



# **SOCIALIST REPUBLIC**

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PAPER OF THE MOVEMENT FOR A SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

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## **STATE BRUTALITY NORTH AND SOUTH**

## **ORGANISE RESISTANCE!**

## **BRITISH ARMY - OUT**

## **HEAVY GANG - OUT**



There can be no doubt that the last year has witnessed a new upsurge in the militancy of the anti-unionist resistance, laying the basis for a potentially mass resurgence against British rule.

In particular, since the Relatives Action Committee (RAC)'s demonstrations in August, the rising tide of struggle has dealt a series of blows against Britain's intention of criminalising, isolating and repressing the resistance. The original protests against the removal of political status have blossomed over into growing spontaneous mobilisations in a number of areas against the British Army itself; so that, one year on from the removal of political status and the formation of the RAC, the issue of political prisoners has been shown

# 'BRITS OUT' D FROM GHET

to be indissolubly linked to the struggle to drive out the forces of occupation.

And the reason is clear: political status was won as part and parcel of the mass struggle against British occupation; it can only be regained in

the context of this struggle. It is the central issue which makes clear the real nature of the Irish war, - not between two communities dominated by 'gangsters' and 'godfathers', but a war of national liberation. The fight to regain it cannot be separated



the  
real  
meaning  
of  
Articles  
2&3

According to Conor Cruise O'Brien Articles 2 and 3 of the 1937 Constitution which claim jurisdiction over the 6 Counties, are a major obstacle to a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the North. The nub of his argument is that these articles are seen by the Protestant community as a type of Southern "imperialist" threat to their independence and liberty. It follows, in O'Brien's view, that the repeal of these articles would go a long way towards pacifying the loyalists and reconciling them to power-sharing and reconciliation with the South.

#### DOUBLE-THINK

As with most of O'Brien's views on the North, this argument is based on half-truths and double-think. O'Brien tries to pose as a great liberal who fearlessly defends the rights of the Protestant community against threats of "Green Fascism". But he carefully avoids asking what it is about the Articles that frightens the Protestants so much. The truth is that the loyalist politicians - for their own cynical ends - are able to make capital out of them only because they represent the claims of a clerically dominated, economically backward state. It is the legitimate fears

of ordinary Protestant workers that their religious beliefs and economic gains are in danger so long as the Southern state claims jurisdiction over the North that gives the ranting of equally bigoted anti-working class politicians, any shred of credibility.

So long as the South remains a "gombeen republic" the repeal of Articles 2 and 3 could have little effect on the ability of Paisley, Baird, West and so, to whip up the fears of Protestant workers. The history of the period from 1922 to 1937 when the Free State made no claim to the North is ample proof of this. So if O'Brien was really serious about defending the rights of the Protestant community his first target for attack would be clericalism and economic backwardness. What is O'Brien's record on these issues? Like all politicians he is adept at making verbal broadsides at clerical control but in practice doing nothing. For example during the Contraception row in 1975 when Cosgrave voted against his own government, O'Brien was in an ideal position to make a real protest by resigning and refusing to serve under a Catholic bigot like Cosgrave... Instead he subordinated the fight against clericalism to the fight against "The Provos". The shallowness of O'Brien's liberalism is exposed by the fact that in order to defend religious liberty he makes an alliance with religious bigots. The truth is that O'Brien is really interested, not in defending the interests of Protestants, but in using their fears created by the 'gombeen men' and their allies like O'Brien - to undermine the struggle against British Imperialism.

#### A HALF TRUTH

If the Protestant community is afraid of Articles 2 and 3 it is not primarily because they pose a threat to religious liberty and economic prosperity. Here is where O'Brien's half-truth comes in. The northern statelet is itself a thoroughly bigoted institution, and some of the worst and most blatant examples of social injustice in Europe are to be found there. The real reason why the Protestants are so vehemently opposed to the claims of the South is that partition reinforced the sectarian privileges of all sections of the Protestant community. Articles 2 and 3 although of purely formal significance - those who try to act in accordance with their logic will soon find themselves danced upon by the Heavy Gang - draw attention to the fact that

the mass of Irish people have never accepted partition and the sectarian privileges of the Northern Protestant community that go along with it. This is the real reason why Articles 2 and 3 are anathema to loyalists and Unionists of every stripe. Thus we see that O'Brien's threadbare liberalism leads him to a situation where he backs the most clericalist and gombeen elements in the South and tries to give a carte-blanc to the sectarian practices of the Six-County statelet.

#### FIGHT LOYALISM

Nobody should be fooled by what a policy of conciliation towards loyalism can achieve. Such a policy was elevated to a strategy by the SDLP and the Southern government in the period from the UWC strike to the Convention elections. Cosgrave announced that the violence of the Northern Catholics was killing the South's desire for unity; Cooney and Fitzgerald called for the abolition of Articles 2 and 3 and a reform of the Constitution; the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Bill was introduced and censorship was stepped up; Republicans were hounded; The SDLP moved towards acceptance of the RUC and UDR etc. etc.... and what happened? Were the loyalists appeased? Not at all. On the contrary they drew strength and unity from these concessions, winning two overwhelming election victories (Westminster October '75 and the Convention May '76), and launching a series of furious sectarian assassinations.

The way to fight loyalism is not through appeasement but by challenging its sectarian privileges. This must be done first and foremost by the Catholic minority demanding its rights. But the Northern minority cannot win on its own - it needs the help of the Southern workers and small farmers. Articles 2 and 3, although they have only a formal significance for politicians from Dev to Cosgrave, are a declaration by the Southern masses that they support the demands of the Northern minority. That is why bourgeois politicians of every persuasion want to get rid of Articles 2 and 3; that is why Socialists who defend democratic rights defend Articles 2 and 3 tooth and nail.

DARA MACEVOY



# EMAND TOS

from that war. Thus, in August, the RAC demonstrations led to barricades being erected in many areas of Belfast: - the real development of the fightback is against the barracks of British occupation.

## TURF LODGE

A couple of months later, the women of Turf Lodge began their heroic attempts to drive the Army out of the area. In the wake of the shooting of Sandy Lynch, the murder of 13-year-old Brian Stewart, and a number of other atrocities, a series of spontaneous mobilisations by these women repelled successive mini-"Motorman" operations by the Army and caused a flurry of chaos in the ranks of the 'elected representatives'.

One Alliance Party councillor demanded the withdrawal of plastic bullets - one of which had killed Brian Stewart - only to be promptly disowned by his Party boss, Oliver Napier. Paddy Devlin of the SDLP did not miss the opportunity either: when 8 soldiers were charged with burning down a GAA club in the Whiterock, Devlin accused the Army of being responsible for 3 other such burnings. Most important of all, when the "Peace at any price" brigade tried to use the situation, they were driven out of Turf Lodge and forced to reveal their true colours - blanket support for the Army, RUC, UDR.

## SPREADING ACTION

The significance of Turf Lodge cannot be overestimated. By directing their struggle against the real enemy, the British troops, the local people cut right through British propaganda designed to depoliticise and criminalise the resistance, utterly exposing the hypocrisy of the Peace Movement and their reformist backers in the ghettos, - the Republican Clubs.

By spontaneously acting together, setting up an Action Committee and relying on mobilisations on the streets, they revealed the latent depth of the mass resistance and the capacity to act outside the rigid confines imposed by the Provisional leadership. They acted as an example to other ghettos.

