

NO TO ANY FORM OF DEVOLUTION, NO TO ANY RESURRECTION OF STORMONT!

**ONLY THE EXPULSION OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM WILL
SOLVE THE PROBLEMS IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND**

Once more these days, most notably in the universal approval (in bourgeois political circles, not amongst the people) of the recent Unionist Task Force Report 'An End to Drift', the talk is being turned towards the restoration of devolved government to 'Northern Ireland', how this 'desirable' objective can be achieved, on what terms for Catholics and Protestants, for nationalists and unionists, whether there should be 'power-sharing' or what form of power-sharing etc.etc.

The British and southern Irish governments, of course, made the achievement of devolution one of the central objectives of their Anglo-Irish Agreement signed at Hillsborough in 1985. It is a fact that all of the major bourgeois parties of Ireland, north and south (and of Britain) are united in measuring what they call 'political progress' in 'solving the problem of Northern Ireland' by the extent to which devolution is brought closer. In fact, the Unionists' 'campaign against the Anglo-Irish Agreement' is itself part of their own campaign demanding devolution.

But what are the real issues involved in the question of devolution for 'Northern Ireland'? Is devolution in 'Northern Ireland' in the interests of the people of Ireland?

Central to the strategy of the British imperialists towards Ireland is their constant work to deny their own true responsibility for what they like to call the 'troubles' in Ireland. Having been forced to come to the aid of their fascist colonial government at Stormont in 1969, the British imperialists have found it more difficult to present the conflict in the north of Ireland as 'Irish against Irish' as a cover to conceal the reality, that this has always been - in this generation just as it has always been since partition in 1921 - a struggle for national liberation of the Irish people (not some 'extremists') against THEM, the British imperialists, as foreign aggressors in an alien country. This is why ever since then the British imperialists have tried to reverse the tide and once more to 'Ulsterise' the

conflict. One such plank in this Ulsterisation policy is the goal of devolution - which can mean nothing more nor less than the restoration of Stormont in some shape or form. The establishment of a provincial parliament with an executive, a provincial government with control over at least some aspects of internal administration in 'Northern Ireland', therefore, cannot - at least as far as the masses of the Irish people are concerned - be any kind of yardstick for political progress, since the whole purpose is not to solve the

problems in the north, but to perpetuate the British colonial annexation which is the root cause of 'the problem of Northern Ireland' in the first place. That the manoeuvres towards devolution are entirely reactionary and against the interests of the Irish people is a fact which can be seen clearly in the recent speech of Tom King, the British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, at the British House of Commons on July 7th last: "A vast majority in the island of Ireland, and a large

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SPIRIT

August
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FREEDOM

RELEASE THE BIRMINGHAM SIX!

**NO TO THE BLACKMAIL TO TRADE EXTRADITION
FOR THEIR FREEDOM!**

For more than twelve years six men have been incarcerated in English jails - men who have committed no crime but who, nonetheless, have been viciously beaten, 'tried' and then sentenced to life imprisonment simply because it suited the purpose of British imperialism.

These prisoners, the men who were railroaded with responsibility for the 1974 Birmingham pub bombings on the sole basis of some making 'confessions' which have since been proven even in British courts to have been the result of brutal torture, and on the 'forensic evidence' of a police scientist subsequently removed for incompetence and 'tests for explosives' subsequently shown to respond equally to handling

playing cards, were found guilty simply because they were Irish.

Their names - Hugh Callaghan, Paddy Hill, Gerry Hunter, Richard McIlkenny, Billy Power and John Walker - are testimony to the outrages of British imperialism. 'Spirit of Freedom' calls for the immediate release of these men and for their complete vindication and for compensation. We and all the patriotic and democratic Irish people demand an immediate end to their suffering and vigorously oppose the British imperialists using these innocent men as hostages simply for the purpose of blackmail to intimidate the Irish people, not least Irish people resident in Britain, and prevent them from speaking

out against the crimes of British rule in Ireland for fear that the same fate could overtake them.

However, tribute to the heroism of the people, the sinister tactic of the British imperialists has backfired. Far from being intimidated by the wrongful imprisonment of the Birmingham Six, a strong cry of opposition has risen against the British imperialists and their jailing of these innocent people.

It is clear that the case of the Birmingham Six is not a mere question of a 'miscarriage of justice', some accident in an otherwise healthy legal system. Instead, it is part of the deliberate policy of the British ruling class towards

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proportion of catholics in Northern Ireland, supported the right of Unionists to self-determination. A majority of Unionists accepted the right of equal treatment for catholics and the necessity for an Irish dimension; these were real components on which real progress can be built".

