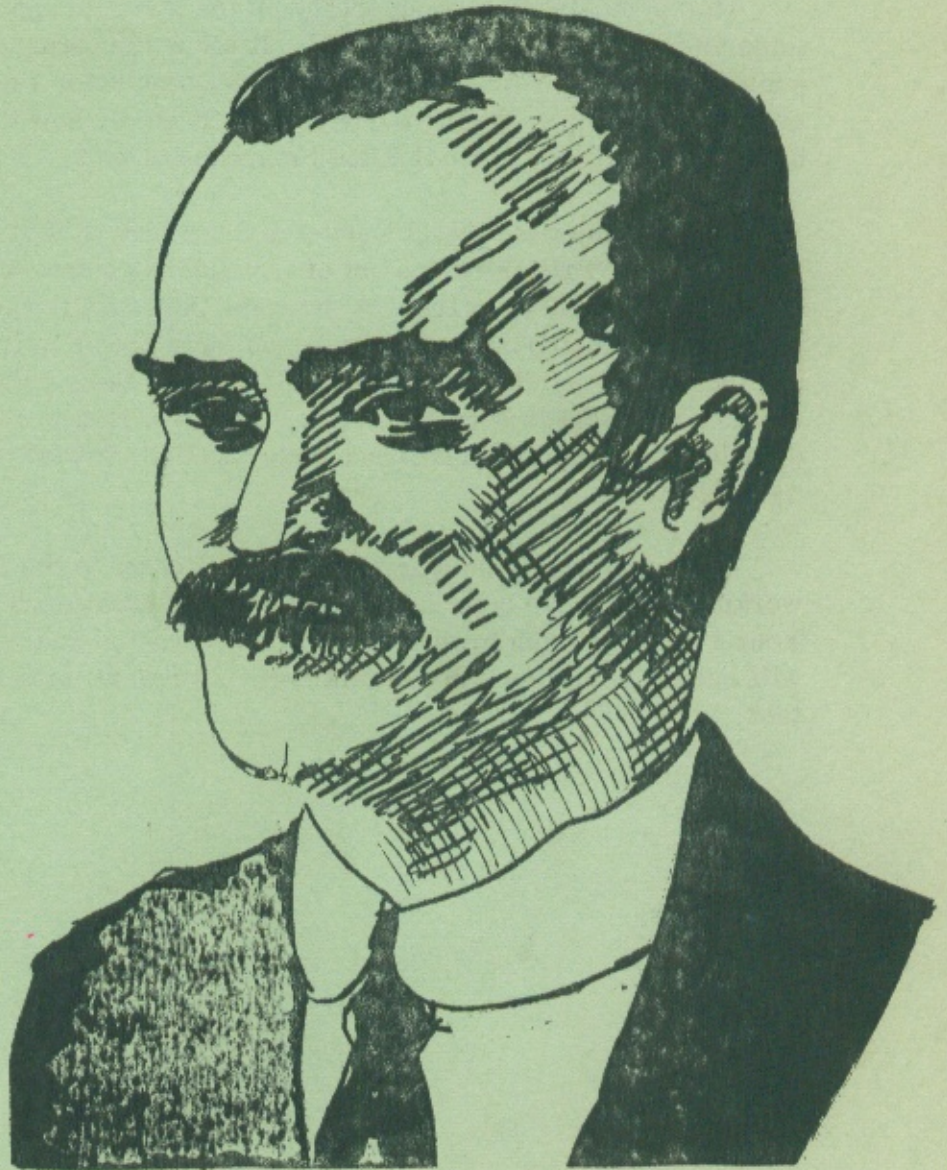


BRITISH IMPERIALISM OUT OF IRELAND!

"... the Irish working class, the only secure foundation upon which a free nation can be reared". - James Connolly



publication of the
COMMUNIST PARTY OF BRITAIN (MARXIST-LENINIST)

5p

P R E F A C E

This pamphlet is a commentary on the struggle against British imperialism in Ireland in 1969-1971. It takes the form of articles published in "The Worker", paper of the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), during those years. It shows how the struggle has unfolded since the Civil Rights marches of 1969.

