

SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

The REPRESSION Has
Been Condemned But
**ONLY MASSIVE ACTION
WILL DEFEAT IT!**



The gloom and doom of unemployment and inflation has been slightly mitigated for most workers by their ability to prevent the government and employers making them bear the full responsibility for the present crisis. The ICTU's rejection of the Employer/Labour Conference wage proposals and the subsequent spat of wage demands by building workers, craftsmen, etc., indicates that workers generally do not identify their interests with those of the capitalist system and are not intimidated by the ominous threats of leading politicians and employers.

In the context of the current depressive atmosphere these are very encouraging signs. But many dangers still lie ahead. The new "interim wage agreement" is obviously a significant retreat for the government, employers, and indeed the trade union leaders. At the same time this deal is the only thin edge of the wedge for developments which promise to be even more dangerous than the traditional national wage agreements. The Irish Employers Confederation interim pay offer is linked to a commitment from the ICTU to participate in joint talks, which would include the government, with the idea of formulating a "social and economic plan".

The "Social and Economic Plan" is a trick!

The attraction of this so-called "plan" is that in return for promises of increased employment and better social services the workers would "moderate" their wage demands. But this is all one big confidence trick. Armed with their "plan" the government and employers hope to hoodwink the workers while the trade union leaders hope to escape from the pressure they have

NOW COMES THE



lately been subjected to by the rank and file.

It would be impossible for the government to devise a plan which would benefit workers no matter how many sacrifices the latter were prepared to make: Today, more than ever before, the situation is much less favourable for capitalist planning. This is especially true in Ireland. A crucial element in capitalist planning is flexibility with regard to public expenditure. When a government has substantial resources at its command it can indirectly affect social goals without really interfering with private enterprise. In this respect the Coalition government is in a very tight corner from which it is unlikely to escape for some time. Under pressure from native employers and international institutions such as the EEC and the OECD the government has given

a firm guarantee to reduce public expenditure. One has only to look at the circular sent out to government departments and state agencies setting out guidelines along which submissions for the 1977 budget must be drawn up. If these guidelines are adhered to a real cut of up to 20% in department and agency spending may be expected. This will automatically mean massive cuts in social welfare benefits and public service (which employs 25% of workers) pay. At the same time the circular made no offer to channel extra funds towards productive investment.

What the "Plan" really means

Under such circumstances what kind of benefits can workers really hope to gain from a "social and economic plan"? The whole scheme is a hoax.

ORGANISE THE UNEMPLOYED!

As the figures soar on unemployment reaching the official figure of 12.5% (actually nearing 15% when all the unregistered girl school leavers and married women seeking employment for the first time) the trade unions in the south are beginning to realise the full implications of the "economic crisis". Chiefly among them is the fact that as the nature of industry changes with old industries declining and new-type industries being established, many Irish workers with traditional skills may never again be employed in this country.

The international monopolies moving in on the Irish economy have not got the interests of full employment at heart, which is clearly indicated in the way in which they use Irish plants — mainly as distributive outlets for goods produced elsewhere! The present situation in Groudings is an excellent example of this, where fertilizer is being dumped here, as the Dublin plan closes down leaving some 300-400 workers out of work.

Prepared to fight?

Realising that some major intervention is essential

on the trade union movement, ICTU leaders will in November, as we have mentioned, enter tripartite talks. One of the major debating points will be the question of unemployment. An important question to be posed and answered is, how prepared are the trade union leadership to deal with the issue of unemployment? What initiatives have been taken to develop the policies already adopted by many of the major trade unions, what efforts have been made to resist further unemployment and what attempts have been made to involve the unemployed themselves in actively demanding the right to work?

Without much effort an answer could be given now — None!

The biggest union, the ITGWU, passed a resolution at its annual conference in June 1975 calling for the launching of a Right to Work campaign, which could involve all unemployed members. But, as with a lot of other resolutions this has never been acted upon! A sub-committee on unemployment involving representatives from the different branches in Dublin, was pushed by some militants of the ITGWU. But this by itself would be problematic, as most of the branch representatives are not unemployed and by the fact that the unemployed do not have representation on the Branch committee of the majority of unions. This form of organisation would be limited in its ability to mobilise the unemployed in any initiatives it might undertake — and its limitation was indeed clearly shown, in the weariness of the representation of unemployed workers, members

of the ITGWU and other unions on the May Dublin Trades Council march against unemployment, and also in the Bray Trades Council march in July.

Half-hearted measures to deal with unemployment and encourage the involvement of the jobless are totally useless. Some serious groundwork must be started immediately. Firstly, all union branches should examine the numbers of members out of work in factories etc. what they were working, how many women in particular have lost their jobs; — on the basis of this information, each group of unemployed workers should be given representation on the branch committee; facilities should be provided to enable these workers to meet and maintain contact regularly with each other. This last point is essential as a safeguard against the atomisation and demoralisation that inevitably sets in among those with no jobs. More regular general branch meetings at quarterly periods, would encourage greater participation and involvement of all

WORKERS IN INTERNATIONAL



CRUNCH



Cosgraves Parliamentary Secretary, John Kelly, let the cat out of the bag as far back as July when, in a major pronouncement, he rejected the ICTU's view that "where private enterprise fails the state should step in". He went on to say that: "Since the state is not guaranteed success in the production and marketing of goods any more than the private sector, is it to be expected to provide jobs for their own sake" (Irish Times July 20th).

The following day Dr. T. K. Whitaker, the chief architect of economic planning in the sixties and the most persistent advocate of a new economic plan, revealed that the real purpose of "planning" was not the creation of employment through state intervention but to put a straight-jacket on wages. He said: "Rather than link bargaining

about pay rounds with the annual budget and its decisions on taxes and social welfare benefits it would be far more appropriate that the frame of reference for improvements in pay, pensions and social welfare benefits would be an assessment of the policies to be observed over three or four years ahead. Free Collective bargaining is not compatible with the minimum planning of an effective kind." (Irish Times, July 21st. Our emphasis)

In short, putting Kelly and Whitaker together, we get NO state creation of jobs and the abolition of collective bargaining!

The "social and economic plan" is a desperate gambit by the government, employers and trade union bureaucrats. Socialists are on favourable grounds to accept the challenge. Rather than simply reject the plan we should use the debate created around it to expose the inherent anarchy of the capitalist system and highlight the need for a real plan based on genuine social needs.

Minimum Conditions

Since the negotiations around the plan will probably begin in November, immediate action is required. The hands of the bureaucrats in the unions can be tied in advance by getting resolutions in section and branch committees passed, listing minimum requirements for the acceptance of any plan.

1. All legislation guaranteeing business secrecy must be abolished. How can there be real planning if employers conceal their resources and investments? Workers must be permitted to inspect and audit all company records before they can be confident that they are not simply being used.

2. There must be a definite commitment to maintaining and expanding public expenditure. The past problems of public expenditure (i.e. excessive taxation and national indebtedness) can be solved only by introducing a new tax system which would really hit the rich by including a capital gains tax and income tax on the big farmers. The problem of the national debt can easily be remedied by nationalising the banks. As for the many international loans which were negotiated on a fraudulent basis (i.e. not allowing

for the decline in sterling etc.) they can be renegotiated or repayments simply cancelled.

