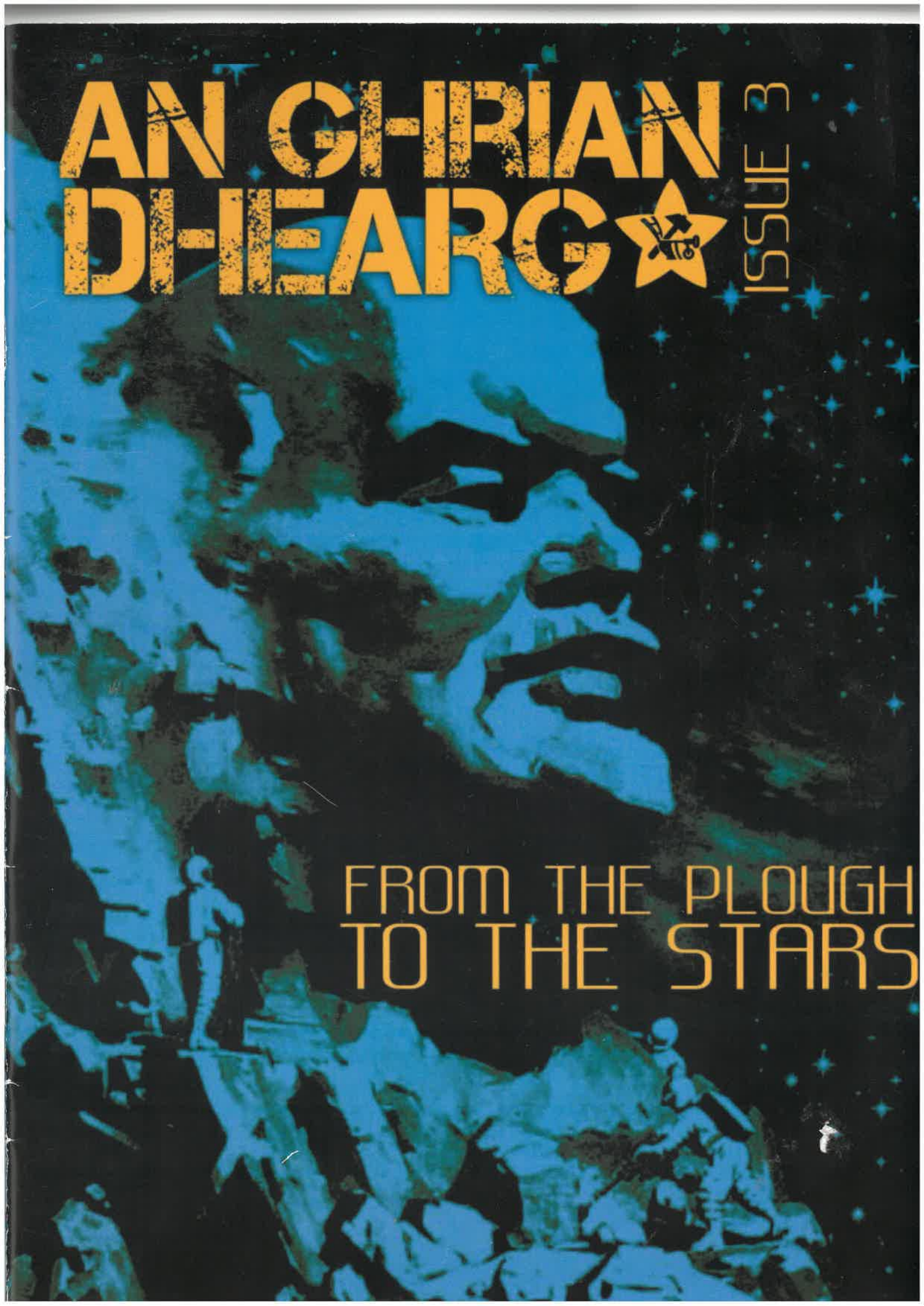


# AN GHIRIAN DI-IEARG



ISSUE 3

FROM THE PLOUGH  
TO THE STARS





# Editorial

**This year marks 100 years since the Irish counter-revolution, when the British-backed national bourgeoisie turned decisively against the Irish Republic. Despite the heroic efforts of generations of Irish revolutionaries, that counter-revolution and the partition of Ireland it enforces remains firmly entrenched. The Irish working class has suffered the consequences, and this year has only seen that suffering deepen.**

The influence of multinationals is greater than ever, as the Irish media crows about ever greater profits and growth. Last month we saw the annual parade of Orange fascists across the North, burning effigies of enemies real and imagined. The growing mobilisation of Loyalist paramilitaries across the North has lent a harder edge than usual to this recurring circus. The international crisis of capitalism, exacerbated by imperialist conflict, has sent the price of goods and energy soaring. This crisis is seen most acutely in the ongoing disaster of Free State housing policy, aggravated by imperialist vulture funds and developers, with extortionate rents and limited options forcing many young workers to emigrate once again. In the Free State alone, there are over 10,000 homeless while 140,000 homes lie empty. Rays of sunshine have begun to shine through, however. With the recent establishment of the Revolutionary Housing League and the occupation of James Connolly House, we see embers of resistance that could soon become a blaze.

The inter-imperialist war in Ukraine that began some months ago shows no signs of resolution. It has been accompanied by a wave of pro-Western propaganda designed to pummel the working class into submission. This propaganda blitzkrieg has hit Ireland as well, as the gombeen parties' campaign relentlessly for the Free State to join NATO and an EU Army in order to fight alongside the western war machine. Refugees have arrived in Ireland to be welcomed by cold hard floors and emergency tents. In the face of this imperialist onslaught, some misguided socialists have turned towards China or even Russia for salvation. Social-imperialists or "lesser" imperialists cannot ever represent the interests of the oppressed masses in Ireland or anywhere else. As communists and socialist republicans we hold firmly to the words of James Connolly when he declared that, "We Serve Neither King nor Kaiser But Ireland".

Nowhere has the decay of imperialism been more pronounced than in Britain, where the ruling class has been tearing itself apart over how to resolve the ongoing calamity of Brexit. And as has so often been the case, when Britain drowns, they try to drag Ireland down to the depths with them. The Protocol, the result of tedious and lengthy negotiations, is on the verge of being torn up. This opens up the possibility of a British-EU trade war, with Ireland caught in the middle of this imperialist wrangling. It could lead to the establishment of a hard border in Ireland. This sharpening contradiction is one that communists in Ireland should be prepared to take full advantage of. The recent euphoria over the "victory" of Sinn Fein in the recent colonial Stormont elections highlights more than ever that revisionist and reformist elements in Ireland must be combatted if a path is ever to be cleared towards the Socialist Republic.

As we go to press, Ireland has just experienced its highest temperatures in 135 years. In Britain and Europe, infernos bur across forests and grasslands. The destruction of the environment, the slaughter on the battlefields in Ukraine, the crisis in housing and cost of living in Ireland are all symptoms of an international imperialist order that is rushing headlong to its doom. Against deepening

exploitation, imperialist war and colonialism we raise the banner of revolution. Only People's War can deliver Ireland from the crushing weight of colonialism and semi-colonialism.

Across the various parties of the Left in Ireland, in the face of these growing attacks on the Irish people, we see not only a lack of organisation, but a startling lack of ambition. For those that see revolution as insanity, a revolutionary movement can only ever be mocked as foolish or marked as dangerous. But the Irish working class cannot be satisfied with breadcrumbs and empty promises for much longer. It is then they will awake to see their role in the liberation of humanity and that no cage can hold them. The future belongs to the class that dares to demand everything, from the plough to the stars.

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### The Housing Crisis

**Poverty in the modern world is not a natural phenomenon, it is consciously man-made. The housing crisis persists in Ireland because housing is seen as a vehicle for speculators to make fortunes, instead of being treated as a basic human right. Under the capitalist system, housing is not produced to meet the needs of people, but to create profit for the wealthy few. Leo Varadkar recently made explicit whose side he is on when he said: 'We need to balance that one person's rent is another person's income.'**

Housing has been a persistent issue for the Free State throughout its history, inheriting the worst slums of Europe, fostered under the direct rule of British imperialism. The widespread support for Fianna Fáil among the urban working class from the 1930s onwards was greatly contributed to by its relatively ambitious programme of social housing and housing construction. With Fianna Fáil giving up on their attempts to create an independent economy (albeit on a partitionist basis), they turned fully towards servicing foreign imperialism. From the 1950s and '60s they opened wide the Free State's economy for to make it a playground for foreign finance capital. A key consequence of this economic shift can be seen in the sphere of housing. The sale of social housing was increasingly encouraged which allowed such property to be bought up by big landlords and institutional investors. Capital saw property as a dependable investment and, when the property bubble burst in 2008, the major financial interests in this sector had their bad investments backed up by the Free State. This collapse of Ireland's housing stock led to the large-scale invasion of foreign finance capital – "vulture funds" – into the Irish housing market. The top players in this game of property speculation are U.S. and Canadian investment firms. The result has been the housing crisis, ever-worsening and affecting ever broader layers of the Irish people.

Today there are over 160,000 vacant properties across the twenty-six counties and over 10,000 homeless people. The undersupply of housing, greatly exacerbated by vacant properties owned by speculators, is a key instrument for raising rents and keeping the people

on their knees – but there are limits to how far a people can be degraded.

Bobby Sands, facing a martyr's death, wrote in his diary his own wringing condemnation:

*'I was trying to piece together a quote from James Connolly today which I'm ashamed that I did not succeed in doing but I'll paraphrase the meagre few lines I can remember. They go something like this: a man who is bubbling over with enthusiasm (or patriotism) for his country, who walks through the streets among his people, their degradation, poverty, and suffering, and who (for want of the right words) does nothing, is, in my mind, a fraud; for Ireland distinct from its people is but a mass of chemical elements... Compare the lives, comforts, habits, wealth of all those political con men (who allegedly are concerned for us, the people) with that of the wretchedly deprived and oppressed.'*

Some of Sands' former comrades are now just such political con men. Many of the Irish people are hoping for a Sinn Féin administration to play the part of Fianna Fáil in the 1930s and to resolve, or at least ameliorate, the housing crisis. However those with faith in Sinn Féin to seriously tackle this crisis will be left disappointed, particularly as the crisis of international capitalism severely and rapidly deepens. Today the Free State is even more restricted by imperialism, with the interests of foreign finance, and dictates from Washington, London and Brussels, taking precedence over all other concerns. And Sinn Féin have time and again demonstrated their willingness to go along with such dictates, already acting as loyal partners of imperialism in the six counties. Their finance spokesperson made clear recently that: 'Big business and investors know Sinn Féin won't go after them' – that is to say, the principal benefactors and instigators of the crisis will not have their interests upset by the solution. They propose to resolve a robbery without taking back from the robber what was stolen.

The necessity for revolutionary action is becoming more and more

apparent to the masses of the Irish people. Oppression breeds resistance and the wilful fostering of this crisis by the establishment has necessarily led to radical housing action, as took place in the 1960s & '70s.

In learning from the housing struggles of recent years and previous decades – in order to raise today's struggles to a higher level – the task of revolutionaries is: 1) to imbue such struggles with a thoroughgoing radical political, social and cultural character, 2) to organise them in a democratic and disciplined manner, with politics in command rather than opportunism or sectarianism, and 3) to build such a movement on a national level. Our situation requires a militant all-Ireland housing movement led by the working class.

### The Acquisition – James Connolly House

On 1<sup>st</sup> May 2022, International Workers' Day, action was at last taken, the first of its kind in the new decade. The Revolutionary Workers' Union (RWU) and other Socialist Republican activists took the first step to rejuvenating a radical housing movement with the acquisition of a long-term vacant property situated at 12-14 Eden Quay. The Salvation Army had left this property – a four storey building, with heating, water and electricity running – vacant for fifteen months. It was capable of comfortably housing many people and providing many services, but it was left unused while people regularly died from want of such necessities on the streets outside. Formerly the Seaman's institute and then a youth hostel, the building was renamed James Connolly House, in honour of the great Irish revolutionary executed by British imperialism in 1916. Connolly's crime was attempting to remove the dominance of British capital interests from this land, just such monied interests as the Salvation Army (or the 'Starvation Army', as American trade unionist Joe Hill aptly named them).

The deceased owner of the building had stated that the building should never be closed while homelessness existed in Ireland. In recent years however, the Free State and the Salvation Army have seen fit to close this refuge at a time when tens of thousands of families are living in precarity and hundreds of people are dying on our streets. From the roof of James Connolly House the Starry Plough, the flag of the Irish working class, flew at half-mast in honour and memory of those who have died on our streets through the Free State's neglect.

The Revolutionary Workers' Union acquired the building and put it to use, housing those in need, including refugees, providing necessities to hundreds, and hosting a wide variety of events, including cultural, political and social events, such as rallies, public meetings, reading groups, skill shares, Irish language classes, banner making sessions and stalls. Supporters cleaned the rooms, prepared meals for distribution by local charities, and prepared the building for those with housing needs. Members of the public, including other housing activists, donated generously to the cause with bedding, clothing, food, etc. Outreach stalls to make contact with the public and distribute food and drink were held regularly outside the building. For six weeks the previously abandoned building became a hub of activity for progressives, radicals and the marginalised, drawing people from far and near and from all walks of life, united around a common sense that the current state of affairs urgently needs to change. The revived building drew constant attention from outside, particularly its many eye-catching flags and banners, which were adorned with revolutionary slogans and expressions of solidarity with struggles of the oppressed near and far. By a banner outside bearing the slogan, 'No More Homeless Deaths', passers-by placed flowers in memory of those that have died.

Three days after the acquisition, an urgent rally was organised by the RWU in response to an eviction attempt by Gardaí and private security. Over one hundred people arrived on short notice to show their support – there was an electric atmosphere as they gathered by the Liffey, an awakening of hope and resolve in the face of concrete action. Over tea

### **Comrades on the roof**



and coffee with residents and supporters afterwards a lively hum reverberated through the building, better than any pub in the city. A crack had appeared in the seemingly omnipotent power of private property in a city shaped to serve international finance capital; a living opposition had emerged to the homelessness created by capitalism.

### The Free State's Response

Counter-insurgency, in the face of intransigence, generally follows two basic steps – discredit and repress. The Free State establishment took the same approach to Connolly House. Initially the media ignored it, perhaps hoping the building would sink into the ground. Then came a shallow and cynical attempt to discredit the action, which led astray only a few vacillating liberals. While the mainstream Irish media chose to ignore the reality a British newspaper, *The Times*, showed them the way forward, carrying the story, which was later 'copy-and-pasted' onto the websites of the Irish media. The headline read: 'Activists squat in hostel meant for Ukrainian refugees.'

Apparently unafraid of bearing false witness, a spokesman for the Salvation Army said the charity had offered the building to accommodate Ukrainian refugees. "There are six weeks left in this schedule of works, and any occupation of the building will regrettably set this timeframe back," its spokesman said. "We have communicated this to the protesters." This was the first public claim of such a refurbishment.

When later questioned on this in court, one activist said, 'I'll believe it when I see it'. Another activist said they were not 'clairvoyant' and did not know of the Salvation Army's alleged plans, but they know that every money-grabbing landlord in the country will invent such a story in order to justify keeping ownership of vacant properties. The activists expressed their refusal to elevate one human being above another,

## Under revolutionary management



upholding the right of all people in Ireland to adequate housing, as well as their right to live and work here. Court documentation also revealed that the landlords had intended to house Afghan refugees in the building last year but these plans also came to nought. Perhaps there's now been enough pressure (and the state contract will be fat enough) for the Salvation Army to put this fully functioning city centre building to use at last. But over a month since the eviction there is still no outward sign of this "urgent", "emergency" refurbishment, or indeed the building being put to any use at all, besides a securing of the property by private security to ensure it won't again be put to use by the rabble.

Following such attempts to discredit, downplay and intimidate, then came repression. Knowing that the Free State forces were likely to raid the house most of the residents departed the building and just two activists, willing to face the reactionary state forces, remained to resist the eviction. Eighty Gardaí, with a helicopter, several vans and weaponry, stormed the building in the very early morning, broke through the defensive barricades and forcibly removed the activists. An operation that must have cost the taxpayer at least 100,000 euros managed to remove just two men, one of whom is in his seventies. It was a major show of strength by the Free State that served only to demonstrate their weakness and fear in the face of resistance.

The housing activists refused to play the court's games, showing their complete contempt for the unjust legal system. Despite this the judge refused to jail the activists and they walked free. The Free State administration – the committee of the rich, in Connolly's words – has released two activists who had seized a property in the city centre, held it for forty days, openly declared their republican and socialist politics, defied multiple court orders, and paid no heed to the rules and regulations of the Free State court.

It is clear that the rich man's committee does not want James Connolly House to be the spark for a national housing movement. They do not want to put a match to a field of dry hay. But the spark has been lit and the fire is ready to erupt.

### **Conclusion – Onward to the Revolutionary Movement**

Housing is among the most oppressive and explosive issues facing the Irish people, affecting the vast majority and with enormous political potential. All political groups and tendencies claim to have the answer to this question – but only the risen people in command of Ireland will resolve it once and for all. In a conscious harkening to the Land War of the late 1800s, the Revolutionary Housing League has declared a Housing War, a militant struggle against the commodification and financialisation of housing.

The most famous of 1916 songs declared: 'Slavery fled, O glorious dead, when you fell in the foggy dew.' This refers not to a physical and social freedom, but to a mental freedom. As Thomas Clarke said to his wife, Kathleen, before his execution, 'Ireland will never lie down again.' For a generation Irish politics had been defined by pleading to Westminster for concessions and looking for positions in the colonial system – the 1916 Rising put a stop to that. The revolutionaries proclaimed the Irish Republic on their own authority and defended it by force of arms. James Connolly House has also stood out for the politics of revolution, based on the authority and rights of the people.

In this process of mental liberation ideas and education play a central role, of rejecting the consciousness and ideas imperialism forces upon us – but only action, concrete opposition to imperialism, can truly take our minds beyond it. The Irish people know that the housing system is unjust, corrupt and in dire need of overhaul; they see how foreign financial interests are upheld over and above the interests of the Irish people, but it is only action that will allow them to see clearly the forces oppressing us, and by what means our opposition to them must be waged. As the militant action of the Land War broke the authority of the Anglo-Irish landlords, as the Easter Rising broke the authority of British colonialism, the Housing War will break the authority of foreign finance capital.

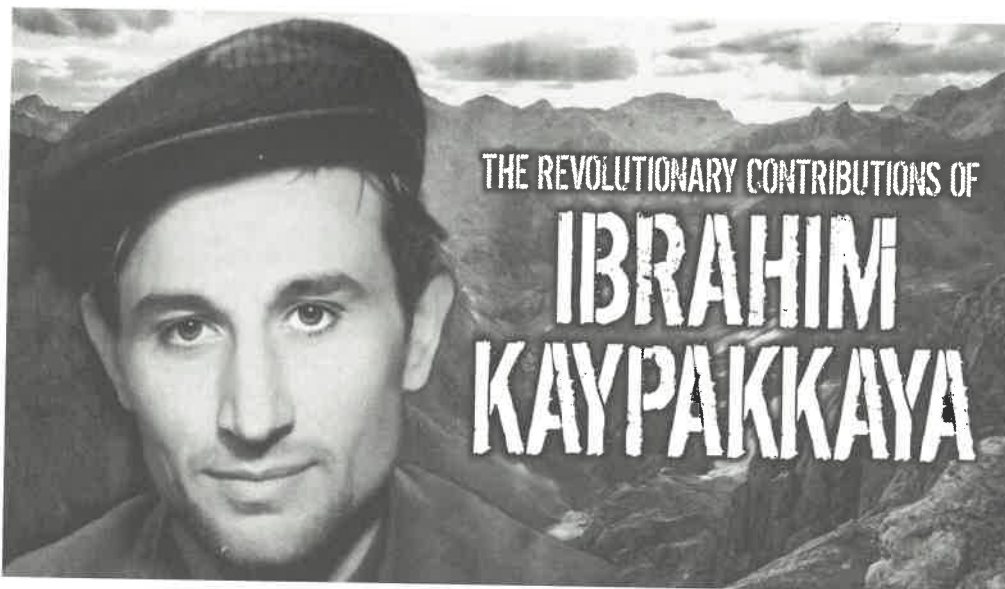
It is clear that on the centenary of its counter-revolution the Free State has still not consolidated its rule. It remains a puppet state for imperialist interests. The Irish people can only endure this shower of corrupt thieves lying to us and driving our country into the ground for so long. This ludicrously heavy-handed operation, followed by barely a slap on the wrist in the courts, demonstrates their terror at the spectre of a revolutionary housing movement – a genuine people's movement that isn't content with begging for scraps outside Leinster House and jockeying for electoral positions. Let us put an end to the shameful act of begging for a little more from our oppressors – they have long since demonstrated their contempt and disregard for us. The pitiful state our people have been driven into due to the foreign domination of our land is alone enough justification to fight back. Let us take back what's rightfully ours and put a final end to this madness.

