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Daily Herald

Powers Of Sonmā May Be
Be Extended

As the Provos' top man is recaptured in Dublin after four years on the run

Squeezing the life out of the I.R.A.

By Roy Mason
JOURNAL OF POST KEYNESIAN ECONOMICS
IN AN INTERVIEW
WITH CHADMAN PINCH

'Because of the political contradictions contained in, and not resolved by Partition, the struggle against the political oppression of Ireland represents a direct attack on the British state. This is its revolutionary significance.'

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PAPERS

Theoretical Journal of the Revolutionary Communist Tendency

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Special Issue on Ireland

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Editorial

'The units are growing more experienced in anti-insurgency and doubtless too, their intelligence is better; but it is difficult to understand why the British Army which penetrated the Malaysian Communist rebel organisation has been unable to plant successful agents in an organisation whose members share the same round eyes, pale skins and cultural background.'

(Clare Hollingworth, Defence Correspondent, 'Tea in "IRA country" gives Army hopes of victory', *Daily Telegraph*, 14 November 1977.)

British imperialism will need much more than good intelligence and experience in anti-insurgency in order to extinguish the national aspirations of the Irish people. What it lacks in 'intelligence' and 'experience in counter-insurgency', British imperialism makes up with armoured cars, tanks, guns, torture and terror. With characteristic arrogance the British bourgeoisie has repeatedly announced that the Irish problem has been solved. But the national aspirations of the Irish people have never been eliminated by force of British arms; nine years of war confirm this lesson, never forgotten in Ireland but never learned in Britain.

The Labour Party has been a faithful supporter of British imperialism. Its role has been to obscure Britain's domination of Ireland with the honeyed phrases of social democracy. The Labour Party provides the bourgeoisie with the important service of reassuring the working class that there is nothing special about the Irish question. The past ten years have seen the killing and torture of hundreds of Irish men and women — and yet the prominent Labour politician Michael Foot can say: 'Northern Ireland is so seriously under-represented at Westminster compared with the rest of the United Kingdom, that a remedy must be found.'¹ Foot provides the human face for brutal oppression. The denial of the most elementary democratic rights of the Irish people — their oppression as a nation — is cynically presented as under-representation at Westminster. This is the same Westminster that presides over the military occupation of the Six Counties.

The Labour Party plays a key role in sustaining the national consensus which supports the strategy of the British state in Ireland. The bipartisan Irish policy has endured one change of government after another and has not met with any serious working class opposition. While the bourgeoisie directly faces a major political threat in the Six Counties, in Britain the oppression of Ireland does not appear to be a political issue for the working class.

This issue of *Revolutionary Communist Papers* shows that the struggle in Ireland must continue because in the imperialist epoch there can be no permanent solution to the contradictions which arise from Britain's historic domination. 'British Imperialism and the Irish Crisis' provides a scientific analysis of the changing material conditions in Ireland North and South. This analysis shows that the political oppression of Ireland — which has reinforced its economic backwardness — is the cause of inherent social instability. The world crisis of

capitalism, which is particularly severe in Ireland as an oppressed country, has intensified the tendencies towards social unrest. Class antagonism has become more direct and the national aspirations of the Irish have been strengthened. The growing importance of the national question in Ireland constitutes a major threat to capitalist relations in Ireland and to their guarantor, British imperialism. The British state has no choice but to continue to intensify its oppression.

By stirring up and exploiting nationalism in the British labour movement, the bourgeoisie has turned the threat to its rule in Ireland to its own advantage. In Britain, the Irish War serves to foster chauvinism in all classes. The collaboration that the British bourgeoisie obtains from the labour movement on the question of Ireland erodes independent working class action in other spheres. Marx's famous statement, that the working class 'can never do anything decisive here in England until it separates its policy with regard to Ireland most definitely from the policy of the ruling classes', is fully confirmed today. Acquiescing in Britain's military policy in the Six Counties over the past decade, the labour movement was inevitably unable to oppose the 'national interest' politically when it came to the Social Contract. By supporting the national consensus on Ireland and the national interest in resolving the crisis of capitalism in Britain the labour movement accepts the ultimate right of the bourgeois state to decide on issues of fundamental political importance.

Effective solidarity with the struggle for self-determination in Ireland demands a direct challenge to the British state; the need for a clear Marxist understanding of the bourgeois state is one of the main themes of both articles in this journal. Many on the left pay lip-service to the view that the British state is a class state. Yet, when it comes to Britain's oppression of Ireland, the class nature of the state is quickly forgotten. The worst sort of opportunism is manifested by the Communist Party of Great Britain which asks the British state to implement reforms in Ireland. These concessions to the national consensus legitimise Britain's oppression of Ireland and the view that the bourgeois state is an instrument which the working class can wield for its own purpose.

Without challenging the role of the British state in Ireland all the left can do is try to curb the excesses of imperialist oppression. The reformist standpoint on Ireland is shared by the groups of the radical left. The article 'No Equivocation!' shows that sympathy with the Irish people and moral outrage against British troops are not merely an insufficient basis for an anti-imperialist movement; by adapting to bourgeois ideology the radical left holds back the development of such a movement. Thus the radical left's Tribunal on 'Britain's Presence in Ireland' shows that petit-bourgeois moralism seeks only to *modify* the political oppression of the Irish people without challenging the agency of that oppression — the British state.

An anti-imperialist movement in Britain, the oppressor nation, must be built on the foundation of revolutionary politics. The objective of this journal is to stimulate opposition to the role played by the British state in Ireland by providing a Marxist analysis of the Irish War which affirms the right of oppressed nations to self-determination. The RCT places two demands at the centre of its propaganda — 'Self-determination for the Irish People' and 'Troops Out Now'. It is only through struggle around these two demands that it is possible to build independent working class opposition to Britain's oppression of Ireland.

The analysis in the two articles will be of value to revolutionaries in Ireland itself. However the aim is not to provide an orientation for their struggle. A strategy for the

¹ *Daily Telegraph*, 30 November 1977.

Irish revolution can only be developed from the direct experience of struggle in Ireland. For British revolutionaries the priority is to fight against the imperialism of the oppressor nation. This requires systematic propaganda work around the two revolutionary demands, addressing the most advanced sections of the working class and making no concessions to the chauvinist and reformist prejudices of the official labour movement.

In previous publications, the *Revolutionary Communist Tendency* has shown that radical moralism can only undermine the struggles of the working class.¹ The dangerous consequences of this tendency have been revealed in the radical left's calls on the bourgeois state to ban the demonstrations of the National Front (NF). When the bourgeois state banned a NF demonstration during the recent Ilford by-election, it also banned all demonstrations in the London area for two months—a serious restriction on the democratic rights of the working class. The same equivocal attitude towards the bourgeois state on the question of Ireland pre-empted effective solidarity with the struggles of the Irish people; it also undermines the political independence of the British working class.

The strength of radical moralism amongst those who see themselves as socialists or even revolutionaries shows the need to struggle for Marxism in the working class. Given the absence of a Marxist tradition in the working class every sort of petit-bourgeois prejudice can be presented as a Marxist or Leninist approach. A pre-condition for building an anti-imperialist movement on Ireland is ideological struggle against this trend. The articles in this journal analyse the relationship between British imperialism and Ireland and explain the central role of the British state. It is this that gives the materialist analysis of Ireland immediate practical consequences.

The RCT has been in existence for almost one and a half years. The first issue of *Revolutionary Communist Papers*, devoted to the elaboration of the political struggle that led to the formation of the RCT, has been fully vindicated by the events of the past year. The analysis of our split with the Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG) has provided the RCT with important lessons for political work today. *Revolutionary Communist Papers* No 1 showed that different conceptions of how a revolutionary organisation should be built have direct political consequences. The opportunist orientation of the RCG in relation to the CPGB and the question of South Africa arose out of the failure to confront consciously the task of party-building. The process of political struggle involved in the split and the clarification required for the production of *RCP* No 1 formed an invaluable stage in the political development of the RCT. Further ideological clarification along the lines indicated in *RCP* No 1 has provided the RCT with foundations for serious programmatic development.

As the radical left continues to apply yesterday's short-cuts to today's problems the discussion on party-building in *RCP* No 1 retains its relevance. In its attempts to overcome political isolation from the working class through organisational means, the radical left makes one concession after another to the prevailing trade union consciousness of the labour movement. One such short-cut to mass action is the Anti-Nazi League—a circus of film stars, footballers, professors and poets, Stalinists and social democrats. The *Socialist Worker* recently boasted of its Popular Front creation that it could attract prominent athletes because 'there is nothing violent about the organisation'.² The method of independent party-building outlined in *RCP* No 1 and exemplified in the propaganda pamphlet *Under a National Flag*... is the only revolutionary alternative to the antics of the radical left.

During the past year the RCT has gone through a concentrated process of political consolidation. Given our

limited resources and lack of experience, our emphasis was on political clarification and cadre training. As a result we have been able to raise the political level of the movement and attract new forces to revolutionary communism. This journal is one of the results of collective work and debate inside the RCT.³ The theoretical work and political experience gained by the RCT during the past year means that we can now publish revolutionary propaganda regularly. The Steering Committee of the RCT took the political decision to publish *Revolutionary Communist Papers* No 2 as a special issue on Ireland. It was decided that in addition to 'British Imperialism and the Irish Crisis', an article dealing with the left's abandonment of even a formal commitment to the building of an anti-imperialist movement on Ireland should be contained in this journal. 'No Equivocation!' is a response to the ideological disarray of the left on the Irish issue. The article on the 'Recession and the working class response', intended for publication in this issue, has had to be postponed. This will appear in *RCP* No 3 which will be published this summer.

Ireland is an almost forgotten issue on the British left which scarcely dares perturb the tranquil consensus the labour movement shares with its own bourgeoisie. Behind the fiery rhetoric directed at the National Front lurks the question of immigration controls—thousands of committed 'anti-fascists' will balk at a programme of total opposition to restrictions on immigration. Arguments for the immediate withdrawal of troops and against all immigration controls are among the most difficult to win in the working class movement, and for that reason they are ignored or avoided by the reformist and radical left alike. We confront these issues directly in our pamphlets and journals because they provide critical points to attack reformist consciousness and in particular the loyalty of the labour movement to the British nation state. Propaganda is the major means of establishing a Marxist alternative to reformism in the working class today. Our ability to accomplish this task depends on having the requisite financial resources. We need money from our readers to ensure the continuation of our journals and pamphlets; more money is essential to ensure that Marxist ideas reach the widest possible audience.

Readers of *RCP* can play a major role in the dissemination of revolutionary propaganda. In order to make an impact on the workers' movement we need readers in towns where we have as yet no members, to provide concrete assistance by selling *RCP* or stocking bookshops. Please write immediately if you are ready to contribute to the building of the movement in this way.

Finally, readers who have begun to appreciate the importance of building a revolutionary organisation on the basis of Marxism and would like more information about the activities of the RCT should write to the address provided. We welcome comments and criticisms.

15 April 1978

1 *Under a National Flag — Fascism, Racism and the Labour Movement*, RCT, 1978.

2 *Socialist Worker*, 1 April 1978.

3 Here we have to acknowledge our debt to the analysis contained in 'Britain and the Irish Revolution', *Revolutionary Communist* No 2, May 1975. This analysis, which is part of our programmatic heritage, has provided the starting point for the RCT's theoretical work on Ireland.

British Imperialism and the Irish Crisis

I WHY BRITISH IMPERIALISM CANNOT WIN.

Hundreds of explosions in business premises and several soldiers shot in sniper raids in the early months of 1978 have brought home to the British bourgeoisie that the struggle against its rule in Ireland continues. Last year's self-satisfied claims that the Provisionals were on the run and support for the republican movement on the wane have now given way to grim determination to smash the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and crush the resistance of the national population.

After centuries of subjugation Ireland remains a major political problem for Britain. After nine years of war in the Six Counties, the armed might of British imperialism — with its loyalist allies and its internment camps, torture cells and special intelligence services — has proved insufficient to defeat the national liberation struggle. On the sixty-second anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising David O'Connell, former IRA Chief of Staff, told a rally of 1000 supporters in Derry:

'... we shall fan and spread the flame of freedom until it destroys every vestige of English rule in Ireland.'¹

The British ruling class clearly recognises the seriousness of this threat. All shades of bourgeois opinion are united in their assessment of the danger posed to the British state by the republican movement. Concern with new constitutional arrangements — federalism or 'power-sharing' — is now subordinated to the need to defeat the IRA. This is how bourgeois commentators — left and right alike — judge the efficacy of British rule.

The bourgeoisie recognises that long term solutions to the Irish problem demand the prior suppression of the national aspirations of the Irish people. Partition — the division of Ireland into six and twenty-six county states in 1921 — was one such long term solution. Through this the bourgeoisie was able to legitimise British rule in Ireland, divide and defeat the republican movement and, for half a century, 'solve' the Irish problem. Partition however was an unstable compromise. Its establishment required the maintenance of sectarian divisions in the working class and the denial of democratic rights to the national population in the Six Counties. This diplomatic treaty could only postpone the national question. The contradictions inherent in Partition are now expressed in the Irish War.

The establishment of the Six County state was made possible by the divisions in the working class along religious lines. Over 50 years it has intensified these divisions. The

existence of the Six Counties as a distinct political entity confirms its appearance as an integral part of Britain. Thus the conflict there today appears as a religious war between two communities rather than as a war for the national liberation of Ireland from Britain. This impression is reinforced by the formal independence of the Twenty-six Counties, which appears to represent the full realisation of Irish national independence. Kautsky, the chief representative of revisionism at the time of Partition, wrote:

'Now with one blow the Irish are to be transformed into the ranks of the freest nations in the world, on a par with Canada and Australia — and these American Sinn Feiners dare to represent this change as the worst defeat Ireland has suffered in nine centuries — merely because eternal hostility is to be replaced by hearty friendship towards England.'²

With one blow Kautsky obscured the essence of Partition — that Ireland remained a nation politically *oppressed* by British imperialism. No matter how much this oppression is modified, in the imperialist epoch stability in an oppressed nation can only be maintained by force of arms. The present world crisis of capitalism has exacerbated the brutal character of this oppression.

The impact of the capitalist recession is particularly severe in a country where development has been retarded by the domination of imperialism. In Ireland its effects have been industrial stagnation, high rates of inflation and mass unemployment. In the Six Counties the need to attack living standards has led to an intensification of sectarianism and the further impoverishment of the working class. In the Twenty-six Counties foreign capital has attempted to rationalise production and restore profitability — at the expense of the working class.

The inability of capital to develop systematically the productive forces of a nation it oppresses necessitates a particularly ruthless bourgeois offensive on the working class. In the Six Counties this involves increased repression against Catholics whilst ensuring that loyalist privileges are maintained. In the Twenty-six Counties the bourgeoisie has conducted its assault on the working class under the guise of Fianna Fáil's populist programme. This populism has acquired an increasingly nationalist character. Jack Lynch,

1 *Daily Telegraph*, 27 March 1978, p1.

2 K Kautsky, *Ireland*, British and Irish Communist Organisation (B&ICO), Belfast, 1974, p17.

Prime Minister of the Irish Republic, suggested in February 1978 that British withdrawal from the Six Counties and Irish unity are objectives of his Government. The real threat that Irish nationalism poses to Britain may be judged from the hostile reaction this statement provoked in Westminster. For Fianna Fáil however, nationalism is used only rhetorically and the Government preserves a powerful repressive apparatus to deal with republican — or trade union — opposition.

In the present crisis of capitalism the response of British imperialism is predictable. The British state will impose law and order by any means necessary. The national unity that prevails in Westminster on the Irish issue demonstrates that there is no distinction between the Labour and Tory approaches to this question. There is only one policy on Ireland — the policy dictated by imperialism. The present Labour Government seeks to ensure that imperialism presents a common front against the Irish people. As Callaghan recently stated about the bipartisan policy:

‘... there are some issues on which the opposition seems desirous of ending what should be a national approach on some of these matters. In the case of Northern Ireland I hope that a national approach can be sustained and maintained as it has during the last seven years.’¹

Here the Prime Minister is concerned that the national approach on Ireland should not be undermined because of the forthcoming general election. Callaghan has nothing to fear. For all their posturing the Tories are in complete agreement with the essentials of the Government's strategy.

Ruling class unity is essential because unrest in Ireland threatens economic and political stability in Britain as well as in Ireland. The ruling class instinctively recognises that it must use all means at its disposal to defeat opposition to its rule. Both parties are at one to defend the interests of capital. In this spirit of unity, the bourgeoisie whips up the most base chauvinist sentiments among all sections of British society. It continually spews out its prejudices against the ‘men of violence’, the ‘madmen’ and the ‘mindless killers’. With its voice of authority it tries to turn such atavistic sentiments into the legitimate response of all ‘right-minded people’.

The political weakness of the labour movement is indicated by its acceptance of the bourgeois attitude to the Irish question. The prevalence of a national rather than a class approach to the Irish War in the labour movement must be of grave concern to revolutionary workers. This article provides an analysis of the class relations which are at the root of the war in Ireland. It is a contribution to breaking the national consensus that at present unites the working class with its own bourgeoisie.

II PARTITION: INSTRUMENT OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM

For the past half century the rule of British imperialism over Ireland has been maintained by its partition into separate states. The material basis of this division was the different pace of capitalist development in different parts of the country. It represented a compromise between British capital and the Irish national bourgeoisie; the objective was to create political stability for further capital accumulation. Thus the national liberation struggle of the first two decades of the twentieth century was thwarted by the creation of a twenty-six county republic with a spurious independence from Britain, and a six county state which was directly incorporated to form the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

In the first 40 years of their existence the weakness and dependence of both these newly created entities were evident

in industrial stagnation, low standards of living, high unemployment and emigration. The decline of traditional industries in the North and the stagnation of industry in the South behind restrictive tariff barriers demonstrated the inability of British imperialism to develop its old colony. Then for a brief moment at the height of the post-war boom, with the major intervention of the state in the economy in both parts of Ireland, prosperity seemed possible. But the attempts by the state to create favourable conditions for capital accumulation could only postpone the tendency towards crisis. No sooner had the vision of an Ireland peaceful and productive of easy profits appeared before the British bourgeoisie in the early 1960s, than it became clouded over by the problems of maintaining the political oppression and economic exploitation on which that vision depended.

1. Uneven development

The pace and extent of industrial development in Ireland was determined by Britain's economic and political domination. In the nineteenth century Britain was primarily concerned with building its own industrial base, using Ireland as a source of two important commodities: labour-power and agricultural produce. The division of labour thus established and enforced by the might of the British state, distorted the development of capitalism in Ireland.

Irish industry remained small and confined to the North-east. The development of industry in this area was a legacy of British colonialism. The favourable tenancies conferred on the Scottish settlers in Ulster stimulated the development of capitalism in agriculture at a time when the rest of the country was still dominated by traditional landlord-tenant relations. British influence encouraged the emergence of capitalist social relations in the North-east whilst stunting this process in the rest of Ireland. In these circumstances traditional manufacturing evolved into modern engineering, shipbuilding and textiles industries. Although small in scale and centred in one city — Belfast — these enterprises expanded, taking advantage of the vast markets of the British Empire at the end of the nineteenth century. The form of industrial development and the nature of the commodities produced were determined by the close economic and political control of Britain.

