

I loved Brendan as a friend. As a comrade in politics, over the years we met in basements, backrooms, meetings and conference halls all over Ireland. Socialist politics was his tribute, simply to being alive with others with whom he suffered, anywhere men were in distress. He had an original creative mind, and all of this fine talent he related to our Irish needs. He learnt from the successes and failures of socialist revolutions from Moscow to Santiago de Chile. He learnt from the diversity of our comrades' experience through history, that our own struggle would finally succeed or fail because of what we do here, to encourage an understanding as a prelude to a demand for socialism. Each community's socialist struggle supports, compliments and slowly guarantees the other. All that is certain is that we cling to our socialism, we owe this to our comrades everywhere in completing the giant jigsaw of world revolution. Our struggle could be the most difficult of all, a thing of the mind, against the wonderfully well-equipped, well dug-in and resourceful enemy, instead of the much easier and appealing to the romantic, of the bomb and the bullet struggle. Is it not its own tribute to the intricate genius of capitalism in Ireland that socialism should still be so weak here without the help even of a serious Fascist dictatorship.

His, as is the life of each of us, I suppose a tiny thin silken thread, working together and being woven from that part of us all which each of us gives to socialism, into a powerful single rope with which so much can be done, and remains to be done, before our job is finished here.

Brendan's last political act of infinite dignity and characteristic restraint was to decline the unspeakable gaucherie of an invitation by the bureaucrats of the Labour Party, two days before he died, to lift his expulsion so that he could die in that organisation in which these same officials did not consider him fit to live during his lifetime. He could not prevent them from attending his funeral; at last they felt safe from his acid tipped tongue.

We mourn him with Carol Ann and their children, and we are grateful to have known him.

LABOUR and SOCIALISM

by

Brendan Scott

This essay is published as a simple tribute to Brendan by his comrades in the Labour Party Liaison Committee of the Left. His great impact in the party was through his speeches and lectures as he was primarily a teacher. This booklet will recall the fundamentals of what he taught to those who knew and learned from him. For a new generation it will start again the debate and action on those ideas. In that way it will be his epitaph.

"We know that the evolution of a phenomenon in movement, no matter what its external appearances may be, depends upon its internal characteristics. And we know that on the political level our own reality — no matter how fine and attractive the reality of others may be — can only be transformed by detailed knowledge of it, by our own efforts, by our own sacrifices . . . The ideological deficiency within the national liberation movements, not to say the total lack of ideology reflecting as this does an ignorance of the historical reality which these movements claim to transform — makes for one of the greatest weaknesses in our struggle against imperialism, if not the greatest weakness of all."

The speaker, the late Amílcar Cabral; the occasion, the first Tricontinental Conference at Havana in 1966. Perhaps a far cry from the Irish Labour Party and all it stands for. But in this brief article I wish to investigate, not just the perspectives for the Labour Party, but the perspectives for socialism in Ireland, and, putting aside slogans and dogmas, to examine at least some of the fundamentals of the Irish political scene.

My first question is this: What stage of development has now been achieved by the Irish people? Connolly distinguishes three stages in the struggle of subject classes. In the first stage the eyes of the subject class are always turned towards the past — they want to march backwards to re-establish the social order of ancient times — "the good old days". In the second period the subject class tends "to believe that the social order in which it finds itself always did exist, and to devote all its energies to obtaining such amelioration of its lot within existent society as will make that lot more bearable". "At this stage of society," Connolly says, "the subject class, as far as its own aspirations is concerned, may be reckoned a conservative force." "In the third period the subject class becomes revolutionary, seeks little of the past for inspiration, but building itself upon the achievements of the present, confidently addresses itself to the conquest of the future".

