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MARXIST REVIEW



WHAT KIND OF NEW IRELAND ?

MARXIST REVIEW is the theoretical journal of the Revolutionary Marxist Group, the Irish supporters of the Fourth International. All comments and contributions, which will be welcomed, should be sent to the Editors 5 Parnell Road, Harolds Cross, Dublin. Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the Group.

MARXIST REVIEW

THEORETICAL JOURNAL OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST GROUP

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"The Labour movement delights in analysing and is perpetually defining and re-defining its principles and objects. The man or woman who has caught the spirit of the Labour movement brings that spirit of analysis and definition into all of his or hers public acts and expects at all times to answer the call to define his or hers position. They cannot live on illusions or thrive by them; even should their heads be in the clouds they will make no forward step until they are assured that their feet rest upon the solid earth."

JAMES CONNOLLY. "WHAT IS OUR POLICY?" WORKERS' REPUBLIC. JAN. 22, 1916.

EDITORIAL NOTE.

The purpose of MARXIST REVIEW is to popularise the basic tenets of revolutionary marxism; to help encourage the use of scientific thought and contribute to the solution of fundamental problems confronting revolutionaries of every tendency in Ireland today. Issue No. 2 of MARXIST REVIEW carries two articles on the Provos with the hope of opening up further discussion. These articles are by no means intended as definitive statements. We apologise to our readers for the brevity of these articles. It was intended that these comments should be much broader and deeper, but owing to pressure of space we had to limit their length.

EIRE NUA

A CRITIQUE TO OPEN DISCUSSION

(Submitted by a Breton comrade)

When Sinn Fein (Kevin Street) claim that their 'Social and Economic Programme' -Eire Nua - is a socialist programme, one response could be to point out the petty bourgeois nature of the Republican Movement; but it is a more positive step to accept that the militants of Sinn Fein are sincerely willing to carry out a fight for socialism in Ireland, and on that basis to offer a critique of Eire Nua and its relation to socialism.

In other words we prefer to conduct a debate⁽¹⁾ in the context of the construction of Socialism rather than to exclude systematically, discussion with Sinn Fein, as unfortunately do many Socialist groups.

It is not possible in this short article (again we remind our readers that because of pressure of space we have had to keep many of the articles in this issue very short. - Editor.) to deal with all the points of Eire Nua; anyway we feel that it is necessary first to deal with two key problems before getting involved in a deeper discussion:

- a) Do the nationalisations of major industries, suggested in the Programme, represent the economic measures necessary to institute Socialism?
- b) And following directly from the above, by what means will the people of Ireland come to power and keep that power?

The main question must therefore be: Is Eire Nua, in its actual formulation a programme capable of guiding the Socialist transformation of Ireland? In spite of the fact that the programme would try to "strike a balance between Western individualistic capitalism, with its poor and hungry admist plenty, on the Right, and Eastern Soviet State Capitalism⁽²⁾ (or any⁽³⁾ of its variations) with its denial of freedom and human rights, on the Left", it seems nonetheless that the 'bourgeois state' of 'Western individualistic capitalism' will be retained in the service of the new Democratic Socialist Republic. The significance of this will become more app arant when we come to discuss the problem of nationalising industry.

History has thought us that to accomplish the transition to socialism

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- 1). "Constructive criticism and comment will be welcomed." - Eire Nua. p.5
 - 2). As Revolutionary Marxists we do not consider the the Eastern People's Democracies to be State Capitalist regimes, but we are entitled to point out, if for no other reason than the persecution of our own comrades there, that the actual regimes in these countries can no longer serve as a model which can enhance the cause of socialism in the eyes of the world working class.
 - 3). Eire Nua. - p. 4 .For a Marxist critique of the degeneration of the Soviet Union, see Trotskys, The Revolution Betrayed.

certain conditions are required:

1) **First condition: NO CONCESSION SHOULD BE MADE TO THE BOURGEOISIE.**

Eire Nua states that the nationalisations would include "finance, insurance, and all key industries", explaining that "the the major agent of development" will be the state; . . . whereas this nationalisation should be under the control of a state comprised of Workers Councils, we find that not only will it be under the old form of state , but that not all key industry will even be nationalised - we are told for instance that "firms which make a reasonable effort to orient themselves towards the national economy and its development will be left in PRIVATE HANDS."

These concessions show that the programme has no conception of the nature of either capitalist or socialist production. There is a naive assumption that industrial capitalists could serve the interests of the ordinary people if only they decided to do so. Presumably they have not already decided to do this because they are "bad and evil" people. Even on the face of it this view is rather simplistic. Some of the greatest tycoons, who have caused tremendous hardship and suffering to the working class, are well known as charitable people in their own right. They did not go out of their way to cause pain and distress. This happened simply because they were part of a production system, the motive force of which is profit making. However socialism is a completely different type of production system. It is a system, based not on production for profit, but on production for the needs of the people. Therefore, even if these people could reorientate themselves, there would still be no need for them.

But this is not merely a mistake in the theory of socialist construction. It leaves socialists disarmed in face of the inevitable reaction from the capitalist class, by suggesting that their mode of production is not incompatible with the socialist mode of production. If socialists are not clearly warned against this they will not know who their real enemies are when the crunch comes, as in Greece, Algeria.etc.

2) **Second condition.: THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF WORKERS CONTROL.**

Quoting Padraic Pearsé can be interesting but in relation to this question it is confusing. The wave of Soviets and factory occupations which swept the country in the twenties is a more reliable guide in this matter. Nonetheless Eire Nua does state clearly that "the means of production, distribution and exchange must be controlled by the people and administered democratically." We of course entirely agree with this. But the method of Comhar na gComharsan is not the way to bring this about.

The attractiveness of the Comhar na gComharsan philosophy for many of the Provo militants is that it is a particularly Irish or Gaelic philosophy. But unfortunately this is not true. The same ideas about the ownership of the means of production, have been advanced by many socialists in many countries - notably France and Russia. What the Provo militants should consider is the class interests of the people who put forward these views and the period in which they put them forward. In France for instance it was put forward in the middle of the last century before the advent of large scale production.

when the skilled craftsman still reigned supreme. With the advent of large scale capitalism, it made sense for these artisans to propagate the view that everybody should own a unit of production in order to defend what they had already got. But of course this situation does not exist in Ireland today. Large scale capitalism already predominates. The vast majority of the people are not propertied artisans, but ordinary workers. It would be impossible to divide up the means of production into so many small units. Apart from any^{thing} else, each unit of production is designed to function in harmony with the rest of the units. Therefore if the means of production are to be transformed into the property of the working class, it will have to be owned as a collective property.

Thus when we speak of workers control over production, we mean the establishment in every factory of workers councils, which unite all workers under an elected leadership which is responsible for the running of the factory.

3) Third condition: INTERNATIONALISM.

Just as the basic units of production have become interdependent and can only function in harmony with each other, so too the national units of production have become interdependent on a world scale. Inevitably this means that no country can build a completed socialism within its own boundaries. This is especially true in backward countries.

Given the level of the productive forces in Ireland this point will be of great importance. The magnitude of the problem can be seen by the fact that 42% of the Gross National Product of Ireland is comprised of imports. If Ireland were blockaded in the same way as Cuba is, then the problems of constructing a socialist economy would be very great indeed.

Apart from this there is the possibility of foreign intervention. Ireland is a neo-colony and the metropolitan countries have vast fortunes invested in Ireland. Britain, for instance, either owns or controls 75% of the capital invested in Ireland's top 100 companies. Over 65% of profits made in Ireland is pocketed by British coupon clippers alone. Any attempt by a socialist government in Ireland to stop the profiteering activities of imperialism will undoubtedly call forth imperialist intervention of both an economic and military nature.

The only^{defence} that a socialist Ireland could have against possible isolation and intervention would be to aid the revolutionary movements in other countries. The taking of power by the working class in other countries is the only real way of defeating imperialism and ensuring the unimpeded progress towards socialism.

Unfortunately the Economic and Social Programme of the Provos any^{does not give} internationalist perspective for doing this. The only spark of internationalism is the declaration that trade will be maintained with other countries. Fine. But what if these other countries refuse to trade with a socialist Ireland? This type of internationalism is a long way from the internationalism of the United Irishmen and the Fenians. It is also a long way from the internationalism of James Connolly, who saw the socialist revolution in Ireland as the first step in the liberation of the people of Europe.

a new ireland or ...

FENNELL'S THIRD REICH ?

(The following article is an analysis by Robert Dorn of some dangerous political trends in the Provisionals based on Desmond Fennell's pamphlet - Build the Third Republic)

Mr. Desmond Fennell expresses a tendency in Provisional Republican thinking. It is one that will have little direct effect unless other, more progressive, tendencies fail to achieve their aims. However, that it can still be accepted in Irish Republicanism (Kevin Street variety) is symptomatic of the continuing theoretical weakness of Republicanism (itself based on the inadequacy of its material base). In turn, this is given material political expression in the current set backs that the groups in the movement are suffering. They may unless there are major changes, lead to the defeat of Republicanism and the turning of its cadres to the author of this pamphlet.

From their point of view this would be a mistake. It would mean a breach with everything that they now support, as certainly as acceptance of the Articles of Agreement did for an earlier generation. Although he has since weakened, it was Mr. Fennell, rather than the B.I.C.O., who began the current propaganda about the "Two Nations in Ireland." In this pamphlet, his attitude to Republicanism is exposed in the first article where he quotes approvingly, with an apparent sense of incongruity, Liam Mellows (who opposed the Articles of Agreement) and Michael Collins (who signed them). The quotation from Collins is from Collins' post - Treaty book!

But what is Mr. Fennell's political faith and what is wrong with it? It is worth asking this question because his writings make explicit and codify many of the assumptions held by would-be Irish political theorists.

Basically, "Fennellism" is a form of Fascism. This may seem a strong thing to say especially at a time when the concept is used far too often as a sort of a bludgeon for one's opponents. Nonetheless it can be easily shown. In essence, Fascism represents the organisation of the demoralised petty-bourgeoisie against the working class in the interests of imperialism. Mr. Fennell's aim is to mobilise the West against the East of Ireland. It is purely coincidental, of course, that most of the workers, and the strength of the trade unions happen to be in the East and that the West is a stronghold of petty-bourgeois (small farmers and gombeenmen) economics and, even more, ideology. Nonetheless, the trend of such a view is inevitable. So we find in various places throughout the pamphlet, it is expressed:-

"Class inequality arises between the metropolitan region and other regions in regard to money incomes, availability of employment, access to cultural facilities and to mass media platforms. The basic human right to live and work within one's own society and region is secured for the inhabitants of the metropolitan region and denied to many citizens born elsewhere" (P.12 present reviewer's emphasis).

"In the light of Mao's broader and correct analysis, the identity of interest between urban workers and capitalists becomes evident. So does the clash of interest between the provincial towns and cities and the metropolitan region. As for the fight going on in the workers' name for "Worker control" and all that, we can now see what this is, when it's all boiled down: The parochial struggle of one metropolitan power clique against another for the metropolitan spoils. Just how remote this contest is from the real interests of rural society is exemplified by the fate of the peasants in Russia after the Revolution. Small wonder that Mao, a peasant himself, (!!!) rejected Stalin's advice on how to make the Chinese Revolution." (PP.14-15)

"Measured in terms of average money incomes, social power and access to cultural facilities, the upper class in Ireland today are the inhabitants of the five-county Dublin region. Measured in the same terms, most of Munster and South Leinster are middle-class and the inhabitants of Connacht, South and West Ulster and several other counties are low-class people. In other words, the inhabitants of the greater part of the Republic belong to this lowest class" P.29.

