

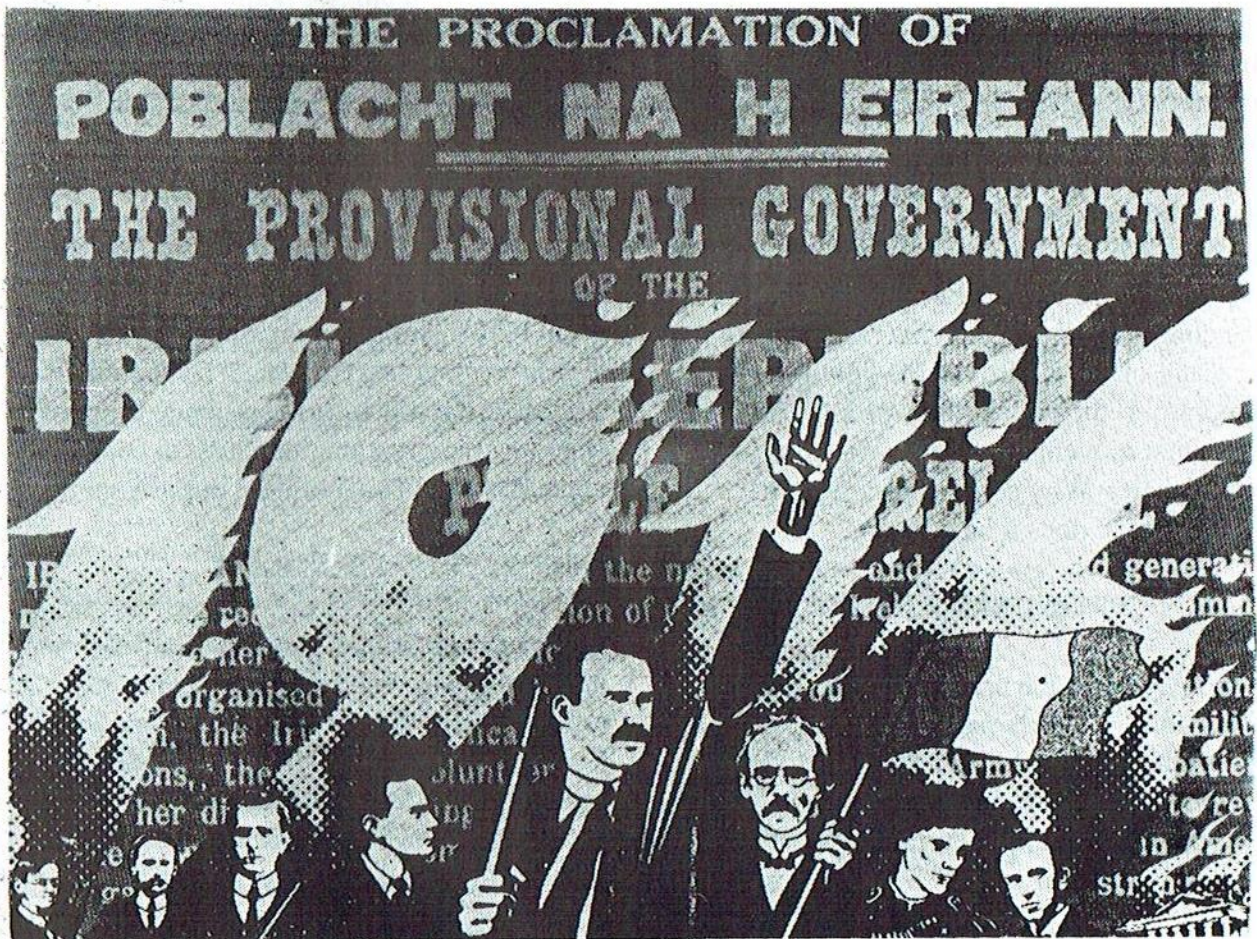
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Why commemorate the Rising?



Inside this
issue;

The Connolly legacy, Bureaucrats join Bosses offensive,
A new world order? The Six, New British plan

EDITORIAL

WHY COMMEMORATE 1916?

It's a tribute to the latent anti-imperialist spirit of the majority of Irish people that the committee "Reclaim the spirit of 1916", arising from an initiative by Sinn Fein, was able to bring together a wide range of talent and build a whole series of commemorative events around the 75th anniversary of the rising.

More's the pity that the political aim of the committee, to force the Dublin government to commemorate the rising, led militants bound up in the movement down a cul-de-sac. The truth is that the Dublin government should not be asked to celebrate 1916. They are not the inheritors of the rising but its gravediggers. The failure to make this reality the centrepiece of the commemoration activities has demobilised many of the victims of the gombeen collaborators- the young, the working class, the feminist movement. It has also stifled a central debate. Why commemorate 1916? What relevance does it have today?

PROCLAMATION

The problem with the proclamation is that it was just that - a proclamation. It wasn't a program that spelt out for the Irish people in 1916 the nature of the new Ireland or the steps necessary to win it and it certainly doesn't offer such a program today.

Implicit in the proclamation was a new balance being struck and a new promise for the future. In the 19th century the national question had expressed itself through the peasant struggle for land. In the 20th century the major opposition to imperialism was to come

from the working class. In its promise to cherish all children of the nation equally the proclamation expressed the new alliance between worker and peasant and also an attempt to smooth over the class contradictions expressed in Connolly's famous quotation;

"In the event of victory, hold on to your rifles. Those with whom we are fighting may cease before our goal is reached. We are for economic and social as well as political liberty."

The death of Connolly and the disbanding of the Irish Citizen Army removed from the scene a revolutionary leadership for the working class. Republicanism became subordinated to the national bourgeoisie. It was able to offer a program of physical force in the North but its own social base made it impossible for it to offer an alternative to capitalist oppression and collaboration in the South.

PROGRAM

It was only after a long period of attrition that the republicans made some hesitant steps towards the working class. The result was the Civil rights explosion in the North and 20 years of mass struggle which has presented the greatest challenge yet to British rule. In the process a Republican leadership has developed committed to political action and intent on breaking out of a growing political isolation.

Yet still the program of republicanism is unable to break with the national bourgeoisie. The present tactic for breaking out of isolation is a "unity offensive" aimed at Fianna Fail and

the SDLP. Unfortunately what is being offered is a unity that either suggests that there is no programmatic difference between republicanism and bourgeois nationalism or that these differences don't matter - for example proposals for a "unity" candidate in Fermanagh/South Tyrone. The result of this policy is 3 years of politically empty commemorations that leave anti-imperialist and working-class militants confused and demoralised. "Reclaim the Spirit of Easter 1916" is the latest such initiative.

