

FOR UNITY AND SOCIALISM

**MANIFESTO OF THE
COMMUNIST PARTY OF IRELAND**

(1970)

Price 6d.

INTRODUCTION

THE COMMUNISTS of Ireland are now organised into one party—the Communist Party of Ireland. This was the decision of the special Congress, held in Belfast on March 15, 1970, and which was composed of delegates from the Irish Workers' Party and the Communist Party N. Ireland.

The Manifesto herewith published states the basic standpoint and position of the C.P.I. on the issues which confront the Irish working class and democratic forces at the present time.

The Manifesto declares that the British ruling class are searching for a new form of relationship with the capitalist forces in the two parts of Ireland that would help secure a situation whereby the monopolies could go on to new successes in their profit-making activities and, at the same time, create a position in which the whole of Ireland would be more effectively subordinated to the interests of British imperialism.

Unity of the Labour and democratic forces, of the small business interests, the self-employed, all those who are suffering under the pressure of the monopolies, can and must be won to counter this offensive. The unity now established in the Communist Party of Ireland points the way to a wider unity of the democratic forces for further advance in the struggle against imperialism, for national unity and independence.

The Manifesto calls for a new society that will be built by the united, fraternal and harmonious labour of the people, under the leadership of the working class.

Before we can build such a society, Ireland, north and south, must break the grip of imperialism. This means fighting against the foreign monopolies and the Irish capitalists. It means fighting the British imperialist conception of "a new relation" of the two areas of Ireland with Britain.

It further means fighting the policy of sell-out to the monopoly capitalists of the European Economic Community.

To bring about this change, the present ruling parties and governments of the Unionists and Fianna Fail must be replaced by progressive governments, truly representative of the people.

The Manifesto presents a programme of demands around which the people can be united—a programme, the achievement of which lays the basis whereby the people of Ireland can take the road to Socialism.

ANDREW BARR (Chairman, National Executive
Committee, C.P.I.)

“FOR UNITY AND SOCIALISM”

Manifesto of the Communist Party of Ireland (1970)

I.

AS the 1970's begin, important political developments are taking place throughout the whole of Ireland. In the North the once all-powerful Unionist Party has been weakened by the mass agitation for Civil Rights and shows signs of being divided at a time when it can be faced by an alliance of Protestant and Catholic workers within the Labour movement, by communists, republicans and wide progressive groupings. In the South, the Fianna Fail Government is being exposed as a capitulator to British Imperialism and International Monopoly Capitalism and is facing a growing and more united opposition than ever before. This opposition is expressed in agitational and political activity by trade unionists, communists, republicans, Left labour sections and national cultural activists and provides the basis for a still broader unity of all patriotic and progressive forces.

Years of imperialist domination have stamped common features on the two parts of Ireland. The north is an integral part of the British economic system, whilst the South, despite its apparent political independence, is rapidly moving in the same direction, due to penetration of its economy by British monopolies, its excessive trading dependence on Britain and the capitulation of the Dublin Government to British pressures for free trade between the two countries.

The immediately apparent consequences in both parts of the country are:—

- constant unemployment of an abnormal magnitude.
- heavy emigration of young people and a high ratio of dependent old people and very young to the working population.
- an economy wide open to penetration and domination by imperialist monopolies.
- the contradiction between the export of native capital and the highly subsidised attempts to attract foreign industries.
- the large-scale depopulation of the grossly underdeveloped areas West of the Bann and the Shannon.
- the expropriation of small farmers and small shopkeepers on a massive scale.

- the erosion of cultural distinctiveness before the pressures of Anglo-American commercialism.

II.

OUR island is a natural entity and our people are one nation. We, Communists of Ireland, call for national unity and independence of imperialism as the essential basis for the construction of Socialism in our country. We believe that out of the common struggle of the working people North and South will emerge a system that will guarantee a full and prosperous life for the urban and rural working people of Ireland; a new society that will be built by the united fraternal and harmonious labour of the people—A New Ireland that will be free, united and Socialist.

III.

BRITISH Imperialism has created many grave problems for the people of Ireland and Ireland has experienced many of its various techniques :—

- subjugation and colonialism.
- the destruction of native industries.
- the imposition of an Act of Union by bribery and corruption
- onslaughts on native culture
- partition
- the buying-off of a section of the native bourgeoisie to facilitate neo-colonialist exploitation
- the deformation of the economy to suit imperial needs.

To the techniques of the past Britain is now adding proposals for a form of Anglo-Irish Federation which could be an Act of Union under another guise.

