



Irish Trotskyist



No. 6

27th February, 1973.

Paper of the Revolutionary Marxist Group (Belfast branch) Price two pence

Lynch seeks mandate to smash Resistance

"The incoming Government, in its appraisal of the British White Paper will need the unequivocal support of the people to deal firmly with the new situation as it develops". With those words Jack Lynch announced the Free State's General Election. The reason for it is clear - Fianna Fail want a fresh election victory, a recent indication of popular support so that they can launch a new, unparalleled wave of repression against Republicans and Socialists, and do it in the name of the people.

Lynch knows that the White Paper will contain nothing for the anti-unionist population of the North. The British, their political "initiative" having failed to break the spirit of Resistance will then fall back on their usual answer - military force. In this, as always, they will be supported by their trusty lap dog, the Irish Government.

Lynch wants to be returned with a hefty majority, for while Fine Gael supports the same basic policy of repression they have tended to slow up the passing of legislation in their anxiety to appear as an opposition. It took two bombs to hurry Fine Gael into the voting lobbies to support the amendment to the Offences Against the State Act, but Lynch cannot try that trick again without serious questions being asked by the people in the South about whether "honest Jack" is quite the innocent he makes out to be. Therefore he called the election.

But it has become clear that Lynch miscalculated his support and when a Fine Gael-Labour Party alliance victory looked possible he promised improved welfare benefits. It was obviously a panic election gesture. It was remarkable that after 16 years of continuous office, Fianna Fail could become interested in working class welfare just a week before the elections.

It will make little difference to the working class which group forms the next Government. Lynch is not the "man of the people" his election propaganda suggests, but neither are Cosgrave or Corish. They are all servants of the capitalists and imperialists. They have striven hard to

break the resistance to imperialism in the North, they have been selling Ireland's mineral wealth to the Americans, encouraging the collapse of the Irish language by neglecting the Gaeltacht, and encouraging capitalists, both Irish and foreign, to exploit the Irish worker.

What then should Socialists and Republicans do in such a situation? Elections set clear tasks for revolutionary groups. They focus the attention of the working class on political issues. Therefore, under normal conditions, it is the duty of revolutionaries to take advantage of this situation and put their policies before the people and, if practical, to participate in the election. In a revolutionary situation, on the other hand, it is the clear duty of revolutionaries to mount a boycott. Working class attention should then be turned away from the bourgeois mockery of democracy and towards the building of the workers' own organs of power, peoples' assemblies, soviets.

Obviously the Free State is not in a revolutionary situation. What then has been the reaction of the Republican Movement to the elections? /continued page four:

SMASH PHASE 2!

After all its pious mouthings about the low paid, the British Government has initiated a campaign of propaganda and repression against those under-paid sections of the working class who have dared to stand up against the pay freeze. And the TUC has refused to build a united movement in opposition to the measures, they have allowed the Government's plan to pick off one section of the working class at a time to be started. The task now before the British working class is to unite in struggle against the freeze. If the TUC will not organise action then it will be for the workers themselves to prepare such action. And workers in the six counties must not shirk their responsibilities, they too must fight the freeze. Some are already doing so.

From March 1, hospital ancillary workers in the north of Ireland will operate a ban on overtime and a campaign of non-cooperation with management. Selective strikes in hospitals throughout the North are also being planned. They must be supported. The Confederation of Health Service Employees has asked that students and children should refuse to be brought into the hospitals as blackleg voluntary labour.

But the fight against the freeze can only be effective, for workers in individual industries, whether hospital workers, civil servants or gas men, and for the working class as a whole, if a resolute and united stand is made.

