

# **SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY**

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**15p**

ERRATA

On Page 2: Paragraph 2 should be "Paragraph 6".

On line 17 read "Marx had pointed out that man made his own history, but" etc.

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Truly all means of printing will be the common property of all, and if any opposition party, any new philosophy doctrine, science or even hare-brained scheme has enough followers to pay society for the labour of printing its publications, society will have no more right nor desire to refuse the service than a government of the present day has to refuse the use of its libraries to the political enemies who desire to use those sources of knowledge to its undoing. It will be as possible to hire a printing machine from the community as it will be to hire a hall. Under socialism the will of the people will be supreme, all officials will be elected from below and hold their position solely during good behaviour, and as the interests of private property, which according to St Clement are the sole origin of contention among men, will no longer exist there will be little use of law making machinery, and no means whereby officialdom can corrupt the people

JAMES CONNOLLY: LABOUR, NATIONALITY AND RELIGION

## Introduction

The ideas of Socialism have fired millions to fight for freedom, yet in the advanced capitalist countries it is the charge that Socialism denies freedom that is most effective in confusing and hamstringing the Labour Movement.

No serious Socialist can now ignore Marx's analysis of society in formulating any programme for advance. This is not to erect Marxism into a religion. No psychologist could ignore the discoveries of Freud, no physicist the discoveries of Newton and Einstein, no biologist the work of Darwin.

The confusion on the question of freedom and democracy largely arises because the societies in which socialist revolutions have won have been semi-feudal and the carry overs from the prerevolutionary societies have become identified with socialism. Lenin and the leadership of the 1917 revolution tried to transcend the limitations of the society in which they operated. Marx had pointed had made his own history, not in circumstances chosen by himself.

Stalin, instead of fighting against the authoritarian legacy of Tsarism, used it to crush all opposition. The ambiguous attitude of the Communist movement, up to recently, to the question of freedom stems from this period. The varieties of distortions of Marxism which are at present operating on the left in Ireland, whether Stalinist, Trotskyist or Maoist, all have in common a complete divorcement from Irish society and Irish history.

This explains their weakness in the face of the general attack on democracy from the right. Its difficult effectively to defend civil liberties when the alternative society you propose would deny them also.

In fact it is in this way that Marx saw his own work on capitalist society. In his 1867 preface to "Capital" (Vol. 1) Marx wrote:

"To prevent possible misunderstanding, a word. I paint the capitalist and the landlord in no sense

couleur de rose. But here individuals are dealt with only insofar as they are personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class relations and class interests. My standpoint from which the evolution of the economic formation of society is viewed, as a process of natural history, can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he socially remains, however much he may subjectively raise himself above them."

Marx's conclusions led to his call to action to change society. Engels described their approach (in Anti Duhring) as being the application of the scientific approach to society and reality.

## Democracy under Capitalism

The smashing of feudalism was not just the destruction of an economic order. In destroying it the capitalist revolution raised questions which went beyond its immediate objectives. "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity", are scarcely the slogans of the profit seeking society which emerged from the heroism of the stormers of the Bastille.

The independence movement in Ireland can be dated from the French Revolution. 1798 was the expression of the same radical motive force which was creating nations all over Europe. The rise of the nation state meant not only centralisation but the destruction of the petty tyrannies and principalities. In Ireland the conception of nationhood assumed an ever more revolutionary significance since it meant not only the breaking of a feudal form of society but the overthrow of an alien domination. Many areas of Europe had suffered from the domination of various "empires" but none had been subjected to quite the same colonial exploitation as had Ireland.

The United Irishmen were a profoundly democratic movement. James Connolly in his "Labour in Irish History" drew attention to the almost socialistic ideas which some of its leaders expressed. In the crucible of a double oppression the hammer of the future was forged.

