



SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

POBLAUGHT SHÓISIALACH

OCT '77 price 10p

STATE BRUTALITY NORTH & SOUTH



**OPPOSITION
EXISTS**

**LET
IT'S
VOICE
BE
HEARD !**

DEFEND THE RIGHT TO WORK!

700 YEARS IS TOO MUCH

Resistance grows

Paddy Devlin's resignation as chairperson of the SDLP's Constituency Representatives Committee and his subsequent loss of all positions of responsibility highlights the crisis which has wracked the SDLP for the last year or more. Now that British Imperialism has abandoned power-sharing and opted to restore loyalist domination the original perspective of the SDLP has become meaningless. The SDLP can no longer expect to hold the allegiance of the Catholic masses on the assurance that Britain is gradually giving recognition to the legitimate and historic aspirations of the Catholic masses.

But any attempt to cover their naked collaborationist past with a "Nationalist" fig-leaf is bound to give credence to genuine anti-imperialist sentiment and revive the mass resistance to Imperialism.

THE SDLP AND TROOPS OUT

The SDLP's dilemma presents the left and the anti-imperialist movement with important opportunities. The role of the SDLP as a buffer between the Catholic masses and the militant vanguard is under strain. With correct tactics the hold of the SDLP on the Catholic masses can be smashed and the masses and vanguard united once more in common struggle on the scale of the Civil Rights movement.

Despite the crisis of the SDLP the task of exposing and isolating them will not be too easy. Simple denunciations of them will achieve little because it is necessary not only to win the Catholic population away from the SDLP but to win them to the side of the anti-imperialist resistance. The Catholic masses do not have the necessary level of political consciousness to understand theoretical and propagandistic "exposures" of the SDLP. They will only really understand the treachery of the SDLP through their own practical experience. Consequently it is vital and urgent to force the SDLP into common action along side the anti-



imperialist vanguard, so that the Catholic population can judge who in practice are their defenders or betrayers.

The focus for such common action is obviously the demand for the withdrawal of British Troops. As Britain has leaned more and more towards the Loyalists the brutality and viciousness has grown accordingly. The indiscriminate violence of the British Army affects even the most passive sections of the Catholic community (as the reactions of the Peace People to the dragging of Purl Lodge shows) and is quickly becoming a matter of common concern to the Catholic population

at large as well as in the ghettos. Moreover the SDLP's emphasis on the "Irish Dimension" and British withdrawal can have only one concrete meaning for the Catholic minority — the withdrawal of British troops. Thus even if the SDLP does not come openly and call for the immediate withdrawal of troops it will nonetheless be creating an atmosphere where such a demand will appear reasonable and just.

AN OPPORTUNIST ALLIANCE?

Some people in the anti-imperialist movement may object to any form of joint activity with a bourgeois party like the SDLP on the grounds that such a "united front" would be an abandonment of the working class and anti-imperialist independence. This objection has already been raised by some socialists against the Irish Front in Kerry which includes the Nationalist Party in its ranks. Certainly any alliance with a bourgeois party runs the risk of opportunism, but that is only a potential danger. Independence means only one thing: an ability to push forward in a real way the struggle against exploitation and oppression. The bourgeoisie tries to curb this independence by enclosing it within the walls of "bourgeois democratic institutions", i.e. by preaching reliance on parliament, the courts, the Constitution, etc. Therefore the principle around which socialists defend the independence of the working class is not opposition to every and any alliance with bourgeois political groupings, but opposition to any form of dependence on or illusion in bourgeois democratic institutions. The principle on which the independence of the working class rests is mass mobilisation in the course of which the working class builds its own democratic institutions (eg action centres, mobilising and defence committees etc) which can eventually provide the working class and its allies with a genuinely democratic alternative to the bourgeois state. The criterion for deciding a particular alliance is deciding if a particular alliance is revolutionary, does it depend on whether it contains bourgeois parties or individuals but whether it wages a struggle for specific goals, in the interests of the working class, by means of mass mobilisations.

DON'T LET THEM OFF THE HOOK

Today as the SDLP find themselves left high and dry by British Imperialism they are in a vulnerable position. They want the Southern Government to be their new guarantors. They realise that this will pose dangerous questions about the "British presence" and the role of the "security forces". But they are hoping no one will pose these questions too clearly or too loudly.

We must disappoint the SDLP.

We must say to them: Actions speak louder than words! We must demand that they join in a real fight to end army brutality and to get the troops out.

Dara Mc Eneaney

END LEGALISED INTERNMENT



On Thursday night, 1st September a protest meeting was held in the ANGW Hall in Marlborough Street, by the McAnulty Defence Committee.

John McAnulty, General Secretary of Peoples Democracy, has been held on remand in Belfast since July 5th, on a spurious trumped up charge of possession of documents "likely to be of assistance to terrorists", at an unspecified date between January '76 and March '77. The speakers at the meeting included Vincent Browne, an independent journalist, and Fergus O'Hare of Peoples Democracy. A letter from John was read out at the meeting. Fergus O'Hare stressed that remand was being used by the British as a legalised form of internment,

whereby people are detained for long periods of time, sometimes over a year, before ever coming to trial. In many cases where the defendant cannot be properly 'tried' the charges are simply dropped. Jim Gibney, a leading activist in the Relatives Action Committee, who was arrested on similar charges to McAnulty last September, and remanded since, was released last week after a year on remand.

The Committee announced that it is to launch an international petition of prominent members of the Labour Movement and other individuals calling for the release of McAnulty and the ending of remand as a form of internment.

Movement for a Socialist Republic

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SUPPORT PRISONERS

It is now just over one year since Kieran Nugent has gone "on the blanket" in protest at being denied political status. This right was granted to the prisoners under pressure of the mass movement, especially in 1972/73. The British moved to abolish it at the same time as they were beginning to recover from the blows dealt to them and their precious puppet statelet in the earlier phase of the struggle and, especially since the 'peace' demonstrations of August/September 1975, have used this issue as part of their overall strategy of fortifying the sectarian foundations of the 6 Counties.

So far they have had some success and the anti-imperialist forces have not been able to deal adequately with the new situation. There are now over 190 men in the H Block at Long Kesh, six men in Crumlin Road Jail in Belfast, 12 women in Armagh Jail, and one Derryman in Parkhurst, England, Shane O'Doherty, all of whom are refusing to wear criminal uniforms or do prison work. According to the Relatives' Action Committee (RAC) - the prison authorities have imposed what the RUC calls "an official (sic) blackout" about H Block - the prisoners have had to double up in solitary confinement cells because of overcrowding. They are denied all reading material except the Bible. Even this is not so easy. Kieran Nugent has found that after a year of staring at the off-white coloured walls (in other cases sometimes grey) in a brightly lit isolation cell, his eyesight has begun to fail.

LOYALIST PRISONERS USED AS STOOGES

Access to radio, TV, and any games or recreational activity is also prohibited. In addition, they have been denied bedding and blankets during the day, letters, and information about their relatives and friends and what is happening outside. If any of the prison staff is shot the screws stop all visits and parcels and keep all prisoners locked up 24 hours a day. They refuse all prisoners' requests, even for medical treatment. The government claim that this is a private demonstration by the screws is not credible since no disciplinary action is ever taken and they still collect full pay.

In the last issue of Socialist Republic we printed a letter from the Irish Front in Derry, asking for support and co-operation in the day of protest against the visit of the British Queen. The Movement for a Socialist Republic had a delegation on the mobilisation, and have made public our complete support and solidarity with the Irish Front. Comprising to date of six Anti-Imperialist groupings in Derry city, the essential feature of the Front is the agreement to a common platform in the direct interests of the Catholic minority, on which all organisations can work, regardless of programmatic differences.

1. An End to harassment, torture, and intimidation.
2. Full support for political status leading to an unconditional general amnesty.
3. Repatriation of all Irish political prisoners.
4. Withdrawal of British Troops and an end to British interference in the political, cultural and economic life of Ireland.

The importance of such an initiative must be stressed sharply, and it is a pressing task for Republicans and Socialists throughout the 32 counties to build support for the Front and broaden its scope of influence. The involvement of the Nationalist Party, such individuals as Eddie McAtteer, also of Frank McManus, and Frank McGuire on such a platform is an important step forward, but the crucial task for Socialist Republicans is to ensure that this is extended to real joint action on the streets, on the whole and also on specific aspects of the platform, and to ensure that the platform is used to initiate a concrete drive towards extending the Front beyond Derry.