Civil servants in the six counties have decided to be "responsible" and not to strike in the present situation. But "responsibility" does not win improvements in pay or conditions. It is the Government that has forced workers to take action, it is the Government that must carry the can for the effects of that action.

public sector

At present it is workers in some of the most ill-paid occupations that are putting up the fight against the Tories. These, such as the hospital workers and in Britain the gas men, have also tended to be employed in the public sector and in essential services. Because of this they are doubly oppressed. Being in the public sector, the Government has had the power to clamp down directly on their pay demands. This power the Government has not hesitated to use. Secondly, as essential service workers they have the full power of the Press propaganda machine turned against them - "they endanger lives by their reckless actions" etc etc.

But workers do not strike and lose pay for fun. It is the refusal of employers to offer workers a fair wage that leaves people with no alternative but to strike. The hospital workers have made it clear that they will not place lives or health in danger - but that will not stop the propaganda.

poverty-stricken

Gas workers in England are already feeling the effect of the Press's poison pen. The "Red Mole", paper of the International Marxist Group, British Section of the Fourth International, made these comments on the Press campaign - "The Daily Mail called the tune for a well orchestrated Press hysteria by shrieking 'this strike could kill'. Charity organisations urged gas men to 'search their hearts' and suggested that half a million might be killed off by the gas strike! This means that half a million people in this country are so poverty stricken that they will freeze to death. Who is responsible for that scandal? Millions of people are finding themselves priced out of essentials, are the gas workers responsible for that? This is exactly what the gas workers are fighting against and what the capitalist class which the Tory Government leads has created. Soon we will hear about deaths. Why haven't we heard about them before? They are an outrage and they have been going on all the time. They occur because every government this country has had puts the profits of the capitalists before the safety and living standards of the working class".

In Britain, workers are preparing for a General Strike. Workers in the six counties must give them fullest support.

SOLIDARITY WITH THE HOSPITAL
WORKERS!

SMASH THE FREEZE!



HEALTH AND THE IMPERIALISTS
MUST BE OPPOSED ON ALL FRONTS!

SMASH THE FREEZE!

Boycott the Propaganda Poll

The British Government continues to uphold the system that allows the Unionists to dictate the future of the minority in the six counties. The Border Poll's result is obvious, there could be no other outcome in a state that's very existence is a gerrymander. But the Poll will provide an important propaganda source for Unionists.

They want to wave the result like a flag to show how "democratic" the six county statelet is. But the will of the people of the Irish Nation must take precedence over that of an artificially created majority. Self determination for the people of Ireland as a whole is the only real democracy, but it is a democracy imperialism rejects. This is why the Poll must be boycotted, anti-unionists must refuse to take part in imperialism's divisive games.

It is a favourite trick of bourgeois "democratic" Governments to put big issues on which they are confident of public support to the vote and pronounce the conclusion democratic. Thus, in the Republic, Lynch knew most of the electorate supported EEC entry and a referendum was held. In Britain, however, most people opposed the EEC and no such vote was organised. Polls, the Government stated, were not in the British "tradition of democracy", they were not constitutional. Somehow they have managed to tear themselves away from such principles to "benefit" their Irish colony.

The holding of the Border Poll contradicts earlier British policy. The 1921 Treaty put forward the idea of a commission to determine "in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants...the boundaries between Northern Ireland and the rest of Ireland". The Government appointed Chairman of the Commission decided that in law this did not entitle the Commission to hold a poll. Had he decided otherwise, considerable areas of territory might have been transferred South.

In 1949, the Ireland Act, recognising the republican status of the South was under consideration at Westminster. It contained a sub-section declaring that the North would not cease to be part of the U.K. "without the consent of the Parliament of Northern Ireland". Some M.P.s reasoned that with gerrymandering, the existence of the Senate, which only reflected the composition of the lower house after a period of time, and the fact that the Crown, the British Home Secretary in other words, could veto any parliamentary decision, that a vote by the people for a change and the ability of Parliament to carry this out were very different. Therefore they argued that the Treaty should be amended so that it should read that the people rather than the Parliament had the power to make the decision.

