

# Marxism Today

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# MARXISM TODAY

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*The front cover designed by Jeff Sawtell is based on the emblem which appears on the banner of the Communist Party of Ireland. It is called the "Starry Plough" and it first appeared as the flag-emblem of the Irish Citizen Army founded by Connolly.*

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We are very glad to publish in this special Irish Issue of "Marxism Today" seven articles by leading members of the Communist Party of Ireland. We shall publish in July an article by Jack Woddiss entitled "Ireland—Common Cause of British and Irish People", which should be studied along with the contents of this issue.

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# The Roots of Socialism in Ireland

James Stewart

(Assistant General Secretary of the Communist Party of Ireland)

The history of all peoples, all countries, all nations is the story of class relationships within the different forms of society they have experienced. Ireland forms no exception to this general statement but any objective examination of the history of Ireland's people must from the outset state that from the days of the Norman invasion in 1169 to the present era the development of Ireland, politically, economically, socially and culturally, has been subjected to the interests of a foreign ruling class. It is this factor which provides the key to the understanding of the myriad struggles of successive generations of Irish for national independence, and equally as to why Ireland's invader has been determined over a space of eight centuries to dominate and control this island to the West of her.

## Struggle for Self Determination

Through the nature of the historic relationship of Ireland to England we can see that the class struggle in Ireland is not simply one of 'native' exploited versus 'native' exploiter but has as an essential feature the struggle of the Irish people for self determination. In other words the fight for national independence forms an integral part of the struggle for Socialism in Ireland.

Before the Norman invasion Ireland was a tribal society which had developed from primitive communism to the pre-slave owning stage. Successive invasions had consolidated into the Gaelic Clan System. Even the Danish Invasion (795-1014) had it succeeded would not have resulted in Ireland becoming a feudal 'colony' of another state but would have followed the pattern of the previous Celtic invaders and resulted in assimilation and the consolidation of an independent Irish state.

The Norman invasion (1169-1485) did not allow for such a development. It was inspired first of all by the need of Henry II to overcome one of the basic contradictions of *feudalism*: the predatory rivalry of the barons, his vassals, in every part of his dominions. And as that eminent English historian, T. A. Jackson puts it:

"Ireland was as good a place as any in which to dump that potent cause of mischief—the unemployed problem peculiar to feudalism—the problem of disposing of the younger (and illegitimate) sons and the redundant dependants of the feudal lords," (*Ireland Her Own*, page 18.)

## The Pale

But neither Henry II nor any of England's Feudal Monarchy had any intention of permitting an independent feudal kingdom to result from this action. The reverse was the case, the aim was to reduce Ireland to the status of a fief of the King of England. In practice this meant establishment of a special area on the Eastern seaboard, surrounded by a dyke, or palisade, and known as *the Pale*. Inside this area were walled cities. Here Irish dress, speech and customs were forbidden. Native Irish caught here were hunted down like wolves. It was the first "English" plantation in Ireland.

Outside this area, his barons were given leave to carve out land for themselves from the Irish clans. The process lasted for three centuries. During this time the feudal barons found themselves through necessity having to adopt Irish ways—customs, dress and language—in order to find the necessary labour power for their domains, whilst at the same time King after King in England enacted laws to combat this development (1367—Statute of Kilkenny) and thus prevent the danger to England's ruling class of an independent feudal state being established in Ireland. Indeed the major factor which prevented this was the existence of *the Pale*—an area tied militarily, economically, socially and culturally to England. Added to this were the inherent divisions amongst the feudal barons and the continued existence of the Irish clans as a powerful political, military and economic force.

## Tudor-Stuart Conquest

Following on the Anglo-Norman period we have the Tudor-Stuart conquest from 1485-1610. This era saw the breaking of the power of the

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feudal barons, the further feudalisation of the Irish clan chiefs and the plantation of large areas of Ireland, both by new landlords and large numbers of new tenants. This process for the Gaelic Irish clansman meant his reduction from a freeman sharing in the clan lands to that of tenant either under the control of a foreign landlord or a native chief turned "English Lord".

Attempts were made, notably in "Ulster" by the Irish clans under the leadership of the Great Hugh O'Neill and Red Hugh O'Donnell to reverse this process during the reign of Elizabeth I. The final defeat of this revolt resulted in the Plantation of Ulster which forms a considerable part of Unionist mythology, but of which T. A. Jackson says:

"It is in fact a complete fallacy to attribute to this Plantation the peculiar characteristics of political "Ulster". That four out of the six counties planted were never part of "Orange" Ulster (until Partition) and that the two most "Protestant" counties, Antrim and Down, were never included in this plantation are facts which destroy this myth." (*Ireland Her Own*, page 34.)

From 1169 to 1608, feudalism imposed on the Irish people from without had engaged in the process of reducing the Irish clansmen, who under the Celtic tribal system shared in the common ownership of the clan lands, to the position of feudal peasants. The last remnants of this former 'classless' system were finally extinguished during the Cromwellian and Williamite Conquests. The Cromwellian Conquest is distinguished from former conquests by its shortness, and for that reason its more calamitous impact on the 'status quo'. Another distinctive feature is that it arose as a by-product of the revolutionary crisis in England into which Ireland became drawn on the counter-revolutionary side. The consequences of this were disastrous for both the Irish and English people. On the one hand for Ireland it meant further confiscations and the dispossession of countless Irish freemen from their land. For the common people of England, Ireland was used as a vehicle to divert the revolutionary movement, isolate the Levellers, establish the dictatorship of the merchant class under Cromwell, and finally pave the way to the restoration of the Monarchy and the Mercantile Bourgeois-Aristocratic Alliance.

#### **Williamite Conquest**

The fourth and final conquest of Ireland—the Williamite Conquest (1690-2)—developed once again out of a revolutionary conflict in England into which Ireland was drawn on the counter-revolutionary ("loyalist") side. This crisis was

the *Whig Revolution* (1688) which meant a revolutionary advance in England but involved Ireland in a further subjugation and intensification of the enslavement of the Irish people.

To quote Jackson:

"Both England and Ireland were pawns in a balance-of-power game fought out on the Continent between Louis XIV and his Allies, on one side, and a European Coalition, (which included the Pope, as a temporal monarch, as well as William of Orange) on the other. It was England's good luck that the maintenance of its independence coincided with William's continental interest. It was Ireland's bad luck that it stood to lose whoever won . . . Apart from the incidental question as to which of two rival Kings of England should rule Ireland, the issue which the mass of Irishmen fought to decide was whether they would be robbed by an English Protestant landlord, or a Catholic Irish one. Robbed they were certain to be either way." (*Ireland Her Own*, page 63.)

#### **The Chains of Landlordism**

In other words, those Anglo-Norman "Irish" landlords who had been displaced by the Cromwellian Conquest were using the opportunity created by the crisis to attempt to replace their recent English landlord successors. Obviously in this game the common people of Ireland, regardless of which side they fought on, had nothing to gain—the chains of landlordism would remain either way.