Maintaining the Front in isolation in Derry, can only allow the Nationalists off the book both on the question of the troops and



Another aspect of the state attack is the use of Loyalist prisoners. An attempt was made to forcibly integrate Republicans and loyalists in Crumlin Road. Combined forces of screws and loyalists staged bloody attacks on anti-imperialist prisoners, until, to prevent any further bloodshed, Republican prisoners 'agreed' to rotate exercise periods with the loyalists. As a result the average prisoner is locked up 22 hours a day. Furthermore the pro-imperialist prisoners don't let anyone forget that they have been responsible for the vast majority of civilian deaths through sectarian assassinations. They keep the other prisoners awake screaming sectarian abuse and the names of their victims into the early hours of the morning. The RUC in their quaint way refer to these as 'notiveless murders' and for some strange reason have little success in catching these responsible.

TORTURE MORE WIDESPREAD

Recently there has been a growing volume of complaints about the use of torture to extract 'confessions'. The response of Secretary of State Roy Mason and RUC Chief Constable Kenneth Newman has been to claim that this is simply resentment at the growing 'success' of the state forces and to make

the fantastic claim that people taken in for questioning are inflicting wounds on themselves. The enormity of this lie is clear when we refer to the fact that 80% of recent convictions have been based on 'confessions' and that many of these have resulted in prison sentences ranging from 15 years to life. One need only ask if any moderately sane person would voluntarily confess to charges made against them when they were of the jail terms ahead of them, not to speak of the increasingly brutal prison regime, to see why the use of torture in these cases is inevitable. And of course legislation facilitates this: the Prevention of Terrorism Act provides for 7 Days detention, that is plenty of time for embarrassing wounds to heal.

REWARD - LEGALISED INTERMENT

Another trick of the RUC trade is reward for over a year on spurious 'holding' charges and drop them when the case comes to court. This is what is being done to the General Secretary of People's Democracy, John McAuliffe. The RUC believes that all anti-imperialist forces should throw their weight behind a campaign for his release because a widespread abuse can then be highlighted over 1,000 people are now being held in a similar manner and the numbers are multiplying. This legalised interment must be fought and a campaign against it is a vital part of any programme to rebuild the mass movement.

THE WAY FORWARD

What is the best way to launch a generalised offensive against the steam-rolling growth of state repression? One way not to do it has been shown by the Provisional IRA. When a campaign against Political Status was started in 1973 they started killing screws. We have already mentioned the disastrous results this had inside the prisons, but, much more important outside this activity demobilised promising mass mobilisations. Ultimately nothing will be achieved unless these are built on a scale similar to the ones that

Contd p 7

irish front

ON THE MARCH



political status, and allow them the scope to strengthen their influence, rather than being forced into activity under pressure from the Catholic masses. By organising joint initiatives with the Relatives Action Committees, the Turf Lodge Womens Action Cttee, by fighting for broad 32 county support and solidarity actions with these sections of the Catholic community which are under the most severe pressure, and have been organising

against it, the Irish Front can play a crucial role in rebuilding the mass movement for the withdrawal of troops.

DEMOCRATIC CONTROL

However, in recognising the advance which

has been made in the struggle through the stabilisation of the Front over the last ten months, a severe weakness can be detected in the following statement released in mid-January:

"Our main activity has been the establishment of local area committees, to propagate the agreed aims and objectives of the front, so as to bring home to the people the vital necessity for unity in this phase of the struggle against British Imperialism".

While in full agreement with the main thrust of the statement, ie, the establishment of area committees, it is not difficult to detect from it the elitist conception that the Front leads, while the people support. In practice, this has led to the area cttee representatives playing a "support" role in the Front itself, without full voting rights etc. It's clear that the Front has a great deal to learn from the democratic organisation of the R.A.C.'s. One of the sharpest lessons of the last nine years of struggle has been the disastrous consequences of political elitism, and the importance at all times of basing joint activity on, and fighting for, political self-organisation within the Catholic community itself.

It is only through this self-organisation that ultimately the movement can be rebuilt. Organisational unity between Republicans, Nationalists and Socialists, is in itself a tremendous move forward, and can drive forward the confidence in the ghettoes, but it cannot substitute for the re-emergence of the struggle itself. If the Irish Front is to break and move beyond the mistakes of the past, it must throw upon its organisation and its control, to the people of the Bogside and Creggan.

Lotti Plunkett.

Ireland has today the worst level of unemployment in the EEC. The last two years has seen unemployment soon to a level not seen in Ireland since the 1930's.

TRADE-UNION LEADERS OPT OUT.

In both its social and political effects unemployment is a scourge of the whole working class. Unchecked by the organised trade union movement it can only lead to demoralisation, particularly among the poorly organised sections of the working class. On this account alone the trade union leadership bears a heavy responsibility. Despite the endless resolutions nothing has been done, either to organise the unemployed or to initiate a campaign against unemployment. With some notable exceptions, as the Local Government and Public Service Union, little attempt has been made at integrating unemployed members into the union structures.

There is little doubt that the Coalitions record on unemployment played a major part in their defeat and the election of Fianna Fail. Fianna Fail is only too aware of how explosive an issue it is, the main feature of its election propaganda was around precisely that issue. Yet their response to the problem of unemployment since they have taken office shows that they will go no closer to tackling the problem than the Coalition did. Their only response is that of makeshift schemes (eg. 600 extra school teachers, and a build up of the police force to deal with unemployed youth.) Yet the election of Fianna Fail with their corresponding load of promises does create an atmosphere for placing demands on the Government and winning concessions for the unemployed.

The overriding need for a national 'Right to Work' campaign is more pressing than ever. The Irish Transport and General Workers Union passed a resolution at its 1975 annual conference, calling for the launching of a Right to Work campaign, yet like many other resolutions it was not acted on. The groundwork for such a campaign has not even been initiated by the unions. The integration of unemployed members and their representation on the branch committees is one vital step which could lay deep roots for such a campaign. The trades councils can

UNEMPLOYMENT STAND UP AND FIGHT

play a major role in co-ordinating common action at a local and national level.

NEW INITIATIVES

The formation of the Dublin Fight Unemployment Committee is a good example of how local groups of trades unionists or unemployed can play an important part in laying the basis for a national campaign and fightback.

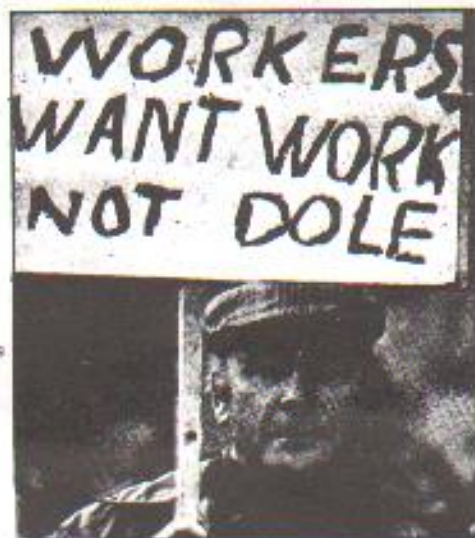
This committee of unemployed trades unionists began to campaign around the issue of free public travel for the unemployed. They issued "fare fight" tickets which were given to bus conductors instead of fares. The cities wrote to community associations and trades unions asking them for support for the campaign. The response was in general positive. A group of C.I.L. employees approached the committee and offered their support. Many trade union leaders including Michael Mullen (Gen. Sec. IISMU) had also endorsed the idea. More recently the Dublin Trades Council declared its support. Also a group of trades union delegates and social workers have agreed to represent the demand for 'free fares' to the Dept. of Social Welfare.

In Limerick a similar initiative is being pursued. The Unemployed Workers Committee and the Bottom Dog (a local rank and file trade union newspaper) are demanding free gas and electricity and have received some backing from workers in the local gas works. They have also enlisted the support of lecturers and students in the National Institute for Higher Education to carry out a survey on unemployment and job potential in the large working class area of Southill. From this they will draw up a plan to clean up the area, provide recreational facilities and carry out such needed repairs, which they will put to Limerick Corporation. They will also have a list of workers prepared to do the job. In this way the Limerick Unemployed Workers Office and Bottom Dog hope to provide a concrete focus around which to organise.

A NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

The latitude for this kind of work is obvious and other initiatives around local public works, etc. can be instrumental in organising the unemployed. While local campaigns aimed at improving the position of the unemployed cannot substitute for a national Right to Work campaign, but they can play a vital role in laying the basis for such a campaign.

The problem with previous campaigns on unemployment, such as the Joint Unemployed Workers Association - Dublin Trades Council campaign, was that they tried to mobilise around abstract demands. The Dublin Fight Unemployment Committee and the Limerick Bottom Dog campaigns have overcome this by relating to the problems which the unemployed face, as unemployed, and by making demands for more jobs very specific and concrete. If this method of work is undertaken in other areas and co-ordinated on a national scale, it could provide the basis for the emergence of a national, ongoing fight against unemployment.



Equal Pay & Equal Work

In an astonishing decision issued in the last week of August the Labour Court has driven a coach and four straight through the equal pay legislation.

In March, 1976, Arklow Branch submitted a claim for equal pay between three women cleaners and one general labourer employed by N.E.I. The Equal Pay officer recommended in the women's favour on the grounds that all four people did very similar work.

The company then appealed to the Labour Court arguing that the male labourer was being paid a higher rate on grounds other than sex (namely on compassionate grounds he was receiving the full labourers rate even though he was physically unable to carry out the full range of labourers duties)

Since there is no one employed as a general labourer doing a fuller range of duties than the men, it is impossible to see the factual basis for the company's assertion that a broader ranging job of general

labourer actually exists. Certainly the Labour Court ruling contains no indication as to why it chose to believe N.E.I. However, even more serious is the courts unquestioning acceptance of the argument that a man who it agrees is doing like work under the Act is being paid a "personal" rate which should not also be extended to women. This reasoning is an open invitation to every company to argue that it's male employees receive more pay for "historical" reasons or because of "an anomaly" or as a "personal concession".

In the current atmosphere of extreme hostility to equal pay the Labour Court's invitation is bound to be received with glee by employers throughout the country.

Extract taken from "Liberty" paper of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, September '77.

This man will never give to the fund drive or subscribe—why don't you!



DETAILS: REPUBLIC, in order to keep up regular production needs lots of finance. Printing costs are very vulnerable to inflation, not to mention the cost of distribution. So if you have any money to spare, no matter how small, please send it to the editor.

Women's Liberation and National Liberation

Through the summer, discussions have taken place in Dublin and Belfast, culminating in the formation of a 32 County Anti-Imperialist Womens Collective, which has taken as it's main project, the production of a quarterly magazine. Through the magazine, it is hoped to provide a forum for discussion, until now absent, on the relationship between the developing fragmented struggles for womens liberation throughout the 32 Counties, the fight for national liberation itself, and the role which women have historically and are currently playing in that struggle. The collective neither sees itself as substituting for a 32 county movement which does not exist, nor for the vital day to day work which the women will continue to carry on in their own areas, but as an arena for discussion, exchange of experience and analysis, which it sees as an essential part in the development of a strategy for the liberation of women in Ireland.

IMMEDIATE RELEVANCE

The development of the Womens Movement, small and fragmented, in both the Six and Twenty-Six counties has in itself been an illustration of the necessity for anti-imperialist women within it, to take the lead in clarifying and fighting for an understanding of Imperialism, it's impact on the lives of women, and above all the economic and political realities which face the movement. Any movement no matter how strong, will ultimately fall into spontaneism, defeat and demoralisation if it fails to understand the nature of the state forces and institutions with which it's dealing. Just as in Spain, the movement remained small and isolated, until it recognised that their could be no moves forward for women until the defeat of Fascism, and it aligned itself firmly within the Anti-Fascist movement, in Ireland, the only way forward for women will come with the defeat of Imperialist domination North and South, and the establishment of a 32 County Workers Republic. The immediate relevance to the womens movement of this can be understood, if we examine on the one hand where the real movements of women actually exist, or in the Belfast ghettos where women are organising autonomously of political currents against the troops; around Equal Pay, against redundancies etc in the South. The existing Feminist movement in the South has made only minor and unconsolidated attempts to relate to these developments. On the other hand the movement for itself has made little attempt to understand the historic lack of a struggle among Irish women for sexual liberation, the dominance of the Churches North and South, or the freedom with which the State has been able to block even minor attempts at socialisation of "womans" labour, ie, nurseries, hospital care etc.

Similarly, while some women have begun to look towards the experience of women in other European countries, the movement as a whole has as yet shown little interest in the struggles and experience of women north of the border, or in the fight to raise the demands for the liberation of women within the struggle for national emancipation.

TWENTY - SIX COUNTY FRAMEWORK

Because the Feminist movement in the South has contained itself rigidly within a twenty-six county framework, it has been blinkered, and has not begun to recognise in practice that the 26 County State is not a bourgeois democracy in the sense that Britain, France and America etc, are, but a deformed state hampered by it's subjection to Imperialism. It has neither the Imperialist revenue to physically pay for such reforms as Equal Pay, increased

employment for women, state nurseries etc, nor is it capable of dispensing with the church as a central force used to control the mass of working people, as the Imperialist states have long since done. The weakness and isolation of the Feminist movement cannot be broken simply by a subjective desire on the part of feminists to do so. The breakdown of the influence of the church will only take place within the context of the growth in strength of the workers movement and the drive of the class as a whole towards freedom from Imperialist and capitalist exploitation. Womens fight for sexual liberation will not emerge spontaneously, but as an integral part of their experience of struggle, of organisation, and of victory. As such, the battle for existence and expansion which faces the Feminist movement in Ireland is to say the least, daunting. We will not "miraculously" grow in a country where the churches and the family are entrenched as part of the state structures. We must be capable of confronting the political realities, if we are to contribute to changing them.

If the feminist movement is not to continuously suffer from demoralisation and fragmentation, then it is crucial that it begins to fight for an understanding of the nature of our own state, and the historic movements of women within it. That historically, for example, a majority of active women in Ireland have consciously placed the struggle against Imperialism over and above their own struggle as women, is not something that feminists can afford to ignore. Rather we must identify the roots of our oppression as a people, while looking always towards those sections of women who are active and fighting that oppression, and their oppression as workers, if we are to discover the key to a strategy for the liberation of Irish women.

IDENTIFY THE TASKS FACING US

Such a strategy cannot be developed while the experience and lessons of the day to day struggle of women North and South of the border remain rigidly confined within the division which Imperialism has imposed on us. While in the immediate future, our demands will remain different, confined as they are within the separate states, we must never lose sight of the fact that ultimately our struggle is one. Even the fight for provision of state nurseries, or the right of women to work in the South, can be an idealistic and demoralising task for the most radical women if the goal remains trapped within the context of a poverty stricken 26 county state. To those women



organising, we must do more than support, we must be capable of explaining how such demands can be achieved. At every stage of the struggle we must arm ourselves and other women with the confidence that such reforms and far more, are accessible through the nationalisation of our resources from Imperialism, under workers control. We have a great deal to learn from the women of Turf Lodge and Andersonstown, from women on the picket lines, and from the practical experience of the struggle to resolve the day to day problems of women in all areas of their lives. But on it's own this cannot substitute for national discussion, assessment of what we've learnt, the fight for ideas among ourselves as an essential part of confronting the tasks which face us and the mass of Irish women. The first moves towards such national discussion have taken place, with the forthcoming All Ireland Womens Liberation Conference at the beginning of October. Such a conference can only be a step forward for the entire movement, and hopefully provide a basis for continued co-operation with the general direction of a united movement.

Anti-Imperialist women, North and South, have a very specific and important role to play in this process. The formation of the Collective, and the regular production of a magazine can bring together the first threads of a national perspective, based on current and historical experience, but essentially based on the knowledge that the liberation of Irish women can only be won with the liberation of the Irish people as a whole. Anti-Imperialist women can begin to examine collectively and in depth the real implications of this for our day to day work in the South and the North, and for the growth of the feminist movement as a whole.