What we can see in this speech is a repetition of the 'logic' that the problems in Ireland, including in the north, are a question of 'two conflicting communities', 'in reconciling them' and so on. But this is the lie, the grand deception, which British imperialism works and reworks to try and hoodwink the masses of the Irish nation so that we look on our struggle for unity and freedom as a violation of some alleged 'protestant-Ulster-British' tradition and the conflict in the north of Ireland as essentially a struggle between two sets of extremist elements.

Of course, the strongest ideological weapon in the British imperialists' arsenal of political deception has obligingly been provided by the fascist Unionist politicians, who for their part have been waging a virulent campaign of terror against the entire population of Ireland, including the ventures into the south at Clontibret, Dundalk etc., in the name of 'opposing' the Anglo-Irish Agreement. This enables the British imperialists to kill two birds with one stone. On one hand, it helps physically embody the British imperialist analysis that the problems in Ireland and in 'Northern Ireland' are due to sectarian bigotry between two communities and two traditions, 'between the majority (unionist protestants) and the minority (catholic nationalists) in the north', or, 'on an all-Ireland basis between the majority (catholic nationalists) and the national minority (protestant unionists)' - after all isn't this one community and one tradition expressing conflicting interests against the other? Whilst on the other hand the ferocity of this 'Ulster Says No' campaign is a handy brush with which to tar and discredit all 'violence' in the north with the appearance that this is 'the scenario for a civil war of Irish against Irish' - isn't the 'violence' of the patriots simply a mirror image of the Unionists, isn't their 'violence' simply against unionism as one 'Irish tradition' and against Unionists as 'one Irish community'?

This scenario gives such apparent reasonableness to the

British imperialist position and that of the 'Free' State constitutional 'nationalist' traitors who signed the Hillsborough Accord with the aim of restoring the Stormont regime, formerly so discredited as such a symbol of colonial despotism in the eyes of democratic public opinion in Ireland, Britain and internationally. According to them British rule is simply ensuring that both allegedly 'Irish' traditions of Unionism and constitutional nationalism are enabled to pursue their 'legitimate' aims, but 'peacefully by political means'.

However, this is not the reality at all. The Unionist parties are not waging some inter-communal struggle of one tradition against the other. Yes, they are attacking anyone who upholds the integrity of the Irish nation, they do attack people simply on the basis that they are Catholics. But the point is that they do this IN ORDER to assist the British imperialists remain in colonial occupation of the north of Ireland and to keep Ireland as a whole divided and under the heel of foreign imperialism.

As agents of British colonialism (not of any community in Ireland) the fascist Unionist politicians fulfil the same purpose as the formation of the Nazi party achieved for the German ruling class. The Nazi terror against the Jewish people, as well as other sections, was the weapon of the German capitalists to subjugate ALL the German working people to capitalism by 'divide and rule'. The Unionist fascists' terror is in fact not only against people who are conscious nationalists, or simply against catholics, just as the terror of the Nazis was not only against Jewish people. The Unionists' fascist activities are to intimidate the people of 'their own community' as well, the protestants, just as the Nazis terror was also to intimidate all those they called 'Aryan Germans', by filling people of protestant background full of fear of catholics and a united Ireland, which they claim would mean the death of people who are protestant, just as the Nazis ranted about 'the international Jewish threat to the German nation' etc.

At the same time, the 'Free' State and constitutional 'nationalist' parties also do the work of British imperialism, by themselves backing up the analysis of protestants and catholics, by saying that their interest is 'to prevent protestant despotism' in any future devolution, when the issue is that the

Irish people have nothing to be afraid of in people of protestant religious opinions as such, but only in British imperialism. In fact neither Unionism nor constitutional nationalism are anything other than colonial ideologies from the one stable of British imperialism's system of 'divide and rule' in Ireland.

Devolution for 'Northern Ireland' could never bring freedom or 'political progress', and certainly not towards a united Ireland as the British imperialists and the 'Free' State traitors have tried to make out in their Anglo-Irish Agreement. The restoration of Stormont in any shape or form, however allegedly 'democratic' and 'fair to both traditions', would not mean an end to the present naked military regime of British colonial occupation, but merely the restoration of the fig leaf it used since 1921 to conceal this reality, and to avert the people's consciousness for the necessity to fight British imperialism by 'Ulsterising' the conflict.

