

FOR A SOCIALIST UNITED IRELAND

IRELAND

THE REAL ISSUES

BY JERRY LYNCH
Since the introduction of internment on August 9th last year, over 150 people have been killed in Northern Ireland, the vast majority civilians. This terrible statistic is part of the legacy of British imperialism in Ireland.

Internment, torture, arbitrary death, harassment of women and children, are common everyday occurrences in the Fogsides, the Ardoyne and the Falls. But the situation today, from the point of view of both the Ulster people and the interests of British monopoly capitalism, is different from any period since 1921. Though the full might of British imperialism has been unleashed, never before has there been such solidarity amongst the mass of the Catholic population.

MOVEMENT OF RESISTANCE

Years of despair and hopelessness have given way to a massive movement of resistance. Over 30,000 families throughout Northern Ireland are involved in the rent and rates strike. The disgust of the Catholic working class at the Tory policy of imprisonment without trial, charge, appeal or limit, has given rise to one of the biggest mass resistance campaigns in the history of Ireland.

But the problems of Ulster have not been confined to the Catholics. With unemployment now at its highest for 19 years, more than one man in ten in Northern Ireland is out of a job. And for the Tories, who give generous tax concessions to investors, there does not seem to be any immediate solution. "Half a dozen firms which between them would have provided another 1,200 jobs, are known to have cancelled or indefinitely postponed their plans to move in." (*Irish Times* 8.12.71)

The Tory Unionists, who have maintained a half-century of ruthless discrimination, and cynically fostered the lie of "a Protestant Parliament for a Protestant people" are now having to pay the cost. "So far the Northern Ireland Government has paid out more than £6 million in compensation to the owners of damaged premises... and it is calculated that claims that will result in settlements totalling more than another £10 million are still in the pipe-line." (*Irish Times* 6.12.71)

COMPULSORY DEDUCTIONS

The British Government is to pump a further \$50 million into the Northern Ireland economy as a result of the report made by Sir Alec Poynter last year. "Though the money is intended "to stimulate economic growth", it will scarcely pay for the debts incurred since August 9th. In an effort to recoup the losses from the mass resistance campaign, the Tory Unionist Government has rushed through Stormont the Payment of Debts (Emergency Powers) Act, which will enable them to make deductions from unemployment and sickness benefit, pensions and family allowances, even wages.

But Faulkner's political machine is crumbling, and even his party colleagues, Heath, Maundling and Carrington, though they advocate censorship of press and television and allow the army to use automatic weapons in the high density slums of Ulster's cities, cannot help him to return to the "good old days."

The effects of the political upheaval have been acutely felt south of the border. The crisis within the

ruling Fianna Fail party, the withdrawal of the troops from UN duty in Cyprus, and the simmering discontent in the cities and towns, indicate that Lynch, the chargé d'affaires of British imperialism in the 26 counties, may resort to even more repressive measures.

In the 26 counties too, severe economic recession is eating into the living standards of the working class. Unemployment and inflation are rampant. During 1971, unemployment in industry and services was twice that in 1970. Last year has been described as "...one of the most grating ever experienced by Irish exporters." (*Irish Times* 31.12.71) There has been no increase in industrial employment since the end of 1969.

At this crucial stage in the history of Ireland, it is vital that the Labour Movement intervenes with working-class policies. This special issue of *Writan* attempts to analyse the situation and pose a perspective for the development of a united Labour movement which will not serve the interests of British monopoly capitalism. There must be no concessions to the Tory parties.

INTERMENT MUST BE FOUGHT

As a priority, internment must be fought, because it is an attack on the working class. It is estimated by TU officials that there are members of every union affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and to the British TUC in Long Kesh and Crumlin Road jail. Many of the international unions, even George Meaney's American Federation of Labour, have spoken out against this violation of human rights. The ICTU and the TUC must adopt the policy to fight for an end to internment, and mobilise its massive membership. In Ireland, trade union membership, in proportion to population, is one of the highest in Western Europe.

Never before was it more vital that those issues such as unemployment, rising prices and EEC membership, which directly affect the working class, be fought with a socialist programme. There must be a break with the policies of Green Toryism on the one hand and Orange Toryism on the other. "The bomb and the bullet" must give way to a campaign for winning the Labour Movement to the ideas of socialism, because only in a united socialist Ireland, where the finance institutions and the major industries are owned and controlled by the Democratic Labour Movement can the problems of unemployment, slum housing and rising prices be solved for all workers, North and South.

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Falls Park Road, January 2nd - Troops Face Demonstration

LANDLORDS PROSPER FROM SLUM MISERY

By BRIDGET O'TOOLE

Well over 20,000 houses are standing empty in Northern Ireland and there is evidence that this figure is increasing.