To carry on and organise this emerging struggle, the activists involved with James Connolly House have since established the Revolutionary Housing League (RHL). The struggle against the housing crisis requires boldness and action but it also requires patient organising and education, and the RHL is a body which intends to do both. All revolutionaries and progressives should offer this broad group their full support and get involved – branches are needed across the thirty-two counties.

As the activist Seán Doyle emphasised, will you tell your children that you did everything you could "within the confines of the law" or will you say that you fought back?

### **Anti-Homelessness Meeting in the JCH Basement Hall**





**“The revolution will rely on violence, that this will be compulsory and inevitable”- Ibrahim Kaypakkaya**

Ibrahim Kaypakkaya is the giant of the Turkish Revolution. Though aged only 23 when he died at the hands of the fascist reactionary state it is Ibo, in his role as emerging great leader, who led Turkish revolutionaries to break with revisionism, take up the path as outlined by Chairman Mao and to march the difficult but universal road of People’s War, as the path to be sustained until victory.

It is in his grasping of Mao Tse-tung thought as the highest form of Communism in his day, that marks Ibo out as head and shoulders above many of the would be revolutionaries of the time. His work in applying Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung thought to the concrete conditions of the revolution in Turkey identify him as the great leader of that revolution and the founder of what would develop to become the weapon of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the third and highest stage of Marxism, in the Turkish Revolution. Despite being killed before Marxism-Leninism-Maoism had been synthesized by Chairman Gonzalo through the Protracted People’s War in Peru, it can be claimed that Ibo was to Turkey what Chairman Gonzalo was to Peru, Mazumdar was to India and what Lynagh and McKearney were to Ireland. In other words, he was a revolutionary trail-blazer that grasped the importance of Maoism.

Ibo was exposed to revolutionary ideas at a young age, as he worked disturbing political newspapers. Attending University in 1967, Ibo entered revolutionary circles and became a member of the Workers Revolutionary Party and the Federation of Ideas Clubs. It was during this time that Ibo became deeply influenced by the Chinese Revolution, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the war being waged by communists against Imperialism in Vietnam. Ibo was drawn to Mao Tse-tung Thought as he sought to find solutions to reformism and revisionism within the WRP and the FICs. As these divisions sharpened within the FICs, Ibo came to be the leader of the revolutionary section, advocating the Chairman Mao’s Road of National Democratic Revolution in Turkey and leading the struggle against the reformist and revisionist sections of the Movement. The section led by Ibo would become known as the Proletarian Revolutionary Illumination and would champion the revolutionary position. It was during these important struggles that Ibo’s revolutionary consciousness took significant qualitative leaps, but even more important developments were about to bring him to the fore.

On June 15/16 1970, the Turkish masses rose up in an outburst of resistance against the reactionary state, in an event that has become known as the Great Workers Resistance. While sporadic and quickly put down, the

event had significant impact on Ibo and crystallised his belief that only Revolutionary Violence could lead to the victory of the working class and peasantry in Turkey. It further convinced him that the time had come to break with revisionism and those who had been his comrades but had only paid lip service to Maoism, and form a new revolutionary Communist Party and People’s Army in Turkey to lead the Protracted People’s War until Communism.

In his own words, Ibo related how the conditions for the formation of the TKP/ML arose, writing, *“The ever growing struggle of our brave working class, altruistic peasants, and gallant youth, the ever more widespread Marxist-Leninist books, the world shaking effects of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution that took place in China under the leadership of Chairman Mao, all these, were preparing the auspicious environment within which a young communist movement was going to spring out to lead the masses’ struggle upon the soil of our country.”*

Waging the ideological struggle against revisionism within the ranks of the supposed Maoist groups, arguing against reformism, the parliamentary line and always advocating the road of the People’s War, Ibo steeled a new revolutionary cadre through this important and necessary fight.

The revolutionary cadre had been built to such a point that on April 24 1972 the final division with revisionism came and the Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist was established under Ibo’s leadership, a world historic moment and achievement of the Turkish Revolution. At the same time Ibo established the Liberation Army of the Workers and Peasants of Turkey (TIKKO), to organise and wage the Protracted People’s War. Ibo was clear from the beginning though, that the party would command the gun and would be the general staff of the Proletarians and Peasantry in the People’s War. He advocated the militarisation of the Party in order to be able to wage the Peoples War until victory. In defining the conditions of Turkey as semi-colonial and semi-feudal, Ibo outlined the character of the new party as *“A communist party with a discipline of steel that is free of subjectivity, revisionism, and dogmatism, that is fused within the masses, that combines theory and practice, and applies the method of self-criticism; under the leadership of such a party, people’s armed forces, and again under the leadership of such a party, people’s united front: These are the three weapons of the people that we will use to defeat the enemy.”*

Already by this point in 1972, Ibo had made world historic contributions to the World Proletarian Revolution in that he had championed Maoism in Turkey, bringing the people the ideology for victory and had played a major role in the defeat of reformism and revisionism in the Revolutionary Movement. However, through his writings, Ibo would lay down Great

Leadership for the Turkish Revolution, particularly in 5 key documents that outline the politico-military strategy of the movement. These documents written between 1971 and 1972 are: ‘National Question in Turkey’ in December 1971, ‘Let Us Correctly Understand Chairman Mao’s Doctrine of Red Political Power’ in January 1972, and in the same month, both ‘The Critique of the RWPPT Draft Program’ and ‘The Dawn Revisionism’s Theses on the Kemalists Movement, the Period of the Kemalists Rule, the Second World War Years, Post-War, and on May 27 [1960 Military Coup d’état].’ And finally, in June 1972, after the organizational break away, he wrote ‘The Origin and Development of Our Differences with the Dawn Revisionism: A General Critique of the RWPPT Revisionism.’ These documents form the major theoretical basis of the TKP/ML and the Turkish Revolution.

It was for these reasons that Ibo emerged as the living symbol of resistance of the Turkish Revolution. It was also for these reasons that he emerged as the great leader of the Party and the People’s War. Consequently, the reactionary Turkish state plotted his demise and murdered him. But in their move to kill Ibo, they also wanted to kill his ideology and bury it. Captured following an armed confrontation in the mountains, fighting for the people, Ibo was brutally tortured for 3 months. In the face of that torture and certain death, Ibo defiantly responded to the fascists, *“Essentially we the communists as a principle do not hide anywhere our political convictions and views. However, we do not disclose our organizational activities, our friends who work with us within the organization, and the individuals and groups that are not within the organization but provide help for us. I have already told all that is necessary as to my personal responsibility. All that I have done thus far were done in the name of the Marxist-Leninist thought, which I sincerely believe in. And I have no regret about its consequence. If one day I am liberated from your hands, I will work as before.”*

His liberation from torture came on May 18 1973, a little over a year after founding the Revolutionary Party and Army of the People. And while he would not return physically to the struggle, his example, his heroic death and his teachings would continue to inspire revolutionaries in Turkey and around the world in the fight against imperialism to this day, 49 years after his murder by the Fascist reactionary Turkish State.

And today, there is much that Revolutionaries here in Ireland can learn from the example of Ibo’s life and his teachings. In particular it is important to understand his grasping of the emerging 3<sup>rd</sup> and higher stage of Marxism as Maoism, later synthesized by Chairman Gonzalo. It is important to learn of the importance of a militarised communist party in a semi colonial country to lead the People’s Army and the United Front. And of most relevance, it is important to understand his teaching that the People’s War is universal and the only road to victory against Imperialism. These are some of the key questions being faced by Irish Communists today as they discuss and debate how best to take forward the Revolution against Imperialism across the 32 Counties. And Ibo, in his great Revolutionary foresight addressed the question of the People’s war in a semi-colonial country such as Ireland where many elements of feudalism have died away, stating, *“Even in the case where feudalism has been gradually resolved and consequently the peasant population is reduced, the strategy still remains valid.”*

So on the 49<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the TKP/ML, Irish Maoists would do well to study the Contributions of Ibrahim Kaypakkaya, take up the lessons and apply them to the concrete conditions in Ireland to better strengthen our movement and the Revolution.



**There exists a culture of serious misconceptions regarding the Chinese state within much of the Irish communist movement. The purpose of this article is to help dispel these misconceptions and hopefully, make strides in bringing a clear answer to the so-called “China Question”. This will be done by examining the claim that the People’s Republic China, and its Communist Party, is under the control of the Chinese working class from a Marxist-Leninist perspective.**

### **The Theory: What Did Marx and Lenin Have to Say?**

Karl Marx wrote in his ‘Critique of the Gotha Programme’ that a state under the control of the working class is called a “dictatorship of the proletariat” in that the proletariat has total and complete control of all aspects of society. This replaces the “dictatorship of the bourgeoisie”, which is the absolute power and control of the capitalist bourgeoisie. What further criteria do Marxists give for a state to be considered under a dictatorship of the proletariat? Marx defines it as such in the aforementioned work. [1]

*“Between capitalist and communist society there lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.”*

Marx establishes that a state in the transition towards communism cannot be anything other than the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship of the proletariat is presented as the transition between capitalism and communism. This means that for China in this case, to be a dictatorship of the proletariat (and nothing other than a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat) it must be on the transition towards communist society. Marx also excludes the idea of any other form of dictatorship of the proletariat outside of a “revolutionary” form. The message here is clear. There is no room for a semi-worker’s state or any sort of compromise in class rule. The working class must hold total and complete revolutionary power.

The claim is that China is indeed this revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat which Marx describes.

Now let us look at how Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin further

defines the dictatorship of the proletariat here (The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky). [2]

*“Dictatorship does not necessarily mean the abolition of democracy for the class that exercises the dictatorship over other classes; but it does mean the abolition of democracy (or very material restriction, which is also a form of abolition) for the class over which, or against which, the dictatorship is exercised.”*

Vladimir Lenin continues the assertion by Marx. He clarifies that a dictatorship of the proletariat means the “abolition of democracy” for the capitalist class. This holds true. For the working class to hold absolute power over the state, the enemies of the working class such as the bourgeoisie would have to have no power at all, and so, democracy is abolished for the exploiters and placed in the hands of the exploited. For China to be under the control of the working class, democracy must be abolished for the capitalist class. Does China today meet the criteria of the Marxist-Leninist dictatorship of the proletariat, where democracy is abolished for the capitalist class, where society is on the transition towards communism, where the working class holds total and revolutionary power? Before we delve into the facts and statistics I have prepared, we should examine the theory espoused by the Chinese side and look at how it matches up to Marxism.

### **Looking at an Openly Class Collaborationist Doctrine: Communism or Corporatism?**

The constitution of the Communist Party of China still upholds Jiang Zemin’s principle of the “Three Represents”. Below is a passage from Jiang Zemin’s work “On the Three Represents” [3] espousing a position in relation to the capitalist class under a dictatorship of the proletariat which clearly contradicts Marx and Lenin’s view. Jiang writes:

*“Since China adopted the policy of reform and opening up, the composition of China’s social strata has changed to some extent. There are, among others, entrepreneurs and technical personnel employed by scientific and technical enterprises of the non-public sector, managerial and technical staff employed by foreign-funded enterprises, the self-employed, private entrepreneurs, employees in intermediaries and free-lance professionals. [...] Under the guidance of the Party’s line, principles and policies, most of these people in the new social strata*

*have contributed to the development of productive forces and other undertakings in the socialist society through honest labour and work or lawful business operations. They join workers, farmers, intellectuals, cadres and PLA officers and men in an effort to build socialism with Chinese characteristics. They, too, have made contributions to this cause."*

It is interesting that the Communist Party of China should uphold the position that "private entrepreneurs" are indeed builders of socialism. Contrary to Marx and Lenin's view, the "Three Represents" clearly espouses a class collaborationist line of unity between the Chinese proletariat and the national bourgeoisie in the transition to communist society (socialism).

It is worth noting that according to the original Mao-era theory of the Communist Party of China, during its revolutionary period, a line of collaboration with the national bourgeoisie was also promoted. Certain quotations from party documents during the "new democracy" period are often used to prove a consistent revolutionary line within the Communist Party. However, new democracy only ever referred to the transitional period preceding the dictatorship of the proletariat, in which semi-feudal conditions are abolished.

According to both the Mao-era and current versions of history espoused by the Communist Party, the need for the new democracy period is long over, and with it, the need for collaboration with the national bourgeoisie. While according to the Mao-era doctrine the need for class cross-collaboration would reduce during the transition to communism, according to the Three Represents, the opposite of this process takes place, with even the foreign capitalist investors becoming "builders of socialism" long after the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the demolition of feudalism.

A clear definition of the state is needed to explain the main problem with Jiang's theory. Lenin, in his work *State and Revolution* describes the Marxist definition of the state as such: [4]

*"The state is a product and a manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms. The state arises where, when and insofar as class antagonism objectively cannot be reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that the class antagonisms are irreconcilable"*

Meanwhile Jiang Zemin and the Communist Party of China directly contradict the Marxist conception with this bogus theory about the relation between the exploited working class and the exploiting capitalist class being reconcilable to the extent that they have all "made contributions" to the cause of building socialism. In fact, this strange strand of class collaborationist revisionism went even further when Zeng Zhifeng of the Central Party School claimed that capitalists are not exploiters, but actually workers. [5] He is cited as saying:

*"As long as these people uphold the law, pay taxes according to the law, treat their workers well, and themselves participate actively in management labour . . . I think a portion of them should be called workers"*.

This sentiment is not alien to the Three Represents, as it was Jiang Zemin himself who said "We should unite with the people of all social strata who help to make the motherland prosperous and strong.". To this day these ideas have been put into practice in China, and Communist Party membership remains open to swathes of even the most criminal exploiters of the working class - dollar billionaires are now cardholders in the Communist Party of China, a fact openly boasted about on official Chinese media outlet *Global Times* [6]. This is the broken but natural conclusion to a blatantly revisionist departure from the basics of Marxism.

## Absolute Worker's Control: All Power to the Soviets or All Power to the Suits?

The Leninist conception of the vanguard party under the dictatorship of the proletariat claims that through democratic centralism, the will of the working class is exercised in a single revolutionary Communist Party whose authority stems from mass grassroots participation. So it follows that a good way to judge the power of the working class in China is by examining their level of representation in their own vanguard party. In a report by the Chinese news agency Xinhua released in the year 2015, members identified as workers totalled 7.3 million, while 26 million were engaged in farming, herding or fishing. A total of 12.5 million were identified as professionals, 9 million as administrative staff while 7.4 million were described as workers in party and government offices. The total party membership was 87.8 million. [7]

It is clear from these figures that the working class actually represents a small minority within the Communist Party of China. Adding together agricultural workers, government office workers, and average workers, still only 40.7 million out of 87.8 million Communist Party members are members of "the masses" which it claims to represent. This means that when Communist Party members vote on issues that determine the future of China and Chinese people, the working class might not be able to pass a motion even if every single one of its representatives voted in favour! Such things would explain how some of the truly bizarre anti-worker actions passed at party gatherings have come to be.

As a few examples, in 1982 the right to strike was struck out from the Chinese constitution [8] [9]. While there is no legal prohibition on strikes in China, there is amazingly no legal protection existing for taking strike action either [10]. The matter is made worse by the fact that there is only one sole legal trade union in China, the ACFTU, which is legally bound to enterprise administration, by a Chinese labour law which states *"The trade unions of enterprises and the administration of enterprises shall have equal legal status, respect each other, support each other, cooperate on an equal footing and seek common development of enterprises."* In fact, some passages like this from the 2006 Enterprise Trade Union Regulations Law [11] read like a union-busting pamphlet. Unions are obliged to support enterprise administration, mediate between workers and enterprises on equal footing (instead of taking sides with the workers?), and it even stipulates that enterprises must contribute 2% of all union funds. A lack of independent trade union association and the legal binding of the trade union to its enterprises is concerning. Labour law in China is truly in a pitiful state. It is no surprise that even Chinese state-owned enterprises abroad engage in union busting practices shamelessly, such as when nine Mineworkers Union of Namibia members at the CNUC-owned Rössing Uranium Mine [12] were suspended by Chinese managers and faced dismissal for the crime of supposedly speaking out to the public about labour abuses [13].

And that is not even touching upon some of the horrific reports of labour abuses by multinationals in China setting up shop there to take advantage of cheap labour prices. We have all heard of the horror stories of the workers at places such as Catcher Technology Co. [14], or those reports of the infamous "suicide nets" [15].

Why do you think multi-billionaire party members such as Jack Ma, who openly admitted to overworking his employees [16], have not been expelled from the party? Why do you think the Communist Party of China has not increased the lowest legal minimum wage of 162 USD per month? [17] Why according to Chinese state media, do over 44% of Chinese households fall into poverty because of hefty medical bills? [18] Why does the Communist Party build five star luxury hotels [19] while around 2.57 million Chinese citizens in 2011 were homeless? [20] There was an interview carried out by chinadaily.cn for example with a Quan Youzhi who lived in a well for 20 years due to financial issues [21]. If only that 66 year old woman selling bottles to survive could see how China's super-rich are faring with massive increases to high-end



consumption reported by the same website [22].

What sort of dictatorship of the proletariat installs anti-homeless devices into public construction projects and even park benches? [23] Do the working class of China like to shoot themselves in their feet by stripping themselves of even the right to put up *dazibao* expressing their feelings, previously their constitutional right? [24]\* What working class inflicts on itself a personal income tax of 45% compared to a corporation tax rate of 25%? [25] And most importantly, which dictatorship of the proletariat scraps the passage of the 1975 Chinese constitution which describes China as a dictatorship of the proletariat (无产阶级专政), and replaces it with a “people’s democratic dictatorship” (人民民主专政)? [26] What dictatorship of the proletariat ceases to even call itself a dictatorship of the proletariat in the first place?

### **Billionaires in Parliament: Abolition of Democracy for the Bourgeoisie?**

As the country with the world’s largest billionaire population, it is worth examining how the Communist Party enforces the will of the working class on the head honchos of its national bourgeoisie. The claim that China suppresses its billionaire population is one thrown around quite often. Recently, we all looked on as the Western media created a storm at Chinese billionaire and Communist Party cadre Jack Ma’s supposed disappearance. Western media outlets often red-tag China by claiming that there, billionaires and businessmen are suppressed and kept in line. If these claims are true, then that might just fit into Lenin’s “very material restriction” of democracy for the bourgeoisie. Now the question remains. Are these claims true?

The general argument in favour of China hosting a suppression of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat is the many reported incidents in which Chinese billionaires have been tried and given legal punishments for corruption, and in which Chinese security services have taken the sides of tenants over landlords. It is easy to lose yourself in such individual stories and to allow them to shape your worldview. But these arguments neglect the fact that China is a big nation. Chinese people make up 18.47% of the global population. It is very difficult to use individual cases as evidence in a society so large and diverse in social makeup. Using such stories to build a broad general perception of Chinese society at large is not very effective.

One can even find cases of similar incidents occurring in Western countries too. In the US Jeff Skilling, former CEO of Enron for example served 24 years in prison for fraud, insider trading, and other crimes related to the collapse of Enron [27], same with John Rigas, former CEO of Adelphia Communications. He was sentenced to 25 years for bank, wire, and security fraud [28]. But we do not call the USA a dictatorship of the proletariat for this reason, so why are such stories used to prove such a thing in China?

There is some valuable information in recent figures published by official Chinese statistics website Hurun.net. According to Hurun’s rich list [29], in 2020, there were 2,398 individuals in China whose net wealth surpassed a 2 billion CNY (309,400,000 USD) cut-off point. According to extra information provided in this same list, 2 of these individuals are currently in prison. These recent figures allow us at last to calculate the incarceration rate for those on the Hurun China Rich List. The incarceration rate for billionaires of this type is thus 0.00083% rounded down. Compare this to statistics given by the national prison administration [30], which allow us to calculate that in 2018 the incarceration rate in China for the total population was around 0.00121%. Comparing the two figures, it becomes evident that these Rich List billionaires, instead of being specifically targeted and suppressed by the government, are in fact far less likely to wind up in a jail cell than the rest of the population!

