

the starry **Plough**

**BRIT
OUT!**



self determination

IRSP ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



STARRY PLOUGH EDITORIAL



August 14th marks the 20th anniversary of the arrival of British troops on the streets of the six counties. Whilst many Catholics welcomed their arrival after being subjected to daily attacks from rampaging loyalist mobs, many recognised that far from the Brits playing a peace keeping role, they would, in the not too distant future, use brute force to put down any resistance to the British state.

Over the last twenty years, the nationalist community has been subjected to every weapon in the British arsenal. But the history of the working class during this period has not just been one of brutal repression, but of a heroic working class fighting back, taking blow for blow and often giving six in return. They have thrown everything at us, and yet the resilience of the people has been shown time and time again. But is this enough, how nearer are the Brits to withdrawing than say 10 years ago?

The reality is that whilst an active section of the people continue to resist, the vast majority of the working class, whilst wanting a British withdrawal, do not feel they have a role to play in the struggle. Gone are the days when the people came out and followed the Brits around the streets, blowing whistles and banging bin lids, gone are the days when the community actively organised to protect themselves against loyalist murder gangs. We have become passive, entrenched in a protracted long war mentality, steeped in old ideas. Military force alone is not going to get the British out, on the other hand its a powerful weapon in the hands of a strong working class movement both north and south. So what has gone wrong?

It is clear that its not enough to say Brits out. It does not inject any powerful feeling into the struggle when the present leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle state that after a British intent to withdraw the representatives of the various political bourgeois parties, the church, trade union movement etc. will sit down at a constitutional conference and decide the future of the Irish people. The same people who have sold the struggle down the river, who represent the interest of capital, how do they represent the Irish people, the vast majority who are working class? Is that goal worth fighting for, dying for?

The working class are not only suffering under British repression, but under capitalism as a whole. The capitalist system by its very nature thrives on greed and profit for the few, and the workers who provide the profit in the first place are forced to pay, with cuts in wages, high unemployment etc. So we are not only fighting to get the Brits out but our goal has to be the overthrow of the present corrupt system and to replace it with socialism. That is the only basis on which the working class as a whole will mobilise and play an active part in the national liberation struggle, as it is clearly in their interest to do so.

But it is not enough to mobilise the working class in the six counties, if we are to win we have to mobilise the working class on a 32 county basis. It is a sad fact that workers in the south do not see any relationship with what is happening to them and the struggle in the 6 counties against British imperialism. The economics of both North and South are dominated by imperialism which has succeeded in dividing the workers through partition.

Part of the reason for this is the effect of powerful propaganda by the ruling class but a contributory factor is that the national struggle is being led by petty bourgeois nationalists who are incapable of mobilising workers due to the lack of any coherent socialist content in their theory and practice. A genuine socialist leadership of the national struggle would be able to link the national and class struggle and show that they are in essence the same struggle.

The I.R.S.P. is the only revolutionary socialist party in Ireland who is trying to build a genuine communist party, that recognises that the fight for national liberation and socialism are part of the same struggle. It is only by building such a party that can give direction and leadership to the working class that the struggle for national liberation and socialism can be won.

THE I.R.S.P

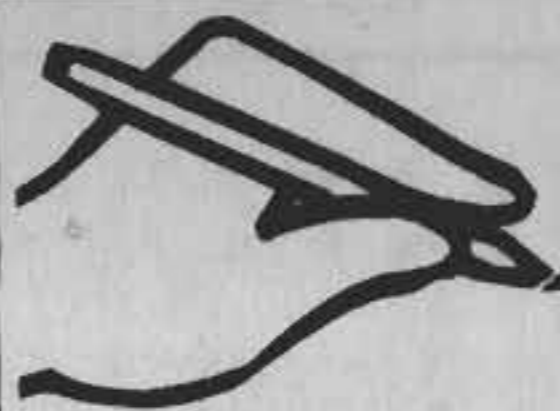
Please send me more information about the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

Name:

Address:

SEND TO: Secretary, I.R.S.P., 392 Falls Rd., Belfast 12,

Ireland.



Right To Work?

Dear Editor,
Letters to *An Camcheachta* numbers 4 and 5 have raised a very important issue for Irish Revolutionary socialists: what attitude should be adopted towards Loyalist-protestant workers?

P. Doyle initiated the debate with a provocative letter, saying that "only on the basis of non-sectarian employment policy is it of any benefit to the Irish working class as a whole that they (Harland and Wolff and Short Bros) remain open." William Stewart's response is that 'real' socialists must recognise the right to work of everyone. He charges P. Doyle with "calling for workers to be thrown on the scrapheap" and asks "are hardship and unemployment the methods advocated by real socialists" to break generations of pro-imperialist conditioning?

"True, the big industries have a bad record as regards sectarianism and links with British imperialism, but since when did two wrongs make a right?" is his supposed justification for what? - supporting the present set up. William Stewart's position is totally unacceptable to socialists and republicans on two grounds. Firstly, it is dishonest and, secondly it is based on a false premise.

P. Doyle did not call for, or advocate, the collapse/shut down of the shipyards but welcomed this development as an expression of the decline of British imperialism. He/she was reacting to a situation which arose independently of his/her wishes. That Thatcherism no longer wishes, or is forced, to end the subsidisation of these particular jobs (costing £20,000 per worker in subsidies) is itself a weakening blow to loyalism. It brings home to these workers that the object of their alleged loyalty, the United Kingdom, the Queen, Parliament etc. regards them just as expendable as workers of any other creed.

The question was posed and I challenge William Stewart to answer it. Of what benefit has the existence of Harland and Wolfe been to the objective of a United socialist Ireland? (which is how I interpret the interests of the 'Irish working class as a whole').

While awaiting his reply I would like to deal with that part of his letter based on an incorrect understanding of the 'right to work' and socialism.

The demand for the right-to-work is based on the dependence of workers in capitalist society on a wage-income for economic survival. It is not the case that socialists seek the right extended to everyone. We do, and should advocate the scrapheap for such as the police, army, prison warders, judges, etc. We do not support the right-to-work of individuals or sections of workers whose social-political role is counter to the interests of the class as a whole, for example scabs and racists (South African white workers).

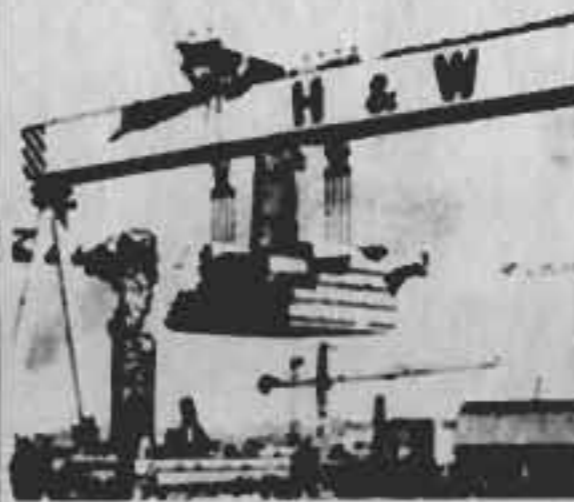
In the context of the six counties, the loyalist-protestant workers' right to work in institutions such as these is a denial of the same right for nationalist-Catholic workers. For William Stewart to counterpose

the abstract, generalised formula of 'right to work for everyone' is simply a capitulation and coverup of the existing discrimination practised by the loyalists with the connivance of the British state and the I.C.T.U.

Finally, 'real' socialists are for the right to work for all workers but do not pander to the backward anti-socialist, anti-unity, political outlook of a minority. We say to these workers, yes, we defend your rights as workers but not your sectarian privileges; we will support your struggle for these rights - but not at the expense of our rights and of the struggle for the Socialist Republic.

D. MacBride.

Bastion Of Sectarian Privilege



A Chara,

In the last edition of the paper (*An Camcheachta* No. 5) William Stewart in a letter accuses me of not being serious about socialism and wishing to inflict unemployment and hardship on loyalist workers. He wrongly asserts "two wrongs don't make a right" - meaning I am equally as wrong as the loyalists. Presumably he is attributing to me the outlook of Irish nationalism which according to the loyalist siege mentality is a besieging force seeking to impose "starvation and deprivation" on protestants. However, instead of comparing me to James II at the gates of Derry, William Stewart uses the more up to date but equally as absurd analogy of "Pol Pot" in his misconstrued opposition to my letter.

Contrary to William Stewart's own sweeping assertions, it is precisely because I am serious about socialism that I say; we (socialists) should not support any campaign which seeks to maintain the status quo in Harland & Wolff or Shorts. As they are presently constituted these industries are a bastion of sectarian privilege. They represent the political and economic interest of British imperialism in Ireland. The industries are organised in such a way as to deny the right to work of Irish workers - except for loyalists. For socialists the complete dismantling of the sectarian employment policy should be a condition of support for jobs in these industries.

In his letter William Stewart appears to echo the Stick, C.P.I. and trade union bureaucracy camp. These people who prostrate before loyalism in their effort to maintain the status-quo are sometimes given to hysterical denunciation of anyone who questions their bankrupt political philosophy and they attempt to do this in the name of socialism. However on examination their politics are revealed as reformist imperialist economism.

In my previous letter it was my intention to make a contribution towards political clarity in the revolutionary socialist movement on these matters.

I believe we need to relieve ourselves from the burden of appeasement to the prejudices of loyalist workers.

Loyalism will crumble when the masses of the Irish working class rally to the cause of socialism. In the meantime the tactics and

strategy of a revolutionary socialist party should be based on a thoroughly anti-imperialist socialist programme without accommodating to pro-imperialist elements.

P. Doyle.

Ultra-Leftist?

Dear Editor,

There are two things which are worth comment in Sean Breen's letter (S.P.5); both are highly confusing. On the one hand he claims to agree "in an abstract sense" with what I say; and on the other hand appears to be attempting to graft Lenin on to a call for support for the Communist Party of Ireland!

- He sees "Time To Go" as a "good thing" with reformist tendencies in the leadership. How advocating the "arming of the 26 county government" as does Bob Rowthorn can be construed as reformist I don't know. It is totally reactionary and displays a belief that a strong 26 county government (either Fianna Fail or Fianna Gael) takeover of the 6 counties will leave Ireland safe for capitalism. How this can be construed as anything other than pro-imperialist is beyond me.

Comrade Breen also tells me to deal in realities: realities are the facts, the L.C.I. for all its good intentions has absolutely no influence on the central leadership anymore than the constituency Labour parties have - look at what happened in Vauxhall where the C.L.P. was over-ruled and the leadership imposed a candidate of its own. He is also well aware of the realities of the progressive "Holy Trinity" towards the I.R.S.P. not to mention other progressives who look for a wide base such as the Birmingham Hunger Strike committee, the Bands' Alliance etc. etc.

If Comrade Breen sees my views as "ultra-left" then he has been too long involved with such people and has lost his communist revolutionary identity (and I presume he had one). There are "communists" such as those in and around the "Morning Star" who see Gusto Spence as a progressive. His type of progressive Unionism "represents" the U.V.F. - not exactly the paragon of socialist values nor indeed "well meaning people."

The I.R.S.P. welcomes activities in Britain in support of withdrawal. It is certainly not ignoring the "Time To Go" campaign nor attempting to restrict the base of support for withdrawal, on certain specific issues united fronts are and will be necessary. What I attempted to do as an Irish revolutionary communist was to point out the shortcomings of "Time To Go" and how it is misleading people. The "Hands Off Ireland" initiative for all its warts is an anti-imperialist intervention and will be on the "Time To Go" march. It is an intervention without the futile entryism advocated by comrade Breen.

If comrade Breen agrees in an abstract sense with what I said, does he mean that theoretically I am right but in practice wrong? He says I should not ask communists to support armed struggle, and then attempts funny wonders with Lenin that he advocated support by communists of the oppressor country for the national liberation struggle of the oppressed colony, which at times such as now in Ireland, involves armed struggle. In giving solidarity to the national liberation struggle communists should not support a specific tactic or group as comrade Glenn implies with the exception of the communist organisation in

that colony." So for national liberation and socialism, support the C.P.I!

The I.R.S.P. does not see anything ultra leftist in building a principled solidarity movement such as that organised by communists in the 1920's. We as communists are struggling not only for the national liberation of Ireland but also the victory of the working class in Ireland against capitalism. We make no apology for this, no matter if it appears "ultra-leftist" to those in the centre.

It is a measure of the watering down of communist principles over the decades that someone who claims to be a communist can produce such ill-considered rubbish.

Francis Glenn

For The Class By The Class



In reply to a letter by P. Clancy, 'An Camcheachta', who argued that the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' does not exist in Russia, Francis Glenn asserts that it does and furthermore as classes do not exist it is by definition a socialist state etc.

Rather than enter the rhetorical arena and simply take sides in the seemingly eternal debate between the state capitalists and the degenerated worker's state theorists, let's examine a key phrase which both adversaries employ to justify their respective positions, i.e. the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat."

What did Marx actually mean by it, and more importantly when, rather than if, did Lenin's interpretation fundamentally depart from that of Marx?

Many choose to believe that Lenin stood on Marx's shoulders, or if he did not, Lenin's vision of the future was perhaps superior to that of Marx, but what can no longer be in dispute is that on this vital question choice is necessary. It is not a case of Marx and Lenin but quite simply Marx or Lenin.

Before we examine Lenin's theory on the Dictatorship of the Proletariat let's first explore Marx's theory. The first shock is to discover that old Karl didn't have one. He lent the phrase no particular significance. In the two decades before the Paris Commune there was not a single case of Marx's use of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, instead he always referred to the 'rule' of the proletariat, conquest of political power, workers state, and similar expressions to denote the assumption of state power by the working class.

Due to confusion within his own circle Marx explained in 1875 what he meant by the term, unfortunately the explanation was regrettably brief "Between the capitalist and the communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. To make this there corresponds a political transition period

whose state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat." (1) According to Marx "A workers state can be nothing but a dictatorship of the proletariat", in other words the two are synonymous. As we shall see Lenin's understanding was vitally different.

When Marx died in 1883 the term had not come up for 8 years and it was another 7 years before it appeared again, under Engel's name defending Marx's 'Critique of the Gotha Program' against attacks from right wingers in the German SDP. Engels wrote "of late the Social Democratic philistines have once more been filled with wholesome terror at the phrase dictatorship of the proletariat. Well and good gentlemen, do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like. Look at the Paris commune. That was the dictatorship of the proletariat." No ambiguity there. (2).

This caused consternation. How could the Commune be a dictatorship, if it did obviously take dictatorial steps. Many wondered was this indeed Engel's own invention, perhaps neither he nor Marx actually understood Marxism.

Blinded by their own prejudice they could not accept the simple truth. For Marx and Engels from the beginning to the end of their careers and without exception, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat meant nothing more and nothing less than the rule of the proletariat, the conquest of political power by the working class, the establishment of a worker's state in the immediate post-revolutionary period. It did not mean the rule of one man, clique, band or party. It means the rule of class. Class rule means class dictatorship by the class not over the class.

The standard anti-democratic definition was first introduced formally not by Lenin as myth has it but by Plekhanov, future Menshevik theoretician, who wrote it into the party program of the Russian Social Democratic Party in 1902. Though it was generally assumed and accepted that the "Dictatorship" meant only the suppressive function of the new state, it was left to Lenin to explain why this might be necessary. "If we really knew positively that the petty bourgeoisie will support the proletariat in the accomplishment of its, the proletariat's, revolution, it would be pointless to speak of "dictatorship" for we would be guaranteed so overwhelming a majority that we could get on very well without a dictatorship." (3)

Therefore if the revolution commanded the support of the immense majority then dictatorship would be necessary, so what Lenin clearly understood by the term was a dictatorship of the minority. It goes without saying that this was a complete negation of Marx.

