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Imperialism &
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Ireland. . Background to 1916

Notes on Pay & Poverty

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Editorial

THE ADVANCING REVOLUTION IN ASIA: BENGAL AND CEYLON

The recent victories of the Indo-Chinese revolutionaries against American Imperialism, symbolised by the Battle of Highway 9 in Laos, has shown once again the tremendous reserves held in store by the Indo-Chinese revolutionaries. These victories have been coupled with a commendable display of internationalism by the Vietnamese, who have publicly declared their solidarity with the anti-war GI's *fighting* in Vietnam and have issued instructions to their troops to deal with them fraternally and aid them to desert or avoid battle. These actions only enhance the already immense prestige of the struggling Indo-Chinese in the imperialist heartlands and act as an impetus to the mass anti-war movement in the United States in particular.

At a time when the imperialist armies in Asia are thoroughly demoralised and over-extended, any revolutionary extension of the Indo-Chinese struggle which opens up new fronts can only aid the Vietnamese and help accelerate the defeat of United States imperialism. It is in this light that we should view recent developments in Eastern Bengal and Ceylon.

The Indian peninsula is virtually the last *major* stronghold of international capitalism in Asia and any revolutionary openings therefore pose a serious challenge to Imperialism hegemony in the whole continent. The invasion of East Bengal (formerly East Pakistan) by the armed force of West Pakistani capital after a General Election result in which the Bengali masses voted for virtual independence, thus created a situation extremely favourable to revolutionaries. In one swift blow the armies of General Yahya Khan destroyed all the illusions of the Bengali petty bourgeoisie as symbolised by the Awami League. The latter, complacent and self-satisfied after its electoral triumph, thought that the Army bosses would be forced to come to terms with it. Its leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, indulged in idle negotiations with the military dictator Yahya Khan. He was confident that his strength as the only antidote to revolution would force the Army to come to an agreement with him. He declared truthfully to a correspondent of the *Agence France Presse*: "Is the West Pakistan government not aware that I am the only one able to save East Pakistan from Communism? If they take the decision to fight I shall be pushed out of power and the Naxalites will intervene in my name. If I make too many concessions, I shall lose my authority. I am in a very difficult position." (Le Monde, March 31, 1971).

But what was involved, even in the 6-point charter of the Awami League, was the expulsion of the West Pakistani bourgeoisie from the East and its replacement by an indigenous bourgeoisie. This the Army could not tolerate and thus it proceeded to smash the Awami League, the only organisation

which could have delayed the development of the revolutionary left forces. Thus the politics of the petty bourgeoisie (the *real* petty bourgeoisie, comrades of the I.S. Group!) showed its total inability to provide any leadership to the Bengali masses. Having steeped itself in electoralism, having condemned viciously the activities of the left groups who were preparing for the armed struggle, the Awami League leadership led the masses to a bloodbath. The responsibility for not preparing the masses can be laid only on its shoulders.

Of course the left parties can not be completely absolved, but their weakness lay in their past; their inability to provide a strong opposition to the Ayub regime owing to the opportunist friendship of the Chinese state with the latter their sectarian refusal to understand the relevance of the political and economic subjugation of East Bengal by West Pakistan and thus grasp the importance of the national question. All these factors allowed the Awami League to steal the thunder and to emerge as a powerful nationalist force. The left groupings however, understood the necessity of the armed struggle and the most advanced of them began to propagandise for it almost immediately after the overthrow of Ayub Khan in March 1969. Thus they were better prepared for the present struggle than most. What could have tipped the balance decisively and firmly in their way would have been an unequivocal display of support by the Chinese state for Bengali national self-determination. But despite all its demagoguery of the past and its revolutionary rhetoric the Chinese bureaucracy was more concerned with preserving its own short-term interests (though it is disputable whether it will achieve even that) and it decided to back the military regime of General Yahya Khan. It dismissed the uprising of the Bengali nation by pretending that it was "Indian interference" and a "Renmin Ribao" commentator wrote on April 11, 1971, that:

"The Chinese government and people will, as always, resolutely support the Pakistan government and people in their just struggle for safeguarding national independence and state sovereignty against foreign aggression and interference." (Peking Review, April 16, 1971).

In his personal message to Yahya Khan, the Chinese Prime-Minister, Chou en Lai, went even further and exceeded all past precedents in grovelling before a reactionary state. (cf. *Pakistan Times*, 13 April, 1971) The declaration of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on the struggle in Bengal (18th April 1971) correctly took the Chinese leadership to task for this abject betrayal:

The Fourth International condemns the treachery of the Maoist government in publicly supporting the Yahya dictatorship and thus helping it to maintain its ruthless exploitation and oppression of the Bengali people. In the guise of combatting Indira Gandhi's "interference", the Mao regime stands today as a direct accomplice to the massacre. Chou en Lai's message to Yahya Khan on April 12th is a brazen attempt to cover up Peking's approval of the massacre of the Bengalis:

"We believe that through consultations and the efforts of Your Excellency and leaders of various quarters in Pakistan, Pakistan will certainly be restored to normal. In our opinion, unification of Pakistan and unity of the peoples of East and West Pakistan are basic guarantees for Pakistan to attain prosperity and strength."

Mao's subsequent personal message to Yahya Khan repeats the same idea in even stronger language. The "unity" of Pakistan is the "unity" of a monstrosity sponsored

by British and world imperialism against the unity of the workers and peasants of the Indian sub-continent. It is a "unity" that strengthens the grip of a tiny group of semi-feudal landlords, comprador capitalists and Generals over millions of super-exploited and starving peasants, agricultural and industrial workers. It is a "unity" that showed callousness to the most elementary needs of the Bengali people by failing to take precautionary measures in advance of last years tornado and by doing nothing for the victims afterwards. It is a fundamental revision of the elementary principles of Marxism-Leninism to speak about the Pakistani "state" and the Pakistan Army without clearly specifying its class character: a state defending the interests of a coalition of semi-feudal landlords, rapacious compradors and monopoly capitalists (22 families of robber barons control two-thirds of the industrial assets of the country). The army is a reactionary bourgeois army formed and trained by imperialism and ready to join similar armies in Iran and Afghanistan in forming an anti-communist *cordon sanitaire* in Central Asia in the direct service of world imperialism. These are the forces approved by Mao to preserve "unity".

The support given to Yahya Khan by the Chinese bureaucracy represents an open betrayal of the class interests of the workers and poor peasants who have died in the struggle for national self-determination, who are struggling today against the Pakistan Army and who will tomorrow continue the struggle for a socialist Bengal. It is obvious that the Maoist leaders, far from learning the lessons of the Indonesian defeat or the lessons of their unprincipled support for Yahya's predecessor, Ayub Khan, continue on the same opportunist road. Their course weakens the socialist forces in Bangla Desh and strengthens right wing elements that utilise Peking's support of Yahya to discredit "communism". Mao's support to Yahya Khan weakens and harms the advance of the Chinese Revolution: the only substantial bulwark against the threat of imperialist aggression from the Indian peninsula against the People's Republic of China is a strong and powerful revolutionary mass movement moving towards the overthrow of the reactionary states of India and Pakistan, towards a victorious workers and peasants revolution in the whole sub-continent. If the mass uprising in East Bengal is smashed, this will strengthen reaction in the whole peninsula and the very same reactionary army that Mao and Chou flatter today, would be ready tomorrow to support aggression against the Chinese Revolution.

Those communists on a world scale who have chosen to support the Chinese leadership in the Sino-Soviet dispute on the grounds that it acts in a more revolutionary and militant way against imperialism must say today where they stand on this issue. Silence would amount to complicity.

Thus the Chinese state acted as an open impediment to the development of the struggle. Fortunately their opportunism has not prevented their former supporters from carrying on the struggle against the Pakistan Army (often with Chinese weapons stolen from the army in commando raids.)

The second important outbreak occurred in Ceylon where the Coalition government of Mrs Bandaranaike which includes pro-Moscow C.Pers and the LSSP renegades (who were expelled from the Fourth International many years ago) is still attempting to crush the forces of the JVP (Popular Liberation Front). The JVP, which consists of unemployed graduates and poor peasants, undeniably has mass support. Its membership estimates vary between 50,000 and 80,000. The crisis was provoked by the Coalition government itself which wanted to behead the JVP before it developed further and before the growing economic crisis brought the Colombo proletariat out on the streets: that conjuncture would have spelt the death-knell of the bourgeois state in Ceylon. As it is the militants of the JVP were compelled to fight a defensive battle without the active support of the working class. It is obvious that a General Strike would have virtually paralysed the

Bandaranaike government. Another key factor in propping up this decaying regime of renegades was the support it received from the biggest counter-revolutionary international co-operation since Metternich: both India and Pakistan sent help (frigates and helicopters respectively), the Soviet bureaucracy sent MIGS and advisers, United States imperialism sent arms and sympathy, the Chinese regime provided an interest-free loan and maintained a friendly silence (they could hardly allege that they were combatting "Indian expansionism" in the company of Indira Gandhi!), the Yugoslavs and Egyptians also joined in the chorus with a few weapons to show their solidarity (revolutionary solidarity from the same Tito who refused to send arms to Cuba!).

In this way were the Vietnamese revolutionaries stabbed in the back by their "allies"? Che's slogan of creating "two, three, many Vietnams" in order to take the burden off Indo-China was acquiring a certain reality, only to be slapped down by Moscow and Peking. To its credit the North Korean regime seems to have given the IVP in Ceylon a certain amount of help and have been expelled from Ceylon for their pains. The sharp right turn taken by the Chinese government demonstrates the necessity of building an independent revolutionary leadership in China and elsewhere. Apart from helping the bourgeoisie in Pakistan and Ceylon, the Maoist regime recently described the Kuwait government as "anti-imperialist" and welcomed the sister of the Persian butcher, Reza Pahlavi, to Peking. Chou en Lai in proposing a toast to the Shah, welcomed his sister: "Her Royal Highness Princess Ashraf Pahlavi is a friend whom we know well. . . ." And this only a few weeks after the Shah had ordered the execution of Maoist student militants. Thus Chinese foreign policy turns a full circle. From pressuring the Vietnamese in Geneva in 1954, Bandung in 1955, the Indonesian debacle in 1965, friendship with Pakistan and Nepal, through the isolationism during the "cultural revolution" down to the betrayals in Bengal and Ceylon today. The future probably holds in store a healing of the Sino-Soviet conflict, the resumption of friendly relations with the Indian bourgeoisie and a seat in the United Nations, that well-known citadel of world revolution. By this time presumably some Maoist groups will begin to demand the rehabilitation of poor old Liu Shao Chi and other "agents of capitalism" who were adjudged guilty of these very "crimes" not so long ago.

The response of some Maoist groups to these "new revelations" has been a return to the primitive Stalinism of the Thirties. Instead of trying to explain the Chinese position they resort to publishing denunciations of Trotskyism as an "imperialist-CIA" ideology and other charming sophistications. The balance of forces today, however, has been slightly modified and imbecilical ravings of this sort will be treated contemptuously by the revolutionary vanguard. From the more sophisticated Maoists, nevertheless, we demand to know where they stand on these vital issues concerning the Asian revolution. In particular those mandarins who "situate themselves within the anti-revisionist movement", whatever that means in Marxist terminology, have a duty to themselves to speak up on these important issues, which after

all, have a relevance which extends far beyond Asia. Because whether our centrist comrades like it or not the whole question of an international revolutionary organisation is posed. Despite its limited resources, the Fourth International is the only existing force organised on a world scale. Its militants in Argentina, who are leading the People's Revolutionary Army have shown the possibilities of what is possible today in the colonial and semi-colonial world even with limited resources. We do not tell them: we can only build an International only after we have built, in varying degrees, isolated national organisations, which will somehow spontaneously converge together. The recent events in Bengal and Ceylon stress the necessity of the Fourth International. Above all they confirm the nature of the epoch in which we are living—not the epoch of a titanic struggle between the petty bourgeoisie and Imperialism, not the era of new form of capitalism, not the era of “non-capitalist roads of development” but the epoch of socialist revolution.

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The Leninist theory of organisation explains the relationship between the masses, the advanced workers, and the revolutionary party. Mandel clarifies the process by which class consciousness is developed, and explains the role of the party in that process.

—by ERNEST MANDEL

Imperialism and National Bourgeoisie in Latin America

1. Imperialist capital re-oriens to manufacturing industry

In the course of the past fifteen years there has been a major change in the area of investment of imperialist capital in Latin America. Although the sector producing primary materials was the traditionally favoured area, a relatively large share of imperialist capital has been invested in the manufacturing sector in recent years. This change has been so marked that by the end of 1966, investment in manufacturing industries had become the most important sector of private foreign capital in Latin America. At this time the division between different sectors of investment was as follows:

Manufacturing industry	\$5 261 million
Oil industry (including oil distribution)	4 878
Mining	1 697
Miscellaneous (including plantations, banking, insurance, public service)	3 828
Total	\$ 15 664 million

(source O.E.C.D.)

As this development has gone further since then, it is likely that by now 40-45% of imperialist investment in Latin America is in the industrial sector and that the 50% mark will be passed in the not too distant future.

The European imperialist powers - especially German imperialism - have undoubtedly played a pioneering role in this process. The big West German monopoly trusts have made a great drive to penetrate Latin America in recent years. These investments have been concentrated almost exclusively in manufacturing industries. American trusts, risking losing important positions (notably their predominance in the Latin American car industry), have been forced to react and follow the trend.

This move by American monopolies nevertheless has deeper roots than a simple reaction to the reappearance of European trusts on the Latin American market. The constant fall in prices of primary materials relative to manufactured products, has provoked a relative fall in the rate of profit in numerous primary sectors. The normal reaction of capital confronted with such a fall is to switch investment from these sectors to those where the rate of profit is higher. This is particularly the case with a series of sectors of manufacturing industries, like the chemicals industry, petrochemicals, electronics, pharmaceuticals, electrical appliances, etc.

To give a few examples: in the north-east of Brazil, just in the last few years, the following imperialist firms have established subsidiaries (generally in association with Brazilian capital): General Electric, Dow Chemical, Union Carbide, Pirelli, Philips, Robert Bosch, General Foods, Fives-Lille, Societe europeenne d'expansion horlogere, etc.

The Capuava petrochemicals complex in Brazil has been created with the participation of not only the World Bank, but the Bank of Worms and the Banque Francaise du commerce exterieur. Shell of Brazil is also to contribute a plant. *Badische Anilin* has just taken a 60% share in one of the major Brazilian chemicals companies, *Suvinil*. The Brazilian chemical group *Mantiquera* has associated with the American trust, FMC Corporation, and the British trust Laporte Industries Limited. Pechiney is collaborating with the Brazilian ASA to establish an aluminium factory near Recife.

The 'joint ventures' formula has been universally extolled as the best way of 'overcoming nationalistic resistance to foreign capital'. In fact, as expressed by the typical representative of big Brazilian capital, Roberto de Oliveira Campos, national shareholders are 'extremely interested' in the possibilities of such collaboration.

Comrade Vitale, in his pamphlet, *Y despues del Cuatro, Que?* (Ediciones Prensa Latinoamericana, Santiago de Chile), quotes an impressive list of joint enterprises created in the last few years in Chile: Rockwell Standard has associated with two Chilean companies for the production of spare parts for cars: General Motors has associated with Automotora del Pacifico; Philips, RCA Victor and Electromet have invested in the Chilean electronics indus-

try, Phizer and Parke-Davis in pharmaceuticals, and so on. (p.27). Vitale quotes an article in the review *Punto Final* which states that out of the 160 most important Chilean firms, more than half have foreign shareholders.

2. The proportion of industry in total production has increased

The immediate result of this change in orientation of imperialist investment has been a growth in the proportion GNP deriving from industrial production in a whole series of Latin American countries. This is clearly not a uniform movement. It has scarcely touched the Central American countries, Paraguay or Ecuador. In Argentina it was sharply restricted. Nevertheless, in the fourteen years from 1953-1966, there was a marked change in a whole series of cases.

It is clear that this increase of the proportion of industry in GNP, resulting from the increase in investment of foreign capital in the industrial sector, has been accompanied, not by a reduction, but by an *increase* in the economic dependence of these countries in relation to imperialism. This increase in dependence can be illustrated by the following phenomena:

All the machinery and a large part of the raw materials necessary to industrialisation have to be imported. Because of this, the dependence of the economy on income from exports (still essentially of primary products)(1) is accentuated, and all new deterioration in the terms of trade provokes an abrupt halt in industrialisation, with all the convulsions that follow from that.

A large part of the real resources which finance foreign investment are mobilised on the spot, thereby draining the capital market and retarding primitive accumulation of 'national' capital.

Under the impulse of private foreign capital, industrialisation causes not only a continual outflow of dividends, interest, etc., but also a continual influx of technicians and highly-paid directors, who in their turn accelerate the net outflow of income from these countries.

For example, in 1967/8, six Latin American countries (Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela and Chile), which are also the most industrialised in the continent, were paying out over 25% per annum of their total income from exports as return on foreign investments and the foreign debts they had contracted. (International Monetary Fund: *Balance of Payments Yearbook*, vol. 20).