(3) Public expenditure must not be squandered on the so-called private sector but channelled into a scheme of useful public works. A scandalous situation exists in the building industry where nearly 24,000 workers are unemployed while tens of thousands of families go homeless. This kind of anomaly is repeated in many other

areas. In the sphere of education we spend only half as much per head of population as they do in the North. In agriculture we export nearly all our meat live for the sake of the big ranchers profits, whereas a proper processing industry would provide jobs for thousands of workers.

4. All those industrial, trading and financial concerns which are obstacles to rational growth or which are inefficiently managed must be nationalised. Most of the trading and financial institutions are purely speculative and parasitic and should be brought under government control immediately. There are also many "fly-by-night" industries without any backward or forward linkages to the Irish economy which operate merely as the blood sucking tentacles of imperialist monopolies. The mining and oil refining industries are key examples - they should be nationalised and put to effective use. There also exists industries receiving public assistance which only goes to lining the pockets of inefficient owners and managers - a 1971 report of the Committee on Industrial Progress showed that over 50% of firms, in the now collapsing, shoe industry, were inefficiently managed. Such firms also need to be nationalised and properly run.

5. A commitment to a comprehensive package of progressive legislation is required. This package should include outlawing discrimination against women and youth plus a new deal for the old and aged; a living national minimum wage; the European Trade Union Confederation's call for a 35 hour week plus a minimum of five weeks holidays etc. Most important of all, special rights must be granted to workers which would give them the right to inspect and veto all production and investment plans so as to ensure that the economy will really be run for general social needs and not for the profits of the few.

Start to act now!

The above are only a few suggestions which can be used to formulate proposals and resolutions for action in the trade union movement and other mass organisations (tenant associations etc.) In addition to resolutions and proposals practical initiatives can be undertaken. The Dunlaire Unemployed Workers Committee for example, has started research on how industries in the area could be reorganised to give greater employment. Other local unemployed groups and trade union branches, which have been particularly hard hit by redundancies, could do the same and in this way both involve greater numbers of workers and provide concrete information for an alternative national plan.

This is the way that the tables can best be turned on the secret scheming of the government, employers and trade union bureaucrats - FORWARD TO THE ALTERNATIVE SOCIALIST ECONOMIC PLAN!

MSR Trade Union Caucus

contd from PA potential fighters for womens rights. Of course it would be foolhardy to say the National Struggle is of no relevance - we would say that it has in an immediate way in so far as it cuts across the struggle for womens rights - then socialist women must fight for an anti-imperialist understanding - then perhaps it becomes clearer to more women the nature of imperialism.

Besides these differences, we would salute the Socialist Womens Group in their efforts and determination.

workers in the unions and these meetings should monitor the development of policy and action on unemployment.

On a broader level, greater liason is needed between all the unions. The initiative of the Dublin Trades Council in organising a National assembly of all trades councils to trash out a common fight against unemployment is an excellent one, provided it becomes a focal point for united actions. Again it is essential that the unemployed are represented in an on-going way and not just for this event both as unemployed trade unionists and members of unemployed workers associations who also speak for non trade-unionists - workers for whom the whole trade union movement is responsible for. This assembly must be supported by all Trades Councils unlike the march in Dublin which did not receive widespread national support. Those militants who realised the need for such support and who fought for it, as in Limerick, will need to prepare support for the Trades Councils meetings. Any idea that the industrial developments taking place, including the growing number of

multi-national corporations setting up plants, will solve our unemployment problems to the benefit of the workers - should be quashed on the had right now!

This trades councils meeting must prepare an action plan to build a national Right to Work campaign which would sink real roots in the working class, at factory, shop, sector, industry level and would fight around such central demands as:

Resist Redundancies!

Work-sharing with no loss of pay!

If there is a de-facto lock-out we should demand 5 days work or 5 days pay!

A programme of public works to create employment!

The right of all women to work!

These are some of the demands which would provide a central focus in struggles that are emerging on unemployment within the working class.

MSR TRADE UNION CAUCUS

MEAT PACKERS DEMAND UNION ACTION TO SAVE THEIR JOBS



BEHIND THE 'PEACE' REPRESSION GROWS

"Peace, peace, peace! — Peace at any price!" It would be difficult to find any other words that so aptly sum up the latest 'peace' campaign in the North. Emerging after the tragic death of the three young Maguire children it expresses the sickening frustration which is gnawing away at the combativity of the nationalist ghettos as more and more people begin to feel that the situation won't ever change, that after seven years of struggle in which their localities have been the battlefield, their relatives and neighbours dragged off to prison and internment camps, their people lying in the wooden boxes, the old system remains as strong as ever! So what the hell is the use of further resistance!

This is what is really important about the latest 'peace' campaign and what marks it out from all the past engineered 'peace' gimmicks of groups like Women Together with their graveyard get-togethers, vigils and walks. As Tomas MacGiolla has correctly pointed out many of the women now marching for an end to violence, marched in the past for civil rights.

"Peace" builders and supporters?

Certainly, the usual pro-imperialist forces are involved, and bodies such as the Alliance Party (in the form of Betty Williams) and the Catholic Church (represented by Legion of Mary activist, Mairead Corrigan) are well to the fore amongst the organisers.

The media has of course given mass coverage to every meeting held, every word uttered. The British government has fully exploited the campaign for its own ends; *providing coaches to transport supporters without charge, to the rallies, waiving legal requirements for marches and so on.*

Nor can it be denied that much of the support so far has come from outside the nationalist ghettos and from people who in the refinement of their suburban semi-detacheds are far removed from the grim misery of the Falls and the Bogside, the day and daily harassment of the British Army and the sectarian attacks mounted by the loyalist paramilitaries.

A response from the ghettos

But neither can we avoid the knowledge that many from the ghettos have also lent their support and been prepared to take to the streets in support of a vague undefined 'peace'. If we emphasise this point it is not to add further to the credibility of the 'peace-mongers' but merely to draw attention to the growth of demoralisation within the anti-unionist population. This is something that republicans and socialists will ignore at their own peril. The mistake however, that Mac Giolla makes in crawling up the backside of the 'peace' campaign is that this in so far as it does draw support from the ghettos it draws the defeated who are prepared to accept a return to "normality" which in the context of the 6-Counties can only mean a return to the repression and discrimination of Stormont Unionist regimes.

A socialist alternative

For socialists the tasks are very much different. The effect of the 'peace' campaign has been widespread; the brutal shooting of 12-year-old Majella O'Hare by the Paras in South Armagh revealed how quick the British Army has been to take advantage of the 'peace' cover to step up repression; the now daily incursions of the RUC and UDR illustrate the opportunities being created for their return to nationalist districts. For those who support the anti-imperialist movement the most urgent need is to get across to the overwhelming majority of the anti-unionist workers the dangerous situation that we are in. The time is clearly slipping past when we will be able to turn the struggle in the only direction that can weld the workers of the republican districts, firmly to the anti-imperialist movement,

rocks the towns and villages of the North where it belongs — with the British ruling class.