Again Connolly stated the issue clearly;

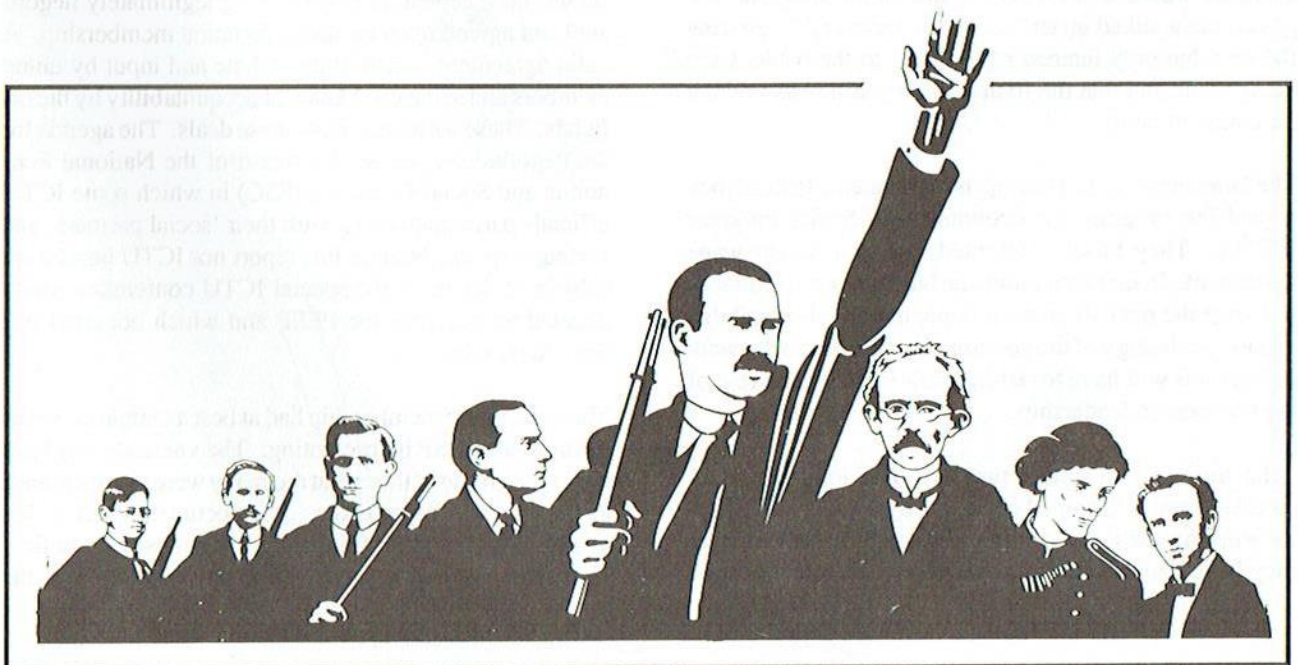
"Having learnt from history that all bourgeois movements end in compromise, that the bourgeois revolutionaries of today become the conservatives of tomorrow, the Irish socialists refuse to deny or lose their identity with those who only half understand the problem of liberty. They seek only the alliance and friendship of those hearts who, loving liberty for its own sake, are not afraid to follow its banner when it is uplifted by the hands of the working class who have most need of it."

CLASS STRUGGLE

Ireland does not have a party of the working

class, but it most certainly has a class struggle and class issues; youth, emigration, women's rights, the separation of church and state, trade union democracy, government collaboration with British and US militarism, are thrown up every day. These questions demand answers. Political abstention or an empty waving of the proclamation won't do. Eventually silence becomes an answer and people turn away, even if the alternative is the mirage of Labour and Workers party "radicalisation"

It was the working class intervention in the Rising that gave it a truly international dimension. Connolly and his followers fought not just for Irish freedom, but also to realise the ideal of the emancipation of the working class from the betrayal of Social Democracy. Today the results of the betrayal of Stalinism are leading to a new balance of power in the world. The existing political structure and the political parties in Ireland today will all be changed in this convulsion. Our response should be to make the promise of the rising a reality today by supporting the concrete demands and struggles of working people against the imperialist domination of our country and by raising the banner of the Workers Republic unfurled by Connolly over the GPO in 1916.



“Program for Social and Economic Progress”

Union bosses line up with Capitalism

The Irish trade union bureaucracy has a long history of national wage agreements with the Dublin Government. It was able to present these as a balancing act between capitalist bosses and unrealistic militants within the working class and as a way of protecting jobs and the wage rates of low paid workers.

With the Programme for a National Recovery (PNR), signed over two years ago, the bureaucrats finally fell off their non-existent fence. They agreed what was effectively a wage cut and a savage reduction in the social wage - the services like health and education that help determine the overall quality of life for working people. The agreement was policed with a vicious effectiveness, isolating and smothering industrial action and carrying out a savage witchhunt against militants who opposed the deal.

The rationale for the PNR was that wage cuts would “restore” profit levels and thus lead to new investment and job creation. Cuts in services would enable the poor to repay the bosses debt to the international banks and restore prosperity.

One prediction came true. Profits went through the roof. But there was absolutely no evidence of job creation. The government talked up an “economic recovery” - ignoring the fact that only interest repayments to the banks were being made and that the Irish economy still rests under a mountain of debt.

The bureaucrats didn't tear up the agreement. Instead they signed the Program for Economic and Social Progress [PESP]. They falsely presented this as a 3-year wage agreement. In fact it commits the bureaucracy to collaborate over the next 10 years in implementing the capitalist economic strategy of the government. Workers who want to fight this will have to rethink their views on the role of the trade union leadership.

The truth is that, under pressure of a long period of recession and a sustained offensive by capitalism against the working class, the majority of the trade union bureaucracy have decided, some consciously and some through

sheer inertia, to come down from their traditional position of trying to balance between the working class and capitalism and joined the bosses side. This is the only realistic meaning to the concept of ‘social partnership’ established first in the PNR and institutionalised through the anti-union industrial Relations Act 1990 (which the ICTU jointly administers with the employers and government) and also in the PESP which is a ten year programme falsely presented as a 3 year pay deal.

To avoid getting bogged down in the percentages, statistics and wishful thinking which forms the majority of the PESP, our analysis must centre around the concept of ‘social partnership’ and a fightback strategy built around opposing it.

Developing a fightback will neither be easy nor produce short term results, but will evolve from a long period of united activity and discussion which are essential to regaining the political consciousness necessary to move forward. Below we list some pointers which we believe can act as a framework for the discussion.

Legitimacy of the PESP agreement.

From the outset neither the PESP nor its predecessor should be accepted as having being legitimately negotiated and agreed upon by the trade union membership. A valid agreement would imply debate and input by union members and some semblance of accountability by the officials. These were absent from these deals. The agenda for the negotiations was set by report of the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) in which some ICTU officials participate along with their ‘social partners’ and various experts. Neither this report nor ICTU input were subject of debate at the special ICTU conference which decided to negotiate the PESP and which occurred just prior to its release.

The trade union membership had at best a couple of weeks to study the PESP before voting. The vast majority have never seen it and of those that did many were given a glance as the vote was being taken. The document itself took a year to produce in its final form. For most of that time discussion centred on the 3 year pay element and the

question of a 10 year joint economic strategy was never referred to.

Content

The contents of the PESP are essentially the Government's economic strategy. It was launched by Haughey and his ministers without a trade union official in sight of the press and TV cameras.

The objectives in regard to employment, taxation, social services and so on are all purely inspirational and dependent on the success, profitability and goodwill of the bosses. In effect at least 90% of the document can be disregarded. As with the PNR the framework set out in the introductory section of the document are its main content. The needs of workers and trade unionists must be satisfied within the framework of capitalism's plans - Developments within the EC, in particular the creation of the single market and Economic and Monetary union, mean that Ireland will become still more closely integrated into the international economy...[Page 8].

