

FOR PEACE, INDEPENDENCE, AND SOCIALISM

**18th National Congress
Dublin · May 1982**

**The Communist Party of Ireland
Páirtí Cumannach na hÉireann**



The 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of Ireland was held in Dublin on May 14, 15 and 16, 1982. There were delegates representing branches from Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Limerick, Waterford and other centres. There were also a number of non-delegate members present as consultative observers, most of these were trade union officials. There were a number of honoured guests, veterans of the Labour and National Independence movements.

The credentials report showed that the majority of delegates were members of trade unions or professional organisations. The report also showed the wide and varied activities and areas of party involvement, including such organisations as N.I.C.R.A., the Peace movement, community, tenants, youth and student organisations as well as Solidarity groups.

The Congress was addressed by fraternal speakers representing the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Socialist Unity Party of GDR, Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Hungarian Socialist Workers Party, Polish United Workers Party, Roumanian Communist Party, Communist Party of Bulgaria, Communist Party of Cuba, Communist Party of Great Britain, German Communist Party, Communist Party of Denmark, Communist Party of Chile, Communist Party of France, Communist Party of the United States of America, and the international journal, "World Marxist Review".

Jimmy Corcoran, General Secretary of the Connolly Youth Movement conveyed greetings to the congress on behalf of the C.Y.M.

A number of messages of greetings to the Congress were received from fraternal parties such as the Communist Party of Vietnam, Portuguese Communist Party, Communist Party of Canada, Communist Party of Greece, etc.

The members of the National Executive Committee, elected at the 18th Congress, were, Andy Barr, Joe Bowers, Margaret Bruton, Madge Davidson, Lynda Edgerton, Andy Gibb, Eddie Glackin, Rosaleen Glackin, Brian Gormally, Gerry McIntyre, Michael Morrissey, Eugene McCartan, Sean Nolan, Dermot Nolan, Eoin O Murchu, Michael O'Riordan, Tom Redmond, Gerry Shanahan, William Somerset, Edwina Stewart, Jimmy Stewart.

At its first meeting the National Executive Committee appointed the following officers:—

National Chairman—Andy Barr; General Secretary—Michael O'Riordan; National Treasurer—Sean Nolan; Deputy National Chairman—Tom Redmond; Deputy General Secretary—Jimmy Stewart.

The above officers along with Joe Bowers, Eddie Glackin and Brian Gormally were appointed to serve as the National Political Committee.

The Congress paid tribute to the memory of Betty Sinclair, a foundation member of the Party, outstanding activist in the Belfast unemployed struggles of October, 1932, long-serving secretary of the Belfast & District Trades Council; also to Michael Fox and Hugh Murphy, both members of the N.E.C. and to Lillian Anderson and other activists who had died since the 17th Congress.

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There follows an outline of the Political Resolution adopted by the Congress.

INTRODUCTION

Ireland is in the middle of a deep political and economic crisis. For over ten years now, the continued occupation of the Northern part of our country by British imperialism has seen a spiral of repression and bloodshed, of violent resistance and suffering, against a background in which sectarian divisions and acute political polarisation continue and are encouraged by British Imperialism.

The seemingly endless character of the violence, and the confusion as to what is being fought for, and what can be won, has produced, especially in the South, a sense of distaste for the whole struggle. Those class forces in our society who have accommodated themselves to the neo-colonial status of the South have used this sense of distaste to cloud the issues further, to mask the real nature of imperialism in Ireland, and its responsibility for the crisis, and have worked to separate the fight for national freedom from the workers' fight for social progress, for economic advance, for a better life.

Nor is the crisis purely political. Over 160,000 are registered unemployed in the South, and over 125,000 in the North. And the figures are continually rising. Lay-offs, closures, redundancies are once again accompanied by widespread social poverty; emigration is again on the increase and the standards of living of the working people are under constant attack.

But these crises are not just arbitrary phenomena. They are the direct result of the capitalist system, and of the fact that British Imperialism dominates the whole of Ireland. In the North, of course, there is the threat of a drift to a fearful civil war, while in the South the very reality of Irish sovereignty and independence is under real challenge.

We are in a new stage of Anglo-Irish relations, but one fraught with new dangers for the Irish people. There is the possibility of a new Treaty being imposed on our country, a Treaty as devastating in its effects as the one which partitioned Ireland in 1921.

It was against this background that the Communist Party of Ireland held its 18th National Congress in Dublin in May 1982. Delegates form the North and South, from the Catholic and Protestant sections, Irish speakers and English speakers, gathered to chart a way forward out of this crisis that would serve the interests of the Irish working class, the great majority of the Irish people.

Of course, Ireland's problems are not totally unique. The world, too, is in crisis. On the one hand stand the forces of capitalism and imperialism, of reaction and backwardness; on the other hand stand the forces of progress, the socialist countries, with the Soviet Union at their head, the anti-imperialist and developing countries.

The forces of reaction are even threatening to resort to nuclear war to prevent the march of progress, to prevent an end to poverty, racism, the oppression of women, deprivation and national oppression.