Thus, in the New Lodge area, after a particularly brutal beating by the Army, an action committee was initiated to mobilise against military repression. In Ardoyne, building workers have gone on strike against Army harassment. In the Royal Victoria Hospital, there have been a number of protest actions by the workers demanding the removal of a military post in the hospital grounds. In the Clonard, after Frank Moyna died of a heart attack, Paddy Devlin accused the Paras of murder, demanded the withdrawal of their regiment, and called for a full enquiry. 98% of the people in the Clonard signed a petition demanding the withdrawal of the Paras and began

to organise their own self-defence with barricades. Moreover, in Derry, the Irish Front - composed of the Provos, IRSP, remnants of the Nationalist Party and individuals from the Republican Clubs - has as its central demands the withdrawal of troops and freedom for political prisoners.

## BRITAIN'S FAILURE TO CRUSH RESISTANCE

Why has this upsurge on the streets developed in the last 6 months? Despite mounting repression - emergency legislation in the 26 Counties, strengthening and rearming the RUC and UDR, massive prison-building programme, removal of political status - Britain has been totally unable to patch together any governmental agreement between the Unionists and the SDLP.

All Britain's talk of 'sorting it out yourselves' has been accompanied by a rising level of torture and brutality, but this has proved completely insufficient to cow the anti-unionist masses into demoralisation. Indeed, every attempt by Britain to step up repression has been greeted by fresh outbursts of militancy. The Army's attempt to crush Turf Lodge and Ballymurphy behind the cover of the Peace Movement were a murderous fiasco.

So, there is a growing crisis of British rule in Ireland today, where imperialism is too weak to inflict any decisive defeat on the anti-unionist masses. Consequently, what the politicians of all parties politely refer to as a 'political vacuum', voicing complaints about 'lack of political initiative' from Britain, in reality reflects the growing crisis of British domination throughout all Ireland, at a time when British capitalism itself is in deep crisis over its inability to inflict a defeat on its own working class.

## REPUBLICANS

But at the same time, this is also a crisis of the Republican leaderships.



The Officials have been utterly discredited in Belfast through their support for the 'Peace' campaign, while in Derry they have ceased to exist as an organisation.

But also the Provos have failed to provide necessary leadership. They have not thrown their whole weight behind the RAC to give it the crucial direction against the British Army and instead have tended to divert the campaign (e.g. assassinating prison warders). They have been caught flatfooted by the sharp struggles developing in areas like Turf Lodge; they have not tried to coordinate these struggles into mass united protests on the streets.

In An Phoblacht, January 11th, in an article, "Anois, le cbeile: Brits Out", there is no hint of how to kick them out; instead: "This month will see the greatest campaign of publicity ever mounted by Sinn Fein on the demand for a British withdrawal from Ireland. ... This is the month of the great instruction." The article goes on to explain why the Brits shouldn't be in Ireland and why Sinn Fein's programme is correct. In short, Sinn Fein limit themselves to propaganda, with no reference to the struggles unfolding, and no attempt to provide the lead necessary to generalise these struggles.

## IMPACT OF MASS STRUGGLE

It is not Sinn Fein or the IRA that have kept the resistance bubbling, but the militant determination of the masses themselves. It is the reassertion of the methods of mass struggle over the last year which has caused turmoil not just in the ranks of the Provos, but amongst British collaborators throughout Ireland.

Almost half the delegates at the last SDLP conference voted for troop withdrawal; Britain's inability to crush the resistance is ultimately responsible for the Ulster Loyalist as to take up all questions of British occupation, from the Army to unemployment and housing, and provide a real answer to the needs of the oppressed in the whole of Ireland.

This sort of united leadership will only be built through a process of developing unity around linking the most outstanding issues of the day - in particular, political status and Troops Out. The recent inference of the left groups (MSR, ISP, PD, SWM, SWG) has formed an anti-repression committee around these demands, with the intention of drawing in individual militants by involving itself in local struggles, trying to coordinate them, and basing itself on the needs and organisation of these struggles. This example of unity is an example which must be followed as a crucial element of building mass anti-imperialist unity.

MIKE PINTER



AFTER THE BUDGET AND THE 5th NWA

# WORKERS STILL NOT BEATEN

February 23 saw the acceptance by the Irish Congress Of Trade Unions (ICTU) of the 1977 National Wage Agreement (NWA). While delegate after delegate trooped to the rostrum to denounce the deal for failing to keep up with prices, or for shifting the burden of the recession on to the backs of the workers, while the majority of those who remain in favour of NWA's remained tight-lipped and silent. That's not surprising as it becomes increasingly difficult for these trade unionists to advocate such agreements as panaceas to workers feeling the bite of inflation. Even Ruaidhri Roberts agreed, in seeking the ratification of Congress, that "Nobody was claiming that this pay-deal would guarantee full protection against increases in the cost of living over the period of the agreement". He went on to tell the conference that the budgetary provisions for increased employment fell short of the measures considered by Congress to be necessary and outlined in their submission to the Minister for Finance before the Budget.

## A PAY PAUSE

It would have been more honest of Roberts and other agreement supporters to tell the workers what this deal really is, a pay pause which effectively extends into a pay freeze for many of the weaker sections of the working class. The proposal for a 14 month agreement which includes a 3 month pause to be followed by two phased increases each of 2½% plus £1. The first increase will be paid immediately after the pause and will be followed by a second increase 7 months later. Each phase is subject to a minimum increase of £2 a week and a maximum of £4.13p. Set against a very high rate of inflation of around 20% and in the framework of highly restrictive clauses, which deny the right to workers to strike for equal pay the abolition of anomalies. To understand how the proposals for the 1977 NWA came to be hammered out, it is necessary to go back to July 1976 and the conclusion of the interim agreement for that year.



## GOVERNMENT AND BUREAUCRAT MANOEUVRES

Tagged on as Clause 22 was a commitment by unions and employers to meet in September 1976, and discuss the possibility of a further agreement. But of greater importance was another commitment that both sides would meet the government for a series of discussions on economic and social strategy. The tripartite talks started on October with O'Leary promising a £100m. package of tax concessions and a job creation programme, if there was a pay freeze until the end of 1977. These talks lumbered on without any agreement being reached, for four weeks. Then the Employer-Labour conference met in November to begin discussions on a wage pact.

These tripartite talks were used to dupe the workers into thinking that they were going to be allowed some say on the direction of social and economic policy. The posturings of the Trade Union bureaucracy went a long way to reinforcing these mistaken conceptions of what these talks really represented. Promises of increased tax allowances (which were only partially met) and social welfare benefits along with postulated plans for a jobs creation programme, were enough to buy off the trade union leaders, even though the Budget allocations have fallen far short of the targets they set. Only Eddie Lawless of the National Executive of the ITGWU was honest enough to point this out and call on members to reject the agreement. It is also interesting to note that the report of the National Prices Commission, which was prepared some months back, was only released after the Budget and the signing of the NWA.

## PROBLEMS FOR THE BOSSES

This latest agreement may prove very difficult for the bosses to hold together. These difficulties will arise on 3 different levels:  
A: A very strong sector within the working class, the Public Service Workers. These have had to endure a government embargo on all claims. There is a great deal of unrest and clashes are likely to break out.  
B: Closely connected is the question of equal pay for women - large numbers of whom work in the public service, where the existence of "single and married grades" is proving a block to the equalisation of rates of pay. In the private sector also, the use of the grading system (thereby placing women at the bottom of the wage scale) is frustrating many thousands of women in their quest for equal pay. Their hands have been tied by the restrictive "no strike" clause in the NWA. Signs are, with the strike of the women telephonists, that a central part of the fight back against the NWA could come from women workers.

