

## Introduction

The purpose of this Supplement and future ones will be to open up the discussion on the nature of, and the future direction of, the National Liberation struggle. Over recent years there has been little or no attempt to develop revolutionary theory and as a consequence the level of debate has dropped to an all time low. This has left the revolutionary movement as a whole floundering in the face of the renewed bourgeois offensive which was launched after Emniskillen. The largest section of the revolutionary movement, the Republican movement has gone into full retreat while vainly attempting to assure the Southern bourgeoisie that they represent no danger to the state.

There is no shame in tactical retreats as long as they are recognised as such. But such retreats strengthen the hands of opportunist elements within the revolutionary movement who are constantly trying to direct the struggle along bourgeois nationalist lines.

The retreat after Emniskillen is ample proof of the failure to politicise any significant cadres amongst the advanced sections of the working class. The bourgeoisie have been allowed to choose the battle ground and the propaganda battle is being waged within the confines of bourgeois democracy and morality.

## Must Labour Wait

This question is not unique to Ireland and indeed is not even new on the Irish stage but it is a question which must be asked wherever there are anti-imperialist and national liberation struggles.

Those who answer yes to the question, "Must Labour Wait?" belong to two broad main trends within the anti-imperialist movement: 1) those who are frightened by the prospect of an organised working class, who fear a social revolution and all that that entails and 2) those who have illusions in the progressive role of the National Bourgeoisie. Trend number one we identify as petty bourgeois nationalism which has no 'independent' ideology of its own but rather wavers between reform and revolution. Frightened by the thought of the revolutionary masses imposing a "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" they try to invent a unique "Irish solution". Something which is in between 'heartless' capitalism and 'authoritarian' socialism. Within this trend we must categorise the leadership of the Republican movement despite its calls for a 'democratic' socialist Republic.

The second trend consists of the opportunistic Communist Party of Ireland. They consistently call on the bourgeoisie to do this or that. A Bill of Rights here or an inquiry there. They slavishly adhere to the dogmatic stages theory. Whist correctly identifying in an historical sense the bourgeois task of national reunification, they fail to answer the simple question, "If the national bourgeoisie is a collaborationist bourgeoisie with imperialism and it has become thoroughly reactionary (as indeed it must do with the rise of the working class), what class can accomplish this task?" This group fails to recognise that the central contradiction in Irish society is the National question and the country's division by imperialism and that all other contradictions are secondary and derivative (see Ta Power's document, Starry Plough No. 1).

As far as the first is concerned, there can be no independent ideology between capitalism and socialism and attempts to try and invent one can only lead to a victory for imperialism. "There is no middle course (for mankind has not created a "third" ideology, and moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be non-class or an above class ideology). Hence, to belittle the socialist ideology in any way, to turn aside from it in the slightest degree means to strengthen bourgeois ideology."

In the following pages, we will try to show that it is only by putting "Socialism on the Agenda" will there be any chance of winning national liberation and a social transformation of Irish society. We will argue that it is only with this perspective that we can win over the Irish working class, who have little interest in idealistic republicanism, to the struggle for National Liberation and Socialism. It must be pointed out that this perspective is also necessary in order to wrest the proletariat working class away from the reactionary ideology of loyalism.

## Connolly's Contribution

Connolly's contribution to the development of Marxism in Ireland has yet to be vigorously examined. The fact that Connolly can be

# MUST LABOUR WAIT?



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 this marsh! And when we

claimed by opportunists and petty bourgeois nationalists alike is due to a large degree on the contradictions which Connolly exhibited within himself. We will not attempt in this article to tackle the question of his "Marxism" but suffice to say that Connolly must by no means be glorified nor his mistakes glossed over. To do so would be treacherous to the interests of the working class and indeed to the memory of Connolly himself. We all stand on one another's shoulders in an historical sense and we have a duty to learn from our "heroes" mistakes as well as their triumphs.

Whilst we may criticise Connolly on many things, his grasp of the "revolutionary kernel" of Marxism is beyond dispute and it is the opportunist's nightmare. On the question "Must Labour Wait?" he was most emphatic. When he led the tiny Irish Citizen Army against the might of the British Empire in 1916 he was saying that labour is not waiting, it is ready to press its claims by force of arms and to hold onto those arms in case their nationalist allies reneged on the cause of labour. "Starting thus, Ireland may yet set the torch to a European conflagration that will not burn out until the last throne and the last capitalist bond and debenture are shrivelled up on the funeral pyre of the last war lord." <sup>2</sup>

It must be remembered to Connolly's eternal credit and to the opportunists eternal shame that even in 1916 when the working class was tiny in comparison to what it is today that Connolly emphasised the hegemony of the working class and that it was the only "incorruptible inheritors of the national liberation struggle."

While in 1916 all over Europe so called

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!