But imperialism is on the retreat. Its first setback came with the Great October Revolution, which has ever since acted as a beacon light to the oppressed of the whole world. Today, the socialist countries are a major world force and bastion of peace and progress, despite the continual efforts of reaction to roll back socialism's advance.

For the capitalist system itself is in deep crisis. Its economy does not work, and in the very heartlands of the capitalist system the working people are being forced to endure growing unemployment and lower living standards.

Workers are resisting with increasing militancy, while throughout the world the struggle to overthrow colonialism, to end military dictatorships and fascist governments, to end racism and feudalism, is reaching ever wider levels.

The response of the reactionaries, of Thatcher and Reagan, has been brinkmanship, the threat of 'limited' nuclear war. **NO NUCLEAR WAR CAN BE LIMITED.** Nuclear war will mean the extinction of all life on this planet, and that is why the struggle for world peace is so clearly the most important issue of our time.

Ireland, too, is involved in this struggle. For Ireland has been drawn into the orbit of NATO's war plans, for three main reasons: the strategic importance of Ireland to NATO, with its vital position on the western coast of Britain; the continual pressure from the EEC for the Republic of Ireland to abandon neutrality and take part in western 'defence and security' arrangements; and the fact that Britain can station missiles and other military installations in Northern Ireland so long as her rule is maintained there.

These pressures on Ireland are both a threat to our existing sovereignty and independence, and an explanation of why Britain resists so fiercely any concession to the democratic demands of the Irish people.

And so the fight for world peace is complementary to, is part of our struggle for a democratic solution to the national question. For our neutrality is essential to our independence, and the 18th National Congress clearly proclaimed its aim of making the whole of Ireland free of war installations and completely detached from NATO's aggressive alliance.

Irish neutrality cannot be for sale or barter, and the congress called for a guarantee of that neutrality to be written into Bunreacht na hEireann, the Irish constitution.

Irish membership of the EEC has posed political dangers to our independence. Within the EEC, Ireland is being pressured into adopting a NATO line.

Our neutrality must be actively defended, and the use of the territory of the Republic of Ireland as a communications centre for NATO brought to an end. The Communist Party demands an immediate end to the use of Irish territory by NATO, and declares that the Irish government must take steps to render useless in advance NATO plans for the seizure of Irish installations and key facilities in the event of war; being prepared, if necessary, to destroy our own resources rather than be sucked in to the vortex of nuclear destruction.

The North, too, must no longer be used as a base for nuclear devices, and all Ireland should be declared a nuclear free zone.

Of course, this is not the end of the story. Even neutrality could not protect Ireland from the effects of radioactive fallout. The Communist Party fights for the strengthening of the peace movement in Ireland and throughout the world.

The fight for world peace, for international solidarity, is part of our own struggle and the Communist Party has committed itself to an unceasing effort to mobilise the progressive forces of our country, and particularly the labour and trade union movement, in this fight.

THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The forces that would unleash a war are also opposed to any democratic settlement of the national question which would allow the people of Ireland to determine their own future.

Ireland, in fact, was originally colonised to utilise her strategic value. Her resources and people were used as a stepping-stone for Britain's domination of vast areas of the world.

The Irish people have struggled for centuries to end this colonial relationship and build a democratic independent country, but British Imperialism responded to this struggle by forcing partition on the Irish people. The seeds of the present crisis - the violence, deaths and repression - lie in this injustice and are directly Britain's responsibility.

Partition suited the most reactionary sections of the bourgeoisie on both sides of the border, as they feared that the struggle for national independence would develop further along the road of social revolution indicated by James Connolly

Partition complicated the fight against the backwardness inherited from the colonial past. It cut off the most industrially developed part, in the North, and imposed great strains on the development potential of the South.

The North, too, suffered, because it remained colonially dominated by Britain, and because the border isolated towns like Derry and Newry from their natural hinterlands.

Britain encompassed within the northern state as much territory as could sustain a contrived unionist majority. To this artificial majority, at Stormont, it devolved certain powers which enabled unionism to rule for 50 years, with British backing, by doling out privileges and patronage to one side of the community, and emergency powers, discrimination and the denial of democratic rights to the other.

And whenever class or democratic demands seemed set to overcome sectarian divisions, unionism, with full support of its British backers, resorted to violence and force.

The Catholic minority, in the main, suffered worse living conditions, greater levels of unemployment, higher emigration and discrimination, both on class and on national grounds.

The Protestant section of the working class has also suffered serious deprivation, but their loyalty was secured by vicious manipulation of marginal privileges and sectarianism.

The Unionist Party, and the Orange Order, created the ideological myth that one section of the working class could enjoy privilege at the expense of the other and remain free.

And while Britain was directly responsible for these developments in the North, the South remained tied to British imperialism, and the working class, weakened by partition and sectarianism, remained at the periphery of events.

The Labour Movement stood aside from the fight for national independence, and the independence movement was

itself left a prey to sectarianism, catholic reaction, reformism and economism.

