

SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

PAPER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST GROUP

No. 4 January 1976 7p (10p in Britain).

Against Free State
collaboration;



British Army officer
confers with Irish
soldier and Garda.

BRITAIN OUT NOW!



Labour Party
p4-5; Fianna
Fail p6;
TRADE
UNIONISTS
AGAINST
CRIMINAL
LAW BILL
p6-7; Loyalist
North p2-3

SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

No.4 January 1976

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CREEPING

The concept of a Loyalist Takeover has become very popular since the R.M.G. first put it forward. Unfortunately it has also been used far too loosely.

In this article we will examine what exactly the R.M.G. said when it first put forward this idea; attempt again to clarify what we mean by Loyalism; examine its relationship with British Imperialism; and finally see where the R.M.G. could extend its analysis and its perspectives.

The Loyalist Takeover

RMG first made this analysis in a Plough article entitled 'Britain's New Turn' which was reprinted in our pamphlet 'British Strategy in Northern Ireland' (BSNI) and in Inprecor (a theoretical and analytical journal of the Fourth International). We stated that Britain outlined a new strategy in

its July 4 White Paper to take account of the Ulster Workers Council (U.W.C.) strike. We stated Britain had a strategy of favouring a Loyalist Takeover: "If Britain is to implement this strategy then it must rely on a molecular process to which it supplies the energy but which it is not directly part of. In other words Britain cannot afford a decisive blow against the minority at this moment (July '74 - J.G.). Such a move would



TOWARDS LOYALIST RULE

unite the entire community, oust the SDLP and send tremors of revolt across the border into the South. Instead Britain is depending on the changing relationship of forces between the Catholic and Protestant communities. Within the framework of its previous approach Britain tried to keep the Loyalist in check while dealing with the minority itself. Now it is releasing the damper and permitting a balance of forces more favourable to itself to emerge" (BSNI p. 36). In other words we did not see a Loyalist Takeover as a coup but as a gradual process of strengthening the Loyalists and increased co-operation between them and Britain.

What then is Loyalism? Essentially it is a current within Unionism which grew in reaction to a genuine democratic and later revolutionary upsurge in the Catholic working class, opposed all efforts by either the Unionist Party or the British government to grant additional rights to the Catholics in the Six Counties and which has successfully reunited the different parts of the old Unionist party on that basis. To put it in another way Loyalism dominates Unionism because of its total hostility to the Catholics in the Six Counties. This analysis is borne out if we look at the increasing rightward shift in the various politicians who have led 'moderate' Unionism: O'Neill, Chichester-Clark, Faulkner the interner, and lately the most grotesque of all, Bill 'shoot to kill' Craig. To borrow a phrase from Michael Farrell of Peoples Democracy they have all broken the iron law of Loyalism: No Compromise. Furthermore Loyalism's capacity for believing it is being betrayed is more or less infinite as long as the Catholic working class remains undefeated. (Note Paisley's new pamphlet where old photographs of the unfortunate Craig shaking hands with O'Neill have been reproduced!)

Loyalism and Britain

What then is the relationship between British Imperialism and Loyalism? There is a problem in establishing what the exact relationship between



the two is since although both are objectively reactionary it does not follow that each will under any circumstances favour the same policy. Since Britain still in the long term (i.e. in a historic sense) favours a federal solution and the Loyalists want to hang on to Stormont it follows that at some stage Britain will attempt to attack the Loyalists. Before doing this however Britain must ensure the Catholic revolt is quelled. The point we are making here is that on its own (i.e. solely using the British Army) Britain has been unable to smash the Catholics. For this reason they have enlisted the help of the Loyalists (e.g. Ree's capitulation to the Loyalist demands for a Loyalist 'Home Guard' in Autumn '74 through increasing the R.U.C. Reserve; dual membership between the Ulster Defence Regiment (an Army regiment) and Loyalist para-military groups; the handing over of Army intelligence information to the Loyalists; the strengthening of the torture and intelligence gathering apparatus)

The Way Forward

One of the ways of doing this is to launch a campaign for British withdrawal from Ireland. In the South Fianna Fail (F.F.) and Aontacht Eireann will be taking up this issue anyway. Though this campaign has dangerous implications anti-imperialists must use the opportunity to launch a campaign with a concrete basis. Does F.F. favour the dissolution of the Special Branch so as to stop British intelligence operations? Do they favour the withdrawal of the Irish Army from the border so as to hinder British Army operations in the Six Counties? Do they favour an end to Gardai-R.U.C. liaison? What course of action do they favour in the case against Britain at Strasbourg? What is the SDLP attitude now that they have failed to get 'agreement' with the UUCC? These kinds of issues put more clearly ahead of us the goal of a 32-County Workers Republic. Let us fight for it now!

**BRITAIN OUT NOW !
TROOPS OUT NOW !
NO RETURN TO STORMONT !**

JAMES GALLAGHER

The Truce

Looking at the truce from this angle we can understand it a little more clearly. The number of Army/RUC casualties has dropped dramatically while the number of assassination attacks (aided by the army) on the Catholics has increased. The army criticises the truce because (like the Loyalists) it believes strong-arm methods can defeat the Catholic masses. They have a 'Bloody Sunday' approach while Rees as a 'Convention' approach. They disagree over HOW to implement a Loyalist takeover not WHETHER to implement it. Also we should not underestimate the potential disarray in the Catholic community caused by the lack of perspectives in the Republican Movement, the destructive effect of the attacks on the Officials, the British bombing campaign, and the adventurist Herrema kidnapping. It is the Loyalists who hold the advantage at the moment and we must direct our energies towards restoring the balance in favour of the anti-imperialist movement.



Troops
Out
Now!

LABOUR PARTY DODGES

Since the 1970 Coalition conference in Cork, Labour Party radicals like Noel Brown and Matt Merrigan have argued against leaving the Labour Party on the grounds that the deepening crisis of capitalism would discredit the Labour leadership and initiate a new left-turn in the Party. Now that the full force of the crisis is being felt their prophecies have been shown to be groundless. The conferences of both last year and this year have confirmed a decisive right-wing shift in Labour.

The evidence is plentiful enough. On the national question Labour is becoming a thorough "law and order" party. Opposition to the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Bill was overwhelmingly drowned out, by both floor and platform. In the process the platform was encouraged to prevent the trade union's spokesperson, Pat Rabbit, from voicing their opposition to the Bill.

Even an amendment put by Barry Desmond, chief of bureaucrats, opposing repression in general (but not including the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Bill) was washed away in the flood of enthusiasm for collaboration with British imperialism. Just as the Northern Ireland Labour Party slid over into the camp of Unionism so now a real danger exists that Irish Labour will sever its tenuous links with the traditions of the

Irish working class and become just another "comprador" party.

On economic questions too, Labour has taken an extraordinary right-wing course. Last year the economic resolution sponsored by the trade unions was decisively defeated, with only the trade union delegates voting for it. This year the unions contented themselves with proposing purile stop-gap measures which were unanimously agreed upon. The attitude of the delegates was epitomised by the enthusiastic reception given to Corish's address which spelt out the need for yet another reduction in real wages next year, coupled with "the harshest budget ever in peacetime". Keating, sincere man that he is, revealed the real magnitude in the shift of Labour's attitudes, when he admitted that they were participating in a government that could only implement policies similar to those of Mussolini and Franco!