In spite of continued colonial oppression the democratic advances of the people of Great Britain were reflected in Ireland also. Although he had grave shortcomings Daniel O'Connell raised the first really mass democratic movement in Ireland. By democratic is meant not just a

movement involving the mass of the people but one in which the desires of that mass find expression.

O'Connell backed away from the implications of what he had helped to raise. He opposed the trade unions and the movement for independence which was beginning to reemerge.

The rewriters of history would have us believe that the struggle for freedom from Britain was sectarianly Catholic and anti-democratic. In fact the struggle for freedom and the struggle for democracy went hand in hand. The Catholic Hierarchy opposed every blow for freedom, as, following the example of the Continental Church, they opposed every blow struck for democracy.

The conservative forces in Ireland opposed the United Irishmen, the Young Irelanders, the Land League, Parnell, the strikers of 1913 and the revolutionaries of 1916. They recognised all these movements as being profoundly democratic, whether socially or politically.

The important point to recognise is that whatever democratic rights were won, whether in Ireland or elsewhere, were won against the opposition of the ruling class. The conception of bourgeois democracy, as if it were something granted by the upper classes is profoundly wrong. The fight for freedom of speech and publication, freedom of organisation and of artistic creation has been waged by the democratic and socialist movements. They are rights which have been won, not gifts granted by a thankful ruling class.

### Stalinism

The main enemy of democracy is class society. When the capitalist class feels its property rights threatened it ruthlessly crushes not only freedom of speech but all the organisations of the people, with first of all the unions. Germany, Italy, Spain, Chile are only some examples of this

After the Russian Revolution the Bolsheviks hoped that a new society could be created without the oppressive features of class society such as prisons and the death penalty. The measures which were taken were defensive. The imperialist powers tried to overthrow the Soviet State by subversion, invasion and the support of White Russians like Denikin and Kornilov. Lenin always emphasised that these measures were of a temporary nature and as soon as there was an easing of

the situation the death penalty was abolished.

After the Revolution Lenin had a controversy with Rosa Luxemburg on the question of freedom. She attacked among other things the fact that members of the former ruling class in the Soviet Union had been deprived of the right to vote. In his reply Lenin made it clear that this step had only been taken because of the conditions in Russia and was by no means an essential part of the creation of a socialist state. Before the Revolution in discussing whether priests should be allowed to join the Social Democratic Party (of which the Bolsheviks were a part) Lenin said that this would be natural in Germany but not in Russia where the Church was an arm of the State.

Lenin was basically concerned with how to apply Marxism to the situation in Russia. When he wrote of the international features of the Russian Revolution he was not at all referring to the suppression of opposition as an essential feature. It is probably true however that Lenin underestimated the use which could be made of an apparatus originally set up to fight counter revolutionary terror. He continually warned against the dangers of bureaucracy which had been inherited from the Tsarist State. He actually proposed that there should be no such thing as a permanent civil service but that every worker should be a civil servant for a period. At the end of his life he became extremely alarmed at trends in the Bolshevik Party. His alarm was not confined to Stalin's "rudeness" but to the way in which minority nations within the Soviet Union were being treated,

In evaluating the period after Lenin it is necessary to distinguish between the fantastic achievements and the equally fantastic distortions and horrors. It is mainly from this period that the anti-democratic tendencies which brought such suffering to the Soviet people and wreaked havoc in the international socialist movement emerged.

The policy of building socialism in one country was the only possible policy at the time. The revolution on a European and then a world wide scale which even Lenin had thought would follow 1917 did not materialise. In this aspect Stalin was correct. But Stalin was only one factor in the building of the Soviet State. Stalin's positive contribution was more than balanced by the destructive and negative features.

Stalin used the state machine to destroy the very people who were building the Soviet State. The entire living leadership of the Bolshevik Party in 1917 was wiped out. In wave after wave of purges the most outstanding leaders were systematically destroyed. After the "Congress of the Victors" in 1934, that is the Congress which celebrated the wiping out of all "internal enemies", 1,108 of the 1,966 delegates were executed in a few years.