Mr. Fennell's essential hostility to the need of organised labour were made even more specific in an article ('Concern of Another Kind' - Sunday Press 25th October 1970) which is not republished in the collection reviewed but which is quoted here, nonetheless as being relevant to its author's views. (The subject is Mr. George Colley's plans to freeze wages):-

"When trade unions are rich or when alternative employment is readily available, the strike is an extremely coercive influence on pay rates. It forces pay above the level which is justified by production and sales."

"When pay is forced up in this manner, supply and demand no longer determine prices. Even if demand falls, prices have to rise. Even if supply increases, prices cannot fall. Commodities are no longer priced by a free market, but by the coercion of production costs." (Incidentally the man who wrote this had the nerve to denounce the Catholic magazine SLANT as not being Marxist enough, a fair comment but coming from him?!)

"Since the maintenance men's strike, both these coercion forces have been operating to an extreme degree. But probed (sic) deeper, behind the inflationary pay increases, to the motivations which forced them

through. Consider the scramble for more money over the past two years as a whole. Was freedom at work then?

"Quite well-off people were setting the pace. Remember this Republic is the sixteenth richest country in the world. Most of the groups claiming large increases and striking or threatening to strike were already earning, on one count or another, at least twenty pounds a week, and many of the claimants were earning much more....."

".....The Government has not introduced coercion. It has merely injected some coercion to reason and survival into a situation which was characterised by coercion to unreason and suicide....."

".....Look the next time when top trade union officials who (sic) appear on television. Listen to their predictable parrot-talk. Note the permanent grievance carefully nurtured in their professionally underdog voices. And recall that these men are very powerful, widely experienced and well-to-do."

Of course, that article is uncharacteristic: not because there are other articles than can be quoted to set against it, but because Mr. Fennell is careful not to write very much on industrial issues. What appears in this collection gives the reader an idea of the ideology that he uses both as a smokescreen and as a possible incentive for the movement that (he hopes) will achieve his aims. Like all fascist ideologies, it is a gerry-built piece of work. Thus in his articles "Two Ways to Develop Industry" (P.P. 34-35) he can compare favourably the Spanish rule of the Basques to Dublin rule of Cavan and Monaghan whereas in "Who Wants a Pluralist Ireland?" he is more correct in denouncing Franco's government. In order to justify his theme he is ready to misrepresent completely the thoughts of Marx, Mao, Guevara and even, poor old Noel Browne (a Paisleyite Liberal" - P.29). It is just as well perhaps, that he doesn't seem to have heard of Trotsky.

Insofar as it has any intellectual form "Fennellism" is essentially idealistic and ultra-clerical. His reference and reliance on, Mao is justified by a masterly piece of shuffling:-

"James Connolly learnt from Marx while remaining an Irish Republican, a Catholic, a Gaelic revivalist and a free-thinking man. Connacht has enabled me to learn from Mao in the same manner" P. -15.

But there is a difference between James Connolly's acceptance of Marx and Mr. Fennell's of Mao. Comrade Connolly accepted Marx' political method and analysis totally, even if he did accept catholicism for his private use (and it is doubtful if he even did this.) n Mr. Fennell merely uses Mao (and Guevara) to give a left veneer to his interpretations of the Papal encyclicals. His political analysis is wholly idealist and overwhelmingly Catholic:-

".....The Primary motivation of the Easter Rising was not political or economic but humanist (sic) and moral. It hoped to set in motion a redemptive process, in the image of Calvary, which would lead to the resurrection of man in Ireland to his full human stature." (6 -6)

".....No human republic - no Irish Republic of man - can be built without the light of Jesus Christ." (P. - 27)

" It goes without saying that virtually every institution characterising Irish life today is derived from Britain, and especially from England, though there is some American influence too. The only major exception I can think of is our Catholicism and all that goes with it. Sunday Mass, Saturday ecofessions, rosary beads, priests and nuns in the streets, parish missions, recruitment lectures for the foreign missions, first communion dresses, people blessing themselves and so on" - P.40.

Basing his analysis upon such assumptions, it is easy for Mr. Fennell to declare (in an interesting expression of the 'Two Stage' Theory):-

"James Connolly, the socialist, put the political aim before the economic aim. Every true radical must of necessity do the same because the distribution of economic power and cultural facilities, and the effective ness of so-called 'social Welfare', are ultimately decided by the distribution of governmental power.

"Radical politics worthy of the name are concerned primarily with political power and its distribution throughout the State. Only secondarily are they concerned with economic and 'social welfare' issues." - P. 13.

In other words, the economic system doesn't matter: what is important is the form of Government. That this form is merely the ultimate expression of the existing economic system is dismissed by Mr. Fennell (or, perhaps, more accurately, never considered by him.) For him, the trouble with Ireland is over centralised government. In article after article, he puts forward pleas for greater powers for the local Irish regions.

All this would be fair enough, but the forms of idealism are insufficient to justify his arguments when they are placed in the reality of Ireland today. In Particular, two questions must be asked. Firstly, if Ireland is too over-centralised for effective or benevolent Government, what interests are keeping it that way? Secondly, how is the Government to be reformed, seeing as how those nations quoted by Mr. Fennell that have not maintained their local governments intact from the middle ages have only been decentrallised as a result of revolution or military annihilation? The way in which Mr. Fennell choses to answer these questions is the give away for his politics as exposed at the beginning of this review. For him, Ireland is kept over-centralised by the machinations of the metropolitan region (all the classes therein) and de-centralisation will be achieved only by a revolution of the

petty-bourgeoisie of the west against the east. Since such a revolution can, in historical practice, only be based on either the capitalists or the workers and since it is clear that Mr. Fennell is opposed to the majority of the workers, it is obvious that he looks to Fascism as his motivating force.

Of course, in practice, Fascism cannot achieve what he says he wants. Indeed, the very idea of Fascism leading to greater de-centralisation is ludicrous. Nonetheless, both the Italian and the Less-successful French Fascists ~~lead~~ in their programmes (not, of course, their practice) calls for greater devolution of government powers. For the Fascist, any theories however irrelevant are serviceable. More than most ideologies, Fascism needs to be examined for what it is rather than for what it claims to be.

But it will be objected that Mr. Fennell and his views are of little consequence in Ireland today. He is associated with the Republican Movement (Kevin Street) at a time when either that movement drops such as he or goes under. Most people can see through his pretence.

Such assumptions are dangerous. That Mr. Fennell has any influence in Kevin Street at all says something about the intellectual barrenness of the Irish left since Connolly. His views often express, albeit distortedly, the illusions that have beset that left and, indeed, the petty-bourgeois theories that have taken root in it and in political left wings elsewhere. His views, can ultimately, only handicap the Irish National liberation struggle. And, of course, this is as it should be as it is only through the defeat of that struggle that he is likely to get any real political power as opposed to backdoor influence through Kevin Street or its "Dail Connachta".

Each of these points can be elaborated, though the first one doesn't have to be. That Mr. Fennell can be allowed to take any role (let alone a leading role) in an assembly aimed formally at creating a dual power situation over a province of Ireland exposes the failure of the Kevin Street leadership as much as its failure to develop a political strategy in Northern Ireland that as as effective as its military strategy. For Fennell makes no appeal to the workers and only the workers can carry out the successful national revolution in Ireland by bringing it over into a socialist struggle. (It must be said, too, that his influence in some Connacht Cummainn of Gardiner Place is stronger than one would like to believe).

Secondly, not only are Mr. Fennell's confusions as to the nature of "class" and of "imperialism" traditional errors of the petty-bourgeois left, but he has incorporated more trendy illusions into his thinking. In his introduction to the pamphlet he calls for a People's Republic quite in the tradition of the Stalinites (but, also, it is worth remembering of Hitler: his Third Reich was also termed a "People's Republic"). In his belief in the acceptability of religion as a cultural aspect of nationality, he is merely expressing an important (contd.p34)

THE TWO NATIONS DOGMA

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE LAND

According to the British and Irish Communist Organisation's "Two Nations Dogma", the Unionist bourgeoisie is the only section of the bourgeoisie capable of understanding developments in Ireland. (1) It is of course, necessary for them to assert this since so much of their position is derived from Unionist propaganda. But here there is a strange anomaly. The argument for the Two Nations Dogma was initially based on the fact of uneven capitalist development in Ireland, engendered by the different forms of land tenure which existed North and South. (2). However, it was not the Unionists but the Nationalists who discovered and stressed the importance of this fact. It was none other than the Catholic Nationalist bogeyman, George O'Brien, who popularised this explanation, and it was from him that the Unionists, including the B.I.C.O. plagiarised it. (3).

This constituted a fundamental flaw in what appeared to be a neatly wrapped dogma. To attempt to construct the Two Nations Thesis on a premise of Nationalist historiography was like trying to build a house on shifting sands. So a new twist in the thesis was called for. Certainly, it was admitted, the uneven economic development of Ireland, explains the evolution of the Protestant people as a distinct nation. But then again, this uneven economic development has itself to be explained. Accordingly, we are told that "the uneven economic development itself followed from the fact that there have been two distinct communities in Ireland since the 17th century, in one of which production relations were more advanced than in the other". (4). This tautological statement, which asserts that two different forms of production relations developed in Ireland because two different forms of relations existed to begin with, makes sense only if we take it to mean that the Protestant community in the North, due to some innate charisma (Protestantism) was able to develop advanced property relations which the Catholics, as a result of their non charisma (Catholicism), were unable to do.

Of course, this is no new explanation. It has been advanced for many years by the ideologies of the Protestant community itself. In 1852, for instance, the Missionary Agent of the Irish Presbyterians Church, the Rev. Edward Marcus Dill, set out to find what reasons "make Ireland a desert and Ulster its only oasis". (5). And the solution he commended was to "venture the supposition that Romanism is false and Protestantism true, and like some dissected map the most shapeless part of Ireland's puzzle falls into its place in a moment. Observe how it unfolds every mystery in our physical and moral state; and explains why the "Black North" is a garden, and the "Sunny South" a wilderness". (6) Dill proceeded at length to explain how "Romanism" and "Popery" had been the bane of the Southern Irish. Not alone was it responsible for their political and economic thralldom and wretchedness, but it was even the source of their physical deformities!

On the other hand the level of development attained by the Catholic peasantry during the sixteenth and seventeenth century is grossly underestimated. The gap which existed between the two communities is not sufficient to explain the divergent lines of evolution and the ultimate uneven economic development of the country. Other factors which we have not space to deal with here have to be introduced to explain this.

THE SCOTTISH PEASANTRY

The ancient Scottish society fused with the Norman system during the twelfth century, and the slow and painful emergence of feudalism in the Lowlands began. The peculativities of this development hindered the establishment of a stable and secure system of land tenure over a long period. This was true not only with regard to the peasantry but also with regard to the highest grades of the nobility. Lands were continually reverting to the crown and being regranted. This was due mainly one supposes, to the instability of the crown and the strict laws of inheritance which were then recognised. (11). The War of Independence initiated a major reallocation, and "during the next three hundred years" says Grant, "land was constantly changing hands as the Crown waxed and waned in strength". (12) In subsequent years, many acts of reallocation were passed by: James II in 1437, James IV in 1488 and 1503, James V in 1535 and James VI in 1587. While the forfeitures had less affect the further one went down the social scale, it is also obvious that the absence of security amongst the aristocracy must have also militated against security for the peasantry. At any rate Grant is of the opinion that "the matter is of importance, not only because of the lairds themselves, but because the same conditions have affected the smaller folk". (13).