The Present Situation

The continuous political crisis in Northern Ireland since October 1968 has clearly shown that the 1920 'solution' to the Irish Question is no longer viable.

There are three major developments which have brought this about.

Firstly, the failure of the capitalist class in the south to establish a viable independent capitalism led to their abandonment of the struggle to achieve full independence. From a purely economic point of view, British imperialism no longer had quite the same necessity to maintain partition.

Secondly, the influx into the Northern economy of the monopolies and multi-nationals, leading to the collapse of the indigenous manufacturing sector, destabilised the all-class alliance of the formerly monolithic Unionist Party and led to the formation of a number of unionist parties and groups.

Thirdly, the development of a mass movement for democratic rights by the broad forces of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association challenged unionist rule at its weakest point, i.e. administration by coercion, discrimination and gerrymandering.

Britain in fact needed at least a semblance of democratic change in the North if it was to cement its re-won economic positions in the South, and if its plans for reintegrating the whole of Ireland into the imperialist war orbit were to be successful.

Unionism, however, proved incapable of change. Unionist intransigence, in fact, intensified the crisis in Northern Ireland and endangered Britain's interests in the South. Faced with the dangers posed by the mass movement for civil rights, Britain sought time to work out a new solution by abolishing Stormont and instituting direct rule.

But Britain never changed its policy towards Ireland. British imperialism still aims to keep the whole of the country within its orbit, and to hold back the development of a political alliance between the working peoples of Ireland and Britain, so essential for their common struggle for self-determination and social emancipation.

Moreover, the British ruling class is especially concerned to secure its strategic interests in Ireland, thereby enhancing its own role in NATO. And, of course, it aims to advance the

economic interests of British monopoly capitalism in both parts of the country.

The object of direct rule was to further these policies, by weakening and smashing the mass movement for democratic rights. This was to be done by a mixture of repression and cajolery.

Since direct rule, British governments have consistently pursued a policy of violence and repression, designed to weaken the anti-imperialist and democratic forces.

At the same time, it has sought to establish a new centrist, moderate, bloc, composed of a section of unionism, the SDLP, the Alliance Party and others, and it has deliberately used the mass media, in Ireland and Britain, to cloud the class issues involved.

This media distortion, presenting the problem as one solely of mindless violence on the part of anti-imperialist forces—a distortion assisted by the wilful stupidity of the military campaign—has contributed in a large measure to weakening the possibility of effective solidarity action from the British Labour movement and other democratic forces there.

British imperialism, therefore, can be seen to have pursued deliberate policies designed to thwart the Irish people's right to national unity and independence. Its attempts to hide behind unionist intransigence should not obscure this responsibility.

However, there are other political forces retarding progress which must be taken into account, particularly in Northern Ireland where unionist ideology can still sustain a mass base within various social strata. Following this ideology has led to increased repression, violence and suffering for the entire population.

But it must be said that while unionism consciously stands in the way of the Irish people's march to national liberation, the paramilitary campaigns of the Provisionals and the INLA have seriously damaged the anti-imperialist struggle.

They have played into the hands of imperialism by providing it with a pseudo-justification for its repression, and have contributed to weakening the effectiveness of the mass movement by their elitist pretensions.

In particular, the military campaign has strengthened unionist ideology amongst the Protestant section of the working class and has also alienated the British working class whose support we need.

In addition, while much of their talk about the 26 counties is purely rhetorical, their declared aim of destabilising the Republic of Ireland would, if carried through, objectively strengthen imperialism's position in Ireland, since imperialism too would like to see a weakening of the cohesiveness of the southern state.

By contrast, the paramilitaries have fanned the flames of sectarianism with their campaigns. They have narrowed the concept of republicanism, rejected the class basis of the national question, elevated sectarian divisions, glamorised militarism at the expense of mass political action and have brutalised the value of life itself.

This is no way to defeat imperialism. But, we must recognise that so long as Britain is allowed to rely on a military policy, so long as covert support is given to its policy of repression, the Provisionals and other paramilitary forces will be sustained by the feeling of insecurity and inequality engendered in the Catholic section of the community by repression and deprivation.

Parroting the British Tories, pandering to sectarianism, bolstering repression, will not expose the incorrectness of the Provisionals' methods. The way to overcome the Provisionals' ideas and practice is to intensify the fight for democracy and for a British declaration of intent to withdraw from Ireland, and to win unity around the defence of the common class interests of working people, Catholic and Protestant, North and South.

A first step to re-establishing this mass campaign is that the military campaign should cease, and the Communist Party reiterates its call for a cease-fire.

It should be realised that the military campaigns have played an important part in bolstering sectarianism, sustained, as it is, by British repression and fostered openly by unionism. Unionist paramilitary activity is permeated by sectarian bigotry, and so a spiral of fear and violence is set up, with the real danger of a drift to a major civil war developing in the North which could eventually engulf the whole country.

THE STRATEGY FOR A WAY OUT

The Irish people have a fundamental democratic right to unity and independence. This right was most blatantly suppressed by the undemocratic imposition of partition, an im-

position that establishes British imperialism's central guilt and responsibility for the political crisis in Ireland.