We must fight back against the twin tactics of military force and political deception which the British imperialists are developing through the operation of the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the fraudulent devolution debate, with the collaboration of the Irish monopoly bourgeoisie and their political parties both Unionist and constitutional 'nationalist', in their attempt to undermine and crush the heroic patriotic struggle. Only the strengthening of the democratic national movement which has been resurgent and undefeated now for eighteen years and the stepping up the armed resistance towards the national insurrection will guarantee our victory. Only the expulsion of British imperialism from our shores and the seizure of state power from the hands of the foreign imperialists and native traitors by a united and armed nation will make our centuries old dream of freedom and peace in Ireland a reality.

**No to Any Form of Devolution,
No to Any Resurrection of
Stormont!**

**Organise to Throw British imperialism
Out of Ireland!**

THE BANKRUPTCY OF THE SOUTH AND THE CONFLICT IN THE NORTH -

TWO ASPECTS OF THE ONE AND THE SAME COMMON PROBLEM - FOREIGN IMPERIALIST DOMINATION

The relationship between the 'northern problem' and the ever-deepening economic crisis of the southern 'Free' State is the subject of perplexing mystification by the national traitor politicians, their media mouthpieces and sundry 'experts'. In fact, former Taoiseach Garret Fitz-Gerald denied any connection describing them as "two major tasks which are long-running, time-consuming and complex, yet separate in character and calling for totally different streams of thought and work". (Irish Times 17.2.86). And when the two issues are discussed in the same context it is to cover up the betrayal by these national traitors of the genuine patriotic struggle for Irish independence in the 1920s by promoting the illusion that, through successful economic development, the southern 'Free' State could become a 'showcase for the advantages of political independence from Britain', and thereby 'persuade the northern unionists to come into a united Ireland'.

For the last thirty years this 'showcase' has been built according to the Whitaker-Lemass model of openly encouraging foreign multinationals to set up in Ireland. Hand in hand with this was a programme of massive foreign borrowing by semi-state companies and by the government, with much of the latter money going back into the pockets of the foreign multinationals in the form of infrastructure provision, factory facilities and capital grants. The stated theory was that this policy would 'prime the pump of native indigenous capitalist development' through a growth of exports from native Irish companies, and thus increase employment and prosperity for the Irish people.

But what has been the reality? True, some Irish companies have prospered as a result but their 'success' has only been used to catapult themselves into the big league of multinational companies where their expansion has been of absolutely no benefit to the Irish economy. For example Smurfits

now only generate 12% of their massive profits in Ireland. For the most part the expansion of foreign companies has actually caused the destruction of native companies (textiles and footwear for example). True, exports have grown at an extraordinary rate despite the deepest depression since the 1930s. Today exports account for a full 70% of total industrial production of the 'Free' State and have exceeded imports over the last year and more continuously. But neither employment nor prosperity has resulted. Unemployment has increased from 90,000 in 1979 to 250,000 today. Emigration has even once more returned to the scene in Ireland with a vengeance, with perhaps 150,000, especially the youth, fleeing unemployment and dead-end prospects at home since 1980, and a current survey of a sample of the 18 - 25 age group revealing that 62% of those questioned think they will have emigrated by the end of 1987. At the same time the real value of wages has fallen and services (health, education etc.) have deteriorated. In short the Irish people are getting poorer despite their increased productivity.

This wealth generated by the labour of the Irish people is leaving the country through three different channels but all of them related to this policy of increased foreign dependence. Firstly through the 'repatriation' of profits by multinationals ('Black Hole Mark I' - £1,500 million last year). Secondly through the outflow of investment capital ('Black Hole Mark II' - £259 million in the second quarter of 1987). And thirdly through the repayment of the 'Free' State's foreign debt (42% of the national debt), which swallows up nearly the total of government tax revenue from PAYE income tax on interest repayments alone (i.e. not the capital itself).

And yet still the 'Free' State national traitors persist with this charade that the 'Free' State economy can become a 'showcase' to bring about a united Ireland. And how do they plan to

achieve this? By decimating the state sector (10,000 redundancies planned) in order to 'bring borrowing under control', and encourage even more foreign investment to 'provide employment'!

Superficially there would seem to be a contradiction between the last two objectives - destroying jobs on the one hand and creating them on the other. In fact there is none since the motive of the 'Free' State national traitors is neither to reduce foreign borrowing nor to increase employment. It is to prove to foreign banks that their loans to Ireland are secure so as to borrow still more in the future and to prove to foreign multinationals that the government will do all in its power to help them 'raise productivity' through capital grants for new technology leading to even further job losses. In short the object of the exercise is to speed up this treadmill of exploitation and extract even greater profits from the sweat and the toil of the working people of Ireland in order to line their own pockets and those of their foreign masters.