C: The weaker sections of the workers, those in the traditional industries running into a decline, have been struggling for the past two years now to win the increases of the last two wage rounds! In many of these cases the employers have claimed inability to pay, and during the workers' fight-back against this attempts have actually been made to cut wages. Examples in Dublin are to be found in the Hickey's strike (mainly young women workers) and at Allied Textiles. These types of strikes are usually officially receiving support from the trade unions but at a very low key mainly because of the implications they suggest. While these workers will not be in the front ranks with the heavy battalions, like the building workers who have threatened to strike over an anomaly claim half-paid to them, their small-scale struggles generate a frustration among workers in general, with the attacks being made on their living standards.  
THE TASK OF SOCIALISTS

A real challenge is now posed to socialist militants in the trade unions, by the activity of these layers of workers. Their co-ordination and generalisation is of vital importance if the fight-back is to take off at all. The need for a united battle on a class-struggle basis within the unions is clearly posed. Workers are seeking answers to the major problems of the day, to unemployment, redundancies, and wage-freezes. We have an opportunity to provide some of those answers. One of the first steps we could take is to call for full-scale support for the equal-pay strike of the telephonists. We must organise a mass demonstration in support of their strike. On a more long-term basis, the need for a public service alliance is sharply posed, to begin to co-ordinate and direct the frustrations of large numbers of these workers against the government embargo.

MSR TRADE UNION CAUCUS

insert from p9

sexuality while many others react in revulsion against the exploitation of human sexuality by big business.



# EXPENDITURE CUTS AFFECT WORKERS AND STUDENTS

The recently published estimates for the budget reveal what has been feared for some time now by trade unionists and socialists - that there would be a significant cut back in public expenditure. While there has been no open slashing as such on public spending along the lines of Denis Healey's £3,000 million over 3 years in Britain, the amount of money to be allocated (£1,500 million) is on average only 11% on last year's allocation. This compared to a 19% allocation last year on 1975 and measured against the official price rise last year of 20.9% shows a drastic reduction in the real value of public expenditure. As Michael Mills, Political correspondent of the Irish Press pointed out "the lower percentage increase obviously indicates a major effort to cut down on expenditure and provide a better balance with revenues." The central budget of £182 million is up 13% which is only marginally up on the general average.

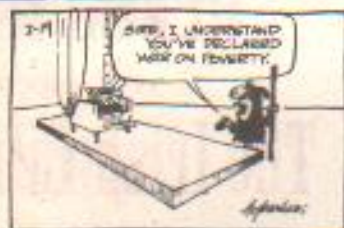
These cutbacks were predictable following the Government's publication of the White Paper on the economy in September. That document postulates throughout on the need for economies in public spending as the second major press, alongside wage restraint, of its 'attack on inflation'. Once again, it is working people who are to carry the burden of an economic crisis not of their making, not just in having their wages held down but in seeing the health, education and welfare benefits of themselves and

their families reduced. A statement from the G.I.P. in relation to the estimates is particularly interesting insofar as it refers to health side of things. The statement said that the extra £34 m given to health (14% up) 'maintained the existing level of services'. This is a transparent lie. It actually will involve less real cash available because of rapidly mounting costs of medicine equipment etc. Health is in many ways the most important of the social services workers need

and yet it is here that the cutbacks will hit hardest. Indeed health has suffered more than any other area as far as cuts to date are concerned especially since mid 1976. The most reticent ones have been in home aid helps to distressed families, milk and food allowances to mothers, nursery grants to deprived children as well as optical

chiropry etc. services. In other words, the poorest sections of the community. Its the same in education, where apart from grants, the worse area affected is remedial (handicapped) education. The final thing that should be remembered is that this is an election budget. For that reason, the allocations granted are, much greater than they would have been if that wasn't the case. The chances are that there will be a second budget after the elections which will involve further cuts, none extensive than any to date. One reason why the cuts have not produced the mass resistance shown in Britain here is because they have not to date produced serious loss of jobs. But this is inevitable in the period ahead. Its time that an organised campaign by the trade unions (and in particular, the Public Services Committee of Congress) tenants organisations and U.S.I. was launched against the cuts. Our children and families mustn't under any circumstances allow a return however slow, to malnutrition, rickets, physical debility etc. Instead, let the coats of the very rich be made 'rough up'.

THIS WILL BE THE SITE OF THE DRAIN FOR PUMPING PUBLIC MONEY DOWN



cont'd from p 8

This comes from a resolution of the Belfast Socialist Women's Group to a recent left conference on anti-imperialist unity. It argued that the most concrete expression of the left's support for women's struggles would be to begin now to discriminate in favour of women participating fully in political activity. This means women chairing their own meetings, having creche facilities at conferences and taking up the problems of child-care, domestic commitments etc. It means realising the importance of women overcoming their lack of confidence and political experience. But words will not achieve this. Women must organise now, inside left groups, inside the anti-imperialist movement and inside local areas. Local women's groups in such areas are beginning to appear - these can play a real role in taking up these questions.

These seemingly mundane questions can and must lead to challenging the position of women in capitalist society. They lead to the question of women playing an equal role in every sphere of life in the socialist society the anti-imperialist forces are fighting for.

History has shown that women play leading roles in revolutionary movements - Russia, Spain - and yet this does not guarantee their liberation. The left must take the fight against the backward ideas of the church and too many Republicans are even against the right of women to control their own bodies. They must take the fight against low pay, lack of unionisation, the farcical loopholes in the Equal Pay Act and demand the right of women as well as men to work, in the fight against reactionary opposition. The lack of nursery and social facilities in anti-unionist areas, the lack of well-paid jobs for women (who are the ones who have to make ends meet) the lack of contraception facilities, all these are directly the result of imperialist domination.

It is not enough to say that the women's struggle should not be subordinated to the national struggle - we must fight now to link them up in practice. The issue of women's oppression must be raised where its effects are most present - in the heart of the Anti-Unionist areas. Thus we must begin to build an anti-imperialist women's movement in the 32 Counties that will represent the fighting women of Ireland.

WOMEN AS HARBINGERS OF PEACE

If we do not understand this, reactionaries understand it very well. Irish women have traditionally played a 'special' role while the men are out fighting, carrying on while husbands, fathers, sons, all took sides.

Their position in the family was seen as sacred - guaranteed by church and state it was above class conflict. Women are the moral conscience for their men, gone astray, and therefore for the whole of society. Thus they have an 'invaluable' role to play in bringing peace to this troubled society.

This is the unfortunate logic of those members of the Republican movement who say that the women's question must wait.

The logic of the position that subordinates any independent activity, on economic, social activities to the immediate needs of the military struggle.

For as long as we wait, and leave women to remain isolated in the home, reactionary forces will attempt to detach women from the class struggle and use them to break it. Which is where Mairead and Betty come in.....

FIONA BENNON

'WORKERS FIGHT' is a newsheet of members and supporters of the Movement for a Socialist Republic. It covers the major issues on which class struggle elements within the trade union movement should be fighting. Not just describing strikes, it draws the lessons from particular struggles and provides valuable information to back up the intervention of militants, concentrating on opportunities to build and mobilise for class struggle initiatives. If you would like to receive 'WORKERS FIGHT' regularly in the post, please cut out this form and send it with £1 (more if you like!) to W.F. (Sub), c/o 38 Clanawley Rd, Dublin 5.

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# SIXTY-ONE YEARS LATER: THE 1916 RISING - A HERITAGE FOR ALL S

Two of the Rising's main aspects will be discussed in this article - i) The lessons to be learnt from an analysis of the event itself and its underlying causes ii) Its relevance today for revolutionary socialists.