The Brazilian marxist economist, Theotonio Dos Santos, publishes a table in his *Dependencia economica y Cambio Revolucionario* (Editorial Nueva Izquierda, Caracas, 1970), from which he concludes that net North American investment in Latin America for the period 1957-1964 reached \$ 1500 million, of which less than \$ 180 million was actually exported from the Un-

ited States, the rest coming either from undistributed returns (i.e. from the surplus value produced by Latin American workers), or from drawing on the local capital market, and banking credits. The sum of \$180 million actually going from the US to Latin America during this period should be compared with the sum of \$630 million transferred in the same period from Latin America to the US in dividends, interest, etc.

3. The Process of Uneven Development

'Industrialisation' under the impulse of foreign capital investment does not produce the classical effects of industrialisation experienced in the imperialist countries during the nineteenth century.

There is no cumulative growth, no diffusion of industrial techniques to increasingly large sectors of the economy, no major reduction in unemployment, no increase in autonomy of economic policy, and so on. The reasons for this divergence from the old historical norm are easy to understand. They are all related to the dominant context of the international imperialist economy, to the form of industrialisation, and to the growth in dependence which follows from it.

The industries introduced by foreign monopoly capital are hyper-modern industries employing relatively little labour⁽²⁾. There is no radical agrarian revolution, and therefore no large-scale reintegration of the rural population into commercial circuits, no division of labour extended into the countryside, no great expansion of the national market. The rural exodus is accelerated primarily in the form of a marginal urban population which partially replaces the marginal rural population. (Theotonio Dos Santos, *op. cit.*, pp 28-29). The landless peasantry is transformed neither into rural proletariat, nor urban proletariat, but into urban *lumpen proletariat*.

The considerable drain which imperialist trusts make on the internal capital market in Latin America, and the retarding of the primitive accumulation of 'national' capital resulting from this, hold back even more the diffusion of industrial techniques, and the process of industrialisation in breadth and depth which small and middle-sized capitalist enterprises carry out.

The small size of the national market, a correlative of the absence of cumulative economic growth, therefore has a paradoxical result: foreign imperialist trusts established in Latin America in their turn become advocates of a Latin American common market. They aim by this policy, not so much to defend themselves by a common tariff against the influx of merchandise imported from the US, Japan or Western Europe, as to provide an outlet for their industrial production which becomes stifled within restrictive national frontiers as soon as the first factories have been set up. This interest on the part of foreign trusts is shared by 'national' capital closely associated with them, especially in the heavy industrial sector.

4. Changes in the relationship of forces and alliances among the ruling classes of Latin America

Traditionally the Latin American ruling class has existed in the form of a bloc, an *oligarchy* (landowners and comprador bourgeoisie), in alliance with imperialism. Living essentially on exports, these two forces were favourable to free trade policy and collided with the interests of the so-called 'national industrial' bourgeoisie whose interests demanded protection against the influx of cheap imperialist products. The conflict between imperialism in alliance with the oligarchy, and the 'national' bourgeoisie, was at the same time a real conflict and a limited one. A real conflict because it was a struggle for the redistribution of surplus value (from social surplus product) produced in Latin America: the 'national' bourgeoisie wished to reduce the share of returns going to imperialism, with a view to increasing its own share and thus stimulating a more or less classic industrialisation process. A limited conflict because the social importance of the proletariat was increasing more rapidly so that the 'national' bourgeoisie feared a revolutionary process might overthrow the regime of private property on which its own existence as a class depended. It was therefore necessary for it to lead a movement of *reform* and not a revolutionary anti-imperialist movement.

In order to succeed in this movement for reform of the classic socio-economic structures of Latin America, the 'national' bourgeoisie was prepared to exercise pressure on imperialism with the aid of carefully contained and channeled mass mobilisations. The regimes of Cardenas in Mexico, Peron in Argentina, and Vargas and Quadros in Brazil, marked the highest achievement of which the 'national' bourgeoisie of Latin America was capable. The end of these regimes marked at the same time the failure and the resignation of this bourgeoisie, their fear of a revolutionary mobilisation of the masses outweighing their desire for an increased share of the profits, especially after they began to lose their grip on the mass movement.

With the economic transformation effected during the last fifteen years, these traditional political structures have also been transformed. The objective basis for the alliance of 'oligarchy and imperialism' has been reduced. The autonomy of the 'national' industrial bourgeoisie disappears in the face of the imperialist manufacturing trusts. Incapable of sustaining a real struggle to compete with these trusts, 'national' industrial capital has a tendency to associate with them. The number of joint enterprises is continually on the increase. National legislation, moreover, pushes foreign capital into this course: the case of the car industry is typical in this respect.

So there gradually emerges a new alliance, an association of 'imperialist capital - national industrial capital' with an interest in weakening the oligarchic sectors - not only the big landowners and exporters, but even tradition-

al mining capital. The joint interest of this new bloc is that of assuring even a widening of the internal market and of freeing resources and capital to finance industrialisation and the importation of equipment. The 'industrial capital' opposition to the 'oligarchy' will combine with an opposition to the old oligarchy formed by 'industrial capital plus imperialist manufacturing trusts' (or more precisely, 'industrial capital dominated by imperialist manufacturing trusts').

Comrade Hugo Blanco is therefore perfectly right when he talks of the appearance of a *new oligarchy in place of the old* (Rouge, 12 October 1970). However the interlocking of interests of the imperialist manufacturing sector and the 'national' bourgeois layers with an interest in industrialisation, is such that no global anti-imperialist strategy is conceivable, even for purely tactical reasons, for this new-style 'national' bourgeoisie. (A wing of it, moreover, tends to become 'bureaucratised', to be transformed into a layer of administrators directing a nationalised sector, with the aim of stimulating simultaneously private accumulation of industrial capital in general and their own private fortune in particular). The test of such partial anti-imperialist measures, of an effective even if small scale reduction of the dependence of Latin American countries on imperialism, is in fact no longer to be found in the nationalisation of such and such a mining enterprise or plantation but in the nationalisation of manufacturing enterprises⁽⁴⁾. Not only is that impossible for the representatives of the 'new oligarchy', but the nationalisation measures they carry out are always accompanied by high compensation *which allows imperialist capital to do precisely what it requires: to leave the primary materials sectors for manufacturing industry without social convulsions or violent ruptures.*

5. The attitude of Imperialism

The most intelligent representatives of imperialism have fully understood the political and social implications of this modification of their own interests in Latin America. If European imperialists have played a pioneering role in this field too, the most significant development is the complete recognition of these changes by American imperialism. This is expressed fully in the Rockefeller report. The significance of this recognition lies in the fact that the Rockefeller family, with its great interests concentrated in Latin American oil, once personified the classic attitude of American imperialism towards Latin America, and today represents the changes which are taking place.

One could quote the whole Rockefeller report, which is dominated from beginning to end by an awakened consciousness of the phenomenon we have described. But it will undoubtedly be enough to mention the following passage:

In the same way that the other American republics depend on the United States for their capital goods needs, the US depends on them for a vast market for our manufactured products. And as these countries regard the US as a market for their raw materials, by selling which they can buy capital goods for their own development, the US regards these raw materials as necessary to our industries, on which the employment of so many of our citizens depends.

But these forces of economic interdependence (sic) are changing and must change. A growing two-way flow of trade in industrial products must replace the present exchange of manufactured goods for raw materials.

(Quality of Life in the Americas. Text of the Rockefeller Mission Report, The Department of State Bulletin, 8 December 1969, our emphasis.)

The law discovered by Marx, according to which it is social existence which determines consciousness, has definitely not lost its truth, if one looks at the changes in the consciousness of the American bourgeoisie concerning Latin America. It is necessary to look to this modification of imperialist interests for an explanation of the strange complaisance that American imperialism had so far shown in relation to the nationalisations by General Velasco, by General Ovando, and even those being prepared by Salvador Allende. (5). 'Pay compensation and allow re-investment in the manufacturing sector of your country: that's all we ask' - implying: 'for in this way our hold on your economy and society will be re-inforced and at the same time it will be less strongly contested by the masses'. Such is the attitude of imperialism to 'military reformism'.(6)

6. The interrelation of 'Military Reformism' & Imperialism

It would clearly be too simple to reduce the whole problem of the attitude of imperialism to 'military reformism' to the single factor of immediate economic interest. There is a social interest, or more exactly socio-politico-military interest, which has priority over the material interests of one section or another of the American bourgeoisie, no matter whether it is producing raw materials or manufactured goods. With the victory of the Cuban revolution Latin America entered a period of deep social convulsions. This period has not yet ended and will be prolonged through the next decade at least. The traditional oligarchy is absolutely powerless to crush or effectively repress the social forces demanding radical change in the continent. It is therefore vital for imperialism to support and foster political forces capable of channelling potential revolutionary energies in a direction which does not lead beyond the capitalist mode of production and therefore

beyond the international capitalist system.

It is no exaggeration to say that these considerations are to be found in the very text of Nelson Rockefeller's report. Here are some of the reflections of the honourable governor of the state of New York:

... The dynamics of industrialisation and modernisation have stretched the fabric of the social and political structures. The situation is dominated by political and social instability, by pressure which has built up in favour of a radical solution to problems, and an increased tendency towards national independence in relation to the United States.

...The ferment of nihilism and anarchism is spreading throughout the hemisphere.

...Most of the American republics have not yet mobilised the resources necessary for a broad industrialisation of their economies. In differing degrees they need: more and better education, a more effective system for channeling national savings into capital formation and industrial investment, laws which protect the public interest while encouraging the spirit of enterprise, and expanding government services to support industrial growth.

...The dilemma of governments is the following: they know that the co-operation and participation of the United States can contribute greatly to accelerating the realisation of their goals of development, but their feeling of political legitimacy may very well depend on the degree of independence they are able to maintain in relation to the United States.

...Although it is not yet widely recognised, the military and the Catholic church are also among the forces today agitating for change in the other American republics. This is a new role for them.

...In many Central and South American countries, the army is the most important political grouping in society. The military are symbols of power, authority and sovereignty, as well as the focus of national pride. They have traditionally been considered the ultimate arbitrators of the good of the nation.

...In brief, a new type of military is appearing, and often becoming a major force for constructive social change(!) in the American republics. Motivated by a growing impatience with corruption, inefficiency and a stagnating political order, the new military are ready to adapt their authoritarian traditions to the goals of economic and social progress.

(Quality of Life in the Americas, op. cit., pp. 502, 503, 504, 505).

Military reformism - as the final stand before 'Castroite or anarchist subversion' - is the strategic line which American imperialism appears to have

adopted since the Rockefeller report.

7. 'Military Reformism' and mass movements

Contrary to the optimistic forecasts of the gradualist school, the form of industrialisation typical of Latin America in the past fifteen years - industrialisation in strict association with imperialist trusts and under their direction - has brought about not a reduction but an increase in social tensions. The explosive character of the social situation is determined by the growth of unemployment and underemployment; the effects of galloping inflation on the standard of living of the masses - sometimes accompanied by a brutal reduction in real wages, as happened in Argentina and Brazil, and in Bolivia at the time of the Barrientos dictatorship - the distortions of the educational system, which produces equally massive intellectual unemployment⁽⁷⁾, the permanent crisis of small and middling enterprises, including small and middle peasants, growing indebtedness in the countryside, and so on.

This growth of social tensions implies an increasingly marked radicalisation of the masses, and not only of the vanguard sectors. The once isolated case of the mining proletariat of Bolivia, has today found a powerful replica in the proletariat of Cordoba and Rosario; it is now only a question of time before phenomena of the same kind are reproduced in the proletariat of Chile, Brazil and elsewhere.

In these conditions, the attitude of 'military reformism' to the mass movement must differ greatly from that of the bonapartist leaders who expressed the interests of the 'national' industrial bourgeoisie of former times, such as Cardenas, Peron and Vargas.

The Cardenas, Perons and Vargases had an interest in mobilizing the workers, in so far as they were for the most part working for imperialism or for the oligarchy, and where they - the workers - and not the 'national' bourgeoisie, would pay the immediate price for this mobilisation. (The 'national' bourgeoisie could even hope later on to transform a part of this price, through various economic and financial mechanisms, into capital accumulation for 'national' industry). The Velascos and their eventual imitators in Argentina, Brazil and elsewhere, have no interest in bringing about such a mobilisation, for the price would be paid first of all by manufacturing industry, in which the major part of the proletariat now works.

The essential social function of the military reformist regimes is therefore not to *mobilise* the masses in order to modify the relationship of forces with imperialism. On the contrary, it is to *contain* the mass movement, in association with imperialism and with its support, offering its reforms and a vaguely anti-imperialist, socialising phraseology. The difference lies in the *form* of struggle against the 'dangers of subversion': repression and terrorism pure and simple in the case of the bourgeois 'gorillas'; reforms, anti-im-

perialist demagoguery and 'muted' repression in the case of military reformism. But 'muted' repression can be transformed into bloody repression from one day to the next, as soon as the mass movement goes beyond the narrow limits which the 'enlightened' dictatorship has set it.

That doesn't mean that there are no conflicts of real interests among fractions of the native ruling classes, fractions of imperialism, and political forces (especially military tendencies) which make an effort to become more independent of the social forces they are supposed to represent. These conflicts exist, they are important and they must be integrated into our general analysis, so that we can understand the vicissitudes of the political, social and economic evolution of each specific Latin American country at a specific moment. We have simply tried to define what appears to us to be the *general* tendency and meaning of this evolution, without claiming thereby to resolve all the problems.

Nor does this analysis mean that the toiling masses and the revolutionary organisations should be indifferent to the precise forms worn by the exploitation and oppression they suffer. Every legal or semi-legal possibility for pursuing work of propaganda, agitation and organisation of the vanguard must be fully exploited. Every new reduction of suppression of the freedoms of workers' organisations must be considered as a blow to the movement, and must be vigorously fought.

But it is necessary to avoid all illusions in any kind of return to constitutional regimes of classic bourgeois parliamentary democracy, in any return to an environment in which the mass movement could gradually organise and grow progressively and legally. That corresponds with neither the intentions nor the possibilities of the regimes of military reformism, nor with the interests of the 'new oligarchy' which supports them.

Above all, it does not correspond to the relationship of forces. The ruling classes in Latin America are too weak to be able to afford the luxury of a regime which could temporarily assure their stability at the price of a real rise in the standard of living of the masses.

The perspective which flows from this analysis is of a succession of pre-revolutionary and revolutionary convulsions, intersected by temporary defeats and by attempts on the part of the Latin American bourgeoisie to find solutions of the 'military reformist' type; but they will be attempts which lead, after a certain time, to new convulsions and new trials of strength. The building of an adequate revolutionary leadership of the proletariat and semi-proletariat of town and countryside, is the only way out of the impasse. It is more than ever the central task. The strategy of armed struggle, closely linked and increasingly integrated with the mass movement, in which a growing penetration must be assured: this is the only way to build this

revolutionary party in the present historical context of most of the Latin American countries.

Ernest Mandel

Notes

1. There is nevertheless an important exception. The exports of manufactured products from Brazil have shown a very rapid increase in the last period. According to the Brazilian marxist economist Ruy Mauro Marini, these exports rose from an index of 100 in 1962 to 102 in 1963, 152 in 1964, 317 in 1965 and 272 in 1966 (*Subdesarrollo y revolucion*, p. 115. Siglo Veintiuno Editores S.A., Mexico, 1969).
2. Here are two striking examples. The first concerns Brazil: from 1950 to 1960 manufacturing production increased at an average annual rate of over 9%, the urban population at an average annual rate of 6%, total population of the country at a rate of 3.1%, and industrial employment at barely 3% (Ruy Mauro Marini: *Subdesarrollo y revolucion*, Siglo Veintiuno Editores, Mexico, 1969, p.73). That means that total underemployment has actually grown, and that urban unemployment has grown considerably. The second example is from Colombia. From 1951 to 1960 the urban population grew by 2.6 million. In the same period, industrial employment did not even increase by 100,000. Mario Arrubla: *Estudios sobre el subdesarrollo colombiano*, Editorial La Oveja Negra, Medellin, 1969). Andre Gunder Frank, in his latest book: *Lumpenburgeria, Lumpendesarrollo* (Editorial Nueva Izquierda, Caracas, 1970), quotes the following net figures: while the share of industrial production in the gross national production of Latin America went from 11% in 1925 to 19% in 1950, 22% in 1960 and 23% in 1967, industrial employment represented only 14% of the total civilian labour force in each of these years! (p.110).
3. For example, the recent conflict in Ecuador between the Velasco Ibarra dictatorship and the banana exporters, who refused to submit to a commercial, banking and monetary policy which would permit the mobilisation of the country's social surplus production for the purpose of industrialisation.
4. Clearly this does not mean that revolutionaries should remain indifferent to such nationalisations, and that they should not give them critical support against attacks from imperialism or the oligarchy. But it lends much more weight to combined demands for nationalisation *without compensation or return sale and under workers' control*. In particular, it should re-orient revolutionary propaganda towards the nationalisation of the whole of foreign capital, without priority for that invested in the primary producing sector.
5. I will allow myself to recall that we predicted this turn in the early '60s: 'Among the imperialist bourgeoisie the interests of those who see the industrialisation of the under-developed countries as the strengthening of a *potential competitor* come into conflict with those who see it above all as the emergence of *potential clients*. Usually these conflicts tend to be settled in favour of the second group, which is that of the big monopolies based mainly on the production of capital goods'. (*Marxist Economic Theory*, vol. II, p.480, Merlin Press, 1968: first published in English 1962).
6. If imperialism and the Chilean bourgeoisie are afraid of Allende's government, it is not for its economic programme, but because of the dynamics of the mass struggle which it runs the risk of unleashing. The choice with which they are confronted is this: Will those struggles develop further if the Allende period takes its constitutional course, or will they go further still if there is an attempt to prevent Allende from governing?
7. During the period 1950-1965, a whole series of Latin American countries experienced an annual growth of 10% or more in the number of university students. This growth was notable in the cases of Venezuela, Chile, Costa Rica, Trinidad, Mexico, Nicaragua and Ecuador. Clearly the absence of outlets in industry for these intellectuals has increased the pressure for a State sector capable of increasing the number of jobs for university graduates.

IRELAND

Background to 1916

This article is one of a series on Ireland which we have been printing in 'International'. In Vol. 1, no. 1 we reproduced Connolly's most important articles on Partition. In Vol. 1, no. 3 we printed an article by D.R. O'Connor-Lysaght on Connolly. A few copies of these are still available from Red Books, 182 Pentonville Road, London, N.1. This present article deals with the social forces at work in the period leading up to the signing of the Easter Rising. It aims to provide a historical background to the present struggle in Ireland. Our intention is not to duplicate the aims of the various histories of Ireland such as Lysaght's 'The Republic of Ireland' or Liam de Paor's 'Divided Ulster', but to concentrate on those aspects which are most essential for understanding present problems. For example, it is impossible to understand the ideology behind the present split in the Republican movement unless you know the social forces which shaped the historical origins of the 'physical force' traditions of the I.R.A. Similarly, the terrible confusion of the Irish Labour movement over the national question becomes much easier to understand when you realise the syndicalist origins from which that movement sprang.

- Eds.

'In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom'. (Declaration of the Republic of Ireland).

This might seem rather a remarkable declaration for a revolutionary socialist such as James Connolly to attach his name to. Appeals to God and nationhood have not generally rested easily on the Marxist conscience. But this declaration was not simple rhetoric nor merely an invocation of memories. The struggle of the Irish people against the British ruling class had had a real continuity in *content* and not simply in tradition. That continuity can be found in the origins of the clash between Britain and Ireland. It does not lie in the colour of flags, the name of the patron saint or even in the clash

of two abstract national ideals. It lies in the struggle for land.

The invasion of Ireland by the ex-Norman English aristocracy in the twelfth century was not simply a clash of armies. It was a clash of social systems. The English feudal system was pitted against the Irish system of holding land in common. (1) Feudalism inevitably triumphed(2), but, in so doing, it did not abolish the land question, it simply altered its form. From that moment until at least the 1930s, the land question, in many guises, dominated Irish politics.(3) It was the continuation of this struggle over land, together with the particular form of foreign oppression, which resulted in the creation of an extremely revolutionary and nationalist peasantry. The revolutionary nature of this class was heightened by the fact that it was the peasants who suffered the more 'spectacular' excesses of British rule and its rather simple minded early policy of the seizure of land and booty(4).

As Britain began to find new methods of colonial exploitation and new countries to conquer, direct plundering of Ireland became less attractive. Ireland remained a colonial nation, but it was the indirect effects of British rule which now became the worst oppression. These effects could assume truly staggering proportions. For example, in 1740 no less than 400,000 people died as a result of famine, and even this did not compare with the effects of the Great Famine of the 1840s.(5)

Although the peasantry bore the main weight of British rule, it was incapable of leading the national struggle. The peasantry is too fragmented a class to have the social cohesion necessary to lead a revolution. Furthermore, its main class aims, division of the land, etc., are scientifically speaking utopian. But because of its numerical preponderance, no other class could make a revolution without the support of the peasantry. For this reason, Irish history is largely the story of various sections of the bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, or proletariat trying to link their class goals to the struggle of the peasantry.

Peasant movement in Ireland

The revolutionary nature of the Irish peasantry was heightened by the particularly barbarous system of holding land imposed on Ireland by British rule. Holding land on lease was of course one of the main features of the feudal system in both Ireland and Britain, but in Ireland there was none of the security of tenure which held under English common law. The few rights that the tenant enjoyed were abolished in a series of acts running from the final enforcement of the feudal system right up to the 1860 Landlord and Tenant Law Amendment Act. The only areas possessing any greater security of tenure were those in which the 'Ulster Custom' prevailed. This levied an extra rent, but gave some security of tenure. Jemmy Hope summarises the position that had been reached by 1840 as follows:

'The relation in which the tenant now stands to the landlord is the relation in which the uprooted traveller stands to the highwayman who holds a blunderbuss to his breast while he demands his purse'.

The law as it applied in Ireland did not recognise a person as holding land for a period of years, but allowed him to be evicted at any time. Similarly, any buildings erected by the tenants on the land belonged legally to the landlord and not to the tenant.

The peasant rebellions against these conditions began to become serious by about 1750, when the secret society of Whiteboys carried out agitation throughout the south of Ireland. Both Protestants and Catholic landlords united to crush them. The Protestant citizens of Cork offered £300 for the capture of the chief of the Whiteboys and £50 for his lieutenants. The Catholic citizens of the same city offered £200 and £40 for the same captures. There were angry scenes in the Irish House of Commons with Irish 'patriots' condemning the British for not killing enough Whiteboys. In the north the peasant societies were known as Oakboys or Steelboys. The first named of these staged a minor rising in County Monaghan in 1762. The Steelboys were predominantly dissenting Protestants, and appear to have been a more formidable organisation. Their strength is indicated by the fact that when six of their leaders were jailed in Belfast, they marched through the city in broad daylight and stormed the jail.

Initially, the main demands of such organisations were against secondary features of capitalism such as the tithe system. However, as the 18th century progressed, their aims grew progressively more radical. Although none of these early revolts posed a serious threat to British rule in Ireland, they are nevertheless important for several reasons. In particular, they display the typical features of peasant movements, with attacks on feudal institutions and conspiratorial forms of organisation.

The first of these features is easy to account for. If the peasantry is oppressed by feudalism it will obviously attack the institutions of that social system. The other feature - the organisational form of the movement - needs a little more explanation.

The main social characteristic of the peasantry is its fragmentation as a class. This is true not merely in the literal physical sense of its being widely dispersed geographically, but also in the more important sense that the mode of production of the peasantry is not a socialised one, but an individual one involving little or no division of labour. This mode of existence naturally tends to produce political movements based on individual actions. The classic peasant form of struggle is therefore terrorism (e.g. the Narodniks). If however a more widespread movement is generated, then its organisational

form does not develop naturally out of the mode of existence of the peasantry. Such an organisation must be extremely hierarchical and rigid, and in fact most such organisations have tended towards a 'military' form. Historically the form of organisation corresponding to these requirements has been the secret society or, more recently, the type of Stalinist party whose organisational form is carried to its logical conclusion in the militarised Chinese Communist Party. It is the organisational rigidity which enables it to surmount, at least temporarily, the fragmentation of the peasantry. As we shall see, the Irish peasant based movements, for example the Irish Republican Brotherhood, fully display these characteristics. The type of militarised organisation produced by the conditions of existence of the peasantry is, however, fatal when applied to the working class movement. If organisation is seen in purely administrative terms, then it leads to an ignoring of the *political* role of the revolutionary organisation.

The nineteenth century - the peasantry alone

The peasantry of course played a role in the 1798 rising of the United Irishmen, but that movement was predominantly a movement of the bourgeoisie (with the participation of the urban artisans lending the rebellion a very thorough going nature). The United Irishmen was the last fling of the revolutionary bourgeoisie in Ireland. After 1798, the Irish bourgeoisie, in common with other European bourgeoisies, became more afraid of the power and aspirations of the working class than it was interested in overthrowing its native and foreign oppressors. It therefore ceased to be a revolutionary class.

What the revolt of the United Irishmen did achieve, and this because of its radical and deep going nature which affected all classes in Ireland, was to leave a permanent mark on the consciousness of all future revolutionary movements. From then on 'The Republic' became the goal of every radical Irish movement whatever its class origin. The concrete interpretation of the slogan of course varied from class to class as we shall see. Gilmore summarises this development as follows:

'It seems advisable then to take a closer look at that name (the Republic), and to try to appreciate what it meant to those who, through the generations, have thought it worth striving for. However vaguely defined, it had a very real meaning simply because the subjection of Ireland to Britain had a very real meaning to life in Ireland.

In its origin there was no doubt as to its meaning. 'The rights of man in Ireland; the inherent and indefeasible claims of every free nation to rest in this nation' - that statement of objectives, issued as a manifesto at a time

when the minds of oppressed people in every country in Europe had been fired by the overthrow in France of the institution of monarchy, and of the organisation of society of which monarchy was the symbol and coping-stone, represented explicitly the aspirations of the people of Ireland oppressed by a similar organisation of society, with the added complication that that society was itself a subject one.

There was no doubt then about what it meant - neither in the minds of its friends nor of its enemies. The doctrine of 'The rights of man' was not just a phrase representing a liberal attitude of mind in nice people. It was understood and adopted as a basic political principle upon which the independence movement was founded, and it was applied by the organisation of the United Irish Societies to the circumstances of the time in an agitation directed towards breaking the tyranny of the landed aristocracy through a radical reform of the franchise and the abolition of discriminative laws against Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, and other 'non-conformist' religious denominations. It meant, in effect, a revolt by a subject people against the social structure that oppressed them, so that they could rebuild the life of their country in a way that only people with the self-respect of freemen can demand that only people in 'effectual ownership and possession' of their country can do. It brought together into one camp the different elements in Irish life whose far-back racial origins and religious and political traditions had up to then held them apart in hostility to each other. In terms of world politics, it meant falling into step with the progressive forces of Europe and the world. So it was seen by its friends and by its enemies'.⁽⁶⁾

This then is the reason why Irish socialist revolutionaries still fight under the banner which has been claimed as their own by everyone from the reactionary Fine Gael Party leftwards⁽⁷⁾. Thus in the same way that the Bolsheviks claimed at times to be the successors of the Jacobins, Connolly and other Marxists could claim that the working class revolution in Ireland would be the historical inheritors of the struggle of Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen.

The fears of the bourgeoisie in Ireland were however premature as regards the working class - not until the end of the 19th century did the Irish work-

ing class become sufficiently large and organised enough to be a decisive social force. What however did appear to threaten the stability of the bourgeoisie was the seething peasant discontent.

The rebellion of the United Irishmen had its particular organisational form and social content because of the involvement of the bourgeoisie and urban petty-bourgeoisie in the revolt. After 1800 the peasant and bourgeois movements diverged. At the end of the century the working class struggle began to merge with the peasant movement and gave it a new social content and organisational form. However, for most of the 19th century, the land, and therefore the national struggle passed into the hands of peasant-based currents and their intellectual reflections in the petty bourgeoisie. This peasant social base meant that the ideology of the movement was Jacobin and its organisational form was conspiracy. These movements fed on the discontent caused by the rising population in the poorest areas during the early part of the century, and then on the devastation produced by the famine of the 1840s. Another strong driving force for these movements was the six-fold increase in absentee rent payments between 1780 and 1860. Spurred on by these social pressures and freed from the restraining influence of the bourgeoisie (because it had abandoned the national struggle), the ideology of the peasant movement grew steadily more radical as the 19th century progressed.

The prototype of these movements was the Emmett Conspiracy of 1803. This appears to have been based on the peasantry and artisans who had supported the United Irishmen, as indicated by the fact that the most serious fighting in the insurrection occurred in the area of Dublin inhabited almost exclusively by artisans. It had been preceded in 1802 by peasant uprisings in Limerick, Waterford and Tipperary. The programme drawn up by Emmett was a typical Jacobin one, including the confiscation and nationalising of church property, the introduction of universal suffrage, and a ban on the sale of land and public securities. It is significant because as Connolly puts it:

'Emmett believed the 'national will' was superior to property rights and could abolish them at will; and also that he realised that the producing classes could not be expected to rally to the revolution unless given to understand that it meant their freedom from social as well as from political bondage'.(8)

In other words, right from the beginning, these Jacobin movements had a tendency to turn in a 'socialist' direction. This created the possibility for the working class struggle to link up with the peasant movement. The tragedy of Ireland is that no working class party ever developed which was cap-

able of utilising the enormous possibilities thus created. The story of Irish history from 1803 onwards becomes the history of isolated proletarian and peasant movements without the political understanding and organisation necessary to unite them (except for brief moments before and during the first world war and in the early 1930s). The way George Gilmore summarises the failure of the 1934 Republican Congress sums up this entire period. He says that the Congress brought about:

'... a meeting between a section of the Trade Union movement and the militants of the countryside on terms that might have set the nation marching again under a leadership dominated by the political thought of working-class militancy. It was an uneasy meeting, and the junction of forces did not hold. The industrial section withdrew from a task for which it was not ready, and the opportunity presented by the upsurge of courageous spirit in those critical years was lost ... The reconquest of Ireland by its people awaits the day when these forces meet - and hold'.⁽⁹⁾

'Young Ireland'

The Jacobin traditions of the United Irishmen and Emmett's conspiracy were kept alive during the late 1820s and 1830s by the 'Ribbon Conspiracy'. This was a type of violent agricultural trade union. The next movement to assume insurrectionary proportions was the 'Young Ireland' rebellion of 1848. The conditions leading to this rebellion were the appalling misery caused by the 'Great Famine' and the wave of revolutionary upsurge sweeping Europe during 1848.

The famine itself was the worst disaster, calculated by the percentage of the population affected, to occur anywhere in the world during the 19th century. In 1847 and 1848 alone over 570,000 people died of hunger or the disease following the famine. This suffering was imposed on a long term oppression which produced over 3½ million evictions between 1838 and 1888. These social conditions created a tinderbox in Ireland. Unfortunately, the leaders of the Young Ireland movement inevitably displayed all the contradictions of the petty bourgeoisie. The nature of these leaders is summed up in Connolly's description of the antics of William Smith O'Brien during the rebellion:

'He wandered through the country telling the starving peasantry to get ready, but refusing to allow them to feed themselves at the expense of the landlords who had so long plundered, starved, and evicted them; he would

not allow his followers to seize upon the carts of grain passing along the roads where the people were dying for want of food; at Mullinahone he refused to allow his followers to fell trees to build a barricade across the road until they had asked permission of the land lords who owned the trees; when the people of Killenaule had a body of dragoons entrapped between two barricades he released the dragoons from their dangerous situation upon their leader assuring him that he had no warrant for his, O'Brien's arrest; in another place he surprised a party of soldiers in the Town Hall with their arms taken apart for cleaning purposes, and instead of confiscating the arms told the soldiers that their arms were as safe there as they would be in Dublin Castle(10).

All this might seem tragically absurd, but, as Connolly points out, there was method in apparent madness:

'The simple fact is that the Irish workers in town and country were ready and willing to revolt, and that the English government of the time was saved from serious danger only by the fact that Smith O'Brien and those who patterned after him, *dreaded to trust the nation to the passion of the so-called lower classes*:(11)

and that:

'Everything had to be done in a 'respectable' manner; English army one side and, provided with guns, bands and banners; Irish army on the other side, also provided with guns, bands and banners ... no mere proletarian insurrection and *no interference with the rights of property*:(12)

It is of course this last point that was crucial for the bourgeois leaders of the Young Ireland movement. A thorough going peasant (let alone proletarian) insurrection would have inevitably turned into a revolution against the feudal land system and against the private ownership of property. In order to prevent this, the Young Ireland leaders had to hold the movement in check. By doing so they ensured its failure.

Possibly the most significant thing to come out of the rebellions was the writings of James Fintan Lalor. Here for the first time the connection between the national struggle and the land and labour struggles was expressed in clear theoretical terms. This is done most remarkably in the following passage from the paper the 'Irish Felon'. Lalor says that he failed to convert the rebels to his views and states that:

'They wanted an alliance with the landowners. They chose to consider them as Irishmen, and imagined they could induce them to hoist the green flag. They wished to preserve an aristocracy. They desired, not a democratic, but merely a national revolution. Had the Confederation in the May or June of '47 thrown heart and mind and means into the movement I pointed out they would have made it successful, and settled at once and forever all questions between us and England. The opinions I then stated, and which I yet stand firm to, are these:

'1. That in order to save their own lives, the occupying tenants of the soil of Ireland ought, next autumn, to refuse all rent and arrears of rent then due, beyond and except the value of the overplus of harvest produce remaining in their hands after having deducted and reserved a due and full provision for their own subsistence during the next ensuing twelve months.

'2. That they ought to refuse and resist being made beggars, landless and homeless, under the English law of ejection.

'3. That they ought further, *on principle*, to refuse *all rent* to the present usurping proprietors, until the people, the *true proprietors* (or lords paramount, in legal parlance) have in national congress or convention, decided what rents they are to pay, and to whom they are to pay them.

'4. And that the people, on grounds of policy and economy, ought to decide (as a general rule admitting of reservations) that these rents shall be paid to *themselves*, the people, for public purposes, and for behoof and benefit of them, the entire general people'.

It has been said to me that such a war, on the principles I propose, would be looked on with detestation by Europe. I assert the contrary; I say such a war would propagate itself throughout Europe. Mark the words of this prophecy - the principle I propound goes to the foundations of Europe, and sooner or later will cause Europe to outrise. *Mankind will yet be masters of the earth*. The right of the people to make the laws - this is what produced the first great modern earthquake, whose latent shocks, even

now, are heaving in the heart of the world. The right of the people to own the land - this will produce the next. Train your hands, and your sons hands, gentlemen of the earth, for you and they will yet have to use them'.(13)

These formulations of Lalor are important not merely because of their impact on the peasant uprising, the Fenian rising of 1867, but also because they contain the first germs of the idea that the national struggle had its basis and its solution in the struggle of the peasantry for land. This idea was developed fully by Connolly - with explosive effect. What Lalor of course did not understand was that the peasantry was too fragmented a class to solve the land and national questions by itself. For that it needed an alliance with a more compact, organised and historically progressive class - the proletariat. To understand this was Connolly's great contribution to Marxism. Nevertheless, the beginning of the ideas that Connolly was to develop are to be found in Lalor, and this marks him out as one of the most significant figures in Irish history.

The Fenians

The Fenian movement represented a further development of the Jacobin tradition in that for the first time an insurrectionary movement as a whole turned consciously against the leadership of the bourgeoisie. The United Irishmen, for all Tone's radicalism, had been a bourgeois-inspired and led movement. The artisan and peasant involvement, which had lent it its thorough-going character, represented only one part of the movement. The 1848 rising had been based on the peasantry, but its leaders, who in turn determined its ideology, had been men such as O'Brien, who owned vast estates. However, the Fenian movement was led, and its class ideology determined, by men such as John Devoy, son of a labourer, and Michael Davitt, son of an evicted small farmer. It is in this movement that the origins of the Jacobinism of the Pearse wing of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I.R.B.) and the O'Donnell and Gilmore wing of the I.R.A. is to be found. It represents the political ideology of a peasantry and an artisan class which is still revolutionary because the land and national questions have not been solved, but which exists in an era when the bourgeoisie has ceased to be a revolutionary class.

Such an ideology has two main aspects. On the one hand, it is reactionary because it extols economic forms, small ownership, etc., which are economically impossible to maintain in a capitalist society. On the other hand, it is potentially explosive because its revolutionary nature in practice forces it to make alliances with other revolutionary classes and to break with reactionary ones. In so doing, its consciousness becomes affected by the class aims and political ideology of its revolutionary allies. In the present era, the only other revolutionary class is the working class, and this Jacobin ideol-

logy, and thereby the consciousness of the peasantry, begins to assume a socialist character.

This is, of course, not a mechanical process: if the working class is passive in the class struggle or does not attempt actively to link up with the peasantry through a revolutionary organisation, then this Jacobinism is far more likely to turn in the direction of bourgeois ideology than it is to develop in a socialist direction. Nevertheless, the potentiality is there for the working class leadership to exploit. The normal dialectic of this process is that the peasantry remains a revolutionary class, and a potential ally of the working class up until the moment when the peasantry achieves its main class aim - ownership of the land. After this is achieved, this same desire for the possession of land forces it to become the staunchest defender of private property. This means that it is now in alliance with the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. However, this process is not an automatic one, the economic base does not determine consciousness directly. In Ireland the tradition built up in the long struggle against Britain, the continuance of certain vestiges of British feudal land relations (the land annuities), plus the fact that the national question had not been fully solved, meant that the tradition of peasant Jacobinism continued long after most of the social conditions that had given rise to it had disappeared. The origins of this particularly radical form of Jacobinism are to be found, as we have already discussed, in the Fenian movement of the 1860s.

Organisationally the origins of the Fenian movement are to be found in the mass emigration following the Great Famine. In 1851 emigration was running at the rate of 220,000 a year, and it was still as high as 100,000 a year in 1854. Inevitably exported with the people were the revolutionary traditions of the Young Ireland movement. A revolutionary centre was rapidly established in New York. In 1856-57 this organisation began to co-operate closely with revolutionary elements in Ireland. Most notable of these was James Stephens, a veteran of the 1848 rising and a man who had some experience of the methods of the secret French revolutionary societies. On St. Patrick's day, 1858, Stephens launched the organisation that was to become the I.R.B.

The entrance oath of this organisation declared its aims to be 'to make Ireland an independent democratic republic'. The organisation grew rapidly and soon had over 1,000 members in Dublin, and 2,000 in Leixlip. The fertile ground it was feeding on can be seen in the fact that when one of the leaders of the 1848 rising, Bellew MacManus, was buried in Dublin, over 25,000 people followed the coffin to its burial place. By November, 1863 Stephens had enough support to launch a paper, the 'Irish People'. The organisation had strong roots in the working class and had largely supplanted

the old agrarian secret societies. Being a secret society, it is of course difficult to estimate how large the movement was, but some authorities estimate it as high as 80,000 members in Ireland alone⁽¹⁴⁾. In 1865 the circumstances were as good as they were ever likely to be for a rising; the membership of the I.R.B. was at its height, its leadership had not yet been decimated by arrests and the British government was pre-occupied by the conflict with the United States that had developed out of the American Civil War. However, Stephens missed this opportunity, and in September, 1865 the British authorities struck. They suppressed the 'Irish People', and arrested the Fenian leaders. Stephens was rescued from prison, but the movement was now on the defensive. In addition, the American movement was split by controversy over an insane scheme to invade Canada in order to divert British energies. By the time the rising was planned in February, 1867, the organisation had gone into a serious decline. This February rising however proved abortive and was called off at the last moment. (The state the organisation had declined to by this time, and the extent to which it had been riddled by police spies is shown by the fact that one detachment, led by John O'Connor, only found that the rising had been cancelled when they captured a policeman and found he was carrying a copy of the order cancelling the attempt!)(15)

The actual rising itself took place on the night of March 4th, and was a complete fiasco, and in no place did the rising last for more than a few hours. As far as the immediate consequences were concerned, that was just about it. A certain notoriety was however gained by subsequent events in England. On September 11th a police sergeant was killed in an attempt to release two of the Fenian leaders. This led to the execution of three Fenians who became known as the 'Manchester Martyrs'. Subsequently, in December, 1867 further notoriety was gained by an attempt to release two Fenians from Clerkenwell Prison by demolishing part of the prison wall with gunpowder.

Politically the rising had a shattering effect. Apart from its radicalism in Ireland itself, its programme declared for the separation of church and state, and the restoration of the land to the peasants, the occurrence of the rising made clear to the more long sighted members of the English bourgeoisie that their policy of straightforward repression was sowing a whirlwind whose effects would not be confined to Ireland alone.⁽¹⁶⁾ The open repression of the 1860 Land Act was replaced by a more subtle policy which commenced with Gladstone's disestablishment of the Irish Anglican church in 1869. This process was climaxed by the 1881 Land Act which largely abolished the old land holding system and instead introduced a form of double ownership between landlord and tenant. Under this system the tenant got the profit from land improvements. Nevertheless, the land problem was by

no means completely solved. As late as 1896, 45% of Irish agricultural produce went as rent or tax (c.f. the British figure of 10%) and some aspects of the problem continued up until the abolition of the Land Annuity payments in the 1930s.(17)

In Ireland itself the I.R.B. continued as the inheritor of the Jacobinism of the Fenians. As the social basis of its agitation, the land question, began slowly to disappear, the movement began to lose any social content it might have had. What was left was the conspiratorial form of organisation and the fetish of 'physical force' and 'military action'. Thus was born the ideology that was to sustain the I.R.A. for most of its history.(18)

II

While the original motive for the English conquest had been greed for land, this naturally became less important as a motive as the English feudal system declined and Britain became transformed into the first capitalist state in the world. Ireland was now seen as a potential industrial competitor and the British bourgeoisie therefore used British domination of Ireland to destroy any rival trades or industries. A whole series of restrictive acts were passed. Thus, for example, in 1666 a ban was placed on the export of cattle from Ireland, and in 1699 an act was passed destroying the Irish wool trade. The only industry not directly hit was the linen trade as here Britain had no competitor industry. This was however largely confined to the north east.

By the middle of the 18th century, Britain's needs had changed again. Now the British bourgeoisie needed provisions for its expanding urban population. It now saw in Ireland a useful 'farm' to exploit, and it began to lift the legislation against the Irish agricultural trades. This allowed a certain increase in prosperity for sections of the Irish bourgeoisie. With increasing prosperity and social importance came increasing political assertiveness. The ideal opportunity to assert this desire for political power came when Britain's military might was fully engaged in the American revolutionary war. At that time, British agents in Dublin declared that the only force available for dealing with any trouble in the north was a 'troop or two of horse, or part of a company of invalids'. By the expedient of raising a considerable army of 'Volunteers', the Irish bourgeoisie succeeded in wringing a relatively independent legislature from Britain. This it promptly coupled with protective tariffs.

Fortunately for the bourgeoisie of north east Ireland, this period coincided with the beginning of the industrial revolution, and allowed it to utilise the new technology of the period. This was highlighted in 1790 with the

introduction of the first steam engine into Ireland. The north eastern bourgeoisie grew rapidly and became more politically assertive still. It was now pulling at the bit of British rule.

This period of rising political expectations of the bourgeoisie co-incided with an upsurge of agrarian discontent which was fed by the rapid increase in rents in the late part of the 18th century.⁽¹⁹⁾ By the late 1790s, the bourgeois and peasant movements were beginning to merge. The organisational expression of this was Wolfe Tone's 'United Irishmen' which was mainly based on the artisans of Belfast, but had widespread support, particularly amongst the Protestant population of East Ulster. It was this widespread involvement of the urban petty-bourgeoisie which gave the movement its particularly radical political colouring. (As it had to the comparable movements led by Hebert and Babeuf in France).

After 1798, with the collapse of the bourgeoisie as a consistently revolutionary class, all that was produced was the lukewarm reformism summed up by Daniel O'Connell's reference to his:

**'most dutiful and ever inviolate loyalty to our
most gracious and ever beloved sovereign, Queen
Victoria'.⁽²⁰⁾**

The Irish bourgeoisie in general, and O'Connell in particular, were acutely aware of the danger of a revolt stemming from the misery of the working class and the peasantry. This concern showed itself in continual church and press injunctions against 'the sin of conspiracy', and in continual and vituperative attacks on the embryonic organisations of the working class. The general tone of these attacks, and therefore the fear producing them, can be gauged by this comment of O'Connell's on the cloth workers:

**'There is no tyranny equal to that which was
exercised by the trade unionists in Dublin over
their fellow labourers. One rule of the workmen
prescribed a minimum rate of wages, so that the
best workman received no more than the worst.
Another part of their system was directed towards
depriving the masters of all freedom in their power
of selecting workmen ... the combination of tailors
in that city had raised the price of clothes to such
a pitch that it was worth a person's while to go
to Glasgow and wait a couple of days for a suit'.**

On laws to limit the maximum working day, he said:

**'Let them not be guilty of the childish folly of
regulating the labour of adults, and go about**

parading before the world *their ridiculous humanity*':(21)

Stricken by fear of unleashing the floodgates of 'Atheist communism', the bourgeoisie abandoned the revolutionary struggle, and by doing so abandoned any hope of solving the national question.

The southern triumph and dilemma

What little industrialisation there was in Ireland during the nineteenth century was almost entirely confined to the north-east of the country. Here the linen trade plus the Ulster Custom had created a pool of capital which could finance the more expensive technology of the industrial revolution. Once steam power and a degree of mechanisation existed in the north, the rest of the country could not compete in industrial terms. The strength of the north plus the crushing economic power and proximity of the greatest capitalist state in the world, Britain, meant that no industrial bourgeoisie developed in the south. Instead, a very singular development took place. We will deal with the development of the northern bourgeoisie in a later section. For now, we will deal briefly with the development of the southern bourgeoisie.

Famine-ruined Protestant estates could be, and were, bought up by the Catholic bourgeoisie. This plus increasing debts in the countryside led to the emergence of the money lender or 'Gombeeman'.

Unlike the northern bourgeoisie, the southern bourgeoisie's economic base was in service, distributive and small manufacturing industries, such as printing and leather. Unlike the manufacturing bourgeoisie in the north, which relied for its markets on the British and their Empire, the southern bourgeoisie had an initial interest in the erecting of tariffs against Britain. Men such as Murphy of Dublin - of whom more anon - were the layer of non manufacturing bourgeoisie who represented the highest development of their class. The key importance of the development of this class from the point of view of the national struggle however was that they were relatively independent of the landlords. They could therefore make a bid for the allegiance of the peasantry by promising land reform at the landlord's expense. This would enable them to get the mass social base they needed to shape Irish society in their own interests, and to wring concessions from the British bourgeoisie. This strategy, however, depended on the British bourgeoisie's playing ball and making concessions to the peasantry. As we have seen, by the 1870s, for its own reasons, the British bourgeoisie was prepared to do this.

Under these conditions, by the late 1860s the bourgeoisie was turning away from the anaemic reformism of O'Connell and attempting to win the allegiance of the peasantry. Its ability to gain this was, however, dependent

on its success in gaining concessions from Britain which materially benefited the peasant class. It had to rely on Britain in this way because revolution was ruled out by fear of unleashing 'the lower classes'. During the 1840s, 50s and 60s, the British bourgeoisie had felt in no mood to grant concessions. In consequence, the Irish bourgeoisie had nothing to offer the peasantry, and lacking a mass social base, the bourgeoisie fell into political impotence. The change in British policy after 1869 gave the Irish capitalist class its opportunity. By presenting itself to the peasantry as a force capable of winning concessions, the bourgeoisie could regain its mass political base. This in turn gave it the political weight which enabled it to gain concessions for itself from Britain. From political obscurity the Irish bourgeoisie emerges again in the 1870s as a significant social force.

The success of this policy was sealed in 1874 when the Irish Home Rule League won 59 seats in the British House of Commons. This victory enabled the Irish bourgeoisie to settle accounts fully with the landlords. This latter group was conclusively defeated in 1879 when the leadership of the struggle passed firmly into the hands of the urban bourgeoisie led by Parnell.

This 'leftward' shift of the bourgeoisie had two main effects on the peasant movement; firstly, it succeeded in temporarily 'defusing' the extreme social tensions and agitation of the countryside, and secondly it led to the political decay of that section of the Fenian movement which had supported the land war and Parnell.

Despite its apparent success in the 1870s and early 80s, the position of the Irish bourgeoisie was only maintained by the grace of Westminster. As soon as the supply of reforms to appease the peasantry dried up, then the bourgeoisie would no longer have its mass political base. The supply of reforms began to cease by the middle 1880s. The split and subsequent collapse of the Land League was the first warning to the bourgeoisie, but the writing was really on the wall with successive defeats for Gladstone's Home Rule Bills. With the bourgeoisie no longer able to appease the peasantry, the I.R.B. began to revive.

The I.R.B. again

The first real sign of this Jacobin revival was with the launching of the 'Gaelic Athletic Association' in 1884. This ostensibly was a society for the preservation and fostering of Irish games and athletics. In reality, however, it was seen by the I.R.B. as a means of stimulating a militant national spirit. As such, it met with a spectacular initial success, and provided a highly efficient recruiting ground for the I.R.B. This success was consolidated by the launching of the Gaelic League in 1893. In 1898 the ex-Fenian terrorist, Tom Clarke, arrived in America from 15 years in British prisons, and rapidly reju-

vinated the American end of the I.R.B.'s organisation. In 1907 he returned to Ireland and began co-operating with Sean MacDermott who had already made great strides in revitalising the secret organisation of the I.R.B. in Ireland itself. In 1910 the militantly republican newspaper 'Irish Freedom' was published. The I.R.B. was now gaining ground rapidly.

Finding its mass political base undermined, the bourgeoisie was forced to move further in the direction of attempting to gain concessions for the peasants. In 1900 the parliamentary Nationalist Party adopted the land policy of the United Ireland League, which included division of big grazing estates and the establishment of more labourers' small holdings for the peasants. By now, in order to keep its mass political base, the bourgeoisie was being forced to promise the peasantry concessions which it could not produce. Thus, although the position of the bourgeois Nationalist Party appeared to be strong in the first decade of this century, in fact it was able to survive politically only because of a very hollow and knife-edged confidence trick. At some point it would become obvious that it could no longer gain the concessions the peasantry demanded. Then its political position could disappear in an instant. It was the First World War which revealed the true position of the bourgeoisie, and the 1916 rising which exploded the confidence trick.

The position of the bourgeoisie was made even less secure by the fact that by the 20th century, a new social force had arrived on the scene which could far outbid the bourgeoisie for the support of the peasantry. This force was the Irish working class.

Throughout the last years of the 19th century, the industrial struggles in the cities had been intensifying, and this upsurge found political expression in 1896 with the creation of James Connolly's Irish Socialist Republican Party. With the founding of this organisation the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat for the leadership of the national struggle, and thereby for the allegiance of the peasantry, was well and truly joined. The outcome of this struggle dominated Irish politics for over half a century.

Ulster

The complete exception to the type of bourgeois development just discussed was Ulster. The reasons for this must be sought in the peculiarities of historical development of north-east Ireland.

Religious bigotry had been used as an instrument of British rule in Ireland since the reformation. The main role of religious divisions then was to buttress the system of land ownership which was the foundation of British domination. But this meant that as the land question became less important for any section of the population, so religious sectarianism had less of a role

to play for it and tended to decline. In terms of late 18th century Ireland, this meant that the industrialised areas, which were almost exclusively the region around Belfast, tended to be the least sectarian. Ironically, the later hot-bed of religious bigotry saw in the 1790s Protestants of all denominations making generous contributions to Catholic religious foundations.

The situation whereby Ulster was the most industrialised part of Ireland had always existed to some extent. It was created by Ulster's monopoly of the linen industry. Ulster's predominance was however greatly accelerated by the advent of steam power. Only the Ulster capitalists, with their wealth derived from the linen industry and the Ulster Custom, could afford to introduce this revolutionary new source of power. Once introduced, steam gave the Ulster industrialists a competitive advantage which enabled them to drive the rest of Ireland's industry into the ground. The result was that outside Ulster the only bourgeoisie that could exist was the gombeen bourgeoisie we have already discussed.

The rapid development of industry was naturally accompanied by the growth of a true industrial bourgeoisie. It was unique in the whole of Ireland in that its social position was not based on land ownership or secondary exploitation of the land situation, and therefore this class had far less interest in maintaining religious sectarianism than the ruling class in other parts of Ireland. In consequence, by 1800 Belfast was the least sectarian part of Ireland. This, plus the rapidly growing strength and assertiveness of the bourgeoisie, led to Belfast becoming the centre of Irish radicalism. As we have already discussed, this affected mainly the artisans, but it also spread to the small proletariat that existed at that time. In consequence, Belfast became not only the radical centre of Ireland, but also its trade union stronghold. This development culminated in a series of riots and strikes in the years 1815 to 1819.

A certain degree of working class radicalism is tolerable to a confident bourgeoisie. However, the height of the French revolution had supplied a series of traumatic shocks to the European bourgeoisie, and with the continued growth of the working class and its organisations, the bourgeoisie in all European countries, as we have seen, became more scared of its own working class than it was of native or foreign oppressors. The bourgeoisie therefore ceased to be a genuinely revolutionary class. It was now no longer interested in overcoming religious differences in order to forge a collective struggle against Britain. It now saw religion as a means of dividing the potentially threatening working class movement.

In these circumstances, the spirit which had produced the United Irishmen died rapidly. Just as Jacobinism, which had once expressed the most progressive interests of the French bourgeoisie, became anathema after

1795, so did 'The Republic' and the ideas of Tone become a nightmare instead of an aspiration for the northern bourgeoisie after 1798. The most ready weapon with which to fight 'The Republic' was bigotry. The old form was now to be filled with a new content. Its new master was not to be British interest, but Ulster capitalism. The instruments which the Ulster ruling class siezed upon were the 'Evangelical' anti-liberal wing of the General Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Ulster, and, most importantly, the Orange Order.

By 1829, the Evangelicals were in complete control of the Synod and were supporting the Protestant bourgeoisie's new tactic of discriminating against Catholics in the allocation of jobs. This policy fed on and reinforced the social tension in Belfast created by its enormously rapid growth in the early 19th century. In 1835 the bourgeoisie's policy was crowned with success when violent sectarian rioting swept Belfast. The bourgeoisie then rapidly moved to institutionalise the bigotry by setting up organisations such as the openly Protestant Belfast Town Police Force. These 19th century B Specials carried out a systematic reign of terror against the Catholics from their founding in 1845 until 1865.

The main institution of Ulster Protestant rule was the Orange Order. This had been originally an Anglican body, but in 1834, significantly one year before the first riots, it was opened to all protestants. This organisation grew steadily throughout the 19th century, and played a leading role in, for example, arming the Protestant population against the 'Young Irelanders'. By 1900 it was the bulwark of the Ulster bourgeoisie, playing such diverse roles as terrifying Catholic priests and arranging scabs during the 1907 Belfast strikes. It was on the blood-stained foundation of the Orange Order that the Northern Irish state was to be founded.

It is of key importance for a correct policy in northern Ireland today to realise that the Ulster state is an organised expression and stronghold of bigotry. It is of key importance for a strategy in Ireland today to realise that the bigotry of the northern Irish state is not something incidental to its existence, but is built into the foundations of that state. To believe, for example that it is possible to create in northern Ireland:

' a democratic community ... in which free and full political debate can occur, a community in which some people no longer benefit from discrimination against their neighbours, in which the great mass of Protestants can learn that Nationalists, Republicans and Socialists are not all votaries of the Great Beast of Babylon, and in which some of them can gradually be won to accepting the ideal of national unity'.(22)

is to forget the most basic thing about the northern state, and is to lead the movement into utopian fantasies instead of organising to fight the battle as it really exists.

But if the need to use religious bigotry to split the working class was imposed on the Ulster bourgeoisie by its status as the only industrial bourgeoisie in Ireland, then so was the policy of support for the British connection. Lysaght succinctly summarises these forces when he says that:

'It was to Britain that the north-eastern industries looked. Scots banks supplied credit, Scots mines supplied coal. British industry supplied recruits for the entrepreneur's ranks (climaxing with Harland, the ship-builder). The British Empire gave Ulster markets. The Union Jack protected them'.(23)

As a result the Ulster bourgeoisie feared above all British tariffs and the possibility of being taxed by an independent Irish state in order to help build industry in the rest of Ireland.

In Britain itself the bourgeoisie as a whole was uninterested in Ireland. It found in India and the new African territories of the Empire a far readier source of profit than in Ireland. However, the Ulster bourgeoisie could rely upon the support of powerful sectional interests. In particular, the growth of the 'Imperial' ideology which necessarily accompanied the expansion of the Empire, gave the Ulster bourgeoisie a way of influencing far larger sections of the British ruling class than were directly opposed to the growth of independent Irish capitalism. This influence was naturally greatest in those sections of society which had most to gain from the maintenance of the 'Imperial' ideology; this meant primarily the Tory Party and the army.

Although the Ulster section of the Irish bourgeoisie could win over part of the British ruling class, it could not win the support of the rest of the Irish capitalists. This had none of the links with Britain that their Ulster compatriots had, and, in fact, stood to gain from any growth of an indiginous Irish capitalism. With the bourgeoisie in Ireland split and it being far from certain that the British ruling class would support Ulster in any civil war, some of the Orange capitalists at the beginning of the century began to fear the isolation their political positions were leading them into. This particularly applied to the strongest sections of the bourgeoisie who, because of their economic strength, had least need of sectarianism in order to keep a totally docile labour force. The sectarian rioting declined for a period. However the final cementing of the Unionist bloc came as a result of Larkin's pioneering trade union organising in Belfast.

During 1907 Larkin led major strikes of dockers and carters in Belfast, and

during the course of that eventful year even the police went on strike. Larkin succeeded in overcoming temporarily the religious sectarianism of the working class. Seven Grand Masters of Orange Lodges resigned in order to assist Larkin. On the anniversary of the siege of Derry he led a parade in honour both of the Protestant defenders of Derry and of the Pope who had supported them. To the bourgeoisie it appeared that class consciousness was about to replace religious consciousness. Larkin's efforts at unionisation collapsed due to spinelessness of the leaders of the existing trade unions, but it had lasted long enough in order to terrify the bourgeoisie. Political isolation and possible civil war might not be a very appealing prospect, but at least it was better than the prospect of a united working class existing in the part of Britain with the longest revolutionary tradition and the worst social conditions. For the Ulster bourgeoisie from 1908 onwards, the die was cast. It would maintain its position inside the Union even if it had to fight Britain to do so.

The first step in this new policy was to stir up new sectarian rioting and to organise the Orange scabs of 1907 into the Ulster Volunteer Force. Before long the bourgeoisie was in a position to take its revenge on Larkin, and it used the occurrence of sectarian rioting in 1912 to smash the organisation of the I.T.G.W.U. in Belfast. Having thus dealt with the threat from the 'lower orders', the Orange capitalists could display their British patriotism by entering into negotiations with the German government for the supply of arms. From September 12th onwards, it strengthened its base amongst the Protestant working class by hectic agitation which succeeded in getting over 200,000 people to sign the anti-Home Rule Covenant. With the Ulster bourgeoisie and their pawns armed, civil war appeared inevitable in 1914. In fact, it was only stopped then by the outbreak of a rather larger contest - the First World War. This contest enabled the British government to show its determination to crush the U.V.F. by allowing it to form an independent unit inside the British Army. Apart from this, the war did nothing to solve the tensions in Ireland. On the contrary, Easter 1916 brought them up to breaking point. By then, two armed camps existed in Ireland.

III

**'In developments of such magnitude twenty years
are no more than a day, although later there may
come days in which twenty years are embodied'.**

(Marx to Engels, April 9th, 1863).

We have already seen that it was the radicalisation of the urban artisan which characterised the revolt of the United Irishmen. Most of the great up-

heavals of 19th century Ireland were also preceded by agitation in urban areas.

Even at the beginning of the 1790s, Connolly notes that there was a series of strikes and armed clashes between workmen and the authorities.(24) Similarly, before the Fenian rebellion, in the early 1860s, there was an upsurge of labour agitation(25). This particular urban upsurge found an ideological expression in the works of William Thompson. However, for the most part the agitation was confined to artisans proper and did not spread to the working class. In fact it would have been virtually impossible for a true working class movement to have existed at this period because, for most of the century, the proletariat was a small class confined to the linen industry of the north-east.

The rural depopulation following the Great Famine and the development of the 'gombeen' bourgeoisie was accompanied by an increase in the size and social weight of the working class. The first real act of political consciousness on the part of the proletariat came in 1863 with the setting up of the Dublin United Trades Association. Branches of the First International existed in Ireland during the 1860s but despite Marx and Engels's preoccupation with Ireland in this period, these had little impact.(26)

By the 1890s most towns of any size in Ireland had Trade Union Councils. However, two great problems were unsolved; firstly, the Trade Unions established up to that time included only the skilled crafts, while the great mass of unskilled workers were non-unionised, and secondly, there was as yet no clear political expression of this growth of working class size and organisation. In the conditions of appalling misery reigning in the Irish proletariat in the early 20th century it was almost inevitable that the solution of these problems would take a semi-revolutionary form.(27) However, the proletariat was still a minority of the population. It could not solve its problems without the support of the peasantry, and for that it needed to grasp the nettle of the land and therefore of the national questions. It was not oppressed directly by Britain in the way that the peasants were. To link its struggles to those of the peasantry therefore required a clear political understanding of the dynamics of the Irish situation. The failure to understand the theoretical questions involved produced the particular 'solution' of the national question which is the key to understanding Irish politics.

Larkinism

The struggle to organise a trade union movement is of course one pregnant with possibilities for developing the political consciousness of the working class. This can be clearly seen in, for example, the period of the rise of the German Social Democratic party. But trade union organisation does not automatically lead to a real heightening of political consciousness. To

take just one case, the Popular Front policies of the American C.P. during the late 1930s, with its support for Democratic Party candidates, meant that the possibility of creating a separate Labour Party during the rise of the C.I.O. was wasted.

By the beginning of the 20th century, the reformism of the parties of the Second International, in particular its manifestation in their abstention from the economic struggle, was becoming apparent.⁽²⁸⁾ This trait was particularly well developed in the Social Democratic Federation, the British 'Marxist' organisation in which Connolly and Larkin gained their early political experience. Although this contained many excellent trade union militants who had played a key role during the great strikes of the period 1889-91 and who would do so again during the period 1915-19, as an organisation it was paralyzed by the policies of its dictatorial leader Hyndman (ex-city businessman, hated enemy of Frederick Engels and jingoist extraordinary).

Hyndman was a rabid defender of the Empire, and for Britain to lose any part of its domain was for him unthinkable. He was therefore violently opposed to Irish Republicanism, and, in consequence, the most the S.D.F. was prepared to concede on the question of Ireland was an acknowledgement of the right to Home Rule.

On the subject of trade union organisation, Hyndman's views were governed by his 'contempt for uneducated and undisciplined democracy', and his belief that 'a slave class cannot be freed by the slaves themselves. The leadership, the initiative, the teaching, the organisation, must come from those comrades in a different position, and who are trained to use their faculties in early life'. His 'considered' opinion was offered up in the view that: 'I never knew a strike which gained anything'. Against Hyndman's politics, which represented in a magnified form all the faults of the Second International, Connolly and Larkin rebelled.

The form this rebellion took was greatly influenced by ideas developing inside the American working class movement. We have already seen how the close links between the American and Irish working classes, which had been created by the mass waves of emigration from Ireland during the 19th century had been important in the Fenian rebellion. It was therefore to America, more than any other country, that both Republicans and Socialists looked for solidarity, finance and ideas. In the case of Connolly, this influence was heightened by his direct involvement in the American labour movement in the years 1903-1910.

Larkin was impressed primarily by the ideas of 'industrial unionism', put forward by the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) which had been founded in 1905. The ideas of this organisation had an obvious interest to Larkin as they had been formed under the same pressured that faced him in Ire-

land - the need to organise unskilled labour, plus the obvious and growing political bankruptcy of the political parties of the Second International. The nature of the work force to be organised obviously made 'craft' unionism impossible. This had led the Industrial Workers of the World to formulate the idea of one all embracing union. The political reformism of the social democratic parties led it to place almost all emphasis on 'direct action', and in particular on the strike weapon. These ideas seemed to fit exactly the situation Larkin had to face where he had to organise an immensely diverse labour force and knew he would get little or no help from any 'political' organisation. Connolly had initially been more impressed by the ideas of De Leon, but eventually he too became a convert to the I.W.W., and became one of its organisers.

The combination of the ideas of the I.W.W., plus the seething discontent of the Dublin slums was not merely to turn that city from a non-union town into one of the strongholds of trade unionism in Europe, but was almost to succeed in bringing about a re-alignment of the social forces in Ireland, and to settle the national question once and for all.

Larkin's first agitation was in Belfast as an official of the National Dock Labourer's Union. Here he led strikes of firemen, dockers and seamen. A successful strike by carters in support of the dockers gave him his first taste of the power of the sympathy strike - a tactic he was later to develop to a fine art. In the ensuing industrial struggles he momentarily broke through the religious sectarianism of Belfast to unite Catholics and Protestants in a massive coal strike. This was successfully concluded in late July, and for once the parades of Protestant and Catholic workers against their employers matched the Orange bigot parades of July 12th. In the ensuing avalanch of industrial struggles, the Belfast police semi-mutinied for higher wages, and the army was called in to keep 'law and order'. This force was then deliberately used to whip up religious sectarianism by its constant parades and patrols in the nationalist Falls Road area. This inevitably culminated in rioting with the army shooting dead a young man and a girl. The N.U.D.L. then ratted on Larkin, and settled the dock strike over his head. This experience, plus the ideas of the I.W.W. convinced him of the necessity of a new type of union in Ireland. On 4th January, 1909, he founded the Irish Transport and General Workers Union. It was to help organise this union that Connolly returned from the U.S. He provided the link that was to create the Easter 1916 uprising.

Labour war and national struggle

Larkin's success in Belfast had greatly scared the northern bourgeoisie, but that was not the key to the situation in Ireland. The vital task facing revolutionaries was to split the peasantry from its bourgeois leadership.

The period 1900-14 was an excellent time for an attempt to forge an alliance between the working class and the peasantry. In 1905 Sinn Fein had been founded by Arthur Griffith, and in 1907 had made its first appearance on the electoral scene - a sure indication that the social base of the bourgeois 'Home Rulers' was no longer secure. In this and the following year, peasant agitation began to grow, and with it the political expression of extreme 'physical force' nationalism, the reviving I.R.B. This began a policy of systematically taking over Sinn Fein, and in 1911 it acquired a new and more extreme leadership. The armed wing of the nationalist movement, the Irish Volunteers, was also undergoing a rapid growth. It was also locked in a fierce struggle between pro-Redmonites and more Jacobin elements. This led eventually, in September 1914, to a split with the I.R.B. wing taking about 12,000 out of the Redmonite dominated Volunteers. Thus, it was clear throughout this period that the split was sufficient between the bourgeois and Jacobin wings for the working class to make a bid to detach a considerable section of the peasantry's support away from the bourgeoisie. For this, three things were necessary: firstly, the working class had to heighten the tensions inside the nationalist bloc by being obviously involved with the bourgeoisie in a struggle. This would force the Jacobins to choose between the working class and the bourgeoisie. Secondly, the leadership of the working class had to see the necessity for linking the struggle of the working class to the land and national struggles of the peasantry. Thirdly, there had to exist an organisation capable of taking political advantage of the opportunities created. The Dublin 'Labour War' perfectly fulfilled the first requirement. Connolly, but not Larkin, understood the need for the second. But neither Connolly nor Larkin were able to understand the need for the third.

