

I.R.S.P. Information Sheets

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EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

The Irish Republican Socialist Party is totally opposed to membership of the European community. We reject the claim that there is no alternative for the Irish people. To us, the E.C. is a political structure created by the capitalists of Europe, initially at the behest of U.S. imperialism, to strengthen their hold over the European working class with increased profit possibilities. It also serves to crush the smaller and weaker capitalists, the poor farmers and sections of the middle class, in the interests of the transnational industrial and financial monopolies.

Our objective of the United Socialist Republic cannot be reconciled with participation in an organisation which is politically, militarily and economically anti-socialist.

EUROPEAN UNITY

The concept of European unity, arose after World War II as an objective of world capitalism. Its purpose was to prevent any further wars between the capitalist nations of Europe. Cooperation between principally West Germany, France and

Italy in economic co-ordination, especially in iron, steel and coal was a condition of the Marshall Aid Plan (massive loans and grants) provided by the U.S.

It was realised by the imperialists that, alone, these countries would not be able to stave off socialist revolution. Together, a speedy economic recovery could be achieved thereby damping down the struggles of the working class.

From these origins the Treaty of Rome (1957) sprang and the Common Market was created to replace the European Coal and Steel Community and the organisation for European Economic Cooperation. In 1972, (Ireland, Britain and Denmark joined the original six members (Italy, France, West Germany, Holland, Luxembourg and Belgium). Greece joined in 1981 and Spain and Portugal followed.

LIVING STANDARDS FALL

Since entry, the gap in living standards between Ireland and the smaller European countries has widened. From having 56% of the average in Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland and Denmark in 1971 we fell to 52% in 1986.

Total numbers at work have fallen in the same period from 1,080,000 to 1,067,000 (1987) in the 26 counties. Our smaller workforce has been accompanied by a fivefold increase in unemployment, from 65,000 to 230,000. Despite the creation of new jobs by foreign investment, numbers in manufacturing have actually dropped due to the wholesale collapse of native industries such as papermaking, textiles, leather, printing, baking, clothing and food processing.

In agriculture the Common Agricultural Policy has subsidised the incomes of the 50,000 large farmers to the tune of £20,000 per annum. The artificially high food prices cost £14 per week to each family.

The result of the massive flow of E.E.C. funds into farming is a reduction of over 100,000 working on the land and dependence on imports for fruit and vegetables.

The Single European Market which comes into force in 1992 will further accelerate all the tendencies in the European economy towards monopoly domination of the poorer, less developed countries by the multinationals of France, Germany Britain and Italy.

Continuing emigration and large scale unemployment is inescapable while the Irish economy is tied to the E.C.. Irish capitalism is pinning its hopes on enticing more Japanese, Korean and U.S. investment here to take advantage of the Single Market of 1992. The I.D.A. (Industrial Development Authority) is facing unparalleled competition from other E.C. countries, particularly Britain. U.S. investors have ranked Ireland as their No. 8 choice for location in Europe.

Ireland's geographical disadvantages (distance from principal European markets and island status) can only be compensated by even further cuts in labour costs, through lower wages and increased productivity. For the capitalist this means less taxes and less public spending on state services such as Health, Education and Social Welfare.

Increasingly the industries which come here are those that have been spurned by other countries for environmental and safety reasons. Some capitalist economists predict that Ireland's largely agricultural based economy will not be able to support a population in the 26

counties of more than 1½ - 2 million. Emigration will continue with the emphasis turning to gearing our human 'exports' for continental Europe rather than the traditional destinations in USA, Britain and Australia.

REPRESSION

The Dublin government has accepted the implications of monetary and political unity with its European masters. It is being dragged into NATO, with which it is already cooperating on a technical level, with much dubious "telecommunications" technology being concentrated on the west coastal area, away from the much more densely populated eastern area. It has ratified the European Convention on Terrorism Act, which includes extradition of Irish citizens to the other states on political grounds; the cooperation of state security organisations in a co-ordinated campaign against republicans, socialists and all anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist political activists. (with the aim of a European police force)

The Dublin government is undoubtedly involved in the TREVI group which is specifically aimed against "subversives". It has no independent line on foreign

policy which is undermining support for liberation struggles in South Africa, Palestine, South and Central America etc.