He 'advanced' on this basis from the dictatorship of the people to the dictatorship of the "revolutionary people."

"Why only of the revolutionary and not the whole people? Because among the whole people constantly suffering most cruelly from the brutalities of (the Cossacks) there are some who are physically cowed and terrified degenerated by bad theories that prevent them from fighting or by prejudice, habit, routine or, for others, simply cowardice". (4)

From this position he slid quite seamlessly from the concept of class dictatorship to the concept of party dictatorship.

Once having accepted the necessity of minority over majority rule it was perhaps predictable that later, in 1919, Lenin was found

attacking the very concept of democracy.

"Democracy is a form of Bourgeois State championed by all traitors to socialism, who assert that democracy is contrary to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Until the revolution transcended the limits of the bourgeois system we were for democracy, but as soon as we saw the first sign of socialism in the progress of the revolution we took a firm and resolute stand for the dictatorship." (5)

In the same year he explained "our dictatorship of the proletariat is the establishment of order, discipline, labour, productivity, accounting and control by the proletarian power." (6) And finally in case there is still any doubt, he explained graphically that "our task is to study the state capitalism of the Germans to spare no effort in copying it and not shrink from adopting dictatorial methods to hasten the copying of it."

Now isn't that worth fighting for! Ironically, given subsequent events, it was Trotsky who chiefly accelerated this process of theoretical degeneration. It was he who accepted the label of "workers state" for Stalin's totalitarian regime, solely and exclusively because it maintained statified property. This was entirely the consequence of having earlier separated, theoretically, the concept "workers state" (dictatorship of the proletariat) from the question of working class control from below (rule).

The process was pursued systematically to its logical conclusion hence, "our practice has led us to the result that in all moot questions generally - conflict between departments and personal conflicts within departments, the last word belongs to the central committee of the party. This affords extreme economy of time and energy and in the most difficult and complicated circumstances gives a guarantee for the unity of action". (8) In a further assault on democracy good old Leon proclaimed "And it can be said with complete justice that the dictatorship of the Soviets became possible only by means of the dictatorship of the party, otherwise, Soviets would be the shapeless parliaments of labour" (9) He particularly distinguishes himself here, not only by attacking parliamentary democracy but any representative democracy. Later he talked about the militarisation of labour." At this time it was Trotsky, Bukharin, Kamenev etc., who held centre state, busily gutting socialism of its automatic enrootment in the mass of the people, as we now know Stalin was standing in the wings rehearsing his own lines.

During the period when the revolution was fighting for life against fourteen invading armies, Lenin thought that the outcome was going to be either/or: either the military overthrow of the Russian revolution before the European revolution could save it, or else the expansion of the revolution into a continental or world-wide upheaval - the final destruction of capitalism over the entire planet. He did not count on the in-between situation that actually took place; a level of European revolution and war exhaustion sufficient to blunt the imperialist worlds intervention without bringing about a social revolution on the continent, so that the Russian revolution survived militarily - but isolated. They had been hanging on waiting for the revolutionary war to be won so that it would be relieved, but now the war was over, they were still beleaguered. It had been accepted in Russia for decades

that a socialist government would be unviable, meaning that a counter-revolutionary overthrow was inevitable. What was expected did actually happen. The crucial element was that the counter-revolution came from inside the ruling party, which was not itself overthrown but which overthrew the workers state.

The principles of revolutionary socialism were first distorted under the strain of the protracted emergency. Then the distortions themselves became the principles.

So for the last 60 years or so what the left has been, and is still debating woodenly is not the result of the application of Marxism, but the legitimacy or otherwise of the distortions, deformities, mutations, that they have undergone since they were first conceived. Hardly surprising therefore that socialism has been in ideological retreat, leaving the working class estranged, bemused and betrayed.

Instead of the valuable lessons of the failure of the Russian experiment being digested by the working class, it was accepted as a success, a role model for the revolutionary party and state to be exported worldwide, with predictably disastrous results. Every subsequent revolution, instead of being an advance for socialism and the working class, had the effect of further confusing and clouding the vision of a future alternative system, enfeebled and unnerved the international working class, and so in the long run actually copperfastened the capitalist system it was meant to replace. The mistakes of the past have been further compounded because the original errors have still not been confronted. Genuine revolutionaries must start again.

Should the events in China, where the 'army of the people' is slaughtering the people in the name of the people under the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', be regarded as an embarrassing excess, a contradiction to be explained away, the blame laid at the feet of a corrupt and geriatric leadership, or instead celebrated as the bloody memorial to end a disastrous epoch, and herald the beginning of a new socialist era.

Gary O'Halloran

Red Action

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- (1) Marx, K. and Engels F.: Selected Works in 3 Volumes. Moscow Progress Publishers, 1969-70.
- (2) *ibid.*
- (3) Lenin: Notes on Plekhanov Second Draft Programme.
- (4) Lenin: Victory to the Cadets.
- (5) Lenin: Collected Works.
- (6) *ibid.*: Report All Russia CEC Session 29th April 1918.
- (7) *ibid.*: Left Wing Childishness and Petit-Bourgeois Mentality.
- (8) Trotsky: Terrorism and Communism. P. 107.
- (9) *ibid.*: P.109.

Time To Go

A Chairde,

Once again we see the spectacle of a labour controlled council censoring an opportunity for open debate on the effects of the British occupation of the six counties and the consequences of that occupation on Irish and British workers. The cancellation of the public meeting due to be held at Brent town hall because Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein was scheduled to speak merely underlines the fact that the British Labour Party is as implacably opposed to the truth being told about the war in Ireland as the Tory party is.

Recent events in Vauxhall concerning the imposition of a candidate acceptable to the labour leadership which showed a blatant disregard for the rank and file activists in that area illustrates the undemocratic nature of the labour

party. This begs the question of how the Time To Go (T.T.G.) campaign can succeed in gaining a commitment from a future Labour government to withdraw British troops from Ireland. One cannot deny that there are many activists within the Labour Party who have done and continue to do excellent work in trying to get the policies of the Labour Party changed as it applies to Ireland. It cannot be denied either that the Labour Party enjoy the votes of the majority of British workers who exercise their right to vote. But this does not alter the fact that the Labour Party is a bourgeois democratic organisation that owes its allegiance to the interests of imperialism and the capitalist system and not to the interests of the working class.

How then will Time To Go achieve the withdrawal of troops from Ireland? The short answer is, it won't. Any labour orientated campaign is effectively, a red herring. The reasons being that the Labour Party denies the legitimacy of the National liberation struggle and denies the right of the Irish people to self-determination free from British interference. The Time To Go campaign fails to grasp the nettle and attempts to steer a middle course between a fully-fledged anti-imperialist movement and the accommodation of their middle-class "personalities". The fact that Time To Go can trot out a plethora of "personalities" who have given their commitment to a future British withdrawal means nothing. It means nothing because the basis of their commitment is as diverse as the withdrawal scenarios they espouse, ranging from the chauvinistic sentiments of the "bring our boys home" brigade to the outright reactionary reasoning of a phased British withdrawal and the strengthening of the Free State army who will be expected to put down any political upheaval. However, Time To Go's most spectacular and telling failure is the failure to address the British working class. Preferring instead to aim primarily at the Labour Party and the trade union bureaucracy, the same Labour Party who sent the troops in and introduced the P.T.A. and the same union bureaucracy who allow British trade unions to organise and recruit in Ireland on a 32 county basis. Another manifestation of British imperialism.

No explanation is given to ordinary workers why they should demand troops out of Ireland, instead the symptoms of the problem are addressed. The effects of plastic bullets, the degradation of the punitive use of strip searches, the erosion of civil liberties. Most British workers would prefer the use of lead bullets to plastic ones and they will continue to prefer this until they are convinced that it is in their own interest to support Irish workers against British imperialism. This Time To Go is afraid to do. They do not wish to alienate anyone no matter who they represent. The bold fact that a British defeat in Ireland would represent a victory for the British working class is eschewed because this is the domain of communists and other "extremists." The Time to Go campaign represents a salve to middle-class consciences, it offers nothing to the Irish or British working class. Without a clear analysis of the struggle in Ireland and without class struggle being recognised as the only way to break imperialism's hold on Ireland. The Time to Go will be consigned to the dustbin along with all the other good intentions.

I fear the only lasting effect of the entire year of activity will be a hangover incurred at the carnival to be held on August 12th.

James O'Brien,
265 Seven Sisters Road,
London N4.

Workers Party Embrace Capitalism

For most republicans and socialists the evolution of the official IRA/Workers party has produced mixed feelings. Its record of pro-British counter-revolutionary terror has led to its support dwindling in the six counties; at the same time in the South it has scored significant electoral success.

Satisfaction at the one has been tinged, sometimes, with anxiety and even frustrated envy at the other. This is so particularly in non-socialist republican circles. For the comrades and supporters of the I.R.S.P. an evaluation of the Stickey's degeneration and yet seemingly political success will be a key factor in our building of the revolutionary communist party and the development of marxism in Ireland. Such an undertaking requires a thorough and painstaking study of the past twenty years and the twists and turns from Official Sinn Fein, to Sinn Fein the Workers Party and now the Workers Party.

Ta Power's document was a valuable contribution to this task and M. O'Shea's article in issue No. 5 provided us with some useful insights into the pretentious nonsense that passes for economic theory in the Workers Party. This correspondent considers it worthwhile to examine the most recent outpourings from Tom King's favourite socialists. In my view it should be made compulsory for socialist revolutionaries to read the Presidential address by Proinsias de Rossa to the Workers Party 1989 Annual Delegate Conference.

In this address, De Rossa was sending a clear message to the ruling class that not only had his party abandoned all aspiration to a United Ireland, it now was abandoning all pretence at socialism. Of course he did not say it that way. What he said was "we think that socialism needs to be defined over and over again." Which allows you to define anything you like and call it socialism - as we shall see.

Before presenting "our current definition" De Rossa says "we must get back to basics, to the corner-stones of scientific socialism." He then goes on to ignore or distort these corner-stones.

According to him "the purpose of this party is political power so that the majority and not the minority has power. The rule of the majority is called democracy and is the first condition of socialism." Lest there be the slightest confusion on this point De Rossa also states that the task of the party is "to build a mass party of democracy that is strong enough so that socialism can march in at the head of social democracy." Just in case "march in" may have sounded a bit aggressive he further explains the three steps for the party as: 1) being elected to Dail Eireann to 'expose' the corruptions of capitalism (?) to go on to 'blocking' (?) these corruptions and finally 3) to prepare for government. He even puts a deadline on it: "to be the premier party of socialist democracy in Ireland well before the year 2,000."

Having clearly laid down the Workers' Party's total commitment to the parliamentary road to socialism (which has as its "first condition" democracy) De

Rossa then goes on to look at the Soviet Union, or in his words "socialism today". And what does he see? "We see democracy breaking out"! After 70 years of "socialism", which every schoolchild knows was achieved by revolution, we are presented with this contradiction; either democracy (parliamentary majority under capitalism) is not the necessary first condition for socialism - or what existed in the Soviet Union is not socialism.

True to form, this minor historical problem is not allowed to get in the way of the Party's needs. "We want to play a full part in the revolution that is renewing socialism across Europe". Does this mean that Glasnost/Perestroika is a revolutionary development - and if it is then how can you renew something by revolution? Is not one of the cornerstones of scientific socialism the principle that revolutions and antiquated social systems and replace them with necessarily different ones?

Socialism!

Having invoked Lenin's name to lend influence to the 'current definition' we are told: "We define socialism by letting the people tell us what they want from socialism". And what are "people" saying? More accurately, what does the Workers Party hear? "People all over Europe" want it to be democratic. They say it should be about politics (!) and so that is how we now define it - in terms of politics and democracy rather than of economics and coercion. Socialism, we believe, should at this stage be defined as the political rule of the working class. That means that democracy has to move to the centre of the historical process. Majority rule yes, but also protection for minority rights".

Here we have an open admission that the Stickers defined and practiced socialism in terms of economics and coercion! Is this an acknowledgement of its own racketeering, gangsterism and thuggery or an open admission that all has not been pure in the 'Socialist states'?

What an insult to Lenin, to admit the discovery in 1989 that socialism is about politics! Even the reference is insulting. De Rossa quotes the title of Lenin's famous 'What is to be done?' and then says "Lenin's great question is as valid as ever". He ignores the fact that it was not the question but the answer that was such a vital contribution to the struggle for socialism. It's clear to see why Lenin's answer was to create a party based on the recognition that there are only two ideologies, marxist and capitalist, and that the revolutionary party must combat the capitalist ideas which 'the people' are educated with, a long way from asking them, with their capitalist-controlled outlook, what socialism is!

And what exactly do 'the people' say? "The people of this country do not at this time want public ownership of the means of production, they want a market system....if that is what they want we will not stand in the way". Surely the point is that we already have a market system and it doesn't satisfy all the people, far from it. Obviously it is the middle class yuppies that have the ear of De Rossa. He is quick to assume then that though he believes "the state must intervene to ensure that



Proinsias de Rossa -

the market meets the need of the people", "this party is not for nationalising anything that does not need nationalising" (who decides?). "This party is for public ownership only where the public want to own something."

It cannot be clearer. The socialism of the scientific stickies is totally geared to meeting the electoral ambitions of its parliamentary careerists. Whatever you will vote for, that's what we are for. This blatant opportunist populism is justified with the rationale that "socialism is first and last about the political rule of the majority in society. The particular forms of economic life can be decided by democratic decision at all levels of society." But what do we do about the minority, the capitalist class who control the state, the 'bodies of armed men', if they don't accept the democratic wishes of the majority? Remember Allende's experiment in Chile?

And just to make it perfectly understood that should the Workers Party become an elected government they will pose no threat to capitalism. De Rossa explains "Socialism, as we see it, is not anti-market, anti-enterprise and anti-individual. Socialism will stimulate effort, enthusiasm and enterprise at all levels of our society. Work will be well rewarded and the lazy penalised - and that means dole spongers as well as tax-dodgers, short-day shirkers as well as bosses". If that doesn't qualify for the endorsement of the righteous and the right wing then what will? Here is a Workers Party which accepts the classification of working class people as inherently lazy and crooked and needing the discipline of their betters!

With all this recognition that 'the people' don't want socialism (or at least they accept, by and large the false arguments and distortions of capitalists against it), is it not peculiar that they title their manifesto for the general election 'The Socialist Alternative'? This is explained by the fact that this document is reserved for those who want socialism and believe that the Workers Party does as well. It was not circulated widely - election literature was deliberately vague about its contents.

The self-contradictory logic is not confined to defining socialism. It permeates the entire speech. In setting out the struggle for socialism in Ireland we are told it "takes three specific and urgent forms and these tasks are not specific to socialism, they are tasks of democracy, in which socialist are obliged to play a leading part". So, the struggle for socialism is not specific to socialism! What are the tasks? - to secure peace in the North, to modernise the South, to harmonise relations between the two states within the framework of the New Europe.

Tasks Of Democracy!

The modernisation of the South is along the lines of that proposed

in the "current definition of socialism", which we have dealt with above. Regarding the E.C., De Rossa says: "We can pretend we are not a part of Europe and go back to the protectionism and isolation of the '30's and 40's or we can march forward with our brothers and sisters in other countries to build a better Europe and a better world. We can choose "Sinn Feinism" or solidarity. We can fight for a Social (?) Europe as a step on the road to a socialist Europe in a socialist world."