In building mass mobilisations on Northern streets once again we will be taking the first step to a real 'peace' based on removing the British presence, dismantling the Northern state and providing a workers solution to the sectarian divisions.



Mass action — a step in the right direction

Ironically the 'peacemongers' have already pointed to this direction. By taking to the streets they are challenging the anti-imperialist movement on the one terrain that has always been favourable to it. A key slogan in the months to come must be "Back to the Streets!" Demonstrations and rallies will have to be painstakingly built but difficult as it will surely prove, it is only through such involvement that nationalist workers will be able to place responsibility for the violence which

**DEFEND POLITICAL STATUS!
BACK TO THE STREETS!
NO RETURN TO STORMONT!
BRITISH TROOPS OUT NOW!**

JOHN MAGEE

ACT NOW! DONT LET

When Marie and Noel Murray were sentenced to death by hanging on June 9th 'informed opinion' in the media was that the Coalition Government would commute the sentences. Several prominent individuals called on the Government not only to commute the death sentences on the Murrays, but also to abolish the death penalty altogether.

However, the government has made no move, except to procure a hangman from Britain. There are indications that the Cabinet is split on the question and that the opinion of the Garda Síochána, in favour of the sentence being carried out, will play a crucial role. It is therefore of the utmost importance that all those who oppose the carrying out of the death sentences should make their voices heard; only public pressure can ensure that the Murrays lives will be saved.

Who are the Murrays?

Marie Murray is aged 27. From the time she left school she worked for 8 years in the Civil Service in the Gaeltacht Department and she left there in 1974 when she married Noel Murray. She has worked all her adult life for the political, social and cultural welfare of the Irish people.

Noel Murray is aged 26. When he left school he worked in C.I.E. as a metal fabricator and was a member of a trade union, as was Marie. He has opposed State violence for the past 10 years — from Nuclear Warfare to the tortures in Long Kesh.

Their trial in the Special Court

Despite the fact that Gardai at no time suggested that the Murrays were members of any subversive organisation they were tried before the 'Special Criminal Court'.



WHERE IS THE REPRESSION LEADING?

The declaration of a State of Emergency and the implementation of the Criminal Law Act by the Dublin Government represents a new level of collaboration between the Southern Irish ruling class with British Imperialism and a qualitative escalation in the degree of repression in the 26-County State. It is clearly aimed at smashing the republican resistance. Every previous anti-Partitionist struggle has been defeated not in the North, but in the South, by mass recent upsurge beginning in 1968, the level of mass involvement in the struggle was such that it was not possible for the Southern Government to smash the republican resistance. However, since 1972/3 the level of mass participation in the struggle has dropped off, largely because of the military elitism of the republicans; and this has resulted in the increasing isolation of the republican movement. It is this isolation of anti-imperialist forces which has enabled the Dublin Government to escalate repression in the 26 Counties.

By any standards, the new legislation represents a serious encroachment on civil liberties. The declaration of a State of Emergency gives the police and army far wider powers than they have ever had before and creates a situation where the government can suspend virtually all constitutional rights; while under the Criminal Law Act virtually all anti-imperialist political activity becomes illegal. Anyone involved in such activity is liable to up to ten years imprisonment; furthermore, any person or publication opposing or exposing State actions against anti-imperialists is liable to the same penalties.

The fact that the 26 County Government already has an arsenal of repressive laws in its statute books but has made no systematic attempt to smash the main

republican organisations, especially Provisional Sinn Fein, might suggest that the new legislation is mere rhetoric. However, a look at the pattern of recent events clearly demonstrates otherwise. The last year has seen the systematic use of torture against political prisoners — unprecedented in the southern state in recent decades. More sinister, however, have been moves against the major newspapers. The 'Irish Times', the 'quality' bourgeois daily, was prosecuted, along with the independent liberal fortnightly, 'Hibernia' for publishing letters against the hanging of the Murrays, while the 'Irish Press', which has always been the unofficial organ of Fianna Fail has been accused by Conor Cruise O'Brien of supporting subversion (a crime punishable by ten years imprisonment under the new legislation).

Given this background, we must view the new legislation as part of an offensive by the Coalition Government in Dublin aimed at creating a political atmosphere within which it will be possible for them to suppress the republican resistance. The government is counting on the passivity of the working class to carry through this offensive. The emergence of a new "peace" movement facilitates this task, because although the "Peace" movement in the North won only marginal support in the Catholic working class areas, and no support at all amongst the southern working class, it has provided the basis of a massive anti-republican propaganda campaign by the ruling class. As against this, the 'peace' movement coming so close to the repressive legislation has endangered Government strategy by producing a significant degree of social polarisation, massive mobilisation of the middle class

against (republican) violence as against increasing working class discontent. This discontent expressed itself in Navan, where over a thousand workers from mines and factories left their jobs to demonstrate against the new legislation and in demonstrations in Ennis, Killala and Limerick.

Many trade unions have protested against the new repressive legislation. So did many Labour Party branches and the Dublin Regional Council of the Labour Party. Two Labour deputies opposed the legislation in the Dail, others in the Senate, despite the fact that the Labour Party is the junior partner in the Coalition government.

The Coalition is aware of the precarious path it is travelling. Any new working class upsurge, north or south, would disrupt its whole strategy. Precisely because of this danger, it is operating a pincer movement, beginning its campaign against the anti-imperialist resistance by first suppressing isolated militants while simultaneously using its full executive powers to prevent any defence of the militants under fire.

Marie and Noel Murray have been singled out as an example for the rest of the resistance. After being tried without a jury, they were sentenced to death by hanging. The only evidence against them was confessions which were made under torture. Before and after their trial there has been a clampdown of news about the Murrays and about any activities of the Murrays Defence Committee. The Movement for a Socialist Republic believes that the defence of the Murrays is the single most important task for revolutionaries in Ireland today; if the State is allowed to murder them, the stage will be set for the suppression of the whole anti-imperialist movement.

Germany — by saying that it is necessary to 'deal with' illegal organisations. Yet, as we noted above, Gardai did not claim that the Murrays were members of any illegal organisation.

So, they were condemned without a jury trial on the basis of statements which they have said were extracted by torture. (Another person who was originally jointly charged with them had his trial postponed so that he could receive medical treatment, after a doctor had testified that he had sustained injuries consistent with having been beaten up while in custody).

The case of the Murrays is outstandingly vicious. We reject the right of the Government to carry out the barbarous act of hanging in this case, and in any other case that may arise in the future.

The Special Criminal Court and the Offences Against the State Acts are a violent suppression of civil rights. We call on all those who oppose state repression of basic civil rights to demand:

1. That the Government commute the death sentences on the Murrays;
2. That the death sentence be abolished altogether;
3. That the Murrays be granted their right to trial by jury;
4. That the Offences Against the State Acts and the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Acts, which provide for non-jury courts and other violations of civil liberties, be removed immediately from the statute book.

