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Editorial

Full support for Solidarity!

In the early hours of Sunday, December 13, the Polish Army, under the command of Prime Minister Marshal Jaruzelski, took over direct military rule of the country. According to the Polish Communist Party and the Kremlin, this was a necessary and progressive step to defend 'socialism' in Poland against enemies of the nation, and in particular Solidarity. This Stalinist 'big lie' was echoed by Stalinist parties in one country after another, Britain included. McLennan, Marchais, Carrillo and dozens of other CP leaders condemned Solidarity for failing to give way to the bureaucratic dictatorship, and expressed pious hopes for a peaceful solution. That means they express the hope that Solidarity and the whole Polish working class will submit.

Solidarity itself made a very different statement. The Provisional Strike Committee called for a general strike in response to the declaration of martial law, and said:

> A military coup has taken place and a dictatorship has been introduced. Thus the agreement between Solidarity and the government has broken down. We call the entire Polish people to a general strike throughout the land in accordance with the recent resolutions of Solidarity leaders.

As we go to press, leaders and Solidarity representatives in Lodz, Katowice, Warsaw and other industrial centres have been arrested and thrown in jail without trial. Their 'trial' will be under military law; their offence, disobeying commands. The exact number of arrests is unknown, but already runs into tens of thousands.

There is no doubt that the proclamation of Army rule was a decision

affected by Solidarity's refusal to call off the mass protest demonstration planned for December 17. Two weeks earlier, the Stalinist government had sent in armed police to smash up an occupation-strike by Warsaw firemen. The same brutal repression had been meted out to workers and students in a number of other occupations. This intimidation not only failed, it aroused even greater militancy and determination among Solidarity's members, and they refused to accept the Government's ban on their protest demonstration. In response, at 6am on the morning of December 13, the soldiers and the tanks moved in.

There has followed a wave of stubborn strikes and occupations. Even the Soviet news agency Tass reported on December 15 that 200 steel workers 'armed with iron bars' were occupying their Warsaw plant, refusing army orders to disperse, and that 25 arrests had been made. It can be said with certainty that this report is but a pale reflection of the actual intensity and scale of the struggle, not to mention the bloody and brutal severity of the Stalinist repression.

LAWS OF HISTORY

Behind Jaruzelski stands the Soviet Communist Party led by Brezhnev. These arch-counterrevolutionaries sense very well that things are not the same as in 1953 (East Germany), 1956 (Hungary and Poland) or 1968 (Czechoslovakia), For a good 12 years, the Polish workers have returned again and again to the struggle for independent trade unions and against the corrupt, parasitic and repressive Stalinist bureaucracy. This culminated in the mushrooming of the mass organisation, Solidarity, to ten million members in a matter of months.

This unprecedented upsurge recalls Trotsky's remark in the *Transitional Programme:* The laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus.' No matter how 'monolithic' the Soviet and Polish Communist Parties and their exclusive control of the state machine (above all its police and army), they cannot put the lid on history. That history is the class struggle itself, with its deep roots in the economic foundations of society. That society is world capitalism in its imperialist stage, its death-agony; and within that, the proletarian revolution, having already destroyed capitalist state power and expropriated capital in Soviet Russia, Eastern Europe and China. These transitional

societies cannot yet be *socialist*, they are degenerated and deformed workers' states. They remain inescapably linked to and affected by the economic crisis and the class struggle in the capitalist countries. They cannot complete the transition to socialism without political revolutions to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracies in Russia, China and Eastern Europe, combined with new socialist revolutions in the advanced capitalist countries.

The events in Poland *are* that political revolution in action. That is why they activate once again very openly the counter-revolutionary role of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Before the eyes of the workers of Poland, of Russia, of the whole world, it becomes crystal-clear that for the Stalinist bureaucracy, independent working-class organisations are a threat to 'the security of the state'. They are not just *said* to be so. They cannot be suppressed by military rule, the court-martial, interrogation under torture, incarceration in prison, the firing-squad.

When all the objective conditions for revolution have accumulated, as in our epoch, the key to the situation passes to the 'subjective factor', as Trotsky long ago pointed out (*The Third International After Lenin*). The subjective factor means: the conscious leadership of the revolutionary party, organising the working class for the conquest of power. That is what must be built in Poland, and in Russia, as in the countries of the capitalist world. Inevitably, forces like the Catholic Church have been able to intervene because of the damage done by Stalinism, and the revolutionary party in Poland will have to assert its theoretical, political and organisational independence while working through every experience of the mass movement.

Millions of Polish workers have already learned that the Church counsels them to lie prostrate before the Army's rule. Thus the uniformed military men who took over all newscasting and commentary on Polish radio on December 13 were joined several times a day by the Roman Catholic Archbishop in his robes, preaching submission.

The military take-over was prepared over months, and represents the inevitable logic of Bonapartist bureaucratic rule, once the mass movement refuses to submit, and the economic conditions deteriorate to the point where the masses elementary demands conflict with the continued existence of the parasitic bureaucracy. All attempts to arrive at a compromise between the mass movement and the bureauc-

racy have broken down. In other words, there is no path of 'self-reform' of the Stalinist regime. In no way can the bureaucracy tolerate a mass movement in which the working class claims any independence and dares call the bureaucrats to account. That is the meaning of military rule in Poland.

Bureaucracy hardened into an oppressive and privileged caste, raised above any control through Party or Soviets, in the Soviet Union through the 1920s, because the bureaucrats were raised to the position of strong-man arbiter between the classes, social groups and individuals who competed with each other for the desperately scarce resources of the young workers' state. The bureaucracies of Poland and the other deformed workers' states of Easter Europe, subservient to Stalin's clique and the GPU, were installed in that elevated role from the beginning, in 1945. Every possible combination of these bureaucrats has been tried in Poland, through the traumas of 1956, 1970-71 and 1980-81. And after all the changes of personnel and the denunciations of 'mistakes' and even crimes by each successive leadership, the end is . . . military dictatorship. The argument about possible self-reform of the bureaucracy was no longer an argument of words, of course, once Khrushchev sent the tanks into Budapest in 1956. The Polish masses have learned a bitter experience that what was true for Hungary is true for every workers' state which has become degenerated or deformed. Not reform, but political revolution, i.e. the organised overthrow of the bureaucracy by the organised working class, is necessary.

Caught in the contradictions, the dead-end, of 'socialism in one country', the USSR, Poland and Eastern Europe and China have increasingly been turned to the imperialist powers by Brezhnev and the Stalinist bureaucracy. Along with 'détente' and talks about strategic arms limitation has gone an increasing dependence on financial agreements with West European and American banks. The economies of the degenerated and deformed workers' states can in no way meet the growing demands of the masses. Nor can they even carry out the 'master-plan' of the Kremlin bureaucrats for 'peaceful competition' with the capitalist powers. That 'peaceful competition' actually involved stupendous expenditure on science and technology, involving investment and far-reaching changes throughout the economy. More and more Eastern Europe and the USSR have sought

credits from capitalist banks to enable them to pay in hard currency for the billions of dollars' worth of imported goods, from grain-supplies to technological equipment and heavy plant, necessary to the East European economies. The bureaucracy in the Kremlin has 'guaranteed' Polish and other East European loans because a series of defaults would endanger the whole structure of their policy of peaceful coexistence. Not only that: they fear that collapse of West German and US banking institutions will exacerbate the proletarian revolution in Europe and America and thus provide the most important support of all for the political revolution growing under their feet.

REALITY OF DEBTS

The sums involved are gigantic. In Eastern Europe as a whole, 80,000 million dollars is owed to German and US banks. Total Polish dollar and other hard currency reserves at the end of September 1981 were only 228 million dollars, enough for *two weeks* imports. Over 500 million must be paid in current interest debts alone by December 31. When these are 're-scheduled' with new loans, even larger quarterly payments will be imposed. This is the reality behind military rule. The bureaucracy has been unable by political means, even including imprisonment and police brutality, to destroy Solidarity and impose the discipline they think necessary to impose the crisis on the masses. They will not succeed in doing it by military rule either. That is the enormous depth of the crisis, in Poland and internationally. It is in this very concrete sense that the Polish struggle is a particular manifestation of the universal world-revolutionary crisis, activated every day by the economic slump but with its own mighty impulse and force.