In fact the results of the Williamite Conquest were disastrous for the mass of the Irish people. The Cromwellian Landlords strengthened by the addition of new "aristocrats" arising from the results of the Williamite Wars took measures to ensure that their former Anglo-Norman "Irish" (Catholic) class rivals would never again be reinstated. What became known as the "Protestant Ascendancy" in Irish history was the result. Like their descendants the Unionists of latter years, these fine gentlemen deliberately enacted laws designed to discriminate against the mass of the people using religion as a cloak. But not only were Catholics treated as second class citizens under these laws. Dissenters, Presbyterians, in fact anyone who was not a member of the established Episcopalian Church were also treated in this manner. The heaviest burden fell on the working people, the peasants and artisans. Landlord class solidarity always provided a loophole for the Catholic landowner, but for the peasant there was no such escape, only intensified exploitation, humiliation and degradation.

#### **Trade and Manufacturing Suppressed**

Added to this "Irish" landlord repression the

common people of Ireland had to bear the brunt of English Imperial exploitation. Mercantile Capitalism had grown and developed in England since the Elizabethan days. In addition to this small scale manufacturing was rapidly growing. And it was at this stage that Ireland found herself in the position of being England's first colony. For the Merchant Traders and Manufacturers of England, Ireland was a useful source of raw material and a ready and near market, but because of its close proximity Ireland was also a dangerous rival. Thus during the 17th and 18th centuries the English Monarchs and their Administrators suppressed the development of Irish trade and manufacturing.

This of course led to conflict with the developing Irish manufacturing class and also the artisans whose jobs depended on the growth of these industries and trade. Out of this was born Grattan's bourgeois revolution and the attempt to establish an independent Irish Parliament to protect the interests of the Irish middle class. It had as its inspiration the example of the American Revolution (1776-82).

### The United Irishmen

It was followed by a far more revolutionary movement, the United Irishmen, which had as its basis the struggle for democratic rights (Catholic Emancipation), the struggle against landlordism, and finally the fight for national independence. Theobald Wolfe Tone, the most outstanding leader of the United Irishmen put the movement's aims very clearly:

"To subvert the tyranny of our execrable Government; to break the connection with England, the never-failing source of all our political evils; and to assert the independence of my country—these were my objects. To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of *Irishman* in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic, and Dissenter—these were my means."

What the American War of Independence was to Grattan's bourgeois revolution the French Revolution was to the Society of United Irishmen. Inspired by the egalitarian ideals and the republican principles of the French Jacobins the movement went far beyond the reform demands of the Irish merchant class and went on to demand an independent republic of Ireland.

In Irish history much space is often devoted to the actual armed uprising of the United Irishmen in 1798 whilst ignoring the fact that the movement developed out of the mass basis of the peasants struggle against the landlords and

the fight for democratic rights (Catholic Emancipation). Tone and the other leaders saw the armed struggle and the military movement as an extension of the mass struggle for the emancipation of the common people, and as one which must be firmly based on the political, economic and social needs of the people.

### The Orange Order

The movement of United Irishmen was defeated by the forces of Counter-Revolution—a combination of British military might and the divisive and terror tactics of the "Protestant" Landlord Ascendancy. It was during this period (1795) that the Orange Order (or Society) was established by the landlords in an attempt to smash the United Irishmen and the peasants' defence bodies through a combination of sectarian bigotry and outrageous terror. T. A. Jackson correctly describes its political content:

"In evaluating the Orange Society it must not be forgotten that the bodies it was founded to disrupt and destroy—the United Irishmen and the Defenders—functioned, the one as a great liberating force, and the other as a tenants' protection league and an agrarian trade union. The Orange lodges functioned as a "union-smashing" force, operating in the interest of an oligarchical clique threatened with over-throw by a revolutionary-democratic advance. They constituted the first "Fascist" body known in history." (*Ireland Her Own*, page 129.)

### The Act of Union

For the British ruling class the movement of the United Irishmen and the birth of Republicanism in Ireland represented a real danger. By deliberately forcing an armed uprising in 1798 they were able to crush the mass movement. But they realised that a major factor in the growth of such a movement had been the method whereby Ireland had been governed by the "Protestant" Landlord Ascendancy Clique. For British imperialism the needs of her ruling class were paramount over the interests of her landlord allies in Ireland, and so, as often happened before, a new solution was looked for. It was found in the abolition of the Irish Parliament and the Act of Union in 1801.

This Act far from relieving the exploitation of the Irish people intensified it for it laid all Ireland open to the ravages of landlordism, and, with the growth of British industrial capitalism, turned her into a supplier of cheap food and cheap labour. Further, the fact that all the revenue extracted from Ireland by the landlords was drained away for consumption and invest-

ment in England meant that Ireland's manufacturers were, with few exceptions, left further and further behind while England became, conversely, a better market for Irish agricultural products.

The theory that the Act of Union made one country of Britain and Ireland is contradicted not only by this colonial relationship but by the results of this relationship: the fact that between 1820 and 1850, Ireland was the field for two great constitutional agitations, one agrarian struggle and one attempted insurrection from all of which Britain was free.

Two general conclusions must be made about this period for they have their lessons for the working class movement in Ireland today: First, the failure of the O'Connellite mass movement for reform to transform itself, as did the United Irishmen, into a movement for revolutionary change and thus realise that it had the basis and the means to carry out a *general uprising of the working people*. And second, the birth of the "physical force" concept—armed uprisings by *elitist* groups divorced from mass movements and thus not reflecting the political, social and economic needs of the common people—as personified by the Young Irelanders and the Rising of 1848.

### The Fenian Movement

The first left the mass of the Irish peasantry powerless to face the *Great Starvation* (The Potato Famine) of 1846-7. The latter was based on "improvisation" and totally under-estimated the needs of the people and the real conditions of the peasantry under the Great Starvation. Thus it failed to rally the masses along lines of action which would have defended and advanced their interests, and instead ended in an abortive uprising of a handful of brave men.

After the Potato Famine two million Irish peasants lay in their graves, another 2 million emigrated as a direct result of the starvation and the land clearances carried out by a "rack-renting" aristocracy. The "Famine", the evictions, the rack-rents, the worsening of conditions, the enforced emigration—these were the root causes of the upheaval of revolutionary republicanism known to Irish history as *Fenianism* (1856-65). This great movement based on the mass agitation of the peasants against landlordism embraced the republican ideals and methods of organisation of the United Irishmen. And like them established strong links with the international revolutionary movements of Europe.

As a military conspiracy the Fenian movement failed completely but it produced permanent results: it re-established for Irishmen the republicanism of Wolfe Tone and the United Irish-

men which became the *norm* of the struggle for National Liberation. It revealed also to the British and the world at large the reality of the Irish aspiration for self-determination. It proved beyond a doubt that as a means of welding two nations into one, the Act of Union was the complete failure ever. Under the inspiration of *Karl Marx* and the *International Working Men's Association* the British Radical and working-class movement returned to the Chartist standpoint and demanded "Justice for Ireland".

T. A. Jackson characterised the Fenian movement as follows:

"The political content of the Fenian doctrine was consciously and purposefully in line with the teaching of *Tone*, and *Davis*, with an infusion of *Mitchel* and of *Lalor*. It was categorically *democratic*, as well as *republican*, and it was *socialistic*, or even *communist*, in its agrarian-revolutionary outlook (at any rate in the negative sense of advocating the expropriation of the landlords as a class). Still more was Fenianism categorically hostile to sectarianism and clericalism." (*Ireland Her Own*, page 279.)

