



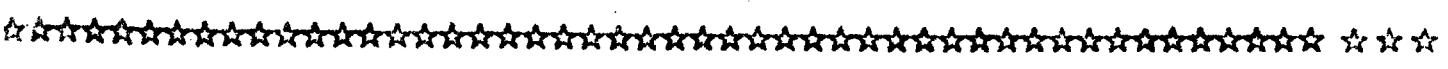
REVOLUTION

REPUBLICANISM

and



RELIGION



**an examination of the republican
response to clerical attacks**

published by the workers league

(I)

The revolution is at the cross-roads. Matters are not the same as they were two years ago.

On the one hand - emergency powers in the 26 counties, police riots on the streets, fascist thuggery in the prisons, the whole country an armed camp.

On the other hand - huge street mobilizations by the Republican movement, thousands of working class youth attracted to the Provisionals, a clear turn to the left in the anti-imperialist struggle in the North.

Ireland is not unique in any of this. Throughout the world, the great slump of the world capitalist system is driving the two enemy classes of modern society - the bourgeoisie and the proletariat - into life and death conflict. In Vietnam, Spain, Portugal, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique, Argentina, Chile and elsewhere, the international class war has already led to bloody battles. Either the bourgeoisie goes down under the heel of the workers and peasants or else the revolutionary movement goes under the axe.

Unlike the great slump era of the 1930's, the working class today is undefeated by the political cancer of Stalinism, which holds back the class struggle of the proletariat in the class interest of the bourgeoisie under the fraudulent banner of "peaceful co-existence" and the "peaceful road to socialism".

In Ireland, the political hacks of Sinn Fein, the "Workers'" Party - under the political direction of their Stalinist tutors, the Communist Party of Ireland - have completely failed to suppress the rising tide of anti-imperialist struggle. In Britain, the working class stands ready to pull down the capitalist Lib-Lab coalition government and sweep aside the cobwebs of the Stalinists' "parliamentary road to socialism".

The slump is driving the working class everywhere towards revolution, just as it is driving all the false friends of the working class into open reaction. This is the international background to the left-wing development in the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland and the great street battle outside the walls of Portlaoise Prison.

One sign of this move to the left is the recent article by Peter Dowling in Republican News, where he calls for a "battle of ideas amongst progressive forces". As Dowling points out, for the struggle to develop "it needs both the ability to make self-criticism and to examine where others went wrong. To this end a sharp critique of the Sticks(Officials) remains a vital weapon.... The political root must be out and examined" (April 9, 1977).

John Hume, the SDLP, the Stickies, the opium-peddlars of the "Peace" Movement, all have come out against the Provisional IRA's campaign against capitalists in the six counties - as expected. So, too, did Father Denis Faul of Dungannon. The Provisional IRA's attacks on individual capitalists greatly alarmed all the enemies of the revolution.

The Workers' League does not support attacks on individual capitalists because this method does not get rid of the capitalist class. Our method is the method of the October Revolution, the mobilization of the working class as a class against the bourgeoisie and its agents.

But what the enemies of the revolution fear in the Provisionals' campaigns is that the capitalist class itself has come under attack.

This is why we publish this pamphlet.

We defend the right of the working class to attack the capitalist class every way it chooses. But without theoretical clarity, the working class cannot overthrow the capitalist system. False hopes and illusions must be cleared out.

This is why we welcome Peter Dowling's call in Republican News for a "battle of ideas amongst progressive forces". We show in this pamphlet that the conception of socialism in Republican News is an illusion - because it is based on a false theory that Christianity is in agreement with the socialist revolution.

We show that Christianity (including Catholicism) is the ideological weapon of the capitalist class. How can the proletariat overthrow class rule when it fights class rule with the ideas of class rule?

We show that Father Faul's attack on the republican movement is completely in line with the theory and practice of Christianity and the Catholic Church. We use the experience of the Catholic Church as a slave-owning organisation in Africa to throw light on its counter-revolutionary politics in Ireland. How can a Church that has defended slavery and owned slaves help the revolution ?

The revolutionary movement in Ireland must go beyond the illusion of "Christian Socialism" and educate the working class in the philosophy and politics of scientific socialism. Either the revolutionary movement overcomes the illusions of the last great revolutionary period - the period of Connolly - or else it will meet the same fate.

"The Catholic Church, most true Mother of ChristiansIt is You who make wives subject to their husbands... You set husbands over their wives; you join sons to their parents by a freely granted slavery.... You teach slaves to be loyal to their masters... You it is who warn the peoples to be subservient to their kings".

- Saint Augustine, De moribus ecclesiae catholicae (I), XXX,63. (quoted in Peter Brown, Augustine of Hippo, Faber paperback, 1969. p225)

Marxists are not in the habit of beginning an article with quotes from the Christian Fathers. But this time conditions require it.

In the March 26 issue of Republican News - the newspaper of the Provisionals' in Ulster - an article by "Solon" carried quotes from James Connolly, Liam Mellows, Constance Markiewicz, Peadar O'Donnell and Wolfe Tone sandwiched in between two quotations from Saint Ambrose and Saint John Chrysostom. The idea was to prove that Republicanism is compatible not only with Socialism but that Socialism is in harmony with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Quotations from Chairman Mao are one thing in socialist literature, but quotations from St. Ambrose are something else! The article - under the banner of Wolfe Tone's phrase, "The Men of No Property", only proves the weakness of the Republican brand of socialism and its inability to stand up resolutely against the bourgeoisie. The motive for the article was Father Faul's recent attack on the Provisional Republican movement.

It is a sign of the weakness of the politics of the Provisionals' they did not dare to mention Father Faul by name. (An Phoblacht, Provisional Sinn Fein's weekly paper did not mention the attack at all). They preferred to quote his words anonymously. Instead, Saints Ambrose and Chrysostom were thrown against the priest. Such is the power of religion within the minds of the republican leadership. Religious gentlemen attack the republicans but republicans may not reply. The French republicans of 1789, who blew up the whole of European feudalism, attacked *their* clerical enemies in a very different way. Irish republicans of 1977 are still behind their French allies of two centuries ago.

Marxists must confess that the priest - not the republicans - was the winner in this battle of saints, this holy war, this conflict of theology with theology. The dispute goes right to the heart of the most important question in Irish politics - the failure of the Irish revolutionaries to develop their own philosophy, independent from that of their exploiters.