Lotte Plunkett.

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NATIONAL STRUGGLE AND CLASS QUESTIONS

HOW SOCIALISTS RELATE THE TWO

Connolly wrote that that "the Irish working class alone remains the incorruptible inheritor of the fight for Irish freedom". Thus the "national question" became a "class question".

There are few socialists in Ireland today who would disagree with this proposition. But there are differences over what is meant by saying that the national question can only be solved by the working class. Some socialists say that national independence, unification, secularism, civil rights etc. will be achieved only after the working class seizes power by struggling on issues such as wages, unemployment, etc. Thus while they concede that socialists should espouse national demands they place their main and central emphasis on economic issues.



NATIONAL DEMANDS

There are a number of things wrong with this interpretation. The first is that it identifies the struggle for socialism with the struggle for the economic needs of the working class. Thus socialist demands become synonymous with economic demands. This conception of "socialist demands" is far too simplistic. Satisfying the economic needs of the workers is not simply a question of twisting the arm of the employers or of getting rid of them altogether. This manner of posing the question would be acceptable to an average reformist in the Labour Party who would be happy to pressurise the employers and even replace them altogether with the state. What separates socialists from reformists is* that even to satisfy the most modest needs of the workers it is essential to change the whole structure of society. And in order to do that it is necessary to seize hold of state power, smash it, and replace it with a new form of democracy. Workers' power is an indispensable prerequisite for reorganising the economy in the interests of the workers. Thus as Lenin and Trotsky incessantly pointed out socialist demands are not simply demands for economic gain; socialist demands are above all else political demands i.e. demands aimed at changing the nature of the state.

* the understanding

NEO-COLONIALISM IN IRELAND

So if political demands are the key to pushing forward the struggle for socialism, what precisely should these demands be in Ireland? To answer this question it is first of all necessary to note that the state in Ireland, North and South, is a neo-colonial one that is to say the fundamental barrier to political change is British Imperialism. This is not to exonerate the Irish bourgeoisie, as the Stalinists do, but simply to say that by themselves the Irish bourgeoisie would not be politically strong enough to maintain a stable state apparatus. British Imperialism helps to maintain a reasonably stable state power in Ireland by dividing the working class (through partition) by denying civil rights to the Catholic minority (while supporting a privileged Protestant community) by relying on the obscurantism of the churches, both Catholic and Protestant, and by cajoling and compelling the Northern and Southern governments to maintain an arsenal of repressive laws and institutions.

In short, it is through the national oppression of Ireland that the Irish bourgeoisie and British imperialism maintain a state power that prevents the working class from changing society to satisfy its own needs. Thus national demands are decisive for directing the attention of the working class towards the abolition of the capitalist state and capitalist exploitation. National demands, in other words, have become the central class demands of Irish workers

ECONOMIC DEMANDS

None of this implies that economic demands are unimportant. Obviously they are important for the material, day to day, survival of workers; they give workers confidence and infuse them with an elementary class consciousness.

But by themselves day to day struggles will never convince the working class of the need to seize state power. Nor will attempts by socialists to "blend" these struggles "a political character" (e.g. demanding economic concessions not only from the employers but from the state as well) bridge the gap. Why? Because the fundamental contra-

dictions of capitalism is not in the sphere of distribution of wealth. A rise in workers living standards is quite compatible with an increase in the rate of capitalists profits. By itself the economic struggle does not even necessarily cause basic conflict within the bourgeoisie. The real motor force of class struggle in capitalist society is not the division of wealth between classes but the actual production of that wealth. It is in the sphere of production that the basic contradiction occurs. This is the contradiction between the production of use values and exchange value in the contradictory process through which surplus value is extracted from the working class. And as Marx emphasized, this process is mystified and concealed from the working class by a whole range of social and political customs, traditions and institutions.



Once it is understood that production (and not distribution) is the source of exploitation and class struggle; and once it is understood that the process of production itself is mystified by social and political relations, then it becomes clear that (a) the day to day economic experience of the working class is warped and deflected by the contradictory values of the process of production. (b) That consequently it is futile to try and build on this deformed experience so as to extend it to socialist consciousness. (c) The fight to bring a genuine socialist consciousness to the workers must begin not with their economic experience but by attacking the social and political forces which deform that experience.

James Connolly

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Information journal of Fourth International

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THE PROVOS: TURNING TO THE WORKING CLASS?

Over the past few months the Provos, especially in Belfast have been critically evaluating their past political strategy. This balance sheet has demonstrated one important lesson for the Provos - the need to turn to the working class. Speaking at the 1977 annual Wolf Tone Commemoration, Jimmy Drumm proclaimed that "We need a positive tie in with the mass of the Irish people - We need to make a stand on economic issues and on every struggle of people."

Ignoring the working class in the 60s. The Provos concept of armed struggle is an elitist one based essentially on an underestimation of the revolutionary potential of the working class. The more isolated an elitist military campaign becomes the more negative a view of the working class it engenders; the more reformist and reactionary its politics become.

And so it is no real surprise to find that the failure of the Provos armed

On the relationship between the armed struggle and mass support Drumm's speech was confusing. He argues that because an isolated armed campaign breeds reformist illusions it is necessary to turn to the working class to broaden the base of the military struggle. And so he says "The forging of strong links between the republican movement and the workers of Ireland and radical trade unionists will create an irrepressible mass movement and will ensure mass support for the continuing armed struggle. But why was the armed campaign isolated in the first place? Because it did not have the support of the workers - and so we are back to square one. Unless the initial weakness of the armed campaign is admitted it is meaningless to talk about "turning to the working class". The failure of the new turn by the Provos to break decisively with elitist military attitudes is reflected in a failure to break with a passive conception of the working class. Thus when Jimmy Drumm spoke about turning to the working class it was not in order to get the workers to take up the "national question", no, the national question was to remain the sacred preserve of the Provos. The Provos were to aid the workers in the day to day grind so that the latter would sympathise with the anti-imperialist struggle. But the anti-imperialist struggle was to remain exclusively in the hands of the Provos.

CONCLUSION

While the tenor of Jimmy Drumm's speech is to be welcomed, it still does not signal a decisive turn to the working class by the Provos. A turn to the working class means more than talking about bread and butter issues. It means mobilising workers to fight for their national rights. And the only form of struggle capable of doing that are mass actions and workers democracy!

Continued from p 3

took place in the early '70's, particularly after internment. Under the colossal pressure those generated, the No-Go areas were straightened, the Brits and the Loyalist militias, both official (RUC/UDA) and unofficial (UDA/UFF), were demoralised, and the anti-imperialists gained their greatest single victory since partition, the abolition of Stormont. After that British concessions combined with errors made by the leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle, allowed the SDLP to come crawling out of their holes and regain credibility with the Catholic masses. Though that hold is still strong - as shown in the recent local government results - they are now under pressure because Britain sees no reason to make any serious concessions and has been consistently moving towards the Loyalists, culminating in the underhand Westminster deal. An opportunity thus exists to rebuild the links between the anti-imperialist vanguard and the masses through using the ill-feeling created by the repression policies to demand of the SDLP (and the new MacIntyre/MacManus party) that they support protest actions against the state brutality. Failure to do this in the coming period can only mean one thing - more British 'success'; more 'motivationless murders'; more British regiments 'misbehaving'. All of which will lead to the Wests, Taylors, McInnesons, and Paisleys lording it over a new and more vicious system of discrimination directed against the Catholics. This has got to be stopped and can be stopped. There will be a big price to pay if it isn't.
DAVID CARROLL



any Provos welcome this new frame of thought as a fresh wind that could blow some new life into the national liberation struggle. But it is necessary to look at the origins of this turn and its practical implications before giving unqualified support to such optimistic hopes.