AIMS OF THE MURRAY DEFENCE COMMITTEE:

The Murray Defence Committee was established by a group of citizens who met to discuss their opposition to the death sentence passed on Noel and Marie Murray in a Dublin Hall on Monday 14 June 1976. The objects of the Murray Defence Committee are:

1. The total abolition of capital punishment in Ireland.
2. To ensure that the sentence of death is not carried out on the Murrays or any other Irish citizen.
3. To secure the establishment of an independent commission to enquire into all the circumstances surrounding the arrest, charging and sentencing of the Murrays to death.
4. To endeavour to have the trial of the Murrays reopened on the grounds of natural justice and human rights and that fresh scientific evidence not hitherto offered in Irish courts be admitted for the purposes of reconsidering the issues involved.

The committee intends to achieve these objectives by the mobilisation of Irish and international opinion behind these demands.

THEM HANG!

The Special Criminal Court was set up in 1939 under the wartime emergency measure, the Offences Against the State Act, and was reactivated in May 1972 when it became clear to the Government that juries could not be relied upon to convict people for the 'crime' of Republicanism. Its main feature is that it deprives those brought before it of the elementary civil right of trial by jury; instead, three judges, appointed by the Government, pass judgement. The spokesmen of successive governments have defended the existence of this measure — the sort of thing normally associated with dictatorships and Nazi



THE PROVO ARMY CAMPAIGN AND ANTI-IMPERIALIST ST

The Provo justification for their military campaign has generally been founded on two premises: firstly, the need to defend the Catholic minority; secondly, a desire to inflict major economic losses on British imperialism. But do the military tactics of the Provos flow logically from these premises?

Defending the minority from what?

What is actually meant by the "defence of the Catholic minority"? It is our view that the Provos have a very narrow conception of this defence. They see it merely as resistance to the Loyalist terror and the police-army brutality.

The Catholic minority however, is under a much more general form of attack — state repression. It was to defend themselves against this type of repression that the people initially came into the streets to fight for civil rights. Any campaign which claims to defend the minority must be assessed primarily in terms of its impact on the level of state repression.

What has the Provo military campaign achieved in this respect? A strong case can be made that the combined strategy of mass mobilisation and guerrilla activity helped smash the British-Unionist machinery of state-repression leading to the abolition of Stormont. With some qualifications we would accept this argument.

The abolition of Stormont was however, the culmination of the Provos success. Subsequently the Provos placed considerably less emphasis on mass activity and turned the anti-imperialist campaign more and more into a purely military affair. Since the fall of Stormont the Provos have made no real attempt to encourage broad based civil resistance and disobedience. There have been a few half-hearted exceptions to this trend. But their main approach has been to try to substitute themselves for the people by using their military muscle coupled with secret diplomacy.

This strategy was bound to have a depoliticising effect on the Catholic masses. British imperialism responded quickly to this changing mood and began to repair and reconstruct its machinery of state. In addition to building up the presence of the British army, restoring some of the prestige of the RUC and the UDR, a whole new network of repressive laws was imposed. While British imperialism and its allies have not fully recovered from the blows suffered in the period up to the fall of Stormont they have nonetheless made a substantial recovery. It has to be frankly admitted that the weight of state repression weighs more heavily on the Catholic minority than at any time since the late sixties.

When we look at "the defence of the Catholic minority" in terms of state repression we are



forced to conclude that the Provos military campaign has not been of much help. Let us add that this conclusion should not be confused with the view of those socialists who argue that the Provos campaign has in fact been responsible for the growth of state repression. The truth is that British imperialism would have found a pretext for repression anyway — after all, what pretext did it need for such brutal acts of repression as the Bloody Sunday massacre.

The question of who is responsible is not really the issue at all. The crucial point is that repression has grown by leaps and bounds and the Provos military orientation has been powerless to stop it. This is the grounds — and not any wishy-washy moralising — on which the Provos armed tactics must be indicted.

Loyalist terror

Apart from the question of state repression what justification is there for the Provo campaign in terms of defending the Catholic minority from the "extra-legal" harassment of the Loyalists and their abettors in the security forces?

After initial attempts to raise its head in 1969 the Loyalist backlash fizzled out. Up until 1972 the Loyalist reaction remained impotent. Once again it was the abandonment of the mass movement by the Provos and the adoption of tactics incompatible with mass action which

created the conditions in which Loyalism could re-emerge as a credible force and resume its terror campaign.

When the Loyalist terror campaign was initiated it had a dual purpose. It was designed to gather intelligence about resistance activity in the Catholic ghettos. It must be remembered, the first wave of assassinations came in the wake of Craig's call for an "IRA" dossier and the assassinations were accompanied by vile and brutal "interrogation" of the victims. More to the point, the Loyalist terror was unleashed to undermine the Provo truce of June 1972. Following the abolition of Stormont the previous March the mass movement amongst the Catholics had abated and the Provos were for the first time feeling the isolation which their new tactics were making inevitable. It was because the Loyalists were afraid that the truce would increase the morale of the Catholic minority and lead to a resumption of mass action that they did everything possible to provoke the minority. The correct line of action would have been to call for massive demonstrations against the assassinations and for local popular defence. But before anything like this could be organised, the Provos responded to the Loyalists provocation and fell right into their trap.

Two lessons can be drawn from the above. First, the precondition for Loyalist terrorism is a situation where the Catholic minority's

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uggle for democratic rights has not been defeated but where it has become — in the absence of channels for self-activity — demoralised and apathetic. Secondly, the aim of the Loyalist error is to keep the Catholic masses demoralised and apathetic — not simply by killing individuals at random, but by provoking the Provos to carry out actions which by their nature prevent the Catholic masses from taking action themselves.

So, even at the level of defending the Catholic masses from "extra-legal" harassment it must be said that the Provos campaign is misconceived and ineffective.

Economic withdrawal?

The second major justification for the Provos campaign is the belief that the North can be made economically unviable resulting in a British withdrawal. More recently this argument has been broadened to include, not only business property but business personnel as legitimate targets. What credibility do such arguments have?

Could the Provos military tactics really bring about a collapse of Britain's economic interests in the North? Anyone who understands the complex mechanism of the capitalist system must answer this question in the negative. Unlike the human body which has a number of critically vulnerable and exposed points, the capitalist system conceals its weaknesses in the long term, in the contradictoryness of its laws of development. From the military point of view capitalism does not exhibit any specific points which would render the system as a whole vulnerable.

The Provo campaign itself bears out this conclusion. In the North the capitalist system as a whole has escaped almost unscathed from the Provo attacks. For example, the production process, which is the power-house of capitalism, has rarely been touched. The weight of the Provo attack has been directed almost entirely against the narrow and limited aspect of capitalism, the retail sector. And even here their attack has lacked any significant success. An article on the North's economy in the Irish Times last June begins as follows: "Terrorist activity is a regular feature of Northern life... the main target since 1969 has been the Northern retail establishment which strangely, continues to operate, to develop and to pay more attention to the influence of inflation and multiple retailers than to revolution and paramilitary operations". The North's businessmen seem to understand better than the Provos, that the objective laws of capitalism will prevail against the subjective desires of revolutionaries. As Mr. Evan Ward, chairman of the Northern Ireland Chamber of Trade said (in the article quoted above) "In spite of the troubles many private retailers are doing well now because the market is still there... the market for the retail

trade is still there and still growing despite the problem of security, recession inflation and staff".