Father Faul attacked the Provisional IRA for shooting capitalists. (This clerical attack was gloatingly and uncritically endorsed by the "Irish People", the organ of Sinn Fein, the so called "Workers' Party" - on April Fool's Day. As part of their campaign to prove that the anti-imperialist movement is somehow 'ultra-left', 'terrorist', 'trendy English (?) Trotskyist' and even 'fascist', the Officials are resurrecting the vilest slanders of the Stalinist pogroms of the Moscow Trials era. In those days all opponents of Stalinist-led betrayals were slandered, framed and butchered in the cause of "peaceful co-existence" and "the parliamentary road". These are the historical roots of the Stickies' Bill of Rights campaign, their touting of the idea of a coalition with the anti-power sharing Orangemen (United Irishman, March 1977) AND their unholy alliance with Father Faul). Father Faul accused the Provisionals of "class-warfare" (a mortal sin!) and of introducing the "language of class-warfare (capitalist, imperialist and bourgeoisie)".

Perhaps Father Faul imagines that capitalists, imperialists and the bourgeoisie did not exist until wicked republicans invented these phrases (to torment good, pious, peace-loving Christians, of course). The good Father should come down from heaven to earth. Capitalists and imperialists were busy in Ireland long before the poor Gaels knew the name for them. Father Faul knows this very well, in fact.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle said that man is a political animal and the Republicans need no reminding that Father Faul of Dungannon is a very political animal. The collar may separate a man from the female sex, but it never separates him from politics.

Father Faul has won and earned the respect of many thousands of republicans and socialists for his spirited defence of the victims of imperialist torture gangs in Ireland, North and South. While most Irish clerics with half a social conscience prefer to see torture half a million miles away (say, in Rhodesia, or Argentina, or the Philippines), Father Faul is one of the few with the guts to denounce it here in his own dear native land. There is a Gaelic proverb that the grass is greener in the next field. Irish priests turn the Gaelic upside down. Torture is blacker outside Ireland !

An Phoblacht , March 22nd quotes a newly released prisoner in Portlaoise, John Hickey, : "There are three priests going into the prison regularly. When I asked one of them did he agree with what was being done he replied, "God said 'Be good to your slaves'," whatever that meant". What this means , in fact, is that the Church regards the Republican prisoners as slaves - and it stands by slavery and the slave-masters! Hickey went on ; "They say if they spoke out they would be stopped going in at all..But if they did speak out people might listen".

The silence of the overwhelming majority of the clergy and the entire hierarchy in this priest-ridden country would be enough to damn the Church in the eyes of the working class forever, if only the Church had not blinded them so thoroughly beforehand.

CONSISTENCY AND INCONSISTENCY

Even on this point alone - the torture and brutalization of their own members - the Provisionals are inconsistent. In one breath they cry "shame" on clerical support for imperialism, in the next breath they defend the Church's teachings in general! How can the general teachings of any organisation be sound when its

practice is so rotten? Besides, how can republicanism in politics be squared with a religion that is monarchist and hierarchical from top to bottom - from the "Kingdom of Heaven" down to the little holy figures wearing crowns which are seen in the windows and doorways of workers all over the country. Religion makes the crown respectable (The "Queen of Heaven" throws the light of sanctity upon the kings and queens of earth - the Queen of England number one. The lower the people, the higher the steeple.)

As St Augustine says, praising the Catholic Church, "You it is who warn the people to be subservient to their kings." Nothing does more to isolate the workers of Ireland from revolutionary politics than the Church. Can "Solon" or the Republican News deny this? It is Father Faul who is consistent here - not Republican News.

Father Faul is inconsistent when he "forgets" that Christianity spoke the language of class warfare long before the "left-wing rump" of the Provisionals. From the beginning, Christianity fought the class war from the side of the slave-masters. "Slaves obey your human masters with fear and trembling..." said St. Paul (*Letter to the Ephesians, 6,5*) "You servants must submit to your masters and show them complete respect", wrote St. Peter, "...submit to every human authority, and to the governors...live as God's slaves...fear God, and respect the Emperor" (*First letter of Peter, 2,13-18*). St. Augustine explained, "slavery is justly imposed on the sinner". (*The City of God, Book XIX, Ch. 16*). From the viewpoint of Saints' PAUL, Peter and Augustine, Father Faul is absolutely correct to condemn the Provisionals for "striving towards a society where all will be equal". The Christian position really is that it is wrong to "bring down groups who exercise power and authority in the community, and, in this way, to create an equal society" as Father Faul put it.

(St. Paul supports the argument of Father Faul very forcefully: "Everyone must obey the state authorities, because no authority exists without God's permission, and the existing authorities have been put there by God. Whoever opposes the existing authority opposes what God has ordered." In the words of St. Paul, the man in authority - i. e. the Minister of State/Justice, the judge, the police commissioner, the officer commanding Her Majesty's armed forces, the prison governor, the Special Branch torturer, etcetera, - this man is "God's servant working for your own good." (!) As God's deputy on earth, the man in authority "carries out God's punishment on those who do evil" (*Letter to the Romans, 13,1-4*). If republicans disagree with Father Faul, they must disagree with St. Paul too. *Father Faul is only following the teachings of the saints. But what about "Solon"?*

SOLON—CONNOLLY—CHRISTIANITY

When "Solon" squeezes socialist quotations in between St Ambrose and St John Chrysostom, he is following the method of James Connolly. His two quotations were taken straight out of Connolly's 'Labour, Nationality and Religion', in which Connolly tried to beat the Jesuits at their own game by reconciling Marxism to Christianity. The Jesuit Father Kane attacked Socialism, Connolly defended Christianity. It is significant that "Solon" quotes Ambrose and Chrysostom on their 'attitudes' towards private property when their living practice totally belied these platitudes.

St. Ambrose criticized private property as 'unjust usurpation'. He said the wealth of the rich was 'stolen goods'. Who is this wise man? asked Ambrose. "The one who shows compassion on the poor, who sees the poor as natural members of his family," he replied. But tears of sympathy for the poor come easily to saints.