This march forward to a socialist Europe, the Workers Party admits in its European Election Manifesto, is fraught with dangers. "Unemployment may even worsen. The Single Market will also lead to a concentration of resources, capital and jobs at the centre, with an outflow from the weaker, peripheral areas such as Ireland. Unless actively countered, the powerful economic forces now being unleashed will strengthen the strong and weaken the weak." These forces "will ride roughshod over the young, old, poor, unemployed and all who are in any way disadvantaged in terms of income or employment, unless equally powerful forces are at work to prevent this happening." And just who are these equally powerful forces that the Workers Party is looking to? Yes, you guessed it - the same "socialists and progressives" who singularly failed to protect the disadvantaged in their own countries! Now, we are to believe, that they not only will be genuine defenders of their own working class constituents but will develop a truly international socialist spirit. "The people of the less developed regions....are ultimately dependent on the solidarity of socialist and trade unionists in the developed countries to avoid stagnation and de-population."

For example, the Labour Party in Britain which has always defended British imperialist interests, which denies the right of a United Ireland, supports the sectarian statelet in the North, etc, etc, will be an ally of the Irish workers! They will, along with workers representations in France, Germany etc, forego jobs in their own areas for their own supporters out of a sense of international solidarity! Indeed, and Paisley might become a socialist republican.

In dealing with "the greatest of these problems", Northern Ireland, we are treated to a contempt for the truth on a par with the propaganda of Goebbels or Stalin. "Despite all Provo provocation there has been no protestant murder campaign on the scale of the Provo genocidal war. Twenty years on and they hold no ground." What a convenient way to dismiss the history and the basis of the anti-imperialist resistance of the last 20 years. How easy it is to dismiss the reality of the massive, almost total support for the Republican movement in the nationalist working class, which dwarfs that of the discredited Workers Party.

Projecting the problem as a war against the protestant people, De Rossa then offers them the simple solution. Go back into politics", he urges them. "Apply the principles of democratic socialism, which does not deal in mathematical majorities within two rival traditions, but in the absolute majority of the working class across the divide." "Start talking".

Nothing - not sectarian

discrimination in jobs, state terror against nationalists waged by "a protestant state for a protestant people", etc. should interfere with the solution of the North's problems "by that social skill we call politics." Because you see "the North is not beyond the reach of reason. The problem is terrorism. The solution is socialism. The prize is peace."

Again we can see that the political theory of the Workers Party is nothing if not consistent in its inconsistency. The problem is terrorism. It is the Provos fault. It is due to the existence of two rival traditions. Everything except the British presence.

This strategy of isolating and defeating the "psychopathic" Provos in the six counties is accompanied by the priority of "freeing the labour movement" in the South of "the clammy grasp of gombeen nationalism." (what about imperialism, foreign capitalism?). This can be done by rejecting the aspirations for national territorial unity in Articles 2 and 3 of the Free State Constitution. This will accelerate and reinforce the revision of history already practiced by the pro-imperialists who are trying to create a political culture based on "new symbols" in a different tradition to that of the national liberation struggle and the socialist cause.

Conclusion

These are only a few of the political absurdities which go to make up the Workers Party's socialist policies. It is quite evident that the Presidential speech was geared for the elections. The style of the speech - a series of half-baked one liners intended to convey the impression of profound simplicity is directly from the copywriters of the advertising world. So too is the campaign poster of Proinsias the poser, the casual laid-back trendy. The yuppie clothes, the £400 suits etc. are all avidly market-researched for the greatest impact. However, the growth in support for the Workers Party is not based on a firm conviction of their socialism. It is the product of a protest, anti-establishment vote with no other parliamentary outlet. In my view it is largely a vague commitment to socialism as presented in popular-chic terms by good peace loving democrats. Because it is an expression of the continuing faith of these working class voters in the ability of Dail Eireann to deliver the goods it is an apt appreciation of the Stickers sincerity on going the distance for real socialism - i.e. workers control of the state and the economy.

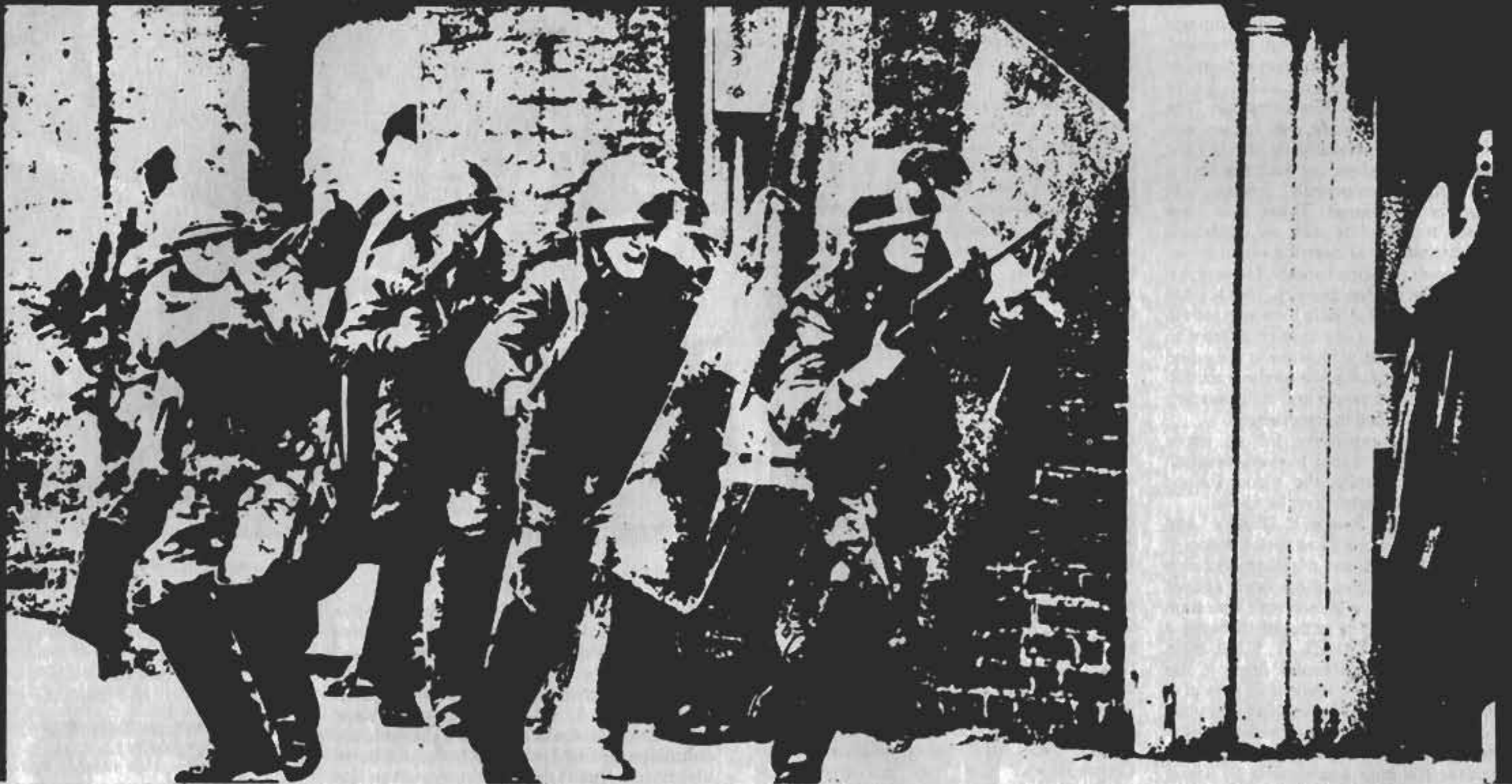
We need have no fear that the best militants of the working class will be able to recognise a genuine revolutionary socialist party when they look for one. It is up to us to ensure that there is one there to be found.

Finally, when De Rossa says "we crave a life that has meaning", the revolutionaries will answer in rejection of this religious mumbo jumbo masquerading as socialism - we want a meaning that has life, not the pessimistic capitulation to the capitalist system, but a revolutionary theory based on the historical necessity of its overthrow.

As stated at the outset, the literature of the Workers Party should be compulsory reading for all serious revolutionaries and students of socialism. As an example of counter-revolutionary politics dressed up, scantily, we must admit, as socialism, it is invaluable. Hopefully these comments will help towards the accomplishment of a full and exhaustive assessment of the ideology of the yuppified Workers Party.

Dermot McBride

Twenty Years Of Struggle



BRITIS OUT NOW!

This August sees a double anniversary: the 17th Anniversary of internment and more significantly, the 20th anniversary of the deployment of the British Army in the six counties.

The events preceding this decision are well known. In both Belfast and Derry, sectarian attacks led by the B Specials had resulted in many deaths, injuries and destruction of homes. There was a continuous battle in the Bogside in Derry as nationalists defended the area against attack from loyalists and B Specials following apprentice boys march. In many areas of Belfast the RUC/B-Specials fired on nationalists, machine-gunning indiscriminately. It was obvious that the machinery of the six-county statelet was breaking down irretrievably. It is also possible that the British Government may have been persuaded to a certain extent by Jack Lynch's "We shall not stand idly by" statement and the presence of the Free State Army near the border and felt that it was time to act. Accordingly on the 14th of August 1969, the British Army was sent into Derry and next day into Belfast.

In hindsight it is doubtful if there was ever any likelihood or possibility of a Free State invasion. However it was clear to the British government that Stormont was completely unable to maintain control and that drastic and immediate action was necessary. There was no alternative but to send in the only thing which was unaffected by the events of the previous months, and which could be relied on as far as loyalty and much more importantly as far as discipline was concerned - the British army.

Initially the British troops were welcomed as an infinitely preferable alternative to the murderous RUC/B Specials by the people who had borne the brunt of the attacks. There were those, of course, who recognised the real intents and reasons behind the deployment and who realised that the initial honeymoon

period would not last.

Since the ending of the Border Campaign in 1962, the IRA had been dormant. It was dormant to such an extent that apart from a few individuals who had access to a few weapons, there was no defence of the nationalist areas in a time of dire need. Late 1969 saw the Official/Provisional split and the re-arming of both movements. In 1970 a curfew was declared in the Falls Road area of Belfast and a major search operation mounted. Three people were killed and a great many homes were wrecked. To those in doubt, the true nature of the British Army became apparent, while the Officials maintained their "defensive" role, the Provisionals carried on a massive bombing campaign. There was also serious rioting.

On August 9th, 1971, internment was introduced. This act of massive oppression blew the lid completely off the can of worms. Practically every nationalist area of the 6 counties had someone interned. There was a massive fightback, and in a few days twenty two people had been killed. From the point of view of what the British government wanted, internment was a disaster. Instead of crushing nationalist militancy, it increased it massively. Even the middle class nationalists were forced to act with the S.D.L.P. and the like proposing an alternative to Stormont. Such was the effect of internment that today, seventeen years on, it is still the largest annual commemoration.

The next significant act of oppression to occur was the Bloody Sunday massacre of January 30th, 1972. There is a general perception that the Paras ran amok killing indiscriminately. Yet all those killed were male and of "military age". This fact, coupled with the fact that the Paras are one of the most highly disciplined units in the British military machine, points to a deliberate decision to terrorise and intimidate. Naturally this did not happen, and far from being

terrorised or intimidated, resistance and the determination to fight back were strengthened. It was clear that the days of peaceful mass protest were over. It can also be said in general terms that there occurred a division of the middle class (SDLP type nationalist) and the working class (Republican) activities. It was now the republicans who were dictating the pace.

In March 1972, the Stormont government was brought down and direct Westminster rule has been in force since. The only serious attempt at restoring a devolved government on the basis of powersharing was soon scuttled in 1974 by extreme loyalism.

Since the mid-seventies, the war has become much more sophisticated, but militant republicanism has failed to make any break through. An acceptable level of violence, to use a well worn phrase, has been reached.

The last campaign which had large numbers of people on the street was the Hungerstrikes of 1980/81. The deaths of the ten Hungerstrikers marked a heroic but tragic phase in the struggle. The totally unbending nature of Thatcher was well demonstrated, but also demonstrated was the ability of the British government to withstand international criticism. Any naive hopes that Britain could be forced to act in any way through moral considerations or moral pressure were well and truly dispelled.

There was also a total failure at that time to capitalise on the obvious large scale resurgence of street protest. Not since the early 1970's had there been such a mobilisation with marches and rallies in every nationalist area of the 6 counties. However since that period, and since the electoral high point of Sinn Fein in the mid 1980's, there has been an air of resignation, almost of apathy. The "acceptable level" continues with scores on both sides, but no breakthrough.

So what lessons can be drawn from the past two decades of

struggle? It is clear to all that some new dimension is needed. Sinn Fein also recognise that this is the case, yet have failed to come up with anything concrete. Indeed Gerry Adams's idea of some kind of General Assembly of elected representatives after a British withdrawal makes the sacrifices and heroism of the past 20 years meaningless. Who would willingly give up their lives and freedom for an assembly which, as Danny Morrison acknowledges, would be dominated by Unionists and Fine Gael/Fianna Fail? To allow such a state of affairs to come about would be criminal.

There has been consistent failure to effectively unite the national struggle with the class struggle and the key to this struggle lies in the 26 counties. In a situation of increasing cutbacks and high taxation, the objective conditions for a demand for socialism are developing. The protest vote in the recent Dail elections went to two pro-imperialist parties. Sinn Fein were bypassed. It is obvious that a revolutionary party which is of the working class and readily identifiable as such, is needed. Only such a party can give the

struggle the fresh angle and new impetus which is required to end the imperialist domination of Ireland.

Twenty years since their initial deployment, the British Army is actually more ensconced than ever. Despite attempts to "Ulsterise" ie. give the RUC/UDR the bulk of "security work", the British Army have actually begun to adopt a much higher and aggressive profile, particularly in the past 18 months/2 years. This has culminated in the presence of two gangs of self-styled "hard nuts", the Marines and Paras, surely a recipe for excesses in the coming months.

It has become increasingly clear that the British government has dispensed with even the pretence of the carrot and is relying totally on the big stick, and hoping for war weariness to increase, to the extent that the national liberation struggle will peter out. This can not be allowed to happen. The sacrifices of the past 20 years can not be allowed to go for nothing. The nationalist working class has shown that it is capable of enduring, now it must be given the opportunity of achieving victory.
Francis Glenn

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Marxism, Violence

Imperialism in this last decade has conducted an hysterical propaganda campaign against what it terms 'International Terrorism'. The media, television and the film industry in particular, have been used quite unscrupulously to back this campaign. The Rambo films are of course well known and generally not taken seriously by any but the most rabid of 'Sun' readers, but there has been a spate of others supposedly dealing with situations such as Beirut. These films have been much more subtle with an underlying message that people all over the world would get on quite well with one another if it were not for the blood lust of a few fanatics. The fact that an increasing number of these films are made in Israel is no accident, it is a studied attempt to mask the real reasons of violence in the world today. The history of violence can be traced to greed and the lust for power and in the modern world this is embodied in Imperialism.

Imperialism is responsible for all major violence in the world to-day. In every situation where there is violence, the blood stained fingerprints of Imperialism can be found.

Of course the Reagan's, Bush's and Thatcher's of this world have their version of what constitutes terrorism, that is any violence by the oppressed peoples of the world against their oppressors. Every national liberation struggle in the world is accused of being a terrorist conspiracy. The P.L.O., F.M.L.N. in El Salvador, the New Peoples Army in the Phillipines to name but a few and in Ireland of course the I.R.A. and I.N.L.A. are all described as terrorists. They even have terrorist states in their vision i.e. Libya, Syria and little Nicaragua.

Of course the bourgeoisie came to power itself through violent revolution and the use of terror as Lenin said "They accuse us of terrorism... However, the British bourgeoisie forgot 1845, while the French bourgeoisie completely ignored the year 1797... Terrorism was considered just and legitimate when they practised it against the feudalists, while terrorism became a barbaric and criminal act when the poor workers and peasants dared to use it against their enemy, the bourgeoisie." (Selected Works of Lenin, Progress Publishers, page 463).