RUC; re-building the loyalist police

While the British Government has been noisy in its opposition to putting forward funds to safeguard jobs in the six counties, it recently showed its willingness to "invest" in the RUC, to the tune of £30m.

The way this money is to be spent, as yet largely unannounced, reveals a strengthening of the machinery of repression aimed against the anti-unionist working class, in Belfast particularly.

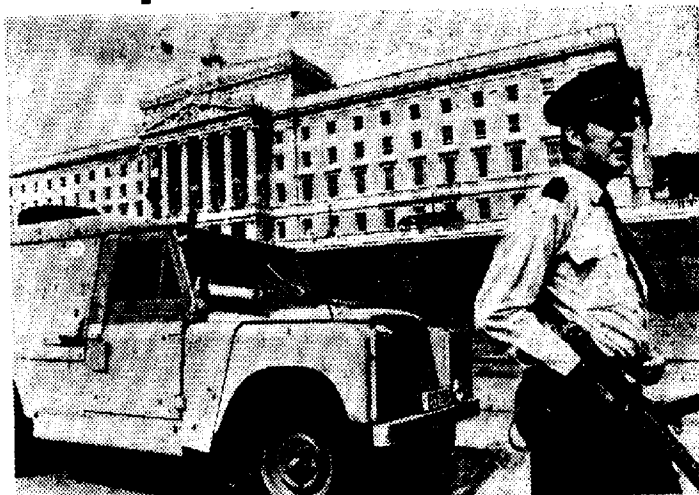
Dominating catholic ghettos

Firstly, the Hastings Street barracks at the foot of the Falls Road is to be replaced. Dwarfing the present barracks, the new building will be well placed to oversee the whole lower Falls area. It is planned to be at the Grosvenor Road, Durham Street junction, swallowing up Cullingtree and Stanley Streets, and extending as far up as Willow Street.

The second major project is in North Belfast where over 100 houses are currently being bulldozed at the junction of the Cavehill and Antrim Roads to make way for another massive RUC station. This barracks, in addition to being within minutes of Ardoyne, breaks up the anti-unionist lower Cavehill and Newington area, and in unison with the existing North Queen Street station is well placed to ensure a close RUC eye on the New Lodge Road, less than a mile away.

These two massive projects are strategically placed as centres for operation against the main anti-unionist areas of Belfast. Linking with them are plans for the extension of the Dunmurry barracks, interrogation centre for much of Andersonstown, Lenadoon and Twinbrook.

Allied Belfast plans provide for enlargement of the existing East Belfast RUC headquarters.



But notably, no similar plans exist for building at loyalist areas as the Lower Falls and North Belfast developments.

Such plans are of use only to a centralised force determined to control the anti-unionist population, in other words; a local police force capable of defending Imperialist interests and the six county state.

Watch the RUC!

The morale of the RUC is badly in need of such bolstering. Conflict with their British Army "masters" has led to threats of mass resignation in Derry. Disagreement with Government policy in the truce with the Provos resulted in the threatened resignation of Chief Constable Flanagan. Alongside this has gone the widespread collaboration with loyalist paramilitaries including the feeding of information about anti-unionists. But most frustrating of all to the RUC's desire to get on with the job of defending

the loyalist state is the continuing resistance to them in the Catholic ghettos of Belfast and Derry. Such opposition destroyed plans to ease the RUC back into the areas which started at the end of last year.

The British Government is rebuilding stations destroyed over the past years, Cushendall, Lurgan, Chichester Road, Belfast, and, of course, the Castlereagh interrogation centre. The RUC is demanding "more effective" equipment than their present Land Rovers and Stirling sub-machine guns, a return to 1969 heavy type armaments.

Rebuilding and re-equipping can only restore the RUC's morale if they can use these to force their way into the anti-Unionist areas.

Resistance today is significant, but patchy and incomplete. The guard against the RUC must not be dropped. There is much behind the smiling face it attempts to present at the present time. In plans to rebuild loyalist domination of the North the RUC is central.

WORKING CLASS ISSUES

No consolation for the Left

The "Lefts" will be trying to console themselves with their "victories" in pushing through a resolution calling on the parliamentary party to submit Bills to the Dail, within six months, demanding the nationalisation of natural resources and the creation of a state-owned smelter. Of course such victories have been won in the past – e.g. on contraception, at last year's conference – but have been contemptuously ignored by the parliamentary party. (In addition three of four hundred delegates were absent when the vote on these issues were taken). On the eve of last year's conference Corish publicly stated that despite what the constitution of his party lays down – Labour government ministers would not be bound by the decisions of annual conference; without first passing a resolution rebuking Corish, any other resolutions won by the Left are nothing but hollow victories.

Anyhow, such incidental achievement cannot conceal the bankruptcy of the Left's perspective. The whole trend of the Labour Party since 1970 has been indisputably towards the Right – the exodus of genuine left wing militants, including the wholesale expulsion of members of the Socialist Labour Alliance; increased independence of the trade unions exemplified in the defeat of their nominee for the Treasuryship and the unanimous rejection by the leadership of the humble request by the unions for six places on the Administrative Council; a decline in working class electoral support as shown in the last general election when the party's vote fell from 17% in 1969 to 13.8% in 1973 (in Dublin Labour vote fell from 28% to 23% and in Cork city it fell from 15% to 8%); a shift in the Party's base from urban to rural areas, as shown by the fact that at this year's conference only a quarter of the delegates were from Dublin where Labour has half of its electoral support.

In this context the prospect of winning considerable sections of the working class to socialism from within the Labour Party, much less any hope of capturing control of the party machine, is wishful thinking.

Unable to argue convincingly that the working class is turning to Labour, Brown, Merrigan and the Liason of the Left use as their triumph card for remaining in the party, the fact that the trade unions are affiliated to Labour. But they never ask themselves what the nature of this affiliation is. An answer to this question would show all too clearly the purely formal nature of this affiliation.

The trade unions do not participate in the internal life of the party. Unlike the situation in the British Labour Party the Unions are not represented at branch or constituency level nor even at national level; they participate only once a year – at annual conference. Even there their participation is strictly limited since on the one hand, they have only 10% of the delegates (compared with 75% in the British Labour Party) and on the other hand they usually don't bother to send a full contingent, in addition to which the delegates are not elected from the Branches but are appointed.



Finally, it is true that the Unions almost entirely finance the Labour Party. But it is not correct to say that this is done through the "political levy" on the rank and file. It is even questionable where more than a handful of trade unionists are aware that they pay a political levy. The funds raised in this way are only a fraction of the money allocated by the Unions to the Labour Party. The bulk of the finance advanced by the Unions comes directly out of Union funds without any prior consultation with the rank and file.

In a word the links between the trade unions and the Labour Party are purely formal. These links do not mean at all that the currents of the class struggle run through the Party.

No political life no democracy

The tremours created by the class struggle do not penetrate the Labour Party, as a result there is no real internal life. One of the consequences of this is that membership of the Party is by and large, nominal. Apart from a few hundred "activists" (i.e. people who attend branch meetings now and then but do not participate in politics in any other way) membership exists only on paper. (Where the 1,000 delegates at this year's conference came from can be judged from the fact that Stevie Coughlan T.D. bought credentials for eight branches from the Standing Orders Committee while the Conference was in session!)