At the same time this pamphlet gives a lead to British workers. When we say "British troops out of Ireland" we mean: end the rule of British capitalists in Ireland, because they rule through their troops. The methods used to preserve their power in Ireland have been and will again be used in Britain. Hence the struggle is in essence identical in both countries. Only the Irish workers can overthrow capitalism in Ireland; only the British workers can defeat it here.

Victory to the Irish working class! Victory to the British working class! We both have much to learn from each other. Your struggle, Irish brothers, will be protracted and arduous, as will ours. Long live our militant solidarity as we face the common task!

THE CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLE - (Worker, Feb. 1969).

Events in Northern Ireland have come as a shock to many British workers, believing that civic franchise is the right of all in the United Kingdom and that fascism could not exist in the British Isles. At the very time that World War Two was being fought to smash fascism on the continent of Europe, a fascist state was being nursed and cosseted within the United Kingdom.

Ireland has been a colony of England since 1170 when the Normans under Strongbow carried out the first invasion and occupation. From this time on there has been a rebellion approximately every 50 years. In nearly every case, since protestantism came to Ireland in the 1600's, catholics and protestants have fought side by side for emancipation from English rule. Many of the risings have been initiated and led by protestants right up to the 1916 Rising and this is continuing in the struggles of the IRA to this day.

The War of Independence from 1917 to 1921, when the Republican Army whipped the occupation forces and the Black and Tans sent to smash Ireland's resistance, led to a truce to negotiate an end to the war. It was at this point that the policy of partition was introduced - a policy British imperialism has used in other colonies from which they were being ousted - Palestine, India, Malaya - a policy of ostensible withdrawal while dividing the country and continuing to rule through lackeys. Lloyd George by trickery and coercion manoeuvred the Irish delegates into accepting his proposals which included tying the Irish economy to Britain (its bank notes are still redeemable at the Bank of England) and setting up a puppet state in Ulster. By carefully gerrymandering the nine counties of Ulster the British imperialists emerged with a state where they controlled electoral majorities in six counties as the legal justification for the backing of the British army.

Among the first acts of the puppet government was the creation of a para-military police force recruited from the most bigoted and sectarian sections of the protestant community. This force, known as the "B Specials", is used to supplement the regular armed police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary. In March 1922 this government introduced the Special Powers Act by which trial by jury was suspended and people could be imprisoned without trial or sentence; inquests were abolished so that those dying in prison could be buried without relatives being informed of how the prisoner had died and flogging, search without warrant and the death penalty for the possession of arms were all legalised. This Act is still in existence and has been used within the last ten years.

The powers of this government were complete. Controlling all local and civil administration it could use employment, housing and local appointments as "jobs for the boys", secure in the backing of the British Government and the army of occupation. While all citizens over 21 could vote in the Westminster elections to return 12 MP's, control was maintained at the

grass roots level by tight restrictions on the franchise in local elections. Property qualifications were introduced barring non rate payers from voting at all, which means in most cases the disenfranchisement of wives and children of voting age. If the franchise were operated, occupation of the 5000 council dwellings Northern Ireland builds each year would entitle wives and children to vote, so the question of allocation is of prime importance to the Unionist Party. So successfully has the Unionist Party manipulated such powers that it has remained in office for over 46 years - longer even than Franco in Spain.

All this explains why the civil rights movement has blossomed and met with such enthusiastic response. Nor is it any surprise that attempts to suppress the movement should include the use of water cannons, the beating up of demonstrators and the hurling of fire bombs by Unionist storm troopers who know that they need have no fear of arrest. Unionist bigots are openly incited by the police to impede and attack marchers who have been suddenly refused permission to travel over their agreed route. Having got away with it in Armagh they knew they were free to step up their attacks on the demonstrators when they marched to Londonderry and Newry.

