



CAPITAL in IRELAND

40p

See O Sweden

KOB

Kob,
is that you,
hung from the tamarind tree
bloody --
and why have they cut your hands off?
you said you would struggle in all ways,
Kob, i believe you now.



do you remember
one morning, how we were walking on that mud path
to the village?
The sun was hot, and the way long,
i tried to keep up with you, but my legs were tired
and i kept slipping
You slowed down to wait for me,
and to pass the time away while we walked together,
you told me a funny story of
the little girl who tried to walk to school in the rain,
but found that for each step forward that she took,
she would slide back two,
because the road was slippery.
So, she turned around and walked backwards,
and in that way she reached the school in no time at all.
We laughed, and already our village was in sight,
and my legs seemed strong again.
You said you would struggle in all ways, Kob,
i believe you now.

Today, Kob,
when i saw you
hanging from the tree,
your hands cut off,
i thought i could walk no more, ever.
But then i remember your laughter,
and how you said you would struggle in all ways,
and i grow strong again.
Kob, i believe you now.

(By a friend of one of the students who was beaten to death during the Thammasat Massacre in Thailand, and whose body was later hung and mutilated near the university, before being burnt with three others. Reprinted from AMPO: Japan-Asia Quarterly Review, Oct. - Dec. 1976.)

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to the reader

This seventh issue of The Ripening of Time begins the examination of the bourgeois class in Ireland. It is the bourgeois class which owns and controls the means of production, the State and the ruling ideas in the 32 counties. It is this bourgeois class we intend to put under the microscope in this and the coming issues of the journal.

The editorial of this issue is rather unusual. It is a reproduction of a letter written by a group of French workers who are at present occupying their factory. It is a militant appeal for political support and solidarity. It speaks for itself and is a stark condemnation of the other seamy side of capitalism.

The article entitled 'The Break-Up of Capital' looks into the historical development and simultaneous fragmentation of capital: it examines and studies the emergence of merchants' capital and industrial capital. It will continue in Issue 9 of the journal with a further look into banking and finance capital.

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The copyright is not intended to discourage the use of material from this journal for political study and debate. It is intended to prevent false and distorted reproduction and profiteering. Aside from these limits, people are free and welcome to use the material.

This issue continues our 'Reflections on Agriculture' began in issue 6. Section II completes the re-appraisal of Sinn Fein the Workers Party's 'The Irish Industrial Revolution'; it is rather a timely piece in the context of the recent conflicts inside that organisation. Section III examines the question of ground rent.

P. Daly, involved in the struggle of the fishermen, has contributed an article entitled, by us, 'The Fishing Market'. It is a response to the article on fishing published in issue 2 of the journal.

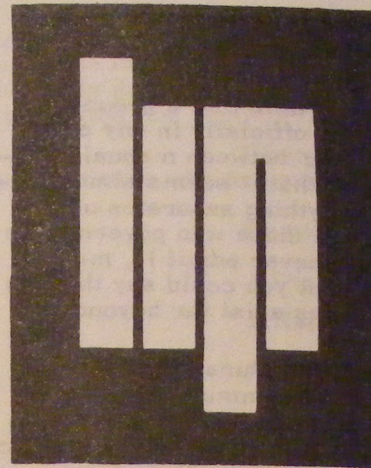
Finally, we start our examination of the bourgeois class. After the Introduction we go straight into the pre-Cromwellian period and the subsequent destruction and transformation brought about through the Cromwellian wars. This article will also carry through to issues 9 and 10 of The Ripening of Time.

Issue 8, the next issue, will be a special issue. It will deal exclusively with the international situation and will be made up by signed articles contributed by readers and supporters of the journal.

Fight, fail, fight again, fail again, fight one more time...till victory. That is the logic of our people - that is the logic of the journal.

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editorial

We are opening this issue of the journal on the bourgeois class and the rule of capital with a slightly unusual editorial. Instead of writing an editorial ourselves, we have preferred to let some working class comrades speak. We are publishing a letter written by a number of French workers; this letter first appeared in the French left-wing daily LIBERATION on 31st July 1977. It has been translated by a member of the editorial collective of the journal.

This is an open letter written by workers in the LIP watch factory in Besancon - France. LIP is at present occupied by workers who have barricaded themselves inside and are resisting the attempts to remove the machinery and close the factory down. The struggle in LIP dates back to 1973 when the entire workforce refused to accept redundancies, occupied and self-managed the firm for a period around 9 months. Then the State had to intervene, a new employer/manager 'found' and LIP continued to function 'under new management'. For the last 6 months the threat of closure and redundancies is hanging over workers heads one more time who are again responding in a united and militant fashion.

Letter from the workers of LIP to a group of intellectuals

Dear friend,

This is no doubt the first time that a group of workers have addressed themselves to you, officially in any case. Don't see in that a rebuke, but a simple fact: between manual workers and intellectuals, the chasm is so wide that it seems almost unbreachable. Our origins, our culture, everything separates us. 'Social organisation', that achievement of those who govern us in the name of finance (something they would never admit), makes communication difficult to such an extent that you could say that the division of labour and its social consequences exist far beyond the shop floor and the office.

This first step across the cultural precipice is intended as an attempt to communicate. This communication is an appeal. This appeal is a request. It is a request that we address to the 'intellectual' fired with freedom, to he or she who has denounced injustice so often, has fought against submission in all its forms, has worked without rest for 'the emancipation of man'.

Injustice reigns openly in many countries. Freedoms are seriously threatened. Our country is not exempt; even if the forms of injustice are 'more subtle more clouded'; they are less violent in appearance, but they are there at our doors. Today they are at the door of LIP.

LIP. You know about it. Perhaps you even supported and approved of this 'dispute'? Perhaps you deplored some of the forms it took. However, we are convinced that you have always been sensitive to its aspects of freedom. You must have understood that behind the battle for jobs, it was basically a battle for being, for dignity, for freedom. Today, now, 'this being, this dignity, this freedom' are under serious threat.

On the surface, it appears like a 'secondary' question. "The bosses want to take away the machines, to sell them off or auction them for scrap". So far nothing tragic. All is possible if the workers stay on. In appearance that is, for with the departure of the machines, it's the technical potential which is escaping, which is 'the whole reason' for workers being there. As a consequence a whole human community is being wiped out. The departure of the machines would correspond to 'their' desire to reduce us to unemployment, to despair and to migration. All that in a world where, in the name of pseudo-economic necessity, the worker is swept from job to job, from town to town, from district to district... thus losing all personal and collective identity.

Our fight for work is basically 'a search for identity'. As such, it represents a hope for all workers. We weigh our words: they are trying to kill that hope. We are far from the machines. Close to freedom. Our spirits and hearts are untouchable but, in removing the machines, they cut off our arms; our souls are laid waste ruining our hopes for freedom. Ours, those of the workers and all those who struggle for freedom against injustice, against the explosion of the being, of man, for unity.

You know your bitterness in denouncing "all forms of Goulag" (1). This is one of them, new, less dramatic, effective none the less. As such, we must do everything to fight it and that we can only do with the widest solidarity. Our request could perhaps be translated and summarised like this:

Circulate this letter around you, especially among your friends who are particularly sensitive to the problem.

For the workers of LIP

J. Pierre Emile B. Girardot
J. Raguenes.

Any replies to: J. Raguenes
33 Rue Berlioz
2500 Besancon France



(1) This is a reference to 'The Goulag Archipelago' - a book by Solzhenitsyn denouncing repression in the USSR.

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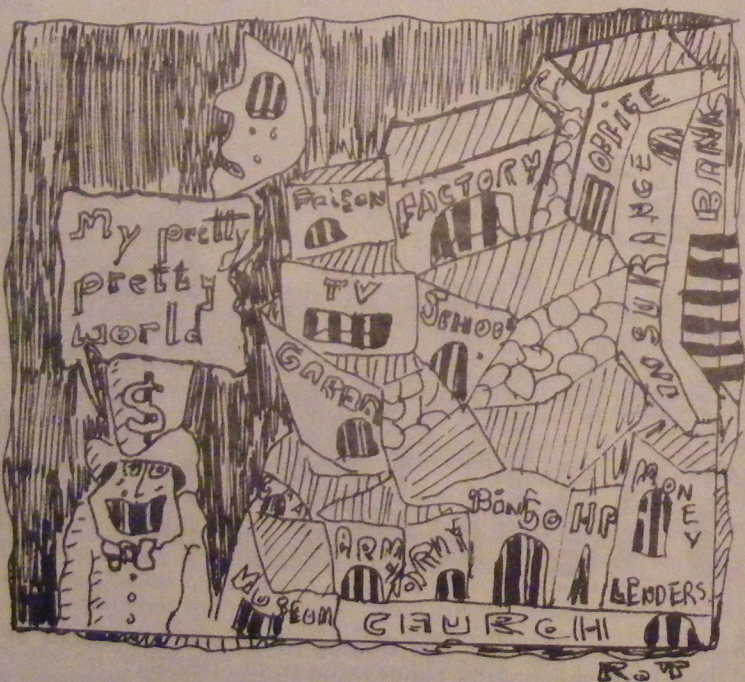
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The break-up of Capital

Introduction

This essay will examine the emergence and development of different forms of capital. As the capitalist mode of production grows and develops, distinct forms of capital occupy different places inside the whole system of capitalist production. These forms play distinct functions inside the different stages and cycles of production and reproduction, for example in production proper and circulation. In this essay we will examine how the early forms of capital, e.g. merchants capital emerged inside the sphere of circulation and how later on, transformed as industrial capital, developed and established the dominance of capital over pre-capitalist modes of production.

"Capital is not a thing, but rather a definite social production relation, belonging to a definite historical formation of society"⁽¹⁾

Capital exists only in relation to labour. It is a relation which embodies exploitation through the production and expropriation of surplus value. Capital is owned and controlled by the bourgeois class; so we can see that the unity of this class has its roots in the common interest in maintaining and extending the rule of capital over labour. But the different forms of capital which compete for control are owned by specific fractions of the bourgeois class. So alongside their class unity emerges also a new set of contradictions due to the break-up of capital.

The key to this break-up of capital is the process of transformations in the social division of labour which necessitate distinct forms of capital specialising in specific functions. And this break-up provokes and intensifies competition. In Ripening of Time nos 1 & 2 we examined how competition gave rise to concentration of ownership and control. While the various forms of capital (merchant, industrial or banking) precede the era of imperialism, they go through crucial transformations with the emergence of monopolies arising out of this concentration. The birth & growth of finance capital, the most advanced and complex form of capital, as a contradictory marriage between industrial and banking capital, marks the apex of this development of capital. This process we will examine in later issues of the journal.

(1) K. Marx, Capital Vol. III, p. 814, Lawrence & Wishart

This essay will provide some general guidelines for an analysis of capitalist relations of production. The objective reality of any one social formation, say Ireland, is never pure but is structured in a complex manner through a coexistence of elements of different modes of production. So the provided general framework is only a tool that can be used to analyse the precise form and nature of capital and its relations of production. The capitalist mode of production is shaped by class forces and their struggles; in this sense the process of the break-up of capital described in this essay takes a particular form inside the concrete conditions of class struggle.

There is no 'correct' development to which we can compare other situations which can then be labelled 'progressive' or 'backward'. The history of a country shapes the class forces of that country which determine the outcome of history as an accumulation of class struggle. It is these questions we intend to examine in this issue in relation to the 32 counties. We refer the reader to the article 'Reflections on Agriculture' and especially its section in this issue entitled 'Ground Rent'. The concepts defined in this article will be used in the essay on 'The Bourgeois Class in Ireland'.



The development of Merchant Capital

Merchant capital is the oldest form of capital. It is the first form in which capital has existed historically.

In examining merchant capital, Marx argues, that an early form of merchant capital existed and was often extremely strong, prior to capital establishing its dominance inside the sphere of production itself. This is very important, in the context of Ireland, where we argue that industrial capital was weak right up until the 20th century. This in no way implies that other forms of capital were absent or weak in earlier centuries in this country.

Merchant capital is capital operating in the sphere of circulation. Merchant capital can be located wherever commodities are exchanged for money (or an equivalent) on a market. It is worth pointing out that this phenomenon occurred many centuries BC, and is not to be identified simply with the growth in trade in Europe in the Middle Ages. The Romans for example, had an extremely sophisticated exchange system centuries prior to this. (2)

The first form that merchant capital takes is money; as the moneyed wealth of the merchant or the usurer. In fact, it remains true today, that all new capital enters the market in the shape of money, which by a definite process is transformed into capital. This is our first question. How is money wealth transformed into capital and under what conditions does this transformation take place?

(2) Engels treats this in his book The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State, in Marx & Engels, Selected Works, Lawrence and Wishart.

To answer this, we must examine circulation itself.

"It is in the nature of things that as soon as town industry as such separates from agricultural industry, its products are from the outset commodities and thus require the mediation of commerce for their sale. The leaning of commerce towards the development of towns, and on the other hand, the dependence of towns are so far natural. However, it depends on altogether different circumstances to what measure industrial development will go in hand with this development." (3)

What is happening here is that a certain portion of the total produce in a social formation goes onto the market as commodities which are exchanged. The merchant mediates this exchange, both for the domestic 'home' market and between countries. Inside the sphere of circulation, where the commodities are exchanged, there are two things which can happen.

Firstly, commodities can be sold, purchased with money and that same money used to buy other commodities. In this case the beginning and the end point is commodity - the same money changes hands twice (as a payment for commodities purchased and in payment for the purchase of other commodities). So, if a person sells £10 worth of clothes and buys £10 worth of food, no extra value has been created. Unless the process is repeated, the food is consumed and the operation completed. The objective of this exercise is consumption - the commodity goes out of circulation and is consumed to satisfy a particular want. This is a use-value. No profit is made through the sale of the commodity - it is a simple exchange.

Secondly, another process may take place; the purchase of commodities with money and their resale for money. In this case the start and end point is money. The objective of this process is to increase the amount of money. Unless this happens, the operation would have no point, and the person may as well have held onto the money. The aim here is to withdraw more money from circulation than was originally advanced. Thus, money is thrown into circulation for the purchase of commodities and in re-selling the commodities a greater sum of money is withdrawn from circulation. Here we locate a surplus - and the appropriation of this surplus was where the merchant originally secured his/her profit. This process no longer involves a use-value but rather an exchange-value.

The important difference between these two events is the following: in the first case two equivalents are exchanged and the objective is consumption. The only reason exchange takes place is to procure the necessary items for survival. In the second place, exchange takes place with the express purpose of attaining a profit. For this operation to be successful, there must exist a surplus in the society which the merchant takes control of by mediating the exchange.

(3) K. Marx, Capital, volume III, p. 332

Thus, for the early form of merchant capital to exist, there must be commodities and these commodities must have an exchange-value. At the same time production will not yet be transformed into production for exchange-value. This means that those living and working on the land will produce a surplus of goods over and above what they consume themselves - but production is still primarily oriented to immediate consumption. The surplus goes onto the market under the control of the merchants. On the market these products are commodities and are exchanged for money. The important point here is that production is not yet subjected to capital and the scattered independent producers, both on the land and in craft industry are tied to the merchant simply at the level of circulation and not production. Commerce turns products into commodities, but this does not necessarily imply that capital is the dominant social relation of production.

Capital appears first in the sphere of circulation, and exchange-values themselves appear first in the process of circulation itself.

"Capital can, and must, form in the process of circulation before it learns to control its extremes - the various spheres of production between which circulation mediates. Money and commodity circulation can mediate between spheres of production of widely different organisation, whose internal structure is still chiefly adjusted to the output of use-values." (4)

In fact, it is this unequal development between different spheres that enables the merchant to draw off the surplus product. The commercial profit of the merchant derives from promoting the exchange of products between unequally developed spheres of production or else between countries with unequal levels of economic development. What this means is that merchant capital "exploits the difference between the price of production of various countries" or across various spheres of production. (5) The merchant capitalist appropriates a large proportion of the surplus product as the mediator between communities which still substantially produce for use-value.

The important point, here, is that the merchant creates no value but rather appropriates a part of the surplus produced by labour, which is transformed into the profit of the merchant. The merchant realises the value of commodities in the form of money but it is the labour in the commodities that is the source of their value.

NO VALUE IS CREATED IN THE SPHERE OF CIRCULATION. It is the production of the goods and the labour thus contained in them which is their value on the market. But the merchant takes advantage of the extremely different conditions under which commodities are produced and consequently the different levels of price of production across spheres of production, and across different countries.

(4) as above, p. 328

(5) See article on Ground Rent, pp. 39ff

The merchant, says Marx, 'compares money prices and pockets the difference.' In this sense, it is inside the sphere of circulation that prices are fixed, in a society where the capitalist mode of production is not yet dominant. It is not until capital dominates production itself, that the averaging out of the rate of profit is determined inside production.

"Merchant's capital, when it holds a position of dominance, stands everywhere for a system of robbery, so that its development among the trading nations of old and modern times is always directly connected with plundering, piracy, kidnapping slaves, and colonial conquest; as in Carthage, Rome, and later among the Venetians, Portuguese, Dutch, etc." (6)

The huge developments in trade, the expansion of the world market and the huge increase in the volumes of commodities exchanged, speeded the development of merchant capital and greatly enhanced the amount of surplus expropriated by the owners and controllers of merchant capital. This development and strength of merchant capital furthered the transition from pre-capitalist to the capitalist mode of production.