Over 40 years ago, Trotsky replied to a critic of his views on political revolution to overthrow the bureaucracy. His critic asserted that it was wrong to demand, as Trotsky did in the Transitional Programme: 'Drive the Bureaucracy and Aristocracy out of the Soviets'. Rather, said this critic, we should expect some of the bureaucracy to go over to the camp of the working class, and we should not demand in advance their 'disenfranchisement'.

How the struggle in Poland has vindicated Trotsky's reply! No matter what some individuals may do, and no matter how the workers

and peasants decide to frame a new constitution when they have won the victory, we must say what is the main question:

> The question is *how to get rid of the Soviet bureaucracy* which oppresses and robs the workers and peasants, leads the conquests of October to ruin, and is the chief obstacle on the road to the international revolution. We have long ago come to the conclusion that this can be attained only by the violent overthrow of the bureaucracy, that is, by means of a new political revolution . . . Real soviets of workers and peasants can come forth only in the course of the uprising against the bureaucracy. *Such Soviets will be bitterly pitted against the military-police apparatus of the bureaucracy*. How then can we admit representatives into the Soviets from that camp against which the uprising itself is proceeding? (July 4, 1938)

In Britain and every other capitalist country the Stalinists and 'lefts' will bleat about peaceful solutions, because they defend the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy and they instinctively hate the revolution. Throughout the working-class movement it is necessary to voice complete support for Solidarity and opposition to the imposition of military dictatorship. The struggle of the masses in Poland is at one with the struggle of all those who are thrown into the maelstrom of the world revolution by capitalism's crisis. Through the fight to support Solidarity and against the Stalinist bureaucracy, the basic theoretical and political questions of building independent revolutionary leadership will be clarified, and the resolution of the crisis of working-class leadership will be advanced.

- Full support for Solidarity!
- No to martial law!
- Release those arrested! They are class-war prisoners!
- Down with counter-revolutionary Stalinism!
- Build the International Committee of the Fourth International!

Since notice was given in last month's Labour Review of forthcoming changes in the journal, for technical reasons the new format will not be introduced before March 1982.

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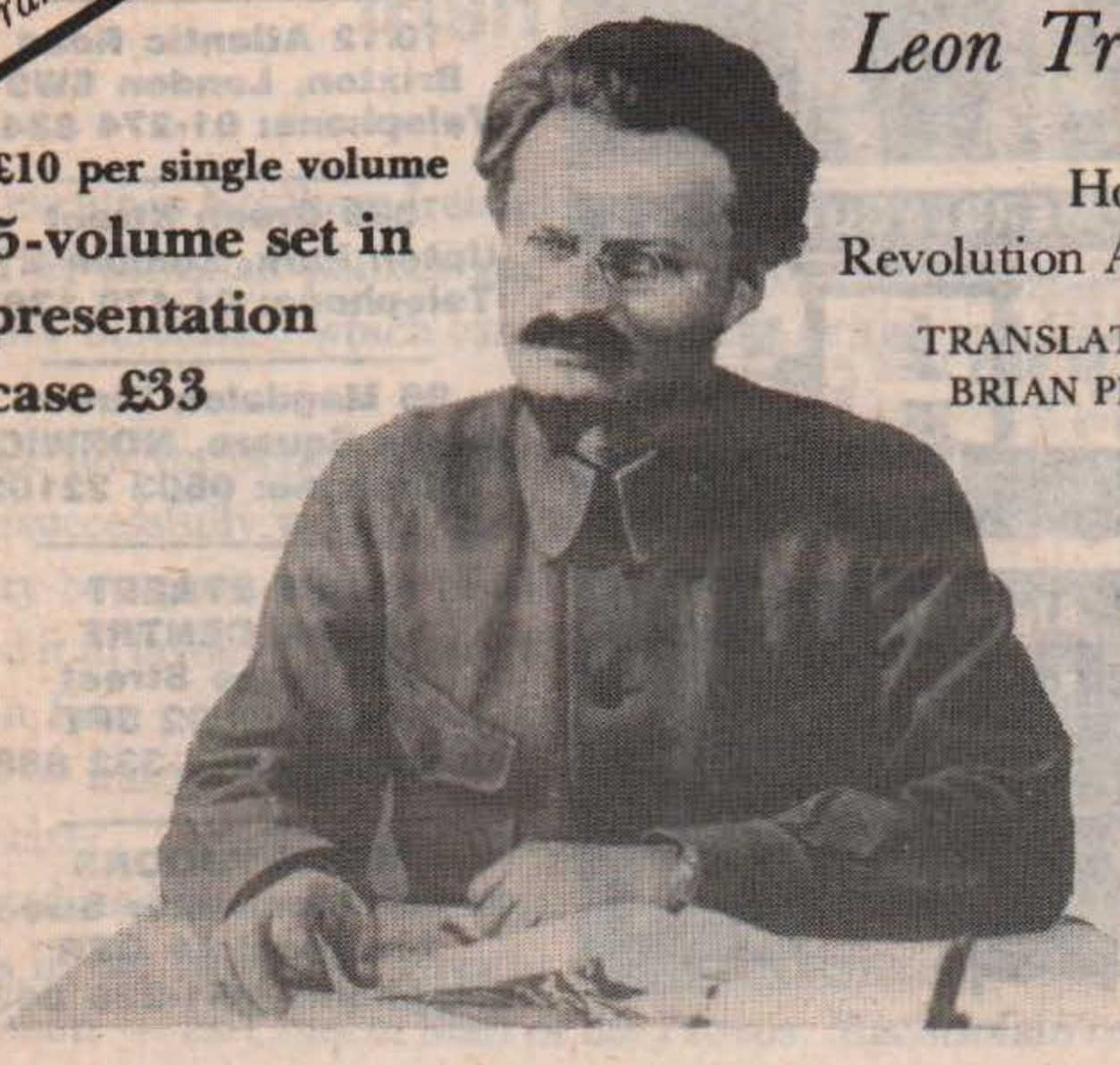

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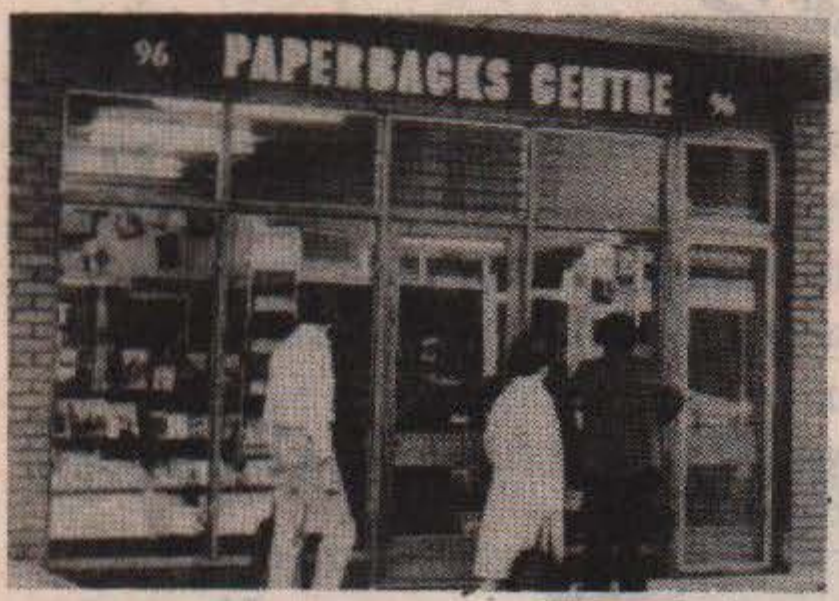

