

# International Socialism 51

Ireland



# **International Socialism 51**

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Survey

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## Prospects for British Capitalism

On Thursday, 20th January unemployment officially topped 1,000,000 for Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The six o'clock news on Radio 4 described a 'demonstration' by Labour members in the House of Commons, leading to the suspension of business by the Speaker. Unemployment, the news continued, had risen by 57,000 over the previous month. The figure for Great Britain was 977,500, or 4.3 per cent of the insured working population. Because of exceptionally mild weather, the rise was not as great as anticipated, but the underlying trend, after allowing for 'seasonal' influences, was still upward. The Government's budgetary measures to reflate the economy were evidently not working through yet: 335,000 redundancies had been officially notified to the Department of Employment in 1971, an increase of about 50 per cent over the 1970 figure. Mr Davies of the lame duck brigade was interviewed. The measures, he said, were indeed taking longer than expected to bear fruit, but there were hopeful signs. The volume of retail sales were rising, and some 'hard indicators' (?) suggested expansion; jobs would begin to be created soon. Mr Feather chastised the government for its ineptitude, and said how shocked he was. Finally, it was reported from the City that share prices had continued to rise, and the *Financial Times* index had broken through the magic 500 level — to 500.1; the reason — high profit-expectations due to the 'streamlining of the labour force'.

Throughout 1971, the figure of 1,000,000 seemed to symbolise economic catastrophe; now that it has been reached, there is near-unanimity among the economic 'experts' that things are looking up. The National Institute for Economic and Social Research, for example, finds that the Tory government's reflationary measures have led to a significant recovery in consumer spending which will, after some delay, begin to affect output — although unemployment is expected barely to fall at all, because increased output will come from increased 'productivity' at least for the next six months or so. Is this a correct judgment? And how long will the delays really be?

### A Structural Crisis

The most obvious fact about the present crisis is that it is not simply a cyclical recession. Despite the talk for so many years about shake-outs and 'rationalisation', there is probably a *greater* need for a restructuring of British capital than at any time since the war; a restructuring which must be paid for by the working class if the capitalists are going to undertake it. Restructuring capital involves shifting it into new areas of activity so as to raise the overall rate of profit as high as possible. Under competitive capitalism, this process was accomplished by the success or failure of different capitals in the market. Economic crisis destroyed those capitals in declining and unprofitable sectors. As monopoly capitalism developed, this process became more and more protracted

and costly as capitalists came increasingly to control markets and to acquire the economic and political power to thwart the competitive process. In the period from 1870 to 1945, the problem was contained only through imperial expansion, ever-deeper crises, and wars between the imperial rivals. State intervention became more and more widespread and far-reaching. At the same time, the increasingly international nature of economic life led to an increasing number of links between the different capitalist economies, and hence to an increasing *simultaneity* of crisis; witness the immediate and disastrous effect of the Great Crash in the USA on the German economy in 1929-33, a crucial factor in the rise of Nazism. The postwar years saw a reduction in this simultaneity, as well as an apparent solution to the problem itself. Keynesian reformist policies and arms and other state expenditure stabilised the system and maintained an expansion whose momentum originated in war production and in recovery from wartime destruction. In addition, the retreat into national economic self-sufficiency in the 1930s reduced the linkages between economies, so that it was feasible to apply the reformist policies on a national level.

But in the '60s, the trends have once more asserted themselves. Post-war expansion has slowed down throughout the capitalist world; and the rapid growth of world trade, and even more rapid growth of international firms controlling that trade, has increased the integration of world capitalism, so that the central contradiction of capitalism, expressed in economic crisis, tends to operate with simultaneous effect throughout the system.

### The World Economy

This means that it is impossible to view the prospects for the British economy in isolation from the rest of the world. And it is clear that the current crisis is world-wide. The eruption of the international monetary crisis last August is symptomatic of this. Not only did this represent a significant erosion of the economic superiority of the USA; it also showed that the apparent economic success of the surplus countries, especially Japan and Germany, was only temporarily suppressing the contradictions in that successful growth. Not only had the Marshall Aid programme rebounded; so had the 'economic miracles' so long pointed to by apologists as proof that capitalism worked. In Japan, economic growth slowed very considerably last year, from 11 per cent in 1963-70 to only 5 per cent. Even that growth could only be maintained by a massive increase in exports to the USA, with the inevitable consequence in Nixon's August measures and a big yen revaluation. In Germany, a similar pattern has led to rising unemployment, while high wage levels are leading to a widespread 'migration' of labour-intensive industries to South-East Asia as well as to Southern Europe. The steel firm, Hoesch, has been forced to merge with Dutch Hoogovens in what its chairman agreed could accurately be described as an 'anti-Japanese cartel'. In Italy, as a recent headline put it, 'industries are queueing up for nationalisation', and industrial output fell in 1971 to below the 1969 level. Unem-

ployment is rising in France — and even in Switzerland — although it is masked, as in Germany, by the reserve army of immigrant workers from southern Europe, which for the first time in years is actually showing a net flow back to the home countries.

Any recovery in the British economy is clearly dependent on a similar recovery in the world economy. In fact, only in the USA is there any optimism, and even there the continued efforts of the Nixon administration to improve its competitive position in world markets shows how tenuous the US recovery is as yet. Overall, the increasing generality of the crisis means that the dog-eats-dog atmosphere epitomised by the monetary squabbles is going to continue; methods of competition are becoming less gentlemanly (the management of exchange rates in the period before the December agreements was aptly described as a system of 'dirty floating'). On the other hand, there is widespread awareness that retreat behind tariff barriers on the scale of the 1930s — let alone depression on that scale — is politically suicidal. What is likely is a prolonged process of jockeying for position, as the different national capitalist classes, and international groupings such as the EEC, each try to secure for themselves the most advantageous position in any new ground-rules that are drawn up to regulate the system. Meanwhile, it is unlikely, to say the least, that there will be much of a recovery in the world economy overall in 1972: for as well as facing each other, the different ruling classes face, as in this country, greater resistance from the working class.

### A British Recovery?

Even if the prospects for world capitalism in general were good from a capitalist point of view, we should not expect the British economy to perform any less appallingly in relative terms than it did in the '50s and '60s. Until very recently, restructuring was half-hearted. British capitalists preferred to wait for an opportunity for rapid economic growth, in the course of which structural changes could be accomplished without demanding too much from the relatively well-organised British working class. This was the policy behind George Brown's National Plan, and the devaluation of 1967. Devaluation did not do the trick because the initial cut in living standards, which was said to be necessary in order to finance the growth in exports and investment, was successfully resisted in the accelerating wage demands from 1968 onwards. At the same time, the benefits of devaluation were reduced by the worsening world market conditions.

It was this failure of traditional Keynesian policies which necessitated the attack on the unions and the savage rationalisation programme that the Labour Government initiated and the Tories stepped up. Yet it is clear that, even with a million unemployed and profits recovering slightly, the battle has only just begun. Compared to other advanced capitalist countries, especially in the EEC, capitalists in Britain have persistently under-invested in their 'home' economy, while remaining second only to the USA in investment overseas. And in 1971, while investment at home fell slightly, the flow

overseas continued to boom: the estimate for the year is nearly £900m, 20 per cent up on the year before.

One consequence of the continued stagnation of investment at home is that the machine-tool industry is on its last legs. In volume terms, orders were down by about 40 per cent over the year 1971. Alfred Herbert, the biggest firm in the industry, has cut its labour force by a third. Yet a very recent survey of the machine-tool population in British industry showed that the age-structure of these vital pieces of equipment was far worse in Britain than in other countries (apart from the USA), and had not changed at all in ten years. In shipbuilding, despite millions of state money, only 25 per cent of machine tools were less than ten years old in 1971 — almost the same figure as in 1961 (see table 1).

Meanwhile, the steel industry is in trouble too. The International Iron and Steel Institute reported recently that its 24 member countries showed a fall of 5.9 per cent in steel production in 1972. The biggest fall, of 13 per cent, was in Britain. In December, indeed, the fall over the previous year was 20.7 per cent. No wonder there is no longer any talk about denationalising the steel industry.

That British capitalists are taking the situation seriously is evidenced not only by Tory policies and their effects in the aggregate, but also by the geographical incidence of sackings and unemployment. In the past, the response to business recession, in terms of cut-backs, tended to hit the peripheral areas of the country, the so-called development areas, the hardest. Production would be concentrated in the 'centre', where the unions were tougher; higher capacity utilisation in those plants could offset in part the higher wages won by the unions. But today, male unemployment is hitting the centre too (table 2): the south-east still gets off lightly because of

**Table 1: Age Structure of the Machine Tool Population**

	5 years or less	6-9 years	10-20 years	over 20 years
per cent				
Britain 1961	41		37	22
Britain 1971	19	22	37	22
USA 1968	38			64
Japan 1967	32	31	14	23
Italy 1960	25	25	25	25
West Germany 1971	35	30	30	5
Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering,				
Britain, 1961	24		35	42
„ 1971	12	13	35	40

Source: *Metalworking Production*, 'Third survey of machine tools and production equipment in Britain', December 1971

the predominance of non-industrial jobs in that area. but Coventry and parts of Birmingham now have rates of 10 per cent and more.

What about the recent rise in retail sales? It is heavily concentrated on consumer durables, and it is restricted to those in a position to take advantage of the easy credit policy — ie those who are *not* likely to be made redundant, and *are* likely to benefit from a further tax cut in March. (The same applies to another 'boom' area — private house-building.) Secondly, even if the rise begins to affect output, and not simply levels of stocks, the output increase is expected to be met from increased productivity — ie increased exploitation. No fall in unemployment of any significance can be expected in 1972: indeed, real unemployment will rise, as more and more people do not bother to register (which explains, incidentally, why the figure for female unemployment is so low, and why employment has shrunk by more than the rise in unemployment: 10 per cent would not be far out as an estimate of real unemployment). At the same time, levels of capacity utilisation are very low, so that output can be increased without increasing investment. This suits the capitalists very well, since so long as the long-term outlook remains uncertain, the profits that are beginning to roll in from tax cuts and 'shake-outs' will not be put at risk.

And uncertain the prospects undoubtedly remain. The recent profits recovery may have elated the City slickers; and while rationalisation is the path to glory, there are plenty of smart operators able to make a quick profit by buying up small companies and sorting them out — a type of operation made respectable by the Slater-Walker firm (yes, that's Peter Walker). But investment, which is the most accurate signal of a recovery, still hangs fire. The big boys remain as cautious in London as they are in Tokyo or New York, where a similar stock market boom is taking place. The reason for this is

all too clear as the struggle continues. The rise in profits which will consolidate their position and lead them to start accumulating once more depends crucially on one factor: whether the working class can refuse to pay for their own increased exploitation.

Given the present state of British capital, and the likely degree of competition in the world market, the price demanded by the ruling class will be very high. **Hugo Radice**

## Underground Press

February, 1972.

In the last few months *OZ* celebrated its 5th birthday, *Time Out* and *IT* both clocked up their 100th issue and *Ink*, an *OZ* offshoot, managed to recover from an appalling start and stabilised itself as a fortnightly newspaper. Enough to keep Lord Gnome worried and Inspector Luff on tip toes. The underground press in Britain gives every impression of being here to stay, dispensing, through a haze of debts, a probable weekly total of 50,000 copies to young people in British cities. And under the rigors of Mr Heath's England, the underground's enthusiasm for dope and disorder is, at last, shaping into some more appropriate politics.

Since the first issue of *International Times* in 1966 (founded by Americans 'bored with Marxism') there has been little doubt about the underground press's ability to shock parents, excite the kids and abuse the bourgeoisie. The papers disgusted the social-democratic patriarchs of the *New Statesman* who called them 'crude anti-socialist beatnikery' no less than the Acting Chairman of the House Anti-American Activities Committee, Joe Pool, who felt, fairly accurately, that the underground papers were out 'to encourage depravity and irresponsibility and nurture a breakdown in the continued capacity of the Government to conduct an orderly and constitutional society'. In a period when the socialist left adopted a carefully unemotional tone, emphasised the material situation and adopted tabloid design and Fleet St language to argue their revolutionary case, the underground press delighted in its virtually incoherent rhetoric, stressed consciousness and turned their newspapers into multicoloured montages. Rather than inform and organise, the early underground papers were out to shriek defiance at the world of parents, school and work and bask in an alternative world of fun and dreams. The underground press didn't say what you thought, but it did somehow express how you feel.

The British underground papers actually emerged through a network established between the older underground of the small poetry magazines and the travelling poetry readers of the late 'fifties. The early *IT* had an English and rather literary flavour and its politics, like those of previous bohemian journals, were violently moral and determinedly unorganised. Anything more than the exchange of information and the raising of consciousness smacked of Bolshevik

**Table 2: Unemployment Rates, January 1972**

per cent	Male	Female
N Ireland	10.9	5.6
Scotland	9.3	3.7
Northern	9.1	3.0
Wales	7.3	3.0
N Western	6.9	2.0
W Midlands	6.7	1.7
Yorks & Humberside	6.6	1.7
S Western	5.6	2.0
E Midlands	5.0	1.3
E Anglia	4.9	1.4
South East	3.4	0.8

tyranny, the search was as much inward for revelation as outwards into politics. The colliding move towards both mysticism and socialism was an obsessional theme of the early underground and was clearly juxtaposed in the 1967 Dialectics of Liberation Conference. The socialist left's enthusiasm in 1968 was to lap mildly around the underground but almost as an optional extra to their own euphoria over the 'Summer of Love'. The erotic reformism of 'All you need is Love' which got hippy editors from Helsinki to Michigan pasting up flowers and bubbles was to tarnish fast. But the underground press would still talk with a straight face about the alternative society implying that its experiments in new ways of living offered a blue-print for capitalism with a human face. Apparently, the problems of poverty and production were over and what was needed was to recover playfulness as a way of living and abolish protestant enthusiasm for work and chastity.

In fact the utopian experiments were fairly few, the underground's 'sexual liberation' was blatantly phallic and at the expense of women, and the rigours of the market (whether in clothes, music or posters) continually crushed the attempts at producers collectives. Behind the successful hippy co-op stood either a longhaired accountant, a private income or simply a desperately low standard of living. As an almost symmetrical opposite of the crude-Marxist dismissal of the possibility of any cultural alternative while capitalism existed, the Tory hippy saw nothing but the this-sideness of the revolution in the here and now. Preperation, organisation, propaganda were all bullshitting evasions. While underground can take credit for returning to politics the revolutionary concerns of the Surrealists and the left-Freudians which postwar Marxism has somewhere managed to lose, it was often at the expense of any recognition whatsoever of class. The attempt to connect the politics of experience to the world of class and empire was too often simply a sleight of hand. Ronald Laing, that most canny of underground idealogues, could merely juxtapose scitzophrenia and the bombing of North Vietnam, it has taken woman's liberation as a movement and a theory to actually tease out the connections between sex, family and class within capitalism.

Even the much vaunted community organisations, whether openly radical, like Street Aid, informative like Bit or openly reformist like Release did little more than clear up the Undergrounds own mess, a task for which the Home Office is entirely grateful.

Finally all that was left was the music which middle-class London art students had adopted from the American urban black and synthesised into a weirdly defiant electric music. The cosy communism of the folk coteries engulfed by rock music which could draw half a million kids to one field in Britain and keep them there for a week of fine sounds from the bands and hippy platitudes from the promoter. It was these kids who accepted the attitudes which had once been the private property of a London avant-guard. It was these kids who naturally looked to the underground press for some of the answers so long suppressed by Fleet Street. The papers differed in their replies. *OZ* dazzled with its eclecticism, took

Lenin seriously one week, flying saucers seriously the next. *IT* became political in a most formal and unhelpful way, publishing tracts on the Black Panthers, adopting a pig killing prose without the rudiments of a strategy to back up the verbal attacks on the police and affecting an imported rhetoric which imprisoned rather than explained. *Freindz*, based in the heart of Notting Hill reluctantly begun to jettison the good vibrations and demanded that the freaks defined themselves as an oppressed community and begin to fight back to realise their desires.

But basically they all faced the same problem. The revolution of consciousness which the underground press had preached in 1968 had, in a warped way, succeeded. Underground music, once slipped on surreptitiously by late night DJs had become top ten orthodoxy, long hair and velvet trousers were worn by ex-skin heads, the cannabis laws were widely disregarded. The underground's demand for a new Jerusalem was marketed as commodities to a new and affluent audience, the utopia had wound up as so much brisk merchandising. But instead of admitting there might be something wrong with the ideas, the underground press, if they bothered at all, explained it in terms of personal ambition, bad dope or just general failure to get it together, while at the same moment making their own attempt to transform themselves from a cultural elite to a political vanguard. Without ever quite mentioning it the underground had changed from a total critique of capitalism to an oppressed minority only still with the stereo headphones and cheque book in the back pocket. Fortunately for all concerned Edward Heath turned what had been mainly self-dramatising hippy paranoia into fact. The most flamboyantly right wing government for decades was thirsty for scapegoats, long-haired dope-smoking hippies were an obvious target. *Friend*, which makes a point of a studied flippancy, insisted that the victory for Heath was the most important single fact for the underground in 1970. *IT* prophetically warned that heads would 'be the skin across the law and order tom-tom' and Richard Neville pointed out that while there may only be half an inch between Labour and the Tories 'it's in that half inch we survive'. As *OZ* followed *The Little Red Book* to the Old Bailey and the Mangrove 9 followed Ian Purdy and Jake Prescott into the witness box the underground press increasingly turned from republishing the distant thoughts of Eldridge Cleaver to a more active solidarity with the people of Notting Hill and Holloway. Politicos begun to appear more often in editorial collectives. In Notting Hill at least, an area with a tradition of official, semi-official and revolutionary community organising and a high density of hippies, claimants and black workers, some of the rhetoric about community actually took on some meaning.

*Friend* has responded to the law and order campaign with some devastatingly insolent attacks on the legal system from The Lord Chief Justice down to the unfortunate PC Pully and has given confidence to black and white defendants to fight back and win in the courts. And as the rate of inflation makes it impossible for even the most inventive hippy to live without either a job or a watertight Social Security claim,

more material about trade unionism and the Claimants Union is finding its way into the paper.

*Time Out* the most ambitious and commercially successful of the London papers deftly balances its weekly entertainment guide with conscientious radical news and consumer features. Like any financially successful underground paper it embodies an obvious contradiction. Its weekly coverage of sexual liberation and anti-authoritarian experiments is the product of a hierarchical male-dominated set. Its indictments of consumer capitalism are sandwiched between sexist ads for the latest youth culture movie hustled by its tough talking advertising department. *Time Out* is now actually rich enough to allow its writers time to produce more than simple slogans and it will be interesting to watch in which direction its prosperous anarchism develops. The paper has many of the elements which has led the American rock newspaper into its deeply reactionary success; a shrewd eye for the youth market, scale enough to start laying down terms to its distributors (always an underground problem), a charming but ruthless managing director and an appetite for diversification. *OZ*, the paterfamilias of the English underground, remains what a letter writer to the *Times* fairly accurately described as 'an incoherent outpouring from a potion of primitive Marxism, Maoism and anarchism liberally laced with phallic phantasies'. This eclectic stew has been the secret of *OZ*'s commercial success and political weakness and its recent issues have tended to rely on the visual possibilities allowed by its elaborate printing methods. The series of trials and the subsequent books, films and Hollywood musicals have made *OZ* the most famous and easily saleable of the underground properties but its editors don't yet seem to have recovered any real sense of direction.

*INK* was begun as a weekly news offshot of *OZ* with the declared aim of deepening the radicalism of *OZ* and weighed down with Fleet Street and publishing 'talent'. Now having got through three entire editorial teams, it is probably the most interesting of the underground papers to IS readers. Edited by politicians, it consciously aims to explore the political arguments between the underground and the left and sees the need to build actual connections with the real movement, especially with gay and women's liberation and the Claimants Unions. Despite a taste for what it believes to be devastating quips at the expense of IS, *Ink* is serious about politics without losing the flair of an earlier stage of the underground, it reads rather like the *Black Dwarf* minus the IMG.