But Britain will not leave Ireland merely because the Irish people demand it. It is a delusion to imagine that moral pressure alone will force them to go. British imperialism will have to be forced out by a political mobilisation of the working class in the leadership of the national struggle.

If we are to find a way out of economic decline and the vicious circle of violence in Northern Ireland, there must be an immediate end to British repression and a declaration from the Westminster parliament that it intends to withdraw, in a specific time, from all interference in Irish affairs, political, military and economic; thus opening the way for the Irish working people, North and South, to determine what future political and economic structures are needed to best serve their interests.

The winning of a British declaration of intent to withdraw is of major importance because it would remove from the unionist bourgeoisie the major weapon by which they maintain the division of the working class in the North, i.e. the guarantee of union with Britain. Such an attack on unionism's ideological base would do much to develop the political unity of the working class of all Ireland, that is essential if the Irish people's struggle for self-determination and social emancipation is to be successfully concluded.

A declaration by a British parliament of its intention to withdraw could, however, be dangerous if it is not accompanied by immediate steps to end repression in all its forms: the removal of the Emergency Provisions' Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act from the statute book, and the abolition of the Diplock Courts.

This must be accompanied by (a) the withdrawal of all British troops to their barracks pending their complete withdrawal; (b) the disbandment of the UDR; (c) the replacement of the RUC by a civilian police force accountable to a reformed Police Authority with powers to hold independent public inquiries into complaints about police conduct; and (d) an independent public inquiry into the torture of suspects interrogated by the RUC, and into other complaints against the 'security' forces, and the prosecution of any against whom the inquiry finds evidence.

The lack of basic human and democratic rights in Northern Ireland since partition, has played a major role in creating and

maintaining sectarian divisions and in nurturing paramilitary violence. The struggle against repression and the campaign for democratic rights is vital to the interests of the entire working people in the North. Repression must be replaced by a Bill of Rights, encompassing the provisions of the draft issued by the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association.

Such a Bill of Rights would encompass:—

(1) The freedom to belong to any political party and to be active in promoting the aims of that party.

(2) An end to repressive laws like the Emergency Provisions Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act, under which the security forces have the right to enter homes without warrant, search, confiscate, arrest and interrogate anyone and hold them up to a total of seven days without right of access by either relatives or medical and legal representatives.

(3) An end to torture, internment and beatings.

(4) An end to discrimination, such as the allocation of housing on the grounds of religion, politics, sex, race or colour, and the punishment of any person, group or firm which so discriminates.

(5) That the security forces be fundamentally democratised and made answerable to the people for their behaviour, and that the investigation of complaints be taken out of the hands of the RUC and the British Army and be given to a completely independent body made up of representatives of the whole community.

(6) The maintaining of PR as the most fair and democratic method of voting because it ensures a wider representation of views—especially from minority groups.

(7) That a person charged with an offence would be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

(8) That the right to trial by jury be restored.

As well as such measures to end repression, the British parliament must also take steps to eradicate the consequences of repression, by granting political status to all prisoners charged under the Emergency Provisions Act and convicted by the Diplock Courts; and by the release of all those convicted solely on "confession" evidence and a review of all other cases.

The Communist Party of Ireland emphasises that the struggle for humane and democratic rights in the North is basic to the struggle for political and social progress. Calls for greater repressive measures from the demagogic leaders of unionism and the widescale coercion carried out by successive British

governments have only resulted in loss of life, loss of liberty, maimings and continuous violence.

But, just as a declaration of Britain's intention to withdraw could be dangerous without an end to repression, so such a withdrawal, without a transition period to prepare for the peaceful unification of Ireland, would be detrimental to the interests of the working class, because it would be carried out in conditions where the working class would be ideologically divided on politico-religious lines.

It would mean that imperialism could overtly withdraw from Ireland, but still use sectarianism to maintain its influence in Ireland, and so hold back the struggle for national and social emancipation. Indeed, the London-Dublin talks underline the fact that it is Britain's objective to hold Ireland firmly within the imperialist camp, even to the extent of drawing us into NATO.

Imperialist forces, not only in Britain, but also in the USA and in the EEC, recognise well that the question of world peace and that of the unity and independence of Ireland are linked. Through the agency of Britain these forces are searching for a formula that would trade off some kind of territorial unity in return for the involvement of the whole island in imperialism's strategic plans and dispositions, openly or covertly. Such an involvement would be too high a price to pay for any kind of territorial unity.

It is essential to realise that the political unification of Ireland does not in itself mean that the struggle for self-determination has been successfully concluded. Given the current balance of forces in Ireland,—a divided working class, a right wing government in the South, unionism, despite its divisions still a significant political force in the North—British Imperialism is in a strong position to exploit these conditions to its advantage.

The working class must be mobilised in the leadership of the national struggle, in order to outflank the strength of reaction. But, the working class is divided by sectarianism. The overcoming of that division is crucial if the working class is to play its leading role and create the unity of social forces to ensure Britain's withdrawal.

