

Merseyside IMG

IRELAND

PARTIES & POLITICS

AN ASSESSMENT OF

THE OFFICIAL IRA

THE PROVISIONAL IRA

THE SDLP

PEOPLES DEMOCRACY

&

THE WHITE PAPER

PAMPHLET NUMBER 2



INTRODUCTION

The articles in this pamphlet are reprinted from "The Red Mole"* paper of the International Marxist Group, the British Section of the Fourth International, and from "The Plough", paper of the Revolutionary Marxist Group, (Irish supporters of the Fourth International)

Although all the articles are complete in themselves this pamphlet is designed to be read in conjunction with the pamphlet "Ireland Unfree" by Bob Purdie (Obtainable from IMG Publications, 182 Pentonville Rd., London N1). Whereas this series of articles deals with specific point, "Ireland Unfree" deals with the situation in Ireland as a whole. Thus the two Pamphlets are meant to be complementary.

Between them the two pamphlets form a fairly comprehensive analysis of the current situation in Ireland, and they certainly give a more accurate picture than that provided by the British Press gang, which has abjectly allowed itself to be reduced to a tool of the British Army's propaganda unit. By the Autumn of 1972 this had become so blatant that on the 1st of October the Irish Republican Publicity Bureau (Provo) announced that all interviews with British Bourgeois journalists, including television, radio and newspapers, were to be blacked as a result of a mounting campaign against the Provisionals. The Bureau stated "The propaganda war now being waged against the Republican movement exceeds anything waged by the British Information Service since World War Two. This is an indication of how seriously the British view the military situation in the North."

The statement accused the "Sunday Times" newspaper of carrying a report of a "distorted interview" with the president of Sinn Fein (Kevin Street), Mr. Rory Brady. It added that the report carried some "downright lies", and that Brady had repudiated the implications contained in the report. The statement also referred to a recent article by Paul Ferris of the "Observer", who claimed to have interviewed Sean MacStiofain, Chief of Staff of the IRA at that time, for an hour and a half. The Provo statement continued:

"MacStiofan has categorically denied giving an interview to Ferris. Both of these incidents are, of course, part of a black propaganda war that the British Counter-Revolutionary forces are forced to use now that they realise that they cannot defeat the Republican Movement by military repression."

This propaganda war had already reached a grotesque height in the Maria Maguire affair the previous month. This produced a bizarre series of revelations, exposes, investigations in depth, etc., about internal relationships inside the Provos, in the bourgeois press. But behind this lay, and still lies, a very seriously thought out and planned campaign designed by British propaganda either to split the Provisionals or to remove Sean MacStiofan from the leadership. This offensive was then backed up by Ivan Rowan's article "MacStiofan's English Years" in the 'Observer' and the 'Sunday Times' article referred to earlier. To understand this campaign we must understand that the main priority of British imperialism in Ireland today is to root out and destroy the military capability of the Provisional IRA.

As early as December 1971, British counter-insurgency experts began to realise that they were not going to succeed in wiping out the IRA during their first confrontation policy. At a conference in Lisburn, they worked out a policy of isolating the IRA from the Catholics by means of direct rule combined with reform. Brigadier Krankie Kitson who was present at the conference, dissociated himself from this policy, declaring that in his opinion the situation had developed too far for there to be any serious possibility of isolating the IRA unless a split could simultaneously be engineered inside the IRA. Kitson then advocated a policy of selective arrests and releases, a phoney peace movement, and a slander campaign aimed at undermining the credibility of MacStiofan and at dividing the IRA on a North/South basis.

Kitson was overruled on this occasion, and only the parts of the plan calling for direct rule and reform, plus the phoney peace movement, were implemented. Only when it became clear that this policy too was doomed to fail did they begin to implement the full plan.

As for Maguire herself, it is interesting to note that she has not so far replied to a challenge made by Gery Lawless at an Anti-Internment League meeting in Brighton which was reported extensively in the Irish papers on 6th September 72. He invited her to deny:

1. That she received a four figure sum from the 'Observer' for her disclosures to date.
2. That her disclosures have been circulated throughout the world by the 'Observer Foreign News Service', the editor of which, Ronald Harker, admitted in a letter to the 'Irish Press' on 30th November 71 that it receives a subsidy from the British Foreign Office.

3. That the firm handling the placement of her forthcoming book is headed by the former head of British Intelligence in North Africa, France and Spain, the man indeed who replaced Philby as head of British Intelligence in the Middle East.
4. That her agents are negotiating for her to receive a five-figure sum for the publication of her book.

And what conclusions can we draw from this affair? First, this campaign of vilification is not over yet. It is absolutely necessary that all supporters of the Irish struggle throughout the world refuse to take part in the British splitting game by retaining any of British Imperialisms slanders. They must be refuted and the purpose pointed out. Second, we can conclude that British bourgeois newspapers, no matter how liberal or how "left" the individual journalist claims to be, will at best defend their society when they see it threatened by the IRA, and at worst, the special correspondent is more and more the special agent of British imperialism.

But to return to the article reprinted here. Since these articles are discussing and criticising various aspects of the socialist and republican forces in Ireland, the point needs to be emphasised that such criticism is made from a position of unconditional solidarity with those republican and socialist forces fighting British Imperialism in Ireland. We make no demands on these organisations that they must change their programmes, methods etc to fit in with our own before we give them our solidarity. And, unlike certain organisations, we ask for no "certificate of socialism" before being prepared to graciously bestow some sort of seal of approval to their operations.

The question of the meaning of solidarity also crops up in this context. There is a school of polemics, which is particularly prevalent on the left in Britain, which is give to writing a whole page diatribe attacking, say, the Provos and then inserting in tiny print at the end that they are, of course, in solidarity with the Provos against British imperialism. And there the matter of "solidarity" stays. SOLIDARITY IS NOT MERELY THIS TYPE OF VERBAL RESOLUTION. Solidarity involves initiating, assisting and joining in action against the efforts of British imperialism to subdue the Irish people. Which brings us to another point, the question of the so-called "right to criticise" which is waved around by some as though it were an RTG-7 rocket destined to solve Ireland's British Question. There are certain individuals and groups who regard this much vaunted right as a God-given cart-blanc to launch attacks on the republicans

for this, that, and the other. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS AN ABSOLUTE RIGHT TO CRITICISE. To be in a position to offer constructive and fraternal criticism to a National Liberation Movement means that the organisation concerned must be prepared to take a position of solidarity and use the resources at the disposal of that group to oppose the activities of British imperialism in Ireland. And even then producing ready made prescriptions and Utopian schemes for instant application in the immediate situation such as "Unity of protestant and catholic workers" or "A peace keeping force based on the Trade Unions" deserves only the contempt with which it is greeted by the forces actually involved.

Unity of protestant and catholic workers is something which will only be achieved when the material basis of protestant sectarianism is smashed - and on this topic we note a significant silence among the ranks of its purveyors. The formula of "A peacekeeping force based on the Trade Unions" betrays an abysmal ignorance of the structure of employment in the North, and the consequent Trade Union structure. The only treatment this pancea deserves is that accorded to it by the ^{Irish} supporters of the group pushing it (The 'Militant' group). And that is to ignore it. As one of their Derry supporters commented "Who will protect us from the Trade Union defense force?"

The problems taken up in this pamphlet are part of an ongoing discussion which will undoubtedly play a vital part in the formation of both the Irish and the British revolutionary parties, and we hope that the discussion will continue in the pages of the left-wing press in Britain.

- But not just discussion is needed, we also need concrete action to build a viable solidarity campaign. The Irish people will continue their ages old struggle for their freedom, regardless of whether those forces who should know better renege on the struggle to build a solidarity movement against their own ruling class. However, the fact that the Irish will continue their struggle doesnot absolve us all from this vital task.

*"The Red Mole", formerly a fortnightly paper has now become a weekly paper and has changed its name to "The Red Weekly".

WHITHER THE OFFICIALS?

By BOB PURDIE (First Published in Red Mole 53 16 Oct.1972)

Following the 'laundry' revelations about British army spying in Belfast, the Official IRA have issued an important statement. It threatens to call off their cease-fire and may indicate their return to a more militant policy. In spite of Operation Motorman - the invasion of the Free Areas - the Officials had maintained their cease-fire, insisting that civil war had to be avoided. This stance had in turn been in sharp contrast with their previous policy of armed operations which included the shooting of Senator Barnhill and the Aldershot bombing.

This article takes up some of the political problems which explain the zig-zags of the Officials. It discusses various questions raised by the September 1972 issue of their paper, the United Irishman, which carried to extremes some of the trends developing in the paper over the preceding months.

We will not be diverted by the many quite apolitical attacks on the Provisionals and on left-wing critics of the Officials; characterisations of the Provisionals as "this cancerous growth, spawned by the moneygrabbing gombeen mind of Jack Lynch and Fianna Fail"; and statements such as; "The Provo/Trots saw a war of National Liberation where there was none, they supplied socialist jargon to justify the bombing of children, they turned Civil Rights into Civil War and they are revealed today for what they always were - not tribunes of the working class but rather a psychosis of the middle class."

These attacks are merely symptoms of the political crisis within the Officials. They are an attempt to close ranks by whipping up anti-Provoism, and to deal with internal critics by associating them with "Trotskyism" - which they dub simultaneously as an importation of "failed" ideas from England, and a capitulation to the Provos. That the 'United Irishman' gives space to such nonsense is eloquent testimony to the internal crisis being caused by their wrong policies.