Their views were attacked. All discussions should be between the Parliaments, they were told, plebiscites might mean the dismembering of the U.K. Lord Morrison, Leader of the House of Commons, said, "this is not a simple issue that can be put to the people which can be answered by yes or no". His arguments convinced the House. Only 56 M.P.s supported the amendment, all Conservatives and Unionists supported Morrison.

Today they have found it convenient to do an about turn. Whitelaw has stated that the purpose of the Poll "is to provide that there can be no change in the constitutional position of Northern Ireland as part of the U.K. unless by the will of the majority ... of the people of Northern Ireland." A yes or no vote is called for.

Bourgeois standards of law and order and of democracy change with the requirements of the ruling class. Twenty years ago a Poll was deemed unconstitutional for then it would have threatened the position of the imperialists. Today the Poll is a useful device to reassure their Unionist supporters.

The British are risking nothing with this poll. It is not a referendum, where decisions are sent from Parliament to the people for ratification, nor a plebiscite, whereby the decision of the people is final. It is merely a poll, no one is bound by it.

The Border Poll is a hideous pretence, put forward by the imperialists as if it would effect our lives. The British Government has the power to decide on U.K. territory and it alone. And it will be the British Government that decides when it has had enough, when it will be time for imperialism to relinquish power over the six counties.

letter

A Chara,

I regularly read the "Irish Trotskyist" and I was rather surprised by the article "All dressed up and nowhere to go..." (I.T. No.4). As far as I'm concerned, an important evolution has taken place in the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis, under the pressure of the more militant cumainn, of the more politically conscious rand and file.

This current, even not crystallised, dominated the Ard Fheis not by its victory in the votes but by its systematic opposition to the reformist wing.

Your criticism about the sticky conception of work with the U.D.A. or any other fascist organisation is correct, but you don't mention that on the vote dealing with this matter, the Ard Fheis was split down the middle (137 votes against 137!) showing a huge confusion in terms of the all-Ard Fheis delegation, but also the birth of an opposition to the traditional Ard Comhairle line!

The same thing can be said about the denunciation of the Communist Party of Ireland as reformist, of the two satges theory, and that if Official propoganda slanders the Provisional Alliance, sev ral Cumainn have proposed to cease these attacks, stressing that the real enemy is British Imperialism.

Apart from that, the fact that the book-stall was dominated by Trotskyist literature, E. Mandel, J. Novack..., and that a member of the French "Communist League (Fourth International) was applauded when coming into the Ard Fheis, are revealing the turn of a consistent fringe towards Revolutionary Socialism.

Finally, all "were dressed up" and "some had somewhere to go" but to succeed they need a compass, what you Trotskyists call a Centralised Combat Party!

fraternally,

J. McA (Ardoyne).

Lynch's Mandate; from front page/

The Provisionals first hesitated, then decided to boycott. They reacted as if they were ashamed of their policies and were not prepared to put their beliefs before the electorate, fearing failure at the polls.

The Officials, in marked contrast to their policies in the North, reacted with confidence against the manoeuvres of the capitalists. They have mounted a sizeable election campaign putting forward their policies.

Because of this, and because a vote to the Republican Movement is a vote against repression, the Revolutionary Marxist Group has been supporting and taking an active part in the Official's election campaign.

To boycott, to not expose Lynch's position to the working class, to not point the way towards working class alternatives, is to invite defeat by the capitalists' strategies.

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Printed and published by the
Belfast Branch of the
Revolutionary Marxist Group.

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Craig's Dominion

On Wednesday, February 7, the forces of reaction tested their strength. Industry and business was brought to a standstill, intimidation and sectarian violence was widespread as loyalists rampaged. But Craig and company got their fingers badly burnt. Craig found less support than he expected. He found that few middle class people, whose support is essential to every fascist, were behind him. He retreated and five days later was talking about the things protestants and catholics had in common, about neighbourly relations. He even referred to the previous Wednesday's violence as "senseless and stupid" - as near to a condemnation of loyalist violence ever to come from Craig. A Dominion of Ulster was suggested.