Why, in a region well-known for its shortage of housing and the problems of severe overcrowding? The answer is one which points to the real division in Ulster society. The empty houses are to be found in working-class areas and in "recreation areas". Of those that are empty in working-class areas, some have been abandoned in the course of sectarian warfare, but most because they are no longer fit to live in. The houses in "recreation areas" are the second homes of the wealthy, near to the sea or a golf course, empty except for a few months of the year.

OVERCROWDED SLUMS

The majority of working people in Northern Ireland live in overcrowded conditions in houses that are old and lacking in basic amenities. Over half the houses in the province are over 50 years old, and over 35% are over 60 years old! It is an appalling fact that over half the households in Northern Ireland have no bath and no hot water. (Statistics collected by members of Soc Admin at NUU). In such conditions, it is children who suffer most in terms of disease

and drawbacks to educational development. But for the community as a whole, these are the conditions breeding the kind of anger and tension which leads to rioting. The rubble of fallen houses becomes ammunition to throw in riots; the waste spaces become a battlefield.

What kind of a life is it for a man on the dole, as so many are in Northern Ireland, trying to bring up his family in one or two rooms, with no job, no place to go? Is it surprising that sectarian bigots have been able to whip up this indignation into hatred and destructively angry? Time and again, Labour leaders have failed to take up the challenge of working-class militancy

MORE PRIVATE LANDLORDS

It will come as no surprise to learn that conditions like these are the result of the fact that in Northern Ireland, a higher percentage of people pay their rents to private landlords. And for fifty years of Unionist rule, the landlord has been protected, even from the kind of reforms brought in by Labour governments in Britain. In Northern Ireland, there is no Rent Act to protect the tenant of unfurnished property. Nor is there a rate rebate scheme as in Britain.

What, if anything, does the Stormont government propose to do about the shortage of houses and the slum conditions in which so many people live? A government report published in 1970 recognised that as many as 100,000 houses in the province were unfit for human habitation. But its building target for the next five years was a mere 75,000, of which only a very few were to replace existing slums. The Executive Committee of the NILP, in preparing its housing policy for the last annual conference, estimated that the actual



Dublin Slum Illustrates Even Worse Conditions South of the Border

PROTESTANTS

IRA statement

on sectarianism

By BRIAN KINKEAD

The crisis developing in the Catholic ghettos of Northern Ireland after the pogroms of 1969 was the pretext on which the Provisional IRA leadership emerged in January 1970. Because of the failure of the Official republican movement to provide adequate defence for the Catholic workers of Belfast and Derry from the invading B-specials, RUC and UVF mobs the previous August, big sections of the Catholic youth joined the Provisionals.

After this pogrom, in which Catholics were shot and their homes burned, the appeal of the Provisional IRA to many young workers in the afflicted areas was great. The sight of the British Army occupying the Falls and the Bogside, coupled with rising unemployment and deplorable housing and the reluctance of the Unionist Government to introduce reforms was an even bigger incentive.

The courage shown by many of the IRA rank and file, in fighting the British Army will not be forgotten. Never again will there be a repetition of August 1969, when half a dozen brave men were left to defend all the Falls against the rampaging B-specials and their allies.

IRISH WORKERS DIVIDED

In the last two years, however, many developments have taken place. The most of these is the unprecedented extent to which Irish workers have now been divided. The only movement truly uniting Protestant and Catholic workers - the Irish Congress of Trade Unions - is being torn asunder by sectarianism. The result of this is that the Trade Unions' two political wings, the Irish Labour Party and the Northern Ireland Labour Party are being left at the mercy of liberals like David Bleakley and Conor Cruise O'Brien. The responsibility for this development must, to a certain extent, rest with the leadership of the Provisional IRA for deserting its links with the Labour movement. In the only advice the September issue of *An Phoblacht* recommends to Trade Unionists is to Gaelise their unions. In the present social and political conditions, such advice is not only trivial, but also downright sectarian.

This article is primarily addressed to the members of the Provisional IRA who may now be questioning the usefulness of some of the tactics advanced by the leadership to be used in fighting against British imperialism, and also to all those socialists and republicans who think that only through the use of the bomb and the gun will James Connolly's ideal of a Socialist Republic of Ireland be realised.

IRA SPLIT

In December 1969, when Ruairi O'Bradaigh, Sean MacStiofain and others walked out of Sinn Fein, they did so on the grounds that the aim of building a Socialist Republic of Ireland and all in the October 1968 riding the nation of our own boss (as well as the foreign ones) was not in keeping with their own traditional nationalism of the Arthur Griffith type. "We reject the atheistic Marxism propagated by the Goulding-MacGiolla clique," said a Provisional IRA statement in the October issue of *An Phoblacht*. The ideals of the Officials were too "extreme" for the Provisional leadership.

So instead, they proceeded to give their allegiance to the ideals of Blaney, Boland and Haughey. Realising that this Green Toryism was insufficient to maintain for themselves any long-lasting foothold in the North, they then displayed over their reactionary nationalism a thin veneer of socialism. However, this facade has been broken many times by the leadership themselves. Joe Cahill, when in America, admitted that the Provisionals were fighting for a republic without any 'socialist or communist' ideals, and MacStiofain declared in an interview with *The Observer* that he was violently anti left-wing.