THE REASON FOR "THE TURN"

It is no secret that for some time the Provos have been uneasy about the conservatism and reformism of the movement's politics over the past few years. Most of the discontent has recently originated from the military failure of the movement. This is paradoxical since it is precisely the military struggle which has nourished the optimism of recent times. Jimmy Drumm, in his Bodenstown speech, gave a specific example of how this came about: "Hatred and resentment of the (British) army cannot sustain a war, and the isolation of socialist publicans around the armed struggle is dangerous and has produced at least in some circles, the reformist notion that 'Ulster' is the issue, which can somehow be resolved without the mobilisation of the working class in the 26 counties"

It may be added that the military struggle has not only led to ignoring the 26 county workers, but also to

struggle to attain its objectives has resulted, not in an examination of the nature of the armed struggle itself, but, in a watering down of its objectives. Thus at the end of the day the Provos held on to their military prestige but as Jimmy Drumm pointed out they traded in their sacred ideal of a "united Ireland" for a plastic "Nine County Ulster". The more isolated the military campaign became the more bizarre became the political rationalisations until eventually the ordinary rank and file Provos were left with nothing meaningful or realistic to say to anyone. A credibility gap began to widen between the Provos and even their staunchest working class supporters in the ghettos.

NOT CRITICAL ENOUGH

It is clear that any attempt to close that dangerous gap between the anti-imperialist fighters and the masses must begin with a critical evaluation of the armed struggle. Unfortunately there is no evidence to suggest that such an exercise is being undertaken. The auspicious turn to the working class, enunciated at Bodenstown, quickly ran into a cul de sac. In particular, Jimmy Drumm's speech failed to grasp the nettle of armed struggle and displayed a continuing underestimation and even patronisation, of the working class.

THE BOLSHEVIK FACTION



and the fight for the Party

The growing number of groups on the far left today has the effect of puzzling many militants, particularly when a number of these groups declare the National Question to be the central focus of activity for revolutionaries in Ireland. The road to unifying these groups in Ireland who declare themselves Trotskyist, eventually under the banner of the Fourth International is beset with many obstacles, one of which is confusion over what constitutes the basis of splits and fusions. Many of these currently justify their separation from the P.I. by invoking Lenin's name and what they assume to be his methods.

The MSR has taken the first and what we believe to be a fundamentally important step, that of unity in action with a number of political organisations we find ourselves close to in different fields of work. During this active unity we will all find ourselves having to overcome divisive obstacles. What then are we principles for real unity, for fusion, and what are the concrete demands of the Irish situation that would make unity a principled and workable one?

As the question of regroupment has been posed both by the pressure of the objective situation, and discussion among certain political organisations, in this and subsequent articles we show what Lenin and Trotsky's position really was and explain it's more general and in the case of Ireland specific, application to the problem of building a revolutionary party.

The conception sometimes held of Lenin as an inveterate "splitter", cannot be upheld in any serious study of Lenin's fight to establish a revolutionary party in Russia.

During the eleven year struggle which Lenin had with the Mensheviks, culminating in a complete break in 1914, there were many times when Lenin fought for unity with the Mensheviks as against a split.

His method of fighting can be divided into two separate historical periods... before 1914 and after. Lenin's struggle after the formation of the Bolshevik faction in 1903, was a political and ideological struggle against the Mensheviks, and simultaneously for a unified party, against what he termed the anarchistic actions of the Mensheviks, which threatened the party with a split.

During this period Lenin was well aware of the reformist implications of Menshevism. But he did not advocate a split because of this. He was totally opposed to a split so long as the Mensheviks obeyed the revolutionary discipline of a common party. A few quotes from his writings will illustrate this.

"The refusal of Martov to serve on the editorial board (of Iskra), his refusal and that of other party writers to collaborate, the refusal of a number of persons to work on the Central Committee and the propaganda of a boycott, or passive resist-

ance, are bound to lead even if against the wishes of Martov and his friends, to a split in the party" (i)

Lenin declared his complete opposition to a split in the party " (i) A struggle of shades in the party is inevitable and essential as long as it is confined within bounds approved by the common consent of all comrades and party members. And our struggle against the right wing of the party, at the Congress, against Sklov and Axelrod Martynov and Martov, in no way exceeded these bounds " (ii).

Thus Lenin decided not to opt for a split in the RSDLP, but to use the method of faction struggle, i.e. of an organisation within a Party, united not by its place of work, language or other objective conditions but by a particular view on party questions"

Nor was his flexibility on political difference and his insistence on organisation discipline based on the fact that he had a majority within the RSDLP. Even where the Bolsheviks found themselves in a minority, Lenin insisted that they obey the majority decisions of the Mensheviks. For example he wrote "after the competent bodies have decided all of us, as members of the party, must act as one man. A Bolshevik in Odessa (where the Mensheviks were in a majority) must cast into the ballot box a ballot paper bearing a Cadet name, even if it sickens him"



When eventually Lenin decided, in 1912, that a split with Menshevism was necessary; his decision was based exclusively on organisational criteria i.e. on the unwillingness and inability of the Mensheviks to obey party discipline. Thus he complained of the Mensheviks "using the columns of legally published magazines to heap slander and abuse on the illegal party (RSDLP), calling on workers to regard the nuclei of the party and it's hierarchy as 'dead' etc"

It was because of these acts of organisational sabotage and not because of political differences that Lenin separated from the reformists. Of course Lenin was well aware of the treacherous implications of the Mensheviks politics; he was also aware that their reformism underlay their unwillingness to uphold revolutionary party discipline. But he recognised the relative autonomy of political perspectives and organisational norms.

It was on this understanding of the relative autonomy of the political and the organisational that his concept of "democratic-centralism" was based i.e. maximum freedom in discussion, maximum unity in action.

When eventually Lenin did break politically with the Mensheviks it was not over abstract questions of political theory but over concrete questions of political practice. The Mensheviks openly supported the Tsarist regime's war policy during the 1914-18 imperialist war. For Lenin this demonstrated that it would be futile to hope for organisational unity for revolutionary goals with the Mensheviks.

He declared that International Menshevism had definitively passed over to the historic camps of the bourgeoisie, and that their parties, although composed of workers were now politically bourgeois parties. He commented, "The collapse of the 2nd International is now clearly the collapse of opportunism which is now captive to the bourgeoisie" (vi). The split was final and forever. The views which had previously been considered positions to polemicalise against within the party, were now views which must be excluded from the party. "As the first shot in the mass slaughter, the chief parties of the 2nd International betrayed the working class and each of them on the pretext - 'defence of the fatherland' - went over to the side

of the bourgeoisie" (vii). As Trotsky clearly put it, "the degree of degeneration of a revolutionary party cannot as a rule be established a priori on the basis of symptoms alone. The living verification of events is indispensable" (viii). As if the record of Lenin's struggle were not sufficient to illustrate this question, however we have a second great experience - Trotsky's struggle within the Communist International and then his split. The next article in this series will outline the experiences of Trotsky and the birth of the Fourth International, and how revolutionaries can build the party in Ireland today.

References.

- (i) Lenin Collected Works Vol.7 p.351.
- (ii) Lenin Collected Works Vol.7 p.348.
- (iii)..... Vol 17 p.265
- (iv)..... Vol.17 p.431.
- (v)..... Vol.13 p.323.
- (vi)..... Vol.21 p.36.
- (vii) Resolution of the first conference of the Communist International on the Borse conference of the Second International.
- (viii) Leon Trotsky, "What Next".

BRITISH CRISIS DEEPENS



The growing social, political and economic crisis in Britain, finds the British Labour Party in a crisis that is almost certain to bring about its downfall at the next general election. The pact between the Labour Government and the Liberal Party in March of this year was preceded by the worst electoral defeats suffered by the Labour Party since 1931, with shifts of more than 20% against them in some by-elections. They stand to lose up to half their seats in Scotland to the Scottish National Party in the next general election. Allied to this the Fascist National Front are not only pushing the Liberals in to fourth place in some constituencies, but will fight every seat in the coming general election.

SCOTLAND
All this occurred in a period that has seen an unprecedented rise in the combativity of the British working class, with more than a million days lost in strikes in March 1977, after two years of relative inactivity. The present impasse of the Labour Government stems from two crises, one of Scotland and the other of Economic policy.

The position in Scotland combines all the elements of the crisis. A combination of economic deprivation, social turmoil, and the advent of the oil industry has given new resonance to Scotland's national and democratic demands. To stand for Scottish self-determination would fly in the interests of their own ruling class, so like good Social Democrats they have proposed a reformist solution which tries to prevent the erosion of their working class base. This "devolution" bill gives limited rights to a Scottish national assembly, but excludes it from control over the decisive sectors of the economy. Labour, however, has proved incapable of carrying the Bill, because of right wing Labour and Tory opposition, and thus lost SNP support in confidence motions.