This is not to imply that those who currently give their allegiance to unionism have any right of veto over political progress. But, if we are to achieve our aims, a certain propor-

tion of the Protestant section of the Irish people in the North must be won away from support of British imperialism and unionism.

Britain relies ultimately on unionism to maintain its rule in Ireland. And unionism maintains its power, its mass base among the Protestant section of the Irish people, through sectarianism and discrimination, through patronage and privilege for one section at the expense of the other, through repression and the institutionalised denial of democracy. The winning of democracy—the achievement of the civil rights demands and the reforms demanded by the trades' unions' Better Life for All programme—is, therefore, a key element in our strategy of uniting both sections of the Irish people in struggle against British imperialism.

The democratic demands are for an end to all institutional sectarianism and discrimination in political, economic and social life. They involve the outlawing of sectarianism: positive action to redress the situation of inherited discrimination; an end to all repressive laws, so guaranteeing the legitimacy of political views hitherto repressed; in short, the establishment of equal status between both sections of the Irish people in the North; and an all-out attack on the prevailing sectarian attitudes.

The Communist Party of Ireland states that the winning of working class unity on the twin questions of national and social emancipation is basic to freeing Ireland from the grip of imperialism. For this reason, we declare that a transition period, to undo the injustices and heal the divisions created amongst the working class in the North is in the best interests of the Irish people. Alongside a British declaration of intent to withdraw and an end to repression, therefore, it is imperative that Direct Rule be brought to an end and that a devolved assembly, elected by PR and controlled by the provisions of a Bill of Rights, should be established in Northern Ireland.

It is essential that such an assembly be bound by the provisions of a Bill of Rights to ensure that the practices of coercion and discrimination which provided the base of former unionist power could no longer be carried out.

And in order to end the total subservience of the North's economy to the interests of British monopoly capitalism, and to prevent the further dismantling of the North's industrial base, this assembly should have certain fiscal and economic powers. This would mean:

(a) that Northern Ireland would have the power to develop publicly-owned industries based on its natural resources and inherited industrial skills;

(b) that Northern Ireland would have the power to take into public ownership industries at present controlled by the multinationals;

(c) that public control could be established over the banks, insurance companies and building societies to assist public enterprise;

(d) that the interests of small farmers could be advanced through the development of agricultural co-operatives and agriculture-based public industries;

(e) that the home market could be protected and expanded through joint economic developments with the South, particularly through the development of mineral, energy and other resources;

(f) that progress could be made to further economic and social integration, North and South, thus advancing the living standards and democratic rights of all the Irish people, and laying basis for a democratic reunification of the country.

One resource base for these developments would be a substantial fiscal transfer from the British government, partly as compensation for previous actions by British governments.

But, in this transition period, unionism cannot be trusted to police its own demise. The Irish government must have a central role to play—together with the British government so long as the latter continues to maintain its hold on the North—in supervising the functioning of law and administration: through a Superior Court of Law, to decide on the constitutionality (in accordance with the democratic Bill of Rights) of any law or legal regulation relating to the North; and an Administrative Court, to perform an ombudsman role, enforcing compliance with democratic procedures and principles (including the redressing of inherited discrimination) in the public service and in local administration, etc.

Of course, the Communist Party does not see these demands as a blueprint which must be followed unswervingly before any progress can be made on the path to national unity, independence and socialism. We see them as a guide to action, to mobilise the working class and the other democratic and anti-imperialist forces in unity around demands which will weaken imperialism's control and so strengthen the forces for democracy, independence, peace and socialism.

FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ADVANCE

The Communist Party of Ireland is confident of the ability of the Irish working people to overcome the divisions created by British imperialism and to build a peaceful and prosperous Ireland, that will cancel out the effects of years of British colonial rule which have had such devastating effects on the economy, North and South.

Historically, the British colonial authorities and, later, British monopoly capitalism, restricted economic development in Ireland, keeping the country as a source of cheap food, labour and other resources.

The industrialised North only escaped to a minor degree the poverty and backwardness that affected the rest of the country. All Ireland has known crippling emigration, unemployment and appalling living standards.

Partition has complicated the fight against this inherited backwardness. It cut off the most industrially developed sector, and imposed great strains on the development potential of the South. This is part of the reason for the weakness of the Irish bourgeoisie vis-a-vis their imperialist masters.

The problems of the Irish economy today, however, are more complex than those of the past. The North is suffering the problems of a declining economy, colonially linked to the problems of a developing one.

The North is experiencing a slump, the severity of which has not been felt since the 1930s. Since 1979, over 110 substantial manufacturing establishments have closed. An even more depressing feature of these closures is that they include the most technologically advanced units of manufacturing industry, e.g. Grundig, ICI, Courtaulds.

A substantial proportion of manufacturing employment (about 60%) has been in existence since before the war, e.g. Harland and Wolfe, and there would be limited capacity for growth in these industries.