This took place at a time when "the most democratic constitution in the world" had been adopted, guaranteeing (Article 125) "freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and meetings, freedom of street processions and demonstrations".

This exemplifies one of the worst heritages of Stalinism, the complete divorce between what is said and what is real. Even during the Five Year Plans, where tremendous results were achieved, lies were told to conceal any defects and to exaggerate successes. The best short account of the economic background from the '30s to the '50s is "An Economic History of the U.S.S.R" by Alec Nove (Pelican Books) .

Since any deficiencies or mistakes were always attributed to sabotage (as Stalin was always right no other explanation was possible) a spy mania developed, not only in the Soviet Union but throughout the world Communist movement. This reached its height in the 1950s when, after the frame up trials of leading Communists in Eastern Europe it was accepted in most Communist Parties that there must be secret police in the leadership. At that time too, the man who had been at the head of the Soviet Union's economic recovery, Voznesensky, was executed. The harm which Stalin did to the world Socialist movement is incalculable.

In the Soviet Union the exposure of Stalin's crimes by Nikita Krushchev at the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U. (in a secret speech) and at the 22nd Congress where not only Krushchev but Brezhnev and others openly denounced him is now being buried. Now the history of the last war has been rewritten to eliminate the facts about the execution of outstanding military commanders like Tuchachevsky, which left the Soviet Army in a dangerous situation at the beginning of the Second World War. It was in spite of such

happenings that the Soviet people defeated the Nazis.

Nikita Krushchev is almost unknown to the younger Leftists, except as a Chinese term of abuse, yet the present economic strength of the Soviet Union owes a tremendous amount to the way in which he broke down the dogmas of the Stalin period and encouraged the development of creative ideas. The period after the 20th Congress saw a spectacular development in all aspects of life in the Soviet Union.

John Foster Dulles, the U.S. Secretary of State who led the cold war forces, described Krushchev as more dangerous than Stalin because he made Stalinism seem attractive.

During the period when Krushchev was General Secretary all political prisoners were released and democracy began to develop by leaps and bounds. Books critical of Soviet life, such as Dudintsev's "Not by Bread Alone", Ilya Ehrenburg's "The Thaw" and Solzhenitsyn's "One Day in The Life of Ivan Denisovitch" were published.

However, as the widow of the poet Osip Mendelstam (who died in jail) put it, "Krushchev was pushing on a coiled spring". This spring was the apparatus which Stalin had left behind and which was more and more threatened by the open investigation of all aspects of history and society.

After a discussion with Brezhnev in the Crimea, the Italian Communist leader Togliatti, wrote his famous memorandum in which he warned of the slowing down of the process of democratisation in the Soviet Union.

There has not been a return to the mass terror of the Stalin days in the Soviet Union, though there has been repression of intellectuals, but there is a noticeable return to some of its ideological conceptions. The Chinese leadership has also used Stalin as an ideological crutch. In the '60s the C.P.S.U. officially declared that the "dictatorship of the proletariat" was at an end in the Soviet Union since there were no longer hostile classes. For this they were attacked by the Chinese Communist Party who, when challenged to name the hostile classes, could only come up with "layabouts, criminal elements" and other peripheral groups.

The fact is that the phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat" originally meant simply that the majority would be in control of society instead of a small class who, even in the most democratic capitalist states, exercise a dictatorship over the lives of the people. As used by those who follow Stalin's ideas it means the suppression of all views different from those of the current leadership of the party in power.

The debate on the question of Socialism, freedom and democracy has not been confined to the Communist Parties of the capitalist world.