Finally it is worth noting, as James Connolly does, that Fenianism, though unquestionably a *national* movement and not a class movement, appealed most successfully to the *wage-worker class* especially among the exile communities in England, Scotland, the USA and Australia.

### Land and Parliamentary Movements

The epoch from 1870-1916 had as its peak phenomena Parnell and his *Parliamentary Struggle*, the continuing *Land Struggle*, and, then, the *Revolutionary Struggle*, opened by James Connolly and Padraig Pearse in the Easter Rising of 1916. The Irish situation was altered beyond recognition between 1879 and 1882 by the *Land War*, waged by Michael Davitt and the Land League (with Parnell's powerful co-operation) and by the concurrent rise of Parnell to the leadership of the Irish Parliamentary Party at Westminster. Basically both movements challenged two things: (1) The domination of the land by British absentee landlords; and (2) The domination of the entire Irish economy by Britain. This led not only to the demand for land reforms but also the demand for "Home Rule" in Ireland. In other words the rising Irish bourgeoisie in alliance with the peasantry were demanding an Irish Parliament to protect their interests against British Landlordism and British imperialism. It must be noted that at this stage neither the Land Movement nor the Parliamentary Movement demanded independence, only a limited form of self-government.

### James Connolly

This epoch also witnessed the rapid development of the organised trade union movement under the leadership of Jim Larkin and James Connolly. The growing Irish working class developed not only its trade union organisations but also its political organisations such as the Irish Republican Party, founded by James Connolly in 1896.

Connolly's proposition "that *Nationalism and Socialism* in an oppressed country, were not *opposite* as mechanical pseudo-Marxism supposed—but were complementary, each to the other, was treated as a "dangerous heresy" by the leaders of the ILP and of the SDF. It was however, accepted and applauded by a group of young men on the "left" of English and Scottish Marxism, and was finally vindicated by the teaching and actions of Lenin". (T. A. Jackson, *Ireland Her Own*, page 356.)

The developing struggle of the Irish people for "Home Rule" led to the growth of a powerful class alliance, composed of the national bourgeoisie, farmers and peasants and workers. For British imperialism it was this latter force which represented the main danger. The British ruling class feared a worker-peasant alliance transforming the reformist struggle of the national bourgeoisie, the fight for "Home Rule", into a revolutionary struggle with the objective of an Irish Workers' Republic. The work of James Connolly and the alliance of his movement with the Republican Movement of Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Brotherhood demonstrated to British imperialism that their fear was fast becoming a reality.

The events leading up to the Easter Rising of 1916 and the subsequent War of Independence 1921-22 demonstrated clearly that the 1801 Act of Union had failed. British imperialism was faced with the task of finding a new solution whereby Ireland could be retained under its control. The Liberals who were then the ruling party favoured the method of "Home Rule" to *buy off* the Irish national bourgeoisie and split it from the peasants and workers. This approach was in essence the forerunner of neo-colonialism.

### British Tory Strategy

The Tories who were then in opposition and saw the crisis as a means of regaining political power, and, as the most backward and reactionary section of the British ruling class, favoured the time honoured method of using the most reactionary class in Ireland as their allies to divide and intimidate the people. They found such allies already made in the descendants of the "Protest-

ant" Landlord Ascendancy clique. This force formed the leadership and the base for the Unionist Party which gave the Tories the weapon not only to defeat the Liberals but also to divide the Irish people. With this force they split the classes in Ireland vertically and established a Unionist Alliance of landlords, businessmen, farmers and workers. It provided the basis for "Partition".

Most serious of all for the Irish working class and the entire working people of Ireland this strategy of the Tories in reality divorced the national independence movement from the struggle for socialism.

The partitioning of Ireland strengthened reaction on both sides of the border and this temporary solution of British imperialism stunted the growth of working class politics. In the North of Ireland it meant that the working class was divided into two sections politically. The "Catholic" section of the working class in the main, alongside other sections of the anti-Unionist population, was reduced to conducting a purely "nationalist" policy for national re-unification, divorced from democratic, economic, social and economic aims. Whilst the "Protestant" section of the working class was reduced to conducting in the main *economist* struggles whilst adhering to the ideology of British imperialism in Ireland—*Unionism*.

But events do not stand still, and Ireland though an island is subject to the developments taking place in the world at large. The change of balance in world forces arising out of World War II, the growing strength of the Soviet Union and the creation of a World Socialist System, plus the rapid pace of national liberation of former colonies led to a new crisis for imperialism on a world scale. Monopoly capitalism faced with this crisis of shrinking markets had to find new methods to overcome this problem. One of those methods was the intensified exploitation of areas either directly or indirectly under its control. Thus with British imperialism the pressure of British monopoly capitalism on both parts of Ireland grew. In practice this meant that branch firms of the large industrial monopolies established themselves in both parts of Ireland. In the North this led to tremendous pressure on the Unionist Party Alliance of landlords, businessmen, farmers and workers. The fact that the monopolies were either driving them out of business or off the land led to seething discontent amongst the ranks of "Unionism".

### The Civil Rights Movement

When added to this feature the mass struggle

for democratic rights developed, the instrument of British imperialism in Ireland—the Unionist Party—split asunder. The extent of that split can be judged by the fact that the present British Tory Party abandoned its allies in 1972, suspended the "Northern Ireland" Parliament and imposed "Direct Rule" on the entire population of that area.

Today many people think of the mass Civil Rights Movement of 1968 as a spontaneous movement. But nothing could be further from the truth . . . it has its roots in the work of the Irish Trade Union Congress, the Belfast and District Trades Council, the Connolly Association in Britain and the British Labour Movement, plus the agitation of the Communist Party of Ireland and the Republican Movement.

The period from 1968-73 represents the greatest crisis British imperialism has faced in Ireland since the '20's. This has been brought about by the building of a broadly based mass movement for democratic rights which attacked imperialism at its weakest spot i.e. *Unionist Rule*.

Today through the "White Paper" and the machinations of Mr. Whitelaw the British Tory Party is attempting to find a new solution to the crisis in Ireland, one which will create a new centre force to replace the discredited Unionists and will permit British monopoly capitalism not only to continue its control over "Northern Ireland" but to increase its grip on Ireland as a whole.

Even more than in former days British imperial-

ism is not prepared to allow a free independent Ireland to develop alongside her. The reasons for this are not only economic plunder but also the strategic question of Ireland's geographic proximity to British shores. Anyone who doubts this should read Mr. Whitelaw's third stated aim in the Green Paper (1972).

### Solidarity

But the contradictions for British imperialist interference in the affairs of Ireland are not diminishing. The present situation in the North is proving that only too well. And as the effects of the EEC become more apparent and harsh the crisis and struggle will take new forms. At present the major and immediate struggle for the democratic, socialist and national liberation forces is the final destruction of the Unionist Party and the ideology of "Unionism". The means whereby this can be done is the sustained pursuance of the fight for *democratic rights* in "Northern Ireland".

A vital factor in that struggle is the solidarity of the British Labour Movement. This solidarity is not just a simple act of international fraternity with another people, but is essential because the "Irish Question" is one which has been created by the class which is also suppressing and exploiting the British working people. A blow against the Tories policies in "Northern Ireland" aids the entire struggle for the emancipation of the British working class.