This figure in itself severely calls into question the narrative that the Chinese government is suppressing its capitalist class. Speaking of which, just to dwell on Hurun a little longer, it is clear that China’s USD billionaires have not been doing so badly in recent years either. Total wealth on the Hurun China Rich List 2020 seems to be up by a massive 54%. According to the Hurun Global Rich List 2021 [31] the USD billionaire population of mainland China is no longer 799, but 1058. This is more than the US, India, and Germany, the other top four contenders in this metric, combined. The combined wealth of the China-resident billionaires was US\$4.5 trillion, up 73% on last year. Even more bizarre was Chinese media outlet the Global Times celebrating this fact as though they had won a sports competition!

What about the abolition of democracy for the exploiting bourgeoisie? How does that stand in modern China? According to the Hurun 2017 Global Rich List [32], 115 out of 609 Chinese billionaires in that year had senior political appointments to the National People’s Congress and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference. After some calculation using Chinese population estimates from that year [33], I was able to deduce that in 2017 a dollar billionaire in China actually had a ratio of political representation 60,514x higher in these bodies than the average Chinese citizen!\*\* Can we truly say that the criteria of abolition of democracy for the bourgeoisie have been met here, in the face of such damning evidence, provided by none other than the Chinese authorities themselves? This does not even take into account less wealthy capitalists, the “entrepreneurs” of Jiang Zemin’s class collaborationist “Three Represents Theory”.

Of course, none of these arguments even consider in the first place what on earth a rapidly growing billionaire class would be doing under a dictatorship of the proletariat in the first place. *“The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement”* wrote Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in their famous Communist Manifesto [34]. How come the working class have not enforced their immediate interests on an ever-fattening caste of super-wealthy billionaires? Is it in the immediate interests of the working class to allow the rich to grow so disproportionately powerful and wealthy?

### **Transition to Communism: What Direction is China Headed in?**

According to the Marxist view, a dictatorship of the proletariat is the “period of the revolutionary transformation” between capitalist society and communist society. Nobody can deny that the intense modernisation, collectivisation, and cultural reform which constituted the revolutionary transformation that took place in China through the years 1949 to 1976 was indeed worthy of these criteria. The Chinese working class and peasantry lead their country’s transformation from an underdeveloped “land of famine” to a modern example of revolutionary alternatives for society, impressively increasing the life expectancy from 35[35] to 65 [36] in those years alone, providing guaranteed universal medical care and housing as a human right [37], introducing a commune-based land reform [38], bringing about rapid changes to fields such as the arts and science, and making leaps in women’s equality among other achievements.

This process in China is a clear historical example of a revolutionary transformation which one would expect from a dictatorship of the proletariat. However the question remains as to whether the Chinese Communist Party is continuing this tradition of radical change and reform in a communist direction. After all, if China is a dictatorship of the proletariat, by the Marxist definition it must be a period of revolutionary transformation. As we have been taught, “for criticism, do it in good time; don’t get into the habit of criticizing only after the event” [39]. Let us take for example a few of the recent changes that have taken place in modern-day China as of late.

An interesting development took place in the Chinese residential sector last year. According to Hurun Global House Price Index 2019, 28 Chinese cities were among the World's Top 50 Property Price Increases, up 17 on the previous year [40]. In another set of statistics from Fathom Consulting, China's house price to annual income ratio shot up past 17 in 2020 as part of a general upward trend that has slowly been creeping up since the beginning of the millennium [41]. This means that the average Chinese household would have to save up its disposable income for 17 years in order to pay for an average-sized house. This ratio is nearly three times as severe as that of the UK, which lies at around 6. But even more amazing is the response of the Chinese policymakers. Data from Fathom Consulting shows that Chinese policymakers have been quite noticeably stalling the construction of new residential projects. The result of this, of course, is a mounting residential value. The time taken to finish the average residential construction project has increased from just over 6 years to 7.4 in 2019 [42]. It was only 3 years in 2010! This is a familiar tactic which has unfortunately been seen in Ireland. Construction projects are mothballed on purpose in order to increase the value of housing. Is this part of China's revolutionary transformation to a communist society? \*\*\*

What about the growing presence of foreign multinationals taking root in China? To cite figures given by China's Ministry of Commerce, foreign direct investment into the Chinese mainland, in actual use, expanded 6.2 percent year-on-year to a record high of 999.98 billion yuan in 2020, allowing Chinese state news agency chinadaily.cn to proclaim that "Foreign investors chose to pile more of their funds in China last year as the country posted growth despite economic fallout of the corona virus pandemic." [43]. This fits in line with the rhetoric of other Chinese media pieces from the last few years, which have been boasting a policy of "reform and opening-up", something which Xi Jinping referred to in his recent new year's address [44] when he proclaimed that "In the future, we should further deepen reform and expand opening-up with greater courage". It was Xi himself who called for the "building of pilot free trade zones, and pioneer exploring the building of the paradigm in regions where conditions permit to create a new highland of reform and opening-up" [45]. It is interesting that the only thing on Beijing's mind right now regarding socialist transformation seems to be the creation of more neoliberal free trade zones, which means the destruction of public infrastructure and the flowing in of foreign multinationals looking to exploit China's cheap labour.

It is ironic that China has taken to this policy of selling up their cities to foreign enterprises. After all, it was Jiang Zemin in "On the Three Represents" who claimed that Mao's "mistake" was supposedly "taking class struggle as the key link". Did Mao make a mistake then by daring to struggle against foreign capitalists in imperialist countries such as the USA, unlike Xi Jinping, who according to Chinese state media "calls on Starbucks to help promote China-US ties"? [46] On that note, if their job is to make Washington and Beijing feel a little closer, Starbucks must be doing something right as in 2020 trade between China and the US rose to historic high last year, amounting to more than \$586 billion, up 8.3 percent year-on-year [47].

One cannot write on China's economy without once mentioning their "State Owned Enterprises" or "SOEs" for short. It appears that not even these are safe from Beijing's privatisation drive! In 2020 a three-year action plan for State-owned enterprises (2020-22) was announced. It is described as such by Zhun Chunxiao of the National Academy of Governance: "The mixed-ownership reform aims to allow shareholders from all backgrounds, including State, private and foreign investors, to invest in SOEs to reach a balanced shareholding structure and board representation. It's goal is to create a flexible and efficient market-oriented mechanism to improve management and profitability of SOEs" [48]. Kamran Vossoughi, CEO of Michelin China, was asked about these reforms by Chinese media. He, for one, seemed quite

happy. "Foreign companies are important players in dual circulation", he said, "Foreign companies are also great beneficiaries of the dual circulation. Promoting external circulation means that China will further open up and optimize the business environment" [49]. It is no wonder that when polled 94 percent of American companies surveyed saw bright prospects in the Chinese market for 2021, with a "vast majority" having expansion plans within China over the next three years. [50]

It can be imagined that this is all part of China's revolutionary transformation too. The question is: revolutionary transformation into what?

## Conclusion

In case it has not been made clear, the takeaway here is that modern day China does not fit the Marxist definition of a dictatorship of the proletariat. There is no suppression of democracy for the bourgeoisie, instead that could be found was class collaborationism, billionaire clubs, and stinking revisionism that blames Mao for believing that class struggle is a "key link". There is no revolutionary transformation towards communist society, instead all that was found was crushing taxes, mounting privatisations, climbing living costs, union busting, and the pampering of foreign multinationals. What sort of Communist Party acts like this? Indeed, a communist should have by now gone far past any scrap of faith that the Communist Party of China is in any way a "Communist Party". Revolutionaries in organisations such as the Communist Party of the Philippines [51] are recognising and denouncing the capitalist restoration that took place in China under Deng Xiaoping, a process of privatisation and misery continued to this day, and are now fighting against the occupation of the West Filipino coastline by destructive Chinese capitalist fishing companies. While China as a country is materially wealthier today, this would not have been possible without the transformation of the Chinese people into an army of cheap labour thrown out to the whims of abusive foreign enterprises.

The Chinese Communist Party has strayed from the path of Marxism and capitulated to the side of crooks and billionaires. Marxists hold that only one class can hold power over the state apparatus in order to suppress the opposing class. If the working class does not hold power, then what does it become as a result? Previously in this article the Chinese constitution was mentioned. It is true that included in that text is the passage "Citizens' lawful private property is inviolable ... The State protects in accordance with law the rights of citizens to private property and its inheritance" [52]. This is reminiscent of what was written in the Communist Manifesto, "Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes." and "Abolition of all rights of inheritance." as measures communists must impose when in power which "in most advanced countries ... will be pretty generally applicable" [53]. Surely the country hosting the world's second largest GDP is advanced enough for such measures?

Those sitting on the top of the Communist Party of China power ladder have no problem openly declaring that such measures will never be introduced. Remember the words of Chinese President Xi Jinping: [54]

*"The practices in reform have made us realize that we must under no circumstances turn our back on addressing blindness of the market, and we must not return to the old path of a planned economy."*

The red flag flew over China once, but it has been dipped in place of the bloody banner of global capitalism. The statistics cited above only make up a tiny fraction of all of the proof and evidence many other authors have found which categorically and scientifically disproves any notion of "actually existing socialism" being anywhere near China in the modern day. Pao-Yu Ching's book "From Victory to Defeat" [55] is an excellent read for a more in-depth explanation of this process. These changes have not been without fierce resistance by the Chinese proletariat however. China has often the highest amount of riots in the

world and although they have been arrested, banned, or forced underground, China's genuine Marxist-Leninist-Maoist currents have been gaining strength. We should want to express our solidarity with our Chinese comrades struggling to organise under such difficult and repressive conditions, and with their fight to let the red sun rise in the East once again.

As for those who tell critics of Chinese revisionism that it is “not their place” to present these criticisms, this piece will end with the words of the famous Chinese revolutionary Mao Zedong. [56]

*“Thoroughgoing materialists are fearless; we hope that all our fellow fighters will courageously shoulder their responsibilities and overcome all difficulties, fearing no setbacks or gibes, nor hesitating to criticize us Communists and give us their suggestions. He who is not afraid of death by a thousand cuts dares to unhorse the emperor – this is the indomitable spirit needed in our struggle to build socialism and communism.”*

\* Dazibao were wall posters written in large characters used by Chinese workers to express political opinions during the Cultural Revolution. They were commonly pasted around factory grounds, as shown in the documentary film “How Yukong Moved the Mountains”.

\*\* For those interested in how to find this “60,514” figure, the method used is presented below for clarity. In the NPC (National People's Congress) in July 2017, 2,280 delegates sat, and in the CPPCC (Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference) there were 2,200 delegates. The combined number of delegates sitting in the NPC and CPPCC was 4,480 if you exclude members who may have held a seat in both. According to Hurun, China had the highest billionaire population in the world in 2017, being 609. According to the World Bank the Chinese population in 2017 was approximately 1.386 billion. Using the Hurun statistics for billionaires sitting in the NPC and CPPCC in that year at we have 4,480-115 becomes the number of non-billionaires holding seats in the NPC and CPPCC. The Chinese population (or more accurately the Chinese population – 609) divided by 4,325 is the number of Chinese non-billionaires per non-billionaire held seat in the NPC and CPPCC. 609 divided by 155 is the number of billionaires per billionaire held seat in the NPC and CPPCC. The former of those figures becomes, 320462.287, rounded down to 320,462. 609 divided by 155 is 5.29565217, rounded down to 5. Divide 320462.287 by 5.29565217 to get the ratio of Chinese billionaires on NPC and CPPCC seats to billionaire population compared to Chinese non-billionaires on NPC and NPPCC seats to non-billionaire population in 2017. The figure rounded down, was 60,514, which is the source of the “political representation” figure. It is clear here that China's billionaire population is grossly overrepresented in the field of politics.

\*\*\* Regarding housing, a common argument heard in defence of this is that the average cost of living in China is much lower than that of the West. This is true. However there are two important things to note here. Firstly, although the cost of living in China is much lower than the West in general, this fails to take into account the difference between town and country. For example, it was Deng Xiaoping who ended the “barefoot doctors” scheme along with other reforms to healthcare introduced during the Cultural Revolution. Bearing in mind that the provinces where the lowest minimum wages are found today are largely rural themselves, there are special difficulties in healthcare and education, and there are of course the brutal taxes and levies waged against small farmers. All of this increases the cost of living. If an agricultural labourer gets injured or sick, he may have to be transported distances longer than the length of this country in order to be treated, which in itself is a costly venture, never mind the fact, that public healthcare in China is not free (nor is it officially claimed to be).

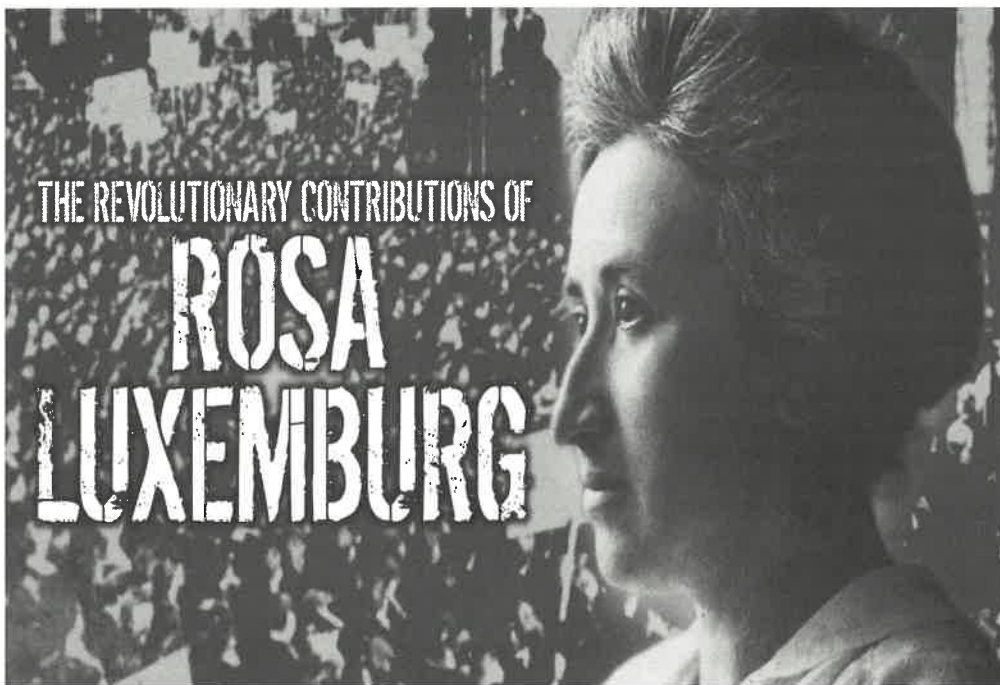
Alongside this, the actual cost of living in China again varies from area to area and more than often exceeds the 162 USD a month minimum wage. For example, it is estimated that in “Tier 1” cities such as Beijing

or Shanghai, the cost of living when taking into account rent, food, transportation, and utilities is at 1,000 to 1,500 USD per month, while the current official minimum wage in Beijing is 335.72 USD a month. In “Tier 3” cities using the same factors the average cost of living is around 424 to 566 USD a month while the minimum wage in Zhenjiang, a “Tier 3” city, is only 228.90 USD a month at its lowest. These statistics paint a grim picture when paired with the general trend of house prices compared to income in China.



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52. <http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/constitution2019/201911/1f65146fb6104dd3a2793875d19b5b29.shtml>
53. See 34
54. Xi stresses decisive role of market in resource allocation – Xinhua | English.news.cn (xinhuanet.com)
55. <https://foreignlanguages.press/new-roads/from-victory-to-defeat-pao-yu-ching/>
56. Speech at the Chinese Communist Party's National Conference on Propaganda Work (March 12, 1957), 1st pocket ed., p. 16



A variety of reformists have tried to claim the legacy of Rosa Luxemburg over the years. They latch onto her criticisms of the Bolsheviks, or appropriate her image in the fashion of a cultural icon, but ignore the fundamental truth that she was an unrepentant revolutionary, dedicated to securing power for the working class. She was implacably opposed to reformism throughout her life, writing multiple polemics against figures like Kautsky, Bernstein and Jaures and struggling against the reformist turn in the German Social Democratic Party. Luxemburg accurately described the mind-set of her reformist opponents when she stated that *"Instead of taking a stand for the establishment of a new society they take a stand for surface modifications of the old society."* For Luxemburg as with any great communist, *"Only the hammer blow of revolution, that is, the conquest of political power by the proletariat"* could bring us to socialism.

While Luxemburg has often been identified with the ultra-left, similarly to Lenin she identified the importance of fighting for the democratic rights of the people as a vital part of the struggle for socialism. This was especially important in the Germany of the time, still crushed under the weight of Prussian aristocracy. Despite seeing the importance of that democratic struggle, Luxemburg was clear-eyed about the nature of the bourgeois state, arguing that *"bourgeois legality (and parliamentarism as the legislature in process of development) is nothing but the particular social form in which the political violence of the bourgeoisie, developing its given economic basis, expresses itself."*

While Luxemburg had long been an outstanding organiser and leader, her

greatest test came in 1914. On the outbreak of the First World War, Luxemburg joined a minority of principled socialists, alongside Connolly and Lenin, who opposed the war wholeheartedly and refused to support their nations' ruling classes. Luxemburg's own party, the German Social Democrats, embraced the imperialist war totally and defended the Kaiser's regime as a progressive force. For Luxemburg, this was the ultimate betrayal of Marxist and international principles. In her anonymous 1915 pamphlet, *"The Crisis of Social Democracy"*, she excoriated the leaders of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International, laying out the depths and consequences of their betrayal, declaring that *"a catastrophe of world-historical proportions has happened: International Social Democracy has capitulated."* This pamphlet also highlights Luxemburg's internationalism, pointing out the hypocrisy of the imperial powers and their colonial crimes, and arguing that *"For the first time, the ravening beasts set loose upon all quarters of the globe by capitalist Europe have broken into Europe itself."*

It would be condescending to the legacy of Luxemburg if we did not acknowledge the serious errors she made. She never balked from criticism and neither should we. Most importantly for those of us in Ireland, Luxemburg opposed the right of self-determination of nations, including that of her native country, whose independence movement she described as "utopian". Because of this incorrect perspective she was unable to see the connection between imperialist chauvinism and the capitulation that led to the 2<sup>nd</sup> International to embrace imperialism. On economic questions, Luxemburg also broke with Marxist orthodoxy and argued that under-consumption rather than over-production was the main driver of capitalist crisis. On this point Marx and Lenin's perspective has better stood the test of time. Other errors are more

understandable given the context Luxemburg was operating in, such as her criticism of the organisational methods of the Bolsheviks that have been proven correct time and again in the course of struggle. Her robust debates with others, in particular Lenin, were vital to providing clarity and progress on many questions.

It was with the aim of delivering a "hammer blow" that Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht founded the Communist Party of Germany in November 1918, replacing their formerly named Spartacist Group. This marked a definitive break with the class traitors of the Social Democratic movement and a great achievement for the German working class. It was a time of great upheaval, as the inevitable defeat of German imperialism came closer. A wave of strikes and protests paralysed the country as the working class mobilised. Across Germany, inspired by the Russian revolution, soviets and socialist republics were declared such as the Bavarian Soviet Republic. Luxemburg was at the forefront of struggles at this time. It is one of the great tragedies of proletarian history that the German Revolution of 1918-19 was not successful.

On January 5<sup>th</sup> 1919, tens of thousands of workers took to the streets of Berlin to protest the removal of a government official sympathetic to socialism. A general strike was called, and soon armed workers spontaneously began to build barricades and defend them with weapons across Berlin. Despite not having been involved in the planning and seeing the revolt as premature, Luxemburg soon joined them and provided the leadership that the workers needed. That this uprising was ultimately crushed by fascists on the orders of the ruling Social Democrats is another irony for reformists who claim her. After the worker's forces were smashed, on January 15<sup>th</sup> Luxemburg alongside her comrade Liebknecht, were captured by the Freikorps. Both were tortured and then executed, with Luxemburg's body unceremoniously dumped in a canal.

Despite growing defeats for the German working class, Rosa Luxemburg remained defiant and filled with revolutionary optimism. Her final statement is a fitting eulogy for an staunch communist who fought to the very end: *"'Order prevails in Berlin!' You foolish lackeys! Your 'order' is built on sand."*

*Tomorrow the revolution will 'rise up again, clashing its weapons,' and to your horror it will proclaim with trumpets blazing: I was, I am, I shall be!"*

# The Two-Line Struggle Within the Irish Republican Movement



## Introduction: The Two-Line Struggle

The recurring source of division within the forces of the Irish republican movement has primarily been on the question of reformism, constitutionalism and capitulationism versus revolutionism, physical-force and anti-imperialism. These two opposing lines exist in unceasing struggle, the outcome of which governing whether the movement descends into the mire of concessions, deals and beggary with Empire or ascends to a fight for a revolutionary break with Empire once and for all. This divide is ultimately an expression of the division of Irish society into classes. Mao Zedong, who led China's national liberation struggle to final victory, spoke extensively on the importance of this two-line struggle, explaining that inevitably two opposing political lines will emerge throughout the development of any revolutionary movement: a revolutionary line and a counter-revolutionary line, a proletarian line and a bourgeois line. This two-line struggle is an inevitable and necessary process as well as a complex one – it is a tumultuous torrent against which the oars of dogmatism or subjectivism will leave one wrecked on the banks.