Those who try to cheat objective economic laws usually get the worst of it. History has made no exception of the Provos. According to Mr. Ward the Provo campaign indirectly made Northern retailers behave more cautiously and helped them to avoid the abrupt booms and slumps which have affected their British and Southern counterparts. Even more ironically, the Provo campaign, according to Mr. Ward, by keeping out the large multiple retailers has slowed down the disintegration of the petty retailers who constitute such an important social backbone for extreme right-wing Loyalism. Listening to Mr. Ward one would get the impression that he would very much regret a return to "peace"!

Individual Assassination

The more recent campaign of assassination against prominent businessmen is open to the same kind of criticism. Eliminating individual businessmen does not affect the functioning of the capitalist system as such — least of all in the North of Ireland. The names and address of the assassinated businessmen first appeared in a list of the North's "top 20 businessmen" published by the magazine 'Fortnight'. Had the Provos read the accompanying article before launching their initiative they could have learned in advance how futile their actions would be. The article opens by asking "Who are Ulsters Top Businessmen"? Then it goes on to say that "This is not the same as asking who are the most powerful men who control the investment and production policies of firms operating in Northern Ireland. There are nearly half as many important manufacturing and construction companies in Northern Ireland without any Ulster based members on their board as their domestic controlled ones." (June '76). So once, again ignoring the real nature of capitalism the Provos began blasting away at a phantom target. Once again, ignoring the complexity and hidden reserves of capitalism they opted for simplistic tactics which could only cause confusion and demoralisation.

In any case even if the Provos could bring about an economic collapse, this would solve nothing. The internal laws of capitalist development which operate more surely than any military campaign have more than once made the North an unattractive proposition for British imperialism. Yet British imperialism has hung on tenaciously. Economic crises are endemic to the whole capitalist system but they result in a strengthening rather than a weakening of the resolve of the capitalists. The capitalists have already put humanity through two world holocausts and innumerable wars of aggression and plunder in order to protect their interests. Whether or not the Provos could bring about an economic collapse this would result



The UDA on the march. Have the Provos a realistic answer to the Loyalist offensive?

not in a British withdrawal but in an even greater and more persistent imperialist intervention.

The Provos economic justification for their campaign — as the last point above shows bears a striking resemblance to those arguments put forward by the "economist" left who — in accordance with the bourgeois caricature of Marxism as "economic determinism" — imagine that there is a direct link between economic cause and political effect. In fact economic crises do not necessarily lead to favourable conditions for revolutionary struggle in the political sphere. Thus the whole strategy of trying to provoke an economic crisis by military means (even if it were possible) is without foundation.

As long as the British army, the RUC and the UDR and the Loyalist paramilitaries roam freely, the question of armed resistance will be posed. But armed resistance is only politics carried on by other means. The stuff of politics in Ireland is the struggle of the oppressed and exploited to wrest state power from their masters. Any form of armed struggle which is not an integral part of that struggle waged by the people themselves is not in essence part of the anti-imperialist struggle. Sooner or later it risks the possibility of becoming a barrier on the road to defeating imperialism.

JAMES CONWAY



Anti-Unionist workers march to defend their rights.

Unemployment has once again become one of the central issues of the class struggle. The figures now stand at more than 120,000 registered unemployed. Of those registered there are women. The table below gives the rate of increase for men and women:

Men	65%	increase
Women	81%	"

In other words, women are getting laid off at a faster rate than men. The conclusion is very simple on a general level. Women are being made to perform the same role in the labour force as they did in the last major capitalist crisis – that of the industrial reserve army. It is women who are pulled into production insofar as there is a shortage of labour and then at lower wages. In times when there is no shortage they will be pushed out of the labour force to become a pool from which any other labour (which becomes too expensive – i.e. demands decent wages) can be replaced or threatened with replacement. It is because sexism is so prevalent in society as a whole that the industrial reserve army can be accomplished with such ease. Even though a number of married women at work in Ireland is still quite low – 13% as compared with Britain – it is still less the case over the last ten years, that marriage takes women out of the workplace. The use of the home to control womens participation in the work-force is no longer the force it has been.

Among the main reasons have been the expansion of light consumer industry and the need of cheap labour; the increasing use of contraception among younger women and the impact of the womens movement. This means that getting women out of the work force may involve a bigger push than was the case previously. This can involve an ideological offensive in favour of traditional values and "family life".

Situation in Ireland

In Ireland the introduction of legislation as a result of pressure from the womens movement, the Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act and the promised Anti-Discrimination (Employment) Act and the public debate around these, has brought to the attention of women in mass, the inequalities of their lives. While these Bills will in no way liberate women they clearly pose difficulties for the government and employers; particularly insofar as they become the focus of fightbacks against the economic policies of the government; e.g. Equal Pay and the Civil Service linked with cuts in public and government expenditure. These Bills introduced to ensure that the radicalisation of women workers did not get out of hand. But part of their consequence has been the raising of womens consciousness on a general level and a certain solidifying of womens place within the workforce and the sharpening of an emerging militancy among women

UNEMPLOYMENT

WOMENS SPECIAL NEEDS



Womens
Caucus
MSR

workers e.g the telephonist and T.V. trade strikes and go-slow.

It would be a mistake however for any militants in the labour or womens movement to think that all problems have "fundamentally" been solved. A few more facts ought to keep at bay, any ideas that the position of women has changed so much that they cannot be returned bag and baggage to full-time domestic slavery. The slow integration of married women into the workforce should be considered in the light of the following:

- (a) That women are more likely to be employed if under 25 or over 40 years of age. It is still usual for married women to have up to 10 to 15 years off work to have children.
- (b) The vast majority of women workers still have no real training and most are employed in either secretarial or clerical positions or involved in public services, hairdressing, shop work and domestic service.

In short, the position of women workers is one which still situates them at the bottom of the pile their lives still determined by domestic responsibilities. The fields in which women are employed are the least productive and most vulnerable sectors of the economy. The most dramatic example is the textile and clothing industry, where the problems of productivity are now being solved through closing whole factories down for months on end and very often for good.

The present unemployment situation is inextricably linked up with the crisis in the Irish economy. A fierce social struggle is on the way in which a whole range of questions – from "For whose benefit do we work?

to "Is all womens place in the home?" come up for answer.

Womens Struggles grow

The only way for women to move forward in the fight against unemployment is to group their resistance around an overall programme that actually tackles the problems. Simple militancy is not enough. A programme, which alongside demands of work-sharing, no loss of pay, nationalisation of all bankrupt companies, would include the demand for the right of all women to work.