ONE STEP FORWARD: THREE STAGES BACK

The Irish Republican Movement took a great step forward when, in the 60's, its leadership took up a socialist position based on a Marxist view of society. Unfortunately they saw Marxism as a mechanistic system which could produce an automatic answer to any political problem. Their

perspective based on this formal method, was that the struggle in Ireland would move through three successive and separate stages; the struggle for democracy in the North, the struggle for national unity, and the struggle for a socialist Ireland.

This was wrong on two counts. Firstly, the necessary conceptual distinctions between the different elements of the struggle does not imply that they are insulated from each other, or that they develop along a linear path; in fact they interact with each other, and one aspect of the struggle serves to aggravate the crisis which brings the others into prominence. Secondly, the reality of the situation in the north was that these three elements were interlinked in an especially contradictory way, and that the mere posing of of a mass struggle for one immediately brought to the fore the struggle for the other elements.

To be concrete, the Six Counties represented a very special form of bourgeois state which could only exist by basing itself on a set of sectarian institutions, which, through the Orange ideology, created a mass base for the Unionist Party. Any substantial challenge to any aspect of that delicate system immediately created the possibility of destroying the state. Thus the mobilisation of a mass struggle for democratic rights could only advance to a very limited extent before it challenged the existence of the state, and opened up once more the national question. In so doing a war was sparked off which if it is to be won poses the problem of effectively drawing the mass of the workers and small farmers in the whole of Ireland into the struggle behind the Northern minority. This problem can only be solved if the achievement of national unity and the defeat of British Imperialism in the North becomes the central and unifying factor of a generalised mass struggle North and South, in which the particular demands of different sections, (urban workers, small farmers, the Gaeltacht; etc.) are welded together into one revolutionary struggle for a Workers Republic.

In this schematic outline, it can be seen how the "stages" of the struggle are intimately linked. Of course, understanding this doesnot in itself solve the problems of revolutionary strategy, and while the escalation from the democratic to the national struggle was achieved fairly quickly, and a leadership capable of driving it forward thrown up by the struggle itself, the transformation to a socialist struggle is much more difficult. But unlike the Official leadership, who see everything in formal and abstract terms, such an approach poses the problems of the Irish Revolution as a linked series of concrete tasks. Thus the national struggle resolves itself into the need to defend

the ghettos, which in turn becomes a struggle to smash Stormont and the British Army. And the socialist phase, far from being remote and academic, is posed immediately in the need to extend the struggle to the South.

Because the leadership of the Officials insisted all along that the struggle was only about democracy, and had to be restricted to civil rights, they were unprepared when the crisis reached its sharpest point in August '69, and could not play the role they should have played in the defense of the Catholic areas. But following August '69 they compounded their error by setting their faces against the developing national struggle which quickly escalated to a guerrilla war against the British Army.

REFORMIST PROGRAMME.

Today the effects of this series of errors can be seen in the deepening of the negative trends in the politics of the Officials, and the consolidation of their organisation around a reformist programme. The September 1972 issue of their paper, the United Irishman, demonstrates this. Monotonously it repeats, on page after page, the same three simplistic themes: that the struggle is simply one for Civil Rights, that the Provisionals are mad sectarian wreckers, and that the "Trotskyites" are ultra-left agents of reaction.

Maintaining the argument that the struggle in the North is solely about democracy the Officials say; "We do not want Civil war. We repeat again and again that the issue in the North of Ireland is CIVIL RIGHTS NOW. On that there can be no compromise and no talking. We do not want prevarications; we do not want stalling; we do not want bombing; we do not want sectarian killings. We want full guaranteed democracy..." "Britain's strategy for Ireland, then, has been very basic: the minimum concessions on civil rights and the maximum of British control over the Irish people and their economy."

And in another article entitled "Why Britain won't give civil rights" they say: "Civil rights means for us the full freedom of political activity, the opportunity to work for the creation of working class unity and for the winning of a sizeable section of the Protestant working class to support the fight for national liberation and socialism. Civil rights is basically, then, a struggle to smash the patronage system of unionism and win the freedom to advocate the sort of Ireland we believe is necessary."

CIVIL RIGHTS OR CIVIL WAR?

There are three dangerous elements in this argument. Firstly, it is true that the British have refused to grant the demands of the Civil Rights Association, for such simple concessions as a Bill of Rights. But this is not because they are opposed to civil rights. On the contrary, they have been anxious to "normalise" the north for a long time. This is indeed essential for their long term plans to re-orient their relationship with the gombeen bourgeois in the South. They resist such demands because they are trying to re-establish stability, and they know that concessions to the Catholic minority on that scale would deepen the mass Orange resistance.

So they balance delicately, while trying to achieve their main priority at this time; the de-mobilisation of Catholic resistance. If they achieve this, through militarily smashing the Provo's and/or exhausting the minority, it is quite possible that they will introduce sweeping reforms in the North, as a means of sealing up the crack in the dam which nearly flooded them. Such reforms would aim at buying off the catholic resistance, and eliminating some of the structural factors which have made the catholic revolt so powerful. It is doubtful, even given the above conditions, that Britain could actually solve the Northern Ireland problem, through internal reform, but at least they could create a period of stabilisation.

In this situation the Officials schema would have two disastrous results. It would mistake as a victory for the minority, what would in fact be a consolidation and strengthening of British Imperialism. And, more important they would not be prepared for the inevitable smashing of the resistance organisations which would accompany such a strategy. The Official Republicans would go down along with the Provos, PD., et al., and despite the "democracy" would be unable to advocate any "sort of Ireland".

WORKING CLASS UNITY

Secondly, the conception that all that is required to win over the Protestant working class is the opportunity to propagandise to them in a democratic state is utopian. It is not lack of facilities to convince them through argument, but the material basis for sectarianism existing in the institutions of the state, which polarises them away from the national liberation struggle.

This view, coupled with the statement: "The Provos have blasted away what slim hopes there were of working class

unity in this generation, and have given birth to the Protestant reaction of the UDA, UVF and other more vicious forces like Vanguard and the Tartan gangs."

It is difficult to imagine a more mistaken or dangerous view. By singling out this one factor as responsible for the information of sectarianism, the 'United Irishman' mis-estimates the political situation in the North and the real significance of developments within the protestants. Such a statement shows the dangers of mindless Provo-bashing, when the difficult and complex situation in the North has to be faced seriously.

CRISIS WITHIN UNIONISM

The main factor in the mobilisation of the UDA, UVF, Vanguard, the Tartans, etc. is the crisis precipitated in Unionism by Direct Rule. This is a new phase of the general crisis within the political and ideological institutions of the Six County state created by the struggle of the past three to four years. It does not represent a strengthening of sectarianism (although it provokes heightened sectarian tensions), but since it is caused by the loss of control over a state security apparatus, and the threat to the protestant ascendancy, it is a response from a weakened position. This weakness is further accentuated by the fragmentation of the former Unionist monolith into a number of warring factions. It is accompanied by a deepening feeling of despair amongst large sections of the protestant community.

Far from working class unity having been "blasted away", this generation is closer to it than any generation in the last sixty years. But it will only be possible to create unity when a sufficiently large section of the protestant working class has lost all faith in the traditional ideology and institutions of Orangeism, and realises that only the acceptance of their common lot with the working class in the rest of Ireland can give them any future.

The Belfast strike of 1907, and the unemployment riots of the Thirties, represented the breakdown of sectarian barriers between workers, during a time when the protestant ascendancy was so secure that the maintenance of its ideological hold through sectarian institutions had somewhat relaxed. The economic interests of Catholic and Protestant workers brought them together fleetingly; but this was enough to re-mobilise the sectarian institutions, and re-assert their ideological hold over the protestant workers.

Today when these institutions are shattered, and debilitated, the possibility of real and lasting working class unity is much closer. But it can only come about if the catholic minority and their organisations remain firm and press forward with their struggle, and they are backed up by the mass of the Irish people. Within this context there can be a discussion about which tactics give best hope of getting across to protestant workers who have gone furthest towards breaking with Orangeism, and the question of bombing targets etc., is relevant in this context. But the line taken by the Officials is a dangerous strategical diversion.

THE NATIONAL STRUGGLE

Thirdly, the 'United Irishman' argument misunderstands the nature of the national struggle. The catholic minority in the North are not mobilised by abstractions like "national unity", "self-determination", or "political independence". They fight for an end to internment, to get the British troops out of their streets, and to ensure that Stormont never returns. This does not mean that they are consciously restricting themselves to basically democratic demands, but that they are responding to the concrete problems posed for them by the nature of the Six County State.

To return to the argument above; the national and socialist struggles consist in a series of concrete tasks none of which can be achieved in a partitioned or capitalist Ireland. The mobilisations around the democratic demands of Civil Rights movement therefore cannot be seen as a purely democratic struggle because, while individual demands could be achieved within the Six County State, as a programme, which mobilised large sections of the catholic minority, these demands could only lead to the smashing of the state. It is vital for revolutionaries to understand this, because revolutionary leadership does not consist of convincing the masses to make a revolution, but of convincing them to take the steps which will move them into revolutionary struggle; and then enabling them, on the basis of that experience, to make the leap in consciousness required to understand that they require a revolutionary transformation of society.

THE AXE TO THE ROOT!

The trajectory being followed by the Officials has grave dangers. It is now clear that the split in the Republican Movement was the tragic and politically confused result of an attempt to graft a reformist programme onto the Republican tradition. Since the split the Officials have been adjusting their policies and actions to align

with that programme, and have therefore been changing the nature of their organisation. Their continued counterposing of a reformist to a revolutionary programme (which means that they counterpose democratic to national struggle, and immediate working class unity to the struggle to smash the barriers between the workers), has only one logic - the abandonment of Republicanism. The need of the Irish revolutionary movement is to move beyond traditional Republicanism to a Marxist understanding of the inseparable nature of the working class and national struggles in Ireland; but at the same time to encompass the aims and fighting traditions of Fenianism.