## V.I. Lenin

Marxists were collaborating with their own bourgeoisie in a fever of national chauvinism (the great imperialist war of 1914-18), Connolly was closest to that revolutionary kernel of Marxism "Our job is to change the world." On his death, there was no one or any party to lift up the torch. His failure to build a revolutionary party and his illusions about syndicalism led directly to the Labour movement falling into the hands of renegades. Although Connolly was involved in the founding of a number of parties (I.S.R.P., S.P.I., I.L.P.) they bore no resemblance to Lenin's Bolshevik party. Whereas Lenin's party was a party of professional revolutionaries who put great emphasis on theoretical clarity, the Irish parties were very loose, organisationally and theoretically.

"Industrial Unionism is the Socialist Republic in the making; and the goal once reached, the Industrial Union is the Socialist Republic in operation. Accordingly, the Industrial Union is at once the battering ram with which to pound down the fortress of Capitalism and the successor of the capitalist structure itself."

"The first act of the workers will be through their economic organisations seizing the organised industries; the last act the conquest of political power." <sup>3</sup>

These are the ideas which influenced Connolly whilst in America along with the IWW's one big union, and to a large extent prevented him from building the Irish Socialist Republican Party or later the Socialist Party of Ireland into a combat organisation of the

working class. Lenin by contrast argued for a tight highly disciplined party of professional revolutionaries. He had no illusions about Trade Unionism believing that "trade-unionism means the ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie." <sup>4</sup>

Sinn Fein was re-organised in October 1917 with De Valera as President and Griffith, Vice President. (De Valera was also elected President of the Volunteers shortly afterwards). The result of the re-organisation of Labour and Sinn Fein was that the alliance of labour and radical republicanism was over. Those who may have kept it alive were dead, executed by the British.

With Connolly's death, the leadership of the National struggle fell into the hands of the bourgeois nationalist party of Sinn Fein led by Arthur Griffith and De Valera. The rising began to be called the Sinn Fein rising even though Sinn Fein did not take part in the rising and had an insignificant following compared to the labour movement. Some idea of the strength of the labour movement as compared to Sinn Fein can be seen from the circulation figures of their respective newspapers "Sinn Fein had an average circulation of 2,000 copies weekly against 20,000 to 30,000 for the Irish Worker. In fact during periods of intense struggle the circulation of the Irish Worker went up to almost 95,000."

During the great struggles of Labour preceding the rising, Sinn Fein was totally hostile to the labour movement. An example of this was during the 1911 railwayman's strike, Griffith's paper incited the British armed forces to suppress the strike. "We are forced to pay for a very large force of police, and Dublin overflows with English soldiers. Yet, when a real emergency arises, the police and military together are not able to cope with so small a matter as ensuring the delivery of foodstuffs to their consignees in a great city threatened by starvation by irresponsible formentors of sympathetic strikes." <sup>5</sup>

And in a further editorial "In Dublin the wives of some of the men that Larkin has led out on strike are begging in the streets. The consequences of Larkinism are workless fathers, mourning mothers, hungry children and broken homes. Not the 'Capitalists' but the policy of Larkin has raised the price of food until the poorest in Dublin are in a state of semi-famine - the curses of women are being poured on this man's head. Mr. Larkin's career of destruction is coming to a close, but when it is closed it will have established his name in the memory of Dublin as the man who did the maximum of injury to trade-unionism and the industrial revival." <sup>6</sup>

Larkin answered in 'The Irish Worker' calling Sinn Fein a rump that invited foreign capitalists to exploit cheap Irish labour.

It is true that a section of Sinn Fein led by Patrick Pearse, Joseph Plunkett Eamon Ceannt and Sean McDermott were quite sympathetic to Labour during this period. They produced a paper called 'The Nation' (1910) and later 'Irish Freedom'. These men represented the Republican section of Sinn Fein and were also members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I.R.B.) They took part in the Rising and were executed along with Connolly.

The result of Labour deserting the field of battle and surrendering leadership to Sinn Fein led to disaster. On October of 1917 at the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis, the following resolution was passed "Sinn Fein aims at securing the international recognition of Ireland as an independent republic. Having achieved that status, the Irish people may by referendum freely choose their own form of government." <sup>7</sup>

(this resolution is depressingly familiar for it is expounded by Sinn Fein even today and its message is clear "Labour Must Wait")

In November 1918, the Irish Labour Party at a special Conference decided by 96 to 23 "in view of the necessity of deciding one issue, and only one issue, that of self-determination, to refrain from putting forward Labour Candidates for Parliament" (Reports 1918,20). This again left the field open to Sinn Fein who won 73 of the 105 seats (26 Unionist, 6 Irish Party). <sup>8</sup>

In January 1919, Dail Eireann was established by 30 Sinn Fein MPs and although at once declared illegal by the British, it started to set up an alternative administration. The class interests supported by Sinn Fein can be seen from the following quotations: "While the I.R.A. was establishing their authority as a national police force, a grave danger threatened the foundations of the Republic. This was the recrudescence in