Of course we know that these developments were not set in train for the purpose of expanding and protecting the interests of the working class - quite the contrary - they are intended to protect and expand the interests of capitalism at the expense of the working class. The trade union leadership themselves accepted this point during the campaign against the Single European Act.

As in the old PNR, the finances for public services are again subject to a reduction as a ratio of 'national' debt to GNP [page 11]. Reduction of the national debt or increasing GNP are completely dependent on factors outside of

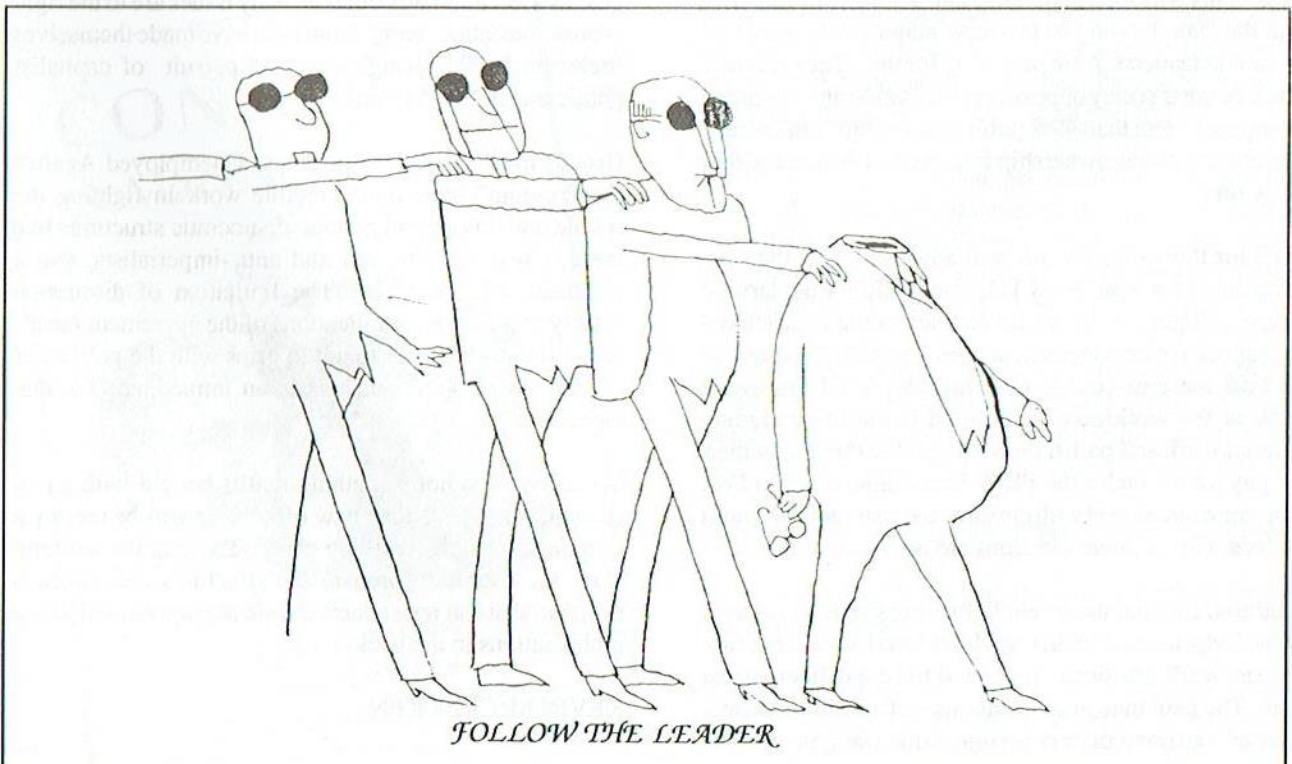
Ireland. If the international economic situation becomes unfavourable social services, employment, the tax regime would all deteriorate to meet this objective. [This is the overriding principle of the programme, it had been drafted with that principle, and that principle cannot be infringed in the implementation of the programme....] page 11.

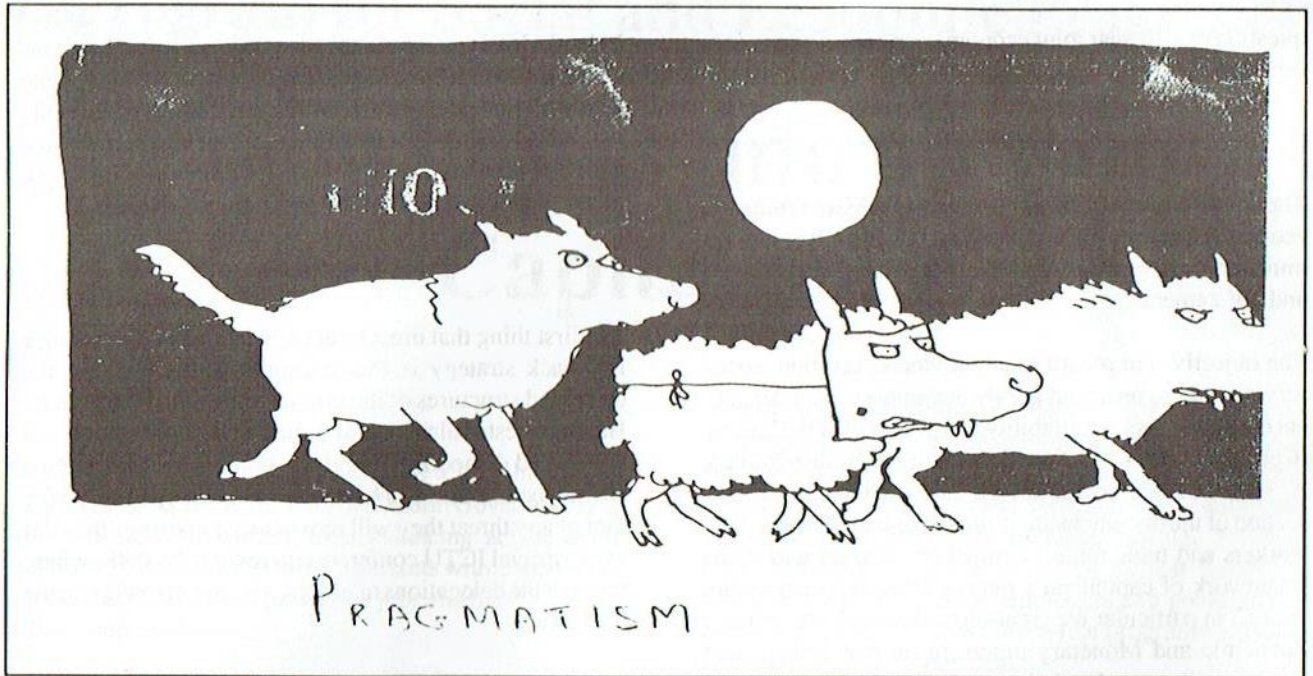
New structures

The first thing that must be acknowledged in discussing a fightback strategy is that it cannot be won within the corrupted structures of the official trade union movement. Having wrested almost total control of these structures and minimised democracy within the unions, the bureaucracy will not be ambushed or beaten on their own ground. At the hint of any threat they will move the goalposts as they did at the special ICTU conference to review the PNR, where they cut the delegations of unions with memberships in the 6 counties.