In the late nineteenth century opposition to British rule developed in the rural areas of Ireland. This was provoked by the reduction of agricultural exports as Britain began to find cheaper substitutes from its other colonies. The economic problems caused by the resulting decline in Irish agriculture forced the nascent bourgeoisie in the South to attempt to develop its industry free from British interference. The movement for Home Rule that ensued found little sympathy in the North-east which relied on the British link for its prosperity. The demands for an independent Ireland were thus unable to unite the bourgeoisie in opposition to imperialism. The divisions created by the uneven development of capitalism played a central role in containing the growing opposition to British domination up to the First World War.

The localised and restricted character of industrial development was reflected in the heterogeneous working class it created. The development of machine-based industry led to the emergence of a small stratum of skilled workers. This section was sharply differentiated from the vast majority of workers who, if they could find jobs, were employed either in agriculture or in low-paid manual labour. The skilled and privileged section of the working class identified its interests with those of the unionist bourgeoisie and its imperialist masters. In return for scarce jobs the political loyalty of the Protestant working class to Ulster and the British Empire was guaranteed. Britain controlled the material basis of loyalist privilege and through the Unionists used sectarian divisions to

maintain its domination. Any movement for Irish independence was tenaciously opposed by the Protestant workers. They perceived the threat of Home Rule to unionist industry — and their jobs. When independence became a real possibility in 1913 loyalist workers were prepared to take up arms to maintain the British link.

Despite the absence of any major centres of industry outside the North-east, the working class began to organise itself in some other areas in the first decade of the twentieth century. Important strikes for trade union recognition and improved pay and conditions took place. Under the leadership of Connolly and Larkin the working class — despite its relatively small social weight — became a threat to capitalist stability in Ireland. The national bourgeoisie did not allow its own differences with British imperialism to stand in the way of unity against the class enemy. The period of increasing industrial militancy up to the First World War culminated in major setbacks for the working class. In the lockout of 1913, 300 Dublin bosses used the British Army and police force to defeat the workers of their own nation. In the North, despite the fact that militancy was growing in association with unions in the South, the working class united with the Orange bourgeoisie — against the Home Rule Bill and the national liberation struggle.

Because of the weak and divided nature of both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the relation of the petit-bourgeoisie to the national liberation struggle was crucial in determining its outcome. In Ireland as a whole at this time agriculture still predominated over industrial capitalism. The national bourgeoisie, however, could not mobilise the peasantry whose capacity to play an important role had already been undermined by Britain. Their radicalisation in the late nineteenth century had been contained by allowing them to become small scale independent farmers — in return for regular financial compensation to the British aristocracy for the land it had stolen. These small farmers, bought off by British imperialism, could not play a major part in the national struggle in the early twentieth century.

The weaknesses of the movement for Irish independence were revealed in the 1916 Easter Rising. Republicans under the leadership of the Irish Volunteers and the Citizen Army seized the centre of the city and proclaimed a provisional government from their headquarters in the General Post Office. This revolt against Britain — then at war in Europe — was brutally suppressed. After a week of street fighting the centre of Dublin was left in ruins and the leaders of the rebellion were executed. Weakened by the defeat of 1913 and divided in its attitude to the First World War, the working class could not give effective support to the insurgents. The republican movement remained under the leadership of petit-bourgeois nationalism which has continued to be its political basis up to this day.

As a result of the uneven development of class relations, the struggle for national independence — which intensified after the First World War — could only achieve partial results. The most powerful section of the bourgeoisie in Ireland — represented by the Unionist Party — was committed to the British connection. It was supported by the skilled section of the working class — as well as by sympathisers in the Tory Party and the army in Britain. The nationalist bourgeoisie was supported by petit-bourgeois elements and the relatively weak working class in the South. The cause of the republican movement was advanced by Sinn Féin. Partition was a ratification of these conflicts and the overriding interests of British imperialism.

2. Partition

The division of Ireland into six and twenty-six county states was the form in which imperialist domination was consolidated in 1921. The unionist bourgeoisie and its allies retained the industrial base of the North-east and as much agricultural hinterland as they could control by electoral gerrymandering. The Six County state was thus formed and named 'Northern Ireland'. Under the Treaty the leading section of the national bourgeoisie settled for most of rural Ireland and the few manufacturing centres outside the North-east. In this way the Irish Free State — which became the Republic of Ireland in 1949 — was born.

The struggle against British imperialism after 1919 had taken the form of a guerilla campaign — the War of Independence. This was called the Tan War after the notorious Black and Tans, the brutal militia used by Britain at that time to maintain its rule. By splitting the republican movement Partition led to its rapid defeat. Civil War broke out between the new regime in Dublin and those republicans who opposed the Treaty in favour of full independence for Ireland. Britain provided military assistance to the Dublin Government in its bitter suppression of the remaining nationalist opposition to the new form of imperialist ascendancy. In the Six Counties Britain's interests were well served by loyalist pogroms against the national population. The defeat of the national struggle by British imperialism was obscured by the nature of this war: Civil War in the Twenty-six Counties and sectarian warfare in the Six Counties.

The political weakness of the Irish working class rendered it incapable of preventing the betrayal of the national struggle. The period which followed Partition further reinforced this weakness. The interest of the bourgeoisie in establishing an independent industrial base in the Republic outweighed its national rhetoric. The working class could not appreciate its own leading role in the struggle for national independence in a country oppressed by imperialism. Consequently its economic struggles became separated from the political struggle for national self-determination. The militancy of the Irish working class has subsequently been expressed largely through the trade unions. Its national aspirations have remained, as in the Partition period, under the domination of petit-bourgeois nationalism. Thus when Fianna Fáil, the party of the anti-Treaty republicans, was returned to power under de Valera in 1932, it was able to win the support of the trade union movement for its populist programme.

The Fianna Fáil programme of self-sufficiency was an attempt to establish a secure basis for Irish agriculture and industrial development. Relative isolation was necessary for Ireland's weak domestic industry in the crisis conditions of the world economy in the 1920s and 1930s. Having secured working class support by its anti-imperialist posturing, the bourgeoisie was able to force down wages to encourage manufacturing industry. Yet while protectionism and economic independence were proclaimed, the interests of imperialism remained paramount. Throughout the 1930s Britain continued to import agricultural produce and took advantage of low wages to establish a number of companies. Under the domination of imperialism protectionist policies proved incapable of developing the Irish economy throughout the inter-war period. Industrial progress was slow and agricultural development even slower. Living standards — already low — fell further. National income per head dropped from 61 per cent of the British figure in 1931 to 49 per cent in 1939.²

1 Hansard, Vol 943, No 51, 2 February 1978, col 987.

2 FSL Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine*, Fontana, Glasgow, 1974, p621.

The continuing national aspirations of the Catholic minority were subversive and unpatriotic for the Six County state—now an integral part of the United Kingdom. The Stormont state required the suppression of the national population and the establishment of a state apparatus which could guarantee its continued subjugation. To counter this opposition Britain introduced the Special Powers Act in 1922, which brought in a host of repressive measures including the death penalty, torture and internment. The British government established the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) to assist the 'B' Specials in carrying out these measures. The new forces consisted largely of armed Loyalists, recruited from the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and other such paramilitary groups.¹ The Six County regime established an electoral system which guaranteed permanent control of its territory. Its local government structure ensured that loyalist workers received material privileges at the expense of the national population. This system, bound together by Orange ideology, was not an option for the unionist lieutenants of British imperialism, but a condition for the continued existence of their state.²

By defending the interests of unionism, Protestant workers were unable to recognise their interests as a class. With the onset of the world crisis in the 1920s the consequences of this political weakness were realised. During these years the shipyard workers supported unionist capital by accepting wage cuts. At the same time, in a desperate attempt to restore their privileges, the Protestant shipbuilding workers launched a major sectarian assault on the Catholics employed in that industry.

However even low living standards and the political repression of the working class were insufficient to encourage the expansion of capitalist production in the Six Counties. The declining market of the British Empire and the increasing competition of more efficient industries in the USA, Japan and Germany spelt disaster for the Orange industrialists. The traditional industries in the Six Counties stagnated throughout the inter-war period, and revived only briefly in the Second World War. Northern Ireland remained the most backward part of the United Kingdom and its working class suffered some of the highest unemployment and worst housing in Western Europe.

3. The post-war boom — Stormont and Dublin.³

The atmosphere of stagnation and decay which continued into the 1950s underwent a remarkable transformation when the post-war boom finally arrived in Ireland. In the 1960s there was every indication that economic prosperity was increasing at an unprecedented rate on both sides of the border. Between 1958 and 1965 output increased by 321 per cent in the new, largely British based manufacturing sector in the Six Counties, while unemployment fell from 9.3 per cent to 5.8 per cent. The Economist Intelligence Unit described it as 'an inspiring picture of economic well-being'.⁴ In the Republic the picture appeared equally bright. Total output grew by over 30 per cent between 1961 and 1968. This rate compared favourably with that achieved by countries in the Common Market.⁵

These developments cannot be attributed simply to changes in state policy in the Six and Twenty-six Counties. Government economic policy was able to take advantage of the world-wide expansion of production and trade. In the 1950s and 1960s capital experienced its greatest period of world growth. This was based upon the defeats of the working class, and upon the enormous destruction of capital values before and during the Second World War. Under the hegemony of American imperialism, output and trade increased more than threefold during the post-war boom.

In these conditions a number of backward capitalist countries were able to achieve high economic growth rates—

for example Brazil, South Korea, Indonesia and Ireland. The inflow of foreign capital and the growth of exports were common characteristics of the expansion of these economies. In the conditions of the boom the export of capital from imperialist countries was part of its global expansion to secure and extend foreign markets and establish new spheres of production. Capital accumulation requires new sources of surplus-value to further increase the mass of profits. The export of capital is one of the most important means of counteracting the tendency of the rate of profit to fall.⁶

In the imperialist epoch all national economies are subordinated to the world economy. However, the dependence of backward capitalist nations on world economic conditions takes a specific form. In a world boom their prosperity is based not on the growth of indigenous capital, but on the attraction of foreign capital and the ability to sell the commodities produced by this capital in the expanding world market. Consequently in the crisis, as world trade begins to stagnate, these countries are particularly hard hit. The economic growth throughout Ireland in the 1960s and its limitations must be seen in this context. As stagnation turned into boom imperialism appeared an anachronism and the republican struggle a thing of the past to be commemorated at Easter parades. The abortive IRA Border Campaign of the late 1950s was regarded as the swan-song of the national liberation movement.⁷ The Six Counties became accepted on both sides of the Irish Sea as an integral part of the United Kingdom.

In both Belfast and Dublin the state apparatus had to be reorganised to take advantage of the world boom. In order to emerge from the stagnation of the protectionist period the Republic depended on inflows of foreign capital attracted by massive state subsidies. The state had to play a leading role in providing the basis for capitalist development. North of the border, state intervention had two major functions. The first was to compensate for the decline of unionist capital by subsidising the traditional industries and, more importantly, by encouraging foreign investment. Its other function was to maintain political stability in a state that depended for its existence on the denial of democratic rights to the Catholic population. It was the inability of the state to grant elementary democratic rights that ultimately provoked militant opposition in the late 1960s. The reaction of the armed forces of the state and their loyalist cohorts shattered the rosy illusion of a peaceful Ireland under British imperialism. At the same time the limits of the state's capacity to maintain economic prosperity were revealed in the world crisis of capitalism.

(a) The peculiar development of capitalism in the Twenty-six Counties

With the failure of protectionism to develop the economy the Irish bourgeoisie began to look for an alternative strategy which could promote capitalist expansion. The world-wide boom in the post-war period provided the solution for its problems. A large amount of capital was available for export, particularly from the USA, West Germany and Britain. During the 1950s the policy of economic self-sufficiency was replaced by a more outward-looking policy involving free trade, the attraction of foreign capital and the expansion of exports. In 1960 the Republic signed the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and a year later applied to join the European Economic Community (EEC).

However there were problems for the new strategy of attracting foreign capital into Ireland. Although wages were low by European standards they were not low enough relative to productivity and the level of development of the productive forces in the Republic. The ease of emigration severely limited the possibility of reducing existing wage levels. Emigration took place mainly to Britain and the USA where jobs were

Money supply (£ million)¹⁵

1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	Nov. 1977
647.2	709.6	815.6	918.3	*	1120.6	1234.6	1513.3	1832.8	2190.3	2575.0	3222.5

(* no data for 1970 due to Bank Dispute)

relatively plentiful and wages higher.⁸

In order to create favourable conditions for export-led growth the state provided the main lever for the accumulation process. It intervened to establish the necessary economic infrastructure—mainly transport and communications. It also directly subsidised capital with a wide range of grants, loans and other investment incentives. Consequently, during the boom state expenditure grew rapidly. Since the early 1960s public expenditure has grown substantially faster than Gross National Product (GNP)—its ratio to GNP rose from 33 per cent in 1960 to 58 per cent in 1975.⁹ Much of this growth occurred in the 1970s, but even previously the ratio of public capital expenditure to GNP was by far the highest of any of the present EEC countries.¹⁰ Capital expenditure—cash grants to enterprises, loans, share capital and direct investment by the state—rose by a massive 239 per cent in real terms from 1953 to 1975.¹¹ Only in this way could the state encourage foreign capital investment in Ireland.

The Irish state has been extremely generous to foreign capital. By the late 1950s the Irish Development Authority (IDA) was playing an important role in coordinating subsidies and incentives. These included non-repayable cash grants of up to 50 per cent of the cost of fixed assets and tax exemptions on export profits. By June 1977, 680 new industrial projects had been set up by state-sponsored overseas companies.¹² Until 1974 more than two-thirds of the growth in industrial exports came from grant-aided companies, and this proportion has since increased.¹³

This high level of state expenditure has been possible only through deficit financing which involved a massive expansion of credit. Between 1961 and 1974 deficits on the combined current and capital account rose from £29.7 million to £178.4 million.¹⁴ As a result the money supply has grown by nearly 400 per cent since 1966.

The expansion of credit performs two main functions for capital. On the one hand capitalists attempt to compensate for the declining rate of profit by raising prices; the expansion of credit allows these higher prices to be realised. As a result consumer prices rose by 314 per cent in the period 1966-77.¹⁶ Since the late 1960s the inflation rate in the Republic has been the highest of any EEC country.¹⁷ On the other hand credit allows commodities to be bought before they are paid for. Credit in the form of loans is necessary for the individual capitalist to finance an expansion of production. Since it is the larger more efficient capitals that obtain loans most easily, the expansion of credit assists the centralisation and concentration of capital.¹⁸

1969 following the Cameron Report, which noted its overtly sectarian role in the pogroms during that period. Its role was taken over by the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), established in 1970 under the control of the British Army. For many Loyalists the only effect was a change in their uniforms. The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) is an armed police force which was set up by the British government in 1922; it is almost entirely composed of Loyalists. See M Farrell, *Northern Ireland: the Orange State*, Pluto Press, London, 1976, pp359-63.

2 The Orange Order was founded in 1795, dedicated to maintaining Protestant supremacy and the link with Britain.

3 To have a clearer understanding of some of the figures used in this article it is useful to compare the Six Counties, the Republic of Ireland and Britain regarding Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at constant (1970) factor cost, real GDP per capita and population. The figures below are for 1972.

	Real GDP (£ million)	Real GDP per capita (£)	Population (000s)
Six Counties	947	613	1,545
Republic of Ireland	1,540	511	3,014
Britain	45,452	838	54,248

Source: N Gibson and J Spencer (Eds), *Economic Activity in Ireland: A Study of Two Open Economies*, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 1977, p8.

4 Economist Intelligence Unit, *Quarterly Economic Review*, August 1965, p15; *Northern Ireland Digest of Statistics* for the years mentioned, HMSO, Belfast.

5 K Kennedy and B Dowling, *Economic Growth in Ireland: The Experience since 1947*, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 1975, p12; Gibson and Spencer, op cit, p54.

6 See K Marx, 'The law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall', *Capital* Vol 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1971, pp211-66.

7 The IRA Border Campaign of 1956-62 was its last major military action against British occupation of the Six Counties prior to the present campaign. See J Bowyer Bell, *The Secret Army*, Sphere Books, London, 1972, pp341-95.

8 By the 1950s the average annual rate of net emigration per 1000 population had risen to 15, representing the highest level this century—nearly three times the pre-war rates. *Statistical Abstract of Ireland, 1972-73*, Central Statistical Office, Dublin, 1976, p31; Lyons, op cit, p625.

9 Calculated from *National Income and Expenditure*, Dublin, 1975, pp11,21,58,70.

10 K Kennedy and R Bruton, *The Irish Economy*, The Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin, 1975, p97.

11 Calculated from *National Income and Expenditure*, 1959, p45; *ibid*, 1975, p21.

12 IDA, *Industrial Development in Ireland*, Dublin, 1977.

13 *The Economist*, 19 November 1977, p89.

14 *United Nations Statistical Yearbook*, 1961 and 1976.

15 Using M3 definition of money supply, which covers currency outstanding, plus Associated Banks' current and deposit accounts, plus non-Associated Banks' current, deposit and other accounts, less all inter-bank balances. Central Bank of Ireland, *Quarterly Bulletin*, No 3, 1977, Statistical Appendix, p11.

16 Calculated from the above and *Statistical Abstract of Ireland, 1970-71 and 1972-73*.

17 Eurostat, *Social Indicators for the European Community*, 1977.

18 Centralisation is the process of the coming together of capital already in existence—that is, the transformation of a number of small into a few large capitals. *Concentration* on the other hand, is identical with the accumulation of capital and involves the increasing concentration of the means of production in the hands of individual capitalists. See K Marx, *Capital* Vol 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, pp586-87.

1 The 'B' Specials were a part-time paramilitary force set up by the British government in 1920. It was composed entirely of Protestants and recruited mainly from the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF)—the private army established by the Ulster Unionists in 1913 to resist Home Rule. The 'B' Specials were disbanded in

The effects of this massive intervention of the state in the economy were dramatic. In the 1960s GNP grew in real terms at more than twice the rate of the 1950s.¹ Investment increased and gross domestic fixed capital formation as a percentage of GNP doubled between 1960 and 1973.² In contrast to the previous decade the 1960s saw a growth in employment — mostly accounted for by industrial development. The movement of labour from agriculture to industry gave the impression that the Republic was becoming a normal small industrial country. At last it appeared that Ireland could become prosperous — through foreign investment.