ECONOMIC POLICY
The collapse of Labour's Scottish policy was only matched by the continuing crisis of Labour's economic policy. The wage controls imposed in 1975 were sold to British workers on the basis that a one-year to eighteen month period of reduction in living standards would lead to economic growth, just like the 1950's and 1960's. But there is no real recovery in sight. Over one and a half

million are unemployed and living standards have declined, all this before Britain is hit by a new recession in 1976/79. Thus, as evidenced at this year's TUC, Labour's policy of increasing impoverishment is becoming indefensible. A new rise of working class struggle has begun - trapping the Labour Government between ruling class demands for restraints, and the new working class militancy. It is here that the role of the Trades Union bureaucracy becomes more and more obvious to the mass of workers. Every struggle against 'wage control' takes on the significance of a major battle as the T.U. bureaucracy manoeuvres against them to 'save the government'. It is becoming more and more obvious that it is precisely the implementation of these austerity measures that will bring down the Labour Government, by producing massive demoralisation in the working class.

UPSURGE IN RACISM
A very dangerous by-product of Labour's right-wing policies has been the rise of the National Front and the National Party. The support they have received has not been of a fascist character - it has

been a racist one. Physical attacks on immigrants are now commonplace. In this field the action of the revolutionary left has been exemplary. Both the International Marxist Group (British Section of the Fourth International) and the Socialist Workers' Party have constantly mobilised against fascism and racism. The recent Lewisham mobilisation was one of a series of mobilisations organised by the revolutionary left with the involvement of the local immigrant community.

GROWING OF REVOLUTIONARY LEFT
The audience for the ideas of the revolutionary left is now greater in Britain than it has ever been. At a time when growing numbers of workers look to the revolutionaries for leadership the need to overcome existing divisions and build the strongest possible united organisation is crucial. Two major items are on the agenda for socialists in Britain today. The first is the building of a class struggle opposition in the labour movement, a united front of all those prepared to engage in action against the policies of the government. Only such united opposition involving the revolutionary left, the Communist Party and Left Social Democrats, can organise a political response to the crisis from the working class. Unfortunately both the CP and the Left Social Democrats, tied as they are to sections of the trade union bureaucracy, refuse to engage in united action. At another level organisations like the Socialist Workers' Party adopt a sectarian attitude towards other revolutionary socialist organisations. For example in recent by-elections the SWP has refused to take part in united socialist campaigns. On the other hand the International Marxist Group were involved in setting up the Socialist Unity campaign, whose candidate in the recent Ladywood by-election received over three times the vote of the SWP. Despite the size of the vote for the revolutionary socialists the National Front were seen as the stronger voice - something which a united campaign would have avoided.

REGROUPMENT
The second task that lies ahead follows from the first, the building of a united revolutionary organisation. In Britain real opportunities exist for the building of a revolutionary organisation capable of challenging the CP in a number of spheres. Such an organisation would be in a stronger position to force both the CP and Left Social Democracy into united action. A perspective of revolutionary regroupment is thus set by the International Marxist Group as a central part of their work. Such a perspective is the only realistic one if revolutionaries are to intervene in the decisive struggles of the British working class.

RUARI MACNEILL

Bailing Out South Africa



The white supremacist states of Rhodesia and South Africa continue to smoulder with the discontent and rage of centuries of oppression. The strategic importance of their geographic location, their natural wealth, and the huge stake of western imperialist investments make any easy retreat by imperialism from them impossible. Although Rhodesia is in many respects a frontier zone of South Africa, her demise from the racist orbit would be a hammer blow to white morale and a further step in the encirclement and isolation of the powerful supremacist regime in the South. Hence the deep interest of the western powers in the region and in particular, the diplomatic initiatives and crusades of, first Henry Kissinger, and now of British Foreign Secretary, Owen, and of UN Ambassador, Young. But the white rulers of Rhodesia, with the myopia of long front line involvement, see their own considerable stakes in Rhodesia to the possible exclusion of a doomed future. Imperialism, with its wider horizons, recognises the need for a stable transition to a docile regime which is as broadly based as possible. It seeks to peacefully establish the type of black neo-colonial state which, to a greater or lesser extent, has been achieved in much of the rest of the continent. The recent Rhodesian general election confirmed the unity and resolve of the whites behind Smith. In the face of a lost situation it remains to be seen to what extent Smith and the Rhodesian whites will opt for the Anglo-American settlement plans with their pseudo-international 'legitimacy'.

art becomes a commodity..

Ireland is regarded internationally as a very literary nation. Not because the Irish people as a whole participate in or identify with literature any more than the peoples of other nations. But because a few Irish individuals have played a particularly prominent role in "English" literature".

Each summer sees hundreds of students come to Ireland from all over the world; and behind them are the universities from Tokyo to New York where several thousand people earn reasonable livings by lecturing and writing about Irish literature.

One might expect that this international reputation would mean that writers had a comparatively easy life of it here, with plenty of work and good incomes - untaxed at that. Nothing could be further from the truth. In many countries it is possible for writers to earn livings without resorting to teaching, digging ditches or clerking; in some they even get a minimum wage. Hardly any Irish writers, however, earn even the major part of their money from writing.

Where this state of affairs is particularly harmful, and where it becomes of a certain political interest, is that in order to get any money for their work, Irish writers have to write for foreign markets. Ireland is a small territory and thus a small market for any products; and just as an independent Ireland would need immediate economic agreements with other countries, so, too, Irish writers cannot prosper on

the basis of Irish distribution alone. The crucial point is the terms on which they enter the international market.

Connolly referred to the possibility of Irish workers becoming the scabs of Europe. The possibility also exists of Irish writers becoming the backs of Europe and Irish culture generally being the primitive pot of Europe (I hope to deal with this in relation to Irish music at a later date.)

There is only one real outlet for short stories, and a conservative one at that: - "New Irish Writing" in the "Irish Press". If your story is published there you'll get about £20; but more often you'll have to settle for a small magazine that doesn't pay at all. If, however, you can break into the American market, rates of pay increase dramatically. If you have a novel and you want a good advance with as many copies sold as possible, then you'll go to a London publisher, who will also hopefully sell foreign rights.

Thus editorial control lies outside Ireland. It lies with editors who have a particular image of Ireland and who believe that their readers will only be interested in what conforms to the image.

Simply from the point of view of being understood by foreign readers, it is necessary to alter one's writing. Apart from details that would have to be explained or excluded, there are whole areas of life one might wish to write about, whole approaches to life

and to writing, which would simply not conform to the caricature of Ireland which provides the only acceptable images the editors will buy. It is, in fact, part and parcel of colonial and neo-colonial domination to be regarded internationally in a particularly restricted way.

So, without necessarily making any conscious decisions, the writer will adjust to survive. The Ireland s/he writes about will not conflict with preconceptions. And the result, as Anthony Cronin has pointed out, is an overwhelming provincialism. Of course, this is not entirely true, because some will persevere, may even be quite unable to adjust. But they may not be published at all, let alone be able to make any kind of a living.

There can be no real solution of the problem short of full national independence, involving totally new international relationships. That does not mean that nothing can be done to improve the situation; but the tasks are daunting and the likely achievements seemingly minimal.

Part 2 of this article will be published in our next issue.

STEVE MACHOUGH



THE IRISH CONTINGENT AT THE RECENT S.W.P. CONVENTION IN OHIO U.S.A.
Left to Right: FERGUS O'HARE (P.D.), ANN SPEED (M.S.R.), BERNADETTE McALISKEY (I.S.P.), AND JIM McMAHON (M.S.R.)

Irish Socialists Tour the U.S.A.

News of the struggles of Republican prisoners to defend their right to political status; the incarceration of prisoners in the notorious K block; the experiences of those who go on the blanket i.e. kept naked except for a blanket, locked up 24 hours a day; or those who go "on the boards" (bread and water diet and all furniture taken away), reached the ears of many members of the Irish solidarity movement and members of revolutionary socialist organisations in the United States of America.