The Cubans in formulating their new constitution have been trying to devise a form of state which will guarantee control by the people and not the Communist Party. In a speech reported in the English language edition of "Granma" (Havana, Sept 8th 1974) Raul Castro stated:

"You must also bear in mind that directives, resolutions and decisions of the Party have no legally binding or administrative power but are only binding for party organisations and agencies and their membership, and even then, if any member does not carry them out he may only be sanctioned politically and even be expelled from the Party. But the Party has not coercive apparatus to force its members to follow Party discipline.....The Party can and must make suggestions, proposals, recommendations, it must counsel and guide the organs of people's power but must never 'hand down decisions', never impose decisions, never undertake any manner of reprisal as regards an organ of people's power or members of such organs who do not agree with or will not carry out some- the Party has suggested, proposed, recommended and set down as a guideline .....the Party must never take over purely administrative procedures which do not fall within its jurisdiction. Undue interference will make its relations with people's power organs ineffective. The Party must lead organs of people's power without becoming their godfather".

This sums up the whole theme of the speech, which is that the role of the State and the Communist Party are separate. The State represents all the people and the Communist Party must win its right to be accepted as the leadership.

In both the Soviet Union and China the organs of the State have become rubber stamps for Communist Party decisions. This has been formalised in the treatment of the leading figures in both Parties as head of State instead of the President or the Prime Minister. This is the negation of the Marxist conception of a State representing the people. Where the Party is substituted for the State democracy is put into a straightjacket.

It has been necessary to go over this ground as it is impossible to discuss Socialism apart from its practice. After the French Revolution many things happened which its supporters abroad did not agree with. Some changed their political views and became opponents of the Revolution. Others continued to see it as a historic breakthrough in the struggle for freedom while disagreeing with the anti-democratic tendencies which emerged under Napoleon.

The Soviet Revolution was the greatest breakthrough in the struggle for freedom in the beginning of the century as the Chinese Revolution was the greatest after the Second World War. Without these the Cuban, Yugoslav and Vietnamese revolutions would have been impossible and the independence struggles of the colonial peoples much weakened. But an uncritical approach to the distortions which both those revolutions underwent means perpetuating those distortions.

Stalin substituted a pseudo-religion, with himself as Pope, for Marxism. This has also happened in China, but without the Concentration camp horrors of the Stalin period. In fact, while paying lip-service to Stalin the Chinese Communist Party has adopted a radically different approach to the building of socialism. Instead of building industry on the exploitation of and expropriation of the peasants, as Stalin did, they are developing both industry and agriculture together. The policies of Stalin undoubtedly left a lasting legacy with which his successors

have found it extremely difficult to cope. Other socialist states are now proceeding on the basis that the interests of the peasantry and the working class must not be allowed to conflict.

At one time it was accepted in the Socialist movement that national conflicts between states would end with the establishment of Socialism. Some people actually argued at the time that the Yugoslavs asserted their independence that the whole thing was a tactical move agreed between Stalin and Tito in order to catch the imperialists off guard. Later the same people swallowed the evidence at the trial of the Hungarian Communist Rajk that he had meetings with Tito and representatives of the U.S. intelligence agencies to plot the overthrow of the Soviet Union.

Rakosi who was General Secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party at the time of the trial, later publicly admitted that it was a frame up. It is necessary to go into these events as precisely the same tactics, in a modified form were used against Dubcek in Czechoslovakia in 1968. Here are two pieces of evidence from the official transcript of the Rajk trial. Rajk:

"After my first meeting with Rankovich (Yugoslav leader) my contact with Brankov (another accused) took on a new character...I had hardly returned when one of these directives passed on Brankov said that I should make use of all means to place in leading positions in the police and army reliable elements suitable to our policy, that is nationalists, chauvinists and anti - Soviet people."

Brankov stated that Tito and Rajk had conspired to create incidents on the Hungarian-Yugoslave border to give a pretext for Yugoslav intervention. He continued:

"Rajk's task was to organise the attempts on the lives of Rakosi, Fanhas and Geró...Rankovich sent two U.D.B. agents from Yugoslavia as experts, with experience in political murder."

Nikita Krushchev exposed the terror based on hysteria and lies. Yet in the Left-Wing movement today it is still possible to find people who will excuse this whole period on the basis of "historical inevitability".