Craig envisaged a treaty between "Ulster" of causing some confusion among the most and the U.K. safeguarding "vital British blindly sectarian of Craig's supporters. interests". In other words, the basis of But Craig and the fascism he peddles is British Imperialism - ownership of industry not easily destroyed. and a virtually complete control of the economy would remain. The only difference would be that Craig and his cronies would be free to "police" the six counties as they wished.

SDLP

There can be no mistaking what lies beneath Craig's talk of a common allegiance to Ulster. He made it clear that his Dominion would be no place for those who did not share his narrow loyalties. Power sharing would only operate as long as "minority groups have an allegiance or some other relationship with majority elements".

The reaction of the Ulster Loyalist Council to the SDLP's offer of talks illustrates this point. The ULC said the SDLP did not represent the working class - its policies were too extreme! But the ULC were right on one thing. The SDLP does not represent any section of the working class. No organisation with the interests of the working class in mind would countenance talks with a fascist like Craig. The SDLP represents only the petit-bourgeoisie, the middle class, of the minority, the people who ask only that there be a stable society in which they can get back to the serious business of making money. It is upon these elements that fascists thrive.

law and order

What promises does Craig give to the working class? None. His only promise is; "Ulster must emerge from this crisis with a really strong constitution; and and Government that carries out tough law and order policies". That needs no explanation. But the Press has chosen to give Craig's speech a rosey glow of moderation - emphasising the mention of common links between protestants and catholics. It gave a wholly false impression but it did have the effect

fascists

Fascists feeds off the fears of the petit-bourgeoisie, the small business men, the middle class, and uses the lumpen-proletariat, the thugs and the work-shy. Craig's change of strategy was designed to win back middle class support lost in the excesses of the strike, but in doing so he lost some of the lumpen-proletariat support. But Craig is a skillful operator and his appeal to loyalists, both middle and working class is strong. While that continues he poses a threat to the entire working class.

independence

Recently Craig has been putting forward a collection of figures to show that an independent six counties could work economically. But his approach has been too simple. Yet Craig is a cunning politician and undoubtedly not a stupid man. He paints only half the picture in his propaganda to the working class. The reason why is simple. If the protestant working class was to clearly understand the economic and political relationship between Britain and the six counties, the capitalistic exploitation and the role of the unionist politicians, then they would reject Craig as surely as they would reject imperialism. That Britain takes between 400m and 700m in profit from six county industries does not appear in his figures. There is nothing in his statements about the exploitation of the working class by industrialists, nothing about the poor conditions of the working class that form an integral part of the capitalist system. For it is the capitalists that Craig represents. He is the man who promises them a new capitalist stability so that they can exploit freely - he is the fascist/
continued next page:

Craig's Dominion; from page five/

But what would be the realities of Craig's Ulster Dominion. There are two possibilities. Either a negotiated independence with Britain. The six counties would then become a neo-colony, controlled economically, and that means politically as well, by Britain. Craig would assume the role of Britain's strutting governor. Or Britain might leave "Ulster" to its own fate. An unstable region on the edge of the EEC, it might not be considered a great loss. With investment in industry drying up economic disaster would loom. Craig would be dictat-

or of an economic wreck. Sweeping government control of every aspect of life would be taken in order to stabilise the economy on behalf of the capitalists. All workers' organisations would have to be smashed for there would be no room for protest in Craig's Dominion. That is how fascism works. Complete government control in the interests of the capitalists. This would be a likely development in the case of the first alternative also if stability were to be maintained.

That is what Craig would have in store for us. That is why he is anti-working class why he and his ideology must be smashed.

There is only one way forward for the working class of the six and of the twenty six counties - the Workers' Republic, free of capitalist exploitation, organised for and by the working class.

Comrades! Workers!
It is necessary to read
"IRISH TROTSKYIST"
-regularly!

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Revolutionary socialist organisation in solidarity with Fourth International.

I am interested in getting more information about the R.M.G.

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