National Executive, Irish Trade Union Congress and Labour Party, 1914. Standing: James Connolly, William O'Brien, M. J. Egan, Thomas Cassidy

Sitting: Thomas MacPartlin, D. R. Campbell, P. T. Daly, James Larkin and M. J. O'Lehane. Also a member, not in group, Thomas Johnson.

an acute form of an agrarian agitation for the breaking up of the great grazing ranches into tillage holdings for landless men and "uneconomic" small holders. Emigration had been dammed up for five years, while an immense rise in the value of land and farm products threw into more vivid relief than ever before the high profits of the ranchers and the hopeless outlook of the landless men and uneconomic holders. The latter, during the winter 1919-20, began to take the matter into their own hands. Gradually a spirit of violence, inherited from centuries of agrarian serfdom in which violence had been the only resource, crept in. All this was a grave menace to the Republic.

The mind of the people was being diverted from the struggle for freedom by a class war. There was a moment when it seemed that nothing could prevent wholesale expropriation. But this crisis was surmounted, thanks to a patriotic public opinion and the civic sense of justice expressed through the Arbitration Courts and enforced by the Republican police." (Constructive Work of Dail Eireann No. 1) <sup>9</sup>

When small holders claimed land on two farms the Sinn Fein Courts decided against the small holders and they resisted "One night, about a fortnight after the issue of the judgement, the Captain of the local company of the I.R.A. descended upon them with a squad of men - sons of very poor farmers like themselves - arrested four of them, and brought them off to that very effective Republican prison - an unknown destination!" (Constructive Work of Dail Eireann No. 2) <sup>10</sup>

Throughout the war against the British, the I.R.A. was used to uphold property rights. One famous case being at Limerick, in May 1920, where strikers belonging to the I.T.G.W.U., seized a creamery and operated it themselves. The I.R.A. suppressed the strike with the blessing of the leadership of the I.T.G.W.U.

After the signing of the treaty, republicans were split. This split was not on any clearly defined class basis but rather reflected the confused politics of the petty bourgeois leadership. Those who supported the treaty began with the help of the British to ruthlessly suppress the anti-treaty forces. The British Army may have executed the 15 leaders of the 1916 rising but in 1922 the Free State executed 77 republicans. This quotation from Michael Collins will show clearly the confused nature of republican politics: "There is no British Government any longer in Ireland. It is gone. It is no longer the enemy. We have now a native Government. Anyone who fails to obey it is an enemy of the people. By means of the fight we put up... we got the British to evacuate the country. Not only to evacuate the country. Not only to evacuate it militarily, but to evacuate it socially and economically as well." <sup>11</sup>

Immediately after the rising the leadership of the labour movement passed to two Belfast members Thomas Johnson and David Campbell. These two had no nationalist leaning whatsoever, indeed Johnson expressed support for the allies in the great imperialist war. They appeared for the release of O'Brian and Daly who had been arrested in swoops after the rising but did not campaign on behalf

of Connolly and after he was executed merely passed a resolution regretting his loss along with Richard O'Carroll. The Dublin trades council also failed to condemn the executions.

When the Trade Union Congress gathered on the 7th August 1916 at Sligo, Johnson the chair addressed the Congress thus: "This is not a place to enter into a discussion as to the right or wrong, the wisdom or the folly, of the revolt... as a trade union movement, we are of varied minds on matters of historical and political development. He asked the delegates to stand for a minute to honour the memory of Connolly, O'Carroll and Macken, whom he said had participated in the rising 'purely with a passion for freedom and a hatred of oppression.' At the same time the delegates were asked to remember those who had died in the war 'also for what they believed to be the cause of Liberty and Democracy and for Love of their country.' Johnson followed with a personal declaration of support for the Allied cause: 'The Cause of Democracy, the defence of such liberties as the common peoples of the Western nations had won was bound up with the success of France and Britain. I had held to that opinion with some enthusiasm and, despite the efforts of our Government to prove that the governing methods of all ruling classes are much alike, I hold the same opinion still, for France is still a Republic - more firmly established.' <sup>12</sup>

It is almost unbelievable that Johnson could have got away with this address so soon after Connolly's execution. Especially the equating of Connolly and others with those who died in the imperialist war. This can only be understood in the context of Connolly's failure to build a revolutionary party. Although he was involved in the setting up of a number of parties, they bore no relation whatsoever to Lenin's ideas of the revolutionary party. Lenin was proved correct when he stated "trade unionism means the ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie."

O'Brian who had been released by this time endorsed Johnston's actions and thus the labour movement was skillfully guided away from revolution and into the cul de sac of reformism.

The Irish Citizen's Army became an embarrassment. The executive attempted to disassociate the Transport Union from the Army and to expel it from Liberty Hall. The Army itself although re-organised only played a minor role from then on. Socialists and trade unionists who were militant on the national question were forced into the ranks of the Volunteers and then later the I.R.A.