But commerce itself, in its development has a dissolving and disorganising effect on the methods of organisation inside production where pre-capitalist relations of production prevail. And it is here that we must locate the transition which takes place whereby production itself becomes production for exchange-value subjected to capital as the dominant form of social relation.

Firstly, the merchant capitalist attempts to move into production. By using his accumulated profits, the merchant begins to invest in production itself in order to bring another sphere under his/her control. On the other hand, developments inside production itself, for example mechanisation and automation, are paralleled by a tendency to increase always the scale of production, bringing the scattered individual producers into one unit. Mass production produces its own markets, new products to replace the old craft products, and thus the merchant becomes an industrialist. (7) What this means is that the production gets transformed into production for a market, for exchange. Production no longer has consumption, in the immediate sense, as its objective; instead the market becomes the mediator for all products. Both the merchant and the landowner invest in production - in the interests of bringing a whole new sphere under the domination of capital, under new relations of production defined by the capitalist system itself. Through this process, production replaces circulation as the determining sphere.

(6) Capital, vol. III, p. 331

(7) Ripening of Time, no. 2, article on "Imperialism and the Internationalisation of Capital", pp. 35ff

"As soon as manufacture gains sufficient strength, and particularly large scale industry, it creates in its turn a market for itself, by capturing it through its commodities. At this point commerce becomes the servant of industrial production, for which continued expansion of the market becomes a vital necessity."(8)

Whether and when this process takes place in any one country will be determined by, what Marx terms, the 'obstacles' to the corrosive influence of commerce - these obstacles he locates in the 'internal solidity and organisation of pre-capitalist, national modes of production.'

At this point, we can clearly see, that it is when capital becomes dominant as a relation of production, that merchant capital takes on a new form, as we will examine: Merchant capital becomes the movement of industrial capital inside the sphere of circulation.

"On the other hand, the immanent necessity of the capitalist mode of production to produce on an ever-enlarged scale tends to extend the world market continuously, so that it is not commerce that revolutionises industry, but industry which revolutionises commerce."(9)

Marx points to the decline in the trading nations, such as Holland, and of the great trading cities like Venice and Genoa. These cities were replaced by the industrial centres of Europe, just as Wexford, Waterford, Galway and even Cork have declined vis-a-vis Dublin, Belfast and more recently Shannon in Ireland.

There is one major conclusion we can draw from this section of the article: Until production itself has been subjected to the dominance of capital, it is not possible for capitalism to be the dominant mode of production in a social formation. So while merchant capital may be highly developed this does not mean that the capitalist mode of production is dominant in that country.

The Rise of Industrial Capital

So far we have examined the process by which the early form of merchant capital appropriates a part of the surplus produced in the society as a whole. This, we have emphasised, happens inside the sphere of circulation where no value is created.

In this Section we will look into the process through which capital dominates the process of value-creation itself. In order to be able to do this, capital must dominate production and thus bring under its service the key element which is the source of value -

Labour Power. When labour power is dominated by capital it gets transformed into a commodity. It is bought and sold on the market by the capitalists. And this is precisely what happens when the independent direct producers are separated from their means of production. They are now forced to sell themselves into the service of capital.

Labour in use creates value ; in order to control value the capitalist class must control the conditions under which labour is carried out and they must control the fruits of that labour. This they do by a violent and systematic process of expropriation, by which the producers on the land get wrenched from the land. Without access to the means of production , the dispossessed masses of the countryside are forced to move and enter the service of capital. In Ireland, this process was carried through the centuries through famine, war and starvation... dispossessed peasants were forced to leave the land and emigrate and sell their labour power to the capitalist classes of America, Britain and Australia. The weakness of industrial capital in this country distorted the process of expropriation and was always geared to emigration. Until the middle sixties emigration remained at a very high level.

" What the capitalist system demanded was a degraded and almost servile condition of the mass of the people , the transformation of them into mercenaries and of their means of labour into capital "

The land was transformed in many countries into grazing plains, in England for sheep for the woolen industry, in Ireland for cattle and the beef industry. Many other parts of the world, from South America to Africa and the West Indies underwent the same type of change.

The savagely dispossessed became the labourers of the capitalist system, producing not for their own needs but for the benefit of the bosses, turning their sweat into profit. And it is this tendency of capital - always to expand and to increase the scale of operations under its control that drives the merchants and landlords to invest in industry and thus shift the system of exploitation from the rule of the landlords and merchants to the rule of industry, commerce and banking. The need to increase the amount of capital at their disposal necessitates accumulation - the drive for more profit carried through, what Marx calls, " the grossest acts of violence " .

From the time that such expropriation takes place to the point whereby the masses of the countryside are transformed into wage - labourers there is a time gap. It is during that period that the capitalist State has to introduce legislation in order to facilitate the transition and pacify the conflicts arising between the different fractions of the bourgeoisie. (11) It is during this period that the State introduces ' legal ' methods and means for the gigantic insertion of the dispossessed peasants into the wheels of industry.

(8) Capital, vol. III , p. 336

(9) Capital, vol. III, p. 333

(10) Capital. Vol. 1. P. 674. Lawrence & Wishart.

(11) For further discussion of this, see Ripening of Time no. 6 pp 33/34.

Production of surplus value - who gets it ?

We will now look at the source of profits of the capitalist class: the extraction and appropriation of surplus value inside the sphere of production.

The conditions under which labour power becomes a commodity can be summarised as follows:

- a. The possessor of labour must be 'free' to sell his/her labour power - the labourer cannot be a slave, owned by another.
- b. The possessor of labour power must have nothing to sell other than his/her labour power.
- c. The possessor of labour power must receive the means of subsistence in return for labour expended. In this way production will continue and the system survive.

These conditions do not arise in a natural way but as the product of specific historical developments, characteristic of the capitalist mode of production. The surplus produced by the labourer is immediately the property of the owner of capital who pays a money wage. The entire product of labour power is controlled by the capitalist who sells it and realises a profit. This is the surplus value appropriated by the owners of the means of production.

The value of labour power, as with any other commodity, is determined by the costs of producing it. The cost of producing labour power is the subsistence needs of the labourer and those (s)he lives with. The wage of the labourer is the level of subsistence - but the labourer produces more than the means of subsistence in one day. Thus (s)he works part of the day for the capitalist producing surplus.

It is the control over the whole process of production which enables the capitalist class to control the surplus value. Commodities are valued on the amount of socially necessary labour time which goes into their production. These commodities embody the surplus value produced by the labourer. The capitalist class will always try to increase the amount of surplus value produced in a working day and thus reduce the amount of time the labourer works to produce the equivalent of his/her subsistence. This is what lies behind the constant drive for higher productivity. The capitalist will reinvest a part of profit earned, in order to expand production and increase the amount of capital (s)he controls.

Industrial capital, then, is capital directly in relation to labour; capital which inside production extracts surplus value. Only a part of the realised surplus value is transformed into the profit of the industrial capitalist, while other parts of it are the source of profit of different capitals. The industrial capitalist controls the extraction of surplus value - although the entire capitalist class unites to raise the rate of surplus value extraction and to retain a high rate of profit.

" The capitalist who produces surplus value, who extracts unpaid labour directly from the labourers and fixes it in commodities is, indeed, the first appropriator, but by no means the ultimate owner of this surplus value. He has to share it

with capitalists, with landowners etc. who fulfill other functions in the complex of social production. Surplus value, therefore, splits up into various parts. Its fragments fall to various forms, independent one of the other; such as profit, interest, merchants' profit, land etc. " (12)

The later form of Merchant Capital

Merchant capital (often referred to as commercial capital) is capital functioning inside the sphere of circulation. Circulation is the realisation, on the market, already embodied in commodities. Realisation is a cost of the whole cycle of production and reproduction inside the capitalist system.

Merchant capital in the sphere of circulation does not include capital involved in storage, distribution and transport of commodities. These functions, Marx defines, as part of the process of production continuing in circulation. These activities get fully separated from merchant capital as the social division of labour develops.

Once commodities are produced, their sale enables the next cycle of production to take place. Thus more commodities are produced and more surplus value is extracted. The sphere of circulation concerns the reproduction process of industrial capital and the speed of reproduction directly affects the rate of extraction of this surplus. Unless commodities are sold the reproduction process is interrupted. This is where the merchant comes in. The merchant plays the specific function of realising the commodities into money by advancing money to the industrialist to continue production immediately.

We can now make a number of points. Firstly, through the division of labour, the merchant carries out a particular function of the system - the realisation of commodity capital into money. Through this, the merchant makes a profit. Secondly, by shortening the time of circulation, this directly or indirectly increases the amount of surplus value produced by labour employed by industrial capital. This raises the rate of profit. Thirdly, the function of merchant capital lowers the proportion of capital in circulation to that in productive use. This means that the scale of operations of capital is increased and also the productivity of capital increases.

Where does the profit of the merchant come from ?

We must immediately discard the notion that the merchant merely adds on an extra amount to the price of the commodity in an arbitrary way. The profit of the merchant is a distinct portion of the total surplus value produced by labour in the service of capital. Merchant capital is carrying out a function absolutely indispensable to the realisation of surplus value extracted by industrial capital; in this sense although merchant capital is not in direct relation to labour-power it makes its profit by appropriating a portion of the surplus created out of the exploitation of that labour power.

It would follow from the above that the profit of the merchants is governed by the tendency of the equalisation of the rate of profit in the society at large. This would mean that the industrialist would have to sell the commodities to the merchant BELOW the price of production. (See full argument on the concept of price of production p. 48 of this issue). The difference between the price the merchant pays and the market price would make up the merchant's profit which would obey the laws of the average rate of profit in the society at large.

Thus, for industrial capital the costs of realisation would be considered as unproductive (13) while the same costs would be the source of profit for merchant capital. Marx points out that in developed capitalist production merchant capital is in a smaller ratio to industrial capital. Simultaneously, the smaller the total portion of capital serving as merchants' capital, the higher the turnover of that capital inside circulation.

One of the advantages of merchant capital in a capitalist society would be that as the operations of merchants spread over spheres of production their scope is not restricted by the scale or period of operation of a given cycle of production of one particular capitalist.

Finally any costs the merchant has (for example costs of storage, wages etc.) must be kept to a minimum to keep the overall costs of the realisation of surplus low. That would explain the attempts of capital in general to keep the organisation of workers in the service of merchant capital as weak and fragile as possible (14).

Labour employed by merchant capital would be, under the definitions examined above (15), unproductive labour. Workers under merchant capital would not be producing surplus value ; nevertheless surplus labour would be extracted from them. Their wages would not be in proportion to the amount of capital / surplus value realised through their labour. Their work would be necessary, indeed vital, in order that surplus value is realised and the lower their wages can be kept the lower the costs of realising the general surplus would be. One more time what would be great for the capitalist class would be misery and exploitation for the workers.

(The next issue of Ripening of Time will look at the question of banking capital, finance capital and the effects of monopolisation on all forms of capital. These concepts will then provide us with the tools to examine the era of imperialism in Ireland and the transformations of the bourgeois class which came with it.)

- (13) See article on 'productive and Unproductive Labour' Ripening of Time no.4 P. 6 ff.
- (14) This accounts for the resistance to the development of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union which drew a lot of its membership from the employees of merchant capital. Today, the capitalist class still reacts very strongly to the spread of unionisation through these sectors.
- (15) See article on 'Productive and Unproductive Labour' Ripening of Time. no. 4. P. 6ff.

Reflections on Agriculture

Section 2

' The Irish Industrial Revolution '

- a reappraisal (continued)

This article concludes Section 2 of our essay ' Reflections on Agriculture - The reappraisal of SF-WP's ' The Irish Industrial Revolution ' - which began in issue no. 6.

C. The present and the future :

Sinn Fein - the Workers Party, based on the historical background examined above (46), proceed to analyse the present structure of Irish agriculture and the problems facing the development of the " potentials of Irish agriculture towards economic growth and full employment " (47). And based on this analysis they finally put forward their plan for the future.

The bulk of this work is carried through by the author(s) of the ' Irish Industrial Revolution ' in Chapter 9 pp. 78-87. It is this Chapter we are proposing to examine in this part of our essay.

SF-WP recognise that " Agriculture is one of the most important of Ireland's natural resource endowments " (48). They estimate that, at present, Irish agricultural resources are "...the exclusive preserve of an ever diminishing number of large scale commercial farmers...." (49).

- (46) : See ' The Ripening of Time ' no.6 pp. 43-52
- (47) : The Irish Industrial Revolution, Research Section, Dpt. of Economic Affairs, Sinn Fein -the Workers' Party p. 78
- (48) : ' The Irish Industrial Revolution ' - as above p. 78
- (49) : as above p.78

This situation, according to SF-WP, has blocked the potential growth of agriculture. At present, the backwardness of Irish agricultural production, they argue, has made this growth "painfully slow and erratic characterised by violent swings in production from one year to the next." (50)

One can hardly argue against this picture painted by the author(s) of the 'Irish Industrial Revolution'. It is a true to life presentation of the real situation; it focusses on the concentration of landed property on the one hand and the simultaneous anarchic and sharp ups and downs of production of different agricultural commodities on the other. These 'swings' are, of course, determined by the mechanisms of the capitalist market under the control of monopoly interests.

It's a picture of a dominated agriculture in a divided and dependent country. And, as far as it goes, we estimate that this particular presentation by SF-WP is adequate. Let us continue.

In pp.80-83, SF-WP examine 'in detail' 'The Problems in Achieving the potential of Irish Agriculture'. And it's at this point that serious discrepancies begin to occur. These 'problems', according to the author(s) are:

1. Too many producing units
2. The Age Structure of Agriculture
3. Land structure of Agriculture
4. Cyclical and Seasonal Swings....." (51)

The author(s) explain:

"By comparison with industrial sectors in which many commodities are produced by a few or even only one production unit (e.g. spirits and cement) agricultural commodities are produced by a multiplicity of units (it is currently estimated that there are 160,000 farms in Ireland). This very fact alone makes planning in the sector extremely difficult since an enormous task of co-ordination is required to ensure the fulfilment of agricultural production potential" (52)

On the second point, "the age structure of agriculture", SF-WP argue that about 4½ to 5 million acres of land are in the hands of about 93,000 farmers who are in their late fifties or early sixties. This, according to SF-WP 'projections', will produce a situation by 1986, where

"...the holders of an estimated 2,500,000 acres of land...will be aged over 70 years...on holdings of less than 80 acres. This land, approximately ¼ of all agricultural land in Ireland, will inevitably go into waste and at best, will be more grossly underutilised than at present..." (53)

- (50) : as above p.80
 (51) : From section headings, as above p.80
 (52) : as above p.80
 (53) : as above p.81

On the third point, the question of "land structure", SF-WP provide the reader with the following table of "projected acreage in unviable holdings" "in the hands of farmers aged between 60 and 70":

<u>Acres</u>	<u>Total Acreage</u>
1 - 15	43,270
15- 30	208,127
30- 50	466,520
50-100	447,337
Total	1,165,254 (54)

So, SF-WP, operating under the premise that any holding under 100 acres is "unviable and uneconomic", arrive at the conclusion that the above acreage, added to another 2,197,875 held by farmers over 70 years of age, will make a body of landed property of approximately 4 million acres which "...will be wasted or grossly underutilised".

Now this situation, according to SF-WP, is of the making of

"...the present rulers of our society (who) are immovably committed to a continuation of the status quo in Irish agriculture...they are furthermore committed to the maintenance of a large stratum of unviable small farmers locked into their holdings through the lack of job opportunities outside farming..." (55)

Finally, on the fourth point, "the cyclical and seasonal swings", SF-WP explain that

"While seasonal swings in agricultural production are inevitable due to the vagaries of climate and the seasons, the massive fluctuations which occur in the flow of agricultural output to our factories indicate that next to nothing has been achieved in planning to avoid these fluctuations." (56)

SF-WP also quote the 'Irish Times' which has argued on this point that the above mentioned fluctuations have affected not only 'our' factories but also "European milk processing plants (which) would go out of business if faced with this erratic milk supply". So, not surprisingly, SF-WP conclude that

"Insufficient and irregular supply of raw materials has contributed to a decline in the numbers employed in agriculture-based industries" (57)



- (54) : Table as above p.82
 (55) : as above p.82
 (56) : as above p.82
 (57) : as above p.83

Solutions proposed by Sinn Fein - the Workers Party

Faced by a serious situation such as this, SF-WP put forward their plan. They believe that

"...the agricultural resources of the country should be geared towards raising the living standards of the workers of Ireland and to providing jobs for the unemployed and the 35,000 school-leavers who enter the job market every year." (58)

They also believe that "...all the natural resources of the country should go to benefit all who contribute by their work and effort to the country's welfare" (59)

Under these laudable, if slightly ambiguous if not contradictory, "guiding lines", SF-WP supports:

"...a revolution in attitude to agriculture, from being a sector synonymous with a tight fisted and livestock class to a modern food industry comprising an integral part of the expanding national economy. This will involve a change in concept of agriculture from being primarily a dairy and cattle producing enterprise to that of an industry providing biological inputs to a sophisticated industrial sector engaged in food processing, pharmaceutical and other chemical manufactures." (60)

I've had enough of those biological inputs



The above statement merits serious thought. Especially as this "revolution in attitude" would go hand in hand, according to SF-WP, with a process at the end of which "100,000 family farming jobs will be lost" (61). SF-WP qualify this process as being a

"...revolutionary new approach to the system of land tenure" which will ensure that "potentially productive land

- (58) : as above p. 76
- (59) : as above p. 78
- (60) : as above p. 78
- (61) : as above p. 65

lying derelict and wasted throughout the country" is put into productive use. (62)

Now, this particular aspect of the SF-WP program is strangely, to say the least, similar to the planned "restructuring" Farm Modernisation and Farm Retirement Schemes. According to these, 118,000 smaller farms are to be phased out of existence in order to increase the "efficiency" of Irish agriculture. This scheme will involve a sustained violent process of dispossession of small farmers; this is nothing new to the rural population of this country. The only newness about these particular schemes is that they are couched in technocratic language designed to conceal and hide the facts. These Schemes operate through a system of selective grants obtainable only by the large ranchers which are classified as "Commercial Farms". Older and smaller farmers are to be "induced off the land" through "retraining" and other carrots; the land thus "vacated" will be passed to the Land Commission which will "redistribute it" among the "viable units".