The Officials instead are moving back, away from Republicanism, and towards the creation of a new kind of reformist movement in Ireland. Such a development would be a tragedy, it would make much more difficult the task of politicising the mainstream of Irish Republicanism, and would surrender all the advances made within Republicanism since the '56-'62 campaign. We know that this would not happen without a deep internal struggle, but without a correct programmatic basis those who are opposed to this trend within the Official would be defeated and demoralised.

Like a despairing gambler, doubling and redoubling his stake, the leadership of the Officials now repeats in more frenzied and exaggerated terms the wrong analyses it made in the sixties, and the tone of the 'United Irishman' becomes increasingly paranoid and abusive. We know that many genuine militants within their ranks are becoming more and more disturbed at these trends. It may well be that they can arrest the rate at which the Officials are travelling along the present path, but this can only temporarily hold back their political decline. The axe to the root comrades! It is the wrong analysis, wrong politics and wrong methodology of your organisation which is responsible. It is this which must be understood, and this which must be changed.

THE POLITICS OF THE SDLP

By SEAN REED (First published in Red Mole 54 30 Oct. 1972)

A major difficulty in analysing the politics of the Social Democratic and Labour Party is that it's not so much a political party, more a way of life for its six M.P.'s, each of whom has his own programme, each his own timetable for his own social advancement.

The SDLP, therefore, is a coalition of diverse elements, representing different political positions and individual political bents. These are best explained by describing individually the parties leading members.

But first, to set the record straight, the six SDLP M.P.'s were elected in early 1969. All of them stood on a different programme from that on which they now stand. With the exception of Hume and Cooper, all of their programmes differed from one another. John Hume and Ivan Cooper were elected as Independents, on the basis of their press-constructed record as young, bright, moderate Civil Rights leaders. Austin Currie was elected as a Nationalist M.P. making desperate overtures to Republicans, and issuing a statement "approving" of the People's Democracy manifesto. Paddy O'Hanlon was a member of an autonomous organisation called Newry People's Democracy, and never in his election propaganda did he disassociate himself from the election programme of People's Democracy.

Gerry Fitt was elected as a member of the Republican Labour Party, on a programme calling for the immediate reunification of Ireland in a Socialist Workers' Republic. Paddy Devlin was elected as a member of the pro-British Northern Ireland Labour Party, although he himself has a record of support for the then most militant sections of the Civil Rights movement.

REFLECTION

The election took place at the beginning of the mass upsurge of the Civil Rights movement, and it was a reflection of the political level prevailing at that time. Even then, the total vote the SDLP collected was less than that polled by the PD. Despite this, and despite the Party's lack of a coherent programme, the SDLP is projected as the main spokesman for the Catholic minority, through the aid given to them by the British and Irish bourgeois media.

However, as Bob Purdie has pointed out in his pamphlet 'Ireland Unfree', they do not "comply with the Marxist definition of Social Democracy... They do not represent any section of the working class. If they reflect any social milieu at all it is a very small section of the catholic middle class which has tried to take over the leadership of the catholic workers."

Having put them in their common setting, it is now necessary to examine each M.P. individually.

1. John Hume. M.P. for Foyle.

As explained above, Hume was elected on the basis of his record as a leader in the early Civil Rights agitation. In the week before the famous October 5th demonstration in 1968 which sparked off the present upsurge in Ireland, the organisers of the march, in order to comply with the law, had to find two signatories to an application form to hold the procession. Hume was approached by the organisers and refused point-blank.

In spite of this, he was projected, mainly by the 'Irish Times', as the man who lit the spark of the Civil Rights movement.

John Hume represents a synthesis of the policy of the Catholic Hierarchy and the newer sections of the Catholic middle class in the Six Counties, and the programme of the Southern government for the Six Counties. He has no faith in the ability of the Irish people to carry out a successful armed social revolution against British Imperialism. Therefore, he sees the way forward as a series of manoeuvres between the IRA and the British on one hand, and between the British government and the local Unionist establishment on the other; and inside the Unionist camp, between the main-stream unionists, and the moderate unionists.

For his manoeuvres, he needs a Catholic mass movement, so that he can project himself as the Fire Brigade Man, extinguishing this upsurge here and another there, according to the tactics of the manoeuvre. This is the strength of his position.

During the bilateral cease-fire between the Republican Army in the summer of 1972 Hume was preparing to ditch the SDLP and tie himself to one wing of the Provos. The flexibility he displayed then, and shortly afterwards when he jumped off the bandwagon, makes it extremely difficult to write "finis" to Hume's political career. His recent description of Connor Cruise O'Brien's politics as being "a more subtle and effective defense of Unionism than

any that has come from any Unionist quarter" has undoubtedly driven a nail into Cruise O'Brien's political coffin. But his disagreement with O'Brien is not, as he himself has said, one of principle. As the 'Irish Times' said editorially, on 16th October 1972, "O'Brien... and the SDLP are, in fact, saying the same things."

2. Ivan Cooper. M.P. for Mid Derry

Ivan Cooper has in turn been member of the Young Unionists, the Unionists, the Liberals and the Labour Party. He was elected as an independent M.P. for mid Derry.

Early in 1972, Cooper was in Brussels for a day to address a meeting. The meeting was cancelled for lack of attendance, and so, in the company of Eamonn O'Toole, the Free State Embassy Press Officer in Brussels, he sat in on a press conference on Ireland given by the Belgian Section of the Fourth International. That same day, Cooper also observed a student demonstration and a mass meeting attended by over 1,500 people, against British Imperialism in Ireland.

That night, Cooper flew back to Ireland, announcing that "we (the Irish) had lost the propaganda war in Brussels."

Bernadette Devlin has said of Ivan Cooper that in politics "Ivan will go anywhere John (Hulme) can drag him."

3. Gerry Fitt. Stormont M.P. for Belfast Dock.

Westminster M.P. for West Belfast.

When Fitt was first elected to Westminster, he was asked during a long boring car journey from Dublin to Belfast whether he would sell his principles for a seat in Parliament. He replied, "If I ever get any, I'll sell them."

Basically a ward-wheeler, his election in the first place represents the historic situation of a large section of the Catholic working class of Belfast, which has become a lumpen-proletariat through 50 years of unemployment, squalor and lack of political and social rights. Fitt himself is a lumpen-politician, who, when sober, is able to articulate the desires and aspirations of the most deprived section of the Belfast population

When the Sunday Times Insight Team wrote their book on Ulster, they mentioned "a leading opposition M.P." who asked Chichester-Clark, then the Six-Counties Prime Minister, to introduce internment in 1970. Mystery has surrounded the identity of this "leading opposition M.P." but a book to be published in the New Year (1973) names the man who fits the bill.

Fitt's whole history of small town, small time,

small talk politics differentiates him from the "new professionalism" of Hume essentially in this ... that he would sell out for a smaller price.

4. Paddy O'Hanlon, M.P. for South Armagh

O'Hanlon was on the dole when he was elected in 1969. His main political ambition is never to go back on it. He had acted as an election agent for the sitting MP Richardson in the previous election. Until the last couple of days before the '69 election, Richardson was assuming that O'Hanlon was to act as his agent in this election, and take care of everything.

When nomination day came, Paddy had taken care of everything. O'Hanlon's name was on the nomination form.

5. Paddy Devlin, M.P. for Falls

Paddy Devlin is an ex-member of the IRA, and an ex-internee. Today he represents a sort of "Parliamentary Connollyism", which embraces the Catholics who are not in principle opposed to armed struggle, but don't believe it to be necessarily the most favourable road. He works closely with the Officials, as is shown by his part in the anti-EEC campaign in the South.

Devlin now spends most of his time watching Gerry Fitt and the others, and stopping them from completely breaking their pledge not to enter into a conference until internment is ended.

His experience with right wing Republicans while interned has given him an almost paranoic hatred of the Provos, which makes him easily lead into a stampede whenever Fitt and Hume can agree on a direction. Devlin acts as a left cover for the SDLP.

6. Austin Currie, M.P. for East Tyrone.

Currie was elected as a Nationalist with, as he said, "P.D. leanings". In the early days of the Civil Rights movement, he acquired a tremendous amount of publicity. On the second day of the Burntollet march he turned up outside a Republican Hall where the marchers were being fed by local Republicans, and presented a chicken to one of the marchers, in front of a battery of press photographers.

The only times Currie seems to make the news these days is when mysterious shots are fired at his home at regular intervals. This provokes the current East Tyrone joke that shots at Currie's home means that the SDLP must be going to sell someone else out.

In fact the reason for Currie's absence from the

headlines is the faction fighting within the SDLP. Currie is able and waiting in the background. He is backing Gerry Fitt for the leadership because he knows that if Fitt goes, Hume will replace him, thus ending for the foreseeable future Austin's hopes of gaining leadership for himself.

RECENT PLAN

The SDLP recently brought out a plan which called for a British declaration in favour of Irish unity, and meanwhile a Condominium of the British and Free State governments over the Six Counties.

Basically the plan calls for the joint running of Northern Ireland by Britain and the Free State. This is seen by John Hulme as the next great manoeuvre. You get a declaration from Britain that she wants to pull out whenever possible, thus putting a time-limit on the existence of a separate Northern State.

Meanwhile security etc., is jointly shared by the forces which can guarantee bourgeois stability and reform. Under this umbrella, it is presumed that there will be an end to discrimination, and therefore a disintegration of the Orange monolith.

In such a situation the forces of moderation would emerge in the Catholic community, forming a governmental alliance most likely with the Alliance Party, the Northern Ireland Labour Party and possibly the O'Neillites. Thus there is a gradual withering away of the Northern State.