If the Special Powers Act has not been invoked, it is probably because of the focusing of the attention of the world's press on Northern Ireland. Already the veil has been torn aside for all to see the savage police attacks on marchers and property in this undemocratic state. Since any police force is answerable to the government that created it, there can be no doubt that their actions have official backing. The Government's decision to send the RUC Inspector of Constabulary to investigate charges of violence, assault and drunkenness by his own police force in Londonderry is like asking the devil to investigate sin!

There have been attempts to present this struggle as a religious crusade by such fanatics as the Rev. Ian Paisley and his henchman Major Bunting, the self-styled commandant of the Loyal Citizens of Ulster. Both of them are encouraged in their acts of intimidation and their incitements to violence by the knowledge that the police and the specials support them and will co-operate with them in all circumstances. Major Bunting, at a meeting of the Down County Council in Downpatrick in November, 1968, even had the effrontery to suggest that the Rev. Ian Paisley should be appointed Ombudsman for all Ulster!

But this is not a religious struggle. It is a political struggle. Unemployment, the highest in the United Kingdom, is a great unifier. Protestants as well as Catholics are unemployed. The system is no longer able to provide "jobs for the boys"; and whoever heard of an employer, Catholic OR Protestant, giving higher wages when there is a pool of unemployed? Where exploitation is concerned, commerce knows no religious barriers.

AFTER THE ELECTIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND - (Worker, May 1969).

With the elections in Ulster over a new stage has been reached, with the acceptance by all progressive sections that the formation of a Citizens Army to defend and protect the people of Ulster is now an immediate priority if the quislings and the lackeys of British imperialism are to be prevented from crucifying the people of Ulster yet again.

The battles that have taken place in the streets of Ulster since the election are significant on two points: first, many of them have been spontaneous demonstrations against savage police attacks; second, the police have been **beaten back** into their barracks for the first time. Three mobile police riot squads from Belfast, for instance, had high casualties. Only three out of twentyseven from Glenravel Street Barracks were fit for duty and only five out of twentyseven from the Castlereagh squad. From Musgrave Street, of 28 men in three riot vehicles only 8 were fit for duty. This explains why when 4000 people evacuated the Bogside area of Derry and gave the police two hours to get out of the area or they would return and drive them out by force, the police slunk away.

To offset this the Stormont Government decided to call up more B Specials. To release still more men they called upon the British Army to take over the guarding of essential installations.

The direct involvement of British troops means that sooner or later they will be used against demonstrators as they have been used in every other country they have occupied. To withstand these attacks it is now urgent that a Citizen Army should be brought into existence as soon as possible. It would not be the first time that this has happened in Ireland. James Connolly, who realised that unless workers were armed both to defend themselves and to attack the forces of imperialism, formed the Irish Citizen Army which played such a valiant role in the Easter Rising of 1916.

In the 1930's Northern Ireland had a series of pogroms when the most bigoted and sectarian sections of the Protestant population attacked the nationalist ghettos with bombs and bullets. A Catholic Defence Force was created which usually consisted of 3 or 4 CDF men with a member of the IRA operating in patrols to beat off these attacks. The nationalist population was thus saved from annihilation until the British Army was forced to step in and declare martial law. The gallant role of the IRA has never been fully realised except by those directly involved. And now, in 1969, they have stated that if the people of Northern Ireland come under attack they will take the field in their defence.

AUGUST 20th, 1969: LABOUR GOVERNMENT SENDS BRITISH TROOPS TO NORTHERN IRELAND TO TAKE OVER SECURITY.