The colonialist powers spread their rule all over the world and brutally suppressed all who opposed their plans. Propaganda at the time said that they were civilising the world, bringing light to the dark continent etc. Violence was justified and supported by the Christian Churches who sent their missionaries along with the gun and bayonet to cement colonialist rule.

Today imperialism does not like to be seen directly oppressing peoples, especially since the defeat of U.S. reaction in Vietnam. Today they prefer to use local collaborators or agents to protect their interests. In South America this often takes the form of military dictatorships which ruthlessly suppress their own people with state organised murders and disappearances.

History of Internationalism

It is the ABC of Marxism that communism can be victorious only as a result of world revolution. For this to happen the workers of various countries must assist one another, break down national chauvinism and render true international solidarity. "Proletarians of all lands unite" says the Communist Manifesto but when this has been put to the test it has invariably split the socialist movement.

In November of 1912 at Basle, at an extraordinary congress of the Second International, the congress warned of the threat of war. Not only did it warn of the forthcoming war but it also stated that the war would be a war of imperialist plunder and most importantly passed a resolution supported by Lenin that socialists should use the crisis induced by the war to further the cause of the socialist revolution.

But within a few months those same socialists were standing four square behind the bourgeoisie of their respective countries in a carnival of imperialist reaction. This treachery helped to kill millions of workers in the obscenity of the first world war.

The leaders of the 2nd International had turned traitors to socialism and had become mouthpieces of the bourgeoisie. The very force that could have used the division of imperialism to further the cause of the international working class, cravenly lined up behind their own capitalist class, and by doing so, condemned millions of workers to die because of the greed for profit.

(One particular treacherous act was the murder of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht and the bloody suppression of the workers rising in Berlin by the Social Democratic government). What great stooges, opportunists make.

How could this happen? It happened because the socialist parties of the Second International had allowed all sorts of petit bourgeois elements into their organisations. These elements rose to positions of power and when the crisis came about within their own bourgeoisies, their own class interests superseded the class interests of those whom they claimed to represent i.e. the proletariat.

Marxism And The Use Of Violence

Today in the six county statelet, a war of national liberation is being carried on in the main by the forces of Irish nationalism as embodied in the Provisional I.R.A. and by the revolutionary soldiers of the I.N.L.A. This war takes the form of guerrilla action against British imperialist forces and their native lackies. What is the marxist attitude to the use of violence?

In 1871, the workers of Paris seized the city and set up what was known as the Paris Commune. It existed for 73 days before it was put down in bloody counter-revolution. At the time the Communards were criticised for their use of violence, and some so-called socialists of the day stood apart and actually supported its suppression. What did Marx and Engels have to say about the use of violence by the Communards? Did they condemn it as adventurism, a putsch etc? Engels most certainly did not, rather he stated that they had not used enough violence "Have these gentlemen... ever seen a revolution? A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is the act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon - authoritarian means, if such there be at all, and if the victorious party does not want to have fought in vain, it must maintain this rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries. Would the Paris Commune have lasted a single day if it had not made use of this authority of the armed people against the bourgeois? Should we not on the contrary, reproach it for not having used it freely enough?" (The Proletarian revolution and the Renegade Kautsky, V.I. Lenin, Foreign Languages Press, Peking 1965, page 16).

Marx, Engels And The Fenians

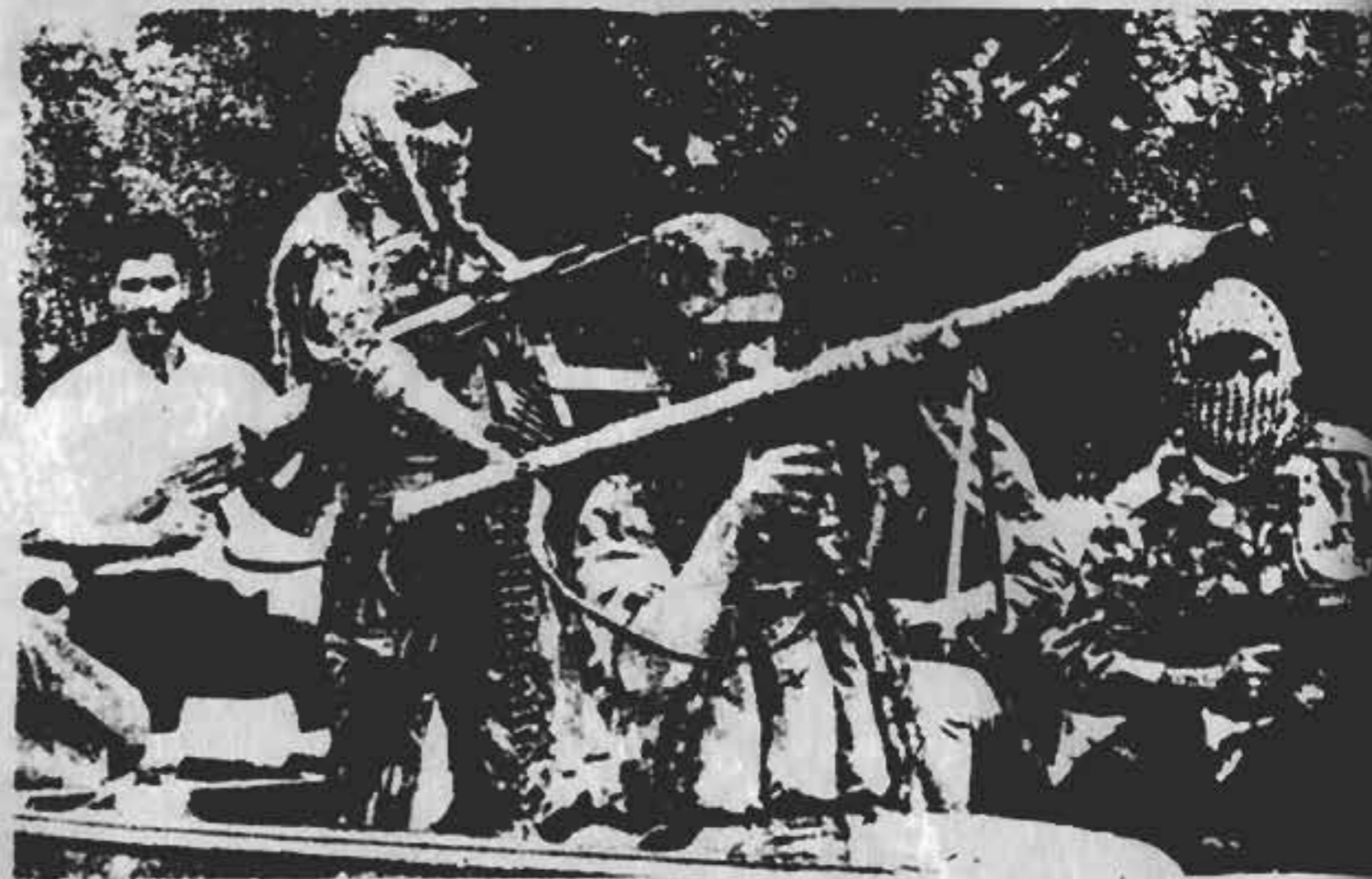
Marx and Engels spent a great deal of time in analysing the situation in Ireland and in supporting the Fenians. In the course of this study they gradually changed their mind:

In a letter to Engels written on November 2nd, 1867, Marx wrote "Previously I thought Ireland's separation from England impossible. Now I think it inevitable, although after separation there may come federation." (Ireland and the Irish Question, Marx and Engels, International Publishers, page 143).

On December 10th, 1869, Marx wrote to Engels "...For a long time I believed that it would be possible to overthrow the Irish regime by English working-class ascendancy. I also expressed this point of view in the 'New York Tribune'. Deeper study has now convinced me of the opposite. The English working class will never accomplish anything before it has got rid of Ireland. The lever must be applied in Ireland. That is why the Irish question is so important for the social movement in general." (ibid, page 284).

On March 5th, 1870, Marx, in addressing the awful conditions of the fenian prisoners wrote "...You understand at once that I am not only acted upon by feelings of humanity. There is something besides. To accelerate the social development in Europe, you must push on the catastrophe of official England. To do so, you must attack her in Ireland. That's her weakest point. Ireland lost, the British 'Empire' is gone, and the class war in England, till now somnolent and chronic, will assume acute forms. But England is the metropolis of landlordism and capitalism all over the world." (ibid, page 290).

On April 9th, 1870, Marx in a letter to Mayer



Palestinian guerrilla fighters.

and Vogt wrote "Therefore to hasten the social revolution in England is the most important object of the International Workingmen's Association. The sole means of hastening it is to make Ireland independent... To awaken a consciousness in the English workers that for the national emancipation of Ireland is no question of abstract justice or humanitarian sentiment, but the first condition of their own social emancipation." (ibid, page 294).

So although Marx and Engels fought against the atrocious prison conditions of the Fenians, many of who died in the "humanitarian" English jails. They stressed that they were not motivated purely by humanitarianism but emphasised that support for the national emancipation of Ireland was a pre-requisite for the social emancipation of the British working class. It is true that Marx and Engels had no illusions about the Fenian leaders, in a letter which Engels wrote to Marx on November 29th, 1867 he said "As regards the Fenians you are quite right. The beastliness of the English must not make us forget that the leaders of this sect are mostly asses and partly exploiters and we cannot in any way make ourselves responsible for the stupidities which occur in every conspiracy. And they are certain to happen." (ibid, page 145).

Indeed in private, both Marx and Engels criticised some of the actions of the Fenians. In a letter Marx wrote to Engels on December 14th 1867 he said "The last exploit of the Fenians in Clerkenwell was a very stupid thing. The London masses, who have shown great sympathy for Ireland, will be made wild by it and driven into the arms of the government party. One cannot expect the London proletarians to allow themselves to be blown up in honour of the Fenian emissaries. There is always a kind of fatality about such a secret, melodramatic sort of conspiracy." (ibid, page 149).

On December 18th, 1867, the Fenians planted a bomb at Clerkenwell prison in order to free some inmates, several people died and others were injured.

However these were private letters and they did not plaster their publications with condemnations like some opportunists like the S.W.P. and others have done over the years. They took the line that actions like these were an unavoidable consequence of the violence of oppressed people. Indeed Engels lauded the increased militancy - even violence of the Irish and London proletarians when he wrote in a letter "The Irish, too, are a very substantial ferment in this business, and the London proletarians declare every day more openly for the Fenians and hence - an unheard-of and splendid thing here - for, first, a violent and, secondly, an anti-English movement." (ibid, page 145).

Again Engels points out in a letter "The Irish are teaching our leisurely John Bull to get a move on. That's what comes from shooting." (ibid, page 333).

To sum up, Marx and Engels had a true internationalist attitude towards the Fenians. Unlike present day opportunists, they maintained that it was of central importance for the British working class to fight for the liberation of Ireland from British rule. A measure of the success of the movement in

which Marx and Engels took part was the mobilisation of an estimated 200,000 to Hyde Park on November 1872 at which, according to Engels there were some 30,000 spectators. Oh for the internationalism of Marx and Engels today. For 20 years into the present struggle, British socialist can mobilise only paltry numbers, being more concerned with scoring points off one another.

(Marx was extremely agitated when O'Donovan Rossa who they had supported whole heartedly as regards the inhuman conditions he had to face in prison, on his release went to America and accused the Paris Communards of being murderers).

Lenin And The 3rd International

Lenin was the true inheritor of Marx and Engels internationalism, speaking against those who vilified Easter 1916 as a putsch said "Whoever expects a 'pure' social revolution will never live to see it. Such a person pays lip-service to revolution without understanding what revolution is. The Russian Revolution of 1905 was a bourgeois-democratic revolution. It consisted of a series of battles in which all the discontented classes, groups and elements of the population participated. Among these were the masses imbued with the crudest prejudices, with the vaguest and most fantastic aims of struggle; there were small groups which accepted Japanese money, there were speculators and adventurers, etc. But objectively, the mass movement was breaking the back of tsarism and paying the way for democracy; for this reason the class-conscious workers led it." (Questions of National Policy and Proletarian Internationalism, V.I. Lenin, Progress Publishers, page 159).

He goes on to state "The socialist revolution in Europe cannot be anything other than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and sundry oppressed and discontented elements. Inevitably, sections of the petty bourgeoisie and of the backward workers will participate in it - without such participation, mass struggle is impossible, with it no revolution is possible - and just as inevitably will they bring into the movement their prejudices, their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses and errors, but objectively they will attack capital and the class-conscious vanguard of the revolution, the advanced proletariat, expressing this objective truth of a variegated and discordant, motley and outwardly fragmented mass struggle, will be able to unite and direct it, capture power, seize the banks, expropriate the trusts which all hate (though for different reasons!), and introduce other dictatorial measures which in their totality will amount to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the victory of socialism which, however, will by no means immediately 'purge' itself of petty-bourgeois slag."

"Is it not clear that it is least of all permissible to contrast Europe to the colonies in this respect? The struggle of the oppressed in Europe, a struggle capable of going all the way to insurrection and street fighting, capable of breaking

And Internationalism



FMLN fighters

down the iron discipline of the army and martial law, will "sharpen the revolutionary crisis in Europe" to an infinitely greater degree than a much more developed rebellion in a remote colony. A blow delivered against the power of the English imperialist bourgeoisie by a rebellion in Ireland is a hundred times more significant politically than a blow of equal force delivered in Asia or in Africa." (ibid, page 160).

Dear me, does that mean that the Irish struggle for British workers is more important than South Africa, Nicaragua etc. Well, comrade Lenin, the British left do not seem to think so judging by the miserable attention they give to Ireland in comparison to these struggles. What could be the reason for this, surely not the fact that they are unwilling to stand up to their own bourgeoisie and confront the deeply ingrained prejudice of their own working class. Lenin writes "In the internationalist

education of the workers of the oppressor countries, emphasis must necessarily be laid on their advocating freedom for the oppressed countries to secede and their fighting for it. Without this there can be no internationalism. It is our right and duty to treat every Social-Democrat of an oppressor nation who fails to conduct such propaganda as a scoundrel and an imperialist, this is an absolute demand, even where the chance of secession being possible and "practicable" before the introduction of socialism is only one in a thousand." (ibid Page 150).

Lenin calls them scoundrels and imperialists, we would add to that that they are traitors to their own class because in not attempting to break the chains that bind Ireland to British imperialism they are effectively condemning their own class to perpetual reaction, so what then does Lenin see as the duties of British Communists; "it is necessary that all Communist Parties render direct aid to the revolutionary movements among the dependent and subject nations (for example, in Ireland, among the Negroes of America etc.) and in the colonies." (Lenin on the National and Colonial Questions, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1970, page 25).

"First, that all Communist Parties must assist the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement in these countries, and that the duty of rendering the most active assistance rests primarily upon the workers of the country upon which the backward nation is dependent colonially or financially." (ibid page 26).

Lenin goes further in "Left Wing" Communism an Infantile Disorder, he states "In great Britain, further, the work of propaganda, agitation and organisation among the armed forces and among the oppressed and underprivileged nationalities in their "own" state (Ireland, the colonies) must also be tackled in a new fashion (one that is not socialist, but communist; not reformist, but revolutionary)." (14). (Selected works of Lenin, page 577).

"The British Socialist who fails to support by all possible means the uprisings in Ireland...against the London plutocracy - such a socialist deserves to be branded with infamy, if not with a bullet." (Theses, Resolutions and Manifestos of the first four Congresses of the Communist

International, page 163).