It is true that at the beginning of the seventeenth century, security of tenure became more common amongst the nobility, as a result of the farm movement. Feuing consisted in the nobles more or less buying out their holdings and was in no sense a democratic movement of the peasantry towards perpetuity of their holdings. (14). In fact, security of tenure was not common in the peasantry until after the middle of the eighteenth century. "About the middle of the century (1750)" says Graham, "there arose a new era in the economic and social conditions of the country..." Previously to this period most of the farms had either been let without leases, or on very short tenure - two or four years - which starved all enterprise". (15). If anything, the position of the peasantry in relation to security of tenure worsened during the period which we are discussing.

So it is that Leyburn, in his important work, describes the Scotland from which the settlers come as the most backward place in Europe, which had not yet escaped from the middleages. (16). In the context of the situation described by Grant, he draws a general picture of the backwardness of the Scottish Lowland peasantry.

Faced with this uneven economic development, the venerable missionary, suggested the conversion of the Catholic population, or failing this, the extermination of Catholics. While he advocated evangelicism, he did not hide his delight at the Famine (which, of course, was caused by "Popery") and the consequent outflow of the Catholic peasantry to America. He sent his reverent blessings after them and called for a second plantation of Scottish presbyterians to take their place.

Naturally, the B.I.C.O. thesis is a little more sophisticated. After all the Rev. Dill claimed only to be "a humble man" and not a "Marxist". The B.I.C.O., in fact, categorically deny that they in any way attribute economic development in Ireland to religious factors. (7). Of course, they deny this. Not to do so would immediately expose their dogma for the Unionist propaganda which it is. But such denials do not alter the reality of their views.

The substance of their position is that both the Catholics and Protestants in Ireland laboured under the same yoke of oppression. But because the Protestants came from a higher civilisation, which found expression in their religion, they were able to impose capitalist property relations on their landowners. The Catholics on the other hand were a backward race, still at a primitive stage of tribal development, which found a cultural manifestation in the community's adherence to reactionary Catholicism. They had no desire to share individually in the ownership of the land and submitted willingly to their tribal overlords. Thus in its latest stage of refinement, the Two Nations Dogma makes the whole of future development hinge on religious factors: Protestantism was the ideological embodiment of new property relations, and being transplanted to Ireland automatically reproduced those property relations. This plainly is the materialist version of historical development turned inside out.

"It was the democracy of Scotland which went to Ulster" (8), we are told, and consequently "the fact that the Ulster peasants have been involved in the Presbyterian struggles in Scotland made them particularly well fitted to look after their bourgeois rights. On the other hand, the clan background and traditions of the Catholic peasantry would have hindered them in generating an independent movement for securing bourgeois rights on the land." (9)

The interpretation contrasts sharply with the position adopted in the original Economics of Partition. Here the new property relations are accepted as given and there is no question of them growing out of the alleged struggles precipitated by the democratic traditions of the Scottish Presbyterian religion. (10).

But leaving aside the nature of historical interpretation which sees property relations coming into existence as a result of religious causes, the arguments put forward here are historically inaccurate. On the one hand, the progress made by the Protestant settlers on the eve of their exodus to Ireland, and the democratic traditions of their religion, are grossly exaggerated.

Although they were grossly oppressed and exploited by the aristocracy they did not resist, as the peasantry of England had, but continued to cultivate a primitive kinship with their social superiors. "The curious point must be made" says Leyburn "that the humble farmer, who suffered most, did not attribute his calamities to the noblemen and lairds". (17). Leyburn, in fact, is struck by the submissiveness of the Scottish peasantry and particularly by "the notable fact that in Scotland, probably alone among all the countries of Europe, there was never anything approaching an uprising against the lords," (18) and "whatever grievances and complaints may have arisen against individual landlords, the meagre Scottish records before 1600 show little that might be called democratic stirrings". (19).

The only explanation for this remarkable fact is that class differentiation and awareness amongst the peasantry had not reached a very fine point, with the aristocracy still continuing to hold reasonably powerful hegemony over the lower ranks of society. The relationship between the principle classes in the Lowlands was in fact very much the same as what the B.I.C.O. insists existed in Ireland at the time. "In actuality", says Leyburn, "there was a rough and practical sense of belonging that gave humanity to the class systems of the Lowlands and kept it from becoming onerous." (20)

Parallel with the meagre social development and backwardness of the Lowlands, went a general economic and cultural (in the Marxist sense) primitiveness. By all accounts agricultural production was not very advanced.

Again Leyburn's social survey is very revealing on this point. To him the situation was unbelievable, with the people being unaware of improvements which had been introduced since the Dark Ages. So primitive were conditions that people were even incapable of implementing the few paltry suggestions of the government. The custom of "ploughing by the tail" has often been utilised to demonstrate the backwardness of the Irish peasantry, but in Scotland, according to Leyburn, instruments and techniques were as primitive as those used in ancient Mesopotamia, and lo and behold harrows were drawn by the horses' tails.

It is against this background that we must examine the specific nature of the democratic traditions of Presbyterianism. To interpret the Scottish Reformation simply as a bourgeois democratic movement against the feudal aristocracy is naive and mechanistic in the extreme. There was a complex web of interests, ^{and the interests} of the peasantry and the nascent bourgeoisie formed only a minor element of this.

It is true that the Reformation began in the urban centres where a small trading class had crystallised. For historical reasons the trade of these merchants was mainly with the continent, particularly France, where the burghs had been granted free access to the market. But after the wars which swept France in the latter half of the 16th century, these markets became extremely fragmented and their importance to the Scottish merchants diminished.

Simultaneously, the possibility of trade with England increased. One of the main reasons why such trade did not already exist was because of the lack of diversity between the two areas. The importance of this was obvious, vis-a-vis France, to which essential foodstuffs and raw materials were exported and from which luxury goods, especially wine, were imported. But the industrial and agricultural development of England during the 16th century laid the basis for commercial exchange and a further integration of both English and Scottish middle classes. It was this change in the relationship between Protestant England and Catholic France which explains the ideological fermentation amongst the Scottish middle-classes at the time of the Reformation. But this urban stratum was as yet insufficiently developed to challenge the dominant position of the feudal aristocracy, and Reformation was a movement against feudalism only in a secondary and limited sense.

The real meaning of the Scottish Reformation is to be found in the sharpening contradictions amongst the feudal nobles, themselves. Without the broad layers of the aristocracy which were drawn into the struggle the Reformation could not have succeeded. "Capturing the towns was only the first step" says Smout "the burghs were much too small for it to be decisive. It had to be followed by winning a significant number of lairds and magnates who could take the initiative against a hostile crown with a well armed offensive army". (24)

There were two important sources of conflict amongst the aristocracy. Firstly, a massive segment of the lesser nobles, who incidently supplied the leadership and tenantry for the Ulster plantation, were deeply impoverished and strongly resented the payments of tithes to a parasite and decadent Catholic church. Moreover they benefitted from the of church lands and wanted to see their gains consolidated by a thorough routing of the Roman Church. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, since the threat of the Angevin monarchy in the 12th century, Scotland and France had maintained a close alliance out of fear on both sides of England's designs. Between 1500-1560 there was great alarm that the whole of Scotland would become a subordinate and integral province of France, thus leaving the Scottish nobility further out on the periphery of power and authority. When James V died in 1542, Mary Queen of Scots was only one year old. Almost immediately a struggle over the Regency between one faction lead by the dissenting Earls of Argyle, Morton and Arden, who favoured an alliance with England to offset the dominance of France and another faction lead by Bishop Beaton of St. Andrews, who favoured the French connection broke out, thus drawing on another powerful layer of support for the Reformation.

Unfortunately, the peasantry does not figure as an independent or even distinct force in the whole process. Certainly, the growth of individualism, and the struggle for security of land tenure did not enter into the question and it is difficult to see what useful conclusion the B.I.C.O. could possibly arrive at by evoking the participation of the Scottish peasantry in the Reformation. The fact that the Reformation spread rapidly into the Highlands should be sufficient to warn against a vulgar materialist interpretation of the affects of the change in religious outlook on the peasantry or indeed the burghs (25). "Few countries were more completely Calvinist than Scotland" says Smout "yet it is hard to see how any support can be found for Weber's thesis from the situation in this country between 1560 and 1690.

Within this period the Reformation cannot be shown in any way to have favoured the rise of economic individualism". (26) And Tawney points out that "In Scotland the views of the reformers as to economic ethics did not differ in substance from those of the church before the Reformation". (27).

To sum up and emphasise the essential features of the sketch we have just drawn, we can say that the Scottish settlers who came to Ulster during the period of the Ulster plantation came from a depressed region where economic relations were at a low level; these settlers, while by no means slaves, had not developed the independence attributed to them by the B.I.C.O. and were certainly not in a position to pioneer bourgeois property relations in the land.

The Gaelic System

It is difficult to make a direct comparison between the Scottish and Irish peasantry of this period, but it will be clear that they did not live in two entirely different worlds. Naturally, the B.I.C.O. accepts uncritically the superficial view that the primitive clan system still persisted in Ireland at this time. "The Clan System", they say, "as it existed in Ireland for many centuries before its abolition smothered all power of independent action by the people" (28). The historical facts when sifted show that this view is completely untenable. The "Clan System" as popularly conceived probably never existed in Ireland at all, and if it did, it had disappeared subsequent to the Northern Invasion. From that time onwards we find the gradual development of a particularly Gaelic form of feudalism, which while utilising many ancient institutions filled them with a new content.

Most authorities deny that this Gaelic system was feudal in nature. This is true of Hayes MacCoy, Cyril Falls and Bagwell, not to mention the B.I.C.O. "authorities". (29)

Their judgement however is not based on sound scientific criteria. Most notably there is no rounded conception of historical evolution in their writings. They fail to see any definite stages in the development of society. For instance, they simultaneously deny that Gaelic society was feudal or tribal but refuse to categorise it in any other way. Instead they merely isolate various aspects of the Gaelic system which distinguish it from English feudalism, and in this way assert the existence of two qualitatively different social orders.

The two most important peculiarities of the Gaelic system on which they concentrate are: the absence of primogeniture and the lack of absolute title of ownership. But neither of these affect the essence of feudalism. Primogeniture was not always and everywhere an inherent feature of feudalism. As Professor Strayer points out, "In the early middle ages there was no rule of primogeniture and no preference for descents through the male line. Thus while there was a tendency to give counties only to men who had some tie of kinship with previous counts, there could easily be a dozen or so candidates who had such ties." (30)

If primogeniture is absent, then absolute title of ownership cannot exist since the noble is unable to pass on his holding as he pleases. In this case title is dependent solely on office. In other words the nobles interest in his title is more or less limited to his own life time. So, on this point also we must admit that absolute ownership is not necessary to the functioning of the feudal order.

The confusion which arises on matters such as these can easily be cleared up with the help of a scientific definition of feudalism. To aid us here, we have ready to hand the work performed by Maurice Dobb, M.A., under the tutelage of Stalin himself. Notwithstanding the B.I.C.O.s recent discovery that this particular mentor of theirs has been a life long revisionist we believe that they will find his definition of feudalism unexceptional. Feudalism, according to Dobb, is defined essentially in terms of "an obligation, laid on the producer by force and independently of his own volition, to fulfill certain economic demands of an overlord, whether these demands take the form of services to be performed, or dues to be paid in money or kind". (31) If we go by such a definition than there is no doubt that the social order which existed in Ireland was feudal in character.