The Life of St. Ambrose gives the key to his "socialism". Ambrose was born about 340 A.D. in the Roman slave colony of Celtic Gaul. His family belonged to the highest rank of the Roman ruling class. His father was prefect of Gaul. In 370, Ambrose himself was made governor of the Milan region in Italy. At that

time Milan was the capital of the Roman empire in the west, the city of the emperor himself. Ambrose was therefore one of the three or four top rulers of Roman imperialism.

Those were the days when two Christian factions were fighting for power in the empire, the Catholics and the Arians. The Emperor Constantine had made Christianity the official state religion of the empire in 317 AD. The question in 370 AD was :which faction was going to be the party of the Roman ruling class, Catholic or Arian ? At that time the political conflicts of the Roman ruling class were fought out through the medium of theology. When the Arian bishop of Milan died in 374 AD a fierce dispute broke out. As governor, Ambrose's job was to "keep the peace". The crowd shouted "Ambrose, bishop!" The emperor agreed. So in one week Ambrose was baptized, made a priest and consecrated as Catholic bishop of the imperial city of the Roman empire in the west. Governor or bishop ? Bishop or governor ? whatever the case, Ambrose moved from being one of the three or four top administrators of the Roman state to being its chief ideologist. "As bishop of the imperial city he was thrown into close relationship with the court ...he was employed by the court on diplomatic missions on several occasions". Ambrose had "great political influence, especially in the field of church-state relationships" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*). But perhaps his greatest effect on history was through his influence on St Augustine - whose views on slavery and the Catholic Church we use to combat St Ambrose's Christian Socialism at the head of "Solon's" article in Republican News.

Augustine became a Catholic after hearing Ambrose preach in Milan. It was Ambrose who baptized him. Ambrose's idea of original sin had great influence on Augustine and from Augustine they plague us still today. As Augustine's most recent biographer in English writes, he is "the most striking representative of the Roman governing class of his age - that is, of men whose position depended less on their patrician birth than on their ability to grasp and hold power in a ruthless society". As Catholic bishop Ambrose "dominated Milan" - and thus the empire (*Peter Brown, Augustine of Hippo, Faber paperback 1969 p8*).

We ask "Solon" and the Republicans - how can you fight British imperialism all the way when you follow the teachings of one of the main leaders of Roman imperialism ? At the time when Ambrose dominated the Roman Empire, Niall of the Nine Hostages was raiding the Roman slave colony of Britain, The empire that Ambrose dominated was based on Slavery. That is where St Augustine got his ideas of slavery from.

We challenge "Solon" to find one example of how the saintly governor Ambrose tried to overthrow slavery. The truth is exactly the reverse. Those Christians who criticized the wealth of the Christian slave-masters (the Pelagians) were mercilessly crushed by church and state - the church and state of Ambrose and Augustine - often with the most brutal violence.

When the Catholic state crushed the followers of Donatus - who had dared to ask "What has the Emperor to do with the Church ?" - Augustine entered the battle as chief spokesman for the imperialists. As he admits, the Donatist peasants were "terrorized" (*Epistle 93*). The rich Catholic land-owners executed them on the spot. If they were lucky they were flogged. This was the essence of Augustine's "Apostolic discipline" (*Sermon 94*). In the words of his biographer, Augustine "was forced to rely on those who exercised real power in that rough-and-ready land - the great landowners themselves; the Catholic churches would be established near their villas and their influence, often brought to bear as directly as a good flogging administered to refractory tenants, would further the Catholic cause". (*Brown, Augustine of Hippo, p193. The Catholic historian Father David Knowles, O.S.B says this book is "in a class by itself".*) So ! - African peasants and workers were flogged into the Catholic Church; what sort of "socialism" is this ?

AS for St John Chrysostom, he was Archbishop of Constantinople - the capital of

the Roman empire in the east - at the same time as Ambrose and Augustine were busy in the west. He was a ruler of the slave system, just as they were. One quotation from Chrysostom should give an idea of the man. Like the other Christian Fathers, he hated, feared and despised women. "What else is woman but a foe to friendship, an unescapable punishment, a necessary evil, a desirable calamity, a domestic danger, a delectable detriment, an evil of nature, painted with fair colours!", he wrote in his Homilies on St Matthew. How can this be reconciled with the heroic, unflagging, self-sacrificing role of women in the national liberation struggle?

Remarks like this would sound funny, if they hadn't had such terrible consequences. This quotation was used to justify the burning of hundreds of thousands of innocent women in the European witch hunt from the 15th to the 18th centuries. The quotation appears in the 'bible' of the witch hunters, Malleus Maleficarum (The Hammer of Witches) which was published with the authority of Pope Innocent III by two Dominican priests in 1486. The second half of this book explains how suspects should be tortured in order to wring confessions out of them and then burned. As Connolly says in Labour, Nationality and Religion, the ravings of the Church Fathers against women are "like the expressions of madmen". But how can madmen be relied upon to teach socialism?

CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM - FROM CONNOLLY TO "SOLON"

Instead of simply quoting Chrysostom's remark that 'the rich man is a thief', Connolly should have looked at his views on slavery. "Hast thou purchased, hast thou bought thy slave?" Chrysostom asks these rich 'thieves'. But does he demand that they immediately set free their 'stolen goods'? Not at all. "Before all things enjoin him (the slave) what God would have him do... teach them to be religious and everything else will follow of necessity". (*Homily XXII on St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, quoted in A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, vol 15 p35*.) Not revolution but Christian slavery is the gospel of this saintly 'socialist'. How could it have been otherwise for an archbishop of the eastern capital of the Roman Empire? For these members of the Roman ruling class slavery was moral.

Marx and Engels had nothing but scorn for the writings of the Church Fathers against private property. "As the parson has ever gone hand in hand with the landlord, so has Clerical Socialism with Feudal Socialism", they wrote in the Communist Manifesto in 1848. "Nothing is easier than to give Christian asceticism a Socialist tinge. Has not Christianity declaimed against private property, against marriage, against the State? Has it not preached in the place of these, chastity and poverty, celibacy and mortification of the flesh, monastic life and Mother Church? Christian Socialism is but the holy water with which the priest consecrates the heart-burnings of the aristocrat".