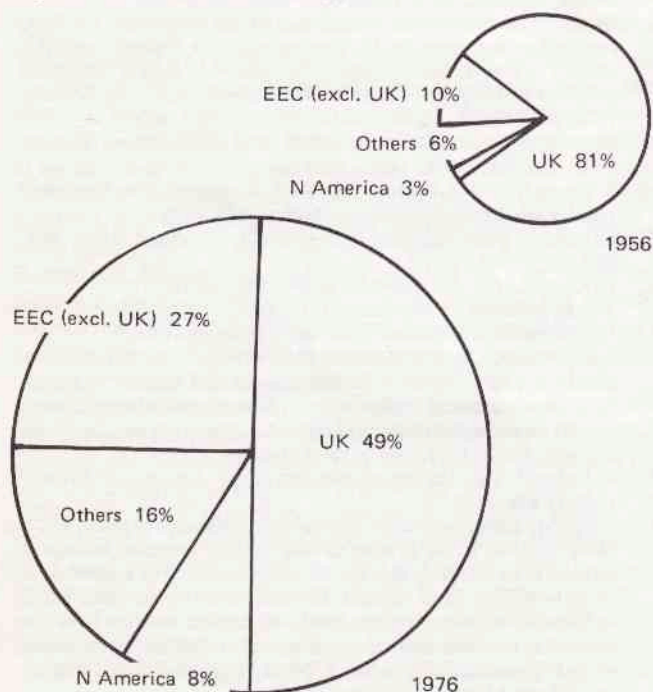
Average annual rates of growth of GNP at constant prices, 1949-77³

Year	Real GNP	Real GNP per worker
1949-61	1.9	3.2
1961-68	4.1	3.9
1968-72	3.7	4.1
1972	4.9	5.7
1973	6.3	4.4
1974	1.8	0.8
1975	-1.3	0.8
1976	3.0	9.2*
1977	5.0	

*Output per man-hour in manufacturing industries

The growth in world trade made it very profitable for foreign capital to take up the state subsidies which were offered to exporters. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s the growth of GNP was largely accounted for by manufacturing exports. The new foreign dominated capital goods sector — chemicals, metals, plastics and electronic components and equipment — was almost entirely orientated towards exports. Between 1956 and 1966 the volume of exports almost doubled. This increase was accompanied by a major change in the composition of exports: as a proportion of total exports manufactures rose from 12 per cent in 1956 to 53 per cent in 1976.⁴ In addition there has been a trend towards the diversification of export markets. As the accompanying diagram shows, the importance of Britain as an importer of products from the Twenty-six Counties has declined.

Exports: Volume and main markets⁵



A constant feature of capitalist countries in the post-war boom was the growth of unproductive labour employed in the public sector.⁶ This increase in state expenditure compensated for the fall of productive employment and had the effect of preventing serious social and political disturbances which might have arisen from high unemployment. In the Republic however the state could only play a very limited role in reducing unemployment. In contrast to the imperialist countries, the state in a backward capitalist country such as the Republic could not afford a large increase in unproductive employment. The high level of state expenditure necessary to attract foreign capital was itself a considerable burden. Since all state expenditure must be paid out of present or future taxation, a further increase to pay for unproductive labour could only have aggravated the state's financial problems. As a result, in the period 1960-68 unemployment remained at over six per cent, compared with the British figure of two per cent.⁷

In backward capitalist countries social stability is no less important than in advanced countries but, because of the lower level of the forces of production, the means to maintain order tend to be more direct and coercive. Even at the height of the boom parliamentary democracy in the Twenty-six Counties could exist only with the back-up of a barrage of repressive powers.⁸ This shows the fragility of capitalist social relations in the Republic. The inability of imperialism to develop the productive forces of an oppressed country, even at the height of its greatest boom, could not have been more sharply expressed. Despite the rising level of investment and the establishment of new industries, unemployment and emigration were still the only alternatives facing thousands of Irish people.

(b) The Six Counties — developments in the 1960s

The fragility of capitalist social relations was no less apparent in the Six Counties where the traditional industries continued to decline. The British state was obliged to extend its role beyond the maintenance of political oppression to the provision of financial inducements and subsidies for foreign capital. It was only on this basis that limited prosperity and growth were possible during the 1960s.

In the early 1960s vast organisational and financial resources were made available through comprehensive programmes to encourage the establishment of new industries. These included setting up industrial estates and providing cash grants of up to 40 per cent of plant and machinery. The restructuring of industry made it necessary for the British state to institute a wide range of retraining courses. In addition to aid for individual companies the state provided the infrastructure for capital expansion.⁹

These measures made possible a rapid growth in the economy. Between 1945 and 1972, some 300 British and other foreign plants were established in the Six Counties.¹⁰ The majority of these were set up during the boom years of the 1960s. Between 1960 and 1970 industrial production increased by 4 per cent per annum compared with a rate of 2.6 per cent in the UK.¹¹ This growth rate was reflected in the volume of exports which expanded by more than 55 per cent during the 12-year period from 1960-72.¹²

In the textiles industry the state intervened both to restructure the old indigenous industries and to attract foreign capital for investment in new plant. The most important method of increasing the mass of surplus-value — the aim and driving force of capitalist production — is increasing the productivity of labour. This is achieved through technical change, using more and more machinery per worker, and is reflected in a rising organic composition of capital.¹³ The different organic compositions of the traditional linen industry and the

Index of industrial production, 1958-1977¹⁸ 1963 = 100

Branch	1958	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	September 1977*
All industries	78	141	143	150	159	159	167	154	155	160	144
Textiles	82	162	174	198	231	242	270	231	211	227	208
Engineering (mainly ship- building)	93	117	114	122	121	109	116	110	113	114	79
Clothing	77	115	118	122	128	126	130	126	124	116	117
All manu- facturing industries	81	134	139	148	157	156	168	155	153	158	139

*provisional figures

more modern, generally foreign, textiles firms producing synthetic fibres, demonstrate this process. Between 1963 and 1972 average annual capital expenditure in the linen industry was £2.8 million while that in the newer textiles sector was £14.3 million, even though gross output in each was similar.¹⁴ As a result of this, average annual output per person employed over the same period was only £930 in the linen industry compared with £2580 in the newer plants. At the peak of its expansion in 1971 output per head in the latter sector was three and a half times the level of that in the linen industry.¹⁵

The process of capital accumulation leads to the concentration and centralisation of capital. At the same time as being the main means of augmenting the mass of profits, the increasing productivity of labour reinforces the tendency of the fall in the rate of profit. Further accumulation and the growth of larger and larger units of capital are necessary to counteract this fall. Competition intensifies and the smaller less efficient capitals are forced out of business.

In the textiles industry mergers and takeovers resulted in the creation of a few large plants which began to diversify and produce a wide range of fibres. The state played a major role in extending these new areas of production — at the expense of the traditional sector. The old linen industries dwindled in significance — their share of net industrial output fell from 29 per cent in 1949 to a mere six per cent in 1972.¹⁶ The other main area for new foreign investment in the 1960s was the light engineering industry. Encouraged by state subsidies, expansion in this field compensated for the continued decline of shipbuilding and its associated industries. In the early 1970s there was some diversification in the engineering sector. In this period seven firms were engaged exclusively in production for Britain's expanding off-shore oil industry.¹⁷ These developments could not however prevent the overall decline of engineering — between 1968 and 1972 total production fell by seven per cent.

These structural changes in the economy were accompanied by a constantly high level of unemployment — during the entire boom period the number out of work remained higher than in Britain (see graph). Despite the rapid expansion in the new textiles sector, total employment in this branch of industry fell by 7360 between 1963 and 1972. The redundancies in the older linen industry exceeded the new jobs created. In the engineering sector the shift from shipbuilding to other machine products resulted in a net increase in employment of only 290.¹⁹ In addition, from the mid-1960s onwards there was a decline in the number of jobs provided by new foreign investment.²⁰ In the Six Counties, as in the Republic, capitalist expansion even in the boom could not solve the unemployment problem.

1 When prices are adjusted to take account of inflation, GNP grew at an average annual rate of 4.1 per cent in the 1961-68 period, compared with an average of only 1.9 per cent in the 1949-61

period. Kennedy and Dowling, op cit, p10.

2 It rose from 13 per cent in 1960 to 26 per cent in 1973. *National Income and Expenditure*, 1975, pp12,59.

3 Table compiled from Kennedy and Dowling, op cit, pp10,256; *National Income and Expenditure*, 1975, pp x,xvi; Central Bank of Ireland, op cit, No 4, 1977.

4 Today exports exceed 40 per cent of GNP. One person in every two engaged in manufacturing depends on exports for employment. Allied Irish Bank, *Review*, No 13, Spring 1977.

5 Ibid.

6 From the standpoint of capital, unproductive labour is labour that does not produce value.

7 Central Bank of Ireland, *Quarterly Bulletin*, No 3, 1977, p99.

8 Throughout the post-war boom the State of Emergency, proclaimed in 1940 in response to the IRA bombing campaign of the late 1930s, remained in operation.

9 *Economic and Industrial Strategy for Northern Ireland*, Review Team Report, HMSO, Belfast, 1976, pp18-19,32.

10 *The Times*, 3 November 1977; *Government Sponsored Industry in Northern Ireland*, Northern Ireland Department of Commerce, Belfast, 1977.

11 *The Times*, 10 August 1977, p19.

12 Calculated from *Northern Ireland Digest of Statistics*, op cit, 1960-72.

13 Capital is divided into two parts: one part is laid out in means of production (machinery, buildings, raw materials) — constant capital; the other part is laid out in living labour-power — variable capital. 'The composition of capital is to be understood in a two-fold sense. On the side of value, it is determined by the proportion in which it is divided into constant capital or value of the means of production, and variable capital or value of labour-power, the sum total of wages. On the side of material, as it functions in the process of production, all capital is divided into means of production and living labour-power. This latter composition is determined by the relation between the mass of the means of production employed, on the one hand, and the mass of labour necessary for their employment on the other. I call the former the *value-composition*, the latter the *technical composition* of capital. Between the two there is a strict correlation. To express this, I call the value-composition of capital, in so far as it is determined by its technical composition and mirrors the changes of the latter, the *organic composition* of capital.' Marx, op cit, p574.

14 Their gross outputs over this period were £736 million and £878 million respectively. *Report on the Censuses of Production of Northern Ireland*, 1971 and 1972, HMSO, Belfast, pp17-18, 30-31.

15 These figures refer to net output, after the deduction of materials, sub-contracting and transport costs. Ibid, pp17-18.

16 Ibid, p3.

17 By 1977 this number had grown to almost 60. *The Times*, 3 November 1977.

18 Compiled from *Censuses of Production*, op cit, p3; *Northern Ireland Digest of Statistics*, (various); *Index of Industrial Production Sheet*, Northern Ireland Department of Commerce, Belfast, October 1977.

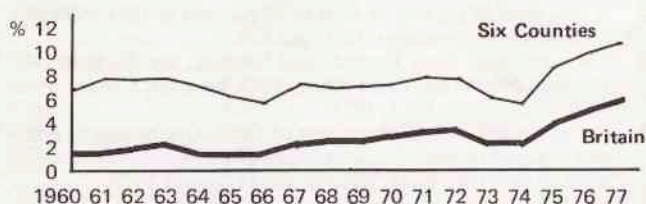
19 Calculated from *Censuses of Production*, op cit, pp17-18.

20 In 1966 new foreign companies contracted to provide 4568 jobs. By 1972 this figure had fallen to 370. Review Team Report, op cit, p75.

Employment (1966-1976) (000s)¹

Sector	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Linen	30.6	27.0	25.2	24.3	23.5	19.9	18.0				
Textiles	53.5	50.0	47.5	47.9	48.4	44.2	39.0	39.0	39.4	35.6	33.3
Shipbuilding	13.5	11.2	9.3	8.9	10.2	10.3	9.4	9.8	10.2	9.9	9.6
Other engineering	29.2	28.4	28.6	29.1	30.0	28.5	24.1	25.3	26.4	25.7	21.7
Total manufacturing	186.7	178.0	177.1	181.7	184.0	179.9	164.6	164.1	166.1	154.3	147.2
Services	237.1	240.4	241.7	244.4	244.9	247.6	249.7	258.0	273.4	284.7	289.5
All industries	482.3	476.9	479.5	485.4	486.6	482.0	470.5	479.4	493.6	494.1	491.6

Comparative unemployment rates²



After the Second World War the state in Britain began to play a much greater role in the provision of social services. While most of this expenditure was unproductive for capital, it maintained the social stability required for further accumulation. In the Six Counties things were different. As the regime depended upon the unequal treatment of 'loyal' and 'disloyal' workers, the introduction of a 'fair' system of allocating resources controlled by the central government was out of the question. The administration of housing, social services and education was controlled by local councils largely dominated by Unionists. An important weapon for maintaining political control was created. Only a minimal level of expenditure was allowed for housing, health and welfare in the Catholic areas. During the 1940s and 1950s, this use of public expenditure to maintain sectarian divisions was most clearly illustrated in housing. Surveys show that the majority of houses in Catholic areas were unfit for human habitation.³

Alongside the rapid growth of the foreign industrial sector in the 1960s went an increase in government expenditure on education and welfare. The expansion of social services gave new opportunities to the professional section of the Catholic population, which had been growing since the provision of free university education after the Second World War. This section found its political voice in the civil rights movement and later in the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP). It was their demands for democratic rights which provoked the wrath of the Orange state and its loyalist allies and showed the inability of unionism to maintain political stability. In response to this threat to its continued domination the British government sent in troops to restore 'law and order' in August 1969. British imperialism was confronted with the necessity of direct military occupation in order to defeat the Catholic population. But British capital soon found that its attempts to maintain profitable production in Ireland were undermined by world recession—recession on a scale not experienced for the previous 40 years. Hence in addition to its military efforts to defeat the Catholic population it became necessary to launch an attack on the living standards of the working class as a whole, in order to create the conditions for further accumulation.

III IRELAND AND THE WORLD CRISIS

The consequences of the world crisis of capitalism are particularly serious for a country oppressed by imperialism. The immanent tendency of capital towards decay and stagnation which re-emerged in the early 1970s has revealed that state intervention has not been able to overcome the barriers to capital accumulation in a backward capitalist country. The forms taken by imperialist domination in both parts of Ireland are fundamentally different: in the North it is exercised directly through political integration into the British state, whereas in the South it is mediated through Partition. Nevertheless the political consequences of the crisis for the bourgeoisie in both states are fundamentally similar. It needs to attack the working class economically and politically in order to restore profitable production. Thus rising unemployment and falling living standards prevail both sides of the border. Moreover, the peculiar nature of the Six County state and the resistance of the Catholic population dictate ruthless measures. The bourgeoisie must intensify sectarian divisions and militarily defeat republicanism.

1. The limits of state intervention in the Twenty-six Counties

Today the Irish Republic is superficially one of the healthiest economies in Western Europe with a growth rate of over 5 per cent in 1977—approximately twice the average rate of the EEC.⁴ The high rate of inflow of foreign capital indicates the continuing attraction of Ireland for the international bourgeoisie. In the crisis the search for higher rates of profit results in the increased export of capital. The intensification of inter-imperialist rivalries forced advanced capitalist countries to increase their export of capital, in an attempt to maintain and if possible increase their share of the world market. Foreign capital invested in the Republic was the main factor contributing to last year's high growth rate. The Republic's position as a backward capitalist country within the EEC makes it the obvious low-cost manufacturing base for companies to export to the European market.⁵ This explains the substantial flow of investment from the USA and Japan in recent years. These two countries now account for over 60 per cent of total foreign investment in Irish manufacturing.⁶

In the last two years three quarters of all new foreign investment in Ireland has come from the USA.⁷ The interest of US capital in the Republic is the direct result of the high level of profits it can extract in that country. At nearly 30 per cent, the rate of return on American manufacturing capital in the Republic during the period 1975-76 was almost three times its rate internationally and almost six times its rate in Britain.⁸

This shows why 1977 was the IDA's most successful year: 24,000 jobs were approved, of which 12,000 came directly from overseas companies.⁹ Capital will continue to enter the Republic only if high profit rates are maintained. Although the rates of growth of both GNP and GNP per worker have improved dramatically since the late 1950s, Ireland's level of productivity still remains the lowest in the EEC. In 1974 output per head was 65 per cent of that in the UK and only 35 per cent of that in West Germany.¹⁰ As international competition and protectionism grow the Republic's export performance will deteriorate. The only way in which foreign capital can still be attracted is through further state subsidies and measures which defend profitability at the expense of the working class. The harsh implications of this may be judged from the fact that per capita incomes are at present only about half of those in Britain.¹¹

Financing high levels of state expenditure requires large increases in tax and borrowing. In the past 15 years taxation levels have risen considerably. While all taxation is a deduction from total surplus value, it also provides a means of cutting the real wages of the working class. As a proportion of total wages, salaries and pensions, direct taxation rose from 10 per cent in the 1960s to 17 per cent in 1975.¹²

Taxation however proved insufficient to finance the growth of state expenditure. As a result borrowing rose dramatically in the post-war period: by 1970 the Irish Republic had the highest ratio of debt to GNP in the EEC — with the exception of Britain.¹³ This ratio rose from 29 per cent in 1947 to 74 per cent in 1975.¹⁴ In that year interest payments on this debt absorbed over 50 per cent of revenue from income tax.¹⁵

From six per cent of GNP in the early 1970s, the Government's total borrowing requirement increased to over 16 per cent in 1975 and was still over 10 per cent last year. It is estimated that the recent Fianna Fáil budget will result in a further rise to about 13 per cent this year.¹⁶ State debt represents an enormous and growing claim on future surplus-value. Concern at the financial position of the state has led to more and more calls for public expenditure cuts. The Irish bourgeois economist F Kennedy expressed this concern in *Business and Finance*:

'Continuing to borrow to finance current deficits in the hope of finding an easy solution to our problems is similar to the addict who craves one last "fix" before mending his ways forever.'¹⁷

However Fianna Fáil's expansionary budget of February 1978 was a necessity — despite its adverse effects on the borrowing requirement. In an attempt to prevent the re-emergence of full-scale depression, an unprecedented £821 million was pumped into the economy.¹⁸ This measure can only accelerate and heighten the contradictions of state expenditure.

This is the dilemma state expenditure poses for capital in the Republic. Capital accumulation cannot proceed without major financial support from the state. Any sizeable reduction in state expenditure risks bringing accumulation to a halt. But any further increase in public spending would precipitate financial chaos for the state.

Capital has no alternative but to mount an attack on working class living standards. This offensive has gathered momentum during the years of the recession and the effects have already been severe. Unemployment now stands at 12 per cent.¹⁹ The creation of a massive reserve army of labour is a central part of capital's strategy to further discipline the working class.

2. The reserve army of labour

In the 1960s and 1970s, the growing productivity of labour led to a large increase in unemployment. Although this is a general tendency of capitalist development it is most pronounced in an oppressed country such as Ireland, even in a period of world-wide capitalist expansion.

The drive for greater productivity results in an increasing concentration of capital: the number of workers employed, relative to capital invested in machinery and raw materials, falls. The same amount of capital invested provides fewer and fewer jobs. Capital investment by foreign firms increased in real terms from £3.9 thousand per job in the period 1960-72 to £5.1 thousand in the subsequent period.²¹

Most of this investment went either into modernisation programmes which involved redundancies or into new high technology industries. The Alcan Aluminium plan to build a new £280 million plant shows the high level of capital investment necessary for modern industry. At an investment of £0.35 million per employee the plant will create only 800 permanent jobs. Such investment clearly cannot solve the unemployment problem.²²

Several additional factors have contributed to the growth of the reserve army of labour. The restructuring of agricultural production has resulted in the departure of more than half the rural population from the land in the last thirty

- 1 Table compiled from *Northern Ireland Digest of Statistics* for the years in the table; *Censuses of Production*, 1971-72.
- 2 *Annual Abstract of Statistics*, Central Statistical Office (CSO), London; *Monthly Digest of Statistics*, CSO, (various).
- 3 Lyons, op cit, pp711-12,762.
- 4 *Financial Times*, 16 March 1978, p31.
- 5 The volume of industrial exports rose 20 per cent in 1977. *The Irish Banking Review*, December 1977, p2.
- 6 IDA, *Annual Report*, 1976.
- 7 *The Economist*, 19 November 1977, p89.
- 8 In 1975-76 the adjusted earnings rate of return for US manufacturing capital was 29.5 per cent, compared with the international average of 12 per cent and 5.5 per cent in Britain. *Financial Times*, 30 November 1977.
- 9 IDA News, January 1978, Vol 4, No 5.
- 10 OECD, *Economic Survey*, 1976.
- 11 *Financial Times*, 16 March 1978, p29.
- 12 *National Income and Expenditure*, op cit, 1960, pp33,44; ibid, 1975, pp9,22.
- 13 Kennedy and Bruton, op cit.
- 14 F Kennedy, *Business and Finance*, Dublin, 5 January 1978, p15.
- 15 Calculated from *National Income and Expenditure*, op cit, 1975.
- 16 Central Bank of Ireland, *Quarterly Bulletin*, No 4, 1977, p5; Economist Intelligence Unit, *Quarterly Economic Review*, No 1, 1978, p12.
- 17 Kennedy, op cit.
- 18 Economist Intelligence Unit, op cit.
- 19 *Financial Times*, 16 March 1978, p29.
- 20 Central Bank of Ireland, op cit, No 4, 1977; International Labour Office, *Yearbook of Labour Statistics*, 1976.
- 21 Calculated from IDA, *Annual Reports*; Wholesale Price Index in *Statistical Abstract of Ireland*, 1972-73; Central Bank of Ireland, op cit, No 3, 1977.
- 22 IDA, *Industry Ireland*, No 4, 1977.