By arguing that by virtue of their founders, the Irish Labour Party, the S.D.L.P., the N.I.L.P., the Republicans, or any other group, are non-sectarian, and that therefore any apparent sectarian conflict in the North is purely coincidental and will vanish when British troops are withdrawn, are we in the first stage — the nostalgia for the past. By saying that the armed struggle against the British Army is of paramount importance and that

other issues will be settled when they have gone, or that any talk of unity is wicked and will merely precipitate civil war, are we in the second stage, i.e. strait-jacketed by a static social order. On a real issue when the neo-colonial sub-structure was unveiled — the E.E.C. issue — unity prevailed between Hume, Faulkner, and our spokesmen in the Labour Party — they all wanted in. They all know that to achieve unity with the alienated Protestant working class, the benevolent hot-line to Cardinal Conway must disappear. The conflict in the North is not a unique one, and its dynamics have parallels elsewhere.

My next question is this: What kind of socialist party do we want? There are as many signposts to socialism as there are roads to heaven, but most of them fall into four categories. Category 1 rests on two foundation stones, firstly, that "without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement", and secondly, to produce a revolutionary movement there must be a "small, compact core", a revolutionary, disciplined, trained élite.

"The history of every country teaches us," Lenin wrote in **What is to be Done** in 1903, "that by its own ability the working class can attain only a trade-unionist self-consciousness, that is to say an appreciation of the need to fight the bosses, to wrest from the government this or that legislative enactment for the benefit of the workers. The Socialist doctrine, on the other hand, is the outgrowth of those philosophical, historical, and economic theories which have been developed by the representatives of the well to do, the intellectuals". In his essay 'For Twelve Years' published in 1906, he says: "The blind unfolding of the Labour Movement can lead only to the permeation of that movement with a bourgeois ideology because the unconscious growth of the labour movement takes the form of trade unionism . . . therefore our tasks as Social Democrats is to oppose this blind process, to divert the labour movement from the unconscious tendency of trade unionism to march under the protective wing of the bourgeoisie, and to bring it under the influence of social democracy instead." Trotsky, in his preface to the **History of the Commune of 1871**, states: "As we page through the history of the Commune one conclusion is inescapable: the party needed a firm command (a strong revolutionary leadership). Those who fought in 1871 did not lack heroism; what they lacked was a singleness of purpose and a centralised leadership — and this is precisely why they were beaten."

The Second Category is also revolutionary but it looks for revolution from below, wants the complete destruction of the state, and is not only suspicious of a disciplined party of revolutionaries, but distrusts all ideas of parties and tight organisation. "The advent of the social revolution is in no country nearer than in Italy", wrote Michael Bakunin in 1860, "there does not exist as in other countries of Europe a privileged class of workers who, thanks to their considerable wages, pride themselves on

the liberal education they have acquired; they are dominated by the principles of the bourgeois, by their ambition and vanity to such an extent that they are only different from the bourgeois by their situation and not in their way of thinking." "Many of the good bourgeois socialists", wrote Bakunin in **Statism and Anarchy**, "are always telling us: let us instruct the people first and then emancipate them. We say, on the contrary, let them emancipate themselves first and they will instruct themselves of their own accord."

The Manifesto of the Maknovite Army — a Russian anarchist group of the Revolutionary Civil War period — states: "Ours is the purest form of socialism; anti-authoritarian, and anti-government, it calls for the free organisation of the social life of the workers . . . the workers themselves must choose their own councils to express the will and carry out the orders of these self-same workers. The soviets or councils will be the executive organs of, and not the authorities over the workers." The modern theorists of the anarchist ideal, Daniel and Gabriel Cohn Bendit, in their book **Obsolete Communism — the Left Wing Alternative** state: "Far from having to teach the masses, the revolutionary's job is to try to understand and express their common aspirations . . . The setting up of any party inevitably reduces the freedom of the people to agree with the party. In other words, democracy is not suborned by bad leadership, but by the very existence of leadership. Democracy cannot even exist within the Party because the Party itself is not a democratic organisation, i.e., it is based upon authority and not on representation." The Cohn Bendits state that "the revolutionary cannot and must not be a leader." They are "a militant minority drawn from various social strata, people who band together because they share an ideology . . . to dispel the mystification of the ruling classes and the bureaucrats, to proclaim that the workers can only defend themselves and build a socialist society by taking their fate in their own hands, believing that political maturity comes only from revolutionary struggle and direct action."