The best answer to this thesis is to be found in the books of the Hungarian writer Josef Lengyel, who was awarded Hungary's high literary award, the Kossuth Prize in 1963. Lengyel was the editor of the Communist Party paper during the short-lived Bela Kun Socialist Government in 1919. When it was overthrown by a counter-revolution he escaped to the Soviet Union along with Kun. He along with most of the foreign Communists in the Soviet Union was arrested during one of the purges. Kun was shot. Lengyel survived eighteen years in the concentration camps. He makes the point in his books quite clearly that those people arrested under Stalin were the same people who were arrested under Hitler. He quotes the phrase used: "If he has raised his hand against authority once may he not do so again". His descriptions of camp life are far worse than anything portrayed by Solzhenitsyn who has now become a hysterical right wing apologist, due to his seeing all socialism in terms of his own ghastly experiences.

It is an astonishing fact that some socialists in Ireland seem to have forgotten the reality of that period and can still swallow the idea that it was all "inevitable". On the other hand the right wing accepts the same conclusion. They say that such things are the inevitable result of a Socialist form of society. They also point to the fact that writers, musicians and film makers are silenced in the Soviet Union and China if they do not produce works which are propaganda for the leadership.

"Socialist realism" was made official doctrine in the Soviet Union only in 1934. It is a theory which has produced nothing of value. The writers and musicians who were denounced in the Soviet Union as "anti people" at periods in the '30s and '50s are now published and performed in the Soviet Union while contemporary writers, painters and film makers are once again suffering a censorship which is stifling creative life. "Socialist realism" has, in China, turned a tradition of art which is one of the glories of humanity into crude propaganda presented in the style of 19th century Victorianism.

In some Socialist countries, such as Poland, there is a different attitude and in painting, for instance, there is no interference on questions of style.

The aims of socialism have always been to create a secure

economic base for the people as a stepping stone to opening up vast new possibilities in the realms of culture.

An extension of the freedom of the artist, not its curtailment, is the way to enriching the life of the whole people. The argument that this means allowing "racism", "fascism" and "pornography" is ludicrous. It is the job of the courts to deal with such things, as is already done in some of the advanced countries of the capitalist world such as Britain.

At certain periods individuals can decisively influence the shape of society. Stalin succeeded in imposing a one man rule because of the state of siege in which the Soviet Union found itself, but also because of the historical background of Tsarism and the type of semi-feudal state machine out of which the Soviet State grew. Stalin was not just a tyrant, he was also a victim of circumstance. A Lenin could possibly have rejected the heritage of the past. Stalin both used and was overwhelmed by it. For the international Socialist movement he was a disaster. The existence of the Socialist World, with all its defects, is still the basis on which other peoples can build. The legacies of the feudal past must be rejected but it is impossible to ignore the positive lessons to be learned.

Ireland has passed through a partly completed struggle for independence and is now in the second wave of a struggle for democratic rights.

It is against this background that a Socialist policy for progress in the present state of crisis of the capitalist economy must be examined.

### Connolly

The name of James Connolly has been so over-used by all sections of the Labour and Republican movements that it is difficult to get people to look at his ideas afresh, free from all kinds of distortions and accretions. I do not intend here to go in detail into his ideas, having already done so in the introductions to his works published by New Books and in an article in the 1975 (No. 2) issue of the "Irish Socialist Review".

Some general conclusions from his ideas are necessary before attempting to deal with current problems.

The first is that Connolly, in common with all the Marxists of his time would have been astonished at the idea that socialism meant the suppression of opposing ideas. He answers this very point in 'Labour, Nationality and Religion' where he also outlines the ways in which channels for the expressing of ideas could be organised under socialism.