In 1927 a young Mao described the basis for the two-line struggle in simple terms: 'Where there are two opposite approaches to things and people, two opposite views emerge.' [1] In a society divided into warring classes this observation necessarily becomes an all-encompassing law. The working class are viewed by the capitalist class in negative terms – they're lazy, they exist to be exploited, they're constantly looking for more, etc. The working class, however, understands itself on its own terms – we are people, we are the revolutionary class that makes history and pushes society forward, we have the power to make everything stop or go.

The people of Ireland see their country as their home and a place with which their own well-being is intimately tied up – it goes against their basic interests to allow it to be exploited and carved up in the interests of foreign imperialism. On the other hand, to the elites of Irish society, the garrison class, those who slavishly serve the interests of imperialism, Ireland is seen as weak and small, something to be sold off to foreign interests as quickly as possible at any price at all. They hate Ireland, its people and culture, they are humiliated by it and strive to see it erased, so that we might exist solely as an appendage of the imperialist powers, not only economically, but politically, culturally and socially as well. As this comprador class emerged to serve the interests of imperialism it continues to feel itself inseparably bound up with imperialism, believing that Ireland could not function if it weren't for destructive, extractive capital investment from Britain, the U.S., Germany and elsewhere. Speaking on this fundamental division, in 1916 James Connolly wrote:

*'[T]he Working Class was the only class to whom the word 'Empire', and the things of which it was the symbol did not appeal. That to the propertied classes 'Empire' meant high dividends and financial security, whereas to the Working Class that meant only the things it was in rebellion against.'* [2]

However the hegemony of the pro-imperialist classes over Irish life has meant that these colonial ideas have sunk deep into our psyche and communists and republicans certainly do not exist outside of this. Again, as Connolly recognised:

*'Like a poisonous ulcer this tie of self-interest has spread over Ireland corrupting and destroying all classes, from the Lord Mayor in his Mansion House to the poor boy and girl in the slum. Corrupting all hearts, destroying all friendships, poisoning all minds.'* [3]

These opposing views of Ireland are the material basis for why so many so-called republicans have passed over to the side of empire. They have unwittingly assimilated the ideas of imperialism and have consequently carried out the policies of imperialism in their political activity. They lack faith in the ability of the Irish people to liberate themselves and come to believe that we can peacefully co-exist with imperialism, that it is a force that can be negotiated and bargained with – eventually they come to see imperialism as a benevolent and progressive force. This false pretext was central to the most recent surrender and betrayal of Ireland's national movement, encapsulated in the promise of the chief colonial administrator of the occupied six counties in the late '80s:

*'The British Government has no selfish strategic or economic interests in Northern Ireland; our role is to help, enable and encourage. Britain's purpose... is not to occupy, oppress or exploit but to ensure democratic debate and free democratic choice.'* [4]

This fantasy has in fact provided an ideological basis for imperialism to strengthen its occupation, oppression and exploitation of Ireland, and as a means to undermine democratic debate and free democratic choice – all with the active and willing participation of compromising, collaborationist nationalists. They come to see the illusive "progressive" appearance of empire as the essence of empire, failing to see through this trick as Connolly did:

*'The essential meanness of the British Empire is that it robs under the pretence of being generous, and it enslaves under pretence of liberating.'* [5]

With stakes no higher than either achieving the liberation of our people or failing to do so, it is clear that the two-line struggle cannot be ignored, nor should we hope to wish it away – on the contrary, it is the lifeblood of our movement, how it remains vital and strong, able to steer a genuinely revolutionary course that will achieve our aims. This dialectical struggle takes place in all things.

Within all living things there is a constant struggle between life and death, this is a contradiction within us all – we are both living while also dying, both trends exist simultaneously. We do not ignore this struggle. We attempt to strengthen the trend of life by eating, sleeping, keeping healthy, etc., and, by this, we nurture life and ward off death. And our life ends when this struggle is resolved, when death overcomes life – and, as Engels noted, *‘physiology proves that death is not a sudden instantaneous phenomenon, but a very protracted process.’* [6] In the same vein we must nurture and give strength to the revolutionary trend in our movement and overcome all counter-revolutionary trends – should this struggle cease within our ranks it would only mean that counter-revolution has succeeded and the revolutionary movement is no more. As Mao explained:

*‘Opposition and struggle between ideas of different kinds constantly occur within the Party; this is a reflection within the Party of contradictions between classes and between the new and the old in society. If there were no contradictions in the Party and no ideological struggles to resolve them, the Party’s life would come to an end.’* [7]

On the centenary of the counter-revolution against the Republic it is essential to highlight this law of revolution in order to both understand what took place in those years and, most importantly, to ensure the movement remains revolutionary going forward and that the awakened people of Ireland will scale even greater heights than before in their struggle for freedom and independence.

## A History of the Two-Line Struggle Within Republicanism

### Ideology

First and foremost the correct ideology is necessary to ensure the revolutionary movement remains revolutionary, an ideology based on the class standpoint of the working class, the only steadfastly revolutionary class. Today this ideology is Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the scientific theory of the international working class, today the leading guide of revolutionary struggles across the globe, particularly in Latin America and Asia. In Ireland revolutionaries uphold the guiding thought of Socialist-Republicanism, for as the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) explains:

*‘[R]evolutions give rise to a thought that guides them, which is the result of the application of the universal truth of the ideology of the international proletariat to the concrete conditions of each revolution; a guiding thought indispensable to reach victory and to conquer political power’* [8]

Affording close attention and study to the developments of socialist thought internationally James Connolly, the great leader and representative of the Irish proletariat, creatively applied Marxism to Ireland’s concrete conditions, synthesising socialist-republicanism as a result, rooted in both the Irish revolution and in Marxism. He drew on Ireland’s history of republican struggle and theory, imbued as it is with socialistic ideals, but he also recognised Karl Marx as the ‘first scientific socialist’ and understood Marxism as the ‘key to the pages of history’. [9] Irish revolutionaries today, similarly drawing on revolutionary developments abroad, understand that Marxism has developed to the higher stage of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and use this scientific theory as the guide for our struggle. If we are to grasp and apply Connolly’s thesis that *‘The Irish working class remain as the incorruptible inheritors of the fight for Irish freedom’* we must grasp and apply the highest development of working-class ideology, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, as the only sure guide to victory in our revolution. As Connolly said:

*‘[T]he capitalist and landlord classes in Ireland, irrespective of their political creed, are still saturated with the spirit of the conquest, and that it is only in the working class we may expect to find the true principles of action, which, developed into a theory, would furnish a real*

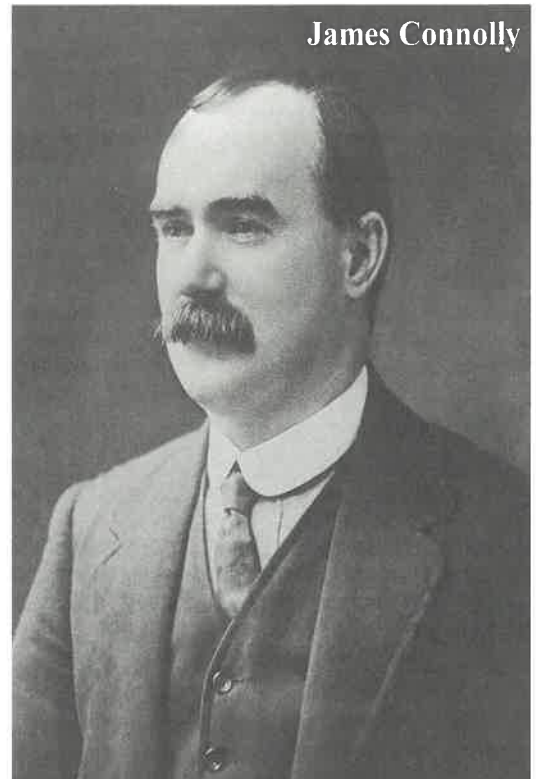
*philosophy of Irish freedom.’* [10]

### Leadership

Connolly’s immense contribution to the Irish revolution is testament to the fact that correct and respected leadership is essential for the concrete application of revolutionary theory and the effective handling of the two-line struggle. In 1988 the PCP wrote that:

*‘All revolutions, in their process of development... give rise to a group of leaders and principally one who represents and leads it, a leader with acknowledged authority and influence.’* [11]

This is a law of history proven by Ireland’s revolutionary struggle. But



such leaders are not gifts from the gods – they are forged through intense class struggle, ideological and political debate, and self-cultivation. As Nepalese communist Parvati wrote in 2003:

*‘Leadership is basically the actualisation of political ideology. ... it is the command in ideology that determines the leadership quality. This quality is developed through continuous class struggle, inner-party struggle and inner-struggle. Hence real tested leadership can only come in countries where there is class struggle, where the Party thrives on healthy inner-party struggle demanding a higher level of transformation of individuals through relentless inner-struggle.’* [12]

The emergence of such committed leaders is precious and their loss, such as with the deaths of Wolfe Tone, Fintan Lalor, Connolly, Mellows and Costello, has been devastating for the development of the revolutionary struggle. As the PCP correctly stated:

*‘Reaction has two principles to destroy the revolution: To annihilate its leadership and to isolate the guerrilla from the masses. But in synthesis its problem is to annihilate the leadership, because it is what enables us to maintain our perspective and reach our objective.’* [13]

For instance, can the blow dealt to the national struggle by the loss of the great leaders of 1916 even be quantified? Staunch revolutionary leaders, such as James Connolly, Thomas Clarke, Patrick Pearse and Éamonn Ceannt, were brutally executed by the colonial establishment, leaving the leadership of the national struggle open to be seized by opportunistic bourgeois elements such as Arthur Griffith, Michael

Collins and Éamonn de Valera. The loss of revolutionary leadership made the internal subversion of the Republic an inevitability. This internal foe temporarily achieved something which the external foe alone cannot: break the revolutionary movement – for ‘it is easier to take a fortress from within’. [14] As Cathal Brugha, murdered by the Free Staters in 1922, put it:

*‘In spite of all that terrorism Lloyd George could not beat the Irish nation, and when he found he could not do so, he resorted to wiles and manœuvres; he came along with the suggestion of negotiations.’* [15]

And, just like that, the pro-imperialist collaborators gladly left behind the magnificent madness of popular revolution for the sickening comfort of empire. Without shame they ignored the wise words of Éamonn Ceannt, spoken mere hours before his execution in 1916, outlining the basic principle which the leaders of any national liberation movement must stick by:

*‘I leave for the guidance of other Irish Revolutionaries who may tread the path which I have trod this advice: never to treat with the enemy, never to surrender at his mercy, but to fight to a finish’* [16]

In a similar vein, Chairman Gonzalo of Peru had the following to say on the question of “peace talks” and conciliation:

*‘Such talks are simply aimed at halting or undermining the people’s war, that’s what they are aimed at and nothing more. ... When the time comes, the people’s war will necessarily have to undertake diplomatic dealings. But our diplomacy will be aimed at seizing Power country-wide, fully and completely. ... We don’t want a North Peru and a South Peru, we want only one Peru. This is our condition: full, complete and absolute surrender. Are they ready for that? No. What they are plotting is our destruction, and so talks are nothing but a part of that same plan despite all their demagogic and philistine cackling.’* [17]

If a revolutionary leadership cannot hold fast by such a principle, to fight till the fight is finished, then they are no longer revolutionary leaders but servile collaborators, the dearest friends of empire.

This recurring crisis of leadership has been a persistent and debilitating issue throughout the history of Ireland’s struggle. For example, in the 1830s & ‘40s the rightist line had a powerful and popular representative in Daniel O’Connell. During these critical years the leadership of Ireland’s national movement was in the hands of an out-and-out reactionary and the whole nation suffered as a result. The leaders of the left line – such as Thomas Davis, John Mitchel and James Fintan Lalor – found themselves unable to effectively rebuild the movement following O’Connell’s outright betrayal at Clontarf in 1843 when he cowed before reaction. Davis’ death in 1845 further compounded difficulties. The attempted rising in 1848 met with failure despite the objective conditions at home and abroad being incredibly ripe, with revolutions raging across Europe and the great hunger, a clear result of British imperialism, seeing Ireland swept up in a genocidal catastrophe. John Mitchel had the following to say about O’Connell:

*‘To him and to his teaching... I ascribe our utter failure... O’Connell was... next to the British Government, the worst enemy that Ireland ever had, - or rather the most fatal friend.’* [18]

The likes of Redmond, Collins, de Valera and Adams, with great effectiveness, carried on O’Connell’s tradition of leading the national struggle down the blind alley of constitutional reformism and selling out the people’s struggles for some concessions for the Irish bourgeoisie. If the leadership of the movement is not comprised of revolutionaries guided by proletarian ideology it will inevitably fall into the hands of opportunists guided by bourgeois ideology, trafficking in the people’s struggles for their own ends.

In the late 1910s and 1920s the loss of Connolly’s recognised and in-

sightful leadership ensured the proletarian movement remained disorganised, in spite of the high tide of struggle of the labour movement in the years following his death. In the absence of strong leadership and revolutionary proletarian organisation the working class failed utterly to accomplish its historic task of leading the national liberation struggle to victory. With the Labour Party effectively capitulating to imperialism and the radical elements scattered and disorganised, the counter-revolution was able to greatly undermine the revolutionary movement in the years and decades following 1922.

### Organisation and the Masses

The failure of Connolly’s Labour Party to carry on the revolutionary struggle of the working class reflects another fundamental prerequisite for the correct waging of the two-line struggle – that is, organisational forms which can effectively meet the needs of the people’s revolution. As Vladimir Lenin, leader of the Bolsheviks and the Russian Revolution, wrote:

*‘In its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organisation ... the proletariat can, and inevitably will, become an invincible force only through its ideological unification on the principles of Marxism being reinforced by the material unity of organisation’* [19]

In order to do so the revolutionary organisations must be closely linked with the masses. As Stalin wrote:

*‘[A]s long as the Bolsheviks maintain connection with the broad masses of the people they will be invincible. And, on the contrary, as soon as the Bolsheviks sever themselves from the masses and lose their connection with them, as soon as they become covered with bureaucratic rust, they will lose all their strength and become a mere cipher.’* [20]

This reality, that revolutionary politics can only thrive in close connection with the oppressed masses, has been actively exploited by opportunists and reformists. In the aftermath of the counter-revolutionary surrender to Britain in 1921-22 there was a conscious effort by the counter-revolutionary Free Staters to delay open discussions among the membership of the movement. This allowed the reactionary forces to consolidate power and legitimacy while also greatly hindering the republican leaders from stirring up the more radical rank-and-file against the capitulation. Ultimately they banned the holding of an all-member army convention recognising it would only strengthen the hand of the republicans, as well as forbidding Sinn Féin from taking a vote on the treaty. The rightist line has revelled in utilising such dirty tricks to assert its dominance, such as publishing the Treaty in the papers before it had been discussed by the Dáil or, in 1986, inventing cumainn in order to secure a majority against abstentionism.

Demonstrating the steadfast revolutionary spirit of their class, the proletarian Irish Citizens’ Army came out against the Treaty – they gained nothing from the Treaty and had a world to win by continuing the struggle, a key feature of that revolutionary class which, when in command of society, will inevitably lead humanity to a classless, stateless (that is, communist) future. Likewise Cumann na mBan came out with a clear majority against the surrender, upholding their commitment to the Republic, a clear show of the radicalism of women militants, engendered by their patriarchal oppression within the current system. As Parvati recognised:

*‘[R]evolutionary communist women have always been on the offensive when they are fighting against the revisionists... painfully aware that revisionism breeds bureaucratization, which in turn strengthens patriarchal values, ultimately negating women in politics.’* [21]

And indeed, as is well known, women only lost out under the reactionary Free State.

If the oppressed of society are relied upon it is inevitable that the revolution will be pushed forward to victory. Therefore it is not surprising that a lack of faith in the masses of Ireland to carry out their own emancipation has been a recurring belief of the rightist line. This belief will often guide potentially progressive elements to step over to the side of reaction, losing faith and believing victory to be an impossibility. The countermarching order of the traitorous rat Eoin MacNeill is an obvious example of this. He believed the 1916 Rising would inevitably be defeated with the absence of foreign support. In 1921 the Treatyites weaponised Britain's spectre of "immediate and terrible war" to cow the people into submission to their capitulationist treason. We might also point to the United Irishmen staking everything on French support rather than striking a coordinated blow when conditions were ripe as an example of this. The most despicable version of this phenomenon is those nationalists who in fact do not want the masses of Ireland to bring about their own emancipation, those who fear social revolution. The likes of Daniel O'Connell and Arthur Griffith might be counted among this rotten bunch.

On the ultra-leftist side of this coin is the erroneous "Blanquist" tendency which sees the revolutionaries as carrying out the revolution while the people cheer on in passive support. George Gilmore noted familiar comments from adherents of this deviation in the '30s:

*"The masses of the people always let down the Republic," and "I dare say we could get a big following – but what would we do with it?"* [22]

In reality revolutionaries must guide and channel the revolutionary struggle of the people as it is the masses who make history:

*'the party must not only go forward, but must also secure the following of the vast masses. ... an advanced group alone, without the support of the vast masses, cannot make a revolution... in the final analysis, a revolution "is made" by the vast masses of the working people.'* [23]

The Irish people are a great roaring river ready and able to wash away imperialism, yet a thousand blockages restrict its flow. Revolutionaries must remove these restrictions and unleash the all-powerful energy of the masses in a mighty flood that will tear down empires and wash away all exploitation and oppression. As Peadar O'Donnell summarised:

*'the stubborn splendour of the big mass of the people must be involved in the tactics of the Revolution: this heresy of the cult of armed men that brought Collins to Imperialism and us to defeat must be overcome.'* [24]

### Political line

An unfortunate reality of the last century of the Irish revolution is that socialism has not always been a by-word for the revolutionary line, in fact oftentimes it has been just the opposite. Socialist politics have either been adopted opportunistically or in a superficial manner; not rooted in Marxist principles. Left-wing politics have often been used as an excuse for reformism, for 'neutrality' on the question of imperialism, for a peaceful accumulation of forces no matter the situation – the pro-Treaty Labour Party are an early manifestation of this trend. As Liam Mellows wrote of the Labour Party in fury from Mountjoy Jail:

*'Professing to be against militarism, its leaders try to delude the movement into believing that at some future date they will head a revolution... Its leaders had it in their power to fashion that Republic as they wished – to make it a 'Workers and Peasants Republic'. By their acceptance of the Treaty and all that it connotes –... subservience to British Capitalism – they have betrayed not alone the Irish Republic but the labour movement in Ireland and the cause of the workers and peasants throughout the world.'* [25]

Opportunistic socialism was also used by the Officials, and later Provi-

sional Sinn Féin, as a means of shipping capitulationism into the movement under a shroud of radicalism, as a covert means of politically, ideologically and spiritually surrendering to British imperialism. For example, speaking on their increasingly cosy relationship with the occupying forces and loyalism, one Workers' Party activist expressed this phenomenon quite plainly:

*'It done no good seeing Special Branch staggering out of clubs... or drink-driving charges getting dropped. If it had an effect on me like that, what effect did it have on ordinary people that did not have a Marxist orientation?'* [26]

In the revisionist lexicon, "a Marxist orientation" is not used to differentiate between our friends and our enemies, nor understood as the revolutionary ideology necessary to break with imperialism and capitalism, but is used as a means to justify papering over the differences between friends and enemies and understood as a means to promote capitulation to imperialism and acting in its interests.

Therefore it is not enough to repeat the unity of the class and national struggle as a shibboleth but to hold true to the essence of this principle through the difficulty and confusion of the real movement.