Under these circumstances it is futile to think that a real socialist force could be established in the Labour Party or that even a modicum of democracy could be achieved. With no real internal life in the party the Left-wing has no solid ground on which to base a stand against the attacks of the bureaucracy. Consequently, the Left, if it wishes to stay in the party, must keep its activity within limits and tone down its politics – this explains the enemic rhetoric of such groups as the Liason of the Left and their historic failure to win any significant number of adherents. On the other hand, the Party bureaucracy, basing itself on a largely fictional membership, is free to manoeuvre whatever way it chooses.

Socialist demagogy vs Socialist action

The logic of this state of affairs is that if socialists dare to speak the truth consistently they will very soon find themselves expelled. And its only because the Liason of the Left, and other less important groups, choose to abandon real socialist principles that they are tolerated within the party.

The course of action pursued by members of the Liason of the Left is sufficient proof of this. They can talk all they like about socialism. Corish, Halligan and O'Brien enjoy their demagogy – it provides them with a convenient Left cover and allows them to pretend that Labour is a democratic party. Actions are what count. Why is the Liason of the Left not in a united front with other socialists and Republicans against the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Bill? Why does Merrigan not call on the A.T.G.W.U. To take industrial action against the governments attempts to unload the burden of the economic crisis on the workers? Why are they not involved in the various shop-steward committees set up to fight the National Wage Agreements? Why are they not supporting those militant women who have launched an independent fight against their oppression?

Why ?

Because to do such things would mean that they would have to venture outside the stifling confines of the Labour Party (proof in itself that the real issues of the class struggle do not penetrate the Labour Party). And that would bring about conflict within the Party leadership and possibly result in expulsions. So Brown, Merrigan and the Liason of the Left prefer to let the actual struggles of the workers pass them by rather than forfeit their Labour Party membership cards.

The only conclusion that can be drawn from the timid behaviour of the Liason of the Left (and other sects with a similar perspective in the Labour Party) is that if a genuine socialist movement is to be built in Ireland, and if it can be built only by combatting the treachery of the Labour bureaucracy, then it must be built primarily outside the Labour Party. The choice is staying in the Labour Party at any cost and degenerating to the level of Roddy Connolly, Justin Keating and Mick O'Leary – all professed Marxists in their day! – or openly proclaiming the principles of socialism.

Limerick RMG

Fianna Fail — sheep in wolf's clothing

After Fianna Fail reversed their policy from tacit support of British imperialism's policy in the Six Counties to calling for a British withdrawal, the leader of the Party Jack Lynch, stated that F.F.'s policy had never changed its foundation in 1926. In a peculiar way he is correct because Fianna Fail has always been a party which is only Republican in name and pro-imperialist in fact. As an organisation Fianna Fail has always had a curious ability to be 'united' no matter how seriously it might be split, and at the same time (especially under Lynch's leadership) to be racked with a crisis which is so deep that it would have torn any other party apart. *To put it another way we can say that Fianna Fail is an ideal instrument of the Free State bourgeoisie because though it has been unable to put down Republicanism it has been able to take advantage of the weakness of the Republican movement for meaningless rhetoric to defeat it much more comprehensively than the Unionists the British or the more openly pro-imperialist Fine Gael could.*

Protectionism Out -- Imperialism In

We must also understand that F.F.'s republicanism does have a material basis: — a brief analysis of the different factions in the party and the way British Imperialism increased its control over the Free State in the 60's and 70's will help to illustrate this point. F.F. from when it achieved power in 1932, through its protectionist policies, built native capitalism in Ireland.

In the post-war era however such policies were no longer viable because Irish capitalism was too small and underdeveloped to withstand the pressure of a rapidly expanding international capital, rejuvenated in Europe by American Imperialism, while at the same time being too weak to compete with it on equal terms. The State therefore sought, through such bodies as the Industrial Development Authority (I.D.A.), to attract foreign capital into the country by offering it extremely favourable terms. In this way native capitalism became much more firmly tied to foreign capitalism (and particularly British capitalism) and was able to benefit from the 'long boom' after the Second World War. Politically this gave rise to the 'Mohair Suit Republicans' grouped primarily around the figure of Charles Haughey. This group however was still based around native capitalist industries such as construction, whereas another group which was represented first by Lynch, entirely owed its existence to British Imperialism (e.g. I.D.A. factories, managers of multi-national companies etc.)

Haughey: Demotion and Promotion

This second group first had pretensions towards liberalism but found itself increasingly hampered by the inability of British Imperialism to control the situation in the Six Counties so that it had to invoke notions of the Strong State (e.g. F.G. Senator Alexis Fitzgerald's call for 'greater terror' to be used by the State than what can be mustered against it) and thus fall back on an alliance with that old reliable law-and-order institution, the Catholic Church.

After the Lynch faction had gained control of Fianna Fail through the 1970 Arms Trial Crisis, when Haughey, Boland, Blaney and O'Morain all left the cabinet through one means or another, F.F. set about fulfilling the needs of this second group with great gusto. Desmond O'Malley, Cooney's predecessor in the Justice Ministry, was particularly active in this effort. They did not however go all the way in attacking Republicanism as an ideology, a task the Coalition Government elected early in 1973 was much more willing to undertake.

During all of this the Haughey wing of F.F. was never defeated; indeed Haughey himself first got elected as a Vice-President of the organisation, then as Honorary Treasurer after a convincing victory over a Lynch nominee, and finally he returned to the front bench as a spokesman on health in January 1975. This process was taken a stage further through the demagogic F.F. opposition to the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Bill, and lately through the policy switch on the North.

Mayo: Why F.G. Won

In no sense however is Haughey a "progressive bourgeois" because he is also for instance strongly in favour of the E.E.C. against nationalisation of natural resources, and a supporter of the attempt by privileged sectors of the medical profession to disrupt the health service. Furthermore, given F.F.'s pathetic showing at the last 3 bye-elections, he provides them with a conceivable means of regaining power. It would be a mistake to view the F.G. victory in Mayo as a repudiation of F.F.'s new policy; F.F. indeed bent over backwards to support the government's handling of the Herrema affair, the most immediate "law and order" issue. Neither was the F.F. reverse caused by a sympathy vote for F.G.; by these criteria F.F. ought to have gained support in the two Galway bye-elections where they also lost support. Also it is obvious from our analysis that the new turn was not just a gimmick for the Mayo bye-election. F.G. really gained support in these areas because the farmers have been cushioned from the recession by buoyant meat prices and there is also the factor of increased EEC subventions to be taken into account. Given also that the Labour Party is in danger of splitting or being broken over the National Question (See 'Socialist Republic' No. 1), we should not assume that the Coalition has gained support throughout the country.

Republicans: Confusion or Clarity?

It follows from this analysis that the need for clarity among Republicans and socialists over the issues they face is greater than ever. Perhaps in awareness of this a debate appears to be opening up over the nature of Republicanism. While for instance not everything in the article about Republicanism by Bernadette MacAliskey in 'Hibernia' is correct, she does open up questions the Republican Movement has not faced before, and which it must face if it is to deal with this 'united' organisation, Fianna Fail. While Ruairi O'Bradaigh is correct in saying that F.F. are opportunists, he shows little awareness of the problems posed by this new development. Can it be that the Republican Movement has learnt nothing from F.F.'s similar manoeuvres in the '30's and the '50's (up to 20 F.F. T.D.s attended Sean South's funeral) and that its only strategy is to denounce them?