Secondly Connolly developed the idea of an alliance of all non-exploiting classes, under the leadership of the working class, as the type of movement which would end exploitation whether in its imperialist or native capitalist form. This is a lesson which even many of the Left of the Labour Movement have forgotten. It is argued that because a majority of the population can now be classed as workers that the winning of the support of the substantial part of the population which makes up small farmers and small businessmen is unnecessary. Brought to its logical conclusion this means trying to establish socialism in opposition to the other non-exploiting classes. This is not only profoundly undemocratic. It means handing over a ready made reserve army to the exploiting classes.

Thirdly, and this is in many ways the most important point, Connolly saw the link between the development of the democratic and socialist movements and the struggle against the huge monopolies which have come to completely dominate life in the capitalist world. His conception of imperialism was not a sentimental, anti-British nationalist one. He saw its essentially economic content. This is the meaning of his famous phrase that the English upper class would still rule Ireland through a thousand golden strings, even if the British army left, unless there was also a social transformation.

### Democracy in Ireland

The statements of Dr Newman, Bishop of Limerick, in attacking Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien's conception of a secular state, are a resurrection of the anti-democratic ideas which dominated life in the South from the '20s until the middle '60s. The form of Parliamentary democracy existed with theoretical liberty for all opinions, but in



fact an extra-Parliamentary combination of pro-imperialist obscurantist religious and right wing nationalist forces, with their offshoots, saw to it that no dissenting voices were raised above a whisper.

That atmosphere is often attributed to the fact that Ireland was a peasant society. This ignores the facts of history where the peasantry time and again defied the thundering of the respectable politicians, the upper classes and the Hierarchy.

The anti democratic features of life in Southern Ireland had to do with the fear of the upper classes and the Church that the democratic revolution, which had achieved partial Irish independence, and the spirit of revolt it had engendered among the people would lead to a second struggle which would want a social as well as a political revolution

The forces in Southern Ireland who prate so loudly about "democracy" when they are attacking socialism are the very same forces who supported one of the harshest official censorships in the world as well as all kinds of unofficial pressures to crush ideas.

There is an attempt these days to laugh off the excesses of censorship as some kind of aberration. It was nothing of the kind. It was an arm of the State which had the full support of the Church. The book on "Catholic apologetics" used in the schools in the '40s taught that 'error' must be suppressed and declared that the 'so called tolerance' of modern states simply arose from an incapacity to suppress.

Vatican II rejected this conception but statements like Dr Newman's show that such attitudes run much deeper than on the purely religious level. There are forces in the South who view the new freedom of ideas with horror, as threatening the basis of class society. As yet their public manifestation is confined to the odd outburst by a Bishop or statements by the lunatic fringe like the League of Decency or Mna na hEireann. It would be very wrong to think that this means the reaction against a more liberal society is insignificant.

It is not only in Ireland, but all over the capitalist world, that influential voices are being raised calling for some form of authoritarianism which would allegedly solve the crisis in the capitalist world, which is more and

more looking like becoming permanent.

What is the relationship between liberalism and socialism? Just as capitalism marked a great step forward from feudalism, liberalism marked a tremendous step forward in the realm of ideas. Although there is a relationship between the rise of liberalism and the rise of capitalism, it would be wrong mechanically to identify one with the other. Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy saw liberalism as a threat second only to Communism and Socialism.

Capitalist politicians have denounced the ideas of liberalism. There is a revolution in ideas going on in Southern Ireland. It has arisen from all kinds of factors, including changes in the world and in the Catholic Church, but it also reflects changing relationships within Irish society and also in its relations with other countries.

Entry into the Common Market on the political and economic level has been a disaster, but as an unintended by-product it has broken down the rigid structure of ideas which dominated Irish life.

This liberal development in the field of ideas is an important democratic step and the left should be giving it not only passive but active support, and seeking to win the Labour Movement to fight for the liberalisation of Irish society.

Some weaknesses on the left in relation to this have been mentioned. It is still possible to find the attitude that because, for example, Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien is wrong on the national and other questions, that he should be opposed when he speaks up for the democratisation of the Southern State in other fields.

