

The Present Situation of the Civil Rights Movement

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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

Army, when it became clear that the British Army was being used as a tool of the Orange Unionist administration.

As repression intensified so did the violence, the support for it among the civilian population, and the demand for democracy. This violence and particularly the bombing campaign had the effect of sharpening sectarian divisions between both sections of the working class. This is surely why the Unionist Government and the present British Tory Government sought to provoke it. In other words a civil rights movement with advocates among both sections of the community, campaigning in a non-violent manner for demands which no British Government could deny in the face of world pressure, could not be allowed to succeed.

They wanted to provoke violence to split the civil rights movement, and lose us our allies. They wanted the demand for an Irish Republic now to be raised to sufficiently alarm the unionist working class, and to encourage the formation of loyalist para-military bodies. In fact they wanted to create such splits, divisions and confusions that the British Government could impose any solution they wanted on this area. If hundreds of Irishmen, women and children, and 220 British soldiers had to die to achieve this, it was a cheap price for British Imperialism.

Divide and Rule

The whole community is sick and tired of violence, longing for peace, but imagine the feelings of our people. After 50 years of the most corrupt government based on sectarianism, violence and repression, people demanding civil rights are subjected to a vicious army of occupation, here to subjugate the natives in the most brutal manner, denied the right to work in many areas, driven from their work and homes by extremist murder gangs and arsonists, denied almost completely any legal redress for their grievances, and with much heralded reform packages melting away like driven snow in the face of increased violence.

Imagine too the reactions and frustrations among those sections of the Protestant working class conned and nurtured for years on the idea that if they voted Unionist their interests would be looked after, and the "rebels" kept in their place, that they "were the people" and that Britain loved them. They are learning bitter lessons, that they have no friends in the world, that the same undemocratic laws can be used against them, that when it is necessary for the British Government, the British Army will use exactly the same measures against them, as in republican areas.

British Imperialism learned its expertise in divide and rule in Ireland, and has created the conditions in which it is all too easy for violence to be provoked in the interests of British Imperialism.

This has been a constant problem for the civil rights movement. When we had a united movement, and our allies lined up, British provocation or right wing violence have put the movement in disarray. This is the problem we are facing today.

Reaction Produced by the White Paper

The situation leading up to the White Paper and immediately after it is extremely complicated. A whole year of Direct Rule by the British Parliament did not bring our people one single democratic reform, or any other reform either. The period was used for softening up what the mass media call the extremists. By the most judicious mixture of public charm and private skulduggery, British statesmen succeeded in persuading the Provisional IRA to break the solid anti-internment front of "no talks until internment ends", and calling a short lived truce, speedily to be broken after the British tolerated right wing provocations. This, coupled with unprecedented army brutality and harassment after Operation Motorman, a vicious campaign of sectarian murders, burnings out, the British Army flirting with the loyalist paramilitary organisations, caused the greatest confusion among anti-unionists.

When Mr. Whitelaw judged that he had succeeded in what he hoped was enough softening up of republican forces, he turned on the loyalist extremists, letting them feel the weight of army brutality, conducting successful arms searches, arresting men for sectarian murders, and internment Protestants. He allowed loyalist extremists to commit the most lawless acts, carry out strikes etc., to isolate them and split the extreme unionists.

During this time the moderates were being lulled along with promises of what great things would be in the White Paper. All this time conflicting versions of what was going to be in the White Paper were spread around alternatively to alarm or placate different interests.

So great is the desire for peace among ordinary people, that when it was published the reaction of the great mass of the people was give it a chance. Mr. Craig and Mr. Paisley could only mount a tiny protest demonstration against it. The Civil Rights Association had the most serious reservations about it, but did not reject it out of hand, confining itself to pointing out the very serious shortcomings.

The language in the White Paper is purposely

ambiguous, so that it can mean all things to all men. What the civil rights movement must do is to convince as many people as possible that the White Paper does not guarantee civil rights, does not guarantee the provision of employment in this area and does not provide the basis for the end of violence in this area. It will be another disappointment for all those people fervently longing for peace through justice.

Position on the Civil Rights Demands: Fair Elections

One man, one vote for all at 18 has been granted in all elections. The use of PR and the number of representatives to be elected ensure fairly well against gerrymandering. However there is no guarantee PR will be used after these elections. Much of the power has been taken away from local authorities and vested in Stormont, now Westminster. The new assembly will not get any powers unless the people elect the kind of representatives the Westminster Government wants.

End of Discrimination

We are promised that machinery will be set up to combat all forms of discrimination. It will be necessary to wait for the legislation to see whether it will be effective. Certainly the phraseology in the White Paper suggests the machinery will have no quick and speedy method of dealing with cases, and that the individual will have to resort to the courts. We have had an Ombudsman to deal with complaints against the Stormont Government, and a Commissioner of Complaints to deal with complaints against local government. This is an improvement, although the machinery is bureaucratic and must be operated by the individual. We demand machinery which is easy of access, and can give speedy and effective relief, and that organisations that specialise in these matters can have the cases of individuals investigated.

The Community Relations Commission set up after the Downing Street Declaration has been a most helpful body, and has helped many individuals and also to provide amenities in a number of districts. It has not enough money at its disposal.

The End of Repressive Legislation

The Special Powers Act is being repealed, but all necessary provisions are being incorporated into legislation currently being passed at Westminster. These include imprisonment without trial, search without warrant, arrest without warrant, secret trials with witnesses not having to reveal even their face, and no right of cross

examination, trial without jury, the accused having to prove their innocence rather than the prosecution their guilt, detention of children, and the outlawing of political organisations.

All this new legislation will contravene the international human rights declarations. Minor concessions have been the lifting of the ban of the Republican Clubs, and the fact that this emergency legislation will have to be renewed year by year. These are very peripheral points however; all the repression which has been such a factor in creating the present violence still exists, plus the continued ban on Sinn Fein, which in fact bars the Provisionals from all legal political activity.

It has also been made very clear in the White Paper that organisations and individuals will have to prove that they are good boys before they can enjoy any of the promised human rights. Those who engage in civil disobedience, violence, or do not help the security forces will have no rights at all. Less progress has been made on this front than any other.

Setting up of a Civilianised Police Force and an Impartial Judicial System

After the Downing Street Declaration the sectarian B Specials were disbanded, and the Hunt Report disarming the police began to be put into operation. This was welcomed by the civil rights movement. All this has been lost in the present violence. The Security Forces, consisting of the British Army, the police, and the Ulster Defence Regiment use the most brutal methods, and all the repressive legislation to enforce the will of the British Government. They have been guilty of torture, assault, vandalism, looting and murder. They go unpunished, except in a tiny minority of cases. Even financial redress is very difficult to get. The behaviour of the Security Forces helps to increase violence.

The jury system remains middle and upper class dominated, biased in favour of Protestants and anti-feminine. The Civil rights movement says the jurors' list should be the same as the voters' list. Far too many judges and magistrates are appointed as rewards for political services to the Unionist Party.