The ICTU have succeeded in their present course by demobilising the trade union movement. The many new struggles which will arise as they police this new agreement must take up the task of mobilising against this corrupt leadership, unmasking their role and demanding their withdrawal from the Labour Relations Commission and the scrapping of the PESP. Make no mistake about it,

ICTU will be at best indifferent or more probably openly hostile to every dispute undertaken by workers. This role, not yet under serious discussion in the workers movement, has been the key element in the defeat of recent struggles. In the Air Rinta dispute on the TEAM aircraft maintenance facility the ICTU openly backed management threats to close down the facility. They rejected every proposal that





didn't meet management demands and eventually achieved a legally binding agreement. A more recent example was in March this year when employers in the contract cleaning industry objected to proposals to bring part time workers into the social security net because of the cost of PRSI contributions. They duly issued 20 000 protective notices to their workforce giving notice of redundancy. This attempt to move an entire section of the part-time workforce into the black economy and deny them all rights was met by silence from ICTU.

New offensive

There are plenty of signs of a new offensive in individual workplace struggles like Waterford Glass and the Evening Press. This will soon generalise into a full scale offensive, with the state moving to privatise major public services. The union leadership are preparing for this. They recently took Congress policy opposing privatisation and reworded it to oppose "less than 49% public ownership" - in essence conceding private ownership and control without a shot being fired.

Plans for this offensive are well advanced. All the state companies; An Post, Bord Telecom, Dublin Bus, Iarnrod Eireann, Sugar Co, Irish Life etc, are being restructured and aggressive management are being installed in most. In An Post the cost-cutting plan includes 1500 job losses (19% of the workforce), unlimited flexibility including contract work and part-time work and the threat that their 6% pay award under the PESP is conditional. 550 Post offices are threatened with closure - the issue deferred until the local Government elections are out of the way.

In Iarnrod Eireann the recent lightning strike was caused by the suspension of a driver who refused an order breaking past work practices. It seemed to be a deliberate test case. The new Industrial Relations Act was immediately invoked - an immediate court injunction was granted. The

case then went to the Labour relations commission. This sort of thing will continue to happen as one of the effects of the Labour Relations Act is to forbid action in one-person disputes - it must go to arbitration. Management can launch a one-sided civil war against individuals and groups of workers with the full weight of the law to prevent them responding.

New Politics

The economics of capitulation in the trade union movement go hand in hand with the politics of capitulation. Labour has commemorated the anniversary of the Rising by hauling down the Starry Plough and raising the pink rose of European Social democracy. The Workers Party pose as a left alternative but on many issues are to the right even of the Labour party. Sinn Fein have made themselves irrelevant by their single-minded pursuit of capitalist politicians in Fianna Fail.

Groups like "Trade Unionists and Unemployed Against the Program" have done credible work in fighting the sellout and it is around popular democratic structures like these, allied with the left and anti-imperialists, that a fightback will be built. The limitation of discussion mainly to the wages implications of the agreement means that militants have yet to get to grips with the politics of "social partnership" and this is an immediate task that faces them.

Social peace is not something that is bought with a few scratches of a pen. The new offensives will be met by a fightback from the working class. The task for working class activists is to prepare the structures and political program that can resist bureaucratic attempts to stab these mobilisations in the back.

KEVIN McCracken

The Legacy Of Connolly

The Politics of James Connolly Kieran Allen (Pluto Press)

Connolly; A Marxist Analysis Johnston, Larragy, McWilliams (IWG)

The legacy of James Connolly has moulded the Irish left throughout this century right up to this day. This is readily acknowledged by the writers of both books. A 'true giant' (Allen), "above any other Irish Marxist then or since" (Johnston et al). The problem, according to the writers, is that Connolly's work and ideas have been used and distorted to justify particular political positions.

When one considers Connolly's place in the "Pantheon" of Irish leaders and the claims to his mantle made by personalities as diverse as Eamon De Valera, Dick Spring and Gerry Adams the point seems well made. Equally well made is the criticism of some previous writings on Connolly which sanitised him for a conservative nationalist audience or idealised him as an Irish Lenin (C.D.Greaves).

Both books claim to rise above such base interests and are presented as honest evaluations of Connolly's theory and

practice, handing out praise when praise is due but also exposing the warts. Have they succeeded?

CONNOLLY WAS WRONG

The books are written from different political perspectives. Kieran Allen is a leader of the Socialist Workers Movement and Johnston, Larragy and McWilliams are members of the Irish Workers Group. Both these organisations are distinguished by an economic analysis and workerist political strategy. Not surprisingly then they both reach the same conclusion that Connolly was wrong to participate in the organising of the 1916 rising.

There's nothing new in this approach which basically mirrors that of most of the international socialist movement when news of Connolly's role in the Easter Rising came out. Allen chronicles the response, pointing out that Lenin was almost alone in hailing the rising and ridiculing those who denounced it as a "putch".

He goes on approvingly to quote Lenin;

"To imagine that social revolution is conceivable without revolts of small nations, in the colonies and in Europe, without revolutionary outbursts by a section of the petty bourgeoisie with all its prejudices, without a movement of the politically non-conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against oppression by landowners, the church, and the monarchy, against national oppression, etc - to imagine all this is to repudiate social revolution.

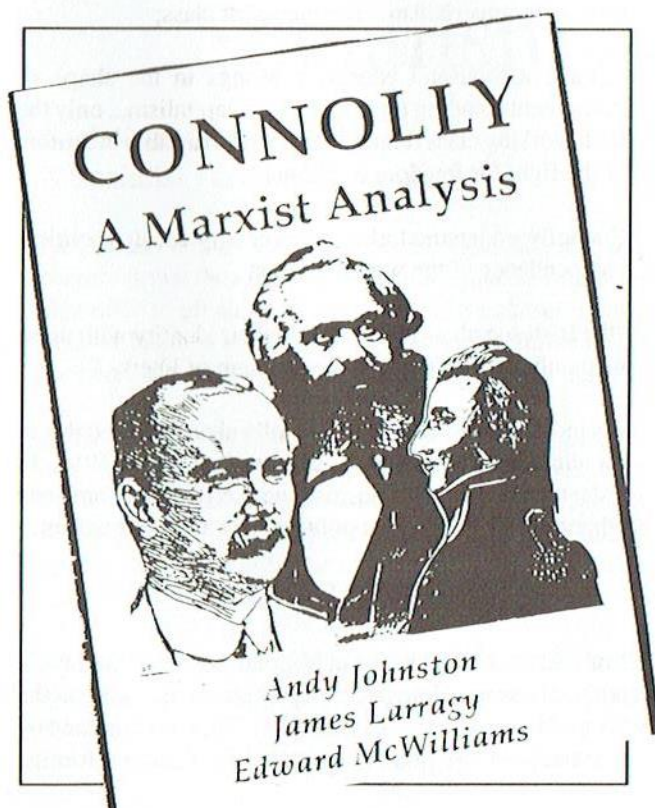
So one army lines up in one place and says "We are for socialism" and another, somewhere else, says "We are for imperialism" and that will be a social revolution. Only those who hold such a ridiculously pedantic view could vilify the Irish rebellion by calling it a "putch".