The opportunity to speak to these people was provided by the American supporters of the Fourth International (FI), the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP), who are prevented from affiliating by reactionary legislation. The SWP, who were holding their 29th Annual Convention, had invited Bernadette

MacAliskey of the Independent Socialist Party (ISP), Fergus O'Hare of People's Democracy (PD), to join Anne Speed of the MSR, the Irish Section of the Fourth International, in taking part in a speaking tour and attend the Convention. At public meetings sponsored by the SWP, in numerous radio interviews and at internal party workshops, the Irish comrades gave up to date analyses of the political problems, their perspectives for rebuilding the mass movement and the role of revolutionary Marxists in the coming period. The valuable work of the Relatives' Action Committee (RAC) in the Six Counties, the brutal torture of prisoners in Castlereagh RUC barracks, the Garda brutality, and the prison conditions in the South were also described.

The other part of the US trip - attendance at the SWP convention - was for the MSR comrades who attended an excellent opportunity to meet with their comrades within the International. In spite of the fact that this was only a National Convention, the presence of comrades from sections and sympathising organisations in 18 different countries, was extremely impressive. The convention of the SWP serves as a focus for members of the FI in

Latin America, Canada and Quebec. Recently 2 organisations claiming allegiance to the FI have fused in Canada and Quebec putting the strength of the International at well over 500 there, and creating an ongoing dynamic for further regroupment among Trotskyist forces. For the comrades of the PE and ISP it afforded an opportunity to see in concrete reality the presence, growth, and ability of the comrades in the FI to intervene in the world class struggle and to begin to cut into the heart of the capitalist world - United States Imperialism.

Nearly 2,000 delegates and observers participated in discussions on perspectives and interventions in the labour movement, the women's movement, and how to fight for the defence of the oppressed nationalities there, the Blacks, the Chicanos and the Puerto Ricans. All of this provided excellent illustrations of how our comrades in the USA are coming to grips with major political questions. Revolutionary greetings from the Ligue des Ouvriers Révolutionnaires/ Revolutionary Workers' League (LOR/RWL), the new united Quebec/Canada section, the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) in France, and the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, served to provide even greater stimulus and a deeper appreciation of the work of the many sections and sympathising organisations.

Revolutionary Internationalism for the comrades of the FI is not a fine aspiration but a living working reality and the trip to the USA proved once more that the best way to go forward is to build the Fourth International.

AN PIARSACH - beathaisnéis nua

Patrick Pearse: The Triumph of Failure
by Ruth Dudley Edwards (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd. 1977) - £7.95 - 10% V.A.T.

"Kings with plumes may adorn their beards, but angels meet the soul of Patrick Pearse." B'áinig an saghas fotha den Phiarsach a samhlaíocht den ar scoil. Ar an taobh eile, bíom daoine mar Chonchúir Crúis ó Briain ag iarraidh a chur ina luf orainn gur fanaiceach nó cuirpeach de shaghas éigin a bhí ann. Níorbh aon nagan é, an Phiarsach, ná aon chuirpeach ná fanaiceach ach an círead. Ní raibh aon ach d'áine—of gur dhúine é go raibh daonnachtúlacht thar an goitiantacht ag baint leis, toisc go raibh sé ina réabhlóidí.

CÚIRA RAIDICEACH

Bhí cúira raidiceach taobh thiar den bPiarasach. Saorintinníoch ab ea a athair, a bhí go mór i bhfabhar Pharell agus an tsaorintinníoch raidiceach, Charles Bradlaugh, MP. Cé gur threas-tail Padraig go rialta ar fhoirmeacha an chreidimh Chaitlicigh - Rómhánaigh, ní raibh aon leisce air rianú ar cur i gcoinne na cléire, i gcúrsaí polaitíochta ná cultúrtha; deir údar an bheathaisnéis lena linn: "We had little of the automatic reverence for the priesthood the common among his contemporaries . . . He was only eighteen when he made his first public criticism of the clergy: in a speech to the central branch of the Gaelic League he is described as 'alluding to the comparatively poor support which the Irish clergy . . . were extending . . .'"

Nuair a bhí sé ina eagarthoir ar An Claidheamh Soluis, iris dhéitheangach a d'fhoilsigh Conradh na Gaeilge, scríobh sé: "There is . . . no longer any room for doubt. The Bishops have done their worst against Irish-Ireland." ("The Dismissal of Dr O'Hickey," 26 Meitheamh 1909). Agus arís: ". . . we claim and will always exercise the right to criticise any action of the Bishops, as of any other body of Irishmen, which affects the welfare of the Irish language . . ." (7 Lúnasa 1909).

GLIAISEACHT NA MBEAN

Léiríonn an leabhar seo go raibh an Piarasach i bhfad chun tosaigh, i gcomárta le lucht a chomhairsire (agus, go minic, i gcomárta le húdar an leabhair seo), ina dhearcadh ar a lan cúrsaí. Mar shampla: ". . . his sense of natural justice had made him an early sympathiser with the movement for equal opportunities and pay for women." (lch. 126)

Náisiúnaí tríd is tríd ab ea an Piarasach, ach i dtosach ba mhó a shúis i gcúrsaí cultúrtha ná i gcúrsaí

polaitíochta. De réir a chéile, tháinig sé isteach ar chúrsaí polaitíochta. Nuair a tharla an Frithbhánadh Mór i 1913, thabhaigh sé leis na hoibríthe. Bhí an-mheas aige ar Shéamus Ó Lorcáin (agus ag an Lorcánach airsean freisin: chuir sé a dha mhac ar seoil chuig an bPiarasach). Maidir le Séamus Ó Conghaile, dair an t-údar lena: "Connolly was to have a profound impact on him" (lch. 184); agus, ag scríobh di ar an mhíliain roimh an Éirí Amach: ". . . Pearse had certainly fallen under his spell by now. He had read Labour in Irish History several times, and read the Workers' Republic regularly. His earlier flirtation with the distressed workers' cause in 1913 had been consolidated by some serious study, and he was especially interested in the economic writings of James Pintar Lalor . . ." (lch. 244)



Patrick Pearse



James Connolly

SCRÍBHINNÍ POLAITÍOLA

Thug an Conghaileach ábairt ar thuairim an Phiarsaigh, freisin. Bhain sé an-thuiscint as Iron & Heritage (baillíochán d'áistí a scríobh an Piarasach, foilsithe i Meitheamh 1915), toisc go raibh an t-údar "so widely sympathetic to the struggles of the workers" (Workers' Republic, 3 Iúil 1915). Ag tagairt do pháinléad an Phiarsaigh, Ghosts, scríobh sé: "It ought to be spread by the thousand." (Workers' Republic, 18 Márta 1915).

In The Sovereign People, páinléad a scríobh sé i Mírt, 1916, deir an Piarasach: ". . . no private right to property is good as against the public right of the nation." Lenáim sé air: "It is for the nation to determine to what extent private property may be held by its members . . . A nation may determine that all sources of wealth whatsoever are the property of the nation . . . and that all surplus wealth shall go to the national treasury to be expended on national purposes, rather than be accumulated by private persons."

SOISIALACHAS

Is léir, mar sin, go raibh an Piarasach ag druidin i dtreo an tsóisialachais ag deireadh a shúil. Is léir, freisin, go bhfuil pobhlachtánaigh an lae inniu ag druidin sa treo céanna. Mar shampla, duirt Séamus Ó Droma, agus é

ag labhairt ag uaigh Wolfe Tone i Meitheamh na bliana seo, go gceann na Sealadaigh go bhfuil deagríochantas ann ceangal a cheutuú idir na daoine atá ag cur i gcoinne fhoiréigean na Breataine ó thuaidh agus na ceardchumannaíthe raidiceacha (agus daoine eile) atá ag troid ar son a gcearta sa deisceart.

Maidir leis sin, bhí áthas orm dul de cheannairí na Sealadach a fheiceáil ag labhairt ag cuid de na mórshúilta agus na cruinnithe a chuir Coiste Cosanta na Mairíthe ar bun sanall beag ó shin. Bhídh sé ar súil go leanfaidh na Sealadaigh leis an gcúrsa príonsabáilta sin agus go gcuirfead ina luf ar gach uile bhall de na Sealadaigh an tabhacht mhór atá ag baint le mórshúilta agus cruinnithe den chineál seo.