The stated objectives of SF-WP show no real contradiction with the EEC schemes. They both say DESTROY NON-VIABLE HOLDINGS (non-viability, of course, defined in capitalist terms) and THROW SMALL FARMERS OFF THE LAND.

At this point it would be interesting to contrast this aspect of the SF-WP plan with a speech made by Tomas MacGiolla, President of SF-WP, to the Farmers Defence Association in late 1975:

"What is immediately required is a scheme which will help our farming community modernise their holdings and improve their standard of living. The Farm Modernisation Scheme will not achieve this, in fact all the scheme will do is depopulate our rural areas and force people out of a livelihood. And what is worse, there is no alternative employment available. As we in Sinn Fein said when the Scheme was first mooted, a major overhaul of the scheme is imperative. The existence of the Mansholt Plan and its central aim of forcing small farmers off the land was one of the basic reasons for opposing entry to the EEC." (63)

Now SF-WP have 'revolutionised' their approach. Gone the opposition to the EEC, gone the opposition to Directives 159 and 160, gone the opposition to the "depopulation of the rural areas". What is left?

Lets follow the rest of the SF-WP 'proposals':

"...a system of taxation, such as tax on land (graded according to the fertility of the soil) be introduced...as a means of ensuring that existing land, both waste and in production, is used more productively" (64)

- (62) : as above p.78
- (63) : Quoted in a Farmers Defence Association publication:
'The Farm Modernisation Scheme - and the Alternative'
- (64) : 'The Irish Industrial etc.' as above p.78

This would give, according to the author(s) of 'The Irish Industrial Revolution', an impulse towards a growth of output of the order of around 30%. Such a growth could set the basis of a process of "import substitution". This means that local industries would be established producing goods at present imported; this, again according to SF-WP, would make a saving of around £ 200 million.

SF-WP also envisage

"...a centrally important role for our Agri-business State Companies, the Sugar Company and Bord na Mona in conjunction with the research and development function of An Foras Taluntais and the Departments of Agriculture and Lands". (65).

Finally, SF-WP also have plans for an Industrial Planning Authority which would control productivity improvements, "a massive food producing conglomerate producing a diverse range of products from the field to the supermarket" (66) and also the promotion and "...commencement of production of new lines e.g. exotic vegetables and fruits, wines etc....in conjunction with the Agricultural Institute." (67)

It is obvious that all this investment, growth and productivity planned by SF-WP will produce thousands of new jobs. The target of 60,000 jobs is aimed at....and if one adds the jobs "to be created" in Meat Processing Industry (3,000), in the bacon industry ("only" 1,500), in the Dairy Products Industry (3,000), in the Preserves and Vegetables Sector (3,800), in the Grain and Animal Feed sector (2,900), in Bread, Biscuit and Flour products (1,500), in the sugar and sugar confectionery sector (2,200), in the "miscellaneous food sector (including margarine)" (3,000 jobs) and finally Drink, Beverages and Tobacco "increasing at a slower rate" (2,200 jobs)....one gets 23,000 brand new productive jobs. And if we add the agricultural "employees" expected to increase by 13,000, the Forestry Sector which will provide 22,200 jobs and the Fisheries another 2,000....we finally get a total of 60,200 jobs bang on target. The SF-WP plan works....or does it? (68)

To attempt to answer this question in an objective manner, it would be necessary, from this point onwards, to widen our scope. The SF-WP plans make up a coherent whole... they constitute an integral part of a political strategy of an organisation, indeed a "workers Party", which has put itself forward as a real "alternative" to the three bourgeois Parties in the 26 Cos.

In this context, technical arguments on whether they could provide say 20,000 odd jobs in forestry by 1986 or whether it would be possible to increase output by 30% in this or that sphere of production would not get us very far. Therefore we have chosen an alternative route: we will look at the overall projections, choices and perspectives of SF-WP from a working class point of view, in fact

(65)&(66)

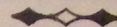
: as above pp. 78-79

(67) : as above p.79

(68) : All figures from pp. 83-87 of Chapter 9 as well as from Table in Chapter 8 pp.65-66

politically. Thus we will try to enter the dark world of political reasons behind these choices and projections.

In this respect, this remaining part of Section II may deviate slightly from the original focus of the article: agriculture. This is only because agriculture is integral part and parcel of the capitalist mode of production in the 32 Cos. And as such it cannot be treated as somehow 'separate' but rather would have to be seen as constituent part of what is the dominant mode of production in this country: capitalism.



D. Answering some of our questions :

To reflect on a political strategy, to think seriously about an economic plan, is to attempt to highlight the class interests which inspired it. This is what we propose to do in this part of our essay.

A superficial reading of 'The Irish Industrial Revolution' leaves the reader with a definite feeling of coherence, internal rationality and rigorous 'practicality' and 'common sense'. There are scores of figures, statistics, detailed arguments about important technical points. There are of course some lapses, big and small, but it is apparent that SF-WP have latched solidly onto the major pre-occupation of the exploited and oppressed masses of Ireland: lack of jobs and went on to build their plan around the fundamentally correct premise that thousands of new jobs need to be created in the next few years.

So if one is to "highlight the class interests" of the arguments, this apparent coherence and logical down-to-earth structure must be laid bare and analysed. The foundations of the arguments must be tested and the stated standpoint of 'scientific socialism' must be evaluated.

First point first: To analyse scientifically does not mean to accumulate figures and statistics. Any day of the week one can buy 'scientific' analysis from the Government Departments or from bourgeois institutions like the ESRI; so the fact that the work in question is full of data does not make it scientific. Let us proceed:

The main reasoning of SF-WP appears simple and obvious: The people need jobs so let's build a plan which will provide jobs. On the basis of the plan accumulate forces at the political and organisational level (thus electioneering, the attacks on the 'other' Sinn Fein as well as, more and more frequently, on their former allies such as the Communist Party of Ireland and the Labour Left). This to be done, while gradually setting the organisation's sights on State power "through the democratic process"; for it is obvious that a plan must have muscle behind it to be implemented. So for the time being don't rock the boat, vote SF-WP and hope for the best.

Such a process, SF-WP would argue, will create the conditions and more 'favourable' circumstances for the undertaking of more fundamental reforms such as nationalisations of banks and national resources and even key industries - but that is for 'later' so it is left completely aside in the 'plan'.

So the kingpin of 'The Irish Industrial Revolution' is State power, or at least Government power; that failing, a strong enough body of TDs 'forcing the hand of Labour'. This project is so ambitious, in its own terms, that only a sovereign government can envisage its full implementation. And here is where real problems begin creeping up:

What are the real and practical chances of SF-WP being a sovereign Government in the next few years? What are the real and practical chances of SF-WP Dail TDs 'forcing the hand of Labour'? Or was this plan conceived as "the price the Coalition will have to pay" for SF-WP support "holding the balance in the Dail"?

Nobody knows the answer to this last question. But judging from the inevitable answers one would have to give to the first two questions one can only assume that this type of thinking, or something very similar to it, must have dominated the author(s) of 'The Irish Industrial Revolution'.

We estimate that if Dail Power was, and is, the tenet of this grandiose plan, then, inevitably, all its realism becomes little more than a utopia. SF-WP may have other contingency plans and other means under their sleeve - time will tell. But if all this work, and all the talk that went with it, projected as it is for 1986, is based on the premise of 6, 16 or 36 SF-WP members getting into the Dail, then it is high time to classify it.

Any 'realistic and scientific' plan, if it is set against the possibilities of getting control of the State through the mechanisms of bourgeois democracy, becomes little more than a fictional work. In the absence of any spelt out strategy to attack the State through a revolutionary process, all the earthy talk about jobs, exotic and such like becomes a gardener's dream.

Now, give them their due, SF-WP say that they are "by history and tradition... the oldest and most enduring conspiracy of the working class in Europe" (69). This a brilliant self-definition worthy of a prize. There would be one condition though for this self-definition to really become a living force: the working class in Ireland, never mind Europe, must be able to grasp the means and the methods through which this "open conspiracy" will be brought to fruit. On that point silence reigns. As these lines are being typed the General Election votes are being counted. Perhaps some clarity will emerge when we all know how exactly the largest fourth Party fared (70).

(69) : Eamonn Smullen in the Foreword to 'The Irish Industrial Revolution'.

(70) : Those lines were written the day after the elections. With historical hindsight it would have been possible to argue this point more fully. We have chosen not to do so.

Lenin used to say that there is nothing wrong with us, we will engage in a bit of dreaming ourselves and attempt to imagine a situation in which a SF-WP Government, or a Government under the influence of the SF-WP, with a SF-WP programme, had arrived, through bourgeois elections, into power.

Now the dream machine is turned on, the dream is in progress and the first steps are being taken for the implementation of the Plan. How will the bourgeoisie react? How will the imperialist powers take it? Will US, British or German interests sit idly by?

Concrete and realistic questions; but no answers are forthcoming from the author(s) of the Plan. For Marxists to answer such questions, it would be necessary to immediately hold the dreamy horses back and look at history. Does the working class in this or any other country have any such experience? What does history teach us? How has imperialism and comprador bourgeois classes reacted to the attempted implementation of such a Plan?

Here we are struck by another major ambiguity in the SF-WP document. There isn't even a whisper of any historical event, success or defeat of the international working class movement. No reference to history. And even more surprising, how exactly they expect this slagged and vilified Irish bourgeoisie to react.

There is ample historical evidence to suggest that the different fractions of the Irish bourgeoisie are not likely to hand power to any Government trying to implement such a programme quietly, meekly and with respect for democracy. The history of our people is littered with bourgeois atrocities under much lesser threats: widescale internment in the '50s, the violent gang attacks on the Republican Congress in the '30s or the Irish merchants counting their profits from grain exports as hundreds of thousands starved to death in the 1840's or even in 1913.

There is also plenty of historical material on other States or Governments which have attempted to put into practice a programme similar to that of SF-WP. It is true that most of them were military dictatorships of the 'benevolent' type; say like the Peron regime in the '50s in Argentina, the Peruvian junta in the late sixties, the Nasser regime in Egypt, the recent N'Gouabi regime in Congo Brazaville, the Boumedienne regime which came into power after the 1965 Coup in Algeria. There is also the experience of the Popular Front Governments in Spain, France and other parts of Europe in the late 1930s. And the most recent and well known of them all: the Popular Unity Government in Chile in the years 1970-73.

SF-WP could have attempted to draw some lessons from these real historical experiences. They have not done so. So one is left wondering whether they have evaluated their historical chances or not.

What, in our opinion, characterizes all these above attempts is:

- a. Their total and absolute failure to transform bourgeois society.
- b. Their final capitulation or defeat, be it political military or a combination of both, in the not so friendly hands of the bourgeoisie (71)
- c. Their incapacity to accumulate forces, objectives they set out to achieve, but rather their common fate of fragmentation and defeat in complete disorganisation. (72)

Many elements were instrumental in this failure and we are not suggesting here that all the above experiences were identical. There was, invariably, imperialist interference, bourgeois speculation, sabotage and capitalist boycott and pressure. But there was also, and this is their common characteristic, a real absence of mass participation in decision making and control which was, by far, the most important cause of failure.

While these regimes centralised decision-making in the hands of a few technocrats, while they all pushed for 'growth', 'increased productivity', 'increased consumption', 'import substitution', they were also totally dependent on the capitalist framework of society which imprisoned, shaped and finally destroyed their choices. And INVARIABLY this gigantic contradiction of attempting to build socialism from above, from inside the capitalist State and without popular control, ended up in failure and often disaster for the people.

Workers and peasants, as well as revolutionary intellectuals, paid with their blood the "small mistakes". All the biological inputs, the downstream industries, the integrated models (the all-so-dear hobby horses of the author(s) of the 'Irish Industrial Revolution') ended up in ashes and mass graves while the 'leaders' fled to some Madrid, Paris or Moscow refuge. Working people lost their lives gunned down by progressive Armies and democratic Police Forces. And the apparent silence of the Workers Parties, and of SF-WP, on these questions does not help any process of clarification at all.

There is one historical reference in the book and it confirms our worst fears. Eamonn Smullen, in the Foreword to the work, defines SF-WP as "the historical product of the French revolution" claiming that the patrimony of his Party stretches back to "the iron and heroic period of the Jacobin Republic of Year II of the French Revolution".

- (71) : Algeria would be an exception to this. Although in the last 12 years there have been over ten serious attempts against the life of Houari Boumediene the regime has survived.
- (72) : This particular characteristic is perhaps the most significant of them all; it is hoped that the journal will return to this particular theme in the forthcoming issues.

Marx in a partial comment on the class nature of the 1789 French Revolution said:

"By a decree of June 14, 1791, the French bourgeoisie declared all coalition of the workers as 'an attempt against liberty and the declaration of the rights of man' punishable by a fine of 500 livres, together with the deprivation of the rights of an active citizen for one year. This law which, by means of State compulsion, confined the struggle between wage labour and capital within limits comfortable for capital, has outlived revolutions and changes of dynasties." (73)

We would sincerely suggest to Eamonn Smullen and his mates to think long and hard about this juicy piece of selected patrimony. SF-WP must resolutely question the fact whether the Jacobins and their Reign of Terror in France can seriously be evaluated as a "populist democratic legacy" to which the Party of the Working Class can ask its current and would be followers to pay tribute.

If they don't want to end up like those likeable visitors who go searching for their family roots in the fashionable antique shops of Dublin town.

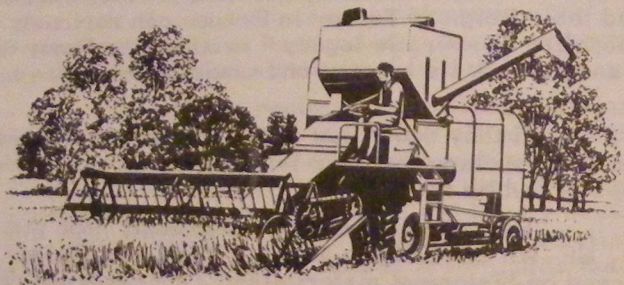
Patrimonies aside, we strongly hope that in the near future, SF-WP provide the working class with a clear political strategy based on historical materialism. Otherwise the dream will be the possible harbinger of another bloody nightmare. We think that Irish workers and small farmers will know better than trust this type of politics. They at least can look to the 6 Cos and understand its implications. We don't think SF-WP are capable of doing just that. And for this reason, among many others, their future looks bleak to us. If they stick to these patrimonies and to this type of plans they will lose all their best militants and end up as a rump of no use, the last of all to the working class.



E. The internal mechanics of the SF-WP Plan :

The reaction and response of an incensed bourgeois class haunts the SF-WP Plan; but this is not the only problem. The rationale and internal logic of the 'Irish Industrial Revolution' is welded with capitalist common sense through and through.

The projections of the SF-WP Plan stand on three main stilts :



1. Produce more
2. Invest more and (as a result)
3. Consume more.

Here is how the author(s) explain their edifice :

"...the only solution, if our workers are to have increasing real wages, is for a rapid increase in productivity. This will require investment and large scale rationalisation. " (74)

And they continue :

" To achieve full employment at the same time as a rapid increase in productivity (output of the average worker) a rapid increase in output must occur. Since we contemplate an unprecedented growth in the Irish workforce a very rapid increase in investment must also occur. So the final part of our equation is consumption - how fast must it grow if we are to achieve the desired aims ? " (75)

So the general rationale is all there....and it is well reflected in their plans for agriculture :

" Our plan for the expansion of consumption goods will involve an increase in the output of the sector by 83 %this

(74) as above pp.63-65
(75) as above p.69

expansion of output in line with our man hour productivity target of 5.6% per annum...will involve the development of employment "(76)

So SF-WP are very clear in their plan : Investment will increase manifold, primarily in the State and productive sector, so more jobs will be created . Those at work will work harder so that productivity and output will increase. And because fully employed people will have more money they will buy more; this will create demand, more jobs, more goodsand to infinity.

Sound, down to earth politics. What's the catch ?