It is not possible in this supplement, to follow the developments of the Irish left up to the present day. However we can say that as a result of the world communist movement degenerating into opportunism, it has proved impossible up to the present day to build a genuine communist party.

## Other Struggles

Those who say "Labour must wait" will almost invariably mention Cuba as an example. The argument being Castro did not emphasise the struggle for socialism. He was a Marxist but

he hid this from the people in order to gain maximum support and then when he had smashed the Batista regime, he introduced socialism. Others on the left say Castro was not a Marxist but an honest petty bourgeois leader who believed in the reforms that the 26th July movement had in its programme. Once they started to put this programme into effect they came into conflict with native capitalism and its master, American imperialism. It was the reality of the Cuban economic situation that forced Castro along the road to socialism.

While not attempting here to make an in depth analysis of the Cuban revolution let's take a look at what happened in Cuba. Marxism teaches us the importance of studying the social forces in society. While the individual has a role in shaping history, it is the social forces in society that are of paramount importance.

The U.S.A. intervened in Cuba during the war of independence (1895-1898). Using the pretext of an explosion on board the U.S.S. Maine in April 1898, they declared war on Spain. The Spanish were defeated very quickly and at the Treaty of Paris (10 Dec. 1898), she renounced sovereignty over Cuba. The U.S.A. refused to recognise the Cuban rebel army and they handed over municipal power to the old Spanish authorities.

Along with the American army came American capital. "Even before the Spanish flag was down in Cuba, U.S. business interests set out to make their influence felt. Merchants, real estate agents, stock promoters of all kinds of get-rich schemes flocked to Cuba by the thousands. Seven syndicates battled each other for control of the franchises for the Havana Street Railway which were finally won by Percival Farquhar, representing the Wall Street interests of New York. Thus, simultaneously with the military occupation began ... commercial occupation." <sup>13</sup>

After a few years, American capital invested

in Cuba was over \$30 million. The United Fruit Company bought 1,900,000 acres of land at 20 cents an acre, and took over the Cuban Sugar industry. The American Tobacco Company arrived. By the end of the American occupation in 1901, 80% of Cuba's mineral exports were in American hands.

During the military occupation, Cuban workers in Havana staged a General Strike for an 8 hour day, "... we have determined to promote the struggle between the worker and the capitalist. For the workers of Cuba will no longer tolerate remaining in total subjection". In an attempt to break the strike, hundreds of strikers were arrested and U.S. troops occupied the railway stations and the docks. <sup>14</sup>

Although American occupation forces eventually left Cuba in 1901, it was only after forcing the Cubans to incorporate the Platt Amendment into their Cuban constitution. This effectively gave the Americans "the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life property and individual liberty. It also provided for the United States to get coaling or naval stations at certain specified points." <sup>15</sup>

In the 1930's the Cuban economy collapsed, this was in the main due to the world wide economic crisis and the Cuban economy dependence on sugar. There were mass strikes throughout the country. Workers occupied public buildings, ports and sugar processing plants. In some towns, Soviets were set up consisting of workers, peasants and soldiers. The repressive Machado regime was overthrown and a radical nationalist regime set up. The Cuban communist Party was active in the insurrection and very influential among the Cuban working class.

Despite a brave and heroic struggle, the revolutionary movement was suppressed by Batista, an army officer who came to power in early 1937. In the years that followed the World Communist movement moved to the right. This was the period of the "Popular Front" and the Cuban communist party followed faithfully the "line" and collaborated with Batista.

The Cuban labour movement shifted from revolution to reform under the leadership of the Communist party and they paid for this by being ousted from the National Labour Organisation (CTC) in 1947. An organisation that they themselves had set up in 1938 under Batista who had relinquished power in 1944. In March 1952 Batista staged a coup d'etat. The CTC collaborated with Batista during the coup and afterwards acted as a Labour Policeman of his regime.

## The Role Of The 26th Of July Movement And The Cuban Communist Party

The popular idea of the Cuban revolution can be summed up like this: Castro, Guevarra and about 30 men arrived in Cuba on a boat "the Gramma". They attacked the Moncada barracks, which failed, so the remnants of the little band headed from the Sierra Maestra, formed a guerrilla army, then descended from the hills, smoking cigars and sporting large bushy beards and proceeded to smash Batista's army.

Let's look at the social conditions that existed at the time. Cuba was an under-



Fidel Castro holds a ground-level conference. Raul Castro is at the extreme right.

developed capitalist country under the domination of imperialism. The labour movement (CTC) was corrupt and acted as a labour policeman for the hated dictator Batista. The monopoly stage of capitalism under foreign domination had been reached but its very nature it was stifling economic development. The economy was stagnant, only socialism held the promise of freeing the productive forces and developing the economy. In short the country was ripe for revolution. The Batista regime was not smashed by decisive military victories by the guerrillas although they did win some notable ones, it completely disintegrated in much the same way as the South Vietnamese army did after the Americans left.