It has been one of the cardinal mistakes of the left to leave the fight on democratic issues, which are not specifically working class to the middle classes. During the '40s and the '50s many people on the left favoured the reactionary censorship because it allegedly kept out "pornography". In reality what was at the back of their minds was that censorship would be necessary under socialism.

On such issues as contraception it is not the left but non socialist intellectuals who made the running. There is of course an explanation for this. To have raised such

issues at one time inside the Labour Movement would have been to isolate oneself. No such argument applies now, and even if it did the fight for civil liberties is too important to allow tactical considerations to have any influence.

It is true that progressive resolutions on these issues are passed at I.C.T.U. conferences, and elsewhere, but in fact that is the end of it. The fight is not carried through.

The fight for the liberalisation of society is part of the struggle for democracy and socialism. While many of those who favour it oppose the Republican heritage it must yet be seen as a complementary struggle to the movement to give the Irish people control over their own destiny. The ideas of socialism did not come down from the sky - they are a development of the democratic strands in ideas which went before.

The limitations of liberalism are that it accepts class society and sees property rights as a part of the general freedom of the individual. It ignores the fact that under class society freedom to own the means of production means freedom for a small minority, and deprives the majority of freedom. As long as class society exists the majority of the people have no control over the society in which they live. They are also deprived of the individual freedom to plan their own lives.

The millions who had to emigrate from Ireland, the hundreds of thousands who live from week to week not knowing when unemployment will wreck the foundations of their lives, these have been deprived of a basic democratic freedom.

Socialism must give to the mass of the people real democracy, in which there is not only freedom of speech and all the other basic democratic freedoms, but also a much higher form of democracy, control over their own lives and over the products of their labour.

### Democracy and the North

The Unionists maintain that power sharing is a denial of democracy. Bishop Lucey of Cork stated recently that it was democratic in the Republic for its laws to be based

on Catholic moral teaching since Catholics were in the majority.

These two views try to use pseudo democratic arguments in order to put over views which are profoundly undemocratic. The Unionists pretend that Northern Ireland is a normal democratic State. In fact it is a State that was deliberately created in order to frustrate the completion of the Irish struggle for independence and in which the minority were oppressed and treated as second class citizens. The civil rights movement demanded basic democracy for the minority. The savage reaction of the ultra Unionists gave rise to the Provo movement, which is based on the utterly erroneous idea that a struggle to drive out the British, not the struggle for democracy, is the immediate necessity. The civil rights struggle was swamped by the Provo campaign. While N.I.C.R.A. has continued to fight against tremendous odds, for the original civil rights demands it has been doing so from an isolated position.

The only major force to emerge from the civil rights movement has been the S.D.L.P.. This Party, which was initially dismissed as being a collection of individuals, has in fact developed in a short time into a mature and effective organisation. It contains people of different political philosophies and has a left and right wing. Its present policy, no matter what disagreements socialists might have with the views of some of its leaders, is the only feasible policy if sectarianism in Northern Ireland is to be defeated.

Lenin and Connolly realised that co-operation with people of very different views is necessary in pursuit of particular objectives. At one period in Germany, Marx and Engels supported a liberal, capitalist party's programme, since it seemed to them to be the right one for the time. The struggle for democracy in Northern Ireland demands the maximum unity of all anti-sectarian forces, including those sections of Unionism which are prepared to cooperate in breaking down sectarianism, even in a limited way.

Instead of trying to achieve this unity we have seen the anti Unionist forces sniping at one another. The attitude of the left towards the S.D.L.P. has shown signs of political sectarianism.

When we talk of cooperation between parties and people of different views the conception is attacked from both

right and left. The right claim that socialists only want to use such cooperation in order to take over and supplant their partners. From the ultra left comes the cry that a socialist must never compromise with anybody. P.D., and the various forms of Trotskyite organisations, -have caused great harm with this line. Even a cursory reading of history shows that there has never been a successful mass movement which did not unite diverse classes and forces.