The tactical weapon which Larkin saw as the key to solving the problem of unionisation was the sympathy strike. This would prevent weak groups of workers being picked off one by one by the employer. The first application of this tactic by the ITGWU was in 1911 when it acted in solidarity with a general seamen's strike. Later the same year, it threatened to come out in sympathy with the railwaymen of the Great Southern and Western Railway. In Wexford a bitter recognition dispute in the iron industry led to the death of one striker and the deporting to Waterford of the union organiser. In Sligo a similar strike resulted in the death of another striker and a policeman. In a series of strikes throughout 1912 rises of between 3 shillings and 12 shillings weekly were gained - i.e. up to 50% of the average wage of Dublin of the period. By 1913 it had become obvious that either the ITGWU must be smashed by the employers or it would unleash a wave of working class militancy that would threaten the foundation of capitalism in Ireland. As always in such cases the bourgeoisie resorted to the mailed fist and the jackboot. The result was the 1913 General Strike.

The aftermath of the labour war

There is not space here to go into a detailed history of the Dublin General Strike⁽²⁹⁾. It is simply sufficient to note those features which made it an almost ideal opportunity to split the Jacobins from their bourgeois 'allies'.

In the first place, the bourgeois nationalists were in the forefront of the employers' organisation. This meant that it could be shown in practice that when it came to the crunch they were prepared to use all the force of the British state against 'fellow' Irishmen. Secondly, the employers showed complete solidarity across religious lines. Although the instigator of the employers' lock-out, William M. Murphy, was a Catholic, he was rapidly supported by Protestants and Quakers. This religious solidarity of the employers could be used to attempt to overcome the religious divisions within the working class by showing that in struggle class differences counted for far more than religious ones. Thirdly, the power of the religious organisations during the strike was weakened by the attitude of the Archbishop of Dublin. His feelings were summed-up in the following communication to the Lord Mayor of Dublin. It was sent on the ending of the strike and congratulated the Lord Mayor on:

'the notable victory gained yesterday over a combination of influences which in addition to the havoc they caused in the industrial world of labour have done no little harm in blunting if not deadening the moral and religious sense of not a few among the working population of our city'.

Apart from general attacks of this nature, the main activity of the church during the period of the strike was to prevent the children of strikers being sent to England, where they might have got adequate food.⁽³⁰⁾ Archbishop Walsh opposed this on the twin grounds that sending the children to Protestant England might impair their Catholicism, and secondly that seeing comfortable English middle class homes would make them discontented with their miserable slums in Ireland.

Despite the obvious advantages of divine help, Murphy tended to place rather more immediate faith in the police. The ferocity of this force during the strike reached heights which even Ireland had never seen before. Their activities included the torturing to death in a police cell of Michael Byrne, secretary of the Kingstown branch of the ITGWU. Continual baton charges were made on pickets. Larkin's meetings outside Liberty Hall and in O'Connell Street were systematically broken up by the police. The assault was even carried into the homes of the strikers, with police raids and rampages in areas such as 'Corporation Buildings' where many of the strikers lived. Typical of the heroic acts carried out by the police was ruining the eyesight of a baby by smashing up its room and battering a man unconscious in front

of six children. In addition, the police aided the actions of scabs. These included the shooting dead of a young girl as she was collecting her strikers' food pay. Larkin himself was of course arrested on a charge of seditious libel and conspiracy.

The lesson of these events was clearly drawn by Larkin. He wrote in the 'Irish Worker' that:

'The most significant fact connected with the industrial struggle in this country has been the direct connection and agreement proved to be existing between the capitalists of the Murphy and Jacob type, the professional politician, the press and the clergy. Each of these sections most brutally and unashamedly stated that they are opposed to any improvement in the conditions of the common people ...'

The lesson of these events, and the way that they showed that when the chips were down the Irish bourgeoisie referred British troops to Irish workers, was not lost on the Jacobin wing of the national movement. The tremendous impetus gained by the working class upsurge threatened to tear apart the already strained peasant-bourgeois nationalist bloc. The strike itself split nationalist Ireland and revealed class forces in their true light. The bourgeois elements were implacably hostile to Larkin with the parliamentarian Murphy actually leading the lock out. The more 'radical' bourgeoisie were equally hostile. Arthur Griffith in particular, who had spared no efforts to condemn the strikers. On the other hand, the leaders and theorists of the peasant Jacobin wing, such as Padraic Pearse and George Russell, were staunch supporters of the strike. When in October Larkin attended a Sinn Fein meeting on Parnell, he was snubbed by Griffith, but greeted as a hero by Tom Clarke and Sean MacDiarmada.

The split in the traditional nationalist bloc created the possibility of an entirely new social alliance. If only the working class movement could seize on the revolutionary aspects of the peasants' traditional Jacobinism, then it could take the leadership of the national struggle out of the hands of Redmond, Griffith and their like. If this junction of forces had been created then the national struggle would have to be fought through to its conclusion, for the working class, unlike the bourgeoisie, had nothing to gain and everything to lose from a compromise with Britain, while, in any case, as soon as it faltered in its pursuit of the struggle for independence, it would be deserted by the peasantry and find itself without the mass support without which it could not fight the bourgeoisie in Ireland.

This alliance was never created. It was at this point that the fatal weak-

ness of Larkin's and Connolly's syndicalist theories proved disastrous. The flaw in the theory of industrial unionism was that in order to be effective in the economic struggle, a union must include all workers regardless of their level of political understanding. The politics of such an organisation are determined by what the majority of its members are prepared to accept. As all levels of politics are represented in the organisation, it is impossible for such an organisation to take far reaching political initiatives, the importance of which are only understood by a few at the time when it is necessary to take them. For this type of initiative, of which an attempt to forge an alliance with the radical peasantry against the bourgeoisie was definitely one, a *political* organisation was necessary. But this was ruled out precisely by the philosophy of the industrial union. Men like Connolly were therefore reduced to personal action without having the backing of an organisation capable of taking advantage of the opportunities which had been created.

Worse still, because of the dogma of the industrial union, Connolly could not even persuade some of his closest political allies to see the link between the upsurge of nationalism and the struggle for socialism. Even Larkin, despite his genuine Republicanism, was opposed to trying to link the union based Irish Citizens' Army with the peasant based Irish Volunteers. This failure was tragic at a time when, as we have seen, the Volunteers were undergoing an internal struggle between the bourgeois Redmonite wing and a peasant based I.R.B. wing led by Pearse. A link between the Citizens' Army and the Volunteers would have immeasurably strengthened and radicalised the Pearse wing. Instead of the mass revolutionary party which might have emerged out of the labour struggles leading up to 1913, all that emerged was an alliance between Connolly, leading the rump of the Citizens' Army, and Pearse. Seldom can the bankruptcy of Syndicalism have been shown more clearly.

1916

The failure to create, in the most fruitful circumstances conceivable, a working class revolutionary organisation linked to the national struggle was the fundamental reason that doomed Connolly's work, for all its theoretical insight, to failure. In the critical period leading up to the Easter rising, the only force he could persuade of the need to link the struggle of the working class to the national struggle was the 1,000 or so volunteers of the Irish Citizens' Army, of which Connolly was the head. This failure was all the more tragic in that the outbreak of war in 1914 revealed clearly the weakness of the Irish bourgeoisie's position.

The outbreak of the First World War posed the capitalists of Ireland with an insoluble problem. Its entire strategy was based on cooperation with British Imperialism. As long as Britain would make even relatively minor concessions, the hold of the Irish bourgeoisie over its mass peasant base could be

largely maintained. However, although that base could be duped, it could never be persuaded to actively cooperate with Britain. On the contrary, one of the key elements in the bourgeoisie's policy was to retain the image of actually fighting British Imperialism. But in August 1914, British Imperialism demanded that the price of any further concessions was cooperation by the Irish bourgeoisie in Britain's imperialist struggle against Germany. To make matters worse, the British ruling class also decided that, in order to secure the docility of Ireland, the concession of Home Rule would not be granted until after the end of the war⁽³¹⁾. The choice before the Irish bourgeoisie and its main representative, Redmond, was clear-cut: if it sided with Britain, it would destroy its mass social base; if, on the other hand, it decided not to cooperate, it would be forced to launch a struggle against Britain in circumstances where the working class and peasantry were already showing unmistakable signs of 'immoderation'. Such a struggle would have unleashed forces which would have rapidly got out of the control of the bourgeoisie. Faced with this situation Redmond showed clearly the nature of the bourgeoisie in the 20th century. He and the Irish bourgeoisie decided to side with Imperialism.

Almost at once, the bourgeois nationalist position began to crumble. In September the command of the Irish Volunteers expelled the Redmonites and demanded immediate Home Rule. Redmond captured the majority of the rank and file of the volunteers, but significantly the anti-Redmonites included many former Home Rule supporters. The left-wing of this section was responsive to Connolly's overtures. The right wing began to seek German aid as an alternative to a potentially explosive alliance with the working class.

By the beginning of 1916, the alliance of class forces was being created which should have come into being in 1913. The Irish Volunteers were split between their bourgeois wing, seeking foreign aid, and their revolutionary Jacobin wing which was now seeing the necessity for an alliance with Irish Labour. On the other hand, Connolly had succeeded in making it clear to at least some sections of the working class that the only way forward for the working class was to link its struggle to the nationalist aspirations of the peasantry. The tragedy was that by 1916 it was too late. What in the period around 1913 could, if only Connolly had had a better concept of the role of a political organisation, have been a massive movement, was by 1916 reduced to something approaching a rump. Only 220 members of the Citizens' Army and 1,000 of the Dublin brigade of the Volunteers took part in the Easter rising in Dublin. Outside Dublin the intended risings came to virtually nothing. Even this tiny force succeeded in transforming the situation in Ireland, but the political elements it represented were too weak to prevent the leadership of the newly revitalised national struggle from falling back into the hands of the old bourgeois leaders. The greatest tragedy for the Irish

working class in 1916 was not simply the death of Connolly, but the fact that he had never created a political organisation which understood and was capable of continuing his policies.

This failure was to dominate Irish politics for 50 years. It was not simply that without linking the working class struggle to the national struggle, the working classes struggle for socialism could not be achieved. It was more fundamental than that. Without the leadership of the working class taking up the national struggle, the position of socialists within the working class movement could not even be *maintained*, let alone extended. The national struggle dominated Irish politics and the working class was no more immune to its influence than any other section of society. If the socialist leadership of the working class did not take a firm position on the question, then it would inevitably be replaced by a petty-bourgeois, but nationalist party. By a failure to grasp this point, the early labour leaders all unwittingly layed the conditions for the later domination of the working class by Fianna Fail and bourgeois nationalism. Only two generations later, and under the impetus of new developments, is the ideological supremacy of the bourgeoisie being challenged. The tragedy is that it was largely the mistakes made before 1916 that ever allowed that domination to pass into the hands of bourgeois nationalism.

A. Jones

Footnotes

1. See for example the early chapters of Connolly's 'Labour in Irish History'. Connolly's views on this essential question remained basically the same throughout his political life. As early as 1897, he wrote in 'Erin's Hope',

'Whichever be the true interpretation of Irish history, one fact at least stands out clear and undeniable, viz., that the conflict between the rival systems of land ownership was the pivot around which centered all the struggles and rebellions of which that history had been so prolific'. (New Books Edition, p.8.)

Connolly has been attacked for glorifying the pre-feudal period (J.A. Hoffman, 'The Irish Question: Connolly the I.C.O. and the Irish Bourgeoisie', p. 1-6), and for his policy as regards the land question (D.R. O'Connor-Lysaght, 'The Unorthodoxy of James Connolly', International, Vol. 1, no. 3), but his basic analysis has not been seriously attacked.

2. This would, of course, have occurred even without interference by England. By 1150 the Irish chiefs and clergy were already seeking the introduction of the feudal system. What the English intervention meant however was that the thirst of the peasants for land, an endemic feature of feudalism, would become inextricably linked with the struggle against the foreign oppressor (see D.R. O'Connor-Lysaght, 'The Republic of Ireland', p. 10).

3. The struggle over land has been mediated through many forms. For example, by 1703 the major manifestation of the question was the fact that Catholics owned only 14% of the land while making up the overwhelming majority of the population. In the twentieth century, it was seen in the struggle over the land annuity payments, and the inability of small farming to be viable, coupled with the inability of Irish industry to absorb the displaced labour. This resulted in a situation whereby as late as 1936-46 farmers were emigrating at the rate of 4,000 a year. (Lysaght Ibid, p. 116). This is, of course, not to say at all that the form which the land problem took remained constant. What however did occur was that the way in which the problem was created meant that each attempt to solve it led into a further mire, e.g. the 19th century land acts and the annuity question.

4. For example, here is how Connolly described the effect of Cromwell's policy in Ireland. He states that the English governors proclaimed:

'... that 'all the ancient estates and farms of the people of Ireland were to belong to the adventurers and the army of England, and that the Parliament had assigned Connacht for the habitation of the Irish nation, whither they must transplant their wives and daughters and children before the first of May following (1654) under penalty of death if found on this side of the Shannon after that day'. In addition to this transplanting to Connacht, gangs of soldiery were dispatched throughout Ireland to kidnap young boys and girls of tender years to be sold into slavery in the West Indies. Sir William Petty, ancestor of the Lansdowne family and a great and unscrupulous land-thief, declared that in some Irish accounts, the number so sold into slavery was estimated at one hundred thousand.

This ancestor of Lord Lansdowne, the founder of the noble Lansdowne family, Sir William Petty, landed in Ireland in 1652 with a total capital of all his fortune of £500. But, he came over in the wake of Cromwell's army, and got himself appointed 'Physician of the Army of Ireland'. In 1662 he was made one of a Court of Commissioners of Irish Estates and also Surveyor-General for Ireland. As the native Irish were then being hunted to death, or transported in slave-gangs to Barbados, the latter fact gave this worthy ancestor of a worthy lord excellent opportunities to 'invest' his £500 to good purpose.

(Connolly's 'The Re-Conquest of Ireland,' p. 2).

5. Some idea of the dimensions of this British-caused disaster can be gauged from the following description by Engels.

'Except for Dublin the whole of Ireland - especially the towns -

reminds one of France or northern Italy since there is a pleasing profusion of policemen, priests, lawyers, officials and country squires and a total absence of any industry whatever. It would be difficult to understand how all these parasites live if the distress of the peasants did not supply an answer to the problem.

'Strong measures' are to be seen in every corner of the country. Here one can see that the so-called liberty of English citizens is based upon the oppression of the colonies. I have never seen so many policemen in any country. The bleary look of the bibulous Prussian policeman is developed to its highest perfection among the Irish constables who carry carbines, bayonets and handcuffs.

Ruined edifices are characteristic of the Irish countryside. The oldest date from the fifth and sixth centuries, the most recent from the nineteenth century. And every intervening period is represented. The oldest ruins are those of churches. After 1100 the ruins are of castles and churches. *After 1800 the ruins are those of peasants' cottages.* All western Ireland - especially in the neighbourhood of Galway - is covered with ruined cottages. *Most of them have only been deserted since 1846.* I never thought that famine could have such tangible reality. Whole villages are devastated. And among the deserted villages lie the fine parks of the lesser landlords - mostly lawyers - who are almost the only people still living there. This state of affairs is due to famine, emigration and clearances. Even the fields have no cattle. The land is deserted and nobody wants it..

Ireland has been utterly ruined by the English wars of conquest from 1100 to 1850 - for it is a fact that the campaigns and the state of siege have lasted as long as that. There can be no question that most of the ruins were due to destruction in time of war. The result is that for all their fanatical nationalism the Irish feel that they are no longer at home in their own country. Ireland for the English! That is now being realized. The Irish know that they cannot compete with the English who are better equipped in every way. Emigration will continue until the almost exclusively Celtic character of the people has gone to the dogs. How often have the Irish started out to achieve something and every time they have been crushed, politically and industrially. Continual oppression has artificially turned the Irish into an utterly impoverished people and now, as everyone knows, they fulfil the function of supplying England, America and Australia with prostitutes, casual labourers, pimps, thieves, swindlers, beggars and other rabble'.

(Engels to Marx, May 23rd, 1856).

6) G. Gilmore; "The Rebulican Congress" p.2

7) In 1945 the Fine Gael party, which had accepted partition of Ireland in 1922 and which during the early 1930's had been overtly fascist party, thought it could regain its nationalist image by proclaiming a totally spurious 26 county "Republic".