JAMES GALLAGHER

TRA ACT

Interview with Johnny Byrne, member of the Liaison of the Left of the Irish Labour Party and Irish Municipal Employees Union.

"The Criminal Jurisdiction Bill is very dangerous. It is the latest of a code of laws that is going to be used against the workers and their organisations.

"This legislation is a betrayal of everything that the parties in government promised when they were in opposition. Of course we expected nothing of Fine Gael but Labour is compromising far too much.

"The Trade Union Movement is not doing much; it could do a great deal more. There is too little co-ordinated action. A good sign, however is the new Committee of Trade Unionists within the Labour Party using pressure to reform it. They are very firmly against the Criminal Jurisdiction Bill. But it has no perspective of bringing this struggle and others against repressive legislation, to the rank and file. The problem here is that the tradition exists in the Labour Party and trade union movement that it should confine itself to bread and butter issues.

"Eventually, the trade union movement must give the lead on the issue of civil liberties and speak out against repression. The Offences Against the State Act was used against unemployed activists in the 1940's including members of the Labour Party. The government down here is frightened of North/South working class unity, which may yet develop.

"Trade Unions should call meetings of their members and educate them as to the dangers of growing repression. The working class should be organised. Our own small union will do its bit, but the Dublin Council of Trade Unions should be prepared to organise such campaigns."

Interview with Dermot Whelan, branch committee member of L.G.P.S.U. and delegate to the Dublin Council of Trade Unions.

"It is clear that this government is proceeding at intervals to attack Civil Liberties. The Offences Against the State Act is not sufficient for the purpose of harassing and imprisoning anti-imperialists. It has got to the stage now that with the Criminal Justice Bill they are quite prepared to co-operate in full with British "justice".

Support t demonstr and lobb

TRADE UNIONISTS CALL FOR ACTION AGAINST LAW BILL

"This seems to be, because they realise that the struggle in the Six Counties is reaching a climax and accordingly their interests are at stake. This explains their haste in trying to push through the Criminal Jurisdiction Bill.

"As the Trade Union Movement is already opposed on paper to the Bill, the problem is to get the unions to act.

"There are two immediate forms of action, the trade unions could take; dissident Senators, Mickie Mullen, and T.D.'s, Thornley and O'Connell, should be pressurised to maintain their stand, as the vote could be vital.

Secondly, at the critical stages of the reading the I.T.G.W.U. as the largest union should organise stoppages of work and hold marches to Dail Eireann.

"More generally, a defeat of the Bill through such actions as these, should initiate a campaign to eliminate repressive legislation including the O.A.S.A., the Forcible Entry and Occupations Bill etc.

It is necessary to form a committee of trade unions to spearhead a fight for such action.

"This committee could hold public meetings and when possible make widespread propaganda on its policies. Many trade unionists are interested in doing this now. But there is insufficient co-ordination. A small beginning was made earlier this year, with a petition drawn up in support of the Portlaoise hunger strikers.

"If it seems the Bill will be passed, the I.C.T.U. should call on all its members to support a one day general strike, before the final vote."

In this interview with Joan Carmichael, branch official with the Workers Union of Ireland, sums up the content of the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Bill and gives us her own views about it.

"The operation of the main provisions of the Bill i.e. common law offences depends on the existence of the Special Criminal Court and yet the Minister for Justice denies that the Bill institutionalises this non jury court. In the Senate debate the Minister acknowledged that "it was

envisaged that practically all cases under the Bill would be heard in the Special Criminal Court".

"The Bill enables the Special Criminal Court to take evidence on commission in "Northern Ireland" and the written statement of evidence thus obtained will be taken as evidence in the Special Criminal Court. The accused has the right to attend these sessions but will be detained in British Custody throughout the taking of such evidence. The Bill cannot protect the accused from the torture and deep interrogation methods of the British. The Minister scoffs at this argument when presented by opponents of the Bill despite the documented evidence of continuing torture and beating of men and women and children when taken for questioning and the torture cases which the Irish Government have brought against the British at the Court of Human Rights. Even defendants who have been granted bail by the Special Criminal Court will be required to go into British Custody if they wish to avail of the right to be present at the taking of evidence against them. No defendant could risk taking the option to attend such a hearing and effectively all evidence taken in the 6 counties will be in the absences of the accused.

"A person charged with escaping from custody in "Northern Ireland" can be convicted by the Special Criminal Court and sentenced to a term of imprisonment of up to seven years. While the Minister stated that anyone escaping from internment will not be liable under this section the fact is that anyone in the six counties serving a sentence for escaping from internment and who subsequently escapes will be liable for conviction here. The Bill also provides that a person remanded in custody in the 6 counties,

and such remands can and have extended to periods in excess of 12 months, who escapes will be liable for conviction here.

"The Bill provides for secret hearings of the taking of evidence - no press; no public can attend no one to see the evidence of beatings and torture or to hear the evidence.

The Bill extends the powers of arrest and search without warrant beyond those that exist under the Offences Against the State Act and Amendments. It creates new offences: **robbery - life imprisonment on conviction; burglary - 14 years imprisonment on conviction; aggravated burglary - life imprisonment on conviction; unlawful seizing of any vehicle - 15 years imprisonment. It amends the Firearms Act 1964 to put the onus of proof of innocence on the defendant.**

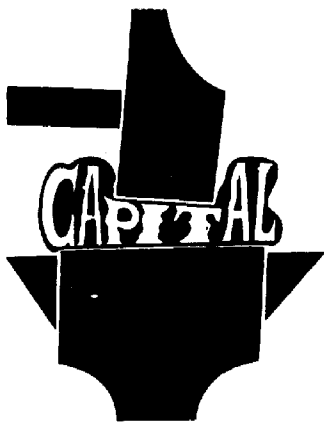
"The Special Criminal Court is an affront to Justice and the Rule of Law and the Criminal Jurisdiction Bill establishes this Court and trial without jury as part of the normal process of law in the 26 counties. The Bill is not a temporary measure, but yet a further permanent piece of repressive legislation that extends powers of arrest and search without warrant. Initially the Bill if instituted will be used against republicans but it will never be used against loyalist fascists and the British Army, whether they bomb Dublin or Monaghan, or shoot 13 unarmed men in Derry or Belfast.

"The Criminal Law Jurisdiction Bill will do nothing to solve the problems created by the British presence in the six counties. It will not achieve the repression of the minority of the six counties; it will not succeed where the Defence of the Realm Act; the Special Powers Act; the Offences Against the State Act; The Emergency Provisions Act; the Prevention of Terrorism Act have failed."

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At its November meeting the Dublin District Council of the ITGWU took steps to spell out in practical terms, the Unions opposition to the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Bill. A resolution proposed by Anne Speed and seconded by Cathal Mac Lian (both of No. 2 Branch which is also Conor Cruise O'Brien's Branch) was passed calling for a demonstration to Leinster House; a mass lobby of the Dail on the day the vote is taken; a similar action by all unions affiliated to the Dublin Council of Trade Unions.

Socialists and trade union activists should make this resolution as widely known as possible and prepare to mobilise the greatest possible support for these activities.



