

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism

**Northern
Ireland
crisis
special**

As Blair backs the bigots

OPPOSE ORANGE SECTARIAN MARCHES TROOPS OUT NOW!

THE BRITISH government of Tony Blair has given into the Orange bigots.

They allowed them to march through the small nationalist area of Garvaghy Road.

Mo Mowlan said that she had 'to defend the civil right to march'.

But the rights of the people of the Garvaghy Road were trampled on.

Attacked

They were attacked by the British army and the

RUC and hemmed into their homes.

It was like black people in Harlem being forced to watch the Ku Klux Klan.

Ronnie Flanagan, the Chief Constable of the RUC, even pretended that the beating of Garvaghy Rd residents was for their own good.

His excuse was that the Loyalist Volunteer Force would shoot individual Catholics if the did not get their way.

It only showed that the RUC colludes with loyalist thugs to keep Catholics in second place.

When Tony Blair won a landslide victory over the Tories, thousands of workers throughout Northern Ireland cheered.

They wanted an end to the attacks on the health service, the anti-union laws and the pampering of the bosses.

Bosses

And for many people from nationalist areas there was a hope that Blair would remove the stumbling blocks that Major put on the road to peace.

But the British Labour

Party has betrayed all these hopes — just as other Labour governments has done in the past.

Every Labour government has tried to work through the existing state. But the state in Northern Ireland stinks of sectarianism.

Its police force, the RUC, has always been the armed wing of Orangeism.

That is why it mutinied last year rather than break the Orange roadblocks set up at the time of Drumcree.

This year it saw the Or-



ange march as another excuse to inflict its thuggery on a small catholic community.

It proves once again

that the Northern state will never be reformed from above — it will have to be smashed by mass action from below.

KEEP UP THE RESISTANCE

John Hume is urging people to stay off the streets, calling for the suspension of all marches for the rest of the summer. In Armagh, Fr Dennis Faul is advising nationalists to do nothing and give Mo Mowlan a chance. Their calls should be completely ignored.

Mass action involving thousands on the streets is the real way to confront Orange bigotry. It can awaken a solidarity movement throughout the whole of Ireland and put the RUC under pressure.

Hume says he is for peaceful negotiations.

But Trimble has shown that he is not interested in negotiations — he wants the nationalists of Garvaghy Road to be humiliated.

That is why he joined up with Billy Wright last year to help organise Orange blockades.

Resistance

Unless there is a clear focus given for mass resistance, some will conclude that the only way to fight is through the IRA. Some youth on the Garvaghy Road have already chanting 'No Ceasefire. No Ceasefire'.

When you are facing the massed ranks of the RUC bootboys, it is perfectly understandable that many would shout this slogan to show their determination to resist.

But the reality is

that the IRA armed campaign has long since reached a dead end.

The Northern state cannot be defeated by a few hundred guerrilla fighters.

Struggle

The police and army chiefs have learnt how to box the armed struggle into

working class ghettos.

Instead the IRA campaign became increasingly counter-productive.

It took the focus of mass mobilisations, except around prominent anniversaries.

It became a factor in heightening the sectarian divisions between Catholic and Protestant workers.

What is needed now is a different road.

That has to start with a return to street politics, involving thousands of people who are willing to stand up to the RUC.

There needs to be a clear call to spread that type of action



across the border to the South.

There should be no pact with the new

Fianna Fail government there to stay quiet or wind down the protests.

Protestants against Orange bigotry

THE MEDIA pretends that Orangeism is simply an expression of the Protestant culture.

But they ignore the thousands of Protestants who hate and despise the bigotry whipped up by Trimble and Paisley.

This year, for example, there have been record bookings of holidays from the North around the 12th. And it is not just Catholics who are leaving, but many Protestants who are sick of the bigotry.

Opinion polls show that a significant number of Protestants want an accom-

modation with the Catholic neighbours and show no support for pushing Orange marches down their areas.

Surprise

None of this should come as a surprise. The monolith of Unionism is breaking up because the Orange Order can no longer guarantee the jobs and houses for its members as it used to in the past.

A Protestant work-

er today is far more likely to be in a low paid job and to experienced unemployment. Gone is the image of Protestant workers being skilled, male engineering workers who earn far more than their Catholic counterparts.

Trimble and Paisley know that the material base of Unionism is eroding and that their hold over Protestant workers are weakening. This is why they want to make so much of the so called Orange 'right' to march the Queen's high way. It is a pathetic attempt to re-unite the Protestant community, by pretending that their whole way of life is under attack from the 'taigs'.

But far less Protestants are going along with this bigotry than before. Attendance at Paisley's marches this year have been small and confined to hardened bigots. His vote in recent elections has been going down.

More and more Protestants are seeing that Orangeism is not just about putting Catholics into second place, it is also a way of crushing any sign of dissent in the Protestant areas. Orangeism is pro-Tory, pro-monarchy, and anti-union. It pretends

that all Protestants have to stick together regardless of class.

This is why every protest against the Orange marches must involve an open appeal to Protestants to protest against Orangeism.

Attacks on Protestant areas by Catholics should be condemned. The wounding of a 14 year old Protestant boy by republican gunmen in west Belfast was a disgrace that should be disowned everyone involved in anti-Orange protests.

Protests

But we also have to go further. What is needed in the North is a socialist organisation which puts common class interest at the heart of its politics. That has to start by opposing loyalism as a cancer in the working class.

It also cut against the idea that Catholic workers have any interest in uniting right wing nationalists like Bertie Ahern and the Irish American lobby in the US senate.

Above all it has to fight for a workers republic which ensures that all workers, Catholic and Protestant, gain from the uprooting of capitalism.

Flanna Fails crocodile tears

Bertie Ahern says he is 'dismayed and disappointed' by what happened at Garvaghy Road. But he is not going to do anything. Its just words.

And while Ahern was being 'disappointed' his police force were still under instructions to harass anyone who dared to organise protests against the British government.

In Dublin, Gardaí systematically tried to stop Socialist Workers Party members putting up posters calling for a protest at the British embassy

Protest

And there has not been the slightest let up in the harassment of republicans from the South's secret police, the

Special Branch.

What an utter tragedy then to see the one Sinn Fein representative in the Dail, Caoimhin o Caollain back Ahern for Taoiseach and call on his supporters to transfer their votes to Fianna Fail.

Fianna Fail plays the green card when in opposition but in government it is far more concerned to keep its links with its fellow capitalist government in Britain. Fianna Fail uses nationalism to tie workers to their bosses in the South.

It has no interest in supporting an actual fight against British imperialism.

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Public Meetings

ORANGE ORDER: PROTESTANT CULTURE OR SECTARIAN BIGOTRY?

Dublin: Wednesday 16th Trinity Inn, Pearse St.

Waterford: Thursday 17th ATGWU Keyser St.

Cork: Thursday 17th Connolly Hall, Lapps Quay

Galway: Wednesday 16th Currans hotel, Eyre Square.

Belfast: Thursday 17th Holiday Inn Brunswick St.

Derry: Tuesday 15th Traceys Pub, Waterloo St.

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or PO Box 354, Tomb St Belfast

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