SECTARIANISM OF PROVISIONALS

However much they may deny it, the leadership of the Provisionals have given their allegiance to the sectarianism of the right-wing Fianna Failers. In the November issue of *An Phoblacht* there is published an article by Father P.F. Malone who, in reference to Protestant loyalists in the North, declares that by 'refusing to join the South, those British citizens should then be treated as refugees and transported to the UK where they can fly the Union Jack and worship Her Majesty to their hearts' content.

The military policy of the Provisional IRA leadership bears out their bigoted sectarianism and proves their indifference to the working class as a whole - Protestant and Catholic. Their attacks upon Protestant workers can only be seen as an attempt to provoke Protestant reprisals and civil war. The aim of such tactics is, in the long run, to make the stay of the British Army so expensive that the British Government would be forced to withdraw it.

In other words, instead of overthrowing British imperialism through the use of political and industrial activities of the working class, the leadership are attempting to overthrow it militarily. "On the military front our role has changed from a defensive role...to an offensive campaign of resistance in all parts

The petit bourgeoisie change their ideas like a man changes his shirt", Trotsky once wrote. Incapable of standing on firm principles and fighting against hostile and backward currents of thought in the workers' movement, the middle-class politician and middle-class political tendencies usually opportunistically bend under pressure. This often means that the position which was stubbornly defended yesterday is unceremoniously abandoned today without any explanation or attempt to justify the change in policy.

Such is the position of Conor Cruise O'Brien, a leader of the Irish Labour Party, and those "Marxist" tendencies who have embraced the "theory" that there are "two nations" in Ireland, a "Protestant nation" and a "Catholic nation". Invariably, these same tendencies in the past adopted the position of Catholic nationalists by implicitly characterising the Protestant population of the North as alien, sometimes as "colon" or at best as being incapable of rising to the same level of consciousness and fighting spirit as the Catholic workers. Conor Cruise O'Brien, for instance, wrote articles in 1969 praising uncritically the leaders of the 1916 uprising and the role of the Republicans in general, in the national independence struggle. Some of the "Marxist" sects, on the other hand, quoted articles of James Connolly in such a manner as to make him appear as the Catholic Nationalist par excellence.

WHAT IS A NATION?

The adoption of the "two nations" theory is born out of a despair that the present religious polarisation in Northern Ireland is fixed once and for all, that real unity between Catholic and Protestant workers cannot be achieved and consequently all that remains is to permanently fix these divisions by recognising two nations and two separate states. Such an analysis, at the same time as being profoundly pessimistic, does not stand up to any serious examination from a Socialist or Marxist standpoint. What is a nation?

Marxists do not characterise any assortment of individuals as a nation. Otherwise, any old group, religion etc would be able to arbitrarily declare itself a nation. Nations and the formation of the modern nation states, came into existence with the development of capitalism itself, with the breaking down of medieval particularism and a corresponding centralisation of capital, peoples and markets as a pre-condition for the development of the productive forces, i.e. science, technique and the organisation of labour. Historical change has shown that for a nation to emerge is viable and not subject to continual break up, it has to have certain common characteristics. These are a common language, a common territory, a common and quite distinct economic cohesion and a common culture. If any one of these factors is missing, then history has shown the tendency towards dissolution will be manifested at a certain stage.



JIM LARKIN: Fought for unity of Catholics and Protestants

In what way then does the Protestant "nation" meet these requirements? A common language? The proponents of the theory of "two nations", feeling their weakness on this question, are forced to harken back to the earlier part of the nineteenth century, to prove that there were two different languages spoken by Catholic and Protestant. Both now speak English as the major tongue. Irish is only used as a first language by a minority, even in the South.

A distinct national territory? Right from its inception, the six counties included two overwhelming Catholic counties, Fermanagh and Tyrone. The logic of a demand for a separate territory for the Protestants would be the establishment of a four county state, with a Protestant majority. The inclusion of Fermanagh and Tyrone in the six counties at the time of partition was because the Unionists themselves realised that their state was completely unviable

on the basis of the four counties. Economically also the the Unionist regime has always relied on the enormous subsidies of British imperialism.

What about a common culture? At the time of the plantations, the Protestant population emanated from a different culture from that of the native Irish. With the development of industry and a modern economy, the tendency towards the comingling of the Catholic and Protestant was only cut across by the British Imperialists, firstly by the deliberate fostering of sectarian divisions for political, military and economic reasons, and in the past by the deepening of the sectarian divide by the Paisleyites on the one side and the Provisional IRA on the other (as other articles in this issue show). More examples can be given to show that the Protestant worker considers himself as an Irishman, than can be adduced to prove any separate "nationality".

Connolly and Liam Mellows inside the Labour Parties, north and south of the border.