The fight is on for the defence of living standards

According to a number of forecasts the Irish economy is on the threshold of a new economic upturn. During the middle of October the annual report of the European Commission, the Minister for Finance and Dr. Brendan Menton (reporting to the Irish Independent's Investment Conference) all predicted new growth in the next couple of months. Accordingly, the government and employers are exhorting workers to greater sacrifices; they argue that if workers tighten their belts by just another notch, then all will be well in a year or two.

The International recession

All the forecasts of new economic expansion have been placed in the context of the gathering recovery from the international recession. To see how realistic these forecasts are it is necessary to look at the prospects for the world economy.

Various causes have been cited to explain the international recession. The one that stands out most prominently is the long term decline in the profitability of industry which has reduced the incentive to invest and curbed growth. To reestablish industrial production on a profitable basis would require large scale rationalisation of plant, equipment and labour. Such a project has incalculable social and political implications which capitalism prefers to avoid for the moment. Instead it has been decided to buy time by injecting huge amounts of credit into the economies of the advanced capitalist countries. Assuming no "accidents" (such as a banking collapse or a war in the Middle East) this move will undoubtedly lead to a major boom within a year or so. But it will be impossible to live on credit indefinitely. The new accumulation of debt will have to be repaid at some stage. This could be accomplished only through an enormous increase in the production of real wealth. In the absence of a major restructuring of the world economy this trick will prove impossible. The inevitable outcome of the recent credit injections will therefore be a new wave of inflation which will reproduce on a larger scale, all the malignant factors in the present recession.

In a word then, while the short term prospects are for an upturn, the medium term prospects are for a recession of even greater depth than the present one. That this is not just the wishful thinking of Marxists like ourselves can be judged from the words of one of the most authoritative voices of international capitalism, *The Economist*.

As far back as April *The Economist* predicted an unprecedented boom by 1977, but it added: "This 1977 boom may reproduce all the worst features of the previous one — a bigger commodity price explosion and so the return of domestic wage-push inflation. So far each successive bust after a boom has left inflation higher than before. The world economy may now be on the 'stop-go' trip which has bedeviled the British economy for so long. The 1977 boom is very likely in its turn, to breed another slump. The international economy looks like becoming dangerously unstable" (21-18 April p. 80)

The crisis of Irish capitalism

In this context what does the future hold for Irish capitalism? Irish capitalism is export orientated and is very sensitive to international developments. Ireland is always one of the first and hardest hit by unfavourable international conditions and accordingly is usually in a weak position to take advantage of new openings when they eventually occur.

The September 9th issue of the *Confederation of Irish Industry's Newsletter* painted a dreary picture of the domestic economy — output and employment were down to the 1972 level; 94% of all manufacturing firms were operating below capacity and industry as a whole was operating 20% below capacity. Add to that the fact that after-tax profits of companies reporting in the first quarter of 1975 were up by only +0.4% on the first quarter of 1974 and that after-tax profits of companies reporting in the second quarter of 1975 were down by -3.3% on the second quarter of 1974 (c/f Trade Union Information July-Sept. '75); plus, that industrial investment for 1975 is expected to be down 6% (c/f Central Bank Report Autumn '75 p. 18) and the picture of stagnation is complete.

When the actual depth of the crisis in Ireland is taken into consideration it becomes obvious that a revival of the international economy will not automatically lead to an improvement in the Irish situation. To be convinced of this it is only necessary to look at the way our exports have been behaving lately. While the volume of manufactured exports in the first quarter of this year compared favourably with the same period last year, the second quarter witnessed a dramatic drop of 10% compared with the second quarter of 1974; this spectacular decline in the volume of manufactured exports has been far greater than the fall in the total demand in Ireland's export markets (c/f C.I.I. Newsletter *ibid*). There is a clear indication here that if and when opportunities open up again in foreign markets, Ireland will be unable to take advantage of them. Thus while the medium term prospects for international capitalism are gloomy, even the short term holds little optimism for Ireland. Naturally the government and employers are worried about the crisis. Earlier they had a difference of opinion on the urgency of the situation, with the government and trade union

bureaucracy — for obvious political reasons — not wanting to make a sudden attack on the living standards of the workers. Since then the government has gone fully behind the demands of the employers. As the speech of the Minister for Finance (on the 16th of October) and the C.I.I.'s Newsletter (of the 25th of October) shows, the government and employers are now united on these main issues.

(i) indexation should be done away with and instead a wage freeze with the same minimal across-the-board pay increase for everyone, should be introduced.

(ii) the government should be involved in national collective bargaining not just as an employer but as government. The significance of this is that any wage freeze could be backed up by repressive legislation if necessary.

(iii) budgetary policy should be deflationary i.e. should not aim at increasing social welfare or reducing income tax, etc. (see also Corish's speech at the Labour Party annual conference).

Already under the current national wage agreement — even with the protection of indexation and a flat rate increase — REAL wages have fallen by 0.6% last year (c/f Trade Union Information — October '75 — these are official figures which do not allow for the fraud of the Consumer Price Index, taxation etc.) — the first official fall in at least twenty years. The same statistics show that the previous year real wages increased by only 0.9%. Without even the limited protection NWA's indexation and negotiated flat rate increase, real wages will fall even more drastically.

First task — defend trade union rights!

The performance of the trade union leaders in capitulating on the public sector's pay increases and their timidity in face of the proposed legislation to cut bank official's wages, is evidence that they do not intend doing much to oppose the latest moves of the government and employers. But, there are clear signs that workers will not easily accept such a stand. After the great decline in industrial militancy following the signing of the first national wage agreement, the combativity of the workers is on the rise again — last year more work days were lost compared with the previous two years combined. Moreover, the figures for last year also show that most of this activity occurred outside the official control of the trade union bureaucracy.

This indicates that, notwithstanding the demoralisation caused by massive unemployment, there exists the basis for organising among workers, real opposition to the government and employers offensive. Socialists and militant trade unionists must convince the majority of workers, that by making sacrifices now, for the sake of capitalism, they will be leaving themselves open to being hoodwinked on an even larger scale in the future.

One of the key issues around which they can begin to do this is the issue of the democratic rights of the trade union movement. After the governments threats against the ICTU during the "prices package deal" it is clear that the government has no inhibition about introducing legislation to curb the rights of trade unions.

A fight against all attempts to interfere with trade union rights will be one of the most elementary and convenient ways of showing workers that the real intentions of the employers is not to create more jobs or increase real wages, but to save their own hides by whatever means necessary. A campaign by socialists and militant trade unionists on this theme will help foster a more suitable climate for initiating a real struggle in defence of workers living standards and against the capitalist system in general.

JAMES CONWAY

Solidarity with Crown workers



BETRAYED

The Militant determination of the Crown Controls workers who have been on strike for seven months was demonstrated in an A.U.E.W. march of over 200 on November 10th. But the march could not make up for the failure to organise active solidarity work.

The principles involved in this strike — the longest in Galway history — make it one of major importance to Irish trade unionism as a whole.

It started when Martin Daly, Shop Steward, was sacked for alleged abusive language to a supervisor after 20 men had been let go. The motives of the management in sacking this man, who was too militant a representative of the workers for the bosses' peace of mind, have become more clearly exposed as the strike has progressed.