*IT* continues to shuffle on, long past its prime but still produced and read by underground veterans.<sup>1</sup> *IT* makes a vague attempt to organise White Panther branches of cultural revolutionaries, three just about exist, with titles of a grandeur (Minister Of Information is the name for the branch secretary) which makes some of our Trotskyist comrades look positively self-effacing. And probably most important are the constantly changing local papers from Hackney's openly communist *People's Paper* run by young trade-unionists to Barnsley's banned and harried *Styng*. All the papers doing

valuable local stirring and usually to the left and openly suspicious of the national underground press.

The way the underground press develops will to some extent reflect the general developments in British politics. But the passion and creative energy of the underground would be a very valuable addition to the revolutionary left's journalism.

Dave Widgery

## Measured Day Work, Piecework and British Leyland

Karl Marx wrote in *Capital* that 'piece-wage is the form of wages most in harmony with the capitalist mode of production'. By providing the capitalist with an exact measure for the intensity of labour, it would enable him to extract maximum output for minimum cost.

In the nineteenth century, engineering workers strongly resisted the introduction of piecework. The absence as yet of mass production meant that price lists, as existed in other industries, were impracticable. Piecework in engineering would thus lead to individual and not collective bargaining. As the Amalgamated Society of Engineers declared: 'it is well known that piecework is not a bargain, but a price dictated by the employer, and lowered at will'.

The 30-week engineering lock-out in 1897-8 culminated in the notorious terms of settlement which stipulated the right for piecework to be established in any federated engineering establishment. Prices were to be mutually agreed between the employer and the individual workman. While this clause was intended to by-pass the union, it led to a rapid growth in workshop committees and in shop steward bargaining over prices.

The rapid extension of piecework, especially in the munitions industries, during the first world war, coupled with the temporary legal shackling of the unions, further fostered the growth of shop floor representation. The right of workers in federated engineering establishments to be represented by shop stewards was accepted by the employers' federation during this war.

In 1919 an agreement established the criterion that piecework prices should allow the average workman to earn at least a certain minimum percentage above time-rates. But the mass unemployment of the inter-war years, with the diminution of strength of the shop stewards movement, meant that if you didn't like the rate, there were plenty outside the gate who'd jump at it.

During the inter-war period the British motor industry grew up. It was the 'hire and fire' era, with regular seasonal lay-offs. The American companies Ford and Vauxhall (General Motors) were violently anti-union as was, for instance, William Morris the well-known philanthropist. Piecework was the system for production work in all motor plants except Ford who paid by the hour.

The second world war began a long spell for Britain of relatively full employment and labour shortage. Under such

<sup>1</sup> *IT* has since changed its format.

conditions piecework could be turned to the workers' advantage, assuming they had the shop-floor organisation necessary. Piecework earnings consist of the nationally-negotiated award — known as the piecework supplement, now worth 3s 10.65d per hour — plus the earnings for the particular job. Jobs are rated to produce a minimum figure per hour. Timing takes place when the worker is relatively inexperienced at the particular operation. Once he has learnt the short cuts, then an increase in schedules will allow him to 'pull' more work and thus increase his earnings.

Whenever the material, means or method of production is changed the job has to be re-rated. Many agreements stipulate that there shall be no reduction in earnings as a consequence. Changes in production thus lead to rising piece-rates.

The biggest increase in rates come when new models are introduced. The employer is under pressure to get the model out, and can be effectively pressured into conceding high prices. The small modifications that often crop up can, with strong organisation, lead to odd coppers being added on to the rate. A foreman whose main worry is to keep production going will be anxious to avoid or settle quickly disputes over prices and times.

Not all workers can be paid by the piece. Those who service the production lines are traditionally paid a time rate, as are the more obvious maintenance men and electricians. To compensate them for their lack of opportunity to approach the hourly earnings of pieceworkers, they are paid various bonuses, often linked to average piecework earnings, on top of their national minimum rate.

Such a national minimum rate was only established in 1948 in the engineering industry. The increasing gap between this and actual earnings is known as wage drift. This is fostered partly by increasing rates for the pieceworkers, but also by increases in the rates of hourly-paid workers. The latter takes two forms — firstly, the bonus linked to the pieceworkers' earnings, and secondly the pressure to restore differentials which occurs every time a section gains any increase independently of the others.

Wage drift becomes much more serious for an employer when he faces increased competition. He needs some method by which he can obtain production and yet keep down his costs. Piecework, with no interference from trade unions, once filled the bill. But with the consolidation of shop floor organisation over a generation, it will take more than heavy unemployment to intimidate a well-organised workforce into accepting managerial dictatorship.

Fords ascribed their ability to keep wage increases down in the mid-sixties to two factors — one was their hourly-paid system of payment which stopped wage drift, and the other was the dramatic change in labour relations after 1962. They never stressed that this change was the sacking of 17 shop stewards from their Dagenham site, with an accompanying 33 per cent rise in productivity in the next year. It was not until 1967 however that Fords went over to the measured day work system, where all their manual employees were divided into five grades, abolishing their previous four grade structure, with its proliferation of merit payments.

Vauxhall changed over from piecework to measured day work in 1956. And Chrysler (formerly Rootes) made the transition from piecework in the late 1960's.

The aim of measured day work is the measurement of tasks which are then imposed on the workforce. It attempts to remove the mutuality element in piecework. By establishing a company-wide wage structure, which is negotiated at long intervals by full-time union officials and not the men on the shop floor, it destroys the negotiating power of the shop steward and halts the constant fight over differentials. By abolishing mutuality on work-loads, it imposes the company's standards — to do this, supervision is increased and shop stewards are often severely limited in their functions. While forcing those directly involved in production to work faster, it seeks to cut down the amount of indirect labour by the amalgamation of job categories.

When British Leyland was formed in 1968, it was the result of a series of mergers, none of which had substantially altered the constituent companies. Its three rivals were all American-owned, and had the advantage of having their production concentrated at a few sites. British Leyland embraced some 70 factories, all with their own unique payments and labour relations systems. It produced vehicles from the Mini to the double-decker bus and larger. Large numbers of its models were in competition with each other. The need to rationalise was paramount.

On the production side, models had to be cut, and facilities reorganised. The increasing capital expenditure necessary for new models and the cost of retooling meant that body shells and engines would have to be standardised. The high-volume Austin-Morris division, successor to the old BMC, was by far the biggest earner, but not of profits. If British Leyland, helped by £25m of public money, could not make the Austin-Morris division profitable, then it would be ripe for takeover from a foreign enterprise or it would have to be nationalised. As British Leyland is the country's largest exporter, its importance in the British economy can be appreciated.

The two sites where production was to be concentrated were Longbridge in Birmingham, and Cowley on the outskirts of Oxford. The most up to date machinery would be of no use if the 'inflationary' system of payment could not be changed. The company first flexed its muscles at Cowley.

The Cowley complex consisted of a body plant (the largest in Europe), the former Pressed Steel Co, and an assembly plant, the former Morris Motors. Although Pressed Steel had merged with BMC in 1965, for several years they continued to act as before. Most of Pressed Steel's bodies were transported outside Cowley, and most of Morris's bodies came from outside — thus leading to the much heard complaint about the phenomenal cost of transporting air across the countryside in steel boxes.

Investment to the tune of several million pounds led to the rebuilding of substantial sections of both plants, and the construction of an integrated production line.

Pressed Steel had introduced job evaluation exercises in 1965, and finally after a strike it moved to a 6-grade structure for



indirect workers in 1968, replacing the previous 21 grades. Soon afterwards it attempted to introduce the Maxi on measured day work. But with a lot of resistance and 'ca-canny', including  $\frac{1}{4}$ -hour strikes every hour, the model was finally priced on piecework. The prices negotiated explain very well the tenacity with which piecework was held onto. Given 40 hours work a week, the men could earn £60-70. A substantial face-lift to the model a year later led to a further increase in the rates. But the company restricted the schedules despite a waiting-list of several weeks for the revamped model. This was part of a subtle propaganda campaign to link short time, lay-offs and so on with piecework, and not with the state of the market. Meanwhile work in the rest of the plant was being run down, partly due to the reorientation of production of British Leyland, and partly to soften up the workforce.

The workforce next door suffered three disadvantages compared to Pressed Steel. Firstly they had not been fully organised till the late 1950's, while Pressed Steel was unionised in 1934. Secondly, while the body plant had been traditionally able to pass on costs to the assembler, the final assembler was less able to pass on costs to the public. Thirdly, the models were much older, and gave much lower rates. The Minor had been going since 1948 and was now on a 'controlled' piecework system; other models were being phased out in 1970-71.

In August 1970 a strike took place over the interim rate to be paid to the workers coming off the Minor who were scheduled to work the new model—the Morris Marina. The company were intending to pay them their previous rate of some 16/10 per hour instead of the shop average of 18/6 or 19/-, as was custom. This would greatly jeopardise the price of the new model.

The company intended to bring the new model in on measured day work. They took the issue through procedure at both plants and registered a failure to agree at York. Meanwhile they were conducting a big propaganda campaign by sending letters to individuals' homes talking about old-fashioned piecework, and how measured day work would bring them security of employment.

Finally on 13 January 1971, the day after both plants had struck for the 12 January demo against the Industrial Relations Bill, the company moved. In both plants the key stewards were called up to the management in the early afternoon and kept there till nearly the final bell. Meanwhile supervision were busy distributing letters to those workers who would be initially working the new model—160 in the body plant, and 560 in the assembly plant. The letter stated: 'Having exhausted Procedure we must therefore exercise our right to introduce the new payment system.' It laid out the conditions; among them 'This will necessitate the full and proper use of modern industrial engineering techniques including Work Study. The use of these techniques which are already accepted in the National Agreement is necessary if we are not to fall behind our competitors.' It ended by saying that the company would not produce the new model on piecework, and stated: 'The Company will be making the

above terms and conditions operative on the ADO28 facilities as from 7.15 am tomorrow morning, Thursday 14 January 1971'. The company's offer was a flat rate of £1 an hour.

At the assembly plant the tactic worked after some initial resistance. The leadership of the dominant T&GWU in the plant were members or close sympathisers of the SLL. They had campaigned consistently for a number of years through leaflets and their branch bulletin against MDW and they now refused to sign an agreement. Their message for management had been 'We're not having it!' Once it was imposed on them however they had no alternative but to recommend a return to piecework, which was not exactly feasible under the circumstances. Refusing to sign an agreement meant that the individual terms of employment stood, including provision for the use of industrial engineers.

At the body plant these Ford-style tactics of individual intimidation backfired. So entrenched was the peaceful tradition of labour relations in the plant that a mass meeting the next morning threw the deal out because management had bypassed the official union channels. A working party was set up to look into the possibility of retaining piecework at one end of the production line while measured day work was on the other.

The attitude was different from a few years earlier. The 1968 package deal in the engineering industry allowed, as the company fully recognised, the use of work study techniques, job evaluation etc. And the immediate reaction of Jack Jones on hearing about the men's resistance was that a strike would cost his union in the order of £30,000 a week.

On 5 February a mass meeting of all 6,000 T&GWU members in the plant met to discuss the company's latest proposals. The local officials stated 'The Officers have been in touch with the Union's National Officials whose advice is to see if better conditions and full 'Mutuality' can be obtained with a high hourly rate. The officers obtained from the Union some draft proposals on mutuality. After lengthy discussions these have now been included in the company's present proposals.' By emphasising that the alternative to acceptance was an all-out strike, the local district secretary sold the deal. It gave 21s an hour, and did contain substantial mutuality but it was nothing like piecework which would have given the men in the region of £70 a week for the job.

The March edition of the T&GWU *Record* gave a thoroughly misleading account of what had happened. It talked about 'this history making agreement'. It bluntly stated that 'the greatest significance of the new deal is the introduction of the principle of mutual agreement on a wide range of issues'. It neglected to say that mutuality over job prices had been sold, and that wages were to be tied to an annual review. A strange omission, one might think, considering that Jack Jones was an official in Coventry in the 1940's—an area where piecework, high wages, and strong shop floor organisation went hand in hand.

With this relatively easy success under their belt, the company turned on the Maxi body-line. The company was not constitutionally able to change the payment system on existing models without mutual agreement. As this was not forth-

coming, the company threatened to move the work elsewhere in the plant. Finally the workers accepted the company offer with a buy-out of £225 (before tax). Before the new system could be implemented, the schedules for the model magically went up, and there were some sections earning up to £100 for a 52-hour week on piecework.

The body plant management have been unable to budge the remaining pieceworkers in the plant though they are not so important. However the fact that the pressings for the Maxi and Marina bodies are produced in the main on piecework in the Cowley plant and at Swindon contradicts the management's claim of the impossibility of producing the new model on piecework.

At the assembly plant, the remaining pieceworkers capitulated in June after another heavy propaganda campaign by management. As no deal was yet signed there, the company attempted to bring in industrial engineers to measure the work. After nearly a year a deal was eventually signed which allowed industrial engineers on the line. Some of those who had refused to sign the original MDW agreement put their signatures to a document which superficially gave mutuality over work standards before implementation, but in fact allowed the management to impose its standards if there was any delay. The agreement at the body plant, however, did not allow any timings at all, and effort was merely visually assessed with the stewards in fairly substantial control.

While this was going on, the pieceworkers at Longbridge were pursuing a factory policy of resistance to MDW. This had been made mandatory on the Austin Works Committee by the Joint Shop Stewards and covered all 12,000 pieceworkers in the plant — probably the largest single concentration of pieceworkers in the country and therefore of symbolic significance.

The Austin Works Committee of 7 contained two members of the Communist Party, led by Dick Etheridge, Works Convenor since 1952 and soon due to retire. He was the man who took tea with Harold Wilson when 10,000 BMH workers were sacked in 1966, and refused to use the Combine Committee, on which he held a leading post, to fight back. He was also the signatory to a model MDW deal negotiated behind the backs of the green labour recruited to man the highly automated new Cofton Hackett engine plant. And the Works Committee, having accepted job evaluation in 1968 made no attempt to explain to the shop floor what the implications were. With the backing of the AUEW district committee, the Works Committee forced the tool room to drop their resistance to the deal, despite the fact that they would lose their existing bonuses which could guarantee them much more money than being part of a factory wide agreement. After their refusal to be job evaluated had been to York twice, it was Hugh Scanlon who insisted they drop their resistance, and that a payment system to replace the toolroom bonus was negotiable. Eventually a deal was signed in April 1971 which reduced the 150 grades of indirect workers on the site to just 7, with their wage increases planned ahead for two years — the top grade only getting something in the order of 3-4 per cent per annum. The *Sunday Times* knew who to

give credit when credit was due, and stated 'As at Cowley, much of the credit must go to the local T & G official'. The deal runs out in May 1973 and stipulates that a new agreement will then be brought into operation.

The company then refused to negotiate further piecework price increases anywhere in the plant, in an attempt to force workers to accept MDW. Where a majority of pieceworkers earn less than the figure quoted for MDW then there is great pressure to accept — as in the assembly plant in Cowley. Where the pieceworkers earn more than the figure quoted then the management are forced to resort to threats — as for the Maxi body line at Cowley. If the men chosen to work MDW are green, as at Cofton Hackett, or have been doing 'trucking', as the Marina body line, they are easy prey and only a factory stand can defeat the management's proposals. At Longbridge the management calculated on picking off the men section by section, and exploiting the particular weakness of each. But a factory wide policy of resistance was forced on to the Works Committee. And it met with substantial success. A six-week strike among a section of engine assemblers brought them an increase in piece-rates. When 134 sewing room women struck for a 15 per cent increase in piece-rates, the company offered them an increase in the order of 25 per cent if they would accept measured day work. But they stayed out because it was the factory policy. Then, with obvious fear of impending confrontations, the Works Committee called a special meeting of the Joint Shop Stewards on 21 January 1972, declared it mandatory (breaking the custom for special meetings) and put forward proposals for an alternative system of payment to piecework. The Works Committee got their mandate to go ahead, and the sewing room women were forced to go back on an interim payment system. Thus collapsed one of the best organised plants in the country. Whatever alternative system is drawn up, it will involve the removal of mutuality over job prices, and will be merely a stepping stone in the direction of formal MDW. Without a fighting strategy to counter British Leyland's plans to introduce measured day work, then the best organised workforce can be taken. And this is much more so the case in a large combine where work can be moved around. **Dave Lyddon**

There are groups of socialist revolutionaries who spend their time sighing for the type of opportunity which was presented to the Left in Northern Ireland after 5th October 1968. Suddenly there was an audience tens of thousands strong, shocked out of its old attitudes, bewildered and excited by what was happening, looking for explanations, asking to be led. The Left proved incapable of taking the opportunity.

The 5th October march the first significant Civil Rights demonstration had been organised by people who would have described themselves as left-wing socialists. The decision to defy the ban announced by Home Affairs Minister Craig on 3rd October was opposed by the executive of the Civil Rights Association and by the overwhelming majority of those who had been even marginally involved in the prior organisation. The decision was forced through at a chaotic meeting of 'all interested parties' late on 4th October by two Labour Party delegates who insisted that they would march, irrespective of any majority vote to the contrary.

It was a very small march. Many of the marchers were students and local teenagers. Possibly two hundred and fifty Derry adults took part.

The blood which flowed in Derry that day unleashed a howl of outrage across Northern Ireland, mobilised and momentarily radicalised the apathetic Catholic masses and brought them out into the streets, spoiling for a fight. Bog-siders, born with wounded pride in their Republican history, cursed the Government the morning after and resolved that this time they were not going to take it lying down.

Yet, within a short time, the 'revolutionaries' who had organised the demonstration, had lost leadership of the resultant mass movement. The original detonating group in Derry disappeared into the middle-class Citizens Action Committee, led by John Hume and Ivan Cooper, both now members of the Social Democratic & Labour Party. After that left wingers directed their attentions and hopes towards the People's Democracy which had been founded in Belfast on 8th October. But while maintaining a separate existence, the PD too, was for a long time effectively submerged in the mainstream of Civil Rights agitation, establishing itself not as an organisation with a programme qualitatively different to that of the 'moderates', but as a lively and aggressive ginger group within the same broad movement. The result was that the revolutionary forces in the North, at the time when mass Catholic working-class discontent was erupting into new political formations, did not manage to convey clearly the difference between their politics and the politics of other anti-Unionist tendencies. To the mass of the people it was apparent that the PD was more militant than the Derry Citizens' Action Committee on the Northern Ireland CRA. It was not clear what it was being militant about. This meant that Unionist spokesmen were able plausibly to suggest that the difference was this: that the 'moderates' were anti-Protestant; the 'militants' even more anti-Protestant.

This was plausible because it contained a kernel of important truth. There was one sense in which the Civil Rights Movement was 'anti-Protestant'. After 5th October the movement was demanding an end to discriminatory practices. Leading

moderate spokesmen such as Hume and Fitt insisted endlessly that this was all they were demanding.

In a situation in which the Protestants had more than their fair share of jobs, houses and voting power, to demand an end to discrimination was to suggest that Catholics should get more jobs, houses and voting power than they had at present — *and Protestants less*. This simple mathematical calculation did not seem to occur to the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. But five minutes talk with a Paisleyite counter-demonstrator would have left one in no doubt that it was not missed on the Protestant working class.