Unemployment, 1966-1977 (000s)²⁰

1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
47.7	55.0	58.3	57.3	65.3	62.4	72.0	66.6	72.0	104.4	112.8	111.0

years.¹ This rural exodus has not come to an end: 22 per cent of the working population is still employed in agriculture, compared with nine per cent in the EEC and only three per cent in Britain.² The collapse or restructuring of traditional industries such as clothing, footwear and iron and steel has contributed significantly to the lengthening dole queues. Although production has increased enormously, the total labour force has actually fallen by 14 per cent since the war.³ Emigration, the traditional counterbalance to rising unemployment, can no longer provide an outlet for workers in the Twenty-six Counties; high unemployment is now a feature of all advanced capitalist countries. From an annual average of 15 per 1000 in the 1950s, emigration has fallen steadily until today more people are entering the Republic than are leaving.⁴

Capital accumulation results in a constantly increasing proportion of redundant workers. Apart from the hardships unemployment imposes on those who cannot get a job it has further implications for the working class as a whole. Even in a boom period the presence of an unorganised pool of labourers is important in restraining trade union militancy. In the crisis the reserve army becomes a crucial weapon used by capital to increase the exploitation of the working class.⁵

As accumulation proceeds the rate of exploitation of labour rises. In the boom this results in profits rising faster than wages — the relative pauperisation of the working class. Capital can afford to pay higher real wages on the basis of rising productivity, and still obtain a higher rate of exploitation. Real wages after tax rose during the 1960s, but more slowly than the growth of productivity, allowing the rate of surplus-value to increase. In the crisis accumulation requires a fall in working class living standards — its absolute pauperisation. Capital accumulation and pauperisation of the workers are two sides of the same coin.

‘...along with the surplus population, pauperisation forms a condition of capitalist production, and of the capitalist development of wealth. It enters into the faux frais of capitalist production, but capital knows how to throw these, for the most part, from its own shoulders onto those of the working class and the lower middle class.’⁶

The following table illustrates the extent to which the rate of exploitation has risen over the last 40 years:

Statistical approximation to the rate of exploitation⁷

	1938	1950	1960	1970
(%)	68.1	71.7	77.8	90.0

In conditions of recession the existence of a growing body of unemployed workers exerts pressure on those who are employed to submit to greater exploitation. In Ireland this has taken several forms. In its quest for increased surplus-labour, capital attempts to reduce the time necessary for the reproduction of labour-power. Rising productivity achieves this by reducing the time required to produce the commodities necessary for the subsistence of the working class. In 1976 alone productivity in manufacturing industry in the Twenty-six Counties rose by 9.2 per cent.⁸ Since 1974 real wages have been forced down through the National Pay Agreements.⁹ In addition, the working week has been increasing for the first time since 1960 (apart from a small increase in 1972).¹⁰ The crisis of capitalist profitability thus takes its heavy toll on the working class of an oppressed nation.

The weakness of the Irish national bourgeoisie has made it heavily reliant on foreign capital. But the inflow of foreign capital has resulted in the collapse of indigenous industries and mass unemployment. Imperialism cannot overcome the economic backwardness of the Twenty-six Counties. The political representatives of the bourgeoisie in Fianna Fáil and

Fine Gael are obliged to implement the policies required by capitalism in crisis. The fact that they need to attack the working class is increasingly manifested by frequent calls for wage restraint. O'Donoghue, Minister for Economic Planning, recently proclaimed that the Irish could not rely on the growth of world trade to solve their problems:

‘The major effort would have to come from our self-discipline and the best allocation of resources. One of the main areas where such restraint and cooperation was required was incomes.’¹¹

The Times summed up the requirements of capital in Ireland:

‘The success of the present government's strategy will depend to a large extent on the outcome of the wage round. It will also depend on the willingness of the Irish work force to accept lower standards of living than its overseas counterparts for some years.’¹²

The repressive apparatus of the state, developed and extended to suppress the republican movement, will increasingly confront the only consistent enemy of imperialism in Ireland — the working class.

3. British imperialism and industrial stagnation in the Six Counties

In the Six Counties, just as in the Republic, severe stagnation followed the short-lived boom of the 1960s. Textiles, for fifteen years the largest industry, have determined the fortunes of the Six Counties. In the crisis European companies have proved incapable of withstanding competition from the Far East and have been forced to reduce output and close plants. Because of the central role of the modern textiles industry in the Six County economy the world crisis has produced much more immediate effects north of the Border.

This is illustrated by the stagnation of industrial output as a whole — it fell by 14 per cent between 1975 and 1977.¹³ In 1975, 50 companies closed and many others cut back production.¹⁴ In the following year the decline in industrial output accelerated as a result of the closure of 75 mainly British based plants, including such textiles giants as Courtaulds and ICI.¹⁵

Falling output has been accompanied by redundancies. In the three years 1971-74 the number of redundancies in government-sponsored industries decreased by 31 per cent: in the following year lay-offs increased by 230 per cent.¹⁶ As a result of this stagnation in industry unemployment almost doubled — from six per cent in 1973 to 11 per cent in 1977 — the highest level since the 1940s.¹⁷

Since the early 1970s capital has sought to modify the impact of the crisis by increasing the rate of exploitation of the working class. Between 1971 and 1975 part-time female employment was increased by more than 21,000 in an attempt to reduce wage bills, while full-time employment of women fell by 4000.¹⁸ Apart from its immediate financial benefit to capital, this use of part-time female labour plays a role in weakening trade union organisation. Recently attacks on organised labour have become more explicit. Last year Du Pont attempted to smash the trade union at its Derry plant, while Goodyear threatened to close its factory at Craigavon if industrial action did not cease.¹⁹

In many sections of industry the length of the working week has been extended. In the two years 1975-76 weekly hours worked rose by 4.4 in chemicals, by 1.6 in engineering and by 1.8 in textiles.²⁰ This illustrates the tendency towards the extraction of absolute surplus-value.

The lower levels of state subsidies and the higher wages in the Six Counties compared with the Republic have intensified the immediate problems facing capital in the North. The ultimate weapon of the bourgeoisie in such circumstances is the attempt to force wages below the level necessary to maintain the customary living standards of the working class. Although in 1975 wages were already five per cent lower than

in Britain, individual companies have been attempting to reduce them still further.²¹

4. Imperialism's welfare state

The central role of state expenditure in providing economic and political stability in the Six Counties has become even more crucial as industrial development has stagnated. But at the same time pressure to cut back public spending is felt in Belfast just as much as it is in Dublin. This is the contradiction facing the Orange establishment and the British state. The limitation on continued high public expenditure explains the logic behind Wilson's famous 'spongers' speech during the Ulster Workers' Council (UWC) strike in May 1974:

'The people on this side of the water — British parents — have seen their sons vilified and spat upon and murdered. British taxpayers have seen the taxes they have poured out, almost without regard to cost... going into Northern Ireland... Yet people who benefit from all this now viciously defy Westminster, purporting to act as though they were an elected government, people who spend their lives sponging on Westminster and British democracy and then systematically assault democratic methods. Who do these people think that they are?'²²

It is certainly true that in today's crisis British capital needs cuts in state expenditure. The 'spongers' — whether the working class in the Six Counties or those on the dole in Britain — are easy targets for those who sponge on the unpaid labour of the working class.

However the special circumstances in the Six Counties make such statements no more than empty threats. There, social stability depends on the maintenance of high levels of expenditure from Westminster — both for subsidising capital and for financing the massive military presence of the British state. As industrial profitability has fallen the demands of capital for state assistance have multiplied. The Quigley Report warned that at least 25,000 further jobs could disappear unless additional steps are taken by the state to subsidise industry.²³ Because of the extreme dependence of industry in the Six Counties on government grants any reduction threatens its existence. Hence while cuts were being imposed on public expenditure at home the British state had no alternative but to respond favourably to capital's calls for more financial aid to the Six Counties. In April 1977 the £24 million operating deficit of the Electricity Service was written off and it was advised to freeze industrial and commercial prices. In August, this was followed up by a further £350 million subsidy to reduce electricity charges to industry, and £700 million in investment grants for new industrial developments.²⁴ Until the mid-1970s the British government continued to extend the public sector in the Six Counties. In 1974 public expenditure accounted for 66 per cent of GDP and provided 36 per cent of all jobs — the highest proportion in Europe.²⁵

These measures, however, were insufficient to regenerate profitable production. Capital requires the reduction of unproductive state expenditure which, as a deduction from total surplus-value, is not available for further accumulation. Thus capital is forced to cut welfare spending and thereby further reduce the living standards of the working class. This poses an extra problem for capital. The process of impoverishment tends to erode the differentials between Protestant and Catholic workers and so threatens sectarianism. Only once did the working class in Belfast unite in opposition to capital. This was in 1932 when employment in the shipyards had fallen by 90 per cent in eight years and the general level of unemployment stood at 28 per cent. Not only were massive levels of unemployment a prerequisite for this unity but also its short-lived character shows the ease with which the bourgeoisie was able to re-establish the old divisions. Three years later sectarian riots once again broke out in Belfast: 514 Catholic families

were driven from their homes and hundreds of Catholics lost their jobs.²⁶

Even once was too much for British imperialism. The way in which cuts in public expenditure are implemented in the North today is determined by the need to maintain political control. Thus sectarianism is reinforced as the cuts fall selectively on the Catholic population. In 1971, while unemployment among Protestant men was seven per cent, the rate for Catholic men was 17 per cent. Since then these figures have increased. Today unemployment in certain Catholic ghettos such as Ballymurphy is as high as 50 per cent.²⁷ Divisions in the working class are intensified rather than reduced. This is how the British state retains the support of the Protestant working class for its policies — even though these result in a decline in its own living standards.

The precarious basis of capitalist social relations in the Six Counties gives British imperialism little room for manoeuvre.

- 1 Between 1949 and 1975, 270,000 workers left the land. Kennedy and Dowling, op cit, p12; Central Bank of Ireland, op cit, No 3, 1977, p98.
- 2 Allied Irish Bank, *Review*, op cit.
- 3 The total labour force stood at 1,227,000 in 1949 and at 1,050,000 in 1975. Kennedy and Dowling, op cit, p12; Central Bank of Ireland, op cit, p98.
- 4 *Statistical Abstract of Ireland, 1972-73*; *The Times*, 20 December 1977.
- 5 Marx, op cit, p598.
- 6 Ibid, p603.
- 7 Since the rate of exploitation is a social relation, it cannot be measured empirically. However, it is possible to obtain measures which indicate the movements in the rate of exploitation over a period of time. One suitable indication is given by the ratio of the net industrial output less salaries and wages to salaries and wages. Calculated from *Statistical Abstract of Ireland, 1972-73*, p132.
- 8 Central Bank of Ireland, op cit, No 4, 1977, Statistical Appendix, p69.
- 9 The National Pay Agreements (NPA) are a form of incomes policy. Each one of them is a single agreement between employees and employers as to the size of the wage increase over the coming period. Since 1970, they have been in almost continuous operation. As well as determining the pay increase, the recent agreements have laid down conditions on trade unions taking industrial action. With the NPAs of 1974, 1975 and 1976 real wages fell by more than one per cent. Given the effects of inflation upon taxation allowances, real take-home pay has fallen even further. See C McCarthy, 'A Review of the Objectives of the National Pay Agreements, 1970-77', *Administration*, Journal of the Institute of Public Administration of Ireland, Spring 1977, Vol 25, No 1. Wage decrease calculated using *Statistical Abstract of Ireland, 1972-73*; Central Bank of Ireland, op cit, No 4, 1977.
- 10 Working hours increased by 1.4 per cent in 1976 and 2.3 per cent in the first quarter of 1977. See Central Bank of Ireland, op cit, No 4, 1977, Statistical Appendix, p69.
- 11 *Irish Times*, 7 December 1977.
- 12 *The Times*, 20 December 1977.
- 13 *Index of Industrial Production Sheet*, op cit.
- 14 Economist Intelligence Unit, op cit, No 2, 1976.
- 15 *The Times*, 3 November 1977; 'Northern Ireland Economic Dependency', *Labour Research*, February 1977.
- 16 Review Team Report, op cit, p75.
- 17 *Northern Ireland Digest of Statistics*, No 48, September 1977.
- 18 Review Team Report, op cit, p92.
- 19 *Irish Times*, 4 November 1977.
- 20 *Northern Ireland Digest of Statistics*, No 48, September 1977.
- 21 *The Times*, 10 August 1977.
- 22 Reported in *The Times*, 27 May 1974.
- 23 Review Team Report, op cit, p67.
- 24 *Financial Times*, 2 August 1977.
- 25 In Britain the corresponding figures are 50 per cent and 30 per cent. Review Team Report, op cit, p58.
- 26 See Farrell, op cit, pp124-32.
- 27 *New Society*, 26 January 1978, p194; *New Statesman*, 23 September 1977, p394.

vre. Although the British bourgeoisie would like to cut public expenditure, the special factors involved in sustaining the undemocratic regime in the Six Counties prevent the cuts from being implemented in an equitable way. Subsidies to capital must continue while unproductive expenditure must be cut. The impoverishment of the working class is the clear condition for capitalist stability in an oppressed country in the recession. The intensification of sectarianism is capital's barbarous tactic to divide and rule the Irish working class.

could not go forward unless its activities were pursued from a working class standpoint.

The development of capitalist industry during the post-war boom has resulted in the growth of the proletariat in the Twenty-six Counties. In contrast to the first two decades of this century, the social basis now exists for uniting the anti-imperialist struggle under the leadership of the working class. Moreover the recession has begun to undermine the material foundations of bourgeois domination in Ireland.

IV CLASS STRUGGLES IN IRELAND

The crisis has revealed the barriers to capital accumulation in Ireland—its resolution will be determined by the class struggle. The uneven development of capitalism in Ireland, a predominantly agricultural country with a localised industrial sector, produced a population in which tenant farmers and labourers outweighed the small industrial bourgeoisie and proletariat which were confined to a handful of urban centres. By settling Scottish Protestants in the North-east, where capitalist agriculture and industry developed more rapidly than in the rest of the country, the rule of imperialism was consolidated through the division of the working class along religious lines. Partition was made possible by the weakness of the national bourgeoisie and the divisions in the working class. By reinforcing sectarianism Partition stabilised imperialist rule.

The formal independence of the Twenty-six Counties appeared to many of its people to represent the complete realisation of Irish national aspirations. The national question was considered relevant only to the Six Counties, which remained under the occupation of the British state. The consequence of this was that the working class did not realise the connection between its fight for better wages and conditions and the struggle against imperialism. In the Republic trade union struggle became divorced from the national struggle which remained under the political control of the petit-bourgeoisie.

In the Six Counties the trade union movement was under loyalist control and hence had little sympathy with the oppressed Catholic working class. The hostility of the labour movement reinforced the isolation of republicanism from working class politics and intensified its domination by petit-bourgeois nationalism. This separation of republicanism and trade unionism had a debilitating effect on both movements. The labour movement could not defend its interests unless it challenged imperialism, and the anti-imperialist movement

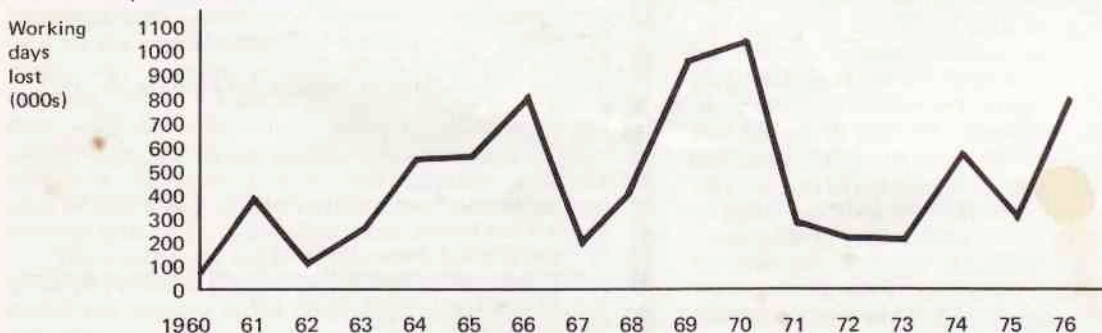
1. The Twenty-six Counties

The Irish Labour Party abandoned the national question after the Easter Rising in 1916. At the 1918 General Election, in which independence was the main issue in Ireland, the Labour Party stood no candidates, allowing Sinn Féin to win an overwhelming majority of seats. After the defeat of the anti-Treaty Republicans in the Civil War, Fianna Fáil won the allegiance of most nationalists. Supported by the labour movement, Fianna Fáil was returned to power in 1932 on its protectionist programme. The labour movement shared Fianna Fáil's belief that the Twenty-six Counties could become a prosperous bourgeois democratic republic, and to this end accepted reductions in living standards. The following thirty years of high unemployment and low living standards saw little change in the politics which were dominant in the working class movement.

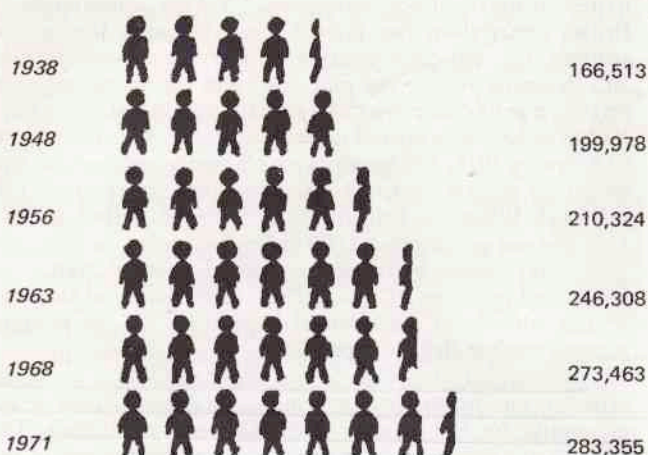
The working class moved no nearer to an independent position in the 1960s. In these years of expansion relative prosperity strengthened the narrow trade union politics of the working class. As long as expansion continued, trade union militancy was no threat to capital and could win an improvement in living standards. Working days lost rose from an annual average of 144,000 in 1954-61 to 586,000 in 1964-71.¹ In the crisis militant trade unionism is directly confronted by the requirements of capital. A reduction in wages becomes a condition for maintaining profits. In the late 1960s the bourgeoisie introduced incomes policies in an attempt to make Irish industry more competitive with low wage countries. The National Pay Agreements (NPA) represent the attempt by capital both to restrain wages and to curb industrial militancy. The 1978 NPA imposes a compulsory 'cooling off period' before strike notice can be served.