An attack on trade unionism

The American-owned firm have refused arbitration, have maintained their decision not to reinstate the steward or even go to the Labour Court or the Rights Commissioner; they have used scab labour with police protection. The blocking of materials to the factory has forced the management to make their first offer, which is that the steward be taken back as a sub-contractor and lose his service. This insulting offer, which could mean him being sacked again after a few months, shows their determination to ensure that he can never act as steward again. Trade unionists cannot accept any attempts by the bosses to determine who shall and who shall not represent them, let alone this blatant assault on basic principles of the right to organise. The demand must be for full reinstatement, with absolutely no infringement of the rights of the workers to elect whoever they please.

In spite of the long stalemate the striking workers have maintained a high level of militancy; but some of their initiatives have been watered down by the strike committee. In particular, while money has been collected from other trade unionists in the area, who have correctly seen the management's attitude as an attack on trade unionism itself, there has been a slowness and a reluctance on the part of the strike committee to popularise the strike amongst Galway workers and get their active support, or to put pressure on the Trades Council to give them real backing. The strike committee has been hesitant to try to spread the strike or to organise any real opposition to the scabs. A suggestion from the rank and file for a mass picket to stop scabs entering the factory was more or less diffused by the strike committee.

Spread the strike

Rank and file militancy is essential. But it is not enough on its own. The struggle must be extended, to transform the passive support of Galway trade unionists into active solidarity. The Trades Council has for seven months abdicated from its responsibility to co-ordinate solidarity work. The Crown workers can and must take matters into their own hands, go out to other trade unionists and call upon them to take an active part in a struggle that is in reality the struggle of all Galway trade unionists. Such calls must provide a focus for organising solidarity, to bring together trade union branches and shop stewards, to provide co-ordination in leafleting, in collecting on a regular basis, and in organising support for marches and mass pickets.

Unity is strength!

The utmost force of the Galway workers as a whole must be thrown against the Crown management. What the bosses can deal with and delay on in isolation, they will retreat from when faced with the united action of the Galway workers. As support is won in more and more workplaces, token stoppages can help build up pressure towards a one-day general strike in Galway.



Women at Bruno Shirts of Galway, marched to ITGWU headquarters at Prospect Hill, Galway, on Friday Nov. 14th, to demand that their union 'representative' Sean Meade, take action to get rises due to them under the National Wage Agreement. They are also withholding union dues in protest at his complete disregard for the interests of the workers he is supposed to represent.

This is not the first time they have been betrayed by Sean Meade and the ITGWU bureaucracy. Last year two girls were sacked by Bruno's and eight girls who had worked in the factory for two to five years were put on a trial basis. Despite union assurances following a meeting with Bruno boss, Pancaldi, only days previous that each individual job was safe, union representatives sided firmly with management, even taking over the management's role in rejecting the workers' demands. When the workers placed pickets on the factory, the union refused to make it official. When they continued with unofficial pickets, union officials, Meade and Breathnach, informed them on behalf of the managers, who had buggered off to Italy, that they were dismissed. In a statement from the Bruno Strike Committee, they said that their experience with the union representatives "left us wondering who was paying the union subs — the union members or the management."

Sean Meade's blatant class collaboration is not inflicted only on the Bruno's workers, either. Attending a union meeting at another sweatshop — Vincent Francis, where the workers make jeans — he invited the manager to the meeting, and proceeded to lecture the women there about absenteeism!

Bottom Dog fights back!

A new North Munster workers' paper was launched in Limerick recently. It was called "The Bottom Dog" and is printed and published by a group of workers who are dissatisfied with the bureaucratic set-up and lack of militancy within the Trade Union Movement, and who are anxious to help improve the standard of living of themselves and their fellow workers. It is named after a workers' paper which operated in Limerick in the early part of this century.

The main purpose of 'The Bottom Dog' is to provide a strong voice for the workers of Limerick, Clare and North Tipperary. It will highlight and support the everyday struggles of the working people and will be open to workers to air their grievances and express their views on such issues as strikes, unemployment and redundancies, the cost of living and other social issues. The Bottom Dog is not a platform for any individual, or political group.

The success or failure of the Bottom Dog, in its aim to provide a strong workers' voice in North Munster, depends largely on the level of support it receives from the workers in the region.

Anyone wishing to have articles inserted in 'The Bottom Dog' should contact any of the following:

Joe Harrington, 41 Glenview Gardens; Farranshone, Limerick; Aileen Dillane, 208 Ballinacurra Gdns., Limerick; Tom Hayes, 36 St. Patrick's Villas, Castleconnell, Co. Limerick.

The following statement was issued by the R.M.G. at the outbreak of the recent Provo assault on the Officials in Belfast. Although an uneasy truce now exists between the two organisations we are publishing the statement again. In our view the democratic right of any left-wing or anti-imperialist movement, to organise freely, cannot be over-emphasised.

Against the attacks

The Revolutionary Marxist Group strongly protests at the campaign of violence directed against Republican Club members by the Provisional IRA over the past week. We call on the Provisional IRA to desist immediately from these attacks on members of another Republican organisation.

The RMG condemns this campaign of violence not because we support the activities of the Official Republican Movement but because we believe that violence conflict between anti imperialist organisations can benefit no one but imperialism itself. For the same reason earlier this year the RMG denounced the Official IRA for physically attacking the Irish Republican Socialist Party and attempting to prevent it from organising. We pointed out at the time that such actions achieve nothing but to "cause confusion and demoralisation, and alienate support not only for the groups involved but for the Republican and left wing movement as a whole."

The RMG regrets that it is necessary to reiterate these sentiments and to direct them at an organisation that has played such a major part in the struggle against British imperialism. The RMG is not in a position to weigh the claims made by the Provisional IRA that it struck only against "criminal elements"; neither is the anti unionist population as a whole. Nevertheless, the point must be made. If the Provisional IRA has evidence to support its claims, then it should present such evidence to the anti unionist population and allow the latter to decide on the rejection of this group. The Provisional IRA has no mandate to usurp this right of the nationalist people, to set itself up as prosecutor judge and executioner within the nationalist community.

Faced daily with repression of the British Army and assassination by Loyalists the anti unionist people require urgently the militant unity of all anti imperialist groups. It cannot afford the events of the past week.

Political Committee, Revolutionary Marxist Group, November 3rd 1975.

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DISCRIMINATION CONTINUED

With the Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act 1974 and the Anti-Discrimination (Employment) Bill 1975, Michael O'Leary, Minister for Labour, has promised to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women — women workers that is. The inadequacies of the "Equal Pay" Bill have been covered in our press continuously, and the many loopholes pointed out. But, this new Bill is really quite a task. On examining the Bill, we find it is in reality a legalisation of all existing forms of discrimination against women workers. For example:

1. It does not mention pregnancy: This is the main way that women differ from men. There is no clause which prevents an employer from dismissing women because they are pregnant.
2. There is nothing on maternity leave; which is quite different from sick leave. Motherhood is a social function and must be recognised as such.
3. Under Section 12, the Minister holds the right to repeal certain acts which by their nature constitute discrimination i.e. protective legislation. A recent charter formulated by Womens Advisory Committee of the I.T.G.W.U. and the charter of Irishwomen United, rightly demand that protective legislation instead of being repealed should be extended to men. In addition this is a very dangerous "right" where women have not achieved equal rates of pay, chreches, nurseries etc.
4. Section 14, 2a, is noteworthy because it allows discrimination to ensure sex is important, where "the nature of the post requires a characteristic of a particular sex such that a member of the other sex could not adequately carry out

or fulfill the requirements of the post". Sections 14, 2(c) and (e) also refer to the "nature" of the work and to the possibility of problems on sanitary and sleeping accomodation. Such ambiguous phrasing is very convenient for employers to slide out of problem areas.