The attempted banning of the Provisional Sinn Fein commemoration in April 1976 which was still attended by a largely working class crowd of over 15,000 shows that these are not simply academic issues. The question "Who Fears To Speak Of Easter Week" is more relevant today than it was last year, as the Southern government strains its every nerve to sever its tenuous and embarrassing links with it. The Coalition stopped officially commemorating the event in 1974, one of its leading ministers, Conor Cruise O'Brien, has declared his opposition to it, and now they are campaigning for another stab in the back to the Northern minority: the abolition of Articles 2 and 3. For over 50 years the Southern bourgeoisie has claimed to support the aims of the men and women of 1916 but to disagree with the "violent methods" favoured by Republicans. We will see that this is not a betrayal but a cynical effort to continue sabotaging the national liberation struggle in a slightly less hypocritical manner.

## BLOOD ON THE HOME RULERS' HANDS

In the years before the Rising the Southern Catholic middle-class (as it then was) made few apologies for its pro-British stance. It is true they used their Home Rule party to engineer an alliance with the English Liberal Party to gain a measure of devolved government. However, in the face of a reactionary onslaught by Ulster Unionists, they backtracked so rapidly that they ended sending over 50,000 people to fight and die in the service of an empire with one of the bloodiest records of all the imperialist powers. This immediately tears to shreds the 'argument' that the constitutional wing of Irish nationalism is peaceful. Neither is it democratic for its party won 83 out of the 103 Irish seats in the 1910 election based on a prom-

ise of fully fledged Home Rule, on a limited franchise of 700,000, whereas Sinn Fein won 73 out of 105 seats in 1918 on a franchise of 2,000,000. To speak of the participants in the 1916 Rising as usurping a democratic mandate therefore means giving credibility to a particularly shabby form of bourgeois democracy.

## DIVISIONS IN THE WORKING CLASS

This however was not done by the most militant sections of the Irish working class. The key to understanding their continued support and sympathy for Republicanism lies in understanding how, due to the extreme backwardness of the Irish economy - in 1900 its national income was £82m. whereas Britain's was £1,643m. - no labour aristocracy could be created, with the exception of the partially industrialised North-East, which was capable of distilling reformist politics into the whole working class, as had happened in England. Lenin explained the contrast in this way: "Larkin has performed miracles among the unskilled workers, that mass of the British proletariat which in England is so often cut off from the advanced workers by that cursed petty-bourgeois, liberal, aristocratic spirit of the British skilled worker" ("British Labour And British Imperialism" p. ). The fight of the unskilled Irish workers was not just abstractly linked to the struggle against British Imperialism. In 1909 Larkin broke from the English Dockers' Union to form the Irish Transport And General Workers' Union (ITGWU) because the English union would not support his militant policies.

The other Irish unions were originally based on a small layer of skilled workers, largely organised in English-based unions. A labour aristocracy existed in the North due to Belfast's limited industrialisation and, in imitation of its English counterpart, placed its interests before those of the entire proletariat. Connolly has been one of the few Marxists to come to terms with this problem: "At one time in the industrial world of Great Britain and Ireland the skilled labourer looked down with contempt on the unskilled and bitterly resented his attempt to get his children taught any of the skilled trades; the feeling of the Orangemen of Ireland towards the Catholics is but a glorified representation on a big stage of the same passions inspired by the same unworthy motives." (Selected Works p.266).

Unfortunately the rest of Ireland's labour leaders deferred to these backward elements by simply concentrating on "bread and butter issues", thus abandoning the advanced workers to the bourgeois

nationalists of Sinn Fein. They failed to see that concentrating on economic issues leaves the workers trapped in bourgeois ideology. As Lenin argued: "... however much we may try" to 'lend the economic struggle itself a political character' we shall never be able to develop the political consciousness of the workers (to the level of Social Democratic - the contemporary term for Revolutionary Marxist - political consciousness) by keeping within the framework of the economic struggle for that framework is too narrow" (What Is To Be Done?, Moscow 1970, p.114). It is the task of socialists not alone to explain to the workers that they are oppressed but also to develop their consciousness by agitating around all the aspects of that oppression. All the aspects

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# GE SOCIALISTS

of the brutal imperialist aggression conducted by Britain against Ireland became clear in the crisis which preceded the 1916 Rising.

## CAUSES OF THE RISING

General enthusiasm for the world war had waned by early 1915. Although Britain wanted to introduce conscription and crush the anti-war agitation it was unable to do so for fear of wiping out the Home Rulers' credibility. They hoped that the limited prosperity gained by the Irish middle-class due to Britain's isolation from its major trading partners would counterbalance the war's unpopularity. This was naive firstly because the social crisis had been made more acute by the war and secondly due to the growing pressure for extra victims in the European carnage. The Republican dominated Volunt-

cers were increasing their membership and along with Connolly wanted an insurrection. The British tried to delude themselves that nothing was wrong - even the police agents didn't see any link between intensified anti-war propaganda and the drop in the number of army recruits.

For these and other reasons, we can only say that the theory that it was only the post-Rising executions and the attempt to introduce conscription which alienated the masses from the government and the Home Rulers is hopelessly wrong. We endorse Lenin's criticisms of the veteran Marxist Karl Radek who supported this type of explanation and referred to the Rising as a

trade union politics so the workers turned to Sinn Fein, got trapped in its insoluble contradictions, and were denied freedom. Until the revolutionary left grasps the full implications of this fact it will remain incapable of giving real leadership to the workers. The most important lessons of the Rising for us today are that the unfinished national revolution remains at the centre of the class struggle and that the bourgeoisie sabotages it not because it is morally corrupt (although it certainly is) but because it is fatally compromised by its links with Imperialism. This of course is an application of Trotsky's "original sin" of Permanent Revolution which came to infect Lenin: "backward countries can go over to the soviet system and, through certain stages of



# WHY JOIN an Army.

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CRUITING LEAFLET  
ARMY

putsch. "Only those who imagine that in one place an Army will line up and say "We are for socialism" and in another place an Army will say "We are for Imperialism" and believe that this will be the social revolution, only those who hold such a ridiculously pedantic opinion could vilify the Irish rebellion by calling it a putsch" (British Labour And British Imperialism p.166).

## SOCIALISM AND NATIONALISM

Contrary to Stalinist legend Trotsky was not one of the people being criticised here. He had condemned Plekhanov's putschist analysis as "shapeful" but had overestimated the depth and effect of the land reforms introduced by the British. This did not impede him from observing that the Irish working class was born as the national struggle was reaching a climax and "clashing with the egotistically limited and imperially arrogant trade unionism of Britain has naturally wavered between syndicalism and nationalism and is always ready to link the two conceptions together in its revolutionary consciousness" (Lessons Of The Dublin Events).

Faced with massive military repression during and after the Rising this class arose in search of an alternative to bankrupt Home Rule politics. Between 1916 and 1920 it expressed its "syndicalism" quite dramatically by increasing total union membership from 40,000 to 250,000, the ITGWU going from 5,000 to 100,000. It defeated conscription in a general strike and had in 1920 beaten the bosses in 1200 wage disputes covering 60,000 workers at a cost of £1,250,000. The labour leaders could only offer them

development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage" (Selected Works, Moscow 1975, p.399). As part of a celebration of the 60th. anniversary of the Russian revolution we will show in future issues of SOCIALIST REPUBLIC how Trotsky was proved correct in his assessment of the course of the revolution and how Lenin had to fight to get this view accepted by the rest of the Bolshevik party.