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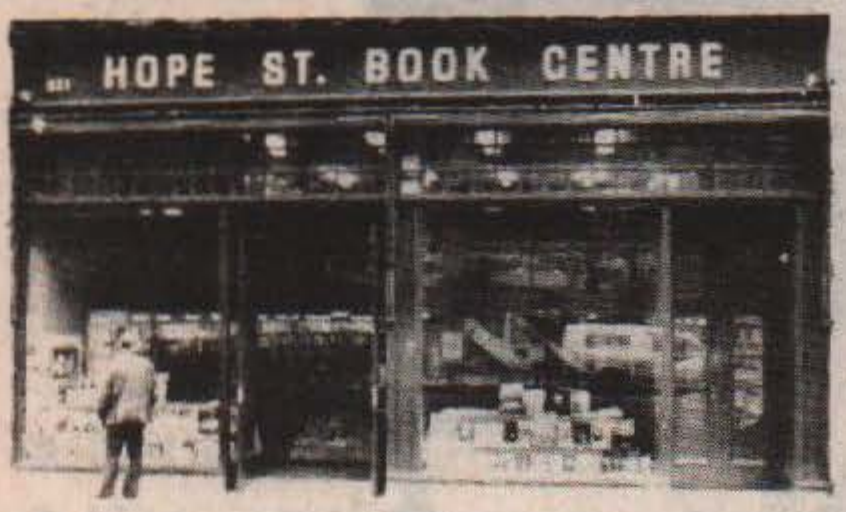

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Comment

Why we publish Feargus O'Connor's address to the Irish people

Recent events in Northern Ireland have again revealed the blind alley reached by sectarian politics and the concomitant danger of inter-communal bloodshed which can only benefit British and US imperialism.

On one side the petty-bourgeois nationalists of the Provisional IRA after unsuccessfully wooing the Protestant-Loyalist movement with the petty-bourgeois Utopia of a Federal Ireland, have capriciously chopped it in favour of a unitary Republic. But the re-adoption of the old Sinn Fein policy — which provided no basis for winning Protestants — was accompanied by a mindless attack on all Loyalists as 'neo-fascists'. The arbitrary manner in which the old policy was reaffirmed and the complete lack of any policy to win Protestant workers in the North has already provoked the resignation of Sean MacStiofain — ex-Chief of Staff of the Provos. MacStiofain resigned in the hope that it would force the IRA leaders to review their arbitrary methods 'so that policy changes could be brought about by means of persuasion . . . and not by a steamroller, Stalinist-type method'. (*Irish Press* December 4, 1981)

Although MacStiofain rightly criticises his opponents like Rory O'Brady and David Connell for their conciliatory attitude to the Loyalist leaders — summarised in the policy of Eire Nua or Federal Ireland — nevertheless he too has nothing to say about the necessity of a secular socialist state as the only answer to Protestant anxiety about Catholic domination in a united Ireland. Together with the unification of Ireland and the abolition of landlordism the most vital issue

in the Democratic Revolution is the complete separation of State and Church.

The old Fenian movement, inspired by the secular and egalitarian doctrine of the great French Revolution, fought tenaciously for these objectives. But the most recent conference of the Provo-Sinn Fein reveals again that the IRA — despite its undeniable sacrifice and heroism — is no nearer a solution now than it was 60 years ago when the infamous Treaty was signed. IRA methods, which separate self-determination from the question of land and church, inevitably produce a political disorientation which writes off Protestant workers both in Ireland and in Britain. The decision to resume bombing of so-called military targets in Britain must be deplored and opposed. Like the previous campaign it will alienate British workers and confuse expatriate Irish workers. Militarily the campaign has been of dubious value. It has injured two dogs (in a nation of dog lovers!) crippled a general, killed two civilians and wounded many more. Politically it has been a disaster. It has antagonised many who were impressed by the hunger-strikers' sublime sacrifice and the unshakable determination of the IRA to continue the struggle. The release of political prisoners, the struggle for political status, the withdrawal of British troops — all these issues were obscured by the confusion created by the bombing campaign. Moreover, the Tories, reeling from the effects of the April and July riots, the massive People's March and the struggle of local councils, now felt temporarily strengthened and mobilised the Metropolitan Police in an unprecedented drive against the Irish community.

PAISLEY'S STRENGTH EXAGGERATED

Unfortunately this does not exhaust the list of Republican adventures. In conformity with its blanket denunciation of the Loyalists the IRA went to grotesque lengths to prove the political homogeneity of the Protestant working class and their unity behind the reactionary demagogue Paisley. Thus when Paisley organised another abortive day of action readers of *Republican News-An Phoblacht* were no doubt surprised to see that their paper was the only one to exaggerate the extent of Paisley's power and popularity. The front page of *Repub-*

lican News completely mis-read the events following the IRA assassination of Rev. Robert Bradford, a Protestant bigot:

> The crisis caused by hard-hitting IRA operations last week, and in particular the execution of loyalist-extremist Robert Bradford, has sent the so-called *loyalists on a rebellious collision course with the British government* which, in terms of shaking and sickening British public opinion (as IRA bombs in London are successfully doing) should knock about two or three years off the British occupation in Ireland. (November 19, 1981)

Who exactly the IRA were trying to deceive — themselves, the Loyalists or the British Tories — it was difficult to say. Far from relinquishing its hold, the Thatcher government was deeply engaged at the time with a new plot to involve the southern Irish government and US imperialism to unite Ireland, within the framework of NATO and thereby end the traditional neutrality of the South. Thatcher's government had shown a callous and inflexible determination in the face of the hunger strike and had shown there would be no U-turn.

Any challenge to the Tories by Loyalists never went beyond a sparring match at Bradford's funeral between Minister Prior and the loyalist mourners. If Paisley did not exist it seemed essential that the IRA should invent him. Instead of leading to a collision with Thatcher, Paisley's histrionics in Parliament and the killing of Bradford by an IRA execution squad only persuaded the British government to send another 600 troops to Ulster and put the RUC and UDR on alert. At the same time the co-operation in cross border operations between the British Army and RUC and the Irish Army and Garda was intensified.

The acceptance of an unbridgeable gulf between Protestants and Catholics is the hallmark of *all* middle-class theorising on Ulster, not just the IRA-Sinn Fein Provos. The Maoist Stalinists have taken this idea to a complete absurdity by projecting the theory of two nations, but other revisionists are not far behind. The SWP and IMG base all their analyses of Northern Irish politics on this reactionary assumption: Catholics good — Protestants bad. They go along willingly with the prevailing confusion whose chief instigator is the British State and the Church — Protestant and Catholic alike.

This anti-theory impressionism was vividly expressed in the columns of *Socialist Worker* by an SWP reporter interviewing an IRA

prisoner in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh in March 1981. The prisoner was genuinely concerned about Catholic-Protestant unity and the fact that Protestants were losing their privileges. The prisoner, Jake, says: 'You can even see cracks amongst the Loyalists. There's Glenn Barr saying that the UDA shouldn't be patrolling the border areas in Fermanagh to protect the farmers because Loyalist workers have nothing in common with Loyalist capitalists.' (*Socialist Worker*, March 7, 1981)

BRITAIN AND IRELAND

But this instructive example of the *class* divisions in the Loyalist movement is immediately pushed aside by the reporter Joanna Rollo who is obsessed by the phenomenon of Paisleyism, itself partly nurutred by the bankruptcy of Sinn Fein ideology and the cowardice of the Labour and trade union leaders. 'The problem, and it is certainly one Jake is in no position to do anything about, is that those Protestant workers who want to do something about their situation have nowhere to go but into the Paisley Orange revivalist movement.' *Voila!* Is this exceptional? Not in the least.

The revisionist buffoon, Eamonn McCann, makes Rollo look almost like an incurable optimist with his regular journalistic genuflections before Paisley. This is one of the more moderate samples of his political buffoonery. Commenting on Paisley's midnight parade of Loyalists in Ballymena in February 1981 he begins:

> Ian Paisley is not to be laughed at. Anyone who tried to scorn as a 'stunt' his recent midnight mobilisation is a *fool*. And Nuremberg [don't laugh you fools] will have nothing on the series of rallies he has called for the next few weeks at which his followers will sign a covenant to resist a United Ireland. ('Paisley "Stunt" is no joke', *Socialist Worker* February 14, 1981)

Not surprisingly this idea was supported by *The Guardian* when Paisley tried recently to upstage his 'Carson Trail' adventure in Newtonards.