Throughout its overlordship the British ruling class has always regarded Ireland as one unit for the purpose of exploitation. Partition was devised and is used as a means to retain control over the whole of the country. It is in this context that the presence of enlarged British military units in the North must be seen, not as a force 'keeping the peace' between Irishmen of different religions, but as protective guardians of British monopoly interests in Ireland, North and South. Had there been no mass disturbances and the consequent political consciousness that arose from the Civil Rights campaign, the British would have felt no need for such a large military presence. In previous bloody and bitter pogroms there was no British military

or governmental intervention because Britain saw no threat to her monopoly interests and in fact saw sectarian strife as a useful weapon in keeping Irishmen divided.

In the 1970's, a new stage has been reached in the long struggle of the Irish people for National and Social liberation. The features of this new stage are :—

- a new crisis for British imperialist rule in Ireland arising from the need to meet civil rights demands whilst retaining political control and a facade of democratic government in the North.
- the upsurge of demands for civil rights and a solution to social and economic ills in the whole of Ireland.
- the abandonment by the big property elements in the South of the struggle against imperialism.
- the divisions within Ulster Unionism.
- the growing recognition of the need for a new type of leadership — political working class leadership — in the fight against imperialist monopolies which increasingly dominate the whole of Ireland.

In the present new stage the British ruling class is seeking a form of accommodation with the various capitalist forces, North and South, that will help them to overcome the 'disorders' and preserve for the monopolies stable conditions for profit-making, as well as create new opportunities for the exploitation of Ireland as a whole. Thus arise the proposals for "Federation". The foundation stone for such an 'arrangement' has already been laid in the form of the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement which is binding together—to the growing advantage of the British monopolies—the three areas of Britain, the Six and the Twenty-six Counties of Ireland.

Another compelling reason for such an 'arrangement' is the need of the British monopolists to streamline their economic apparatus and facilitate the exploitation of their third biggest market, the Twenty-Six Counties, in face of the growth of international monopoly competition as Britain prepares to negotiate entry into the European Common Market.

Neither the Free Trade Agreement nor the European Economic Community provide any substantial or lasting benefits for the workers and small farmers of either the Six or the Twenty-Six Counties. Rather they will cause workers, small farmers and the people generally irreparable harm.

The integration of Ireland, North and South, into the Common Market would be a regressive development adding the exploitation of European monopolies to that of their British counterparts as burdens to be borne by the Irish people, committing the whole of the country to military alliances and making more difficult the achievement of democracy and independence.

To the capitalist conception of federation of the three areas and to the policies of "sell-out" to the monopoly capitalists of the European Economic Community, we oppose our call for the greatest unity and solidarity between the working people of Ireland and Britain in a common struggle against imperialist monopoly capitalism which also exploits the British working people.

IV.

BOTH the Unionists, who are a subordinate element of the imperialist ruling class, and the Fianna Fail Government, which is anxious to find an accommodation with imperialism, are facilitating British monopoly capitalism with their policies.

Both pursue policies geared to a greater or lesser extent to the British imperialist interest. Both are likely to be parties to the resurrection of the Act of Union in a new form.

The two Governments impose repressive laws, such as "Special Powers Acts" and "Offences Against the State Acts", and others under the false titles of "Public Order" and "Criminal Justice". They both try to impose wage restraint and anti-trade union legislation on the working class. In these spheres the pattern of reactionary policies show striking similarities on both sides of the Border.

But our people in both areas are fighting back. They are becoming more and more conscious of the power of organisation and the unconquerable strength of unity. The workers of Belfast, Dublin, Derry and Cork are challenging the attempts to curtail their wages and shackle their trade union movement. There are militant Housing Action Committees in both North and South. There is a growing link between the Tenants' Movements in both areas. The students at Queens, Trinity, the various colleges of the National University and the various technical and higher educational institutes are becoming more involved in academic, social and political struggles.

Our working class, with over 200,000 in the North and 300,000 in the South, organised in trade unions, has shown

its capacity to lead on economic issues by reunifying the Irish trade union movement into one national centre.

V.

IN the new situation which is opening up in our country the Communist Party of N. Ireland and the Irish Workers' Party have joined together to reconstitute the **COMMUNIST PARTY OF IRELAND** which was first formed in June 1933.

As Irish men and women and as revolutionaries, we are conscious that this political decision is being taken in 1970, the year of the 50th anniversary of the British "Government of Ireland Act" which divided our country, and the year of the centenary of the birth of Lenin, great leader of the international working class, socialist and national liberation movements.

The reconstituted Communist Party of Ireland, an All-Ireland political organisation of the working-class and small farmers, is a new feature in the present stage. Its work will be inspired by the consciousness of the great traditions of the United Irishmen of 1798; the Ulster Land War; the National Land League and our immediate forbears, the fighting strikers of Belfast's 1907, Cork's 1908 and Dublin's 1913 — glorious class battles that were fought under the symbol of the "Red Hand of Labour."