It would of course be wrong to call on the Provisional and Official rank and file to just lay down their arms and leave the Catholic areas defenceless again. But the individual terror campaign must end, and a start made organising a T.U. defence force as the only real defence of both Catholic and Protestant workers.



JOE CAHILL

"of the occupied area," said Sean MacStiofain at the recent Ard Fheis of the Provisionals. Martyrdom, instead of disciplined mass action, is the basis of such tactics. They arise from a fundamental lack of confidence in the potential of the working class to recognise the need to get rid of British imperialism, to struggle against it and overcome it. They express a certain amount of political and social defeatism.

The leadership of the Provisionals anti-democratic and elitist because it takes it upon itself to make all decisions concerning the oppressed without their conscious participation. They seek to replace the political and social activities of the workers with a "dual in the dark" between themselves and the British Army. Instead of raising the consciousness of the working class as a whole



RUAIRI O'BRADAIGH

the tactics of the Provisionals have tended only to make the mass of Catholic workers less active (note the deplorable attendance at the Falls Park rally on January 2nd), and to drive Protestant workers further into the camp of Unionism.

ADVENTURIST TACTICS

Such tactics are adventurist, because they try to compensate for the backwardness of the mass movement and the weakness of its leaders with violence. They are self-defeating, because not only do they inform and provocateurs, but also because they play into the hands of British imperialism and its agencies by enabling them to shift the responsibility for violence from themselves to the mass movement



SEAN MACSTIOFAIN

and thereby further increase repression

Of course it is true to say that these tactics have introduced a certain amount of confusion into British imperialism, but this confusion is only temporary, and when the British Government finds its "solution" and begins to implement it, the much deeper confusion introduced by the Provisional IRA into the ranks of the working class will leave them defenceless.

The only way to fight British imperialism is through class unity in a mass movement, and the only guarantee of long-term success is the Trade Union and Labour movement. But for this movement to be effective in the struggle to build a 32-county Socialist Republic of Ireland, socialists and republicans must fight for the ideals of James

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...the emerging Southern capitalist class... class objectively... reaction. This class... the case with the position of... the case with... which accept this "theory" and at the same time restrict themselves to calling for the "right of self-determination" for the Protestants without raising even once the idea of socialism as a way out of the crisis which faces Protestant and Catholic workers. In practice, they adopt the standpoint of Paisley and Craig, fuelling the sectarian fires with ill-considered arguments borrowed from Marxism.

A SOCIALIST UNITED IRELAND

The rank and file of the Irish Labour Movement, North and South, must reject these ideas, which are a barrier to the uniting of Protestant and Catholic workers in action against the Geoghan and Geoghan types alike. A united Ireland will be realised, but only on the basis of the socialist transformation of society. The Protestant workers can be won to the Geoghan and Geoghan type only on the basis of the unification of the country if this is linked to solutions to the problems he faces, i.e. unemployment, housing, education, starvation wages, etc. The only weapon which can bring this about is a united Labour Movement, which in the North alone is a quarter of a million strong. The giant will be aroused to action on a programme of socialist change which will, in the process, push aside the purveyors of those "Protestant nationalism" or "British nationalism" and their Catholic counterparts.

BANKRUPTCY OF THEORIES OF O'BRIEN AND "MARXIST" SETS

Thus the numerous Protestant Republican martyrs, beginning with Wolf Tone. And the Independent Grange Order which in 1906 and 1907 broke away from the Independent Grange Order, taking with it the majority of working class lodges in Belfast.

They linked up with James Larkin who was able to forge an alliance of Catholic and Protestant workers fighting together on class issues.

PROTESTANTS ARE IRISHMEN

The Manifesto of the Independent Grange Order, demonstrated that even the Catholic workers, who started off as a right wing, viciously sectarian organisation, considered themselves as Irishmen... "As Irishmen we do not seek to asperse the memory of the hallow dead (but)... to bridge the gulf that has so long divided Ireland into hostile camps, and to hold out the right hand of fellowship to those who, while worshipping at their shrines, are yet our fellow countrymen."

(from Emmet Larkin's biography of "James Larkin")

"Quite apart from this, in every 'national culture' there are in reality two cultures, one of the capitalists and landlords, and that of the workers, i.e. class solidarity and international brotherhood from the Catholic workers who fought together shoulder to shoulder on many occasions against their common exploiters.

The argument that the Protestant population must be a nation because there is a Protestant capitalist class in the North, arises from a complete misunderstanding of the national question from a Marxist and Socialist standpoint.

Firstly, there were Jewish capitalists in Russia before 1917, but this did not mean that at that stage there was a Jewish "nation". The Russian Marxists specifically rejected this idea, characterising the Jews as a specially oppressed caste. This development was closer in all respects to the Georgian worker and peasant than the Ukrainian Jew,

By PETER TAAFFE

save for the religious question. The religion of the Protestant worker is a reflection of the cultural conditions of the past. It can only continue to hold the worker in grip given the backwardness of the Labour movement in Northern Ireland, allied to the fact that some Labour leaders also seek to hold the worker in grip given the backwardness of the Protestant workers by the injection of false ideas about "Protestant nationalism".