The downward trend has increased dramatically over the last three years, and the major safety valve present in post war years (growth in public sector employment) has virtually disappeared.

There has been a severe contraction in the construction industry (caused by capital expenditure cutbacks) which has been responsible for an increase of 35,000 in male unemployment between June 1979 and October 1981. An increase of

15,000 female unemployed in this period reflects the problems of the clothing and textile areas.

A return to the level of activity in the construction industry of the mid '70s would alone increase employment by over 10,000.

From 1982 to 1986, a normal population expansion will add 9,000 workers to the North's labour force each year. But virtually no increase in the demand for labour is anticipated in this timespan. Instead, it is anticipated that there will be a real decrease in public sector employment, and the Northern Ireland Economic Council forecast that unemployment will exceed 22% in 1982 and that this trend will continue for the rest of the 80s.

In the south, emigration amounted to 2% of the population each year in the 50s. But in the 60s, the relative economic boom was accompanied by a population increase for the first time since the Famine. Half the population is now under 25 years of age, and we have the highest crude birth rate in Europe.

An increase in the population of working age of 40% is forecast over the next two years, and the number of people entering the labour force will exceed those retiring by 30,000 per annum.

Between December 1979 and September 1981, seasonally adjusted unemployment increased from 85,000 to 131,000 or 55%. Unemployment worsened in 1982, the growth prospects continue to look grim. The average increase in output in the building sector in 1981 was only 3%, reflecting a sharp fall in private sector investment. And the volume of agricultural exports was 15% lower in 1981 than in 1980.

THE IRISH REPUBLIC

Irish capitalism arrived on the world stage too late historically to survive. Manufacturing capital could not achieve the concentrations necessary for modern industrialisation, and the commercial and financial sectors were at all times tied in with British imperialism.

The formal abandonment of the attempt to develop an independent capitalism (with the repeal of the Control of Manufacturers' Act in 1957) was an inevitable consequence of its weakness. In its place, the bourgeoisie have relied on foreign monopoly capital as the dynamo of industrial development.

It cannot be denied that some such development has occurred. But the main features of this development are that it is mainly component-producing, part of overall industrial processes originating and being completed in other countries, and with little value added here; that it develops few if any linkages to the rest of the economy; that the obsession with export-orientation obscures the vital importance of the home market that little research and development is carried out in Ireland as a consequence of the nature of the development programme.

There are many examples, of which Ferenka is one of the most outstanding, which show that the only real gains to the Irish economy as a result of this kind of development have been the wages paid during the period of operation. On their closure, these industries leave no pieces to be picked up. Massive state investment, including one of the highest rates of capital accumulation in the capitalist world, has left us with no net gains of jobs, only a restructuring—important though that is—of the nature of employment.

This penetration of the economy by monopoly capitalism has meant intensified exploitation of the Irish working class. The IDA even boast that the average return on US investment in Ireland is 29%, the highest return for US investment of any country in the world. Compared to an average return of 18% this amounts to super-exploitation by any standards.

Irish agriculture, too, has not escaped the stranglehold which the imperialist past placed it in. The reformist settlement of the land question, at the end of the 19th century, has led to an intense differentiation in the countryside. The large ranchers, mainly on good land on the east coast, exploit the small farmers of the west (raising calves) and the small to medium farmers of the midlands (in the second stage of cattle production). Tillage and dairy-farming, too, have been placed in an unequal situation vis-a-vis the big cattle men, one of the mainstays of the imperialist connection.

This has been compounded by the historical under-realisation of the value of Irish agricultural produce on the British controlled market. The result has been high emigration and great rural poverty, a flight from the land, leading to a greater concentration of land in fewer and fewer hands.

NORTHERN IRELAND

As part of the British state, the North has never had the freedom to protect itself against the ravages of the imperialist connection. Northern industry developed partly as a result of the importation of British capital, partly to service the British military and naval establishments. Its economy, however, has never been an integral part of Britain's. Rather, it has been a subject economy, subservient to the interests of British monopoly capitalism.

The relative decline of British imperialism on the world stage after the second world war imposed a need on Britain to rationalise its economy, to centralise its production and to achieve economies of scale by greater capital concentration. In addition, the expanded opportunities for overseas investment led to a diversion of investment funds from the internal British economy to which the North was tied.

This has been felt particularly acutely in the North of Ireland. Since the war, there has been a serious failure to reinvest, to re-equip old plant, to develop new technologies. In addition, the centralisation and concentration of production referred to led to a series of closures in the North, still continuing, under which the developed industrial base—especially in engineering and textiles—is being totally wiped out, and with a large number of the remaining enterprises being taken over by British and other foreign monopolies.

This phenomenon first made its appearance in the textile industry where the locally owned industry was annihilated as a major producer and employer in this sphere. It has been replaced by the man-made fibre industry, owned and controlled by multinational companies, like Du Pont, Courtaulds, ICI etc. These are now closing down even their new plants in Northern Ireland.