The fact that Unionism keeps splitting and yet is still able to maintain its hold over the majority in the North has been contributed to by the exclusivist policies of the left, including Official Sinn Fein.

In talking of building a united movement for democracy there is no question of any section of that movement having to give up its ideas. From their inception, united movements do not have to be continually thinking of the time when they will break up either. If a successful movement for democracy can be built it will develop and has the possibility of developing progressive policies which go beyond the immediate demands on which it was based.

This conception has been particularly well developed in both theory and practice by the Italian Communist Party and by the Socialist-Communist alliance in France. Their conception is of building a socialism in which all sections of the population, apart from the monopolies, would participate. This perspective is based on the fact that the advanced capitalist countries have already been through a capitalist and democratic revolution and that circumstances are vastly different from those prevailing in the feudal countries in which socialist revolutions have taken place.

The struggle for democracy in Northern Ireland could open up wide prospects for advance in the whole island, for the defeat of sectarianism would end the basis for hostilities between the two communities in Ireland and give a chance for cooperation in policies which would benefit all the people. The struggle for democracy is an essential part of the struggle for socialism.

### Conclusion

In a short pamphlet like this it has been only possible to touch on some of the problems raised by the relationship between democracy and socialism.

If the socialist movement is to be effective it must be in the forefront of the fight for democratic rights and civil liberties. This is not just a tactical question, but one of principle. Some Marxists seem to think that being "scientific" means having an inhuman detachment.

Solzhenitsyn has stated that if honest socialists were to read the works of the major "prophets" of socialism, they would be turned against it. One can only conclude that he has never read Marx or Engels himself. Every one of their works is filled with a concern for humanity. The chapters in Volume 1 of "Capital" which deal with the conditions of the workers in both cities and countryside are filled with anger and indignation that people should have to live in such a way.

A scientific approach does not mean the type of attitude contained in Mao Tse Tung's remark that even if three quarters of humanity were to be killed in a new world war, the remaining quarter would be socialist.

The methods to be used in the struggle for socialism do not, of course, depend on the attitude of the socialist forces alone. To talk of fighting for democracy and socialism by democratic means in Chile would be farcical. But by being driven underground in Chile the democratic left and ultra left forces have found a unity which would have made the task of reaction much harder if it had been developed while Allende was in power.

The split in the working class movement which arose after the Soviet Revolution has had catastrophic results for these movements in the capitalist countries. This split was mainly due to the hostile line taken by the leaderships of the official labour movements, but sectarianism of the new Communist movements also contributed. The dubbing of the German Social Democrats as "Social Fascists" and the concentration on attacking them rather than the Nazis helped the rise of Hitler. The United Front idea came too late for Germany.

The development of a strong left wing in many European Social Democratic Parties means that new perspectives for cooperation between all socialists are opening up.

In Ireland it is not just a question of cooperation with avowed socialists. The Fianna Fail Party, in its rank and file contains many of those who would be in Labour, Socialist, or Communist Parties in Europe. There

are also progressive forces within Fine Gael.

The forces exist for the creation of a Socialist movement which would unite a variety of tendencies on a common platform. With capitalism showing that its basic weaknesses have not been eliminated, and with the reality of unemployment there is an urgent need for the emergence of an effective leadership on the left. Without it the danger of authoritarian solutions from the Right is always present. The series of measures in the South ostensibly designed to beat the Provos, could easily be used against working-class or small farmer discontent.

A movement built on a programme to defend and extend democracy, with an economic programme to solve the present crisis by giving the people control over economic and political life is an urgent necessity. In thinking on these lines it is obvious that forces outside the traditional left can and must be included. In this way the people could be led out of the present morass and the fight for democracy merge into a fight for socialism.

Based on such a movement socialism could be built by a coalition of progressive parties, with the right of opposition also guaranteed.

#### THE AUTHOR:

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