IMPERIALISM DIVIDED IRELAND

Ireland was not divided, as is claimed by some, because of the separate development of a Protestant industrial capitalist class in Northern Ireland. The Unionist bosses were a component part of British imperialism. If the British ruling class could have guaranteed a limited "independence" for Ireland, while maintaining their military and political bases in Ireland, and an economic stranglehold, they would have been prepared to come to terms



in which there are 108,000 Northern Ireland workers, and the British Labour Party Conference voted with overwhelming majorities, their opposition to EEC entry. A motion of the Labour Party Conference calling for a Socialist Europe was only narrowly defeated.

The movement of the French workers in 1968, described in *Teoicic*, the theoretical organ of the Official Republican movement, as "the most recent case of a European country on the verge of revolution", the prolonged strikes in Italy, the protests of the farmers in Germany and Belgium all demonstrate that within Europe, there is a huge movement of opposition to the capitalist "free" enterprise system. There is no solution in going it alone. It is no good arguing "...if we increased trade with Eastern Europe, etc., or an independent basis etc..." Capitalists will invest anywhere where there is a possibility of profit, and with falling rates of profit and impending crises of capital in many western countries, inevitably there has been a total rethink of the rank and file realiser to the threat of intensified exploitation in the "enlarged community" is a campaign for a Socialist Europe.

The position of the Official IRA on the question of British troops has been totally opportunist. On the one hand they have asked the rank and file soldiers to desert; on the other they boast of the number of troops killed in retort to measures. In their letters to the soldiers they wrote "...You are here for two reasons...to protect the bosses, who are making fat profits while you go without sleep. The day is coming when you will find yourself doing the same job, though, Volherampton..."

What the Official IRA offered them was "...desert now", today Thomas MacGiolla recognises the need to campaign for Trade Unions within the ranks of the Official IRA. It is true that the troops are in Ulster to serve the interest of British monopoly capitalism. The rank and file soldiers being sent into confrontation with their class, should have the right to refuse. The troops in Ulster live in appalling conditions. To a class appeal to the troops must be linked the most fundamental class demand, Trade Union rights.

UNITY WITH BRITISH WORKERS

The organisations in Ireland today can be judged by their attitudes towards the British working class. Towards the British Labour movement The living standards of the Northern Ireland workers are being attacked by the Tory government. The Minister and Stormont in the interests of British capital. In this sense, the rights of the Catholics today in the Ulster will tomorrow be the rights of the Protestants in Glasgow, Cardiff and Liverpool. In answer to the criminal campaign for a united Ireland by the Provisionals, to launch a campaign

BY PINN GEANEY AND ALEX WOOD

ing campaign in Britain, the Officials replied "At the present time of crisis for the Tories in Britain and the Tories in Ireland, the rank and file workers, and mass resistance on a national scale to the Industrial Relations Bill, we have an unique opportunity to mobilise working class opinion against parallel repression in the 6 counties." (*Irish Times* 16.8.71)

FIGHT UNIONIST MACHINE

The bombing campaign of the Provisionals can only lead to disaster, but on the other hand, working-class unity can only be achieved on the basis of a working-class assault on Tory Unionism. It is not sufficient at this stage to raise merely "democratic demands" in Ulster. It is necessary that the entire Unionist machine of repression be fought. But if the process is to gain the support of the Protestant workers, it must hold tangible benefits. The present situation of the rank and file workers, bad housing and the erosion of the welfare services can only be solved on socialist terms. The Stalinist theory of national revolution appears in the *Manifesto of the Workers' and Small Farmers' Republic*. The historical completion of the national independence revolution in Ireland and the establishment of the Workers' and Small Farmers' Republic is the essential prerequisite of the socialist revolution, the national independence revolution and the socialist revolution in two stages: one democratic transformation of society, separate in time..." It is incorrect to say that the workers' liberties will be achieved first. The history of Ireland is a shining illustration of the fact that the national revolution and the socialist revolution are inextricably linked.

In Ireland, the national question can only be resolved on the basis of a united Socialist Republic. The demand for socialism must be raised, and the statement that "we are not strong enough to make our own demand for socialism" (*United Irishman* Oct 1971) is not based on a correct analysis of the situation. The history of Ireland has proved that it has only been at times of increasing economic and political activity by the Irish working class in the North and South, that the national revolution has seemed capable of solution.

At the first stage of the national total failure of the so-called working class leaders to intervene in the recent developments in Ulster which

The UVF attacks in 1969, the Falls curfew in 1970, the interment swoop on August 9th last year, the daily shootings and raiding of working-class homes, all this and the arbitrary bombings in Protestant ghettos and places of work, demonstrated the vital necessity for an armed force which would protect the working class of Ulster.

