

Force alone cannot beat British terror

30,000 TROOPS, POLICE, AND RESERVISTS HAVE BURIED THE LAST REMAINS OF THE BRITISH TORIES' SO-CALLED "PEACE INITIATIVE" IN THE NORTH. WITH THE BIGGEST NUMBER OF TROOPS IN THE SIX COUNTIES FOR MANY YEARS THEY AIM TO CRUSH THE I.R.A. BY SHEER WEIGHT AND SIZE.

The inspiration for this move comes from the Unionist hard-liners, but even Whitelaw knows that if he is to prevent resentment building up among the nationalist population, he must make some political "concession". He will try and make the Catholics reconcile themselves to the massive military occupation - and no doubt the S.D.L.P. will help him.

The people of those areas which have taken the full weight of Unionist and British repression in the past are again being sharply tested. It's the stick now; it may be the carrot soon. The I.R.A. has made a "tactical" withdrawal, but it may not be long before militant resistance emerges again. IT MUST BE DIRECTED WITH MUCH GREATER POLITICAL SENSE IF IT IS NOT TO LEAD PEOPLE INTO THE SAME GHETTO CUL-DE-SAC.

The excuse the British Army uses for launching a new and more massive offensive is the bombing campaign of 21st July.

condemnations

The public condemnations of the I.R.A.'s bombings have been loudest from those who have always opposed the I.R.A. and its aims of defending nationalist areas, ending the system of repression, and driving out the British troops. There are those, too, who seem to believe that such changes can be brought about by purely peaceful means. Socialists believe, however, that no ruling group hands over power without a fight. Force is a necessary part of the fight to change society.

THE PROVISIONALS' MISTAKE IS IN BELIEVING THAT IT CAN BE DONE BY PHYSICAL FORCE ALONE.

The role of physical force must be in supporting and promoting the struggles of workers - for only their action can bring real change. The Provos don't see themselves as accountable to the people whose interests they claim to represent. They give little or no explanation of their actions. The Belfast Sinn Fein statement about 21st July only details the warnings which were not passed on. The campaign has not been related to the needs of the people on whose support they depend. They give little political lead to those people. This is what causes such drastic mistakes. But if the Provos are wrong about the means it is because they are wrong about the final goal. Without a clear perspective of class struggle for socialism they must become unstuck.

It was inevitable that the British administration would retaliate to the bombings - and the retalia-

tion has found the nationalist population less able to defend than before. Many are war-weary - precisely because of the failure of political leadership. Up to recently they were being told that victory was close; now it seems further away than ever.

The pressures on the I.R.A. for militant action must be understood. The U.D.A. has gathered strength with the knowledge and collusion of the British Army. The sectarian murders and the intimidation has increased. After Lenadoon, the frustration had to find violent expression.

The Provisionals had already messed up the opportunity of political action - handing it on to the S.D.L.P. The secret talks with Whitelaw gave a lead to the middle-class compromisers. In the Free Derry Council the Provos have given known anti-socialists the chance to boost themselves. Their "Eire Nua" re-launched recently, is pathetically irrelevant to the needs of the moment.

alternative

Such criticisms do not mean that we want to give any comfort to those who say 'destroy the Provos'. There is a need for military defence of the nationalist areas. But it must be done with greater strategic awareness than before, and the suffering of the people there must be kept to a minimum. The resistance campaign must be kept intact, and given new and clear political tasks. Sectarianism must be opposed on both sides with a socialist perspective for working class action.

For all their talk about non-sectarianism and socialism, the Officials do not have this perspective. They want to see the working class limit its demands to "the institution of proper democracy in the North". Instituted by whom? The British government? Socialists believe that the only call to be made on an occupying army and administration is to GET OUT.

The attempt must be made to go beyond the fight against repression in the Six Counties to oppose British political and economic domination in the 32 Counties. This means opposing the class which upholds it - the class of Whitelaw, Lynch, Faulkner and Hume.

If workers on the republican side put forward a perspective for socialist change which goes further than the ambiguities of the republican movement, then loyalist workers too may come to recognise their class interests. If this is not done, they will remain tied to the Orange ruling class. North and South, we should fight to maintain the resistance campaign for the release of political prisoners, an end to repressive legislation and the withdrawal of British troops. We should support Irish and British workers in their struggles against rent rises, wage-freezes, redundancies, unemployment and anti-trade union legislation.

VICTORY INTO DEFEAT

Ruaidhri Roberts, General Secretary of the ICTU, is jubilant: the workers have a National Wage Agreement which is as good as they could hope for. That's what he says. But the real reason for his joy is that he can report back to the employers: mission accomplished.

Following the defeat of the first proposals for a Pay Agreement the employers' representatives in the Employer-Labour Conference told Roberts and the other trade union representatives that they had not pushed the deal hard enough. Now, following the 'hard sell' by the union officials the deal has gone through.