The police and judiciary are now no longer the private weapon of the Unionist Party, but are under the control of Westminster. How they are used depends on the policy of that Government. Generally the judges and magistrates have kept to the rules, but there has been considerable discrepancy on who gets bail, and the length of sentence imposed. Magistrates and judges need to have conferences to make sure there is at least parity in these matters.

Jobs and Houses for All

At the present moment there is a much higher level of unemployment than in Britain, and this unemployment is not evenly divided, being considerably worse in anti-unionist areas. In one housing estate in Belfast a survey revealed that 47 per cent of fathers in the area were unemployed. Unemployment and the housing shortage in these areas has been made worse by anti-unionist people being driven into the ghettos or out of their jobs by the intimidators.

The White Paper promises that employment and housing will be brought into line with Britain. What areas of Britain are they talking about however? There is even a question mark over the whole thing, because any development must be in line with Britain's economic policy.

While there is a serious housing and employment problem, it is extremely difficult to end discrimination, and root out the basis for sectarianism.

The British Army

It is very necessary to point out that the British Army is not recognised as an impartial peacekeeping force. This is obviously one of the most difficult questions for the British people, brainwashed by the Tory Government and the mass media. The British Army is used by the British Government as an army of occupation, and behaves as such. The very best recruiting agent for the Provisionals is the British Army. Its treatment of the civilian population ensures that there is a body of support for the Provisionals at least as a force capable of retaliating against atrocities.

This is no accident. It is not just the case of lack of discipline or brutality or bloody mindedness on the part of individual soldiers. It is deliberate Government policy. Since the White Paper there has been a feeling of optimism among ordinary people and considerable pressure on the Provisionals to call a ceasefire.

At the time of writing this is being dispelled by the actions of the army. Since the Republican Clubs have been made legal, they have been harassed more than in previous months,—raids, wrecking of premises and arrest of members for screening. The killing of two unarmed Official IRA men in Armagh, coupled with this harassment, would lead one to believe that the British Government wants the Official IRA to call off their truce. Areas where the Provisionals have strong support have been subjected to so much abuse recently that there is no danger of them being isolated.

The army have also been used to keep the sectarian pot boiling, notably by the use of the

SAS or some similar body to carry out explosions and murders when necessary. The evidence is very clear as to army involvement in this. In fact two members of the armed forces are currently facing an attempted murder charge, for some unofficial activities carried out with the connivance of the RUC Special Branch.

We need a change in the role of the British Army; they must be returned to barracks at once, and only used to prevent sectarian outbreaks.

The State of the Civil Rights Movement at the Present Moment

As you can gather it is not an easy situation to work in the civil rights movement at the present moment, with army harassment, violence and fierce sectarian hatreds tending to dominate the situation, and the confusion that the British Government has sowed. None the less the civil rights movement is in a reasonably good shape to continue the struggle. The demands for democracy continue to be a major plank in the programmes of the anti-unionist parties, and to a large extent of the moderate unionist parties also.

The civil disobedience campaign is also continuing. If the civil disobedience committees set up after internment have fallen away in many areas and street activity has been difficult and spasmodic, the civil rights structure remains intact, or is being revived in most areas. The branches are essential for the defence of the rights of the people in these areas, and to point out in the midst of the confusion that the struggle for democratic rights is the key issue, and to organise agitation in these areas.

At the same time efforts are being made to broaden the civil rights movement and its allies. So earnest is the desire for peace that this is meeting with some success. An interesting feature of this was for the reprieve of Albert Browne, a UDA man sentenced to death for the murder of a policeman. Although it was impossible to mount a joint campaign, the groundswell of protest at the sentence from all sections of the community was such, that the man was reprieved. There is now talk of abolition of the death penalty. Oh the lessons that should be learned how the British Government fears above all united action, and will do anything to prevent it! As well as continuing and consolidating the work at home, and ever seeking the broadest alliance, it is also necessary to seek help abroad.

Need for British Solidarity

The first and most important place for the civil rights movement to seek aid is in Britain.

Although there has been and continues to be help from Irish people living in Britain, we seek the help of the British people. It is not just an Irish problem with the British people lending an odd hand. *This is also a British problem.* The British Government have a peaceful and democratic solution to their hand, and we ask the British people to change the policy of their Government.

Firstly we ask the Parliamentary Labour Party to end their policy of bi-partisanship with the Tory Government. There have been signs that this is going to happen through the Emergency Provisions Bill.

Secondly we ask the British Labour and Trade Union movement to throw its full weight behind a democratic solution to our problems.

Thirdly we ask for the support of the great liberal British tradition in our struggle.

It is very difficult to break through the paper curtain the press and television have erected. We ask that the truth about Northern Ireland is told through the progressive journals. The Civil Rights Association and other bodies do their best to supply information to as many individuals and organisations as possible in Britain, and throughout the world. This is difficult for us as we are short of cash to employ the necessary workers to do this job properly.

Cash is needed for everything, legal work, organisation, relief, and the dissemination of information.

One form of international work which should strengthen the hands of our friends in Britain, is through the European Commission on Human Rights, and the Protection of Minorities and Prevention of Discrimination Sub-Commission of the UNO.

The Irish Government took the British Government to the European Commission. The whole of the White Paper is designed to be an answer to the charges there. Because the Civil Rights Association, and the Association for Legal Justice encouraged two civil rights lawyers to take 7 torture cases there, which have been recently accepted for further investigation, it will be very difficult for the Irish Government to declare itself too easily satisfied. A case is also being prepared for the UNO by various civil rights and legal justice bodies, though the speed at which this case will be taken depends on finance.

We know these cases severely embarrass the British Government, and make their violations of human rights more difficult, and certainly the British people will not like to see their Government branded before international bodies.

The Civil Rights movement has support groups

in the USA, Australia and New Zealand, and relations with many important international bodies such as the International League for the Rights of Man, the World Peace Council. We have received help from most European countries, sent speakers to them, and received messages of support from the Arab countries and Latin America.

Main Civil Rights Demands

The main demands of the Civil Rights Association and many other bodies at this moment are:

The end of imprisonment without trial, and the repeal of repressive legislation.

The immediate withdrawal of the British Army to barracks.

The immediate passing of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland by the Westminster Parliament.

This has been a long and bitter struggle for our people. The granting of full civil rights and social justice is the only peaceful and democratic way forward. It is the only decent way forward for the British people. Both our peoples have hard lessons to learn. Our people must learn that sterile physical force is no solution to every problem, and that while one section of the working class is prepared to enjoy privileges they deny to another section, they can never be free themselves. And the British people must remember Marx's words when he said the British working class could never be free while it tolerated the subjugation of Ireland.

BRITAIN and the IRISH CRISIS

**A Communist view of the
White Paper**

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Trade Unions in Ireland

Betty Sinclair

(The author, who is writing in her personal capacity, is the Secretary of the Belfast Trades Council)

"In understanding Carson and the Unionist leadership in 1912-14 we must be very clear that they were risking a lot. But the stakes were high. The more economically-orientated Unionists, and there were many, well knew they were hoping to protect and improve their investments; the more socially-conscious were anxious to uphold their position. Birmingham testifies to upper-class awareness that the struggle on which they were engaged was partly viewed as a means of eroding class conflict by the exacerbation of workers' and petty-bourgeois anti-Catholic sentiment and its deployment under upper-class leadership . . . the Unionists could not make enthusiasts of their lower-class followers, they could simply channel the enthusiasm and hope to control it." (Owen Dudley Edwards, Irish Times, March 22, 1973, "Carson Agonistes").

The trade union movement in Ireland has a very long history. Its development into a strong *national movement* was hampered especially after the full effects of the Act of Union 1801 began to bite into the economy to the advantage of industrial development in England. Industries that had been growing in the last half of the 18th century were ruthlessly sacrificed to the needs of the dominant economy and position, i.e., of British imperialism. Local trade unions, which sprang up and which offered opposition to home conditions, begot, as emigration grew, a "one-ness" of interest between trade unions in England and Ireland.

The Process of Division

As the struggle for Home Rule grew, English and Irish Conservative interests took up the challenge and Randolph Churchill introduced, for the first time, the "Orange Card" to divide the workers and their organisations and to pull them behind the chariot of Conservatism and against Irish nationalism and a national trade union movement. In the 1910-14 days, when James Connolly was pointing out the dangers of a divided nation and especially so for the working class, Carson and Co., understood quite well their class interests and the "eroding of the class interests", because there was more employment of the working class in the North with the shipyards, linen industry, etc., which was not an accident.

And, as the years progressed and the big events

such as the Russian Revolution took place, the upper class in Britain and Ireland were not under any illusions that the "times were a'changing". The middle class of the rest of Ireland were willing to settle for something less than "revolution" and "the most stupid employers in Europe", as Connolly called the Dublin employers in 1913, were able to make a deal for a divided country which politically, economically, socially and culturally, cut off 26-counties from the 6-counties and Connolly's fear was realised. It is difficult for British workers to totally understand why Northern Ireland workers do not seem to fight on "bread and butter issues". After the keeping of the whole problem under the carpet by both British Conservative and Labour Governments for half a century, it was not easy for such workers to appreciate the fact that the struggle of the Irish workers could not be a duplicate of the struggle of the British workers. The unfinished business, i.e. the national question, left a weapon in the hands of reaction both in the North and the South.

In the North, the ruling class had control of central and local government, control of the industries, control of the provision of homes, education, social and cultural facilities. They had also control, in the last two decades, of the diversification of industry and the development of a new infrastructure. The plans meant favouring a "greater Belfast", i.e. taking a radius of 30 miles, and ignoring areas such as Counties Derry, Fermanagh and Tyrone where Unionist support was thin on the ground. This meant, in turn, that the trade union movement grew in the former areas and jobs were available for supporters of Unionism—and not for those in the opposition.

Trades Union Congress

Despite all the difficulties, the Irish Trades Union Congress was formed in 1894 to deal "with Irish problems". It remained in existence until 1945—taking the strains of two world wars—when a number of Irish-based unions disaffiliated on political grounds. There was a fear that the progressive politics which emerged during the struggle against fascism would find a reflex in the 26-counties and Right-Wing Social Democracy resented what they called "British politics". Secondly, they put forward

the case for "Irish-based trade unions" as against trade unions controlled from Britain.

The struggle for re-unification went on until 1959 when the two trade union centres came together to form the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and a new Constitution which emphasised the "Irish" nature of the Congress. The Congress, in its earlier formation, had been refused recognition by the Stormont Government. To help meet this difficulty a Northern Ireland Committee was set up in 1945 with powers to deal with the Government. The Committee was retained after 1959 but still Stormont refused to budge. They stated that the Committee had its headquarters in a "foreign country", i.e. Dublin. It was not until 1964, a year after the O'Neill Administration took office, that recognition was afforded and the Committee could then act on matters of legislation facing the workers.

It will be readily recognised that there are difficulties in that Congress has to deal with two Administrations bringing forth two sets of legislation.

The degree of trade union organisation in Ireland is about the highest in Western Europe. In the Republic the percentage of employees in trade unions is 52 per cent. In Northern Ireland the percentage is 54. The overall percentage for all-Ireland is 53 per cent. The problems arise when one examines the trade union base. Unions with head offices in the Republic cater for 55 per cent of the total members; with head offices in Northern Ireland, 2 per cent; and with head offices in Britain, 42 per cent. In Northern Ireland the problem of allegiances is clearly seen in the fact that 84 per cent of employees are members of British-based Unions and 15 per cent in local or Dublin-based unions. The reverse is the position in the Republic—86 per cent are members of Irish-based unions and 14 per cent in British-based unions. (All figures relate to the year 1970).

Common Market and Monopoly

The total membership at 1970 was 649,800 and in numbers and potential strength Congress represents the best base with which to face the big problems that have come to the fore. The British Government, during the O'Neill Unionist regime began seriously to work for entry into the EEC. The plan was to pull the whole of Ireland in behind imperial Britain and so strengthen her position within the Community. Already both the North and South were dependant on Britain for their export trade. British and other monopolies, by the 60's had more or less driven local enterprise off the map in the North. The task was to do the same in the Republic and, despite the problems that arose from 1966 to the present day, those plans go steadily ahead.

O'Neill's talk with the leaders of the Republic brought out the old resentments that Unionism

had thrived on. The Civil Rights struggle opened out in 1968. Nevertheless, Britain's plans gathered momentum. After the vote of May 10, 1972, in the Republic to join EEC the influx of British monopoly became a flood. This take-over or merging of industrial interests was duplicated by a growing closer of the banking systems and now there is a United Stock Exchange covering the two islands. Chambers of Commerce have found a greater identity of interests and the Confederation of British Industries and the Confederation of Irish Industries are working jointly to exploit the economy of the whole country.

The aim is to further encourage outside interests. Sir Brian Morton, chairman of the Derry Development Commission and a very rich businessman, stated recently that he hoped Northern Ireland, *which has so much to offer international companies*, would resume its prosperous position in the world. The old formula of "maximum assistance and minimum interference" to the monopolies still goes ahead. Assistance given in this way, in Northern Ireland, reached a total of £393,639,662—from 1945 to December 31, 1972. Most of this money has been paid out to big British, American, Dutch and French companies and the profits made go out of the area to the detriment of any further development.

Impoverished State

The trade union movement has played an important part in order to evolve a political policy that will best benefit the whole country. In the recent policy document which brought together 400 representatives from 95 organisations in Belfast, a call was made for the abolition of poverty, the achievement of an equitable order, human rights, the development of resources, security and liberty, greater co-operation in education, plans for employment, for housing, public enterprise, reconstruction by way of a crash programme to provide jobs and end discrimination in employment.

Much work lies ahead to achieve these objectives. In 1966, the total personal wealth in the Republic was £2,121 million and in the North, £1,552 million. But no wealth was possessed by 60 per cent of the people in the North and 65 per cent in the Republic. Latest figures for unemployment were 72,094 in the Republic and 34,624 in the North. Both sets of figures are suitably "doctored" and the hopes for the future are not good unless the trade union movement fights back. The British Government Actuary, in preparing accounts for the Social Security Bill 1972 on the Financial Provisions of the Bill relating to Northern Ireland (Cmd. 5269) stated, in paragraph 16, page 7, "The rates of unemployment on *Government instructions* are 2½ per cent in Great Britain and 6 per cent in Northern

Ireland". (My emphasis). The calculations of the Actuary were made up for the years to 2005-06!

The Actuary stated, in dealing with his calculations, that there had to be taken into account "the lower level of earnings which, together with the effect of higher rates of unemployment and sickness, results in the expected average of annual contributions per male employee in Northern Ireland being only about three-quarters of the corresponding amounts in Great Britain". (Paragraph 17). It is clear that the British Government does not intend to bring workers here to parity of earnings, incidence of sickness and unemployment with the workers in Great Britain—our impoverished state is to continue. This means that the programme of Congress must be fought for to end this colonial approach to our people.

Housing and Education

Programmes for housing needs are very necessary. In 1945, there were 100,000 unfit dwellings in the North. In 1973 there are still 100,000 which have been declared "unfit" and 30,000 of these are located in Belfast alone. In the Republic the position is no better and, with the high interest rates for owner-occupiers, working class families face great hardship. The housing problem in the North has been made worse with the movement of families because of intimidation and worse—a conservative estimate is that 20,000 families have changed their abode since August, 1969, the majority of whom have crowded into the anti-Unionist areas and are very much overcrowded.

There is growing concern about educational facilities. Although receiving state funds, the 81 private grammar schools with the help of successive Unionist Administrations have refused to develop any form of comprehensive education. Grammar school places are at a premium and the number available determines the number of children who go on to higher education. The segregation of the school system, since the inception of the state, has prevented efforts to end sectarianism and bigotry and the blame for this situation cannot be laid wholly at the door of the Catholic Church. The trade union movement has asked all the interests to come together on the problem and "provide full protection for all religious and cultural interests and in which the educational interests of the children will be paramount".

The problems which we face will not be overcome in a short space of time. Congress has, therefore, called on all political organisations in Northern Ireland, the Republic and Great Britain;

- (a) to reject violence, and
- (b) to accept the principle of non-discrimination, and
- (c) to accept the right of persons to peacefully

advocate political change, including changes in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland.

New Attempts at Division

One of the problems that has arisen is that of Congress maintaining the leadership of manual and salaried workers. In the camp of ultra-Unionism, efforts are being made to subvert the allegiance of the workers with the aid of the so-called Loyalist Association of Workers and the recent call by Rogers of the Young Unionist Council and now of Craig's Vanguard Unionist Progressive (sic) Party to reform the old Ulster Unionist Labour Association which had its birth in the strike for the 44-hour week in 1919. This Association was used by the Unionists to "erode class conflict". Carson's policy, but became negligible after the last war. Rogers and Co. hope to win the workers on the basis of all the old, rotten and outworn bigotted slogans which kept Unionism in total power for over 50 years.

One cannot say that the Whitlaw regime is doing anything to curb such sectarianism and it is not in their class interests to do so. Manufacturing production increased in the North by 64 per cent between 1962-72. Productivity per employee has risen since 1963 by 55.1 per cent, as against 38.7 per cent in the UK. Per capita Gross Domestic Product as a percentage of the UK figure rose from 63.4 per cent in 1960 to 71.7 per cent in 1970. Since 1966 exports, calculated at constant prices, have risen on average by 6.5 per cent each year, and imports by 7.2 per cent. The injection of capital into the area's infrastructural services is estimated to involve a total of over £3,000 million by 1975—most of which has benefited British monopoly capital.

Irish and British Workers for Unity

Over the recent years liaison has grown between the British and Irish Trade Union Congresses and the former have supported the call for a Bill of Rights—already the policy of the ICTU. What needs to be undertaken now is a campaign to explain the situation to British Trade Unionists. They must be made aware of history and the background of the struggle here and the real difficulties that face workers in Ireland. The demand for democratic rights touches more nearly workers in Britain as they meet the forces of the law in relation to wage struggles and picketing. The overall strengthening of democracy becomes more necessary as the Heath Government proceeds to enact *undemocratic legislation* for Northern Ireland. The outcry of the Tories—and some others—for "law and order" will not fool the British people. Tory "law and order" means that workers are underneath and the bosses are on top. Together we can rid ourselves of this most infamous Government.

The numerical strength of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions—over 600,000 and forming 53 per cent of all employees—and its leadership are vital and would be a determining factor if the country was united. It is not in the interests of the capitalists in Britain, Northern Ireland and the Republic—

and further afield—that unity should come about. But it is in the interests of the workers of these two islands to foster that unity and on that basis build up the unity and friendship so necessary to defeat the bosses here and in the EEC.

The Communist Party of Ireland

Sean Nolan

(The author is the Chairman of the Southern Area Committee of the Communist Party of Ireland)

The Communist Party of Ireland was re-formed 40 years ago, in June 1933; it has been in continuous existence since in the Six Counties; in the Twenty-Six Counties it has functioned as the Communist Party, as the Irish Workers' League, the Irish Workers' Party and since 1970 again as the Communist Party.

The Communist Party of Ireland first came into existence in 1921 when the Socialist Party of Ireland, following discussions and some expulsions, was transformed into the Communist Party of Ireland; it became a section of the Communist International.

The Socialist Party of Ireland was revived in 1917, following the 1916 Uprising, but in the years until the truce of 1921, because of the Black and Tans and a strong British military presence, making political activity very difficult, the Party functioned intermittently, with no newspaper or public activities.

The defeat of Czarism in February 1917 and later the Bolsheviks success in October were hailed in Ireland by the Labour movement and the radical republicans. The National Executive of the Irish Labour Party and the TUC greeted "the triumph of the workers, solidiers and peasants of Russia . . . with unbounded delight; . . . the Irish workers welcomed the establishment of the Soviet Republic".

Early Days

Following the 1921 July truce which led to the opening of negotiations between the Republican Government and the British Government, the Socialist Party of Ireland resumed public activi-

ties and published the weekly paper, *The Workers' Republic*. R. J. Connolly (son of the executed leader of the 1916 Uprising, James Connolly) was the Party's chief spokesman. The Party's membership was small and its activities were mostly confined to the Dublin area.