There never was the slightest possibility of a movement demanding 'fair play' in Northern Ireland engaging the support, or even securing the neutrality, of the Protestant masses. In terms of strict economics the only programme with any potential to undercut sectarianism and make contact with the consciousness of the Protestant working class would have been one which linked the demands for fair distribution of the relevant commodities to demands designed to increase absolutely the number of jobs and houses available for distribution. This would have involved campaigning for an end to the system of grants and inducement to private industry, a ban of the export of profits from Northern Ireland, direct investment in areas of high unemployment. With regard to housing it would have meant demanding the cessation of repayments by the Housing Trust and local authorities to London banks — repayments which were and are crippling the housing programme in the North and forcing rents up. In a phrase it would have involved a comprehensive anti-capitalist programme.

If any group had fought consistently for such a programme within the CR movement, it (the CRM) would have split wide open, and such a programme, hardly the normal stuff of Northern politics, would not of course, have attracted immediate mass support. At any rate, the matter was never put to the test. No such group existed or emerged.

By the middle of 1969 the Left was established in the Catholic mind as those who were most impatient, who were willing to run most risks, who wanted to go along the same road as the moderates but further. It was not clear that the Left wanted to go along a different road.

Thus when Northern Ireland exploded in August 1969 the Left was still imprisoned within the sectarian strait jacket, forced to operate almost exclusively within the Catholic community but unable to give any clear lead to the Catholic masses. In Belfast the PD did not have a single person on any of the Defence committees. In Derry an *ad hoc* alliance of Derry Labour Party members and left wing Republicans did manage to carve out a separate minority position on the Defence Committee but, unwilling to cause a split in the barricaded area and doubtful about the extent of its own support, it never seriously attempted to wrest leadership from the moderates.

This was one of the reasons for the emergence of the Provisionals. The raging bitterness of the Catholics in Belfast especially, after the August days was certain, sooner or later, to swamp Fitt and Hume. Emotions were too strong to be

contained for long within the thin shell of timid respectability. The Provisionals filled the vacuum created by the effective absence of the left and the irrelevance of the right.

Had there been a consistent attempt between October 1968 and August 1969 to build a vigorous socialist movement, applying and refining the half-formed ideas which motivated the organisers of the original march, then we *might* have had, when the explosion came, an organisation sufficiently clear in its perspectives, sufficiently confident of its politics to intervene decisively and seize the initiative.

Instead, taking leadership from the Left had proved as easy as taking candy from a baby.

All of which is to present the matter in a simplistic economic form. One does not over-estimate the objective possibilities of winning Protestant workers in 1968-9; no mass deflection from the 'loyalist' camp was on the cards. What is true is that the lack of open class-orientated agitation destroyed whatever potential did exist to develop some tenuous links with militant Protestant workers. Moreover, the problem was not, of course, one of mere economics. The national question, once posed, would still have polarised the two sections of the class. To be more exact, the national question posed in exclusively bourgeois terms, as a choice between rule by the Orange or rule by the Green bourgeoisie, would have inevitably split the class. And there was no possibility of the national question *not* being posed.

The failure of the subjectively revolutionary left to demarcate itself from middle-class civil rights politics was paralleled by and connected to, its failure to understand this.

The Civil Rights movement was an *understandable* reaction to the pattern of discrimination, repression and institutionalised Protestant supremacy — and it was the duty of revolutionaries to support its demands for 'democratisation' — as far as they went. But the fact, was, and is, that Northern Ireland *cannot* operate 'democratically'. It is an artificial creation containing within its territory a massive, permanently discontented minority. The struggle for 'democracy' was bound, sooner or later, to become a struggle against the state. By agreeing to suspend consideration of the national question, while simultaneously failing to make clear enough the class nature of its politics, the revolutionary left was helping the middle-class to peddle an illusion, the illusion that it was possible to reform N Ireland.

It will be objected by some of those involved that the PD, in particular, far from peddling this illusion, consistently advocated the *end* of Unionism and the creation of a socialist Republic. And indeed, none of our speeches was complete without an invitation to go 'Forward to the Workers Republic'.

But this slogan was quite detached from the day to day practice. It was, in effect, a piece of rhetoric tucked on to the end of a series of liberal demands. This manic oscillation between reformist practice and adventurist rhetoric is not uncommon in student-based groups. Projected into the mass movement, it served to preclude any possibility of winning people by consistent practice and propaganda, to a revolu-

tionary position and delivered them up to the 'moderate' leadership of Fitt, Hume and the rest.

There was no *campaign* for a socialist independent Ireland, in any meaningful sense of the word. This had a disastrous effect on the left after August 1969. It meant that when the moderate leadership was swamped, the Catholic workers did not pass into the socialist camp. There was no socialist camp there to receive them.

After the traumatic experience of August 1969 the National Question re-emerged. The mutiny of the RUC and the Specials in Belfast shattered any possibility of the Catholic communities being weaned to tolerance of the State. It was the machinery of the state itself which had threatened their destruction. Afterwards, securing the physical safety of the community *meant* striving to bring the state down. The Catholics in Belfast *had* to pose the partition issue, despite both the Left and the Right in the Civil Rights movement. In this situation there was no socialist option available. There was no movement with a base in the Catholic working class able to offer the 'socialist Ireland' as a remedy. Given this absence, the emergence of the Provisionals was inevitable. Tens of thousands of Catholics in the North literally had no alternative but to throw up some such grouping.

There are parallels with 1921. There is a folk myth account of the founding of the Northern State which holds that, in 1921, the Protestants in the North, blackmailed and befuddled by sectarian Loyalist propaganda, chose, against their own interests as Irish people, to retain the link with Britain; that had it not been for the agitational activities of Carson and Craigavon the Protestant masses would have seen that their interest lay in joining with their fellow-countrymen to build a free Ireland. This is a misty simplification.

Half a century ago the Protestants had to choose between the Union and bourgeois rule from Dublin. The protectionist economic policies of Sinn Fein, had they been applied to the North, would have bid to destroy all the Northern industrial structure. The ship-building and linen industries, cut off from sources of raw materials or markets, or both, would have gone to the wall. The loyalist posters which festooned Belfast showing the shipyards and Royal Avenue choked with weeds and inscribed 'Belfast under Home Rule' may have been caricature. But they contained an important element of truth. On a short-term economical basis home rule from Dublin would not have been in the interests of the Protestant masses.

It is not true that the Protestants, blinded by propaganda, made a crazy choice. They made a perfectly rational economic decision between the alternatives offered. Which is not to say that their conscious decision was based on cold economic calculation. It is to say that there was a curious economic rationality underpinning all the quasi-religious jingoism with which the Unionist case was expressed, a rationality which was not being challenged in the existing working-class movement.

It is academic to argue that there was a third alternative — the Socialist Ireland of Connolly — which would have better represented the interests of all workers. This is an attractive

truism. But the Socialist Ireland was not really on offer. Connolly had not understood the necessity to build a revolutionary party (for that matter, neither, in 1916, had Trotsky). When he was executed there was no political party which could clearly be seen as the repository of his thought. In 1918 the Irish Labour Party accepted De Valera's dictum that 'Labour must wait' and collapsed into an all-class national alliance. The result was that there was no credible socialist presence when the carve-up came. Just as — and for many of these same reasons — there was no credible socialist presence in August 1969.

This is not to argue that in 1921 the Protestants were 'right' to choose to fight for the link with Britain; in so far as such monolithic concepts are applicable they were 'wrong'. It is to argue that in the absence of the left it was, anyway, inevitable. The vacuum which the Provisionals filled was in the first instance a physical one. The adhesion of the Republican leadership to the crazy Stalinist 'stages' theory had disarmed the community. Arms were needed and the Provisionals eventually supplied them.

The role of the Republican leadership pre-1969 does not fall within the orbit of this piece. It can be said, however, that they had helped to disarm the community politically as well as militarily. Grafting the crude Stalinist theorising of Roy Johnston *et al* onto the republican tradition, they strove to guide all mass agitation in the North into a struggle for 'democratisation'. They, too, denied vehemently that the national question was of any relevance. And, in their efforts to build a 'broad-based movement for reform', they emerged as the most bitter opponents of suggested agitation within the civil rights movement on economic class issues.

If the PD and its fellow-travellers failed to see the need to link the socialist and republican struggles together, the Republicans chose not to see any immediate need for either.

The Provisionals did not fight for and win the leadership of the national struggle. They did not have to. There was no competition. They developed as the leadership of the national struggle.

The absence of a movement in the South was crucial. Without such we could not fight bourgeois nationalism, even had we set out much more rigorously to do so within the North. One cannot fight bourgeois nationalism if one is not part of a struggle against that section of the national bourgeoisie which is actually in power. Obviously, without a struggle against the set-up in the South, it was in effect *impossible* for us to drive a wedge between ourselves and the northern Catholic middle-class.

The southern bourgeoisie, as clients of British Imperialism, could not fight British Imperialism. Within the southern state it presided over the intensifying day-to-day exploitation of the working-class. It had to be attacked on both these fronts and the link between the two demonstrated. Only by linking the two together could the socialist content of our anti-imperialism be demonstrated. And only by doing *that* could the grip of orange ideology on the northern Protestant working-class be loosened.

This was illustrated by the most elaborate single attempt to

'extend the fight to the south' — the PD's Belfast-Dublin march in April 1969. The marchers swung into O'Connell Street chanting, pithily enough, 'Lynch Lynch! Lynch O'Neill!' What they meant was that O'Neill and Lynch represented two equally oppressive Tory regimes and that the working class in each area ought to rise up and eject them. But what the people standing in O'Connell Street understood it to mean was different — that O'Neill was a Unionist and therefore had to be brought down. And that Lynch had to go because he was insufficiently militant in pursuing this objective. The difference between the revolutionary left and Fianna Fail was not seen in terms of the kind of societies they aimed at. It was seen almost exclusively in terms of the intensity with which they were willing to attack the regime in the North. In a phrase, the link between the anti-Republicanism of Lynch, and the anti-working-class motives of his policies was not demonstrated.

This is how the Protestants saw it and were encouraged to see it by their leaders. (And there were indications that others shared the assessment. Once after making a fierce and, I thought, a rather effective attack on the Southern Government at a meeting in Bogside I was given an Irish fifty-pound note by a prominent member of Fianna Fail who said that he supposed I could find use for it. Clearly he did not feel threatened.)

This resulted in total confusion. On the one hand we were more or less denying that the national question was on the agenda at all. On the other we were seen to be attacking the southern regime for failing to live up to its stated national aspirations. Nowhere were we illustrating in action the class nature of our objections to Fianna Fail. In August 1969 in the Bogside it was stated from a socialist platform (a) that Lynch was a traitor because he had not sent his troops over the border when we needed them; and that (b) if he had sent them over we would have opened up a 'second front' to repel them. In the circumstances it is difficult to imagine what the listeners made of this.

A credible attack on the *class* nature of Fianna Fail could have been mounted only by an organisation which was seen to be engaged in a day-to-day economic struggle against it. This would have required an all-Ireland organisation, the southern section of which was not directing its own and others attention to the North, but was taking up issues of wages, rents and unemployment in the South and linking *these* to the anti-imperialist struggle, the front line in Ireland of which was in the North. No such organisation existed, and between October '68 and August '69 there was no consistent attempt to build it.

The Left did not fail between '68 and '69 for lack of effort. While prominent 'moderates' were circling one another, daggers in hand, each wondering into which back it might most profitably be plunged, the PD was directing more energy into the struggle than any other single tendency. In Michael Farrel it had at the helm possibly the most determined political operator in Northern Ireland. The loose left group in Derry was frenetically active.

The very 'effectiveness' of the original strategy was one of

the things which derailed the Left. In Derry before 5th October we had been working on a conscious, if unspoken, strategy to provoke the authorities into overreaction and thus spark off a mass response. We certainly succeeded. But when the mass response came we were not capable of handling it.

Socialist revolutionaries get used to talking to audiences numbered in tens. When we were confronted with an audience tens of thousands strong our reaction was to abandon the attempt to win people, if necessary in ones and twos, to a hard political position, and instead to try to exert some general influence over a broad, relatively political movement. The Young Socialist Alliance, the semi-clandestine core of PD in the first three months of PD's existence, was, by majority vote, dissolved on 31st December 1969, the night before the Burntollet march.

In a phrase, we lacked a revolutionary Marxist party and did not understand the necessity of building one. The events of the last four years in N Ireland demonstrate that mass 'influence' or prominent involvement in mass agitation is, despite sometime appearances, meaningless and fruitless unless one is, in the process, forging the political instrument necessary to lead such agitation to conclusive victory over the opposing force. This is not a lesson for revolutionaries in Ireland alone.

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# The Programme of the Socialist Workers' Movement

An important development in Irish politics is the appearance of the Socialist Workers Movement, a marxist organisation based largely in the republic but with connections in the six counties. We reproduce the SWM programme from its monthly paper *The Worker*, which can be obtained from 30 Strandville Avenue, North Strand, Dublin 3. (80p per year)

The SOCIALISTS WORKERS' MOVEMENT is a revolutionary workers' movement, whose aim is the organisation of the working class in the struggle for power and the transformation of the existing social order. All its activities, its methods and its internal organisation are subordinated to this and are designed to serve this purpose.

Capitalism is a system based on production for profit, not for human need. This system is driven by the necessity to accumulate profit, which means that capitalists compete with one another, both nationally and internationally.

The capitalist class is a ruling class whose ownership and control of the means of production is based on the exploitation of the working class. Thus, a small minority rules society. In Ireland, 9 per cent of the population owns 90 per cent of the wealth.

The contradictions between competing capitalists, produce war, poverty and crisis. The struggle between the classes will produce the overthrow of capitalist society.

Capitalism needs the working class; the working class does not need capitalism. Present day capitalism is entering a period of stagnation and crisis; it attempts to solve its problems at the expense of working-class living standards and democratic rights.

This system is international: in the drive to expand it must extend its power over the whole world. 250 companies dominate the international economy. The search for markets and materials has led to imperialism — the brutal oppression of the peoples of two-thirds of the world and the effective strangling of those peoples' attempts to develop their societies. International capitalism operates in Ireland through British imperialism's military, economic and political domination of the whole country. Britain maintains a standing army in the North. British imperialism has divided the working class on sectarian lines. British investments throughout Ireland equal 50 per cent of all investment in manufacturing and commerce. The Dublin and Stormont governments are subservient to the dictates of the international system and thus to its agent, Westminster.

Imperialism dominates Ireland *as a whole*: it treats Ireland as a unity. The struggle to defeat imperialism, therefore, must be fought in a united way throughout the 32 counties. This involves the overthrow of the Orange-Unionist state in the North and of the Green-Tory state in the South.

Irish capitalism, Green and Orange, is wholly integrated into the world system. Because of this, the mere unification of Ireland, or the removal of British troops, cannot in themselves mean the defeat of imperialism in Ireland. There is no independent republic this side of the Workers' Republic. Only by the uniting of the working class can power be taken from

the Orange and Green ruling class minorities and victory be won over imperialism.

It is the Irish working class and small farmers who bear the load of this imperialist domination. The contrast between Ireland, a neo-colony, and the Western capitalist countries is especially glaring:

North and South:

120,000 unemployed — the highest rate of unemployment in Europe;

60,000 redundancies expected in the next four years;

100,000 unfit houses and the worst housing record in Europe;

£9 per week net average income per rural household — the third lowest in Europe;

1,000 political prisoners.

The working class has the capacity to end exploitation and oppression. In Ireland North and South the working class is now the predominant social class numerically and in terms of potential strength. The class has achieved a new self-confidence and militancy; this needs political co-ordination. Independent working class action can create a society based on production for human need, democratically controlled by the majority. By organising at the point of production and in the localities the workers can lead a struggle to the Workers' Republic. This would not mean merely a State takeover of the means of production, but *workers' control* of all aspects of society, local and national. Such a society does not exist in any country today.

The Socialist Workers' Movement stands for the nationalisation of banks and industry under workers' control and without compensation. To this end we actively engage in the day-to-day struggles of workers and small farmers and seek to build a mass working-class party which can lead the struggle to build socialism in Ireland as part of the struggle for international socialism. A Workers' Republic cannot survive without the aid of the British and Continental working classes and the international extension of the revolutionary fight.

The Socialist Workers' Movement opposes the EEC to which the only alternative is socialism in Ireland, as part of a socialist Europe. The Socialist Workers' Movement opposes NATO and all other international military alliances. We are independent of Washington, Moscow and Peking. We support all anti-imperialist struggles throughout the world.

The Socialist Workers' Movement fights for: —

full support for workers and small farmers in struggle;  
defence of the living standards of workers and small farmers;  
rank-and-file control and socialist leadership of the trade unions;

the election of all trade union officials, subject to recall;  
all strikes to be declared official if supported by the majority of the workers concerned;

a minimum wage of at least £30 for a 35-hour week;  
equal pay for women;

100 per cent trade unionism;

opposition to all anti-trade union legislation;  
 opposition to all incomes policies under capitalism;  
 against unemployment, redundancy and lay offs. We support  
 the demand: Five days' work or five days' pay;  
 repeal of all repressive legislation — eg Special Powers Act  
 and Offences Against the State Act;  
 extension of the Civil Resistance Campaign in the Six Coun-  
 ties;  
 release of all political prisoners;  
 evacuation of British troops from Ireland;  
 defence of working class areas against military and sectarian  
 attacks;  
 freedom of worship for all religious groupings;  
 total separation of Church and State;  
 an end to clerical control of education;  
 a secular and comprehensive education system controlled by  
 teachers, pupils and parents;  
 raising of school-leaving age to 18;  
 free education to the highest level;  
 full adult rights at 18 — eg the right to vote;  
 adult wages and adult rights for workers at 18;  
 free and comprehensive health service;  
 end to means-tested benefits;  
 minimum wage for the unemployed and pensioners;  
 one family — one house;  
 emergency housing programme and expropriation of all build-  
 ing land;  
 tenants' control of estates, including rents;  
 full social equality for women;  
 24-hour nurseries;  
 income for small farmers and agricultural labourers on parity  
 with industrial rates;  
 division of large estates under control of local farmers;  
 the building of a genuine co-operative movement among  
 farmers and fishermen;  
 nationalisation of hunting and fishing rights.

The SOCIALIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT is a democratic organisation open to all those who accept its principles and objectives, who work in one of the units of the movement, agree to recognise its discipline and pay dues.

'Internationalism; to some people this is the great bug-aboo which frightens them off from socialism' (James Connolly). The struggle for a Workers' Republic in Ireland is inseparable from the international struggle against capitalism. The Socialist Workers' Movement fights to build a mass party of the working class as part of a revolutionary international of working class parties.

in the current issue of

## Socialist Revolution

*James O'Connor*—Inflation, Fiscal Crisis, and the American Working Class

*David K. Cohen, Marvin Lazerson, and Jeol H. Spring*—Education and Corporate Capitalism

*Bay Area Radical Teachers' Organizing Committee*—Towards a Movement in the Schools

*Gail Pellet*—THE DIALECTIC OF SEX: The Case for Feminist Revolution

*Paul Sweezy*—The Resurgence of Financial Control: Fact or Fancy?

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In the 1940s travellers crossing the border from Northern Ireland were greeted by banners proclaiming 'Welcome to Independent Ireland'. North bound travellers were warned 'You are now entering Occupied Ireland'. There was then — and is now — no doubt about the accuracy of the second slogan. But what of the first? Just how independent is the Twenty-six county 'Republic of Ireland'? The question is directly relevant at a time when the British Government looks increasingly to the Lynch Government in Dublin to move against the forces of republicanism, and preserve some semblance of the status quo throughout Ireland.