Class-conscious workers and Trade Unionists within Sinn Fein and the IRA, realising the futility of arbitrary bombing and protest, have fought since the mid-60s to build and maintain working-class unity in Ulster. Today, while recognising the need for a Trade-Union defence force, they nevertheless have declared and proven their readiness to defend with arms those people who today are in the front line of fire. The drift away from the narrow militaristic traditions of the movement and the uncertain leftward trend are but the cumulative symptom of many years of soul searching.

BRUTAL SUPPRESSION

The severe social and economic problems of the Irish working class and small farmers, and the growing strength and confidence of the Trade Union movement have, in the past few years since 1963, driving Sinn Fein and the IRA out of their isolation into working-class politics. The Derry Civil Rights Association took more in a few years than the republican movement had gained in decades. The military campaigns in the pre-war years and in the 1950s were brutally and bloodily suppressed by the combined force of the British and Irish governments. Socialist republicans learned that a military campaign, without a class programme and mass support, can only end in disaster.

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In the past number of years, by involving themselves in mass agitation in the form of the Housing Action Committees, the Civil Rights Movement and the National Students League, and by intervening in the major industrial disputes, republicans succeeded in drawing many thousands of workers and small farmers into active opposition to the schemes of British imperialism. This development within the ranks of the republican movement was a crucial factor in the emergence of the Provisional leadership in 1970. On the basis of historical experience and the recent upsurge within the Irish Labour movement, the Official republicans, unlike the Provisionals, have declared their opposition to another border campaign. For fifty years bonfires have been lit on the border, customs posts blown up, roads spiked, and the British grip on Ulster has as secure as ever." (*United Irishman* Nov 1971)

Though often the tactics of the Officials appear more as acts of political expediency than as the uplifting of the working class movement, nevertheless the ruling class has felt sufficiently threatened to have passed through the Dail the Forcible Entry Act, in an effort to prohibit such acts as sit-ins, in houses or places of work; and the Republican Clubs were banned in Ulster as far back as the early 60s.

OPPOSITION TO EEC

The biggest rallying cry of the Official republican movement today is opposition to the EEC. The plan of British imperialism to re-integrate the whole of Ireland into the UK political and economic system is the essence of the so-called "federal solution". The basis of the Officials' campaign is summed up in the pamphlet *What's the Deal?* "What would Ireland be the mini industries would have against such monopoly capitalism. The mini industries would be put out of business, and large-scale unemployment and emigration would result.

But this is true. The Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement of 1965 has given a foretaste in redundancy and bankruptcies of the effects of the "Free Market". But, under capitalism, there is no real solution to the problem of entry or non-entry into the world market. The Official pretend that there is. As long as the commanding heights of the economy remain in the hands of a small number of giant cartels and monopolies, there can be no real planning inside or outside the EEC.

But there is an alternative, and that is the alternative of linking up with the working class movements in the other European countries towards a campaign for a united Socialist States of Europe. The British Tuc,

On very few occasions has the religious polarisation in Northern Ireland been greater than at present. With the lingering possibility of a religious bloodbath never too far in the background, it is understandable that disillusion and despair have seeped their way into the working-class movement. Even many active trade unionists and members of the Labour Movement have lost faith in the possibilities of building a united class movement.

It is the history of Ireland, most especially the history of the Irish working-class movement, which speaks out against such pessimism. A common hack interpretation of Irish history since the Williamite wars is of a long inexplicable succession of religious feuds, something particularly Irish. Connolly, in a number of his writings, treats such an interpretation with the scorn it deserves.

In fact, religious divisions have been overcome many times in the past. The 1798 rebellion came out as a landmark in this respect. Under the leadership of Wolf Tone and the United Irishmen, the Irish petty-bourgeoisie and peasantry, both the Presbyterians of Antrim and Down and the Catholics of Wexford and elsewhere, rose together against the subjection of their country to the interests of the landlords and capitalists of England. These traditions kindled in action were rekindled time after time, most especially during this century with the emergence of the working class as an independent force.

1907 STRIKE

In 1907, the Belfast dockers, led by Larkin, united behind their large sections of the oppressed of the city in a movement which shook the already tottering Tory-Unionist establishment to its very foundations. First the dockers, then the carters and finally the colliers came out in a dispute that centred on the basic issue of the right to organise.

A measure of the extent of the sympathy for the strikers, both the reaction of the police. When Larkin pointed out at a strikers' meeting that the police who were being beaten against them were working 18 hours a day and not receiving a penny extra for it, the flame of revolt was kindled. A mutiny in the barracks was only finally suppressed when almost the entire Belfast force was moved to country areas.

In order to undermine the solidarity of the strikers, the employers resorted to their favourite tactic, divide and rule. The "Employers' Protection Association" in Belfast pressed poured out no end of bigoted filth in an attempt to divert the movement. At one time, when he was a Catholic, was denounced as an agent of Rome, while, at the same time, attempts were made to shake the confidence of the Catholic strikers in the Protestant members of the strike committee. All the efforts of the employers expended in their faces.