By the 16th century, this system prevailed in most areas. It was spread over most of Ulster, parts of the Northern Midlands, North, West and South Connacht, Thomond, parts of West Cork and Kerry, the central and South midlands, and parts of Wexford and Wicklow. The system was characterised by the typical hierarchial structure of feudalism. Society was divided between two distinct social entities, the freeman and the peasantry. The freeman themselves were divided into a number of categories, professional people, and lower and higher grades of of the land owning lords. The lower grade of the nobility was the most numerous stratum of the class of freemen. These nobles were subordinate to their overlords by a system of clientship, which was characterised by the overlord advancing them livestock while guaranteeing protection and the underlords paying interest on this livestock and reciprocating this guarantee of protection. (32). Groups of such subordinate nobles as were under the the same lord formed a distinct unit called the tuath, and groups of adjacent tuatha formed even greater units known as ur-riogha, building up in the form of a pyramid.

Traditionally, the tuatha was supposed to be a democratic institution governed by the members. However, by the 16th century, the overlord had usually usurped authority. "Although historically" says Hayes McCoy "political power in the tuatha belonged to the freemen gathered together in assembly, the lord, captain, chieftain or king of the tuatha (the titles as reported are various) appears by the 16th century to have assumed effective rule in his own person". (33)

As we remarked above, inheritance through primogeniture had not yet been established, though we may note that it did exist temporarily in the relative stability following the Norman invasion. But the absence of primogeniture does not mean that there was no form of inheritance.

In fact inheritance in a ~~vifer~~ form existed within the legal family, the ~~derbfine~~, which was composed of a four generation group, including sons, grandsons and great-grandsons. Inheritance passed through this grouping and a narrowing in towards primogenitur was proceeding through the system which grew up after the Norman invasion. Under this system the successor within the ~~derbfine~~ was chosen while the leader of the ~~derbfine~~, and ultimately of the whole tuath, was still alive.

The ultimate ^{caricature} of the Gaelic system concerns the system of landownership. It is often asserted that the land was owned in common by the "clan", and was periodically redistributed among the members. It is true that gavelkind still prevailed, but only in a form which guaranteed a certain security of tenure. When contemporary historical records speak of redistribution they are referring only to alterations in the pattern of ~~brifings~~. Very often as a dominant tuath expanded, additional parcels of land had to be carved out for the new freemen which frequently resulted in portions of the lands of lesser freemen being annexed. Again this reallocation was confined to the ~~derbfine~~ and did not occur on the more general plane of the sept or tuath. "Periodic redistribution appears to have taken place within the ~~derbfine~~ and not within the sept as a whole, and it did not mean, as Davis claimed, that no man's holding was ~~divided~~. In the inhabited parts of the country every acre had its owner and each knew what he was entitled to, says Hayes McCoy (34).

THE CATHOLIC PEASANTRY

It is difficult to frame a unified picture of the conditions and life style of the peasantry under this system. From the meagre information we possess, however, it is evident that the BICO have an entirely erroneous impression of what the Catholic Peasantry's existence and mode of behaviour was like. They certainly were not the indolent, docile mass, which the BICO have depicted. They neither submitted willingly to their aristocracy, harkened back to their tribal origins or squandered away their time and energy. On the latter point an anonymous Elizabethan testifies that "There are two sorts of people in Ireland to be considered of, the Kern and the Chorle. The kern breed up in idleness and naturally inclined to mischief and wickedness, the chorle willing to labour and take pains, if he might peacefully enjoy the fruits thereof." (35).

When we piece together the evidence of competent authorities we cannot avoid the conclusion that a new form of tenure was emerging and parallel with this, that the peasantry was acquiring sturdy and independent traits. Montgomery, who was no Catholic nationalist, says in his prizewinning essay of 1888, that "Ireland was steadily progressing towards a modern system of land tenure (at the beginning of the 16th c. - J.C.). The **extensive** growth of the power of the chief makes it evident that in reality the practical development of tenure and even primogeniture was not far distance". (36) George Campbell, who again could hardly be mistaken for a Catholic Nationalist in his 1869 account, dealt more extensively with the mode of tenure as it affected the ordinary peasantry. From his examination of some legal records and with his wide knowledge of the history of land tenure in Europe and India, he was confident that the village system operated in Ireland during the Tudor period.

"There can be no doubt" he says "that the village system formerly prevailed in Ireland. The whole system of settlement and valuation is based on it to the present day, the town-lands being exactly preserved, though the villages have generally dissolved into separate forms". (37)

After examining the records of a villeinage in Westmeath in 1682, Campbell draws a sketch of a typical feudal manor. The land was divided into shares called "plough lands", and the villagers managed their own affairs and paid their rent in lump to the "landlord". The function of the lord was merely to collect the rent and settle disputes amongst the villagers. (38).

Parallel with the development of tenure the peasantry was also steadily developing as a separate social entity, conscious of its interest in their holdings and challenging the absolute supremacy of the nobles.

As early as medieval times the peasantry or betaghs, as they were known, began to assert themselves in struggle. Admittedly, these betaghs were bound to the soil and might be recovered if they fled, and were obliged to perform labour services for their lords. But by the 13th century these services had been commonly commuted to money rent and the process whereby the peasantry would inevitably be emancipated was in motion. Professor Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven has pointed out that, while theoretically the peasant might have been a tenant-at-will, in reality his tenancy was secure by established custom, i.e. by class struggle "It is clear from the enumeration of the betaghs obligations given by the rentals" says Otway-Ruthven "that he was in fact protected by fixed custom. And when labour services had been generally commuted for money rent the anticipation of the betaghs or villeins was well in sight". (39)

By the 16th century we find many references to the resistance and independence of the peasantry. It was not uncommon for the entire inhabitants of an estate to band together and abandon their lord if conditions were not to their satisfaction. (40). For instance we find the Bishop of Cork writing that the peasantry of Munster "continued not past three years in a place but ran roving about the country like wild men fleeing from one place to another". (41) and other examples of this practice, particularly in the North, can be gleaned from the correspondence of Davis and Cecil.

At all events, the peasantry was not a feckless mass which took no interest in individual private ownership of the land. It is true that the evolution of absolutist feudalism in England cut across the path of Ireland's natural development. The Tudor intervention in Ireland led to incessant war and strife which put a break on the consolidation of the peasants drive towards a more advanced form of tenure. While this may have prevented the emergence of a mass national movement amongst the peasantry, it was not sufficient to negate the consciousness and tradition which had already been established. And when the conquest and expropriations of the 16th century lead to the decomposition and final disintegration of the Gaelic system, the Gaelic peasantry was not incapable of taking advantage of the new situation. The Catholic-Nationalist economic historian, George O'Brien, who held no brief for the new system imposed by "the foreigners" was forced to admit that "the tenants on the confiscated land were in a relatively good position owing to the customs which were growing up and which were becoming generally recognised" (42).

Another Catholic Nationalist historian, Sigerson, testifies to the same development.

Apart from these, however, there are more "objective" accounts. Montgomery points out that while the Gaelic nobility was removed from the land in the Cromwellian plantation the ordinary tenantry was not interfered with. They were not despised by the new owners as mere barbarians who could not be harnessed to produce a steady ground rent. On the contrary, says Montgomery, "The earth tillers were kept in their holdings for several reasons; firstly they had always been a fairly quiet and toilsome class, and when freed from the influence of the disquieting element ... might be expected to develop into a peaceful tenantry". (44). Montgomery goes on to say that the peasantry was admitted to fixity of tenure even after the plantations. He draws attention to the fact that Petty, in his famous survey of the confiscated estates, calculated that they were worth only two-thirds their total value to their new owners since a third of the value was held in the form of leases by the tenantry. "This appears to prove conclusively that he did not regard them (the ordinary peasants - JC) as mere tenants at will". (45), add Montgomery.

George Campbell also testifies along the same lines. He says that, after the expropriations "The country was gradually recovering from the effects of war and depopulation and the general tendency during the greater part of the time was rather for landlords to compete for tenants than for tenants to compete hotly for land. The external pressure which kept the village system together being removed, that system gradually v at to pieces ... Without protection of law, the idea of property in their holding again took hold of the Irish mind". (48). Indeed, in Campbell's views, a situation was rapidly developing where the new aristocracy would have been quite willing to concede and recognise fixity of tenure and fair rents as a general principle governing their relationship with the Catholic peasantry. (47)

By the beginning of the 18th century the consciousness of the peasantry was at a high enough level, and its traditions of struggle sufficiently entrenched to steel them against total disintegration and demoralisation under the great pressures of the next two centuries which were to elapse before the land question was finally solved. The odds mounted against them were tremendous. The twin aims of English rule in Ireland, as manifested in the penal laws was to abort economic development and prevent ownership of the land from falling into the hands of the Catholic masses. Central to this policy was the system of absentee landlordism, which was imposed on most of Ireland. This was a massive stumbling block on the road to the creation of a custom in the whole of Ireland, similar to the Ulster Custom, or customs which prevailed in most of Europe. Without direct contact between the peasantry and their landlords it was impossible to consolidate customary rights since the landlords had no intimate knowledge of the proceedings on their estates, nor indeed had many of them even laid eyes on them". The curse of absentee owners" says Montgomery "is responsible in a great measure for that total want amongst the lowest tenants of continuity in their holdings which prevented the growth of customary rights" (48).

However, notwithstanding the great difficulties, the Catholic peasantry were able to enforce customary rights, albeit of an elementary nature and at a great price. Taking a look at conditions in the first half of the 19th century, we can scarcely find the BICO's "helpless peasantry" (49). Campbell remarked that in theory the landlord was supposed to be absolute owner of his land. In practice, however, this was far from being the case. In the North East where the Ulster tenant right prevailed it was obviously not so, and in the South the issue was less clear cut "by an infinitely more disagreeable process, a similar result is arrived at ... viz, that the theoretical landlord cannot do what he likes with what he considers to be his land" (50). Campbell readily concedes that the Ulster custom did not exist in the South. But this is not to say that the Southern tenants were a "helpless peasantry" at the mercy of the landlords. "A tenant" says Campbell "seldom goes without being bought out by someone, and the feeling of the country is that in some way, regular or irregular, he is entitled to something which amount to selling his holding" (51). The fact that such a custom could develop gives the lie to the BICO's punch-like caricature of the Catholic peasantry.

We have then, a picture placed against the background of subsequent developments which, while not exaggerating the level of progress reached by the Catholic peasantry in the 16th and 17th century differs radically from the popular image and descriptions given by the BICO. When we place side by side the picture of the peasantry already in Ireland and the picture of the Scottish peasantry, which eventually came to the North East as a settler community we can imagine the differences which the BICO sees only through the most sweeping and unconvincing generalisations. A difference there may have been, but it was not an epochal difference, a difference which took as the BICO claims, two centuries to bridge!

THE PEASANT STRUGGLES IN ULSTER

If then, the BICO grossly exaggerates the difference between the Protestant and Catholic peasantry, how are we to explain the subsequent gap which widened between them? How did the Protestant peasantry secure permanent tenure and a right to compensation for improvements made, while the Catholic peasantry remained systematically excluded from these rights?

The BICO deny that this development had anything to do with official favouritism towards the Protestant community. Indeed, they go so far as to say that the Protestant peasantry was oppressed as much as the Catholic peasantry. With a sweeping statement that the Protestant peasantry came under the operation of the penal laws, the BICO imagine that their point is adequately proven. (52).