Ireland is an outstanding example of the uneven development of capitalism in a country dominated by a foreign imperialism. Although trade and commerce developed widely in Ireland during the eighteenth century, unprotected exposure to competition from Britain, combined with active discrimination against sections of competing Irish industry proved disastrous after the Act of Union in 1801. However in the north east there had been a greater development of industry, including manufacturing. In part this was due to official encouragement given by the British ruling class to the creation of a stable middle class. This was achieved by assisting the Protestant peasantry, descendants of the Ulster settlers in the previous century, to buy their holdings. This occurred more than 120 years before the Catholic peasants in the rest of Ireland. The relatively advanced nature of industry in NE Ulster meant that the continued prosperity of the growing northern Protestant bourgeoisie depended on ever widening markets. It became essential that the northern textile and engineering industries were not denied access to either British domestic markets or those of the world wide British empire. Throughout the nineteenth century support for Union with Britain came to mean increasingly bitter opposition to the demand for Home Rule from the late developing southern Catholic middle class. The convenient blend of economic and religious sectarian motives for opposition to Home Rule can be judged from the following quotation from a Unionist Party pamphlet *Commercial Ulster and the Home Rule Movement in 1902*: 'The cry against Separatism . . . is not merely voice of the Orangemen that is heard . . . it is not the voice of Protestantism alone that is heard . . . it is the voice of civilised humanity . . . it is the voice of trade, it is the voice of commerce, it is the voice of Capital.'

At that stage the majority opinion within British ruling class circles was that the uneven development of capitalism in Ireland, which British policy towards the Catholic peasants had done so much to foster, was no bad thing. The relative advancement of industry in the north-east was regarded by Tory leaders like Lord Randolph Churchill as providing a stable 'base for the maintenance of British interests and British power in the island'. It became British policy to encourage and protect their Unionist allies by directing business to the Belfast shipyards, and by providing finance for the continued development of industry in north east Ulster. In the south the picture in the nineteenth century was very different. The backwardness of trade and industry had left a weak and conciliating Catholic middle class. Time and again

in the nineteenth century the mass of Irish peasants looked in vain to their middle class leaders to direct the struggle against the landowners and the occupying British power. But only among the most economically backward sections of the, mainly rural, petty bourgeoisie did the insurrectionary ideals of the 1798 Uprising live on through the physical force 'Irreconcilables', the Fenians and later the Sinn Fein movement. This petty bourgeoisie believed that with England off Ireland's back a purely Irish, socially harmonious form of capitalism could develop. But this in their view would mean extensive protection of small Irish manufacturers from the British giants across the water. Protection went together with the Home Rule movement among the southern middle class moderates and the Sinn Fein radicals alike. The official 'Sinn Fein Policy' in 1905 put it like this:

'Protection means rendering the native manufacturer equal to meeting foreign competition. If a manufacturer cannot produce as cheaply as an English or other foreigner, only because his foreign competitor has larger resources at his disposal, then it is the first duty of the Irish nation to accord Protection to that manufacturer.'

Arthur Griffiths, the founder of Sinn Fein, recognised that the 'greater resources' of British capital was based on Britain's ownership of an empire. He went so far as to advocate that Ireland might have its own commercial 'empire' taking advantage of 'the links forged with Africa and Latin America by Irish Catholic missionaries'.

However moderate the Home Rule and Independence movements were, British ruling class regarded them with hostility and fear. In part this was because the British ruling class was not certain that the weak Irish middle class and the utopian petit bourgeoisie would be able to contain the radical and implicitly revolutionary aspirations of their peasant and working class supporters. The revolutionary socialist labour leader James Connolly recognised that the international development of British and world capital made a nonsense of any hope of a genuine Irish independence based on capitalist property relations. He saw that a protected isolationist Irish capitalism was an illusion and that 'bourgeois independence would lead back to empire'.

In 1897 Connolly wrote 'If you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organisation of the Socialist Republic your efforts would be in vain. England would still rule you. She would rule you through her capitalists, through her landlords, through her financiers, through the whole array of commercial and individualist institutions she has planted in this country and waters with the tears of our mothers and the blood of our martyrs. England would still rule you to your ruin, even while your lips offered hypocritical homage at the shrine of that freedom whose cause you betrayed'.

It would be difficult to imagine a more prophetic anticipation of the actual history of the Twenty-six county state since its creation in 1922. Connolly also foresaw that this kind of crucial strategic concession to the Irish middle class would be used as a way of containing the potentially revolutionary demands of the Irish workers and small farmers.

The independence of the Free State was a sham. It was armed and partly financed by British money. It was with British guns that the republican opposition was crushed in the Civil War. From the beginning the Free State civil service was modelled on and largely trained by Britain. The tradition of close and continuing liaison between departments of the Twenty-six county Government and Whitehall is one stemming from the birth of the Free State. This liaison has worked particularly closely in the field of 'political security'. Collaboration by the Twenty-six county police and Special Branches has long been an essential component of British vigilance over republican and revolutionary socialist activity in both the North of Ireland and Britain itself.

From its birth the Twenty-six county economy has been dominated by British capital. Indeed the penetration by British capital of every department of production and distribution has continued over the period since 1922, no matter what official policy the Dublin Government adopted. Official economic policy has in fact gone through several different stages. When Sinn Fein and the IRA split over the Treaty, the Free Staters represented the largest of the southern bourgeoisie and big farming interests. They had an interest in close and continuing access to the British market and to the investment opportunities provided by the British empire sterling area. As a result protection and economic friction with British interests in the Twenty-six counties was kept to a minimum. However in 1932 De Valera, representing the 'radical' wing of Sinn Fein and the smaller business interests and the rural petit bourgeoisie came to power. His Fianna Fail party attempted to put into practice the old protectionist policies of the republican movement. Tariffs were erected around most native industries. A law was passed requiring companies to have a majority of Irish directors. In addition the De Valera Government refused to continue making compensation payments to English landowners who had been compelled by a pre-1914 British law to allow their tenant farmers to buy their holdings. The slogan during this period of economic war was 'Burn everything British but their coal'. However British capital in Ireland itself remained untouched. De Valera's Fianna Fail was not prepared to take over foreign property in Ireland, not least because this would have pointed to taking over Irish capital too.

Before the outbreak of World War Two De Valera had come to terms with the British Government. From 1945 onwards, through successive Government changes in Dublin, tariffs and other forms of protection for Irish industry were progressively reduced. This process accelerated through the 1950s and 1960s during the long post-war economic boom. The Twenty-six county economy was able to attract a considerable volume of foreign investment, not only British, during this period thanks to massive tax incentives and low wages. In 1965 the Fianna Fail Government negotiated the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement. This opened the floodgates to a further penetration of British capital. It was also at this time that the then Dublin Government initiated the first cross-border talks with the O'Neill Government in Stormont. It was evident that with entry into the Common Market looming ever closer

the interests of capital on both sides of the border pointed in the same direction — closer integration with Britain. But for that to take place a political settlement of the border and the underprivileged status of the Catholic population in the north was necessary. In Whitehall it was also accepted that there had to be political changes in the six counties if there was to be a political rationalisation of the economic interests of Anglo-Irish capital in the country as a whole. The problem for the British ruling class is that they have to achieve this rationalisation while at the same time maintaining the Orange Stormont link and preventing the forces of revolutionary republicanism being allowed to challenge the imperialist status quo over the whole of Ireland.

How extensive is British economic control of the Twenty-six counties at present? The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development estimates that between a third and a half of all manufacturing concerns are either controlled or owned outright by British firms. Perhaps 70 per cent of the 100 largest companies in the Twenty-six counties are British-controlled in part, or entirely. In 1971 profits totalling £21 millions — 60 per cent of total profits of all publicly quoted companies — were pocketed by British investors. In the past ten years some 500 new industrial concerns, with assets totalling about £150 millions were established in the south of Ireland. Of these more than a third were directly sponsored by British companies. British investment in Ireland is also highly profitable. The average rate of profit on foreign capital in Ireland during 1970 was a little over 20 per cent — compared with 13.4 per cent in Britain itself (Dublin Chamber of Commerce). Just how dependent the Irish economy is on decisions taken outside the country can be gauged from the fact that some 70 per cent of investment in manufacturing is decided on or sanctioned by head offices abroad — mostly in Britain. Not that the Twenty-six county state is not generous in bribing big business to invest in the south; — half the cost is met by the Irish tax payers of all new industrial investment and foreign firms making the investment may not be liable for profits tax for up to fifteen years.

Another important measurement of the dependence of the Irish economy on British capital can be made through foreign trade. Today 55 per cent of all Twenty-six county imports are supplied by Britain and more than 66 per cent of all exports are sold in the British market. The impact of the 1965 Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement will almost certainly increase this bilateral exclusiveness of Twenty-six county foreign trade. However it is as wrong to picture the Twenty-six county state as a mere colonial appendage of the British state as it is to imagine that the Green Tory state has achieved complete national independence. The native Irish ruling class enjoy a junior partner relationship with their cousins in Britain. The Twenty-six counties are, in that sense, a client state of British capital. The partnership is not merely evident in the joint investments of British and Irish interests in Ireland itself. The Irish ruling class itself has long had a tradition of foreign investment. Indeed the proportion of the Irish national product invested abroad and the per capita income from that investment is among the highest in the world. Total Irish

investments abroad are about £550 millions, some 85 per cent in the sterling area. It is to facilitate this lucrative exploitation of foreign labour that the Irish bourgeoisie (and all Twenty-six county Governments) have jealously defended the almost total integration of the Irish currency with sterling and managed Irish monetary affairs in total harmony with the policies laid down in the City of London. This is why Irish interest rates are based on London Bank rate, irrespective of the domestic state of the Irish economy.

It is precisely this almost total integration of the economic interests of the British and Irish capitalist classes which makes a nonsense of Twenty-six county claims to political independence. Of course the Free State Government does occasionally jib at particular political decisions taken in London. The 'special relationship' is not always totally devoid of friction. But where conflicts arise normally the junior partner puts up and shuts up. The events in the North of Ireland and the unwillingness of the British ruling class to disentangle itself from its alliance with the Orange establishment has posed several points of conflict. The British Government is not unaware of this and the dangers of placing its Twenty-six county allies in a position where they will be seen by the mass of the Irish people as traitors to the cause of Irish national unity. There will be attempts made to reach a 'political settlement' which may abolish the externals of partition in return for binding both parts of Ireland (via some kind of new federal constitution) closer to Britain. When that happens the Irish bourgeoisie, having come to political power on the back of the anti-imperialist republican movement, will have travelled the path right back to the empire. That is why imperialism cannot be defeated in Ireland without the overthrow of the rule of Irish capital. Only a strategy which sees how the consumation of the national struggle demands the triumph of the workers republic has any chance to break Stormont, Orangeism and the hold of British capital in Ireland. The petit-bourgeois republican leaderships and those who pedal the illusion of a theory of stages in the struggle for Irish freedom cannot lead the anti-imperialist movement to victory. The task of building a revolutionary socialist workers movement and winning for it the leadership of the national struggle falls to the small but growing forces of marxism in Ireland.

**The Decline of Traditional Industries**

The main areas of employment in Northern Ireland have traditionally been shipbuilding, linen, and agriculture. Since the war there has been a dramatic decline in these sectors:

	1950	1970
Agriculture	134,000	54,000
Linen	61,000	27,000
Shipbuilding	25,000	10,000

These three have accounted for the loss of over 6,000 jobs a year since 1949. In agriculture alone the *average* rate has been 3,500 a year.<sup>2</sup> British economic trends encouraged this process. Each Tory credit squeeze in the 1950s reduced employment in Northern Ireland. When English unemployment was raised by 1 per cent in 1951-52 it went up by 6 per cent in Northern Ireland and by 4 per cent in 1957-58. With the British economic crisis of 1966 unemployment was raised by 12,000 in Northern Ireland and two major factories in Derry closed.<sup>3</sup> Agricultural unemployment has provided the momentum behind this decline.

**Agriculture**

Over 10 per cent still work on the land — the biggest employer in Northern Ireland. There is almost no tenant farming, 96 per cent own their own land. The Land Purchase Acts (1870-1925) enabled tenants to buy the land they farmed with the aid of loans by the government. Fifty years later most of these loans are still being repayed.<sup>4</sup> Of the 20,000 full-time farms only one sixth are capable of providing employment for two or more men. The farmers depend almost entirely on government subsidies for their revenue.<sup>5</sup> In England this subsidy usually accounts for only one half of a farmer's income. Of the £150m worth of farm products produced each year, goods to the value of £105m go to Great Britain.<sup>6</sup> Entry to the EEC will bring about an end to the subsidy, with little compensation. Only beef and grain producers stand to gain from entry into the wider market, most of the farms in Northern Ireland are producing pigs, eggs and milk. There are slightly more Protestant than Catholic farmers (51 per cent to 49 per cent), but a higher proportion of Catholics work on the land (15 per cent to 11 per cent). Protestants tend to farm the better land and are buying up the small farms. Catholics either leave the land altogether or tend to be the poorer farmers. See table in next column

**The 'Growth' Areas — Jobs for the Boys**

Government policy has arrested the decline in the other sectors. Shipbuilding (Harland and Woolf, Belfast) appears to have stabilised with 10,000 employees. Of these only a few hundred are Catholic. In 1970 Harland and Woolf made a loss of £3.8m but with enormous government loans, and orders from Shell, it is secure until 1975.

**Class Structure of two Rural Areas in Co. Fermanagh (1962)<sup>7</sup>**

Approx. % of heads of families classified as		Catholic	Protestant
Upper Class		0	18
Large Farmers	} in proportion to size of county	13	20
Medium Farmers		22	30
Small Farmers		34	17
Labourers		22	8
Miscellaneous		9	7
		100	100

The textile industry is another stronghold of Protestant employment. Linen, the 'traditional' Ulster industry, accounted for 91 per cent of textile employment in 1949.<sup>8</sup> Today it only accounts for 50 per cent. The industry has diversified into capital intensive synthetic fibres (Dupont, Monsanto, Enkalon etc) which accounts for another 20,000 jobs. The *real* growth areas in the economy are construction (10 per cent of employment) and services including those in public administration (40 per cent). Employment in service 'industries' increased by 13,000 between 1964 and 1969 alone. These jobs are only for those 'loyal to the state'.

Employment by the government and local authorities has offset the effect on the Protestant community of the decline in the traditional industries. Public employment therefore plays a crucial role in maintaining Unionism.

**Job Discrimination**

12 per cent of Northern Ireland's local government staff are Catholic. 'The exercise of patronage is made easier by the custom of expecting personal canvassing of the council or of its committee before appointments are made.'<sup>9</sup> The following are all predominately Catholic areas:

*Dungannon* — no Catholics employed by the council

*Armagh* — 8 Catholics out of 20 county council clerical employees

*Fermanagh* — 32 out of 370 posts. No senior posts held by Catholics. 'This was rationalised by reference to "proven loyalty" as a necessary test for local authority appointments'.<sup>10</sup>

*Derry* — Catholic employees netted only 26 per cent of the total salary bill. Catholics held only 30 per cent of the bus driving or refuse collecting jobs.<sup>11</sup>

Firms take their cue from Unionist policy. The pattern tends to be either complete discrimination, the employment of Catholics only in the lower paid jobs, or segregation by departments. An example of the latter is dock labour: cross channel traffic is handled by the Protestant Amalgamated T & GWU; 'deep sea' traffic is handled by members of the Catholic Irish T & GWU.<sup>12</sup>

### East and West of the River Bann

The Unionist government's policy of arresting the decline in shipbuilding, engineering and textiles, and encouraging the rationalisation of agriculture by clearing large numbers of farmers from their land should be seen as part of the discrimination in economic development programmes between the Belfast region and the provinces to the South and West. The most neglected areas are Derry Co., Tyrone Co., and Fermanagh Co. (The latter two with Catholic majorities.) Unemployment is far higher in the West (see below) and the resulting internal migration from West to East (see below) helps to preserve Unionist control in the Western counties. The Matthew Report (1963), accepted by the government, recommended only the planned development of the Belfast region. The Benson Report (1963) on the railways recommended that most of the lines be closed, including the two major lines connecting Derry with Belfast. The government accepted the recommendations but hesitated to close both lines. It closed the Southern line which connects Derry with Strabane, Omagh and Portadown as well as Belfast, in 1965. It is proposed to close the Northern line (through Coleraine) as soon as the 'near motorway standard' road to Derry from Belfast is completed. In 1965 the Lockwood Committee recommended that the New University of Ulster should be sited at the northern (Protestant) town of Coleraine. Derry City had possessed the Magee University College for over 100 years. It had confidently been expected to be elevated to University status. The decision caused an outcry by both Catholics and Protestants in Derry. The university is one of the very few unsegregated institutions in Northern Ireland, and the Unionist Party could not tolerate the critical products of that institution in an area like Derry.

Of the 111 factories which the government owned and the Ministry of Commerce had built up to 1964 only 16 (one in seven) had been sited in the underdeveloped areas of the West.<sup>13</sup> In 1965 the Wilson Committee reported to the Stormont government on the economic development of Northern Ireland. The government accepted its recommendations that only the Belfast region, including Antrim and north Down, were worth developing. These were already the most prosperous areas in Northern Ireland. Wilson recommended a new city of 100,000 in the Lurgan/Portadown area (both with Protestant majorities). Beside the new city of Craigavon the mainly Protestant towns of Antrim and Ballymena, Bangor and Newtownards, and Larne and Carrickfergus were selected as 'growth' centres. Antrim and Ballymena have since been projected as a single industrial complex. £40m is to be invested in the area this year. A similar area plan has been prepared for the Coleraine, Portrush and Portstewart regional triangle.

Pressures on the government to diversify its development programmes has produced a 1968 plan for Derry, and a five year development programme — published in 1970. In 1970 the Belfast urban area has already reached the 1981 population target of 600,000. Craigavon, the new town, was not growing as fast as had been expected. The main point of the Develop-

ment Programme announced an 'extension' of the range of incentives to industry, with capital grants ranging from 45 per cent to 60 per cent of the cost.

The costs have continued to rise. In the year ending March 1969, the cost of creating a single new job under the Industrial Development Act was £1,670, far higher than for any other region in the United Kingdom.<sup>14</sup> Beside the capital grants scheme (20 per cent for new plant and machinery, 35 per cent for new buildings), industry in Northern Ireland takes advantage of the industrial derating of 75 per cent. This is an annual saving of £3m for industry. There also exists a £1m industrial fuel subsidy toward the cost of coal, gas, electricity etc.

In June 1967, Brian Faulkner, then the Minister of Commerce, replied to the charge of regional discrimination. He pointed out that since the war the government had spent £20m on industry in Fermanagh, Tyrone and Derry and provided 9,000 jobs. But since 1945 the government has spent more than £250m on aids, inducements and grants to industry. Money spent on the western three counties therefore amounts to less than 10 per cent of the total.