In recent years one factor has emerged which poses problems for the bourgeoisie. The rapid industrialisation since the end of the 1950s has resulted in the growth of the working class. For the first time a strong proletariat is in existence which has the potential to play the leading role in the anti-imperialist struggle.

Industrial disputes 1960-1976²



Average aggregate industrial employment (1938-1971)³



The lines of force of the class struggle in Ireland have now changed. The rural classes today have relatively less social weight than in the last period of acute class conflict in the 1920s. They have been forced to fall in behind either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat — the two great classes created by capitalism and driven by its crisis into mortal conflict. With the onset of the crisis the response of the working class to attacks on its living standards has become increasingly militant. Many of the recent strikes such as those at Ferenka, Tara Mines and the Post Office have been conducted outside the official trade union movement.⁴

Events at the Ferenka plant in Limerick exemplify the developing working class consciousness in Ireland. Since 1972 there have been 26 unofficial stoppages at this subsidiary of the Dutch firm AKZO.⁵ Whereas in the 1960s foreign capital was seen as the bearer of prosperity and jobs, its true nature has become more apparent in the crisis. The determination of the Ferenka strikers, despite threats of closure and government warnings that foreign investment would be deterred, contrasts sharply with their attitude only a couple of years ago. In November 1975, when the managing director Dr Herrema was kidnapped, the official trade union response was in accord with the interests of imperialism. Leaders of the labour movement were able to arouse widespread concern that the kidnapping would jeopardise the involvement of foreign capital in Ireland and thus threaten prosperity. After two more years of declining living standards and rising unemployment, sections of the working class have begun to see that their interests do not coincide with those of foreign capital. The threat by foreign capital to transfer investment to countries where trade unions are more suppressed brings to the fore the real role that imperialism plays in Ireland. Today militant trade union struggles contain an anti-imperialist tendency. This tendency will not acquire a coherent political form unless it is directed against Britain's political oppression of Ireland. Up to the present, nationalism in the Republic has been manifested only in response to dramatic events in the Six Counties. When loyalist pogroms took place in Derry and Belfast in 1969 the angry reaction in the Republic forced the Government to deploy a token military force in the Border regions. When British troops shot dead 14 civilians in Derry in 1972 the British Embassy was burnt to the ground by a mass demonstration in Dublin. The inevitable growth of working class hostility to foreign capital as the recession continues indicates the developing potential for a movement against imperialism in Ireland.

The electoral defeat of the reactionary Fine Gael coalition in June 1977 was another indication of the response to the capitalist offensive. Although the programme of the new

Fianna Fáil government is essentially the same as that of its predecessor it campaigns on a populist basis, appealing to nationalist sentiments. The support given to Fianna Fáil by the working class indicates the limits of the political consciousness it has so far achieved. Despite their limits the national aspirations of the working class constitute a serious threat to the relatively weak bourgeoisie. The two main bourgeois parties in Ireland have used a variety of strategies to cope with this threat. The new Fianna Fáil government has attempted to channel the growing nationalist tendencies into a number of constitutional dead ends. After all the anti-British rhetoric and ostentatious commitment to Irish unity, at a recent Ard Fheis (annual conference), its contribution to the anti-imperialist struggle was to set up a work group to study the constitutional aspects of North-South relations, conjuring up such dreams as a peaceful solution through federation. Because of its weakness the Irish national bourgeoisie is incapable of ruling as an independent class — it is reliant on British imperialism. The nationalist pronouncements of its political representatives play an important role in disguising this dependence and help confer a spurious autonomy on the Dublin regime.

It can make *gestures* of independence such as taking Britain to the European Court of Human Rights on charges of torture in the Six Counties. But its capacity for genuinely independent initiatives is severely constrained. Unable systematically to develop the economy the Irish national bourgeoisie has no alternative — it must make concessions to imperialism. The populist approach of Fianna Fáil involves appealing to nationalist sentiments. This facilitates its attacks on working class organisations and living standards. This cynical betrayal of the aspirations of an oppressed people by its own bourgeoisie was described by Lenin:

'All national oppression calls forth the resistance of the *broad masses* of the people; and the resistance of a nationally oppressed population always *tends* to national revolt. Not infrequently... we find the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations *talking* of national revolt, while in practice it enters into reactionary compacts with the bourgeoisie of the oppressor nation behind the backs of *and against* its own people.'⁶

The Irish national bourgeoisie, like its British counterpart, needs to defeat the anti-imperialist movement if it is to survive. The common Anglo-Irish policy on the repression of the republican movement is a united front of imperialism. By threatening Partition and the military occupation of the Six Counties the anti-imperialist struggle challenges the political order throughout Ireland. The fight against British imperialism is also a fight against its allies — the national bourgeoisie of the Twenty-six Counties.

Today as in the past Fianna Fáil has taken up the nationalist cause only to betray it. In 1940 at the end of an IRA bombing campaign in England it passed the Emergency Powers Act, reintroducing internment in the Republic. The Border Campaign in the late 1950s provoked it to institute internment yet again and to add the notorious Part II of the Offences Against the State Act to the Statute Book. This act,

- 1 C McCarthy, *The Decade of Upheaval — Irish Trade Unions in the 1960's*, Institute of Public Administration, Dublin, 1973, p20.
- 2 International Labour Office, *Yearbook of Labour Statistics*, 1960-77.
- 3 *Statistical Abstract of Ireland*, 1972-73, p132.
- 4 The long dispute at Tara Mines began with an unofficial go-slow in April 1977 over the operation of a bonus scheme. There were also complaints about poor working conditions. The unofficial action by the Post Office technicians centred around new work practices introduced by the Department of Posts and Telegraphs.
- 5 Economist Intelligence Unit, op cit, No 1, 1978.
- 6 V I Lenin, 'A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism', *CW23*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969, p53.

after further amendment by the Fianna Fáil Government in 1972, provided the legislative backing for the recent repression of the Provisionals. Today prison conditions in Portlaoise are just as brutal as those in the Six Counties.¹ In the past the bourgeoisie has attacked the labour movement with the same weapons it had at hand to deal with Republicans. During the 1940s the Emergency Powers Act was used to introduce a Wages Standstill Order. This was followed by the Trade Union Act which imposed legal restrictions on the unions. The intensification of repression against Republicans is a prelude to further attacks on the working class movement.

Fianna Fáil has stirred up the nationalist aspirations of the Irish people in order to gain popular support for the anti-working class policies necessitated by the crisis. But this approach could serve to aggravate the national grievances of the Irish working class and so promote a threat to the imperialist order. The recent nationalist orientation of the bourgeoisie is an indirect recognition that the national question remains at the centre of Irish political life. Only recently the bourgeoisie saw fit to ban the traditional nationalist Easter Parades. Today the bourgeoisie tries to present itself as the voice of the nationalist tradition. The adoption of such dangerous tactics shows that the Irish bourgeoisie is in desperate straits.

2. The Six Counties

In the Six Counties the fundamental class conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat—which has become more acute in the crisis—is modified by the sectarian divisions in the working class. The domination of the trade unions by loyalism has made them allies of the bourgeoisie. Far from uniting the working class against capital, the unions have reinforced sectarian divisions. One of the main issues dividing workers is the privileged access of Protestants to scarce jobs. The sectarian character of the traditional working class organisations means that in practice they are indifferent to Catholic unemployment. Orange unions cannot help Catholic workers. Because of the reliance of the Six County state on sectarianism any movement by the national population to overcome its barbaric effects must threaten the state's very existence. The barriers to achieving reform by trade union or parliamentary means demonstrate that there is no basis for traditional social democratic politics in the Six Counties. The opposition between loyalism and republicanism cannot be resolved within the framework of reformist politics. Social democratic parties, such as the Northern Ireland Labour Party and the SDLP, have always been overshadowed by loyalist and republican organisations.

Political oppression in the Six Counties involves more than the denial of democratic rights—it is also a direct physical threat to the Catholics. When the civil rights movement was smashed the Catholics turned towards republicanism. The Provisionals were the only force prepared to defend the national population when the Catholic ghettos were stormed by the armed forces of unionism and British imperialism.

The maintenance of political order in the Six Counties inevitably entails the repression of the Catholic population. The aim of British imperialism is the same today as it has always been. In a parliamentary debate last year on military strategy Mason, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, stated:

'I am determined to prove to the Provisional IRA, who are the principal enemies of society, that our will to defeat them is unshakable.'²

He proceeded to outline new ways in which the army and

police force could be helped in the battle with the Irish enemy. Further repressive powers were required for a renewed effort to destroy the republican movement.³ Yet the armed might of British imperialism has proved incapable of defeating the struggle for self-determination. There have been regular British claims over the last nine years that the Provisionals are on the verge of collapse and without support in Catholic areas. Recent events have proved otherwise. In the three months up to February 1978, 179 bombs were planted in commercial and industrial centres, causing damage worth more than £30 million.⁴ When the British monarch visited Belfast in July 1977 she was greeted by 20,000 disloyal subjects. In February 1978 7000 people marched to demand political status for republican prisoners of war.⁵ These displays reveal the continuing support of the national population for the military struggle against British imperialism.

Although Provisional Sinn Féin has failed to build an effective anti-imperialist movement, at present there is no alternative for the defence of the Catholic population. The absence of a vanguard that can advance the leading role of the working class in the struggle for national self-determination severely limits the anti-imperialist struggle. It has meant that the republican movement has not been able to go beyond its role of defending the Catholic minority.

Capital faces a contradiction in Ireland. Its precarious stability demands political control through Partition and the sectarian division of its working class. But the denial of genuine independence to the Irish and the military suppression of the national working class in the Six Counties is a major source of instability. Because of the more direct nature of British domination in the Six Counties since Partition, the anti-imperialist struggle has been concentrated in this part of Ireland. Since the onset of the crisis the struggle of the working class in the Twenty-six Counties to defend its declining living standards has served to question the benefits of foreign capital. In this way capital is creating the basis for unity between trade union militancy and the struggle for national self-determination. The realisation of this revolutionary potential depends on the emergence of a leadership in Ireland that can in its revolutionary programme create the political basis for unifying the struggles for socialism and national liberation.

V BRITISH IMPERIALISM AND THE WORKING CLASS

1. The sectarian state

In the Six Counties, high levels of unemployment and poverty are nothing new; they have persisted through the entire history of British rule. They continue to reinforce the sectarian divisions on which the existence of the state depends. In the present recession sectarianism must increase if capital is to reduce working class living standards.

The current requirements of capital accumulation dictate that British efforts to create the semblance of bourgeois democracy become more and more perfunctory. In Westminster both Labour ministers and Tory spokesmen have questioned the desirability of a democratic 'power-sharing' government. The intense feeling now stirred by a moderate phrase like 'power-sharing' merely indicates the way British rule is presently enforced.

For the last eight years Britain has used terror to maintain its economic and political domination over the Six Counties. During this whole period Britain has never deviated from its central strategy of beating the Catholics into submission. In 1969 Britain relied on its own soldiers to attack the national

population. It was British soldiers who spied on individuals, fought mass opposition and tortured and harassed prisoners. Today the same functions are increasingly carried out by loyalist forces.

In 1971 15,000 British troops manned the repressive apparatus: today it is estimated that this figure has been reduced to 9000, as the number of local military and paramilitary forces has risen to 18,000.⁶ This shift in the composition of armed personnel is the product of a political strategy begun in the early 1970s. At that time Britain set out to establish and train a local army and police force. This work began to bear fruit in the mid-1970s when the RUC re-emerged as an important means of suppressing the national population. Most recently the UDR has been groomed to play a 'normal' part in military operations.

In 1975 the RUC held and tortured 320 people: a year later the figure had more than doubled and by the first quarter of 1977 it had risen to 904.⁷ Arrests and interrogations have enabled the RUC to amass detailed information about nationalist opposition and to throw hundreds of people into gaol.⁸ Over the past two years most of the armed raids on Catholic houses in cities have been carried out by the RUC. At the end of last year it launched military assaults on a much larger scale with little assistance from the army. The most significant display of this growing paramilitary strength took place in December, when 400 RUC men raided and looted the offices of Provisional Sinn Féin in Belfast. The number of RUC men has risen from 6600 in 1973 to 10,400 today.⁹ The RUC comprises a special patrol group for large-scale counter-insurgency, an anti-terrorist squad organised along Special Air Service (SAS) lines, and a section specialising in torture and interrogation.¹⁰ In his latest report Chief Constable Kenneth Newman bragged that Britain had produced 'a development of the RUC which was unparalleled in its history'.¹¹

The 'B' Specials are back — wearing UDR uniforms. By July 1977 the UDR could claim eleven battalions containing a total of 8000 men.¹² Operational experience with British troops in rural areas has been useful preparation for its growing urban responsibilities. Last summer it was used to help 'clean up' Catholic ghettos and create a Jubilee atmosphere prior to the arrival of the British monarch.

British imperialism also employs a civilian unit to search and inform on people in local shopping areas. In addition it pays most of the salaries of 3000 'private' security officers in industry and gives substantial grants to individual security companies, which employ 2000 uniformed men. This means that the state has at its disposal a coercive force of 31,731 people — one for every 45 men, women and children in the province.¹³

2. Britain's political agents

The alliance between the British state and the loyalist population in the Six Counties was necessary to establish British domination in the form of Partition in 1921. At that time and subsequently Britain has used the religious divisions in the working class to maintain its rule. The alliance with loyalism provides the axis for maintaining social stability in the Six Counties. Since the onset of the recession the bourgeoisie has been able to mobilise loyalism against the Catholic population. Sectarianism has been reaffirmed even in relation to the most basic social issues. Right wing unionist politician Ernest Baird told a loyalist audience:

'We can expect to see a return to street activities, as was the case at the beginning of the troubles, with provocative marches and civil rights' style of protest. Already the Provisionals are stepping up their campaign of economic destruction. We believe that Republicans are planning to put the Ulster people through another period of terror and disorder, in their attempt to finally create their all-Ireland State. ... In order to meet this new challenge the UUUP [United Ulster Unionist

Party, Ed] believes that Unionists united on the basis of agreed long term policy and methods is the best way of thwarting this onslaught, and establishing meaningful devolution.'¹⁴ 15

The more moderate politician Harry West echoed Baird's sentiments with calls for the establishment of local 'vigilante groups' — to protect the people of Ulster. The language of the lynch-mob can also be heard in discussions of bread and butter issues. A British proposal to build a new estate in a Catholic area of Belfast, known for its poor housing conditions, has been unanimously opposed by the local Unionist controlled council, as a 'Republican plan to take over North

1 *An Phoblacht*, 6 July 1977.

2 *Financial Times*, 9 June 1977.

3 In Mason's words, the new ways under discussion represented efforts to 'capture' and 'nail' leading elements in the republican movement. To ensure greater success in the first of these the size of the SAS and its local counterpart the RUC's 'Ants' Squad was increased. For the second, Mason announced life imprisonment for those conspiring to murder, as against the ten year sentence previously in force; a ten, rather than five year, sentence for membership of the IRA; and a five year sentence for bomb hoaxers. *Ibid.*

4 *The Times*, 1 February 1978.

5 *Republican News*, 13 August 1977; *An Phoblacht*, 1 March 1978.

6 Due to the reluctance of British imperialism to convey the extent of its growing dependence on loyalist military forces, it is difficult to estimate the present level of British troops in the Six Counties. However, although their numbers have fallen, according to Ministry of Defence Statistics, the estimated cost of military operations has risen from £1.5 million in 1969-70, to £65 million in 1976-77. See *The Times*, 15 August 1977. For current bourgeois debates on the level of troops see *Hansard*, Vol 944, No 36, 18 February 1978, col 1011; for present strength of loyalist forces see *The Times*, 10 February 1978.

7 These people were held under regulations which allowed arrest and detention without charge up to seven days. Virtually all such prisoners suffer brutal interrogation. See *Irish Times*, 3 August 1977.

8 For number of prisoners up to 1976 see *Digest of Statistics*, No 48, September 1977, table 55, p47. For 1977 figures see *Irish Times*, 9 June 1977. None of the figures quoted indicate internees or persons held under custody orders.

9 For number of RUC up to 1976, see *Digest of Statistics*, *ibid.*, table 60, p49. For 1977 figures, see *The Times*, 10 February 1978.

10 The Special Air Services Regiment (SAS) set up during the Second World War is a top-secret unit of the British Army. It specialises in counter-insurgency and plain-clothes special operations work. Its reputation has spread far beyond the boundaries of the Six Counties. Recently it has assisted the Italian government's hunt for the kidnappers of ex-Prime Minister Moro, the Dutch government's operations against South Moluccans and the German government's assault on a hijacked plane at Mogadishu.

11 Quoted in *The Times*, 18 August 1977. For Roy Mason's account of these changes see *Financial Times*, 9 June 1977.

12 This figure includes full and part-time battalions. See *Hansard*, Vol 934, No 131, 5 July 1977, col 1092; *The Times*, 3 July 1977. For loyalist response see *Irish Times*, 16 July 1977.

13 For details of 'private' security officers, see *The Times*, 3 November 1977. For details of total number of armed forces, see *Hansard*, Vol 943, No 56, 9 February 1978, col 1645.

14 *Irish Times*, 27 January 1978.

15 The United Ulster Unionist Party (UUUP) was a member party of the United Ulster Unionist Council (UUUC) — a loyalist alliance formed in 1974 to bring down the 'power-sharing' Executive and re-establish Stormont. It was comprised of the Official Unionist Party (OUP), the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), the Vanguard Party and the UUUP. Harry West, Ian Paisley, William Craig and Ernest Baird were its joint leaders. After numerous divisions the alliance finally collapsed prior to the UWC strike in May 1977, when the 'moderates' — West and Craig — were not prepared to echo Baird's and Paisley's outspoken support for the strike. See *Irish Times*, 13 May and 10 June 1977.

Belfast'.¹ Predictably the recent 'discovery' that two and a half times as many Catholics are unemployed as Protestants, was regarded by Loyalists as confirmation that the 'taigs' are naturally 'work-shy'.^{2 3}

These sectarian responses from loyalism to growing unemployment and deteriorating social conditions allow British capital to institute the further attacks on the working class that are required to create a more profitable basis for capitalist production. Britain's current military strategy is not at variance with loyalist interests — on the contrary it advances them. By strengthening the political power of loyalism Britain is ensuring its permanent repression of the national population. Consequently Britain's domination takes on the form of a religious feud between Catholics and Protestants. In this way imperialism can appear as the harassed mediator between the two opposing communities.

However the loyalist alliance is a double-edged sword for Britain. The act of Partition, in recognition of the close economic interdependence of traditional Ulster industry and the markets of the British Empire, incorporated the Orange regime into the British state itself. Even the representative institutions of Parliament were extended to include Northern Ireland. Central and local government structures in the Six Counties were modelled on those of England. The widespread acceptance that the Six Counties are a part of Britain is a result of the persistence of this relationship in a relatively stable form for over half a century. This total integration of the Six Counties within the UK, whilst effective in defeating the nationalist movement, created a great *potential* danger for Britain. Because of the inherent instability of the Six County regime — its dependence on the permanent suppression of the national population — future disturbances there must have direct effects in Britain.