CPB(M-L) STATEMENT:

"WE CONDEMN THE DESPATCH OF THE BRITISH TROOPS TO ULSTER BY THE WESTMINSTER GOVERNMENT. IT IS AN ACT DESIGNED TO SAVE A PUPPET GOVERNMENT NO LONGER ABLE TO GOVERN. THE UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT'S INTERVENTION CAN ONLY INFLAME AND IS DOOMED TO FAILURE. WE CALL UPON ALL PEOPLE HERE IN BRITAIN TO DEMAND THE IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF BRITISH TROOPS. OUR PARTY JOINS WITH ALL WHO SEEK TO ASSIST THE UNITY OF THE IRISH WORKING CLASS TO UNITE AGAINST THE NORTHERN IRELAND PUPPETS AND WE ARE READY TO ASSIST IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE THIS AIM. IT IS FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE TO ESTABLISH A GOVERNMENT OF THEIR OWN CHOOSING. THE SO-CALLED IRISH SETTLEMENT IS CLEARLY SEEN TO ALL NOW AS A FAILURE. IRELAND IS ONE NATION. OUT WITH THE INTRUDERS AND THEIR QUISLINGS!"

WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLES OF ALL LANDS UNITE!

NORTHERN IRELAND - PARADISE FOR BRITISH IMPERIALISM

As capitalism developed in Britain, speculators began to covet the rich land of Ireland. Attempts to settle colonists were opposed by the Irish, and Britain embarked on a war of conquest. The conquest proceeded with the greatest barbarity. Cromwell's campaigns cut the native Irish population by half. Tens of thousands were sold into slavery in America; the rest were driven from their homes and deprived of all rights. The purpose of this was to guarantee for Britain a supply of cheap food and raw materials and a people who would labour for Britain's profit. During the so-called "Great Famine", when 1.5 million Irish people starved to death, food enough to feed three times the population was shipped out to Britain under cover of British guns. An official government report showed that in one year (1835) the Irish people produced agricultural goods to the value of £36 million, of which they received £6 million while the balance went in rent (to British landlords), profits (to British merchants), taxes (to the British Government) and tithes (to the Church).

- Today, a colony like Northern Ireland is Paradise for British capitalists.
1. It is a captive market in which they can sell the goods produced elsewhere - 90% of Northern Ireland's imports come from or through Britain and their value each year is about £500 million.
 2. It is a source of cheap labour for British investors - three quarters of all Irish families take home less than £20 a week.
 3. When a British capitalist invests in Northern Ireland he gets over half his investment in the form of a grant from the government, which in turn got it as a "gift" from tax-paying workers.
 4. The pampering of British capitalists (with workers' money) goes so far that both the original investment and the profits are insured by the government - in one recent case the Armagh County Council was compelled to pay the Bairnsweat Company £587,033 for plant destroyed in riots and £256,500 in compensation for lost profits.

Obviously Britain's big capitalists are not going to let this Paradise go without a fight. Last summer's uprisings (1969) in Belfast, Derry and other towns threatened to take Northern Ireland right out of British imperialism's grasp. The Labour Government, always the obedient servant of the capitalist class, promptly despatched 10,000 troops to keep the people in check. To assist the troops they created two new police forces to take the place of the notorious 'B Specials' and announced the expansion of the Royal Ulster Constabulary from 3,000 to 5,000 men. With these three forces Northern Ireland is literally becoming a 'police state' with nearly four times as many police per head of population as in Britain. Right on our doorstep we see living proof that British capitalists will resort to fascist violence when workers threaten their profits.

APRIL-JUNE 1970: PETROL BOMB THROWERS TO BE SHOT. INTRODUCTION OF NEW REPRESSIVE WEAPONS - C.S. GAS, RUBBER BULLETS.

STOP BRITISH TROOPS COMMITTING MURDER! - (Worker, Aug. 1970).

In Northern Ireland today British troops in their thousands are rampaging through workers' homes and shooting men dead in the streets.

They are there because last year saw a massive movement of protest against conditions created by British rule in Northern Ireland. British monopoly capitalism, which for generations has profited from the exploitation of workers in the great industries of Ulster like textiles and shipbuilding, relied on its Stormont stooges to keep Northern Ireland quiet and the profits rolling in. But with the rundown of traditional industries, unemployment rocketed to 20% in some places and the people began to rebel. The whole rotten system of inadequate housing unfairly distributed and jobs for the boys came under fire.