Socialists in the womens movement must be in the forefront of the efforts to join with the militants of the labour movement in their struggles around these demands. With this in mind it is absolutely vital that the forms of struggle that we undertake – such as factory occupations, are based on a full consciousness of what is implied for women involved. There must be creches, wives of strikers must be fully involved (in collections among local communities, security etc.) and there must be a consistent struggle against male chauvinism among workers. It is no accident that recent struggles have been led by women workers. It will be no accident if male chauvinism precipitates defeat.

We must organise to build vital links initially between women, organising in trade unions and the liberation movement, help build womens caucuses in the unions, lead the fight to make the leadership fight for its policies on women and solidarise with women who begin to struggle by giving all the support we can.

Formed in October 1975

by a group of women active in revolutionary socialist politics and womens liberation groups in Northern Ireland, there can be no doubt that the experiences of the founder members led them to establishing the S.W.G. Experiences on the one hand of the terrible-backwardness of the main political forces they were/are in contact with, i.e. extreme reaction against womens rights; the Republicans who see contraception as a British plot and the implementation of the 1967 Abortion Act as mass murder" and on the other the patronising lip-service paid to womens liberation by the "machismo" male-left who fought on the barricades and never questioned why their companions/wives should be at home and maintaining certain functions. Of course it is a two-way process, the absence of a strong womens movement also saw to it that the functions of the household were never examined and socialised as were many other community functions in the embryonic dual power situation that was "Free Derry".

For Their Triumphs and For Their Tears. Women in apartheid South Africa. by Hilda Bernstein, International Defence and Aid Fund, 50p.

When a book states in its early pages that some of the arguments against apartheid are that 'it aggravates and creates illegitimacy, bigamy, and prostitution; homosexuality and drunkenness...' one is immediately thrown on guard, for such statements demand that the book be thrown into the bin without further ado!

Save for two or three chapters about the working and living conditions and struggles in South Africa, we are convinced that the book does indeed belong in the bin.

Bernstein's arguments fall into three areas of confusion: apartheid, the family and 'the struggle for national liberation'. 'In the special language of apartheid,' she writes, 'blacks are not human beings. They are labour units who are productive or non-productive'. One does not have to be particularly astute to notice that, let alone this 'special language', exactly the same can be said about workers in any capitalist society. Throughout her book, Bernstein fails to relate 'apartheid' with capitalist exploitation with dangerous results: since in South Africa, the small white working class is totally sold out to the capitalist class, the black working class is the only revolutionary class, and the only class in whose interest it is to smash the racist state. But in order to do so, it must necessarily challenge the entire capitalist system, for in no other way can it smash racism. By failing to recognise this, Bernstein raises purely moral objections against the racist regime and implies that capitalism with a better face must be on the agenda for the South African blacks.

She correctly identifies that the 'apartheid economy' depends on the use of a cheap migrant labour force, that black women play a minimal role in this as a direct labour force, and that the burden of rear-

SOCIALIST WOMEN V FEMINISTS ?

So immediately women mobilizing against their oppression in Northern Ireland have problems to deal with and all those are set against a background of a struggle against imperialist oppression and for basic democratic rights.

Firstly in their manifesto the SWG say "the formation of the SWG represented a break with the feminist oriented policies of the womens liberation movement and a recognition of the need to analyse the economic and sexual oppression of women from a class-based viewpoint". The needs for analysis we agree with but why break from the womens movement to do so and why "break" from feminism. Feminism is a response against male supremacy and womens oppression, and as socialists we are all initially feminists. The womens movement struggling against oppression are asking all the questions of analysis. So why put ourselves outside the movement to answer them. Many women come to Socialism through a series of struggles and experiences; not through merely coping with a set of ideas. It is sectarian to insist that women struggling against oppression should define themselves at this point in time as socialists. It is our responsibility to try to win the movement to struggle on a class-basis and

thereby raise the consciousness of the women involved. Women in Britain attempted to set up Socialist womens groups and found themselves outside the mainstream of womens struggles. Happily they correct this course and it is by their intervention that the womens movement is now beginning to fight on a class basis. For whether we like it or not women will join together to struggle as women and we can choose to be part of that.

Secondly, there does not seem to be any clear perspective on how to deal with the anti-imperialist struggle and the fact that the two communities are basically divided on the role of Britain in Ireland. Objectively there are huge barriers against the unity of workers in Northern Ireland but the SWG raises demands on equal pay, creches, contraception, in the efforts of mobilising and uniting (?) Women on these demands. Then why put another barrier in that path - that one has to be a socialist?

All of these main demands can be found in the Charter of Irish Women United which draws all kinds of women to struggle on demands - who take up class-based positions in these fights. Being a socialist immediately defines a particular position on the National Struggle and could cut off many

contd p 3.

SOUTH - AFRICAN WOMEN ARISE



ing children (ie. the next generation of workers) is forced onto the backs of women in the 'reserves'. But Bernstein's objections are that this causes 'illegitimacy' and 'provides fertile ground for faithlessness' and that because the men are forced to sell their labour as migrant workers, it 'makes a mockery of family life'. 'For many', she tells us, 'a family unit is never formed. The result is social chaos'. For Bernstein, women's liberation no doubt means the restoration of the family unit!

The most valuable part of the book deals with the struggles of women but even here, she uses these examples simply to boost the image of the African National Congress (ANC). This body did little to actually support or build the struggles, but instead tail-ended most of them and used all its opportunism to take the credit for them. An example that she quotes was the June 1959 'riots' led by women against the appalling living conditions in Durban - where both men and women were brutally attacked by police and many were jailed as a result. It was not until September of that year that the ANC came to the support of these struggles by calling a special conference to 'thank the women!'

Bernstein's avid support for this movement (the ANC) is clearly reflected when she talks about the 'struggle for national liberation', a phrase which implies that South Africa is a colony that must struggle for - at least - political independence. Since the vast majority of the African population is proletarianised, the slogan for 'national liberation' is about as meaningful there as such a slogan would appear to the British working class!

For black African women in South Africa, the struggle against their oppression involves immediately a struggle against the racist state that bases itself upon the exploitation of the black working class in the interest of both the South African and the international bourgeoisie. Their struggle involves a fight against the backwardness amongst black men whom they must educate and win over before they can lead southern Africa to socialist revolution. Though much belated, a serious analysis of the oppression of black women in South Africa is urgently needed. Hilda Bernstein's book will be of little help for this task.



SOUTH AFRICA ERUPTS



South Africa continues to be rocked by the most massive black uprisings in its history. Throughout the country (most recently in Cape Town), African students and workers have defied police bullets and poured into the streets to express their hatred of the apartheid system.

In the forefront of the struggle have been the youth — of Soweto's one million population, more than 42 per cent are under 20. Young Africans, inspired by the cry of 'black power', are prepared now to brave even the most brutal police violence in order to sweep away the hated system of white racist oppression in their country.

The reflex of the white rulers has been to step up repression — to keep the black majority in its place by arresting its leaders and sending heavily armed police into the black townships to fire into crowds of African demonstrators. By 15 August, over 219 Africans had been killed in this slaughter according to South African government sources (though the real death toll is believed to be far higher).