The most immediate threat to the UK resulting from its close relationship to the Six Counties is that posed by the national population. Intensified sectarianism increases this danger. This is why the defeat of the Irish national liberation movement is a necessity for the British state. Because of the political contradictions contained in, and not resolved by Partition, the struggle against the political oppression of Ireland represents a direct attack on the British state. This is its revolutionary significance.

There is another danger for the British state created by the loyalist alliance. The commitment by loyalism to the sectarian state stems, not from a sense of duty to British imperialism, but from the struggle to maintain its way of life. Protestant privilege is dependent on the British connection. Any attempt by Britain to modify the alliance inevitably produces vigorous loyalist resistance — which has consequences not only in the Six Counties but potentially in Britain itself.

The disruptive implications of the loyalist alliance in Britain were prefigured before the alliance was consolidated in Partition. When Britain considered granting independence (Home Rule) to the whole of Ireland in 1913 this was opposed by loyal Unionists in the North-east who raised an army to resist any such measure. The consequences of this for Britain were a mutiny of senior army officers stationed at the Curragh in sympathy with the Loyalists and a split in the Tory Party.⁴

Loyalist intransigence is a factor that the British state cannot ignore. Even at the height of the post-war boom any attempts to diminish the undemocratic features of the Six County state provoked vigorous loyalist opposition. All recent attempts to alleviate the consequences of sectarianism in the interests of more long term stability have failed. The Ulster Workers' Council (UWC)⁵ strike in 1974 put the final nail in the coffin of 'power-sharing'. The vacillation of the army in the face of this defiance (reminiscent of the Curragh mutiny) indicated the possible results of any serious attempt by Britain to modify its commitments.

The threat which the Irish problem poses to the rule of

capital has been clearly perceived by both major political parties. Airey Neave, Tory spokesman on Ireland, showed his recognition of the threat to the British state caused by the inherent instability of one part of the UK. Referring to an article in the *Daily Mirror* he said:

"'Let Ulster stew in her own bloody juice'" was its cry. I do not think that that is courageous. I do not think that it is a sane or practical policy. If we followed that advice, we should ourselves stew in the same bloody juice. ... If we abandon that duty [to restore order in a part of the UK, Ed] we could expect not only civil war in Ulster, but a spread of the disease to all parts of the UK.'⁶

Given this recognition of the dangers it is no surprise that despite changes in government and domestic political crises the bipartisan policy on Ireland has stood firm.

The Labour Government has provided sterling service for the bourgeoisie in its handling of the Irish War. It can thank the Labour Government that the political rule of British imperialism in Ireland is now far more thorough and insidious than ever before. Labour built up a military and political alliance with loyalism that is the envy of every Tory. The commitment of the Labour Party to the British state comes first. All sectional or class interests are subordinated to the defence of the national interest. Callaghan's hypocritical support for the distant struggle in Chile is transformed into the language of the policeman when it comes to the struggle on his own doorstep. It is an indication of the Labour Government's good record on repression that unionist MPs can now use it as a standard against which to measure the past performance of the Conservatives. In a recent House of Commons debate on law and order unionist MP J Kilfedder took Tory ex-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland W Whitelaw to task:

"When the Right Hon. Gentleman was in a position to enforce law and order in a part of the United Kingdom, he engaged in parlying (sic) with the representatives of the Provisional IRA and created a special category of political prisoner. Does he not feel rather hypocritical now to be drivelling on about law and order from the Opposition Dispatch Box?"⁷

This remark does not mean that the Conservatives neglected the Irish War — it simply gives due credit to the superior repressive role of the Labour Government.

In order to subdue the national population the British state has no alternative but to play the Orange card — to intensify sectarianism. This course — with all its inherent dangers — must be pursued because imperialism demands the defeat of the working class in Ireland and the denial of its democratic aspirations.

3. The significance of Ireland for the working class

The resilience of the bipartisan policy demonstrates the ability of the bourgeoisie to draw all major political parties behind a commitment to British rule in Ireland. Presenting the Irish problem as one of psychopathic terrorists who threaten the security and integrity of the United Kingdom, the British ruling class is able to establish a powerful national consensus, which accepts the right of the state to impose its solution on Ireland. By representing a threat to itself as a danger to the nation the bourgeoisie turns the Irish War to its own advantage. The British state in the Six Counties appears to be a firm but just mediator, concerned only to keep the peace and prevent the disturbances which stem from the attachment of the Irish people to obscure fundamentalist doctrines and alien cultural practices. The national consensus on Ireland reinforces the notion — widespread in the labour movement — that the national interest transcends the interest of the working class.

From the earliest days of the Empire the British bourgeoisie has used nationalism to win working class support for its campaigns of conquest and war. As Britain's oldest colony Ireland has played a major role in forging inter-class national unity. The recent defiance shown by the republican movement to the British state — especially when extended onto the mainland — is represented as a threat to all the people of this country. In this way the Irish War is used to fortify the national politics of the bourgeoisie, and to enfeeble the class politics on which the workers' struggle depends. The national consensus on Ireland debilitates the working class in Britain.

The view of the state as a neutral agency plays an important role in the reformist politics which dominate the labour movement. This notion was enormously strengthened by the reforms conceded through the increased activity of the state in the economy and in social affairs during the post-war boom. The role of the British state in Ireland at each stage in the war has seemed consistent with the reformist conception of its impartial character. In 1969 the British state sent in its army, ostensibly to defend Catholics from loyalist pogroms. In 1971 internment was reintroduced 'only as a last resort' to curb sectarian warfare. In 1974 a vexed British government was forced to shelve its proposals for 'power-sharing' because of loyalist intransigence. Today the war continues with the British state still appearing to hold the ring between violent extremists on either side, whilst working with increasing desperation for a lasting peace. The fact that these views have not been challenged by the labour movement indicates the strength of its identification with the nation state. In this way the Irish War confirms reformist illusions in the possibility of the state acting in a non-partisan and enlightened manner — in both Ireland and Britain.

The consequences of these attitudes to the nation state for the working class in Britain are enormous. They go far beyond its inability to support the struggle for national self-determination in Ireland. In the crisis the state has led the offensive on working class living standards in the interests of capital. The trade unions, responding to appeals to the interests of the nation, have signed and kept the Social Contract with the Government. Real incomes have fallen as a direct result. General working class agreement that sacrifices are necessary in the national interest has served to undermine any major fightback against measures which have reduced living standards. Thus the national consensus on the right of the British state to rule in Ireland serves to hold back all independent working class action in Britain.

The struggle against national oppression in Ireland in today's conditions directly challenges the British state. Effective solidarity with the Irish struggle entails support for this challenge. By questioning Britain's right to rule in Ireland an anti-imperialist movement must be directed against the state. As long as workers tolerate the role of imperialism in Ireland they will be incapable of defending themselves against the attacks of the bourgeoisie couched in the language of the national interest. At the same time they will be implicated in the most brutal and reactionary anti-working class measures in Ireland. By allowing such repression to continue the subversion of the labour movement to the state is enhanced. Ireland is of fundamental political importance because effective solidarity with the Irish people requires that the working class break its allegiance to the British nation state. An anti-imperialist movement can be built only by confronting and overcoming national reformism in the working class. This is the only way in which significant sections of the working class will be able to effectively support the war against the British state in Ireland and thereby extend and augment the international struggle of the proletariat.

One indication that the labour movement has no independent position in relation to the Irish War is that no significant challenge to the bipartisan policy of the Labour Government has emerged within the Parliamentary Labour

Party. The TUC remains loyal to the Government in its war against the national population in Ireland. Even the left of the labour movement, outspoken in solidarity with the struggle in Chile and against the violations of democratic rights in South Africa, becomes silent when faced with an imperialist war conducted by its own nation state. So strong is the faith of *Tribune* in the British state that after the last nine years of British repression the Labour left can still look to the Government to consider peaceful solutions.⁸ After proclaiming in the House of Commons his record as a fighter 'for human liberty in South Africa, Iran, Latin America, Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and other countries' left Labour MP Martin Flannery continued:

'I find it necessary, without developing this theme, to reiterate what Opposition members have heard me say on many occasions, namely, that there would not have been any need for this legislation [the Prevention of Terrorism Act, Ed] had there been any democracy in Northern Ireland. The greatest defence against terrorism is democracy. Where there is a lack of democracy and communalist politics violence breaks out. Democracy is still not present in Northern Ireland. The sooner it is the sooner this type of Draconian Act can be relegated to the dustbin of history.'⁹

Seeking to modify British imperialist oppression in Ireland, Flannery wants to see the state introduce democratic policies to solve the Irish problem.

The Stalinist version of left reformism in the labour movement shares this faith in the progressive role of the British state.

'What the people of Northern Ireland want to hear is speeches from Westminster announcing democratic reforms and an end to repression.'¹⁰

What the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) has in mind is a Bill of Rights and a programme of social and economic reforms — to be introduced by the British government. Far from confronting the main barrier to building an anti-imperialist movement in the British working class — its loyalty to the nation state — the Labour Party and the CPGB gives social-chauvinism a coherent political expression.¹¹

The radical left is even more sympathetic to the Irish struggle than the reformists. It has been trying to build a campaign of solidarity for as long as the war has been in progress. Sympathy however is not enough. The inability of the radical left to understand the revolutionary significance of Ireland means that it tries to build a solidarity campaign on the basis of the existing consciousness of the labour movement. In its attempts to extend solidarity to the Irish people it neither raises the question of the state nor confronts national reformism in the labour movement. It treats the problem like any other struggle requiring international solidarity. These attempts to build an anti-imperialist movement have presented Ireland as an issue which can be raised without challenging the identification of the working class with its own nation state.

1 Quoted in *Irish Times*, 4 January 1978.

2 These findings were published in *An Industrial Occupational Profile of the Two Sections of the Population*, Fair Employment Agency for Northern Ireland, 11 January 1978.

3 Quoted in *Irish Times*, 18 January 1978.

4 Lyons, op cit, pp302-11.

5 An association of loyalist workers which has direct links with the paramilitary forces. Strikes were organised by this body in 1972 as the Loyalist Association of Workers (LAW), and in 1974 and 1977 as the UWC.

6 *Hansard*, Vol 903, No 24, 12 January 1976, col 67-68.

7 *Hansard*, Vol 945, No 68, 27 February 1978, col 38.

8 *Tribune*, Editorial, 24 February 1978.

9 *Hansard*, Vol 946, No 80, 15 March 1978, col 570.

10 *Morning Star*, 25 August 1977.

11 For elaboration of this point see F Richards, 'No Equivocation!' in this issue.

The radical left campaigns have not attempted to undermine this loyalty of the working class; they have therefore failed to build an anti-imperialist movement. This is why the numerous campaigns have all been short-lived and failed to make any impact on the working class.¹

Sympathy, not Marxism, is the starting point of the radical left—inevitably its arguments are only a radical version of those of the bourgeoisie. The reactionary consequences of its approach are realised under the pressure of events. Thus when the British army entered the Six Counties in 1969 the International Socialists (now Socialist Workers Party) could only adapt to public opinion:

'Time is vital to bring aid to the northern people. The intervention of the British troops only allows a temporary breathing space in which the defences of the Catholic community can be strengthened.'²

In reaffirming the view that the imperialist army had a progressive role to play the radical left showed that despite all its rhetoric it could provide no alternative to old-fashioned reformism.³

Moralism is the stock-in-trade of the radical left in its appeal for solidarity with the Irish people. It attempts to win support by exposing the brutal features of British repression. A central theme of all its attempts to build an anti-imperialist movement is that revealing 'the facts' will engender the outrage of all decent people. This belief that facts speak for themselves and are not interpreted according to class interests leads to an entirely moral, non-class perspective. The International Marxist Group (IMG) addresses all concerned individuals rather than the working class:

'The key to our task is to mobilise a force on the streets in mass action from whatever section these forces might come, as we did with Vietnam.'⁴

In its identification of Ireland with Vietnam the IMG betrays its inability to understand the particular importance of Ireland. This statement reveals a failure to understand that the working class is the only class whose interests are fundamentally antagonistic to the state and therefore the only class capable of leading the anti-imperialist movement. The perspective of appealing to a wide and heterogeneous audience leads the radical left to formulate demands which avoid the central question of the state. Even when sections of the radical left give formal adherence to revolutionary demands—'Troops Out Now' and 'Self-determination for the Irish People'—they are always prepared to drop them in favour of slogans with greater popular appeal. In almost every mobilisation in support of the Irish struggle in the last five years the revolutionary demands have been abandoned. An effective solidarity campaign cannot be constructed without challenging the reformism that weakens the working class. The absence of an anti-imperialist movement indicates that no section of the working class is yet capable of advancing an independent position in relation to major political issues. A precondition for systematic opposition to the imperialist war in Ireland is the transformation of the existing consciousness of the working class. Solidarity will not emerge spontaneously. Given the present awareness of the movement only those workers who have already been forced to question the prevalent assumptions of the working class can be expected to see the importance of solidarity with the struggle in Ireland. Building an anti-imperialist movement means nothing less than the development of a vanguard in the working class which will be able to lead wider sections of the movement. This is the scale of the undertaking facing revolutionaries in Britain today.

Building an anti-imperialist movement demands showing the British working class why it must confront its own nation state in order to give full solidarity to the struggle of the Irish people against British domination. It means showing that the liberation struggle must be supported—whatever its political

form. It means showing the working class why it must consistently demand the immediate withdrawal of troops. An anti-imperialist movement on these political foundations can fight imperialism in Britain and build the international solidarity of the working class movement.

Mary Masters and Phil Murphy

- 1 These campaigns (some of which still exist today) include the Irish Civil Rights Solidarity Campaign, the Anti-Internment League, the Troops Out Movement, the Bloody Sunday Commemoration Committee and the United Troops Out Movement.
- 2 *Socialist Worker*, Editorial, 21 August 1969.
- 3 The illusions of the IS in the neutrality of the armed forces exceeded even those of the CPGB: 'The use of British troops in Northern Ireland will not solve the problems there. The British intervention needed was not military action to back up the Stormont government but political action to ensure that civil rights are given to all the people of Northern Ireland and more homes and jobs for them.' *Morning Star*, Editorial, 15 August 1969.
- 4 *Socialist Challenge*, 16 February 1978.

No Equivocation!

'the British Socialist who fails to support by all possible means the uprisings in Ireland, Egypt and India against the London plutocracy — such a Socialist deserves to be branded with infamy if not with a bullet'

Trotsky¹

1. Introduction

The national liberation struggle in Ireland can expect little support from the British left. As a matter of course, the Labour Party, the Trades Union Congress (TUC), the Tribunes and the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) will pass resolutions deploring violence in the Six Counties. They will request that the government introduce reforms to alleviate the plight of the people there. Party conferences and newspaper editorials will express sympathy and concern, and declare that reforms are long overdue. But this is bureaucratic hypocrisy at its worst. Look through the minutes of the TUC and Labour Party conferences: there is no discussion on the Irish question. Read through the pages of the *Morning Star* or *Tribune*: there are no suggestions how to build a movement against British imperialism's oppression of Ireland.

For the reformist press imperialism ended years ago. The various social democratic solutions to the Irish problem that are offered — the Bill of Rights and the Better Life for All Campaign — present the British imperialist state as the instrument for reform. Why was it that the CPGB never asked American imperialism to implement a Bill of Rights in Vietnam, but asks British imperialism to do just that in Ireland? Why is it that the official labour movement can have so much sympathy and concern for the struggles of the Chilean or South African peoples and yet ignore political oppression next door? Why is it that reformist organisations can label similar acts of violence as the deeds of *freedom fighters* in Zimbabwe but as those of criminals in Ireland? Why is it that the radical left also accepts this double standard?²

The organisations of the British working class refuse to give solidarity to the Irish people because they accept the right of the British state to administer the Six Counties. Trade unionists spontaneously identify with the struggles of the Chilean people despite their adherence to the British nation; but to identify with the struggles of the Irish people and to give them real support requires that the working class directly challenges its *own* state. Opposition to Britain's domination of Ireland can be built neither on trade union militancy nor on

moral indignation. On the Irish question genuine internationalism can only mean class confrontation with the British state. This is why the Irish question is so unpopular on the British left.

The difficulty of building an anti-imperialist movement on Ireland has led sections of the radical left to look for a way around the thorny problem of the British state. All previous attempts to evade this question have led to nothing. The latest and most grandiose exercise in side-stepping the British state is the International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland.³ The Tribunal expresses the dominant trend on the radical left — that of radical moralism. This trend will be assessed and criticised through a presentation of the Leninist approach to the question of national oppression.

2. The struggle for internationalism in the European working class

At the end of the nineteenth century capitalism reached the stage where it could no longer accumulate within the confines of the nation state. In order to overcome the barriers to its expansion capital began to be exported and non-industrialised areas were drawn into the capitalist world economy. This extension of capitalism was accompanied by the colonisation of the non-industrialised nations. The 'scramble for Africa', for example, was part of capital's search for new sources of raw materials, new markets and new spheres of investment. These tendencies of development crystallised into a distinct stage of capitalism — the stage of *imperialism*. This meant that the world was divided amongst a few of the leading capitalist nations. The imperialist world economy reinforced the uneven development of capitalism and resulted in the oppression of colonial peoples by a small number of major capitalist powers.

The establishment of colonies had a strong impact on the metropolitan labour movement. They provided cheap food and raw materials and stimulated the expansion of the productive forces. Sections of the working class were able to derive some benefits from the imperialist plunder of the colonies. A privileged and pro-imperialist layer evolved in the labour movement which fostered social-chauvinism — socialism in words, chauvinism in deeds. The identification of colonial expansion with jobs and the promise of future prosperity undermined working class opposition to imperialism. The German Social Democratic Party (SPD) faced the first important test of its determination to oppose colonialism in 1884, when Bismarck asked for a subsidy for steamships to strengthen the German hold over southern Africa. However, the majority of SPD deputies were more concerned with obtaining jobs for shipyard workers than with the subjugation of the African people. They accepted Bismarck's argument that the establishment of naval links with southern Africa had nothing to do with colonialism and so supported the request for

1 L Trotsky, 'Manifesto of the Second Congress', in *The First Five Years of the Communist International*, Vol 1, New Park, 1973, p153.

2 The Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) says that the Palestinian commando raids are 'unquestionably an act of war' at the same time as it 'unequivocally dissociates itself from and condemns the IRA [Irish Republican Army, Ed] bombings of civilian targets like La Mon House'. See 'The Workers Revolutionary Party and the IRA', Statement by the Political Committee of the WRP, *The News Line*, 22 February 1978.

3 The radical left organisations most closely identified with this Tribunal are the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the International Marxist Group (IMG).

subsidies.¹

In theory the leadership of the Second International agreed with the warnings of Marx and Engels that the working class must oppose the annexationist foreign policy of the bourgeoisie. Marx and Engels had argued for a ruthless campaign against chauvinism in the workers' movement and had noted that the working class could not begin to liberate itself while it tolerated the oppression of other nations by its own bourgeoisie.² For the Second International however, anti-colonialism was a moral imperative with no practical consequences. The International was itself strongly influenced by the pro-imperialist stratum of the European working class. The relative prosperity produced by the rise of imperialism strengthened reformist tendencies throughout the labour movement — including tendencies in the Second International. Hand in hand with the rise of reformism went increasing support for colonialism. In the first decade of this century its resounding declarations of internationalism covered a growing and active commitment to what was only a radical form of nationalism.