Without any hesitation we take the road of the two leaders of the Russian revolution and the founder of the Fourth International in expressing our solidarity with the Rising in spite of its limitations and repudiating all currents who downgrade the struggle for national liberation. We are hostile to those who revive the theories of pre First World war reformism by claiming that the workers will come to socialism as a result of their daily struggles and expect Protestants in the North to be won from Orangeism in this way. People of this opinion, whether they be the neo-Stalinist Official Sinn Fein, or the so-called Trotskyist Militant, repudiate social revolution and do not deserve the description "Marxist" To socialists who take a principled stand on the national question we say that they must embrace Trotskyism if they are to be consistent, and understand how the revolution in Ireland must be made permanent. Even if partition staggers through the current assault the national problem in Ireland will not go away. Neither will the memory or significance of the 1916 Rising.

DAVID CARROLL



# WOMEN IN THE NORTH FIGHT BACK NOW

Women's magazines are about them, newspapers interviewed them, governments and charities worldwide acclimated them.

Who were they?

Mairéad and Betty, the fighting women of the North. An article in "Cosmopolitan" (the trendy young woman's "Playboy") characterised Betty as the sex symbol (I hate her because I fancy her, said the Provo in dark glasses) and Mairéad as the saintly symbol. BUT WHO ARE THE FIGHTING WOMEN OF THE NORTH?

It is the women of the Turf Lodge who chased the Brits out of the area. The women of Ballymurphy, Andersonstown, St. James's, Clonard, Twinbrook and the New Lodge who initiated and are active in the Relatives Action Committees, leading marches, demonstrations, and all-night vigils against the removal of political status. The women of the Royal Victoria Hospital, Lower Falls, striking against poor conditions of work and recently against incidents arising from Army surveillance in the hospital. The women of the Clonard who petitioned against the presence of the troops. Dolours and Marian Price, languishing in jail.

These women are not only fighting but in many cases leading the struggle. Look at any activity over the last 7 years and you will find women playing a leading role. They have been in the streets fighting the Brits, leading demonstrations, active in prisoner's aid committees, keeping watch on the barricades in the No-Go areas and so on.

## INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY IN THE ANTI-UNIONIST AREAS

The initiation of the Relatives Action Committee (RAC) in February 1976 was a sign of the direct participation of women in the struggle. It marked also the beginning of a return to the streets. The actions taken against the troops are not just praiseworthy, they are very sharp political lessons which point the way towards mass activity against the troops. They shift the emphasis from the military tactics of the Provisionals to the day-to-day problems of the ghettos. The demonstrations, vigils, and meetings on political status touch the very heart of the British depoliticisation strategy.

And this many women are very well aware of. They are critical of the organised Republican Movement's lack of activity on these questions. So, isolated in the home, often the direct target for harassment by the troops, bearing direct responsibility for their relatives suffering in jail while protesting against the loss of political status, women have taken their own political initiatives and forced others to take up these issues.



## FOR AN EQUAL POLITICAL ROLE IN THE STRUGGLE

And yet many women are hesitant to see the political implications of their activity as women. Their activities are still essentially seen as secondary and supportive. All the problems that go with women's role in the home, domestic commitments, lack of child-care and nursery facilities, lack of political experience and confidence in playing an equal decision-making role unchallenged. One example of this contradictory situation is that meetings attended mainly by women are still too often chaired by men.

Another is the action of 4 women who padlocked themselves to the Downing St. corner in London. The 4 were protesting against the loss of political status for Irish political prisoners and to show the plight of those who refused to accept this they chained themselves to the railings. The 4 were taken to Cannon Row police station where they refused bail and the offer of clothing and food.

According to an "Irish News" reporter they admitted causing an obstruction and were conditionally discharged for 2 years. One of the women, who wasn't represented in court, was quoted as saying they - "had carried out a peaceful protest and would have pleaded not guilty but all had family commitments at home" 11 This doesn't detract from the importance of the initiative - shown by the 5,000 who attended the demonstration on Sunday March 6 which demanded political status and was led by these very same women.

## FOR POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION

Until women realise the importance of

their own liberation their struggles will remain secondary and supportive. Women in Ireland are doubly oppressed, by imperialism and as unpaid domestic servants in the home. This oppression marks every aspect of their activity, and must be seen as part and parcel of the struggle for socialism against imperialist domination.

"The problems of women in capitalist society cannot and will not wait until some ideal point in time in the future when a solution is found. The drudgery of women, the oppression of children and the demand of both for their rights is the concrete expression of capitalist brutality in Northern Ireland as much as the British Army" cont'd p 5

# INTERNATIONAL

March 8 1977 is the 57th. International Women's Day. But how many women in Ireland know about it or what it stands for? International Women's Day was first organised to draw more women into political activity. It was called "Working Women's Day" and aimed at making more women conscious of the undemocratic discrimination practiced against them, and helping them realise that they could themselves organise to change society.

## THE EARLY HISTORY

During the international struggle for votes for women, Socialists in North America were particularly prominent. On February 28 1907 the women socialists of the USA organised huge demonstrations all over the country demanding political rights for working women. This was the first "Women's Day". The credit for initiating the Women's Days belongs to the working women of America.

In 1910, at the Second International Conference of Socialist Working Women, Clara Zetkin brought forward the question of organising an International Working Women's Day. It was decided to hold the first day on March 19 1911. This date was not chosen at random. On March 19 1848 the Prussian king recognised for the first time the strength of the armed people and gave way before





# Censorship and Pornography

During the last decade in Southern Ireland, many literary classics have been banned as indecent or obscene material. The Censorship Of Publications Board has exposed the real implications of censorship, in its thoroughly arbitrary banning of literature. The board, established in 1929 and made up of five people, decides on the basis of their own individual moral views, what is suitable reading material for everyone else. The Censorship Of Publications Act gives an almost "carte blanche" to the board to review anything which may be considered "indecent or obscene" or advocates "prevention of conception by unnatural methods". Acting on the complaint of any one individual, the board reviews all material within this framework.

**"PORNOGRAPHY" AND SEXUAL REPRESSION**  
Allied to the problem of the completely undemocratic nature of censorship is the whole issue of pornography. How can we truly say, in a sexually permissive society, what is and is not pornographic? Those who are opposed to the present censorship board cannot avoid this question. There is a mixture of views on the issue. Some react against the open portrayal of the physical expressions of human sex. ~~Some insist women first column p. 4.~~ We must be careful to distinguish between these reactions, for the difference clearly indicates what our attitude should be: the problem posed for revolutionaries is to be able to illustrate clearly the real nature of pornography; human sexuality is essentially an expression of ourselves, a participation we experience and share. "Pornography" is based on the inability of

human beings to participate in their own sexuality and reduces the role of humanity to that of an audience. It is the alienation of human beings from their own sexuality that big business financially exploits. This becomes most obvious in the case of women, whose sexuality is repressed most acutely in class society, by denying them the right to control their own bodies. In most "pornographic" material, it is the portrayal of women as sex objects, as the recipients of male pleasure, which largely fills all the pages.

## THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S ROLE

Confusion on this issue is inevitable and it has come to the surface in the widely diverging reactions to the recent explosive growth of censorship. In a church-dominated state where religious control of education is almost absolute; where the media have historically been inculcated with the values of Catholicism; where the politics of Church and State are intertwined; the result has been the entrenchment of a sexually repressive society.

Set against a background of a country divided, exploited and oppressed by British imperialism the strength and historical role of the Catholic Church fits into perspective. Shifting between the double role of political ally of imperialism and moral policemen of the Catholic masses, the Church in Ireland remains a powerful political force.