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# The Forces in the Irish National Liberation Struggle

Tom Redmond

*(The author is the Dublin Area Secretary of the Communist Party of Ireland)*

*"As to any union between the two islands, believe us when we assert our union rests upon mutual independence. We shall love each other if we be left to ourselves. It is the union of mind which ought to bind these nations together".*  
(Address from the United Irishmen to the English Society of Friends of the People, October 26, 1791.)

The struggle for Irish National Independence is one of the oldest liberation struggles in the world and unique in Western Europe. In it are reflected the typical ingredients of classical colonial struggle, yet Ireland's geographical position in the middle of European capitalist development influences its path. The present crisis is not just an aggravation of an internal dispute sharpened by economic pressures, but is the fundamental clash of interests between Irish democracy which seeks to replace the external property relations of British Imperialism. The concepts which arose through centuries of struggle moulded this desire into a revolutionary philosophy "the reconquest of Ireland by the Irish people"—and also evolved the form in which it could be fulfilled—a sovereign Irish Republic.

The democratic content and the reliance of that movement on the working people ensured the understanding that the relationship of classes within the Republic would be built around the demands of the most exploited. Connolly's contribution was to bring the organised working class into this revolutionary process in alliance with the other social strata restricted by Imperialism, not just as a participating force but as the leadership. This would ensure that the Republic serving the people would be transitory to the Workers' Republic serving the working class.

Much has happened since Connolly's day and there are new stages and new forces in the present crisis. Formerly a British worker may have studied Ireland for interest; today it is a necessity if there is to be a favourable outcome for socialist advance in these islands.

## The National Struggle is Moulded

The great sustaining force behind the movements

for liberation was the struggle for the land. Feudalism was only established by the invader after hundreds of years of wars, famine and plantations. It was to take the same number of years again before the feudal landlords, losing their supremacy in British politics, crumbled before the combined forces of Parnell's parliamentary agitations and the mass agrarian Land League. Even with the rise of native middle class proprietorship of the land, the agrarian influence has affected the national struggle both by its support and its ideology.

Another influence, both adverse and positive, has been the interweaving of religious freedom as part of the democratic advance within the whole process. It is important for the British people to grasp the significance of this question as it stands outside their own experience. In contrast to the historically and socially progressive nature of the Reformation in ushering in bourgeois democracy to Britain, Protestantism was the mainstay of colonial practice in Ireland.

It was the yardstick to divide the natives from the planters and the anti-Catholic laws were the means by which as Engels remarked "the people are no longer at home in their own country".

Modern Irish politics begins with the concept of Republicanism—the uniting of Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter as Irishmen with the reliance on the masses for no property and the stirring of the masses who proclaimed the doctrines of the United Irishmen. This great liberating force, combined with the agrarian tenants' organisations, invoked in London the organisation of the Orange Order.

T. A. Jackson in his *Ireland Her Own* described its creation as "a union-smashing force, operating in the interests of an oligarchical clique threatened with overthrow by a revolutionary-democratic advance. It constituted the first Fascist body known in history". From that day, 1795, imperialist strategy in disrupting and shattering the common alliance has been the Orange Card and a criterion of judging the seriousness and determination of any national movement has been its attitude on this question.

### The Working Class

The distorted direction of capitalist development in Ireland, with the favoured Belfast industries forced to rely on Britain, provided the inducement for weaving sectarianism further into the working class. The horizontal divisions in Northern society which responded to the Orange card had later to overcome the formidable weapon of working class solidarity. Connolly's and Larkin's trade union and socialist activities in Belfast demonstrate this force and strength. The creation of Partition was ushered in by driving Catholic workers physically from the shipyards and along with them the militant union men.

In an economy of permanent unemployment and low living standards the system of patronage and privilege dulled the consciousness of the skilled workers who were mainly Protestant in composition. The Catholic worker was low on the priority for jobs and housing and the continuation of the penal law practices meant that he was doubly oppressed—nationally and socially. To re-establish a people's alliance required a healthy and vigorous labour movement and the right to struggle for democratic change. There was to be no wide cross-fertilisation of opinions, however, for draconic laws like the Special Powers Act became permanent in order to beat the "Fenians" back to the ghettos.

The only force capable of overcoming reaction was the labour movement. Traditionally it stood for the rights of all workers, and practically by challenging the undemocratic nature of the State it could have arrived at the solution of the contradictions of the national question.

The key to this understanding lay in socialist consciousness and the freedom to champion it as a normal part of the flow of ideas. Sectarianism and intimidation from without sought continually to prevent the growth along these lines while the reformism of social democracy hampered its influence. The skilled workers of the Belfast shipyards were the prey, not only of right-wing illusions about the nature of capitalism, but were kept politically in the strait-jacket of unionism. Social Democracy<sup>1</sup> since the day of William Walker (with whom Connolly bitterly clashed precisely on this question), has continuously apologised for imperialism's presence in Ireland. It has not always had its own way. For example, the upsurge of left-wing feeling after the last war brought Socialist Republicans to the fore in the Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP). Sectarian mobs threatened to break

up their election meetings demanding they fly the Union Jack. The leadership flew the Union Jack, expelled half the branches and has ignored the national question ever since. The NILP is today only a rump whose only importance is its trade union affiliations.

The Protestant section of the working class movement has been deliberately shut out from all the healthy currents of development which would flow from Irish Nationality. For many years the fraternal alliance between the trade union centres North and South was broken and though re-established now, is still weak due, not only to the politics of Partition, but to rivalry between British based unions and Irish ones. There is a reactionary attitude found among many trade unionists which argues that the demands for democratic rights for the minority and for the promotion of a United Ireland are themselves sectarian and divisive. Yet at the same time, because Imperialism functions in both parts of Ireland in different forms, it requires different strategies to counteract them.

It is to the credit of the Left that the concept of the stages in the relationship between national independence and the struggle for socialism has been clearly projected. The failure to convince the mass movement due to the factors outlined above, has led the Protestant workers into the blind alley of loyalist organisations like the UDA and LAW. The most pressing issue in the present crisis is to elevate on all the immediate questions the common interests of the working class, thus separating the proletarian base of these organisations from their bourgeois manipulators.

The freeing of workers' minds from the ideology of Unionism will introduce a new qualitative factor into Ireland's liberation struggle because it will return the initiative and ground back to the mass movement, and from that experience will come the demands for an independent nation.

### The Republican Movement

The prospects of entry into the European Economic Community marked a turning point in the role of the Southern capitalist class. Formerly there had been an attempt to build a mature economic structure. Several large state enterprises still function, but the principle of succumbing to neo-colonialism was more profitable than resisting it. England's strategy in relation to Ireland vis-a-vis the EEC was "integration within integration", domination by the monopolies but the desire for Partition to remain to divide politically the progressive forces and range them against separate "native" institutions. Internally the Fianna Fail Party abandoned any serious claim to independence, only retaining symbols and rhetoric to appease their mass following.