We have already dealt with the question of political power; SF-WP does not have any foreseeable chance of implementing this plan constitutionally. But is this an argument why more and more people should give their support to SF-WP so that implementation becomes possible ?

We do not think so. Not only is the Plan based on a completely distorted historical analysis, as shown in Issue 6 of The Ripening of Time, but while sticking to a solid capitalist framework it is also totally unscientific and doomed to failure.

Let us clarify :

*1

The question of productivity and increased output :

We feel that an important point must be made at the outset: the discussion on productivity and increased output under a system where capital reigns and the bourgeoisie is a ruling class does not overlap, and must not be confused, with the discussion of the same issues in a situation of transition to a classless society.

The SF-WP projections are for Ireland today : a divided, underdeveloped capitalist Ireland. So many of the contemporary discussions taking place on the question of productivity under a State of the dictatorship of the proletariat would have no direct implication on the issues at hand.

What is productivity in Marxism ?

In a capitalist society, productivity is " squeezing out more labour in a given time from the working class . " (77) Under capitalist production, capital uses machinery to squeeze out as much labour as humanly possible from the workers. This the capitalist does either by giving the working woman or man more machinery to tend or by increasing the speed of the machinery.

The bourgeois class understands this very well : listen to the latest Coalition Government plans :

" The high proportion of total growth represented by productivity improvement is a feature of any modern economy (i.e. capitalist economy - The Ripening of Time) and must be expected

(76) as above p.34
(77) Marx : Capital Vol. I p.388

to continue here with the high - capital intensity of new projects in the manufacturing sector. A high rate of growth in productivity would, in any event, be necessary to maintain our competitive position vis-a-vis other countries showing similar improvement. " (78)

Let there be no mistake. What SF-WP propose is not in the slightest bit different. The only difference is that SF-WP want this squeezing out of the workers bones to be more " efficient " .

And this 'small' difference comes about because the ruling class knows only too well that to tighten the screws too hard leads to revolt. So the Coalition had predicted an increase of output for industry of about 8% an increase of output in agriculture of 4.7% for the 3 years 1977-80.

Not good enough say SF-WP. Treble the squeezing of labour from the poor bastards. Wring out from their sweat 98% in the 10 years 1976-86 in industry and 83% in agriculture in the same 10 years. (79). This in simple language means that workers in ten years time will be working and producing twice as hard and twice as much as they do today. Lovely thought that to contemplate.

Productivity in Ireland has grown considerably in the last few years. This is primarily because resistance to speed - ups and manning level cut backs has been lacking. . . the Unions' collaboration on these issues hasn't helped the situation either. With the threat of redundancies hanging over our heads, workers have been forced to work harder and harder. Between 1967-73 productivity in Ireland has grown by 5.3% overall. In agriculture alone between 1971 and 1975 there has been a tremendous jump of 24%. Well up with the SF-WP ' requirements ' . (80)

And what has the result been ?

Higher inflation, the highest unemployment figures ever, higher profits for the bourgeois class, higher repression and lots of misery and suicides for the working class. And still the bourgeoisie shouts that productivity must increase; Fianna Fail in with a blank cheque will try surely to increase productivity more. Not great, we are sure SF-WP will agree.

To take another practical example : in the textile industry, during 1976, output increased by 17%. At the same time the industry as a whole threw 15% of its workforce onto the dole queues. So 15% less workers produced 17% more commodities. . . . one can calculate the increase of productivity from these figures. And this what the bourgeoisie, and SF-WP, mean by ' rationalisation ' . The textile industry has been spruced up , rationalised. And let us ask the important question :

Who profited from this situation ?

- (78) Economic and Social Development (Government pub.)
Sept. 1976 pp. 5 and 33
- (79) Figures from ' The Irish Industrial Rev. ' as above pp. 84
and Table 12 p. 32
- (80) Economic and Social Dev. as above Table I p. 7

What class interests did the increase in productivity and output serve ?

If increase in productivity, under capitalism, is what SF-WP are after, the author(s) of this bourgeois Plan must be able to answer the above questions without difficulty. For when they say :

" . . . the only solution, if our workers are to have increasing real wages, is for a rapid increase in productivity. " (81)

They must go and ask the textile workers if their real wages have increased. . . . and the other 15% who are living on the dole will know well what to tell to these SF-WP charlatans.

It is in this context we must place statements such as:

"The Civil Servants have been loyal servants of this State for over 53 years. Their masters seem singularly ungrateful. Perhaps the servants should consider changing masters. " (82)

Masters and servants indeed.

*2 The investment strategy of SF-WP :

" If we take the average job creation cost of the construction industry, £ 9,150, as being representative of the job cost in the short term programme, and our new job creation target in 1977 as 50,000 jobs, we estimate that the total additional investment required will be £ 460m. " (83)

" This additional finance must first be made available to the economy. This finance is under three headings :

- a. By means of temporary import and foreign exchange controls
- b. Increased output due to a higher national profitability due to expansionary economic policy
- c. Foreign borrowing . " (84)

SF-WP envisage the import controls not on everything but only on " finished consumer articles (e.g. articles of clothing)" . . . these can be produced in Ireland and SF-WP estimate that in 1976 these goods were valued at £ 700m.

On the question of foreign borrowing the SF-WP approach " will be . . . to maximise economic independence " . So they will " . . . raise loans by means of export credit arrangements. Failing this we will do so on a project by project basis " . (85) Foreign

- (81) ' The Irish Ind. Rev. ' as above pp. 68-69
- (82) Thomas Mac Giolla Oct 75 quoted in ' The Public Sector and the Profit Makers ' Repsol pamphlet 19.
- (83) ' The Irish Ind. Rev. ' as above p. 125
- (84) as above p. 125
- (85) as above p. 126

borrowing will be for 'productive investments'. " Foreign borrowing to finance central consumption expenditure will be avoided, which indeed is the preference of lending bodies such as the World Bank and IMF " (86)

Just how exactly foreign borrowing in the manner preferred by international money-lenders will be bent to maximise the economic independence of Ireland is, of course, a well-guarded secret. SF-WP must have something sneaky up their sleeve there.

Then follows another bombshell:

" These strategies, since they will involve the restructuring of our international economic relations of course will involve our political relationship with foreign countries in particular the EEC. This Party strongly opposed EEC entry. Now it intends to strongly campaign for maximum advantage from the EEC " . (87)

Advanced realism - SF-WP style. Now you know who will be the ' progressive candidate ' for the European Parliament for next year's direct elections.

So, SF-WP will borrow more money. Not a word of course about what will happen to the huge external debt Ireland has accumulated over the years. Will they pay up ? Will they write it off? Don't see - don't know.

There is also talk about an ' austerity programme ' "that would reduce imports of non-essential consumer goods and goods that could be produced alternatively in Ireland "... This austerity programme would raise "... approximately and potentially £ 1,100 million " (88)

On the short-term there is always the tax on the farmers which will raise £ 100m. ("instead of the paltry £1.6m. ", (89) , cutting current subsidies to agriculture which "... would achieve a saving of £ 20m.", (90) , an increased tax surcharge on non-agricultural incomes raising an additional £ 50m. (which means everybody not working on the land - Ripening of Time) and, finally, a further £ 160m. to be raised by means of consumption taxes .

This is a lovely taxation programme. Now we are beginning to see clearly who is really going to pay for all this growth. Now taxation and foreign borrowing cannot really be said to constitute a very original way of raising cash . And there always remains the tricky question of what precisely SF-WP plan to do if, say, the farmers refuse to pay the hundred-fold increased taxation which is going to hit them, not to talk of cutting the subsidies back by £ 20m. But this after all is a technical question - there are always ways. Are there not ?

- (86) as above p.126
(87) as above p.126
(88) as above p.126
(89) as above p.127
(90) as above p.127



*3

The increased consumption strategy :

Whoever talks of consumption in 1977 must talk of inflation - not so SF-WP . Inflation does not figure even once in 'The Irish Industrial Revolution ' . Yet planning on prices is such a central part of socialist planning. SF-WP do not say what they are planning to do with the horrific inflation hitting the working class. The reader can draw his/her own assumptions.

SF-WP concentrate on projections for increased consumption. According to the author(s) :

"...between 1976 and 1986...consumption will grow ...to 182.6% of its present level which represents an annual rate of growth of 6.2% " (91)

There is a real question here to be answered first : Is attempting to increase consumption in any way contradictory to ' the austerity programme ' and the ' import controls ' mentioned above ? And if it is not, would not that mean that all SF-WP are advocating is a more sophisticated form of ' Buy Irish ' ? - which incidentally they call " a feudal and reactionary appeal " elsewhere in the book ?

No answer forthcoming . Even to the average person not in tune with " downstream biological inputs " and such like, it must be obvious that if a State is curbing imports while simultaneously trying to boost internal consumption - as SF-WP are planning to do , if they come to power - that State is going to be in serious conflict.

Such a State is going to have problems with those capitalist countries where imports come from opening itself out to all kinds of counter measures; and a State like the 26 Cos State would have really big headaches dependent as it is on exports. Then, and parallel to the ' external ' problems, a State increasing taxation on the level envisaged by SF-WP would have great difficulties in getting the bourgeoisie to comply but also in finding people with enough money to buy the increased amounts of goods produced. In capitalism, austerity and consumptionism don't usually go together; but technical questions of this sort are not going to daunt SF-WP.

Finally another point comes forth : in the SF-WP Plan everything JUST HAPPENS. The State taxes the farmers hundred-fold ... they pay up. The Plan increases productivity... workers obey. The State curbs imports... equivalent goods are produced here. No questions asked... no answers provided. No class struggle in evidence at all here; just economic projections and pronto success.

Chile, in the years 1970-73, did provide a real and living opportunity to examine what happens in a capitalist society when measures, such as the ones envisaged by SF-WP, are introduced ' from above '. Let us summarize:

While the reign of capital continued, the Popular Unity Government of Chile increased public spending - mainly on productive projects. This is exactly what SF-WP have in mind : pour investment into the construction, forestry, the energy sector, fishing, Aer Lingus, ESB and Irish Steel Holdings. (92)

The Popular Unity Government had to borrow money: the Chilean bourgeoisie opposed that and cut the thrust of new investment short. What is going to happen in Ireland ? An open question mark - no answer by SF-WP.

Then the Popular Unity froze consumer prices. NO WHISPER on that by SF-WP. If prices are not controlled inflation will soar as it in Chile when prices were let go in the later stages. No policy put forward by the author(s) of the Plan. And there is the question of printing money without gold and foreign reserves back-up - something the Popular Unity Government was forced to do. SF-WP estimate that

"...with Central Bank External Reserves standing at a level (£ 800m. approximately) which is more adequate than most overseas countries, scope exists for borrowing in the form of a certain reduction in the reserve level...." (93)

The Coalition , on this question, had said :

"...as existing foreign loans involve the repayment of £ 400m. between now and 1980, it is hardly possible that we could add significantly to this level of commitment by further borrowing

- (91) as above p.71
(92) as above pp. 124-5
(93) as above p.126

abroad, even if this were desirable in itself. External debts are now well in excess of our external reserves. Foreign lenders are in no way obliged to lend us money....." (94)

With 24p. in the £ going to repay loans and 29% of all tax revenue mortgaged abroad, the Coalition, themselves champions of foreign borrowing, seem to be making more sense...even if slightly. Anyway, another open question there.

Assuming borrowing ' works ' and accumulated surplus increases in the country that would mean that the buying power of all the classes will increase. Question : how does this benefit the working class ? If the profits of the bourgeoisie increase say on the same rate as wages, which is in itself highly improbable, with no control of prices envisaged....how is this process, and why, beneficial to the workers ? The answer is that IT IS NOT.

What happened in Chile at such a turning point was the following : as prices were frozen at the beginning, the bourgeoisie unable to increase its mass of profits through the mechanisms of production turns attention to the exchange and circulation mechanisms of Chile. Thus the continuous series of transport strikes, the gigantic lorry drivers' strikes, the hoarding, the black markets. The people of Chile responded by their independent distribution structures which were called JAP s.

Do SF-WP feel that there is any possibility of a similar type of situation in Ireland ? Not a word. Vote they say for the largest fourth Party and everything will be taken care of. Will they protect the working class and the small farmers from the wrath of the bourgeoisie ? Will they organise the people ? Will they arm the people ? Will they fight against the bourgeois Army ? Not a word.

We say that in such a situation, if prices are frozen the bourgeoisie will react violently. At that point the outcome will depend on political and military questions not economics. If, on the other hand, prices are let float inflation will multiply ten-fold and the standard of living of the workers will get destroyed. No reference to such eventualities by SF-WP. Are they being 'careful' not to frighten potential allies ?

*4

Finally, the 6 Counties

Now this is a burning question. The SF-WP Plan is about Ireland; the name of the book is the IRISH Industrial Revolution. In this context, any self-respecting democrat, progressive person, republican, socialist, communist and many liberals would, at least, expect the 6 Counties to be treated as full and integral part of Ireland. Not so SF-WP.

For them, " Northern Ireland " is " defined as a region within the United Kingdom " . In their analysis ' Northern Ireland ' gets 4 pages out of a total of 151 and it's not even considered

(94) Economic and Social Development, as above p. 25

as part of the main text for it has been relegated to an Appendix. (95)

The SF-WP analysis, according to the author(s), has identified in "Northern Ireland"

"...that the role of the multi-nationals has been objectively progressive in that foreign non-British investment over the past five years was the only factor compensating for jobs lost in the private retarded economic sector ..." (96)

In that sense, for SF-WP, "progressive advance lies unequivocally on the side of...the multinationals, of whom the instruments are the Ministry of Commerce, the Northern Ireland Finance Corporation and the ICTU Northern Committee." (97)

We can't exactly guess how the ICTU Northern Committee feel about being called "an instrument of the multinationals" but blunt as it may be we think that this statement is despicable. And in case there is any ambiguity on the SF-WP position on this, let us quote them fully:

"Foreign industry means a progressive industrial base, explicit imperialist control and a vast work force which in times of crisis is open instantly to the argument for state socialism" Well, this quote (98) must win the prize of this amazing plan: At a time when unemployment in the 6 Cos is at its highest since 1932, when the working class is more divided than ever, and the prospects are really dim this celebration of "explicit imperialist control" has something really ominous in it. The author(s) of these lines must have been really tickled recently when Carter suggested that US investment in the 6 Cos must hit a new peak. A progressive industrial base? How reactionary can one get?

It's for the reader to assess the unmistakable class interests of the above position. To help in this process we see it as apt to quote from a statement made by the Army Council of the Irish Republican Army in early 1972 - after all just over 5 years ago:

"Consistent with our ultimate objective - a Democratic Socialist Republic - the tasks that the Army Council of the Irish Republican Army sees for all revolutionaries to be engaged in are:

* North and South continue to expose and fight the many facets of British Imperialism, direct and indirect;

* To fight the establishment's attempt to sell the Nation to the monopoly capitalists of the EEC.....etc etc" (99)

The leadership of the Workers' Party has changed views radically over the last 5 years, has it not?

- (95) Appendix 3 'The Irish Ind. Rev.' as above pp. 148-151
(96) as above p. 148
(97) as above p. 150
(98) as above p. 151
(99) Repsol no. 3 'The IRA speaks' p. 30

F. Conclusions :

We will stop here. There are questions we have not touched on. There are political ambiguities we have not even attempted to examine. We may come back to these issues in future dates.

Our conclusion, having studied and discussed the above document amongst the members of the editorial collective, in an objective and scientific manner always within our limitations, is that the SF-WP Plan is not in the interests of the Irish working class and small farmers. We are fully convinced that the class interests of this project are not those of the workers.

Indeed, we believe, the class interests behind the SF-WP Plan are those of the petit-bourgeoisie, especially of its new and 'modernist' fraction: technocrats, middle managers etc. who are closely allied with the growth of monopoly capital in the 32 Cos. These are the people SF-WP, so crudely, attempt to include into the working class in the second last page of their book:

"Being guided by the Leninist principles for determining classes, we must include in the composition of the proletariat the category of wage earners which is growing most rapidly, technicians, qualified engineers, scientists, teachers etc..." (100)

We admit that these are the interests SF-WP represents. But to even attempt to cover up a complete fabrication by referring themselves to Lenin, or to "Moscow's respected journal 'Questions of Economics'" is, in our opinion, utterly and totally despicable.

Let us ask the SF-WP ideologues to consider the following quotation from the Communist Manifesto:

"In countries where modern civilisation has become fully developed, a new class of petit-bourgeois has been formed, fluctuating between proletariat and bourgeoisie, and ever renewing itself as a supplementary part of bourgeois society." (101)

We estimate that's in that class that we must locate the political and economic interests of SF-WP and those of 'qualified engineers, scientists etc.'. In the new petit-bourgeoisie which can, at times, function as a class ally of the proletariat but could also turn against it in terror and violence.

The new petit-bourgeoisie has an external relation to production. It doesn't produce surplus value...so while it can see surplus value, it hasn't got the faintest idea where it comes from. SF-WP do not understand surplus value - the word is not mentioned even once in their book. SF-WP do not understand exploitation - the concept does not appear even once in their book.