Today that relationship is coming under a lot of pressure from the realities of the economic and social crisis. On the one hand, the continuing instability in the North coupled with the threatened "population" explosion, set against a

background of growing unemployment has forced some sections of the bourgeoisie in the direction of "liberalising" the Southern state; on the other hand the burgeoning women's movement in its demands for contraception and divorce, has given expression to the increasing awareness among women of the oppression they suffer.

Sections of the ruling class know well, as do the Catholic hierarchy, that in times of great economic and social upheaval, the authoritarian influences of Church and State come under great strain as sections of the working class begin to seek solutions to their problems. The response of the bourgeoisie to this possibility has been to begin to use the weapon of censorship. Therefore we are able to see the implications of the banning of the Family Planning booklet, Fear Of Flying, Spare Rib, and Gay News, all of which deal with human sexuality and some of which question the framework of the family and women's role in society. Sections of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie firmly and obviously believe that these questions must not be posed at a time when all the basic structures within society are reeling under the strains of economic and social pressures.

## FIGHTING BACK

Those included in the censorship net range from people involved in voluntary contraception services to sections of the women's movement, who have responded to the latest attacks with vigour. Irishwomen United has called for a fight against the recent banning of Spare Rib and an end to the censorship laws. Support has come from the Family Planning Services, the Irish Gay Rights Movement, the Union of Students in Ireland and several colleges throughout Dublin.

The true nature of censorship, which is used to hit all sections which threaten either implicitly or explicitly the stability of bourgeois society, is an appalling indication of the need to involve the broadest possible range of forces, if we are to be free from the influence of undemocratic moral policemen.

The recent seminar on censorship held by the Irish Council of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) shows the growing concern of many media workers about the widespread use of political censorship, particularly on TV and Radio. The fact that the NUJ has taken up this issue is a step forward but on its own is obviously not enough. The repeal of the 1929 Act and the abolition of censorship in Ireland will take the combined effort of all these sections, in the women's movement, the media workers, Family Planning Clinics and Gay Rights movement, backed up by the strength of the labour movement.

## FIGHT FOR!

Resolutions through student unions, trade unions, etc. branches for affiliation to the anti-censorship campaign and/or financial support. Get your organisation to hold meetings, pickets, etc. in support of the campaign. Send statements to the press. Call on TD's, councillors etc. to sign a statement of protest.

SARAH HARPER

## WOMENS DAY

the threat of a proletarian uprising; the German women at the conference picked this date.

Its success exceeded all expectations. Germany and Austria in particular were alive with meetings, even in the small towns and villages. In Austria the largest demonstration exceeded 30,000. In 1913 International Women's Day was transferred to the 8th of March. Women's Day in Europe and America had amazing results. It turned out to be an excellent method of agitation amongst huge numbers of women turning towards political ideas for the first time. Women's Day has served yet another function, it has strengthened the international solidarity of women throughout the world.

### WOMEN AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Of fundamental importance is the impetus it gave to the heroic women of Petrograd who marched on February 23 1917 demanding "bread for our children" and "the return of our husbands from the trenches". The women, some were workers, some the wives of soldiers, raised the torch of proletarian revolution and set the world on fire. The February Revolution marks its beginnings from this - as Trotsky described it: "... a mass of women, not all of them workers, flocked to the Municipal



halls demanding bread. It was like demanding milk from a he-goat. Red banners appeared in different parts of the city, and inscriptions on them showed the workers wanted bread, but neither autocracy or war. Women's Day passed successfully with enthusiasm and without victims. But what it concealed within itself no one even guessed by nightfall...". (History Of The Russian Revolution).

### CELEBRATIONS IN IRELAND

International Women's Day in Ireland provides us with an opportunity to come together, learn about our oppression, and all forms of experience we share in a country divided and dominated by Imperialist power. We should not miss the opportunity to resist our oppression in a united fight.

(N.B. In 1917 the calendar used in Russia was different to the one used in the rest of the world so that February 23 there was March 8 everywhere else)





# Charter 77 Adherents Fight Repression

organization. It... does not constitute a basis or political opposition work, it seeks to serve the general interests as do many similar associations, both east and west. It does not intend to... propose changes, but within its sphere to carry on a constructive dialogue with the state authorities. In particular it will seek to do this by drawing attention to the various concrete cases of violation of human and civil rights."

The Charter's aim is thus a "discussion" rather than building a clear-cut opposition to the bureaucracy.

For the Czech bureaucracy, however, this makes no difference. Any opposition is a threat to their political monopoly. So the initial reaction to Charter 77's appearance was mass arrests. Over 100 supporters were detained in the first few weeks of January. Most were released shortly after, but not before interrogations, searches and confiscations of manuscripts, letters and other materials.

Even after release, Charter supporters faced harassment and re-arrest. Leading figures such as playwright Pavel Kohut were invited to leave the country. A few have been charged under the section of the Constitution dealing with treason, raising the spectre of political frame-up trials.

Simultaneously, the regime launched a campaign of crude Stalinist slanders to discredit Charter signers. They were labelled "bankrupt politicians", "bourgeois degener-

ates", "zionists", and so on. A 'spontaneous' protest statement was also launched, which individuals were told to sign (often without having seen the statement) or risk losing their jobs.

But the bureaucracy's campaign backfired, subjecting it to growing international protest and internal dissent.

Internationally, the ruling class has taken up the case - for their own purposes, of course. They want to use this as another example of the undemocratic nature of socialism in Eastern Europe.

But there has also been significant support in the workers' movement and progressive quarters. While a few hard-line Stalinist Communist Parties (including the Canadian CP) continue to denounce the Charter, the major Western European CPs have been forced to speak out against the repression.

Charter 77 has also received political support from the Polish Committee to Defend the Workers set up after the repression hit workers in that country who struck to protest price increases last June. This support reflects growing fragment and

critical links between opposition forces in Eastern Europe. Despite the increasing repression the more politically advanced Polish Committee has continued its work collecting money for jailed or fired workers. It's growing support has sparked opposition in other Eastern European countries.

As a result of the protests, the Czech regime has been forced to change its tune. Under increasing international pressure (including an upcoming Belgrade conference to discuss implementation of the Helsinki accords) and facing growing internal hostility (including from hundreds of thousands of CP members expelled after 1968) the hysterical rantings against Charter 77 have been toned down.

A new public campaign has begun, stressing the "great accomplishments" of "socialism" while arguing against a return to the policies of the Dubcek regime in 1968. But this too is unlikely to succeed in a context of increasing economic problems, continued repression of dissidents, and most importantly, developing oppositional currents throughout Eastern Europe.

P. NIGHTINGALE

Fierce repression from Czechoslovakia's ruling clique has hit dissidents who signed the Charter 77 statement in January, bringing protests from around the world. But the attacks have not stopped the Charter from gaining new support in Czechoslovakia itself.

Initially signed by 242 intellectuals and supporters of the former Dubcek regime (ousted by Soviet and Warsaw Pact troops in 1968) the Charter has now been signed by at least an additional 208 people, it was announced February 5.

The document lists democratic rights violated by the Husak regime, calling for observance of guarantees in the Helsinki accords and the country's constitution. Charter 77, the document states, "is not an

# Egypt: Workers Shake Sadat

"We are dying of hunger anyway, so kill us with your bullets Sadat." With such defiant chants, Cairo workers and youth refused to back down and disperse during mid-January riots.