The Third Category is similar to anarchism in that it distrusts the idea of parties. Syndicalism also believes in direct action. Trade Unionists organise themselves to secure the ownership of the industry in which they work, then gradually a government of the Trade Unionists emerges. Both Connolly and Larkin were aware of this strand in the thought of the American Industrial Workers of the World, and were influenced by it.

The Fourth Category — the Gradualists — the modern Social Democrats believe in achieving socialism through the parliamentary process, by, in Sydney Webb's phrase, "the inevitability of gradualness." I think the best exposition of the dogma of social democracy is still to be found in Bernard Shaw's **The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism, Capitalism, Sovietism and Fascism**: "In the long run you must have your parliament and your settled

constitution back again, and the risings and coup d'etat with all their bloodsheds and burnings and executions might as well have been cut out as far as the positive and constructive work of socialism is concerned." Again, "Sooner or later the irreconcilables exterminate one another like the Kilkenny Cats; for when the toughest faction has exterminated all the other factions, it proceeds to exterminate itself." Or again Shaw says: "It is far more likely that by the time nationalisation has become the rule and private enterprise the exception, Socialism will be spoken of, if at all, as a crazy religion held by a fanatical sect in that darkest age, the Nineteenth Century; and I who said forty years ago that we should have had Socialism already but for the Socialists, am quite willing to drop the name Socialist if dropping it will help me get the thing. What I meant by my jibe at the Socialists of the 1880's was that nothing is ever done, and much is prevented by people who do not realise that they cannot do everything at once."

I have dealt at length with the four roads to socialism — the disciplined party of trained professionals, the anarchist anti-establishment, the Syndicalist trades unionist, and the gradualist parliamentarian — for a special reason. Because of our colonial past, but also because of our nearness to the imperialist heartland, all sections of the Labour Movement — even the Labour Party — has both a revolutionary and a evolutionary past in the realm of theory. Within almost any Labour Party Dublin branch you will hear all four ideologies expressed. This is not necessarily a bad thing but what causes confusion is that there is little if any attempt to adapt the sacred texts to modern conditions. Too often the thought of Connolly or Lenin or Trotsky is not a spring-board but a pair of cement boots. This is what Cabral means when he says that on the political level our own reality, no matter how fine and attractive the reality of others, can only be transformed by detailed knowledge of it.

Take, for example, the quiet but effective way in which the Labour Party has begun to refer to itself as a "European Social Democratic Party." There have been no voices raised about this, no debate, no consideration of the implications. In a vague sort of way we are led to believe that this is a very good thing, a slipping off of the old Nationalistic garments. There has been no mention of the fact that all the modern Social Democratic parties owe their origin to the triumph of chauvinism in the First World War situation; that Social Democratic parties have cheerfully backed imperialistic nationalism in colonial situations, e.g. Mollet and Algeria. We are also told time after time by Coalition Europeans, "Seven Days", John Healy, Michael Mc-Inerney etc., that all the Social Democratic parties have been in coalitions; that in fact coalition is almost a sacred principle of social democracy. If we oppose coalition we are narrow Nationalists, Little Irelanders, swimming against the world tide, etc. I want us, therefore, to take a long hard look at the Brave New

World of Social Democracy and see if indeed its record is one which should make us anxious to imitate it.