- (100) 'The Irish Ind. Rev.' as above p. 150
(101) Marx/Engels 'The Communist Manifesto' Peking ed. p.64

The preoccupation of the new petit-bourgeoisie is how to control that surplus value produced by the workers...so their engulfment on the question of State control and State ownership and, of course, State socialism. The State which they hope one day to control. The capitalist State which provides the daily bread and butter to the SF-WP leading figures anyway.

And it's this basic drive behind their perspectives which must be grasped, if we are to objectively evaluate the class interests of SF-WP. So when they say that they are part of the Jacobin tradition, the bourgeois terror of the late 18th century, we have to agree with them. But we must be permitted to say that the Irish working class of 1977, and all and every worker anywhere in the whole wide world, can do well without any meddling with this type of "open conspiracy".

For as Marx used to say

"Petty bourgeois socialism aspires...to cramping the modern means of production and of exchange within the framework of the old property relations that have been, and were bound to be, exploded by those means. In either case it is both reactionary and utopian." (102)



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(102) 'The Communist Manifesto' as above p.65

Reflections on Agriculture

Section 3

Ground Rent

Marx, in Volume III of Capital, devotes ten chapters to a detailed examination of ground rent. There is no ambiguity in Marx's work that ground rent is a social relation which must be scientifically grasped and understood BEFORE any serious attempt is made to analyse the development of capitalism in a social formation.

In this Section III of our essay, we will examine a limited number of aspects of the question of ground rent. (1) We will focus on a general definition and explanation of the two forms of ground rent: differential ground rent and absolute ground rent. We will then examine the place of the two forms of ground rent, as social relations, inside the Capitalist Mode of Production, as well as inside pre-capitalist modes. We will illustrate our arguments with examples from Ireland and thus set the tone for Section IV of our essay, which will examine the historical co-existence of different modes of production in the 32 Counties.

Our arguments are based on a number of guide-lines, already outlined in the Introduction to this present essay. We must keep firmly in mind the reality, that if and where capitalism has developed in an unequal fashion, as is the case in Ireland, this is not due to a supposed 'unwillingness' of the bourgeoisie to develop its system of exploitation and domination. The bourgeois class has invariably been conscious of its economic and political interests and have usually acted in a manner conforming to those interests. To accuse the bourgeois class of an intellectual incapacity of developing its exploitation is to do them a really big favour.

There is, of course, historical evidence to suggest that the bourgeois class does at times attempt to curb the development of capitalism. Marx shows how the German bourgeoisie put brakes on the destruction of the rule of the feudal junkers in the Prussian

(1) : In Section IV of this present essay, due to appear in Issue 9 of The Ripening of Time, there will be a separate part entitled 'Land and Capital' where the question of ground rent will be further analysed.

State in 1848. (2) One could also argue that the French bourgeoisie practised widespread anti-population policies after the Paris Commune in 1871 and thus indirectly curbed the development of the system. But the overriding factor in those historical conditions for the German and French bourgeoisie was the fear of social revolution.

Is there any historical evidence to suggest that the English ruling class voluntarily curbed the development of capitalism in the 32 Counties? Is there any evidence that they attempted such a policy in England or in Scotland? And if there is, were those policies the answer of the ruling class to a fear of social revolution?

Or, were there any political and economic barriers to the development of capitalism in the 32 Counties which played a far more important role in the underdevelopment of Ireland?

These are the fundamental questions we will strive to answer. It is towards the examination and understanding of these 'barriers' that we have developed our analysis of ground rent and landed property in this present Section.

We believe that the answers provided to these questions determine the type of politics, the strategy and tactics and the organisational forms under which the popular classes will fight their present anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggle. In the answers to these 'historical' questions lie the seeds of future defeats or victories for the exploited masses of Ireland.

So these questions assume an importance far greater than an academic interest. They become burning questions which doggedly demand answers.



A. What is ground rent ?

Ireland is a country where Marxism and Leninism has never quite managed to gain a strong foothold inside the popular masses. As a result of this, important Marxist concepts, such as ground rent and surplus value, have been completely hoovered up and annihilated by bourgeois economic and political sciences.

For most people today to talk of ground rent is to refer to the 'small amount of money' house-owners have to pay to landlords or insurance companies. Ground rent is seen as a relic of the past.

In Marxism, ground rent is a general and widespread social relation through which landlords expropriate wealth from people who work and live on the land. This wealth represents a smaller or bigger part of the entire surplus created by direct producers and it is appropriated by a specific fraction of the bourgeoisie : the landlords.

(2) : See particularly 'The Civil War in France' by Marx as well as Engels' 'The Peasant Question in France and Germany'.

It is in this precise sense that we will define ground rent as the economic form in which the realisation of landed property takes place. In this economic form landlords concretise their economic and political power ; and as such ground rent would include all sorts of payments landlords receive by virtue of their property monopoly : rent, tithes, annuities etc etc.

Ground rent can be expropriated by landlords under different forms : as labour, in kind or as money. L.M.Cullen argues, for example, that even by the end of the 18th century " in much of Cork and Kerry the rent continued to be paid in kind " (3). But whatever guise it takes, ground rent remains an economic relation dominated by those who own landed property.

Marx devoted 200 long pages to ground rent in Vol.III of Capital. He argued that in 1860, in Ireland, the amount of ground rent appropriated by landlords was three times higher than the combined profits from all manufacture and all professions. (4) There is not a hint of a doubt that the appropriation of ground rent played a tremendously important role in the development of capitalism and the bourgeois class in the 32 Cos. Rents extracted in Ireland rose according to the following pattern , between the years 1672 and 1880:

1672	:	£	900,000	
1687	:	£	1,200,000	
1720	:	£	2,000,000	
1770	:	£	6,000,000	
1815	:	£	12,000,000	
1860	:	£	14,000,000	
1880	:	£	17,500,000	(5)

The economic importance of these figures is evident. We will examine the specific implications and the relative importance of this situation elsewhere.(6) . What is equally significant though is the implications of this economic relation for the social and political life of the country. L.M.Cullen makes the point that :

"...rents did pose a problem for the tenant and, in so far as rents were remitted to England, for the economy as a whole. The problem in paying rents - or in remitting them to absentees - did not lie simply in the amount, but in the fact that through intermittent harvest failure the surplus in agriculture was...reduced " (7)

Marx points out that "...ground rent...formally exists without the existence of the capitalist mode of production itself, i.e.

(3) : L.M.Cullen ' An Economic History of Ireland since 1660 ' p. 82

(4) : Marx : Capital Vol. I Table p.656 (Lawrence & Wishart ed.)

(5) : All figures from L.M.Cullen (as above) except for the 1860 figure obtained from Marx, Vol. I p.656 and the 1880 figure obtained from ' The Land Question and the Irish Economy 1870 - 1903 ' by B.L.Solow p.76

(6) : See article on the emergence of the Irish bourgeoisie in this issue.

(7) : L.M.Cullen, cited above p.45

without the tenant himself being an industrial capitalist, nor the type of his management being a capitalist one. Such is the case, eg in Ireland. The tenant there is generally a small farmer. What he pays to the landlord in the form of rent frequently absorbs not merely a part of his profit, that is, his own surplus labour, (to which he is entitled as possessor of his own instruments of labour) but also a part of his normal wage, which he would otherwise receive for the same amount of labour...." (8)

In this context the precise role played by ground rent must be grasped in detail. Otherwise, it would be impossible to develop a materialist analysis of the economic and historical development of Ireland - and especially the countryside. This we will attempt to do in this Section of our essay. We will not deal with the relative importance of ground rent today...this will be examined in Section V, in the Conclusions to this present work.

Starting from the initial definition outlined above i.e. that ground rent is an ' economic realisation of landed property ' , three points emerge immediately:

Firstly, " ground rent presupposes the existence of landed property, the ownership of certain portions of our planet by certain individuals " (9) . Ground rent without the existence of landed property is inconceivable.

Secondly, "all ground rent is surplus value " (10) . This would imply that ground rent is an appropriation of value created by labour and embodies exploitation. For ground rent to exist direct producers who do not own land or their means of production would have to work beyond the time necessary for reproducing what they need themselves in order to survive : their labour power.

Thirdly, precisely because ground rent is an economic realisation of landed property its extent, in other words how large or how small it is, is "...by no means determined by the actions of the recipient, but...rather by the independent development of social labour in which the recipient takes no part " (11) . This would mean that ground rent would increase or decrease not as a result of conspiracies by landlords who would maintain rents high or low, as the case may be, by artificial methods; on the contrary, the ups and downs of ground rent would be determined by market fluctuations, opposition by direct producers, changing political conditions, technical innovations and other objective changes inside the general development of the productive forces and the relations of production in a given society.

So, with these three initial points in mind, we can now proceed and analyse the role of ground rent, as a social relation, inside the capitalist mode of production.

- (8) : Marx - Capital Vol. III Chapter XXXVII - Introduction to Part VI.
(9) : Marx - Vol. III as above p. 634
(10) : as in Note (8)
(11) : as above p. 636

B. Differential ground rent and absolute ground rent

Marx's work on ground rent outlines two main forms under which ground rent appears inside the capitalist mode of production. Differential ground rent is, by far, the most common form of ground rent. Marx's analysis of differential ground rent covers 100 pages in Part VI of Vol. III of Capital ; then comes one final chapter on the second form : absolute ground rent, inpp. 748-772 of Part VI in Vol. III .

A superficial reading of Marx on this question may prompt the reader to make a parallel between differential and absolute ground rent on the one hand and absolute and relative surplus value on the other. Such a parallel would be misleading.

Absolute surplus value is examined by Marx in Part III of Vol. I of Capital ; it is seen as the most central concept in Marx's analysis of the capitalist mode of production. Absolute surplus value is the major innovation of Marx and, as he says many times, it is the ' iron core of capitalism ' . Relative surplus value cannot be understood and examined without a thorough grasping of absolute surplus value first. Thus Marx's order of presentation : absolute surplus value and then relative surplus value. (12)

This is not the case with differential and absolute ground rent. Marx in fact insists that there is no such direct connection between the two distinct forms of ground rent. He underlines the fact that differential and absolute ground rent arise from different circumstances :

" Our analysis has revealed how the market value...embraces a surplus profit for those who produce in any particular sphere of production under the most favourable conditions....A surplus profit may also arise if certain spheres of production are in a position to evade the conversion of the values of their commodities into prices of production, and thus the reduction of their profits to the average profit. We shall devote more attention to the further modifications of these two forms of surplus profit in the part dealing with ground rent. " (13)

We will argue that these two distinct forms of surplus profit produce two corresponding distinct forms of ground rent. " Those who produce under the most favourable conditions " would be producing differential ground rent and those who are "...in a position to evade the conversion of the values of their commodities into prices of production " would be producing absolute ground rent.

Now let us look into the two different forms of ground rent in detail :

- (12) : For a full discussion of relative and absolute surplus value see Ripening of Time no. 2 p. 45 and no.4 p.15
(13) : Marx Capital Vol. III pp.198-99

*1 Differential rent appears in a very general manner in all spheres of production where 'favourable conditions' make the existence of a surplus product possible. The conversion of this surplus product to surplus profit would give rise to a differential rent.

When the sphere of production in question is agriculture, we have a situation where 'favourable conditions', such as fertility of soil, modern machinery and other factors bring about a situation of surplus profits for the sector. Inside these varying conditions of production in agriculture we can then locate the material source of differential ground rent. This rent is appropriated by the landlords who control landed property; it is in this context that we can explain the earlier definition of ground rent as being an economic realisation of landed property.

Ernest Mandel, in his book 'Marxist Economic Theory' puts it thus: "For differential ground rent to appear, the selling price of agricultural products must ensure the average profit even on capital invested in the least profitable land. (14)

If the favourable conditions necessary for differential ground rent to appear undergo changes, or if they simply disappear, then differential ground rent tends to zero as well. This situation came about many times....for example, Sir William Petty's 'Treatise of Ireland' describes a situation in Ireland in 1686 when prices of agricultural produce fell so sharply that rents tumbled from 3s 6d an acre to 2s 6d an acre while the purchase price of land also went down from as much as 14 years' rent to 10 years' rent. (15) A similar situation also occurred during the last quarter of the 19th century as vast quantities of pampas and prairies came under cultivation with increasing modern techniques. This simply destroyed the favourable conditions reigning in wheat producing regions. That coupled with the improvement of the means of transport which made a reduction of freight charges possible precipitated a situation where wheat prices tumbled from 0.60 gold francs a bushel in 1860 to 0.05 gold francs in 1910. (16) This collapse of prices led both to a fall in the price of land and to the abandonment of all cultivation on the less profitable plots of land. In France, between 1875 and 1900 the 'value' of rural property was reduced by 35% on average. (17)

*2 Absolute ground rent, on the other hand, is a very specific and particular case of ground rent. While differential rent, for example, appears in all spheres of production and not only in agriculture,

- (14) : E.Mandel 'Marxist Economic Theory' Merlin Press 1968 p. 284
(15) : Quoted by L.M. CULLEN as above p. 22
(16) : Nougare and Oualid 'Evolution du Commerce, du Credit et du Transport depuis 150 ans' p.194
(17) : A. Garigou - Lagrange 'Production Agricole et economie rurale' p.66 (Quoted by E. Mandel)

Marx does not give any indication of absolute ground rent being apparent anywhere but agriculture.

Absolute ground rent, as already noted, arises in situations where certain spheres of production, in our case agriculture, is in a position to evade the reduction of profits to the average rate of profit. This would imply that somehow certain conditions prevail inside a sphere of production which hamper the development of competition.... for competition, in ordinary circumstances, would bring about an equalisation of the rate of profit. So, absolute ground rent is the result of a surplus profit accumulated in agriculture due to the fact that competition between other spheres of production and agriculture is hampered so that an equalisation of the rate of profit does not operate. Now this is a very special situation and deserves a careful examination.

Absolute ground rent was an unknown quantity for the classical economists. Ricardo for example, while fully conscious of the importance of differential ground rent, had always considered absolute ground rent as impossible. Marx, very influenced by Ricardo on the question of ground rent, did not break out of the Ricardian framework until 1862. In a letter to Engels, dated June 18th 1862 he writes (18):

"...By the way, I have finally managed to see clear into this shitty question of ground rent...it's been quite a while since I had black premonitions in relation to the correctness of Ricardo's theory and I have finally discovered the bluff...."

Nearly two months later, he continues in another letter:

"The importance of theoretical solutions on the level of theory alone has become apparent when one observes statisticians affirm for 35 years now the existence of absolute ground rent while theoreticians (influenced by Ricardo) try by forced and theoretically weak abstractions to demonstrate its impossibility" (19 & 20)

This 'theoretical' discovery of Marx was coupled and followed by a simultaneous discovery of the concept of 'price of production'. This discovery sets the foundations of the entire Vol.III of Capital where the relation of price of production with value carries through the entire Volume.

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(18) : Free translation from letter in French quoted by P.Ph.Rey in his book 'Les Alliances des Classes' Maspero
(19) : as above
(20) : Letter of 9th August 1862

At this point, it is necessary to introduce a short and summarised outline of Marx's discovery and its implications for the question of absolute ground rent. Otherwise, if the concepts of value and price of production are not clarified and carefully grasped, absolute ground rent would remain meaningless and incomprehensible. This, according to Marx, was the question Ricardo was never able to grasp - thus he never managed to understand and explain absolute ground rent.

The value of a commodity in Marxism is determined by the amount of labour spent in the production of that commodity. The general formula regulating the value of a commodity is : $c + v + s$. In this formula, c stands for constant capital and is the part of capital which passes through the means of production into the commodity (for example cost of machinery) ; v stands for variable capital and is the sum of wages distributed through the process of production of the commodity ; finally s stands for surplus value extracted from the workers through the given process of production . To give a numerical example, if the value of constant capital going into a commodity is, say, 100, the sum of the wages distributed 40 and the surplus extracted another 40 , then the value of that particular commodity would be V (for value) = $100+40+40 = 180$.

Under capitalism, different spheres of production, say mining or engineering or textiles, develop unequally. This inequality reflects itself in different capital and wage structures inside those spheres. We call organic composition of a sphere of production the relation of constant capital to variable capital of that sphere : c/v . In the example above the organic composition (c/v) of that particular sphere of production would be $100/40 = 5/2 = 250\%$.

Unequally developed spheres have unequal organic composition of capital. For example in the modern and advanced sectors of industry constant capital, c , tends to be high for a lot of investment has been poured into machinery . That would make c/v high and would give a high organic composition of capital; for example, in Ireland, the pharmaceutical sector would be a sphere of production with a high organic composition of capital. The opposite would be true of a more traditional sector like shoe manufacturing.

As capitalism develops, as the employers invest more and more driving for higher profits, investment in machinery grows an awful lot faster than investment in wages . That would mean that the organic composition of the economy as a whole would have the tendency to rise. With these concepts in hand, we can now proceed to look into the iron law of capitalism : the tendency of the rate of profit to fall .

The rate of profit is calculated by the formula : $s / c+v$. In other words the rate of profit of an investment depends on the extracted surplus value over the capital employed ($c + v$) . It should be obvious from the formula $s/c+v$ that as the employers invest in either machinery (c) or wages (v) the rate of profit would have the tendency to fall UNLESS the extracted surplus value is increased as well. Marx argues that this tendency pushes and obliges the capitalists to try and squeeze more and more surplus value , s , out of the working class so as to keep their rate of profit intact. Thus the ever constant cry for higher productivity which is the surest way of increasing the amount of surplus value extracted.