There is no need to labour a refutation of this. The fact that the BICO are forced to adopt such flimsy arguments is evidence of the bankruptcy of the Two Nations Dogma. Suffice it to say that only one subsection of one of the seven Penal Acts against the Catholic population, affected the Presbyterian peasantry. This was the sacramental test act included in the sixth penal enactment of 1705. While it placed limited political restrictions on those who were not prepared to abide by the Test (and these by no means included the whole Protestant or even Presbyterian community) it did not affect their property rights in the slightest. By contrast almost all the penal enactments contained some element of economic repression against the Catholics.

Parallel with this the BICO claim that the Protestant peasantry had to fight tooth and nail for their rights and they attempt to construct a history of that struggle. Significantly enough this struggle is represented as only beginning midway through the 18th century. The crucial century and a half before this, in which the essential internal social relations of the settler community were moulded, is not analysed at all. When we come to examine the opinion of the Protestants themselves on the origin of their rights we will find the good reason for which the BICO skipped over this period. For the moment, however, we will examine the BICO's "new" addition to Irish history. (53)

Firstly, it should be noted that only two periods of struggle are mentioned: 1700-1772, and making a jump of nearly a whole century - the land struggle which resulted in the Gladstone reforms. This episodic form of struggle is hardly the stuff out of which land customs are forged. The strained method of argument is again evidence of the bankruptcy of the BICO's theorising.

It should be noted that these two periods are not ^{re}presentative of the general relations which existed between the Protestant peasantry and the aristocracy over the three centuries of their existence. The turmoil of the mid-18th century had specific and exceptional causes. And it could not have been otherwise, for as the BICO themselves recognise "Once the system (of the Ulster Custom - JC) had been established it would not have been in the interests of the landowners to revert to the system of rack rent." (54)

Around 1760 the price of provisions rose significantly and this made a turn from cultivation to pasture, usually through the medium of some urban entrepreneur, a profitable proposition. Perhaps nothing would have come of this in the North-East, where established custom governed the calm relations between peasant and landlord except for two important facts: (1) the existence of a small nucleus of absentee landlords, who by the fact of their absenteeism, had little respect for the custom. These were the wealthier and more politically important of the landlords, and they set an extremely bad example for the rest of their society. And (2) around this time many of the original leases from the beginning of the plantation fell through and placed enormous temptation in front of the landlords. Given these exceptional circumstances there was bound to be friction.

The period of turbulence which had been smouldering on since 1760 flared up in 1770 on the estate of the wealthy absentee Lord Donegal. When the leases of his tenants expired he demanded an impossible fine of £100,000 on renewal. When the tenantry failed to comply they were evicted, and the estate was let to some prosperous Belfast merchants. This example was immediately followed by another wealthy proprietor, Clothworth-Upton, and they by the lesser aristocracy. "A precedent so tempting and lucrative" says Froude "was naturally followed. Other landlords finding the trade profitable began to serve their tenants with notices to quit". (55)

It is true that the peasantry resisted strongly. The history of their resistance has been covered by the Catholic Nationalist historian, Frances Joseph Bigger, and it is not essential to recapitulate on it here.

It is, however, necessary to say that the resistance of the Protestant peasantry was only one element in the causes which preserves the Ulster Custom at this stage. Another essential element was the pressure exerted from within the Anglo Irish aristocracy, and the British Government. Archbishop Boutler recognised that any intensification of the struggle would have had disastrous effects for the ascendancy. "But the worst of this is" he wrote "that it tends to unite protestant with papist and whenever that happens, goodbye to the English interests in Ireland for ever". (56) Boutler was astute enough to see the folly of the aristocracy's behaviour and favourably presented the case of the tenantry to Walpole. King George III also showed signs of worry about the situation and ordered his Viceroy, Townsend, to make it known to the landlords that he was not pleased with their new "infatuation" (57). And Townsend himself had already been trying to do this by introducing into the Irish Parliament a bill protecting the tenants.

With the massive emigration which occurred during this period it is not extravagant to say that the Ulster Custom might possibly have been abolished or seriously altered had not the economic motivation of the landlords come into conflict with British policy in Ireland regarding the maintenance of a loyalist garrison. Bigger, who in accordance with the democratic content of his Catholic Nationalist philosophy, is inclined to emphasise the resistance of the Protestant peasantry, is nonetheless forced to admit that "by the middle of 1772 the agitation had become less fierce, not by reason of the hearts of steel growing less determined, but because undertakers and magistrates increasingly became more moderate in their dealings, in face of the storm that their many high handed acts had provoked, and also in view of the royal expression regarding their conduct" (58)

After this episode calm returned once more to Ulster. Not until the second half the the 19th century do we again find substantial conflict. Once again specific causes were at the root of it. After the famine the Irish aristocracy in general had become not only politically obsolete, but economically bankrupt. The British liberal bourgeoisie were anxious to liquidate them and thereby eliminate one of the more backward supports for the Tories. The aristocracy itself was willing to be liquidated, provided the price was right. From 1849, with the passing of the Encumbered Estates Act, the process of buying out the landlords was underway. It was such a profitable business that even the comparatively solvent aristocracy of the North-East joined in, and in the North as well as the South many estates began to pass into the hands of financial speculators. The sole motivation of these speculators was private profit and they had little time or regard for the customs which had grown up between tenant and landlord. "The new proprietors", says the English liberal, Thomas MacKnight, who spent many years in Belfast "acted on commercial considerations. They were generally less indulgent to the tenants than the old owners. They considered that all they had legally bought they had a right to sell". (59). Thus in the death throes of the land system as it existed in most of Ireland, the position of the Protestant tenantry became momentarily insecure. They were in the paradoxical position that while the rest of Ireland was progressing towards fixity of tenure, they who had always had it, were now in a precarious state. Understandably they fiercely resisted all infringements by their new masters on the rights they had grown accustomed to.

Another aspect of the agrarian conflict at the time was the collapse of agricultural prices and the fall in the value of land. In this situation the tenants share in the land left him at a loss. When he went to sell his tenant right he found it was almost worthless, and the pittance he received on sale was more likely than not seized by the landlord in payment for arrears accumulated during times of distress. The weakness of the Ulster Custom, coupled with the change in the ownership of the land - rather than any major attempt on the part of the landlords to abolish the custom - were responsible for the agrarian unrest in the North-East during the last decades of the 19th century.

WHO WAS FAVOURED?

In trying to construct a history of agrarian struggle for the Protestant peasantry, which would explain the existence of the Ulster custom in a way compatible with the theory of a sturdy Protestant community developing into a nation, the BICO simultaneously ignores the popular feelings of the Protestant peasantry on the subject, and unwittingly adapts the stand point of a certain section of the landed aristocracy. As the British liberal bourgeoisie were busy cutting the ground from under the aristocracy, ^{a stream} of the larger, and politically more important aristocracy, fought vainly to retain their old influence and prestige. They realised that the legal recognition of the Ulster custom which the peasantry was demanding, in the context of a capitalist solution to the land question, would mean the end of the line for them. They were therefore hostile to any steps in that direction, their favourite argument being that the Ulster custom was the result of agrarian outrages and it would be a gross profanity to enshrine it in legal code. The argument of the landlords was not taken seriously by anybody (except until now by the BICO) and least of all by the Protestant tenantry. They remained firmly convinced that the Ulster custom was a special concession to them in return for their counter-revolutionary services to Britain and the ascendancy. A popular ballad addressed to the landlords, during the second period of conflict shows the views of the tenantry:

"We have been kinsmen of your blood and clansmen to your name;
And now our rights, but favours none, we're asking at your hands;
We gave our Yeomen services - we'll keep out Yeoman lands" (60)

This verse expresses succinctly what the peasantry, and indeed most historians of the Ulster Plantation and Protestant community, knew to be a fact of history. James McKnight, who was the most popular spokesman for the Ulster tenantry, and who has been described "as one of the greatest authorities on the Ulster land question from the tenants points of view" (61), countered the landlords' argument in a pamphlet entitled "The Ulster Tenant Right - an original grant from the Crown". McKnight states four different reasons why concessions had to be granted to the Protestant peasantry. Firstly, without such concessions no-one would have been willing to risk their lives and the lives of their families in coming to Ireland (62). Secondly, the aristocracy needed the plebian masses to protect them against the dispossessed Irish and consequently had to woo them (63). Thirdly, the provisions of the Ulster plantation, as outlined in the "Collection of Such Orders and Conditions as are to be observed by the Undertakers upon the Distribution and Plantation of the Escheated Lands of Ulster", specifically excluded the return of the outcast Irish.

The only meaningful way this could be done was through granting fixity of tenure to the Protestant peasantry. Even common sense would tell us, that such a concession was essential to the success of the Plantation (64). Finally, the Plantation was conceived not solely with financial profit in view. If that had been the case, as he himself pointed out, King James would have kept the plantation lands for himself. But in fact an important aspect of the exercise was to plant a loyal garrison in Ireland, and it would have been counter-productive to have installed a divided community. (65).

After examining the historical records concerning the Ulster Plantation, M'Knight comes to the following set of conclusions:

- "(1. That the lands of Ulster never were granted, in simple, feudal ownership, to the original proprietors, who could therefore convey to their successors only such title as they themselves held from the crown and no other.
- "(2. That for purpose of state, the money terms required from these were made unintentionally easy;
- "(3 One object of this lenientcy was that, they might be enabled to share the benefits of their own bargain with the tenant settlers, for the better encouragement of the Plantation.
- "(4 That this was also one special object of making 'fixity of tenure' to be a universal law of the Ulster Plantation, in order that the cultivators as well as the owners, of the soil, might have a "CERTAIN estate' or interest in it.
- "(5 That the successors of the original Undertakers, and, in fact, all persons drawing titles from them, were held by the Crown, agreeably to its own declared INTENTION at the time, to be BOUND by the Articles of the Plantation, EQUALLY with the individuals to whose RIGHT they have succeeded.
- "(6 Hence, these successional landlords were bound, in every instance to make fixed 'estates' to their tenantry, and this too at RENTS proportionate to the easiness of their own.
- "(7 Hence, also if the landlords were BOUND by the Crown to GRANT fixed tenures their tenantry had, to under the Crown, a RIGHT to fixed tenures, and this by the VERY TERMS of the Plantation Articles". (66)

We have, above then, M'Knight's view of how the Ulster custom arose. After such a long quotation we hope that we will not be overtaxing the patience of our readers if we present the testimony of yet another important authority. The most substantial historian of the Ulster Plantation, the Rev. George Hill wrote that special concessions were made to the aristocracy to attract them to Ireland" ... but the benefits which they thus secured", he adds, "they were obliged to share with their tenants, by letting their lands on the most liberal terms ... This was done to secure what was called 'Civil Plantation' or an arrangement which would work well in every particular for the peace and welfare of the settlement in Ulster" (67).