Our Party will carry on the proud traditions of the 1933 Communist Party of Ireland which bequeathed a proud legacy of struggle. In the thirties in the North it played an outstanding part against sectarianism and for the unity of the great Unemployed Movement, when Protestant and Catholic jobless, with united ranks, faced batons, bullets and armoured cars. In the South its members suffered imprisonment for fighting for the people's rights in anti-eviction and boycott activities. North and South, the party lost the best of its sons in the military battles of solidarity with the Spanish people's struggle against international Fascism.

The fighting banner of the party was never lowered throughout the years since 1933. The work of Irish Communists proceeded throughout these years, despite great difficulties, adopting their organisation to events and developments but never retreating from their loyalty to the socialist and working-class ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Connolly and Larkin.

There has not been a people's struggle in any part of Ireland

in the last 37 years in which Irish Communists did not unselfishly participate.

VI.

OUR country has the necessary resources, labour, skill and capital to develop a thriving and independent economy. It is not in the interest of the Irish people to be part and parcel of the imperialist economic and political system, whose frequent crises have such grave social and economic repercussions in Ireland.

A government that is willing to stand up to British imperialism and fight for the interests of the people, planning the economy and organising the means of production, distribution and exchange in the people's interest, can build such an economy.

Inspired by the perspective of an Ireland :—

FREE from the domination of imperialism and monopoly capitalism;

UNITED by the common endeavours of our people in building a National Democracy as the basis for the winning of a

SOCIALIST form of society in our country, the Communist Party of Ireland believes, after an evaluation of the present situation and its possibilities, that such an Ireland is realisable.

It believes that such an Ireland can be achieved in stages and that there exists at present the potential for the replacement of the present ruling parties of the Unionists and Fianna Fail by Progressive Governments, North and South, which can be pressed to forward the interests of the people. This can be done by fighting on a programme that will make inroads into the economic conquest of Ireland by the monopolies and will force British imperialism to end its political interference in Irish affairs.

Such a programme will contain demands for the Six and Twenty-Six Counties and for Ireland as a whole, among them the following:—

- i. Development of our natural resources by the State and the setting up of new State industries;
- ii. Public ownership of the banks, insurance and hire purchase concerns;

- iii. Public ownership of principal foreign concerns and the big Irish industries connected with them;
- iv. The scrapping of the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement and the negotiation of a new trade agreement on a mutually equitable basis, which would provide for more North-South trade and economic relations;
- v. The extension of trade contacts with all countries, and especially with the socialist states, whose expanding and crisis-free economies can provide stable markets, as well as with the ex-colonies and underdeveloped nations whose economies, like ours, are subject to imperialist domination;
- vi. Division of large estates and cattle ranches amongst the landless and small farmers, with Government incentives including provision of machinery, seed, fertiliser and stock on favourable terms, for co-operative farming;
- vii. Public ownership of inland fisheries and the equipping of our sea fisheries with the most modern boats and plant for processing, together with training schemes for crews, process workers and marketing staff;
- viii. Intensive development of rural industries using local raw materials where possible, including food processing, a pharmaceutical and chemical industry, with extra investments in Irish speaking areas of the country to help maintain traditional communities;
- ix. The introduction of equal pay for equal work regardless of sex;
- x. Declaration of a national housing emergency and public ownership of major firms in the building industry, together with legislation to eliminate speculation in building land, and town planning measures which will preserve local amenities and viable properties and services;
- xi. Ending the destruction of the railways by branch closures and run-down of facilities;
- xii. A new plan for shipping which would reverse the trend to make Belfast and Dublin our only seaports;
- xiii. Protection of the small and self-employed businessman and the prohibition of foreign-owned supermarkets;
- xiv. Development of producers' and consumers' co-operatives with special tax concessions to encourage their growth;
- xv. Placing the burden of taxation on the rich and abolition of feudal left-overs such as ground rents;

- xvi. Provision of a free, fully comprehensive health service;
- xvii. Provision of free comprehensive education, up to and including University level, with merit as the only criterion and without discrimination as to sex, for all professions;
- xviii. Protection and extension of the democratic rights of freedom of expression, religious worship and assembly and other civil liberties, for all citizens, Catholic and Protestant;
- xix. Declaration of an All-Ireland policy of independence, military neutrality and solidarity with all those fighting imperialism throughout the world;
- xx. The defence of our cultural traditions and all that strengthens our identity as a people on this island.

On the basis of such a programme can be united the forces which can remove the Unionist Government in Stormont and the Fianna Fail Government in Leinster House and achieve the establishment of Progressive Governments which will defend the people's democratic rights and oppose imperialist inroads and interference.

Powerful popular forces can be won to support such a programme. They are principally the 500,000 workers organised in trade unions and linked together by industrial confederations, trades councils, and on a national scale by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, and then all those, North and South, who are organised in or support national and democratic organisations, workers, farmers, professional and business people, students, youth and cultural activists, in short the great mass of the Irish people whose aspirations and self-development are today held back and stultified by imperialism and the domination of our country, North and South, by British monopoly big business.