Another consistent difficulty with carrying out the two-line struggle has been that splits often take place over a particular political decision which leaves a mishmash of ideological and political views on both sides - for example, the question of abstentionism. While history has vindicated the correctness of republicans upholding this principle, all groups which deserted it having degenerated into reformism and capitulationism, this divide was often not so clear-cut in the moment. This question led to the republican movement fracturing along reformist and revolutionary lines with the 1969/1970 split between the "Official" and Provisional groups. The reformist revisionists, led by Cathal Goulding and Seán Garland, wanted to end the practice of abstentionism and embrace electoralism. However revolutionary elements still remained within the reformist "Official" movement, which lay the basis for a later split in 1974, forming the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP). Seamus Costello, a founding member of the IRSP, saw an end to abstentionism as a move away from rigid conservative militarism towards a more mass-based left-wing political movement, with politics in command, and thus threw his lot in with the reformists for a time. However his revolutionary socialist-republican conception of politics soon became irreconcilable with the reformist constitutionalism of the "Official" leadership. Ultimately we must understand this history and the decisions made in its concrete context as we seek to learn from the failures and difficulties of the past to more effectively wage such two-line struggles in the future.

In a similar vein the question of politics vs. militarism has been a recurring point of division, though diverse political views may reside on either side of that divide. However, as socialist republicans understand, this is a false dichotomy, and in fact both are necessary to forge a suc-





successful national liberation movement. As Liam Mellows argued from prison in 1922:

*'I am strongly of opinion that the Republican political and military outlook be co-ordinated. ... during the past six months we suffered badly because responsible officers in their desire to act as soldiers, and because of an attitude towards 'politicians' acquired as a result (in my opinion) of a campaign directed towards this end by old G.H.Q., could only judge of situations in terms of guns and men.'* [27]

In general these more complex splits are near always due to illusions and tricks put up before the revolutionary movement by the forces of empire, such as treaties and peace deals (1922, 1998), parliaments and constitutional reformism (1840s, 1880s, 1926, 1970, 1986) and imperialist war (1914). As Lenin wrote:

*'The zigzags of bourgeois tactics intensify revisionism within the labour movement and not infrequently exacerbate the differences within the labour movement to the pitch of a direct split.'* [28]

The job of revolutionaries is to navigate these tricks and illusions by applying socialist-republican principles and sticking to them. If this is not done reformist and capitulationist elements will inevitably seize control of the movement and liquidate it. In 1902 Vladimir Lenin wrote in poetic terms on the difficult, thankless task of genuine revolutionaries, to stay true to the correct line and to struggle against the inevitable reformist tendencies which will arise within our movement:

*'We are marching in a compact group along a precipitous and difficult path, firmly holding each other by the hand. We are surrounded on all sides by enemies, and we have to advance almost constantly under their fire. We have combined, by a freely adopted decision, for the purpose of fighting the enemy, and not of retreating into the neighbouring marsh, the inhabitants of which, from the very outset, have reproached us with having separated ourselves into an exclusive group and with having chosen the path of struggle instead of the path of conciliation. And now some among us begin to cry out: Let us go into the marsh! And when we begin to shame them, they retort: What backward people you are! Are you not ashamed to deny us the liberty to invite you to take a better road! Oh, yes, gentlemen! You are free not only to invite us, but to go yourselves wherever you will, even into the marsh. In fact, we think that the marsh is your proper place, and we are prepared to render you every assistance to get there. Only let go of our hands, don't clutch at us and don't besmirch the grand word freedom, for we too are "free" to go where we please, free to fight not only against the marsh, but also against those who are turning towards the marsh!'* [29]

Twenty years later Liam Mellows expressed a similar sentiment at his speech at Bodenstown in June 1922, shortly before the active phase of resistance to the counter-revolution was launched:

*'Certain people have taken the road of expediency and descended into hypocrisy to achieve their object but republicans must not deviate one inch from the straight road. It is regrettable that our people have*

#### **Ruairí O'Bradaigh addresses a rally at the GPO**



*yielded to the threats of England, but republicanism will go on in spite of what has happened.'* [30]

Over sixty years later Ruairí O'Bradaigh, before departing the Provisional Movement, echoed Lenin and Mellows, reflecting the unceasing nature of the two-line struggle, when he said:

*'[S]o those in Leinster House who have done everything... and weren't able to break this movement, they can come and say, "at last we have them towing the line, it took us 65 years but they've come in from the cold, they've come in from the wilderness" – never, I say to you, never.'* [31]

Free State Minister for Defence Richard Mulcahy characterised the 1922-23 counter-revolution as the campaign to protect Ireland 'from a madness from within'. This 'madness' is exactly what Mellows, Lenin and other stalwart revolutionaries characterised as sticking to revolutionary principles, through thick and thin. We can never forget that the revolutionaries of 1916 were exactly those who had been said to be out in the cold, infected with 'that delirium of the brave', those who had denounced Redmond's cow-towing to British imperialism and steered a revolutionary course through the crisis of the inter-imperialist war. As Liam Mellows wrote in 1917:

*'A minority... still stood true. ... It is to these, who in the first instance, considering neither their size nor their influence, nor shrinking from the terrible outlook that confronted them, stood out for principle first as against 'safety first', that Ireland is indebted for her salvation as a Nation. Had they, acting along the lines of least resistance, adopted an attitude of expediency, no matter with what ulterior motive, all would have been lost and the final object of England's Irish policy accomplished.'* [32]

Mellows placed the blame for the low ebb of the nationalist movement prior to the mid-1910s primarily on the actions of constitutional nationalists, for misdirecting and pacifying the struggle, acting in the service of British imperialism. He saw that only the tireless efforts of revolutionaries led to the revival of republicanism:

*'At long last some result was seen of the years of drudgery and 'spade work' on the part of the small minority who had stood true to Ireland through thick and thin. Slowly but surely the country was being roused from the lethargic and disorganised state into which constitutionalism had thrown it'* [33]

In recent years Provisional Sinn Féin have played the same role by their (inevitably futile) attempt to convince the Irish people that imperialism can be dealt with by peaceful means, by means of begging for the basic democratic rights that have been actively and forcibly denied to the Irish nation. The recurring strengthening of imperialism's grip on Ireland through the capitulation of such reformist elements demonstrates the correctness of Lenin's words:

*'Struggle against imperialism that is not closely linked with the struggle against opportunism is either an empty phrase or a fraud.'* [34]

A revolution can only be put through on the basis of a correct political line, not through opportunistic politicking and flip-flopping in an attempt to stay 'relevant' and inoffensive to the bourgeois classes. Those who uphold or tail Sinn Féin's degeneration into reformism do a disservice to the cause of the Republic, and in 'thinking in the grooves' of British constitutionalism depart from the ranks of Irish republicanism to the ranks of Empire, whether consciously or not.

Revolutionaries must struggle against such reformist tendencies, for allowing rightism to fester in the name of unprincipled unity only leads to its strengthening which in turn leads inevitably to capitulation and splits. As the Communist Party of Peru recognised:

*'The Party is a contradiction where the class struggle expresses itself as the two-line struggle between the right and the left. It is the two-line struggle that propels the development of the Party, its just and correct handling requires that the left must impose itself. We fight conciliation because it nourishes the right'* [35]

A common position is centrism, which hopes for a compromise between the left and right of the movement, misunderstanding that this desired unity can only take place through the dominance of the revolutionary line. The Bolsheviks mocked those who pushed for conciliation with the revisionists within their movement:

*'Conciliation with the opportunists, with the traitors to the revolution, for the sake of what?... For the sake of "peace within the Party," for the sake of "unity"... Unity with whom, with the opportunists?... It was clear that such parties could not be revolutionary parties... [this tendency caused them] to degenerate from parties of social revolution into parties of "social reforms,"... [and] converted from a leading force into an appendage of its own parliamentary group.'* [36]

Going further they say: *'whoever insists on a conciliatory attitude towards opportunists is bound to sink to opportunism himself.'* [37] Mellows also understood that unprincipled unity is worthless, and that division has always occurred primarily due to those who have departed from the tenets of republicanism:

*'We are warned of the consequences of a split or division, but you can only have unity on the principle and those who will depart from this principle are in my opinion responsible for any division or split because those who will alter the status of Ireland from a Republic will cause any division or split. ... I do say that on the question of unity, of preventing a division, of stopping a split that there is one way it can be done and that is by the rejection of this Treaty. You can come with us but we who are against it cannot go with you.'* [38]

### Conclusion: a Stagnant Pool or a Roaring River?

For those 'practical' revolutionaries who see all this as abstract we urge you to recall the very real blood that was shed over these ideological and political struggles. The consolidation of the counter-revolution in 1922-3 saw the revolutionary forces crushed and scattered. Violent internal feuds stand out as another expression of this. If this two-line struggle can be waged conscientiously and democratically through discussion and debate, our movement will be made much stronger and our unity more firm and developed.

Furthermore it must be remembered that this unity cannot be based solely upon staying true to the ideals, strategies and tactics of the past. Unity must be forged in the messy present through ideological and political struggle, which can only be carried out successfully only through the process of waging class struggle and with a firm grasp of the concrete conditions of our current situation. As Mao wrote:

*'To talk all the time about unity, and never about struggle, is not Marxism. Unity must go through struggle before unity can be attained. ... To talk all the time about unity is "a pool of stagnant water"; it can lead to coldness. We must destroy the old basis for unity, pass through a struggle, and unite on a new basis. Which is better – a stagnant pool, or 'the inexhaustible Yangtse comes roaring past'?'* [39]

Or, as Mao said elsewhere: *'If unity is sought through struggle, it will live; if unity is sought through yielding, it will perish.'* [40]

We must develop the theory of past great leaders for the present situation, in all its complexity, and, through this application of scientific socialism, develop our practice for building revolution. This is not a simple process and it can only take place through the two-line struggle as we attempt to assert the revolutionary line. While we may largely agree on the successes and mistakes of the past, we must forge a higher

unity on the basis of a correct assessment of how the Irish people can take power in this century. In this struggle for unity we forget such struggles of the past only at our own peril.

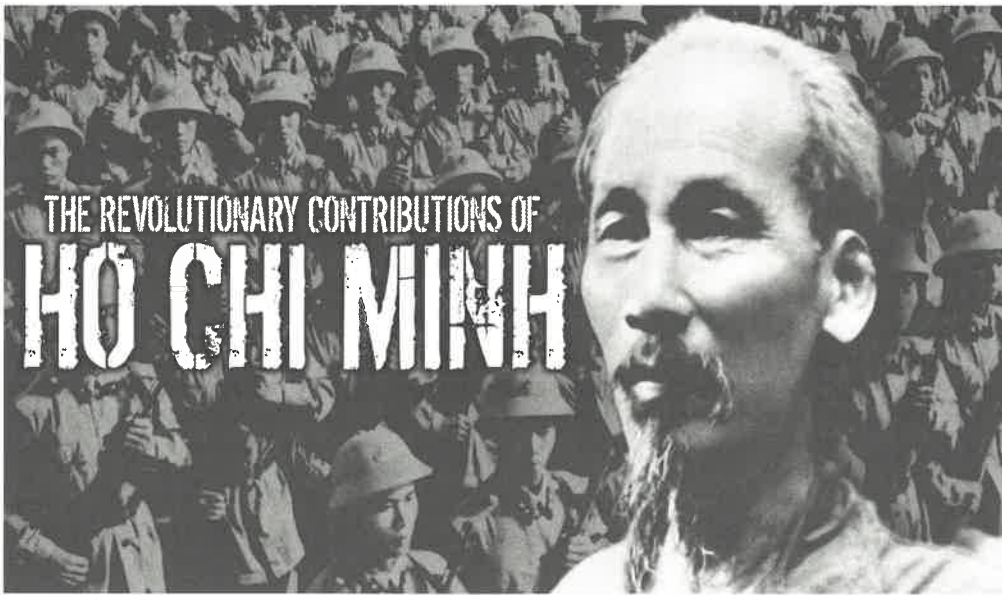
It is important to recognise that this two-line struggle is by no means unique to Ireland but a universal phenomenon within class society. Mao Zedong recognised the essential divide in 1971:

*'To persist in revolutionary violence to smash the bourgeois state machine and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, or to maintain the bourgeois state machine and oppose the dictatorship of the proletariat – this has been the focus of repeated struggles between Marxism on the one hand and revisionism, reformism, anarchism and all kinds of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology on the other, the focus of repeated struggles between the two lines in the international communist movement for the past hundred years.'* [41]

Either 'to break the connection with Britain' or to concede and capitulate to Britain; either to 'set about the organisation of the Socialist Republic' or to rest content with supposed 'stepping stones' – history tells us that such stones only lead us deeper into the marsh. Instead we must, step by painstaking step, remove ourselves from the marsh entirely, and not rest easy until we are entirely free of it and no longer drenched in its foul stench. For this task we have the powerful weapon of proletarian ideology, Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, which, correctly applied to the concrete reality of the Irish revolution, will inevitably see the working class of Ireland lead the national liberation struggle to victory and rebuild our People's Republic.

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*"A nation that has such citizens will never surrender" - Ho Chi Minh having learned of the death of Irish Republican hunger striker Terence MacSwiney in 1920*

Following the Second World War, Ho Chi Minh emerged as the most visible and influential leader of the international anti-colonial struggle in South East Asia. He was a founder of the Indochina Communist Party in 1930, the Viet Minh in 1941 and president of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam from 1945 to 1969 and was affectionately known to freedom-loving people as 'Uncle Ho'.

Having worked in London Ho spent six years in France and was an active socialist. He organised Vietnamese émigré there and following the First World War he petitioned the Versailles Peace Conference that the Vietnam nation should be entitled to national self-determination and national liberation. He demanded a break from the French colonial power which dominated Vietnam.

When the French Socialist Party split in 1920 along revolutionary and reformist lines Ho joined the revolutionary communist side.

In 1923 Ho travelled to Moscow and attended the Fifth Congress of the Communist International and opposed the weak opposition to colonialism by the French Communist Party. Similar to Mao Tse Tung's line on the peasantry, Ho articulated at the Congress the importance of the revolutionary role the oppressed peasants held in a semi-feudal, semi-colonial and colonial country.

In 1924, Ho went to Canton in China and established the first cadre of the Vietnamese nationalist movement, Vietnam Thanh Nien Cach Menh Dong Chi Hoi (Vietnamese Revolutionary Youth Association) which became known as Thanh Nien.

In 1928 the headquarters of Thanh Nien in Canton was destroyed by the Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party) and the group was forced to operate underground. Ho sought refuge in the Soviet Union and became a representative of the Communist International in Southeast Asia.

In Hong Kong in May 1929, the Thanh Nien evolved into the Indochina Communist Party. Having returned from Siam (Thailand), Ho presided over the founding of the Vietnamese Communist Party in February 1930.

In October of that year having taken advice from the

Soviet Union, they renamed the organisation as the Indochinese Communist Party. The Soviets believed that the communist movement should be promoted in the whole of French Indochina which included Cambodia and Laos.

At the same time, an insurrectionary movement began in Vietnam which the French repressed. Ho was condemned to death in his absence but managed to escape to Moscow.

In 1938 he returned to China and was an advisor to the Chinese Communist armed forces. Ho stayed with Mao for several months at Yenan and then returned to Vietnam in 1941. In May he established the Vietnam Doc Lap Dong Minh How (League for the Independence of Vietnam) or Viet Minh.

Ho led many successful military actions against the Vichy French and the Japanese occupation of Vietnam during World War II.

In 1945, the Japanese imperialists spread across Indochina and imprisoned or executed all French officials. Six months later the United States dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and the Japanese were completely defeated. Japan and France's threat to Vietnam diminished.

Ho pushed the advantage. Commandos under Ho's direction entered Hanoi on the same day that Japan surrendered to the Allies. On September 2nd 1945 on Ba Dinh Square in front of a huge crowd, Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam an independent sovereign nation.

Under terms of an Allied agreement, Chiang Kai-Shek's troops were supposed to replace the Japanese in the north of Vietnam.

On October 6th the French general Jacques Leclerc landed in Saigon. In three months, the French were back in control of South Vietnam. Ho decided to negotiate but prepared for an eventual transition to war.

Ho's strategy was to get the French to make the Chinese in the north withdraw and then to work for a treaty with France in recognition of Vietnamese independence. The former was achieved and he signed an agreement with the French which recognised Vietnam as a "free state with its own government, army, and finances" but it was integrated into a French Union with Paris pulling the strings.

The peace would not last long. In November 1946 a French cruiser opened fire on Haiphong and killed

6000 Vietnamese. The First Indochina War thus began on December 19th.

In February 1950 Ho met with Joseph Stalin in Moscow after the Soviet Union recognised his government and all agreed that the newly established Peoples Republic of China would be responsible for backing the Viet Minh. However, Ho always maintained that self-reliance was central to the Vietnamese campaign for national liberation. Later during the Sino-Soviet split, Vietnam took a centrist position, accepting material support from both China and the Soviet Union.

The Viet Minh commanded by General Giap was able to contain the French and by the end of 1953 through a protracted peoples' war, most of the countryside was under Viet Minh control with the large cities under siege. At Dien Bien Phu on the 7th May 1954, the French were crushed and decisively defeated with 10,000 French troops surrendering.

The Geneva accords saw an agreement that Vietnam would be divided until elections in 1956 after which the Vietnamese would establish a unified government. The details were never formalised and the Viet Minh did not recognise the authority of the International Control Commission to hold elections in Vietnam. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam relocated to Hanoi and became the government of North Vietnam. The Southern state in Vietnam was a US puppet and was led by Ngo Dinh Diem.

During the struggle for national liberation and socialism, in 1959 guerrillas of the National Liberation Front then began to conduct armed actions against the US puppet state.

North Vietnam created a network of supply and reinforcement routes through Laos and Cambodia that became known as the Hồ Chí Minh trail. The trail was central to the final victory of the Vietnamese people. Even the US military praised the ingenuity of the trail and considered it "one of the great achievements in military engineering of the twentieth century".

Ho sent a message to the Vietnamese people on July 7th 1966 which became the motto of the Vietnamese cause for national liberation and socialism which was "Nothing is as dear to the heart of the Vietnamese as independence and liberation".

What followed was what became known as the Vietnam War or in Vietnam, the American War. It was a war which saw three times as many bombs dropped on Vietnam by the US than were dropped throughout the whole of the Second World War and which would eventually see the Vietnamese people liberating themselves after one of the longest and most costly battles against the Japanese, French and US colonial and imperialist powers. Ho Chi Minh died in 1969 and never saw the defining images of victory showing US troops and dignitaries scrambling to escape on helicopters. His legacy is the struggle for national liberation and socialism the world over.

Uncle Ho personified the resilience, determination, self-sacrifice and dedication that the Vietnamese people exuded and once again proved that a superior military and technological enemy could be defeated utilising the three magic weapons of the revolution and through a protracted peoples' war.

# More Loyal Than Loyalists: The British and Irish Communist Organisation

Following the murder of 14 unarmed protesters in Derry in January 1972 by the British Parachute Regiment, there was an outpouring of anger across Ireland. Thousands in Dublin marched on the British Embassy in Dublin and burned it to the ground. Every town and city in the 26 counties was in mourning. The armed campaign against British imperialism and the Orange state was to escalate dramatically as working-class youths all over the Occupied 6 counties flocked to the IRA. A few days after the massacre, a group of activists were handing leaflets around University College Dublin on the situation in the North. Contrary to virtually every left-wing group of the time, these leaflets argued that the blame for the entire conflict, that all the violence lay with the Nationalist Catholic leadership and their refusal to "recognise the rights of the Protestants". [1] These activists were members of the British and Irish Communist Organisation (BICO).

Some may ask "why bother analysing what was, on the surface at least, a small and now widely mocked defunct communist organisation from the '70s and 80s? The first reason is that unfortunately, when people talk about Maoism in an Irish context, BICO is one of the two groups people think of, if they think of any at all. As a publication that aims to promote Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in Ireland, it's important that we separate ourselves from such a rotten legacy. The other more important reason is that despite their small size, BICO have had an impact that far outstripped their organisational capabilities. Certain ideas that this bizarre collective promoted in the early 70s, and which were widely dismissed at the time in socialist circles, have become unfortunately common, even if groups espousing those ideas are unaware.

The most extreme manifestation of anti-Republican "socialism" to have ever polluted this country, BICO has rightfully earned itself a place of infamy. While initially formed in London and Dublin as an anti-revisionist Marxist-Leninist organisation under the name Irish Communist Organisation, BICO eventually concluded that the Protestant Working Class was essentially the only revolutionary section on the island. They believed that the rapid development of capitalism in the 6 counties relative to the rest of Ireland had created a far more progressive society as opposed to the priest-ridden backwater in the South. What is more, they openly identified Irish Republicanism as historically reactionary, and spilled barrels of ink about the progressive role of British imperialism and protestant settlers in Ireland as opposed to the backwards Catholic natives. In large part they viewed the colonisation of Ireland as positive rather than a process which underdeveloped the country. Having started from a position that the solution for the 6-county state was a united Ireland, by the 1980s they argued that only full integration into the British state could solve sectarian strife. What had begun as a seemingly genuine attempt to engage the Protestant working class, as evidenced by their attempt to persuade Belfast Protestants to reject "fascist" Loyalist militias in 1969, curdled into an obsession with justifying British imperialism and the historic rights of Unionists.