Frank Parkin, in his excellent book, **Class Inequality And Political Order**, states: "Socialist parties were initially committed to abolishing the system of ownership and rewards of capitalist society, and replacing it with a system based on egalitarian principles. All the major Social Democratic Parties in Western Europe have now abandoned this aim. This process of de-radicalisation has occurred over an extensive period of time, but in most cases the final break with traditional egalitarian socialist doctrines occurred in the 1950's coinciding with the first European taste of affluence." "One implication of this," Parkin says, "is that wherever Social Democrats form the main party of the subordinate class, there is no major political force in society which represents a radical challenge to the reward system of modern capitalism." Indeed, European Social Democracy has taken part in many coalitions with Conservative groups. Ralph Miliband in his book **The State in Capitalist Society** says: "Social democratic ministers have generally been able to achieve little inside these hybrid formations. Far from presenting a threat to the established order, their main function has been to contain their own parties and to persuade them to accept the essentially conservative policies which they themselves have sanctioned. For the most part, participation on this basis has been a trap not a springboard."

Robert Michels in his book **Political Parties** probes for the reasons for revisionism and de-radicalisation within the European Social Democratic Parties. He argues that this is due to the bureaucratisation of the party machine. As the socialist movement grew in numbers the influence of the Party officer grew in importance. He was committed to the routines of organisation rather than to the radicalisation of society. "Those who controlled and prospered by the party machine took a more cautious attitude to social and political change." David Childs in his book on German socialism **From Schumacher to Brandt** states: "The S.P.D. is ruled by a coalition of thoroughly expert, but thoroughly middle class functionaries, managers, professional Lander politicians, and dominated by the federal parliamentary wing . . . Although manual workers make up a majority of ordinary members they find no representation at the top of the Party." Parkin says: "Once the Party has accepted the rules of the parliamentary game, the way is then open for the second phase of de-radicalisation — that brought about by the influx of 'moderate' middle class leaders and cadres. The process then becomes a cumulative one. The greater the inflow of bourgeois recruits the less militant the party becomes so making it even more attractive to those who favour the interpretation of equality along meritocratic and welfare lines. And so on . . ." Here is perhaps the kernel of difference between **socialism**, which is **egalitarian**, and **social democracy**, which is meritocratic. What

do we mean by meritocratic? I let Tony Crosland define it. He says in *The Future of Socialism* published in 1956: "The essential thing is that every citizen should have an equal chance — that is his basic democratic right; but provided the start is fair, let there be maximum scope for individual self-advancement. There would be nothing improper in either a high continuous status ladder, or even a distinct class stratification, since opportunities for attaining the highest status or topmost stratum would be genuinely equal."

Basically there is a very wide gulf between egalitarian social and meritocratic social democracy. The former wants to get rid of privilege — the latter wants to change the rules on how privileges are allocated. Socialism seeks classlessness, Social Democracy is content with class mobility. Socialism wants industrial democracy, Social Democracy is prepared to live with a private-sector dominated economy, provided there is a welfare service safety net. Socialism sees the cause of inequality as the capitalist system — Social Democracy believes it can run the system better than the capitalists.

Let us now look at some figures to see how in fact meritocratic social democracy has been performing. Education must be the escalator in a meritocratic society. Yet in the 1960's these were the percentages of university students of working class origin: Great Britain, 25%; Norway 25%; Sweden, 16%; Denmark, 10%; France and Austria, 8%; Netherlands, 5%; West Germany, 5%. The percentages of working class children doing grammar school courses in the early sixties were: Great Britain, 52%; Sweden, 23%; Netherlands, 19½%; France, 17%, West Germany, 16%. Again, the differentials between unskilled workers and white-collar professionals have increased rather than decreased in the 1960's. In Sweden and in Denmark, there were wider differentials than in the U.S. or Germany. Or look at the percentage of G.N.P. allocated to welfare services. In the 1960's, Sweden was allocating 12.4 %; Denmark, 11.1%; Great Britain, 11%; Norway, 10.3%; West Germany, 16.1%; France, 14.9%.