### Catholic Middle Class Exclusion

Catholics of 'professional' status are denied any effective influence in the machinery of the administration. This was the composition of certain public boards in 1969:<sup>15</sup>

	Total Membership	Catholics
Electricity Board	5	0
Housing Trust	7	1
Craigavon Development Commission	9	1
Economic Council	18	2
Hospitals Authority	22	5
General Health Services Board	24	2
Agricultural Wages Board	15	2
Youth Employment Services Board	18	3
Industrial Court	22	1
Lowry Commission to Redistribute University Parliamentary Seats	5	0
1969 Commission to Overhaul Stormont Parliamentary Boundaries	3	1

The Civil Service of Northern Ireland, with over 8,000 permanent and temporary staff, is 94 per cent Protestant. There are no Catholics in the Ministries of Home Affairs, or Labour, with the rank of Principal or higher.<sup>16</sup>

### Trade Unions

There are 250,000 trade union members in Northern Ireland. Over 80 per cent (213,262) are members of British based unions. These are mainly Protestants and 40 per cent of them belong to the Amalgamated T & GWU. Only 5,000 are members of unions with their headquarters in Northern Ireland, ie the Transport and Allied Operatives Union and the Civil Service Association. 15,308 workers belong to unions based

in the Republic — mainly in the Irish T & GWU. Under the Trades Disputes and Trade Unions Act (Northern Ireland) of 1927, trade unionists must 'contract in' in order to pay a political levy. The adoption of British trade union legislation has depended upon the degree to which it may weaken the relationship between the Unionist government and the Protestant working class. The Industrial Relations Bill has not been introduced because of 'a fear that these working class ties might be weakened'.<sup>17</sup> Instead continuing discussions are taking place between the government, the CBI and the Northern Committee of Irish Trade Union Congress on the future of 'industrial relations' in the province. All unions operating in the North are represented in the Northern Committee of the ITUC. The committee receives a 'grant' of £10,000 a year from Stormont.<sup>18</sup> Ulster's union members 'benefit from nationally negotiated wage settlements, though their average weekly earnings are about 20 per cent below those in the rest of the United Kingdom'.<sup>19</sup>

#### Local Unionist Rule

For fifty years the Protestant vote in local council elections over the whole of Northern Ireland has been worth approximately twice that of the Catholic and non-Unionist vote. Beside the infamous Company Vote (which enabled the Unionists to hold Armagh UDC) the local government franchise was 'available only to occupiers of dwelling houses and their spouses, which excluded sub-tenants, lodgers, servants and children over 21 who were living at home'.<sup>20</sup>

If the limited franchise (based on high rateable values) did not insure Unionist control then ward boundaries were manipulated. Derry County Borough was the classic example:

1967	Catholic Voters	Other Voters	Seats
North Ward	2,530	3,946	8 Unionists
Waterside Ward	1,852	3,697	4 Unionists
South Ward	10,047	1,138	8 Non-unionists
Total	14,429	8,781	20
	23,210		

Derry boundaries have been changed many times to accommodate a growing Catholic population and preserve a Protestant majority (1896, 1919, 1922, 1936 etc). The technique has always been to force up the Catholic majority in South Ward (which includes the Bogside). In November, 1968, the Catholic Registration Association declared that the majority in South Ward had moved up to 13,023.

In November, 1968, Stormont was forced to suspend the Derry Council, and in April, 1969, the Londonderry Development Commission was appointed for the whole County. The Unionist government appointed 5 Protestants and 4 Catholics to the Commission, over which the people of Derry have no electoral control.<sup>21</sup> In the same year the administrative departments of the old County Council were moved to Coleraine. All local electoral rights have been suspended since the beginning of the Civil Rights campaign. Lurgan RDC's powers have been transferred to the government appointed Craigavon Development Commission (1 Catholic, 9 Protes-

tants), and the Antrim/Ballymena Development Commission was set up in 1967. Stormont accepted a reorganisation of local government in 1970. 26 districts are to replace the 66 local authorities with a wider franchise but with reduced powers. The drawing up of new boundaries and the first new elections were postponed until November, 1972. It is thought that they will be postponed yet again.

#### Housing

40 per cent of Ulster's houses are over 80 years old. (British rate: 25 per cent.) 60 per cent are pre-war. 10.3 per cent are officially classified as 'overcrowded'. (British rate: 3.8 per cent).<sup>22</sup> 25 per cent have no toilets. 50 per cent have no baths or hot water and 20 per cent lack even a cold water tap.

This is the situation after a massive post-war housing development. Of the 440,000 dwellings in Northern Ireland, 175,800 have been built since the war. The responsibility for building and allocating these has, up to now, been that of the local council. In Fermanagh, of the 1,589 County Council houses built since the war to 1969, 1,021 went to Protestants and 568 to Catholic families, in a predominately Catholic area.<sup>24</sup> In 1967 Derry Council collected £½m in rates but did not build a single house.<sup>25</sup> Nationally there are high subsidies for owner-occupiers but no rate rebates for poor households, and no rent subsidies for the private tenant.<sup>26</sup> The Northern Ireland Housing Trust, which has been dismissed, did not 'accept applicants whose income is so low that the high rents of post-war property would be an unreasonable burden'.<sup>27</sup>

#### Education

'It is said that, in regard to youth, the Catholic Bishops are afraid. They are . . . they fear the circumstances that breed indifference and indiscipline'.

Archbishop of Dublin on educational integration in Northern Ireland, 1961.

April 1970: the Unionist Party annual conference carried a resolution urging the immediate integration of all schools. The Minister for Education (Capt. Long) described the idea as 'impracticable'.

Education has always been segregated in Northern Ireland. The 492 'Voluntary' schools are almost entirely Catholic. The Government's view has always been that private Catholic education 'could ultimately destroy Northern Ireland as a distinct political unity',<sup>28</sup> and therefore they have received only the teachers' salary and 65 per cent of their running costs. More financial assistance was available for those Catholic schools which allowed one third representation on their committees from the local education authorities ('two-and-four' schools). Since the passing of the 1947 Education Act the Catholic community has contributed over £20m (in 1968 currency) towards the erection and maintenance of their schools — besides contributing to Protestant schools out of their rates.<sup>29</sup> Only 27 per cent of the children at

grammar schools are Catholic. (The Catholic/Protestant school attendance ratio is 41:59).<sup>30</sup>

Unionism therefore spends the bulk of the £80m education budget on its state schools. Beside the usual categories of education the government runs 'grammar school preparatory departments' which receive grants from the Ministry, charge fees, and offer an 'alternative' to the primary schools.<sup>31</sup> An education bill of 1968 proposed to raise the grant of Voluntary Schools to 80 per cent of costs, providing they allowed 'two-and-four' committees and thereby became irreversibly 'maintained', ie they could not withdraw from the state influenced sector. The Catholic Church forced a compromise whereby any reversal in status meant a repayment of the 15 per cent extra that had been paid. The Act was inspired by a Catholic request for higher grants and many Voluntary Schools have been forced, since 1968, to transfer to 'maintained' status thereby receiving 80 per cent grants. Comprehensive education means less in Northern Ireland than it does in Britain. The most that has been accomplished is the building of segregated comprehensive schools next to each other, as in Craigavon.

Unsegregated university education is therefore significant in Ulster. 6,000 attend the Queens University of Belfast and another 2,000 study at the New University of Ulster at Coleraine (which includes Magee College at Londonderry). But teacher training is segregated between the state controlled Stranmillis College and St. Mary, and St. Josephs for Catholics. Prospective teachers have to canvas members of management committees and education authorities for posts, even in areas like Derry and Belfast.<sup>32</sup>

### Health

Since the war there has been a 'step by step' policy of maintaining general parity with Britain on the standard of social services. That this policy has been followed reluctantly was shown in 1956 when the Minister of Labour and National Insurance attempted to dispose family allowances so that smaller (Protestant) families benefitted and larger (Catholic) families were penalised. The Unionist government gave way under pressure from Westminster.

But regional 'variation' nevertheless exists. Northern Ireland's health is controlled by the Hospitals Authority and the General Health Services Board (for membership see above). The former is the largest public employer in Ulster, and of its 387 specialist doctors in 1967 only 31 were Catholics.<sup>33</sup> Unlike health boards in Britain the GHSB has power to control the admissions to vacancies in general medical practice, the work carried out by dental estimates committees, and the drug pricing bureaux. The members of the two authorities are unpaid and consist of 'laymen and representatives of relevant professions appointed by the Minister'.<sup>34</sup> And yet there is no Ministerial control over the way they carry out their duties or the method in which they allocate their funds.

There is nevertheless great contrast with social welfare in the Republic. The North spends twice as much per head of the

population, on combined social services, as the South.<sup>35</sup> Mr. Brennan, the Republic's Minister for Social Welfare, has admitted that parity with the North would cost the 26 counties at least another £50m a year.<sup>36</sup>

### The Unionist State

The central power of the Unionist Party is the Standing Committee of Ulster Unionism composed of 2 delegates from each of the 51 constituency associations, the Stormont and Westminster MP's, Senators, and official representatives from the Orange County Grand Lodges, the Apprentice Boys of Derry, the Ulster Unionist Labour Association, the Association of Loyal Orangewomen and other affiliated bodies. The vast majority are in fact members of the Orange Order or similar bodies. Because there is more than one Protestant religion (Presbyterianism, Church of Ireland etc.), the Order serves to maintain 'a warm and united spirit among Protestant brethren from all social classes'.<sup>37</sup> All members of the government are members of the Order.

Almost all judges in Northern Ireland are ex-Unionist politicians, appointed as a reward for their political service. All Crown solicitors are Protestants and the jury system is based on property ownership.<sup>38</sup>

The judiciary has at its disposal wide-ranging repressive legislation. Beside the infamous Special Powers Act (1922) there exists the Emergency Powers Act (1926) under which the Governor may proclaim a state of emergency 'whereafter the government can make whatever regulations it deems necessary'; and the Public Order Act (1951) which is based on the British 1936 Act but includes the power to arrest without warrant 'on reasonable suspicion'. The 1970 Amendment deals with 'the problems of counter-demonstration' while allowing the original demonstration to continue. The Flags and Emblems (Display) Act (1954) protects the Union Jack by making it an offence to interfere with its display. Any other emblem may be confiscated by the police 'if they apprehend that there may be a breach of the peace.' The prison population is rising. Not including internees (500 plus) the number in prison in Northern Ireland has doubled in the last four years to 800.<sup>39</sup>

The RUC has a force of 4,000 to implement the law, with a reserve of 700. The B Specials have been replaced with the Ulster Defence Regiment, a part-time body 'designed to play a support role to the army'.<sup>40</sup> Commanded by a regular army brigadier, well over half the force are ex-B Specials. Protestants have been joining at the rate of 200 a week and have reduced the original Catholic proportion from 16 per cent to 8 per cent.<sup>41</sup> There are 102,000 licensed guns in Ulster, almost all of them owned by Protestants. The 15,000 troops of the British Army in Northern Ireland are in 16 battalions, nine of which are stationed in Belfast.

### Financing Unionism

In 15 years the public subsidy from Westminster to the Unionist government has more than doubled. In the early

1960s it was approximately £45m. For 1971-2 it must have approached the figure of £130m however it is calculated (the exact amount is concealed). This figure includes £10m in social service and £30m in agricultural subsidies. Indications are that the figure has reached a peak.

In spite of this up to 1959 Northern Ireland was still running a large trade surplus with Britain (£45m) worth of exports over imports. The trade balance continues to rise with 75 per cent the value of imports, and 90 per cent the value of exports, with or via Britain. Trade with the Republic runs at a deficit however. In 1968 the North's exports totalled £19.9m while imports from the South totalled £42.9m.

### Unemployment and Resistance

Unionism has forced Catholics (approximately 40 per cent of the total population) to move from west to east, or to emigrate, in sufficient numbers to protect Protestant supremacy. Catholic resistance has produced a reversal in the trend and a challenge to its politics.

Emigration has usually offset the higher Catholic birth rate (giving Ulster the highest birth rate of any region in the UK). Between 1951 and 1961 51,000 Catholics and 41,000 Protestants emigrated. One third of the population accounted for over one half of the emigration, representing a 9 per cent loss for the Catholic community and a 4 per cent loss for the Protestants.<sup>42</sup> From 1961 to 1966 a total of 7,000 emigrated each year, a drop of 3,000 in the yearly average.<sup>43</sup> But in 1971 only 2,000 people emigrated from Northern Ireland.<sup>44</sup> The government estimate of a total population of 1,700,000 in 1981 will be a gross underestimation if this trend continues. It will still take at least 40 years before Catholic outnumber Protestants in Northern Ireland, but Unionism will not find it easy to reconcile its followers with a dramatically increasing Catholic growth rate. Furthermore, the mainly Catholic counties of Fermanagh and Tyrone have arrested their depopulation rate or reversed it.

The reason is not purely one of internal resistance to Unionism. Recession in the British economy and a lowering of the US immigration quota have assisted the trend. The result is a greater number of anti-Unionist unemployed. More and more of these are skilled. 'A few years ago only 16 per cent of male school-leavers had the chance of an apprenticeship. Today the figure is 40 per cent.'<sup>45</sup> Government training centres are putting 3,000 workers a year onto the market. Between 1964 and 1970 5,500 young people each year have sought work in Northern Ireland. It is assumed in the five year plan that this will rise to at least 6,000. The regional variation in unemployment is dramatic. The rate in Strabane, Newry, Enniskillen or Derry is at least three to four times greater than in Portadown, Lisburn, Larne or Belfast (8 per cent in January). In Belfast 70 per cent of unemployed juveniles are Catholics.

The cost to the state is rising. At least 24 firms, employing 6,000 are in 'serious financial trouble as a direct result of the IRA campaign'.<sup>46</sup> Since internment 70 firms have suffered damage, 10 have not resumed production, and over £12m

has been claimed in compensation for damaged property. Industry has had to pay for higher insurance and tighter security measures. The government has been recommended to set up a finance corporation to offer loans to companies faced with closure of contraction. Tourism was worth £28m p.a. until 'considerable damage' was sustained. The revenue has dropped by at least 20 per cent since 1968.<sup>47</sup> The Ministry of Development has declared that 'only' 24,500 households are on rate and rent strikes. The real figure is certainly higher. This means that 20 per cent of Ulster's total public housing, stock is affected, mainly concentrated in Newry, Strabane, Derry, Dungannon and Belfast. Through the Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act 1971 rent may be deducted from all 16 categories of state benefit. A new government department has had to be set up to work (overtime) on collecting the penalised benefit, which mainly hits the old, the poor, and the sick. Rent has been lost at the rate of £240,000 a month since internment began. Local administration in Catholic areas has almost entirely detached itself from Stormont although, as in Newry and Strabane, the state has 'taken over' local government. But the Stormont government is no longer recognised by anti-Unionists in Northern Ireland.

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The problems facing Irish revolutionaries revolve to a large extent around the theoretical and practical attitude to the Protestant (Orange) section of the working class. The problem is to integrate national demands, which presently divide the working class, into a programme for a Worker's Republic which can only be brought about—or maintained—by united working-class action. Unfortunately, this complexity of the Irish question is reflected in *confusion* of ideas on the republican and socialist Left.

Most prominent and distinct of the confusing ideas is the 'two nations' theory. It is gathering some credence among left-wingers who have despaired of accomplishing the task outlined above. It has been most developed by a reactionary Stalinist sect, the Irish Communist Organisation. This group moved within the course of one year from describing Paisleyites as fascists to seeing them as the organised expression of legitimate Protestant national demands. They see the Northern Protestants as a separate nationality, whose democratic right to remain a part of the United Kingdom must be recognised.

In adopting this position, the Irish Communist Organisation, and others who have since followed them, condemned themselves to inactivity. While state forces attacked the opponents of the Unionist regime, and the nationalist population in general, the advocates of the 'two nations' theory were so concerned with distancing themselves from supposed Catholic nationalist desires to oppress the Protestants, that they were unable to oppose the actual repression! Thus it was, that one month after the introduction of internment in August 1971, a leaflet was published by the 'Worker's Association for the Democratic Settlement of the National Conflict in Ireland', which omitted to mention internment or repression. Nor was there any mention of the role of the British Army or of British imperialism.

To most socialists this alone would condemn the 'two nations' theory and its advocates to irrelevance. But, as the polarisation between the Protestant and Catholic communities increased, and the possibilities of anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist propaganda among the Protestant working class appeared to decrease, the 'two nations' position has gathered support in radical circles. The argument has a certain plausibility; it appears to answer the main problems quite simply. In some cases, people have come to this position out of a genuine desire to find a distinct proletarian perspective, and a possibility of gaining access to the Protestant working class. There is little sign, however, that they are succeeding in the latter objective. 'Loyalism' identifies Communism with Catholicism.

Some would argue that to take the 'two nations' position would not necessarily mean that one is silent about military and political repression. It is clear that advocates of the 'two nations' have not worked out in full the practical conclusions of their theory. Nor will they necessarily come to the same conclusion. It seems to us, however, that to argue that the Protestants of North-East Ireland constitute a nation, whose national rights the Catholics aim to suppress, must inevitably

lead to a defence of the Orange state and support for the presence of British troops.

It is no accident that the theory was first elaborated by W F Monypenny, a reactionary journalist with *The Times* who, in 1912, gave his support to the anti-Home Rule movement with a series of articles, later published as a book, entitled *The Two Irish Nations*. Monypenny argued that, whether one liked it or not, there were two nations; 'there is no question of right or wrong, of reasonableness or unreasonableness, involved in the matter; it is a case of separate traditions, separate creeds, separate ideals—in a word, separate nationalities'. (p66) Other conservative politicians of the time who supported the Unionist cause in *opposing independence for any part of Ireland* also referred to the 'two peoples', or 'two nations', in Ireland. R S McNeill, later Lord Cushendun, and a minister of the first Unionist government, wrote in 1922 of 'Ulster's Stand for the Union', and propagated the 'two nations' idea there.

Such antecedents would appear overwhelming evidence for the incompatibility of this theory with socialism. But they have not deterred its contemporary proponents, who consider that all who oppose the partition of Ireland are tarred with the same 'Catholic nationalist' brush. To be compromised with that position, they say, is to be incapable of developing a proletarian-revolutionary strategy. In saying this, they assume that nationalism is absolutely incompatible with, indeed opposed to, socialism. There is, therefore, more at stake in this argument than the matter of determining whether or not the Protestants constitute a nation. The argument brings into focus the revolutionary, Marxist attitude to the national question.

## Marxism and the National Question

There are a number of possible ways of determining whether a group of people are a nation. But Marxists are interested in more than mere definitions. They are interested in the role social groups play in historical struggle. They are interested in ascertaining the working class interest in any particular struggle.

Advocates of the thesis that the Ulster Protestants are a nation have usually taken the definition given by Stalin in *The Bolsheviks and the National Question* (1913), and attempted to test the Protestants against each of the four criteria enumerated there. 'A nation is an historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture.' Awarding the Protestants a certain number of marks on each item, they conclude: Yes; the Protestants are a nation. Yes, their right to self-determination must be defended.

Nothing could have less to do with the Marxist method. The analysis is static and arbitrary.

It has been necessary for 'two nations' advocates to use this method, because the even more obvious one of asking: have the Protestants seen themselves as a nation? have they defined their opposition to Home Rule, etc, as a struggle for national rights? gives the wrong answers. Ulster Protestants have not

claimed to be a nationality. Thus we apparently have the phenomenon of a national movement without a national consciousness.

The reasons given by Unionists for opposing Home Rule, and now for opposing a united Ireland are various. They relate to religious and civil liberties and the need to defend Protestantism against the authoritarian Catholic Church; they relate to the 'inevitable economic ruin' which such a change would cause, and to their 'cherished position as citizens of the United Kingdom'. This is only evidence of something which any experience of the Northern Irish situation bears out: that the Protestants have a confused cultural and national identity. That fact is itself reflected in the various designations given them by 'two nations' advocates: 'British'; 'a distinct Irish nationality'; 'Ulster Protestant'; 'Northern Irish Protestant nationality'; etc.

Even assuming that any of these methods of discerning nationality were adequate, and that they led to the conclusion that the Protestants are a nation, would this mean that socialists and revolutionaries campaign for their right to national self-determination? *Not necessarily*. What determines the revolutionary attitude to such claims in the perspective of international, proletarian revolution, the relation of the national struggle to imperialism, and the effect of pursuing those national demands on the relations between classes within that nation, and on a world scale. What Lenin's writings on the subject teach us is that there are no universal principles, only the guidelines of the struggle for international socialism. 'The proletariat . . . values above all and places foremost the alliance of the proletarians of all nations, and assesses any national demand, any national separation, from the angle of the workers' class struggle.' (*Right of Nations to Self-Determination*).

Socialists support some national struggles; they do not support others. They may even change their attitude as events unfold. Hence, as the demands of the Sudeten Germans changed from being the demands of a minority within the framework of the Czechoslovak Republic to (effectively) demands to strengthen the hand of German fascists expansionism in that part of the world, the attitude of revolutionaries to their national demands changed. The Comintern of the 1920's supported the former; the anti-Stalinist revolutionaries of the 1930's opposed the latter.