EOLAS SUIMHÍUL FAOIN PHÍARSACH

Nuair nach níonn údar an leabhair seo ag iarraidh a thuairim féin a thurú chun tosaigh, cuireann sí eolas suimhíul ar fáil eile: faoin bPiarasach. Léigh sé páipéir agus irisí ón Breatain, ón Phrainc agus ó Mheiriceá agus chuir sé sin mhór i gcúrsaí reatha an doimhne. Bhí a thuairim i bhfad chun tosaigh i gcúrsaí oideachais, i gcúrsaí litríochta (bhí an-mheas aige ar Robt' Burns ar Synge), agus, ar ndóig, i gcúrsaí teange chuir sé go tréan i gceimic pionóis chorpóra na scúileanna. Bhí an-mheas aige ar pháistí agus ba mhúinteoir an-chumasaigh é. Chuir sé fuinneadh iontach i ngach scéin dar thug sé tuithi. Fear mí, míle a bhí ann: "He was without cruelty himself, and after . . . deplored the primitive and callous attitude of the Irish people to children and animals, and praised the enlightened approach of the English." (l. 132)

CLAOINÍ AN ÚDAIR

Tá sé ri-sholleir, ámh, nach n-aontaíonn an t-údar le dearcadh polaitíochta an Phiarsaigh. Ach, in ionad bealach eile a chur romhainn, scríobhann sí a leithéid seo faoin bPiarasach agus faoina chomráitithe: "Flunkert . . . was dying anyway from consumption, and he sought a more heroic end. Pearse had nothing to live for . . ." (lch. 201); "By this stage of his life, those human desires in Pearse which had not shrivelled from neglect had been forcibly suppressed—with one exception. He still longed for success . . ." (l. 199). Déanann sí iarracht freisin a chur ina luf orainn gur hómáigeasach, i ngach áit de féin, ab ea an Piarasach. Pó hómáigeasach heitricheasach é an Piarasach, is cuma lena (b'fada a fuais ag dóch . . . go bhfuil an iris seo agus an dream a fhoilsíonn í go tréan i bhfabhar cearta na hómáigeasach). Féin san amhras, ámh, an dtabharfaidh an t-údar seo an méid sin adre don chéist nua abeadh an pobal (de bharr drochthionchar frith-ghloiníochta na síle don chuid is mó) claonta chomh nór san in aghaidh na hómáigeasachta.

Mar sin féin, cinn cáitíon na féinne a thabhairt don údar, cuirfead a rá go minic go raibh an ráiteas úd ina ndúirt an Piarasach: ". . . bloodshed is a cleansing and a sanctifying thing, and the nation which regards it as the final horror has lost its manhood." Bhí an t-údar: "His rhetoric of blood was in keeping with much of contemporary political writing, in republican and socialist papers, whose tone had to compete with the growing hysteria of British army recruitment propaganda . . ." (lch. 179). Léiríonn sí freisin arís, lúshachadh na creacchadairí san Éirí Amach, cé go gceideann daoine áirithe sa réiteas gur lántachadh iad.

Le soéal gearr a chéanamh de, sílín gur fíú an leabhar seo a leanú, ach níorbh míste don té a léifadh é scríbhinní an Phiarsaigh féin a léamh in éineacht leis.

"An Seabóg Siúlach"

1. Praetorian
2. Biography
3. Great Look-out
4. Reactionary



After seven years it looks like the end of the road of the National Wage Agreements. Right from the beginning it was obvious that NWA's would not serve the interests of workers; but it is also clear today that they haven't even helped the employers that much either.

NOBODY WINS

Table 1 shows how workers wages have fared since 1970. Anybody earning more than £20 in 1970 has suffered a wage cut, (the average of a male industrial worker in 1970 was £21.30). And that is not the whole story. Some 100,000 workers have not yet received increases due to them under the various NWA's. As most of these are in the poorly organised low-paid industries, it is obvious that the increases attributed to those who were earning £10 - £15 in 1970 are greatly exaggerated. So without even mentioning the hidden nature of the Consumer Price Index, the National Wage Agreements have resulted in a real wage cut for the vast majority of workers. This decline in wages has not been anywhere near big enough for the Employers to solve their crisis of profitability at the workers' expense. Notwithstanding the cut in workers' income Table 2 shows that over the last decade the inability of the employers to invest and modernise has meant a drastic reduction in their share of wealth being produced. Considering all the other problems the employers have, a much greater reduction in wages will be necessary if they are to make the working class pay for the crisis of capitalism.

EMPLOYERS LOSE MOST

Today a situation has been reached where National Wage Agreements have become too much of a burden for workers and too much of a luxury for the employers. Under the strain of this contradiction a further NWA would collapse in chaos. But the employers are not in a good position to enforce a wage bargaining framework favourable to themselves. Not alone have the NWA's failed to solve the economic crisis, they have failed to undermine the basic militancy of the workers. While the exemplary combativity of the 1960's was moderated under the NWA's it has not at all been eradicated. Last year, for example, 42,481 workers went on strike for a period of 776,949 man-days - figures which come close to the peak figures for the 60's strike wave. Underlying all the recent talk about changing the framework of wage bargaining, therefore, is one salient fact - a sharp polarisation of the class struggle. Since the employers are not in a position to make major concessions and the workers are too strong to be openly and directly defeated the initiative in this situation lies with the working class. Of course the employers and the trade union bureaucrats will try to buy off the workers with some kind of class collaborationist 'social contract'. But given the reality of class polarisation a clear class struggle alternative will have a much stronger purchase on the imagination of the workers.

TABLE 1. Source: Trade Union Information, Spring '77.

Basic pay at December 1970	£10	£15	£20	£25	£30	£40
Total increases under '70-'77 National Wage Agreements	25.02	27.25	30.73	34.26	38.26	45.81
% Increase	250.2	181.7	153.7	137.0	127.6	114.5
Est. % increase in C.P.I. November '70 - '77	152	152	152	152	152	152
Est % change in pay increased in real terms.	+39.0	+12.2	+0.7	-6.0	-9.7	-10.9

TABLE 2. Source: Newsletter Confederation of Irish Industry, July 19th.

Sector	% share of net output of sector	1968	1975
Industry	Employee	77.6	87.6
	other income	22.2	12.4
Distribution Transport & Communication	Employee	75.0	62.4
	other income	25.0	17.6
Other non-agricultural excl. Public Admin + Defence	Employee	66.4	75
	other income	33.6	24.6



SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

NO MORE WAGE CUTS!

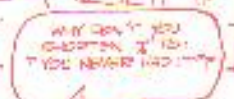
CLASS-WIDE ACTION NEEDED

CLASS STRUGGLE ALTERNATIVE

In opposition to any form of 'Social Contract' in which wage restraint would be traded for spurious promises of increases in social welfare and employment, Socialists in the unions should mobilise around the following demands:

- For centralized collective bargaining without strings; withdraw from the National Employer-Labour Conference.
- No further negotiations until all NWA arrears have been paid.
- For an index linked £10 a week flat rate increase.
- End discrimination against women - the male rate for the job.
- Support the low paid workers - for a national minimum take home pay of £45 a week irrespective of age or sex.
- Against unemployment - reduce the work week to 31.5 hours as recommended by the European Trade Union Confederation.

These demands should be capable of uniting the far left, the Officials, the Communist Party etc, in a common struggle to lead the trade union rank and file in a fight to defend the basic interests of the working class.



SOUTH AFRICA

The Anglo-American plan probably had its greatest effect among the black politicians vying for power. It was welcomed by Bishop Muzorewa and Sithole. But the countries six million blacks might not be so easily bought off. All that can reasonably be expected from many of the black leaders is the simple change of ownership of large farms. The land acts of 1930 and of 1969 made for the poorest, least fertile land to be held by the blacks. By the 1970's each white proprietor has over 100 times more land than the black, per capita. The result is impoverishment and the large labour reserve that is necessary for a budding capitalism. But the unstable international economy - unemployment is increasing in Rhodesia in recent years - and the parilousness of the elitist regime in its present form, will not allow for any capitalist development. The Zimbabwean people are hungry for land and bread. They have been crushed for too long by one of Imperialism's most hideous offsprings. A workers and peasants upsurge would have profound consequences for Zimbabwe's people as well as for the entire continent.