Hundreds of African school students have been arrested; and, on 15-16 August, police seized 50 African leaders in a series of nationwide swoops. Among those detained (under the notorious Internal Security Act, which allows detention without charge or trial) was Winnie Mandela, wife of Nelson Mandela, the leader of the banned African National Congress (ANC).

While the African masses step up their fight for liberation throughout southern Africa, the major imperialist powers are redoubling their efforts to defend their vast economic and strategic interests in the region.

The NATO powers see South Africa as a vital part of the world imperialist system. Much of the world's trade (including 7 million barrels of Middle East oil a day, half of western Europe's oil consumption) is shipped past the Cape of Good Hope. Furthermore, South Africa has some of the largest naval bases bordering on the Indian Ocean.



South Africa are kept at extremely low levels by the apartheid laws, these imperialist investments yield some of the highest profits in the world.

but perhaps the most important consideration for the western powers is Pretoria's role as a bastion of imperialist rule on the African continent. Itself an imperialist power, the South African regime has the economic and military strength to advance its own interests and those of its western allies well beyond its borders — as the South African invasion of Angola last year proved.

Moreover, the imperialist powers are committed to the defence of white rule in South Africa since a transition to neo-colonial methods) as elsewhere in the continent) would be virtually impossible in South Africa's case. The rigid apartheid system has blocked the development of a black bourgeoisie; while the black proletariat — now numbering more than six million workers — is a powerful force that could lead the national liberation struggle toward the overthrow of capitalism along with the apartheid system.

This strategy was unveiled by the US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, in Lusaka, Zambia, on 27 April. Kissinger publicly called for a negotiated settlement in Zimbabwe, leading to independence in two years. As for Namibia, Kissinger advocated a 'definite timetable acceptable to the world community for the achievement of self-determination.

In his speech, Kissinger endorsed the so-called 'Callaghan Plan' — a set of policy proposals outlined by Jim Callaghan in Parliament on 22 March, which included a transfer to majority rule in two years, British involvement in planning elections prior to independence, and financial hand-outs to white settlers who might want to resettle.

Kissinger turned to South African prime minister John Vorster for assistance in forcing the Smith regime to knuckle under to the imperialists' plans. This was the main purpose of the celebrated meeting between Kis-

(continued next page)

There are also large deposits of diamonds, gold and other valuable minerals in South Africa that are considered strategically important to western imperialism. 26 per cent of the world's uranium reserves — essential for both nuclear warheads and nuclear power stations — are located in countries that have armed the racist regime — in Britain's case despite a

In addition, 360 US companies have over \$1.2 billion invested in South Africa — and US investment continues to grow in South Africa by 12.8 per cent a year. 500 British companies have investments in the country worth over £2,000 million

Since the wages of black workers in

Kissinger has put the Kremlin on notice against launching a "new Angola," warning that the Pentagon's response could be enormous. Ford has dropped the word "detente" from his vocabulary. The formula of the cold war are reappearing. After being dismissed as secretary of defense, Kissinger is seeing his line applied. American military spending has been stepped up considerably. Trade negotiations with the Soviet Union have fallen flat.

Does all this represent the end of detente? Is it the beginning of a turn in American foreign policy?

In the wake of the massive antiwar movement, the final phase of the Indochina war, the fall of Nixon, and the fallout over Watergate, American imperialism found itself temporarily paralyzed. The domestic situation in the United States for the moment no longer permitted Washington to intervene abroad on a massive scale, with its own troops, to fulfill its rôle as the world cop of imperialism. This explains its inability to aid adequately its allies and agents in Angola, as well as its astonishing failure to take action in face of Cuba's aid to the Angolan revolution.

The Soviet bureaucracy measured the degree of risk and found it to be within acceptable limits. It gave Fidel the green light, an action for which there still remains a considerable risk of a localized response by imperialism. The international bourgeoisie was deeply shaken. What is taking place now is the search for a countermove. It is being carried out on three fronts.

The first is the fresh increase in military spending. This came at a favorable moment for bolstering the "recovery" of the American economy, which risked being stifled by a lack of productive investment. The American electoral campaign and Ford's efforts to outbid his "opponents," both the Republican Reagan and the Democrat Jackson, have helped create a propitious climate for increased arms spending.

Kissinger and Vorster in West Germany on 23-24 June. As Kissinger explained before the summit in a press conference on 17 June: 'The question I want to explore is whether South Africa is prepared to separate its own future from Rhodesia and Namibia.'

South Africa, with its control of all Rhodesia's supply routes (both road and rail) since Mozambique's decision to impose sanctions last March, would be in a powerful position to force the Smith regime into acquiescence with the US plan.

This is why (despite ritual denunciations of apartheid for public consumption) the western powers have continued to collaborate with the Pretoria regime. France, Britain, the United States, Italy and other NATO countries have armed the racist regime — in Britain's case despite a supposed arms "ban" — and maintained trading relations with South Africa.

On 9 August, for example, South Africa's Finance Minister, Senator Owen Horwood, announced that the International Monetary Fund had ar-

Ford's Aggressive Detente

by Ernest Mandel

Next comes the question of putting first things first, which does not mean (or does not only mean) Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Africa, but above all capitalist southern Europe. The warnings by General Haig and Kissinger against allowing Communist ministers into governments of the Atlantic alliance are aimed at increasing support to the capitalists who are hesitant to play this ultimate political card. They are designed also to deepen the climate of hysterical anticommunism whipped up in face of the revolutionary upswing in Portugal. They help pave the way, in capitalist Europe as well, for an increase in military spending.

The confidential report by the Belgian General Close, indicating that troops of the Warsaw Pact could reach the Rhine in forty-eight hours, thus neutralizing NATO's nuclear arsenal, serves the same purpose.

For the moment, the Giscard regime has lined up with Kissinger. In the longer run, however, the West European imperialists will count increasingly on an "independent" nuclear striking force. This will also be used to justify, in passing, generalization of the concept of the professional

armed stand-by credit of over \$150 million for the racist regime. On 6 August, officials of a French consortium (which includes Framatome, Alsthom, Spie-Batignolles and Framatag) signed a contract with the South African Electricity Supply Commission (ESCOM) to build two 920 megawatt nuclear reactors in South Africa — a decision which many observers fear could assist Pretoria's well-known drive to develop a nuclear weapons industry.

These cases of assistance to South Africa — both made since the wave of black uprisings began in June — illustrate the NATO powers' determination to bolster the racist regime.

The same interests have prompted the imperialists to seek a shift to more indirect, neo-colonial forms of rule in Zimbabwe and Namibia, where the burgeoning liberation struggles threaten — from the imperialist point of view — to spark still greater unrest among the black masses in the

The Vorster regime has now declared its backing for Kissinger's

army, an essential card to be played against the rising proletarian revolution in southern Europe.

The third front is the effort to strengthen the stand-ins that can temporarily serve as a substitute for the imperialist guardian of order until it regains its capacity to intervene in the political arena (in the military arena its capacity in no way suffered). The coup in Argentina came at a favorable moment, creating in the southern cone of Latin America a military bloc under Washington's tutelage that can dominate the south Atlantic.