For the democratic movement this re-alignment

<sup>1</sup> The Social and Democratic Labour Party, SDLP, of Fitt, Hume etc., is not a part of this trend in spite of its unfortunate name. Although its ideology is unclear, because it was formed by opposition Civil Rights MPs and forced to depend on Catholic support, it is radical on social issues and progressive on the national question.

of class forces led to a revival of socialism. Most affected was the Republican movement<sup>2</sup> already in the process of re-examining the failure of its military campaign in the fifties. While this movement had mainly drawn its support from the countryside and middle-class elements the fact that for the first time ever a majority of workers were engaged in manufacturing and service industries rather than agriculture accelerated the new direction. It is difficult for any such movement to re-orientate given its long historic traditions of physical force and conspiracy arising from its illegal existence. It is a movement in transition and while in the main its analysis has been sound, there are differences within it on its exact character and on its relationship with the working class movement. Its military wing adds an ideological imbalance to its own concept of a "revolutionary working class party" and it presents practical problems of élitism, spontaneity and substituting roles. It has attracted the butterflies of the ultra-left but they have not settled long enough except in Republican circles in Britain.

On the positive side the movement has involved itself in the social struggles of the people. Despite the harassment and provocations of the British Army in the North it has refused to be drawn into conflict on their terms. Its presence is strongly felt in the Civil Rights movement and it has attempted, even in the middle of the bombing, to speak to the Protestant section in class terms. The Republican movement is a fundamental force of national liberation, it works in alliance with the communists and progressive elements and it is a component force for socialism in Ireland.

### The Provisionals

The gravitation to the left of the Republican movement was resisted by elements within who were contemptuous of "politics" and saw only the simplicity of physical force. Looking back at the period of the forties and fifties Cathal Goulding said:

"The evidence was that the Republican movement had no real policies. Without objectives, we couldn't develop a proper strategy. Tactics were all that we had employed. The actual fight for freedom had become an end in itself to us. Instead of a means, it became an end. We hadn't planned to achieve the freedom of Ireland. We simply planned to fight for the freedom of Ireland. We could never hope to succeed because we never planned to succeed."

<sup>2</sup> The term Republican movement is used not only to denote the political wing Sinn Féin, but the IRA and other allied organisations like the Fianna (boy scouts). The term used here is the *Official* Republican movement, often bracketed by the address of their head office (Gardiner Place). I use the term "Provisionals" to describe its rival breakaway.

The armed attacks and pogroms on the nationalist areas in 1969 were successfully beaten back by mass resistance. However, many of the older men who had drifted away from the movement saw in the struggles then raging the beginning of a revolutionary upsurge. Amid the confusion of those hectic days when a movement of solidarity swept the whole country, Fianna Fail politicians in the South, fearful of the consequences of a mass movement no longer under their control, financed and manipulated a wedge in the Republican ranks. The split was formalised in 1970 with the minority walking out of the 4th Fheis (Annual Conference) to consolidate their Provisional organisations outside the nationalist ghettos of the North. The social composition of the Provisionals was more middle class and mainly rural. That element among the petit-bourgeoisie who hanker for the purity of physical force free from ideology, support them eloquently from the safety of the 26 counties.

In so far as the Provisionals defend the Nationalist areas, or are seen to be capable of doing so from further pogroms, they enjoy support there. The Catholic population, embittered by repression and second class citizenship, separated socially from the common cause with the labour movement, now have the threat of ultra-loyalist attacks and British army terrorism on their heads. These pressures have now magnified backward trends which existed in nationalist politics and which took the form of Catholic Action, "classless" politics etc. It was only a few advanced Republicans who understand the significance of the Belfast Trades Council calling a Civil Rights Conference in 1965 and indeed Pearse's warning in 1911—"the narrowing down of Nationalism to the members of one creed is the most fateful thing that has occurred in Ireland"—was never properly understood.

The military campaign of the Provisionals, particularly the bombing activities, has been fed by all these trends and itself has been sustained by them. The difference between, on one hand, the Left and the Republican movement and, on the other, the Provisionals, is sharp and bitter because they reflect ideological as well as strategical differences, including:

1. The civilian bombing campaign which has reinforced sectarianism between Irishmen to the advantage of Imperialism.
2. The military reflex action to British army terrorism is desired by British Toryism, for it enables the latter to determine the pace on its own terms. It further denies the role of the mass movement to regain the initiative.
3. The confusion of *elements* of national liberation with a revolutionary situation and hence the attempts to bypass the stage of democracy has prevented the Civil Rights Association from

mobilising the potential of democratic forces and deeper roots.

4. Imperialism is not understood in all its forms, hence no consideration is given to forces which also resist it—the people in the 26 counties and the British working class.

The appearance of the Provisionals is not unique in national independence struggles. Wherever working class leadership is absent the tactics, strategies and content adopted are those of the middle class. The Provisionals are an anti-imperialist force but, in the context of the development and experience of the world-wide national liberation struggle, a more critical attitude must be adopted to them. Conversely the attempts to hurl all the blame onto the "terrorists" must be resisted as many people need to be reminded that there was no Provisional movement before the organised pogrom of 1969.

#### The Present Stage

The inability of the ruling class in Northern Ireland to accept democratic change under pressure from a wide spectrum of opinion precipitated the crisis of unionism. The Unionist Party, however, was the instrument of Toryism and the excuse for Partition. Britain's claim to sovereignty of a part of Ireland is being questioned more seriously now than in the last 50 years. Whilst the Unionist Party is now suspect because of its unreliability, Toryism has prospective allies in the Southern ruling class and is attracting middle sections typified by the Alliance Party in the North. In the South the ideas of national independence are being constantly attacked as are the historic traditions of the liberation movement.

The slanted presentation of the Northern struggle and the type of warfare being waged by the Provisionals has dulled the solidarity movement. The corrosive effects of Partition in dividing the working class movement plus the fears of alienating further the divisions of the Northern workers has, in the absence of wide left-wing influence, reinforced economism in the Southern Labour movement. The ultra-left have added to the confusion by a hotch potch of fantasies ranging from the two nations theory (i.e. that there are two nations in Ireland, a Catholic one and a Protestant one) to describing the Civil Rights demands as being in essence class demands. The romantic soul of Trotskyism has always been stirred by the sound of gun fire and, by confusing the elements of liberation in the Northern scene with revolution, they are drawn to the Provisionals. While these groups have been contained by the reality of politics in Ireland, their curious amalgams can cause harm by their presentations of the crisis to the British Labour movement.

The most pressing immediate demands for

presentation by the democratic movements in the three spheres, the North, the South and also in Britain, are the demilitarisation of the North and the establishment through a Bill of Rights of democratic practice there. Within a framework of progress towards an independent Ireland the common bonds of Irishmen and the class solidarity of workers can re-surface. The greatest obstacle to this is British Toryism, but its strength is derived from the bi-partisan policy of the Labour Party. The tremendous upsurge of militancy by the industrial workers in Britain has inspired the labour movement to confront Toryism on a scale not seen since the General Strike. The interconnection between the sharpening of these battles and the heightened national feeling in the North is not lost on the ultra-right wing of the Tory Party. Already there are disturbing trends towards encroachment on civil liberties in Britain and threats of more to come.

As old as the conscious struggle for Irish nationality is the corresponding response of solidarity from the British people. From the Levellers and the Corresponding Societies, the Chartists and William Morris's Socialist League, the understanding grew that a common fight required mutual support. Projected in its scientific form by Marx and Engels and introduced by them into the First International, it has become ingrained into the socialist movement in Britain as a condition for achieving their own freedom. The complexity of the present situation and its distortion and upheavals call for deeper Marxist understanding of the nature of British Imperialism and a greater resolve to mobilise the widest support for its overthrow in these islands.