The CPI strongly opposed the Anglo-Irish Treaty settlement signed by Collins and Griffith in early December 1921 in London, which led to the establishment of the Irish Free State. The CPI declared the Treaty terms were a betrayal and abandonment of the fight for full national independence. The Party's position had an impact on some Republican leaders, such as Liam Mellows, who, later, while a prisoner in Mountjoy before his execution, endeavoured to influence the Republican forces to see the importance of a radical social policy to be joined to the military struggle.

The Labour and trade union leadership took up a position of so-called neutrality between the two sections of the Republican movement on the Treaty terms; it had a like position in the Civil War which started in June 1922 and went on for almost a year. The Labour members of the newly-created Free State Parliament took their seats and assumed the role of the Opposition; the anti-Treaty Republicans, refused to recognise the Free State and abstained from all participation.

The CPI joined with the anti-Treaty Republicans in the Civil War fighting in the Dublin city area, which lasted for a week. After the fall of Dublin to the Free State Government forces, the Party carried on under difficult conditions. It remained small in numbers but endeavoured to

influence the Republican leadership from pursuing a purely military position.

In the early part of 1923, following his attendance at the 4th Congress of the Communist International, R. J. Connolly returned to Dublin. In his report he put forward the viewpoint that since the military struggle in the Civil War was not going in favour of the Republicans, the emphasis should be on a resumption of political action in the form of the Republicans abandoning abstention and taking their place as the main Opposition in the Free State Dail Eireann. The military units of the Republican movement were to be maintained, but not in active service.

From the Republicans, R. J. Connolly's proposals were strongly denounced by Peadar O'Donnell, and, as well, within the Communist Party there was opposition to Connolly's proposals.

At this time, Jim Larkin, the 1913 Dublin Strike leader, had been released from jail in America after serving some 30 months of a ten-year sentence for alleged criminal anarchy. The CPI in Ireland and other left forces hailed Larkin's release and his early return to Ireland.

Jim Larkin Returns

Larkin returned to Ireland in April 1923. He had left the country in late 1914 following the end of the six-months long Dublin Lock-Out. In America he was identified with the left groups; he was a strong supporter of the Russian Revolution and was involved in the foundation of the CPUSA. He opposed the Anglo-Irish Treaty when its terms became known.

In a short time after his return Larkin was in headlong collision with the leadership of the Union (ITGWU) which he had helped to found in 1909. He also made it known that he would not co-operate with the CPI.

Larkin, with his fame in the 1913 struggle, had considerable support among Dublin workers. A breakaway from the ITGWU was formed, called the Workers' Union of Ireland. A large membership among the carters and dockers was won for the new union. The Workers' Union of Ireland became a section of the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU) and Larkin was elected to its Executive Committee.

The "Irish Worker League," which was launched in the latter part of 1923 never really functioned as a political organisation. The CPI, in face of Larkin's attitude, terminated its existence and offered full support to the Irish Worker League.

Larkin's Role

The IWL was brought into existence at a big meeting in Dublin's Mansion House and some hundreds of workers joined. It became a section

of the Communist International and Larkin became a candidate member of the Executive of the International at the 5th Congress of the CI.

Bob Stewart, a veteran of the British Communist Party, came to Ireland in 1924 to help in the development of a Communist Party. In his book, *Breaking the Fetters* Bob Stewart writes:

"... the political and economic conditions in Ireland necessitated a Marxist Party with a solid basis in the Irish trade union movement. My work was to see how this necessity could be achieved. . . . Big Jim Larkin was then the best known trade union leader in Ireland. . . . and naturally any hope of success in my task rested on my ability to interest Larkin in the formation of a Marxist party. . . . I spent months working with Larkin in the attempt to found a Marxist party in Ireland. . . . Working with Larkin and the other Marxists, both in Dublin and in the country districts, I soon found that one of my greatest difficulties was to keep the peace among our own people. . . . Larkin was the biggest problem because he always personalised his politics. . . . I got on well with Larkin and I was one of the few men he really trusted politically. Lenin said of Larkin, 'His remarkable oratorical gifts and seething Irish energy performed miracles among the Irish workers.' That was justified. He was a powerful and popular speaker. . . . The aim of the group I was working with was to plan a political campaign leading to and culminating in the formation of an Irish Marxist Party. In Ireland at that time politics took a wide sweep. Poverty in some places was desperate, and it was necessary not only to recognise this politically but to do something about it. So we were constantly engaged in relief work. . . . With the tremendous political campaigning and the prodigious relief and welfare work we got a good political footing in many Irish counties, but most important and best of all in Dublin. We decided the time was opportune to launch the call for the formation of a mass Irish Marxist party. . . . After much deliberation and argument we drew up a manifesto and organised a mass demonstration in the Mansion House. It was essential to get Larkin to sign the manifesto and I discussed this with him many times. . . . but it was never signed. . . . My own opinion is that Big Jim would never accept the democracy of a disciplined Marxist party. He always had to be in the centre of the stage all the time, and so to join a party where the emphasis is put on collective work was not for him. . . . In 1924 the political situation in Ireland was ripe for the formation of a Marxist party based on the Irish workers' organisations, principally the trade unions. Larkin's refusal to play his part in the creation of such a party greatly weakened the fight. The result was that much of the good work done over the years preceding 1924 ran into sand and failed to bear fruit."

Larkin's identification with the Communist International for all practical purposes came to an end in 1928. There was no formal break or

public announcement; he continued to be a strong defender of the Russian Revolution and its aims. From then on his main preoccupation was with the difficult job of holding together the Workers' Union of Ireland which, having been involved in a whole number of strikes was in bad financial circumstances, not winning any new membership, if anything losing them. Generally at the time and for some years later the whole working class movement was not in a strong position to resist the employers' offensive for wage reductions and worsening of conditions. The divisions within the working class movement were used to advantage by the employers.

The Irish Worker League or the Larkin-ITGWU clash did not extend to Belfast or the other areas of the Six Counties. The left-wing elements in Belfast, Derry and the other Northern areas found their own forms of organisation and activity on a local basis.

New Initiatives

In Dublin the former members of the Communist Party and new forces which had come forward in the years since, finding it impossible to be involved in political activity in the non-functioning Irish Worker League, founded the Connolly Workers' Education Club in 1925, and endeavoured to do some of the work, at least in the field of Marxist education and public lectures, which should have been undertaken by the Irish Worker League.

In 1929 the Revolutionary Workers' Groups came into existence; at the start these were confined to Dublin and Belfast, and later groups were started in Cork, Leitrim, Longford and among the miners at Castlecomer. The groups had the aim of building support for the re-formation of the Communist Party on an all-Ireland basis.

In 1929 the groups started a weekly paper, *Irish Workers' Voice*. In Dublin the groups were in the leadership of the struggles of the unemployed. At the time unemployment was as high as one in five of the insured population. Money payments were only paid to those who qualified with insurance stamps; unemployment assistance or other forms of social welfare, as known today, did not exist. The Free State Government to help balance its Budget, reduced the old age pension from 50 pence a week to 45 pence.