"Solon's" Christian Socialism is a fraud. As late as 1565 the Catholic Church defended itself with slavery. In the great siege of Malta in 1565 - when Christ-Europe was at war with Muslim Turkey - the military arm of the Catholic Church was the monastic Order of the Knights of Saint John. They were directly under the command of the Pope. Like the feudal barons of the Crusades, they were all rich noblemen. They were religious warriors, half monk and half fighting man.

They owed their origin to the religious militarism of the Crusades. In the 12th century St. Bernard had preached war on paganism to the Knights Templars: "The soldier may securely kill, kill for Christ and more securely die. He benefits himself if he dies and Christ if he kills... In the death of the pagan the Christian is glorified because Christ is glorified" (quoted in Roland Bainton, The Penguin History of Christianity, vol 2, 1964 p24). By the 16th century the Knights of St John had turned themselves into Christian pirates. They defended Malta with a fleet of galleys operated by galley-slaves. Their fortifications were

built by slaves. The fact that the Turkish fleet was manned by Christian slaves, while the Catholic fleet was manned by Islamic slaves simply throws light on religion in general. John Martelle de Bergerac, a Frenchman who served as a galley slave, described the life of the slaves as follows. "They are chained six to a bench"; he wrote. Above them stood officers "armed with whips with which they flog the naked bodies of the slaves.....Sometimes the galley slaves row ten, twelve, or even twenty hours at a stretch, without the slightest rest or break.... . . . if one of the slaves falls exhausted over his oar (which is quite a common occurrence), he is flogged until he appears to be dead and is thrown overboard without ceremony(Quoted in *Emile Bradford, The Great Siege, the Reprint Society, London 1962. p 36 - 37*) After the defeat of the Turkish invasion fleet, Pope Pius V sent the Grand Master of the Order a Cardinal's hat in gratitude. Thus did slavery rescue the Church.

But in modern times the Church gave its blessing to slavery most clearly outside Europe. Marx once remarked that in the colonies you see the truth of the mother country. He could have said too that in the colonies you see the truth of Mother Church. As England's first colony, Ireland felt the union of colonialism and the Catholic Church in the first English invasion between 1167 and 1171. In the middle of the twelfth century St. Bernard condemned the Gaels as "Christians in name, pagans in fact." "They were not men, but beasts", he wrote in his *Life of St. Malachy*. St. Bernard was outraged because the Gaels continued to follow the Brehon Law in their marriage customs, despite seven centuries of Christianity. (See *Patrick C Power, Sex and Marriage in Ancient Ireland, Mercier Paperback, 1976.*) In 1154, a few years after Bernard's death, Pope Adrian IV gave permission to the feudal king of England for a papal crusade against the Gaels to "root out the weeds of vice". After the English King had invaded Leinster, another Pope, Alexander III gave his blessing to the conquest. For the next 400 years English rule in Ireland was Catholic rule, the authority of Rome was always on the side of the English crown. Gaels who resisted the feudal conquest were excommunicated as well as executed. Even the leader of the Scots, Robert Bruce, was excommunicated for daring to oppose the English crown. Only during the religious wars of the 16th and 17th centuries did the Papacy support Irish resistance against the throne of England - and even then Ireland was regarded only as a stepping stone towards the re-conversion of England to the Catholic Church.

At no time, even when Irish resistance was supported by a papal nuncio, did the papacy support Irish independence. At best, the papacy wanted a Catholic king upon the English throne and England over Ireland - in other words, the situation of the latter Middle Ages, all over again. The politics of the papacy was quite clearly reaction, a desire to return to the feudal monarchy of the crusades, when the power of the Church was at its height.

But it was precisely in the main century of the crusades- the twelfth - that the papacy brought Ireland under the English heel. The Catholic Church could not, and can not, escape from this contradiction. As a result, the Irish were tied to every lost cause in English politics, from Charles I to James II, to Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1746, when an Irish Brigade was wiped out at Culloden Moor. Together with the Catholic Church, the Irish were tied to a dying system of production - feudalism- and were necessarily beaten by the rising power of capitalism represented by the Protestant English bourgeoisie.

By the time of the French Revolution of 1789 however, the rising bourgeoisie had itself outgrown its early religious trappings - the Protestant clothes in which it dressed itself in England in Cromwell's day - and Christianity itself was banished from France for a number of years. In panic, the papacy made its peace with Protestant bourgeois England and together they now declared holy war upon the atheistic democracy of French Republicanism. Roman Father and English king joined hands, sinking all previous differences behind them, as in 1690 when Rome celebrated King Billy's victory on the Boyne with a Te Deum mass.

Against the tune of 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity', Roman Father and English king sang the doctrine of Religion, Monarchy, Aristocracy. Once again Ireland was betrayed by the Catholic Church. England made its peace with the papacy with the Maynooth grant of 1795 - voting the king's money to support the Irish Catholic bishops - at the same time setting up the Orange Order in the North as its twin instrument of oppression. No fifth column did more to immobilize the Irish masses in 1798 than the hierarchy.

In every struggle of the oppressed since 1798 the full weight of the papacy and its fifth column in Ireland - the Catholic hierarchy - has been thrown against the oppressed. Not a single real step forward has been made - whether in the fight for independence or the social revolution - except against the powerful opposition of the Catholic Church. Does "Solon" deny this?

The *revolutionary* policy towards the Catholic Church in Ireland, just as towards the fascist Protestant bigots in the North, is based on the lessons of history. No surrender, no compromise, merciless criticism and ruthless exposure - these are the Marxist weapons against the false friends of the working class. Will "Solon" deny that the Catholic Church must be classed in their ranks?

If the Catholic Church opposed the revolution of the radical bourgeoisie in Ireland in 1798, how much more will it not oppose the revolution of the proletariat? For exactly this reason "Solon" and Connolly's reconciliation of socialism to the Church is very dangerous. It disarms the working class at the moment of greatest danger and deceives the advance guard of the revolution as to their friends and enemies.

THE CHURCH AND COLONISATION IN AFRICA

In case the lessons of Irish history are not enough, let us look at one other country to see the class politics of the Catholic Church in action. Few countries show the union of slavery and Catholicism better than Portugal.

The Portuguese were the first European power in the modern period to enter Africa and they were the last to be kicked out. For more than 500 years the Catholic Church supported the Portuguese ruling class in its rule of blood in Africa, until the African revolutionary armies finally threw out their most Catholic enemies in 1975.