In a leaflet distributed at trade union meetings the Socialist Workers' Movement pointed out that the changes from the first proposals to the second were tiny and irrelevant. The union officials who tried to present them as radically new probably didn't even believe their own words.

Opposition to the principle of National Agreements has hardened in many sectors. There are threats of action to break the present one.

Militants must organise within the unions and at shop-floor level for effective rank-and-file pressure against the Agreements. It may be

tempting for some groups to 'go it alone', but it could be counter-productive in the end.

There was a large vote against the Agreement at the second Special ICTU Conference. That can be built on to force a change through industrial action and a recalled Congress. It should be pointed out to those still in doubt that in these supposed "Agreements" the employers can opt out, but the workers cannot. Thousands of people in the textile and woollen industries did not get the minimum increase under the 13th Round. Accepting the Agreement means accepting the bosses' arguments that wage rises cause price rises (see THE WORKER No. 6 for a different argument), and accepting that workers should pay for the effects of competition on weaker industries.

Many employers will try to introduce productivity deals on the same basis. These should be opposed completely. They mean speed-up, 'flexibility' - and, at the end of it all, less jobs.

Trade union militants must answer the bosses' attacks with a programme to oppose redundancies, productivity deals and National Wage Agreements, and to bring real improvements in living standards on the basis of a national minimum of £30 for 35 hours and equal pay now.

Industrial News

IRON FOUNDRY WORKERS AT TONGE AND TAGGART, DUBLIN, RETURNED TO WORK ON 31st JULY AFTER NEARLY THREE WEEKS ON STRIKE.

A worker who stopped at the picket line during the strike read the Strike Committee's leaflet and commented: "Looks like another case of having to sort out the union first before you can sort out the company". The comment was very much to the point.

For some time the management of Tonge and Taggart had threatened to close the foundry at Windmill Lane. In order to cut losses there, they introduced a new bonus scheme earlier this year.

The scheme was designed to reduce earnings. But the union branch secretary (National Engineering and Electrical Trade Union) recommended the men 'give it a try'. They found that they were taking cost of £5 in bonus earnings. Working to standards set by management, some men were earning no bonus pay at all.

They told the union the scheme had to go. But nothing was done. After three months, they came out on strike. Production was stopped at the two Tonge and Taggart foundries in East Wall Road and Windmill Lane, but a court injunction stopped picketing of J.&C. McGloughlin, another subsidiary of Tonge-McGloughlin Holdings.

The N.E.E.T.U. refused to make the strike official, arguing that the procedure was too complicated. They left the men on

their own. When a member of the Strike Committee tried to raise the question at a special meeting on the National Wage Agreement, he was ruled out of order.

The strike has ended but the negotiations continue. The men are receiving an average bonus under the old scheme for a month.

They must make sure that all stages of the negotiations are under their control. The management must not be allowed to use the closure threat as a means to cut earnings. Production has dropped this year; the workers must guard against it being phased out and men let go gradually.

NO REDUNDANCIES!
NO LOSS OF EARNINGS!

FOURTEEN WORKERS AT IRISH FLOCK MANUFACTURING CO., DUNDALK, ARE 'SITTING IN' IN PROTEST AGAINST THE CLOSURE OF THE FACTORY. They are some of the 25 workers who were laid off "for three weeks" in May, only to find that the company never intended to re-open.

After 10 weeks out of work and without any statement from the management as to what they were up to, the workers took over the factory and are now maintaining a 24-hour occupation. They aim to prevent any equipment leaving the factory.

The managing director, Arthur Levins, has only appeared on the premises to abuse them. The directors, who are also involved in an enterprise called Irish Efficiency Centre, and in an English

firm, Chiswell Wire Co., have refused any comment about the closure.

Chiswell took over Irish Flock when it was based in Cork, and run by Peter and William Walsh. They moved the factory to new premises in Dundalk and equipped it with the help of IDA grants. They were beginning to get a big share in the Irish market for mattress spring-units when they suddenly, and inexplicably, started to phase out production, eventually stopping altogether.

Now Walsh, who still has a similar factory in Cork, has come back on the scene. By means of poorly paid casual labour working in primitive conditions (and some reported to be getting the dole as well) he has cut into Irish Flock's market.

The workers feel that forming a co-operative will save their jobs. That in itself can be a victory - but public attention will be turned to the setting up of the co-op, and not towards the fight against redundancies. It must always be remembered that workers have been putting forward occupation as a weapon against factory closures. The workers should demand that the union (Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' Union) organise support action, investigate the Walsh factory in Cork, and stop the supply of imported spring units to the mattress factories.

Messages and donations to the Irish Flock Fund should be sent to: Bill Elliott, Coastguards, Point Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth.