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RED FRONT

FOR WORKING CLASS POWER
FOR A SOCIALIST BRITAIN

ORGAN OF THE MARXIST-LENINIST ORGANISATION OF BRITAIN



August 1971 SPECIAL ISSUE

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THE IRISH NATIONAL REVOLUTION

Three years ago, writing of the developing civil rights movement in Northern Ireland, we said:

"There can be no doubt that the movement will grow, that it will overcome all the obstacles placed in its way by the brutal police and their collaborators, the protestant fascists led by Ian Paisley, and that it will develop from a movement for democracy and civil rights into an invincible national-revolutionary movement to free the people of Northern Ireland from British rule." (RED FRONT, December 1968;p.17).

Subsequent events have more than confirmed the accuracy of this analysis.

Since the above words were written, thousands of British troops have been sent to Northern Ireland in a bloody but futile effort to repress the movement for national liberation, and hundreds of Irish patriots have been forcibly interned in concentration camps without trial.

But brutal repression has never yet held up the march of history, and its failure is already demonstrated in the newsreel pictures of the men, women and children of Northern Ireland fighting the foreign occupation troops in unmatched heroism with stones, home-made bombs and, now, guns.

For now all but the most politically backward of the Irish people have been forced by events to realise that the civil rights and social equality which they initially demanded can be obtained only through national liberation from British colonial rule, and that this can be obtained only through armed struggle.

The colonial conquest of Ireland from across the Irish Sea began in 1169, and it was in Ireland that the British ruling class learned to practice the brutal repression and atrocities which they later came to use in every corner of their once extensive colonial empire.

But the people of Ireland, who form a nation quite distinct from the British nation which inhabits the other main island of the British Isles, have never ceased to struggle for the right to determine their own destiny, for their national independence. Time and time again their national liberation movement has been temporarily crushed, or betrayed by treacherous leaders, only to rise once more to new heights of struggle.

The British ruling class has always sought to maintain its domination and exploitation of Ireland by dividing the Irish people. The introduction, primarily into the six northern counties, of Protestant settlers from Britain was designed to provide the British overlords with a social base of support within the country in the shape of a stratum of British descent dependent for its privileged social position on continuing British rule. And in the new situation which followed the Easter Week Rising of 1916, the British imperialists partitioned Ireland, holding the six northern counties, with a majority of the population Protestants of British descent, as a colony, and granting "self-government" to the

twenty-six southern counties.

The "Irish Free State" developed into the present "Republic of Ireland", but its independence is a nominal one. Ruled by Irish comprador capitalists dependent upon British finance capital, the Republic forms a neo-colony of British imperialism.

Thus, the struggle for a united, independent Ireland cannot be confined to the British-occupied north; the national-democratic revolution also needs to be completed in the south by the overthrow of the neo-colonial regime in the Republic.

Marxist-Leninists, and indeed all genuine progressives, have always supported wholeheartedly the Irish struggle for national liberation.

Karl Marx wrote to Friedrich Engels in November 1867:

"What shall we advise the English workers? In my opinion they must make the repeal of the Union ... into an article of their pronunziamento. This is the only legal and therefore only possible form of Irish emancipation which can be admitted in the programme of an English party. Experience must show later whether a purely personal union can continue to subsist between the two countries.

What the Irish need is self-government and independence from England." (K.Marx: Letter to F.Engels, November 30th, 1867, in: K.Marx and F.Engels: "Correspondence: 1846-1895"; London; 1936; p.229).

Three years ago RED FRONT declared:

"British Marxist-Leninists and progressives stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Northern Ireland. Both are fighting the same enemy -- the British imperialists. Every blow struck against this enemy in Belfast and Derry helps the struggle of the British working people for their social liberation. Every blow struck against this enemy in London and Manchester helps the struggle of the people of Northern Ireland for their national liberation." (RED FRONT; December 1968; p.17).

But recognition in words that the Irish people are the allies of the British working people is only the beginning. Moral support for the Irish people in their struggle is far, far from enough. THIS RECOGNITION AND THIS SUPPORT NEEDS TO BE TRANSLATED INTO CONCRETE ACTION AGAINST THE BRITISH IMPERIALIST BUTCHERS WHO, WHEN THEY FEEL IT NECESSARY, WILL HAVE NO HESITATION IN USING THE SAME MURDEROUS, REPRESSIVE BRUTALITY AGAINST THE BRITISH WORKING PEOPLE AS THEY ARE NOW USING AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND, AND AS THEY HAVE USED IN THE PAST AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF COUNTLESS OTHER COUNTRIES WHEN

THEY HAD THE MILITARY POWER TO DO SO.

Active solidarity with the Irish struggle for national liberation requires the building of a mass movement against the British government's "dirty war" in Ireland; it requires mass demonstrations proportional to those which occurred in the United States at the height of the agitation against the American "dirty war" in Vietnam; it requires industrial action to hinder the supply and transport of the British troops which are being used to massacre the finest sons and daughters of the Irish people.