Lenin on the other hand warns against attempts to paint bourgeois democratic liberation movements in communist colours, rather he said to support the democratic content of its programme only. All support must be given to help the proletarian forces in the oppressed countries even if they exist in rudimentary form only. There is clearly only one group in Ireland that fulfils this description, the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

Individual Terrorism

The "left" opponents of the armed struggle in Ireland invariably always use quotes from Lenin or Trotsky, but with opportunist dishonesty they will ignore the context in which these words were written or against whom they were aimed. (Examples of this will be exposed later when the C.P.I. use Lenin and the S.W. M. use Trotsky completely out of context, i.e. when they were polemicising against the use of individual terror.)

So what is individual terror. In Russia, the organisation Narodnaya Volga (Peoples Will) was formed in August 1879 in the belief that a small tight knit organisation could lead the masses to victory through the use of assassinations etc. which would throw the ruling class into confusion. It believed in active heroes and a passive mass and rejected class struggle. These comrades fought heroically against Tsarist autocracy and succeeded in assassinating Alexander II but after this they were ruthlessly put down.

Marxists fought against this belief but at the same time recognised the revolutionary credentials of these comrades and sought at all times to defend them against the savage death sentences and reprisals meted out by the autocracy. Lenin never ruled out the use of terror, he stated "In principle we have never rejected and cannot reject, terror. Terror is one of the forms of military action that may be perfectly suitable and even essential at a definite juncture in the battle, given a definite state of the troops and the existence of definite conditions." (Selected Works of Lenin, page 38).

Lenin neither discounted the use of heroic individual blows but warned against it being seen as an end in itself, that violence not connected to the class struggle was doomed to failure "Far be it from us to deny the significance of heroic individual blows, but it is our duty to sound a vigorous warning against becoming infatuated with terror, against taking it to be the chief and basic means of struggle, as so many strongly incline to do at present. Terror can never be a regular military operation; at best it can only serve as one of the methods employed in a decisive assault." (ibid page 39).

But Lenin was always very careful to distinguish revolutionary acts of violence from individual terrorist acts. "It was, of course, only on grounds of expediency that we rejected individual terrorism." (ibid page 526). And he was quick to praise revolutionary acts when there was a clear political motive such as when a group of revolutionaries invaded one of the Tsar's prisons in 1905, Lenin stated then "This is an honourable victory. This is the real victory after a bloody battle with an enemy armed to the teeth. This is not an attack against any hated figure. This is not a shameful act,

and it is not an impatient outlet... This is the beginning that prepares and quiets, taking into consideration the balance of forces. It is the beginning of the acts of the vanguard factions of the revolution." (Lenin, the Complete Works, Vol. 9 P. 270).

It is within this context that the attack by Castro on the Moncada barracks can be seen not as an act of individual terrorism but a planned revolutionary act designed to stimulate the masses into action.

Summing up we can say that marxists rejected individual violence because, it did not believe in building the class forces necessary for victory. After the October revolution and during the attacks on the new Soviet government the Bolsheviks were quick to use terror against their enemies, the counter-revolutionaries.

Lenin defending the use of terror against attacks from the international leaders had this to say "The revolution has gone too far. What you are saying now we have been saying all the time; permit us to say it again." But we say in reply: "Permit us to put you before a firing squad for saying that. Either you refrain from expressing your views, or, if you insist on expressing your political views publicly in the present circumstances, when our position is far more difficult than it was when the Whiteguardists were directly attacking us, we shall treat you as the worst and most pernicious White Guard elements." (Marx and the Marxists, Sidney Hook, page 194).

Trotsky similarly had this to say "Terror is helpless and then only "in the long run" - if it is employed by reaction against a historically rising class. But terror can be very efficient against a reactionary class which does not want to leave the scene of operations.... "You do not understand this, holy men? We shall explain to you. The terror of Isarism was directed against the proletariat, the gendarmerie of Tsarism throttled the workers who were fighting for the Socialist order. Our Extraordinary Commissions shoot landlords, capitalists, and generals who are striving to restore the capitalist order. Do you grasp this...distinction? yes? For us Communists it is quite sufficient." (ibid page 208).

The Armed Struggle In Ireland - It's Critics

In looking at the critics of the armed struggle in Ireland we have chosen to look at two recent articles. One by the Communist Party of Ireland (C.P.I.) in the form of an open letter to the Provisional I.R.A. and the other by Eamonn McCann of the Socialist Workers Movement (S.W.M.) which appeared in the 'Socialist Worker' last year. The choice is one of handiness but also because between them they contain most of the criticisms directed against the armed struggle.

C.P.I.

The Communist Party of Ireland state that "Our declared policy is to work for the creation of a united political campaign which would force the British Government to declare its intent to withdraw from all interference in Ireland - political, military and economic, by a specific date, which would be accompanied by a transition period to a point when the role of Government would be taken over by a sovereign government elected from all parts of Ireland on the basis of a new Constitution which would include a guarantee of fundamental civil, religious and democratic rights for all sections of our people." C.P.I. pamphlet 'armed Struggle'.

This reformist position they hold together with Sinn Fein and the Workers Party. The whole idea behind this is that "normal" politics i.e. class politics can only develop when Ireland is united in a bourgeois republic. That organisations as diverse as the C.P.I., Sticks and Sinn Fein should hold such similar positions should not be surprising to marxists. They are a symptom of the petty bourgeois ideology that all three share. This reformist stages theory is repugnant to marxists, an outright opportunist betrayal of the working class. Lenin writing about backward nations at a pre-capitalist stage of development had this to say: "Are we to accept as correct the assertion that the capitalist stage of development of the national economy is

inevitable for those backward nations which are now winning liberation and in which a movement along the road of progress is to be observed since the war? We replied in the negative. If the victorious revolutionary proletariat conducts systematic propaganda among them, and the Soviet governments come to the assistance with all the means at their disposal in that event, it would be wrong to assume that the capitalist stage of development is inevitable for the backward peoples. In all the colonies and backward countries, not only should we build independent contingents of fighters, party organisations, not only should we launch immediate propaganda for the organisations of peasants' Soviets and strive to adapt them to precapitalist conditions but the Communist International should advance and theoretically substantiate the proposition that with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, the backward countries can pass over to the Soviet system and through definite stages of development, to communism, without going through the capitalist stage." (Lenin on the National and Colonial questions, Page 35).

If Lenin had this to say about nations that were at a pre-capitalist stage of development then how can the C.P.I. insist that the immediate tasks of revolutionaries in Ireland (a medium developed capitalist country) is to fight for a bourgeois democratic republic. Well clearly they and the others who hold this position have nothing in common with Marxism. Such a position is a betrayal of the working class.

The main points of the C.P.I.'s criticism of the armed struggle being waged at present (although they state that they are not against armed struggle in principle) are:-

(1) It does not have popular support amongst the majority of our oppressed people.

(2) It has increasingly degenerated into a sectarian campaign and in effect divides workers.

(3) It brings on repression.

In dealing with the first point, (that it does not have popular support), here we start playing the good old numbers game again, and as usual when we start looking deeply at the question, we expose again the differences between an essential reformist position and a revolutionary one.

If the C.P.I.'s position had been followed to the letter then today we would not have a Soviet Union, a Vietnam, a Cuba. Further there would have been no Easter Week in 1916, there would be no armed struggle in South Africa, the Philippines, El Salvador, nor anywhere else.

It is commonplace to say that a revolution cannot succeed in Ireland without the united support of the working class at the very least. However no one is ordering a general insurrection at the moment, what we are talking about is the tactic of the use of arms against imperialism.

If the C.P.I. can state categorically that Lenin had the majority of support of the oppressed initially in 1917 then we would have to ask, how the hell do they know? The Bolsheviks did not hold a gallop poll to see if they had a majority in favour of insurrection. What we know as facts are that the Bolsheviks were the smallest of the left wing parties and that they gained the support that they needed by their actions, one of which was the decision to launch an insurrection.

Similarly, Castro and Guevara when sitting on top of the Sierra Maestra did not consider a referendum nor did Ho Chi Min or Mao Zedong. The A.N.C. when deciding to found Umkhonto we Sizwe, did so when they decided that armed struggle was the best tactic left to them. Similarly it can be said that the use of state violence here against peaceful protests such as Bloody Sunday, the use of CS gas, rubber and plastic bullets led to the same conclusions.

We cannot say that the majority of the Black oppressed peoples of South Africa support the armed struggle of Umkhonto we Sizwe. However to an internationalist that is not important, what is important is that we support the right of oppressed peoples to use any tactic they feel necessary.

We come to their second objection, that armed struggle has degenerated into sectarianism and fosters division amongst workers. Here again it is what the C.P.I. does not say that is important. Nowhere in their letter do they state that sectarianism is the

cont. from p. 7

creation of imperialism and that it deliberately fosters it.

To the ignorant person sitting in front of the TV watching the BBC, ITV or RTE, it might be just conceivable that they would think that the republican struggle was degenerating into a sectarian campaign. The C.P.I. in stating this have become miserable collaborators with bourgeois propaganda. Because the R.U.C. and U.D.R. happen to be drawn mostly from the protestant community, does not mean that there is a campaign of genocide against the protestant community, but against the agents of the state who violently oppress our people. But this the C.P.I. are very well aware of.

When the loyalist paramilitary UVF were running around murdering catholics and blowing up power stations and reservoirs in the late 60's, the IRA for all intents and purposes did not exist.

There is no evidence that sectarianism, though more open today is any greater than it was when there was no armed struggle (remember the countless pogroms against the catholic community in the 20's and 30's) and no fairy tales nor myopic reasoning can refute this. **Imperialism divides workers not the struggle against it, no matter what tactic is used.** If the C.P.I. do not recognise this they are not marxists but miserable philistines masquerading as such. Not once did Marx blame the Fenians' violence for dividing the working class, he went to a hostile British working class and fought for the right of the Irish nation to separate from Britain.

When Ho Chi Min turned on the catholics between 1945/6 causing a mass exodus to the South, was this a sectarian act? We'll not hold our breath awaiting an answer!

Finally to their last point, that the present armed struggle being waged brings repression. This definitely is a joke, but really, comrades, we must get up off the floor and answer this one.

It is a fact of life that when you start annoying the powerful, they will turn around and try and swat you. Oh, for a world were this was not true, were the bourgeoisie would roll over on their backs, belly up and surrender without a fight. But we live in a real world and therefore must expect more repression if we attempt to challenge their rule. Of course if you sit on your backside and moan

without attempting any resistance you might just get a patronising little pat on the head.

Two points alone among many make a nonsense of the C.P.I. claim.

1) the reaction of the state to the peaceful civil rights marches - repression and murder.

2) the reaction of the British state to the miners strike - repression on a massive scale.

The bourgeois state is an instrument of repression. It is only commonsense that repressive measures will be introduced by the ruling class whenever it feels threatened and whether that threat takes the form of marches, strikes or revolutionary violence is immaterial.

Lenin accuses Kautsky of transforming Marx into an ordinary liberal and of using **"Marxism in words and subordination to opportunism in deeds."** True, we can say that the C.P.I. rob marxism of its revolutionary core - they are modern day Kautskys.

One of the famous twenty-one conditions for membership of Lenin's Third International was as follows: **"In the Colonial question and that of the oppressed nationalities, there is necessary an especially distinct and clear line of conduct of the parties of countries where the bourgeois possess such colonies or oppresses other nationalities. Every party desirous of belonging to the Third International should be bound to denounce without any reserve all the methods of 'its own' imperialists in the colonies, supporting not in words only but practically a movement of liberation in the colonies. It should demand the expulsion of its own imperialists from such colonies, and cultivate among the workmen of its own country a truly fraternal attitude towards the working population of the colonies and oppressed nationalities, against every kind of oppression of the colonial population."** (Marx and the Marxists, Sidney Hook, page 189).

It is clear from this that the C.P.G.B. of today (nor indeed most British left organisations) would not have been allowed into Lenin's Third International and their miserable off shoot in the C.P.I. would not get any invitations to Lenin's Moscow.

It was rather disappointing to

read the contributions of Comrade James Tierney (League of Communist Republicans, Long Kesh) to this debate. It would seem that the league of Communists whose formation gave the left in Ireland a "boost" are heading to embrace reformism. The call for the setting up of a "Popular front" (see Starry Plough No. 4 for our analysis) and the general fawning attitude taken towards the C.P.I. would seem to show that in correctly rejecting the social content of the Sinn Fein programme that they have thrown the baby out with the bathwater i.e. the revolutionary aspect along with the petty bourgeois ideology.

Tierney calls on the C.P.I. **"the people of scientific socialism"** to take the initiative in organising the **"other way"**. Really, comrade, get a grip of yourself and don't allow sectarianism against the Republican movement drive you into the arms of such as the C.P.I.

S.W.M.

The Socialist Workers Party (S.W.P.) and its 'sister' organisation in Ireland S.W.M. just don't seem to be able to make up their minds as to how to categorise the armed struggle. They vacillate between calling it a "wrong tactic" and the use of **"individual terrorism"**. An article by Eamon McCann in the *Specialist Worker* of last year epitomises this confusion. Firstly he states what he calls the marxist position of the (S.W.M, S.W.P). **"And there is the Marxist position held by the Socialist Workers Movement which defends the right of the IRA to wage armed struggle while arguing against the armed struggle as a tactic. This can often seem an 'in-between' position held by the Socialist Workers Movement which defends the right of the IRA to wage armed struggle while arguing against the armed struggle as a tactic. This can often seem an 'in-between' position and something of a contradiction."** But is this a Marxist position, Marx and Engels faced by the armed campaign of the Fenians never once criticised their use of violence. I would suggest to Comrade McCann that he spends some time studying Marx and Engels before claiming Marxist's positions that are clearly not in keeping with reality.

Comrade McCann goes on to say that some critics of the armed struggle in Ireland who would concede the right of armed

struggle in countries such as South Africa because **"there is a sense in which the racist regime in Southern Africa is not legitimate but in which the six county state is: in the six county state they say, political change can and therefore should, be sought within the law."** He concedes that these people have a political argument. Instead of heaping scorn on this argument from the point of view that repression is repression and there are no degrees of which are acceptable. And when reforms were demanded, as Eamon McCann well knows the six county state reacted with murder and violence. Twenty years on, Eamon, and no change. This is the cudgel with which to beat these miserable philistines. But Eamon merely contents himself with saying that for marxists, no capitalist state is legitimate. The defence of marxism is certainly not going to come from Eamon McCann and the S.W.M.

Ending his article Comrade McCann uses a quote from Trotsky where Trotsky's intention was to show the futility of individual violence and as such it is not applicable to the present Irish struggle. It would have been more appropriate for McCann to state that it was a distinct **lack of violence** on the part of communists and socialists in the Germany that led to the rise of fascism. The communists and socialists for the most part cravenly capitulated to nazism and it was this betrayal that ultimately led young Herschel Grynszpan to heroically slay a Nazi official in Paris in 1938. (Trotsky was polemicalising over the individual act of Grynszpan).

By concentrating on attacking the tactic of armed struggle it lets the SWM off the hook on the national question. Their newspaper *Socialist Worker* is thoroughly economist with little or no attempt to link the national and the class struggle. The building of an open revolutionary party as Comrade McCann advocates cannot be built on this base but only on the uncompromising principles of Leninism.

Conclusion

We have tried here to give an introduction to a Marxist analysis of internationalism and the use of violence. In the most part we have allowed Marx, Engels and Lenin to speak for themselves through the

use of extensive quotations in this way it is easy to destroy the opportunist who would have us believe that they hold a "Marxist position." Of course it is easy to pull selected quotations from Marx, Engels and Lenin in order to back up almost any position however these quotations pullers inevitably do not understand Marxism, they distort it. They rob marxism of its revolutionary essence and reduce it to a form of pacifist liberal nonsense.

On the British left, the author would like to exempt such organisations as the Leninist, Red Action and to a certain degree the R.C.G. even though this organisation has reduced its activity on Ireland recently. If I have left out any other, my deepest apologies.