The theoretical underpinning of this disastrous revisionist line was BICO's "Two Nation Theory". This theory posited that there are two historic nations in Ireland, the Catholic Irish nation and the Protestant Unionist nation, both with an equal right to self-determination and their own national territory. Following this they justified partition on the grounds of Unionist self-determination. [2] This is essentially the position that was adopted by the Trotskyist Socialist Party following their Unionist guru Peter Hadden, but BICO go a step further in pushing their absurd revisionist ideas, in an attempt to discredit Irish republicanism and bolster their image of a progressive Unionist community. BICO believed that the

civil rights movement that kicked off the war in the North had given northern Protestants no choice but to lash out, given they were supposedly under threat of being destroyed by Catholic sectarian forces. BICO became apologists not only for British imperialism in Ireland, but imperialism across the world.

Even most arch-imperialist reactionaries did not go so far as to pretend there is more than one nation in Ireland. On the eve of partition, Winston Churchill is quoted as saying 'I am not at all prepared to admit that there are two nations in Ireland. I look upon the Irish nation as one people.' [3] This naturally was to be one Irish nation under the boot of the British Empire in his estimation, and yet even this imperialist thinking is less viciously reactionary than that of BICO. That is not to say that there were no proponents of the idea of separate nations in Ireland. There were suggestions of this Two Nations idea from Bonar Law and various Unionists at times in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, something that BICO were only too happy to rediscover and republish.

The group originally formed as the Irish Communist Organisation (ICO) in 1965, led by a group of Irish immigrants in London, chief among them Brendan Clifford and his wife Angela. It split from the larger communist grouping and took a pro-China position officially, although from the start the group was somewhat dismissive of Maoist ideas. It had branches both in London and in Ireland. Ideologically the group was strongly anti-revisionist and anti-Trotskyist, and was intent on severely criticising groups in Ireland. From the beginning the position on the national question was that the Socialist movement in Ireland had done too much tailing of Catholic Irish nationalism. This in itself wasn't an unusual position however, and the group still believed that a 32 County Socialist Republic was the ideal solution in terms of the Irish national question. In the early days this group also attracted a small number of veteran Socialist Republican figures.

The September 1969 edition of the "Irish Communist", a publication of the ICO, is the first point where we can see the beginnings of what would be known as the Two Nations theory: they argued "That what exists is a tendency towards the developments of two nationalities" but that there was not yet "a historical perspective present for the development of two

## SOCIALISTS AGAINST



## NATIONALISM

Socialists Against Nationalism, a pressure group which exists to oppose nationalism and promote class politics, in the Republic of Ireland. At present we comprise the Socialist Party, the British and Irish Communist Organisation, the Limerick Socialist Organisation and individual socialists. Others who agree with our aims are invited to support us.

nations in Ireland" and that "the tendency must be towards the merging of the two national tendencies into one national society". However, over the course of 1970 what was called merely "national tendencies" had now become fully fledged and immutable nations in the writings of the ICO. The rhetoric became openly partitionist.

Jack Lane, editor of the ICOs "Communist Comment", in a letter to the Cork Branch of the ICO towards the end of 1970, put forward the following view of a united Ireland: "If the British and Catholic Nationalists make an attempt to unite Ireland with the help of leading Unionists, they will have to coerce the Protestant masses and we will find ourselves advocating a partitioned Ireland, along new lines of course". [4] Already here we can see a tendency towards seeing the perspective of the Protestant working class as paramount, as opposed to the perspective of the Irish working class as a whole. When Lane was asked what his position would be if a significant number of Protestants abandoned Unionism and supported a United Ireland, he replied that he did not have an answer!

Naturally a development towards such a view during the outbreak of renewed violence in the North was not going to be entirely well received. When the Cork Branch of the Irish Communist Organisation resigned in January 1971, they were accused of being "engulfed in bourgeois Catholic nationalism" by the ICO leadership. The Cork branch by contrast accused the ICO of having forced through the Two Nations Theory by undemocratic means. They charged the ICO with having come to a position which favoured the Northern bourgeoisie as being more progressive than the Southern bourgeoisie without any real justification. Beforehand, they had taken exception to articles in 1970 from a London member, Mick Lynch, who had described both wings of the Irish Republican Army as "murderers and fascists". This was printed in the organs of the organisation, which the Cork branch refused to distribute. [5] Mick Lynch would go on to write further articles with titles such as "Fascism and the Republican Movement" and "Fascism in the Ulster State" in which the IRA was blamed for the pogroms against Catholics in the North in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as the now standard revisionist accusations of Nazi collaboration in the 1940s. Lynch accused the IRA in the Occupied 6 Counties of being a Catholic military whose primary aim was to terrorise the Protestant working class, this despite the majority of IRA targets being members of the occupation security forces. Lynch even argued that the Unionist bourgeoisie was justified in repressive measures against Catholics, as they were under attack from the expansionist Southern bourgeoisie, developing a bizarre notion of Irish imperialism.

Other writings showed a move away from talk of a unitary 32 County Workers Republic as a main goal. In response to this rising revisionism and open hostility to Irish republicanism, Cork branch chairman Jim Lane, a veteran socialist republican who had been in the IRA, authored an article titled "On the IRA: Belfast Brigade Area" in December 1970. In this article it was made clear that the attacks in the 1920s were unprovoked attacks on the Catholic community by "Protestant militants at the behest of the Orange bourgeoisie", and that the IRA was in no position to pose a serious threat to the Orange forces at the time. What is more, members of the Northern IRA were disciplined for promoting attacks on Protestants. Examining the recollections of Belfast IRA officers at the time will even reveal that there was a serious reluctance to become involved in what the IRA saw as a distraction from the struggle against British imperialism. Seamus McKenna of B Company IRA in Belfast was to say "at the beginning the Volunteers were ordered not to take part in what was regarded as fratricidal strife. After a week or two, however, it was obvious that if the Catholic population were to survive at all it would be necessary for the Volunteers to protect them". [6] Hardly the words of mindless sectarian killers as the ICO and their descendants would like to present. In 1922 when Protestant non-combatants were killed in Cork by the IRA it was denounced roundly from many Irish nationalist quarters, as opposed to pogroms being roundly encouraged by Unionism.

Lane also pointed out that the Southern bourgeoisie had made little to no effort at all in the 20s and 30s to take control of the North, and barely seemed interested in doing so. The various provisions of the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1938 made that even clearer. In contrast to the nonsense

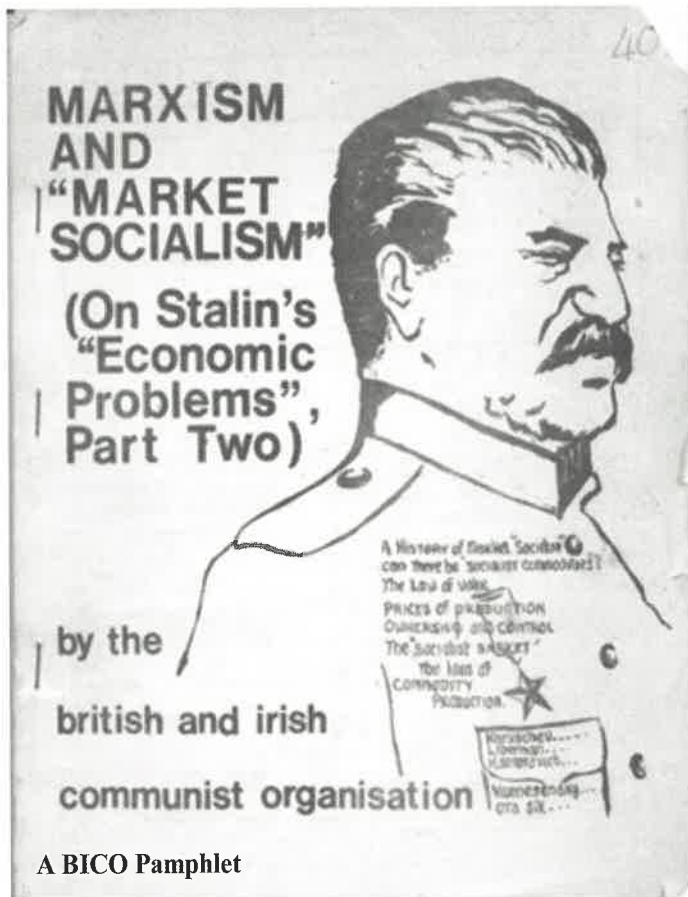
about irredentist Catholic nationalism, Lane made it clear that most of the Republican leadership has historically laid the blame not with Protestants but with Britain. The document as a whole is balanced in its acknowledgment of the issues of sectarianism among certain Republicans and the need to win over the Protestant working class, and yet the ICO refused to print this article in their paper without providing a legitimate reason for doing so. It was later denounced as proof of bourgeois nationalism on the Cork branch's part. Lane's perspective was the perspective of a genuine anti-revisionist Marxist-Leninist who understood the importance of national liberation for Ireland, but the ICO had already decisively moved away from these ideas.

With principled Marxist opposition to their views within their organisation now removed, the newly rechristened BICO was free to pursue their role as the Marxist wing of Unionism and the Irish counter-revolution. They regularly drew upon the work of revisionist historians such as RF Foster and the Dudley Edwards' in their vitriolic attack on Irish republican traditions, many of whom were promoted by British and 26 County media as part of an ideological offensive aimed at the resurgence of Republicanism North and South. Their new position also dovetailed closely with other figures of the time. In 1972, Garret FitzGerald of Fine Gael wrote to a member of BICO to say he had been "struck for some time past by the courageous and sane approach adopted by the B & ICP in Northern Ireland". [7] Irish Labour politician Connor Cruise O'Brien developed his own version of the Two Nation theory in his book States of Ireland in 1973, 3 full years after BICO, although he refused to give them credit. Similar to BICO he went on a mission to totally discredit not only the history of Irish national liberation, but national liberation in general, going as far as to write revolting Zionist fan fiction in his tome "The Siege". BICO was in many ways a "Marxist" iteration of the Irish revisionist historical project, a project designed to attack the foundations of Irish republicanism and socialism in Ireland.

As time went on BICO functioned less and less as a political organisation, and more as a dedicated think-tank with no purpose other than undermining the struggle for national liberation. They even published pamphlets by James Connolly for a time, trying to claim his writings on partition supported their position, although ultimately Connolly was denounced as being inadequate and a pro-German imperialist, just another example of the reactionary nature of Republicanism. They argued that Cromwell's massacres in Ireland were justified, comparing his campaign to de-nazification. Their criticisms of Republicanism often rested on such flimsy foundations, finding isolated examples of reactionary thinking and claiming that these ideas represented the movement historically. Their output generally was incredibly prodigious, having released 12 pamphlets about the development of Ulster by 1971.

So dedicated was BICO to destroying Republican ideology that in 1975 they eventually took an axe to the root and attacked Wolfe Tone and the progressive United Irishmen of 1798, instead favouring contemporary figures who looked for progress within the confines of the British Union. [8] It was particularly important for BICO to disregard the United Irishmen, as the fact that this group of mostly Protestants leaders had led a largely Catholic rebellion against British rule, totally flew in the face of their analysis of what it meant to be Irish and fatally undermines the Two Nations theory. Groups such as the Workers Party that adopted BICO's ideas still saw it as necessary to claim a continuity with the United Irishmen, if only as a stick to beat the Provisional movement with, but such was BICO's embrace of chauvinism that this was not deemed necessary.

In April 1972 BICO members through one of their various fronts occupied the 26 county Foreign Affairs department to demand that they recognise the state of Northern Ireland and cease their hostility. BICO were long time campaigners for the removal of articles 2 and 3 from the constitution of the Irish Free State, on the grounds that the Free State was oppressing Protestants through vicious revanchism, a "Southern" imperialism. [9] This ridiculous interpretation rested on a total misunderstanding of the role of the Free State as a vassal of international capital and British imperialism. [10] If the conflict in the North were caused by Dublin revanchism why has the 26 County government not raised the issue in the United Nations since



A BICO Pamphlet

1969? Even before this, Free State governments had done little but throw out the occasional bit of rhetoric about the North, quite happy to allow them to live in poverty and under apartheid. Efforts to arm and aid Northern Catholics were short lived following the outbreak of violence. Despite BICO's contempt for the Free State however, the main thrust of their ideas on the national question was exactly what many Irish Free State establishment figures wanted to hear, justifying as it did their own inaction and cowardice as well as their censorship and suppression of Republicans.

Naturally, if the Ulster bourgeoisie was under siege from vicious Irish Catholic imperialism, this meant that the sectarian murderers of the UDA and UVF must necessarily be freedom fighters. And BICO certainly argued as such, making a case that these groups only retaliated to IRA atrocities, even if they did at least view sectarian assassinations as counterproductive. Rumours even circulated in 1972 that the BICO had aided the UVF in carrying out the Dublin and Monaghan bombings, which would point to an MI5 connection also, although there is nothing substantial to back these rumours. Their work was openly praised by leading loyalist David Trimble of Vanguard, and BICO were proponents of the reactionary paramilitary backed Ulster Workers Strike, Clifford remarking that "Catholics had never been safer". [11] Not content to sit on the side-lines BICO activists canvassed East Belfast supporting the strike and describing the SDLP and other nationalist groups as "fascist".

#### A Maoist Organisation?

It is necessary to demolish the myth that BICO was a Maoist organisation. While the origin of the ICO was somewhat within that tradition, quickly the group was to abandon Mao Zedong Thought (along with their senses). The 100<sup>th</sup> Issue of the Irish Communist included a proud declaration by Brendan Clifford that they rejected the ideas of the Communist Party of China as "inadequate" and that Mao's leadership had "suffocated the main part of the anti-revisionist movement." As opposed to most pro-Mao groups they rejected armed struggle and instead argued for the revisionist peaceful transition to socialism ala Khrushchev. When one looks at the reading list BICO published in 1973, there is not a single work by Mao, and only a single publication from China. [12] The Communist Party of Ireland (Marxist-Leninist) has a better claim to the Maoist mantle, and

despite their many errors they were at least insistent on heavily criticising BICO's revisionism. In a pamphlet published in 1975 they accused the organisation of being "Trotskyite thugs" and "agents of British imperialism" and of generally accepting revisionist ideas of Marxism in every aspect of their analysis. Aside from the largely baseless accusation of Trotskyism it is difficult to disagree with their assessment:

*The sole orientation of this clique is opposition to the proletarian revolution in Ireland, as well as in Britain (where they are trying desperately to increase their influence) and throughout the world and its main activity for this end is that of seeking out 'quotations' from the Marxist-Leninist classics in order to put a 'Marxist-Leninist' front on the activity of counter-revolution and sow maximum confusion in the working class movement. Both in theory and in practice every stand they take sides with British imperialism and the Irish capitalist class (in their case the unionist section in the north) to oppose the workers and small farmers, oppose the revolutionary intellectuals, oppose the struggle against the entire imperialist dominated capitalist system in Ireland. [13]*

Having rejected Mao, BICO still embraced the work of Stalin to a highly dogmatic degree. Despite this however, their interpretation of Stalin's work was frequently the exact opposite of Stalin's intended meaning. The entire theoretical foundation of the Two Nations theory supposedly rests on the work of Stalin in "Marxism and the National Question". And yet their interpretation of this work is a distortion, as with so many of their writings. A key factor in a nation, as seen by Stalin, is a common territory. Prior to the artificial partition of Ireland by British imperialism in 1921, there was no true common territory of Protestants, who were spread across the island, even if there was a majority in parts of the North West. What is more, BICO argued that the Ulster statelet as a whole was clearly the Protestant homeland. And yet many areas of the 6 counties, even entire counties such as Tyrone and Fermanagh, were Nationalist majority. The Northern state is a clearly artificial imperialist construct. From the beginning it was never a "stable community of people" given its existence was only possible by armed force and gerrymandering. It is quite clear that BICO had essentially worked backwards from the fact of partition and the occupation of Ireland and sought to justify with Marxist sounding phrases what already existed.

Another aspect of Stalin's definition of a nation is "psychological makeup manifested in a common culture". Prior to partition, the Protestant population would have in many cases seen themselves as Irish as well as British. Partition was regarded as a great tragedy even by Unionist figures such as Edward Carson, who desired the entire Irish nation to remain within the Empire. Attempts by Loyalist groups in past decades, some of which were inspired by BICO's ideas, to push for a sort of Ulster separatism and declaration of 6 County independence have always failed miserably. Even noted hardliner Ian Paisley was quoted in 2008 as saying "I would never deny I was an Irishman...the person that says that, they are Irish and there have been more generations from Irish roots in them than they're prepared to meet." [14] As it is now, the majority of Protestants in the Occupied 6 Counties do not generally see themselves as a separate nation but rather as British, and there is no real Marxist definition that can identify Britain as a nation, as opposed to an amalgamation of nations and the extension of English power. Even now as we are witnessing the growth of a "Northern Irish identity" it does not penetrate much beyond a certain section of middle-class liberals, and it is usually accompanied by other identities.

It is undeniable there are differences in culture between Ulster Protestants and Catholics, and yet there are also many similarities that have grown over centuries of integration of Ulster Scots culture. While many Irish Republican revolutionaries historically have recognised that there are cultural differences, they nonetheless argued that Irish nationality incorporated all living in Ireland, the Gael (native) and the Gall (later settlers) as Pádraig Pearse would frame it. Wolfe Tone and his fellow Protestant bourgeois revolutionaries argued their aim was to unite the Irish people despite religious and cultural differences.

Attempting to keep track of the idiotic positions espoused by the group is dizzying. In many ways it reads as a list of the exact opposite of what a

communist group should support. Support for Israel, opposition to the British Miners' Strike, they considered the Tories "sensible" and supported the fascist Enoch Powell (who was reportedly a fan of their work also), describing him as "*honest and good intentioned*". [15] They supported Thatcher's invasion of the Falklands, were pro-European Union, anti-immigration, etc etc. It can be difficult to wrap your head around what exactly drove BICO. A common explanation was best summed up by the anarchist CJ Stone: "*If they weren't actually conceived by some joker in MI5 then they ought to have been.*" [16] Certainly, the inexplicable positions and hairpin ideological turns could suggest a group that was moulding itself to whatever the needs of British intelligence were at that particular time. The adoption of a pro-Sinn Fein position in the late 90s is a good example of a convenient ideological change. We now also have evidence that anti-revisionist groups were invented wholesale by intelligence agencies in the 1960s and 70s to undermine the communist movement in the USA for example, as exposed in Aaron Leonard's "*A Threat of the First Magnitude*". A group founded in 1962 called the Ad Hoc Committee for a Marxist-Leninist Party was entirely created and run by the FBI and set out to cause as much division and distrust in the American communist movement as possible. It is not at all far-fetched to suggest that British intelligence could have followed a similar path to undermine the Communist and Republican movements in Ireland.

Another possible explanation is that Brendan Clifford and his crew revelled in their role as agent provocateurs, and contrarianism became a sort of intellectual exercise, not much better than a common internet troll. How far could they go? Just how absurd a position could they come up with and justify with cherry-picked passages from Lenin and Stalin? That the efforts of a tiny cult ended up being adopted by major reactionary politicians and supposed socialist intellectuals alike must have been flattering at least, or perhaps it had Clifford and co. bouncing up and down in glee that some suckers had actually bought it. Unfortunately, in the absence of concrete evidence it remains mere speculation.

### Legacy

By the 1980s the group had already undergone several transformations. Having adopted a position that the North should be integrated into Britain further, they began jointly campaigning for the British Labour party to be setup in the North as a non-sectarian solution. They also campaigned alongside Unionist politicians for greater integration. In 1987 they openly campaigned for the Unionist Robert McCartney's election for Westminster although by this point, they no longer functioned as party. Eventually in the 90s the group was to rebrand as the Aubane Historical Society. And yet bizarrely, by the late 90s they were parroting a pro-Sinn Fein position, once the "peace process" had got underway. They even began to denounce Irish historical revisionism. Despite yet another complete change of view, the legacy of BICO continued in other forms.