There are progressive nationalisms and reactionary nationalisms. Even if we were to accept, for the sake of argument, that the Northern Protestants are a nationality, their 'national' demands are pro-imperialist. This does *not* mean that at every stage the Orange movement is in agreement with the designs of imperialism for Ireland; even less does it mean that the Orange movement is *steered* by the imperialists. The main thrust of the movement is to demand that Northern Ireland (previously the whole of Ireland) remain a part of the United Kingdom, thus strengthening the power of British imperialism in Ireland. Furthermore, the effect of pursuing the 'national' demands of the Ulster Protestants can only be to weld closer together the classes within that community.

The contrast with the Irish national (or republican) tradition

is obvious: to fight for the separation of Ireland from Britain, and for its unification, is to challenge the economic and political power of British imperialism in Ireland. As the national bourgeoisie proves itself unable—in the age of monopoly capitalism and permanent revolution—to lead that struggle for national independence and unity, the continuation of the fight leads to a heightening contradiction between the classes. However *critical* revolutionaries may be of many manifestations of the nationalist tradition, and however much they may take account of the objections of Protestants to a united Ireland, they determine their role in the struggle according to that fundamental historical difference.

The difference is of political relevance in so far as it relates to the over-riding factor determining economic and political development in Ireland, i.e. colonial and imperialist domination. There are some who, without drawing the full conclusions of 'two nations', tend to equate the two traditions, and who see little essential difference, say, between Protestants marching in support of internment, and Catholics demonstrating against discrimination. This simple argument, which relates the Orange and the Green to imperialism, and to the international power relations, gives the lie to them.

Even W F Monypenny partially recognised the difference outlined above when he wrote in passages which his contemporary successors do *not* quote: 'If among the Roman Catholics there is still something of the spirit of revolted slaves, there is among the Protestants something of the spirit of overthrown oppressors'. (p66) 'The Protestants have to bear the greater load of guilt for the crimes of the past'. (p67)

The key question of the relation to the centres of world power determines the revolutionary attitude to the legitimacy of the republican struggle. It is still true, however, that, in spite of its recent leftwards movement, the republican movement has not been able to formulate a consistently revolutionary attitude to the question of the Northern Protestants. This is *not* because that movement is guided by the Catholic nationalist desire to suppress the Protestants; it is an integral part of its failure to understand the class content of the anti-imperialist struggle, the role of the working class in that struggle, and the need for an independent, revolutionary party of the proletariat. In considering the question of the Protestant workers, as in analysing recent economic and political developments in both Irish states, we return again to the central problem of the Irish revolution at the present time; the struggle for socialist leadership of the anti-imperialist movement, and the building of a revolutionary party.

In summary: the protestants do not constitute a nation and even if they did revolutionaries are not automatically committed to support all strivings for national self-determination, and they are certainly not committed to take up a campaign for self-determination on behalf of every (statically) discernible nation. The right to self-determination is only meaningful in the context of national oppression. The oppression of the alleged Protestant 'nation' is, in the view of the 'two nations' advocates, only prospective. They completely over-estimate the capacity of the Irish national bourgeoisie, in power in

Dublin, to complete the national-bourgeois revolution. Protestant nationalism — if such there be — is reactionary. Some of the proponents of Protestant nationality have drawn the consequences quite unashamedly. They defend the 'democratic validity of the Northern Irish state'; they support the presence of the British Army in the Six Counties; they see the present leaders of the Unionist Party as men who have betrayed the Protestant nation, and Jack Lynch (Southern Prime Minister), as the material and political force he represents, as the 'main enemy' in the struggle for democracy and socialism in Ireland. To be quite consistent with the view of the Protestants as a (potentially) oppressed nation they should go further; they should oppose Paisley and Craig for their petit-bourgeois limitations, and work for proletarian leadership of the oppressed nationality; in any confrontation between the UVF (Ulster Volunteer Force—ultra-loyalist armed body) and the IRA, they should support the UVF; in any confrontation between the IRA and the British Army, they should support the British Army.

Advocates of the 'two nations' thesis shrink from openly adopting these positions for a number of reasons. The most obvious is that they are too evidently ridiculous. The other is that they seem unwilling, or unable, to think out the implications of their position. Having virtually discounted the role of colonialism and imperialism in arriving at the original position, this is hardly surprising. Their arguments on self-determination have very little to do with Lenin's statement: 'The right of nations to self-determination implies exclusively the right to independence in the political sense, the right to *free political separation* [my emphasis, BT] from the oppressor nation.'

### The Birth of Orangeism

Politically, the 'two nations' thesis has nothing to recommend it to revolutionaries. However, the proponents of the theory insist that the *facts* speak clearly for it; they represent the difference between those who say that there is only one nation in Ireland, and those who say there are two, as the difference between mythology and facts.

Nobody can pretend that the historical analysis is unproblematic. What any examination of the historical development of the two communities in the context of the overall relation between Ireland and Britain must explain is the continuing strength of the Orange-Unionist ideology among the Protestant masses. The 'two nations' theory *appears* to explain this, but on the basis of very dubious historical research, which largely consists of quoting Unionist propaganda as statement of fact.

Ever since the Plantation of Ulster in the seventeenth century the conflicts between planter (Protestant) and native (Catholic) have been carried out alongside contradictions within both communities, and across the communal divide, along class-lines. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the law, the social order, and economic relations (land-holding and possibilities of accumulation) favoured Protestants.

There were intense agrarian conflicts between Catholic and

Protestant peasants on each occasion of lease renewal. At the same time, there was militant action by Protestant tenants against Protestant landlords. The differences within the settler camp coincided to some extent with differences between Episcopalian and Dissenter: It was largely Presbyterian middle-class elements who organised in support of the French Revolution, and for an Irish national revolution, under the title of the United Irishmen. Wolfe Tone and his colleagues forged an ideology of *Irish* nationalism to unite 'Protestant, Catholic, and Dissenter'.

It was largely Anglicans (Episcopalians), on the other hand, who were recruited to the Orange Order, founded in 1795, soon after the United Irishmen. The Orange Order had the support, and active encouragement of landlords, but it did also have a popular base. It was not foisted on to the people from London. It did not need to be.

Although the number of Protestants involved in the United Irishmen was relatively small, it was clear after the 1798 Rebellion that the 'Protestant population could no longer be seen as merely an alien British garrison in Ireland — the equivalent of the French colons in Algeria. But neither could they be seen as a second and separate nation in Ireland since their most progressive section had deliberately identified themselves with, even created, the concept of revolutionary Irish nationalism.' (M. Farrell, *Northern Star* No. 5).

Advocates of the 'two nations' theory do not disagree with the view that in the late part of the 18th century there was developing in Ireland *one* nation, and one nationalism. However, they maintain that there was a *break* in the historical development following the Act of Union (1801), and, indeed, a *second break* in the 1880's. For all that was carried over from previous decades — land competition, the system of privileges, the Orange Order, its landlord support and popular base, and the strands of progressive Irish nationalism — it is maintained that two nations were formed, with conflicting interests.

What did happen following the enactment of the Union was that the uneven development of capitalism, for which the basis had been laid in 'Ulster Custom', the system of land-tenure peculiar to that region, was sharpened and accelerated. While the Southern industries were destroyed — as deliberate policy of the London government — the Northern textile (linen) and engineering (textile machinery, later ship-building) industries developed as an integral part of British industrial capitalism. There was no separate capital market from Britain, and the industry of North-East Ulster shared the outlets of the expanding British Empire. The Ulster bourgeoisie had some advantage over English counterparts; the competition for jobs between Catholics and Protestants enabled them to hold wages down and prevent combination. Wage-rates have been lower, and workers' organisations weaker in North-East Ulster than, for instance, in those areas with which Belfast formed an industrial-commercial triangle, Merseyside and Clydeside.

The 'two nations' advocates have insisted sufficiently on the *uneven* development of capitalism in Ireland, as the basis for Partition. They claim that Protestant and Catholic bourgeoisie

had 'no common economic history'. What is missing from their account is the *combined* character of the economic development. This is of especial political relevance when we see how the responses of the backward Southern (and Catholic) bourgeoisie to the new situation reinforced sectarianism between Northern workers, and helped maintain the high rate of exploitation.

### The Catholic Bourgeoisie

The rise of O'Connell's Catholic Emancipation movement, the Repeal movement, and Young Ireland, in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, is, for proponents of the 'two nations' position the evidence of a *new* nation and a *new* nationalism, more and more obviously defined by expansionist aims vis-a-vis Ulster. 'The ideology of Irish Catholic nationalism was forged by Thomas Davis in the 1840's. The movement which assimilated it was that developed by O'Connell in the Catholic Emancipation movement and continued in the Repeal agitation' (*Irish Communist*, April 1971). This is seen as 'a quite separate and distinct movement from 1798' (Eamonn O'Kane, in *Socialist Monthly*, August 1971). In the shift from one section of the bourgeoisie to another it was inevitable that the *precise ideological* expression of Irish national interests would change. The difference between the two sections of the bourgeoisie is, however, *not essentially one of religion*, but one of the relation to landed property and capital, one of disposal over the means of production. The Southern, Catholic bourgeoisie was a 'gombeen' middle-class, that is, mainly dependent on being able to service the landlord system. The 'two nations' view makes them into potential predator-imperialists.

O'Connell's rantings against the Orange Order certainly helped promote anti-Popery in the North. Catholic Emancipation itself, which removed the religious barriers against franchise, public services, etc., but raised the property qualifications for electors, encouraged resentment of lower class Protestants. After O'Connell, the movement against the Union, and, to a lesser extent, the movement for land reform became increasingly identified with Catholicism. But the most radical elements in the national movement always harked back to Wolfe Tone's message of the unity of Irishmen of all denominations. They were often bitterly *opposed* by the Catholic church. O'Connell was also vigorously anti-trade unions, as was the virulently anti-Catholic tendency in the Presbyterian Church. In spite of this, and in spite of different relations to the land problem, there was joint action by Catholic and Protestant peasants in the period 1850-52. Protestant tenants were later active in the Land League. Michael Davitt spoke at a Land League meeting in Co. Armagh in 1881 which was chaired by the master of the local Orange lodge. Some of the Tory landlords supported the Land Act of the same year which granted the 'three Fs' (fixity of tenure, fair rent, free sale), fearing that otherwise Ulster might follow Davitt and go nationalist. But joint action between Catholic and Protestant tenants was not sustained over a long period. Nor was any joint action between indus-

trial workers in the Belfast area. In many ways, the patterns of agrarian life were transferred to the fast-growing city; Catholics and Protestants lived in distinct areas. Serious rioting between Catholic and Protestant workers in Belfast began in the 1850's. It was often deliberately stirred up by preachers such as Henry Cooke and Hugh Hanna who were key figures in winning *popular* support for opposition to any reform measures which the aristocracy wanted to see defeated. The upper classes expressed their appreciation at Cooke's funeral; 154 carriages of gentry were reported present. (Owen Dudley Edwards, *Sins of our Fathers*, p78.) Cooke's ascendancy within the Presbyterian church had marked the total reversal of Presbyterian attitudes from the 1780's and 1790's.

It would be facile to represent the whole Orange movement, and the popular strength of anti-Catholicism as merely the result of manoeuvre by the landlords and the gentry. However, the control of the Orange movement never left their hands. Each reform measure which the more enlightened self-interest of the Whig bourgeoisie, and the pressure of the Irish MP's and the Irish land and national movement, dictated, and which appeared to challenge the privileged position of Protestants, afforded an opportunity to strengthen anti-Catholic and anti-national feeling among Protestants. Thus, the Disestablishment of the Anglican Church called forth warnings to Mr Gladstone from Rev Henry Henderson that he 'and his co-conspirators were driving the country into civil war.' (Speech of June 1869, quoted in nationalist pamphlet, *'The Orange Bogey'* from the *Daily Express*.)

The role of the Catholic clergy in nationalist politics gave preachers like Henderson material enough to instil bigotry into Protestants. After the Catholic hierarchy had played its part in ending Parnell's career, politics in Ireland became increasingly sectarian. The basis was well laid to arouse mass support among Protestants for a campaign against Home Rule.

To complicate the picture it should be pointed out that in 1871 a Protestant Home Rule Association was formed in Belfast, and that, in the same year, a resolution was passed at the Grand Orange Lodge in Dublin, 'that all statements and provisions in the objects, rules, and formularies of the Orange institution, which impose any obligation upon its members to maintain the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland, be expunged therefrom'. Some progressive strands did survive within the Protestant community from the late 18th century. There was conscious reference by some to that heritage.

### The Anti-National Movement

Above all, the Ulster bourgeoisie had no national aspirations. 'The Ulster Unionists never demanded an independent nation state or expressed any interest in it. Their slogan was "Ulster is British" and their flag was the Union Jack.' (M Farrell, p30.) The Ulster bourgeoisie was sometimes at odds with the landlords who were the main instigators of anti-Home Rule. But it benefitted from the strength of sectarian feeling among the workers. As D R O'C Lysaght has phrased it:

'By 1886, Ulster industrialism was, in its way, even more dependent on the Catholic Church than the gombeenmen of that religion.' (Paper to the Socialist Labour Alliance, 1971.) In 1886, when Gladstone's first Home Rule Bill closed Protestant ranks still more firmly, the Rev Henry Henderson wrote in the *Belfast Newsletter*: 'I believe myself that if we can stir up the religious feeling . . . we have won.' It was the emergence of a more vigorous bourgeoisie and small scale industry in the South which put Home Rule—and, indeed, more radical solutions—on the agenda. The interests of the Southern bourgeoisie, and more especially the petit-bourgeoisie, in acquiring protection for their enterprise were not compatible with those of the Ulster bourgeoisie. Thus the Ulster bourgeoisie lined up with the Tory-landlord opposition to Home Rule. The deliberate playing of 'the Orange card' and the activities of elements of the nationalist movement welded together the popular support. Carson, the Unionist leader, and his colleagues were able to represent their position as an opposition to 'tyranny and coercion; against condemnation to servitude; against deprivation of the right of citizens to an effective voice in the government of their country'. (Marquis of Londonderry, in *Against Home Rule*, London, 1912, p164.)

The two nations argument was also used occasionally to give 'substance' to a pseudo-democratic opposition to Home Rule. But Thomas Sinclair spelt out to British readers what he thought was characteristic of the Protestant 'people', i.e. their 'sympathy with the world mission of the British Empire in the interests of civil and religious freedom'. (*Against Home Rule*, p173)

It is quite absurd for the contemporary advocates of the 'two nations' position to argue that 'until 1886 the development of politics along clear class lines had been proceeding in Ulster'. (*Birth of Ulster Unionism*, p20) Any purely narrative history of sectarian riots in Belfast and in the northern countryside would refute this claim. It is precisely the tragedy of the Irish working class that it was *not* able to develop its own independent class politics during the period of Belfast's expansion. It was unable to overcome the insidious influence of religious sectarianism and resist manipulation by the exploiting classes. Trade unionism was slow to develop, and when there was a beginning of class solidarity in the first decade of the 20th century, it was broken 'first by Devlinism, then by Carsonism'. (*Sins of our Fathers*, p167) Joseph Devlin was the Nationalist MP for West Belfast, and a member of the Hibernians, which was dominated by clerical influences, and strongly anti-Trade Union. James Connolly wrote: 'Were it not for the Board of Erin [similar to the Hibernians, BT], the Orange Society would long since have ceased to exist. To Brother Devlin (Grand Master, AOH) [Ancient Order of Hibernians, BT], and not Brother Carson is mainly due the progress of the Covenanting Movement in Ulster.' (Quoted in T A Jackson, *Ireland Her Own*, p375). The 'Covenanting Movement' was the movement in support of the Ulster Covenant signed in 1912 by over 500,000 persons who played their support for all opposition to the Home Rule 'conspiracy', and swore to fight it by arms if necessary.

Connolly understood the responsibility of the Catholic bourgeoisie in fostering anti-Catholicism among the Protestant workers, but he did not understand *in practice* how to counteract the twin influences which fractured the working class. He often appears to have thought that it was sufficient to spell out to Protestant workers the extent of their exploitation for them to see through the deceptions of their bosses. But the key issue then, as it is today, was to confront the ideology and politics of Orangeism *ideologically* and *politically*. If there were few Dublin workers who fully understood Connolly's position on the 'cause of Ireland' and 'the cause of Labour', there were even fewer Belfast workers who understood it.

### The Sectarian Tragedy

In so far as they came to Socialist views, Protestant workers tended to take the position of William Walker, ILP organiser in Belfast, who argued that the issue of national independence was irrelevant, indeed contrary, to the struggle for socialism. Connolly debated with Walker vigorously; experience has proven him correct in thinking that the 'Walkerite' position does not allow workers who adopt it to *maintain* a struggle against the Orange bosses. Orangeism or Walkerism have not, however, wholly prevented Protestant workers from fighting sophisticated *economic* struggles.

On a number of occasions these have been fought in unity with Catholic workers. In 1907, for instance, the Dock Strike and police mutiny led to a total disruption of Belfast industry. Support came from both Catholic and Protestant working class districts. On 12th July ('Orange Day'), the Independent Orange Order held a collection for the strikes at its rally. The IOO, which was a breakaway from the main Orange body, combined resolute anti-Catholicism with class resentment at the treatment of fellow (Orange) workers. Lindsay Crawford, a leader of the IOO, did not exclude the possibility of joint activity with Catholic workers, on condition that 'the Irish Roman Catholic places the reasonable claims of his country before the impossible demands of his Church'. The IOO Manifesto stated that 'it is not too much to hope for that they [Protestant and Catholic, BT] will reconsider their position and in their common trials unite on a basis of nationality'. (Both quoted by Joseph Quigley in *Northern Star*, Autumn 1970) The solidarity of 1907 was quickly broken, as was the solidarity of 1919, and of 1932-34. The attempts to 'keep politics out' meant that they rebounded even more sharply. Following the strike in 1919 of 40,000 Northern workers in support of the British labour movement's demand for a 44-hour week, the events of the independence struggle in the South, depicted as acts of terror, offered the Unionists an easy opportunity to destroy any militant unity of workers. In May 1920 Unionist leaders called for a show of arms in the shipyards in Belfast. Not only the Catholics, but also the militants of the previous year's strike, were driven out. The patterns of communal politics were so routine that it often did not require active intervention from outside the working class to break solidarity. There were enough religious sec-

tarians in every sector of the Protestant working class, and there was no real political force in the working class movement which argued the primacy of the class struggle, and the working class's interest in defeating British imperialism in Ireland.

The formation of the Northern state, and the institutionalisation of Protestant privileges which were previously largely informal, has added a new plank to the arsenal of Unionist ideology: defence of the Constitution. The state embodies the notions of Protestant ascendancy. Founded on the power of the Unionist all-class alliance it could only have been fundamentally sectarian. For the advocates of the 'two nations', it is the legitimate expression of Protestant national aspirations, although the objective of the supposed national movement was never declared to be a separate state. Thus they can claim that a state built on Protestant ascendancy, discrimination, gerrymander, and repression used primarily against Catholics is only driven to such measures by the disruption activities of the Catholic bourgeoisie. It is 'the Catholic bourgeoisie which has been the cause of the 50 years of conflict in Northern Ireland'. (*Irish Communist*, April 1971) 'The Catholic bourgeoisie has been largely responsible for the antagonisms in the North.' (*Communist Comment*, 30th January 1971) This latter comment was made in uncritical support of statements by a Unionist government minister, Roy Bradford.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the behaviour of the Catholic Church, and of the nationalist bourgeoisie, has consistently nurtured and amplified anti-Catholicism among Northern Protestants. Since the partition settlement in 1921 the situation is unchanged. The control over education which the Catholic Church asserts both North and South has fed the Protestant fear of clerical domination of public and private life. The Southern state gives the Catholic Church a special status; as far as many Northern Protestants are concerned, the Twenty Six Counties are ruled not from Dublin, but from Maynooth (Catholic seminary). There is sufficient truth in this, and there has been enough encouragement given to the notion by Unionist propagandists of the Northern state to implant it as a stereotype response to any invitation to consider alternative political arrangements. Furthermore, the patronage and corruption among bourgeois Nationalists in the Six Counties has in many ways mirrored the patterns established by the Orange Unionist leaders.