NEAT

The plan is neat. It calls to mind a verse in an Irish folk song:

"Irishmen forget the past,
And think of the day that's coming fast,
When we shall all be civilised,
Neat and clean and well advised,
Oh won't Mother England be surprised."

It's too neat. It comes up with the wrong answers, because it starts with the wrong analysis. It acts throughout on the assumption that what has been happening for the last few years is that the Catholics want the Free State to control the Six Counties, and that the protestants want to maintain the Orange Ascendancy.

As the Derry Officials' paper 'Starry Plough' says, "the SDLP's solution is to declare the fight a draw and give each side equal share of control".

The two basic things that the plan leaves out are: firstly, the true role of British Imperialism in Ireland; and secondly, that what Republicans and socialists have been fighting for, and they are leading the struggle now, is to overthrow not just the Orange state, not just British Imperialism, but the Free State as well.

IMPORTANCE

In other words the plan is founded on the assumption that Britain will first have defeated the IRA, and this fact alone tells us the most important thing about the SDLP.

Although it is wrong to describe them simply as Green Tories, and therefore by implication to equate them with the Unionists, they are opponents of the revolutionary struggle which is taking place in Ireland today. Their importance lies in the fact that in the event of a defeat for the IRA, they would act as the Party of Surrender for the oppressed Catholics.

In the event of a drawn battle, they would, Deriving their base from the war-wearyness of the Catholic population, act as the new Treatyites.

The song quoted above was a satire, the SDLP takes it seriously.

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THE POLITICS OF THE PROVISIONALS

By BOB PURDIE & GERY LAWLESS (First published in Red Mole
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PROGRAMME

The fundamental political definition of a movement derives from its programme. Lenin defined the British Labour Party as bourgeois, despite its proletarian composition, because its programme, far from posing a transformation to socialism, was merely an alternative method of operating the capitalist system. In this programmatic sense the Provisionals, despite their adherence to the objective of a "democratic socialist republic", are bourgeois nationalists. Such a definition is not an apithet, but merely the starting point for a serious analysis. It absolutely does not mean that the Provisionals are reactionary, on the contrary Irish nationalism poses certain necessary and progressive advances which, while they correspond to the classical tasks of a bourgeois democratic revolution, are in the interests of the masses of the Irish workers and small farmers. The latter must fight for these objectives whether or not the Irish bourgeoisie does and against that bourgeoisie if it resists that struggle. Therefore the relationship between the Provisionals and Irish capitalism does not stem abstractly from their programme, but from the relationship of the Irish bourgeoisie to these political tasks.

The Irish bourgeoisie long ago surrendered the banner of nationalism, and it is determined to retain its servile relationship with British Imperialism. In so far as the Provisionals struggle for a bourgeois national programme they will be obliged not only to come into conflict with the bourgeoisie but can only base themselves on the workers and small farmers. The important question is whether they can transcend that programme through conflict with the Irish bourgeoisie, and the pressure of the class interests of their social base.

It is this contradiction between the programme of the Provisionals and the process of Permanent Revolution in Ireland which gives them an impulse for a move to the left. But it only the intervention of Marxists, explaining the necessity of a socialist strategy, in terms of the immediate problems which face the masses engaged in the national struggle, which can create a clear understanding of why the combined national and socialist revolutions in Ireland, can only be fought for with a different programme.

EIRE NUA

To examine these programmatic questions more thoroughly, it is necessary to deal with some aspects of "Eire Nua", the social and economic programme of the Provisional Sinn Fein. "Eira Nua" combines three distinct political elements. The first of these is straight reforms within the capitalist framework already existing, the second vague and eclectic elements of traditional Irish liberal thought, given a radical twist by posing them as the out-growth of popular struggles rather than as concessions from above. There is, however, little evidence that such policies as the establishment of co-operatives, credit unions etc. have ever been a major force within the Irish masses, and certainly have never mobilised any struggles which have challenged the state.

The third element is more important, since it does have roots in real struggle. This element is the radical concept of the relationship between the state and property as advanced Padraig Pearse in 'The Sovereign People', the Proclamation of the Republic in 1916, and the Democratic Programme of the First Dail: the idea that property ought to belong to the people of the nation as a whole, and be distributed, according to their will, by a democratic state. In this traditional Republicanism came near to socialism. But such a demand is not in itself socialist. Socialism is also a qualitatively new system of society, distinguished from capitalism by the political, social, economic and cultural tasks it accomplishes, and not merely by the way in which it is administered. It is entirely possible for this kind of demand to be achieved within capitalism. Indeed it was first put forward by the most radical of bourgeois democrats, Tom Paine, who influenced the French and American bourgeois revolutions. However, it is impossible for such a demand to be achieved within latter-day Irish capitalism. So this element in the programme has great potential; but only because a fight for it would demonstrate the inadequacy of the programme as a whole, and the need for a socialist programme based on a Marxist analysis of the needs of the Irish workers and small farmers.

REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

Based on this programme the Provisionals have two main objectives: to smash partition by destroying the Northern State, and forcing British Imperialism to take its troops out of Ireland, and to transfer state power from the two partitionist assemblies to new regional parliaments based on community organisation of the people. This latter

objective is rarely discussed, but is, however, an extremely important aspect of the Provisional's strategy since it is designed to solve such important problems as the relationship of the masses in the South to the struggle in the North and to break down the resistance to Irish unity by the protestants. (It is argued that a regional parliament for the nine counties of Ulster would have a protestant majority, and that such a radical degree of autonomy, operating in favour of the protestants, win acceptance from them.)

In analysing this strategy (of regional parliaments) Marxists cannot simply state that it is utopian and non-socialist but must try to see the direction in which it takes the Provisionals. The proposal for Dail Uladh has a kernel of revolutionary potential. Although it was originally posed as an institution created from the top, it was later drastically modified and was designed to base itself on the street committees and other organisations created in the North by the struggle against British imperialism. However, despite the fact that its stated aims make a bow in the direction of the civil resistance movement, in practice Comhairle Uladh (the body set up to prepare for the creation of Dail Uladh) has settled down to a-political, a-historical, and a-class propaganda for regional government. The same is true of Comhairle Connacht, set up on the west of Ireland; the recently formed Comhairle Munster, and Comhairle Laghain give no evidence of being different.

Concentrating their resources on abstract propaganda, these bodies have lead the Provisionals into an alliance with right wing elements who, while they pose no tremendous danger, since they are politically impotent, help to separate out the two strands of the Provos' strategy and keep the second element abstract and a-political. An examination of the material produced by these bodies reveals a startling political naivety. 'Take the Faroes for Example', a pamphlet by Desmond Fennell (a right-wing Irish writer) argues that the Faroe Islands are prosperous because they have a healthy social structure, and a deep sense of regional loyalty. Fennell mentions, but gives no weight to the fact that the Faroes are a solitary example of a successful one crop economy. The smoked fish industry provides a greater surplus than is normal for a primary producing country, and this combined with the relatively progressive policies of Denmark is the basis for the social structure and the re-birth of Faroese national culture. This example of the Faroes is relevant only as an exception, and if for instance, the West of Ireland is to emulate them, it is precisely by forcing imperialism to concede a different

relationship. Fennell does not pose such a struggle, which is conceivable only with a socialist programme.

THE ECONOMIC BOMBING CAMPAIGN

The Provisionals' campaign has been almost uniformly misunderstood or misrepresented. So-called "Marxists" have sternly denounced "terrorism" which they have defined in a quite un-Marxist way as a question of military technique, rather than as a question of the political relationship between military action and the masses.

The bombing campaign had two main purposes, Firstly, it was designed to disrupt commercial life in the main cities. In turn this had two subsidiary purposes: to bring pressure to bear on the British government; and simultaneously to break up the foundations of the Six County state. It was secondly an important defensive measure: the British Army had to dispose of large forces in the centre of cities, forces which could have been used in the period before Operation Motorman to saturate the Catholic Ghettos. The methods now being used in these areas are an indication of what this would have meant. Whole populations are constantly under surveillance by the Army, constantly threatened with arrest, and/or harassment. This seriously undermines their ability to engage in political resistance. Fortunately the army has not yet been able to totally crush the people but if they were able to dispose of large enough forces they would. By abliging the Army to protect the city centres the Provisional IRA contributes directly to the possibility of a mass political opposition. Thus the bombing campaign is not terrorist.

If we draw a balance sheet, it shows a very heavy balance on the positive side. The campaign helped to maintain the free areas for much longer than they would otherwise have existed, by pinning down large numbers of troops. It forced the British Government into scrapping successive policies for victory in the North, and most important, it smashed Stormont, which was the cement holding the Unionist monolith together. 'The Red Mole' has constantly stressed that the fragmentation of Orangeism is a historic step forward in the struggle. It must be said to the Provo's credit, that they understood very clearly that this would happen.

SECTARIANISM AND THE BOMBINGS

But there is of course a negative side. The campaign has been accompanied by a very high civilian casualty rate; there have been actions which have seemed sectarian (in the

sense of being directed against the protestant population rather than the state, or forces of occupation). In particular Official Republicans would point to the elimination of such points of contact between protestant and catholic workers as the West Belfast Housing Alliance. And it has from time to time caused serious rifts within the catholic population itself.

Even accepting these at face value, they do not outweigh the tremendous positive results of the campaign. But when these points are examined more closely, some of them must be heavily qualified. It would be legitimate to say that the Provisionals should have learned from the experience of Donegal Street bombings, that the army and the RUC were likely to manoeuvre large numbers of civilian casualties; during a blitz on the scale of the so-called "Bloody Friday" bombings. On the other hand, one should not ignore the purely military factors which can frustrate the designs of such an operation. As we saw with the Aldershot bombing, bombs can go off prematurely; the use of inexperienced volunteers (due to internment) has caused more problems. Also it is not always possible to choose only the best targets, and often pure chance intervenes.