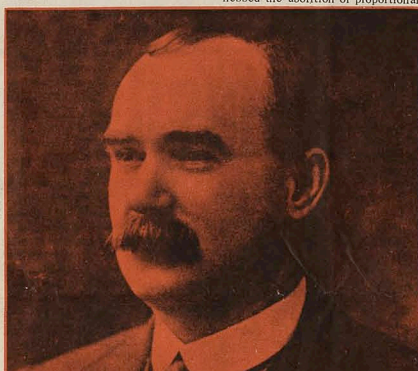
"ORANGE" SPLIT

Nothing better illustrates this than the stand made by the Independent Orange Order during the dispute. Out of the ranks of the original Protestant Association, the Independent Orange Order drew its support from the working-class Protestants. Just as the Orange Order today has won much of the working-class support once enjoyed by the Unionists, so the Independent Orange Order and its predecessor reaped the rewards of the disgust felt by the workers of Belfast for the Conservative policies of Orange today.

Throughout their propaganda there runs a basic class current, the attacks made on the Orange leaders and merchants, etc. as in the example, Long before the 1907 dispute, the orientation of the Independent Orange Order changed through its own from its bigoted roots. During the July 12th celebrations which coincided with the 1907 strike, the meeting of the Grand Lodge did not even mention the strike. At the same time, the Independent Orange Order at their traditional meeting, only passed a motion pledging solidarity with the strikers but also collected £50 for the strike fund. Throughout the dispute, Lindsay

not to the champions of "Protestantism" but towards the Labour Movement. In the 1920 Corporation elections, out of the 20 Labour candidates nominated, 13 were returned, significantly enough the Candidates for Shankill and St Annes, both of whom had been members of the strike committee, topping the poll.

In the late '20s and early '30s, the growth of the Unemployed Workers' Movement heralded a new era in which class issues took precedence. The international crises in capitalism affected the Northern economy with a vengeance. Shipbuilding, linen and farming all slumped drastically, creating a vast army of over 100,000 unemployed. For the bosses, desperate measures were required to safeguard their position. As with the early movements and in the early twenties, bigotry was seized upon as their most effective weapon. It is no idle coincidence that this period witnessed the abolition of proportional



JAMES CONNOLLY

"Not the rack-renting landlords; not the profit-grinding capitalists... but the Irish working class"

In 1919, Belfast was in the front line during the struggle for a reduction of the working week. In the longest and most bitter dispute in the city's history, the engineering and shipyard workers and corporation employees held out for a month in support of their demand for a 44 hour week. During that time the city was without gas, electricity or trams. Industry stood side by side against 20,000 had to be laid off, adding to the 40,000 who were on strike. Had the transport workers joined the strikers, a general strike situation would have existed.

In more ways than one, the shade of 1907 was raised. Protestant and Catholic stood side by side against their common class enemy. Yet it was not for want of effort on the part of the employers that solidarity was maintained. The press raised the slanders of 1907; calling at the same time for the most vicious repression of the strikers, jailing of the strike committee, etc. The leaders of the Orange Order joined with the bosses in attempting to cripple the strike. Even the members of the Orange Order on the strike committee joined with their comrades in denouncing the intervention of the Grand Lodge.

It was only with the use of troops and after the defeat of the movement in Britain, that the workers of Belfast conceded defeat. The mood of militancy, however, lingered. On May-day in 1919, months after the return to work, 100,000 took part in the march through Belfast. As in 1907, the workers who had tested their class power, if only for a period, looked for a political lead

representation, the provocative speeches of the Unionist leaders and the formation of the Ulster Protestant League which advised its supporters to have nothing to do with Catholics, most especially not to employ them.

In an orgy of bigotry, the paid agents of capital attempted to instil a "colon" mentality into the minds of Protestants. But to the unemployed Protestants the social assurances of their leaders proved no substitute for a job, decent wages and decent conditions. Unity in the struggle against unemployment culminated in 1932 when an unemployment march was batoned away from the city centre into the Falls area, an attempt to paint the movement as purely Catholic and use the Protestants to feel crush it. However, instead of helping the police investigate a religious pogrom, the people of the Shankill joined hands with the Catholic workers in beating off the police attacks.

CLASS SOLIDARITY

Tim Pat Coogan in his book on the IRA quotes one member of the army council, recollecting their intervention: "We put gangs into the hands of Orangemen to use against the B-specials." As late as 1934 the basic class ties remained. When socialists around the Republican Congress groupings formed a James Connolly club for the unemployed of Belfast, support was forthcoming from Protestants and Catholics. A lone contingent from the Shankill Road took part in that year's Wolf Tone commemorations at Bodens-ton, marching under banners saving "Break the connection with capitalism..." and "Connolly's message is alive." From this the mood of the advanced workers of the city can be surmised.