The recent debacle in trying to build a united anti-imperialist contingent for the 'Time To Go' march is nothing short of disgraceful. It appears that there is going to be at least three different contingents, all using the same slogans. You may not personally like each other comrades, but a united show of strength against imperialism is vital. How do you think you can ever win British workers to an anti-imperialist position on Ireland, when you present to them such a fragmented solidarity movement!

On the question of armed struggle, we believe that not only is the tactic legitimate in the present struggle in the six counties i.e. it cannot be described as individual terrorism nor can it be rejected on the basis of a head count or degree of repression, but it is absolutely essential. A cessation of the armed struggle at this present time would lead to such a level of reaction and total demoralisation within the advanced sections of the working class in the six counties that it would take years to recover.

It is the duty of communists in Ireland to support the use of violence by the oppressed sections of the working class against British imperialism, realising that this violence stems not just from organisations but from social forces within the six counties. Organisations may declare cease-fires or abandon the armed struggle altogether but the social forces would still exist and violence would continue under other names. It is the duty of communists to fight for hegemony over these forces and direct the struggle towards the goal of a Socialist republic.

Seamus Morgan

Show Trials Continue 20th Anniversary

On Monday, 11th July, the second show trial held in connection with the armed attack by British undercover soldiers, on the funeral of Caoimhin McBradaigh last year, ended with two of the defendants, Sean Lennon and David O'Connell receiving sentences of 15 years and nine years for "false" imprisonment.

Already we have seen "British justice" meted out to Alex Murphy and Henry Maguire accused of killing the two 'would be assassins', with sentences of 25 years recommended. Contrast that with the treatment of Ian Thain who shot down in cold blood an unarmed nationalist youth. Not for him years rotting in a prison cell, after receiving a life sentence, he was released after 18 months and is now back on duty. What about the RUC men charged with murdering unarmed republican/socialist activists. Where they given 25 years? No, they pleaded that they thought their lives were in danger and this was accepted by the judge as a 'justified' reason for killing. But when two British soldiers,



guns drawn, ran a funeral cortege, fire shots at the participants, people are not expected to defend themselves. Not to mention that a few days earlier, loyalists had mounted a gun and bomb attack on another funeral gathering killing three people. Injustice has been the reality for the nationalist community for the last twenty years.

The British controlled media also went on centre stage and did their usual stunt of hysterical rantings. Before any of these trials took place, the defendants had

already been tried and convicted. We were treated to a daily campaign of vilification against the working class people of West Belfast, portraying them as 'savages' and 'animals'.

Unlike the imperialists and their apologists here in Ireland we remember that day with pride, when the working class people defended themselves and hundreds of others, against armed gunmen, who had only one thing on their mind, murder. Now these brave people are paying the price - let us not forget them.

Marches Belfast

The 20th anniversary of the deployment of British troops will be combined with the annual internment commemoration. It will take place on

Sunday August 13th, leaving Dunville Park at 2.00 p.m. for a rally at the Busy Bee, Andersonstown. We urge everyone to come out and demonstrate against British occupation of our country.

Dublin

A 20th Anniversary March to commemorate and protest at the introduction and the continued presence of British troops in the six counties is due to take place on August 19th in Dublin. The march organised by F.A.D.A. August 19th committee, will be mobilised under the slogans **"Withdraw British troops"** and **"for a new United Ireland."** Whilst the



I.R.S.P. have strong reservations concerning the selective manner of F.A.D.A.'s founding, it's current make-up and direction coupled with the faint-hearted and indeed puzzling demands, we will have a contingent on the march and would urge all Socialists/-Republicans to attend. The march will assemble at 2.00 p.m. at Parnell Square on Saturday, August 19th.

Protest Vote In Dail Elections

The swing to both the Workers Party and Labour Party in the Dail and Euro elections in the 26 counties has been heralded as a victory for the left and for socialist politics as a whole. Unfortunately this is not the case, as these parties do not represent socialism but rather reformism. What it did show was a massive protest by the working class against the traditional right wing policies of both Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. A protest against high unemployment, forced emigration, huge cuts in public spending leading to poor health care, little access to higher education, reduction in social welfare benefit payments etc.

The Irish Labour Party and the Workers Party are from the same mould as the British Labour Party. They in effect prop up the capitalist system and provide at times of stress a safety valve for the capitalist state. As such these parties are the enemy of the working class, they are part of the problem and in no way a solution.

And what of Sinn Fein, the 'leftward' swing totally bypassed them in both elections. Despite having candidates like Christy



Fianna Fail leader Charles Haughey

Burke in Dublin and Caoimhin O'Caolain in Cavan/Monaghan who were well known and respected for their work at a community level, they failed to gain a seat while the Green Party came completely from nowhere and not only won a seat, but commanded a very respectable share of the vote in the areas where they fielded a candidate. The fact is that Sinn Fein are totally identified with the national question. The national question is of no relevance to the 26 county



Progressive Democrat leader Dessie O'Malley

electorate. That is an unfortunate but inescapable reality. Any amount of good community work is no substitute for clear socialist ideas (as opposed to socialistic rhetoric).

Over the past few weeks we have seen Haughey forced to eat humble pie after his humiliating defeat in the General Election, which he engineered confident of outright victory. Instead he lost four seats, not faring much better in the Euro elections held on the same day.

Although Fianna Fail still emerged as the largest party, they needed the support of at least six TD's in order to stay in power. Initially Haughey was forced to resign as Taoiseach, when frantic negotiations with both Fine Gael and the Progressive Democrats failed to produce any working agreement. Both parties were insisting that Fianna Fail enter into a coalition government with one of them. This Haughey refused to do saying it would be a betrayal of Fianna Fail's electoral promises.

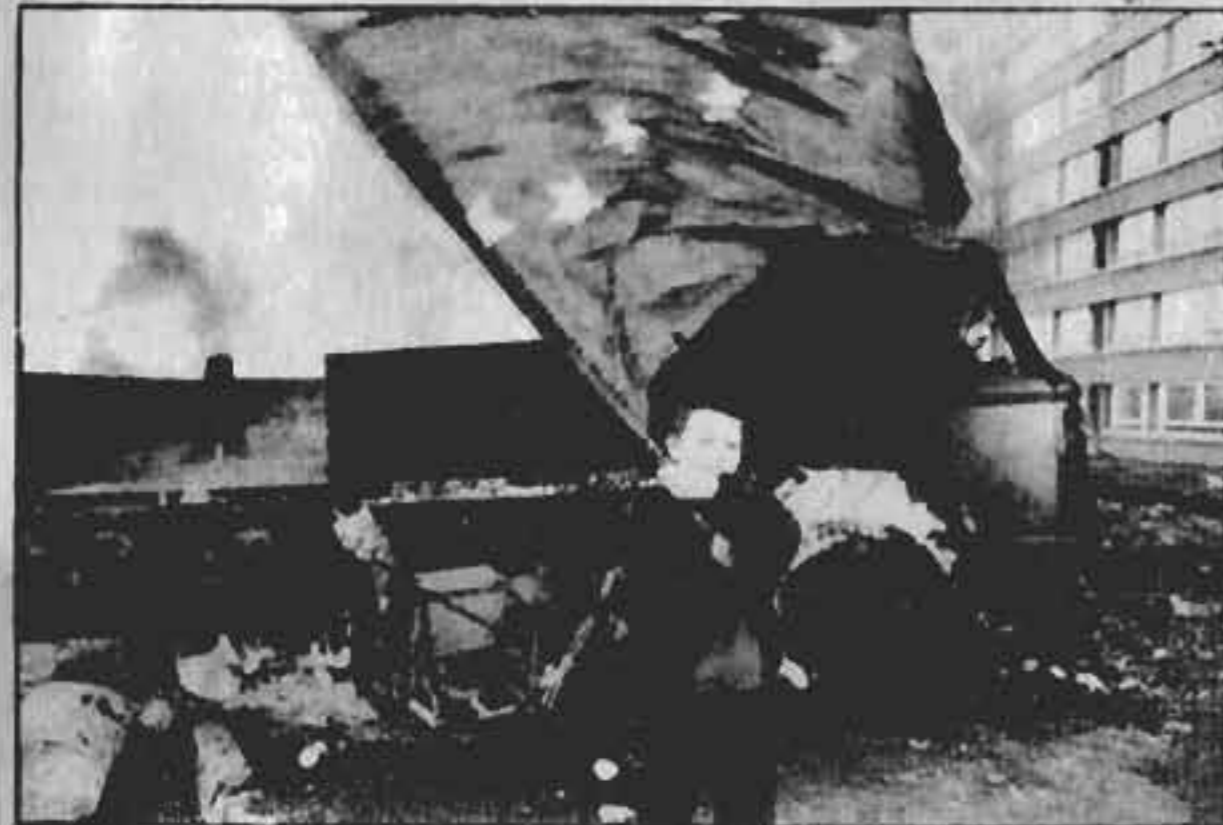
Of course an election pledge remains only a pledge until the votes are counted. Thus it comes as no surprise that Charles Haughey, has turned about face and agreed to a power sharing deal with his arch enemies, the right wing Progressive Democrats, the first in Fianna Fail's 63 year history. In return for keeping Fianna Fail in power, PD leader Dessie O'Malley has been appointed Minister for Labour and PD TD Bobby Molloy has been appointed Minister for Energy. Ironically, during the election campaign, the Progressive Democrats and Fine Gael entered

into an electoral alliance with a view to also forming a coalition government if they won the election. So the Progressive Democrats seem to be quite happy to share the same bed as Fine Gael or Fianna Fail, depending on who has the upper hand at any one time.

Capitalism is in deep crisis in the 26 counties, with a massive foreign debt and an economy dominated by transnational companies. Under this new coalition government, nothing will change. The working class will be faced with more cuts in health, education, high unemployment etc.

It has always been a problem for socialists that ruling class ideology is dominant within the working class. Part of the myths of bourgeois democracy is that change can be brought about by voting political parties into power, but as the election of the British Labour Party has proved time and again that unless the whole apparatus of the bourgeois state is dismantled - nothing changes in any permanent or meaningful way for the working class.

Under The Starry Plough



headed by a standard-bearer carrying a beautiful new poplin flag, displaying the design of the Starry Plough, the work of Mr. Megahy." The flag, which was much admired at the time, became the official emblem of the I.C.A. and a source of pride for its volunteers. It's originality helped give the Citizen Army something of an identity all its own. Sean O'Casey, in 'The Story of the Irish Citizen Army' (1919), wrote: "The banner, the idea of which was given by a sympathiser, and executed by Mr. McGahey (Megahy) was generally admired, and its symbolic design of the Plough and Stars was indeed strikingly original. The tallest man in the army was selected as banner-bearer, and he was always proud of his work..."

This first Starry Plough differs somewhat from the version in general use today. G.A. Hayes-McCoy in 'A History of Irish Flags from the Earliest Times' describes it as "...a stylised representation of an agricultural plough with, superimposed upon it, a representation of the constellation Ursa Major, the Great Bear or Plough of the heavens..." This representation is on a background of green which is bordered by a gilt fringe. The silver stars are disposed along the

yellow-coloured plough and the coulters is replaced by a sword with a serrated edge. The version of the Starry Plough currently used by, among others, the Workers Party is a replica of this original flag.

The identity of its designer is still a source of dispute. It is generally accepted that the streamlining of the design was carried out by the Belfastman William Megahy. Megahy was a teacher at the Metropolitan School of Arts in Dublin. His original design was presented to the national Museum in 1954 by Sean O'Casey. O'Casey who was prominent in the Citizen Army in 1914, didn't believe Megahy to be responsible for the initial idea nor did he accept the contention of some that George Russell first proposed the design. To this day it remains unclear precisely who conceived the Starry Plough.

Megahy's flag was raised above the Imperial Hotel in Dublin during the 1916 rising. The hotel, which was the property of William Martin Murphy of 1913 Lockout fame, was burned to the ground during the fighting but the flag survived and a British officer seized it as a souvenir. The Irish National Museum managed to acquire it in 1955. It was, however, missing when, in 1934, elements of the Republican Congress decided to attempt a revival of the Citizen

Army which had disappeared at the end of the Civil War. With the original flag believed destroyed in 1916, it was agreed to design a new Starry Plough.

New Flag

The I.C.A. was revived briefly at the time of the Republican Congress by veterans of the old Citizen Army and volunteers forced out of the Republican Movement by a General Order forbidding members giving any support to the Congress. The flag they took as their emblem is that used by the I.R.S.P. today. It consisted of white stars on a blue background. It has become the accepted flag of Irish socialism and of the Irish working class. The Irish Labour Party used the flag until relatively recently when they replaced the blue with a red background. Perhaps they finally discovered the origins of the flag and decided that it wasn't for them? In the past few years their use of the flag has diminished and it would seem that they intend replacing it with a hand clasping a red rose - the symbol of European social democracy.

For most Irish socialists the Starry Plough remains a potent symbol. It remains a symbol of militancy. It is a flag that once flew over Dublin as a flag of rebellion. It shall do so again, not below the tricolour but above it, alongside a red flag, as a flag of social revolution.

Robert Lake

All political movements have their symbols, songs, flags and banners. The nationalist movement in Ireland has, as its flag, the tricolour; the loyalists have the red hand of Ulster. For Irish socialists the emblem generally found fluttering in their midst is the Starry Plough.

The Irish working class has a history and tradition, as pugnacious and vibrant as Irish nationalism. Irish historians, however, commonly overlook this as they grapple with the intricate business of dissecting the two dominant historical blocs - Nationalism and Unionism. The result of such a histographical

obsession can be seen in the virtual ignoring of the upsurge in class conflict during the Anglo-Irish struggle of 1916-23. In spite of this a tradition exists and we retain in symbols, such as the Starry Plough, a link with our struggling predecessors.

Origins

The Starry Plough was first exhibited publicly on April 5th, 1914 at an Irish Citizen Army meeting. Early in that month the *Irish Worker* reported on this demonstration and noted that "...a large number of the Citizen Army were in attendance,

part of our community and all of us need to become actively involved in the campaign against the health cuts and what we believe to be the Health Board's long term strategy - the eventual closure of the R.V.H. altogether.

At a meeting in West Belfast convened by the Falls Women's Centre and attended by concerned local people, community organisations and the I.R.S.P. and Sinn Fein, the West Belfast Health Monitoring group was set up. One of the first priorities of the group is to conduct a survey to look into the relationship between the deterioration in people's health in West Belfast and the run down of services in the R.V.H. The survey will primarily be carried out in the Beechmount and St. James areas. An approach has also been made to a number of community organisations in other areas like the Shankill to see if the same thing

can be done there.

Anyone interested or wishing to support the West Belfast Health Monitoring Group should contact Marion Gough Tel: 327672 or Terry Harkin Tel: 331935.

Plastic Bullets For U.D.R.

Reaction within the nationalist community following the disclosure that the British government intends to supply the U.D.R. with plastic bullet guns for use in community control was swift and angry. There can be little doubt that given the chance, Ulster's 'Dirty Rats' would recreate scenes reminiscent of the occupied Gaza Strip.

I.R.S.P. spokesperson Kevin McQuillan described the decision as "an extremely sinister move."

Comrade McQuillan continued "We were told that one of the main purposes of the Hillsborough Agreement was to ensure the Irish government's role in curbing the excesses of the R.U.C. and British Army. In particular their use of plastic bullets as a means of crowd control. Instead of hearing that calls to this Hillsborough Secretariat

for the banning of such an indiscriminate and lethal weapon have been successful, we now find that its use is to be extended to what are no more than 'B Specials in green', the U.D.R."