Castro was passively supported by the peasantry. Che called them their "invisible collaborators". The Guerrillas were generally supplied with personnel and materials from the cities. The organised working class was generally passive, although on April 9th 1958 the 26th of July movement attempted a General Strike. The Communist Party was opposed to the strike, its leaflets denouncing the strike were published by Batista and used against Castro. The Strike was successful in Santiago but failed in Havana. In January 1959 the working class finally shut down all Cuban industry and commerce, Castro marched into the cities unopposed.

Castro failed to raise the mass of the peasantry or the working class until a very late stage. How did he win? Castro was successful because of the extreme weakness of the Dictator Batista. There was no massive support from American imperialism or the Cuban monopoly Bourgeoisie for Batista. (The Americans never made the same mistake again. They have propped up hated dictators and military rulers all over South America since).

The Cuban Communist Party tied to the policy of collaborating with the National bourgeoisie (they see the national bourgeoisie as a potential revolutionary force in South America. The logic being that the national bourgeoisie will complete the national democratic revolution in these countries and then the struggle for socialism can begin. The

National Democratic Revolution being the overthrow of feudal structures), denounced Castro's armed struggle as bourgeois, romantic and putschist. They called for "clean, democratic elections" to eliminate Batista. Tied to the dogmatic stages theory they forgot their revolutionary past (early 1930's) and failed to see that all Batista needed was a good push and he would fall on his face.

The agitation of Castro's movement among the working class was a great deal more radical and socialist in content than the Communist Party. Castro was able to win support from sections of the Communist Party but the Party did not officially support him until the battle was almost won.

As to whether or not Castro was a communist or not before he started, we can only quote Castro himself "When we started our revolutionary struggle, we already had some knowledge of Marxism-Leninism and we were in sympathy with it. But by virtue of this, we could not call ourselves Marxists-Leninists ... we were apprentice revolutionaries."

Although it is true that Castro did not build a revolutionary party before the guerrilla stage of the struggle, it is our belief that he succeeded only because of the extreme weakness of Batista, and the general passiveness of the Cuban population.

## Africa, Vietnam

In Africa since 1900, about 50 countries have achieved national independence. The majority of these became independent in the 60's (about 30). Some of these countries achieved independence after long wars of national liberation. Algeria is one such nation that fought a bitter seven year war with the French. Others such as Ghana progressed to independence in a relatively peaceful manner.

When the question is asked, how many socialist countries there are in Africa, then if we are being strict, we must say none. Indeed it can be shown that whether countries in Africa used force of arms to achieve independence or achieved it peacefully, it made little difference to the nature of the "independent" state. This leads us to the conclusion that it is not the methods used to achieve National

Liberation that count but the nature of the forces fighting for liberation.

African Cabral recognising this stated, that the colonialist countries encouraged national independence movements and that they had three aims (the imperialists).

- 1) Preventing the growth of Socialism
- 2) Liberating the reactionary forces in Africa which were being stifled by colonialism
- 3) Enabling these forces to ally themselves with the international bourgeoisie.

What is clear from Cabral's analysis is that imperialism would grant independence when it is clear that a political grouping has emerged which can safeguard its interests.

It is interesting to compare the programme generally followed in African countries with that followed by the Vietnamese.

The African Programme had as its author Nkrumah and the main points summarised are as follows.

- 1) Africa for the Africans - an end to colonialism.
- 2) Democracy the most desirable form of government.
- 3) Belief in non-exploiting socialism. International communism rejected.
- 4) African nationalists replace tribalism.
- 5) A United States of Africa.

The programme of the Communist Party of Indo-China drawn up in 1930 was:

- 1) to overthrow French imperialism, feudalism and the reactionary Vietnamese.
- 2) to make Indo-China completely independent.
- 3) to establish a worker, peasant and soldiers government.
- 4) to confiscate the banks and other enterprises belonging to the imperialists, and to put them under the control of the worker, peasant soldiers government.
- 5) to confiscate all the plantations and property belonging to the imperialists and the Vietnamese reactionary capitalist class and distribute them to poor peasants.
- 6) To implement the eight hour working day.
- 7) To abolish public loans and poll tax. To waive unjust taxes hitting the poor people.



- 8) To bring back all freedom to the masses.
- 9) To carry out universal education.
- 10) To implement equality between man and woman.

It is clear the difference is in the type of movement, one a petty bourgeois nationalist leadership, the other a revolutionary communist party.

The British handed over power to Nkrumah in Ghana in 1957. Nkrumah's experiment lasted just nine years, his country bankrupt, he tried to turn to the left but it was too late. The military seized power while he was visiting Peking in 1966.

The whole history of the Vietnamese struggle showed the flexibility of tactics that a revolutionary party can adopt. Unlike Cuba, imperialism fought to the bitter end in an effort to defeat the revolutionary forces. A guerrilla struggle of the nature of the Cuban one could not have succeeded in these conditions.