Stormont reacted with a vicious campaign of repression using CS gas and the notorious 'B Specials'. But the people fought back until last August the entire edifice of British rule in Northern Ireland was near collapse. The

British bosses, through their 'Labour' Government, sent in the troops. They said they sent them in "to keep the peace": in fact they sent them in to keep their profits.

IRELAND FIGHTS FOR JUST DEMANDS

Northern Ireland today is in a state of siege, a British army of occupation holding back a militant and rebellious population. The Irish demand: British troops out! Ireland one nation! The land that was divided by Britain 50 years ago shall be re-united by the Irish people themselves, and to do this they will have to organise a People's Army. The struggle for re-unification is inseparable from the fight to liberate all Ireland from British imperialism. A phoney, negotiated re-unification would merely replace the direct colonialism of the North with the neo-colonialism of the South.

NORTHERN IRELAND BECOMES LABORATORY FOR NEW WEAPONS -
(Worker, March 1971).

British imperialism is using Northern Ireland as a laboratory for trying out new weapons which could be used against British workers.

Just as Kennedy used South Vietnam to test "anti-insurgency" weapons like gas bombs and various anti-personnel devices which could be used against students on campuses and protesting blacks in the ghettos of the United States, so Lord Carrington, Tory Secretary of State for Defence, boasts of a whole new secret armoury of "anti-riot" weapons which the British occupation army is testing on the people of Northern Ireland - and which could be used also against workers in this country as working class indignation against capitalist repression mounts.

The "new equipment" which he carefully refrained from defining may include catapults for launching bigger CS grenades, exploding canisters of dye which would enable troops to hunt down demonstrators later, rocket-assisted nets which would entangle protesters and perhaps even chemical sprays which could be directed at the faces of rioters since the head of the company marketing these sprays in the United States recently visited Belfast.

As these weapons are being used against workers in Belfast, they will be used against workers here.

The Sunday Times of February 7th reported that "a secret committee to co-ordinate the use of police and troops in the event of civil disorder in Britain has started meeting in London. Its members are Mr. Robert Mark, Deputy Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, who was a member of the advisory body concerned with the reorganisation of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, and Home Office and Ministry of Defence representatives".

It must not be forgotten that Heath chose the world forum of the U. N. to announce that the main danger "we face in the 'Seventies is not war between nations but civil war". That is the context in which the training of British troops in the use of new weapons and new methods against civilians in the streets of Belfast and Derry must be seen.

STATEMENT OF CPB(M-L) - JUNE 1970:

The British ruling class has been murdering Irish men and women for 800 years. When General Freeland orders his 10,000 British troops to "shoot to kill" Irish people he is acting as the natural heir of Cromwell, of the executioners of James Connolly, and of the Black and Tans.

The fact that he defines the Irish people, in rebellion against the British army of occupation, as "hooligans" should fool no-one. British imperialism has always defamed and slandered anyone who dares resist it.

Recent events show that the uprising in Northern Ireland last August was no mere flash in the pan. The Irish people are determined to liberate their entire land from British control. Frantic attempts to whip up religious differences will fail. Irish workers, ever since the days of Connolly and Larkin, have put aside religion and united at the point of production against the boss. Today the Irish people, with workers at the fore, are forging closer and closer unity against their biggest boss - British imperialism.

They know from bitter history that what Britain has seized with the gun and is holding with the gun can only be repossessed with the gun. Chickens come home to roost, and General Freeland's orders will come back on him with a vengeance. Blood debts will be repaid in blood.

The Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) calls on all British workers and on all Irish workers residing in Britain to give full support to the just struggle of their class brothers in Ireland. We say to our Irish comrades: Your struggle is our struggle. We say to the Labour Government and all the other parliamentary pimps of imperialism: Out with British troops! Release all political prisoners! End British rule now!

BRITISH IMPERIALISM WAGES COLONIAL WAR IN NORTHERN IRELAND
(Worker, April and May 1971).