The return of the Portuguese army from Angola and Mozambique, following the soldiers' coup of April 1974, is one of the great historic events of modern history. Previously the European powers made history in Africa, now Africa makes history in Europe. Ireland has already felt the bite of this colossal 'wind of change'.

Bishop Donal Lamont arrived in Dublin in March this year after being deported from Rhodesia where a revolutionary war has been developing since 1967. Bishop Lamont's diocese was centred in Umtali, within a few miles of the border with Mozambique. After the Frelimo victory the diocese of the Catholic Irishmen came within mortar range of a black guerrilla army that had just overthrown 500 years of Catholic colonialism and slavery by the Portuguese. It is easy to see the situation that Bishop Lamont and the Catholic Church found itself in.

The African slave trade began when capitalism was in its youth, just before the rounding of the Cape and the discovery of America. The first black slaves were brought to Europe in 1442 by sailors working for the Portuguese prince Henry the Navigator. Conquest followed. In 1454 Pope Nicholas V declared that

the conquered territories in Africa belonged to the king of Portugal, in the papal bull Romanus Pontifex. He authorized King Alphonsus to subdue other countries and islands in Africa and India; on one condition - that the African victims of papal generosity be christianized. In this way Christianity entered West Africa through conquest, with the sword in the hand of the European slave master. More than a thousand years earlier Saint Augustine had brought the Catholic message to the Donatist peasants of North Africa in the same way. As Augustine put it, slavery is God's punishment on the sinner and "the rod has its own kind of charity" (*Contra epistolam Parmeniani III, i, 3. quoted in Brown, p223*).

By 1492 Columbus had arrived in the islands of the West Indies and the modern era of capitalism became firmly established. The American Indians of the Caribbean were immediately enslaved in the frantic hunt for gold. Columbus's employers, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain, made a fortune. When Queen Isabella consulted the Church about the ethics of slavery the theologians replied that the Church had never condemned it. By that time the Spanish and Portuguese conquistadores had already nearly exterminated the American Indian peoples of the Caribbean. The cross and the steel sword entered America together. The Church blessed the State and the State financed the Church. Pope Alexander VI drew a line down the middle of the world from the North Pole to the South Pole (in the bull Inter Caeterae divinae of 1493) and said that the eastern half should belong to Portugal and the western half to Spain. Most of America went to the Spanish crown, which in turn financed the Catholic mission in America. The Christian religion reached the American Indians with these words:

"God the Lord has delegated to Peter and his successors all power over all people of the earth, so that all people must obey the successor of Peter. Now one of these popes has made a gift of the newly discovered islands and countries to the kings of Spain... You are therefore required to recognize the holy Church as mistress and ruler of the whole world and to pay homage to the Spanish king as your new lord. Otherwise, we shall, with God's help, proceed against you with violence and force you under the yoke of the Church and the king, treating you as rebellious vassals deserve to be treated. We shall take your property away from you and make your women and children slaves. At the same time, we solemnly declare that only you will be to blame for the bloodshed and the disaster that will overtake you."

(Quoted in Dr. Joachim Kahl, The Misery of Christianity, Pelican 1971 p48-49)

A Dominican priest, Bartholeme de las Casas, revealed to the world what was done to the people of the West Indies in the name of Mother Church. As Dr. Kahl points out, this was 'in a word, the mass murder of twenty thousand Indians. Those who were not massacred at once died later in the goldmines, the pearl fisheries and the plantations. There was an endless succession of the most horrifying crimes. Indians were impaled, hanged or slowly burnt alive, or had their hands, feet, ears and other parts of their bodies cut off" (Kahl, op. cit. p49). Indians were crucified 13 at a time - to commemorate Christ and the 12 apostles! Whole populations committed mass suicide. The living stopped having children. They preferred the death of their race to life under their most Christian masters. So much for the Catholic doctrine that "Human Life is Sacred", as the Irish bishops continually tell us. This is the historical reality behind the plague of Catholic 'Third World' charity organisations such as Caritas, Gorta, Concern, Trocaire and so on, which combine Christian penance with sermons on poverty. They are all a pious fraud, hiding the bloody hands of a colonialist slave-master Church beneath white cassocks and well-fed smiles. Needless to say, the Protestant missions in North America and Southern Africa - as in Ireland - were no less carnivorous.

After blessing the destruction of the American Indians - summed up in the choice which the Church offered the Inca Atahualpa, of being burned as a pagan or garrotted as a Catholic - the Church now helped the slave-masters to throw their misfortune upon the people of Africa. The Dominican priest Las Casas was horrified at the genocide of the American Indians. He appealed for an end to

the slavery of the native peoples of America. But without slavery how were the Spanish and Portuguese colonialists to work their plantations? Las Casas' answer - which corresponded exactly to the interests of the slave owners, who had all but exhausted their native supply of slaves - was to import healthy, robust slaves from Africa. In 1517, his most Catholic Emperor, Charles V authorised the export of 15,000 African slaves to the Caribbean island of San Domingo - named after St. Dominic, who paved the way for the Inquisition and launched the massacre of the Albigensian heretics of southern France in the 13th century, the beloved century of the Church. In this way "priest and king launched on the world the American slave trade and slavery." (C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins*, Vintage Books, 1963. p 4)

Christian slavery continued on the American continent for 350 years more or less. Slavery was the foundation of capitalist economy in America North and South for more than three quarters of the time since Columbus arrived in 1492. It was not Christian philanthropy that ended black slavery either. As C.L.R. James shows in *The Black Jacobins* - a Marxist history of the slave war on Haiti from 1789 to 1805 - the first black slaves to break the chains of Las Casas and Charles V freed themselves in the greatest and only successful slave revolution in history. Christian philanthropy followed lamely behind the armed slaves, terrified that the message of slave war might spread. In North America, slavery generally wore a Protestant face; in South and Central America it was universally Catholic; everywhere it was Christian.