5. There is no provision for a woman to get her job back when it is proved that she lost it through discriminatory practice.
6. The onus of proof of discrimination rests on the employee.

And so the list could go on and on. The Labour Court which is proscribed in the Bill as the channel through which claimants should take their case is totally inadequate; if only for the reason that it benefits employers and not workers.

There is no responsibility on employers to actively eliminate discrimination; i.e. that they should recruit a certain number of women; train them, promote them etc. There is no provision to establish a type-action system where by a single case fought in one employment or industry should apply across the board to all other women.

The most damning aspect of the Bill is the glaring omission of over 600,000 women i.e. women as housewives. This Bill should have encompassed all these women, who suffer discrimination, as consumers, socially, as parents etc. Instead of giving them a means to fight O'Leary has off ered them an insult.

This Bill must be rejected because it provides absolutely no means to enable women to fight discrimination.

Finally, the drafters of the Bill are either thick-skinned or very stupid, as it seems the cries of women have not penetrated their ears in the slightest. Throughout this "Anti-discrimination Bill", the person i.e. claimant, is referred to as exclusively MALE. That just sums up the seriousness of the Bill.

women in the ussr

The 1917 Revolution offered exciting possibilities for transforming the position of women in the new Soviet Union. The first workers' state, by providing the basis for the emancipation of women, could have inspired millions of working class women throughout the world to identify with the proletarian revolution.

Unfortunately it offered nothing more than a brief flicker of hope. Soon the light of women's emancipation was buried under the smothering darkness of Stalinism.

In Industry

The Soviet bureaucrats needed an obedient compliant working class. The 'stable' family and the subservient mother were essential props on which that process rested. Who needs emancipated, political women 'interfering' in Soviet society, when the bureaucracy can take all the necessary decisions?

In her pamphlet *A Woman's Place in the USSR* Tamara Volkova – basing herself on recent official surveys – shows the inequalities and oppression that Soviet women still suffer from. The USSR boasts that over half the workforce consists of women. But as Volkova explains, "there are 19 million more women than men in the country."

She explains "The real situation of female employment is grasped only if we look at persons outside the labour force; 94 per cent of those eligible but not working are of the female sex . . ." Surveys show "that most of these women would be willing to work but the burden of domestic duties prevents them. In Leningrad 50 per cent of those questioned replied that they would work if there was somewhere to put their children . . ." It may be added that according to Svetlana Turchaninova (Chief of Dept. Central Trade Union College, Moscow) women are barred from 386 out of 1,100 trades in which courses are provided by Soviet vocational training schools (c/f *International Labour Review* Oct. '75). The ostensible reason given for such restriction is the need for protection against harmful work. Marx himself agreed with the need for such restriction not however to prevent women from taking up particular trades but precisely to ensure that they could participate in whatever type of work they wished – no matter how strenuous – without being taken advantage of.

That this is how Marx saw the matter is clear from his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* when he says that "The standardisation of the working day must include the restriction of female labour, in so far as it relates to the duration, intermission, etc. of the working day; otherwise it could only mean the exclusion of female labour from branches of industry that are especially unhealthy for the female body or are objectionable morally for the female sex".

Perhaps the most obvious way that Soviet women workers are discriminated against is the manner in which article 122 of the Soviet constitution which guarantees equal pay to women is flouted. This is done by means of establishing differentials between industries which are organised along sexual lines. An article, otherwise sympathetic to the Soviet Union, in *Industrial and Labour Relations Review* (July '75) shows that the more women employed in a branch of industry, the lower the rate of pay. For example, in 1970, at one extreme, in the construction industry who's labour force was only 29% women, the average monthly wage was 149.9 roubles while at the opposite end of the scale, in the Public Health sector whose labour force was 85% women, the average monthly wage was only 72 roubles.



Soviet poster of the Stalin era – women stay at home to look after the children while men go off to fight.

Household Tasks

Because there has been no real effort to socialise household tasks, the domestic jobs still remain like a fetter around women's necks. A mere 2 per cent of Soviet washing goes through public laundries. Even in Leningrad only 15 per cent of children are covered by creche facilities. Ten per cent of women in Leningrad who have just had children do not go back to work immediately because there are not enough nursery facilities.

There is still a chronic shortage of places to eat out of which supply well-cooked cheap meals. When the two sociologists Kharchev and Golod questioned 1,230 women in Leningrad, 256 of them considered the expense of canteen food "the main drawback" and 211 complained that the meals 'were poorly cooked'. Only 12 women, however, thought communal cooking was unnecessary.

As Volkova writes: 'Given that women have to shoulder the domestic burden themselves, receiving little help from the state in the form of communal facilities or co-operation from their husbands, there is nothing surprising about their secondary unequal position.'

Communist Party

In 1970 only 21 per cent of Soviet Communist Party members were women. This represented

an increase of 0.8 per cent in five years and is only 0.3 per cent higher than the 1950 figure. This baseness, as Volkova explains is "not just as a result of formal education. Although in the highest reaches of the educational system women are still under-represented, the educational opportunities appear in general to be genuinely equal . . ."

But the burden of the family, the onerous nature of domestic work, and the strains that these impose on the individual woman, mean that they have little time to think, study, or engage in political or social activities.

Feminine Virtues

After the revolution the school was considered to be a major instrument in destroying the conservative backwardness of the home. Today the school wages no serious fight to combat reactionary attitudes to women. Although education is co-educational, the school uniform accentuates the two groups. Boys do metal work and carpentry – the girls do needlework and cookery. The now deceased Sukhomlinsky – a modern and officially well-received Soviet educator – sanctioned this division saying it was important to teach girls "to be mothers and to possess the 'feminine virtues'."

One reader wrote in 1968 to *Kominomolskaya Pravda* asking: "Why should I humiliate her (his girl friend) by bowing and fawning?" He explained: "She does the same job as I. And works no worse than us lads". The editors referred him to General Ignatiev, who said: 'One should never forget for a moment that women are the weaker sex . . . that every woman is the mother, wife or beloved of some man.'

Unlike the architects of the Revolution who grasped that a programme of action was needed to bring about the liberation of women, the epigones say that the family is a socialist institution. They claim that it will play a key role in education and the socialisation of Soviet citizens.

This is a position that has nothing in common with Marxism. The Bolsheviks were for the abolition of the bourgeois family. They understood that this corresponds to a central task of the proletarian revolution which is to end the oppression of women.

The abolition of wage labour through nationalising and socialising the means of production lays the basis for a planned economy. This establishes the means for the socialisation of domestic labour, ending for all time the alienation and exploitation which rests on the privatisation of labour.

Emancipation

The emergence of the bureaucracy temporarily brought a halt to that process in the USSR. By taking out of the hands of the working class the state power and appropriating it for its own use, Stalinism dominated the working class and excluded it from political life.