INADEQUATE FUNDING

Social, Regional and Structural funds have been and will continue to be, totally inadequate to protect the weaker countries such as Ireland. These funds are totally reliant on the goodwill of the member states and the European parliament has no effective power to enforce greater contributions, should it come to the conclusion that these are necessary. Any benefits to the Irish masses of the various grants have been incidental.

These are designed to facilitate the imperialists plunder of our resources and our labour which is why so much of the Structural Funds are going on the transport system. This is not to improve the living conditions of the urban and rural poor, it is designed solely to speed up the transport of goods and materials to the markets.

We totally repudiate those collaborators with British imperialism who falsely project the prospect of Irish unification via the E.C.. Middle class 'nationalists' of the SDLP

and Fianna Fail variety try to conceal their own cowardly subservience to British imperialism by involving the international unity of the E.C. as the force which will end partition in Ireland.

SELF-DETERMINATION

The I.R.S.P. says the right of the Irish people to national self determination can only be won by the revolutionary struggle of the Irish working class. Not only do we discount the desire or sincerity of the EC (dominated by imperialist powers including Britain) we say it has no role in this matter. Similarly we do not regard any of the advances in social legislation as a justification for continued membership of the community. Such gains or advances which have accrued owe more to the E.C's recognition of (and embarrassment by) the social, political and economic backwardness of Irish capitalism than to the benign nature of the Brussels bureaucracy.

We reject the claim that there is no alternative for our partitioned and underdeveloped economy. We do not, however, cite the relative prosperity of countries such as Norway, Finland, Sweden etc which

are not in the E.C. as the basis for our confidence in an independent role for Ireland (as does Sinn Fein).

For us the only real alternative to the E.C. is a Socialist United Irish Republic. Only with the working class in power and a planned economy based on the nationalisation of major industries and the banks etc and the monopoly of foreign trade by the workers state can there be a future for the Irish people. Such a state will develop through trade agreements, technological exchange etc. entered into with those states and economies independent of the imperialists.

In or out of the Common Market/European Community, the Irish working class has no future under capitalism. Therefore, the struggle against the Common Market is not simply one for withdrawal. It must have as its aim the socialist revolution and national liberation. It must also have the objective of replacing the European community with the Socialist states of Europe. This is the revolutionary significance of 'being European' for the I.R.S.P.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE I.R.S.P

BACKGROUND

The Irish Republican Socialist Party was founded in 1974. Like Sinn Fein and the Workers Party, its roots can be traced back to the broad republican tradition in Ireland and in particular James Connolly and the Irish Citizens Army.

Following the distasteful border campaign in the 1950's, serious debate took place within the Republican movement about exactly how they could become more receptive to the needs of the people, in an Ireland vastly different from that of the 1920's.

Given that the Republican Movement was not ideologically united, there emerged several "factions". The socialist faction advocated that the movement should immerse itself in the everyday affairs of the people, whilst not denying the need for armed struggle to confront imperialism, it was felt that armed struggle should go hand in hand with building a solid political base. Abstention from elections, long considered

one of the main tenets of republicanism, was no longer thought politically viable, instead, it was argued that participation in elections should be considered as a tactic not a principle. But within this faction there was also developing a totally reformist position, which was later to become the predominant force.

The other dominant trend within the Republican movement was the old traditionalist faction who believed that only the national question had any relevance to the Irish people. Participation in elections was considered to be in total opposition to republicanism. This faction later emerged as the Provisionals.

Events outside the control of the movement were to push it into the position where a "split" became inevitable. During the Civil rights campaign, the state in collusion with militant loyalists launched repeated attacks on the nationalist community culminating in the pogroms of August 1969. The I.R.A. were unable to

adequately defend the nationalist community and blamed this on the new social policies being pursued by the leadership of the movement. This coupled with the dropping of abstentionism led to the Republican Movement splitting into the Provisional and Official wings.

Those who still believed that the national class question was inextricably linked remained with the Official camp. This element was led by Seamus Costello. When the Provisionals launched their offensive military campaign against the British, the Officials found themselves also committed, not because it was what the leadership wanted, because they did not, but because the rank and file in the six counties saw an opportunity to expand the struggle.