Acceptance of the sectarian status quo is inseparable from the revisionist belief that hunger-strikes as a form of protest could force reforms from a civil-war cabinet. Nobody articulated this reformist drivel more succinctly than ex-editor of *Socialist Worker* Paul Foot:

> There is some sign that even the Thatcher government wants to disengage from its commitment to the North of Ireland just as it disengaged last year from Zimbabwe. Now is the time *to force their hand, to force them to accept the verdict of the people* of those two beleaguered communities; to restore political status to the H-Block prisoners; and thus give life and hope to Bobby Sands and all the people for whom he fights.

What a cruel deception! Only a liberal like Foot would see an analogy between Zimbabwe and Ulster — when in fact there is none. The reason? Because for decades the fate of Ulster is bound up with the fate of the British and Irish socialist revolution. No negotiated constitutional settlement is possible so long as a capitalist regime dominates Britain. Isn't this the main lesson of the last ten years of military occupation in Northern Ireland?

The Tories — and right-wing Labourites — reckon unerringly that any significant concessions to nationalism in Ireland would undermine Toryism and strengthen and inspire the working class to attack them at home. There will be plenty of conspiracies with Dublin and Washington but no concessions — not even political status. For that it would need the socialist revolution and workers' power.

The Workers Revolutionary Party condemned the killing of Rev. Bradford — not out of any sympathy for this anti-Catholic bigot, but because this method of political struggle is counter-productive and is based on a lack of confidence in the revolutionary capacity of the masses to overthrow imperialism. These terroristic actions undermine the political gains made by the IRA during the hunger strike — primarily the election of Bobby Sands although, here too, the blind-alley politics of the IRA leaders and their abstentionism on Parliament unnecessarily sacrificed ten of the most promising leaders of the Republican movement. They have left a gap which will not be easily filled. More recently the IRA have decided to contest and take seats in local government and in the Euro-Parliament but because of traditional opposition from the Old Guard the leaders have drawn the line on Westminster, Leinster and Stormont. Pragmatically adapting to new tasks and changing circumstances, the IRA has now come round to the improbable theory that Republicanism can win with the ballot in one hand and the Armalite in the other.

This is one side of the Northern Irish equation. The other is the frantic bellowing, gesturing and parading of Rev. Paisley and his

nondescript army of Loyalist fanatics, anxious farmers and disoriented youth. Unlike 1974 and 1977 Paisley — despite all the threats and boasts of raising 50,000 vigilantes — has failed to disrupt local or central government. His day of action was pathetically ineffective and his army turned out to be a battalion. In 1974 Paisley and the UDA fielded an army of 50,000 which brought down the power-sharing executive and seriously embarrassed the Wilson Labour government. Since then Paisley's hold on the masses is becoming precariously insecure.

Why? Because the deepening of the world slump and the development of the world revolution has seriously and irreparably undermined the foundations of the Loyalist-Orange Order establishment and created disunity and confusion in all its component parts. The heroic and unyielding resistance of the Catholic workers to British repression and Loyalist provocation has also been a major factor. Paisley failed because this time the cohorts of the largely working class UDA and the Ulster Loyalist Central Co-ordinating Committee as well as the Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party (political wing of the UDA) refused to participate in Paisley's stunt.

LOYALISTS INSECURE

If the UDA were unenthusiastic about going round this particular mulberry bush again they had very sound reasons not to do so. Since 1977 many of their leaders realise that the old concept of the 'British connection' no longer pays a political dividend. This does not include Paisley and the official Unionists who represent the Protestant bourgeoisie, gentry and upper middle class. The UDA feel that the British ruling class no longer needs them — and, moreoever, they no longer have the allies they had in the past. Hence they have adopted the reactionary Utopian slogan of an 'Independent Ulster'. The UDA resting largely on the working class reflects not only the *caste* arrogance of skilled workers but also the *class* insecurity of the industrial workers whose jobs — for the first time — are seriously threatened by the slump.

This anxiety is revealed in a recent series of interviews given to Donald O'Donnell, *Irish Press* report, by Loyalist leaders. John

McMichael, chairman of the reactionary ULDP, summarised these frustrations succinctly. As O'Donnell reports:

> Mr McMichael's party supports the idea of an eventual independent North but he acknowledges that before that could become reality there has to be a constitution framed to take into account the identity of all those loving in the North. [He quotes McMichael:] 'But at present we could be heading for a situation where those fighting to maintain the union are going to fight to break the union . . . *But we are not in a 1912-1914 situation when Ulster had powerful friends in the British Empire* [Milner in S. Africa, Carson in Uslter, Bonar Law in Britain] *and in influential positions in the highest circles in England. Now we have no international friends and frankly a resistant Ulster would not be looked upon in a friendly light.*' (*Irish Press* December 4, 1981)

The privileged position of the Ulster Protestant worker, as James Connolly once predicted, is rapidly drawing to an end. A bleak and jobless future faces him and his children. Toryism has become synonymous with economic depression, cultural deprivation and political repression. Thus one section of the Orange Order peers myopically at a very indistinct and indefinable Independent Ulster as the basis for a renovated Loyalism while another grasps frantically at the British connection. An independent Ulster has even less substance and hope of fulfilment than the present rickety structure with its monarchy worship and its bizarre tribalistic ritual.

This is the dilemma of Ireland today. The petty-bourgeois IRA and the Free State bourgeoisie cannot unite Ireland — neither by Armalite nor by ballot — because the Ulster question is firstly a question of winning the Protestant working class and breaking the hold of Loyalism. The Loyalists, on the other hand, cannot satisfy the interests of Protestant workers either by an Independent Ulster — a hopeless and impossible prospect — or by the British connection which implies an unending civil war and massive burdens on Catholic and Protestant workers alike.

We believe that the grip of Loyalism and Catholicism will be broken by a combination of revolutionary struggles in Britain and Ireland and that this presupposes the creation of a revolutionary Irish working class party completely independent of the Catholic and Protestant bourgeoisie and based securely on the doctrine of Lenin and Trotsky. The abolition of the border must be tied indissolubly to the expropriation of the big landlords, multinational companies and

property speculators and the creation of a completely secular state which will not discriminate against any community and be based on the working class and poor farmers. The struggle for such a state can be conducted only in the closest fraternal alliance with British and European workers. The present secret negotiations between Whitehall and Dublin underline the necessity for such unity more than a hundred manifestos.

Such unity demands an implacable struggle against the reactionary demagogy and charlatanry of the Loyalist groups and an extreme sensitivity to the problems confronting the nationalist movement. It requires, too, uncompromising opposition to the politics of individual terror. Our differences which are deep do not however prevent Labour Review from defending unconditionally all sectors of the Republican and nationalist movement from the repressive measures of British imperialism and its agents.

REVISIONIST REACTION

From this internationalist standpoint — the only standpoint for Marxists — we reject the revisionist balderdash of groups like the Revolutionary Communist Party, that weird group of middle-class dustbin-lid bangers and political fetishists whose political vision does not extend beyond the Irish coast line. The reactionary implications of this single-issue, IRA right-or-wrong policy are made indisputably clear in their attack on the Workers Revolutionary Party and the British working class in their journal *The Next Step:*

> The fact is that the official labour and trade union movement is one of the foremost allies of British imperialism against the Irish people. And the British working class, whilst *potentially* the foremost ally of the Irish people, is far from realising that potential: it remains today a bulwark of British rule in Ireland. ('IRA bombs in Britain — The Left grovels', *The Next Step*, November 1981)

This mixture of middle-class sophistry and kow-towing to petty-bourgeois terrorism is accompanied by a truly disgusting example of this group's malicious hatred of the British working class. It consists of a facsimile of a leaflet attacking GLC leader Ken Livingstone for having criticised the IRA bombing campaign. The caption of the

leaflet speaks volumes for this group: 'When is a sympathiser with Irish unity a supporter of British rule? When he condemns the violence of the IRA.'!! The mind boggles. Livingstone's crime was his refusal to justify IRA bombs in working-class areas. He even tried to negotiate a separate peace with the IRA — and he still remains a committed supporter of Irish self-determination and a fervent advocate of withdrawal of British troops.