Many paid the price. For the first time since 1952 when widespread rioting heralded the fall of King Farouk, the army was used massively against the people. Troops occupied Cairo, fighting raged into the night. The official death toll was 75 dead and 500 wounded. Unofficial estimates were three times higher.

The protests were not the first, but they were the angriest and most political in recent years. At the behest of the International Monetary Fund, Egypt had decreed the suspension of food subsidies January 17. Bottled propane, widely used for cooking and heating, was to cost 46 percent more, flour 63 percent, rice 16 percent, meat 26 percent.

The price increases came on top of already appalling social conditions. The minimum wage can buy neither meat nor leather shoes. Inflation now runs at 30 percent per year. There are 2.5 people per room and few social services in a sprawling, squalid Cairo of 7 million people. In the countryside, life expectancy is less than 40 years.

IMF austerity demands were a virtual death sentence for millions of Egyptian workers, peasants and urban poor, who could already barely afford to eat.

Foreign correspondents described the reaction as a "virtual insurrection". Rioting flared in other cities, including Alexandria, Suez, and centres in upper Egypt and the Nile Delta. The revolt was unprecedented in scope and pointed in its targets. Many of Cairo's leading nightclubs, symbols of Egypt's vast social inequality and playground to parasitic local millionaires and wealthy foreigners, were put to the torch.

In Alexandria, dock workers sacked the home of the vice-president. In Cairo the headquarters of the ruling Arab Socialist Union were destroyed.

Sadat had little choice but to back down. The food subsidies stayed. The masses would

eat. To pay for it, Sadat went to his allies in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf oil sheikdoms and US imperialism. He got a few million dollars worth of crumbs from the oil states. Recognizing the need to stave off a disaster and maintain the regime's stability, the IMF may well cough up a loan.

But even while offering a carrot, Sadat prepared a club that would allow him to strike against the masses' living standards. The Communist Party and the Soviet Union were blamed for inciting riots. The Egyptian Communist Party, the Communist Workers Party, the Revolutionary Current and the January 8th Movement were targeted for far reaching arrests. Thousands have already been seized.

On February 3, Sadat announced a referendum on new state powers designed to give the regime a leg more teeth. Proposed were absolutely draconian measures against "criminal conspiracy". Any participants in strikes, demonstrations, the destruction or occupation of factories or anyone belonging to a "secret organization" could be subject to forced labour for life.

In his address, Sadat accused not only the Communists but also the Nasserists of subversion. Repudiating Nasserism, he pointed out that it had "died" after the 1967 military defeat at the hands of Israel.

In fact, there is no starker proof of the failure of Nasserism than the corrupt and callous regime of his successor. In the 1960's and 1960's Nasser attempted to pursue a nationalist course and introduced "socialist" economic measures. By 1963, most key sectors of the economy had been nationalised. But the capitalist state remained. While the state sector of the economy swelled, so did embryos of the new ruling class which would reap the profits.

With Nasser's death, his work was soon dismantled. Sadat's regime began in 1971 by purging left Nasserists, and followed this with the 1972 expulsion of Soviet advisors - a series of moves carrying Egypt back into the waiting embrace of imperialism.

In 1974 an "opening" to the West was officially proclaimed, including guarantees to

private investors and the promise of no further nationalisation. Previously nationalised sectors such as metallurgy, banking and insurance were opened to foreign capital.

Three years later, Sadat's plans are in ruins. Despite the attempts at seduction, foreign capital has not rushed in, because of concern about political stability, the absence of basic requirements including telegraph facilities and the Egyptian bureaucracy's corruption.

For Egypt's rulers, the only solution is a further decline in worker and peasant living standards. But it comes at an awkward time. The bloom has long gone from the rise of

Sadat's partial victory in the October, 1973, war.

American imperialism has not pressured Israel into accepting a peace settlement, despite the fact that Egypt has bowed its head, joining with Arab reaction to slash the price.

Sadat has mortgaged Egypt to US imperialism for nothing, but the situation is not yet secure. Workers in this heartland of the Arab proletariat have written in blood that they want no more of the miserable regime. Their vast anger ensures they will rise again.



Mob fleeing Cairo Riot Police.



On February 4 1977 Anthony Cronin informed the readers of "The Irish Times" that "... while Ireland could be Ireland without the Irish language, it couldn't be, in any recognisable sense, anything at all without a literature, in whichever language." Which makes you wonder what sort of method for assessing nationality they use around the "Irish Times". There you have Holland, now, with little to speak of in the way of literature, yet nobody has been casting any doubts on Dutch nationality lately. Switzerland, too, seems to be holding together fairly well, despite having little to boast of by way of literature.

#### FOUR LANGUAGES, FOUR NATIONS?

So, you don't need a literature to be a nation. What about a language? In Switzerland, they speak four and still get away with calling themselves a nation. English is the most widely spoken language in Britain, the U.S., Australia and Canada, yet nobody suggests that they're all one nation - although people sometimes suggest that because English is the dominant everyday language in Ireland, we are therefore British. Funny psychology at work there.

So, a set of people can still constitute a nation without having a notable literature and without speaking one, unique language. As Leon Trotsky put it: "...the Swiss people, through their historical connection, feel themselves, despite different languages and religion, as one nation. An abstract criterion is not decisive in this question, but much more decisive is the historical consciousness, their feelings and their impulses. But that also is not determined accidentally but rather by the general conditions." (Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination, p16) Anthony D. Smith, in his scholarly study, Theories of Nationalism, writes: "...there is no doubt that linguistic homogeneity and distinctiveness is an invaluable vehicle and symbol of nationhood and nation-formation; but it would be misleading to consider it either a sufficient or a necessary mark of the ethnic nation." (p220)

#### Gaelic League

Thus, it is wrong to regard the Irish language or a highly developed literature as essential to Irish nationality. Both our language and our literature have been experiencing lean times for many decades now, yet Irish nationality has, in the last eight years, asserted itself with renewed vigour in the struggle against British occupation of the Six Counties.

But it is true that the struggle to revive the Irish language and to develop the literature of the country tends to strengthen and enhance our nationality generally, and, in particular, to give a boost to the more overtly political aspects of the struggle against British domination (and vice versa). This emerges very clearly from an examination of the period leading up to 1916 and the War of Independence. Pearse wrote in 1914: "I have said again and again that when the Gaelic League was founded in 1893 the Irish revolution began."

Six out of the seven signatories to the 1916 Proclamation were members of the coiste gno of the Gaelic League. Connolly's attitude was described in an interview which his daughter, Nora

## Debate on the Irish Language part of the anti-imperialist fight



to conquest or races which abandon their language in favour of that of an oppressor do so...from a slavish and cringing spirit...which cannot exist side by side with the revolutionary ideas." As with the Gaelic League, so too with the Irish Literary Revival, Yeats, as he lay dying, asked himself: "Did that play of mine send out/ Certain men the English shot?" Conor Cruise O'Brien, that sad representative of the most clapped-out elements of the Irish petit-bourgeoisie, builds on this in order to put a large share of the responsibility for 1916 on Yeats's Cathleen Ni Houlihan. The reason for this exaggeration is to justify his own acts of censorship today (when was the last time you heard "Kelly of Killane" on Radio Eireann?)

I wouldn't go along with O'Brien's exaggeration, but I do believe that the Literary Revival enhanced the sense of separate identity among the Irish people; - in Trotsky's words: "the historical consciousness, their feelings and their impulses." This is as valid for the Irish people as it is for Blacks in the USA to be inspired by the works of James Baldwin.