Were there a Marxist-Leninist Party in Britain, with roots in the working class, the achievement of this programme of active solidarity with the Irish national liberation movement would, in view of the known facts of the situation, be a relatively simple matter. Indeed, were there such a party which had, in accordance with Marxist-Leninist principles, developed its cells within the armed forces, then some at least of the British soldiers now forced to shoot Irish men, women and children who are resisting the foreign occupation of their country would already be turning their guns against their own officers.

But the leadership of the Communist Party of Great Britain, which was once a Marxist-Leninist Party of the working class, has betrayed every principle of Marxism-Leninism, so that the party has ceased to be a revolutionary party, ceased to be a party of the working class. Having, in the name of "the peaceful transition to socialism", long refused to work within the armed forces - refused even to accept a serviceman as a member of the party - the hands of Gollan and Dutt are, in reality, as stained with the blood of Irish patriots as those of General Tuzo.

Were there a Marxist-Leninist Party in Ireland, it would have long been bending every effort to win the support of the workers, irrespective of religious views which they might have, for the national-liberation struggle; indeed it would be working to gain leadership of the national-democratic revolution by the working class so that the revolution might, at an appropriate stage, be transformed into a socialist revolution.

But the leadership of the Communist Party of Ireland, too, has betrayed every principle of Marxism-Leninism. In the name of "the peaceful transition to socialism" in Ireland, it has deplored the actions of those who have turned to "violence" in the cause of national liberation. Even after

internment without trial had been introduced by the Stormont government with the full approval of the British government (as well as of the Opposition leaders), it sank to the depths of issuing a statement demanding

"the immediate recall of Parliament" (i.e., the Westminster Parliament - Ed.)
 ("Morning Star"; August 10th, 1971; p.1).

and requesting the British Government to

"legislate a programme of democratic reforms". (Ibid., p. 1).

Thus, in their struggle for national liberation, the Irish people have to contend not only with their open enemies - the British troops, the police, the protestant fascists - but also with the traitors within their midst. They must destroy the influence of the bishops, the "liberals" and the revisionist "Communists" who beg them, in the name of "non-violence", to lie down and be trampled on by the foreign jackboots. They must destroy the influence of the trotskyite groups which seek to disrupt the national liberation movement by the "leftist" slogan of "Socialism Now", or like the Maoist "Irish Communist Organisation" puts forward the fantastic concept -- "discovered" only since the upsurge of the movement became dangerous to British imperialism - that Protestants and Catholics in Ireland constitute two separate "nations".

No-one would presume to advise the heroic Irish people how to fight. But a people's war is primarily a political struggle and only secondarily a military struggle. One thing is lacking in the Irish national-liberation struggle which is essential to its success - even as a purely national-revolutionary struggle, as it must be in present circumstances. That which is lacking is a political organisation, a National Liberation Front, which can unite all those bodies which genuinely support the national-revolutionary struggle under a simple programme of independence, democracy and equal social rights. Such a political organisation with such a programme could play an essential role in achieving victory - not least in winning over those Protestant workers who have been deceived into supporting the British imperialists and their fascist collaborators in Northern Ireland by the artificially instilled fear that in a united independent Ireland they would suffer social discrimination.

For its part, the Marxist-Leninist Organisation of Britain will do all in its - at present extremely limited - power to mobilise the

widest possible active support among the British working people for a cause which is incontrovertibly in their interests, the cause of the Irish national revolution. It will continue this task until the last British soldier has been driven or withdrawn from Irish soil, and IRELAND IS AT LAST A UNITED, INDEPENDENT REPUBLIC.

(A Full historical analysis of the Irish Revolution will appear shortly in the M.L.O.B.'s theoretical journal "RED VANGUARD".)

The aim of the MARXIST-LENINIST ORGANISATION OF BRITAIN is to build a Marxist-Leninist Party of the working class in Britain which can lead the British working people to bring about the revolutionary overthrow of the present capitalist state, establish a People's Republic based on the rule of the working class, and build a socialist society based on planned production and the common ownership of the means of production.

Applications for candidate membership should be addressed to the MLOB, 26 Cambridge Road, Ilford, Essex.

C H A N G E O F A D D R E S S

The Editorial address of RED FRONT and the Marxist-Leninist Organisation of Britain is now the following:

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PUZZLED MAOISTS

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THE RED FRONT MOVEMENT aims to function:

- 1) as the inceptive nucleus of the future revolutionary mass front of the British working class;
- 2) the broad training school in the science, strategy and tactics of the revolutionary struggle of the working class which will equip the most advanced and politically conscious workers with that minimum grasp of Marxism-Leninism, the science of socialist revolution, necessary for membership of the emerging and developing Marxist-Leninist vanguard party.

Courses in the foundations of Marxism-Leninism are held in the West London area fortnightly every Tuesday commencing Tuesday August 31st at Middle Flat, 25 Hetley Road, London W.12 and in the South London area every Thursday commencing Thursday August 24th, at 18 Camberwell Church Street, London S.E.5. at 8.p.m

Further details of activities from Provisional Secretary, Red Front Movement
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18 Rodenhurst Road,
London S.W.4.