So far as the sectarian connotations are concerned, it must be clearly stated that the aim of the campaign was not sectarian. Because of the structure of employment in the Six Counties, an economic bombing campaign inevitably hits harder against the protestant than the catholic workers. It is a pity that the West Belfast Housing Alliance was broken up, but one must seriously question whether such organisations can create working class unity without the destruction of the main barriers between the workers, the institutions of the sectarian state. Those who argue that no action which increases sectarianism should be taken, will find themselves with a problem. Since any action which threatens the status quo of a sectarian state will polarise those who are for and against the state, it will result in an increase in sectarianism. The Civil Rights Movement is a classic example, its aims and its activities were manifestly non-sectarian, but it led directly to the communal violence of August 1969. Does anyone seriously say that/^{the}Civil Rights campaign should not have been started?

There have been directly sectarian actions carried out by catholics against protestants. These must be deplored, and every effort made to eliminate them. But they are not directly the responsibility of the Provisionals. Most have been carried out by catholic sectarians who are not under the discipline of either the Provisional or the Official

IRA. There can be little doubt, however, that units or volunteers of the Provisionals, in particular, have broken discipline. Such indiscipline in the ranks of the IRA, or in the broader catholic population, stems from the political weakness of their leadership and a failure to resolutely campaign against the communalist culture which exists among sections (although by no means a majority) of the catholic population. Only a much clearer political strategy which spells out the way in the struggle of the ghettos in the North is integrated with the all Ireland and international struggle against capitalism and imperialism, could break down this cultural and political backwardness.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST BACKWARDNESS

This failure to break down the backwardness within the ghettos has been the source of rifts within the oppressed minority. The "peace" movement in 1972 represented real forces within the ghettos, influenced by the church, and the lack of perspective for breaking out of the long-drawn-out struggle with the Army. If the incidents which lead to the ending of the Provo cease-fire and the brutality of the British Army since Operation Motorman have buried these tendencies for the present, it does not mean that they no longer exist. On the contrary, they are liable to break out again, in a more intractable form.

From this it can be seen how the inadequacy of the second strand of the Provisionals' strategy (the regional Parliaments), contributes to the problems involved in carrying out the struggle in the North. However, the weakness is not their alone, if there were a more capable alternative leadership they would have been superceded.

It must be stressed that the development of such a strategy is extremely difficult. It has to solve the problems created by the vast differences which exist in the political conditions North and South, in a situation where both states are in crisis. The crisis in the South is developing in a different way from that in the North, and the political problems involved in a co-ordinated struggle North and South are exceedingly complex due to the fact that some of the tasks of the national revolution have been achieved in a distorted and incomplete way in the South. The Provisionals must be criticised, not for failing so far to solve this contradiction, but because their programme and politics do not give them the capacity to find a solution.

WHO WILL GO BEYOND THE PROVOS?

The Provisionals won their present position after

the Catholic minority had gone through a whole series of different leaderships within an extremely short period. The ghetto politicians of the Nationalist Party were pushed aside by those who were asking for civil rights. Then those who fought for Civil rights came to the fore, followed by those who were determined to push the Civil Rights movement to the point of challenging the Northern State; and finally by those who were prepared to take the struggle beyond the stage of Civil Rights, to an armed national struggle against the British Army and in defence of the ghettos. The Provisionals had the answers which corresponded to the needs of the minority after July 1970. If they are less politically sophisticated than some element who were rejected the fact is that these other tendencies did not have the necessary answers to develop the struggle.

Given that this is the case, it is by no means predetermined that the Provisionals will always exercise their present influence. Indeed it is the fact that they are unable to take the struggle beyond its present phase which has (in freezing the situation) been partly responsible for their continued role.

But will a breakthrough come about by developments within the Provisionals, or by their being overtaken by a new leadership? It is clear that without a new programmatic basis the Provisionals cannot achieve final victory, and it is unlikely that they can simply evolve such a programme through empirical experience. History shows that for a radical nationalist movement to become a socialist movement there must be a deep process of political struggle within it, which will be accompanied by re-groupments, rejections of layers of leadership, split and re-unifications. Such a process, happening in Ireland, would create a new movement, quite different from the present Provisionals.

It is precisely the relationship between the Provisionals and revolutionary Marxists which is key for the way in which such a process will take place. This is why the reformist pseudo-Marxists, and the fake internationalists, who insist that the Irish revolutionary movement must follow their own dead-end road, play such a negative role. It is only those tendencies like the Peoples Democracy and the Revolutionary Marxist Group in Ireland who, while maintaining their their political independence and a critical stance, nevertheless attempt to fight alongside the Provisionals in the current struggle and solidarise with their positive actions, who will be able to make a contribution.

Irish Republicanism has been the most consistent

and radical strand of democratic nationalism. It has a long history of struggle and has inspired great acts of revolutionary heroism. The Provisionals exemplify the positive aspects of that tradition, but also its limitations. It is those who are able to surpass and absorb that tradition, while giving more adequate political leadership, who will supersede the Provisionals, not the majority of those who criticise them. And that new movement will draw heavily on the present Republican militants for its best cadres.

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THE POLITICS OF PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY By BOB PURDIE

(First published in Red Mole 63 17th March 1973)

"The PD was created out of the initial response of the Queens University students to the October 5th 1968 events. As part of the reform programme the Unionists had already permitted a 'British' type higher education structure to be created in the Six Counties. Within Queens religious discrimination was merely a grim shadow of the world outside, a generation of young catholics went through a non-discriminatory education, and a generation of young protestants were educated alongside them. The sudden horrifying reality of Northern Ireland caught up with this generation on October 5th, 1968. In protest at the attack on the Civil Rights demonstration in Derry, 2,000 students marched from Queens University to the City Hall, but were blocked by a crowd of 50 Paisleyites who proved an immovable obstacle for the RUC. Following this experience, the Peoples Democracy was born, in the type of endless, all embracing discussion which marked the emergence of student vanguard after student vanguard in the sixties, and has been the means by which they moved from a recoil against the reality of society, through a critique of society to action."

(Bob Purdie: 'Ireland Unfree', Chapter 6)

LITTLE RESEMBLANCE

The PD of today bears little resemblance to the original PD. The radicalise milieu in Queens was only a temporary phenomina. Although it gave a base for action, independently of the reformist and stalinist leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, it nevertheless had shallow roots in the Northern Irish society, and could not correct some of the more utopian schemes of its leaders. And, while these leaders had been trained in Marxism, the rapid growth of the student movement, combined with revulsion at the stale dogmatism of British Marxism, induced a deep-going spontaneism.

Nevertheless, they did carry over from their British mentors an "economistic" method, ie. a concept that every aspect of the situation in the North of Ireland had been manipulated in the interests of profit. Some examples of this kind of thinking can be seen in Mike Farrell's pamphlet, 'Struggle in the North':

"The history of the Northern State is this. At the end of

the last century the industrialists and landowners of the North, fearing the economic consequences of Home Rule, formed an alliance with the protestant workers and small farmers to oppose it. They bought their allies allegiance with a combination of preferential treatment in the disposal of jobs and land leases and the cynical whipping-up of religious bigotry. When they got control of their own state the same money-grabbing crew set up an apparatus of gerrymandering, discrimination, thuggery and repression. This had two immediate purposes. One was to put down any activity by the anti-partitionists -mainly Catholics - and to force as many as possible to emigrate, leaving the rest in poverty and without any political leadership. The other purpose was to divide the working class by buying the allegiance of Protestant workers and gulling them into believing they held a privileged position when in fact they merely had a smaller share of the general poverty and exploitation.

Both immediate purposes had a common long-term aim: the perpetuation of the easy flow of money into the pockets of the Unionist ruling class. The conflict in Northern Ireland is neither a religious nor a tribal war, but a struggle against those who have cynically used religious hatred to protect the profits of a privileged elite."

Two essential elements were missed in this analysis: the ultimate role of the strongest factor in the situation, British imperialism, the moving force behind the setting up of the state, and the role of the state itself, which had sufficient autonomy from British Imperialism, and the top layers of Unionism, to defy any attempt at reform, forcing British imperialism to choose between the maintenance of an unreformed state, or the smashing of that state by the catholic minority.

In turn this led PD into a form of political myopia. They saw only the North, and applied a completely voluntarist approach to the struggle there; under the misapprehension that exposure of the vested interests behind Unionism, and proof that the Civil Rights Movement had their interests at heart, would win over the Protestant workers:-

"The support of these men can only be won by an honest movement which makes clear that civil rights are here to stay and tries to explain why they were denied, and then campaigns on economic issues and tries to build a united working class movement." (Farrell - ibid)

ABILITY TO LEARN

But PD had one valuable asset, an ability to learn

from experience, combined with a tenacity and seriousness of purpose which kept them going despite the drastic decline of their organisation, and their failure to maintain the political impact of 1968-9. While other tendencies talked, and still talk, about winning over the protestant workers through economic demands, the PD actually tried it, not shirking from the consequences of acting alone with small forces to support struggles like the Cement strike (which got some of them jailed). Their latter-day critique of economist and voluntarist approaches to the problem of working class disunity in the Six Counties is the more trenchant for having arisen from practical experience.