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# The White Paper on Northern Ireland

Michael O'Riordan

*(The author is the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Ireland)*

The Act which will be based on the White Paper<sup>1</sup> published in March, will count as the fourth major legislation, over a period of 172 years, dealing with what is called the "Irish Question".

The first was the "Act of Union" of 1801, carried as it was by "perjury and fraud", which integrated Ireland into Great Britain for all time, or so it seemed to its architects. The next Act was the "Government of Ireland Act, 1920", for which no Irish parliamentarian in Westminster, North or South, voted, but by which the British Government partitioned the island. The third was the ratification of the "Anglo-Irish Treaty, 1921" which was signed by the Irish under the British threat of unleashing "an immediate and terrible war". What it did do was to provoke a civil war in the South, over its terms, with London supplying arms and applying pressure on the Conservative Irish pro-Treaty party which later became the first Government of the 26-County state now known as the Republic of Ireland.

Like all the previous Acts the latest White Paper claims to be a settlement.<sup>2</sup> What it really is—is a re-establishment of the British "right" to veto the Irish people's clear right to self-determination.

## Fifty years of Partition

In the half-century of the British partition of Ireland into two states, the Republic of Ireland has evolved from a Dominion to a sovereign State, but at the same time into a neo-colony of British monopoly capitalism. Albeit, it possessed the power and the basis—and still does—but not the leadership to alter that relationship.

In Northern Ireland, that north-east part of the island which the British Government retained as part of the United Kingdom, there was created a Parliament with local powers. This Parliament, known as Stormont from the name of the place where it was situated, was the base for rigid rule by the Northern Ireland Unionist section of the British Tory Party.

The five decades of Unionist Government in

Northern Ireland were characterised by blatant discrimination against the Catholic minority who had been deliberately incorporated into that state. The purpose of this incorporation was not only to implant a divisive element between the working people of the North itself, but also to complicate the dis-union between the two Irish states.

Unionist rule in the North was based on deliberate fomentation of sectarianism by gerrymandering the electoral constituencies which would give the Unionist party even more power, and by the implementation of a "Special Powers Act" to crush all opposition to the Government.

The partition of Ireland and the naked discrimination against the Catholic minority in the North was resented by the majority of the Irish people and resisted by the minority itself in Northern Ireland by many forms of struggle. Sometimes by protest demonstrations, by abstention from parliamentary elections, or if elected, by boycott of, or obstruction within the Stormont Parliament; other times it was by struggles of civil disobedience, and even by outbreaks of armed struggle by some sections.

To overcome the unjust discrimination against the Catholic minority, and the consequent division amongst the working people, there was set up in 1967, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA). The significant preparatory work for the emergence of this body, whose campaign over four years altered the entire situation in Northern Ireland, was first done by the Belfast Trade Union Council whose affiliated membership is composed of a majority of trade unionists of the Protestant section of the working class.

On October 5, 1968, a NICRA march through the mainly Catholic city of Derry was broken up in the most savage fashion by the Unionist Government's para-military police. From that act sprang the cycle of violence in the North. In August, 1969, the right-wing of the Unionist Party organised a pogrom in the Catholic ghetto in Belfast. In Britain's "first colony" it was apparent that "law and order" was about to collapse. London ordered the British troops, who were always stationed in Northern Ireland, to intervene. The Government was then

<sup>1</sup> "Northern Ireland: Constitutional Proposals", (Cmd. 5259), Her Majesty's Stationary Office, London, Price 24p.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Par. 6, page 3.

headed by Harold Wilson but it made no attempt at real basic reform, instead it preferred to pass as "a peacemaker" in a situation which British imperialist policies had created.

When in June 1970 Governmental power passed back into the hands of the Tories, the Heath Government switched the role of the British Army from pretending "peacemakers" to open repressors of the minority. In August, 1971 a planned military operation swept over 400 anti-unionists into a special internment camp. The entire minority replied with an immediate civil disobedience campaign, refusing to pay rents, rates and any state taxes and by the setting up of barricades created "no-go" areas into which the Army and Police could not enter.

On January 30, 1972, paratroops opened fire on a peaceful NICRA meeting in Derry killing 13 citizens. On July 31, 30,000 troops, a Unionist Defence Regiment and armed members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary plus 50-ton Centurion tanks tore down the barricades of the "no-go" areas and occupied them.

By March, 1972, the British Government was forced to drastically curtail the Unionist monopoly by suspending its parliament and Government and by instituting direct rule from London. In this way whilst it downgraded its agents in Northern Ireland it at the same time reinforced its own position of dominance.

#### A New Technique of Domination

Stripping down its legal-constitutional verbiage to examine its political content what does one see in the White Paper? As the first paragraph of the statement of the Communist Party of Ireland, issued simultaneously in Belfast and Dublin on March 25, declared "The British Government has been forced after a four-year mass struggle to yield to some of the demands of the Civil Rights Movement, but at the same time adopts a new technique in maintaining British domination of Ireland."

Ireland is not, as some allege, an ancient headache which the British Government would be glad to be rid of. It is a source of labour, land, minerals and the wealth of the sea. More important still it is a source of rich profit, with industry in the North being almost completely owned by British monopolies, and increasingly so in the South. *It is Britain's third largest market in the world.*

In the White Paper Britain has made a much belated admission that indeed there was something rotten in the state of Northern Ireland during the half-century of Unionist monopoly of government. There is now the need "to seek a much wider consensus than has hitherto existed."

In response to the mass struggle for civil rights there is the abolition of oaths and loyalty tests, the promise of financial aid "for the achievement in

Northern Ireland of those standards of living, employment and social conditions which prevail in Great Britain." There is the conceding of the NICRA demand that the voting system for local and parliamentary elections should be that of Proportional Representation.

There is to be a "Charter of Human Rights" (Part 4) which will guarantee "the right to freedom within the law, including freedom to advance any political or constitutional cause by non-violent means; the right to protection under the law, so that freedom is not taken away or diminished by violence, oppression or intimidation by others; and the right to equality of benefit and opportunity, so that society will deal in an equitable and even-handed way as between one citizen and another, without bias or prejudice." There is also the promise that discrimination in public and private employment will be acted against.

#### Further Struggle Needed

These are concessions in principle—but if they are to be implemented in practice it will need still further struggle by the Irish Civil Rights movement and equal pressure by the British Labour, Trade Union and Democratic movements.

The British ruling class does not concede easily. A case in point in the White Paper is the abolition of the infamous Special Powers Act, but it is to be replaced by equally nefarious legislation which is based on the recommendations of a Commission headed by Lord Diplock. This provides for the proscription of organisations which certainly conflicts with the guaranteed "freedom to advance any political or constitutional cause by non-violent means."

Detention without trial was the main bone of contention with the British Government. Despite the inclusion of a high-sounding section on "Human Rights" the White Paper made no reference to the 650 persons so detained at the time of its publication. In fact the new legislation which is to succeed the Special Powers Act will provide for detention and imprisonment with a jury trial, special police powers for arresting and searching, restrictions on the granting of bail and the admissibility of statements hitherto regarded as inadmissible.

In fact the only real concession in this proposed new legislation—Northern Ireland (Emergency) Bill—is the lifting of the ban on the "Republican Clubs", under which title function the branches of the Official Sinn Fein political party.