The influence BICO had on Eoghan Harris, Henry Patterson and Paul Bew, all members of the Workers Party could well be the most damaging. These pseudo-intellectuals embraced BICO's viewpoint and helped to propagate those ideas within the Official Republican Movement as part of their own special intellectual think tank, resulting in a wholesale rejection of Republican ideas. Eoghan Harris in his position at RTÉ also had influence beyond merely the Official movement. Many formerly brave volunteers were led further down the path of counter-revolution and disgrace by these ideologues and their revisionist agenda. Just as BICO's Mick Lynch had argued in 1970, the Officials and their successor, the Workers Party, sincerely claimed that the Provisionals were a fascist and sectarian movement, going so far as to compare them to Eoin O'Duffy's Blueshirts in a pamphlet about the Spanish Civil War released in 1975. [17] This is not to say the Stickies were not capable of coming to these conclusions themselves, they had long accepted that the only solution to partition was a peaceful reformist one, but what made BICO a touchstone was that they provided a wealth of literature to justify the ideological abandonment of, and vicious hostility towards, republicanism that had already begun. Official IRA units in Belfast frequently reached out to Loyalist paramilitaries much as BICO had, and reportedly coordinated with them in running criminal enterprises such as brothels. While Harris, Patterson and Bew no longer are involved in the Workers Party, they remain somewhat influential as media figures and academics.

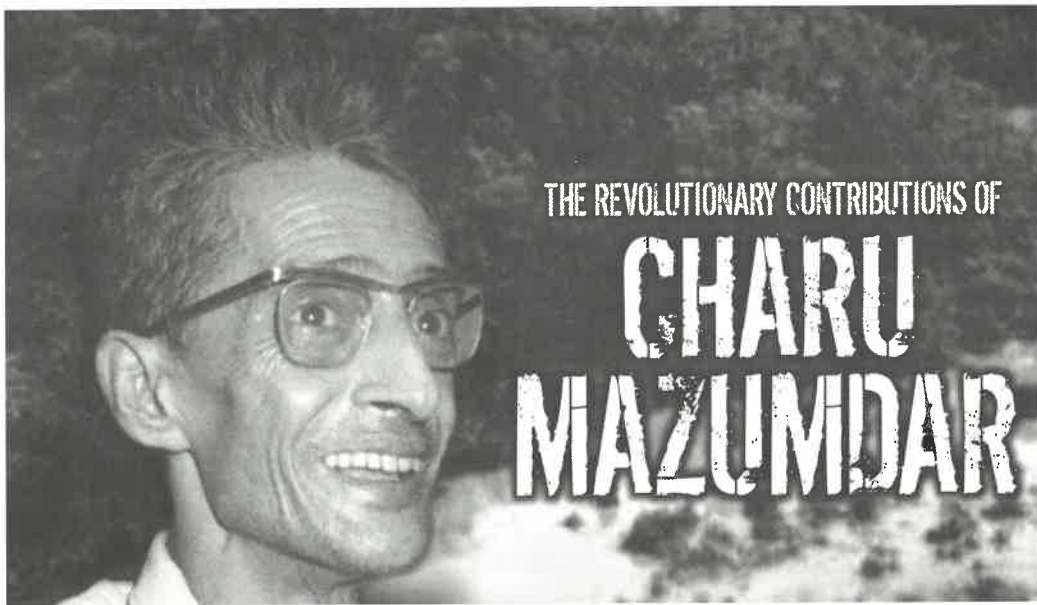
The Socialist Party, while in the early 70s arguing against elements BICO's position, has now essentially adopted it. They believe that Unionists have an inherent right to self-determination, and even believe that in the event of a United Ireland, Unionist communities should be allowed to "opt-out", resulting in re-partition of the country. Socialist Party materials also downplay pogroms against Catholics historically, justifying Loyalist violence as a response to sectarian IRA intransigence and generally take the viewpoint of the Protestant Working class exactly as BICO did. Constantly this group equivocates between Loyalist and Republican organisations, implying that one was no better than the other and that the answer is a "*non-sectarian working-class solution*" and a Federated British and Irish Socialist State. Naturally such a solution is of no real interest to the Nationalist community or the majority of the Irish working class as a whole, and the constant pandering to Unionists doesn't appear to have brought any more success to the SP and it's many splits among the Protestant working class either.

The work of BICO was widely read by Free State establishment figures as already mentioned. Many of the arguments about the supposedly reactionary nature of Irish republicanism that BICO innovated are common arguments by anti-Republican "socialists" now. We can see elements of this Walkerite thinking also in the Communist Party of Ireland, People Before Profit and others. The majority of groups believe that the IRA campaign was in the end a sectarian one, that British and Unionist identity in the North should be respected, and that the only acceptable means of uniting Ireland is a peaceful constitutional solution along partitioned lines. No doubt many would deny being influenced by BICO at the time, and yet there is plenty of evidence that their works were widely available and widely read, becoming a staple in college libraries in Dublin and elsewhere. Following the death of David Trimble, Paul Bew's glowing eulogy made reference to his flirtation with BICO, describing how Trimble was "*fascinated*" by their "*highly original pamphlets*" which "*bravely challenged the nationalist republican line on Northern Ireland*". [18] This is a central plank of revisionist propaganda, the idea that they represent a brave minority despite the full backing of British imperialism and vested interests.

Ultimately the North remains occupied by Britain, and the supposed opposition has accepted it will remain so for the foreseeable future within the confines of the Good Friday Agreement. To rebuild a movement that can challenge that occupation and the imperialist domination of Ireland, the ideas of BICO and their descendants must be challenged wherever they are raised. Anti-Republicanism, defence of partition and crypto-Unionism, apologia for Empire, denying the historical suffering of the Irish people, denial of the right to armed struggle, these are potent ideological tools in the hands both of British imperialism and of the Free State counter-revolution. That these tools were sharpened by a supposedly anti-revisionist Marxist group should serve as a warning to any aspiring Socialist organisation in Ireland of the dangers of incorrect positions on the question of national liberation. As much as they have been mocked, for the time being at least the British and Irish Communist Organisation have had the last laugh.

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**From the moment he left formal education in 1938 until his brutal murder in 1972 Charu Mazumdar was a dedicated fighter for the Indian people and the international working class. Leaving behind a relatively comfortable life he exemplified his own description of what it takes to be a revolutionary:**

*'[I]n order to win victory in the revolution, the revolutionary cadres must be able to make sacrifices. They must sacrifice their property and belongings, sacrifice comforts, sacrifice old habits and aspirations after fame, rid themselves of the fear of death and give up ideas of seeking the easy path.'*

Like Seamus Costello in Ireland, Chairman Gonzalo in Peru, and Ibrahim Kaypakkaya in Turkey, Mazumdar was at the forefront of the struggle against revisionism in his country, asserting the necessity of revolutionary politics in the face of the opportunism and reformism then attempting to drape itself in the trappings of communism. The initial split from the revisionist "Communist" Party of India, which took the name "Communist" Party of India (Marxist), adopted a centrist position in the ideological struggle then raging within the international communist movement. This struggle was fought between the revisionist line, led by Khrushchev and later Brezhnev in Russia, and the revolutionary line, led by Mao Zedong in China. Although Mazumdar went with this centrist split he could not be satisfied with their opportunist line, writing in 1966:

*'The Chinese leaders predicted long ago that those who had remained neutral in the international debate would very soon take to the path of opportunism. Now... these advocates of a neutral stand are in reality revisionists and they would soon cross over to the reactionary camp.'*

This is a universal law of ideological struggle, as he later highlighted:

*'Centrism is a brand of revisionism - its worst form. In the past, revisionism was defeated again and again by revolutionary elements but centrism always seized the victories of the struggle and led the Party along the revisionist path.'*

As predicted, this centrist party degenerated into the usual revisionist politics of reformism and opportunism, propping up the fascist government

and engaging in class collaboration with the bourgeoisie and feudal landowners in order to pacify the struggles of the workers and peasants. They sought positions in parliaments and trade union bureaucracies rather than seeking power for the working people. Charu Mazumdar, steadfastly upholding the red line of the international communist movement, could not tolerate this. Upholding Lenin's thesis that *'Everything but power is illusory'* Mazumdar understood:

*'[I]f the words "Seizure of Political Power" are left out, the Party no longer remains a revolutionary party... it will be actually reduced to a reformist party of the bourgeoisie'*

Thus he broke with the revisionist "Communist" Party of India (Marxist) and rallied all genuine revolutionaries to his side, retaking the red path of the Indian revolution and establishing the proud tradition of Indian Maoism.

Mazumdar understood that genuine adherence to Marxist principles and the teachings of Chairman Mao meant that the Indian revolution had to be vigorously developed. It was not enough to simply agree that revisionism was bad, or that the Soviet party was wrong and the Chinese party was right – these insights needed to be concretised and developed through class struggle. As Mazumdar wrote:

*'The only Marxist road to self-cultivation... is the path of class struggle. Only through tempering in the fire of class struggle can a Communist become pure gold. Class struggle is the real school of Communists... there cannot be any education apart from practice. ... Self-cultivation is possible only in the process of changing the existing conditions through revolutionary practice.'*

Thus, in 1967, in the face of a rising revolutionary tide, with repression growing more brutal and the struggle of the people growing more militant, Mazumdar launched the revolutionary armed struggle with a peasant uprising in Naxalbari. The Naxalbari Uprising is to the Indian revolution what the Easter Rising is to the Irish revolution. As Mazumdar wrote of it, *'the revolutionary era has been ushered in, and this is the first year of that era.'*

Central to the ideological and political preparation for Naxalbari was the circulation of Mazumdar's *Historic Eight Documents*. These remain foundational articles of unity for the Indian communist movement, outlining the intense struggle waged against revisionism in order to develop India's revolutionary guiding thought through the creative application of Marxism-Leninism-Mao

Zedong Thought to the concrete conditions of India. His words have lost none of their power and relevance, remaining essential reading for revolutionaries everywhere.

Firmly breaking with class collaborationist, pro-imperialist revisionism, Mazumdar grasped that the Chinese path was the only path for India. He applied Mao's theory of people's war, the highest development of proletarian military theory, to the Indian revolution, among the first to concretely grasp its relevance beyond Chinese conditions. Against the urban-based reformism of the revisionists he saw that the revolution must be based on the armed struggle of the rural masses due to the semi-colonial, semi-feudal nature of Indian society. Furthermore he opposed the revisionist conception of people's war:

*'The guerrilla war that we speak of... is initiated by the class-conscious elements of the poor and landless peasants and can be led and carried on only with the active cooperation of the poor and landless peasant masses.'*

*... this kind of guerrilla war is launched not by relying on arms and weapons... but is launched without arms and by relying confidently on the cooperation of the masses.'*

Shining proof of the correctness of his approach can be seen in the heroic practice of revolutionary war still raging in India, dominating vast territories, particularly in central and eastern India, and with support from millions of the broadest and deepest masses.

In 1972 the Indian revolution suffered an immeasurable loss when Charu Mazumdar was captured by the security forces, tortured and murdered. The death of this great leader, alongside extraordinary levels of brutal repression against the people's struggle, engendered many splits in the revolutionary movement. But, in 2004, the irrepressible spirit of Naxalbari reunited a number of revolutionary groups, forging the Communist Party of India (Maoist), an important milestone on the road to freedom in India. This party carries forward both the revolutionary thought of Mazumdar and the people's war that Mazumdar first sparked in Naxalbari.

By creatively applying Mao Zedong Thought to India's conditions Mazumdar was central in establishing a serious communist movement which has become the world's most developed revolutionary struggle, and which, by holding fast to the teachings of Mazumdar, will inevitably seize power within the coming years and shake the rotten imperialist system to its core. Across India today countless people are taking up the path set out by Charu Mazumdar, steeling themselves in Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and, through struggle, leading the peoples of India onward to national independence and people's democracy, socialism and communism. Let this growing revolutionary tide steep us in revolutionary optimism and help us to recognise, as Mazumdar did, the inevitability of the better world that lies ahead of us:

*'Suddenly the India that is enveloped in darkness vanished, and I saw before me my motherland India, a vigorous, throbbing India, sparkling in the bright sunshine, People's Democratic India, Socialist India!'*



# When the Andes Roared

## Part 3: In the Shadow of the White Goddess

**.June 1986, and the slaughter of revolutionary prisoners in Lima marked a turning point in the conflict. Peru's recently inaugurated President, Alan Garcia, referred to as 'the Conductor' by his close henchmen had promised that he would "not fight barbarism with barbarism". The reality of counter-revolutionary warfare and the Peruvian state however, had ensured that this was unachievable.**

In the aftermath of the massacres in Lurigancho, El Fronton and Santa Barbara, the prisons were declared 'military zones,' placing any investigation into the hands of a military tribunal and preventing civilian and judicial authorities and opposition leaders from entering. Lieutenant Loyola later declared that, when the operation was over, Colonel Cabezas had told him that *'there are times in which you don't like the orders, but you have to obey them,'* adding that one day he would understand that *'if the President so orders, what can we do?'* [1]

The surviving prisoners were locked down under military control for around a week *'to avoid propagandist actions by subversive groups which operate through legal fronts.'* [2] Eventually however, Garcia allowed reporters to tour Lurigancho due to none of the prisoners there being left alive. The living prisoners remained off-limits.

One PCP member that was being held in the women's prison of Chorrillos at the time recalls, *'There I found out that all were killed in Lurigancho, they told me there were no survivors [...] it was a blow, a very strong blow; then I started to get DINCOTE visits [...] they took advantage of the genocide situation to blackmail me telling me I could die here, and they could arrest my brother again if I did not collaborate.'* [3]

Cracks began to appear in the establishment's resolve and although the Archbishop of Lima Augusto Vargas Altemora had said, *'I wouldn't condemn the government,'* Fernando Cabiesez, a member of the Peace Commission, admitted that their efforts in trying to avoid the massacre were 'childish'. He went on to say, *'This was a battle that was already coming.'* [4]

Gradually the clamours of human rights activists, victim's relatives, opposition leaders and international journalists, began to unearth the truth and even the right-wing weekly magazine, *Caretas*, was moved to call the government's actions 'deliberate extermination.' [5]

According to Simon Strong however, Garcia *"was reported by a journalist [Augusto Zimmermann] with whom he had breakfasted two days before the killings to have asked in a rhetorical manner, in reference to the jails, "What would happen if we shot all the Senderistas?" and to have answered, "Nothing, absolutely nothing."* [6]

Added to this, a US embassy cable entitled, *"President Garcia says Crisis is Over,"* (July 1, 1986)[7], reported that in a private conversation with the outgoing US Embassy Political Consul, Garcia stated that while he regretted how the massacres had occurred, they did have a positive side. The prisons had turned into indoctrination centres for accused terrorists, many of whom were released back into society due to lack of evidence or the intimidation of judges. Garcia believed that this problem was over with the elimination of so many 'terrorists.'

But damage had been done and Garcia struggled to save his image, acting shocked in spite of his complicity in the massacre. In an interview with *Newsweek* a week later he said, *"'Shining Path' is an anarchistic and cruel outburst, in the style of Pol Pot, and that's why I am vigorously anti- 'Shining Path.'*" [8]

With regard to the massacres, Garcia said that, *'I support the actions of the Joint Command,'* going on to state that some people had committed *'excesses, instinctive and criminal vengeance.'* Garcia had immediately distanced himself from the military operations, calling for an investigation into the massacre. Against the perpetrators he said, *"Either they go, or I go!"* placing the blame on overzealous police, despite the military being in overall control. [9]

Showing traditional ruling class loyalty to those that do its bidding, Garcia later called the Republican Guards 'assassins' and demanded a 'historical sanction' against those responsible. The Republican Guards, not represented on the Joint Committee, had been selected to take the fall and the military tribunal that followed found Colonel Cabezas and 52 Republican Guards responsible for Lurigancho. The Army, which was in overall control, was relieved of responsibility. At El Fronton the tribunal found no blame was to be attached to the navy for the massacre, despite an internal investigation report that blamed Vega Llona for the decision to execute the prisoners and destroy the pavilion, declaring, *'... it is revealing that the worst massacre of political prisoners in Peru happened under a democratically elected government.'* [10]

In spite of the Izquierda Unida, or United Left Coalition (IU), listing six militants from within its ranks as having been killed in the massacre, Alfonso Barrantes, demonstrated clearly whose side he was on when he called for a *'united front against terrorism,'* issuing a statement in which he piously declared, *'When the law is broken it must be restored.'* [11]

The Congress of the Socialist International, of which APRA was a member, had opened its world congress in Latin America in Lima. In the final hours of the massacre, it too ultimately joined with US imperialism to applaud the cowardly murder upon the selfless resistance. In typical fashion of such 'socialists' and 'reformers,' the Garcia regime sought to kill as many people as possible and then call for an investigation to appease those that would believe in vague peaceful alternatives to revolution. As always, social democracy committed hideous crimes while piously holding up illusions.

With attention now drawn to the war internationally, the PCP declared that, *'Social democratic peace is the peace of tombs. What does it matter, that later they establish one or one thousand commissions of inquiry to charge those responsible for the "excesses" (!)... [Such] cynical play is part of the natural mechanisms of bourgeois domination and oppression. Even though they plan and decide of the military operations, they always find alibis, and to preserve the credibility of the State, they sacrifice such and such of their colleagues whom they find "guilty" of these "excesses", of these "violations of the human rights".'*

## The Forces of Reaction



Due to the instability of the Peruvian economy and currency, dollars were the preferred currency for certain deals. Coca dollars made up over 70 percent of all dollars that flowed through the Peruvian economy, entering into the legal economy through established financial circuits. Coca dollars were traded for Peruvian intis in currency exchange houses in the Huallaga Valley. Large currency exchange businesses would send planes into the valley to pick up consignments of dollars for shipment to Lima to be sold wholesale to industrialists, wholesalers and individuals and small street retailers that dealt small amounts to small businesses. Imported luxuries required dollars for purchase and the Peruvian state needed dollars to pay off its foreign debt. In the cocaine economy the vast majority of profit was made after the development of the drug at source.

The dollars generated by the coca economy were the primary source of foreign exchange. The peasants that grew coca leaf and those that produced coca paste exploited a stable crop in a failing economy, coca dollars being an inflation-proof currency.

Estimates of land given over to illegal cocaine vary between 100,000 and 300,000 hectares. Some cocaine however was sold legally to pharmaceutical companies, marketed by the state-owned National Coca Enterprise (ENACO). The coca leaves purchased and sold by ENACO came from the 10,000 hectares of legally registered coca fields in the Cusco Province of Le Conventión y Lares, the Huallaga Valley and other much smaller areas in the department of Huánuco, Le Libertad, Ucayali and Puno. This produced around 323,000 metric tons of coca leaf per year. This was cultivated and harvested by small peasants and also commercial growers that owned large and medium-sized farms. The small peasants depended on family labour, the commercial growers employing a workforce drawn from local and seasonal highland migrant labour. This brought more money than any other crop. Daily wages in the Huallaga coca fields averaged 20,000 intis, compared to 5,000 for crops like coffee, rice and Cacao. The latter crops also required substantial input such as fertilisers, pesticides, labour-intensive irrigation and weeding. The coca plant is relatively maintenance-free and provided four harvests annually. [26]

The price of leaves from local growers fluctuated between US\$1.20 and US\$3.00 per kilo although ENACO would pay seven to eight times less for legal coca.

During the production process, the leaves are gathered from industrial varieties of the *Erythroxylum* coca plant cultivated on the eastern slopes of the Peruvian and Bolivian Andes. In its raw form the coca leaf contains a negligible amount of the cocaine alkaloid substance that, in its concentrated form, constitutes the basis of cocaine.

After the harvest, the next step is turning leaves into 'basic cocaine paste' (PBC) in jungle laboratories. During the process, the leaves are placed in a large pit lined with cement or plastic sheeting and soaked and pounded in a mix of sulphuric acid, lime (or cement), kerosene, sodium carbonate and ammonia. After the residue is drained and formed into balls of paste, the chemicals are dumped into surrounding rivers doing severe ecological damage. Around 100 kilos of leaves goes into the production of one kilo of PBC. In these makeshift factories, workers wash the PBE into cocaine base, and turn it into crystallised cocaine hydrochloride. Each kilo of hydrochloride requires 2-5 kilos of PBC (equal to 250 kilos of coca leaf). Using chemicals such as acetone, potassium permanganate and sodium sulphate, imported from the US and Europe, these chemicals are strictly controlled in Peru and Colombia and imported illegally.

Local coca entrepreneurs had to pay bribes to police and local authorities and a salary to the 'chemist' that directed the operation. They also had to pay the 'stompers' that pounded the corrosive mixture with bare feet, risking chemical burns and poisoning. All risked arrest but the wages were high.

The PBC was sold to three markets. Most went to the two large Colombian cartels (Pablo Escobar's Medellín cartel being one). Also there was the Cartel Lehder, the Ochoa brothers and others whose careers began in the 60s and 70s marijuana trade. The other cartel was the less visible Columbian cartel around the city of Cali that is made of the well-known political and industrial families that maintained close links to Colombia's national and regional political and economic establishment.