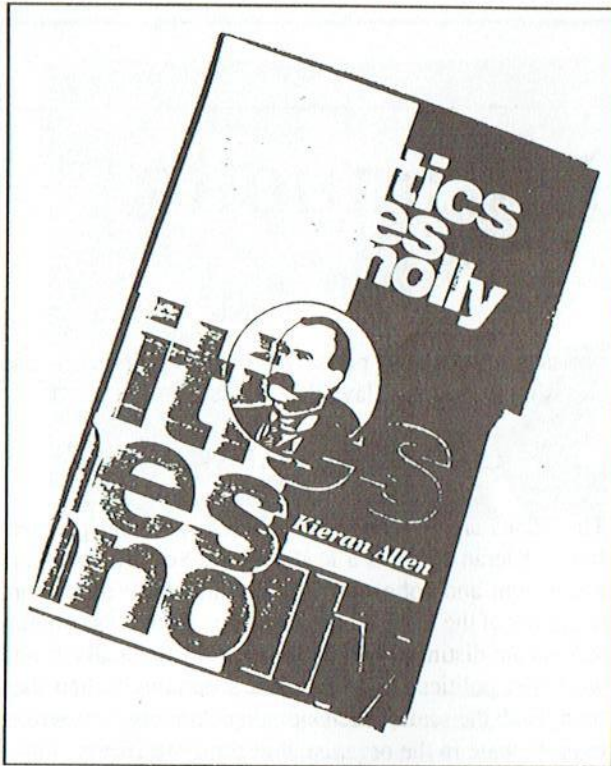
However Kieran Allen is unwilling to follow the logic of this all the way. Basically his position is that socialists should have applauded the insurgents from the sidelines. The GPO was on place for any class-conscious worker.

The Irish Workers Group have no need for such blandness:

"Firstly we say that he (Connolly) was wrong to lower the red flag to the green...

Secondly, we hold that, even had Connolly been determined to conduct the Rising on the principled basis of





making independent fighting propaganda for action by the working class, he still would have been wrong to call for or organise an insurrection against British rule in the conditions of 1916..."

So, in the conditions of 1916, the Irish Workers Group would have been picketing Liberty Hall demanding that the Rising be called off.

RELEVANCE TODAY

What is the relevance of Connolly today? Both books deal usefully with Connolly's career as a professional revolutionist both in Ireland and in America. The influence of the orthodox Marxism of the Second International, the syndicalism of Daniel De Leon's Socialist Labour Party in America, Connolly's role in the young Irish trade union movement are all closely examined. So too his views on women's emancipation, marriage and religion. It is well demonstrated that Connolly was an imperfect Marxist.

However Connolly's relevance today does not centrally rest on his role as a trade union leader or his confused views on religion but on his attempts to grapple with the relationship between the Irish national independence movement and the struggle for socialism.

Shortly after arriving in Ireland in 1896 Connolly dissolved the Dublin Socialist Society and founded the Irish Socialist Republican Party, for whom he drafted a new programme dedicated to the complete separation of Ireland from the British empire and the establishment of an Irish Socialist Republic.

An early manifesto of the ISRP declared:

"The struggle for Irish Freedom has two aspects; it is national and it is social. The national ideal can never be realised until Ireland stands forth before the world a nation free and independent. It is social and economic, because no matter what form the government may be, as long as one class owns as private property the land and instruments of labour from which all mankind derives their substance, that class will always have the power to plunder and enslave the remainder of their fellow creatures... The party which would lead the Irish people from bondage to freedom must then recognise both aspects of the long struggle of the Irish nation."

This approach distinguished Connolly from the "Municipal" socialists of the day who argued that the national question was no concern of the working class, while the Republican Brotherhood, in the tradition of Fenianism, had no social program but united around the use of physical force to drive the British out of Ireland.

RED AND GREEN

The charge against Connolly is that by linking the national and socialist struggles in this way he created a mishmash subordinated the interests of the working class to the interests of Irish capitalism.

The evidence for this assertion is pretty thin. Connolly in his analysis of the Irish independence struggle ascribed to the Irish bourgeoisie an unimpressive role. He was convinced that they had no genuine interest in securing national independence. Any throughgoing national revolution would be led by the working class and would necessarily entail the establishment of a Workers Republic. He warned that the Irish bourgeoisie would always compromise with imperialism. The capitalist class;

"...have a thousand economic strings in the shape of investments binding them to English capitalism... only the Irish working class remains as the incorruptible inheritors of the fight for freedom in Ireland."

Connolly understood also the necessity for the political independence of the working class;

"the Irish socialists refuse to lose their identity with those who only half-understand the problem of liberty."

It's ludicrous to assert that Connolly abandoned all this in his alliance with the Republican Brotherhood in 1916. In order to understand his position we need to understand one other major aspect of his politics - his internationalism.

INTERNATIONALISM

Both Allen and Johnston et al point out that Connolly's political career almost exactly spanned the life of the Second International. Founded in 1890, it was marked by a developing struggle between Marxism and a reformist

revisionism which promoted a policy of seeking gradual advances which in time would see capitalist society evolve towards socialism. This spawned a policy of class collaboration including participation in capitalist governments.

With the outbreak of the First World War the reformists staged a criminal betrayal of socialism. Internationalism and anti-imperialism were abandoned and in each country they united with "their" capitalist class to send workers to the slaughter. Connolly stood with revolutionists like Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg in branding the war as an interimperialist conflict, denouncing the betrayal of the reformists and calling on workers to turn the war into revolution against their capitalist masters. So for Connolly a rising in Ireland was both a blow struck for Irish freedom and part of a larger international process that was to see a series of revolutionary uprisings in Germany and successful revolution in Russia.

In 1914, in the Irish Worker, Connolly wrote;

"Ireland may yet set the torch to a European conflagration that will not burn out until the last throne and the last capitalist bond and debenture will be shrivelled on the funeral pyre of the last warlord."

On Easter Monday 1916 Connolly marched into Dublin's GPO to ignite that spark, almost certainly knowing he would die in the effort.

BUILDING A PARTY

Much is made in both books of Connolly's failure to build

a revolutionary party. Marxists today, with the benefit of hindsight, may have a clearer appreciation of the need for such a party but the fact is that it has not been built by today's more "perfect" Marxist and, 75 years after the Easter Rising, Ireland remains a country dominated by imperialism and by the "carnival of reaction" Connolly foresaw arising from partition.

The road to such a party is not some sort of organisational task but a political one. James Connolly remains relevant today because his attempt to understand the unique political dynamic of the Irish revolution, the political bedrock for the self-organisation of the working class, has not been surpassed. In fact it is obvious from these books that it is not even clearly understood by many in the revolutionary movement today.