However by 1972-73, those with radical and militant policies had become more and more isolated by the forces of reform. A split was inevitable and with the expulsion of Costello in 1974 there was no alternative but to leave the "Officials" and form a new party. Revolutionary republicans came together with trade unionists and other socialists to form the

Irish Republican Socialist Party under the slogan "*For National Liberation and Socialism*". There were widespread defections from the Officials.

The fledgling party soon came under armed attack from the Officials and three members were killed and forty people wounded. Those who had refused to fight against the armed forces of British occupation, freely turned their weapons on those who posed an alternative to their reformism.

STATE REPRESSION

The I.R.S.P. saw the necessity not only to confront British imperialism in the six counties but to mobilise the working class in the 26 counties. Thus it soon came under sustained attack from the Free State government.

In an attempt to criminalise and intimidate the I.R.S.P., over 40 of its members were arrested following a train robbery in Co. Kildare. Many of those arrested were tortured and several were subsequently convicted of the robbery on the basis of statements signed under duress. The medical evidence of torture was overwhelming, and after a lengthy campaign both in Ireland and abroad, and a

long and painful hunger strike by Nicky Kelly, one of those convicted, all were eventually freed.

In 1977, Seamus Costello was assassinated by the Workers Party, and this was to be followed several years later by the assassination of other leading members, Miriam Daly, Ronnie Bunting and Noel Little, almost certainly by the S.A.S.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY

From its inception, the Party was involved in all aspects of political struggle in Ireland; participating in the campaign for political status for republican/republican socialist prisoners, culminating in the Hunger strikes of 1980/81 in which ten prisoners died including three I.N.L.A. volunteers, Patsy O'Hara, Kevin Lynch and Micky Devine; it campaigned against the 'supergrass system' in the mid 1980's, and was involved locally in numerous campaigns against repression. At the same time, the party was consistently involved on class issues, including the fight against cut backs in health and education, the water tax, it was prominent in the campaign to introduce divorce in the 26 counties and was active in supporting

strike actions.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

Because of the sustained attacks against the party, it had little breathing space and was unable to develop a clear ideology nor define its politics beyond the slogan "*For national liberation and socialism*" and a vague call for a "*Broad Anti-imperialist Front*". It was not until the 1984 Ard Fheis, that an attempt was made to give the party a coherent balance of theory and practice, with the adoption of the teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin as the essential basis for a revolutionary party. These proposals were passed unanimously and without argument.

Those who opposed the public declaration of Marxism/Leninism did not appear at the Ard Fheis to voice their arguments. Instead they chose to distance themselves and engage in a campaign of smear, innuendo and outright physical intimidation which eventually culminated in the counter-revolutionary attacks on the party in 1987, when five comrades were murdered and several wounded.

Since the attacks, the IRSP has been totally committed

to building a genuine revolutionary communist party, and it is through the pages of our national paper, 'An Camcheachta/Starry Plough, that we are encouraging debate amongst the working class around the major political questions facing the struggle in Ireland today.

The Party is also active in the campaign against the health cuts, against extradition, as well as being involved in local activity on a day to day basis. Whilst we believe that participation in certain elections is a necessary tactic, we also recognise that there is no parliamentary road to socialism.

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NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE

INTRODUCTION

The struggle for national liberation directly raises class questions. Any attempt to isolate the national struggle from class politics will result in failure. We do not have a choice in whether or not we wish to consider the interconnection of the national and class questions: reality forces us to do so.

The I.R.S.P. supports the struggle for national liberation and furthermore believes that it is the duty of all anti-imperialists to further that struggle for national liberation.

We define the national liberation struggle as that struggle which seeks to force a British military withdrawal from the occupied six counties; the destruction of the pro-British loyalist armed forces; the withdrawal of British political influence from all parts of Ireland; the winning back of economic control of our own resources, the recognition of a separate Irish cultural identity and the establishment of a

revolutionary socialist Republic.

LOYALISM

At no time can there be political concessions to British loyalists. We recognise loyalism as a reactionary, racist and imperialist ideology which has for three hundred years been used as a bridgehead of British imperialism. We distinguish between loyalism and protestantism. We recognise the right of everybody to their private religious beliefs, provided those beliefs are not used in the oppression of others, but we stand totally opposed to the political ideology of loyalism.

NATIONALISM

We recognise the progressive role of nationalism in the Irish struggle. We also recognise that nationalism can play a reactionary role. The national chauvinism of the Tories, National Front etc. is counter-revolutionary and anathema to socialists. The nationalism of an oppressed

country is vastly different from such reaction. In Ireland the progressive nationalism of Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen identified with the most radical movement of their day, the French Revolution, and today progressive nationalists in Ireland identify and support in a genuinely international sense the struggles of oppressed peoples throughout the world and the anti-imperialist socialist states.

We recognise that national liberation struggles can distort and blur class differences. Various class forces make up the national liberation movement. We state unequivocally that only under the leadership of the working class can the Irish liberation struggle achieve the ultimate victory, not only of "Brits Out" but also the destruction of the capitalist system. Only the working class has the objective interests in the victory of that struggle.

MIDDLE CLASS/BOURGEOISIE

The bourgeois nationalists only role is as clients of imperialism. Hence their abandonment over the years of the demand for national independence in favour of

'stability', to facilitate the search for profit. They have accepted through the Anglo-Irish agreement not only Britain's but also the U.S.A's right to interfere in the internal affairs of the Irish people.

Sections of the small farming class and people engaged in small businesses may support national liberation. However as representatives of the petit-bourgeoisie, they are unable to carry the struggle to victory. They vacillate in the face of imperialism. Property ownership is still at the basis of their economic existence.

One need only look to the past leaders of the Republican movement to see how its petit-bourgeois leaderships constantly betrayed the struggle for national liberation for eg. Griffiths and De Valera.

REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT

We recognise the progressive nature of the Republican movement. We also recognise the limitations of that movement. They are an alliance of nationalists, socialists and republicans who are united in their support for the war against the forces of occupation. In so far as they fight for independence we support

them, but as communists, we affirm that mere independence which leaves untouched the class question in Irish society is unacceptable to us. We refuse to accept that an "Assembly of Elected Representatives" is in any way an adequate end goal for the working class in this country.

THE USE OF ARMS

At present the term "national liberation struggle" is generally taken to mean armed struggle. We believe that the use of arms is a tactic to be used wherever and whenever necessary. The use of arms stems from apolitical analysis of a given situation. As peaceful protest in the six counties was beaten and shot off the streets, there was no alternative but to fight back in the same vein. We support the armed struggle presently being waged against British imperialism and in particular we support the Irish National Liberation Army. The I.N.L.A. is not merely a smaller alternative to the I.R.A. but it shares our belief that the social and national struggles are inseparable and recognises Connolly's warning to the Irish

Citizens Army to the effect that should independence be achieved, the struggle would be far from over and that their arms should be not be laid down until the final victory of the working class.

The I.R.S.P. believes that armed struggle alone cannot achieve victory. Only by mobilising the working class north and south, which would include at least a section of the protestant working class, can the goal of national liberation and socialism be achieved.

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Irish Election Literature

<https://irishelectionliterature.com/>

WOMEN IN IRELAND

"...The first class opposition that occurs in history coincides with the development of antagonism between man and woman in monogamous marriage, and the first class oppression coincides with that of the female sex by the male." (F. Engels: The Origin of the Family)

The oppression of women is thus directly linked with the institution of the family which emerged for the first time when there was an economic surplus in society, thus creating a material basis for class exploitation. The family became a unit of consumption, a vehicle of inheritance and a means of socialising children into the system.

The management of the family was no longer a public concern, and so the wife's production became 'private', not recognised as socially necessary labour ie. giving birth to a man's children and looking after his house, while doing so increasingly in isolation from other women. Hence regardless of her status in wider society, within the family, the women's relationship to the man became one of exploited to exploiter.

IMPERIALISM

British imperialism in setting up the sectarian statelet in the six counties and through partition, has deliberately fostered sectarianism amongst the working class and fragmented the women's movement into those who are actively involved in or support the national liberation struggle and those who are pro-imperialist.

ROLE OF THE CHURCH.