None of this should be taken as indicating that peaceful coexistence is going to be abolished. This is hardly the case, for the simple reason that far from thwarting capitalism, peaceful coexistence serves its fundamental interests. In face of the rise of revolution, the international capitalist class has more to gain than ever in taking advantage of the Stalinist parties' willingness to serve as a restraining force and to conduct a policy of class collaboration. The imperialists are divided in their assessment of the Stalinists' effectiveness in this role, and in their willingness to pay (or to refuse to pay) a given price in exchange for the role. But the role itself is doing the imperialists no harm — quite the contrary.

So, what is taking place is not a return to the cold war. It is a range of measures aimed at enabling imperialism to break loose from the temporary political paralysis into which it was plunged by the heroism of the Indochinese masses and the power of the antiwar sentiment in the United States. Washington's No. 1 objective is to condition public opinion in the imperialist countries, particularly in the United States itself.

Will the effort succeed? The answer does not depend solely on the ploys and financial resources of the peddlers of myths on both sides of the Atlantic. It depends also and above all on the outcome of the class struggles that are little by little radicalizing Japan and North America itself. □

policy, though it is still unclear what practical measures Pretoria will be willing to take to bring the Smith government to heel.

But the Smith regime has so far been unwilling to sacrifice the privileges of the Rhodesia settlers to protect the wider interests of the imperialist powers in South Africa. Speaking on BBC Radio 4 on 15 August, Ian Smith declared that he was willing to negotiate with African nationalists — but 'if they are simply going to repeat the cry of "One Man, One Vote" and "Immediate Majority Rule", then there is not much point in going to the conference table.'

Commenting on Smith's remarks, the Tory shadow Foreign Minister, Reginald Maudling said (reflecting the fears of the big imperialist monopolies): 'I fear that things are bound to get worse, the war will escalate and the whole of southern Africa may soon be engulfed in it.' He could be right!

Fascist Origins Of Fine Gael

Fascism is one of the twentieth century's most important and misunderstood reactionary political forces. The Fourth International itself was founded only after the third International proved its incompetence by its failure to understand it, and from this its failure to lead the German workers to oppose Nazism successfully. This double blunder resulted in the murder of millions of Jews and the Second World War.

In Ireland, this confusion is well expressed in the rhetoric of the various reformist groups that compose the "Left Alternative" particularly Sinn Fein (Gardiner Place) who denounce Kevin St. Sinn Fein as Fascist. That the latter has committed acts of unprincipled sectarianism against the Officials does not justify a self-styled Marxist body distorting theory to suit its case. This appears even less justified when it is remembered that the first to make this accusation was the common enemy of all Republicans: Conor Cruise O'Brien. As a final ironic twist, O'Brien made the same accusation against Fianna Fail to justify the currently revived coalition between his Labour Party with Fine Gael a party which began far closer to Fascism than any Republican group.

But was Fine Gael fascist? Whenever its unsavoury beginnings are exposed in any bourgeois newspaper, defenders proclaim that its mass para-military organisation — the Blueshirts — was simply created to defend freedom of speech against Republican attacks. This tremendous lie has gained credence even amongst self proclaimed "Socialist Republicans".

But if Fine Gael was not a fully developed fascist party, it tried hard enough. To recognise that, it is necessary first to understand what Fascism is. It is not simply a matter of brutal sectarian behaviour, nor a policy of breaching the formalities of bourgeois democracy. Its claim to power is based on material conditions. It is the weapon of last resort that the capitalists use when, to quote Trotsky, they "find themselves unable to govern and dominate with the help of democratic machinery" and can no longer allow workers the luxury of their own organisations. More especially it is a political last resort distinguished from the military strategy of counter-revolutionary Putschism (operated by the Colonels in Greece) by the mobilising of the masses of the petty bourgeois and of the



lumpen proletariat to support the capitalists' aims when the workers parties have failed to move quickly enough to assert their hegemony. A fascist Party is an organisation, literally, of para-military, rather than military scabs. By this definition, Sinn Fein (Kevin Street) is not Fascist; though ideologically petty-bourgeois, it is not opposed to working class rights. However, Fine Gael in its Blueshirt period failed to develop its fascism, only because the Irish bourgeoisie did not need such a program.

The Pro-Treaty cause had a permanent tendency that way. Its victory in the Civil War was accompanied by a social counter-revolution, in which the bosses increased their profits at the workers' expense. In January 1922, real wages were higher than ever before; by January 1924, they were lower than they had been ten years previously (after the 1913 Dublin Lock-out). The chief forces in this counter attack were the National (Saorstát) Army and its allies, the armed bands of rural scabs, the "Farmers Freedom Forces".

Just under ten years later, veterans of the Saorstát Army and ex-members and the sons of members of the Farmers Freedom Forces formed the Army Comrades Association — the original Blueshirt association — to oppose, slow down and, perhaps, reverse the policies now being initiated by Fianna Fail. In its original Manifesto (August 1932) it declared itself at once non-political, anti-Communist and for the (Saorstát) Constitution. A year later, when it merged with the constitutional parties of compradorian capitalism (W. T. Cosgrave's

The Blueshirts' U.C.D. Branch in its early days (April 1933): Top centre left is Thomas F. O'Higgins, later Fine Gael and Coalition Presidential Candidate and today Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Next to him (top centre right) is his brother Michael Joseph O'Higgins, today the arch clericalist and male chauvinist Fine Gael Seanad Leader. Once a fascist . . .

Cumann na nGael and the large farmers' National Centre Party) to form Fine Gael, this established on a programme including demands for P.R., the establishment of vocational corporations with statutory powers over the nation's "economic life" and the abolition of local councils. Six months later, the new party published a "Labour Policy". This demanded legal ban on strikes and lock outs (a typical fascist piece of formal evenhandedness; where the workers can't strike, the bosses don't need to lock them out). It was spiced with demagogic attacks on trade union leaders (who were, with all their faults, more responsible to their membership than the Blueshirts).

Allied to the Saorstát's second largest party the Blueshirts seemed to be a real threat that could be defeated only through a confrontation. But objective conditions were against them. Though supported by big business and ranchers and, on the other hand, by lumpenproletarians such as Dublin's Animal Gang, it had little support from fascism's traditional mass base, the petty bourgeoisie. This was not attracted to its policies because it tended to be satisfied with Fianna Fail's industrial expansionism. Naturally, the workers tended to be instinctively hostile and showed it. Fine Gael failed to make the major gains it had expected in the local elections of June 1935. In September the Blueshirts split between those (under O'Duffy) who wanted a more extreme, interventionist policy, and the constitutionalist majority (following Cosgrave) who feared such policy's electoral counter-productivity. Fine Gael became less openly Fascist (though Fascism was never removed formally). Finally, in 1936, the Blueshirts disappeared after another split. Some joined the O'Duffy group to go to Spain to fight for reaction there. A mass movement (the Christian Front) gave fascism hope for a revival. However this resulted less gloriously than had been intended. A sordid dispute over the handling of the monies raised, discredited the immediate prospects for Irish fascism.

Movement for a Socialist Republic

IRISH SECTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL
I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE M.S.R.

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