We sum up with a quote from Frantz Fanon: "If national liberation is not accompanied by social transformation, all that happens is the installation of a national bourgeoisie whose 'nationalism' simply consists of substituting themselves in office, not in the total break up and replacement of the system of government as part of a wider social revolution. This kind of nationalism is devoid both of positive social content internally and devoid, too, of any wider external content, since it leads to the failure of regional, continental, or wider co-operation and the consequent re-emergence of chauvinistic boundary disputes, tribalism and federalism."

In most of the liberation struggles that we have looked at, the national liberation movements were led by the petty bourgeoisie whose aspirations were to become the national bourgeoisie.

In Ireland today we have a National monopoly bourgeoisie that has no interest in completing the national liberation struggle. Its interests are tied to that of imperialism. There is only one class that can complete this task, the working class.



Castro gives shooting instruction to a group of rebels while peasants look on.



## The Irish Economy

Since 1975, the republic of Ireland's 900 foreign owned firms were attracted or should we say bribed to set up shop here. This bribery was of the form of massive tax relief and direct grants. There is no doubt that these transnational companies have transformed the outward appearance of the Irish economy but as we shall show, they have failed to build a base for the new technology or industry - not that it was ever their desire to do so.

In the seventies the 26 counties had the fastest growing economy in Europe. Between 1970 and 1981 the economy grew at an average rate of 4.3% in comparison to an average EEC growth rate of 1.9%. This massive growth was largely accounted for by the arrival of 900 foreign owned firms since 1975. These transnational companies have been attracted to the 26 counties by the creation by the Irish Development Authorities of a tax haven and by the proximity to the large European market. Ireland also has the youngest, best educated, population in Europe.

The theory behind the I.D.A. creation of a tax haven for transnational companies was that they would introduce high technology which in turn would stimulate domestic industry and provide jobs both in the new industries themselves and also in local enterprise in the supply of parts etc. This theory did not work however, due mainly to the nature of imperialism itself. The transnational companies had no interest in stimulating domestic industry, preferring to import parts etc from other subsidiaries. In an E.S.R.I. study in late 1987, it was revealed that imports accounted for almost 50% of the content of industrial exports.

The high 'tech' foreign companies are capital intensive rather than labour intensive and are highly concentrated in industry which requires little labour. "In Chemicals, Office Machinery, for instance, wages and salaries account for less than 20% of net output; in manufacturing as a whole, the proportion is 39%, in the old mainly indigenous industries of clothing and footwear, it runs to over 60%".

Although they employ about 86,000 out of a total estimated workforce of 186,000 (46%), they remain satellites of their parent firms, engaging in one process manufacturing and importing almost all their raw materials, manufactured parts etc. They have failed to stimulate any significant growth in domestic Irish industry and this can be seen clearly in figures.

The enormous change in the face of the Irish economy can be seen from the following figures:

### Exports

**1930**  
60% Manufactured Goods, 75% live animals

**1961**  
60% manufactured goods (80% from foreign firms)

### High tech goes higher



Fig.1

### Repatriated Profits

The reason the transnational companies are here of course, is to make a profit. However the amount of these profits are staggering as a study by the Economic and Social Research Institute published towards the end of 1987 showed. This study showed that repatriated profits for foreign companies per worker were over **£17,000** a year. That is a profit of approximately **£1330** per week from every employee and even these figures do not reflect the true picture. (These figures are four times as high as in 1986).

In 1983, the total profits of foreign companies have been estimated as **£11.2 billion**, of which they repatriated **£1 billion**.

### Debt

With the influx of the transnationals, Government spending had to increase dramatically. A whole modern industrial infrastructure had to be built to facilitate these firms. As a result the total foreign debt has rocketed. In 1983, the total government debt was **£11.5 billion**, the total government debt in foreign currency. By 1986 this had more than doubled to **£25 billion** of which foreign debt was 40%. This represents a debt of **£28,000** for every Irish household.

### Who Pays?

Foreign transnational companies are very happy with their investments here. They have a young highly educated workforce who have proved capable of matching their home productivity rates in a very short period of time. They have been offered "the tax deal of the century" by the I.D.A. The rate of return on their investments has been twice the European average. For U.S. companies, the average rate of return was 33.7% between 1977-1980.

In another E.S.R.I. study by Mr. Eoin O'Malley and Mrs. Sue Scott, they examined four industries dominated by recently arrived foreign firms: pharmaceuticals, chemicals, computers and soft drink concentrates. The study found that those four accounted for the bulk of profits repatriated from Ireland: and that six months after a unit of output was produced, profits worth **35-40%** of its value would also leave the country.