8) Connolly; "Labour in Irish History" p.67

9) Gilmore Ibid p.64

10) Connolly op.cit p.109

11) Ibid p.114

12) Ibid p.108

13) Ibid p.121

14) K.B. Nowlan; "The Fenian rising of 1867" in "The Fenian Movement" ed T.W. Moody.

15) Another symptom of the general disorganisation of the movement was the fact that the ship bringing arms from the USA, the "Erin's Hope", did not arrive until 2 months after the rising had collapsed.

16) Quite apart from the political example of the rising for the English working class, the Fenians were also organisationally represented in Britain. Fenian cells existed in most towns with a large Irish population and the many Irish units and group of soldiers in the British army were honeycombed with Fenian groups.

17) See Lysaght op.cit p.29f for details of the Land changes in the last latter part of the 19th century.

18) Quite apart from this particular social development it is a general feature of social movements based on the petty bourgeoisie (including the Peasantry), that unless they have a politically working class leadership they tend to find a substitute for any coherent theory in military fetishism. An excellent example of this is El Fatal.

19) Between 1760 and 1815 the value of rents quadrupled.

20) For a theoretical discussion of the changing nature and role of the 19th century bourgeoisie see Engel's "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany" and "The Role of Force in History". For a discussion of this process in Ireland see Connolly op cit - particularly the Foreward and chapters 6-16.

21) Connolly op.cit p101

22) A Coughlan; "The Northern Crisis, Which way forward?". This book, which represents the theory of the C.P. concerning the situation in Ireland is one of the most remarkable documents ever appeared. It contains such gems as that it would be unrealistic to demand workers control from the Unionist Party. At a time when there are virtually daily gun-battles in Belfast the C.P. is still plugging on about the Peaceful Road and rather than organising the population to fight it is terrified of alienating the "progressive priests and "democratic" business men, in the name of "uniting" the maximum number of people.

What is truly amazing is that Coughlan can still put forward arguments which were refuted years ago. For example this is how Rosa Luxemburg dealt with Bernstein when he put forward exactly the same argument as was put forward by Coughlan and some members of Sinn Fein (i.e. tha the struggle for Socialism must be kept seperate from the struggle (bourgeois) democracy).

"He advises the proletariat to disavow its socialist aim, so that the mortally frightened Liberals might come out of the mousehole of reaction. Making the suppression of the socialist labour movement an essential condition for the preservation of bourgeois democracy, he proves in a striking manner that this democracy is in complete contradiction with the inner tendency of development of the present society. He proves at the same time that the socialist movement is itself a *direct product* of this tendency.

But he proves at the same time, still another thing. By making the renouncement of the socialist aim an essential condition of the resurrection of bourgeois democracy, he shows how inexact is the claim that bourgeois democracy is an indispensable condition of the socialist movement and the victory of socialism. His reasoning exhausts itself in a vicious circle. His conclusion swallows his premises.

The solution is quite simple. In view of the fact that bourgeois liberalism has given up its ghost from fear of the growing labour-movement and its final aim, we conclude that the socialist labour-movement is today the *only* support for that which is not the goal of the socialist movement—democracy. We must conclude that democracy can have no other support. We must conclude that the socialist movement is not bound to bourgeois democracy, but that, on the contrary, the fate of democracy is bound with the socialist movement. We must conclude from this that democracy does not acquire greater chances of life in the measure that the working class renounces the struggle for its emancipation, but that, on the contrary, democracy

acquires greater chances of survival as the socialist movement becomes sufficiently strong to struggle against the reactionary consequence of world politics and the bourgeois desertion of democracy. He who would strengthen democracy should want to strengthen and not weaken the socialist movement. He who renounces the struggle for socialism renounces both the labour movement and democracy."

Seventy years after that was written there is still nothing to add.

24) Ibid p.129

25) Ibid p.132

26) Marx's pre-occupation with Ireland was marked during the 1860's. See for example his letters of 30th Nov.1867, 29th Nov.1869 and 10th Dec.1869 and also the section on Ireland in the 1st volume of Capital. (Published 1867).

27) The condition of the Irish working class in particular. Dublin during this period is virtually indescribable. In Dublin only 5,000 tenements lived 26,000 families. Of these tenements over 1,500 were condemned as unfit for human habitation even by the standards of the period. Of the families themselves, and the members of these families, made up almost one third of Dublin's population of 300,000 twenty thousand lived in one room and only one thousand of them had more than two rooms. Baths were unknown and water and primitive toilets existed only in the yards of the tenements. As a result to quote the report of the Departmental Committee of Inquiry into the housing of the Dublin working classes of 1914, "Human excreta is to be found scattered about the yards—and in some cases even in the passages of the house itself." The condition of the inhabitants of the tenements was however at least preferable to that of the not insignificant section of the population which was completely homeless and was forced to sleep in hallways and sheds.

The effect of these social conditions was shown in the appalling death rate for Dublin. In the decade 1901-10 the average death rate for the whole of Ireland was 17.3 persons per thousand of the population. In such social conditions infant mortality in particular was bound to be incredibly high, in Dublin in 1901 one child in every 7 died in infancy. The death rate in Dublin was second only to Calcutta in the entire world.

For the adult population things were little better. Over 12% of the population was unemployed, and even for those in work the average wage was only approx. 18 shillings a week (equivalent to approx.£6 now). Women slaved for as little as 5 shillings a week. Of this meagre income, rent and food accounted for over three quarters, leaving little fuel, clothes etc. Of the labour force itself over a half was classified as general labourers and here unemployment stood at approx. 20%. (For a fuller description see Emmett Larkin; "James Larkin" ch.3)

28) See for example Knipskays "Memories of Lenin" p.21

29) For a brief account see Red Mole 16th Feb 1971

30) Which is not to say of course that it would have been correct to support this. On the contrary it was more designed to lower the morale of the strikers. What is interesting however, is the *reason* the Archbishop gave for opposing it.

31) After 1910 the British Liberal government had to rely on the Irish nationalist for support in the House of Commons. The Redmondites used this advantage in order to ring Home Rule out of the Liberal government. The Act putting into force would have become law in 1914 but it was impended on the outbreak of war.

Review

KORSCH; MARXISM AND PHILOSOPHY New Left Books £2

Korsch is a writer who can present severe difficulties for the reader. The major problem lies in the discontinuities and contradictions that exist in his work when considered as a body. Ideas that are merely limited at one stage are drawn out and explained later while others are flatly denounced. His writings vary from the extreme left of the ultra-left (his pro-Bordiga period) to a revisionism that could argue (in his 5th thesis on contemporary marxism in the French edition of "Marxism and Philosophy") that, "Marx is today only one among the many precursors, founders and continuers of the socialist movement of the working class. No less important are the utopian socialists, from the time of Thomas More to our own. No less important are the great rivals of Marx such as Blanqui, and his implacable enemies such as Proudhon and Bakunin".

The important thing about Korsch is not that his exploration took him in contradictory directions but that he did explore and seek to solve new problems rather than ossifying the Marxist method with uncritical reiteration of classical texts. "Marxism and Philosophy" still remains an interesting essay because Korsch had to deal with a situation that has some parallels with the contemporary scene. Korsch was surrounded by the rubble and war-charred ruins of the "orthodox" Marxism of the Second International. Today we are confronted by the decaying theoretical residue of the 3rd International, that was presented for a whole period as the mainstream of Marxism.

The fundamental problem that faced Korsch was that the Marxism of the Second International had shivered into antagonistic factions. This posed a series of questions about the nature of scientific socialism and its relationship to philosophy, ideology and false-consciousness in general. To pose the question in its sharpest form, (and Korsch later on in life did just that): "Can Marxism itself become an ideology?"

Korsch explored these issues by a critique of the Marxism of the Second International.

Marx and Engels continually stated that scientific socialism was the supercession of all philosophy. Scientific socialism was, therefore, not a passive philosophy which masked an undeclared class interest but a non-ideological, active tool in the class struggle that was inherently biased on the side of the working class. In other words, "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, it is now a question of changing it." Korsch argues that Marxists had misunderstood this view and imagined that all that was necessary was to shrug off philosophy as a fantasy. For these Marxists there are three degrees of reality:

1) the economy, which in the last instance is the only objective and non-ideological reality; 2) Law and the State, which are already less real because clad in ideology, and 3) pure ideology which is object less and totally unreal ('pure rubbish')." This led to a view that Marxism was a positive science, like chemistry or physics. Hilferding saw Marxism as a theory which was "a scientific, objective and free science, without value judgments." It need not be related to socialism and could be conveniently divorced from a revolutionary practice. Korsch condemns the concept of Marxism as a positive science; a view that originated in Engel's "Dialectics of Nature", infected "Materialism and Empirico-criticism" and bloomed again in "Dialectical and Historical Materialism" when Uncle Jo converted the dialectic into something remarkably like the three card trick. Marx, in his marginal notes to Bakunin on the State, even went so far as to disclaim "scientific" socialism, as only having any meaning when contrasted with Utopian socialism. It is only later, in his masterpiece "Karl Marx", that Korsch positively identifies Marxism as a critical science.

Why did the Marxism of the Second International degenerate? When Korsch posed this question, he was opening new ground for Marxist

theory. He was attempting a Marxist i.e. scientific and materialist, analysis of Marxism. The spread of Marxism in the late 19th century was accompanied by relative social calm. Marxism had no practical revolutionary task to accomplish but merely expressed in a political form the reformist and economic struggles of the working class. Scientific socialism lost its function as a guide for the proletarian revolution. Since this Marxism was an abstract theory with no practical consequences, it was unable to deal with the relationship between the State and revolution and philosophy and Marxism. Korsch, therefore, saw that Lenin's "State and Revolution" "was an early indication that the internal connection of theory and practice within revolutionary Marxism had been consciously re-established."

What is the relationship between Marxism and philosophy? As mentioned before, Korsch attacks those who argue that philosophy is an unreal superstition preserved by the ruling class, that will disappear like a puff of smoke when capitalism is overthrown. It was true that scientific socialism was to abolish philosophy, but questions remained: "should this abolition of philosophy be regarded as accomplished so to speak once and for all by a single intellectual

deed of Marx and Engels? Should it be regarded as accomplished only for Marxists, or for the whole proletariat, or for the whole of humanity? Or should we see it (like the abolition of the State) as a very long and arduous revolutionary process which unfolds through the most diverse phases?" The existence of the degenerated worker's states and the quasi-ideology of Stalinism force us to accept the view of Korsch that a conscious struggle against the idealist component of bourgeois society and all of its forms of consciousness is necessary. To do this Marxism has to be a counter-critique of capitalism in its totality and not merely its "real" (economic) aspects. Korsch argues that such an attack on philosophy is a prerequisite for a successful revolutionary struggle. It seems at times as if Korsch attempts to elevate, in the "Gramscian" manner, this aspect above the Leninist vanguard party. But this is not at all convincing once it is grasped that central to Leninism is the role of the party as the agency of totalisation and the generator of socialist consciousness. In spite of the weaknesses, Korsch provides insights that are essential for us if we wish to re-establish today the connection of revolutionary theory with revolutionary practice.

Julian Atkinson

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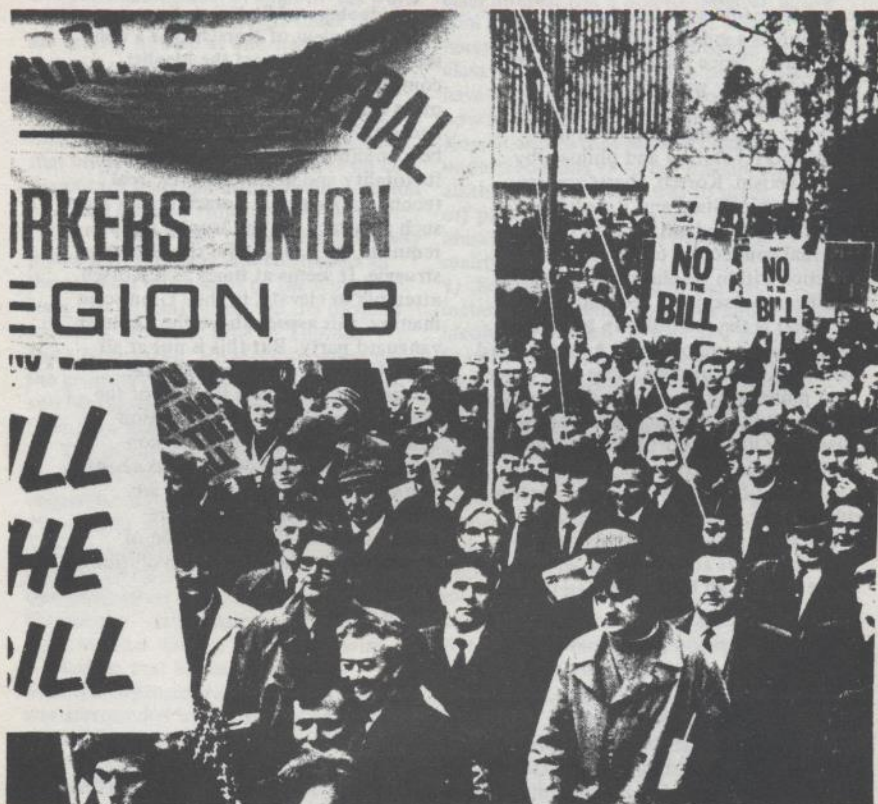
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Notes on Pay & Poverty

During the 1950's and 1960's there was a great vogue for the theories of "enbourgeoisement". We were informed that under the influence of ever increasing prosperity the working class as a class with a distinct consciousness was disappearing. This theory always was rubbish as it totally ignored any other variable than that of pay in determining the consciousness of a worker. However it is worth looking at the underlying assumption that what has occurred inside the working class is a massive increase in affluence. The picture that emerges is by no means the never ending vista of prosperity which was offered to us as a perspective by the ideologists of bourgeois sociology.

Frequently accompanying the theories of the disappearance of the working class, and in fact a necessary correlate of it, was the idea that economic growth in itself would cure the problems of poverty. The argument went that the working class should cease worrying about the division of the economic cake and only be concerned with the actual size of the cake. If only it did this the problem of poverty and low pay could quickly be resolved. After all if the economy could grow at 4% a year then in 5 years we would, by the miracle of compound interest, all be 25% better off. After 25 years of unprecedented growth for capitalism we are perhaps now in a position to evaluate these claims and unfortunately we find that the laws of capitalism are rather stronger than the laws of compound interest.

While in the period of the post war boom the real income of much of the working class went up, nevertheless two things must be noted. Firstly the increases in real terms have not been due, largely to increases in basic pay but has been largely due to increases in payments for such things as overtime, a greater number of women working etc., and secondly for a significant section of the working class this has not been a period of increasing prosperity but of increasing poverty.

The Role of Labour

Amongst certain layers of the left there is a belief that it is better to have the Labour party in power because in some way it attacks the working class "less". The usual evidence adduced for this is the 1945-51 Labour government so before looking briefly at the record of labour in its last period in office it is worth looking at what were the essential features of the "Welfare State" as established by Labour and why it was introduced.

If we look at the record of the 1945-51 Labour government we can see that in purely monetary terms it did little to improve the provision of welfare: It increased the percentage of national income spent on welfare from 9½% prewar to only 11-12% (1). It was the full employment due to the boom and not the Labour governments welfare policies which really affected the living standards of the majority of the working class after 1945. In fact, far from Britain having the finest Welfare State in the world thanks to the efforts of the Labour party, the British working class in fact has perhaps the least good welfare

facilities of any comparable industrial state. However even at the level of what facilities do exist it would be entirely wrong to believe that these were largely the work of the Labour government. On the contrary many of the most important measures—free secondary education for all children, introduction of family allowances, abolition of the household means test—were introduced by the war time government before Labour ever came to power.

The reason why in all advanced capitalist countries the post war period saw an increase in social expenditure, and this happened quite regardless of whether the governments in power were made up of "working class parties" as in Britain or of openly capitalist parties as in most of Europe, was partly due to fear of a wave of working class militancy and partly due to a desire to have a labour force able to cope with the new demands of capitalism. This former point was clearly pointed out in an utterance by Quinten Hogg when he said that, "If you do not give the people reform, they are going to give you revolution. Let anyone consider the possibility of a series dangerous industrial strikes, following the present hostilities" (2). At another level the increase in spending on health is necessary to ensure a fit work force (a factor not necessary in the 1930's when there was a surplus of labour and the sick were simply kicked onto the dole) and the increase in expenditure on education was seen as necessary to provide a more skilled workforce to deal with the techniques demanded by modern capitalism.