Both books are worth reading in that they provide a review on which a necessary debate can take place. The book by Johnston et al tends to be more rigorous and Kieran Allen's book more readable. Both fail in that they are attempts to stake out a claim to the mantle of Connolly socialism and this could only succeed with new research and new analysis. There is little new here. In their failure to accept the central theoretical contribution that Connolly made they cannot pass beyond the ABC of Marxism and are forced to focus on Connolly's "flaws" and "ambiguities". Unable to build on Connolly's strengths, they are unable to assist in breaking the allegiance of today's working class to bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties.

JOHN MAGEE.

Socialism After Stalinism

Socialism After Stalinism A Socialist Outlook Pamphlet

Part of the extraordinary impact of socialist ideas this century is that they not only help to imagine the future but also offer to all an opportunity to build a chosen future. This willingness to imagine and plan for the future lies at the heart of the success of this excellent little pamphlet.

It offers a lucid and straightforward socialist analysis of the new world epoch which has opened up with the collapse of Stalinism and the transformation of Eastern Europe. It does this calmly and in the teeth of the cynicism of liberal journalism and analysis it articulates a socialist future with confidence.

"Respect for basic materialist values of evidence and facts has to be a starting point. Those who throw away the Marxist baby with the Stalinist bathwater will soon enough end up either demoralised or defenders of the status quo".

A basic strength of the pamphlet is that in clear prose it addresses itself to some of the key issues that the collapse of Stalinism has opened up for socialist activists: Planning and the market, Choice and Democracy, Efficiency and innovation, Reds and Greens. As a starting point for helping ordinary people to realise that here is a socialist alternative to Social democracy and labourism on all these issues the pamphlet is invaluable.

In a clear and undogmatic way it is not afraid to imagine and describe a socialist future - and building a future from the present is what socialism has always been about.

JAMES MACKIN.

Socialism After Stalinism A Socialist Outlook Pamphlet £1

Available from PD contact addresses

BRITISH TEAR UP HILLSBOROUGH AGREEMENT NOW A NEW OFFENSIVE

There's a simple reason why the British government has spent 15 months pressuring Unionists, the SDLP and the Dublin government to talk. Despite many gains for imperialism the Hillsborough agreement has failed to deliver the goods. The scene is being set for the scrapping of the agreement by the British and a substantial move to the right. During its history the Hillsborough agreement helped to isolate Sinn Fein and erode its support while also giving cover for further repression. Even though there wasn't any consistent political opposition the agreement ran up against the objective contradictions of British rule. The new attempt to square the circle will also fail to address the fundamental problem of partition.

The Hillsborough accord was a disaster for the nationalist population of the North and for the Irish people generally. Loyalist and state terror have continued. New links between state forces and the death squads have been exposed. Even the Brits own fake anti-discrimination scheme fell flat on its face. Dublin delivered on extradition, on intelligence links with the RUC and on cover for British repression. The British, true to form, kicked them in the teeth each time they tried to use the much-vaunted "Irish dimension".

The Catholic Church, with SDLP support, has effectively been given control of the limited funds available for nationalist areas in the North and is using them to set up a system of patronage and black-listing of militants. In the absence of mass struggle they can be used to convince Irish workers in the 26 counties that change is taking place.

UNITY OFFENSIVE

A Sinn Fein policy of "unity offensives" against Fianna Fail and the SDLP has helped this process by confusing and demobilising republican supporters and led to a steady drift to the right. Today their policy is marked by a lack of both political and military strategy and a reliance on increasingly adventurist military action.

The British have not been slow to capitalise on this. An offer of a place at the negotiating table in return for a ceasefire is aimed at exploiting this political weakness and the war - weariness of republican support.

The violent Unionist reaction to the Hillsborough deal forced the Brits (albeit with velvet gloves) to weather the worst of the storm and establish who was boss. In an earlier settlement, the Sunningdale deal, they had capitulated to a

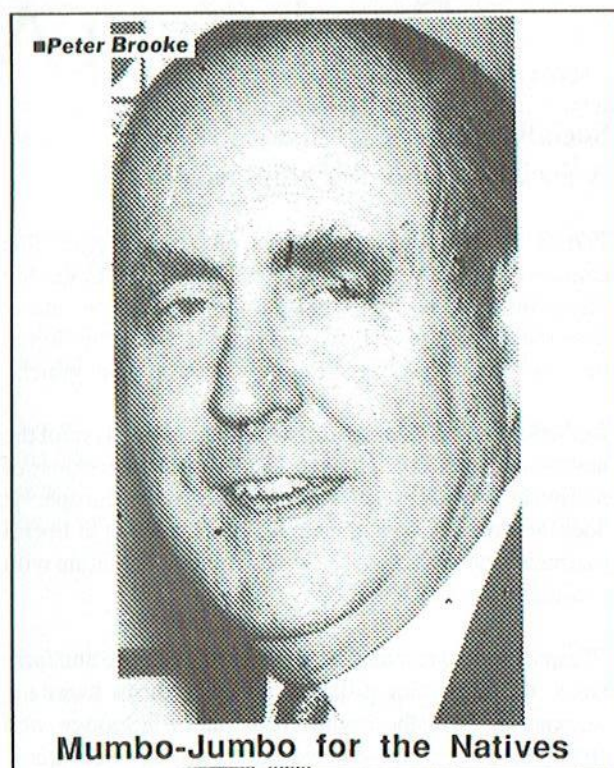
Loyalist rising. Having to a very limited extent restrained Unionism the Brits then had to hold it up. It's the only mass base for British rule in Ireland and must be preserved.

NEW STORMONT

The Unionists have a key role to play. Britain has no solution for the "Irish problem". It wants to stuff it in a box and forget about it. The best box they ever came up with was called Stormont. In a new local administration the Unionists would get the British off the hook and act as gaolers for the national aspiration of Irish people as a whole.

Brooke has a lot to offer the local bourgeoisie. The Unionists have been complaining that the absence of parliamentary salaries is leading to the decay of their political machines. A new administration would mean millions in Parliamentary salaries, contracts and kick-backs. Security would gradually be "Ulsterised" and Britain would be able to show a clean pair of hands and claim benevolent disinterest.

In fact one sideshow running alongside the talks is a statement by Brooke that Britain has no inherent interest in



remaining in Ireland. Essentially he was claiming that the British presence was simply "the white man's burden" to defend the democratic right of the Unionists to partition. (This piece of mumbo-jumbo led to howls of delight from the SDLP and a rather silly and pedantic debate with Sinn Fein.)

The statement does illuminate the direction of British policy. They are prepared to utter some mumbo-jumbo about their willingness to leave Ireland (as long as they stay). In return they want the Irish constitution amended to recognise and support partition. In the North they want a Unionist administration willing to make cosmetic changes that the SDLP could claim as power-sharing and a new formula for "an Irish dimension" creating a new "comic-opera" structure that the Unionists would be willing to live with while Dublin claims all sorts of power and influence.

SQUARING THE CIRCLE

Britain's problem is that after 20 years of war a decaying

power cannot afford to look kindly on a permanent source of instability with a substantial political, economic and military cost. Yet the determination of force a settlement is accompanied by a lack of resources to achieve one.