In Africa too, Christianity and slavery supported each other. Soon after 1500 Portuguese slave-owners began producing sugar on the plantation system on an island off the west coast of Africa called Sao Thome - (named after the angelic doctor - "Doctor Angelicus" - of the Catholic Church, St. Thomas Aquinas), the plantation owners held their lands in fief from the King of Portugal, who in turn held his (in theory) from the Pope. In one form or another, openly or more or less hidden, the system continued throughout the Portuguese territories in Africa until overthrown by the black revolutionaries themselves in the 1970s. Right on the eve of the revolutionary wars that destroyed 500 years of Portuguese colonialism, a former inspector general of the Portuguese colonies wrote: " At present practically the entire economy of Angola, Mozambique and Sao Thome is based on forced labour". (*Henrique Galvae, 1961. quoted in Basil Davidson's In the Eye of the Storm, Angola's People. Penguin 1975, p. 107*)

Throughout this time the Catholic Church was completely identified with the colonialist regime. For nearly 400 of these years it was a slave-owning Church. Undisguised, open, frank and honest slavery continued until 1878, when it was abolished in legal fiction and continued in fact under the form of "contract labour". An English Bourgeois critic of Portuguese colonialism, Basil Davidson, explains that : "the Church was also part of the system, and could not exist outside it . Almost from the first Bishops and lower clergy alike had their quota of slaves who worked in fields and gardens, performed domestic service, carried the litters in which their reverend masters moved about on such journeys as they cared to undertake.....By the end of the seventeenth century all missionary orders working in Angola were supported to some extent by slavery: by revenue, that is, from dealing with slaves by one means or another. Occasionally the crown granted them special privileges. Establishing a Junta of Missions at Luanda in 1693, the crown assigned it the right to 700 slaves, at the going rate, for its financial support. Thereafter the missionary traffic assumed wider dimensions, others profiting in the same way." The result was that by 1800, missionary effort was universally subsidised by slaving." (*Basil Davidson quotes an American scholar who published this report in 1933:*

"On the wharf at Luanda, as late as 1870, there could still be seen a marble chair in which the bishop had sat and baptized by boat-loads the poor wretches as they rowed alongside the ship. The Government collected its tax, the pious ecclesiastic received his fee, and the slaves had their first introduction to the white man's religion".

(*J.T.Tucker, in Davidson, p97*)

There you have the fulfilment of St Augustine, the African bishop, in Africa. From the theory and practice of slavery in the Roman empire to the theory and practice of Christianity in the Portuguese Empire. If Protestantism shows its slave essence in Ireland, Catholicism reveals its inner secret in the African colonies of Portugal. (A Portuguese Jesuit missionary on the coast of Angola actually incited the colonialists to invade. Father Gouveia, who was stationed at the capital of the King of Ndongo, wrote to Lisbon that the only way seriously to convert the African heathens was to subject them to Portuguese rule. He said that the Portuguese king should give exemplary punishment to the insolent pagans and show once and for all that he was the real mast of all Africa. See Davidson, op.cit., p81)

As for the Capuchins, the most 'national' of all the religious orders in Ireland, they demonstrated the imperialist character of the Church when they burned a young African woman in Angola in 1706. This woman, Chimpa Vita, or Ana Beatrice to the Portuguese, was an African Joan of Arc. She had proclaimed herself as the reincarnation of St Anthony and called on the Kongo people to reassert the dignity and independence of their ancient kingdom after invading Portuguese had trampled both beneath their soldiers' heels" (Davidson, p55)

Chimpa Vita died in the flames while Fr Lorenzo da Lucca held his crucifix above her, because she taught the black slaves of the Capuchins that Jesus, Mary and St Francis were black. She said that this black Jesus had been born first south of the Congo River at the old capital of the Kongo people (re-named to Salvador - Saint Saviour(!) - by their Christian conquerors).

What have the Irish Capuchins to say about this? How can Father Piaras Duill be close to the Provisional movement and still remain a member of this order? Was the martyrdom of Chimpa Vita at the hands of colonialism and religious bigotry in 1706 any different from that of Archbishop Oliver Plunkett, executed in 1681? Was Fr da Lucca any less a murderer than the Protestant teachers of Irish history? What kind of liberation can the Capuchins fight for? For the martyred Chimpa Vita ideas like hers continued in Angola for 250 years and inspired one of the forerunners of the great insurrection of 1961. That insurrection not only drove out the Portuguese colonialists but also defeated the C.I.A.-backed mercenary invasion of 1976. How can a Capuchin be a resolute friend of liberation in Ireland when his order burned the apostles of revolution in Africa?

An old African saying in southern Africa once summed up the role of religion in the enslavement of the Africans. 'When the white men came, we had the land and they had the Bible. Now we have the Bible and they have the land'. That was before the revolutionary liberation of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea and St Thomas. Once the enslaved workers and peasants have reconquered the land, however, it is a short step for them to get rid of the Bible of their former masters too. How will capitalism survive the destruction of Imperialism in Africa? - whines the bourgeois liberal. How will Christianity survive the uprooting of the colonialist Church? - whines the clerical international. Far from being compatible with "the men of no property", the Catholic Church owned men property! Therefore it must disappear along with private property.

This explains the dilemma of Bishop Lamont, as he went about his diocesan duties in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) within a few miles of the guerrilla camps in Mozambique. The Church entered Africa as an agent of colonialism. Will it be kicked together with its paymaster? Catholic missionaries and priests in Mozambique received their salaries directly from the imperialist state. The relations between the Catholic Church and the Portuguese state were fixed in 1940 and 1941 - when the fascist warmachine in Europe was at its greatest strength - a Concordat and Missionary Agreements between the Vatican and Portuguese Catholicism. Article 82 of the Missionary Statute Decree-law of 1941 stated: "The Authorities...shall give all the help...that the development and

progress of Catholic missionary action necessitates, in harmony with their national and civilizing aim" (quoted in *Mozambique: Memoirs of a Revolution*, by Archdeacon John Paul, Penguin, 1975, p66).

Through this agreement, diocesan bishops had the same rank and authority as district governors and both received the same salary from the fascist state. The salary of the Cardinal of Lourenco Marques (now renamed Maputo) was equal to that of the Governor-General. Article 68 of the Missionary Statute of 1941 agreed to by the Vatican stated that "Native education will conform to the doctrinal orientation established by the Political Constitution" and would teach "the acquisition of habits and aptitudes for work". Since a vast proportion of the revenue of the Portuguese state was squeezed out of the labour of the workers and peasants in Africa, the Catholic Church in the Portuguese colonies was supported by the exploited masses which it instructed "to work". (quoted in *Antonio De Figuerida : Fifty Years of Dictatorship*, Penguin 1975, p79).