As imperialist predators began to quarrel about the division of colonial spoils, reformists started to use inter-imperialist rivalries as an excuse for their own nation to acquire colonies. Bernstein's apology for colonialism was that if Germany withdrew from the race for colonies, other nations would take her place and thus injure Germany's national interest.³

More and more trade union leaders echoed Bernstein in arguing that the Second International should abandon its opposition to colonialism and instead advance a *positive colonial policy* of its own. Adapting to the chauvinist pressures that were generated by the rise of inter-imperialist antagonisms, many labour leaders sought to give colonialism a socialist cover. The essence of the positive colonial policy was to accept that 'colonialism was here to stay', and to demand that the imperialist state modify its oppression by implementing reforms for the benefit of the 'natives'.

The Second International's first major debate on the colonial question took place at its 1907 Congress in Stuttgart. Led by the Dutch Social Democrat Van Kol, the reformists argued that the labour movement had to recognise the facts of life: colonies were unavoidable — the task was to reform them.⁴ Some reformists drew out the logic of Van Kol's arguments and justified a positive colonial policy on the grounds that imperialism had a progressive mission to play in the colonies. The German revisionist David told delegates:

'... the Congress affirming that Socialism needs the productive powers of the entire world, which are destined to be placed in the service of humanity, and to raise the people of all colours and languages to the highest culture, sees in the colonialist idea envisaged in this connection an integral element in the universal aims of civilisation which the Socialist movement pursues.'⁵

It was a sign of the times that Van Kol's motion was supported by almost half the delegations.

At the Congress the defeat of the reformist position on colonialism was due to the combined efforts of Lenin, Luxemburg and Kautsky. The vote against colonialism, however, was more a reaffirmation of platonic internationalism than an indication of a Marxist appreciation of the colonial question. Most delegates who voted against the reformist resolution did not understand that pro-colonial sentiments had already begun to undermine the independence of the labour movement, and as a result no steps were taken to combat social-chauvinism. Lenin was one of the few present who understood the consequences of accepting a colonial policy. It

'... would be an outright desertion to the bourgeois point of view. It would be a decisive step towards subordinating the proletariat to bourgeois ideology, to bourgeois imperialism, which is now arrogantly raising its head.'⁶

Lenin's warnings went unheeded and no attempts were made

by the European social-democratic parties to actively solidarise with the struggles of the oppressed.

The growth of nationalism in the imperialist countries went unchallenged in the first decades of this century. For all its professed anti-colonialism, Social Democracy did no more than moralise about 'injustice'. The colonial question was the main issue in the 1907 Hottentot Elections in Germany. The SPD argued against colonialism by appealing to working class interest in reduced taxation and lower state expenditure on colonies, army and navy.⁷ The SPD's main newspaper *Vorwärts* proclaimed that 'the abandonment of the colonies would constitute... a substantial financial, military, ethical and commercial gain for the Empire'.⁸ This commonsense rejection of colonialism could offer no alternative to bourgeois calculations which showed it to be economically lucrative to the German nation. By identifying the interests of the German working class with those of the state, the SPD criticism of colonialism served to reinforce nationalism in the labour movement.

The Second International's disagreement with colonialism on ethical grounds was coupled with an arrogant attitude towards the struggles of oppressed peoples. Lenin noted that the super-profits from the colonies provided 'the material and economic basis for infecting the proletariat with colonial chauvinism'.⁹ In Britain Keir Hardie, one of the most prominent left-wingers in the infant Labour Party, approached the struggle of the Indian people from the point of view of the British Empire. Like the SPD Hardie wanted to reform his country's colonial system without dismantling its empire. In his 1907 tour of India, Hardie's advice to the colonial masses was to rely on constitutional change and to avoid actions which threatened the existing colonial structure.¹⁰ As far as the representatives of the British labour movement were concerned, Westminster was to be the instrument for improving the lot of the colonial people. In practice they proposed a 'positive colonial policy' which was to be implemented by the imperialist state. If the colonial peoples used force against imperialism they could expect no support from the Second International. For the social-chauvinists changes in the colonies had to be made through the political channels laid down by the bourgeois state. The emancipation of oppressed nations was considered to be wholly conditional on the requirements of the imperialist nation state.¹¹

The failure of the Second International to oppose colonialism paved the way for its collapse at the outbreak of the First World War. Once the labour movement had tolerated the aggression of its own state in Asia and Africa it was a short step to taking its side in the conflict in Europe. The collapse of the Second International confirmed Lenin in his view that an uncompromising battle against social-chauvinism was necessary. Lenin's analysis demonstrated that the material basis for this collapse lay in the rise of imperialism and the formation of a labour aristocracy. For Lenin a proletarian internationalist position on the imperialist war went hand in hand with a revolutionary approach to the colonial question. During the war years Lenin developed a clear understanding of the colonial question. He showed that the struggle of an oppressed people for national liberation was a class issue for the international proletariat. The core of his position was the demand for the right of nations to self-determination.

Lenin emphasised that colonial oppression was not an option that could be taken up or rejected by imperialism, but a necessity for capitalism at its highest stage. No matter what its form, political oppression of backward capitalist countries was essential for the development of imperialism. To see annexationist policies as incidental to imperialism led to the conclusion that it could be persuaded to shed its warlike features. Against Kautsky's subjective view of imperialism Lenin argued:

'The essence of the matter is that Kautsky detaches the politics of imperialism from its economics, speaks of annexations as a policy

"preferred" by finance capital, and opposes to it another bourgeois policy... the result is bourgeois reformism instead of Marxism.¹²

Because imperialism must of necessity oppress colonial peoples, their struggle for national liberation must have an anti-capitalist character. This is the revolutionary significance of the demand for the right of nations to self-determination.

The essence of imperialism lies in its division of the world into oppressor and oppressed nations. The struggle of an oppressed nation for national liberation has a democratic content which the working class of the oppressor nation must support. Lenin wrote:

'Imperialism means the progressively mounting oppression of the nations of the world by a handful of great powers... the focal point in the Social-Democratic programme must be that division of nations into oppressor and oppressed which forms the essence of imperialism. ... It is from this division that our definition of the "right of nations to self-determination" must follow, a definition that is consistently democratic, revolutionary, and in accord with the general task of the immediate struggle for socialism.'¹³

In an oppressor nation, revolutionaries are not worthy of the name unless they fight for the right to self-determination of nations oppressed by their own nation state:

'It is for that right, and in a struggle to achieve sincere recognition for it, that the Social-Democrats of the oppressor nations must demand that the oppressed nations should have the right of secession, for otherwise recognition of equal rights for nations and of international working-class solidarity would in fact be merely empty phrase-mongering, sheer hypocrisy.'¹⁴

Solidarity with the struggles of oppressed nations is essential for building proletarian internationalism in the oppressor country. This act of solidarity is not a favour which the working class of an oppressor nation extends to oppressed nations but is of crucial importance to the struggles of the proletariat in the imperialist heartland. Lenin wrote:

'Marx demanded the separation of Ireland from Britain... not... from considerations of "justice for Ireland" but from the standpoint of the interests of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat of the oppressor, i.e. British, nation against capitalism. The freedom of that nation has been cramped and mutilated by the fact that it has oppressed another nation. The British proletariat's internationalism would remain a hypocritical phrase if they did not demand the separation of Ireland.'¹⁵

For Lenin, as for Marx, the need for the British proletariat to fight for the self-determination of Ireland is based not on liberal moralism but on acute awareness that acceptance of imperialist oppression ideologically subordinates the working class to its own bourgeoisie.¹⁶ The working class cannot defend its interests as a class as long as it acquiesces in Britain's oppression of Ireland. This means that the working class of an oppressor nation cannot restrict its solidarity to resolutions and pledges of support, but must actively challenge imperialism and social-chauvinist ideas at home. One of the major gains of the Bolshevik struggle to build the Third International was the formulation of clear guidelines on this question for revolutionaries in oppressor nations.¹⁷

In this article we do not deal with the tactics and strategy that revolutionaries in an oppressed nation must pursue. As we have said, the struggle against imperialist oppression has a progressive content that all revolutionaries must support. Communists support the nationalism of the oppressed insofar as it is directed against their oppressors. Precisely because the struggle for national liberation involves a combination of classes with different interests, some on the left have sought to counterpose the struggle for socialism to the struggle for national self-determination. Lenin argued that if revolutionaries in an oppressed nation do not give a lead to the nationalism of the oppressed, then it will be dominated by the bourgeoisie who will degrade the struggle in favour of its own class

interest:

'To the workers the important thing is to distinguish the principles of the two trends. Insofar as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation fights the oppressor, we are always, in every case, and more strongly than anywhere else, in favour, for we are the staunchest and the most consistent enemies of repression. But insofar as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation stands for its own bourgeois national-

- 1 See V L Lidtke, *The Outlawed Party, Social Democracy in Germany 1878-1890*, Princeton, 1966, p196.
- 2 Engels wrote to Kautsky in 1882: 'You ask me what the English workers think about colonial policy. Well exactly the same as they think about politics in general: the same as the bourgeoisie think... the workers are cheerfully consuming their share of England's monopoly of the world market and the colonies.... One thing alone is certain: the victorious proletariat can force no blessings of any kind upon any foreign nation without undermining its own victory by so doing.' *Marx-Engels Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1975, pp330-31.
- 3 '... the German people has a great interest in this — that China should not be the prey of other nations... that China's commercial policy should not be subordinated to the interest of a single power or a coalition of foreign powers — in short, that in all questions concerning China, Germany should have a word to say,' E Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism*, New York, 1975, p173.
- 4 Van Kol advanced the most coherent reformist standpoint on the colonial question. For a presentation of his ideas see F Tishelman, 'Pays Bas: La Social-Démocratie Hollandaise et L'Indonésie 1897-1907', in G Haupt and M Reberieux, eds, *La Deuxième Internationale et l'Orient*, Paris, 1967.
- 5 Quoted in G D H Cole, *The Second International*, Part 1, London, 1956, pp70-71.
- 6 V I Lenin, 'The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart', *CW13*, Moscow, 1972, p70. All references are to V I Lenin, *Collected Works*, 4th Edition, Moscow, 1972.
- 7 The financial burden of the Irish War is a theme of opportunists in the British Labour movement today. British social democracy's fierce critic, the Workers Socialist League (WSL), informs us that 'we have to explain that spending on the Irish war, running into millions contributes to the cuts in social services, housing, health and much else. We have to demand that all spending on this war be stopped immediately'. The CPGB notes that 'The cost of this policy of repression has been the loss of hundreds of lives and the squandering of millions of pounds'. See *Socialist Press*, 11 February 1976, and the draft *British Road to Socialism*, 1977.
- 8 Quoted in G D Crothers, *The German Elections of 1907*, New York, 1968, p151.
- 9 Lenin, op cit, p77.
- 10 See G Fisher, 'Grande Bretagne: Le Parti Travalliste et L'Inde 1905-1914' in G Haupt and M Reberieux, op cit.
- 11 During the Second World War, the CPGB reprimanded the Indian people for their struggle against British imperialism. 'Now is not the time' it said. See F Richards, *Under a National Flag—Fascism, Racism and the Labour Movement*, RCT, 1978, pp13-15.
- 12 V I Lenin, 'Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism', *CW22*, p270.
- 13 V I Lenin, 'The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination', *CW21*, p409.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Ibid, p410.
- 16 The centrality of the struggle against chauvinism in the oppressor nation is drawn out by Lenin: 'The view that a struggle must be conducted against social-chauvinism of the dominant nations, who are now engaged in an imperialist war to enhance the oppression of nations, and are now oppressing most of the world's nations and most of the earth's population — this view must be decisive, cardinal and basic in the national programme of Social-Democracy.' Ibid, pp410-11.
- 17 See 'Theses on the National and Colonial Question', *The Second Congress of the Communist International*, Vol 1, London, 1977.

ism, we stand against. We fight against the privileges and violence of the oppressor nation, and do not in any way condone strivings for privileges on the part of the oppressed nation.¹

In an oppressed nation the struggle for socialism cannot be achieved without the struggle for national liberation:

'To imagine that social revolution is *conceivable* without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without revolutionary outbursts by a section of the petty bourgeoisie *with all its prejudices*, without a movement of the politically non-conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against oppression by the landowners, the church, and the monarchy, against national oppression, etc — to imagine all this is to *repudiate social revolution*.'²

It should be noted that while revolutionaries in an oppressed nation may, in the interest of the world revolutionary movement, oppose the *exercise* of its right to self-determination, the duty of revolutionaries in an oppressor nation is *always* to support the *right* of an oppressed nation to self-determination.

3. The revolutionary position clarified

The defeats of the working class in the 1920s and 1930s, which were reflected in the degeneration of the Third International, led to the abandonment of the revolutionary position on colonialism. Though the official communist movement still gave formal support to the right of the colonial peoples to self-determination, in practice this support was considerably qualified. During the Second World War, the western communist and social democratic parties asked colonial peoples to postpone their struggle for the moment — in the interest of democracy of course.

In this period Marxism was virtually destroyed in the European labour movement. Today there is considerable confusion about the attitude that the working class should adopt towards national liberation movements. Nobody now calls directly for a positive colonial policy: everybody on the left makes formal declarations supporting the right of nations to self-determination. Even the CPGB mouths the slogan from time to time — but in practice it calls on the British state to introduce progressive legislation for the Six Counties and to provide money for a Better Life for All.³ At least Bernstein and Van Kol did not disguise their social-chauvinism by talking of self-determination.

Internationalist solidarity with the struggle of the Irish people stems from an understanding of the distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations. The failure to make this distinction leads to an equation of the nationalism of the oppressor with that of the oppressed.⁴ This represents a capitulation to the social-chauvinism in the imperialist nation. By eradicating the distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations, opportunists ignore the political oppression exercised by imperialist countries. However, Ireland is not merely economically dominated by foreign capital: it is politically oppressed by British imperialism. To obscure this point — to make abstract calls for a common front between Irish and British trade unionists against the same enemy, the multi-nationals and monopoly capitalism — is to draw a socialist veil over Britain's political oppression of Ireland.

The hallmark of opportunism on the Irish issue is neglect of the national question, along with the argument that 'socialism' is the answer. Organisations from the CPGB to the WRP would prefer the Irish to forget about their national oppression. By wishing away the nationalism of the oppressed, these organisations merely advance a radical form of social-chauvinism. SWP leader Tony Cliff argues:

'I would never dream that it is the job of the British workers to tell the Irish workers how to fight. But let's be clear. If there is a march for the right to work in Britain, I don't see any reason at all

why there shouldn't be a march from Dublin to Belfast on the question of unemployment...'⁵

But the SWP does tell Irish workers how to fight. It tells them to do what it tells British workers to do: be good trade unionists! The *national* oppression of Ireland by Britain is completely ignored.

Denouncing the 'crimes' of the Provisionals, the CPGB draws out the chauvinist logic of Cliff's position. Referring to the struggle of the Irish people for democratic rights, it observes: 'We in Britain have a crucial part to play in that struggle. It is a struggle against the same big business monopolies as exploit us here'.⁶ For the CPGB 'the same big business monopolies' are used to obscure the fact that the Irish are not merely exploited but are politically oppressed. This repudiation of the nationalism of the oppressed is an outright defence of British imperialism.

The failure to distinguish between oppressed and oppressor nations has left many genuine socialists confused about the relationship between the nationalism of the oppressed and nationalism in general. But internationalism is inseparable from supporting the struggles of an oppressed people for national liberation. Every organisation which counterposes internationalism to the struggle for national liberation inevitably adapts to social-chauvinism. Unlike many of its radical co-thinkers, the Spartacist League has given a particularly clear codification to this form of opportunism. Its leader James Robertson speculates:

'Life is complicated comrades... What we are seeking to do is to defend the core of revolutionary Marxism, the *proletarian* solution, against those who would simply embrace the "good" nation against the "bad" nation.'⁷

Life is so complicated for Robertson that the Leninist distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations is too much to handle. The 'core of revolutionary Marxism', the 'proletarian solution', is the profound liberal insight that all is not perfect in oppressed nations and all is not hopeless in the oppressor nations. Sentiment replaces science; the fundamental difference between oppressed and oppressors is obliterated. Indeed life is so complicated that the real conditions of political oppression faced by the Irish can be waved aside with an anecdote:

'How many of you have had the same experience that I have had, of working with young militants, either Ulstermen or from the Republic of Ireland? As soon as they're broken from the nationalist ideologies, and you encounter them and work with them as comrades outside that poor island, they are simply components of the English speaking nation.'⁸

At a time when the Irish people face daily political oppression at the hand of British imperialism, any talk of the Irish as simply 'components of the English speaking nation' is totally reactionary. Speaking of these 'internationalists' who ask oppressed nations to forget their nationality, Engels remarked:

'If members of a conquering nation called upon the nation they had conquered and continued to hold down to forget their specific nationality and position, to "sink national differences" and so forth, that was not Internationalism, it was nothing else but preaching to them submission to the yoke, and attempting to justify and to perpetuate the dominion of the conqueror under the cloak of Internationalism.'⁹

Neglect of the distinction between the nationalism of the oppressed and that of the oppressor means that solidarity with the Irish people can be no more than concern for human welfare — a position entirely acceptable to British imperialism.

4. Solidarity with the Irish people: what it means

Because Ireland is an oppressed nation it cannot advance on the road to socialism while Britain's political domination continues. Therefore the struggle against British imperialism in Ireland is *progressive*. The fight against the political domination of Ireland by Britain is one that revolutionaries must *unconditionally* support. What does unconditional support mean? Lenin wrote:

'The bourgeois nationalism of any oppressed nation has a general democratic content that is directed *against* oppression, and it is this content that we *unconditionally* support.'¹⁰

Support for the democratic content of this struggle expresses solidarity with the anti-imperialist struggle of the Irish. When bourgeois and petit-bourgeois nationalists divert the struggle for national liberation from its anti-imperialist course, revolutionaries have a duty to criticise this degradation of the fight for self-determination. However it is not the nationalist movement that revolutionaries criticise, but its degradation.

'Not infrequently... we find the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations *talking* of national revolt, while in practice it enters into reactionary compacts with the bourgeoisie of the oppressor nation behind the backs of, and *against*, its own people. In such cases the criticism of revolutionary Marxists should be directed not against the national movement, but against its degradation, vulgarisation, against the tendency to reduce it to a petty squabble.'¹¹

It is necessary to emphasise this point because the degradation of the national struggle by the Irish bourgeoisie is often used as an excuse to denounce the Irish national movement itself. Opportunists raise the bogey of 'Green' nationalism, making the radical suggestion that Irish workers will be just as exploited by their own bourgeoisie as they now are by British imperialism. The recognition of capitalist exploitation in Ireland absolves these 'socialists' from the responsibility of supporting the struggle against national oppression.

Unconditional support for the struggle of the Irish for self-determination means unconditional support. It means supporting the struggle against British imperialism *irrespective of the form that struggle takes*. 'National self-determination is the same as the struggle for complete national liberation, for complete independence, against annexation, and socialists *cannot*—without ceasing to be socialists—reject *such* a struggle in whatever form, right down to an uprising or war.'¹² To denounce the *form* the struggle for national liberation assumes is to put conditions on that struggle and render solidarity meaningless. Denunciations of particular forms of armed tactics, such as assassinations or bombing campaigns, reflect an equivocal attitude towards wars of liberation. By its very nature, a war inflicts violence on civilians and can have tragic consequences. To denounce these acts of violence is to denounce violence in the abstract. It is to abandon a class assessment of violence. It results in the equation of the violence of the oppressed with that of the oppressors.

