

SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY

Our Task: Smash Sectarianism!

Beware of Drumcree! In Derry, as at Drumcree, the British stand face to face with the Loyalists. In Derry as at Drumcree they rely on their discredited state forces. In Derry as at Drumcree their aim is not to stop the Orange forces but to wring from them a symbolic nod in the direction of consultation with the nationalist population. In any case they are perfectly free to march through the city. Finally Mayhew makes it clear that there are no guarantees. The British are still ready to step back from any full-scale confrontation with loyalism.

What are we going to do about it?

For a start we need to clear our heads and face reality. Such clarity has been woefully absent during the years of the "peace process".

Our task is not to achieve "equality of the two traditions". We are not dealing with two cultures that don't understand each other but with a reactionary political movement - Orangeism - that exists to perpetuate sectarianism. It's not some outdated holdover from the past but the central mechanism for winding up sectarian hatred each year. Orangeism's "tradition" is domination and this makes the idea of equality with it purest hokum.

We won't get anywhere through negotiation. This word is used as if it were some sort of magic wand. Any historian [or present day trade unionist for that matter] will tell you that what you get out of negotiations depends on who has the greatest muscle.

Negotiation with the apprentice boys has made things much worse. It sowed illusions that a settlement was possible. It weakened the political case for rejecting the sectarians outright. Above all it hid where the real muscle lay.

The force that "resolves" this dispute wasn't even at the table. It's the British and the RUC who decide the march route.. Negotiations hid this brutal reality.

The negotiations foundered on the principle of consent. This "principle" is a blind ally. Such a principle, proposed 28 years ago, would have led to the Civil Rights movement being stillborn. Our movement, Socialist Democracy, is the direct descendent of the old Peoples Democracy. If we accepted the principle of consent we would be saying that the B Specials were right to beat us off Burntollet bridge and the loyalists to attack us at Irish street estate.

Democratic marches should have unfettered right of assembly. The question of consent only arises because Orange marches are undemocratic and stand for sectarian intimidation. This means

that consent should always be withheld. The answer should always be "NO!".

We should oppose Orange marches wherever they take place. One of their main jobs after the intimidation of Catholics is to keep the "rotten Prod" and the "Lundy" in line, to prevent the emergence of a third identity - that of membership of the Irish working class.

So where did this idea, that we should spend our future locked in apartheid ghettos, come from?

"Equality of the two traditions" is pure Humespeak. The failure of the republicans militarist strategy left Irish capitalism in the saddle with John Hume as their mouthpiece. What have they achieved?

All the capitalist negotiations and diplomacy went up in smoke at Drumcree. John Bruton fumes with anger. A week later he's supporting the Loyalist march through Derry! The SDLP returns to the talks fuming with anger. A week later it comes out with rulea that gives Unionism control of the agenda.

Today, as in the past, Irish capital remains a very junior partner to British imperialism. It is totally ineffective in opposing the British. It does one job very effectively. Through Humespeak and doubletalk it leads Irish workers up blind alleys and demobilises resistance.

Our aims are simple. Smash sectarianism. Smash the sectarian state. Smash the imperialist lifeline that holds it up.

We have had plenty of marches and demonstrations. It's time to bring these together in a mass open campaign. We need to break out of the nationalist family, to appeal directly to the broad mass of working class people in the south, to target the rotten leadership of the trade unions, suddenly struck dumb in the face of Orangeism. We should demand:

**RUC out of Nationalist areas!
Disband the Orange RUC!
SDLP out of Stormont talks!
Dublin: Scrap the framework deal !**

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