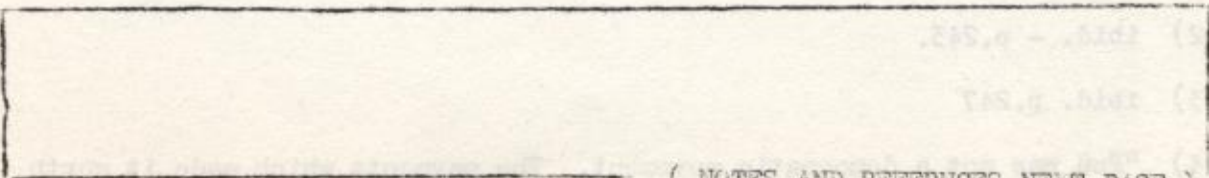
LANDLORDS AND THE ULSTER CUSTOM

The obverse side of the BICO's contention that the Protestant peasantry armed with their democratic traditions, forced the Ulster custom on the landlords, is the view that the landlords were in constant fear of the peasantry. The picture which they project is one of an aristocracy terrorised into conceding some of its most fundamental property privileges to the plebian masses. In their typically schematic manner, the BICO glean a few appropriate passages from the four monstrous volumes of the Devon Commission Report and rest content that they have clinched the argument. The substance of the matter, however, cannot be clouded by a few isolated quotations, no matter how well chosen. There were many good reasons why the aristocracy, far from being coerced, willingly conceded these privileges which in the words of the Devon Commission, were "either authorised or connived at by the landlords".

The principle reason was the aspect of the custom which particularly favoured the landlords. It must, of course, be realised, even if we accept the BICO's simplistic position, that the custom was not simply a surrendering by the aristocracy to the peasantry, but more precisely a compromise which suited the landlords long term interests. The custom suited the landlords in that it ensured regular and continuous payment of rent. If a tenant defaulted it was agreed by the custom that the landlord was entitled to delete arrears due, from the sale of the tenants right. And in the last resort the custom guaranteed the landlord sovereign right over his property, since it permitted him first option on the tenant right once a sale price had been arranged on the open market.

Considering this it should come as no surprise to learn that the passages and quotations which the BICO use to substantiate their position are of an extremely one-sided nature. This is most notable in the segment presented from the statement of James Hancock (Lord Lurgan's land agent) to the Devon Commission. Hancock, it is true, says that the peasantry resisted any interference with the custom. But it would be wrong to assume from such an isolated passage that this was the reason why the custom remained in force. In fact, earlier on in his statement he touches on a more likely explanation. "I consider tenant right beneficial to the community", he says "because it establishes a security of land and leads to improvement of the estate, without any expenditure of capital to the landlord. It likewise affords the best security for his rent, as arrears are always allowed to be deducted from the amount the occupier receives for tenant-right" (68).

Only the BICO could find anything strange in a landlord's agent preaching that what was beneficial to the landlords was "beneficial to the community"!



(NOTES AND REFERENCES NEXT PAGE)

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- (1) "The Ulster Unionist Movement came nearer to comprehending the reality of Ireland as a whole than did the Nationalist Movement ..." (The Economics of Partition - 1972 ed. - p.46)
- (2) See the original edition of The Economics of Partition.
- (3) George O'Brien, who has written a three volume economic history of Ireland, and who was the most imminent of the Nationalist economic historians, says:

"We have seen that the failure of Southern manufacturers to introduce improvements was due to their inability to amass capital owing to the land system, and it is equally the fact that the reason Ulster was enabled to progress was because capital could be accumulated owing to an essential difference in the land system in the North. The Ulster custom which was observed throughout the Northern countries did away with the worse evils which characterised the land system in the South by encouraging tenants to improve by ensuring that they would enjoy such capital as they succeeded in accumulating" (from a special introduction to E.J. O'Riordan's Modern Irish Trade and Industry - 1920 - p. 44-45)

Conrad Gill, whom the BICO more or less credit with the formulation of the "uneven economic development" theses did not publish his book until 1925.
- (4) The Home Rule Crisis - pp (iii)
- (5) Rev. E.M. Dill, The Mystery Solved - 1852 - p.34
- (6) *ibid.* p.92
- (7) c/f Aspects of Nationalism - p.37-38
- (8) The Economics of Partition - 1972 p.2
- (9) *ibid* - p.19
- (10) The original Economics of Partition - p.14 . Here religion is correctly viewed as an outgrowth of the productive forces, and not vice versa.
- (11) I.F. Grant The Social and Economic Development of Scotland before 1603, (1930) - p.244
- (12) *ibid.* - p.243.
- (13) *ibid.* p.247
- (14) "Fen was not a democratic movement. The payments which made it worth while to the superior to fen land were fairly heavy..." *ibid.* p.270

- (15) Henry Grey Graham - The social life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century. (1899) - vol. 1 p.201.
- (16) James B Leyburn "The Scotch Irish - a Social history pp xv. It should be noted that Leyburn is here referring specifically to the Lowlands.
- (17) *ibid.* p.11
- (18) *ibid.* p.11
- (19) *ibid.* - p.15
- (20) *ibid.* p.15
- (21) S.E. Elyths - The Economy of Scotland (1550-1625) p.169.
- (22) *ibid.* p.215 - 216
- (23) Donaldson adds that the Scottish burghs preferred an alliance with England because the incessant wars and disputes between both countries was disrupting commercial development. Their support for the Reformation he holds was conditioned by this fact - Gordon Donaldson - The Scottish Reformation - p.46
- (24) T.C. Smout A History of the Scottish People (1560-1830) - p.60
- (25) The ridiculously simplistic approach of the BICO is seen in the following passage:
- "In the last half of the 16th century Scotland was undergoing a profound bourgeois democratic revolution against feudalism. An important economic feature of this was the struggle for bourgeois rights on the land. Culturally, it involved a break with the Catholic Church, which was the cultural and institutional backbone of feudalism".
- (26) Smout *Op.Cit.* p.95
- (27) R.H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (Peter Smith 1962) - p.127
- (28) The Economics of Partition - 1972 - p.14
- (29) Speaking of the Gaelic system, the BICO says: "But the general opinion was that the chief did not have feudal ownership. Even the assumption that Gaelic society was feudal makes many things inexplicable".
Was Connolly a Bourgeois Intellectual? - p.28
- (30) Joseph R. Strayer - Feudalism - p.32
- (31) Maurice Dobb, M.A. Studies in the Development of Capitalism (Internat. pub. 1963) - p.35
- (32) G.A. Hayes McCoy - Gaelic Society in Ireland in the Late Sixteenth century in Historical studies Vol. IV (1963) - p.47

- (33) ibid. - p.47
- (34) ibid. - p.54 Most authorities base their assessment of the Gaelic system on the observation of Davis, whom the BICO praise as a sharp social analyst. But it must be noted that Davis had a vested interest in claiming that security of tenure did not exist in the Gaelic system since he was preparing the case for the mass expropriation of the Gaelic nobility.
- (35) T.W. Moody, "The Londonderry Plantation - p.48. See also Ireland 1607-1732 (ed.) James Carty, where George Hill is quoted as saying that the native peasantry were as dedicated as the Scottish and English settlers, to agriculture pursuits - p.40
- (36) W.E. Montgomery The History of Land Tenure in Ireland (1889) p.69. This essay won the York prize in Cambridge in 1888.
- (37) George Campbell The Irish Land (1869) - p.27
- (38) ibid. p.32-33
- (39) Professor Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven. The Native Irish and English Law in Medieval Ireland in Irish Historical Studies. Vol. VII no.25 March 1950 p.10
- (40) Campbell - Op.Cit. p.33
- (41) Hayes McCoy - Op.Cit. p.30
- (42) George O'Brien "The Economic History of Ireland in the 18th Century (1918) p.53
- (43) George Sigerson, History of Irish Land Tenure, p.103
- (44) Montgomery Op.Cit. p.80
- (45) ibid. p.80
- (46) Campbell Op.Cit. p.34
- (47) ibid. p.35
- (48) Montgomery Op.Cit. p.92
- (49) The Economics of Partition - 1972 - p.17
- (50) Campbell. Op.Cit. p.6-7
- (51) ibid. p.54
- (52) The Economics of Partition - 1972 - p.10
- (53) Even this is not an original concoction of the BICO. It is plagiarised, without acknowledgement understandably enough straight from the Orange ideologist Hugh Sherman - c/f Anglo Irish Relations - p.44-45
- (54) The Economics of Partition - 1972 - p.6

- (55) J.A. Froude The English in Ireland in the 18th Century (1874) Vol. 2 p.120
- (56) Quoted in F.J. Brigger The Ulster Land War of 1770 - p.22
- (57) *ibid.* p.29
- (58) *ibid.* - p.105 Our emphasis.
- (59) Thomas MacKnight Ulster/It Is (1896) Vol. 1. p.107
- (60) George Gavan Duffy - The League of North and South p.26. The Yeomen were a counter-revolutionary, militia, closely linked with the Orange Order and the aristocracy, which ruthlessly suppressed the '98 uprising and harried and persecuted the Catholic peasantry.
- (61) T. MacKnight *Op.Cit.* p.97 As far as we know the gentlemen were not related
- (62) James MacKnight The Ulster Tenant Right (1848) - p.15
- (63) *ibid.* p.39
- (64) *ibid.* p.41
- (65) *ibid.* p.24
- (66) *ibid.* p.25 Emphasis in original throughout.
- (67) Rev. George Hill The Plantation in Ulster 1608-1620 (1877) p.89
- (68) Report of the Devon Commission Vol. 1 p.484

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document 1

REPORT OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF IRELAND TO THE 3rd INTERNATIONAL.
SEE SPECIAL NOTE ON PAGE 34)

The first attempt at establishing a socialist party in Ireland was made by James Connolly on his return from Scotland to Dublin in 1896. Gathering a few friends around him he embarked upon propaganda which issued in 1898 in the production of a weekly paper called the "Workers' Republic." By 1903, the Irish Socialist Republican Party, as it was called, had been almost completely extinguished in Dublin and Cork, the two centres in which it was established, to an unrelenting personal persecution of its members by the Nationalist and Catholic reactionaries.

Its members were scattered abroad, Connolly and other members going to the United States, others to Great Britain and the British Colonies.

The files of the "Workers' Republic" of that period show the passage of the Irish Socialist Republican Party from the stage of social-democratic political propaganda with a programme of palliative measures to that of revolutionary socialism, basing itself upon the industrial organisation of the working class, without denying to its self any field of action upon which it could meet and do battle with the forces of capital.

Before passing from the work of the I.S.R.P., it is well to observe that it was the first Irish organisation of any kind to express in a public manner the hostility of the Irish people in general to the piratical policy of the British Empire in attacking the South African Republic and the Orange Free State in 1899-1903. The lead then given with a courage that none of the bourgeois parties could muster decided the attitude of the Irish nation. Anti-recruiting work was very effectively done by the party and several members were arrested.

In 1904, the Socialist Party of Ireland was founded by the survivors of the I.S.R.P., and maintained the revolutionary tradition. In the industrial struggle between 1907 and 1914, its members were the unpaid propagandists of direct action who welcomed the work of James Larkin in founding the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union established in 1909 to be an industrial union of Irish workers. James Connolly's return to Ireland in 1910, restored to the party an asset of immense intellectual and practical value. Operating at first as the Party's organiser, he and they recognised that, in the then industrial and Psychological condition of the country, the propaganda of socialism, apart from industrial organisation was an almost hopeless task. Joining the Irish Transport Workers' Union as Ulster organiser, James Connolly continued to work for both sides of the movement.

The capitalists of Ireland realised the extreme danger of the Socialist form of organisation, teaching and practising the solidarity of labour in every industrial dispute, and in 1913 the federated employers

of Dublin began a series of lock-outs against the I.T.G.W.U. The struggle was maintained for two years until the outbreak of the War in 1914. The British Government in Ireland, all the political parties, (among which the Nationalist (Home Rule) Party was predominant), the press, and the clergy, both Catholic and Protestant, co-operated with the employers against the workers, a telling lesson in class solidarity, valuable in a subject nation whose people had always been taught to regard every Irishman as a brother.