The monopolies did not restrict themselves to taking over manufacturing industry. They moved into distribution, establishing chain stores and supermarkets which once again undermined local ownership and control. And in the agricultural sector, the demands for high profits of the farm machinery, fertiliser and food processor giants rendered thousands of small farms uneconomic, pushing their owners off the land.

Overall, the position has now been reached where 78% of Northern Ireland's economy in finance, industry and commerce is directly controlled by British and other foreign business

interests. At the same time, far from increasing employment and economic growth, this process has in essence accelerated the decline of Ireland's industrial north east.

THE COMMON MARKET

At one time, the EEC was held up as the structural solution for Ireland's economic problems. It can now be seen, starkly and unavoidably, that Ireland's entry to the Common Market has been a total failure.

In the South, the main advantage to be gained from Common Market membership was increased prices for farmers and a greater attractiveness of Ireland for foreign capital because of its access to EEC markets. The North entered in the wake of Britain.

While there has been a net inflow to Ireland from Common Market funds, membership of the Common Market has not resolved the problems of Irish agriculture. The dramatic increase in agricultural incomes in the initial period (1973-1975) has been more than offset by developments since, including massive rises in fertiliser and other production costs, as well as the credit crisis and higher interest charges.

Since 1977 agricultural incomes have fallen 45% in real terms. The continual pressure to leave the land has been intensified, and differentiation has been made more acute.

In particular, the gains have gone to the cattle men, exporting on the hoof. This has deprived us of the potential jobs in processing, a deprivation increased by the problems facing tillage and dairying.

In any case, the political pressures against the CAP within the Common Market are growing steadily, just as the cost of CAP grows out of hand. It is now widely accepted, even by EEC apologists, that the bonanza is ending, even if it never began for many farmers.

AGRICULTURE

The Communist Party of Ireland therefore proposes a national plan for agriculture. This plan is designed to maximise agricultural production, and consequently employment in agricultural and ancillary industries, as a major sector of our economy.

The key points of such a plan are:

(a) a national land survey to determine the optimum potential and use of all agricultural resources, and a resource tax on land—based on this survey—to penalise those who fail to use their land to its optimum.

(b) the planning of agricultural output, through linking credit with acceptance of a state agricultural plan, to meet the needs of the domestic and export markets, and the needs of processing industries, such as the Tuam sugar plant, especially.

(c) the determining of the maximum size of holdings which may be owned by any one individual.

(d) the reorganisation of co-operatives under an agricultural planning authority to meet plan targets and ensure adequate capitalisation. It is essential that such co-operatives receive favourable financial support.

(e) major improvements in levels of investment in research and development, in marketing and production under the aegis of an Agricultural Planning Authority.

(f) a shift from exporting cattle on the hoof to processing freezing, canning and packaging at home; together with similar expansion in other food processing sectors.

(g) adequate warehousing, storage and freezing facilities to ensure a stable supply of produce to food-processing plants on an all-year round basis.

INDUSTRY

Private enterprise, whether domestic or foreign, cannot meet the development requirements of the Irish people. The state must involve itself directly in manufacturing and in the provision of capital.

In particular, we call for the abolition of the IDA and the calling to account of those who have run it. This institution has been marked by dishonesty, cynicism, fraud and abject servility before foreign monopoly capital. We seek its replacement by a national development corporation, which will be democratic and have full control over all aspects of industrial development.

We call for the development of an indigenous manufacturing base by state productive investment, concentrating on exploiting the home market and for a complete reform of the pro-export biased company tax system and abolition of all incentives and grants which encourage chaotic and unintegrated industry to establish here.

Such foreign investment as we do need, we should negotiate for on terms which force foreign investors to meet specific targets in job creation (and not the job approvals fraud that characterises the IDA), linkages with the rest of the economy, research and development and marketing commitments.

It is vital that the state assume the commanding heights of the economy, and that we develop a proper balance between capital intensive and capital extensive investment, so that we can at the same time meet the job requirements of the unemployed and yet still secure a dynamic base from which further growth can be ensured.

This interim plan requires centralised state planning. Indigenous industrial concerns can play a part in this, but it is essential that the state manufacturing industries occupy the central role, attaching other industries to them, such as Bord na Mona currently leases out engineering contracts while keeping the research and development and the market under its own control:

But, both the industrial and agricultural plans depend on indigenous sources of finance being in state hands. At present, Irish finance is overwhelmingly controlled by British financial institutions, and it is a first prerequisite that this be ended. We demand the nationalisation of the banks and all financial institutions and the placing of their assets at the disposal of the state planning and development corporations.

All of these measures, however, will mean breaches of common market regulations. Since these are the only measures open to us that lead to a path of development and social progress, we must unequivocally reassert, and call on the labour movement as a whole to join us in reasserting, our opposition to EEC membership and our commitment to withdraw from the Common Market.

The North has fared even worse than the South from Common Market membership. This is partly because it had no political significance as part of the British state and consequently no representation within EEC councils. A closer linking with the South, even under conditions of EEC membership, would mean an improvement in the North's situation even as it is.