In Belfast, in October 1932, the RWG led the great struggles of the unemployed for improved relief rates. Street battles developed in which the police killed two workers and wounded a number of others. Tom Mann, the veteran British Communist, was deported back to Britain. The

magnificent militancy and unity of the workers, Catholic and Protestant, compelled the Stormont regime to increase the relief rates.

With the help of the socially progressive elements among the IRA leadership, the groups in Dublin were involved in educational work among some sections of the IRA. A number of members of the groups were also members of the IRA.

Bob Stewart was back in Ireland, as helpful and as popular as ever with those engaged in the work of preparing the way for a Communist Party. Bob with Sean Murray and Jim Larkin jun., initiated group organisation among the Castlecomer miners. Trade union organisation was virtually non-existent among the miners and wages and conditions were very poor. The RWG took the initiative in developing trade union organisation. The Irish Mineworkers and Quarrymen's Union was formed. Nicholas Boran became the Secretary. The first success of the union was to have Boran elected as checkweighman.

Reactionary Offensive

In a short time the local reactionary forces gathered together to down the new miners union. The Prior-Wandsforde family had owned the mines for generations and did not want effective trade union organisation among their workers. Although of planter stock and never in sympathy with the national aspirations of the Irish people, they sought and got the backing of all sections of the propertied people, regardless of religious or political attachments to undermine the miners union. The local press played up the "Red" scare and the national press were drawn into support. The heavy hand of the Church was conscripted, there were the Sunday warnings from the pulpit and when these appeared to be not succeeding, the Bishop was brought into the Castlecomer area amidst much publicity to put the union and all who continued to be associated with it under ban.

In the face of the large-scale offensive by reaction, it was vital to safeguard trade union organisation among the miners; this was done by the miners becoming a branch of another union, with their own officials and committee to defend and advance their interests.

Whenever and wherever possible the reactionary forces, clerical and otherwise, used their power and influence to obstruct the development of the Communist movement. The weekly paper—*Irish Workers' Voice*—was first printed in Longford, but soon clerical pressure compelled the printer to stop and this was to be the experience with a number of other printers and in 1935 the paper had to be printed outside the country. In

the 1950s and into the 1960s, in the cold war days, the Party had similar printing difficulties, even our nominated candidate being denied printing facilities.

Revolutionary Workers' Groups

In the general election of 1932 there was a great mobilisation of the forces opposed to the Free State Government to ensure its defeat after being ten years in power, during which the working people suffered high unemployment, wage reductions and almost no social welfare services, and the anti-Treaty Republicans, defeated in the Civil War, were harassed in every way, with jailing and denial of employment on political grounds. The Revolutionary Workers' Groups nominated candidates in two Dublin constituencies; they joined with the other forces in calling for defeat of the Cosgrave regime, but were sharply critical of the deValera's Fianna Fail.

The general election resulted in the defeat of the ten-year-old Free State Government; with the support of the small number of Labour deputies returned, Fianna Fail had a majority to form a government.

The RWG resumed legal activities, having been proscribed, along with twelve other organisations, six months earlier under a Coercion Act of the Cosgrave regime. The RWG resumed publication of their weekly paper, public meetings and other activities. In the changed political situation the anti-communist campaign did not diminish, in fact it greatly intensified. From the ranks of the defeated Cosgrave Free State party there emerged the fascist Blueshirts, much encouraged by the successes of the Hitler-Mussolini fascist movements.

Communist Party Reformed

It was in the situation of this fascist challenge to all the forces of democracy that the RWG convened the conference to re-form the Communist Party of Ireland; it was held in Dublin, in June 1933, and had to be held in semi-legal conditions.

A short time before the Party headquarters had been under a three days siege by a combination of Blueshirts and a clerical-inspired mob; it was some time before the premises could be re-occupied.

The conference to re-form the CPI was presided over by Jim Larkin jun. The Party Manifesto, later published as "Ireland's Path to Freedom," was introduced by Sean Murray, who was elected the Party's General Secretary. The Manifesto emphasised that the Irish capitalists' interests could never be relied upon to bring to a successful conclusion the fight for Ireland's

independence. It repeated the proposition of James Connolly that "the Irish working class remained as the incorruptible inheritors of the fight for freedom in Ireland."

The deValera Government dillyed and dallied in the face of the Blueshirt challenge. It was on the streets of the towns, cities and villages of Ireland that the Blueshirt challenge was met and defeated by the militant workers and the IRA rank and file. It was constantly demanded by the Communist Party that the Labour and Trade Union movement organised action by the workers to halt the threat from Blueshirt fascism. There resulted the massive demonstration of thousands of workers in Dublin in 1934 which served as a warning that the working class movement would resist the fascist challenge.

Fight against Fascism

From the deValera Government there was the revival of the bad and anti-democratic legislation of the Cosgrave period to be used to tackle the Blueshirt threat. The CPI warned and protested against this legislation being re-introduced under the pretext of dealing with the Blueshirts; it could, urged the CPI, as required, be used against Republicans, Communists and others. The IRA leadership at the time was generally unimpressed of the deValera policies.

In time the CPI was proved correct; the revived anti-democratic Cosgrave Government's "Offences Against the State Act" was brought into use against the IRA and militant workers and military courts were restored to send people to jail it would have been impossible to get convicted in the ordinary courts.

The struggle against the local variant of Blueshirt fascism shifted to the international scene with the Franco rebellion in Spain in 1936. Irish Communists and left-wing republicans joined with the communists and anti-fascists of Europe and America to form the famous International Brigade and they remained in the fighting line until, in early 1938, the International Brigade was withdrawn from Spain. The Irish section formed part of the British Battalion and some were involved with the American Lincoln Brigade.

In Ireland, in 1936, the reactionary forces rallied great demonstrations in support of the Franco fascists. It was a time when the CPI and the left-wing Republicans had to contend with organised violence from the so-called Christian Front and there was the constant use of the pulpits to encourage anti-communist, pro-Franco feelings.

The Blueshirt movement as such no longer functioned, but its chief, General O'Duffy, joined

the Christian Front platform and organised the so-called "Irish Christian Crusade" to support Franco. The deValera Government followed the League of Nations policy of non-intervention. The O'Duffy "Brigade" was a fiasco; within some months the 700 involved returned home very disillusioned by their experiences and were involved in recriminations and abuse of one another. Among the Irish with the International Brigade there was, for their numbers, a high rate of casualties. The Communist and Republican movements lost some very capable and promising workers in the struggle against fascism in Spain.

Second World War

With the outbreak of war in 1939, the Dublin Government declared for neutrality. The CPI declared in a statement against the war and against the involvement of the Six Counties which was, by the 1920 Act, automatically included with the UK. The CPI called for the withdrawal of the Six Counties from the war.