On the outbreak of the War in August 1914, the Socialist Party had no doubts or hesitation. It declared war upon war and displayed the legend "We serve neither King nor Kaiser." Co-operating with it were such people as Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, who was a pacifist socialist, but the S.P.I. was not pacifist but anti-militarist.

During the 1913-14 lock-out the savage attacks by the police upon the workers had led to the formation of the Irish Citizen Army: a military force composed solely of workers for the protection of the people from capitalist violence. On the departure of Larkin to America, James Connolly took command of the Irish Citizen Army, perfected its equipment and prepared to take action when the opportune moment arrived.

The Citizen Army was pledged to fight for the Revolution but its membership was small and practically confined to Dublin.

There was also in existence the Irish Volunteers, a much more extensive organisation, established to win the political independence of Ireland. Connolly effected an alliance and impled the Irish Volunteers toward open war. At the crucial moment, the commanding officer of the I.V. counter-manded the mobilisation orders for Easter Monday 1916, and in consequence the rising of Easter Week was confined to Dublin. The leaders of the Volunteers who took up arms on that occasion, men like P.H. Pearse, and Sean MacDermott, were those who had reached identity of outlook with Connolly during the pre-war industrial struggle. The result of the conflict was the surrender of the Irish Forces after a week's siege of Dublin by 60,000 British troops who had at their command all the resources of modern armament. During the week, no movement of British labour took place to assist the insurgents. British labour, indeed, was rendered useless and helpless at the crisis by the social patriotism of the trade unionists and the Tolstoyan pacifism of the Socialists. It had been Connolly's hope to signal his fate to fail at the moment because European Socialism, where it is powerful, was faithless, and where it was faithful was at the moment powerless. His orally expressed belief in his fellow revolutionaries' co-operation, is the justification of the attempt to begin in Ireland the policy that triumphed in Russia.

Many members of the Socialist Party participated in the struggle, some were filled in action: James Connolly, a wounded prisoner of war, was tried by court-martial which assembled around his bed, and placed in a chair, his arms and legs fastened by bandages to it and carried thus to the place of execution and shot. At the moment of the insurrection, the British Labour Party was in coalition with the bour-

geois parties of England, Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. Wm. Bruce, and Mr. G.H. Roberts being members of the Ministry, the first mentioned having Cabinet rank.

Naturally, the Socialist Party of Ireland did not modify its opposition to Imperialism, recognising in it the most complete expression of capitalism. It was reorganised in 1917 after the release of the interned prisoners and began such activities as the conditions permitted.

When the Russian Revolution occurred it was prompt to recognise it and to point out that its progress must be from political to industrial from democracy to socialism. The call to Stockholm was responded to and as no passports could be obtained arrangements were on foot to secure the passage of the Party's delegates by other means.

The definite triumph of the Bolshevik forces was celebrated in Dublin by a startling demonstration, which, by its size and enthusiasm astonished even the promoters. About 10,000 people attended the meeting which overflowed from the Round Room of the Mansion House into the streets. The speakers were with one or two exceptions all members of the Socialist Party, including Wm. O'Brien, Secretary of the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress, Thomas Johnson, Treasurer of the same, Cathal O'Shannon, editor of the "Voice of Labour" and W.P. Coates at present organiser of the "Hands off Russia" movement in England.

When Comrade Litvinoff came to England, a delegation from the Socialist Party was sent to greet him and to assure him of the Party's co-operation with the Russian Proletariat.

When it was proposed to convene an International Socialist conference at Berne to re-constitute the International, the Socialist Party of Ireland decided unanimously to participate in it for two reasons:

First: to cleanse the working class movement from the elements of social patriotism and coalition with capitalism which had characterised, in particular, the British, French, Belgian, and German constituents during the war.

Second: to bring before the world the subject condition of Ireland under a military terrorism fully endorsed by the British Labour Party.

The first aim was defeated by the abstention of the Communist elements, but our mandatories established friendly relations with the communists of Switzerland and France. The second object was attained by securing publicity at Berne and at the Amsterdam Commission a resolution was unanimously adopted called for unfettered self-determination for Ireland; a resolution which was promptly belied by the British Labour Party.

But before the Amsterdam Commission had met, the Socialist Party had received the report of its mandatories at Berne and had decided to cease all further connection with the 11 International.

The Marxian character of the Socialist Party of Ireland has been consistently maintained. Its literature distribution department has grown steadily and has been confined to the works of Marxians. Its own publications have been the works of James Connolly and "The Historical basis of Socialism in Ireland" by T. Brady. The writings of Marx, Engels and Daniel De Leon have been steadily circulated during the past twenty years. Within the past three years, thousands of pamphlets on Russia, and by the Bolsheviki leaders, have been sold. One that had a potent influence in affecting working class action is "The Land Revolution in Russia" by Lenin. Its circulation has been followed by wide spread demands for land by the landless labourers, and has resulted in the distribution of many large estates under the pressure of popular feeling. While that is far short of a social revolution it is indicative of the quality of the Irish workers and their responsiveness to revolutionary teaching.

The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union which now musters 130,000 members in the total of 250,000 organised in the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress, affords the Socialist Party facilities for the circulation of this literature and for the conduct of oral propaganda. The position of the I.T.G.W.U. in the Irish Labour movement and the significance of its strength relative to the entire body of Irish Labour, shows that the young industrial Union movement in Ireland, beginning under the auspices of the Socialist Party but having its greatest growth since 1916, bids fair to have a decisive influence in the destinies of the Irish Labour movement. Already the one big Union is dominant and the work of reorganising its internal structure is keeping pace with its growth by the absorption of craft and local unions.

The Socialist Party has always maintained its independence of other political parties. In the struggle for national independence, while endorsing the claims of the nation it has ceaselessly proclaimed "Ti Saoirse go Saoirse Lucht Oibre" - "No Freedom without the Freedom of the Working Class". It has envisaged that freedom as based upon the economic organisation of the actual workers. It has rejected always the idea of political administration of social industry and regarded participation in electoral struggles as a means of propaganda only. Thus the Soviet organisation with the dictatorship of the Proletariat has aroused no controversy among us. Both are foreshadowed in James Connolly's "Socialism made Easy" (Chapter 5). "The Workers' Republic" is our idiomatic phrase which anticipated the recent spread of the phrase "The dictatorship of the Proletariat". The content of both is identical.

Laying the emphasis thus upon industrial organisation, the substance of power, our members have given to the I.T.G.W.U. its present basis, upon the direct representation of the workshop in the Shop Stewards Committee, an integral part of the Union's organisation. Workshop Committees have been formed in all large plants. Recently in a dispute in the rural Creamery district, fourteen creameries were seized by the workers and operated by them as the "Soviet Creameries". This was only

possible owing to the linking of each creamery with the others in the Transport Union Creamery Committee. Workers' Councils are formed in all small towns and during the general strikes of 1918-1919 and 1920 these councils have taken full control of food supplies and kindred matters, in some cases ordering the British police (an armed force) to be confined to barracks. The policy of the general strike has been adopted by the Irish Labour Party & Trades Union Congress with great success on three occasions. On the Executive of that body are four members of the Soviet (sic)(Socialist) Party of Ireland, to whose revolutionary initiative the movement owes its representation for direct and fearless action. Two of these members are William O'Brien and Cathal O'Shannon, (editor of the "Watchword of Labour") who have been imprisoned without trial and were released subsequent to the general strike, during which two members of the S.P.I., J.W. Burns and J.R. White, D.S.O. (Ex Captain of the British Army) were arrested for propaganda amongst the British soldiers.

On the side of education the party took the initiative in establishing the James Connolly Labour College, a federation of the Labour Movement for the purpose of Marxian education within the movement. Courses of lectures in economics in industrial history and public speaking have been given during the last two winters and work has been carried into the rural districts.

The Socialist Party has now got branches in Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Newbridge and Sligo, and a large number of corresponding members in other parts of the country.

The absence of big industry with its corresponding ideology, the wide diffusion of a sparse population, the predominance of agriculture carried on by small farmers, many of them peasant proprietors, the pre-occupation of the people with the struggle against British Imperialism have been obstacles of importance in preventing the spread of revolutionary socialism. The terrorism exercised, during, and, in a worse degree, since the war, by the British military occupation, has prevented propaganda by means of lectures. Our Comrade John McLean, of Glasgow, was among those who have been prevented from addressing meetings under our auspices by sheer force of arms. The terrorism has been approved and confirmed by the inaction of the British Labour Party, which indeed has its own reason to fear the Irish Socialist movement. The friendly co-operation between the revolutionary sections in Britain (the B.S.F. the Workers' Committees and the Workers' Socialist Federation and the official Labour Movement in Ireland, threatens the social-patriotism of the British Labour Party with opposition from within its own ranks. That this opposition springs from revolt against its own imperialism, it does not seem to realise.

On the other hand, the Socialist Party of Ireland enjoys the results of its own clean work in the economic field, and the prestige of James Connolly's martyrdom. In place of the unrelenting hostility with which he and his colleagues met in their propaganda the revolutionary message of Communism is heard gladly by the Irish people. In the last three

years it has been impossible to respond to all the demands made upon us by people to participate in the work. But steadily pursuing the work of agitation and education, consolidating it by labour organisation, that is building up the new society, co-operating with the militant forces of discontent, and rejecting no weapon of offence against capitalism, the future is faced by us with the hopes inspired by the supreme victory won by our Comrades of the Russian Revolution.

(SPECIAL NOTE:- This document - the first time as far as we are aware that it has been made public, consists of a memorandum from the Socialist Party of Ireland, to the Third International explaining its origins and political positions. Unfortunately, because of pressure of space, we are unable to give an introduction or commentary on the history of the Socialist Party of Ireland except to say that it was founded with Connolly's participation and later changed its name to the Communist Party of Ireland. We have in our possession, a number of other such documents, as well as reproductions from the Irish Worker and Workers' Republic which we will be publishing in future issues of the Marxist Review. This we hope will give us sufficient opportunity to comment.)

EIRE NUA or FENNEL'S THIRD REICH (continued from page 5.)

Irish

part of his original theory of the Two/Nations - one which the E.I.C.O. has never faced. His belief in the revolutionary potential of the Irish peasantry is shared with the C.P.I. (Marxist-Leninist). Above all his view of regional assemblies is at the present stage a perfectly valid strategy, but not for the reasons he gives. Such assemblies will only be effective as bases for Socialist Revolutionary opposition to the present order, rather than as unofficial bases for co-operation with and peaceful devolution of the powers of that order. For all its subjective revolutionary outlook, Kevin Street has failed to distinguish these aims.

And this last fact points out, of course, the fact that within the limitations of "Fennellism" no successful social revolution will be possible in Ireland. And for this reason and others that have shown, his views are only likely to be acceptable to individuals with a vested interest in opposing such a revolution.

No, Fennell's views are reactionary; the fact that Kevin Street can listen to him is connected to its current failure to counter politically the British initiative in Northern Ireland, both are natural results of political bankruptcy. As part of their struggle against this, Revolutionaries must analyse Mr. Fennell's politics the better to expose him to his disciples.

TROTSKY ON SELF-DETERMINATION CONTINUED. (continued from page 39.)