The North, even more than the South, needs direct state involvement in manufacturing industry to offset the decline in its peripheral economy. But this immediately raises the question of which state. A British imperialist state, working in the

interests of British monopoly capitalism, cannot defend the people of the North against British monopoly capitalism.

Ultimately, it is only in the context of all-Ireland development that the North can win a dynamic role for its traditional engineering and machine producing capacity. In the interim, it needs to have sufficient fiscal and economic powers, as spelt out in section five, in a devolved administration, that can link in with the South and begin the process of economic integration.

In such a context, and as part of the democratic struggle, the Communist Party of Ireland calls for state industrial development, and for agricultural and industrial planning linked to that of the South.

In the wider economic context, we unequivocally reject the bourgeois concepts of zero economic growth. We seek no return to a misty celtic twilight, where individual producers will raise individual organic chickens in individual harmony and peace of mind.

Social progress will only come through collective work, through expanding the economic potential of the country and material living standards of the people.

The plans we outline here call for such growth. And they lay the basis for a sustained development which a politically conscious working class, freed from the limitations imposed by imperialism, can develop further to the building of a socialist economy leading to communism.

THE POLITICS OF STRUGGLE

To achieve our aim of a united socialist Ireland we must first of all win the unity of the working class, and build an alliance between the working class, small farmers, small businessmen, self-employed fishermen, professional self-employed and progressive sections of the intelligentsia—whose interests are all opposed by imperialism: An unfree people cannot build socialism, so we must first win independence from imperialism. On one hand, then, we must put an end to sectarian divisions among the people and create conscious working class unity; and on the other we must complete the struggle for full Irish unity and independence.

The imperialist powers of NATO, and British imperialism in particular, will use every means possible to stop the Irish

people from achieving their national liberation and social emancipation. The British will not willingly declare their intention to withdraw from the North, to end the repression there or provide the basis for the unity of the working class, or for progress towards the national economic, social and political reintegration of Ireland that we seek.

For the national question is essentially a class question, and social advancement, democratic rights and national liberation cannot be achieved except together. And the formidable task of dislodging British Imperialism's grip on Ireland is not helped by the weakness and confusion of the potential anti-imperialist alliance. Left unity, in particular, though still in its infancy, is imperative. We see Left Unity as the core of any anti-imperialist alliance.

Of course, the existence of two state machineries makes it more difficult to develop a national consciousness and common strategies for these alliances, and sectarian divisions in the North complicate the whole process further.

But, as explained in the preceding section on the strategy for a way forward, the demands for the establishment of democracy and for a British Declaration of Intent to Withdraw are the keys to breaking the dead weight of British control. Support for these demands must be fought for in the labour movement North and South, among the democratic sections of our people, within the British labour and progressive movements, and internationally as well.

But we have a crucial role to play in imbuing the national question with its class character, placing the unity of the working class at the fore. Territorial unity is only important in so far as it forms the base of a genuinely independent, that is, anti-imperialist, Irish state. The character of such a state will only be forged in class struggle.

Our demand, then, for an independent state is not the same as that of the bourgeoisie. We conceive an anti-imperialist alliance making real inroads against imperialism's economic domination of our country, defending our sovereignty and neutrality, and ensuring democracy in practice. A cornerstone of such an alliance is, of course, withdrawal from the Common Market, for political as well as economic reasons. It is no use to replace old masters with new ones.

Furthermore, we reject any sectarian and undemocratic aspects of various laws in the South. The ban on divorce, the laws against abortion, the limitations to the right to contra-

ception, religious control of education, and other infringements of civil and democratic liberties, are both an obstacle to winning the Protestant section of the Irish people for a united Ireland, and an injustice to the people of the South.

But we are opposed to any blanket rejection of Bunreacht na hEireann, especially Articles Two and Three which proclaim the right to territorial reunification.

In both parts of Ireland, the organised labour movement has been divorced from the national liberation struggle and vice versa. The result has been that economist ideas have predominated in the labour movement, and physical force methods in the national liberation movement. Both involve an underestimation of the role of British Imperialism in Ireland, and limitations on the scope of the struggles of the various sections.

British Imperialism has consciously harnessed these divisions of aims and methods. In particular, unionism has constantly attacked the unity of the trade union movement as embodied in the ICTU, fanning sectarian divisions and confusion about the class character of the national question to maintain itself. In the South, both Fianna Fail and Fine Gael have posed the national question purely in terms of the border, while the trade unions and the Labour Party have shut their eyes even to this, and have confined themselves purely to economic issues as if the national question did not really exist, as if British Imperialism did not enter the picture at all. Unfortunately, the Workers' Party (as the former Sinn Fein Officials are now known) have in recent years adopted this self same economist position and have ignored the reality of the national question.

Only by mobilising on the issues of democratic rights, of national liberation and of social emancipation together can progress be made on any of these fronts. Despite the divisions which exist, there is nevertheless a real basis for an anti-imperialist alliance in these fields, and a basis, and opportunity too, for Left Unity to give the working class a real leadership position—but only if it faces up to the political problems of the national question.

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