The re-orientation of PD after internment led to involvement in the struggle of the catholic minority, and PD gained political influence and credibility quite out of proportion to its small size. PD was able to sink deep roots in the ghettos relatively quickly, and, having shed their student base, found another smaller, but more solid one. The majority of PD members are teachers, lecturers, lawyers, white collar workers. They are an important segment of the generation of young catholics which was best able to take advantage of the concessions made in the educational sphere. Such is the nature of the minority that there is no middle class for them to become integrated into. The choice is between the barren, and increasingly insecure, heights of Malone Road, or the Catholic ghettos.

At the same time the bulk of their generation is involved in the struggle of the minority through the Republican organisations. Their links with this generation are strengthened by the influence of some of the most active and important young leaders in both the Officials and Provisionals who have gone through an initial political training in the PD.

Having made a turn to the struggle of the minority, PD was able to play an essential role in determining the form which the struggle took. The interdependence of the military struggle of the IRA and the Civil Resistance of the masses needs no elaboration, but it is necessary to stress that to a large extent it ran counter to Irish revolutionary tradition. For Republicanism the responsibility of those involved in the armed struggle was not directly to the people but to the Irish Republic. Of course, in the North the IRA had always had close links with the people in its role as a catholic "home guard", but this had not included any concept of the people as an element in the struggle. Had the elitist concepts of traditional Republicanism determined the form of the struggle it would have very quickly been isolated and

defeated. PD's intervention was not the sole element in breaking from the past (to a large extent the mould was broken by the early Civil Rights movement), but PD was able through its own interventions and through its influence within the Republican movement, to prevent a total re-assertion of the traditional forms of struggle.

"INSTANT DEMOS"

But the other side of the coin is that PD is limited in its experience and outlook to the struggle in the North, and is essentially a product of that struggle. It has so far been unable to relate to the all Ireland struggle in the same way as it relates to the North. Since ultimate victory cannot be won in the North, this weakness must be overcome.

Their activity in the last year has relied heavily on the "instant demo", North and South of the border. This technique is important; the willingness of PD to demonstrate when other, larger forces wanted to hold back action has enabled them time after time to outflank them in action. But such a technique has a very special significance in a society like the North of Ireland. In a situation where the slightest flicker of independent action by only some hundreds of the minority population provoked a crisis in the whole of society such demonstrations were of historic importance. And today, when Catholics take to the streets in even limited numbers in the face of the occupation forces, the inability of British imperialism to crush their revolt is exposed.

But elsewhere demonstrations have a different significance. Specifically, they cannot play the same role in the South as they have in the North. It is true that from time to time demonstrations have rocked Leinster House, but these have been at times when the situation in the North has provoked a response in the South which has burst through the channels of Fianna Fail "Republicanism".

Also, given the right political situation even small demonstrations can have important political results; the PD march to the Curragh, which was met with fixed bayonets, is an example of this. But the political significance of this action could not have been understood by PD, since they shortly afterwards made a call for demonstrations at the Curragh every weekend; needless to say these were neither effective nor long sustained. PD was running the risk of allowing a specific form of struggle to so occupy their forces that they could not pay attention to the longer term tasks of creating a revolutionary movement.

A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY?

PD has understood this; a political statement issued early in 1973 states: "By the end of 1973 there must be active branches in every city and major town in Ireland. ... Without a revolutionary Party there can be no revolution. It is our task to build that party. To that we dedicate ourselves. (Unfree Citizen, 15 January 1973)

This statement is correct, but it contains a potential danger. The building of a revolutionary party does not consist of creating "active branches", but of leading revolutionary struggle; the organisational tasks of party-building are of secondary importance. So far the PD has not begun the job of extending itself outside the catholic ghettos in the North - the Dublin branch consists mainly of Northern exiles, and has not been able to intervene in any meaningful way in the situation there. The task before PD, if it is to build a revolutionary party, must be reformulated or it will prove a pious and misleading platitude. That task consists of linking the struggle of the ghettos to the other struggles going on in Ireland, and centralising them around the main contradiction in Irish society, the unresolved national question, which is the springboard of the Irish revolution. Although this task has to be accomplished through leading struggle, it is interlinked with another task, which at present has first place - the theoretical work of developing a strategy for the Irish revolution.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Since the mid-Sixties Irish revolutionaries have been confronted by a series of strategic opportunities, which were related to the new crisis then opening up. Their inability to grasp these opportunities was the direct consequence of their failure to understand that new conjuncture. While this was fairly inevitable, their failure has meant that the struggle is now less advanced than was objectively possible.

The nature of this/^{new} conjuncture can be sketched rapidly. The re-orientation of British capitalism from the American alliance towards Europe meant a re-structuring of relationships with Ireland North and South. In Northern Ireland the decline of traditional industry, and the failure of any alternative industrial take-off meant that the statelet was not only now politically outmoded, but a financial drain on the British exchequer. In the South the high point of Sean Lemass's economic miracle served only to point up the fact that the economic relationship between

Britain and Ireland, outside North-East Ulster, had not changed in any qualitative way since the Act of Union. Despite an important growth of industry, despite a growth of non-British investment, the area still depended on the export and processing of agricultural goods for the British market.

In the North this was to lead to the first substantial challenge to British Imperialism and Orange supremacy since the foundation of the state: the Civil Rights struggle, growing over into armed anti-imperialist struggle. In the South the bourgeoisie had to choose once and for all to accept their relationship with British imperialism and make the best of it. Thus the crisis in the North was merely the sharpest and most immediate aspect of a crisis which was gripping Ireland as whole - any perspective for struggle in such a situation had to be an all-Ireland one. The factor which gave the Northern crisis such depth and power, the uneven development of North and South, is now turning into its opposite, isolating the struggle in the Northern ghettos. The development of a strategy for the struggle in the South is of prime importance now. The crisis in the South is developing on a more heterogeneous basis, and at a slower rate than in the North. Already experience has shown that forms of struggle drawn from the Northern experience are quite inadequate for the South. For example, the Dundalk and Mountjoy "riots" last year, far from polarising society in South and weakening the base of Fianna Fail, strengthened the hands of the Lynchs and Colleys.

THE GENERAL ELECTION IN THE SOUTH

A more recent example is the General Election in the South. Here the lines of PD and the Revolutionary Marxist Group (Irish supporters of the Fourth International) were very different. The RMG put forward the slogan "Against Repression, vote Republican", while the PD had a totally abstentionist position, not even supporting the Official Republican candidates.

For PD the main task in relation to the election was to break the electoralist illusions of the masses in the South. This was yet another example of the failure to transcend the Northern experience. Electoral illusions are practically non-existent in the Northern Ghettos; a gerrymandered parliament and a permanent minority status do not breed trust in the possibility of change through the ballot-box. But in the South the experience of the masses is quite different. The abstentionist position of the Republicans in the early years of the state was an expression of

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For PD the main task in relation to the election was to break the electoralist illusions of the masses in the South. This was yet another example of the failure to transcend the Northern experience. Electoral illusions are practically non-existent in the Northern Ghettos; a gerrymandered parliament and a permanent minority status do not breed trust in the possibility of change through the ballot-box. But in the South the experience of the masses is quite different. The abstentionist position of the Republicans in the early years of the state was an expression of

weakness and futility; with the election of Fianna Fail in 1933 important changes did take place, and the continued abstentionism of Sinn Fein ensured that it was effectively by-passed by Fianna Fail. The electoralist illusions in the South have a material basis, and will not be broken down through propoganda but by the development of concrete alternatives to electoral action.

Again the Northern experience does not provide an answer. Since 1969 the self activity of the minority, organised in the ghettos, has been sufficient to offset reliance on the old Nationalist Party system of local M.P's and councillors with a personal base of support built up through patronage. The problem in the South is to create such self-activity. And such mass action in the South will have to throw up more solid and powerful organs of dual power than the street committees in the North, if Leinster House is to be bypassed.

In such a situation intervention by revolutionaries is very difficult. There are no material alternatives to which they can point, and the temptation is to lapse either into "lesser evilism", and call for the election of the less reactionary political alternative, or to substitute for an intervention with abstract propoganda about why the masses, who are not going to break from electoralism, ought to.

The RMG's position was correct, because it posed a form of action, within the electoralist framework, which nevertheless brought out the main question in the political conjuncture (resistance to anti-Republican repression) and if followed it would take the masses into struggles which would face them with the necessity for transcending their electoralist consciousness. It is true that there was no objective possibility of the masses following the RMG's lead, but that was a result of the weakness and lack of influence over any section of the population of the revolutionary vanguard in Ireland. The RMG strengthened that vanguard by demonstrating a viable course of political action. By supporting the 'Officials' election campaign, and at the same time projecting their own independent slogans, agitation and propoganda, the RMG was able to intervene within the ranks of the Sinn Fein, and explain the weaknesses of their election campaign, pose an alternative political methodology and at the same time get closer to the rank and file. If the Dublin PD had supported the RMG in this, the forces of revolutionary Marxism in the South would have emerged from the campaign with a proportionately greater influence and political impact.

PARTY BUILDING AND INTERNATIONALISM

The necessity for PD to transcend the experience of the North is the more urgent since they are in the best position to regroup those young Republican volunteers in the North who are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the political limitations of Republicanism. If a viable revolutionary organisation emerged from this process then the prospects for the Irish revolution would be greatly enhanced. Even if the uneven development of the revolutionary crisis in Ireland breaks, and the North is stabilised before the Southern masses are drawn into the struggle, the interregnum could not only be shortened, but used as a very necessary breathing space while the revolutionaries prepare themselves for the next round of struggle. But PD has a long road to travel, and a very short time scale if it is to achieve this task. If it is inadequate to the task, the young Republicans will be diverted into the pattern of previous generations; a brief military campaign, soon smashed, and the depoliticisation of the majority, while a small number go over to reformism.