A small amount of PBC would remain in Peru for the domestic market, the remainder being sold as paste or basuco (unrefined and highly toxic cocaine that is smoked). The Colombian export market defines the character of Peru's coca economy, controlling prices, supply and distribution. The PBC purchased for the cartels is flown by plane to 'laboratories' along the tributaries of the Upper Amazon near the Colombian-Peruvian-Brazilian borders.

The cocaine was shipped by Colombian traffickers to workhouses and distribution centres in Mexico, Ecuador, Brazil, Honduras, Panama and the Caribbean where cargoes were broken down into smaller units for transportation to the US and Europe. Coca cultivation yielded a profit margin of 200 percent.

Organised in well-armed gangs, the Colombian agents, known as coloches, as well as narcos, in Peru used violence, intimidation and bribery to secure supplies and compliance from local authorities. Armed actions sometimes broke out between groups. In Huallaga Valley, Columbian traffickers carved out fiefdoms, enforced with brutal violence, as they vied with the military and police. The Columbian drug barons went by such names as 'The Vampire' and 'The Minister'.

In a 1985 CIA report into the Peruvian Cocaine Industry, the writer stated, '*The available information suggests the Peruvian organisations resemble the Colombian crime families – extended family networks with numerous compartmented sections devoted to carrying out specific functions, such as transportation, security, false documentation, supervision and hiring of couriers, and laboratory operations. Loose associations between trafficking groups exist, and territories are staked out and grudgingly respected.*' [27]

The town of Tingo Maria personified the coca boom. Once a sleepy jungle village, the town grew to burst with energy, its population of 5,000 in 1961 growing to over 50,000 in the mid-80s. Its paved streets were lined with branches of Peru's major banks and currency exchange houses, as well as electronics, automobiles and motorboat dealers. All kinds of consumer goods were available in the market. New hotels sprung up and almost everyone benefited from the illicit coca trade – farmers, businessmen, bankers, shopkeepers, and the Civil Guards' anti

-narcotics force, all of whom participated in the town's coca-based prosperity.

Smaller settlements along the Upper Huallaga experienced a similar boom. Makeshift airstrips were scattered around the 'coca capitals' of Tocache and Uchiza to the north of Tingo Maria. Narco money likewise encouraged banks, money-changers and commerce along with prostitutes, gamblers, thieves, etc. A Tacache resident, interviewed for the magazine *Quehacer* said, 'in the mid-1970s this whole region was invaded. New patterns of consumption were introduced and the lifestyle changed. The people with money – those who make PBC from coca leaves – hired big bands from Lima or Huánuco and spent the nights dancing and drinking.' [28]

The price plunged after the Colombian government cracked down on the cartels but the coca in Peru could now be sold without bureaucratic obstacles by the peasants. When, Tito Jaime, the mayor of Tingo Maria, attempted to organise a coca grower's defence front, he was killed by the PCP. After destroying the power of the drug barons, they installed their own revolutionary justice.

This was popular with locals given all that had gone before. A car workshop owner in Tingo Maria, whose family became wealthy during the coca boom admitted, 'The party is liked everywhere, people feel protected by it and believe its justice rather than the police, who let delinquents go free and use them as informers. People complain of thieves to the Peoples Committees themselves.' [29]

The party instigated people's trials in which the accused was denounced by the community and investigated by the people's committees. The accused was condemned by delegates from the support bases. Their community however would be given the opportunity to pardon an offender. Pardons could also be given in exchange for a period of military service. In Tingo Maria, a man was beheaded for beating his wife and mother. The party also 'spoke' to men that failed to keep up with maintenance payments to their families. Lawyers also lost their custom, which was logical as official law tended to be expensive, corrupt, slow and inefficient. Police were primarily targeted for acts of rape, corruption, bribery or indeed the robbing of bus passengers.

The depressed Peruvian economy also contributed to the dominance of the coca trade in local and regional economies, reinforcing the government's caution about pursuing a vigorous anti-narcotics strategy in the country's coca-growing areas.

There has been a long history in the US of military intervention being viewed through the prism of foreigners and drugs. A recumbent theme, forging a link between foreign and domestic policy, Nixon built on his image as anti-communist crusader, bringing narcotics issues under the direct control of the executive branch by creating the Justice Department's Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). The DEA has since been the most important agency in governmental anti-drug initiatives with jurisdiction over international and inter-state drug-related criminology. A de facto narcotic police force, the DEA manages a national narcotics intelligence system, coordinates anti-narcotics programmes overseas and has powers to make arrests and seize property. By the time of Ronald Reagan's arrival, the DEA had become a complex network of agencies with a global army of US narcotics agents.

Coca was classified by both Presidents Reagan and Bush as a 'national security threat', replacing communism as the principle enemy around which to rally public support for military intervention abroad. The new enemy was presented as the dark-skinned migrant and domestic youths and drug users. Drugs therefore provided the foreign enemy that could be blamed for crime, poverty, violence and unemployment; foreign people carrying foreign drugs. Peru's coca boom took off in the 1970s, demand for cocaine having begun to grow in the US the previous year.

Equivalent criminal penalties for heroine, marijuana and cocaine had made marijuana less convenient to smuggle due to its bulk. Cocaine's 'fast high' was the ideal stimulus for those benefitting from the short-lived financial boom of the Thatcher-Reagan era, feeding off the yuppie culture of the '80s. In 1984, entrepreneurs began to manufacture a more destructive form of mass-marketed rock cocaine; 'crack'. More Americans could buy it, causing a drastic leap in demand for coca leaves. Naturally this also opened up entrepreneurship in the inner cities so that by the late-80s, the industry, with its retailers, wholesalers, money launderers in the US, and its manufacturers and exporters in Latin America, had become an efficient business-model with a clearly defined international division of labour between production, refining, distribution and financial operations.

The Coca leaf therefore brings forth derivatives like crack and cocaine, serving separate classes in the First World. Cocaine goes to the attorneys, bankers, accountants, et al, while crack floats down to inner city drug peddlers and crack house managers serving the poor. In a capitalist society, the drug trade feeds neatly into the widely promoted free enterprise that creates a culture for entrepreneurs, the coca producing peasant and the inner city dealer languishing at the bottom of the market.

During 1979-80 the DEA launched Operation Green Sea, a 'cooperative enforcement effort' with the Peruvian government. Reagan's government increased the budget for drug law enforcement so that it grew from US\$705.3 million in 1981 to US\$1.221 billion in 1985. In Bush's first year in office, Congress approved 5 billion for drug enforcement. By 1990, the budget appropriations for Bush's 'War on Drugs' had reached nine billion dollars. On 8 April 1986 Reagan signed a National Security Directive declaring drugs a national security



'Let your enemy be your quartermaster.' A PCP Fighter

matter, authorising the military to support anti-drugs officers overseas. As US foreign policy attempted to militarise the drug war, Colonel John Waghelstein, former commander of US advisors in El Salvador, saw the 'war on drugs' as being merged into the 'low intensity conflicts' needed to 'counter the guerrilla/narcotics terrorists in [the Western] hemisphere.' [30] On the 5 September 1989, Bush announced the Andean Initiative, a five-year strategy to deal with the drug problem 'at its source'. This concentrated US anti-narcotics efforts on the 'producing countries'.

The 'War on Drugs' gave supposed legitimacy to the US presence in the Huallaga Valley in a fire base known as, Santa Lucia, a forty hectare fortress on the banks of the river Huallaga, where watchtowers looked out over the rainforest. The base featured a 1600-metre runway, US UH-1H helicopter gunships, C-123 transport planes, and was patrolled by a British government donated Hotspur hussar, a tank-like radio command module. Described by one veteran as being 'just like a firebase in Vietnam', barrack buildings stood behind rows of concrete bunkers, barbed wire, black plastic sandbags and minefields that ringed the perimeter did not deter the PCP, which regularly attacked the base with machine guns and RPGs. An adviser to the Peruvian drug police in Peru's Upper Huallaga Valley, Stephen G. Trujillo, writing in the New York Times, revealed that, 'the guerrillas claim they shot down a U.S. helicopter, which crashed in January killing two American pilots and a mechanic; the rebels harassed the Santa Lucia base last summer with small-arms fire, and tried one full-scale attack a year ago that halted all operations for weeks.' [31]

The US created Upper Huallaga Valley Coca Reduction Programme (CORAH) depended on logistical support from Santa Lucia and retained armed protection by Mobile Rural Patrol Units (UMOPAR), the Peruvian anti-narcotics police trained by US Special Forces personnel at the Mazamari camp in the department of Junin. Supposedly their function was eradication, CORAH workers uprooting the coca by hand. In 1988 680 hectares were thought to have been destroyed by manual eradication, while an estimated 5,000 hectares of new plantations of coca were planted in the region.

The Andean Initiative laid the groundwork for future US-Peruvian programmes with the creation of CORAH, UMOPAR and PEAH (Special Upper Huallaga Project) a half-hearted crop substitution programme. In 1985-86 came Operation Condor, an initiative that supposedly targeted the airfields of processing laboratories. Peruvian military planes transported UMOPAR personnel and equipment. Soon after came Operation Snow-cap, the longest US Andean initiative. Launched in April 1987, Snow-cap presented a three-year 'comprehensive international cocaine suppression strategy' for twelve Latin American countries. It later expanded and was incorporated into the Andean Initiative. Snow-cap sought to cut cocaine imports to the US by 50 percent. In Peru it began in July 1987 and concentrated in a 'relatively small area' of the Upper Huallaga Valley. But Trujillo revealed,

*'On June 15, 1990, three other D.E.A. advisers and I accompanied the drug police to Tocache, north of the Santa Lucia base. Hovering over the municipal airfield in our helicopters, we caught soldiers red-handed as they transferred a load of refined cocaine to a stash house. We landed and chased the fleeing soldiers back to their barracks, only to be surrounded by the remainder of the garrison. The soldiers raised their assault rifles, and their commander ordered us to surrender our weapons. Only the adroit diplomacy of the senior D.E.A. agent saved us.'* [32]

Trujillo also recalled, 'I survived several other confrontations with Peruvian soldiers who were guarding stash houses, airfields and aircraft used by traffickers. I owe them my gray hairs.' [33]

During 1989, anti-narcotics seized less than one percent of the total PBG in Peru and made only 44 arrests. Trujillo's disillusionment is

evident, 'The threshold of actual violence has been crossed. Army units have fired on U.S. helicopters. The former political military commander of the zone, Gen. Alberto Arcinieta Huby, sent a Soviet-made Hip helicopter to menace the base in January 1990. He was angered by repeated police incursions into Uchiza, where he had relocated his headquarters.' [34]

Trujillo explains 'The Peruvian Army dominates Uchiza, a bustling city dedicated to the export of unrefined cocaine. The going rate for protecting a planeload of cocaine is about \$20,000. A conservative estimate of 15 to 25 flights a week at the Uchiza airfield adds up to at least \$20 million a year. A more likely range is \$35 million to \$50 million.' [35]

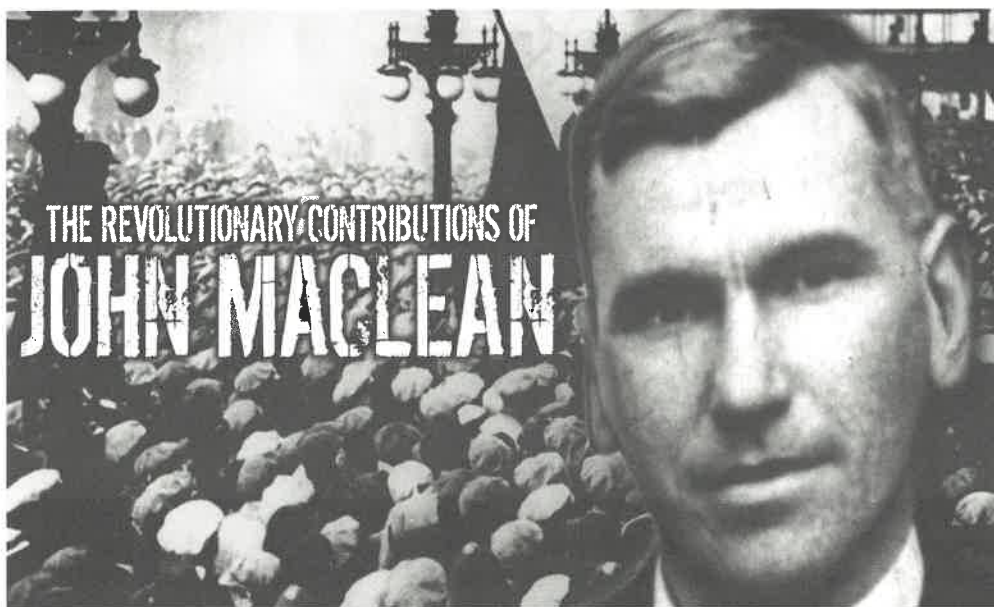
The PCP shot at UMOPAR helicopters, bringing several down and in August 1988, the PCP called an armed strike against the use of the aerial spraying of Spike, an ecologically destructive and highly controversial herbicide. Between 1983-89, 24 eradication workers had been killed by the PCP and by 1989, UMOPAR and the DEA temporarily halted field operations in the area.

In response, the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics Matters (INM) turned to the mercenaries of the privately owned Arizona-based National Air Transport, Inc to serve as gunners and pilots for the INM's helicopters. Most of these were former Special Forces or Green Berets. Many of them were also Vietnam veterans and worked for the 1984-85 Contra re-supply mission orchestrated by Oliver North and retired air force Major-General Richard J. Meadows who had led Special Forces missions in Vietnam, taking part in the failed 1980 US hostage rescue mission in Iran. Involved in the Contra-gate operation, Meadows arrived in Huallaga in 1983.

As General 'Mad Max' Thurman, Commander-in-Chief of Southcom (the Panama-based US Southern Command) and Commander of the US invasion of Panama in 1989 put it, 'the Latin American drug war is the only war we've got.' [36]

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It was Mao himself that once said, 'In matters of principle, there can be no compromise.' And in this he might have been talking about Scottish Marxist John MacLean. A revolutionary socialist playing an important part in the Red Clydeside movement, he was a fiery and restless teacher, becoming the most successful Marxist educator in Europe at the time. MacLean's lifelong socialism however 'matured in an instant' on the outbreak of war and cemented the Red Clydeside's reputation as a threat to the war effort. MacLean elevated class struggle over national chauvinism and emerged as the most prominent anti-war socialist in Britain at that time. His viewpoint was further developed by the winds of the Easter Rising as they wafted across the Irish Sea and, like Connolly, MacLean's approach to national liberation stirred controversy within the left. Although not initially sensitive to national aspirations, a ripple effect from the Irish rebellion had reached Glasgow and had a deep effect on MacLean's thinking and actions going forward.

John MacLean was born in Pollokshaws, Glasgow on the 24 August 1879. His parents were Gaelic speakers, driven from the Highlands by the clearances. MacLean's mother was widowed but ensured that all her children received an education. After leaving school, MacLean initially trained as a schoolteacher with the Free Church Training School, becoming a certified teacher in 1900. He then attended part-time classes at the University of Glasgow, graduating with a Master of Arts degree in 1904.

MacLean first became actively involved in politics with the Pollokshaws Progressive Union. Here he came into contact with Marxist economics and, while teaching for the Govan School Board, he joined the Social Democratic Federation. Teaching as his work, MacLean later joined the British Socialist Party and worked in the co-operative movement, organising evening classes for workers on Marxism. In 1907, he was invited to speak in Belfast by Jim Larkin in the midst of a series of historic strikes, the two men becoming friends. At this time MacLean did not support Irish independence, his Protestantism leading him to fear the prospect of a reactionary Catholic state.

During the First World War he strongly opposed the imperialist conflict which divided workers from one another. Because of his views, MacLean was arrested in October 1915 under the Defence of the Realm Act, his activities causing him to be fired

from his post as a schoolteacher in Govan.

MacLean was arrested again in February 1916 after making a series of anti-conscription speeches and was charged with six separate offences of sedition. His trial took place during the Easter Rising and in April 1916 he was imprisoned for three years, but released on 30 June 1917 following a public campaign against his incarceration, which had gathered pace after the February Revolution in Russia.

He continued to hold outdoor meetings all over Glasgow, sometimes addressing up to five a day. MacLean was an inspiration to the Clyde Workers' Committee and urged munitions workers to adopt a policy of 'ca'canny' (go-slow). He was however critical of the Committee's narrow focus on shop-floor concerns, or economism, rather than promoting a political opposition to militarism.

But his activities did not go unnoticed. In January 1918 MacLean was elected to the chair of the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets, and the following month he was appointed Bolshevik consul in Scotland. The consulate he established at 12 Portland Street in Glasgow was however not recognised by the British Government.

On 15 April 1918, MacLean was again arrested for sedition and sentenced to five years imprisonment. Sent to Peterhead prison, he became convinced that the prison authorities were drugging his food. In response, he went on hunger strike, being fed with a stomach tube twice daily. Again he became the subject of a vociferous public campaign and he was released on 3 December 1918 and returned to Glasgow.

MacLean however felt that the best way to support the Bolsheviks was in keeping the bourgeois busy at home. MacLean pledged to 'send help to Ireland to establish her Connolly College,' in June 1919, and a month later visited Dublin for the first time where he saw the military build-up there. Forced to confront the Irish question, by 1920 he was defending the shooting of Irish constables who he described as 'scabs and traitors to their race' and condoned the killing of resident magistrate Alan Bell, asking, 'What self-respecting man or woman can blame the Irish for ridding the earth of such a foul skunk?'

MacLean also spoke of how, 'Irish Sinn Feiners, who make no profession of socialism or communism..., are doing more to help Russia and the revolution than all we professed Marxian Bolsheviks in Britain.'

In September 1921 he was arrested and imprisoned

for sedition again, this time being released in 1922. After falling out with the newly formed Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), he went on to found the Scottish Workers Republican Party (SWRP) in 1923. Contesting elections on an abstentionist platform, it advocated both communism and Scottish independence in its key aim of establishing a Workers' Republic of Scotland. A long term critic of Scottish Home Rulers, MacLean's engagement with Irish republicanism had inspired him to cooperate with more advanced nationalists in Scotland in the hope of giving rise to a Sinn Fein-style agitation.

Although MacLean advocated Scottish and Irish separatism as a short road to imperial collapse, his later writings took on a Pan-Celtic theme, asserting the ethno-cultural roots of the Scottish and Irish 'races' and their deep-rooted cultural affinities. Expressing his outrage at Scottish troops being deployed in Ireland, MacLean wrote, 'To every Scotsman who has felt proud of Scotland's political and religious fights against England... the blush of shame must come when we learn that Scottish boys are to be used to prevent by murder the Irish race from attaining that very freedom... our fathers fought to preserve.' As to the Unionist population, MacLean saw no reason to compromise stating, 'If Ulstermen cannot tolerate an Irish republic, let them take a taste of emigration.'

However, five terms of imprisonment, including a hunger strike and subsequent force-feeding, were compounded by relentless speeches in the bitter Glaswegian winter. MacLean died in 30 November 1923 at the age of 44. Over 20,000 people lined the streets at his funeral and debate still rages on within the left about MacLean's mental state in the final years of his life. Some attribute his pointed disdain for leaders of the newly formed Communist Party to 'paranoid delusions,' but MacLean's legacy cannot be denied.

During the Soviet era, MacLean's Marxist teachings were honoured with an avenue in central Leningrad, the Maklin Prospekt. It has now reverted to its original name, Angliiski Prospekt (English Avenue). The USSR also published a postage stamp to mark the centenary of his birth in 1979.

In recent times, MacLean has been presented as a secular saint. An image compounded by his donating of his coat to a Caribbean comrade, and his giving away the last of his money to pay the medical bills of a sick child just before he collapsed in mid-speech, to be carried Christ-like from the podium to die of pneumonia. Many martyrs have shed their lifeblood into the folds of the flag of revolutionary socialism and it is the cold-eyed analysis of the teacher that was MacLean's greatest gift to humanity. It is tempting to view MacLean as a captain Ahab, pursuing his prey to his own destruction. But this image of the martyr haranguing the crowd in his shirt sleeves must not hide the burning message; a message that saw national liberation as a double-edged weapon with prospects beyond the freedom of his country.

*"I hold that the British Empire is the biggest menace to the human race... We on the Clyde have a mighty mission to fulfil. We can make Glasgow a Petrograd, a revolutionary storm-centre second to none. A Scottish break-away at this juncture would bring the empire crashing to the ground and free the waiting workers of the world."*



# JAMES CONNOLLY HOUSE

THE THREAT OF A  
GOOD EXAMPLE