Perhaps the most dangerous aspect of Social Democratic involvement in coalitions is the tether which this places on affiliated trade unions. The unions are urged to be adult, responsible, and to look to the "national" interest rather than to the class interest. Parkin says about this: "The tendency for underclass leaders in socialist parties or trade unions to redefine their duty as the protection of the national interest obviously undermines their position as class representatives. To withdraw pressure for redistribution in favour of some other abstract principle is to confer an advantage on the dominant class. Clearly in a class — stratified society the very notion of a "National" interest is highly problematic. In terms of income distribution what does not go to the subordinate class goes to the dominant class instead." As Galbraith points out in *The Affluent Society*, pressure

to increase G.N.P. has often been used as an alternative to the re-distribution of the national wealth by believers in the meritocracy. In other words, Don't talk about better slices of the National Cake for the workers; talk instead about baking a bigger cake so that you can give a bigger share to the workers without letting Rockefeller, Krupps, or Onassis go hungry.

Today the most deadly threat to socialism in Ireland comes not from without the Movement, but from within. It comes from the ultra-democratic, new wave social democrats whose constant battle-cry is "The people have spoken." We will now of course do what they have told us to do — go into Europe, lock up Republicans, accept the meritocracy, etc. Let us examine the case of the ultra-democrats very carefully. One must first see that a politician can take very different views of his role in a liberal-bourgeois democracy. He can see his role as the shaper of public opinion, right out at the front of the herd, trying to steer it in a particular direction. Or he can seek the safe middle of the herd and go where the leaderless majority are heading. The ultra-democrats who are at present claiming to be the leadership of the Labour Movement forget that Socialism cannot and must not claim to be a national party representing all the people. Socialists by definition are a sectional party representing the majority Have-nots in society, and, by definition, wishing to abolish the minority Haves. Newspaper owners and columnists, television programmers, bishops, also represent minority interests. They have a very good reason for advocating consensus politics because they control the media which produce the consensus. Yet the Labour Party's actions since 1969 at least, have been reactions to prodding from newspapers and bishops on issues such as coalition, the North, etc.

Again we are entitled to ask the ultra-democrats this question — what profound or significant or lasting change was ever initiated or brought to fruition by a majority? The Christian religion? The Reformation? The French or Russian Revolutions? The abolition of slavery? The vote for women? Should Larkin have waited for the majority of the Irish people to back him in 1913? Behind the ideology of the ultra-democrats is a profound conservatism. The Civil Rights Movement in the North, street action of any kind, even if non-violent in theory, we are told, are violent in practice because they stir up a reaction of violence from those against whom the protest is aimed. We get the same kind of reaction from coursing and hunting enthusiasts who claim that it is unfair to spoil the sport of the dogs and horses and hunters. Institutionalised violence has received the sacred seal of approval at the ballot box — in time the masters would have had a change of heart. 1916 was unnecessary — in time John Dillon would have persuaded both Carson and England, perhaps because of the legitimate (because blessed by the majority) carnage in Flanders, that Home Rule

was permissible. 1913 was doubtless unnecessary because in time William Martin Murphy would have recognised that Larkin was a fine chap to contest the election in North East Dublin, and would have invited him into the confraternity. The ultra-democrat is lavish in spending one commodity — time. Perhaps his prodigality is due to the fact that the time he is spending is not his own. Those who are most keen on cautioning others to wait are usually not the people who are suffering under the disabilities.

But those who most detest the smug establishment Lefties in Leinster House are often their best, if unwitting, accomplices. How many people are there who say "I'd join the Labour Party or Sinn Fein if they really were socialist?" "I'll join them when they say they are . . ." and there follows a string of conditions. There are others who seek the seamless garment of doctrinal purity in the wilderness. In the early days of Christianity there were many zealots who, rather than besoil themselves with contact with the less pure, choose instead to climb their individual pillars in the desert and denounce the world to the empty air. The history of socialism is studded with the pillars of ultra-pure Simon Stylites — perfectly happy to be always right and also seemingly happy to remain ineffective.