### Awful for earners, lovely for property and profits

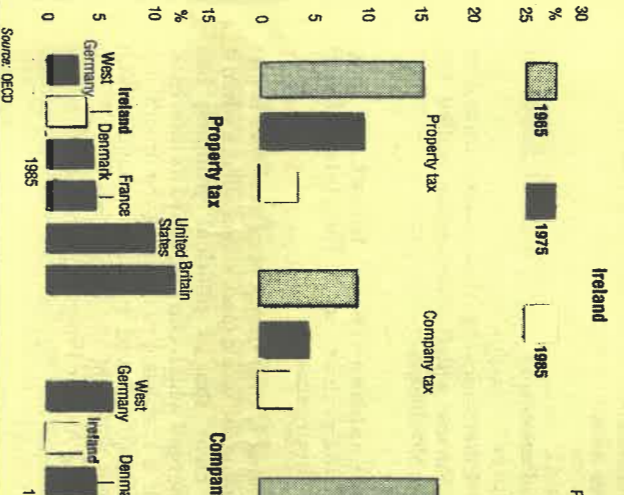


Fig.2

The question arises who is paying and who will pay the massive foreign debt? You guessed it right - the working class. Already Irish workers are the most heavily taxed in Europe and have the highest standard rate of VAT (25%). Ireland's PAYE taxpayers contribute 87% of total income tax, an increase of 62% in twenty years. A single man or woman starts to pay tax at the industrial world's highest starting rate of 35% (See Personal Tax in comparison to Company Tax Fig. 2)

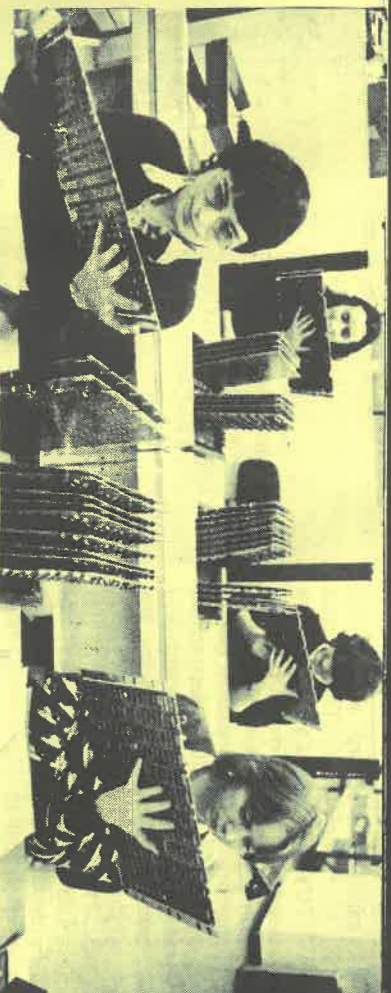
On top of this tax burden, the Haughey government has announced the biggest cuts in 30 years with the health service being lined up as number one target. Health spending is to be reduced by 5% this year with the real possibility of many hospitals closing down.

Education is next on the hit list with plans to reduce the number of teachers by 2,500. The trade unions have been extremely helpful to Mr. Haughey, having agreed to hold pay increases to two and a half% in each of the next three years. With the cuts and the massive debt to be repayed, the lot of the Irish working class looks very bleak over the next number of years. The irony is that the Irish working class is on top of all this financing transnational companies' investments in other parts of the world.

Most up to date facts and figures come from the Economist Survey of Ireland, Jan. 16th 1988. Other figures are from 'The Leninist' three excellent supplements on Ireland, who quote their sources as 'The Irish Industrial Revolution' published by Repeal 1978 'Financial Times' survey on Ireland April 16th.

### Conclusion

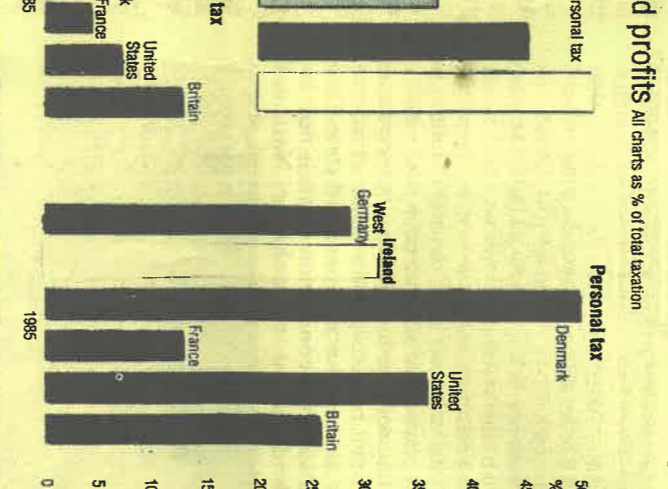
Today the world is dominated by two great systems, Imperialism and Socialism. The chief contradiction of this epoch, is that between Capitalism and Socialism. We live in an age where the struggle against Imperialism in each country is increasingly a struggle against the native collaborating bourgeoisie. An age of proletarian struggle, of the transition from capitalism to socialism.