As a step towards combatting the confusion and lies spread by this wretched group and other revisionist groups we have decided to reproduce the speech of Feargus O'Connor — Irish leader of British Chartism — and Engels' appreciation of this rare and eloquent defence of proletarian solidarity and unity. Despite its religious overtones O'Connor's speech is a passionate indictment of bourgeois opportunism masquerading as nationalism and repealism. Before he went over to middle-class politics O'Connor fought untiringly for the common destiny of British and Irish workers.

This principle is true today as it was in 1848, and in the turbulent decades of Chartism. There is certainly more to be learnt from this evocative statement than from all the manifestos of present-day Republicanism and revisionism. We commend the speech and Engels' remarks unreservedly to British and Irish workers alike.

Feargus O'Connor and the Irish people

by Frederick Engels

The first issue of the *Northern Star*[1] for 1848 contains an address to the Irish people by *Feargus O'Connor*, the well-known leader of the English Chartists who also represents them in the House of Commons. The whole address deserves to be read and carefully considered by every democrat, but our restricted space prevents us from reproducing it in fully.

We would, however be remiss in our duty if we were to pass it over in silence. The momentous consequences of this forceful appeal to the Irish will very soon be clearly evident. O'Connor — who is of Irish descent, a Protestant, and who has been for over ten years a leader and main pillar of the great labour movement in England — must henceforth be regarded as the virtual chief of the Irish Repealers[2] and advocates of reform. The part he played in opposing the latest of the ignominious Irish Coercion Bills has given him the first claim to this status, and his continuous agitation for the Irish cause has shown that Feargus O'Connor is just the man Ireland needs.

O'Connor is indeed seriously concerned about the well-being of the millions in Ireland, Repeal — the abolition of the Union, that is, the achievement of an independent Irish Parliament — is for *him* not an empty word, a pretext for obtaining posts for himself and his friends and for making profitable business transactions.

In his address he shows the Irish people that Daniel O'Connell, this political juggler, led them by the nose and deceived them for thirteen years by means of the world 'Repeal'.

He correctly elucidates the conduct of John O'Connell, who has

taken possession of hs father's political heritage and who like his father is prepared to sacrifice millions of credulous Irishmen for the sake of his personal ventures and interests. All O'Connell's orations at the Dublin Conciliation Hall[3] and all his hypocritical protestations and beautiful phrases will not obliterate the disrepute he has brought upon himself by his earlier actions and in particular now by the way he acted during the debates on the Irish Coercion Bill.

The Irish people must and will in the end grasp the real position, and then it will kick out the entire gang of so-called Repealers, who under cover of this cloak laugh up their sleeves and in their purses, and John O'Connell, the fanatical papist and political mountebank, will be kicked out first of all.

THE PEOPLE'S CHARTER

If this were all the address contained, we should not have especially referred to it. But it is of much wider importance. For Feargus O'Connor speaks in it not only as an Irishman but also, and primarily, as an English democrat and a Chartist.

With a lucidity which even the most obtuse mind cannot fail to notice, O'Connor shows that the Irish people must fight strenuously, and in close association with the English working classes and the Chartists, in order to win the six points of the People's Charter — annual parliaments, universal suffrage, vote by ballot, abolition of the property qualification for members of parliament, payment of MPs and the establishment of equal electoral districts. Only after these six points are won will the achievement of the Repeal have any advantage for Ireland.

Furthermore, O'Connor pointed out that justice for Ireland had been demanded even earlier by the English workers in a petition which had received three and a half million signatures,[4] and that now the English Chartists again protested against the Irish Coercion Bill in numerous petitions. He finally stressed that the oppressed classes in both England and Ireland must fight together and conquer together or continue to languish under the same burden and live in the same misery and dependence on the privileged and ruling capitalist class.

Henceforth the mass of the Irish people will undoubtedly unite ever more closely with the English Chartists and will act in accordance with

a common plan. This will bring the victory of the English democrats, and hence the liberation of Ireland, considerably nearer. That is the significance of O'Connor's address to the Irish people.

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Translated from the German

Notes:

[1] The newspaper *Northern Star*, founded in 1837, was published up to 1852, first in Leeds and from November 1844 in London. Its founder and editor was Feargus O'Connor, but it was Julian Harney, a leader of the revolutionary Chartists, who determined its revolutionary trend. Under his guidance the paper became a militant proletarian organ, which was greatly esteemed by the masses and exerted a major influence on them. Harney enlisted Frederick Engels as permanent contributor and Engels's articles appeared regularly in the paper betweeen 1843 and 1850. Marx and Engels highly valued the *Northern Star* as a militant organ of the proletarian democrats. When O'Connor deserted the proletarian movement and took up petty-bourgeois democratic positions, Harney was compelled to leave the paper in 1850 and it lost its revolutionary trend.

[2] *Repealers* — participants in the movement for the Repeal of the Union between England and Ireland and for the setting up of an independent Irish parliament. The leadership of the movement was exercised by liberals.

[3] *Conciliation Hall*, one of the biggest halls in Dublin, in which theRepeal Association held public meetings. They were frequently addressed by Daniel O'Connell and later by his son John, who became the head of the Association after his father's death. Both father and son opposed a genuinely revolutionary struggle against English colonial rule, although they constantly swore that they would achieve Ireland's independence, if necessary, by means of armed uprising.

[4] The second Chartist petition for a People's Charter (a programme of six points providing for the introduction of unversal suffrage and other reforms of the English political system) included the demand for Ireland to be allowed to annul the enforced Union with England of 1801. The petition was drafted by the Executive of the National Charter Association (founded in 1840), the first mass party of the working class in the history of the English labour movement. On May 2, 1842, the petition was submitted to Parliament, but even though it had been signed by about three and a half million people, it was rejected by the House of Commons. The Irish liberals headed by O'Connell did not approve of the Chartist agitation.

From the archives

First published in the Chartist paper
'The Northern Star', January 1, 1848

To the Irish people

by Feargus O'Connor

Oh, Erin, my country, I love thee from pride,
But I love thee the more for thy sorrow,
And many's the bitter, salt tear I have cried,
As I've cheerlessly thought on the morrow.

F. O'C.

'Hereditary bondsmen, know ye not,
Who would be free, himself must strike the blow.'

My countrymen,

Though thirteen years may be a comparatively short period in the history of nations, yet it constitutes a large amount in the life of an individual; and yet, during that whole period, though I have been exiled from my country, yet I have never lost a single opportunity of returning good for evil, by instructing the English people in the real history of the Irish people, and by proving to them that those weaknesses, for which they despised my countrymen, were virtues rather than vices.

After such a period of exile, it is now my pride to be placed in a situation to give to my country any little benefit she may derive from an ardent desire and a firm resolve to serve her; and, in truth, she stands in no small need of the smallest amount of service, a fact of which I was convinced by the treachery of some of her representatives during the discussion of the Irish Coercion Bill; and to the consideration of which I shall not confine this, my address, looking upon that measure and the conduct of some of the Irish representatives as a mere drop in the ocean when compared with the larger difficulties which yet stand in the way of Irish freedom.

No man who suffers under the provisions of that tyrannical, bloody, and unconstitutional act will endure greater mental torture than I suffered during its discussion. I shall not canvass the silent votes of many Irish members, from whom a different course was expected, when I have not words to express my horror of the language used by those Irish members who spoke upon the bill.