#### Downgraded to a Crown Colony

To replace the Stormont Parliament which was suspended in March, 1972, the White Paper proposes a Northern Ireland Assembly. This will consist of 78 members elected by the proportional representa-

tion method of the single transferable vote in the 12 constituencies which return members to the Westminster Parliament.

Heralded as a new departure in power-sharing as against the Unionist monopoly of power in the suspended parliament, it is provided that "there will be Committees of Assembly whose members will reflect the balance of parties, associated with each Northern Ireland Department. The Chairmen of these committees that collectively will form the Executive will be the political Heads of the Departments and the Committees will be associated with the development of new law and policy."<sup>3</sup>

This really sounds like an attempt at a democratic shake-up, but the document makes clear that in reality there is very little power to be shared. It is only *after* the election that the Assembly will discover what power it will possess, and that will be at the discretion of the British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. He (who is likely to be Mr. William Whitelaw who has been the "direct-ruler" since March, 1972) will be the person who will decide, also, who are the Assembly Members who will be allowed to be the Heads of the Departments!<sup>4</sup>

This is a classic example of giving people the democratic right to vote, but if they do not elect the kind of representatives that London likes, they will not have any powers, not even the normal right of a parliament to elect from its members a Prime Minister and a Cabinet. The Northern Ireland State has been well and truly downgraded to the position of a Crown Colony. Gone is the pretence of it being a State within the United Kingdom that possessed a special kind of self-government. Its position is now clearly spelt out in Paragraph 54:—"Whatever powers to legislate may be developed upon a regional law-making authority in Northern Ireland, *it must and will be made clear* (my emphasis) that such devolution does not diminish in any way the right of the United Kingdom Parliament to legislate for Northern Ireland."

### British Domination Continued

Her Majesty's Stationery Office Document Cmnd. 5259 had been preceded by another publication in October 1972—"The Future of Northern Ireland: A Paper for Discussion." Known as the "Green Paper" there appeared therein the expression, "an Irish Dimension" which implied that any political restructuring in Northern Ireland should be in accord with the Dublin Government and *ipso facto* in some form of an All-Ireland context. This gave rise to many illusions that the British Government, "tired" of the Irish Question, would facilitate the

formation of a body—of a supra-border character—that would immediately minimise the effects of Partition and clear the way for one authority for the whole of Ireland.

Conceding that there is in "virtually all the Northern Ireland political parties"<sup>5</sup> a general agreement for some form of a "Council of Ireland", the British Government says that, as far as it is concerned, "it favours and is prepared to facilitate the formation of such a body. . . . There are undoubtedly many matters of substantial mutual interest such as tourism, regional development, electricity and transport."<sup>6</sup>

However before the Heath Government is prepared to "facilitate" what it regards to be the need for "effective consultation and co-operation in Ireland for the benefit of North and South alike", it lays down conditions and in effect establishes the right of a British veto on any talks between Irishmen "North and South alike." This it does by demanding Southern recognition of the present status of Northern Ireland, thus recognising retrospectively the British right to impose partition, and also by demanding concerted governmental action against "terrorist organisations."<sup>7</sup>

Even if Britain agrees to allowing talks for some form of a "Council of Ireland" it will not be a bilateral one between Irishmen of the North and South. The British Government will call the inaugural conference. It will not only be the third party present but will be the key—the Chairman.<sup>8</sup>

When all the talking is done and "firm agreement" is reached, the implementation of the decision will be "formally adopted as between sovereign states."<sup>9</sup> There is no ambiguity there. Since Northern Ireland is not a sovereign state, the agreement will not be one worked out by Irishmen and so giving some substance to a "Council of Ireland", but it will be one that will be ratified by the British Government and the Government of the Republic of Ireland, thus transforming it from an "Irish" Council into an Anglo-Irish Council.

As the statement, already mentioned, of the Communist Party of Ireland declared:—

"Behind the White Paper's language of 'isolating the extremists in both communities' is the real aim of continuing British Tory political and economic domination in the North, as well as the extension of its economic and political influence in the South. It is for a solution which would satisfy, to a large

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Par. 109.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* Par. 110.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* Par. 112.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* Par. 112.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* Par. 113.

<sup>3</sup> Part 6—Summary and Conclusion, Par. 110, (vii).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Par. 72.

degree, the Faulkners,<sup>10</sup> Cosgraves<sup>11</sup> and Lynchés<sup>12</sup> but which would ignore the interests of all the working people of Ireland, Catholic and Protestant."

### The Common Market

The British Government's new technique for holding on to Ireland arises not only from internal developments in the North. These developments led to a discredited and now deeply divided Unionist Party. The pressures that caused this arose from the intensity of the mass struggle that moved forward from the original demand for democratic rights to a position of challenging Britain's right to deny the right of self determination.

The new technique was also occasioned by the accession to the EEC of both Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

It is in this context of the Common Market that the White Paper has been deliberately aimed to win the support of all those who favoured EEC entry in both parts of Ireland. In the North there has been the emergence of a new political party, the Alliance Party, representative of the interests of the propertied classes, to which many pillars of the Unionist Party have switched and which has attracted the support of many middle-class Catholics. This is the new image for old Unionist policies which need to be brought up to date in the conditions generated by EEC membership.

In the South, the two main political parties, Fine Gael and Fianna Fail, support Irish membership of the EEC. The Fine Gael leader, Liam Cosgrave who is now Prime Minister of the Fine Gael-Irish Labour Party Coalition Government<sup>13</sup> is the spokesman of a conservative-national party which has been traditionally pro-British ever since its acceptance of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. In the case of Fianna Fail, which opposed this Treaty, it found in the years it was in Government that as a middle-class party it had neither the capacity nor will to challenge the continued British monopoly capitalist

power in the South. During the Referendum on the issue of joining the Common Market it had the support of Fine Gael, then in the Opposition, in advocating membership. (Today, Fianna Fail, now in opposition has a similar supporting attitude to the Cosgrave-led Government in its seeking of an accommodation with the British Government for a "peaceful" solution to the Northern question.)

It is not without significance that one of the main arguments advanced by both Fine Gael and Fianna Fail for the Republic to join the EEC was that in the European Community the "Border" dividing the two parts of Ireland would go.

The Southern bourgeois leaders instead of fighting for the independence of the whole of the island from Britain made the division line between the two parts the national issue. They concealed the fact that British imperialist policies towards Ireland, whether when as part of Great Britain after the Act of Union of 1801, or split into two under the Government of Ireland Act of 1920, or what have you now under the Treaty of Rome, was consistent, as the Communist Party of Ireland declared in March, 1970:

"Throughout its overlordship the British ruling class has always regarded Ireland as *one unit* for the purpose of exploitation."<sup>14</sup>

### EEC Development Area?

Three years later, in March 26, 1973, when examining the proposals in the White Paper, the CPI declared that:

"The White Paper is deliberately aimed to gain support from the property-owning sections, *on both sides of the border*, who have the common platform of downgrading Ireland as a whole into an assisted underdeveloped region of the rich man's club—The Common Market."

As to the question of Britain's own commitment to assistance to Northern Ireland, the promise is made in Paragraph 86 that it will set out:—

- (a) to accomplish as rapidly as possible, once violence is ended, the task of physical reconstruction and rehabilitation created by the disorders of recent years;
- (b) to create a sound base for the economy and to encourage external industrial investment;
- (c) to work progressively towards the achievement in Northern Ireland of those standards of living, employment and social conditions which prevail in Great Britain.