The church, particularly the catholic church, has continually taught that woman's main role in life is to marry, have children and stay in the home. Women are seen in the image of the Virgin Mary - pure, and that the sexual act inside marriage is for procreation and not to be enjoyed. Women are positively discouraged from seeing themselves as having their own identity and their own sexual needs. This view reflects itself in the church's total opposition to contraception, abortion and divorce and to women working.

CONTRACEPTION

Contraception is now available throughout Ireland

from family-planning clinics but the moralising attitude of medical staff and the unnecessary prying questions into one's sexual habits, prevents many young people from using these facilities. The entire process becomes very humiliating when, not only the clinics, but many family doctors agree firmly with the catholic stance and refuse to prescribe any form of contraception .

When it comes to sterilisation, a wife must have her husband's written consent before the authorities will perform the operation - the implication being that she is his property.

ABORTION.

In the six counties, abortion is illegal, except on strict medical grounds, when a mother's life is in danger or when the child will be deformed. In the twenty-six counties abortion is illegal. It is also illegal to give advice on how to obtain an abortion and at present there are court cases pending against various groups who are giving advice on abortion. A vigorous campaign has also been mounted (DEFEND THE CLINICS) to defend the right to freely give out information on abortion.

The I.R.S.P. totally

supports a woman's right to choose, whether to have an abortion or not.

The I.R.S.P. supports the Defend the Clinics campaign for the right to freely give out information on abortion.

DIVORCE.

In the 26 counties, divorce is unobtainable, yet another example of the indivisibility of the Church and State.

In the six counties, even with the opposition of the churches, the right to divorce exists, after two years with both couple's mutual consent, or after five years without mutual consent.

The I.R.S.P. totally supports the campaign for the introduction of the right to divorce.

WORK

The Equal Pay Act has had much less impact here than originally expected. Women have traditionally been employed in 'women's work' like clothing factories, cooking, cleaning, typing etc. so it is almost impossible for a woman to say she is paid less than a man for the same work as this situation rarely exists. Many women find they can't make ends meet on social security and they're

forced to take on jobs without disclosing this to the DHSS 'doing the double'. This always results in bad working conditions, low wages and the risk of being sacked at a moment's notice.

This type-casting of women is reflected in the family and in particular in the education system where boys are steered towards science, metal-work, woodwork and are encouraged to continue their education. Girls on the other hand are trained to prepare themselves for their future lives as wives and mothers and are given no encouragement to continue their education.

CHILDCARE.

Pre-school child care has been and continues to be grossly inadequate in Ireland. There are only four day-care nurseries in the six counties and places are few and far between and usually cater for what they call 'problem families'. Play-groups exist in most areas, but the majority of these are only morning or afternoon care for any one child. This does not suit a working mother.

The I.R.S.P. supports the demand for the provision of free childcare facilities for all those who wish to avail themselves of it.

HEALTH

The recent government cut-backs in health, both north and south, have had detrimental effects on women's health. Cervical cancer which relies on early detection through regular smears is on the increase, due to long delays in getting results back and long waiting lists for hospital appointments. Breast scanning facilities are almost non-existent. Addiction to nerve tablets is on the increase with doctors prescribing Valium as a cure for all ills.

The I.R.S.P. is actively involved in the campaign against the cutbacks and against increasing government privatisation of health care.

RAPE

Society has created many myths surrounding rape such as: rape is due to sudden uncontrollable sexual urges unleashed in men by the sight of a provocatively dressed woman; no woman can be raped against her will; 'women secretly enjoy it'.

Rape is a violent crime often carried out under threat of, if not actual use of force, such as beating, maiming and the murder of victims. 90% of all rapes are planned in advance. Rape

is man's physical expression of his power to dominate women. The victim is humiliated in court and made to feel that she is on trial, her own private sex life will be displayed to the court. Many judges openly sympathise with the rapist, illustrated by the nominal sentences handed out, often less than a motoring offence. Because of the way women are degraded by the courts, many women will suffer rape and not report it, and so the official figures on rape are considered by many to be just the tip of the iceberg.