Higher productivity means inevitably one of two things: either workers get thrown out of jobs and the remaining ones are forced to produce harder (at which case the sum of wages paid by the employers, v , gets smaller and the rate $s/c+v$ gets bigger) or more advanced machinery gets introduced which while raising the amount of c also increases s , so the rate remains intact . Inside the formula $s/c+v$, there is also another important rate : s/v which is the relation of extracted surplus value over wages distributed and is called the rate of extraction of surplus value...it is in fact the rate of exploitation of the workers.

If we set the two formulas together ($s/c+v$ and s/v) and follow our original numerical example we get the following situation: If $c=100$, $v=40$ and $s=40$, then the rate of profit would be $s/c+v$ i.e. $40/100+40 = 40/140 = 2/7 = 28.57\%$. The rate of extraction of surplus value on the other hand would be $s/v = 40/40 = 1 = 100\%$ which in simple words would mean that workers in such a situation would be working half a working day in order to reproduce their wages and half a working day for the boss.

Now if we follow the employer with the above productive capacity, after the cycle is complete he would get commodities of total value $c + v + s = 180v$. Of that $180v$ 40 would be his surplus which would be realised in the market and will come back to him as profit. Assuming none of the profit is wasted in the next cycle our capitalist would have 40 units to invest. Lets assume now that he invests 30 of his profit into machinery and raw materials and 10 into labour. That would make $c = 130$ $v=50$ and if extraction of surplus remains constant s would go up to 50 as well. During the second cycle though his rate of profit would be : $s/c+v = 50/130+50 = 5/18 = 27\%$ down 1.57% from his original rate.

It is at this precise point that a crisis confronts our capitalist. His rate of profit down he must act : and the only thing he can do here is to attempt to raise the rate of extraction high enough so as to offset the 1.57% fall....and this he can do by either raising the rate of extraction high enough or by laying people off so as to drop the total sum of his wages paid. And finally it must be pointed out that in order for the fall to be offset the rise in the rate of extraction of surplus value must be way above 1.57% for a mere equivalent rise would not offset the fall.

Some would argue at this point that this tendency of the rate of profit to fall is offset by big monopolies by the sheer magnitude of the mass of profits they make. While it is true that the mass of profits in a sphere of production may rise while the rate of profit may be falling, the capitalist market with all the cut-throat competition that it encompasses sets strict limits to this situation. The drive for high profits brings about overproduction, increased stocks, dumping, price undercuttingall observable in the current crisis. We argue that the tendency of the rate of profit to fall is a shackle capitalism is not able to destroy. It is an objective factor of why the system is fragile and consistently unstable.

To go back now to the organic composition of capital mentioned above, the implication of low or high organic composition for the rate of profit of a sphere is direct and crucial. Traditional sectors of the economy, having low machinery and raw material costs coupled with relatively low wages, would tend to have a low $c+v$, thus a high rate of profit: $s/c+v$. On the other hand more modern sectors would have a lower rate of profit because their constant and variable capital are very much higher than traditional sectors.

This is perhaps best demonstrated by the fact that the investment flow of capital is from the advanced sectors to the traditional ones and not vice-versa. It is capital from the most modern multinationals which pours into and "modernizes" the backward manufacturing sectors in the 32 counties.

Marx explains this in the following manner :

"...capital withdraws from a sphere with a low rate of profit and invades others, which yield a higher profit. Through this incessant outflow and influx, or, briefly through its distribution among the various spheres...the average profit in the various spheres of production becomes the same, and values are, therefore, converted to prices of production." (21)

Thus we have arrived at the concept of price of production. If capital flows free of barriers it would tend to equalise the rate of profit between different spheres...in fact Marx argues that an average rate of profit would tend to be established. In a situation of an average rate of profit value ($c + v + s$) and price of production would coincide. But in unequally developed spheres of production which have rates of profits either higher or lower than the average the price of production of that sphere would be either lower or higher than values.

Prices of production are calculated by the following formula:
 Price of production (p) = $(c+v) + (c+v) \times \text{Average Rate of Profit}$.
 In other words, price of production would equal the cost of production ($c + v$) plus the cost of production multiplied by the average rate of profit in the economy as a whole. So in our mathematical example followed from above price of production (p) = $(100 + 40) + (100 + 40)$ multiplied by the average rate of profit.

From this would follow that for traditional sectors the price of production is UNDER their value; on the contrary the price of production of modern sectors is higher than their value. Let us demonstrate :

- In a situation of average rate of profit being 20%
- I) $80c + 20v + 20s$. Rate of profit = $20/100 = 20\%$
 Value = 120 Price of product = 120
 - II) $90c + 10v + 10s$ Rate of profit = 20%
 Value = 110 Price of product = 120
 - III) $70c + 30v + 30s$ Rate of profit = 20%
 Value = 130 price of production = 120

(21) Marx Capital Vol. III p. 95-6
48

This difference between value and price of production is the core of the Marxist explanation of absolute ground rent. Unless the difference and the variation between the two is carefully grasped, absolute ground rent cannot be possibly examined and understood. It is based on this point that we will then argue .

According to the tendency for the equalisation of the rate of profit this difference between price of production and value would tend to diminish as the always present ebb and flow of capital takes place. BUT if capital faces an external force which it cannot overcome completely, then in those spheres of production where this 'external force' operates the equalisation of the rate of profit will not take place. That would mean a constant difference between the price of production and value.

We argue that agriculture is such a sphere of production; the existence of landed property is the external force that capital has to face. And because it is a sphere with low organic composition of capital, its price of production, as we have argued above, would be continuously lower than the value of the agricultural products.

And in this situation between unequally developed spheres of production, we can now trace the continuous existence of surplus profits. It is this continuous capacity of agriculture to be able to exert enough constraints on capital so that its prices of production remain low enough, which brings about constant surplus profits to agriculture...and it is those surplus profits which are then transformed into absolute ground rent and expropriated by the landlords.

To finally summarise what has been said so far : Marx's discovery of the concept of price of production coincides with his discovery of ground rent. Ground rent, and especially absolute ground rent, has its roots in the capacity of agriculture to keep its prices of production consistently lower than the value of the agricultural products. Therefore, in a sphere of low organic composition of capital, such as agriculture, if the flow of capital can be constrained by an external force, there arises a situation of surplus profits which are expropriated by those who control that specific external force.

As a result of the above, it would become clear that in such a sphere as soon as this 'external force' disappears then the situation would change...the equalisation of the rate of profit would begin to operate once more and the existence of absolute ground rent would become really problematic.

.....

Based on the above assumptions Marx attempted to demonstrate the existence of absolute ground rent not only theoretically but in reality. And it's at that specific point that new problems and complexities appeared. In fact by the time of Marx's death the chapter on ground rent was still not complete. So it would be important to look at the concrete situation of the existence of ground rent a bit closer :

As soon as the demand for agricultural produce rises, the selling price of those products would have the tendency to rise as well. This re-arrangement would take place under the condition that

the land structure in the country in question would have to remain constant. If new fallow or unused land is brought into use at that precise moment the re-adjustment of prices would be jolted. In fact, as already mentioned in p.44 of this essay, if enough new land is brought into cultivation prices will not rise but, on the contrary, fall.

Now this series of suppositions would apply to a social formation dominated by capitalism and it would assume that no investment takes place in any sphere of production unless a profit equal to the average rate of profit can be arrived at. Under those conditions, and this a basic hypothesis of Marx and all other classical economists, fallow or unused lands will not be invested in unless they can bring at least a rate of profit equal to the average rate of profit.

So while ground rent would exist in a society, as soon as demand for agricultural produce rises the selling price of agricultural commodities would rise and that would enhance the possibility of further extraction of surplus profit. But it is at this precise moment that problems appear. Marx says :

" A slight increase in market prices bringing them above the price of production will be sufficient to throw new lands of the less fertile category into the market " .

But if this happens prices would not rise.....so the situation in agriculture would be one of rising new investment and falling prices rather than the opposite. A curious situation which would seem to undermine Marx's assumptions on absolute ground rent. For it must be obvious by now that if investment rose and prices fell absolute ground rent would tend to disappear.

Marx accumulated an amazing amount of statistics on Ireland, India and China. But by the time of his death he had still not answered the above contradiction. His theoretical demonstration of the existence of absolute ground rent were unable to account for the real situation. The reasons for that are to be sought not in any ' personal shortcoming' of Marx but rather in the objective reality that neither Marx, nor Engels were fully implanted in the struggle of the peasants against the landlords. Their relation to the class struggle in the countryside had remained external and as a result their theory was ambiguous and incomplete.

We estimate that the only possibility of furthering Marx's concepts on absolute ground rent is squarely based on a historical class analysis of the countryside, in our case of the 32 counties. And this is what we propose to do in the next Section of our essay. In the coexistence of modes, of capitalism with the pre-capitalist modes of production, we believe certain answers to the ambiguities present in Marx can be located and examined.

(to be continued in issue 9)



the fishing market

The public image of the fishing industry is a huge cluster of interwoven parts and concepts such as fish markets, processing plants, harbours, boat building, net factories, national fishing limits, loans and grants, Business and Finance, profits, romance, investments, adventure and tragedy at sea. Sifting through this maze of impressions, we search for the main link in the chain of exploiting a resource and supplying a need to the consumer, we find the working fisherman, the man in the forefront of the task of winning this resource from the sea despite difficulties social and physical, hazards economic and personal.

It is almost impossible to find a satisfactory answer to the question why a fisherman chooses the job in the first place. Many would be following in a family tradition, more would see it as an acceptable alternative to unemployment, and some would see it as a job with good prospects of becoming an owner of their own boat. In fact, most see it not as a career in itself, but as a stepping stone to some more desirable position. The romantic or adventurous image would also play some part in selecting fishing as a career, and this aspect is used to a large degree in the Fisheries Department advertisements to attract boys to their training scheme for fishermen. It is interesting to note that there were 1,500 applicants for thirty places in the department's last training group. However, only two out of 1,000 school-leavers considered fishing as a career in a recent survey, and this would lead one to expect 120 applicants per year. Could this be the ratio between what young people want, and what they will accept, in the present state of high unemployment?

When a man settles into a job on a fishing boat, he finds some aspects difficult to get used to. The long and uncertain hours, the primitive and sometimes unnecessarily laborious methods of work, and often the indifference of the skipper-owner who started the same way himself, but seldom tries to improve the working conditions as pressures to meet the cost of running and paying off his boat will take most of his attention. However, if he can develop an attitude of accepting these drawbacks, they may be more than balanced by a job that can be very satisfactory, and up to the last few years could be very well paid, even if the hours are about twice that of most jobs ashore. Also, an almost unique kind of comradeship and a feeling of belonging to a separate rather special group of people who are inclined to remain in their own groups even when ashore on social occasions. Very few leave fishing, and those that do seem to come back, despite the changes for the worse that have been creeping into the industry over the last 3 or 4 years.

The reasons for these changes are twofold - first the severe escalation in the price of crude oil in 1973 turned the whole economics of fishing upside down. The running expenses, which up to then comprised about one tenth of the average returns, have now become from a fifth to a quarter, despite an approximately threefold increase in the price of fish. Since the crew is given a share of the net returns when these expenses are deducted, this amounted to a savage cut in pay at a time when inflation was eating into the buying power of his money anyway.

Secondly, the fish stocks were coming under increasing pressure from bigger and more greedy fleets from Holland, Germany, France and East European countries who were also under pressure of increased costs and were being excluded from traditional grounds by countries extending their fishing limits.

Herrings, the species the Irish fleet depended on for about 75% of their income, decreased alarmingly over the years 1972-75, and they have now become so scarce that only the modern, large sophisticated boats can fish them economically. The effect of this for most crewmen was that the day of the 'big lump' was over, and he was now largely dependant on 'white' fishing which required steady slogging to earn a week's wages, and seldom produced a 'big' wage, though it sometimes deteriorated to a level where it barely covered expenses, and left nothing to divide at the end of the week. This meant he was dependant on a 'sub' from the owner. This, together with the usual time lost due to bad weather meant that 'subs' would be deducted on the good weeks, and he was thus faced with rather modest wages without the accustomed 'big' week to make things appear better. Most fishermen, being optimists, tend to remember the good weeks and forget the bad ones, so that most of them were inclined to have an inflated idea in their

mind of their true earnings.

This was now changed for many of them because of higher operating costs and falling stocks. Consequently they were taking a new look at the job as a whole and were comparing it with working conditions ashore. It became clear to many of them that there was a great need of crew members organisations, to try and have some control over the things that affected their job conditions. Earlier attempts to organise a Sharefishermen's Association were revived with some success, but it soon became apparent that it was difficult to keep such an organisation going because of the fragmented and itinerant nature of the job. In fact, it had started to disintegrate when some of its members got in contact with a trade union and attempted to sell the idea fairly successfully to the general membership. Thus, the National Fisherman's Branch of the ITGWU was born. With it came a new awareness and a new unblinking look at the crewman's working situation. Stripped of its aura of romance and adventure, and compared in purely social and monetary terms with ashore jobs, it looked like a transplant from feudal times. Pay on an hourly rate is lower than for unskilled female workers onshore before equal pay. Socially, the time away from home was no longer than in some jobs ashore, but what made it worse was the uncertainty of when time off would be available.

For the single crewman, it meant no regular attendance at social or other activities - this may be why crewmen seldom seem involved in matters or mix socially with people outside fishing. For the married crewman, it meant extra pressures on his relationship with his family - his time off is so irregular.

Of course, fishing had become more intensive in the sixties. Low interest loans, and generous grants, were available for new boats, and a new class began to emerge, the rich owner-skipper, who moved out to their new house on the hill, but also moved away from their crews insofar as few of them now joined in the work of discharging fish or mending nets. In many cases, it meant they put on extra shares, that is, they took a higher proportion of the total earnings. After a night of herring fishing, the crew would start the long laborious job of discharging the fish and mending the nets - the skipper owners would go home for a sleep.

However, the crewmen accepted this - they were getting a few more crumbs from the table, and someday they might be skipper owners too. But the whole scene changed when the higher costs and falling catches, along with an unprecedented increase in the cost of new vessels, makes the future of a skipper-owner far less desirable. Crewmen now find themselves in the position where they are working harder for less money - more boats are chasing fewer fish. Although scarcity has improved the price of fish, this is swallowed up by incr-

easing running costs. No real attempt at conservation is evident at the moment. The hassle over the declaration of unilateral measures against trawlers over 110 feet is really only diverting attention from the real problem.

**A PLAN TO CONSERVE FISH STOCKS TO PROVIDE THE
MAXIMUM NUMBER OF JOBS FROM A SUSTAINABLE CATCH**

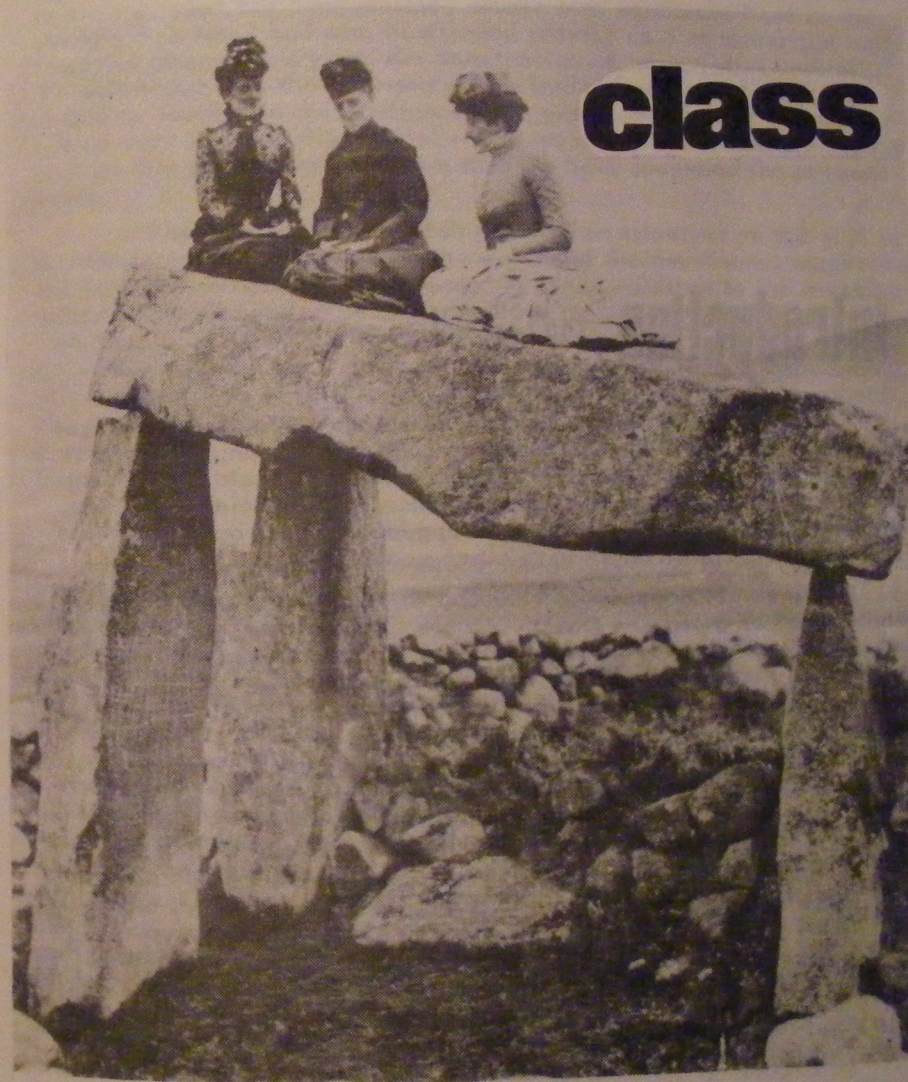
The present argument is really about who is going to get the biggest share of the spoils ravaging the fish stocks. When the grounds are denuded - and the only argument at the moment is who is going to do it - the people with the capital will invest in something else, and the crewmen will be left with skills that there is no demand for, and with very little chance of becoming employed elsewhere. Without being strongly organised to affect conservation measures, the main issues facing crewmen now, like pensions, minimum pay, sick pay, holidays, unfair dismissal, etc., would become academic, and all he will have to worry about will be redundancy payment.