In closing comrade McQuillan said "Although brought in to use to deal specifically with community control in nationalist areas. Plastic bullets do not differentiate between religions or political affiliation. The death of protestant bandsman Keith White being a case point in question. The ironic twist to the extended use of this death weapon is that the loyalist mouth-pieces who were forced by the death of Keith White to criticise the use of plastic bullets, have been deafeningly silent over this latest announcement."

Cuts Fight back

Over the last number of years, few issues have received as much media exposure as the campaign to save the health service. Countless protests from the medical profession and trade unions have been to no avail.

In West Belfast, the Royal Victoria Hospital (R.V.H.) is facing major cutbacks with the closing of the gynae wards, huge waiting lists, and reductions of beds right across the board. The R.V.H. is



Murder On The Rock

Maxine Williams

As it stands, 'Murder on the Rock' is a damning indictment of the whole incident which took place on the 6th March, 1988 and the subsequent cover-up. Maxine Williams has meticulously researched all the information available to the public (at the time) and the resulting collation of lies and distortions should destroy any belief held by the naive and politically unaware in "British Justice".

The general thread of Ms. Williams argument is that the Gibraltar executions were the logical follow-on from the shoot-to-kill policy and not a new departure. This policy, as we are all too aware, has been used extensively in the six counties and was at its

most blatant in 1982. She sees the whole policy as a personalised war carried on by Thatcher against the killers of her "political friend" Airey Neave. It must be pointed out that Neave was killed by the I.N.L.A. (not by the IRA as stated in the book) and Thatcher had her immediate revenge by having leading members of the I.R.S.P. Ronnie Bunting and Noel Little executed. Nevertheless her hatred of and actions against Irish revolutionaries certainly fit in with her known character.

Ms Williams points out how the short-comings in cover-up technique which were exposed during shoot-to-kill investigations, were corrected and perfected to a high degree in Gibraltar. All the diverse elements in the total picture are examined: how the witnesses (from the police difficulty in finding any to begin with) were "nobbled", whether by

character assassination or as appears to have been the case with Asquez by some more sinister method: how Public Immunity certificates were freely used: how from the moment of the announcement of the incident, the press in general participated willingly in the distortions necessary to create a certain image in the public mind ("fierce gun battle", "massive car bomb" etc.) in some cases perpetuating the myths after they had been discounted: how the Spanish police version of what took place was not heard and how the Spanish government was "encouraged" to remain silent: how the rules of the Inquest were deliberately restrictive: how Correa, who was appointed Coroner's Officer, was also the officer in charge of police investigations, and appointed to that post before there was anything to investigate: how the

forensic evidence was disturbed at the scene, and then played down since it contradicted the evidence of the SAS etc.

McWilliams also speculates that "had the inquest decided that the three were murdered, the effects for the government and its strategy in Ireland would have been incalculable". Certainly in an international context, such a result would have been embarrassing, but to suggest that the results would have been "incalculable" is stretching the imagination somewhat. All the indications from past "embarrassments", such as the various findings of the European court of Human Rights, resulted in only minor cosmetic change. The reality does not change.

The trouble with this booklet is that with the steady trickle of "new information" it will soon need to be updated. A recent example of this new information is pointed out by Ian Jack in the Observer. When mentioning reports in the 'Irish Times' and 'Independent' quoting

Spanish police sources to the effect that the IRA team had comprised six members and not three. Naturally as the truth appears as a trickle it loses the impact that a complete disclosure would have.

What the book sets out to do is to show that Mairead Farrell, Danny McCann and Sean Savage were executed by the British government and that the Labour Party and media were willing accomplices. It does this satisfactorily, yet who is it aimed at? To those of us involved in the politics of national liberation it is preaching to the converted. Is it then directed at those who actually believe there is such a thing as "British Justice"? Just how much influence this publication will have on that layer of society remains to be seen.

All in all this booklet, although there is a little repetition, is useful for an immediate grasp of the events surrounding the Gibraltar executions.

Francis Glenn

Is Education A Privilege?

Education like all other items in a capitalist society is for sale to, the highest bidder. The reality of the education system in this country is that if you are from a working class background you are at a distinct disadvantage in your educational opportunities. This is no accident but a deliberate policy by the establishment to perpetuate their own self-interest and deny the working class their fundamental democratic right to proper education. The following table clearly illustrates the inequality that exists in education.

Yet despite the increased funding on education there has been practically no greater participation of working class students in third level education. In other words all the spending increases in education were solely for the benefit of the professional and middle classes.

Inequities

It is a statistical fact that the children of large farmers and of the professional classes enter into

of opportunity or access to third level education for the working class in this state. Dr. Kathleen Lynch a lecturer in the Sociology of Education in U.C.D. put this across very well at a recent seminar on Education in Tallagh. She made the following statement:

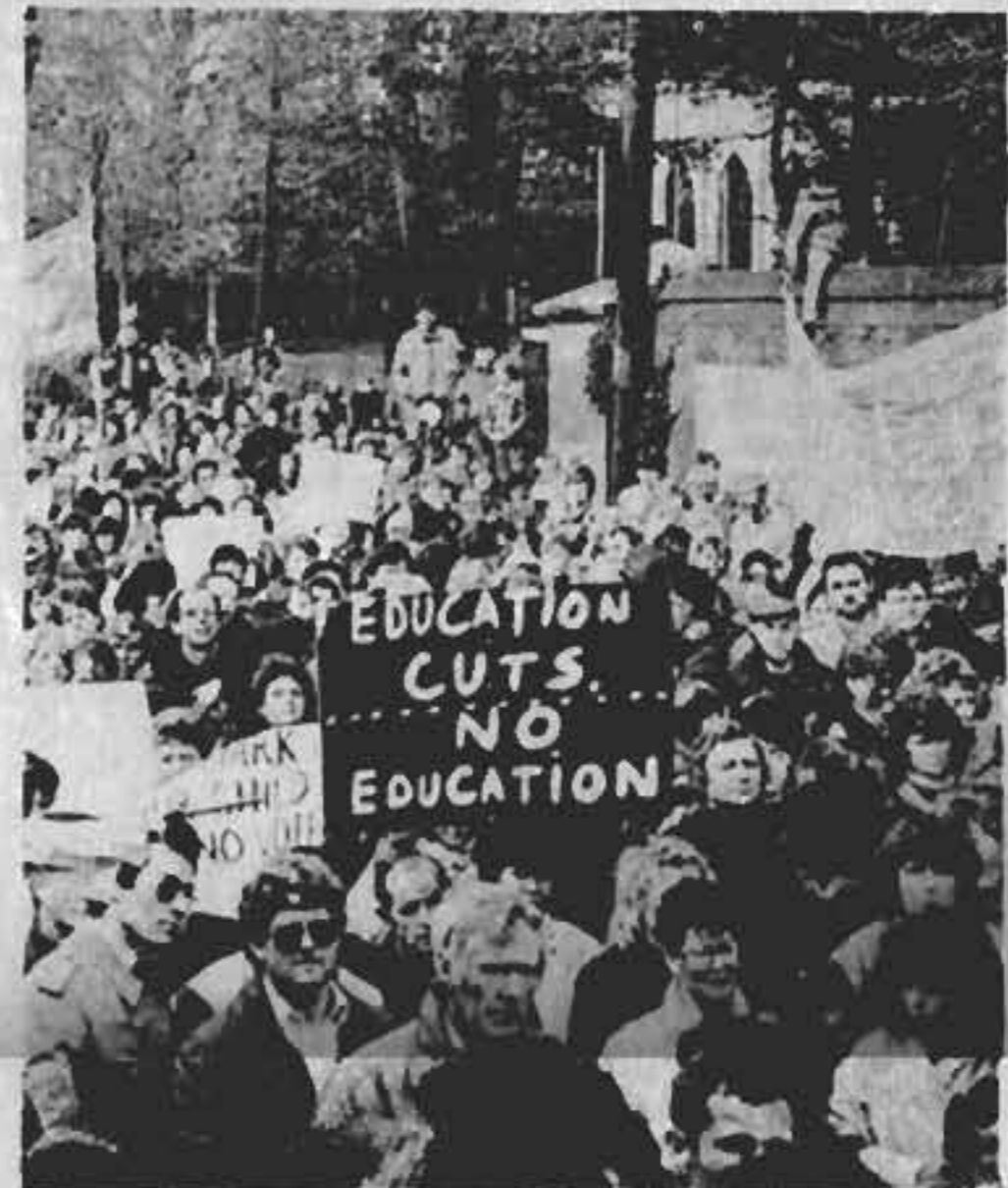
"Since the foundation of the state, education has been monopolised as the only means by which the professional, but property-less, middle classes transmit their privileges to their children. These middle classes rose to power through the independence movement and have since taken control of policy making through the formation of political dynasties that fill the Dail and ministerial positions. The ethos of that class permeates the Irish education system, by the state subsidies of the fee-paying schools, reinforced by an examination system that measures only those forms of intelligence which are recognised by the middle classes."

She also made the following points that the inequalities in education are self-perpetuating and that: "It was a deliberate political decision to exclude the social and political sciences from the second level school curriculum, it helped to ensure that the status quo was not questioned."

In other words, this was a decision taken by the establishment to stop working class people thinking in a class conscious way, and by the exclusion of a proper understanding of social history, prevent any possible threat to their control of society by a working class who is thinking politically in a way which would advance their class. She also made a point, that only designated associations dominated by the middle classes are consulted by the government on matters of education. This means that the working class have no say whatsoever in what type of an education system is provided.

Who Pays

The irony of the situation is that while we have an education system which totally discriminates against the working class, it receives the vast majority of its funding from the taxation of the working class! Whereas the children of these workers who pay their taxes to finance this education system may never have access to it themselves. The wealthy can send their children to third level education and write off



Students protest

this expense against their overall tax payment. We also have the ludicrous situation where you have fee paying private schools separate from the normal education system and yet receiving state funding (ie. workers taxes). While state sector schools are constantly suffering cutbacks in equipment and staff, privately run schools are still receiving large injections of state funds to ensure that the education of the establishment's children do not suffer.

These private schools are often controlled by the churches. Overall the churches in Ireland have a major influence on the way the education system is run due to the large amounts of various religious orders involved in the running of schools throughout the country. The churches by their very nature are pro-establishment and through their large scale involvement in the education system they perpetuate the inequalities in society. Their influence and connections over the government and establishment in general ensures that money is channelled into the educational sectors which they control to the economic detriment of the vocational sector where the vast majority of the working class children receive their education.

Conclusion

Equal access to third level education and indeed all forms of education is a basic democratic right. The reality of the situation is that this is a right which is

deliberately denied to the working class. The state as it exists cannot change this as it is structured to defend the interests of the wealthy. At best all it will do is introduce cosmetic changes here and there to quell growing criticism. We in the I.R.S.P. support any reforms the working class can achieve but we must press home the fact that you will never achieve equity in education under a capitalist system. This will not change until the working class take control of their destiny and create a socialist system.

In a socialist society a person's ability only would guarantee them their place in third level education. Education would reflect the needs of the people as a whole and not the marginal interests of elite groups as is the norm in the present system, the stranglehold which the church has over the education system will have to be broken. There will have to be a complete separation of church and state. There would be full democratic participation in higher education by the students and teachers to ensure the best use is made of the education system. All this will only come about in a workers republic. We call on our fellow comrades in the working class to join us in building the party that will hasten the day.

N.B. The statistics and table in the above article are drawn mainly from the second national survey of participation in higher education which were compiled in the book 'Who Goes to College' by Patrick Clancy.

Jon O'Hanlon.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF 1986 ENTRANTS TO HIGHER EDUCATION & NATIONAL POPULATION UNDER 15 YEARS IN 1981 WITH PARTICIPATION RATIOS BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP FOR 1986 AND 1980

Socio-Economic Groups	Higher Education Entrants In 1986 %	National Population Under 15yrs In 1981 %	Participation Ratio 1986	Participation Ratio 1980
Farmers	20.8	14.3	1.45	1.04
Other Agricultural Occupations	1.4	2.9	0.48	0.21
Higher Professional	12.0	4.0	3.00	3.93
Lower Professional	9.2	4.3	2.14	2.29
Employers & Managers	18.2	9.2	1.98	2.75
Salaried Employees	6.2	2.7	2.30	2.93
Intermediate Non-Manual Workers	9.8	10.2	0.96	1.11
Other Non-Manual Workers	5.7	12.8	0.45	0.50
Skilled Manual Workers	12.9	25.4	0.51	0.51
Semi-Skilled Manual Workers	2.5	5.9	0.42	0.49
Unskilled Manual Workers	1.3	8.2	0.16	0.11
Total %	100.0	100.0	-	-
N	14,388	969,951	-	-

The establishment have consistently claimed that there has been free education available to all for the last twenty years. The reality however is that relevant statistics prove that the participation of the working class in higher education is even less today than twenty years ago. The reason for this is the ingrained bias against the working class within the system and the high cost of education. Third level education has largely been a closed shop to the working class and with the current cutbacks this inequality is being intensified. While one sixteenth of all students participating in education attend third level education, one fifth of all monies spent on education are spent on the third level sector. In 1967 3.3% of the G.N.P. was spent on education. And this is proposed to rise to 6.2% of G.N.P. in 1990.

third level education at a rate of twenty times greater than the children of working class families. Even members of the working class who do make it to third level education find themselves at a disadvantage because of the completely inadequate grants available. This places a terrible strain on them and their families trying to provide the necessary finance to enable them to finish their education.

This was clearly pointed out at the I.N.T.O. Conference in Bundoran, when Mr. Noel Ward in his address made the following statement:

"Parents living in poverty believe that schooling offers their children a real chance in life, but at every turn of the system there are barriers to those parents greatest efforts."

There is absolutely no equality

Brits On Rampage



Attacks on innocent civilians have been the order of the day since the Paras and the Marines have moved into West Belfast. Both these regiments have been notorious for their brutality against the nationalist community over the years, and with the 20th anniversary of British army occupation coming up in August, they are determined to leave their mark. In the months of May and June alone, several people were hit at point blank range with plastic bullets including Anne McNally who was shot in the chest outside her Moyard home. A particularly vicious assault took place on Denis

Laughlin while he was working in his father's workshop in the Conway Mill. He was beaten with rifle butts and was treated in hospital for head wounds and a broken arm. In one of the latest attacks to be reported, three young men were leaving St. Galls G.A.C. Club on the Falls Road on Tuesday night, the 11th July. All three lads are deaf. Suddenly a Brit appeared and threw a brick at one of the lads. John Wilkinson from Ardoyne. He was knocked unconscious and woke up in hospital. His nose and forehead were badly bruised and cut and he was badly concussed.

In Memory

The Republican Socialist Prisoners of War in Long Kesh, Magilligan, Maghaberry, Portlaoise and England remember with love and pride our fallen comrades:
 Vol. Paul "Bonanza" McCann, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A. killed on active service, June 15th, 1984.
 Vol. Miriam Daly, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A. assassinated by loyalists/SAS, June 26th, 1980.
 Vol. Kevin Lynch, I.N.L.A. died on Hunger Strike, August 1st, 1981.
 Vol. James McPhilomy, Tyrone Brigade, I.N.L.A., killed in action 10th August 1988.
 Vol. Brendan Convery, South Derry Brigade, I.N.L.A., killed in action, 13th August 1983.
 Vol. Gerard Mallon, Armagh Brigade, I.N.L.A., killed in action, 13th August 1983.
 Vol. Micky Devine, P.O.W., I.N.L.A., died on Hunger Strike, 20th August, 1981.