It is wrong of Anthony Cronin (who is usually more perspicacious than this) to upgrade the development of our literature at the expense of the language movement. Both have a substantial contribution to make, not least to one another, and the sooner everyone in both camps (if you can describe them as separate camps) realises it, the better. Indeed, Cronin's proposition becomes slightly ludicrous when you recall that a substantial proportion of our contemporary literature in Irish - something that would never have happened without the language movement. Mr Cronin should also remember that there are other arts besides literature.

'AN SEABHAC SIULACH'

Connolly-O'Brien, gave to the "Irish Times" (24/4/76): "One day her father told her and her sister Mona that he was taking them to a place where they would learn their native language. He took them to a Gaelic League class off High Street...He could read Irish but did not attempt to speak it.

1916: ALL YEATS'S FAULT!

Elsewhere, Connolly condemned those who, like today's British & Irish Communist Organisation, believe that imperialist oppression and cultural domination somehow help the cause of Socialism. He wrote that: "...nations which submit

contd from p12

opposed to discreet behind-closed-doors lobbying.

Students: A large meeting of the Civil Liberties Action Group in UCD in February was militant and far-reaching in its condemnation of Garda brutality. Militants must build on such meetings, offering perspectives for extending into joint action with other sectors of society, extending action to other colleges, and taking up the fight within the student representative bodies.

Women's Movement: Many speakers at the Irishwomen United meeting on Censorship in the Mansion House on February 28th placed the banning of 'Spare Rib' in the context of the growth of state repression, as did the fact of an IWL militant being held under the emergency laws for putting up posters about the meeting. The women's movement can play an important role in bringing its weight and energies to bear in the struggle against repression.

The Murray Defence Committee: Early in its campaign the Murray Defence Committee (MDC) made approaches to many organisations and individuals for support for its demands.

It must seize the opportunities now opened up on the question of brutality; and it must approach these organisations again. It is not so much a matter of getting a speaker from, say, the ICCL on an MDC platform, as to get the demands taken up within the membership of such organisations.

National Association of Tenants Organisations: On the basis of the resolutions passed at the last national conference of NATO, militants should fight for support for action against state repression, as was successfully done by the Limerick Anti-Repression Committee on the question of the Murrays and capital punishment.

Republicans and the Left: For the Provos to merely permit individual members to be involved in campaigns such as the Murray Defence Campaign is not enough. Militant republicans must fight for the commitment of their organisation to such campaigns, at local and national level. And both republican and socialist organisations must see the centrality of intervening in all sectors of political struggle to raise the demands that can bring a determined and concerted fightback.

S. MACKAY





Republicans and socialists are being beaten up while held for questioning in both the Six Counties and the Twenty-Six. Political prisoners - North, South and in Britain - are being subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment.

What is new about this situation is not that it exists, but that government denials that it exists are now received with overwhelming disbelief. As a result, the governments' strategies that lie behind the use of brutality are threatened with a setback.

Last year, the Leinster House government hijacked Frank Stagg's funeral, banned the Provo 1916 demo, brought in new repressive laws. In June, the Murrays were sentenced to death, convicted on the basis of confessions which they asserted were extracted by torture; and the Murray Defence Committee's demands found little support in the face of the onslaught of state repression.

#### FIGHTING BACK

Since then, the climate has changed. Despite the hostile environment, the Murray Defence Committee has maintained an energetic campaign, winning significant international support; the death sentence no longer hangs over Noel Murray, and Marie Murray has won a retrial.

The emergency laws did not pass unchallenged: workers in several areas marched in protest against them. And the reality of the laws has become more and more apparent to many who were inclined to dismiss their importance.

Over the last year, the relationship between the Department of Justice and the legal profession has deteriorated. In the view of many lawyers the methods of the state in securing convictions have threatened to expose the whole concept of legal "justice" in Irish society. In rapid succession, Hoey, Madden and Stenson have been released, and each of the releases has been implicitly a rejection of the more "unorthodox" methods of achieving convictions. Such methods have backfired to the extent that Mr Cooney saw fit to advise Gardai publicly against being 'overzealous'.

#### OPPORTUNITIES

Then came the "Irish Times" articles. The details were not new; what was new was that a 'respectable' bourgeois daily paper had published the material.

The potential for a real fightback against state repression is greater now than it has been for some time. In particular, the demands of the Murray Defence Committee gain new force in relation to police brutality.

State repression has not been halted or pushed back, but government strategy has received a jolt - a jolt that can be transformed into a major setback not just for the Leinster House government

but for British strategy as well. The suppression, intimidation and violence directed against the anti-unionist workers in the North is by no means the whole of British strategy. On the contrary, the suppression of republican and socialist forces in the 26 Counties is an essential part of British policy.

The revolt of the Catholic working class in the Six Counties has come up against the limits imposed by its separation from the Southern working class. British imperialism is intent upon further isolating and suppressing that revolt - and that entails the thorough repression of anti-imperialist forces in the South. It is in the context of the centrality of Southern state repression in British strategy that anti-imperialists must seize the opportunity to exploit the current situation.

#### DEMANDS

While it would be mechanical to believe that a simple set of demands in relation to the repression can be uniformly presented in all sectors of political struggle, it is important to establish what are the demands which can take the struggle against repression forward.

As we have mentioned, the demands of the Murray Defence Committee gain new force. On the grounds of the allegations of police torture in the Murrays case, and with the precedent of Ronan Stenson's release, the demand must be to FREE THE MURRAYS; but this demand should not exclude drawing attention to the fact that they were convicted without jury trial; especially in the context of the revelations regarding fingerprint evidence and other "unorthodox" procedures, we must demand AN END TO NON-JURY COURTS.

As we have said on many occasions in the past, we oppose the Forcible Entry Act, the Offences Against the State Acts, the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act, etc., etc. And we demand AN END TO ALL REPRESSIVE LAWS. And the particular aspect of the vast array of such laws that is thrown into clearest focus by the revelations about Garda brutality is the 7-Day Detention provision. It is quite obvious to large numbers of people that few could keep up their resistance to signing a fake confession after such a period of intimidation and torture. So, we demand AN END TO 7-DAY DETENTION; and we add the demand that all confessions and statements should be signed not only by the person charged but also by a lawyer; and that a lawyer or other independent witness should be present during interrogation.

It is by raising such demands as widely as possible that we can aid the growth of consciousness as to the actual reality of the repressive laws of the state.

#### RAISING THE DEMANDS

**In the Trade Unions:** On the one hand, workers have mobilised against repressive laws, both through trade union bodies and at local and factory level. On the other hand, the various trade unions and the ICTU have passed resolutions against repression, but these resolutions have not been transformed into action. The task of revolutionaries and all those within the labour movement committed to class struggle must be to work to generalise spontaneous expressions of resistance by workers, and must be to press for trade union-sponsored meetings, marches, demonstrations, and other initiatives. One example of how to raise the question of repression in the trade unions can be given in relation to brutality in prisons: The Minister for Justice has refused permission for Labour TDs and Senators to visit Portlaoise; militants should push for a trade union fact-finding mission to visit the prisons where they would hear first-hand accounts of the allegations of brutality.

**The Irish Council for Civil Liberties:** No one can be under any illusions that the bureaucratic leadership of the ICCL wishes to advance political demands through direct action. They have an exclusively parliamentary and legalistic perspective. All the same, many members and supporters of the ICCL do not see parliament and the courts as the only areas where effort should be directed. It is therefore important to find ways of placing before the supporters of the ICCL the perspective of public action against the state's repressive policies, as

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Garda technical bureau, St. John's Road, Kingsbridge, Dublin, where the nucleus of the "Heavy Gang" is based.