Their Unionist base is a fragmented shadow of its former self. The economic base of an imperial market that sustained a relatively autonomous local bourgeoisie and a labour aristocracy no longer apply. The Irish bourgeoisie, pulled in to cover the cracks, has swollen in number and economic weight, but much of this is hot air, leached from their integration with imperialism and destabilising their own popular base in nationalism.

At the end of the day what will square all these circles is force. Stability for Britain can only come from an historic defeat of the Irish working class. That's why Brooke's words of peace in practice mean more violence and repression and why we so urgently need a political leadership which will put on the agenda the only real alternative - a Workers Republic.

JOHN NORTH

Interested in the Politics of Peoples Democracy? You can find out more.

PD is joining a Summer School in Wales with our sister organisation the International Socialist Group.

The School will run from Saturday 24th August until Thursday 29th August and the program will include;

Basic Marxism

History of the international socialist movement

The national question in Ireland

Creche facilities are available

For further details contact;

Joe Carter Conway Mill, Falls Rd, Belfast

R. Lyseight, 38 Clanawley Rd, Kilester, Dublin

VICTORY FOR THE SIX NOW THE WHITEWASH

The release of the Birmingham 6 was followed by a wave of relief and triumph among Irish people everywhere, and especially among the emigre community in Britain itself. The relief is self-explanatory. The triumph arose from the fact that the release of the 6, Guildford 4, of the Winchester 3 and the clearing of the Maguire family was not the gift of British justice, but was prised inch by reluctant inch from the British government and judiciary by popular pressure in Ireland supported by sections of the British socialist movement.

As one of the 6 said immediately after their release, every dog has its day, and this was a day on which Irish people

celebrated a triumph over racism, conspiracy and hypocrisy.

COVERUP

It was also the day that the coverup began. In fact the last months of the incarceration of the 6 and the final slap in the face of detention over Xmas were imposed simply to give time for the whitewash to begin. During the trial the Judges accused the DPP of "damage limitation". This was brass neck on a big scale. In fact the judiciary had forced the DPP to bring an impossible case to trial to distract attention from their own role in the affair and begin the campaign to save Lord Lane from the consequences of his bigoted remarks at the last appeal.



The Six taste freedom

In fact Lane was only the foreground of the "appalling vista" that Lord Denning had set out when he first rejected the men's road to appeal. By releasing the 6 the British judiciary were in effect finding themselves, the police and the British state guilty of conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.

Denning did his bit in a statement the next day blaming the whole thing on a few bent coppers, but the main thrust of the whitewash came in the Government announcement of a royal commission (reporting in 2 or 3 years when the dust has settled). This will look into the structure of the British legal system and the functioning of the various elements - very worthy matters, but designed to distract attention from the real issues.

OFFENSIVE

The truth is that the conviction of the 6 was part of an offensive by the British state to defeat a revolutionary process in Ireland. The conspiracy this involved was not simply one of individuals but of the state itself. In this conspiracy the rule of law has essentially ceased to operate in the North of Ireland and in Britain itself a system that was already unjust and class-ridden was bent to breaking point.

That's why we had the Birmingham 6, the Guildford 4, the

Winchester 3, the Maguires and the copy-cat frame-up of Black people in Broadwater Farm. The list is long: the torturers charter of the PTA, 'internal exile, Internment (kept on the books and recently used to terrorise the Arab community) Diplock courts in the North, the continuing witchhunt of the trials of almost 40 West Belfast people after the killing of 2 British army corporals 3 years ago [new trials in the coming weeks will make this the longest running and most extensive trail in British legal history], The absolute ban on nationalist demonstrations in Belfast city centre. The law has also been used "positively" - to establish a Shoot to Kill policy and make the state forces immune from the force of the law, to shore up a UDR regiment given the bigotry of its membership, their involvement in Loyalist murder squads and its policy of targeting only republican violence.

The British attempt to put the Birmingham 6 case to sleep will be welcome news to Charlie Haughey and the Fianna Fail Government in Dublin, Their last intervention was to urge the 6 to do a deal and accept release without clearing their name. More recently they forced the extradition of Desi Ellis only to have the British tear up the most basic principles of international law on the first day of the trial.

Those who supported the 6, those who celebrated their release, should join now to fight the whitewash. We should do this not because we seek vengeance but because the conspiracy is still going on and we should not allow division in the anti-imperialist and socialist movement to any longer obscure the basic task of self-defence.

John North.

Join P.D. Now!

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Where now for the “New World Order”

The Gulf war has ended with one of the most comprehensive and least costly victories in military history. At the price of less than 200 casualties Bush has decimated the Iraqi military force and driven Iraq into the stone age. The US is now engaged in “winning the peace” - building new structures to defend imperialist rule and laying down the law to collaborationist regimes in the area.

The imperialists have gained a great deal. On top of the political authority from the collapse of Stalinism that made the Gulf adventure possible they have demonstrated their military supremacy. The short war they gambled on has come off and the US will even gain economically from the donations by the feudal states and by the other imperialist powers. The arms industry, faltering for lack of an enemy, has had a massive shot in the arm. The US has control in the Gulf and has for the time being assured the survival of Israel and the Gulf's feudal monarchies while winning the support of bourgeois nationalist regimes like Egypt and Syria.

Is this then the first days of a new world order? Has the US won the undisputed control of the world and the ability to direct us all in the interest of imperialism?

VIETNAM SYNDROME

Bush claims to have licked “the Vietnam syndrome”. In reality this question is still undecided. The US has yet to demonstrate its ability to crush a genuine popular struggle or that the internal anti-war sentiment that built against the

Vietnam war has finally evaporated.

The war had a great deal of support but it was never a popular war in which mass sections of the working class in the West consciously declared support for imperialism. In fact unease during the war has been followed by a general distaste for what was quite clearly a massacre rather than a battle. The hype of imperialism's crusade for freedom has evaporated as it has become clear that the West prefers the genocide of the Kurds to the overthrow of Saddam's regime. They would like one of the other butchers to replace him, but the last thing they want in Iraq is the victory of democratic forces.

The imperialists don't have a political solution; they have no intention of pressuring Israel or allowing any dangerous experiments with democracy that might destabilise imperialist rule. Their main program is to “make the world safe for feudalism” - so they support the Emirates in their expulsion of migrant workers and the attempts of the Al-Sabah family of Kuwait to maintain power and divert the opposition with a pogrom against the Palestinian population. No sooner is the war over than the monster Saddam is given a free hand to carry out genocide against the Kurds.

Other chickens have yet to come home to roost. Two nuclear power stations, what was claimed to be a nuclear bomb factory and two poison gas plants have been bombed. Black snow from the Kuwaiti oil fields has fallen in India. The imperialists will not escape the charges of irre-

sponsibility and irrationality arising from their adventure.