Foreign jobs for the girls

Ireland today can be categorised as a medium developed capitalist country. We mean by this that it has reached such a stage of development (where monopoly capitalism is dominant and finance capital has emerged) that it can no longer be designated an underdeveloped country. However, Ireland is stuck at this stage. It cannot become imperialist like the advanced countries and therefore the contradictions between the working class and the bourgeoisie are that much sharper. The interests of the working class are in direct contradiction to every other class in Irish society today.

Unable to bribe their working class with super profits gained at the expense of the under-developed countries, native capitalism has to increase the rate of exploitation of the working class in order to maintain their profits. Countries such as Ireland, stalled at this stage



of development, where class strength is sharp, are together with under developed countries weak links in the imperialist chain.

The chief contradiction in Ireland today is the division of the country by imperialism. In the six counties, imperialism is directly involved by the presence of an occupying army. The working class has been directly divided by imperialism fostered sectarianism which has been maintained by a deliberate policy of keeping the proletariat working class "bribed" and tied to imperialism by the provision of jobs and a much higher standard of living. (note the fanatical resistance to the McBride principles). The division of the country and the division of the working class is a deliberate policy of British imperialism to hold back the subjective conditions for social revolution.

In the six counties, there exists a revolutionary situation, there is a war going on, but it lacks a clear revolutionary perspective, a class perspective.

In the 26 counties, the objective conditions for a revolutionary situation exist and are increasingly developing due to the instability of the world capitalist system. However, subjective conditions lag behind. Social revolutions do not come about spontaneously. The working class does not develop revolutionary class consciousness of its own accord, it has to be pumped into it. "Modern socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge. Indeed modern economic science is as much a condition for socialist production as, say, modern technology, and the proletariat can create neither the one nor the other, no matter how much it may desire to do so; both arise out of the modern social process. The vehicle of bourgeois intelligentsia" (Kautsky). 16

Hence the building of a revolutionary party is part and parcel of the subjective conditions necessary for the development of class struggle. Left to itself the working class can only develop trade union consciousness which

is easily contained and encompassed by the bourgeoisie.

In 'What is to be Done', Lenin argued against those who believed in the spontaneity of the masses. He argued that these ideas led to victory for the bourgeoisie. "But why, the reader will ask, does the spontaneous movement, the movement along the line of least resistance, lead precisely to the domination of bourgeois ideology? For the simple reason that bourgeois ideology is far older in origin than socialist ideology, that it is more fully developed and that it has at its disposal immeasurably more means of dissemination." 17

We live in a bourgeois society which is completely dominated by bourgeois ideas of democracy and morality. We must consistently wage war against these ideas which are firmly rooted in the working class. "In particular, it will be the duty of leaders to gain an ever clearer insight into all theoretical questions, to free themselves more and more from the influence of traditional phrases inherited from the old world outlook, and constantly to keep in mind that socialism, since it has become a science, demands that it be pursued as a science, that is, that it be studied. The task will be to spread with increased zeal among the masses, of the workers the ever more clarified understanding thus acquired to knit together ever more firmly the organisation both of the Party and of the trade unions." 18

Ireland, today, north and south is dominated by imperialism. The six counties is directly dominated by imperialism - the 26 counties is neo-colony of imperialism. The national monopoly bourgeoisie is a collaborating bourgeoisie which has long ago lost any independent interests from imperialism. The anti-imperialist struggle confided as it is the six counties and led by the petit-bourgeoisie is being easily contained by imperialism. It will only be by harnessing the power of the entire working class, north and south and other exploited sections of Irish society that this struggle will be pushed to a successful conclusion, which is the overthrow of imperialism and the building of socialism.

- To be Anti-imperialist in Ireland today means to have no illusions as to the progressiveness of the National Monopoly bourgeoisie.
- It means confronting the National Monopoly bourgeoisie, north and south.
- It means that the anti-imperialist struggle is the class struggle.
- It means putting Socialism on the agenda and not letting "Labour Wait"
- It means building the Revolutionary Party.

Seamus Morgan

### Sources

1. V.I. Lenin - 'What is to be Done' page 49-50 (Peking 1978).
2. G. Schuller - 'James Connolly and Irish Freedom' page 15 (Cork 1976).
3. D. Delion - 'Marx and the Marxists' page 176 (New York 1955) ED. S. Hook.
4. V.I. Lenin - 'What is to be Done' page 50 (Peking 1978).
5. 'Sinn Fein and Socialism' page 3 (Cork).
6. *ibid* page 3-4.
7. *ibid* page 5.
8. E. Burns - 'British Imperialism in Ireland' page 50 (Cork 1983).
9. *ibid* page 52.
10. *ibid* page 52.
11. *ibid* page 57.
12. A. Mitchell - 'Labour in Irish Politics' page 76 (Dublin).
13. H. Zinn - 'A People's History of the United States' page 302.
14. *ibid* page 303.
15. *ibid* page 303.
16. V.I. Lenin - 'What is to be Done' page 48 (Peking 1978).
17. *ibid* page 51-52.
18. *ibid* page 33.