The Central Committee of the Irish Republican Socialist Party remember with love and pride our fallen comrades:
 Vol. Paul "Bonanza" McCann, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A. killed on active service, June 15th, 1984.
 Vol. Miriam Daly, Belfast Brigade I.N.L.A. assassinated by loyalists/SAS, June 26th, 1980.
 Vol. Kevin Lynch, I.N.L.A. died on Hunger Strike, August 1st, 1981.
 Vol. James McPhilomy, Tyrone Brigade, I.N.L.A., killed in action 10th August, 1988.
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 Vol. Gerard Mallon, Armagh Brigade, I.N.L.A., killed in action, 13th August 1983.
 Vol. Micky Devine, P.O.W., I.N.L.A. died on Hunger Strike, 20th August, 1981.

From the graves of patriot men and women spring living nations.

The I.R.S.P. Support Committees in London, Glasgow and Bristol remember with love and pride our fallen comrades:
 Vol. Paul "Bonanza" McCann, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A. killed on active service, June 15th, 1984.
 Vol. Miriam Daly, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A. assassinated by loyalists/SAS, June 26th, 1980.
 Vol. Kevin Lynch, I.N.L.A., died on Hunger Strike, August 1st, 1981.
 Vol. James McPhilomy, Tyrone Brigade, I.N.L.A., killed in action 10th August 1988.
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 Vol. Gerard Mallon, Armagh Brigade, I.N.L.A., killed in action, 13th August, 1983.
 Vol. Micky Devine, P.O.W., I.N.L.A., died on Hunger Strike, 20th August, 1981.

The people's flag is deepest red, it shrouded oft our martyred dead and ere their limbs grew stiff and cold, their hearts blood dyed its every fold.

The Irish Republican Socialist Committees, (North America), remember with loving pride:
 Vol. Paul "Bonanza" McCann, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A. killed on active service, June 15th, 1984.
 Vol. Miriam Daly, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A. assassinated by loyalists/SAS, June 26th, 1980.
 Vol. Kevin Lynch, I.N.L.A. died on Hunger Strike, August 1st, 1981.
 Vol. James McPhilomy, Tyrone Brigade, I.N.L.A., killed in action 10th August, 1988.
 Vol. Brendan Convery, South Derry Brigade, I.N.L.A., killed in action, 13th August 1983.
 Vol. Gerard Mallon, Armagh Brigade, I.N.L.A., killed in action, 13th August 1983.
 Vol. Micky Devine, P.O.W., I.N.L.A., died on Hunger Strike, 20th August, 1981.

The Staff and Vols. of the Irish National Liberation Army remember with loving pride our fallen comrades:

Vol. Paul "Bonanza" McCann, Belfast Brigade, I.N.L.A. killed on active service, June 15th, 1984.
 Vol. Miriam Daly, Belfast Brigade I.N.L.A. assassinated by loyalists/SAS, June 26th, 1980.
 Vol. Kevin Lynch, I.N.L.A. died on Hunger Strike, August 1st, 1981.
 Vol. James McPhilomy, Tyrone Brigade, I.N.L.A., killed in action, 10th August, 1988.
 Vol. Brendan Convery, South Derry Brigade, I.N.L.A., killed in action, 13th August 1983.
 Vol. Gerard Mallon, Armagh Brigade, I.N.L.A., killed in action, 13th August 1983.
 Vol. Micky Devine, P.O.W., I.N.L.A., died on Hunger Strike, 20th August, 1981.

"to carry on no matter what odds are against you. To carry on no matter what torments are inflicted on you. The road to freedom is paved with suffering hardships and torture. Carry on, my gallant and brave comrades, until that certain day". Tom Williams.

O'Keefe Billy (4th Anniv.). In proud and loving memory of Billy O'Keefe who died on March 22nd, 1985. Will always be remembered by the Central Committee I.R.S.P.

O'Keefe Billy (4th Anniv.). In loving memory of our comrade Billy O'Keefe who died on the 22nd March, 1985. His contribution to the struggle will never be forgotten by his comrades in Dungarvan, Co. Waterford.

Power Jessie (1st Anniv.). In loving memory of our friend Jessie Power who died on August 23rd, 1988. He was a tireless worker on behalf of the prisoners and he is sorely missed by his friends in Dungarvan, Co. Waterford.

We owe it to you, who have died to honour the cause you nobly served. Other generations have failed, we must not.

Yet Another Sticky Wicket!

The Workers Party were unusually quiet about the arms find in Turf Lodge, two weeks ago, when an M1 carbine, a submachinegun, 38 rounds of ammunition and two magazines turned up in a back garden. According to the D.P.P. they were originally put in a well constructed hide in the house by a Brigade Staff Officer of the Official IRA.



Seamus Lynch.

More revelations were yet to come. Apparently one of the guns had been stolen from the UDR in 1972, and had been used in a sectarian gun attack by loyalist paramilitaries. No explanation was forthcoming as to how the gun found its way to the Official IRA, but affiliations between the Officials and loyalist paramilitaries have been well documented especially in the lucrative area of

building sites. Of course, let us not forget that according to the Workers Party, their military wing, the Official IRA, does not exist, so maybe the arms find was a figment of somebody's imagination!

Sexual Attack By RUC

In another incident, this time involving the R.U.C., a 30 year old young woman, Geraldine Skillen from Turf Lodge was arrested near her home and was sexually attacked in a police landrover taking her to Woodbourne RUC barracks. During her three hour ordeal inside the barracks, she was subjected to a degrading stripsearch, more sexual threats were issued and the RUC threatened to take her children into care. As is usually the case, the perpetrators of this attack, the RUC, were not charged, instead the victim was charged with assault and disorderly behaviour.



At the first hearing of the case on Friday 7th July, a solidarity picket was mounted outside Chichester Court House by a newly formed West Belfast women's group, who demanded that her charges be dropped.

The case was adjourned until later this month.

Killer Soldier Back

On Duty!

Less than a year after Aidan McAnespie was gunned down at a border checkpoint at Aughnacloy on his way to a GAA match, the soldier, Private David Holden, who was originally charged with manslaughter is now back on duty. At the time of the shooting, Holden claimed that whilst he was cleaning the machinegun, his wet hands slipped and the gun went off by accident. The DPP eventually dropped the charges against him saying there was no evidence to proceed, and yet at a hearing within his own regiment, he was found guilty of a "negligent discharge" and fined. At the time of the shooting, the Irish government intervened and exhumed the body to carry out their own post-mortem but strangely, the findings of the postmortem were never made public, though it was speculated in the Brit and Irish media that it did



not contradict the findings of the original postmortem which were that McAnespie was hit in the back by a bullet which had ricocheted off the road.

Yet again in a long list of similar cases, here we have a young man who over a long period of time had been harassed and received death threats by the soldiers at the checkpoint, these threats had been well documented and publicised before he met his death.

And nobody in the nationalist community is in any doubt, that the threat was carried out. His killer walks away with a fine and no doubt a pat on the head for a job well done and is back on duty with a gun in his hand.

And as for the Irish government, why were the post-mortem findings not made public? If they found nothing new, why not announce this fact? The real truth has to be one of collusion, collusion with the British government to effect a cover up. This has been backed up by Fathers Des Wilson and Joe McVeigh who announced this week, that they have positive proof that it was not an accidental shooting as claimed, and that more than one soldier was involved. This proof will be presented at the inquest when it takes place. Joe McVeigh also states they have found "disturbing evidence of alleged high-level collusion by the British authorities into some of the other so-called sectarian killings in the North...Our overall investigation leads us to the firm conclusion that some of the recent murders were planned and organised at the highest level".

I.R.S.P. Condemn Murder

On Sunday, the 23rd July a gang of armed fascists walked into the Fallswater Street home of John Devine and shot him nine times in front of his 13 year old son.

In condemning the murder, I.R.S.P. spokesperson Kevin McQuillan said, "No doubt the timing of this murder is meant

to coincide with the run-up to the 20th anniversary of the deployment of British troops in the six counties, and would suggest the beginning of a new wave of sectarian terror."

"The significance of this deplorable murder perpetrated in the heart of West

Belfast would further indicate that the aim of these attacks are to disrupt and stifle the forthcoming street protests against continuing British occupation. The very root cause of sectarianism in Ireland today."



THE STARRY PLOUGH

China: The Fight For Socialist Democracy

In the blood of thousands of Chinese anti-government demonstrators, the Peoples Liberation Army has written a stark message in Tiananmen Square. It read: 'There can be no peaceful road to socialism in China - the only path is the political revolution.'

When the tanks and infantry mercilessly slaughtered students, workers and children on June 4th in Beijing they simultaneously killed off any lingering illusions that the party, which successfully led the 1949 revolution, had constructed a socialist society.

The televised massacre of peaceful protesters has revealed to the world that the Chinese Communist Party is a totally ruthless defender of its privileged position. As the ruling elite in the Peoples Republic it reacts with terror against the slightest questioning of its dictatorial powers, its corruption, its incompetence, its political and moral degeneration. In this it is only being true to the barbaric traditions of its acknowledged political and theoretical hero - Joseph Stalin.

The horrifying events of June 4th and the subsequent crackdown on the student and independent trade union movement came after weeks of non-violent campaigning for political reforms. Contrary to the lying claims of the Deng/Li Peng government, the demands of the students were for socialist democracy and not for the restoration of capitalism. It is precisely the Chinese Stalinist leadership itself which has been introducing capitalist reforms.

In the past ten years, the party under Deng has opened up the Chinese economy to foreign capitalist investment, U.S. investment alone in 1987 was three billion dollars. Enterprise zones were established on the East Coast to cater for the imperialists' giant companies - similar to the I.D.A. and I.D.B. in Ireland. The relaxation of state control resulted in huge price rises on basic items for the working class while fortunes were amassed by individuals with the right connections in the state and party bureaucracy.

Industrial growth accelerated during this period, reaching a peak of 20% expansion in 1984. Alarmed by the 'overheating' of the economy, with inflation reaching 20% in 1988 and 35% in the early part of 1989, the brakes were applied. This produced a fall of 11% in industrial output in January of this year. Agriculture was de-collectivised in some regions and the black market and profiteering flourished.

This background of increasing social inequality and anxiety in the face of spiralling living costs is the soil from which grew the 'campaign for democracy' of the Beijing students on April 17th. On



this date, protests began, in the wake of the death of Hu Yaobang, a former party leader deposed by Deng for concessions to the students in 1987. 50,000 students confronted police on the occasion of Hu's funeral on 22nd April. Then followed a classroom strike. Defying the authorities they marched to the Tiananmen Square on the 26th. Up to one million people took part with support growing amongst the working class and even sections of the militia.

As the campaign spread throughout the major Chinese cities, students began a 1,000 strong hunger strike. They ignored the TV appeal by Zhao Ziyang to end their protest. Instead they insisted on their demands. These included: an end to corruption and nepotism in the party; the right to demonstrate and free association; disclosure of leaders' incomes; free press; free speech; more education funds; acceleration of democratic reforms; punishment of corrupt officials; a police apology for beatings of students.

Into the middle of this democratic upsurge Mikhail Gorbachev arrived for an 'historic' visit to the Chinese leaders. Gorbachev and the Chinese gerontocracy suffered the humiliation of having to re-schedule their summit meeting due to the takeover of the Tiananmen Square by crowds of over 250,000. Gorbachev, the 'acceptable' face of Stalinism in the USSR urged the protesters to be 'cautious'. It seems that Glasnost, the spirit of political freedom and maturing democracy is not a right for the masses but a privilege to be conferred by the bureaucracy and then only under strict control and in small doses.

With Gorbachev's departure the beleaguered leaders were quick

to declare martial law. This they were unable to impose however. The masses of Beijing ignored the dictates, Zhao Ziyang, who had wanted to concede their demands disappeared from public life - under house arrest. 100 senior officers sent a letter supporting the students and refusing to act against them.

By this stage the protesters were being branded as counter-revolutionaries. They called a mass protest for the 28th May. Only 50,000 turned out in Beijing but there were gatherings of 100,000 in Shanghai. Between half and one million attended a rally in Hong Kong. On the 29th, there were only 2,000 in the square. President Yang Shangkun warned the government not to retreat. Government sponsored demonstrations called the students 'traitorous bandits'. Nanking students begin a 'Long March' to Beijing.

On June 3rd thousands of unarmed soldiers are repelled by the citizens as they charge towards Tiananmen. On June 4th, the massacre begins as troops from outside the region are used. They have been isolated for weeks from all news except state propaganda.

As the heroic students and their working class allies reel under this shock assault their alleged instigators in Washington, London etc, maintain silence. Once it is evident that there is not going to be civil war and that the campaign will be crushed, Bush, Thatcher etc, begin to condemn the 'excesses' of the Chinese regime but refuse to break off relations or to impose economic sanctions. Token gestures (cancellations of arms sales) and empty platitudes reveal that these imperialist vultures are clearly on the side of the bureaucracy. They understand clearly that the students'

campaign for political-democratic reforms is not a call for the introduction of capitalist/bourgeois democracy. Democracy for the students and workers of China is socialist democracy. The term is used by the capitalist commentators to imply that the Chinese people want parliamentary democracy Western style. In fact the demand for democratic reforms put forward were for political measures based on the already established predominant socialised ownership of the economy.

The real fears of the imperialists were expressed by such as Henry Kissinger who urged caution and restraint saying "it cannot be in our interest to drive China back to the Soviet Union." Their concern is not with the political rights of the Chinese masses, it is with the loss of access to this newly acquired and developing market and source of profit. This is what the 120 million Chinese workers and 900 million peasants represent to the U.S., Japanese and European multinationals. It is worth comparing this response to the slaughter of innocents in Beijing in 1989 to the crushing economic sanctions against Poland when a strong movement for restoring capitalism developed within Solidarity and the rural population.

At time of writing the leaders of the independent students organisations and of the illegal trade unions are being rounded up. Some have been sentenced to death in show trials, and on June 21st, three of them were executed publicly. Terror is once more the order of the day. Undoubtedly this is only a lost battle, the war will continue for real workers democracy in China. At this stage it is possible to make some

observations on the lessons of this short, sharp, shock to the political naivety of millions of workers, trade unionists, students, youth, throughout the world - East and West.

Regimes like the Chinese Communist Party, with its record of political, military and economic support of dictatorships in Chile, Pakistan and for the Khmer Rouge of Pol Pot infamy, have never been interested in relinquishing their control to the people. Nor are they able to. Their high living standards depend on their total control of the distribution of the wealth produced. Only then can they assume their disproportionate consumption of it. In contrast, capitalist regimes can live with limited political rights for the masses - because their ownership of the means of production and exchange guarantees their huge profits.

The demand for democracy in the Peoples Republic of China can only be met through the political revolution. That is; the overthrow of the corrupt and repressive government and party bureaucracy by the revolutionary mobilisation of the workers and their allies. That the Chinese working class draw this conclusion and begin to act upon it is a fear running through all anti-socialist politicians. It is a spectre which haunts not only Mao's successors in China. Anxious party officials in the U.S.S.R. alarmed at both the campaign and its manner of destruction have been heard to ask "Can this happen here?" They were quickly answered by delegates from Georgia: "It already has, in Tbilisi!" (dozens of striking protesters were killed by the army in May).

It is imperative for socialist republicans to come to grips with the major theoretical/political questions posed by such events if a genuine marxist movement is to be built here. Time has run out for fudging on such questions as the nature of the Soviet Union, China, Vietnam, Eastern Europe etc; what should be the attitude and relationship of the revolutionary movement to such regimes and their supporters in Ireland (and elsewhere)? Refusal and/or inability to come to any consistent scientific view on these matters has long been the hallmark of the republican tradition. It is a major obstacle to its development as a revolutionary socialist movement.

When so-called communists order their army to fire into unarmed civilians peacefully protesting for the meagrest of reforms; when so-called agents of capitalism die singing the "Internationale": - surely there can be no excuse for denying the obvious. If we cannot recognise and identify the truth of issues so starkly represented, then just what can we do?

Dermot McBride

Title: The Starry Plough, No. 6

Organisation: Irish Republican Socialist Party

Date: 1989

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