IRELAND

The struggle in Ireland will not be decided in isolation from the present struggle bestriding the entire globe. Bush's new world order would be a long dark nightmare for the working class and for democratic forces everywhere. The prospect of Irish freedom would become a pipedream. On the basis of the Gulf adventure the British military establishment have already made known their willingness to "deal with the IRA"

The Gulf war was only the first in a series of battles to decide the new order. Its outcome will depend on the combativity of working people in many different situations, but it will also depend crucially on a battle of ideas. The imperialists and their loyal opposition in the Stalinist camp and in social democracy all put forward the UN,

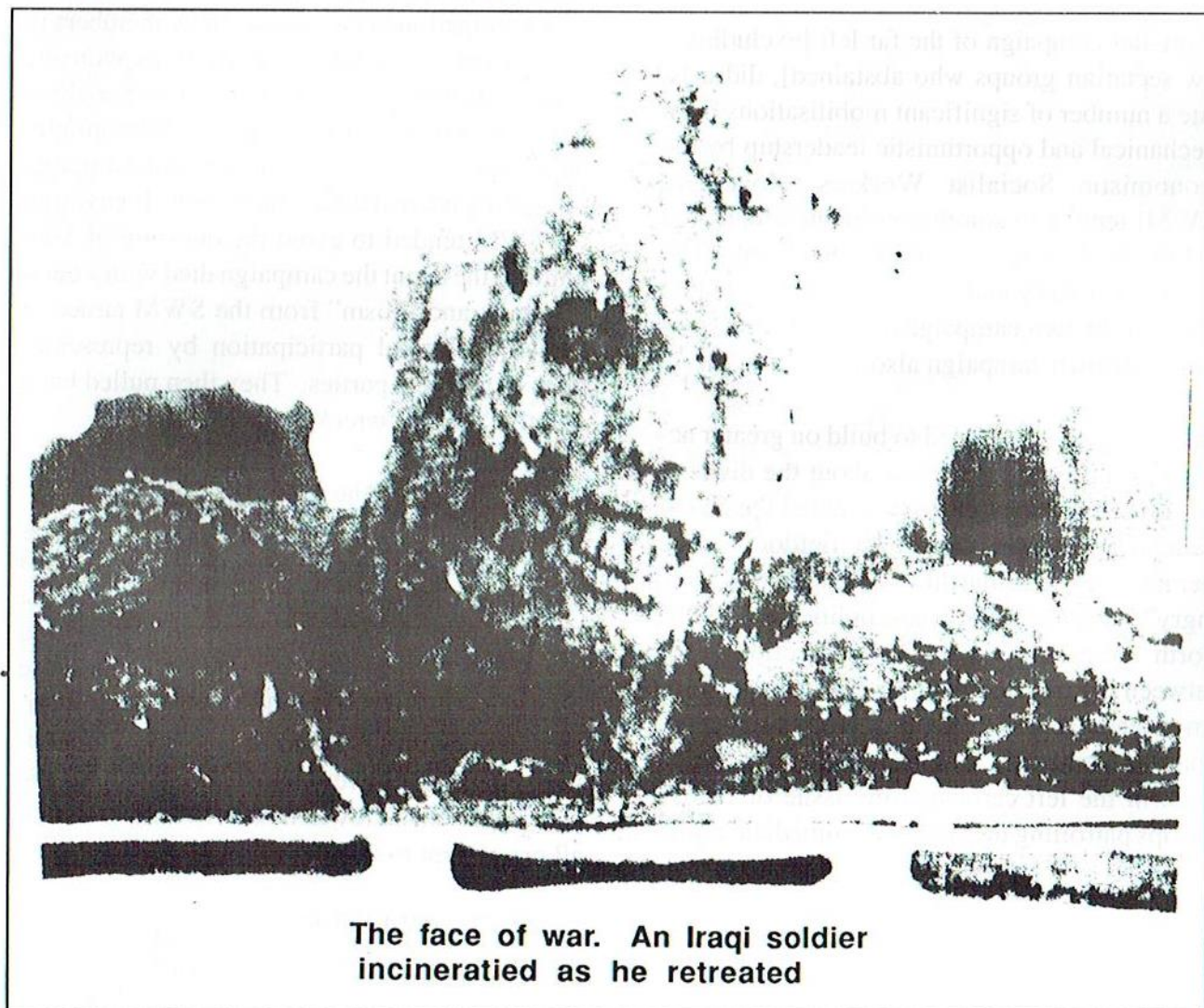
with its long history as a tool of imperialism, as the forum for change. Revolutionaries need to popularise an older idea - of the international organisation of working people. This battle for ideas is especially important in Ireland, where many people believe they know where they stand in relation to the anti-imperialist struggle. A new debate could help break this logjam and help end the isolation of the revolutionary forces.

In any case we must avoid at all costs the routine striking of attitudes that has characterised what little there has been of international solidarity work in Ireland. If we are not actors in the battle for a new world order we will be its victims. The task of the day is clear enough;

IMPERIALISM! - HANDS OFF THE MIDDLE EAST

SELF -DETERMINATION FOR THE KURDS!

SELF -DETERMINATION FOR THE PALESTINIANS!



The face of war. An Iraqi soldier incinerated as he retreated

Lessons of the Gulf campaign

The Campaign against the war in the Gulf showed once again a generalised anti-imperialist sympathy among the mass of the Irish population, not shared by the capitalist parties who all gave fervent support to the war.

The campaign against the war did not succeed in mobilising this sympathy. As in other countries the campaign was divided. A social-democratic and liberal movement balanced opposition to the war against opposition to Stalinism, obscuring where the danger to world peace lay and peddling delusions about the role of the UN.

A smaller campaign of the far left [excluding a few sectarian groups who abstained], did activate a number of significant mobilisations but a mechanical and opportunistic leadership by the economistic Socialist Workers Movement [SWM] tended to smother political debate and stultify the development of the movement. [The Communist Party and Militant tended to shuttle between the two campaigns, with Militant running their own campaign also.]

The left campaign tended to build on greater activity. There was no protest about the division into two campaigns because it suited the SWM leadership to have their own fiefdom. One member explained that their campaign was "more angry" [whatever that means politically]. In the North there was almost no connection at all between the two campaigns - leaving the Trade union leadership and the Communist party to run a paper campaign that took no significant action. Even in the left campaign the issue of British Troops patrolling the streets as immediate repre-

sentatives of the Gulf savagery was left in abeyance.

In the South the left were able to focus on the Dublin government's collaboration in US overflights and refuelling at Shannon, but with an active social-democratic campaign it was even less clear why there were two campaigns and the eventual witchhunt and expulsion of left forces went almost without comment.

This political lack was even more crucial in relation to Sinn Fein. They reacted in a routinist way with articles opposing the war and individual participation in the campaign by members in some areas. A political debate to explain the need to react to a world offensive by imperialism would have held out the prospect of substantially increasing the forces available to the campaign and giving it a real mass orientation. If anything the SWM tended to avoid the question of Sinn Fein. In the event the campaign died with a burst of "Rank and Filism" from the SWM aimed at excluding formal participation by representatives of political parties. They then pulled back quietly from the wreckage.

Overall however the lessons of the campaign were positive. It tested the politics of existing left forces and found most wanting, but it also showed that there is a significant anti-imperialist layer outside Sinn Fein. This is diffuse and politically fragmented, but there will be more tests of the "new world order" and more imperialist offensives in Ireland itself. If the present political paralysis of republicanism continues the anti-imperialist left will have an influence out of all proportion to its size.

LEMUEL GULLIVER.