Clearly this state of affairs is disastrous for the vast majority of the Irish people and proves that these national traitors are unfit to govern. Not only will their 'showcase' policy not lead to a united Ireland but it has eroded such independence as was won by the people's heroic struggle in the War of Independence, witness the increased subjection of the south to foreign monopoly capital through accession to the EEC, now additionally through the Single European Act, as well as in increasing collaboration with the age-old foreign enemies, the British imperialists, in keeping Ireland partitioned by means of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, and through breaking the precedent of every decade since the foundation of the 'Free' State by agreeing to extradition of Irish patriots into British jurisdiction etc.

In fact the issue of the economy and the issue of the North are integral aspects of one and the same problem - the problem of the foreign domination of Ireland in its entirety by world imperialism, but where in Ireland the very cornerstone of this system and its armed defender is British imperialism through its illegal occupation of a part of our country. The solution lies in the Irish people getting organised to throw off the yoke of foreign domination in

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all its forms whether military or economic, by preparing the conditions whereby the current heroic patriotic resurgence centred in the north can be transformed into the insurrection of the entire nation, thus placing state power in an all-Ireland nation-state in the hands of the Irish people themselves, organised for their own benefit and not for a handful of parasites, native or foreign.

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Ireland and her people - a country and a nation which they have, so criminally, forcibly subjugated for so many centuries already and are intent on continuing to subjugate 'in perpetuity' - to use the phrase which the British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Tom King, coined in relation to partition.

These days there is a lot of talk, even in certain circles which claim to be organising to free the Birmingham Six, that these innocent men's freedom could be traded for 'Free' State acceptance of extradition (the new act is coming up for ratification in the Dail this autumn). But this would be to accept the cynical 'logic' of the British imperialists - that the Birmingham Six are political hostages, and should be regarded as bargaining counters who can be traded for favours which the British imperialists seek in strengthening their hold in Ireland.

But this would be quite wrong. These men are not some bargaining chip for the foreign imperialist aggressor to use against the rest of the nation. They are men who must have the gross injustices committed against them righted immediately ! Their case stands on its own merits - they are innocent, so the freedom of the Birmingham Six is a question of justice in its own right, and has nothing to do with whether the southern 'Free' State should extradite patriotic people into British jurisdiction or not. In fact, this would be to compound one injustice (the wrongful imprisonment of these six people for 12 years) with another - the extradition of Irish people for 'crimes' which the British imperialists themselves are free to define into the hands of a judicial system, the British judicial system, which is anti-Irish to the core.

The British Home Secretary has talked in terms of his review of the case being an acknowledgment that there is 'new evidence', claiming that his unjust denial of a review in other cases such as the Guildford Four is because, as he claims, there is 'no new evidence'. But this is not the issue either. Yes, some new evidence has come forward in the case of the Birmingham Six - for instance, individual police who witnessed the brutal extraction of some forced confessions have answered their consciences and exposed what really happened at the so-called interrogations. But anyone can see

the real reason for this 'new evidence' being brought to light in any case; it has been the persistence of the public campaign for the innocence of these men, which has been waged by their family, friends and democratic organisations, and which has eventually achieved such widespread public support that even the British government, after 12 years, has been forced to make the review. It was this campaign which pricked the consciences of such witnesses and persuaded them to come forward.

The 'Free' State politicians are trying to make out that the British review of the case of the Birmingham Six is a tribute to the advantages of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. But this is no more the issue than the claim that new evidence is the issue or that the freedom for the Birmingham Six should be a matter of a trade off for agreement to extradition. It is simply another cynical ploy which reveals the underlying unity of interests of the British imperialist and the Irish bourgeoisie - to use any issue, no matter whether it is a matter of elementary justice in its own right, as a lever to strengthen reaction and the hold of British imperialism over the Irish people.

Freedom must be won for the Birmingham Six as a matter of justice in its own right. It cannot be the case that such freedom of these individuals should be used to tie the hands of the rest of the Irish people and prevent them from continuing to fight for the freedom of the nation as a whole, which is what acceptance of the Anglo-Irish Agreement and acceptance of extradition would mean. In fact, the case of the Birmingham Six is yet one more proof that there can be no justice for the Irish people except British imperialism is thrown out of Ireland once and for all, and the relations between the British and Irish peoples can be founded on the fraternity which can only spring from mutual respect between equal and sovereign nations.

RELEASE THE BIRMINGHAM SIX !