Direct support from Britain, higher living standards, better social services, have served to strengthen the conviction of the Northern Protestant masses that their economic interests are best met in continuing Union with Britain. The 'step-by-step' extension of the provisions of the British Welfare State to the Six Counties have cushioned conflict between the communities in the North, but it has reinforced (Protestant) objections to any attempt to end the Border. The changing pattern of investment in Ireland since the 1950's, the changing role of monopoly capitalism in both parts of the country, has decreased the economic significance of the Border. It has made the Northern state an embarrassment and an anachronism to the British ruling class. Sections of the Northern

bourgeoisie have begun to accept ideas of a federal solution transitional to a united Ireland. But they must determine the pace, not the militant republicans.

Their 'constituency', — the Protestant petit-bourgeoisie and working class — has not adapted itself so easily to a changed situation. The petit-bourgeoisie threatened by the penetration of large-scale international capital has known no other response than retreat into extreme 'loyalism', lately compounded by UDI illusions — something only possible given unlikely British indifference. The Protestant working class, whose privileges are under attack, has largely responded in like (or more violent) manner.

Northern Ireland demonstrates the possibilities of contradiction between base and superstructure, the different rate of change of economic and ideological structures. Objective historical developments are working to undermine Orangeism; the traditional industries on which the power of the Ulster bourgeoisie was built are declining. The changes necessitate the integration of the Catholic middle-class into the Northern political structure. Yet the explosion of 1969, and subsequent events, have polarised attitudes along traditional, communal lines. It is this 'relative autonomy' of ideology, and the non-completion of the national revolution, which means that simple class-versus-class, first-principles programme offers less chance of intervention in the class struggle in Ireland than elsewhere. It is also this 'relative autonomy' of ideology which has misled certain people to deduce from the strength of loyalist consciousness, with certain traits of a national consciousness, the existence, and the legitimate rights, of a Protestant nation.

### The Only Road

The tasks of revolutionaries faced with this situation is to couple the principal and immediate objective of destruction of the Northern state with a comprehensive working class programme designed to weaken the hold of Orangeism on the Protestant working class and prepare the situation in which they become an active force in making the socialist revolution. *In isolation*, the movement to abolish Stormont can easily be seen by Protestant workers as an attack on them. They may well think — as the 'two nations' advocates would persuade them — that the Southern bourgeoisie wishes to annex the Northern territory and suppress civil and religious liberties. This is, of course, the very opposite of what the Southern bourgeoisie wants; they wish most to make their peace with British imperialism, and find a *modus vivendi* with the Unionists in an Ireland dominated by monopoly capitalism.

There is a sense in which the Southern bourgeoisie, and the state it has built, can be seen as the main enemy. It is not because they are militantly nationalist, but because they succeed in deluding people that they are. It is not because they are organising to annex the North, but because the reactionary Southern state, its economic backwardness, and the privileged position of the Catholic Church within it,

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reinforces all possible objections of Protestants to a Thirty-Two County Republic.

Therefore, the demand for the end of Stormont is part of an overall strategy for Thirty-Two Counties. Socialists must work for the dismantling of the apparatus of discrimination and repression in the North. In the perspective of building a force to overthrow both Irish states, they must demand total separation of Church and State, a free and comprehensive education system under control of pupils, parents, and teachers, a free and comprehensive health service, abortion and contraception on demand, etc. A series of demands which points clearly to the necessity of the Worker's Republic being *secular* has its important place in a revolutionary programme for Ireland today. Such demands are of immediate importance for building a revolutionary tendency among Catholic and Southern workers and it is of longer-term relevance in penetrating the Protestant section of the working class. There is little or no chance of breaching the barrier of Orangeism unless this kind of perspective is put forward, *and fought for*, among Catholic workers.

There are social democrats who insist that a united Ireland must be secular. Some of them simply mouth secularism without being able to carry out a thorough opposition to sectarianism and clericalism. But the real line of demarcation is the class content; anti-sectarian and anti-clerical positions only have their real weight in the context of an anti-capitalist perspective: to forge the working class unity which is a first guarantee of maintaining a Worker's Republic. The class struggle is the key to the national question. The class struggle is the key to the 'religious' question.

It is only in the context of a Worker's Republic, defending working-class power, that any question of cultural autonomy for Protestants could be considered. The primary task is the restoration of the Irish territory to the Irish people; this can only be achieved in the course of a proletarian revolution, fought for and sustained by a united working class. The Protestants are a part of the Irish nation, whose unity will be established in the only possible Irish revolution, the proletarian revolution.

'Whoever expects a "pure" social revolution will *never* live to see it.' (Lenin)

## Antonio Gramsci: Prison Notebooks

Lawrence and Wishart, £6.

The appearance in English of a large chunk of Gramsci's prison notebooks is a welcome event for all Marxists. It will enable many people to begin to come to terms with his ideas for the first time.

In a rich and varied selection of writings produced over a number of years there are far too many topics dealt with to be even touched upon in a brief review. I only intend to deal with two of the questions here.

The best of Gramsci's writings are those on the role of Marxist theory, its relationship to previous systems of ideas and the class struggle, and the way it develops. He deals with all these questions at greater length than any other substantial Marxist since Marx's own early writings. Yet more often than not his views have been misinterpreted in order to justify a position diametrically opposed to Gramsci's own.

Central to Gramsci's thought is the contention that a philosophy can only be understood and its importance judged when it is seen in relation to the notions held by a mass of people engaged in practical activity. He argues that everybody is a 'philosopher' in the sense that they all have a set of ideas in their heads. The specialist philosopher is an individual who concentrates on developing these ideas into a more or less coherent system.

But the ideas of ordinary people cannot be divorced from their actions. Ideas guide actions. And people change their ideas, when they change them, because they find that they no longer accord with active experiences.

A philosopher, then, is someone who succeeds in drawing out from the hodgepotch of ideas and notions that most people hold, a clear and coherent set of ideas that correspond to a particular set of practical activities. Insofar as he is successful in his task his philosophy becomes an 'ideology', a means of tying people's ideas, and therefore their activities, together in a particular way, whether to defend the existing social structure or in revolutionary opposition to it.

Gramsci has often been accused of being 'idealistic'. Some of his professed disciples have accepted this epithet, claiming that his 'idealism' complements the 'one sided materialism' that Marxist usually are said to support, producing a synthesis of the two, which is 'neither materialism nor idealism'. And some of Gramsci's own statements seem to bear out this interpretation (he objects to

talk of the 'material' world, although he himself is prone to talk about the 'real'). Yet in fact there is nothing idealistic about Gramsci's position. He stresses what Marx stressed, that man is not a passive product of the world around him, but actively intervenes to change it. This intervention, however, depends on his ideas — even although these ideas in turn derive from previous experiences. Men are not automatons and how their ideas change depends upon debate, reasoning and argument.

Pretended Marxists who try to deny this basic truth end up themselves by falling into an idealistic position. They wait around for the revolution to occur independently of real, concrete human intervention. Marxism, on the other hand, is thorough-going materialism: it attempts to grasp the material process by which new ideas develop — men's interaction with the world and each other, the new understanding that begins to develop on the basis of this, the contradiction between this and methods, argument, propaganda, organisation — by which this contradiction is resolved.

The link up between theory and practice, ideology and struggle, was central to Gramsci's thought. That is why, when he had to think up a synonym for Marxism (so as to fool his gaolers) he wrote of the 'philosophy of practice'.

Some people have tried to water down this striking position. Indeed, even in this excellent translation, 'practice' is rendered as 'praxis', although he uses it to mean the same as the common-or-garden English word (and, after all, in German even doctors have their 'praxis'.)

But Gramsci himself is absolutely unambiguous on the question. 'One may term "Byzantinism" or "scholasticism" the regressive tendency to treat so-called theoretical questions as if they had a value in themselves, independently of any specific practice. . . . In short the principle must always rule that ideas are not born of other ideas, philosophies of other philosophies: they are a continually renewed expression of real historical development. . . . Identity in concrete reality determined identity in thought, and not vice-versa. It can further be deduced that every truth, even if it is universal and even if it can be expressed by an abstract formula of a mathematical kind (for the sake of theoreticians) owes its effectiveness to its being expressed in the language appropriate to the specific concrete circumstances. If it cannot be expressed in specific terms, it is a Byzantine and scholastic abstraction, good only for phrase mongers to toy with) (p. 200).

Again, he writes that 'It is absurd to think of purely "objective" prediction. Anyone who makes a prediction has in fact a programme for whose victory he is working, and his prediction is precisely an element contributing to that victory. . . . Only the man who wills something strongly can identify the elements which are necessary for realisation of his will . . . predictions made by people who claim to be impartial . . . are full of idle speculation, trivial detail and elegant conjectures.'

Of course, this stress on the practical, 'pragmatic' relevance of revolutionary theory does not mean accepting the bourgeois philosophy of pragmatism which asserts that to be valid ideas have to be an expression of the immediate activities of men as they take place in society as it is at present organised. That would be to ignore the fact that two sorts of practical activities occur in our society — those that sustain the present form of organisation and those that oppose it, pointing towards its eventual overthrow. Instead pragmatism reduces all human activity to the level of the forms of activity natural to bourgeois society and, in effect, backs up that society. That is why Gramsci can write 'the individual' philosopher of the Italian or German variety is tied to "practice" in a mediated way, and there are often many rings on the chain of mediations. The pragmatist on the other hand wishes to tie himself immediately to practice. It would appear, however, that the Italian or German type of philosopher is more "practical" than the pragmatist who judges from immediate reality, often at the vulgar level, in that the German or the Italian has a higher aim, sets his sights higher and tends (if he tends in any direction) to raise the existing cultural level.'

One could sum up Gramsci's position succinctly with the formula 'the pragmatic element — yes; pragmatism — no.'

However, despite Gramsci's own opposition to any 'Byzantine', scholastic rendering of theory, he was unfortunately forced to use a style in the prison notebooks that deliberately avoided dealing explicitly with the real problems developing in the class struggle. There was no other way in which he could deceive his prison guards as to the real nature of his writings. Unfortunately, there are still those on the left able to be confused by this — usually because their own academic orientation makes them want to be confused — into believing that somehow Gramsci's 'philosophy of practice' can develop independently of the practical concerns of the revolutionary workers movement and that revolutionary theory cannot be expressed "in specific terms —

appropriate to specific concrete circumstances". Instead they deliberately cultivate the more obscure formulations to which Gramsci was forced to resort into a veritable mysticism which they parade under the name of 'developing Marxist theory'.

The second important question which is raised by this volume concerns Gramsci's treatment of the split in the international Communist movement from the mid-1920s onwards between revolutionary Marxism and Stalinism. This is not just a question of revolutionaries claiming Gramsci 'for our side'. His attitude towards the rising bureaucracy in the Soviet Union and the Comintern must reflect upon the significance of some of his later writings on the party and the state.

But it seems that Gramsci took a very confused position — possibly a consciously confused position — on the issues involved. For instance, at a whole number of points he accuses Trotsky of wanting to spread revolution regardless of the objective circumstances. He writes that 'Bronstein (ie Trotsky) in one way or another can be considered the political theorist of the war of frontal attack in a period in which it can only lead to defeats.' Yet Gramsci knew at the time of the march on Warsaw (1920) it was precisely Trotsky who urged the danger of an offensive action that ignored real possibilities, and, again, it was Trotsky who decisively backed up Lenin in opposing the ultra-left 'theory of the offensive' at the Third Congress of the Comintern. Again, while Gramsci was writing, it was Stalin's henchmen in the Comintern (including the Italian Party) who were urging the 'Third Period' policy of attempting instant revolution everywhere. What makes the mystery deeper is that Gramsci, when given a rare opportunity to express himself, came out in favour of the position of the minority in the Italian CP who had been expelled over precisely this issue.

Perhaps this mystery will never be fully solved. But there does seem the possibility that Gramsci was prepared to make considerable concessions to Stalinist regime inside Russia and the Comintern, while also trying to maintain a degree of intellectual independence. In this, of course, he was not alone. After all, the majority of Bolshevik leaders from 1917 tried, during the twenties and early thirties to be with both Stalin and with the traditions of October — until Stalin himself sent them to execution after 1936. And even Trotsky continued to believe that somehow that Stalin's apparatus of repression was a 'degenerated workers state.'

The difference between Trotsky

and Gramsci was that while holding this position, Trotsky never relented in his criticism of Stalinist totalitarianism. Gramsci at points almost seems to justify it, as when he writes that "the war of position (of which socialism in one country seems one version — CH) demands enormous sacrifices by infinite masses of people — so an unprecedented degree of hegemony is necessary." But that involves a view of the state which is light years away from the 'state which is not a state' of Lenin's '*State and the Revolution*' and from Gramsci's own writings of the 1918-1920 period.

However, none of these observations can detract from the value of this volume. Its editors are to be congratulated on both the translation and the footnotes (which are invaluable in guiding the reader through a veritable labyrinth of references and names in the text), although the introduction is a little weaker (the editors, for instance, seem to me to completely distort the meaning of one of Gramsci's pre-prison writings, *The Theses of Lyons*, because of their own lack of comprehension of the problem of the united front). But the only real objection anyone can make to the volume is its price. Let's hope a paperback edition appears soon.  
**Colin Humphreys.**

**Lenin's Moscow**  
Alfred Rosmer  
Pluto Press, £1.30.

For Maxists, a critical understanding of the history of their own movement is essential, and it is all too rare for us to have the opportunity of reading genuine first hand accounts. Too often the reviewer has to advise such things as 'ignore the cold-war introduction' or 'read this book for information, not author's opinions'.

With Alfred Rosmer, no such problem arises. Here is a book written not only *about* the struggle for workers government in Russia but from the living heart of that struggle; not only *about* the early years of the Third International, but from the experience of a genuine internationalist who made great sacrifices to reach the Soviet Union from France.

Rosmer did not do these things, and does not write about them, out of any feeling of fuzzy romanticism. He kept his eyes open and wrote, like Victor Serge, 'for the bottom drawer and for history'.

It was also Victor Serge, another eye witness of the aftermath of October, who remarked 'It is often said that "the germ of all Stalinism was in Bolshevism at its beginning". Well, I have no objection. Only Bolshevism also

contained many other germs — a mass of other germs — and those who lived through the enthusiasm of the first years of the victorious revolution ought not to forget it.' The crucial thing about both Rosmer and Serge is that their accounts enable us to study the control conditions (to pursue the analogy) under which the various germs began to flourish or decline.

In this connection it cannot be said that Alfred Rosmer gives complete satisfaction. On the question of the Kronstadt revolt, he offers rather a confused and thin chapter which only reflects rather than resolves the painful polarities of the confrontation. And as Ian Birchall observes in his excellent introduction, the section on the trade union debate established consciousness, the is rather disappointing when one remembers Rosmer's qualifications on the subject.

On the other hand, the chapter on the New Economic Policy is an excellent one, and Rosmer makes an ideal guide through the conference halls and the arriving delegates. In addition to which, the scope of the book is very much wider than the title suggests; Rosmer ranges freely across Europe to illustrate his points, and shows us the first tiny shoots of the Third International as they make their appearance. He has been criticised for not stressing the dangers of Russian domination sufficiently, and this is a valid point, but there is enough material provided for the reader to form his own opinion on the matter.

Similarly, the rise of Stalin and Zinoviev is described in a very committed and forthright fashion, but with ample evidence supplied. In particular, Rosmer stresses the importance of honest accounting. Lenin would never conceal a mistake, or try to deflect the responsibility for it, but Zinoviev's regime in the International made this practice assume the scale and proportions of an art. 'It was never the fault of the centre.' Readers of this book should pay special attention to the letter from Stalin to Brandler, which is described as far as I know for the first time on p. 209.

The final section, in which Rosmer attacks the argument of continuity between Lenin and Stalin, is essential reading for this recurrent debate. Written by one of the losers, it is painful to read as it must have been to write, but ultimately hopeful that the web of Stalinist falsification can be penetrated.

It was written in 1952, before the death of the tyrant, and few of us can appreciate the faith in reason and revolution that must have animated its author in that dark period. Today, as the Stalinist



regime is breaking up in Russia and internationally, and as its ideologues increasingly fail to reach the minds of workers, Rosmer's book should be on the shelf of every militant as much for what it represents as for the theoretical and historical ammunition which it contains.  
**Christopher Hitchens.**

### The Greening of America

Charles Reich.  
Penguin, 40p.

Charles Reich's book seems to have two aims. One is to analyse the development of American society from the pioneer days to what Reich describes as the modern corporate state, and the other is to propose, on the basis of this analysis, some perspective for radical social change. As this is the task that Marxists set themselves, such an attempt by a non-Marxist is most interesting. When the attempt has been a best-seller in the United States for some thirteen weeks, it is extremely important to understand how its arguments relate to Marxist analyses.

The development of American society, says Reich, can be characterised by three general levels of consciousness, which he designates I, II and III. Consciousness I was shown in the attitudes of the early Americans, in the importance they attached to individual enterprise and the self-made man. As American capitalism developed, the idea that individual hard work alone made the world go round (or the Protestant Ethic as sociologists used to call it) became more and more removed from the reality. By the 1930s, it was the gigantic private corporations rather than the hard working individual that determined the direction that the United States was to go in. Along with this development went poverty and financial crises, and the need to reform the system. The crucial reform programme was the New Deal, and from this came Consciousness II; a reformist consciousness, but a totalitarian one, committed to the Hobbesian view of the need to regulate men. The state created a vast number of public corporations, as it was felt that they would balance out the private ones and make reforms possible, but instead of balancing, the public and private corporations merged and consolidated their power.

Because it must adapt ordinary citizens to its own needs, the corporate state alienates them. It tries to transform them, through education and social institutions, so that they serve its interests, and thus estranges them from their own interests and from themselves. But the state machine is destroying itself, particularly in the false consciousness of affluence that it

sponsors. As the myth of affluence wears thin, so dissatisfaction grows. Because the power of the state lies in its control of men's consciousness, rather than in the force of arms, the state will lose control if the people's consciousness can be changed, and will be overthrown bloodlessly and simply. This is the revolution of consciousness. And men's consciousness is changing. There is developing, especially among young people, a new consciousness, Consciousness III, that is overcoming their alienation, rejecting the old values, ignoring the corporate state and so removing its control. Because its only control, that over consciousness, will disappear as Consciousness III spreads, the state will become impotent and wither away.

That, at any rate, is the argument, and it does contain some truths. Reich's historical treatment provides a fairly sound basis for understanding the development of American society in recent years, and the alienation that he describes certainly exists, although it is a pity he didn't discover it earlier. Large corporations do not create alienation, they merely intensify it. What Marxists will really want to question is his conclusions. As far as Reich is concerned, the revolution will be brought about simply by educating people along the lines of Consciousness III, and because state control depends only on its control of consciousness, this change in consciousness will bring about the collapse of the state.

State control does, of course, involve the control of consciousness, through ideology, education, and other social institutions, but this is only part of the *mechanics* of control, it is not the *basic*. The basis of state control is its economic dominance, not in itself, but as the executive arm of the ruling class. The central means of control is its dominance of the legal system, and in the last analysis in its capacity to exert physical force. This is not just rhetoric. Reich should have understood the importance of American legislation: on industrial relations, the significance of the brute force used by the state in the black areas, and the legal violence at Kent State University. He could then have seen that the state is not some abstract thought-controller, but is something very real that affects the lives of every American, every day, controlling schools, work, police, prisons, universities, and a thousand other real, material things.