However, there is no concrete indication of how

<sup>10</sup> Faulkner is leader of the Unionist Party and was Northern Ireland's Prime Minister at the time of the suspension of the N.I. Parliament.

<sup>11</sup> Cosgrave is Prime Minister of the Irish Republic since Feb. 1973.

<sup>12</sup> Lynch was Prime Minister of the Irish Republic up to Feb. 1973.

<sup>13</sup> The Irish Labour Party, which is notoriously weak in its understanding of the national question in Ireland, only half-heartedly opposed Irish membership of the Common Market. In the February, 1973 General Election it abandoned its general socialist programme in order to join with Fine Gael. The platform of this Coalition was concentrated on 'bread and butter' issues, ignoring both the Northern question and the effects of EEC membership. The Labour Party acts now as a subservient junior partner in the National Coalition Government which is dominated by Fine Gael.

<sup>14</sup> "For Unity and Socialism": Manifesto of the Special Re-Unification Congress of the Irish Workers' Party of the Republic of Ireland and the Communist Party of N. Ireland which reconstituted one Communist Party of Ireland, March 15, 1970, in Belfast.



much money London is prepared to give to provide that massive capital investment that is necessary to overcome the position in which there are at the present 40,000 out of work, not because of "the violence", but because of British Government policies which over the last 50 years have resulted in Northern Ireland having always the highest degree of unemployment in the United Kingdom.

In the succeeding paragraph 87, there is more than a hint of where the economic "assistance" is to come from: "The United Kingdom Government cannot abrogate responsibility for the application in Northern Ireland of regional policies which will be the subject of negotiations with the European Economic Community in their application to the United Kingdom as a whole."

On April 13, three weeks after the publication of the White Paper, there emerged another set of proposals—but this time from Brussels. These were contained in a programme drawn up by the EEC Commissioner for Regional Policy, Mr. George Thomson. It is at present being considered by the Commission. This programme provides for the whole of Ireland being designated a development area of the EEC. The plan before the Commission has taken four regions as being urgently in need of massive development, viz. the whole of Ireland, some parts of Britain and Denmark and Southern Italy.

The criteria for selecting regions that need development are high unemployment, emigration and relatively low incomes. Ireland as a whole can certainly satisfy these requirements. The level of unemployment is seven per cent average as compared with the EEC average of four per cent; emigration from both parts of Ireland is exceedingly high; the average Irish income is approximately half the EEC average.

No definite amount of money has been specified as necessary, but the amount implied in Mr. George Thomson's programme is that it should be far in excess of the £60 million average per year spent by the EEC in its so-called regional development over the past 14 years.

Who will furnish this amount? Will it be the richer nations in the EEC, like West Germany? Again, as in the White Paper the amount and source of the massive aid that is needed is not spelt out and the Irish have a proverb for such situations: "Live Horse and you will get Grass."

What is clear, however, is, firstly, that with the present level of British monopoly capitalism, linked as it is with the European multi-national firms, Ireland divided into two states is an anachronism, which must be re-modelled in the interests of British imperialism in order to improve its role and capacity as one unit and a single peaceful source of rich exploitation. Secondly, that as the British monopoly

capitalists take both Britain and the two parts of Ireland into the Common Market, it is at the same time seeking to hold onto the whole of Ireland.

### The Long Term Struggle

"As we have again and again pointed out, the Irish question is a social question. The whole age-long fight of the Irish people against their oppressors resolves itself in the last analysis into a fight for the mastery of the means of life, the sources of production, in Ireland."

Thus wrote James Connolly, in the ultimate paragraph of his classic study of the forces and classes involved in the long struggle for national liberation—*Labour in Irish History*.

The British Government's White Paper is a re-affirmation of its claim to continued control over the means of production in Ireland. Thus it must be accepted that the "Irish Question" will continue to exist, and to be fought over what Connolly said was "the bottom question of Irish politics."

This is the long term struggle, but the immediate one in Northern Ireland is the implementation of genuine democratic rights for all, and the ending of British interference in Irish affairs, so leading to the position where the "Irish Question" can be solved by Irishmen, "North and South alike", as the *White Paper* says. In this way there can be a situation where, as Connolly wrote in the concluding sentence of his book:

"In their movement the North and South will again clasp hands, again will it be demonstrated, as in '98, that the pressure of a common exploitation can make enthusiastic rebels out of a Protestant working class, earnest champions of civil and religious liberty out of Catholics, and out of both a united social democracy."

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# The Present Situation of the Civil Rights Movement

Edwina Stewart

*(The author is a member of the National Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Ireland and a leader of the Civil Rights Movement)*

After the partition of Ireland the democratic and nationally minded people in Northern Ireland suffered almost 50 years of despotic rule by the sectarian and anti-working class Unionist Party. At the end of that period a weapon was found that has smashed the unionist monolith—that weapon was the demand for civil rights and social justice, backed up by a mass movement at home and international support.

These demands were for a fair electoral system and the end of discrimination, the repeal of all repressive legislation, and the creation of a civilianised police force. Very early in the campaign the demand of jobs and houses for all was added.

These seem very simple demands but the Unionist Government was unable to grant them, because granting them meant an end to the Orange Unionist system of Government based on sectarianism, and granting small privileges to the Protestant section of the working class that they denied to the Catholic.

The civil rights movement quite rightly placed the major blame for the situation on successive British Governments, who were quite happy to hide behind devolved powers to the Stormont Parliament until the mass movement drew the veil away. In the early sixties the Communist Party of Ireland pointed out that the fight for democratic rights was a key one in the struggle against imperialism. The labour and trade union movement made the civil rights demands in 1966. At the same time the Republican Movement abandoned its policy of armed struggle for an Irish Socialist Republic, and began to work in a political manner, with civil rights as one of its objectives.

The labour and trade union movement were instrumental in setting up the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, which spearheaded the demand for democracy through the mass movement. Unfortunately the policies of reaction were once again able to divide the labour and

national independence movements with disastrous results.

This was done by playing on sectarian fears of the Protestant population and by using violence to produce counter violence, making it impossible for the trade unions to campaign on the streets with the CRA, although they still have a good policy on civil rights.

Reaction was aided in its strategy by the activities of the ultra left, who sought confrontations when the movement should have been making alliances.

## What Sustains Violence

Unfortunately or rather fortunately people are not pawns in a chess game who will move in the way that the participants in the struggle want them to. We can all see clearly how the present violence is preventing and delaying a solution in the interest of the working people of this area. To really understand the problems facing the civil rights movement it is necessary to understand why there is violence.

The seeds of violence were always present in an area where there had been an 800 years struggle against British occupation, often through arms, in an area which was partitioned against the wishes of the majority of the Irish people, and in an area where the substantial political minority were denied all civil rights, and even the right to work.

Traditionally the British Government have deliberately provoked violence either by vicious use of their army, or using right wing extremists to make sectarian attacks. Before the pogrom against Catholic areas in Belfast in August, 1969, all major civilian violence had been on the extreme Unionist side, although the police had managed to produce several minor disturbances with civil rights supporters. After the pogrom the Catholic ghettos armed themselves to defend themselves. These defensive arms were eventually turned against the British