There is the profound hatred of our socialist sects that assures victory to the new breed of social democratic organisation man. Laszek Kolakowski, in his profound and moving denunciation of Stalinism, says: "For centuries death by fire was reserved for heretics rather than for pagans and the proscribed books on the Catholic Church's Index are rarely those of non-Catholics. That special merciless hatred which almost every organisation with a political ideology bestows on its heretics, dissidents, apostles or renegades, a hatred surpassing a hundredfold the most violent revulsion felt toward the recognised enemy, is in reality an understandable product of all such social conditions . . . in which a specific political or religious organisation, originally intended by its authors only as a means to an end, becomes an end in itself." In other words we have forgotten that the purpose of our organisations is to achieve socialism, and instead consider them to be ends in themselves, and their immediate triumph over other sects to be more important than furthering socialism. Thus we find we spend more time disrupting the activities of other Left-wing groups than we do fighting the enemy. Hold a meeting on the North in the Mansion House and we will all be there savaging one another. Yet how many of us join Fianna Fail dominated tenants' associations, conservative dominated debating societies, or even trade union meetings. Are we so busy taking in each other's washing that we do not even know where the laundrettes patronised by the uncommitted are situated?

Has our thinking progressed in the last twenty or thirty years? How often do we talk of the masses, the working classes, the

workers, as if we were still back in the days of Engels, as if the meritocratic one-hundredth of a revolution had not happened. Take Ireland today and a fairly typical situation. One factory may contain workers on £18 per week and workers on £60 per week. Rationalisation may produce a situation like this: the boss says to X — "Look, we feel you can handle twice the commodities you do if they are loaded in this way; we are prepared to give you an extra £10 per week for doing it." X hears later that Y, who was paid £20 per week as a loader has been declared redundant. X has a sheaf of H.P. commitments. Is he always ready to declare his solidarity with Y by voting for strike action?

Herbert Marcuse says: "If the worker and his boss enjoy the same television program and visit the same resort places, if the typist is as attractively made-up as the daughter of her employer, if the Negro owns a Cadillac, if they all read the same newspaper, then this assimilation indicates not the disappearance of classes but the extent to which the needs and satisfactions that serve the preservation of the Establishment are shared by the underlying population." "Indeed", he continues, "in the most highly developed areas of contemporary society the transplantation of social into individual needs is so effective that the difference between them seems to be purely theoretical. Can one really distinguish between the mass media as instruments of information and entertainment, and as agents of manipulation and indoctrination?" Marcuse concludes: "The people recognise themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level house, kitchen equipment. The very mechanism which ties the individual to his society has changed, and social control is enclosed in the new media which it has produced."

Have we, as socialists, done any real research on the subversion of society by affluence? In America the "Hard Hat" workers were amongst the most fervent supporters of the Vietnam War. In England Powellism thrives on the fears of workers enmeshed in higher purchase affluence. In Ireland, the interests of the Northern working-class Catholic and Protestant victims are not foremost in the thoughts of many engaged in tourism and British-owned industries.

We need to know the leverage points if we want to overthrow the existing society. We cannot ignore any form of protest. For example Women's Liberation could have a far more profound effect on overthrowing our present society than any strike. Contraception and divorce can force the Establishment in the South into the open. The disciplined action of Sinn Fein on issues such as mining, fisheries and housing action caused more pain to the Establishment than activity on the border. Consider the circumstances leading up to the split in Sinn Fein. We must make the decision on whether action on Southern streets on issues like housing might not be of more assistance to both

communities in the North than a string of resolutions condemning the role of the British Army.

The same men who claim to be the real voice of democracy in Ireland, who see our role as the extension of European Social Democracy, are also the men who are causing the most confusion in the North. If you claim to be the voice of majority democracy how can you justify the Unionist Statelet of the North which was imposed upon the geographical entity of Ireland? You can do so by claiming that there are two nations or two states, and thus you can have two majorities. We must differentiate between a state and a nation. We can see the state in Marxist terms as the institutionalised means of coercion of the dominant class, or in liberal terms as simply a legally defined territory. A nation on the other hand, is a human group which identifies as such, has cultural similarities, its own political system, perhaps its own language. We can have a state which contains several nations, e.g., Britain which contains the English, Welsh and Scots. We can have a nation divided between states, e.g., the Kurds or the Armenians. We can have a nation without a state, e.g., the Jews before the foundation of Israel.