The history of the Irish revolutionary movement shows that it cannot haul itself up by its own bootstraps. It has never been capable of understanding the dynamic of the uneven development of Irish capitalism, and has thus been divided and weakened by it, rather than acting to deepen the contradictions for capitalism and imperialism caused by that uneven development. As we have argued, PD has not been able so far to integrate the experiences of the struggles in the North and South of Ireland. Moreover Irish Marxist, while needing to develop a precise analysis for the Irish revolution, have not had the analytical tools necessary, and they have not been able to integrate forms of action, tactics, strategy, etc., appropriate to Ireland, but developed elsewhere. That is why the Irish revolutionary movement has to be Irish, but also internationalist.

PD has a very strong internationalist consciousness, and has helped in stimulating interest in the international class struggle amongst young Republicans. But the PD has not progressed beyond an internationalism which solidarises with struggles elsewhere, but does not incorporate the experience of these struggles in developing theory and strategy. An interest in the international class struggle will inevitably be one-sided and haphazard if it is seen as a question of general information about other struggles, combined with the development of friendly relations with revolutionaries in other countries. PD's relationship with Lotta Continua in Italy, for example, does not enable PD to understand the powerful industrial struggles there, which

relevant to the South of Ireland, while Lotta Continua's devotion to direct action reinforces some of the less broadly applicable aspects of PD's experience.

The Fourth International has a completely different concept of internationalism, and one which is much more appropriate to the problems faced by Irish revolutionaries. That is why, while the FI works independently of all other forces in Ireland, the development of a discussion between PD (and other Irish revolutionaries) and the FI would be a valuable contribution to more effective action, jointly or independently; and could have very positive results in developing the necessary forces to lead the Irish revolution, which both the FI and PD recognise as being a key to the European and World revolution.

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THE WHITE PAPER By James Conway

(First published in 'The Plough' paper of the RMG)

Disraeli once said that every time Britain finds an answer to the Irish question, the Irish change the question.

This is just a clever way of saying that British diplomacy in Ireland has always covered its nakedness by avoiding the issues and discussing irrelevancies. The Whitelaw White Paper is just the latest example of the grand old tradition. The key feature of Britain's latest plans for Ireland is their failure to grapple with the needs of the Irish people (which was to be expected) and also their failure to satisfy the needs of British imperialism itself.

THE GREEN PAPER -- FIRST STEP TOWARDS FEDERALISM

It is now common knowledge among socialists, republicans and political commentators in general that Britain and its native clients desire a "federal solution" to the Irish problem. There is no need to elaborate on this, merely to mention that the general forms of this solution were outlined last October in the Westminster Green Paper, 'The Future of Northern Ireland'.

The Green Paper constituted a basic reappraisal of British imperialism's strategy in Ireland. The central revision concerned what is known as the 'constitutional position' of the Six Counties. The Six Counties were considered to be an integral part of the United Kingdom, and its status was held to be inviolable except by the will of the protestant majority, ie. the Unionist bourgeoisie.

This tenet of British policy was deleted by the Green Paper which stated that the constitutional position of the North "must not preclude the necessary taking into account of ...the Irish dimension". In other words the future of the Orange statelet was no longer to be considered purely in terms of the protestant majority, but in terms of the whole people of Ireland. Moreover, Britain's confidence at this point was highlighted by its desire to give this change of policy as wide a currency as possible as it evidenced by the statement (contrary to the wishes of Conor Collaborator O'Brien) that a refusal to speak now of Irish unity would be "a prescription for confusion".

The Green Paper not only insisted on placing the question of partition in the context of Irish unity, but it

also spelt out in a general way what this would mean for the basic structures of the Six County statelet.

For the first time it was openly admitted that the conflict rending the North apart over the past fifty years, arose not merely from the existence of two "political viewpoints", but from the existence of "two whole communities".

The reformulation of the problem in this manner, pointed the finger logically at the other features of the Orange statelet. It was admitted, albeit in an indirect way (using such euphemistic terms as "permanent majority" and "permanent minority") that this situation had resulted in institutionalised sectarianism against the catholic minority.

By so framing the problems the need to radically alter the structures of power in the North was deliberately posed. Thus the need "to seek a much wider consensus than has hitherto existed" was insisted upon. It was openly acknowledged that "minority groups should be assured of an effective voice and a real influence". And it was stressed that this would be done by "giving minority interests a share in the exercise of executive power".

The Green Paper undoubtedly marked a major shift in the historic orientation of British Imperialism, in the sense that it posed the need for some formal unity between North and South and the need for a definite sharing of executive power between catholic and protestant communities in the North.

Arising from the new orientation two important practical proposals were made. Firstly, that a Council of Ireland should be set up which would take account of the Irish dimension by giving the Southern bourgeoisie a significant say in the affairs of the Six Counties. Put simply, it was intended to end the sovereignty of the Unionists. Secondly, that a community government be set up in which representatives of the catholic minority (ie the catholic middle class) would wield ministerial power.

RESISTANCE FROM THE SOUTH

Although British imperialism wishes to introduce these reforms and alterations, it is caught in the web of its past policies. Now that it has altered course, the material results of its past interventions have produced autonomous tendencies which are cutting across its path at this point.

In the South these tendencies assert themselves in two important ways.

Firstly, in the economic sphere: one of the

fundamental reasons behind the federal proposals, has been the significant increase of control gained by British capital over the Southern economy during the sixties. But this is not the only reason for federalism; it is supposed to be a means to achieving it. The influx of capital, the expansion of industry, the creation of jobs, was supposed to show in a practicle way the desirability of integration with Britain. In the short term this may in fact have had some effect.

But the way in which British capital, to use a Marxist expression tended to increase the organic composition of capital invested in industry, ie. it increased the ratio between capital invested in plant and machinery, and capital invested in labour power. Since surplus value and profit are created on the capital invested in labour, a decline was produced in the rate of profit. To ofset this decline the rate of exploitation of labour had to be increased. (this increased rate of exploitation, has already received a practicle manifestation in the huge strike wave which marked the sixties.)

In addition to this central feature, there is a whole galaxy of secondary problems - intensified inflation, worsening balance of payments, run down of external reserves etc., which eat away the social surplus that might have been used to provide decent social services or create a welfare state.

In the long term, the intervention of British imperialism was bound to propel the Irish working class into struggle against its designs, rather than integrating the class into its overall system.

Secondly, in the cultural sphere the hopes of British imperialism have proved equally vain.

During the 30's, 40's and 50's, for reasons we will not discuss here, Fianna Fail seized on the Republican traditions of the working class and small farmers and used them in a demagogic way to consolidate its position of power. Now, the process of integration with Britain demands that these traditions be liquidated. But the fruits of thirty years hard work cannot be obliterated over night. The "ideological reformation" had to begin gradually. The first changes naturally began with the intelligencia and were slowly transmitted to the general public. But the unexpected explosion of struggle in the North reactivated the traditional instincts. It came as a timely shot in the arm to the Republican ethos which was about to expire helplessly.

The interaction of these economic and cultural

factors have prevented the ripening of conditions and the preparation of public opinion quickly enough to permit any attempt at laying the prerequisite foundations for the implementation of the proposals of the Green Paper.

OBSTACLES IN THE NORTH

Of course the more important and profound stumbling blocks to any meaningful implementation of the line elaborated in the Green Paper, came primarily from the North. These obstacles to the policy of the British are traceable largely to the heterogeneity of Unionism and the peculiar position occupied by the protestant working class in the production process.

The heterogeneity of Unionism stems from the deformed nature of the Irish market and the consequently deformed nature of the Northern market. Because the Northern market is a fragmented piece of the entire Irish Market, it succeeded in producing only an unstable and unbalanced economy. In particular it created two distinct layers within the Unionist ruling class, whose interests do not immediately coincide.

The smallness of this market, resulting in high risk and low profitability on capital, causes an outflow of capital to Britain and keeps the size of industrial enterprises limited. Hence the widespread existence of the Victorian type family firm, which, of course, is bigger than a petty bourgeois concern, but not quite the norm of 20th century capitalism. This type of firm continues to play a vital and vigorous role in the North of Ireland economy.

By contrast to the effusion of capital there is a considerable influx of capital from Britain which arises from the lower rate of profit due to greater technical advancement and a higher organic composition of capital in Britain. This influx of capital has created an alternative and distinct layer within Unionism, which is much more closely identified with the interests of British imperialism.

While both these wings of Unionism are heavily dependent on British imperialism, they are so in different and even contradictory ways.

The second wing of Unionism the "moderates" in the present struggle, while it may have some degree of independence has no real or substantial interests apart from those of British imperialism.

The first wing, the "extremists", is much different however. The family firm, in the course of such a long and

prosperous existence has become not only an economic unit, but a social and political unit as well. As such it is much more deeply rooted and interested in the protestant community.

This situation has created, along with a variety of other factors, a strong paternalism which has reinforced and further spawned a web of favouritism, discrimination, graft, power and privilege.

Accordingly the extreme wing is hostile to any attempt to infringe its sovereignty and more particularly to sharing state power with the catholic minority. So while this wing depends on Britain for profitable outlets for its surplus capital, it has a firm base of its own which can create friction with the interests of British capital.

As Britain proceeded with the plans for reform, it did not consider seriously the significance of the growing schism within the Unionist camp. The material basis of the split was not understood and a naive belief persisted that it would heal itself once the gravity of the situation became apparent. As it turned out, no assumption could have been more ill-founded. It is in fact the resistance of the extreme wing of Unionism which today constitutes one of the most dangerous elements in the grave situation which exists.

The second obstacle we mentioned, the position of the protestant working class, is of course an extension of the problem of heterogeneity in the Unionist camp, but it is best dealt with separately.