Arising from articles which appeared in the Party paper, *Irish Workers' Voice*, on the issues involved in the war for republicans and the working class movement, police actions were taken against leading Communists in Northern Ireland; Betty Sinclair, W. H. McCullough and Val Morahan received prison sentences.

In the conditions of neutrality in the Twenty-Six Counties it was made difficult for the Communist Party to function and the weekly paper was subjected to the severest Press censorship. At the time, all sections of the Press had to submit to Government censorship.

Following the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union, there was no easement of the problems the Communists had to contend with; but in the Six Counties the Party was greatly strengthened in membership and considerably expanded its activity. There was launched a weekly paper, *Unity*, which continues to appear now as the weekly paper of the Northern Area of the Communist Party of Ireland. As was the position in Britain, there were large-scale Party activities in the Six Counties, with great meetings, etc., in support of the Soviet Union and for the defeat of Nazism. Many leading British Party speakers participated in these meetings.

Irish Workers' League

Following defeats in by-elections, the deValera Government called a general election in 1948 and for the first time in 16 years was defeated by a combination of all the parties and individuals in opposition who were elected and these formed into a Coalition. There had been for some time

a build up of discontent with the social and economic policies of the deValera Government. The Government had persisted in maintaining the wages standstill order of the war years until 1947 and only yielded to its removal after great trade union pressure. The health services were poor and TB was claiming many victims. The openings for employment were almost nil and emigration (mostly to Britain) was greatly increasing.

In the same year of 1948 a number of groups came together to form the Irish Workers' League; this title was chosen after much discussion, the resumption of the title of the Communist Party of Ireland was considered, but not agreed upon. The Party paper, *Irish Workers' Voice*, was resumed as a monthly.

In 1951 the Coalition Government was forced to a general election because of the disunity within it over the "Mother and Child Scheme," which occasioned the disfavour of the Bishops. The involvement of the Irish Workers' League in the 1951 general election prompted the anti-communist "crusaders" to mount an extraordinary campaign. Virtually a pogrom situation was created to frighten off in any form at all support for the IWL candidate; the Archbishop of Dublin, the recently-deceased Dr. McQuaid, came in with a special letter read in all churches in the constituency, warning that to vote for the Communist candidate would be a mortal sin. The newspapers and the other media churned out the world-wide anti-Communist barrage and a very large number of workers were confused and bewildered; the backward elements were encouraged to attack meetings and the Party workers selling the *Irish Workers' Voice*.

Against Cold War

The Dublin Coalition Government, in the 1948-53 period, with Sean MacBride as the Minister for External Affairs, sided with Churchill and the US Government in their anti-Communist aims in Europe and in Asia.

The Labour Party, with its trade union support, was for the Coalition policy. The Communists, emphasised that the Marshall Plan, NATO and the European Defence Council were all part of the imperialist design to involve all Ireland in its plan and to have neutrality abandoned.

There were at the time strong US pressures against Ireland's neutrality policy. The appointment of the American Archbishop, O'Hara, (instead of the usual Italian Prelate) by Pope Pius XII as Papal Envoy, in the hope of influencing a change in Irish policy was an outstanding example. Offices and libraries as US

propaganda centres to promote cold war policies were opened in Dublin. Trade Union officials sent for special training courses in US universities. US Embassy officials requested and were allowed observer status at the annual meetings of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. The Labour and trade union leadership acquiesced in the cold war policies. There were some notable exceptions among them.

The campaign to win support for the Stockholm peace appeal came under heavy attack with church sermons warning that support for the peace appeal was support for communism. Party public meetings often had to be defended from organised hooligan gangs. In face of such difficulties, the Party members held firm and pressed on with the work of increasing the sales of Party publications and winning new membership.

The Communists were the first to come out against the country joining the Common Market. The Fianna Fail Government, in the early 1960s was for joining, until the negotiations for Britain's entry fell through. The Labour leadership, like Fine Gael, did not oppose the Government's position. The Republicans, a united body at the time, had no position. In the general election of 1961, the Party was alone in warning that membership of the Common Market would limit national sovereignty, mean a loss in jobs

and higher prices. In the 1971 referendum campaign, the Labour and trade union leadership and the Republicans had shifted and took the same position as the Communists had ten years earlier.

Party Re-united 1970

In the 1960s the Irish Workers' Party was the name of the organisation in the Twenty-Six Counties and the Communist Party in the Six Counties. There were no disagreements or conflicts in regard to national policies, but they did function separately. Some years earlier in the 1950s a Joint Council of representatives of the executives of the two organisations was created. From the work of this Council programmes for the two areas were published (*Ireland Her Own and Ireland's Path to Socialism*).

A further result of the work of the Joint Council was the organisation in March 1970, in Belfast, of the Congress which re-formed the Communist Party of Ireland on an all-Ireland basis.

The Party's centre is based in Dublin; the weekly paper, *Unity* is published from Belfast and the monthly paper, *Irish Socialist* and the theoretical journal, *Irish Socialist Review* are published from Dublin.

Britain and Ireland in the Common Market

A. Raftery

(The author is the editor of 'Irish Socialist')

Ireland joined the Common Market because Britain joined. The people of the six counties were not consulted. Neither were the British people. The twenty-six counties had a referendum.

The two major Parties, the employers' and farmers' organisations all mounted an unprecedented campaign to vote "Yes" to entry. The Labour Party, the Trade Unions, both Sinn Feins, the Connolly Youth Movement and the Communist Party campaigned against entry. So did Aontacht Eireainn, set up by the ex-Fianna Fail Minister Kevin Boland, and a number of groups formed to fight entry.

The pro-market argument boiled down, in

spite of a lot of sunbursting, to the simple argument "If Britain joins so must we". People were convinced there would be economic collapse if we stayed out. The result was a massive "Yes" in favour of joining. In spite of political independence the economy of the Republic was always tied to that of Britain. This was sold to the people as the natural and inevitable situation.

The employers enclosed slips in the workers wage packets warning that if there was a "No" vote the business would have to close down. One factory, producing bowling alleys, was issued with such a warning. Within two months of the "Yes" vote it closed its doors.

Integrated with British Monopolies

Britain joined the Common Market because British big business was prepared to sacrifice the people's interests for greater profits. Over the years since the setting up of the 26 county state the bigger Irish capitalists have become more and more closely integrated with British monopolies.

Ireland's trade, both North and South, is and was largely with Britain. The Irish financial structure is dominated by British banks. Irish agriculture largely catered to the British market, shipping beef on the hoof to be fattened in Britain, the most disadvantageous way possible for the Irish economy.