There are several examples of modern states where different groups co-exist, e.g., Belgium or Yugoslavia. There are clashes between the groups making up the states on matters such as language, religion, etc., but these are not major clashes. There are a number of states which had their statehood imposed upon them, e.g., Nigeria and the Congo. They have been scenes of major conflict, and it is interesting to speculate why the Labour Party spokesman was so keen on smashing Katanga and yet so keen on defending Biafra. Katanga was a classic case of colonial manipulation, but was Biafra free from colonial manipulation?

One can see a whole layer of states where tension between groups was the result of the colonising power's manipulations in trying to maintain its stranglehold. Take the cases of India-Pakistan, Palestine, Cyprus, Algeria and the Congo, where invariably the conflict was fanned by the colonial power. Then there is another layer of states with inbuilt national problems, of which South Africa and Rhodesia are the best examples. What differentiates Belgium and South Africa, or Czecho-Slovakia and Yugoslavia? Is it just numbers? The groups are fairly well balanced in both Belgium and Czecho-Slovakia and Yugoslavia. Is it purely a division between colonist and native? When does one cease to be a colonist and become a native? Both the Boer in South Africa and the planter in Ulster have been there for a longer period than most of the world's states have been in existence. There is one factor absent in the constitution of the Czecho-Slovak, Yugoslav and Belgian states, but present in South Africa and Rhodesia — the assertion of the superiority of one group. If we examine the present status of the Six-County State one finds more similarities to the Rhodesian and South

African model than to the Belgian one. There is the difference that within the Six-County area there is a majority — but the doctrine of ascendancy was conceived when the group who fathered Ulster was in a minority. The ascendancy doctrine anywhere in the world has little to do with numbers; it is concerned with holding on to power, both economic and political. What has happened in Ulster is reverse Bantustanisation — withdrawal to the laager.

Now, let's get this one clear, I would be — and I am sure that any Republican or Socialist would be — ready to fight for the rights of conscience of either Catholic or Protestant. In historic terms the Protestant ethos is more favourable to the growth of socialism as both the thesis of Capitalism and the antithesis of socialism grew out of the Reformation. I think it would be an abomination to force any Protestant group into a theocratic Catholic republic — and I think the present Irish Republic is such a state. But I feel equally strongly about the principle of Ascendancy — whether it be in Ulster or Rhodesia. Socialism cannot co-exist with this principle. The one virus which, whenever it has infected Socialism, always kills or maims it, is Nationalism. In Ireland we have the healthy differentiation between Nationalist and Republican. The Nationalist is the believer in Ascendancy — be he Northern or Southern Catholic, or Northern or Southern Protestant. The Republican in French or Irish history is the assimilationist — he believes in creating new conditions to solve old equations, e.g., Tone's famous definition of an Irishman.

The Two Nations theory, and especially its conclusions, strikes me as being dangerous opportunism. Pandering to Ascendancy nationalism has always lead to disaster for socialism. Remember that the Hitlers, Mussolinis and Mosleys began their careers as socialists. Today, also, it is very easy to involve workers in defence of Ascendancy, e.g., the "Hard-Hats" and poor whites of the States, the White miners of South Africa, the white workers in Rhodesia. Again, not all the South Vietnamese army are conscripts. I would like to ask the believers in the Two Nations theory, and especially those who believe that it should lead to the support of a Northern State, the following questions:

(a) Do they believe that separate development is ever likely to lead to socialism in South Africa or Rhodesia.

(b) Are they supporting separate development in Wales, Scotland and Brittany — why the British and Irish Communist Party? Why the British rather than the British, Irish, Scottish and Welsh Communist Party?