The image propagated by the capitalist media and the widespread distribution of pornographic literature increases the view of women as sexual objects to be 'had' and 'conquered'. On a wider level it is a reflection of the wider use of repressive values in the capitalist system to make the man/woman relationship one of domination and not of equality.

The I.R.S.P. supports the demand that sentences for rapists should reflect the serious nature of the crime.

STRIP SEARCHING

Since 1982, when strip-searching was introduced for women prisoners, on the pretext of security, there

have been over 3,500 strip-searches. A strip-search entails a prisoner removing all her clothes and having her body inspected in full view of prison staff. Sanitary towels must also be removed. Refusal to comply results in beatings and the forcible removal of clothing. Nothing of any consequence has ever been found on a prisoner and its sole purpose is to degrade and humiliate the women prisoners.

The I.R.S.P. totally supports the campaign to end the degrading practice of strip-searching.

SEXUALITY

We believe in a woman's right to define her own sexuality, either as a lesbian, bi-sexual or heterosexual. Lesbian's experience discrimination especially in areas of child-custody, where a lesbian must often face a really hard legal battle for her children. She also faces the possibility of losing her job if she works in such areas as teaching or nursing.

The I.R.S.P. demands an end to discrimination against lesbians and a recognition that women have a right to define their own sexuality.

LEVEL OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The 26 counties of Ireland can be categorised as a medium developed capitalist country. We mean by this that it has reached such a stage of development (where monopoly capitalism is dominant and finance capital has emerged) that it can no longer be designated an underdeveloped country.

In world terms, the collapse of the colonial system, begun after the first World War and greatly accelerated between the end of the second World War and the 1960's, was a great blow to imperialism. It meant a new approach was needed to ensure continued imperialist exploitation. The answer was neo-colonialism.

Imperialists ruled through the ruling class of the nominally independent country. In a general sense this still holds true of the ex-colonies. At the same time imperialism had to ensure that the underdeveloped countries remained in the capitalist system, thus a certain amount of development in both social and economic terms was essential.

MEDIUM DEVELOPMENT

The medium developed capitalist country has reached a stage of impasse. It has succeeded in using state capitalism (ie. direct state involvement) to develop its own capitalism. The monopoly capitalism and the finance capital that emerged from such a forcibly accelerated process does not rest on a long-term developed economic basis.

Ireland's economic basis has only in comparatively recent times moved from the agricultural to the industrial. The accumulation of capital has been much more rapid than in the underdeveloped countries but much less than is needed to bring the country on a par with the advanced countries. There is also a dependence economically on the advanced countries.

In the 70's, the 26 counties had the fastest growing economy in Europe. This massive growth was largely accounted for by the arrival of 900 foreign owned firms since 1975. These transnational companies were

encouraged or rather bribed to set up shop here. Massive tax concessions, direct grants, the proximity of the large European Market and cheap labour (with "docile" unions) were the attractions. Although they transformed the outward appearance of the national economy, the profits are naturally repatriated to the parent companies.

The advanced countries can soften their class contradictions, for eg. the British monopolies derive the vast majority of their profits, not from exploitation of their own workers, but from foreign investments and the exploitation of under-developed countries. Thus they are able to create a labour aristocracy and in fact gave a middle-class consciousness (bourgeois) to large sections of the working class.

It has been a consistent policy of British imperialism to maintain a protestant labour aristocracy thus tying their interests to imperialism. The 26 counties are unable to do this, plus they have incurred a huge national debt in the provision of the industrial infrastructure for the transnationals.

The 26 county working class is therefore faced with massive exploitation through

providing profits for the transnationals and native capital, and through oppressive taxation in order to pay off the national debt. Capitalism in the 26 counties is unable to alleviate basic social problems, and in fact is in the process of cutting back on health, education and general social spending, thus again hitting the working class (employed and unemployed) hardest. Thus the objective conditions in the 26 counties can be said to be ripe or at least ripening for revolution.

SIX COUNTIES

The six county statelet is of course directly tied both economically and politically through armed occupation to the advanced state of Britain. In its actual economic make-up, however, it is considered to be on the same level of economic development by the E.C. as the 26 counties.