The first three months of 1971 saw the longest and fiercest period of continuous fighting in Northern Ireland since the present troubles began. Police and Army chiefs have been forced to admit that they are unable to hold down the Falls, Ardoyne, New Lodge Road and other nationalist areas of Belfast.

The British ruling class is reacting to this situation by sending in more troops, by rushing repressive legislation through Westminster and Stormont, and by incarcerating Irish patriots in British jails. Chichester-Clarke before resigning announced the stationing of a permanent garrison in anti-Unionist areas of Belfast, areas which he described as "enclaves of subversion and terrorism". These measures are certain to provoke counter action from the nationally minded people in Ireland, who are now constantly being attacked by the British army, Unionist extremists, and the Police.

INTERNMENT WON'T STOP THE IRISH STRUGGLE. - (Worker, Sept. 1971).

With their backs to the wall the British occupation authorities in Northern Ireland have introduced internment as a last ditch means of stemming the rising tide of struggle. Despite the honeyed words of Jack Lynch, internment is also being mooted by the authorities in the South of Ireland. This savage act of repression will not succeed in quelling the Irish people. To suppress the struggle through internment, they would have to intern the entire nationalist population.

The Irish people are demonstrating that they will not passively tolerate the military presence of British imperialism. They cannot be fooled, as have some professing sympathy with them, by the pretense that British troops are there as a peace-keeping force. When have British troops been sent anywhere abroad - Malaya, Kenya, Cyprus, Aden, Dhofar - as other than the brutally repressive arm of British imperialism?

When, for that matter, have liberation fighters in any of these places not been called "terrorists"? The only answer to the counter-revolutionary violence of British imperialism is revolutionary violence. In so far as the I.R.A. or any other force in Ireland directs its efforts against British imperialism and mobilises the Irish working people, irrespective of utterly irrelevant religious differences, to fight for their liberation, they deserve and will have the support of British workers.

The hypocritical capitalist class sends soldiers to crush the people of other countries and then wants everyone to go into mourning everytime one of them is shot. We say if they really care about the lives of British troops, they had better bring them back at once because British troops will never find anything in Ireland but Irish bullets.

We are being treated to the usual imperialist combination of an escalation of repressive violence, like the concentration camps for internment without trial, accompanied by boasts that resistance has been almost crushed. We have heard it all before. MacArthur's speech on invading North Korea that the boys will be home by Christmas. President Kennedy's promise that the G.I.'s would have pacified Vietnam and be on their way back in 18 months.

IRELAND AND VIETNAM

This is a valid comparison. British troops have no more right to be in Ireland than American soldiers in Vietnam. The division between North and South is the same in both countries - an artificial boundary dividing what is in both cases one nation in the interest of imperialist aggressors. The results of military occupation can only be the same in both cases too - victory for the people and bloody defeat for imperialism.

PEOPLE'S WAR IN IRELAND

"The revolutionary war is a war of the masses, it can be waged only by mobilising the masses and relying on them." - MAO

Only the people of Ireland can solve the problems of Ireland. As James Connolly wrote in "The Irish Flag":

"We are out for Ireland for the Irish. But who are the Irish? Not the rack-renting, slum-owning landlord; not the prostitute pressmen - the hired liars of the enemy. Not these are the Irish upon whom the future depends. Not these, but the Irish working class, the only secure foundation upon which a free nation can be reared".

Workers learn through struggle. They have been united at the point of production for many years against their capitalist bosses. It is only a matter of time before this same unity is forged on the streets against the biggest boss of all — British Imperialism.

To the Irish workers in this country, driven here by the economic conditions created by British imperialism in their own land, we say particularly: "Brothers, you are part of our struggle against the attacks on the working class by employers and their Government. We are part of your struggle against British imperialism."

We call on British workers to give solid support to the struggle of the Irish people for a united Ireland and an end to British rule. Their employers are our employers, their struggle our struggle. The class which sends the Army against Irish workers today will send it against British workers tomorrow. We salute the heroism of our Irish class brothers in resisting that Army and we join them in their battle cry:

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