All this has made the fishing subculture break up and owners are finding they have more in common with fish merchants and other employers, while crewmen find their only salvation lies in joining up in larger groups of workers to get the muscle to protect their interests. There is much interest awakening among crewmen in the wider economic implications of their position, and one of the interesting ideas that have come forward is that smaller boats using less destructive methods of fishing, and working more social hours, would provide about six times the number of jobs for the same capital cost. This may not produce millionaires as the present system has, but if it worked it would solve most of the problems, and certainly deserves further investigation. New thinking is needed at a national and E.E.C. level if crewmen and the fish he depends on are not to become an extinct species. His survival as a worker is of no interest to other sections of industry, so he will have to rely on his own efforts.

Paddy Daly, May 1977

the bourgeois

class



in ireland

Introduction

The tasks of an analysis

In Ripening of Time nos 3 and 4 we attempted to analyse the rise of the State in the 26 counties. It was assumed that there existed a bourgeois class in Ireland for whom a State was essential to control and dominate the other classes in the social formation. We now begin an analysis of the emergence of the bourgeois class in Ireland and its struggle with other social classes.

It is not possible to examine the bourgeois class ' as a whole ' or ' in general ' and then apply that schema to this or that society. Nonetheless, the emergence of the bourgeoisie through history in many countries of Western Europe, like England, France and Holland, as well as in the United States, has been the basis of an ideal(ised) model of ' bourgeois society ' which still exerts a powerful ideological influence in the minds of the bourgeoisie. Therefore, even though in reality it may correspond to no actual historical situation, Marxists must be able to first grasp the general model , in order to investigate what lies behind it.

Social classes exist only in struggle ; and class struggle takes place in different conditions inside specific social formations. In Ireland, these conditions have differed crucially from those of the ' general model ' ; even though it is in terms of this model that the Irish bourgeoisie now wants to understand itself. The Irish conditions have been more akin to the situation in countries also dominated by big capitalist metropolises... a situation often seen in terms of the controversial notion of underdevelopment.

The bourgeoisie conceives itself to be the universal modernising force, the spearhead of progress in the world. In Ireland, Grattan in the 18th century, De Valera in the 1930s, and later Lemass were the political expression of this ' natural ' bourgeois drive. In the 1970s first the Coalition and now Lynch with wonder-boy O'Donohue allocated this role to themselves.

Ireland was a colony ; today it is a divided and dominated country . The formal political independence of the 26 counties has not - and could not have - meant a real economic and political sovereignty. On the side of the bourgeois class , this situation has brought about a particular make-up of the bourgeois power bloc : big landlords whose weight was and still is very substantial, allied to a comprador big bourgeoisie, whose own economic base in the country was weak and who functioned chiefly as a commercial and financial intermediary for the penetration of imperialist capital. We will argue that the bourgeoisie in Ireland remained weak and unable to assert its domination either over other social classes or indeed over imperialist capital - this as much historically as today. It is on this particular situation that we have focussed the present essay.

The consequence of this particular situation on the side of the dominated classes was on the one hand the permanent numerical and political weakness of the working class relative to the massive weight of a subjugated peasantry while on the other hand the quite " particular disposition " of the petty bourgeoisie in both its traditional and ' new ' fractions in relation to the State, republicanism, culture/language/tradition and nationhood in general. That aspect of the situation we will examine in later issues of the journal.

The struggle of bourgeois, proletarian or other residual pre-capitalist class forces makes up a contradiction. Each part of that contradiction is itself of a non-unified contradictory make-up. So when we analyse one pole of that contradiction, in our case today, the bourgeoisie, we analyse it not only in relation to the classes that it dominates, and by which it is dominated, but also in its own internal complex set-up.

Inside the bourgeois class as a whole, industrial, merchant and banking fractions exist as warring fractions. It is these fractions that impinged on Ireland from the outside - above all from England - and it is these fractions which are now arising and reproducing themselves within Ireland.

In the article entitled ' The Break-up of capital ' in the present issue we have presented a more detailed treatment of this fragmentation of the bourgeois class. It is inside the earlier capitalist period in England and inside the pre-capitalist modes of production in Ireland that we can trace the roots of these different warring bourgeois fractions.

We will argue that the specific domination of Ireland by England has brought about a situation that through the development and extension of the capitalist mode of production, the bourgeoisie, with all its warring fractions, developed not really as one class but two. These two are of course linked together historically in many complex and contradictory ways. Our account of the emergence and the development of the bourgeois class in Ireland will have to

distinguish and separate bourgeois fractions whose basis of accumulation is Ireland, but which remain an extension of capitalism in England, from those whose basis of accumulation is also Ireland, but are a product of the specific development and taking root of capitalism in Ireland.

Modes of production exist not alone but in co-existence. Elements of different modes of production, for example landlords and industrialists exist alongside each other. They are united in their common drive for further exploitation and profit and they are in conflict and competition precisely because of that same drive. Hence, we will argue that a bourgeois class includes fractions, such as landlords, not directly the product of capitalist reproduction, but even, if temporarily, in opposition to that reproduction (This point is more fully discussed in Ripening of Time issue 3 pp. 7-8 and will also be taken up in issue 9 of the journal.)

An account of the Irish bourgeoisie will have to separate distinct modes of class struggle and locate them historically. While in ' model ' capitalism struggles between the bourgeoisie and landlords have preceded those between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, land struggles between the agricultural labouring classes and the landowners have also played a crucial but still not fully understood and explicated role. In many countries the land struggles are written out of the history of the bourgeoisie as it understands itself. They are only beginning to be examined by Marxist historians, economists and sociologists (see for example Captain Swing by D.Rude and E. Hobsbawm, the works of M.Marini and Anibal Quillano in South America, P.Ph. Rey's excellent work on the Congo etc.) An understanding of the particularly crucial role of the land struggles in Ireland - historically and today - must also be a major part of our task.

All history is the history of class struggle. The history of the bourgeois class is the history of its struggle to maintain and reproduce itself. This, in Ireland, can be said to have been often unsuccessful in the past and very precarious today. To analyse this history, it is necessary to distinguish various periods of its development. Such a monumental task remains ahead of us, in Ireland. We will be aided by VI.Lenin's periodisation in ' Imperialism , the Highest Stage of Capitalism . This is further elaborated by Nicos Poulantzas in ' Classes in Contemporary Capitalism ' . The brilliant and novel periodisation by Perry Anderson of pre-bourgeois Europe in ' Lineages of the Absolutist State ' has given us also additional material

Periodisation, that is using criteria such as the concentration of ownership, the extent of the socialisation of labour, the growth of the division of labour and the extratction of surplus value,

enables us to analyse correctly the changes in the mode of production and hence locate historically the organisation of the bourgeois class in relation to other social classes. (See also the discussion of this problem in Ripening of Time no. 3)

Thus the task of analysing the historical emergence of the bourgeoisie in Ireland involves, like any other materialist research, a return to and a reworking of the fundamental theoretical categories of revolutionary Marxism. It involves in fact a contribution to the completion of the task which Marx himself left unfinished ; the task anticipated in the final incomplete chapter on ' Social Classes ' in Vol. III of Capital. We shall proceed by small steps in an attempt to begin this work.

A.



The Take-Off

Pre-Cromwellian period

1. Through the last quarter of the 16th Century in Ireland, the British colonialists carried out a twenty year protracted process of destruction, through which the entire economic and social organisation of the country was annihilated and the mass of the population reduced to a state of abject poverty. This period of systematic destruction dismantled the social structures of the Clan system and transformed the social relation between the different layers of the Clans. (1)

The plantation policy of the British, during the 16th Century, was a policy of 'surrender and regrant' by which all land held in Ireland (including commonland) was to be surrendered to the British administration and regranted as land 'under title from the Crown'. In most areas, the chiefs and upper layers of the Clan system were given title to the land while the mass of the people were turned into tenants or labourers, without the customary right to use the land.

The granting of the land title to the chief often ensured his loyalty to the new rulers - the English landowners - while the ancient tradition of allegiance to the chief blocked widespread revolt against the 'chief cum landlord'. The colonialists had managed to use the hierarchies and customs of the Clan system to their own advantage, while simultaneously destroying its social structures and its economic base. The lessons of the colonisation of Ireland were well used in the later expansion of British capital across the globe.

There is, however, evidence to demonstrate that the Clan system was already on the decline which can account, for example, for the penetration of Catholicism into Ireland. The codification of the Brehon laws had already incorporated a notion of private property. The plantations established for the first time, a system of primogeniture for the transfer of land. This meant that rights of inheritance were set down by law whereby the eldest son inherited the land of the father. Some of the Clan chiefs and their followers rejected the plantation policy and there were many years of sporadic revolt, which at times succeeded in uniting large numbers of those who had been dispossessed from the land. (2)

In England, at the same time, a similar process was taking place - the wealth and prosperity of the 15th Century was transformed into poverty and misery by the end of the 16th Century. This lengthy period of transition which lasted centuries, laid the basis for the development of the capitalist system. Dispossession was followed by the advent of huge grazing farms to feed the developing manufacturing industry.

- (1) The Clan system and its decline is looked at, in more detail, in issue no. 5 of *The Ripening of Time*, article entitled 'The Development of Capitalism in Ireland'. P. 9 ff.
- (2) The process is examined more closely in the section of the article 'Reflections on Agriculture', in this issue, called 'Ground Rent'. P. 39 ff.

" The forcible usurpation... was generally accompanied by the turning of arable into pasture land, beginning at the end of the 15th and extending into the 16th century... But at that same time, the process was carried on by individual acts of violence against which legislation, for a hundred and fifty years fought in vain... Town and manufacture increase as... little occupiers of the land are reduced to the state of day-labourers and hirelings." (3)

The wars raging in the Irish countryside continued for 20 years; the lower layers of the clan society, the herdsmen and the freemen, were crushed but land remained in the hands of Irish lords. The herdsmen and the freemen were now transformed into 'new' tenants who through their unabating resistance forced their continued protection by the old customs of the clan system, for example the right to a lifetime on a piece of land.

" The beginning of the century was marked by a complete breakdown of the economic life of the country, after which the industrial organisation had to be built up anew from its foundations. The last quarter of the sixteenth century witnessed a devastating war in Ireland, in the course of which property of all kinds was deliberately and ruthlessly destroyed... The whole of Ireland was impoverished and laid waste." (4)

The social structure of the country had been completely transformed through this period. The economy was destroyed and gradually rebuilt on a new basis. For example, under the Clan system agriculture was mainly around hunting and the rearing of live-stock. This produced a situation where exports were limited to fish and hides. However, the new settled (sedentary) agriculture which emerged after the destruction, and the cottage industries it brought with it, was based on a completely different set of property relations. This new type of economy gave rise to an expanding merchant capital, involved in the export of beef, butter, wool and yarn. This merchant capital was still controlled by native merchants. An amazing expansion of commerce took place: during the period 1630 to 1640, in 10 years, Irish shipping increased hundredfold. (5)

But this existing trade was turned to the outside - almost exclusively. There was very little internal trade - a fact not helped by a 1495-law forbidding trade between Irishmen which remained in operation well into the seventeenth century. Most of the important towns were ports, dotted around the Irish coast. The only commodity with a substantial domestic market was tobacco. The lack of investment into agriculture, the absence of internal markets, the lack of tools and equipment meant that grazing and pasture land were far more dominant than tillage.

- (3) K. Marx. Extracts from 'Capital'. Vol. 1. pp 676/680.
- (4) G. O' Brien: *The Economic History of Ireland in the 17th Century*. A. Kelley. Clifton. 1972. P. 2.
- (5) as above. P. 111.

Smuggling was very prevalent as a response to the many pieces of legislation put through English Parliament to forbid the export of products from Ireland to those countries the British Empire was at war with, such as Spain, which had been an important outlet for native merchants.

Industry was very weak during this period. Capital inflow into manufacture had not yet taken place. Raw wool, linen freize, brewing and tanning were the main industries and for the most part were carried out by scattered independent producers or small work-houses. Money lenders existed and robbed the people of a large amount of surplus and, according to O'Brien, the average interest on £ 100 was £ 40, over a very short period. (6)

As the 17th Century moved on, it was clear that the destruction and rebuilding had not succeeded in subjugating the mass of the population to the complete rule of English landlords and merchants. Native lords still held sway and were in fact growing more powerful under the newly imposed system of property relations. The huge rents extracted remained in the hands of these native lords, as they had been given title to the land. The small but growing amount of trade was also controlled by native merchants.

The first half of the seventeenth century witnessed a growth in the amount of small scale industry, mainly cottage-based and in increase in the level of output of the tenant farmers and agricultural labourers. This increasing wealth was becoming a great attraction to a new and growing class in England. Violent conflict had broken out in England between the feudal lords, on the one hand, and the new 'commercialised gentry' in alliance with a growing industrial fraction of the ruling class in England, on the other hand. Ireland was to become a focal point of this conflict. The extremely powerful merchants and landlords who were investing in industry gave the impetus to the Cromwellian invasion of Ireland. The feudal lords lost this battle and the arrival of Cromwell with a whole new era of destruction and more violent plantation was the effect of this in Ireland.

II. The plantation

As happened many times through Irish history, the internal conflicts in England gave a certain amount of space for the discontent in Ireland to be channelled into rebellion and revolt. It was under the banner of smashing this revolt, that Cromwell arrived on the shores of Ireland. The 14 year war that followed and the destruction/reconstruction which followed it had far more reaching effects on the social structure and economy of Ireland. The struggle between the feudal lords and the rising bourgeois class in England was fought out in Ireland at the Battle of the Boyne, while the interests of the Irish masses were totally overrun. The chief/landlord sided with the feudal lords in many instances, and their defeat was simultaneously the defeat of the native lords in Ireland, with the peasant

(6) as above. P. 67.

and labouring classes the cannon-fodder for both. While the struggles for dominance in England by different fractions of the ruling class were reproduced in Ireland, there was no equivalent inside the country of the rising industrial-manufacturing fraction of the ruling class in this country. The landlords and merchants continued to hold power and in the decades which followed any attempt at the development of industrial capital was quickly blocked by the strong interests in England who wanted no competition from an Irish manufacture.

The result of the Cromwellian wars was massive-scale depopulation and desolation. It was a war waged mainly against the native lords in Ireland, who were driven from their lands, executed, deported or banished to Connaught to lord the less fertile lands of the West. The Cromwellian slogan of 'To Hell or to Connaught' was no idle threat.

This plantation policy differed sharply from the earlier system of 'surrender and regrant' and was carried through by the direct plantation of English landlords and tenants into Ireland. The fact that the earlier system had not succeeded in fully crushing the people was a lesson well learnt. Cromwell did not depend on pieces of paper and legal niceties - if subjugation by law did not work, then... annihilation would.

English records of the time put the economic value of this destruction at £32 million pounds, the equivalent of over 32 years of total rent extracted from Ireland. The majority of the population was massacred; William Petty in his 'Treatise on Ireland' estimated the population at 600,000 natives and 300,000 settlers at the end of the wars. (7)

The extreme state of misery and desolation, the result of famine and plague brought about through the wars, are well-documented in Prendergast's book 'The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland':

" Ireland now lay void as a wilderness. Five-sixths of her people were perished. Women and children were found daily perishing in ditches, starved. In the years 1652 and 1653, the plague and famine had swept away whole countries, that a man might travel twenty or thirty miles and not see a living creature. Man, beast, and bird were all dead or had quit those desolate places...it was so rare to see either smoke by day or fire or candle by night...Thousands of Irish lay daily starving for want of food. " (8)

The wars and the plantations transformed every aspect of social life in Ireland. English landlords replaced the native lords. Of the 8,000 Catholic landlords, all except 26 were dispossessed by Cromwell and his administrators. About 500 were 'compensated' with small amounts of land in Connaught - of those who declared 'loyalty' to the new administration. In all, only one-seventh of the land area remained in the hands of native landowners. (9)

(7) William Petty : 'Treatise of Ireland' quoted in G. O' Brien. p. 12.

(8) J. Prendergast : 'The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland' lon P. 307/8.. London. 1870.

(9) Butler : 'Confiscation in Irish History' P. 197.