The protestant working class cannot be understood solely in terms of the labour-capital conflict which characterises any segment of capitalist society. It must be analysed in the context of the evolution of the entire protestant community. Only in this way can the importance of its role be put in proper perspective.

Two aspects of this evolution must be taken into consideration. To begin with, the elementary historical fact that the protestant community was planted in Ireland as a bridgehead of nascent British capitalism meant that the lower ranks had to be granted special concessions in order to ensure loyalty and bind them to the aristocracy. The principle concession was security of tenure, which allowed an improvement and expansion of holdings and the emergence of line weaving and spinning as a "cottage industry". By contrast, the native catholic population was forbidden any security of holdings and consequently was not in a position to develop any skills or techniques.

By the time of the industrialisation of the North during the middle of the last century, it was only the protestant peasantry which was in a position to fill up the leading skilled ranks in industry.

In addition, their new advantage by comparison to the catholic population was reinforced by the factors which as we have seen also created a fissure in the Unionist bourgeois monolith - the nature of the Six Counties market.

While a significant layer of industry with skilled opportunities did spring up, the smallness of its market base prevented widespread diversification and created intense competition for these positions. Since the protestant workers were installed first, they have been able to use their advantage to monopolise the various trades in the major industries. The catholic worker on the other hand have been forced to occupy the unskilled positions and as there is too little scope in this field of employment, they have been subjected to an abnormally high rate of unemployment and emigration.

The protestant working class has therefore, as Connolly pointed out, come to occupy a position quite similar to the old British labour aristocracy. But there is the additional feature, that a reactionary peasant ideology, Orangeism, lay ready to hand, at the time of the formation of the protestant working class which they used to solidify their ranks and defend their privileged position.

The protestant working class is naturally hostile to the moves towards a federal solution and the economic tendencies of diversification which underpin it. Consequently they have mobilised as a separate identifiable force and have thrown their weight in behind the extreme wing of the Unionist bourgeoisie. This has accentuated the rift in the Unionist camp and reinforced the obstacles to Britain's strategy. The protestant working class has in fact played a decisive role in the extreme Unionist mobilisation against the threat to its privileged position.

A DISEMBOWELLED GREEN PAPER

It is unnecessary to recall here how all the factors we have outlined here have intervened in the last few months. In the South the massive trade union upsurge after Bloody Sunday and the repeated mobilisations after MacStiofan's arrest and during the passing of the Offences Against the State Amendment Act are clear enough in their meaning.

On the opposite side, since the abolition of

Storm at we have seen the consolidation of the extreme wing of Unionism, the Vanguard Movement lead by Craig, and the rise of the protestant working class through the Orange Order, the Loyalist Association of Workers (LAW!) and the Ulster Defence Association.

It was obvious, even when the Green Paper was first published, that the proposals logically flowing from it could not possibly be implemented against such odds. But British imperialism still had a few cards left to play. In the South an all out effort to crush republicanism both physically and politically was projected. The main weapons in this drive were the anti-IRA bill (O.S.A.A.) followed by the general elections. In the North the border poll was to be used as a lever to enhance the position of the moderate wing and put it in a position where it could compete with the extremists for hegemony over the protestant workers.

Both of these offensives failed. The Anti-IRA Bill met with tremendous opposition from the Southern people. It was only with the help of a few bombs from British Intelligence that the legislation was forced through, and the government recognised its defeat by not widely using its new powers. In the general elections which followed, this defeat was confirmed. (The purpose of the elections was clearly to stabilise the situation for the White Paper, but none of the major pro-imperialist parties were able to raise the pertinent issues such as security, repression, collaboration, etc. Instead the manoeuvre was reduced to a squabble over rates and prices etc.)

In the North the border poll stunt produced equally ineffectual and dubious results. Although the extreme wing had raised the cry of a Unilateral Declaration of Independence, a separate nine county Ulster with independently negotiated relations with both the South and Britain etc., this was mostly demagogic hot air. When the crunch came the moderate wing found it had very little room to outflank the extremists. In fact the only interests that suffered were those of Britain, who had her "Irish dimensions" kicked out of the door.

Unable to deal effectively with all these obstacles and suffering repeated defeats every time it tried to grapple with them, British imperialism has been forced to retreat. The magnitude of this retreat can be judged by a comparison of the proposals in the White Paper and those projected in the Green Paper.

The most glaring retreat in the light of such a comparison has been the question of the "Irish dimension" in

the form of a council of Ireland which would give the Free State a veto over some affairs in the North would be a central feature of the White Paper. Although it was admitted as the deadline of the White Paper approached the nothing too bold would be ventured in this field, it certainly came as a surprise to all seasoned commentators that no direct proposals on the Council of Ireland were contained in it.

A careful examination of the White Paper commentary shows that the whole line of approach to the Council of Ireland has been changed. The Free State will first have to recognise the status of "Northern Ireland" and crush the Republican movement before any kind of united council can be considered. In addition, the areas of work for such a council are limited in advance to "tourism, regional development, electricity and transport". This means pushing the Irish dimension right out of the picture again. The prospects of the Free State authorities being able to mobilise popular support for a constitutional change which would recognise the right of British imperialism in Ireland and OK the extirpation of republicanism in return for a mess of pottage such as "co-operation" in tourism, electricity transport etc. is, to say the least, unlikely. The "regrets" expressed by Cosgrave are a hint to British imperialism and the Unionists about the awkward position their Southern collaborators are in.

The move towards community government was also halted, though not in such clear and decisive terms. Firstly the restored Stormont assembly will not have even the limited power which the old regime had. Prior to this Stormont had no control over foreign policy, treaties or trade pacts, no control over currency, weights, measures, radio, air or sea navigation, taxation, post office, no power to declare war or raise an army, in addition, any decision taken by the legislature could be annulated by the Queen's government.

Now the security and constitutional matters have been removed from the sphere of competence. The new Stormont Assembly will in fact be nothing more than a glorified County Council.

Thus the question of power sharing is avoided altogether by depriving the Assembly of any effective power. In other words, the new assembly will just be a more naked form of direct rule.

In this form, the Assembly cannot act as a stabiliser. While it strips the Unionists of power, it does not give the catholic middle class (led by the SDLP) any additional power.

The SDLP, while it may be prepared to accept this temporarily in the hope of better things to come, will not embrace it as a definitive solution. That is why they have shown such little interest in the proposed structures for power sharing.

Of course, apart from the question of the assembly having real power, the proposed methods of power sharing are transparently ineffectual for the simple reason that the Six Counties by its very nature is a sectarian apartheid state and can only be genuinely reformed in an all-Ireland context. No matter whether the seats are increased from 52 to 80 or 800, no matter whether the straight vote or proportional representation is in operation, the Unionist and protestant population will have a substantial permanent majority.

Accordingly, it doesn't matter whether the Cabinet is chosen by the Secretary of State (who will undoubtedly always appoint a couple of Catholics), the ministers, whether they be protestant or Catholic will have to submit to a Unionist majority. Moreover, these ministers, if they operate in accordance with the procedures recommended in the White Paper will have to bring their legislation through departmental committees which will be elected on a PR basis which will guarantee that they are unionist dominated. So even at this preliminary stage any catholic or non-Unionist minister would have his hands tied by a Unionist majority.

No wonder Mr Faulkner could boast the the "epoch making" proposals of the White Paper were only a souped-up version of the proposal made by the Unionist Party as early as.....1970!

WHAT NEXT?

The implications of failure are becoming more obvious every day. The only way out of the complex impasse in the North will be a major defeat for one of the sectors opposing the British solution. Having then changed the balance of forces through a decisive military intervention, it may then be possible for Britain to impliment some of its proposals.

There are two important opposition groups - the catholic masses and the extreme unionists. The question is: which of these will the British opt to defeat?

It is unlikely that British imperialism will make a major offensive against its former allies. Not for any sentimental reasons of course, but because of the dangerous consequences this could have.

-40-

Any attempt to crush the organisations like Vanguard, LAW, the UDA as has already been proved would generate a whole series of pogrom attacks against the catholic ghettos. The security forces would then find themselves taking on both sectors at the same time since the resistance of the minority tends to grow over into offences against imperialism. Such a fight they are not capable of winning except at enormous expense to the already overstretched resources of British imperialism.

Even if such a situation did occur there are deeper political consequences which must be considered.

The taming of the "Loyalists" would indeed change the balance of forces, but not specifically in the direction of British imperialism. The position of the catholic masses would be strengthened as a result, and without the extremist wing of Unionism to act as a buffer their struggle could not easily be contain. In the long run, the strategy of defeating the Loyalists would not be the most profitable one for Britain.

On the other hand an offensive against the minority would have many side effects. The most important would be to put the moderate wing of Unionism in a position to compete with the extreme wing of Unionism for the leadership of the protestant working class. A heavy defeat for the catholic masses would undoubtedly placate large sections of protestant workers and reconcile them to Britain's new plans. It is likely therefore that the failure of Britain's White Paper will result in an escalation of the brutality against the catholic community.

The tasks of revolutionaries and their supporters are two-fold. The first task is to expose any illusion that the White Paper might work. (Such an illusion leads to collaboration with imperialism and disarms the people against the inevitable attack.)

The second task is to link the struggle North and South. Only the mobilisation of the Southern workers can prevent the defeat of the catholic ghettos in the North. In this respect the tendency among socialists and republicans to think that the main line of offense against imperialism is along the economic front is very erroneous and dangerous. The practical tasks of the socialist and republican movement necessary are:-

1. To explain how and why the White Paper is a failure.
2. To expose the dangers of collaboration.
3. To prepare for mass mobilisations among the catholic people.
4. To win support in the South for the minority in the North as the first stage in the mobilisation against imperialism in the South.

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL



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