The recognition of the right of every nation to self-determination is for us of necessity fulfilled by the slogan of a democratic federation of all the leading nations, by the slogan of a UNITED STATES OF EUROPE.

document.2

TROTSKY ON NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION

(Trotsky's position on the national question has been greatly distorted by his opponents. For instance we find people seriously arguing that he was opposed to the right of nations to self-determination. Such people have dared to propagate these distortions simply because Trotsky's views have not been available in English, or any other European language for that matter. As a contribution to the clarification of Trotsky's position on this vital matter we publish below two articles, specially translated from the original by Marxist Review. As far as we know this is the first time that they have been published in the English language.)

NASHI SLOVO. (3-7-1915)

THE NATION AND THE ECONOMY. -I

The recognition of the right of every nation to self-determination is part of the programme of Russian Social Democracy. This demand has its origins in the period of the revolutionary struggles of national bourgeois democracy. In the last analysis it means the recognition of the right of every nation to state independence. Following from this flows the duty of Social Democracy to oppose actively all regimes, where the forcible cohabitation of nations and national fragments exists, and to support- depending on conditions of place and time - the struggles of nations and national fragments against an alien national yolk. But what is more: Social Democracy by no means casts aside the programme of national democracy as the unbridled social-imperialists would have us do. It cannot and will not be reconciled with forcible retention by a state of national groups within the large state body, ostensibly in the interests of an economic development, which is being paralysed by divisions along national lines. But neither does it make its own aim a multiplication of these divisions i.e. it does not turn the national principle into some sort of historic absolute idea.

It is absolutely clear that Social Democracy stands always and everywhere for the interest of economic development and opposes all political measures, capable of holding it back. However it understands economic development, not as a self-sufficient, extra-social, productive-technical process, but as the basis of the development of human society into its class groupings, with its national-political superstructure, etc. This point of view was, in the last analysis, not to ensure for local or

national capitalism success over the capitalism of other places and countries, but to ensure the systematic growth of man's power over nature. Accordingly the class struggle of the proletariat itself is the most important factor ensuring further development of the productive forces - by leading them out of the imperialist blind ally onto the broad arena of socialism. A state of nationalities and national groups, which exist through force, (Russia and Austria are examples) may without doubt for a certain time, develop the productive forces, by creating for them a broader internal market. But by generating the bitter struggles of national groups for influence on the state power or by evoking 'separatist' tendencies - that is the struggle for separation from that power - such a state paralyses the class struggle of the proletariat as the most important force of economic and historic progress in general. The proletariat is deeply interested in the elimination of all artificial frontiers and barriers, in the greatest possible extension of a free arena of economic development. But it cannot buy this aim for the kind of price which, above all disorganises its own historic movement, and thus weakens and lays low the most important productive force in contemporary society. The present day social-imperialists, mainly of the German type, reject the idea of self-determination as a 'sentimental' prejudice of the past, and recommend yielding to the iron necessity of economic development, so they propound as the supreme criteria, above the historically limited claims of nations, not some absolute need of economic progress but its specific historic form, which stands before us in the guise of imperialism. In the present war this is showing itself in contradiction not only with the needs of further economic progress but with even the most elementary conditions of human existence

Democracy is and remains the condition for the development of the proletariat and the sole form in which it can wield state power. This latter demands first a growth in the political-cultural independence of masses, their economic and political association on a broad field, their collective intervention in the fate of the country. Thus a national language, the tool of human intercourse, becomes at a certain stage of development, the most important instrument of democracy. The desire for national unity has thus comprised an indefeasible aspect of the movement of the period of bourgeois revolution. We see before us in backward regions - not only of Asia and Africa but of Europe too - the awakening of historically belated nationalities. And this is of necessity assuming the form of a struggle for national unity and national independence, and coming face to face with the imperialist desire to break through the nationally defined framework of capitalist economy and create by means of military violence a world empire.

In this process Social Democracy in no way identifies itself with the internally contradictory imperialist methods of solving its ripening historic tasks. But just as little, if not less does it counterpose to imperialism, and more importantly, to the progressive historic needs it is pursuing, the bare national idea. That would be to think with a pitiful vulgar utopianism a la Herve that the fate of Europe will be decisively ensured if the state map of Europe is brought into conformity with its national map, if - ignoring geographic conditions and economic links - Europe is parcelled up into neat squares, each a nation state. France and

Germany in the past period approached a type of nation state. This by no means prevented their policy of colonialism, nor their present plans to expand their frontiers - to the Rhine or the Somme. An independent Hungary, Bohemia or Poland will in exactly the same way seek an outlet to the sea by means of a violation of the rights of other nationalities, as Italy is seeking to do at the expense of the Serbs or the Serbs themselves at the expense of the Albanians. National democracy, awakened by capitalism, which strives to wield as many elements of nations as possible into one economic unit. But it is this very capitalism which strives everywhere it sets down roots to expand the limits of the internal market as widely as possible. to creat as many favourable outlets as possible to, the world market, to impose its domination over regions with an agrarian type economy. The national principle is for national capitalism neither an absolute idea nor the final crowning of the edifice. It is only the springboard for a new leap in the direction of world domination. At the present stage of development, the national idea appears as a banner of struggle against feudal-particularist barbarism or foreign military aggression. In the long term, by creating a self-sufficient psychology of national egoism, it becomes itself a tool of imperialist barbarism.

The task consists in reconciling the claims of nations to autonomy with the centralised needs of economic development.

NASHE SLOVO (9-7-1915)

THE NATION AND THE ECONOMY. - II.

Social-nationalism amazed everyone, itself above all, by its strength. Almost without opposition, in the first period of the war, it took hold of the strongest parties and organisations of the proletariat. But together with this suddenly discovered power went an extraordinary, thoroughly disgraceful ideological bankruptcy. Not one serious attempt to think things through theoretically, beginning to end! Decisions and actions, on which socialism depends for its life or death, are explained and justified with contradictory and haphazard reasoning, in which political intuition freed from any theory plays the most important role. The basic argument underpinning the social nationalist policy of a workers party is the idea of 'defence of the fatherland'. But none of the social patriots has yet troubled himself with the sense to explain WHAT actually in the fatherland is threatened by danger and WHAT is subject to defence. The French socialists talk about the republic and revolutionary traditions - he is defending the past. The German patriot quotes his powerful national industry, as the basis of socialism - he is defending the present. Finally our home grown social-nationalists quotes the interest of future economic development of Russia, repeating all the old arguments and lying enough for two - he is defending the future. Each of them with more or less resolution is making the attempt to proclaim his own 'national' interest as the higher inter-

nationalist interest of mankind. But each such attempt only introduces into the affair a more hopeless confusion. It is one of two things: either the international interest demands the defeat of Germany (or Russia) - in which case it is pointless talking about defence of the fatherland, since after all there are people in the world for whom Germany or Russia is the fatherland. Or on the other hand defence of the fatherland is an independent principle of proletarian policy - and then it is useless to attempt to reconcile this aim with a generally obligatory line of conduct for the international proletariat. For the defence of one fatherland demands the utmost destruction of another fatherland.

At the beginning of the war, Kautsky tried to determine that basic good in the name of which the proletariat bears its class independence to the bloody altar of defence of the fatherland. This good is the nation state. In the first article we spoke what a powerful factor of historic development, national-cultural unity is. It would be necessary to add, that a state (that is the fatherland) is the more subject to defence, the more it approaches a type of nation state. It is exactly thus that Kautsky poses the question. But then the question arises to what extent the proletariat of Austro-Hungary, and more importantly of Russia also, can and must defend its fatherland? From the point of view of Kautsky, the multi-national proletariat of a monarchy near the Danube has obviously no obligations in relation to the state of the Hapsburgs. Kautsky himself arrived at this conclusion. But with the available international combinations the defence of Germany demands the defence of Austro-Hungary and Turkey, just as on the other side of the struggle of France for national unity demands the perpetuation of a powerful block of nationalities, called Russia or of a world colonial power, Great Britain.

Together with the states of nationalities and national fragments stands the states, where a far from complete national unity is fulfilled on one side by union with states of nationalities and on the other by violation of the national independence of colonies. The substitution of FATHERLAND or STATE for the meaning of NATION is the most widespread argument in favour of the social-patriotic policy of the proletarian party.

The present war through the tendencies exposed by it, threatens not nations as such but that state which is the historic home of the nation. Capitalism as little brings about national unity as it does democracy. It awakens the need for national unity but it also called to life tendencies, which do not allow the fulfilment of this need. However the nation is a powerful and extremely stable factor in human culture. The nation will outlive not only the present war but capitalism itself. And in the social structure, free from the path of state-economic dependence, the nation will remain for a long time the most important seat of intellectual culture - for at the disposal of the nation is the most important organ of this culture - language. The state is another matter. It developed as a result of the intersection of dynastic, imperialist and nationalist interests and of a temporary correlation of material forces. The state is an incomparably less stable factor in historic development than the nation. For the past period economic development has found a home for itself in the capitalist state, which, with a great straining of interpretation, it has been accepted to call 'national'.

In this state-fatherland, cultural development found a home almost always as a divided nation exploiting or seeking to exploit by means of the state apparatus, other nations. As capitalist development got bound up in the framework of the state, this was fulfilled by annexations and colonial conquests. The struggle for colonies - that is the violation of the economic and national independence of backward countries, was the most important concern in the foreign policy of the so called nation states. Competition for colonies lead to the struggle of capitalist states amongst themselves. The productive forces became decisively bound up in the framework of the state. If the present day 'nation' state finds itself in danger, then this danger flows from the incompatibility of its limits with the achieved level of the development of the productive forces. The danger comes not from the enemy without but from inside, from the very economic development, which in the language of the world war is telling us that the 'nation' state has become a break on development and it is time to scrap it. In this sense the idea of the defence of the fatherland - that is of the nation state which has outlived itself is an extremely reactionary ideology. The more the social patriots link the fate of the nation which by itself in no sense paralyses economic development nor hampers it from taking an all European and world dimension, with the fates of restrictive state - military organisations, the more it is necessary for us internationalists to take upon ourselves the defence of the historic rights of nations to independence and development, against these reactionary 'patriot' defencists.

Capitalism strives to wield both the nation and the economy into the framework of the state. It created a powerful formation which for a whole period served as the arena of development for the nation just as for the economy. But both the nation and the economy came into contradiction, as with the state so with each other. The state became too restrictive for the economy. By striving to broaden its base, it violates the nation. On the otherside the economy refuses to subjugate the natural movement of its forces and means to division of ethnic groups on the earths surface. The state is essentially an economic unit, it will be forced to adapt itself to the needs of economic development. The place of the closed in nation-state must inevitably be occupied by a broad, democratic federation of leading states on the basis of the removal of all customs barriers. National unity flowing from the needs of cultural development not only will not be destroyed by this, but on the contrary, only on the basis of a republican federation of leading countries will it be able to find its full consumation. An indispensable for this is the freeing of the framework of the nation from the framework of the economy and viceversa. The economy is organised on a broad arena of European united states, as the pivot of a world organisation. The political form can only be a republican federation in the flexible and elastic framework of which every nation will be able to develop its cultural forces with the greatest of freedom. Contrary to the German and other social-annexationists we are not prepared to throw aside the recognition of the right to self-determination.. Just the opposit - we think that the time is approaching when this right can finally be realised. On the other hand we are very far from counterposing to the centralised needs of the economy 'the sovverign rights of every national group and grouplet'. For in the very process of historic development, we discover the dialectical reconciliation of both 'elements': the national and the economic. (continued on page 34.)