After the bombing of a Birmingham pub in 1974, *Socialist Worker's* front page headline was 'All socialists must condemn these senseless killings'.¹³ This was a spineless capitulation to public hysteria whipped up by the bourgeoisie. Logically, such a position leads to the renunciation of class violence altogether.

Revolutionary communists have a duty to criticise *Éire Nua*, the programme of the Provisional Sinn Féin, because it fails to place the struggle for national liberation on a consistent anti-imperialist basis. The outcome of the struggle in Ireland depends on the liberation movement developing a programme on a firm internationalist foundation. This is a matter with which the world proletariat is concerned. However, the struggle waged by the Provisionals against British

imperialism must be supported unconditionally by revolutionaries in Britain. Given the strength of chauvinism amongst all classes in Britain, criticism of particular tactics of the Provisionals can only represent a concession to bourgeois outrage—the bourgeois propaganda which portrays the liberation movement as a mere 'handful of terrorists'.

The radical left's 'criticism' of the Provisionals shows that it has accepted the language and notions of the bourgeoisie. After criticising the La Mon House bombing, *Socialist Worker* argued: 'This was an act done out of desperation: desperation at discrimination in housing and jobs, desperation at the beatings, the shootings, the torture and the dragging away of the young men in the middle of the night'.¹⁴ In liberal fashion, the SWP uses bourgeois psychology to explain the struggle for elementary democratic rights.

In order to justify its 'criticisms' of IRA tactics, the radical left distorts reality. It makes the point that Marxists have always been against individual terror and conspiracies. This argument simply reinforces bourgeois propaganda that the Irish 'troubles' are the work of a few psychopaths. But the military operations of the IRA are not acts of individual terrorism: the Provisionals are leading the struggle of the Irish people and represent the only significant force that can defend the Catholic minority from loyalist pogroms. To label as individual terrorism the armed struggle of the Provisionals is to join the bourgeois chorus against terror. *Socialist Worker* justifies its disgusting response to the Birmingham bombings in this way:

'Marxists have always argued that the violence of small, conspiratorial groups set apart from the mass of workers cannot change society towards socialism. Even if such actions are successful in killing a particular nasty ruler thousands more will be ready to take his place. If innocent bystanders are hurt in the process, the result is a needless loss of life that turns people against the very idea of social change.'¹⁵

Socialist Worker equivocates over the Irish struggle. Can it really be that the thousands of Irish men and women who have been killed, tortured and imprisoned in the war in the Six

1 V I Lenin, 'The Right of Nations to Self-Determination', *CW20*, pp411-12.

2 V I Lenin, 'The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up', *CW22*, p355.

3 See *Morning Star*, 14 February 1978.

4 'what petty-bourgeois nationalism means by internationalism is the mere equality of nations... which leaves national egoism untouched.'—'Theses on the National and Colonial Question', op cit, p180.

5 Speech quoted in *Socialist Challenge*, 9 February 1978. The Spartacist League does not like Tony Cliff. Nevertheless, it calls for 'a British Isles-wide trade union federation as a method of promoting joint struggle and cutting across the divisions in the working class in Ireland'. Perhaps the Spartacist League should cut across the Atlantic or the Irish Sea and find out for itself how the British TUC reinforces Westminster's hold over Ireland through its various affiliates—UCATT, NGA, ASTMS, NUS and others. See 'Theses on Ireland', *Spartacist*, Autumn 1977, p21.

6 *Morning Star*, 20 February 1978.

7 'Workers Must Crush Sectarian Terror', Supplemental Remarks by James Robertson, in *Spartacist*, op cit, pp15-16.

8 Ibid.

9 Engels' record of his report at the General Council meeting of 14 May 1872, in K Marx and F Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*, Moscow, 1971, p303.

10 Lenin, op cit, *CW20*, p412.

11 V I Lenin, 'A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism', *CW23*, p61.

12 Ibid, p34.

13 *Socialist Worker*, 30 November 1974.

14 *Socialist Worker*, 25 February 1978.

15 *Socialist Worker*, 30 November 1974.

Counties are 'small conspiratorial groups'? *Socialist Worker* explicitly distorts Trotsky's approach to terror. His was a working class standpoint: 'under conditions of civil war, the assassination of individual oppressors ceases to be an act of individual terror'.¹ In his day Lenin criticised those opportunists who characterised the Easter Rising in Dublin as a 'putsch':

'The term "putsch", in the scientific sense, may be employed only when the attempt at insurrection has revealed nothing but a circle of conspirators or stupid maniacs, and has aroused no sympathy among the masses. The centuries-old Irish national movement... also manifested itself in street fighting conducted by a section of the urban petty bourgeoisie and a section of the workers after a long period of mass agitation, demonstrations.... Whoever calls such a rebellion a "putsch" is either a hardened reactionary, or a doctrinaire hopelessly incapable of envisaging a social revolution as a living phenomenon.'²

Criticism of the 'individual terrorism' of the Provisionals reveals an inability to locate terror within a class perspective. The logic of this position is to ask the Irish to give up the armed struggle, or at least to restrict it to the Catholic ghettos.³ The radical left's 'solidarity' with the Irish struggle has no revolutionary content. Criticisms of 'individual terrorism' must be seen in terms of the concrete conditions of today. Why are they made? Does the British working class have illusions in individual terrorism — or is this issue raised by the British left in order to disassociate itself from a war of national liberation against the British state? Why is it that these critics seldom if ever criticise the bombs that go off in Chile, Argentina, South Africa, Zimbabwe or Israel? Our socialists can recognise a war of national liberation only when it is over 1000 miles away. In this way they undermine internationalism in the working class.

The task of internationalists in Britain is not to bemoan the absence of revolutionary leadership in Ireland but to act as revolutionaries against their own bourgeoisie. This means actively supporting the struggle for national liberation that is going on now. Solidarity with the struggle of the Irish people — the unconditional support of the democratic content of that struggle — means challenging British imperialism and social-chauvinism in the labour movement.⁴ Not to attack the right of the British state to oppress the Irish people is to turn solidarity into an empty phrase.

5. The Tribunal — the radical left gives colonial policy a positive content

The equivocation of the radical left over the struggle of the Irish people finds a clear expression in its practical activity on this issue. Formally, most radical left groups accept the two revolutionary demands 'Self-determination for the Irish People' and 'Troops Out Now'. However, when we look closer we find that these demands have a wholly rhetorical status in their campaigns. In the past four years almost all the 'events' organised by the radical left on the question of Ireland have been publicised without these slogans. The IMG explains why:

'The Tribunal, the United TOM and other related activities on the Irish question must do all it can to involve as many people, individuals and organisations. This implies the planning, building and attendance at such activities should be non-exclusive.'⁵

In Britain an anti-imperialist movement on the Irish question can only be built on a class conscious basis: to be worthy of the name, an anti-imperialist movement must confront the British bourgeois state. That is why the IMG desires to reduce opposition to Britain's oppression of Ireland to the lowest common denominator — to a publicity stunt that is an unprincipled move born of desperation and it can never

lay the basis for an anti-imperialist movement.

Liberal circles in Britain have recently expressed concern about 'human rights'. The American State Department has been particularly interested in this question, since discussions of brutality which go beyond the capitalist norm serve to obscure the class content of the day-to-day oppression meted out by imperialism. The Tribunal is an attempt to draw attention to Ireland on the basis of appealing to those worried about 'human rights'. Unlike previous radical left campaigns, this initiative makes no pretence of challenging British imperialism and its political oppression of the Irish people. The IMG argues that 'the potential of the Tribunal must be grasped. The renewed debate on human rights throughout the world gives an opportunity to internationalise the Tribunal'.⁶ By now we are a long way from any consideration of British imperialism. But the end is not in sight. In January 1978 the IMG and the SWP discovered that the name 'International Tribunal on British Crimes in Ireland' was too exclusive: it prejudged British imperialism. In true statesman-like fashion they changed the name to 'International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland'.⁷

For our part the change of name has only a symptomatic significance. Whatever its name, the Tribunal will not contribute to the building of an anti-imperialist movement. The question at stake is not human rights, but the suppression of the democratic rights of the Irish by British imperialism. To build an anti-imperialist movement in the working class is to break it from its identification with the British state. The position people take on Britain's domination of Ireland depends on how they perceive their class interests, not on the findings of an 'independent' investigation.

The mimics of bourgeois jurisprudence who support the Tribunal are anxious about 'streams of allegations concerning aspects of Britain's presence in Ireland'.⁸ The radical left forgets that terms like 'presence' have a class content. Whether people of a particular class condemn or support repression depends on how they perceive their class interests. While our independent investigators moralise that they 'believe that the exercise of military, judicial and political control in the northern Six Counties has disturbing implications for civil and human rights',⁹ the bourgeoisie approaches the question strictly from the point of view of its class interests. Commenting on the European Court's decision on 'allegations' of British torture *The Daily Telegraph*, a strident voice of the bourgeoisie, says

'The Court did find that the "deep interrogation" methods complained of and now forever forsworn by the British Government were "inhuman and degrading"'. It also recognised the immense contribution they made to the anti-terrorist campaign. Can states threatened by anarchy be properly and realistically expected not to employ such methods?'¹⁰

The bourgeoisie does not recognise 'human rights' in the abstract — the question is whether torture and terror advances its class interests. The working class should emulate this attitude. As long as the labour movement maintains its identification with the British state, 'facts' will not win British workers to a position of solidarity with the struggles of the Irish.

No Tribunal can be 'independent' from the class struggle. Childish prattle about independence can only reinforce the domination of bourgeois ideology over the working class.¹¹ The radical left has real illusions in bourgeois justice. On 11 January 1978 *Socialist Challenge* noted that:

'The launching of the International Tribunal coincides with the announcement of the verdict by the European Court in which Britain is being tried for torture.... The verdict is expected to further embarrass Britain....'¹²

To the IMG's surprise the verdict did not embarrass Britain: a week later it lamented 'European Court abolishes human rights'.¹³ Much to its chagrin, the IMG discovered that,

honest, you can't get a fair trial anywhere these days. But the radical left's faith in the independence of the judiciary is still unshaken. Abandoned by the European Court of Human Rights, it takes its case elsewhere:

'In December 1977 investigators from Amnesty International (recipients of the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1977) visited Northern Ireland to examine the continuous reports of physical and psychological torture at the British government interrogation centre in Castle-reagh, outside Belfast. The launching of the Tribunal can only aid such investigations.'¹⁴

Any attempt to aid the investigations of the liberals at Amnesty International only reinforces the prejudice that bourgeois repression can be exposed by a neutral and disinterested body. We can assure the radical left that Amnesty International will be very efficient at exposing torture in Chile or the Soviet Union. But where the British state is directly involved, as in Ireland, it will exercise a sense of proportion and understanding.¹⁵

It is not that the Tribunal 'does not go far enough': *it is going in entirely the wrong direction*. The Tribunal not only fails to challenge imperialism: it actually accommodates to imperialism. The Tribunal reinforces the notion that British imperialism could 'play fair' in Ireland. Justifying their initiative, the organisers of the Tribunal argue that the British people must 'uphold human rights and call their own government to account in the event of any violations',¹⁶ particularly in the light of the 'apparent absence of any determination on the part of responsible authorities to deal with allegations of abuse of power'.¹⁷ It is the *abuse of power*, not the *power of Britain over Ireland itself*, that is questioned. It is the *violations* involved in Britain's 'presence' in Ireland that are questioned — not this presence itself. This wretched opportunism suggests that the 'determination' shown by 'responsible authorities' has a role to play in Ireland. Let us look at the determination of the authority who is most responsible for Britain's presence in Ireland — Roy Mason:

'We are squeezing the terrorists like rolling up a toothpaste tube. We are squeezing them out of their safe havens. We are squeezing them away from their supplies of money and explosives. We are squeezing them out of society and into prison.'¹⁸

It is only appropriate that this 'independent' Tribunal has asked Roy Mason to make a submission. The Tribunal is indeed non-exclusive. Its non-exclusive approach turns out to be a reformist one of trying to *moderate* oppression, not to end it. It accepts political oppression but takes issue only with its extreme forms. The radical left gives today's colonial policy a positive content.

Supporters of the Tribunal will say: 'Yes, we know about imperialism, but at least we are bringing the facts to people's attention'. But 'facts', just like terror or justice, have a class content; they are presented either from the standpoint of the proletariat or from that of the bourgeoisie. As long as the labour movement accepts the right of the British state to oppress the Irish, it will accept the means that are necessary to maintain this domination. Appeals to human justice do not stir the conscience of Social Democracy. In 1974, the Labour Party Conference supported the Prevention of Terrorism Act because it recognised 'the urgent need to protect our people from the terrorism which is now spilling over from Northern Ireland. The new powers being taken by the Government are temporary (sic): they will lapse after six months'.¹⁹ 'Facts' can only defend the interests of the working class if they are presented from an anti-imperialist perspective. And it is exactly the difficult question of imperialism that the Tribunal delicately avoids. Without challenging the right of the British state to oppress the Irish, people will interpret the facts in accordance with bourgeois public opinion. We have no reason to question the worthy motives of the supporters of the Tribunal. But their attempt to raise the question of Ireland on this 'non-exclusive' basis leaves the interests of the working class in the hands of petit-bourgeois moralists.²⁰ The moral

distaste for terror that we saw earlier is translated by the Tribunal into the language of the law courts.

Revolutionaries do not begin with the question of whether a movement is 'exclusive' or not. Their starting point is the establishment of the political foundations for a movement that can provide *real* solidarity with the struggles of the Irish people. We are against the 'non-exclusive' Tribunal of the radical left, not because we are doctrinaire, but because an event based on petit-bourgeois moralising *excludes* the building of an anti-imperialist movement. Imperialism is a tricky question, but the failure to challenge the right of the British state to oppress Ireland means that internationalism has no content.

In Britain there is little opposition to bourgeois public opinion on Ireland. The absence of an anti-imperialist current in the labour movement indicates that the working class does not have an independent position on Ireland. Is the problem 'Green' nationalism? Is the problem 'individual terrorism'? Is the problem that the working class does not know the 'facts'? Or is it that nationalism in the labour movement goes unchallenged, and that when the question of Ireland is raised, trade unionists look to the state to solve it?

For revolutionary communists there can be no equivocation on Ireland. Solidarity with the struggle of the Irish people can be effective only if an anti-imperialist movement is built in the working class. Moral indignation will not convince British workers that their cause is the same as that of the Irish people. Workers will only be won to a position of solidarity when they question the right of the British state to oppress Ireland — when they understand that the interests of the bourgeois state are fundamentally antagonistic to those of the proletariat. Such opposition to the British state will not develop overnight.

In order to build an anti-imperialist movement, communists must ensure that working class opposition to various aspects of the bourgeois strategy in Ireland is transformed into a conscious internationalist vanguard. This process of training a vanguard will only take place through the struggle for a revolutionary position on Ireland. History will not be tricked by 'credible' tribunals. The struggle for the two demands, 'Troops Out Now' and 'Self-determination for the Irish People', draws out the link between the independent interests of the British working class and those of the Irish people. Those who are seriously concerned with the oppression of the Irish must make a choice. They can appeal to bourgeois fair play or they can contribute to the building of working class opposition to imperialism.

Frank Richards

- 1 L Trotsky, *Their Morals and Ours*, New Park, 1968, p46. Commenting on the La Mon House bombing the WSL makes the profound observation: 'Individual acts of terrorism will not defeat British Imperialism'. See *Socialist Press*, 8 March 1978. In the worst traditions of the Second International, the WSL's sister organisation, the WRP, makes the reactionary note that the 'practical political effects of individual terror... play into the hands of the imperialist enemy'. See *The News Line*, 22 February 1978.
- 2 Lenin, op cit, CW22, p355.
- 3 'But the bombing of places frequented by ordinary workers cannot in any sense contribute to the defence of the Catholic areas or to the driving out of British troops.' See *Socialist Worker*, 30 November 1974.
- 4 The substance of this approach is summed up in the two revolutionary demands, 'Troops Out Now' and 'Self-determination for

- the Irish People'. Lenin had this to say about the demand for the separation of Ireland from Britain: 'Actually, however, this demand *alone* presented a consistently revolutionary programme; it alone was in accord with internationalism; it alone advocated concentration along non-imperialist lines.' Lenin, op cit, *CW21*, p410.
- 5 *Socialist Challenge*, 30 June 1977, p10. In a polemic against revolutionaries in the old Troops Out Movement, who insisted that it mobilise on the demands 'Self-determination for the Irish People' and 'Troops Out Now', the IMG explained: 'It is no use and no help at all to make your principles a barrier to convince others that those principles are right.' 'Troops Out — How?', *Red Weekly*, 29 January 1976.
 - 6 *Socialist Challenge*, 30 June 1977.
 - 7 In diplomatic fashion this change of name was never raised by *Socialist Challenge* or *Socialist Worker*. Except for the newly headed notepaper and leaflets, history will have no record of this amicable settlement. Our information is based on notes taken by the RCT at the planning committee meeting of the Tribunal on 17 January 1978. The change in name was justified on the grounds that the word 'crimes' prejudices the issue: what was wanted was a 'credible' (sic) International Tribunal.
 - 8 'Student Appeal Form', International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland.
 - 9 'International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland — Appeal for International Support for Tribunal', March 1978.
 - 10 *The Daily Telegraph*, 19 January 1978.
 - 11 Trotsky wrote: 'The bourgeoisie, which far surpasses the proletariat in the completeness and irreconcilability of its class consciousness, is vitally interested in imposing *its* moral philosophy upon the exploited masses. It is exactly for this purpose that the concrete norms of the bourgeois catechisms are concealed under moral abstractions patronised by religion, philosophy, or that hybrid which is called "common-sense". The appeal to abstract norms is not a disinterested philosophic mistake but a necessary element in the mechanics of class deception. The exposure of this deceit which retains the tradition of thousands of years is the first duty of a proletarian revolutionist.' Trotsky, op cit, p15.
 - 12 *Socialist Challenge*, 19 January 1978.
 - 13 *Socialist Challenge*, 26 January 1978. So wedded is the IMG to the intricacies of the power of the law that it actually believes that the European Court can abolish human rights. Perhaps the IMG can set up teams to monitor the implementation of the Helsinki agreements in Britain.
 - 14 'International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland', op cit.
 - 15 Patrons of Amnesty International include such illustrious friends of the Irish people as Lord Gardiner, who recommended the ending of political status for republican freedom fighters, and Harold Wilson, who implemented this recommendation. For the republican assessment of Amnesty, see *An Phoblacht*, 4 January 1978.
 - 16 'Join Us', International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland.
 - 17 'International Tribunal...', op cit.
 - 18 Roy Mason in an interview by Chapman Pincher, *Daily Express*, 5 December 1977.
 - 19 'Statement by NEC of LP', approved by Conference 30 November 1974. In Appendix 8 of the *Report of the 1973 Annual Conference of Labour Party*, London, 1974.
 - 20 Trotsky wrote about petit-bourgeois moralists: 'They do not understand that morality is a function of the class struggle; that democratic morality corresponds to the epoch of liberal and progressive capitalism; that the sharpening of the class struggle in passing through its latest phase definitely and irrevocably destroyed this morality; that in its place came the morality of fascism on one side, on the other, the morality of proletarian revolution.' Trotsky, op cit, p17.

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