IRISH COERCION BILL

In Conciliation Hall, and in the press, there has been loud denunciation and just denunciation of Grattan and Dillon Browne, but there has been scarcely a complaint lisped against Mr Morgan John O'Connell, who not only supported the bill in its entirety, but was my most strenuous opponent and the government's staunchest friend, when I proposed to preserve the rights of traverse to the hastily kidnapped slave.

You, my countrymen, must understand the meaning of this 18th clause, which I designated as the 'Sting of the Bill'. At present, in all cases of misdemeanour, the prisoner has a right to put off his trial till the next gaol delivery, if not in custody fourteen days before the sitting of the Court. This is no more than a just and salutary provision of the ordinary law, because the law of England, presuming every man to be innocent until a jury has found him guilty, has assigned the period of fourteen days to allow him to prepare his defence, instruct his attorney, and explain his case to his counsel. The 18th clause in the Coercion Act takes away this protection from the Irish slave, who may now be hunted down by a pack of infuriate police blood-hounds, whose employment depends upon their ferocity, and without a moment's time being allowed to him to prepare his case and engage counsel for his defence, he may be dragged into court, arraigned upon the instant, tried, condemned, and sentenced, his sweat, fear, and excitement being urged as evidence of his guilt instead of testimony of his honour — honour which impelled him to fly from a brigand police force rather than join in the pursuit of his neighbour.

Upon this clause I argued,

Firstly, its unconstitutionality.

Secondly, the absolute necessity of allowing an Irish pauper prisoner time to scrape up amongst his friends the means of securing some defence, and

Thirdly, the injustice of trying a man in the midst of unnatural excitement.

I showed that in ordinary cases this indulgence was stretched by the judge, who almost invariably postponed trials, upon affidavit that the excitement arising from the charge rendered a fair trial even doubtful.

To this Sir George Grey replied that the discretion would still remain with the judge. I answered, that having established the will of a despot Lord-Lieutenant as the Irish constitution, I was not prepared to delegate the legal right of the peasant to the discretion of a judge selected by that Lord-Lieutenant to try him; and, in my conscience, I believe that the constitution would have been spared this further wound had it not been for the insistence of Mr M.J. O'Connell of the propriety of preserving this clause whole and entire, urging the absolute necessity of instantaneous trial, and the speediest conviction, if found guilty: that is, not only supporting the terrible vengeance of the clause, but adding to it the further heart-breaking penalty of dragging the unfortunate victim to speedy punishment after the mockery of a trial.

This secured the clause for the minister. And again, when I proposed to saddle the magistrates of the district with some responsibility, Mr Morgan J. O'Connell said, 'No; it is an *unconstitutional measure;* the magistrates are a *constitutional body;* and the government should not subject them to the responsibility of carrying out an unconstitutional measure.'

Well, after such an avowal from such a name and such a quarter, was it not natural that the opponents of the bill should become paralysed, and their opposition weakened? and if ministers, in their bold daring, required any apology for this unconstitutional measure, they have only to quote Grattan, Browne, and O'Connell, as authorities for its necessity and mildness.

The Irish members pledged to the Repeal of the Union, and who, if their constituents had supposed them friendly to coercion would have been pledged to oppose it — if those parties had stood together, unintimidated by the frown of faction, the *Clarendon Statute* would never have passed the House of Commons; and so decided was the opposition that a few gave to it, that the Lords feared to adopt the smallest amendment, because thereby another discussion might have been raised upon the bill.

I contended at the time, and I repeat it now, that the speech of Maurice O'Connell on the second reading of the Coercion Bill, was as complete an exposure of its injustice, and the ministers' tyranny, as could be made upon the subject. He took the case of Rebecca in Wales [the Rebecca riots — *ed.*]; he analysed it from beginning to end, showing that women were shot; that policemen were shot; that magistrates were shot; that houses were demolished; that men were denounced; that threatening notices were delivered; that coroners' juries refused to find verdicts to implicate the insurgents; that, notwithstanding, the assassins were parleyed with by the government itself; that a commission was sent to inquire into the grievances complained of; that those grievances were redressed, and that the judge who was selected to preside at the special commission won the people to obedience by the mildest administration of the ordinary law, making six months the maximum punishment for the highest offences, while many were afterwards set at liberty altogether.

Now, I ask, if it would be possible to have established a more triumphant case to show the triumph of the ordinary law, with this exception, indeed, that Wales is not Ireland, and that tyranny practised upon the Welsh people might have infected their English brethren, upon whom the government dare not impose a Coercion Bill.

I now leave this branch of my subject, and shall call your attention briefly to what the state of Ireland has been since she was in a condition to assert her rights in a British legislature. Till the period of 1829, the Catholic people had not been represented in Parliament since the reign of the adulterer, Henry VIII, nearly three centuries, and the support of a dominant church, professing a religion hostile to the whole of the Catholic people of Ireland had, during that period, been the great bone of contention; and I, as a Protestant, adoring the Catholic people for their unswerving devotion to their own form of worship, had a right to presume that the real practical meaning of Emancipation was the destruction of Protestant ascendancy, root and branch, not the destruction of Protestants or Protestantism — as I have ever held the right of peculiar worship to be the indefensible right of every man — but the destruction of that power which imposed a tax upon the professors of one faith, for the support of the preachers of another faith.

In my opinion, Catholic Emancipation meant the infusion of Catholic representatives into the Commons' House of Parliament, whose first and primary duty it would be to insist upon religious perfect equality for all, and to demand the complete and entire abolition of religious ascendancy; and to this end, nearly four hundred thousand Catholic freeholders were satisfied to relinquish all social claims for the achievement of their darling object.

In three years what was called Reform followed Emancipation, and the anticipated result of that measure, as far as Ireland was concerned, was, that legislation would devolve more extensively upon the Catholic people of that country. When Reform was accomplished, the great question of Repeal was placed before the Irish people as what should be their great and only object; and now I pray you, my countrymen, to bear in mind the difference between the tactics observed towards Emancipation and Repeal.

REPEAL PLEDGES

It was thought necessary to have a discussion in each session upon the question of Emancipation, in order that its growing strength in Parliament should have its due effect upon the public mind. While contending for this measure of justice, men who were out of the pale of the constitution were compelled, as leaders, to bear an honest front; because it was their interest to achieve power, and they were worth nothing to the enemy until they had secured that power; therefore, it was their interest to have a second discussion. Upon the other hand, as far as the question of national liberty is concerned, Emancipation was as nothing compared to the value of a domestic Legislature; and yet was that question allowed to remain a dead letter, as far as Parliament was concerned, for thirteen whole years, from 1834 to 1847 — the Irish people being whimsically and childishly satisfied with the Repeal pledges from members who were never to be tested, and who were otherwise left free to aid Whig administrations in their most tyrannical assaults upon national freedom.

The English people were courted as indispensable auxiliaries in the cause of Emancipation, by men looking for power — while in the cause of Repeal, the same aid was repudiated by men possessing profitable power.

My countrymen, as the day for hearing stern truths has arrived, you must open your ears to their bitterness. You must hear, and you must believe, the damning fact, that you have been the authors of your own every suffering and grievance; you relied upon your own strength, and not only repudiated the assistance of others, but received the defamation of your English friends and auxiliaries with shouts of savage exultation, for no other reason than because they were Saxons and Protestants — and always forgetting, or rather never thinking, because never told, that the Saxon and Protestant people of England were equally as oppressed as yourselves, and equally anxious as you to see justice done to your order, to your country, and to your religion.

However, I lay it down as an irrefutable fact that the young blood of Ireland returned forty-two Repeal members in 1833, and that the polluted blood of Ireland returned but twenty-five Repeal members in 1847. I make no account of any man who was absent, except Mr Anstey, who, I know, was indisposed, because it was the paramount duty of each and every one to be present, all other business being laid aside. Of this maxim, I furnished a strong example myself, because, on the very night of the debate, I was suffering under a painful illness, which would have confined ninety-nine in every hundred to their beds, but my duty to my country sustained me.