(c) If it is a question of a majority within the boundaries of the state supporting the borders of the state, then why not support Israel and Formosa?

I feel that the hypothesis that all violence in the North is the

result of the presence of the British Army is equally wrong. This is not 1920. Violence in the North comes from the imposition of, the reaction to, Ascendancy Orange Nationalism. It was the simple bourgeois civil rights demands which toppled the Unionist Party and opened up the cracks in the structure. It was the return to armed confrontation which facilitated the rise of William Craig and his brigades.

Where does this leave us in the South? I think we do not further the cause of socialism in the South — or the North — by wasting time and energy supporting or rejecting the wish fulfilments or dream fantasies of the S.D.L.P., or the pious "Hear no evil, see no evil, do no evil" conservatism of the Labour Party Establishment. We can profoundly affect the Northern situation by changing the Southern situation.

We can only do this by making a real effort to come together, plan together, at least consent to work for short term objectives together. Stalinist, Trotskyist Independent Socialist thought they could afford the luxury of internecine squabbles in the Weimar Republic. Eventually Hitler united them — in a pile of ashes in the concentration camps.

As Connolly said in 1909: "Now the problem is to find a basis of union on which all these sections who owe allegiance to one or other conception of Socialism may unite. My position is that this union or rapprochement cannot be arrived at by discussing our differences. Let us rather find out and unite upon the things upon which we agree. Once we get together, we will find that our differences are not as insuperable as they appear whilst we are separated. What is necessary first is a simple platform around which to gather . . . As each section has complete confidence in their own doctrines, let them show their confidence by entering an organisation with those who differ from them in methods, and depend upon the development of events to prove the correctness of their position."

BRENDAN SCOTT

January 1973.

Brendan Scott

by

Dr. Noel Browne

'It's hard to write about a dead friend — stone crosses, long low lumps of earth, weeds, the perished, once lovely, flowers of withered wreaths — pitiful human artifacts. How trite are words like humane, compassionate, warm, loving life and mankind, un-pompous, gentle man, courage in the last agonising months of dying. They are said about nearly anyone who dies, and so are meaningless, except to each of us, privately, who mourn.

Brendan was something more than all these platitudes tell us about any man. Does man, with Beckett, simply "pass the time which would have passed anyway?" With Brendan this could not be said. He was a revolutionary Marxist in the barren political wasteland of this Republic, with its thousands of one-time socialists with nothing but guilty consciences to show for it. Luckily his comrades are of all colours and races who now people one third of the world, a member of a powerful, growing more powerful, wonderful socialist world community — this he never forgot. Heaven forbid that the watching capitalist world could ever learn the truly lethal danger to the revolution of simple ostracism and its loneliness, and the attractive warm cosiness, to the weak in spirit, of the herd; even when simply headed over the next cliff. Such is the simplicity of man's emotions that the romantic murdered revolutionary, fathers a thousand sons to avenge his end. No one mourns the revolutionary who gives up because he cannot wait, ceases to believe any more, or simply cannot stand the awful loneliness and isolation of being only a few, on his own, or seemingly ignored. There is no romance, no anger.

Brendan hated the privileged life of the capitalist world — he hated the vulgarity and the greed of capitalism as a system of organised society, for the pain and misery it meant to so many innocents. Like any good hater — I use that word hate, without reservation, — he did what he could to destroy it. He was the only truly safe socialist revolutionary, soft on the outside, but hate-hard on the inside. He never faltered in his conviction that socialism must come, even to Ireland.

Unlike so many of our intellectually pedestrian doctrinaire imitators, those dogmatic political theologians who have replaced the Roman variety, he built onto his profound knowledge of Marxist Leninism. He knew that socialism must come to Ireland in a way special and unique to Ireland, and that only those who know their Ireland well could help to create it.

Title: Labour and Socialism

Organisation: Liaison Committee of the Labour Left

Author: Brendan Scott

Date: 1973

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