However the largest section of the six counties organised workforce has up until very recent times benefited from the British economic ability to bribe its workforce. Since the vast bulk of organised labour in the six counties is from a loyalist background, there is a

general reinforcement of the division of the working class in Ireland as a whole. Although there is a revolutionary situation in the six counties it is largely tied to national aspiration or at least is perceived as such. There is a lack of a clear revolutionary perspective and therefore an inability to link the national and class struggle but the subjective conditions exist despite British attempts to crush them.

In the 26 counties on the other hand, the objective conditions for a revolutionary situation exist and are increasingly developing due to the instability of the world capitalist system. However the subjective conditions lag behind. The unions collaborate with the government and the only parties in a position to receive the recent protest vote in the Dail elections are themselves pro-imperialists (The Workers Party and Labour Party).

Only a revolutionary communist party can provide the leadership necessary for the overthrow of the capitalist state.

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LOYALISM

RELIGIOUS WAR!

The ruling class go to great lengths to portray the struggle in the six counties as a religious war. British troops are portrayed as peacekeepers who have no reason for being in Ireland other than to keep the warring religious tribes apart.

British imperialism is a past master of the tactic of divide and rule and has practised such a policy in every colony it has occupied. Since the plantation policy of the 16th century, Britain has fostered division in order to make its rule easier. This policy is maintained to the present day and results in a divided working class in the six counties.

LABOUR ARISTOCRACY

Today, sectarianism is still fostered by the imperialists. Protestant workers are still bribed by higher and better paid jobs, more employment and better housing and other privileges. Although this is gradually being eroded away through the privatisation of Shorts

and Harland and Wolff (two of the largest employers of an almost exclusively protestant workforce), which will result in numerous redundancies.

The British has successfully created an aristocracy of labour within the protestant workforce of the six counties with the effect that their economic interests are seen to be tied to imperialism.

DISCRIMINATION

In the last twenty years of British occupation of the six counties little or nothing has been done to redress religious discrimination in the work place. The British government's fanatical opposition to the moderate McBride principals including financing trips for local politicians and trade unionists to America in order to testify on their behalf, proves once again imperialism's determination to maintain the sectarian division of the working class on which their continuing rule is guaranteed.

Unemployment is extremely high in nationalist areas,

as much as 80% in some areas of West Belfast. Catholic workers are mainly concentrated in unskilled jobs in the service industries, the health service and in minor positions in the Civil Service.

LOYALISM-REACTIONARY IDEOLOGY

From the privileged economic position of Protestant workers, the reactionary ideology of Loyalism has grown. This ideology which depicts Catholics as lazy, dirty in their habits and generally inferior human beings is totally reactionary and fascistic.

The most extreme form of Loyalism is embodied in the murder squads of the UVF and the UDA. These murder gangs are used and controlled by the British government as another form of terror which they can turn off and on at will. And it is a convenient way to get rid of people who are politically active against the state without the British government being directly involved.

Take the murder of Finnu-cane, a prominent solicitor who was active in defending the families of the shoot-to-kill policy. Shortly before his murder by the UDA a statement was made in the British parliament by a Tory government minister,

insinuating that certain solicitors had links with the IRA.

There is now a great deal of evidence linking British undercover operations with loyalist murder squads. Many members of the U.D.R. have been convicted of involvement in the murder of nationalists and passing on information to loyalist death squads about political activists.

As Marxists, and therefore materialists, the I.R.S.P. is opposed to all religious prejudices which spring from idealism.

As Marxists, the I.R.S.P. is also committed to fighting divisions within the working class. However these divisions will not be combatted by appeasing loyalism or attempting to find a socialist consciousness within the loyalist organisations that most definitely is not there. For eg. the Morning Star interviews with Gusty Spence, a prominent leader of the UVF in which he describes himself as a Socialist Unionist.

The Workers Party mainly, and to a lesser extent the C.P.I., and others follow a course of appeasement of loyalism which has the effect of giving credibility to loyalism that it does not deserve. They also as a

result condemn republican and revolutionary socialists as being sectarian because of their uncompromising hostility to loyalism in all its forms.

There can be no doubt that a socialist revolution can not succeed without winning at least a section of the protestant working class to a revolutionary perspective. This can only be achieved by confronting Loyalism with principled socialist politics.

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