(By its Concordat and the Missionary Agreement and Statute of 1940 and 1941 the Vatican directly set the seal of papal approval on Portuguese imperialism and the system of forced labour. As Galvao, the former High Inspector of Colonial Administration, wrote in 1961, "only the dead are exempt from forced labour". Twenty years after the Concordat Galvao stated: "There are employers who let as many as 35 percent of the workers, supplied by government agents, die during what is called the period of 'contract work'," (in *De Figueiredo, op.cit.*, p97-191).

Just as Cardinal Spellman of New York blessed the US invasion of Vietnam, so the Catholic Church in the Portuguese colonies in Africa threw its weight against the revolution. Padre Machado, the vicar-general of the diocese of Nampula, opened a naval base in Mozambique as follows: 'Christ led our people to plant His cross in this place many centuries ago and now with the national flag about to be raised no doubt can remain among those who have wished to deprive the Portuguese of their divinely chosen role in this part of Africa. Viva Portugal !' The priest then blessed the imperialist flag, which was then hoisted reverently by imperialist troops (quoted in *Paul op.cit.* p88)

The leader of Portuguese fascism who was thrown out of power in the armed forces coup of April 1974 was Professor Marcello Caetano, a former law professor. He had been responsible for the colonialist wars in Africa since before the death of his old colleague and teacher, the former dictator Antonio Salazar. Caetano's troops were responsible for the massacre at Wiriyamu in Mozambique which brought world attention to the atrocities of the fascists in Africa. This is how Caetano summed up the exploitation of African workers and peasants under the forced labour regime of Portuguese and international capital: "The blacks must be seen as productive elements organized, or to be organized, in an economy directed by whites." (from a course of lectures in B52 - B53, quoted by Davidson, *op.cit.* p.81). That is exactly how the Catholic Missions saw their "National and civilizing aim". As the Archdeacon Paul points out "It was the duty of the State, together with the Church, to teach (by force if necessary) "the native" the "dignity of work". This in fact meant that the authorities could seize anyone, at any time, and force him to work for them or for some middle man". (Paul, *op.cit.* p 67-68). The result was that "many Roman Catholic missionaries in Mozambique had the reputation among the oppressed and exploited African masses of being more concerned with making money from what they produced in their fields, than with their work of education." (Paul, *op.cit.* p.54). Archdeacon Paul quotes an example of this sort of clerical capitalism from his experience of 13 years of missionary work in northern Mozambique. During the last five of these years, the revolutionary war led by Frelimo was gaining strength in the area of his mission. Padre Camillo of the Unango Mission he reports, was even charged in the colonialist courts with assaulting two African peasant boys. "The Unango Mission was one of the worst examples of a mission involving itself in commerce," writes Archdeacon Paul. "It was situated in very fertile country, and the pupils at the school spent as much time working in the mission fields as they did in the classroom. This brought

Padre Camillo into almost immediate conflict. . . . with the local Portuguese farmers, who did not have unlimited free labour at their disposal; and who could not afford, as could the Mission, to sell things in shops at such low prices." (Paul op cit. p.68) Teaching the "dignity" of slave labour is one thing, but practising it is another: The Unango Mission must be given the credit for practising what the Church preaches. "The Word was made flesh, and the Word was flesh" and the Word was Padre Camillo and his cash register. "The Unango Mission made great material profits," comments the Archdeacon.

This was exactly the function of the Catholic Church in Portuguese fascism. Its role was to assist the capitalist class to hold down the working class, both in Portugal and Africa, and thus to maximise the amount of surplus value wrung out of the "productive elements", as Caetano called the working class. Caetano himself defined the relationship between the Catholic Church and political reaction in Portugal when he was a young fascist militant. He was editor of a fascist magazine called *Ordem Nova* (New Order) which carried on the front page of its first issue the following set of principles: "An anti-modern, anti-liberal, anti-democratic, anti-bourgeois, and anti-bolshevik magazine; counter-revolutionary and reactionary; Catholic Apostolic and Roman; monarchist, intolerant and intransigent..." (Quoted in de Figueiredo, p.57). The only false statement in this frank and open statement of fascist principles was that the fascist movement in Portugal was "anti-bourgeois". Caetano himself proved very clearly by his own career that fascism is the tool, the weapon of the capitalists. The "anti-bourgeois" slogan was pure rhetoric, used by all fascists everywhere, including Hitler's National Socialists, in order to create the fiction that the nation is above classes.

Salazar himself expressed the truth about the role of the Catholic Church in policing the proletariat in a study which he wrote as a young fascist ideologist called 'The Peace of Christ among the Working Class'. That was his name for the fascist dictatorship that seized power in 1926, overthrowing the bourgeois republic. As de Figueiredo points out, "the Vatican, through its influential connections with Catholic kings and governments and many friends in the international press" helped to "bring discredit upon republican Portugal" (p43).

The Catholic movement in Portugal was not just an anti-working class but an anti-republican movement, just as it was in Italy when Catholic hierarchy organised an Irish brigade led by Catholic priests to fight against the Italian republicans under Garibaldi in the 1860's, or in Spain in the 1930's when the Irish hierarchy united with the Blueshirts to send Irish young men to fight the Spanish republic.

Salazar's idea of the fascist structure of rule was taken straight from the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. "I do not believe in universal suffrage.." he said in an interview in 1954. "I do not believe in equality but in hierarchy". Salazar received these ideas in the seminary where he was educated, he publicized them in the Catholic study group of which he was secretary under the republic - The Academic Centre of Christian Democracy - and they received their finished form as the doctrine of the state with the Concordat of 1940.

In Africa the victims of Salazar's imperialism were continually taught that 'being Portuguese and being Catholic are one and the same thing', as the assassinated Frelimo leader, Eduardo Mondlane, explained (quoted by Paul, p61). Now that the victims of colonialism have turned themselves into the revolutionary masters of their own lives, why should they forget this lesson of their former masters, who are now their victims? Is the Catholic Church in Southern Africa any less colonialist now that colonialism has been defeated in the former colonies of Portugal?