It is quite incredible that a radical American can virtually ignore the importance of workers' struggles and of struggles in the black ghettos, because it is in these struggles that the majority of American people experience the

power of the state and come to understand its nature. The only workers' actions that Reich seriously considers are the negative ones of idleness and absenteeism. There is no talk of the positive struggles to gain control of the wages system, and for some, to gain control over their whole working environment. He can ignore all this, however, because of his false analysis of the power of the state, and his gross over-emphasis on consciousness. Marx's dictum that it is social being that determines social consciousness, rather than vice versa, provides us with the key to understanding this point. Only a small minority of young Americans will ever have the opportunity to drop out and reject conventional life-styles. For the great majority of Americans, there will be no choice but to work, and to battle against the state whenever it gets in the way. It is their social being as workers, as blacks, and as exploited consumers that will determine their social consciousness, and it is from this consciousness that a social revolution will develop in America.

*The Greening of America* is a sad but dangerous illusion. It is not the first of its kind, and neither will it be the last. **Michael Dillon**

The thought of Karl Marx; an introduction  
by David McLellan  
Papermac, £1.50

Is there a need for yet another collection of excerpts from Marx's writings? I should have thought not, especially as the present work is described in the preface as 'merely an introduction and thus necessarily superficial'. In this case, however, first impressions are misleading. For once an author is too modest in his claims. Dr McLellan has produced a most valuable handbook. It is comprehensive clear, thoroughly documented and concise. It will be of service not only to the academic reader, whom the publishers presumably have in mind, but to much wider circles.

The book is arranged in two parts. The first gives a chronological treatment, in eight chapters, covering the years 1837 to 1882. Each chapter is divided into three parts, a list of Marx's writings in the period, a biographical note summarising Marx's activities in that period and a bibliography listing the available English versions or translations of the writings and commentaries in English. The second part selects eight topic namely: Alienation, Historical Materialism, Labour, Class, The Party, The State, Revolution, Future Communist Society, and provides on each a selection of excerpts from Marx together with a commentary. The book also contains a chronological table and a select general bibliography with brief descriptive com-

ments, all confined to works in the English language. The excerpts are generally well chosen and include 'passages from some of the lesser known and untranslated writings of Marx'.

This then, is a book that is likely to become a standard text and if what follows is critical it is because McLellan's version of Marx's thought will become influential, indeed deserves to become influential, and yet it is, in some ways, a misleading version.

'Grey is all theory' wrote Marx following Goethe 'but green, green is the tree of life'. Dr McLellan is clearly a very learned man. So was Marx. But Marx was also a man of action when the opportunity offered itself. Though the facts of his activity are faithfully reproduced in the biographical sections they find little echo in the commentary. For Marx the theoretical work and the revolutionary movement were indissolubly connected, Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it'. Very little of the spirit of this aphorism appears in the book.

The much derided Whig historian Macaulay made a point of substance when he wrote that Gibbon's *Decline and fall of the Roman Empire* owed a good deal to Gibbon's experience as an MP 'though he never made a speech', and as an amateur soldier 'though he never saw a campaign'. A musty, academic smell rises from much of McLellan's commentary. It is a fair commentary, but it is the commentary of someone who is not vitally involved, of someone who stands above the struggle, of someone who, however scrupulous, is alien to the spirit of Marx's whole life and work. That such a person can produce the best available survey of Marx's thought, and it is undoubtedly the best available is a condemnation not so much of the author, but rather of the movement.

Some day a new Mehring or a new Riazanov will produce a book that will supersede Dr McLellan's work. Meanwhile we must use the material to hand. Buy this book and study it. **Fred Hall**

The Prisoner of Sex  
Norman Mailer  
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £2

This reply to Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* is disappointing. Mailer is obviously irritated at Millet's impertinence in criticising his work, and this arrogance prevents him from either refuting her criticism, or from analysing accurately the Women's Liberation Movement. Apart from the sections on Henry Miller and D H Lawrence, the book is - quite frankly - a bore.

The WL Movement is middle-class and it isn't surprising that much

debate should be around sexuality, psychology and culture, particularly in the US Socialists are told they often have an economist approach to WL, ignoring the question of sexuality. Mailer is determined to make up our deficiencies. He reads like a medical manual, so much attention is paid to conception, childbirth, the womb, the genitals. He accuses WL of being obsessed by the orgasm, but, by his neglect of every other aspect of the women question, it is clearly Mr Mailer who is dreadfully worried about orgasms.

He takes as his key to Women's Liberation, Valerie Solanis's manifesto for SCUM (of which she is the only member), advocating the destruction of the male sex. He admits this to be extreme, 'even extreme of the extreme. (It is) nonetheless a magnetic north for WL. . . . All their lines of intellectual magnetism flow from Adam's rib . . . and converge on Valerie Solanis and her manifesto'. The logic of this is that Mailer believes all WL supporters want to destroy the male sex. He goes on to imply that 'liberated' women would sooner have abortions than babies, no longer want loving personal relationships, and despise for their misuse of the female sex. He concludes that he will concede all women's demands 'to travel to the moon, write the great American novel, allow her husband to send her off to work . . . she could legislate, incarcerate and wear a uniform'. This is one of the oldest tricks in the world, and shows the sterility of Mailer's thinking. For centuries men, when faced with women's demands for respect and equality, have fallen back on the hackneyed accusation that women merely want to change places with men, to dominate instead of being dominated. But, wait, on p 58 Mailer gets us all excited with talk of 'class warfare' - but he lets us down again. One paragraph and the matter is dropped. He nowhere attempts to apply a class analysis to the tensions between men and women. On the contrary, he denies the political implications of WL. He quotes a socialist, Linda Phelps, ' . . . women will not respond to an appeal to live the kind of lives they see men living' and he admits 'She is probably right . . . women (and men as well) would never get anything fundamental without changing the economic system'. However, here we go again, 'But, beyond Linda Phelps is Valerie Solanis'. So that's the end of the socialist case.

A novelist is not necessarily a male chauvenist because he portrays women as destructive or degraded; he is recording life as many of us know it. But Mailer's failure as a self-styled revolutionary, is that he is content to describe the frailties and perversities of women - he accepts these as part of being a woman. He does not question, as the Women's Liberation Movement does, why women (and men) are

driven to behave the way they do. He has no vision of a society in which both men and women are free from their present struggle to fulfil predetermined roles. He envisages a nightmare future of artificial insemination and ovary transplants, whereas Women's Lib wants a society based on freedom, equality and love.

He has not judged the Movement, but only a few of its 'leaders'. (A leader is, to him, anyone who has written a best-seller on the subject). And he therefore misses a vital implication of WL: that the changes in society necessary to achieve the liberation of women mean, not the enslavement of man, but his liberation too. 'Norman Mailer on Women's Lib' says the jacket blurb - but it isn't. Mailer hasn't a clue about Women's Lib. The aim of this book is to put Kate Millett back in her place (at the kitchen sink perhaps?) VC

#### The Rediscovery of Black Nationalism

Theodore Draper  
Secker and Warburg, £2.10

The ideology of Black Nationalism dominates the American Black movement. It developed concurrent with the integrationist civil rights movement and picked up momentum as the civil rights movement faltered, unable as it was to break through the institutional racism of American capitalism. Theodore Draper examines the recent nationalist development from the vantage point of a current which has existed in America for over two centuries. His material helps clarify why Black nationalism has come to the forefront as the primary expression of the American Black movement.

The recent Black Nationalist upsurge comes in many forms, but all have the common theme that blacks can't integrate into American society as so many ethnic groups have done. Mobility into the middle class and large sections of the skilled working class is essentially closed.

Paradoxically, the Black Nationalist movement in the United States takes roots in the Northern urban black ghettos, and not in the South, where the largest number of blacks have historically been concentrated, and where the rural life of share-cropping and tenant farming afforded some tenuous sense of community. Instead the rank-and-file membership of the two most important mass nationalist organisations, the Garveyite 'Back to Africa' movement of the 1920s and the Black Muslims of the 1960s were composed largely of recent immigrants from the South to the Northern ghettos.

In 1913 Stalin, writing under the supervision of Lenin, defined the central core of a nation as a historically evolved stable community. Common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up

are characteristics of this central core.

The urban black ghettos in America are neither historically evolved or stable. They possess no separate history and owe their existence only to the industrial city for which they are designed as an auxiliary to production. The location of the black population in these ghettos represents a sharp discontinuity and not an evolution of the previous black communities in the South. Modern American capitalism has incorporated blacks into its very vitals; it has not permitted an external class structure within the black community to develop to any real extent. The class structure of the ghetto is integral to the society rather than existing as a controlled separate unit. Therefore the 'economic life' of the blacks in the United States at this time is external to the ghetto 'community'. The absence of such a stable community is the most obvious characteristic of urban black life. And it is in fact this absence which has led to the false consciousness of nationalism as a way of coping with the frustrations of urban ghetto existence, and the embedded racism of American capitalism.

Draper concludes correctly that there does not exist a 'black nation' or 'black colony' within the United States, although the situation of blacks may take on certain aspects of a national question. There is a need for black self-organisation, respect, identity, group self-consciousness and group combativity. This was the essence of the 'black power' movement. When black workers in America perceived their plight it was because they were 'black' and not in class terms. The black power movement has helped to strip away this layer and prepare the ground for black consciousness to merge into class consciousness as victories are won and confidence is built, although black self-awareness at certain levels will remain. Substituting black territoriality for this is the false path of nationalism.

Draper is left in a quandary, the quagmire of his own politics. Because he is committed to the maintenance of American capitalism, he is faced with the dilemma of how to achieve the delicate balance between black 'self-government' and the larger capitalist superstructure within which it must at the same time exist. He cites as encouraging signs the election of black officials in the black community, and the development of a black petty-bourgeoisie in 'Nairobi' California (formerly known as East Palo Alto, a city near Stanford with a nearly two-thirds black population).

In fact, there is no need for such tightrope walking. A Socialist analysis provides an alternative strategy to the 'separate but equal' community development which Draper envisions as the solution for American blacks. As long as one concentrates on the black ghettos as the

units for a solution one must come to an impasse. Fortunately history is bypassing this line of thinking. The focal point of the struggle is shifting to the factory, where the question of class-wide action is brought to the forefront.

The real strength of black Americans is the central role of black workers in the American economy. Therefore black workers must organise at the workplace. This does not mean that black workers should subordinate their just demands for an end to the racist practices of both employers and trade unions which have relegated them to the bottom rung of the ladder. But the strategy for liberation must be from a perspective of class-wide action.

As American capitalism sinks deeper into crisis and as the nonviability of a black nationalism approach becomes clearer, only a socialist strategy can point the way forward for black people. And only a socialist strategy can offer an alternative for both black and white Americans to the distinct possibility of fratricidal race war. Laurie Landy

#### Shipwreck of a generation Joseph Berger Harvill, £2.50

Under Stalin the Russian revolution was transformed into its opposite. A mass terror cast thousands upon thousands of men and women into prison. Men like Nikolay Yemelyanov, who had helped Lenin escape from Russia when Kerensky ordered his arrest in July 1917. Men like the Old Bolshevik metal worker Belousov who had been in Tsarist prisons, and found it difficult to remember to call the guard 'comrade' instead of 'Your Honour'.

These are just two of the many characters who appear in the memoirs of Joseph Berger, a veteran Communist and one of the founders of the Communist Party of Palestine, who spent the years from 1935 to 1956 in various Russian prisons and camps, and is one of the few to survive such an experience.

Though Berger himself now has a jaundiced view of revolutionary politics, he gives us some valuable insights into the life of the camps under Stalin. It is not the physical horror of the camps that were their dominant feature, though some grotesque features emerge. For example, each camp had its 'mortality quota'; as long as the death rate did not go above a certain figure, no-one worried, but when it rose too high, there was an investigation. Yet despite the abolition of privileges for political prisoners the camps, filled with oppositionists as well as purged loyalists, were hotbeds of the most sophisticated political discussion. How did Stalin bring it off? How did he break the spirit of militants like the Ivanovo district Party officials who in 1932 showed their solidarity with strikers by boycotting the

special party shops, wearing workers' clothes and standing in the food-queues? Not by force alone. No state machine, no police force is strong enough to do that. But because he was able to present himself as the heir to the October revolution, he won a victory in the battle of ideas. The Russian revolutionaries who had studied the failure of earlier revolutionaries saw that they were defeated by disunity and lack of ruthlessness. Stalin's monolithic ruthlessness could be made to seem the embodiment of revolutionary necessity. The cultivated arbitrariness and irrationality in the dispensing of 'justice' helped to encourage a sense of fatalism.

Berger shows how all this worked on the psychology of the prisoners. Almost all believed the regime to be basically just, and hence saw their own cases simply as 'mistakes' that would soon be corrected. When the war came they were almost all loyal, and actually believed Stalin would now turn to them for help. He tells the pathetic story of one prisoner who had so impressed on his wife the need to accept all that was done in the name of state security, that when he himself was arrested, he was unable to convince her of his innocence.

Berger's memoirs are often scrappy in form, and lack the illuminating power of Serge's *The Case of Comrade Tulayev* or Solzhenitsyn's *First Circle*. Nonetheless, they are a useful document to help the understanding of the greatest tragedy of this century. **Ian H Birchall**

**Workers Self Management in Algeria**  
IAN CLEGG  
Allen Lane, £3.25p

The current fashion for 'industrial democracy' has met with several echoes from the better sort of publishing house, and apart from the extortionate prices charged, this is a tendency to be welcomed. Ian Clegg's book is very much alive to the difficulties of his subject; he registers most of the problems of underdevelopment and bureaucratisation, as well as the relation between them, with great sensitivity. Which makes his lack of a unifying theoretical framework all the more noticeable and regrettable.

He has produced a very scholarly, but very clearly written account of the fate of workers in the Algerian revolution. Quite properly, the book opens with a chapter on the 'colonial prehistory' of the country where he describes very simply how the French empire deliberately scoured and devastated the entire region in order to ensure that the social bases of resistance would be eliminated. In itself, this description of imperial beastliness makes the book worth studying; the French occupation reduced the population by over one half between 1830 and 1852.

But the real meat of the book lies in its treatment of the workers councils during and after the defeat of the French in the early sixties. Clegg has amassed huge documentation on the practical workings of the workers committees, and he shows very clearly what the real effects of scarcity meant to these enterprises. True to form, the French took almost everything that was not nailed down, and their headlong retreat left the new republic almost empty of resources and skilled workers. As a result, the self management committees developed not as a conscious plan for workers power, but as a hasty and empirical response to chaos and the desertion of foreign management. Inevitably, therefore, they were deformed from the outset not just by war damage and dislocation, but by the haphazard and apologetic way in which they were cobbled together and 'tolerated' by the new regime. It was only a short step from this to the 1965 coup by Boumedienne and his technocratic elite.

So far so good: the old story of colonial revolution betrayed, this time with enough evidence provided to convince even a Pablo (whose pathetic intervention in these events is given the occasional oblique mention by Clegg). But the weakness of the work comes out in the chapter on 'Workers Councils: a Historical Perspective'. Clegg recognises the importance of external factors such as the size and maturity of the working class, the level of economic development and independence and so forth. The real difficulty arises when he addresses himself to the relationship between the workers council, the state, and the party. Thus we have the Kronstadt revolt and its suppression compared to Hungary in 1956 in a totally a-historical way and the idea advanced that the Yugoslav 'decentralisation' at factory level denotes a weakening of state power.

Generally speaking, Clegg ignores the conception of a mass workers party informed by Marxist theory. Naturally enough, this leads him into confusion. But he has written a highly intelligent and relevant book, which deserves the attention of all revolutionaries. It could well form the basis of a vitally needed discussion about the proletarian movement in the Third World, as well as the more obvious purpose which it may fulfil in illuminating the debate on workers control.  
**Christopher Hitchens**

**Peasant wars of the Twentieth Century**  
Eric R Wolff  
Faber and Faber, £3

This book is an 'account of peasant involvement in six cases of rebellion and revolution' in the 20th Century. These range from the Mexican and Russian to the Chinese Vietnamese Algerian and Cuban

revolutions. Each case history is comprehensive, though based entirely on secondary sources. Together they present the picture of a relatively stable world of rural communities in disintegration under the double pressure of expanding latifundia and the penetration of the world market; of the massive social and economic distortions engendered by the predominance of a single industry geared to the world market - Cuban sugar, Algerian wine, Vietnamese rubber - and controlled by foreign interests; and the emergence of new classes and new political parties linked to them. In the conclusion Wolf argues that the expansion of capitalism on a world scale, by everywhere undermining the traditional social forms and mechanisms which sheltered the peasantry from 'risks', drove it into a series of defensive reactions which fused into broader political movements based initially on 'marginal' groups such as 'rootless' intellectuals. More specifically, it was the 'middle' peasantry which suffered most from the encroachment of the market and the disruption of established pattern of landownership and power, and they and the 'free' peasants in areas remote from central control constituted the 'pivotal groupings for peasant uprisings'.

Wolf does not however argue for the latter thesis in detail; one or two citations chosen at random are usually considered enough to establish the case. But it is doubtful that a large 'middle peasantry' ever existed in pre-revolutionary Mexico. In the Russian case, Lenin saw the middle peasants as a class to be neutralised rather than firmly relied upon, and in Vietnam in 1945 the majority (61.5%) of the peasants were landless. Again, the distinction between poor and landless peasants is never clearly defined, while landless agricultural labourers are simply defined out of existence; 'a rural proletariat is not a peasantry'. Formally, no doubt, this is correct, but relations of production always present a historical complexity which simple schematic definitions inevitably avoid. Linked to this is a question Wolf nowhere considers. The massive expropriation of peasants throughout the 'third world' resulted in the formation of a class of landless producers forced into wage-labour relationships and thus forced to engage in forms of struggle more typical in some ways of the cities. Has this made the traditional image of the peasantry as a class defined by passivity, inertia, conservatism and self-centredness historically redundant?

If this question is not within the scope of his analysis, neither apparently is the problem of class-consciousness; at least the basic contrasts between peasants and workers are nowhere sharply defined. The conclusion of the book leaves you with the impression that the history of the Cuban and Chinese revolutions was primarily a matter of political and technical skills, and had nothing to do with the role of

the working class and its relationship to the state and economy. Stalinism is therefore seen simply as the effect of certain ideological positions (p 300). These criticisms may distort the emphasis of Wolf's book, but they at least point to the need for a far more rigorous marxist approach to the 'peasant question'. As it is, the vacuum is filled by bourgeois sociological theory on the one hand, and theoretical ambiguity on the other. **Jairus Banaji**

#### BOOKS RECEIVED

**Marxist Economic Theory**, Ernest Mandel, Merlin, £1.40 (paper)  
**The Economics of the Common Market**, Dennis Swann, (2nd edn), Penguin, 50p  
**The Prison Diary of Ho Chi Minh**, trans. Aileen Palmer, Bantam, 40p  
**Wage Regulation in Pre-Industrial England**, W E Minchington (ed), David & Charles, £4.20  
**White Society in Black Africa**, Rita Cruise O'Brien, Faber, £3.50  
**The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy**, Hoffman/Fleron (eds), Butterworths, £5.50  
**The Theory of the Novel**, Georg Lukacs, Merlin, £2.25  
**Walking the Indian Streets**, Ved Mehta, Weidenfeld, £1.75  
**Company Boards**, Barbara Shenfield, Allen & Unwin, £2.75  
**Untimely Thoughts**, Maxim Gorky, Garnstone Press, 90p  
**The God of the Labyrinth**, Colin Wilson, Mayflower, 40p  
**The Great Conspiracy Trial**, Jason Epstein, Faber, £3.75  
**Les Voies de la Revolution Russe**, Karl Radek, EDI, Paris  
**Les Superstructures Ideologiques dans la Conception Materialiste de l'Histoire**, Franz Jakubowsky, EDI, Paris