Engels in a letter to Jenny Longuet in 1881, described the administration of the plantations. The 'adventurers', he argues, advanced £200 in Ulster for 1,000 acres of land, in Connaught £300, in Munster £450 and in Leinster £600. The new lords were either the soldiers of Cromwell or the landowners of England. The English lords in Ireland who fought on the winning side got land under the plantations, but in general there was a huge increase in absenteeism as vast areas of land were now controlled by English landlords living in England. During this period, absentee landlords controlled about a quarter of all land under rent

While native landlordism had been destroyed, the tenants and labourers were taken on by the new lords in many areas. Transplantation did not replace the working population. Those who were found guilty 'by trial' of fighting against the Crown were executed, but many others became the tenants and labourers of the soldiers-turned-landlords. The tenants still demanded the customary right to life-long leases on this land and for a short period this demand was not challenged. It was later to be met with the violence of the penal laws which fixed short leases and excluded Catholics from many areas of economic life, such as trade and the professions.

By the end of the wars, no native shipping remained. The expanding merchant capital of the pre-war period was totally destroyed and it was the English merchants (riding on huge profits now being drawn from the English masses) took control over Irish trade. Through this transition, the towns went into decay.... Dublin was in ruins.

" All the old Irish inhabitants were driven from the towns; and whatever trade continued to be carried on, was conducted by factors on behalf of English merchants. " (10)

Woods which covered the midlands, were razed to the ground, the vessels of the fishing industry were destroyed. Tillage had all but ceased; acres and acres of crops had been burned and livestock massacred.

Once more the whole economic life of the country had been dismantled and destroyed - this time by the growing bourgeois class in England. The following 40 years was a period of rebuilding the economy and the social structure under new rulers and under new conditions.

continued in issue 9



(10) G. O' Brien. quoted above. P. 113.



reviews

Some comments on the book of Raul Manglapus: Philippines: the Silenced Democracy. Marvknoll, New York: Orbis Books 1976.

Raul S. Manglapus, founder of the Christian Social Movement in the Philippines, is now a self-exile from the Marcos dictatorship and has recently been granted political asylum by the U.S. government. In 1954 under the Magsaysay administration, he was appointed Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs; later he became Secretary of Foreign Affairs. He was elected to the Senate in 1961, and to the Constitutional Convention in the seventies.

In his book, Manglapus assails President Marcos for killing democracy in the Philippines by imposing martial law on September 21st, 1972. He exposes how Marcos manipulated the Constitutional Convention, rigged the results of referendums, arrested and imprisoned thousands who opposed the dictatorship.

Manglapus also chides the U.S. government for not coming out with an official disapproval of the Marcos regime. He points out that the World Bank and the U.S. multinationals are also giving Marcos enthusiastic support. He criticises the 'special relationship' imposed by the U.S. on the Philippines, and traces these to the imperialist outlook of Theodor Roosevelt, who declared that it was the 'manifest destiny' of the U.S. to expand its power and trade throughout the world. Manglapus then appeals to the U.S. government to officially disapprove of the Marcos regime, and withhold military and economic aid from it. He lays his hope on the American people, whose high ideals enshrined in the American Constitution, he states, are violated by the government policy of concern for 'stability and profits', and of supporting the Marcos regime that suppresses the rights of the Filipino people.

In spite of its value in exposing the repressiveness and deceptiveness of the Marcos regime, and in criticising US government policy towards the Marcos administration the book by Manglapus suffers from some basic mistakes.

What Manglapus refers to as Philippines democracy in 1972 was no real democracy at all, since it was clearly not a government 'of the people, by the people, and for the people'. It was in fact a government ruled by landlords, big businessmen, and top bureaucrats, subservient to U.S. interests enriching themselves in office and suppressing the Filipino masses. Manglapus fails to bring out that subsequent to the military takeover of the Philippines by the U.S. in 1898-1901, the U.S. systematically took control of the economy, politics, and culture of the Philippines. The Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act of 1909, and the Underwood-Simmons Act of 1913 passed by the U.S. Congress in 1913 tied the Philippines' economy to the U.S., making it a source of cheap raw materials, a ready market for manufactured products, and a place of high yield investment because of cheap labour. The U.S. also took control of Philippines' politics, installing an American Governor-General, and allowing in 1907 the representatives of the local exploiting classes, the landlords and big businessmen, who were quick to betray the Philippines' Revolution, and to join the bandwagon of the new colonisers to set up the Partido Federal (later the Partido Progresista) and the Partido Nacionalista to give a semblance of free elections and democracy. Filipinos (called pensionados) were sent to the U.S. for training in order to run the colonial bureaucracy. Manglapus fails to bring out that Philippine politics and 'democracy' were a creation and instrument of U.S. policy. Upon the so-called granting of independence in 1946 and thereafter, it was therefore easy for the U.S. to impose 'special relations' with the collaboration of the bureaucrats to whom the government of the Philippines was turned over.

Manglapus is therefore naive in appealing to the U.S. government to withdraw support from Marcos, since it is the U.S. that controls Philippines politics and has decided to have Marcos and the dictatorship to serve its own interests. The support of the U.S. controlled World Bank, and the U.S. multinationals, should awaken Manglapus out of this naivete. Moreover the recent decision of the Carter administration to continue giving military and economic aid to Marcos in spite of the U.S. State Department's admission of the violation of human rights by Marcos should dispel any such illusion.

A second basic weakness of the Manglapus book is its lack of faith in the Filipino masses. In speaking about the Philippine Revolution of 1896, Manglapus fails to mention Andres Bonifacio, the Tondo worker who founded the Katipunan and, supported by the Filipino masses, waged the war of independence against Spain. Manglapus speaks highly of Emilio Aguinaldo, the ilustrado who took over the leadership of the Philippines Revolution, had Bonifacio tried and executed, and then compromised with the Spaniards at the pact of Biak-na-Bato, accepting 400,000 dollars, agreeing to go into exile, and then calling on the Filipino revolutionaries to lay down their arms. Aguinaldo was again naive enough to trust Dawey and the Americans and later, upon his capture, took the oath of allegiance to the U.S.

It is also worth noting that the Christian Social Movement was also composed of intellectuals, mostly from the landlord class-

es and businessmen, who, however, were kept out of political power by the Nacionalista and Liberal Parties who represented the bigger, more powerful landlords and businessmen who had the support of the U.S. government and U.S. multinationals.

It is therefore not surprising that in referring to the present opposition to the Marcos regime, Manglapus also fails to note the growing resistance of the Filipino masses: the strikes of the workers and the determined opposition of the slum dwellers to eviction and demolition, the increasing armed struggle of the peasants. He refers only to the opposition of the Church to martial law. Even here, he is inaccurate, in presenting the whole church as opposing martial law. In November 1976, the bishops issued a statement, Omnnes Unum Sint, stating that there was division within the hierarchy regarding their

stance towards martial law and they, the 17 signatories, categorically came out against martial law even if the others (more than 70 other bishops) either cooperated with Marcos or refused to take a stance against the martial law regime. Among the priests and nuns, only a small minority really joined the masses in their struggles. Some of the so-called progressive Bishops and religious like the ilustrados of old, easily give in under pressure, compromise with the dictatorship, and try to stop the people struggling through to the end. All that Marcos has to do is play on their fears of communism and give them a few paltry concessions to maintain their Church interests. (In January 1976 amidst mass arrests of workers, slum dwellers, and students, and the deportation of two Italian missionaries serving the workers and slum dwellers - Frs. Luigi Cocquio and Francos Alesso - Archbishop Sin of Manila called a meeting of priests and sisters, and announced that Marcos had agreed to not issuing a decree allowing divorce, to the deferral of payment of realty tax on Catholic schools, and to the tax-free entry of equipment for the Catholic Church's Radio Veritas.)

While failing to recognise the Filipino people's will to struggle for national independence and liberation, Manglapus hopes that the Philippine Armed Forces will turn against Marcos. It appears that Manglapus places his hope on the U.S. government to withdraw support from Marcos and, with the help of Church dissent and the collaboration of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, overthrow Marcos and restore 'Philippine Democracy'. Subtly implied, of course, is that this restored 'democracy' should be led by politicians such as ex-Senator Benigno Aquino and Raul Manglapus. (The author of the forward to the book, Harrison Salisbury, clearly suggests that Manglapus should take the place of Marcos.) Such a government, having the support of the people, Manglapus suggests, is actually better for the U.S., for it will be more stable and effective in preventing the growth of Communism in the Philippines. Marcos after all, says Manglapus, has 'dedicated Marxists' in his inner circle and, to preserve himself from being overthrown, will readily hand over the Philippines - and the US military bases - to the Communist powers.

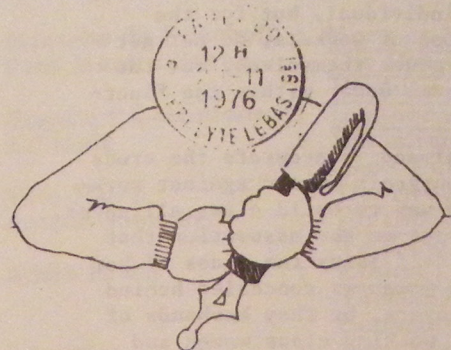
For all his idealism and good will, Manglapus shows a lot of naivete' in his view towards the U.S. government and the ruling

interests in the U.S. While his faith in the American people is praiseworthy, he appears to be sadly lacking in faith towards the Filipino people. In the meantime, the Filipino masses wage their resolute and protracted armed struggle against the U.S.-backed Marcos dictatorship, convinced that liberation cannot come from the U.S. government, but from their own resolute struggle unto final victory.

Some Comments on Manglapus' Book

The main points of Manglapus in his book seem to be:

- (1) Philippine democracy in 1972 was imperfect, but it possessed within itself the capacity to straighten itself out. (pp. 9-10)
- (2) Marcos is the executioner of Philippine democracy - he imposed martial law on September 21st 1972, manipulated the Constitutional Convention to approve the transitory provisions which legalised his dictatorship, arrested oppositionists, controlled the press and the judiciary.
- (3) The reasons given by Marcos for declaring martial law are without basis. The Communist movement is no threat at all: the Muslim Independence Movement would have been agreeable to some concession on autonomy but was pushed to armed resistance by Marcos' insistence that they surrender their household arms. The Christian Socialist Movement (which Manglapus headed) was only presenting a hopeful alternative peaceful revolution (pp. 28-30).
- (4) The real reason for the imposition of martial law was Marcos' ambition to stay in power.
- (5) The American Chamber of Commerce, the World Bank, and multinationals, (or giant U.S. firms), approved of this killing of democracy (for stability and profits) while the U.S. government has not given any sort of official disapproval of martial law. In fact, U.S. military aid continues for Marcos, and this is used to suppress the Filipino people's rights.
- (6) The root of this kind of attitude seems to be 'manifest destiny' by McKinley and Roosevelt when the same ambition for trade, profit, and domination were the policy of the U.S.
- (7) This kind of attitude and policy is however contrary to the high ideals of Washington, Jefferson, and the conscience of America, or of 'the great American people'.
- (8) His main appeal seems to be to the American people to become 'beacons of revolution' for the whole world: he appeals also to the U.S. government to officially disapprove of the Marcos dictatorship and stop military aid. He also believes that this official disapproval will encourage internal forces of peaceful change to move quickly and head off a chaotic explosion (p. 56). While he refers to George C. Lodge's proposal to help 'engines of change' in the developing nations, democratic peasant organisations, the labor federations, the movements for peaceful social liberation (CSM of course!) he dwells on no more than two groups: the Catholic Church, which he presents as a united group resisting martial law, and the Armed Forces of the Philippines ("it is no longer their duty to obey Marcos").
- (9) Moreover, Marcos has several sincere and dedicated Marxists in his inner circle (p. 26) and for his own interests could easily deliver the Philippines to the Communist camp.



letters page

Dublin, 7.7.77

Dear Ripening of Time,

The article on Domestic Labour and Social Classes in number 6 is exciting and highly relevant in the fight against the expropriation of relative surplus value. It bites at the insidious meaning of cliches and myths attached to the role of women in capitalist society, especially in Ireland. This is very important to counterpose the ideological oppression of women at the same time as showing the ideological oppression that women perform in socialising workers and future workers into capitalist relations of production.

At the same time, there appear to me to be glaring theoretical discrepancies in the article.

Firstly, surely it is commodities and not surplus which circulate in the society by the purchase of goods and services etc.? Otherwise, how could there be 'theft of the surplus from the working class'?

Secondly, 'social welfare payments serve the same function'. As what? To circulate commodities? Yes. Sure. But if they (social welfare payments) are designed to 'maintain the labourer and his/her family at less than subsistence level', while the wage, i.e. the value of labour power defined as the 'value of the means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of the labourer', then the wage and the social welfare payments serve different functions, and thus the domestic labour which uses both serves different functions in these particular cases.

For me, both the definition of the value of labour power is enhanced, and the apparent lack of homogeneity in the function of domestic labour for capital is explained by the quote from Wage Labour and Capital: "the cost of production of simple labour power therefore amounts to the cost of existence and reproduction of the worker. The price of the cost of production constitutes wages. Wages so determined are called the

wage minimum. This wage minimum, like the determination of the price of commodities by the cost of production in general, does not hold good for the single individual, but for the general. Individual workers, millions of workers, do not get enough to be able to exist and reproduce themselves, but the wages of the whole working class level down, within the fluctuations, to this minimum."

Thirdly, I regard as controversial and inaccurate the crude economic determinism of setting 'bourgeois' women against working class women. It is certainly no way to build class alliances. But primarily it inaccurately rests on the assumption that a woman who marries a bourgeois herself joins the class of her husband. The oppression of women as women is concealed behind the exploitation of workers by employers, be they husbands of women. 'In demanding birth control, working class women and petty bourgeois women are asking what the bourgeois woman already has, the right to control the rate of reproduction of labour power.'

No woman in Ireland has already the right to control the rate of reproduction of labour power. 'The bourgeoisie obtain their annulments and Mexican divorces, using contraception and yes, even sterilisation and abortion.' Under what degrading

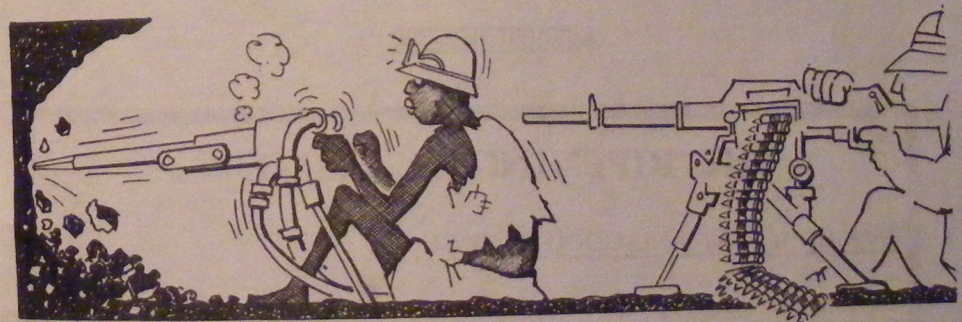
and illegal conditions? The women of the bourgeois class do not 'hire other women or services to do domestic labour, rather than touch it themselves, unless they themselves own the means of production, which is rare, and uncharacteristic of the capitalist mode of production. Their husbands are hirers. Don't judge a woman by what her husband does and is.

Fourthly, and continuing from the last point, the alliance of the working class and petty bourgeoisie must not be sought at the expense of the other oppressed groups under capitalism. Not only are women per se written off as an oppressed class, which they are, but also the children of the bourgeoisie. The paved way from the cradle to the university' is not the path of gold inferred in the article. They cannot be discussed as 'potential employers and rulers of other classes' so presumptuously and prejudicially. The article, to me, does not 'recognise that women exist', but rather that bourgeois women and working class women exist. As a Marxist-Leninist, I think that it was a mistake to subsume the oppression of women within the oppression of domestic labour.

Timothy McCarthy

Books/pamphlets received

- Suzanne de Brunhoff : Marx on Money Pluto Press March '77
 Paul Martin Sacks : The Donegal Mafia - an Irish Political Machine - Yale University Press Feb. 77
 Rogers + Callinicos : Southern Africa after Soweto - Pluto 77
 J. Steele : Socialism with a German Face - Jonathan Cape Publishers - 1977
 Tom Nairn : The Break-Up of Britain - NLB May 77
 Amado Guerrero : Philippine Society and Revolution - Ta Kung Pao, Hong Kong 1971
 Addis Hiwet : Ethiopia - From Autocracy to Bourgeois Dictatorship. Review of African Political Economy occasional publication no. 1
 Intercom : Weekly publication of the National Democratic Front of the Phillipines - reproduced in English in Europe.
 Cork Workers Club : Complete set of Historical Reprints no. s 1 to 19 . (see inside cover).
 New Left Review : no. 103 May - June 1977
 Troops Out Mvt : Bulletin
 Big Flame : Irish Bulletin no. 8
 RCG : Hands Off no. 2 Bulletin on Ireland



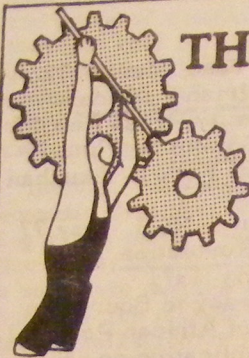
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