The rise of the revolution in Africa explains the Church's attempt to separate itself from the fascist regime in Rhodesia and South Africa. On the one hand, as Bishop Lamont explains, the Church "clearly rejects national guerrilla violence" - the only weapon of the oppressed against the combined forces of the

capitalist, the slave-driver, the secret police, the terror squads of the invader's army. On the other hand, the good Bishop criticizes the imperialist regime because it creates its opposite, the proletarian revolution. "Far from your policies defending Christianity and Western civilization, as you claim," he protested against the Smith dictatorship, "they make Communism attractive to the African people" (*Irish Times*, 17 February 1977). Bishop Lamont shows that the Church shares the same aim as the Smith regime; it differs only in method. Each accuses the other of hastening the progress of their common enemy, the communist revolution. We could paraphrase Marx's and Engel's words in the opening passage of the Communist Manifesto, written in 1848:

"Aspectre is haunting Africa - the spectre of Communism. All the Powers of old Africa have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: Pope and Queen, Bishop Lamont and Jan Amith, English liberals and South African police spies.

Where is the party in opposition that has not been decried as Communistic by its opponents in power? Where is the Opposition that has not hurled back the branding reproach Communism against the more advanced opposition parties, as well as against its reactionary adversaries?"

THE CHURCH'S DESPERATE BID FOR SURVIVAL - ITS PHONEY "CONCERN"

In so far as the Catholic Church is now moving into conflict with the ruling parties in Southern Africa, it is in exactly the same position as the 'opposition' in the Communist Manifesto. After the collapse of their strongest power base in the former Portuguese colonies, the only role left to the Catholic Church in Southern Africa is that of 'opposition' - apparently to racist terror but in reality to Communism.

With Irish bishops at its head, it tries to cover up its Portuguese past with liberal criticism of the Protestant bigotry in racist South Africa and Rhodesia. A fascist face in Catholic territories, a liberal face in Protestant ones - the role was exactly reversed by the Protestant missions which were liberal in the Catholic colonies and are mostly fascist in the Calvinist ones.

Here we come back to Father Faul. His politics in Ireland are the same as those of Bishop Lamont in Southern Africa. Both priests have worked on the border between the Protestant and Catholic provinces of imperialism, at a time when the world proletarian revolution is winning tremendous victories. Their job is to defend the indefensible. But how can capitalism be defended where its rule has been one long reign of terror? And how can capitalism be preserved where the oppressed have risen up in arms against imperialism and are smashing it down with terrible blows?

Obviously in this situation, an open defence of reaction has great dangers for the future of the Church and the system it defends, This was the weakness of the Catholic Church in Mozambique and Angola. It exposed its slave essence too clearly. Therefore, the Church divides its forces. The main body of the Church throws its strength openly against the revolution, while a small minority of priests criticize the open horrors of the regime and attempt to associate themselves with the future victory of the revolution. In this way the Church works to preserve the past even in the future.

But inconsistency is the name of the game. Nobody can eliminate the contradictions of capitalism, least of all in a period of revolution. The Church, which pretends to stand above the contradictions of mere mortal, earthly, material class society, must necessarily reflect these contradictions like any other human organisation. Consequently, the reactionary politics of the Church never take a long time to reappear from behind the liberal features of the "good priest".

Father Faul has done a great service to the working class in Ireland by his attack on class-warfare (not the class-warfare of the exploiting classes of course - Christianity has always blessed that kind of warfare.) He has helped to expose the myth of the "good priest".

The Catholic Church, after all, is one organisation, tightly controlled from top to bottom - that is what hierarchy is all about. Father Faul has shown that his politics are exactly the same as that of the joint pastoral statement of the Irish Catholic hierarchy of 10 October 1922, which put the Church firmly behind the Free Staters and British imperialism. "Such being divine law, the guerrilla warfare now being carried on by the Irregulars is without moral sanction....murder before God.... robbery ... criminal destruction... a grievous crime" (*Irish Catholic Directory, 1923, 610*)

There speaks the voice of Padre Machado in Mozambique, the voice of Saint Augustine, the voice of Saint Paul - *the authentic voice of the Catholic Church.*

"Solon's" great weakness, which is the weakness of all republican and socialist politics in Ireland up to now, is that he dares not admit this. He imagines himself to be more Christian than the Church. But the Church cannot be taught theology. How can the working class come to victory in Ireland if it dares not expose its enemies? And especially an enemy that has such a powerful influence on all social life in Ireland, including the thinking of the working class itself.

The Catholic Church in Ireland is a mighty instrument of capitalist and imperialist propaganda, with thousands of highly trained and paid officers (the priests) and thousands of schools, pulpits, publications and organisations through which to influence the workers' thoughts. It is the biggest political party in the country, with the greatest international and national experience and the most complete *philosophy*.

It is one of the biggest property-owners in the country. Until the revolutionary party completely replaces the Church in the consciousness of the advanced section of the working class, there can be no revolution that is completely successful. That is the lesson of the defeat of the struggles in 1922.

Revolution has nothing in common with the Church. There is nothing more opposite to a Lenin, a Trotsky, or even a Connolly than the typical priest.

The revolutionary socialist struggles to enlarge the worker's hatred of capitalism, to expand it, to organise it, to give it strategy and tactics and a clear view of the end of the struggle. The priest tries to calm down the worker, to pacify him, to make him content with his lot. The priest, who belongs very firmly to this world, tries to persuade the worker to accept this world with all its criminal misery and brutality. The revolutionary fights to change this world, to overthrow it here and now and replace it with a better one. When the revolutionary shouts "forward!", the Church calls "stop!".

Nothing could be more foreign to the communist's unshakeable optimism for the future - based on the scientific socialism of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky - than the sour pessimism of the priest who has no answer for the people's problems other than a sigh and a prayer! Prayer or revolution - the working class will make its material choice.

Only with a perspective based on the philosophical conquests of Marxism, represented today by the International Committee of the Fourth International, can the revolutionary vanguard overcome the grip of capitalist ideology, in all its forms - religious and political - on the revolutionary movement. The Workers' League, Irish section of the I.C.F.I., puts forward this pamphlet as part of the struggle to develop that perspective.

We invite all workers and republicans to discuss the issues raised here.

FORWARD TO THE UNITED SOCIALIST SECULAR IRELAND ?!!

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