If, however, capitalism saw it as in its short term interests to increase social expenditure, that of course did not mean that the capitalist class considered it was going to have to pay for it. On the contrary it knows that under capitalism to finance welfare states from the employers would cut into the all important profits and therefore into the incentive to invest. Instead of this the trick is to get the less badly off sections of the working class to finance the worst off. The secret of this is to make the source of finance universal flat rate contributions. These ensure firstly that a worker contributes far more as a percentage of his income than does the well off, and secondly that because the working class constitutes the overwhelming majority of the population, it will contribute the overwhelming majority of the finance. In addition a good second trick is to charge for the services received, as this ensures that the working class pays most for these, again because it is the majority of the population, and also because it has the lowest wages, the effects of the charges fall hardest on the working class. This latter trick was found exceptionally useful by Labour in 1949 when it was used to help finance rearmament. The result of all these stratagems was that even after Labour had been in power the cost of unemployment, sickness, maternity, and pension benefits, that is to say those benefits which most affect the working class, were completely paid for by contributions, of which the vast majority were paid by the working class. Just to ensure that benefits can be easily reduced without too much of a fuss being created, a good thing to do is to make the benefits at a flat rate so that they are easily cut into by inflation. (A new twist, more recently developed, is to make the benefits income related so that the best off get the most and the worst off the least).

If in fact the boom and capitalist governments have done nothing to alter

these basic features of capitalism, neither have they done much to take the rough of the edges of capitalism for those who are forced under in the rat race, and what little has been given is now rapidly being taken back.

Most important of all however, in "Welfare" expenditure is very largely not even seen as a sop to the working class but as one way of regulating the economy. Increases in, for example, allowances are seen as ways of regulating the level of demand in the economy. The fact that regulation of demand has to fall to the state, i.e. the representative of the bourgeois class as a whole, is determined by one of the central contradictions of capitalism, namely the need to generate a demand for goods while at the same time each capitalist endeavours to pay as little to "his" workers as possible. Marx outlined this contradiction when he noted that "... although every capitalist demands that his workers should save, he means only *his own* workers, because they related to him as workers; and by no means does this apply to the remainder of the workers, because they related to him as consumers." It is of course incorrect to see the problem of underconsumption as the primary characteristic of capitalism, on the contrary it is merely one of the manifestations of a system whose fundamental feature is generalised commodity production. This is a fundamental point which divides Marxism from all utopian theories, (and incidentally from all State Capitalist theories which for their own reasons are forced to see underconsumption as the fundamental feature of capitalism). Lenin characterises the situation when he says that utopian theory, "explains crises by underconsumption, the latter (Marxist theory) by the anarchy of production. Thus while both theories explain crises by a *contradiction* in the economic system itself, they differ entirely on the nature of the contradiction. But the question is: does the second theory deny the fact of a contradiction between production and consumption? *Of course not.* It fully recognises this fact, but puts it in its proper, subordinate, place as a fact that only relates to one department of the whole of capitalist production. It teaches us that this fact cannot explain crises, which are called forth by another and more profound contradiction that is fundamental in the present economic system, namely, the contradiction between the social character of production and the private character of appropriation." (3) As long as this anarchy of production exists, attempts to regulate the consumption of the economy by the state are utopian, and the intervention of the state can in no way go against the laws of capitalist production. The intervention of the state in a capitalist system can therefore not solve one of the key problems of capitalism—that of social expenditure. Lenin again put this very succinctly, in his "Imperialism", when he wrote in relation to the tendency for a surplus of capital to arise in the imperialist states, "... if it (capitalism) could raise the living standards of the masses. ... there could be no question of a surplus of capital. This "argument" is very often advanced by the petty-bourgeois critics of capitalism. But if capitalism did these things it would no longer be capitalism."

It was over this basically pro-capitalist structure erected by Labour that the Tories ruled so easily for the period 1951-64. As this system in no way was a burden to, or threatened the capitalist class, the Tories saw absolutely no need to dismantle

Labour's measures. On the contrary they would certainly have introduced them all themselves if they had been in power after 1945, and in that way Britain would have had its pro-capitalist welfare state introduced, as virtually everywhere else did, by an openly capitalist government. This might have saved us a whole lot of mystification and would certainly have made the working class no worse off. During the "Thirteen years" of Tory rule all that occurred was that the more anti-working class parts of Labour's welfare edifice were accentuated and the Tories more consciously saw "welfare" as a way of regulating the economy. Thus for example prescription charges were doubled in April 1961 as part of a policy which in the years 1951-61 saw the health charge rise by 260% as against a 74% increase in wages. The various changes made in April 1961 for example were "justified" by supposedly being used to finance a £5 million hospital building programme, but in fact raised for the exchequer over £65 million.

As British Imperialism declined during the 1950's so of course it became less willing even to let the working class finance any welfare benefits by redistributing wealth inside the working class. On the contrary the capitalist class was forced to seek a much more fundamental redistribution of wealth—a redistribution of wealth away from the working class and to the bourgeoisie. In the 1950's the need to do this was considered slightly less urgent than the undersiability of an open political clash with the working class so instead of an open attack on social expenditure, the British "welfare state" was simply allowed not to keep up with that of other capitalist countries. The result was that by 1960 welfare payments in Britain stood at 6.4% compared to 10.4% in West Germany, 8.3% for France and 7.9% for Italy, and what benefits there were were financed less by the least nominal charges on capital than in any other country, with British employers "contributing" twenty one percent of social security revenue, compared with 41% in Germany, 69% in France, and 72% in Italy.

By the middle 1960's however it was obvious that the decline of British capitalism was proceeding at an accelerated rate. In this situation the order of priorities for the ruling class changed. First priority now became the redistribution of income away from the working class and the only question that remained to be settled was how to do while meeting as little resistance as possible. In its hour of need the more enlightened members of the bourgeoisie looked, as always, to the Labour party. Just as in 1931 it had been used to introduce, in Lord Samuel's words, "measures most unpalatable to the working class" and just as in 1945 Labour had been useful to "defuse" the working class movement, so it was calculated that a Labour victory in 1964 would lead to an attack on the working class, and particularly on the trade unions, which, because it was carried out by a "working class" party, would meet with little resistance. It was for this reason that you had journals such as the "Economist" and more class conscious representatives of the bourgeoisie, such as Sir Frank Kearton, then head of Courtaulds, and Sir Donald Stokes, head of the Leyland motor company, openly saying that they wanted Labour to win.

This strategy was, within limits, extremely successful. In fact quite definitely by the mid point of Labour's period in office we can say that welfare was now ceasing to have any real effect in maintaining, let alone increasing the, standard of life of the working class. It was only the wage increases that were made by the well organised

sections of the working class that maintained an increase in the real standard of living. (See Red Mole Feb 21/2/71 for details)

Changes in Real Income

Certainly in money terms the increases appear enormous, in the period 1938-68 the average wage in money terms went up by 545%. According to the official government estimated the cost of living has increased 270% over the same period. This however understates the position very considerably. If you take purchase cost of the same number of goods at the beginning and end of the period the actual increase has been 371%. In other words there has been a real increase in average wages over this period. (It should be noted that the element of redistribution involved is virtually nil. Atkinson calculates that allowing for a 73% increase in GDP over this period a family with one child would need an income increase of 538% in order to stay in the same place once the increase in productivity is taken into account. But looking at averages is far too crude, to really understand what has been happening, it is necessary to break the figures down further.

Firstly the fact that capitalism has been in a state of boom does not mean that it has been giving money away. All that it means is that if you have a strong bargaining position you can wrest concessions from the employers. If on the other hand you have not then the inflation will actually make your standard of living lower. For example teachers basic wages have gone up only 339% in the period 1938-69. In other words if they were on basic they would actually get paid less. This can be compared to say the Coventry toolroom average which indicates an increase of 480%. (4) Similarly a bus drivers basic has gone up 368% and a postmans 387%. It is obvious that with this type of increase on the basic many sections of workers have only been able to keep up or increase their standard of living by working long hours overtime, seeking intensive work bonus systems etc. In fact in 1969 it was found that the average overtime pay for a male manual worker each week was £5.20 and this represented 33.2% of his total pay. (5) It is not surprising given this situation that the number of hours overtime worked is very great. In 1968 for example it was an average of 8.5 hours a week in manufacturing industry (6).

The other method by which family income has been increased is by a far larger number of women working; between 1951 and 1961 the proportion of women in employment increased from 27% to 37%. These women of course have been subjected to a tremendous rate of exploitation and in fact their situation has, if anything, got worse. In manufacturing for example female average weekly earnings expressed as a percentage of mens earnings fell from 53% in 1950 to 48% in 1960 to 47% in October 1965 (7) Over 80% of women get less than 41½p an hour which would be equivalent to the TUC's suggested minimum wage of £16.50.

A dependence of families on overtime working and the income of working wives (two thirds of working women are married) means that family income is very greatly affected by cyclical fluctuations are endemic in some industries, for example motors, and can therefore affect many groups of workers. The effect from unemployment is even greater than the official unemployment figures show. It is common that many married women for example do not register as unemployed and therefore are not counted in the statistics. As these women are however necessary to keep up family income the effect will be very marked. This probably to some extent explains why for example between June 1966 and March 1968 unemployment went up by 284,000 but employment fell by 740,000. ((8))

What is worth noting especially is that as the government increases its attacks on the working class, the proportion of the working class actually improving its living standards as a result of the 'boom' progressively decreases. Thus for example in the period April 1970-April 1971 probably half the working population suffered a fall in real income. On average a fall in real income of 3% occurred for the working class. ((9))

What can therefore be seen that although the successive Tory and Labour governments have not gained a decisive victory in any field they have succeeded in waging a war of attrition so that now they are actually quite materially cutting into the position established by the working class since the war. In particular the inability of capitalism to even maintain its level of welfare services coupled with a decreasing ability of the working class to keep up its income through wage struggles has led to really marked increase in poverty in the present period. This situation can, for a variety of reasons, only get worse. Firstly it is obvious that we have come to the end of the period of relatively full employment. We are moving to a situation whereby there is a permanent pool of unemployment. Apart from the direct consequences of this it will also significantly affect family income by restricting the opportunities for women to work. The extent to which this has already struck home is disguised by the present unemployment figures because it is known that many women do not register as unemployed. Secondly the attack on the unions will make it consistently harder to win wage increases. This will affect the main way by which the working class has driven up its living standards. Most important of all of course is the general decline of British Imperialism which forces any capitalist government, no matter which party, to continually attack the living standard of the working class by all conceivable means. These processes are already leading to really significant increases in poverty.

POVERTY

Poverty cannot of course be defined in absolute terms. In the words used in the Social Science Research Council's report, "Research on Poverty", "People are 'poor' because they are deprived of the opportunities, comforts, and self-respect regarded as normal in the community to which they belong. It is therefore the continually moving *average* standards of that community that are the starting points for an assessment of its poverty, and the poor are those who fall sufficiently below these average standards."

The boom has of course done nothing to change the fundamental inequality of wealth in capitalist Britain. It is the case that 5% of the population have 92% of the disposable wealth. (10) Those who do not have personal wealth are still totally dependent on the selling of their labour power for survival. On Jan. 1966 the 87.9% of the population who own less than £3,000 were calculated to have an average holding of only £107. (11) The distribution of the wealth that really matters, the ownership of property and industry, is even more uneven. On income from property, the richest 10% of the population in 1959 were calculated to receive 99% of all such income. (12) In 1966 only 4% of the population owned any shares at all, and 1% of the population were calculated in 1961 to own 81% of all shares. (13)

At the bottom end of the scale it is also remarkable how the position has not really changed with time. If we look at the median earnings level for all workers in full time manual work, and then compare how the bottom 10% have done, the picture emerges as follows:-

% of median earnings level earned by bottom tenth in

1886 - 68.6%

1906 - 66.5%

1938 - 67.7%

1970 - 67.3% (14)

It is very hard to make exact estimates of the situation as regards poverty but a reasonable estimate seems to be that between 1953 and 1966 the number of people living below the state accepted poverty line more than doubled (15) (This incidentally is excellent evidence against the once fashionable view that economic growth in itself would solve the problems of the worse off). Between 1953 and 1960 it has been estimated that the number of people living at or below the state defined poverty line increased from 4 million to 7½ million, and estimates for the number now in this category range up to 10 million. (16) This point about considering not only those below the poverty line but also those at it, is a very important one. A survey of the Ministry of Social Security carried out in 1966 found that apart from the families actually living in poverty, there were more than twice as many who have an income only up to £2 above the official poverty line. Any slight increase in unemployment of women and recently we have seen a massive increase, and rise in national insurance contributions etc., will bring them down into the poverty range. (17)

One of the factors affecting these workers most, is of course inflation. This means that in the recent period these workers will undoubtedly have suffered very real cuts in their real standard of living. For example between April 1970 and April 1971 consumer prices rose by 9.4%. (18) The rates of increase amongst the poorest workers have nothing like kept up with this, capitalism does not give away wage increases and the poorest workers are mainly in industries with little or no union protection. For example workers in laundering, narrow fabric, the fur trade, retail newsagency, baking, bespoke tailoring, licensed establishments, unlicensed places of refreshment and industrial staff canteens, received in 1970 an average annual gross increase in wages of 4% during a period when prices rose some 8%. (19) The policy keeping down wages

by tackling public sector workers, who are usually poorly paid, will only make this situation worse. If we look only at male manual workers we find that there are 900,000 who in 1970 earned less than £15 a week. In non-manufacturing industries, i.e. services in particular, there is an enormous concentration of such workers, with 13.4% of the labour force getting less than £15 a week, compared to 9.4% for all industries and 4.6% for manufacturing. (20)

To see just how badly off these poorly paid workers are becoming, and to see how their position is deteriorating and lack of trade union organisation is crippling them, it is worth looking at the example of the wage council industries. In 5 years to September 1970 prices rose by 24.7%. In 25 out of 53 industries covered by wages councils lowest minimum rates of pay for men went up by less than 24.7%. (21) It is sometimes claimed that few workers are actually on the minimum, but even the bourgeoisie explodes that argument. The Incomes DATA report just quoted points out that "...the DEP's Wages Inspectorate finds people paid *below* their statutory minimum. More significantly, if there are only a few workers on the minimum, there should be little difficulty in appreciable raising rates of pay that in almost every case are now below the level of Supplementary Benefit. Until this is done, it is fair to assume that there are a proportion of workers actually on the statutory minimum." (22) Furthermore this differential is increasing. For example, in a survey of 126 industrial groups over the period of the beginning of 1970 it was found that the average rate of pay increase was 8% per annum while for the bottom 10 groups the average was only 4%. (23) Furthermore even where pay is higher this is only maintained by high overtime. Out of the 126 groups, each employing over 10,000 workers, 117 had basic rates of pay lower than the TUC target minimum wage of £16.10.0. (24)

In all there are at least 75 categories of occupation where at least 25% of the workforce gets less than 8 shilling an hour. The consequence of this type of situation is that it is now calculated that between one child in six and one child in seven lives in poverty. (25)

There is not space to go into their special forms of oppression here (26) but just at the level of pay, it is a staggering fact that 80% of all women manual workers get less than 8 shilling an hour (equivalent to £16 for a 40 hour week) (27) As for equal pay, that is nowhere in sight with rates of pay relative to men ranging down to 57% in the case of those employed in cinemas. (28) All attempts at gaining equal pay are being systematically sabotaged by industry reserving certain jobs for women and by downgrading jobs done by women. If anything the situation may be getting worse. In October 1960, average earnings for women in full time manual employment were 49% of the equivalent male earnings; in 1968 they were 48%, in October 1969 they were 47%. (29)

At the present time none of the organisations of the labour movement are in any way prepared to tackle the question of poverty or equal pay. All the suggestions for things such as an incomes policy in return for a guaranteed minimum wage in fact will only make worse the situation of those driven into poverty by capitalism. Even if Socialist ever needed any justification for the fight to keep independent and strong the organisations of the working class they can find it in the decline of welfare as a decisive factor in maintaining the

living standards of the working class. The fight to maintain the power of the working class in economic struggle has not become the decisive fight for the defense of the living standards of the *entire* working class.

J.Marshall

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(1) Kincaid—International Socialism no.35. (2) House of Commons 17.2.43 quoted International Socialism no.7. (3) Lenin—A Characterisation of Economic Romanticism, section 7. (4) N. Atkinson—Whatever happened to our Wages? (5) Income DATA Services Annual Review 1969 p.21. (6) Trade Union Register 1969 p.337. (7) Lerner—in Prest ed. "The British Economy". (8) T.U. Register 1969 p.33. A similar pattern can be seen in reverse in the years 1963-64 when employment rose by 1.4% and unemployment dropped by only 0.9%. (9) The Guardian 22.5.71. (10) Blackburn—in The Incompatibles ed. Blackburn and Cockburn. (11) The Economist—15.1.66. (12) Blackburn op.cit. (13) op.cit. (14) Productivity prices and Incomes Policy after 1969 para 61. cited in Red Mole 15.5.71. (15) Tribune—12.3.71. (16) Ibid. (17) The Times 10.3.71. (18) The Guardian 22.5.71. (19) 'Tribune' 12.3.71. (20) The Times 19.1.71. (21) Incomes DATA Sept 1970 p.25. (22) Ibid. (23) Incomes DATA Sept Aug. 1970. (24) Ibid. (25) Child Poverty Action Group 25.1.71. (26) Coulson—International vol 1. no.4. (27) D.E.P. Gazette Dec 1970 p.1114. (28) "Sunday Times"—28.2.71. (29) Morning Star 18.12.70 cited in Coulson op.cit.

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