The Fianna Fail Party, while continuing to mouth the slogans of independence, in fact represents a capitalist class which has come to the end of the road as far as any real struggle for either political or economic freedom is concerned. All its actions in Government had the objective of bringing the Irish economy closer to that of Britain and of avoiding any action which might antagonise the British Government. Its Common Market Policy of integration with Britain and, from that, with the Western European monopolies was the cornerstone of all its policies. This was the reason for the dismissal of its most talented Ministers over allegedly sending arms to the North. It was presented as if Mr. Lynch's policy of a peaceful solution to the question of uniting the country had been infringed. In fact it was no pacifist sentiment but the displeasure of the British Government at even token support for the Civil Rights struggle in the North which caused Prime Minister Lynch to go against the sentimental attachment to Irish unity and independence of his own party.

Effect of Ireland's Entry

After even a short period the gloomiest prediction of those who opposed Irish entry are coming true. All over the State the smaller factories are closing down and the take-over by foreign monopolies of every aspect of Irish life is proceeding at a tremendous pace.

This process is personified in the person of an Irishman, Tony O'Reilly, at one time the Elvis Presley of the Rugby field. He was appointed as head of the semi-State company Erin Foods after its previous head, Major General Costello, had objected to the proposal to allow Heinz, the international monopoly, to become a partner in it. From Erin Foods he moved to one of the top jobs in Heinz. From there he, with a number of others, set up a holding company called Fitzwilliam Holdings which initially started to buy up smaller companies. It eventually merged with

the Goulding Fertiliser Co., to form a new group called Fitzwillton. Then ICI bought a share in Fitzwillton and the take-overs proceeded.

The next step was that Mr. O'Reilly took over the Independent Newspaper group. This is by far the biggest newspaper group in Ireland, publishing national morning and evening newspapers and owning many provincial papers as well. In all these undertakings Mr. O'Reilly has had the backing of English-controlled banks.

In the Common Market set-up, whatever controls and safeguards limited political independence gave to the 26 counties have disappeared. At all levels the country is wide open. Even before joining the Common Market this policy was put into effect and the huge mineral finds of copper, zinc etc., are being exploited by foreign, mainly Canadian, mining companies with hardly any benefit to the Irish economy. The ore from these mines is shipped abroad in its crude state to be refined and the mining companies are paying no taxes on profits. What could be a source of profit, industrial development and employment for the Irish economy is only providing a couple of hundred jobs. A Study Group set up by students in Trinity College, Dublin, has calculated that over a short number of years the mining companies will make a profit of over £300 million out of the Irish mines. Already foreign monopolies have started to explore for natural gas and oil under the sea off Ireland's shores.

The Irish big capitalist sees the EEC as a graven train. The farmers saw it as a way of breaking out of the stranglehold which Britain has had on our agriculture.

Food and Agriculture

The British ruling class by its cheap food policy, unquestionably did exploit the Irish farmers. Cheap food for Britain meant low prices in Ireland for cattle. What was not realised was that entry into the EEC would mean dearer prices for everything and that the higher price for cattle would have to be paid for by an increase in costs for almost every other item, including the raw materials for agriculture.

Since joining the EEC it has become obvious that the bigger powers have no intentions of giving hand-outs to the smaller countries. We now have the spectacle of the Irish and British Ministers for Agriculture being on diametrically opposed sides on the question of price increases for agricultural products. What was supposed to be a united benevolent club turns out to be a jungle, with the bigger lions getting the spoils.

For Ireland, North and South, and for Britain entry into the Common Market has meant huge price increases for the ordinary people. In the

Republic the price of meat has increased over a hundred per cent in 6 months. Other food items have also soared.

One of the more hopeful developments in relation to Irish agriculture was the growth of a meat-processing industry. This meant that, instead of sending off cattle on the hoof, they were processed in Ireland and all the by-products were utilised. Since joining the EEC the meat-processing industry is on the verge of closing down due to the high prices which foreign buyers are prepared to pay for Irish cattle. Ancillary industries such as leather and glue and the industries which depend on them are suffering massive lay-offs also. The International Meat Co. in Dublin which employed over 800 workers six months ago now employs less than 400. "Redundancy" has become one of the most familiar everyday words.

At the same time foreign capital, much of it from the US, is coming into the country. What is at work here is a sophisticated form of neo-colonialism. The industries set up by foreign firms are capital intensive and employ very few workers. They are mainly engaged in the processing of imported raw materials. While the wealth of the country goes out in crude form (ore, cattle on the hoof) the work force is being utilised to process imported raw materials more cheaply than it can be done in the home countries of the big monopolies.

Another great advantage which was supposed to follow from joining the Common Market was that the border would become irrelevant and unity of the country would become inevitable. It was also argued that Britain wanted to get rid of Ireland and was only looking for the opportunity to get out.

In fact, British imperialism, while it may change its tactics, wants not only to hold on to the North, but also even more tightly to control the economy of the South as well.

It is also now confidently predicted that the Irish Sea will prove to be the bonanza area for natural gas and undersea oil. The Irish people will not benefit from these riches. It is the multinational monopolies which are going to reap the profit from the undeveloped resources of Ireland.

The Irish Labour Party, which fought against entry into the Common Market, is now the junior partner in a Coalition Government dominated by Fine Gael which was even more enthusiastic about joining the EEC than Fianna Fail. The Foreign Minister, Dr. Garret Fitzgerald, at the time of the first application to join the EEC in 1961, was a writer on economics.

He stated at that time that the Irish people would have to become used to the idea that the depopulation of the countryside would become a Government policy. This is precisely the role which Irish agriculture is to play. The people are to be driven off the land to make way for cattle. The Irish countryside is to be used to produce beef for Europe.

While there is opposition to these developments it is as yet confused and unchannelled. It is the Left and the Republicans who carry on the fight for Irish independence.

The trade union movement, which opposed entry into the EEC, has been silent since the Referendum. The movement will have to swing into action to fight the results of EEC entry if the scourge of redundancy which is beginning to sweep through Irish industry is to be halted.

United Action Needed

In the new situation arising from the entry of both Britain and Ireland into the EEC the necessity for united action between the British and Irish working class becomes more important than ever. The British workers are fighting Heath's wage freeze. Now the Irish employers are trying to use that wage freeze in order to keep down the wages of Irish workers. They argue that in a free trade situation Irish goods would become uncompetitive if wage increases in Ireland were higher than those in other EEC countries. In this way the employers in the Common Market hope to keep wages down to the level of the lowest paid working class in the EEC.

Ireland has become tied to what is reliably expected to be, in a short period, the weakest economy in the EEC, that of Britain. If a policy for the independence of Britain wins it will benefit the Irish people, just as the independence of Ireland would deal a shattering blow at the British ruling class. That is why it must be brought home to the British Labour movement that it is in its own interests to oppose British imperialism's policies in Ireland as well as in Britain.

As long as British Labour is tied to a bipartisan policy on Ireland it will never be able to mount a proper fight against the Common Market. Imperialism's policies form part of a whole. For real progress every aspect of them must be fought.

Mr. Cosgrave sees the two islands as linked by the common interests of their ruling classes. To that conception must be opposed the common interests of the British and Irish working people in fighting for freedom and progress.

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