The bureaucracy are congenitally incapable of transforming the backwardness that runs right through Soviet society. What characterises the bureaucracy is its devotion to its own privileges and its deep hostility to the working masses. Soviet women will only achieve their emancipation in alliance with the Russian working class. That will involve transforming the political institutions of the USSR and once more putting Soviet power back into the hands of working men and women.

The world-wide struggle of socialists in the fight for the liberation of women can give impetus and act as an inspiration to the Soviet working class, when they – as inevitably they will – begin to fight for the restoration of Soviet democracy.

In the wake of the abortive revolt by left-wing soldiers in Lisbon last week, the Portuguese Government has been able to undertake repressive moves it had previously only been able to dream about.

The brunt of the repression has been borne by those militants in the army who have dared to challenge the holy principle that soldiers owe their unquestioning loyalty to the capitalist state. Up to 100 left wing soldiers and officers are reported to be under arrest — among them Diniz de Almeida, the popular commander of the far left Lisbon Artillery Regiment (RALIS), which bore the brunt of the right-wing 11 March coup. These prisoners are not being kept in the Lisbon area, where the Government still feels uncertain of its power, but have been moved to the Cusoias barracks in the right-wing dominated north.

There are reports that a number of civilian left-wing militants are among those arrested, including leaders of the PRP-BR (Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat—Revolutionary Brigades) and the Maoist MRPP.

The second focal point of the repression has been the mass media. After the army, this is the most important area where the right-wing forces need to reassert their control if Portugal is to be saved for capitalism.

MARTIAL LAW

All Lisbon newspapers have been shut down and the radio and TV stations occupied by the army since the city was placed under martial law on Thursday. The Government has also ordered the purging of left-wing sympathisers from the editorial boards of a number of Lisbon and Oporto papers (but the pro-Socialist Party papers have been left untouched).

The left-wing soldiers were utterly defeated in Lisbon for political and not military reasons. Certainly the 800 troops of the Amadora commandos are a crack fighting regiment, but they were totally outnumbered and would have been incapable of defeating the paratroopers and military police in a serious battle. Furthermore none of the units involved in the 'revolt' made anything other than the feeblest attempts to fight.

The reason was political — that the left-wing regiments believed the ultra-left political groups when they said that the Lisbon workers would flock to support an insurrection. But not one section of workers supported their adventure. It was this which utterly demoralised the soldiers and meant that the tiny number of pro-Government forces won such a speedy victory.

It is also *politics* which is necessary to recover from the defeat. The basic power and organisation of the masses is not crushed.

Certainly we must expect some decline in the size of the vanguard, some lessening of the influence of the workers commissions, some retreat from the centralisation of organs of popular power, a strengthening of the CP at the expense of the revolutionaries, of the SP at the expense of the CP, and of the PPD and the CDS at the expense of the SP. These are the inevitable consequences of a defeat. But three vital factors still work in favour of the revolution.

In the case of the independent worker-controlled paper *Republica*, the Government has meted out even harsher measures: its works have been occupied by armed paramilitary police, the GNR, and speculation is that it will be kept shut until it is driven into bankruptcy.

These actions are just the thin end of the wedge of repression. If the Government can get away with them, then much more will follow — the steady erosion of the gains made by the workers since 25 April 1974, and the repression of all those who speak out for the working class against attempts to guarantee the rule of capital in Portugal.

For the time being these measures are being perpetrated by the 'moderates' — pro-capitalist elements like the Soares leadership of the Socialist Party and President Costa Gomes. But once the repression gathers speed, political power will rapidly shift further to the right than even these 'gentlemen' desire. Already an extreme right-winger like Jaime Neves, head of the commandos who put down the revolt, is being widely feted as a national hero.

VETERAN ENEMY

If the Portuguese working class is not able to regroup in the wake of this defeat, organising broad and united action to defeat this repression, the return of a new reactionary dictatorship is waiting not far around the corner — just behind that veteran enemy of the working class, General Spínola.

The international workers movement must now be rallied around our Portuguese comrades to stop this threat before it begins to gather speed.

End martial law in Portugal!
Free Diniz de Almeida and all left wing militants!
End the occupation of Republica!
End military control of the mass media!

PORTUGAL THE DEFEAT

Firstly, hundreds of thousands of workers daily feel the effects of the economic crisis. The Government still cannot repress them. A mobilisation around demands to safeguard the living conditions and employment of the workers can reunify the masses and begin to turn the tide against the Government. It is more construction workers' and metal workers' strikes, not new military adventures, which are needed.

Secondly, the repressive power of the state is still weak. The Government does not dare repress the masses and has only dared to arrest a small number of those involved in the struggle. A massive campaign of defence against all the democratic rights threatened — against the state of emergency, against the press closures, for the release of those arrested, to defend *Republica*, against the purges in the army — can both defend those under attack and once more find links to the masses.

The struggle to release Major Diniz de Almeida (of the left-wing RALIS regiment) and all the others held in the Cusoias prison near Oporto; to lift the censorship; and to stop the disarming of civilians — these must be the first tasks. Through this combination of struggles for the immediate needs of the masses, the vanguard can overcome its isolation, and the workers' commissions and other organs of workers' democracy can be strengthened and centralised.

Thirdly, the situation in Spain works entirely in favour of the Portuguese revolution. The demonstrations for the release of prisoners in Madrid, Barcelona and San Sebastian

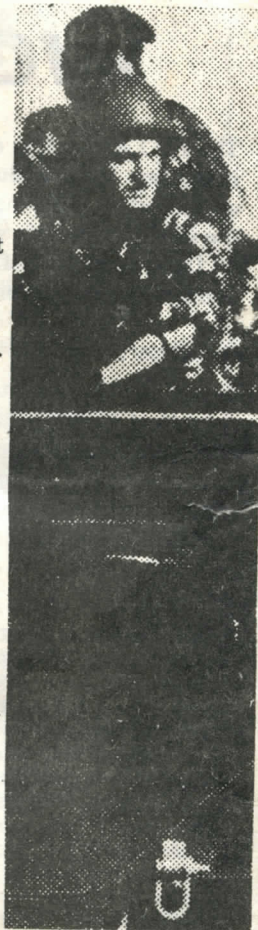
are the first sign of what is to come. An upheaval in Spain can alter everything in Portugal. It would deprive the right of their military support in the north, the fascists of their main bases, the right of its political initiative. To gain time through the defensive struggle in order to receive the gigantic reinforcement which Spain will mean is now a vital task.

If Portuguese revolutionaries and the working class can today undertake these defensive tasks, then all is very far from being lost. The Portuguese revolution has escaped from this defeat with far less repression and other harmful consequences than many other revolutions have passed through.

But one thing in Portugal is clear. The infantile adventurist line of the PRP-BR, the MES and the other ultra-lefts is finished for ever. In the first onrush of the Portuguese revolution these absurd politics had some success. Now they have brought down a severe defeat on the working class.

Many individual militants of the PRP and other ultra-left organisations, and even of the junior officers, can doubtless still be won to a revolutionary line. All must be protected from the repression. But we do not think that the Portuguese workers will forget the crime which has been committed against them.

As organisations the ultra-left should be condemned to the dustbin. The task is defeat the repression, create a united front of the workers organisations, revive the mass movement, and build the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI) — Portuguese organisation of the Fourth International.



Title: Socialist Republic, No. 4

Organisation: Revolutionary Marxist Group

Date: 1976

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