The unity in action of all these forces would be the first step to the final solution of the major national, economic and political problems of the country. With a common programme, applied in the conditions of the two States, there would develop a unity in struggle which would move both parts of Ireland in a democratic and anti-imperialist direction as a pre-requisite for a solution of the border question that is in the interests of the people; this in turn providing the politically necessary basis for the establishment of Socialism in Ireland.

A condition for such an advance must be the leading role of the working class. As the most exploited social section in

the community, it has the greatest interest in bringing about a new Ireland which is wholly freed from exploitation. It possesses tremendous strength in numbers and organisation, as well as the greatest political experience of all the social strata of Irish society. It has a tremendous tradition of integrity in our national liberation struggle. Its role and historic mission has been aptly summarised by James Connolly, when he said: "Only the working class remains as the incorruptible inheritors of the fight for freedom in Ireland."

The Communist Party of Ireland bases itself primarily on this consistent revolutionary class. In the building of a united movement against imperialism and monopoly capitalism in our land our Party will make its own specific contribution. It will develop still deeper its roots in the trade unions, the basic organisations of the working class. It will extend still further its activities of a socialist theoretical and educational nature, thereby giving the working class a clearer revolutionary perspective. The Communist Party of Ireland, as Irish communists have done before, will help to formulate strategy for the Labour movement and working class, provide ideas and policies, and in its unique position of being part of both Irish labour and the Irish national movements, will strive to unite all the different aims of the various people's organisations into one single political aim. It can, and will, play a major part in winning the working class to enact its leading role.

The Communist Party of Ireland, in this 50th anniversary of the "Government of Ireland Act", presents the progressive points in this Manifesto as the basis for the unity of all Irish democrats, of workers, small farmers, professional people, small business people, as a platform from which there can begin a national march to a united, independent and socialist Ireland.

Basing itself on the principles of scientific socialism, revolutionary Marxist-Leninism, the Communist Party of Ireland believes that to bring about a fundamental change in society in Ireland the working class and its allies must oust imperialism from the country, politically and economically. It must then press forward to break the state machinery of capitalism altogether and establish a socialist form of society in our country.

Compared with the past, infinitely more advantageous conditions now exist for the Irish people to march to national freedom and socialism. Throughout the world powerful allies exist whose interests are identical with those of the Irish people. They are principally :—

- The peoples of the 14 countries of Europe, Asia and Latin America who have swept capitalism aside under the leadership of Marxist-Leninist parties and who are building socialism. Together these countries are a powerful force for progress and, with the Soviet Union to the fore among them, they are assisting the peoples of other countries fighting for their freedom;
- The working class in the capitalist countries, who like the Irish people, are fighting for jobs, decent living standards and democratic rights and opposing the attempts of the monopolies to impose wage restraints and anti-trade union legislation. Like the Irish working class, the working class of the other capitalist countries are more and more threatened by the policies of imperialism and monopoly-capitalism;
- The peoples in the battle areas of the fight against imperialism and colonialism who are registering great victories for the cause of national independence; the peoples of the former British colonies who are breaking free of the orbit of imperialist power and whose struggles have contributed to the general crisis of imperialism.

The future is with unity, national independence and socialism Ireland, under socialism, will be a country whose resources are owned and run by the working class in the interests of the entire people. Science and technology and the achievements of a profound spiritual culture will be at the service of the people. Gone will be the fear of unemployment and insecurity for tens of thousands without hope. Abundant will be the fruits of their labour, their material and cultural achievements. The spectre of enforced emigration will be banished forever.

To the people of Ireland unity, independence and socialism offer a future which imperialism has denied them for centuries—free education for all, full employment, the opportunity to reach the highest level of which human beings are capable, participation by all in public life and affairs, a rich and virile national culture based on our proud heritage.

Socialism will be the crown of achievement on Ireland's age-old struggle. We call on the people of Ireland to join with us in the struggle for such a society as worthy of the noblest aspirations of man. We call upon the Irish people, North and South, Protestant and Catholic, old and young, to join with us on the road to an Ireland, Free, United and Socialist.

Title: For Unity and Socialism

Organisation: Communist Party of Ireland

Date: 1970

Downloaded from the Irish Left Archive.

Visit www.leftarchive.ie

The Irish Left Archive is provided as a non-commercial historical resource, open to all, and has reproduced this document as an accessible digital reference. Copyright remains with its original authors. If used on other sites, we would appreciate a link back and reference to the Irish Left Archive, in addition to the original creators. For re-publication, commercial, or other uses, please contact the original owners. If documents provided to the Irish Left Archive have been created for or added to other online archives, please inform us so sources can be credited.