Criminally, however, the antics of

the old IRA at Bodens-ton only helped to reinforce the old divisions. Bitterness in the republican movement remained between the IRA and its various socialist groups who had broken away from it and eventually formed the Republican Congress. At Bodens-ton, the hostility overspilled into the ranks of the Congress group were attacked by the Temporary IRA. The resulting battle inevitably turned into a fight between the Temporary IRA and the Protestants from Shankill. No one incident better illustrates the way in which the tactics of sections of the republicans can successfully alienate even the best of the Protestant workers.

1969 JOINT COMMITTEES

These are only the most outstanding examples of unity in action. Contrary to the views expressed by many people, this period will not drop in an ocean of bitterness. During these periods, the class solidarity, which is always present at least in an under-current, showed itself most vividly to the fore. Today the definite signs of solidarity are clearly only straws in the wind. But despite this, real potential still did exist for the building of a strong working-class movement capable of countering sectarianism and imposing its own solution.

In August 1969 this was clearly shown. Weeks of bloody fighting in West Belfast preceded the intervention by the British Army. During this period and after, working-class groups took the initiative in protecting their own areas. At Hooker Street, Butler Street, the Falls and other areas burned, street committees of Protestants and Catholics were set up in one district after another.

On August 6th it was reported that the volunteers were patrolling the Catholic Bone area and the surrounding Protestant streets in Oldpark. By August 15th, such groups existed in the Ardoyne, the Falls, Shankill, Folk, East Belfast and the York Street areas, to name but some. In this way, religious bloodshed and mass intimidation was avoided.

HOUSING

need was for some 248,000 (almost a quarter of a million) houses.

The NI Housing Trust (the body which deals with all public housing in NI) and the Derry Commission are vainly attempting to solve the problem. But these organisations can never fulfill the needs of the working people, while the time is going up. The time has come when we need to build more and better houses, but to pay back the money-lenders. In 1971, the NI Housing Trust collected £3,717,390 in rent, but paid back £4,699,981 in interest repayments alone!

CRACKS APPEARING IN WALLS

In Derry, the houses being built by the Commission are already showing the signs of cheap and hasty construction. Cracks are appearing in walls, and at least five houses have had to be knocked down through defective building materials. And yet, after people had been living on the estate for 6-8 weeks, the rents and rates went up twice. Once again, tenants are paying a corporation's debts; after two years, the Commission's debt was over ten million pounds.

These are the problems which face Catholic and Protestant alike. Recently we have seen how quickly and easily the Stormont Government can push through legislation against one traditional form of protest, the rents and rates strike. This repressive measure enables both private and public landlords to claim rents by deducting from income, from state benefits or wages. There seems no end to

least in these areas. In East Belfast the attempts of the intimidators who delivered "Get Out" leaflets were crushed by the prompt action of the Association of six tenants whose reply was "Stay Put - We Will Protect You."

A meeting of 9,000 shipyard workers was organised on August 15th by shop-stewards in the yards successfully prevented the sectarian pogrom returning to the yards. In this the basic class sense of the workers was revealed. This remains true, despite the fact that the meeting was addressed by Roy Bradford or that it applauded the arrival of the soldiers. A condemnation of sectarianism by these men was not something which suddenly appeared out of the sky, but was a result of years of successful TU organisation and co-operation on the shop floor.

The absence of a strong Labour movement from Northern Ireland is not due to the failure of the working class movement. It is a result of the failure of one set of leaders after another. Nothing else explains the collapse of the 1920 movement into the pogroms of the early '20s, or the collapse of the unemployment movement into the bloodbath of 1935. In the same way, the failure of the leaders of the Labour and Trade Union Movement to give a class lead during the events of 1969, as Peter explains the degeneration from that period to today's fighting.

NEED FOR SOCIALIST POLICIES

In 1969 the Militant fought for socialist ideas as the only solution to the economic problems, the root cause of all violence and the replacement of the troops with a TU defence force capable of combating sectarianism. Had these ideas been followed by the Labour leaders, had the republicans directed their forces towards the Labour movement on such a class programme, the outcome would have been entirely different.

By PETER HADDEN

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what the Tories at Stormont can do now; they can intern a man without trial in circumstances of physical and mental brutality. Leave his wife and children deprived of the wage-earner and then reduce the possible state benefits they may have had to subsist on.

At present, while thousands of houses need to be built, the high unemployment rate of a very high number of unemployed are the building workers. There should be interest-free loans to all who wish to build their own houses. An immediate rents and rates freeze, the cancellation of debts of the NI Housing Trust, and an end to the wasteful building of such luxury objects as the Europa Hotel. To carry out this programme, as was recognised at this year's Labour Party Conference in Britain, we must fight the nationalisation of all of the building industry and also the banks, insurance companies and building societies. But it is not enough simply to build houses. It is essential that Tenants' Associations be involved at all levels of decision-making, so that there are adequate shopping facilities, bus services and recreation centres, and so that not only do people have houses to live in, but an area in which they can be glad to live.

MILITANT

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