I have now shown you how the question of Repeal has been trifled with for thirteen whole years: while Ireland, during that period, was ready to sacrifice its best blood for its accomplishment; and for those thirteen years Repeal has been made, and no man can deny it, the stepping-stone to place, patronage, title and emolument — in a word, the brave Irish nation has been sold to the oppressor for pelf. Not a single agitation, calculated to serve declining Whiggery, that has not been resorted to as a substitute for Repeal, and as a means of securing patronage for that 'base, bloody and brutal' faction; and, although a Repealer from the day I had thought to the present moment, and although I would beg my bread for the rest of my life rather than vote against that measure, the late proceedings of your pledged representatives in Parliament have convinced me of its perfect inutility, unless accompanied by Annual Parliaments, Universal Suffrage, Vote by Ballot, Equal Representation, No Property Qualification, and the Payment of Members. And although many of your present leaders tell you triumphantly that they do not understand what Chartism means,

I tell you, and I would meet them, one and all, upon the question, that I would rather see Chartism carried than Repeal, which would be followed by a House of Landlords sitting in College-green — while, upon the other hand, from a Chartist representation must follow, not only a Repeal of the Union, but every measure of justice that industry can or ought to demand.

Perhaps I could not select a better period than the present, when so many of your representatives have sold you, for the consideration of the first point of the Charter:

ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS

and let me, in the outset, ask you whether, if those who voted for Coercion, and against Repeal, were to come before their constituents at the end of the present Session, instead of at the end of seven long years, would they not have acted under the wholesome influence of that public opinion, before which they should so speedily appear, instead of setting it at defiance for seven years, and relying upon some timely clap-trap to recommend them once more to your credulity?

Now observe, and observe well, that those who deserted Ireland on the question of Coercion, will have the deepest interest in preserving the Whigs in power for seven years, lest their dismissal from office should have the effect of subjecting them to the criticism and reproach of their constituents. Thus I explain to you the value of the first point of Chartism; and I will now go further, and tell you that so little faith have I in public men, and so convinced am I of the indispensable necessity of short reckonings, that I would expect, and liberty would receive, much, very much greater advantage from seven Parliaments elected annually by the present constituent body, than by a Parliament elected for seven years by Universal Suffrage and the Ballot.

In the one case, there is a wholesome dread in returning to a constituency at the close of the Session, to receive their smiles and renewed confidence as a reward for virtue, or their frowns and dismissal as a punishment for vice; while, upon the other hand, the representative steeped in six years' villainy, which remains upon the Statute Book, would seek atonement by a death-bed repentance, and would come before a credulous and confiding people upon his paltry

acts of atonement, which but too frequently obliterate the errors of the past.

I have shown you, my countrymen, that from the day your leaders achieved power through you, down to this very present hour, those leaders have qualified for prostitution out of your confidence, and I now tell you, as I have a thousand times told the English people, that a nation never will be free until the leaders are placed under that popular vigilant control which never will pardon the first act of political delinquency — because the mistaken lenity of public opinion towards a public man, is precisely like the mistaken indulgence of a parent to a child. The first act of forgiveness emboldens the delinquent with the hope of again receiving forgiveness, until at length he becomes so steeped in depravity, that in his sins the people see their own error, and fear exposure lest it should bespeak their own folly.

This has been one of your besetting sins, while ignorance of the motives of the English people has left you in a state of forlorn hopelessness. Even that portion of your Press, which chants its notes of liberty in the dullest strains of music, has withheld from you all knowledge of English feeling for Ireland, and, while it has cried out for help, it has failed to tell you when and how the English people have proffered the required aid.

It has not told you that, while you were dull and apathetic, three millions and a half of the English people petitioned for a Repeal of the Union. It has not told you that, when you were passive, scores of thousands of the English people petitioned against the Coercion Bill.

It has not published the innumerable resolutions, passed at large public meetings in all parts of England, in favour of Irish liberty; but it has, in the most contemptible, treacherous and despicable manner, garbled our speeches, and misrepresented our motives; and why? — because it, like your leaders, lived upon your credulity, feeding you with moonshine; while, unlike the English people and the English leaders, neither the Irish press nor the Irish leaders have directed the Irish mind to any single practical social result, which would be likely to follow any political change that they have propounded. Hence, we find you, as the 'Royal Loyal Irish Repealers', now throwing up your cap for your lovely young Queen; again, for the undefined thing called Justice to Ireland; then, for another trial for the base, bloody and brutal Whigs; then for Federalism, and anon for eleven incom-

prehensible measures of relief, of which Ireland has heard but the sound —

'Alas! poor country,
Almost afraid to know itself.'

Courage has been banished from your mind, and passive obedience and non-resistance has been made the freeman's catechism.

How dare you ask for liberty, when you die in millions rather than take it? Liberty is always within the reach of a people who are prepared to work out their own salvation, and liberty is an attribute which the Creator, in his wisdom, withholds from those who cannot worship the goddess, or who, worshipping her and knowing her value, dare not assert her prerogative.

Where, now, after your half century's agitation, is your substitute for the system you wish to destroy? You look for Repeal, and only for Repeal, while the English people, after fifteen years of Reform, which was to them what Repeal would be to you, without a House of Commons chosen by yourselves — bitter fruit — are now compelled to define the social system, the benefit of which the improved political system should bring home to every man's door.

My countrymen, you must now prepare your ears to hear the greatest truth ever propounded. You must prepare to hear that character of the English people which no historian has ever yet been able to assign to any people in this habitable globe.

The English people, deceived by Reform, after giving that measure a fair trial, established a great political agitation, which promised to bring justice home to every man's door; and so steadfast were they in their aim and end, that thousands preferred the dungeon to the abandonment of their principles. But even that was not all; if their virtues ended here, they should be extolled as virtues only, but I am going to prove their wisdom, as well as their virtues, thus — when they were poor, when they were hungered, yea famished, naked and outlawed, the most wealthy, the most influential, tyrannical, and vindictive portion of society — their own masters, their own magistrates, their own employers and jurors — tempted them in their poverty with the bait of 'High Wages, Cheap Bread and Plenty to Do'. What a fascinating motto for the rich oppressor to offer to the poor oppressed; and yet, mark, my countrymen, such was the valour, such

the union, such the honour and devotedness of our Chartist Confederation, that the starving spurned the proffered bribe, the delusive offer, for six long years, and never abated that opposition, until its longer continuance might have entailed greater suffering upon their Irish brethren; and this is the people that you have been taught to despise.

THE ENGLISH CHARTISTS

Now, this greatest of all facts cannot be too deeply impressed upon your memory; that, while the excited mind of Ireland was, for thirteen years, running after different shades of moonshine, the working classes of England resisted the delusive cry of '*High wages, cheap bread, and plenty to do*'.

Now, why was this? Because the English agitation was conducted by leaders belonging to the suffering class, and because the power of public opinion was sufficiently strong, virtuous and resolute to keep those leaders in the straight course; whereas every man who spoke in your packed assemblies should first qualify by the payment of speech money, and should then measure his words by the standard of expediency; and from which did he depart but by a syllable, he was howled down as a dangerous traitor.

When you begin to reflect upon your own past madness, your astonishment at Coercion will vanish, and your only wonder will be that a nation of such willing slaves is even pitied in their misery.

When you reflect that such men as John Lawless, Sharman Crawford, O'Gorman Mahon, Patrick O'Higgins, Feargus O'Connor, and thousands of others, who were too proud to join in delusion, and too sincere to commit a fraud upon Ireland, have been held up as traitors to their country; when you think of the names of O'Connor, Fitzgerald, and Emmett, being made by-words of scorn to the living; when you think of the great national question being burked for thirteen whole years, and only resuscitated now and then within that time when the distributors of patronage stood in need of an Irish difficulty to affright their Tory opponents from power; when you think of those pledged Repealers voting, one and all, for the continued imprisonment of the English Chartists, and one and all being the never failing resource of the 'base, brutal and bloody Whigs' when a

blow was to be aimed at liberty; when you think of 'Who is the Traitor', 'A good Jury Law', 'Justice to Ireland', 'Our lovely young Queen', 'Give the Whigs another fair trial', 'Ireland for the Irish', 'One year of unbroken tranquillity', 'Federalism', 'Tenant Right', 'Municipal Reform', and 'Eleven Healing Measures', being successively and successfully used to direct your attention from the one great national question, I say that it is not to Daniel O'Connell, but to the Press of Ireland that the present state of that country is to be attributed.

As long as the press received the lion's share of patronage, the press performed the lion's share of prostitution, and the press swelled the lisp of the man into the thunder of the nation; but when a portion of it lost that patronage by which its adherence was secured, then its thunder was hurled at O'Connell, in the hope of covering its own shame. Merciful Providence! must not the heart of the most cold-blooded sicken at the bare notion of one million brave, hardy, virtuous and industrious peasants being sacrificed in one year to famine, not caused by Almighty God, not increased by the machinations of the Government — but procured through the instrumentality of a delusive hope, and total reliance upon one talismanic event, which was to feed, house, clothe, warm and comfort the Irish people.

If a million of Poland's sons died from starvation the Whigs would preach Christ's gospel as a terror to the Autocrat, and would tell him: 'That they who died by the sword are better than they who perish of hunger, for their bodies pine away stricken through for want of the fruits of the field.' Those are the words of God, not my words; and as I love God's laws better than the laws of man, I would rather see Ireland decimated in battle by the sword than cut off by famine, in the midst of abundance, created by her own hands.

And think of even one Protestant or Orangeman, much more one Catholic Irishman, being found so degenerate as to stand up in the Senate House of the foreigner, after a million of his countrymen had perished from hunger, and consent to place the lives of the remainder, and the destinies of the country, in the hands of an upstart Saxon diplomatist. And think of one and all vieing in paying their tribute of respect to this Autocrat, who now embodies within his own narrow mind the Irish Constitution — *save the mark!*

Now think you, my countrymen, that the name of Irishman will

gain credit in the future history of our country, when her tale of sorrow and of her sons' degeneracy is told?

What did America gain by her petitions to the English Crown? What did she not gain by her resolution to do for herself what she might have begged Britain to do for her in vain, so long as she relied upon humble prayer and petition?

If I did not see hope for Ireland in renewed exertion I should blush to belong to such a nation of slaves, but I have still reliance upon a people who for seven centuries have maintained their hostility to oppression, and who for three centuries have clung with fondness to their persecuted faith.

Yes, the elements of regeneration are in the people, and they but require to be properly directed to secure that freedom which would make Ireland the happiest nation on earth; and as I know of no man living who can advance a greater right to counsel the Irish nation than myself, I will now prescribe for the patient, at a time when her disease has puzzled the faculty.

This then is my prescription:

Firstly – Elect a Convention of forty-nine Delegates, to meet in London, and there to discuss the grievances of Ireland, and propound the simple remedies, making Repeal of the Union the great means to the end.

Secondly – At every election put the following pledge to every Candidate whom you propose to support, and let him sign it and let it be witnessed, as I shall describe.

'I, A.B., do solemnly and sincerely swear before God, that, if elected as a Representative to Parliament, I will accept the Chiltern Hundreds, and restore the trust committed to my charge, whenever required to do so by the Committee of Observation, whose names are hereto attached, together with my signature.'

Now the names hereunto attached should be the names of six laymen, being non-electors, and the six Roman Catholic Clergymen whose parishes furnished the largest number of voters; and those twelve should elect an elector as chairman. If I am asked why appoint six Roman Catholic Clergymen? my answer is,

Firstly – Because they are, as a body, the best patriots in Ireland.

Secondly – Because they would more rigidly insist upon compliance with the terms of the contract, and

Thirdly – They are more subject to popular vigilant control than any other class.

I submit this test in order to secure the dismissal of the traitor the moment that a majority of the committee shall demand it; while there could not be a better guarantee for the seat of the representative, as long as he acted honestly, as in such case the Observation Committee dare not demand the resignation of his trust.

Now, my countrymen, when you reflect upon the fact that Parliament invariably selects the commencement of a session for the enactment of coercive measures, and that the same Parliament as invariably resists coercion and talks of remedial measures as dissolution approaches, you will see the value of this ingredient in my prescription.

CANDIDATES' PLEDGES

I would, then, demand the following pledges from every candidate asking popular support:

'I do solemnly swear and declare that I will not accept myself, or solicit for another, place, pension, emolument, or patronage, from any Government that rules the destinies of Ireland in a foreign land.

'That I will not court the favour of any man in power, nor will I dine at the table with any minister or ministerial official, until my country is freed from the foreign yoke.

'That I will take my seat in the English House of Commons upon the first day of the Session, all other business being laid aside, and that I will there fight the battles of my country without reference to party interests or political factions.

'That I will support every measure which promises the slightest advantage to Ireland; while, upon all questions upon which the fate of an administration depends, if benefit to Ireland should not be involved, I will give my vote against the existing Government, from a firm conviction that a united band of fifty, or even forty, *United Irishmen*, acting upon the obstructive principle, would hold the balance of power in the Senate House.'

Now I proclaim to you, my countrymen, and to the world, once again, that I would expect more from seven parliaments elected by the

present constituency within seven years, than I would expect from a seven years' parliament elected by Universal Suffrage, and for the reasons I have before assigned.

Now shall I be told that any portion of my machinery is complicated, or that any one of my terms is even rigid? Shall I be told that it is a hardship to demand of the trustee a restoration of that trust which he has failed to execute according to the terms on which it was granted? Shall I be told that a place hunter and beggar of patronage is a fit and proper representative of a nation whose liberties are now handed over to the keeping of one man? Or shall I be told that it is a hardship to deny the Irish representative a feed at the luxurious table of the tempter, while a whole nation is in hourly dread of famine.

If any shall be bold enough to advance such an argument, I can only say for myself, that I would rather, much rather, live upon an equality with a nation of comfortable peasants than live in splendour, sumptuousness and affluence, gleaned from the parings of their poor board.

Irishmen, there is nothing in what I propose that can be distasteful to the honest representative, and Ireland needs none other. In thirteen years you have seen your Repeal ranks dwindle down from forty-two to twenty-five; while twelve years' out-door agitation has taken place, and one year of *monster* excitement, when vows for Ireland and Repeal were offered up which must have made the God of Justice smile. And within that period, if you would discover the deficiency, you will find it made up of placemen and pensioners, sopped off by the Government that has given *you* Coercion in return for your representatives' prostitution.

Mark now what I am about to enforce: it is this — that so long as Repeal was the simple guarantee of fitness, the pledged Repealer remained untested during three whole parliaments. The parliament that sat from 1835 to 1837; the parliament that sat from 1837 to 1841; and the parliament that sat from 1841 to 1847. And those pledged Repealers held themselves free to act upon all other questions, the Irish people making the question of Repeal the one that absorbed all others.

Upon the other hand, by the adoption of annual parliaments, you hold your representatives in proper check upon all great questions. Indeed, I have been taken to task by both parties for testing the fledglings so easily, both by old Irelanders and young Irelanders. Mr

McGee, of the Young Ireland party, says: 'I do not blame the mover of the Committee of Inquiry into the Union — though he might have shown more consideration for Ireland than to drag our undisciplined levies into the field on a fortnight's notice.' I shall answer this remark by asking a simple question. If the Irish levies were undisciplined after thirteen years' drilling and training, how many centuries would it require to prepare them for action?

CONSISTENT FRIENDS

Of a truth, I never heard more absurd rubbish than has been written upon the expediency of my motion. Why, my countrymen, the very scampering of the rats proves the absolute necessity of testing them at the earliest possible period, in order that the Irish people may know their friends from their enemies. If I had not tested them thus early, those who voted for Coercion would have deluded the Irish Repealers with the delusion that the insurgents, who alone were to be put down by the Coercion Bill, were the greatest enemies of Ireland and Repeal; that they voted for Coercion because they were sincere Repealers; and that they acted upon the maxim that 'The man who commits a crime is Ireland's greatest enemy.'

I tell you more, that, as long as I have a seat in Parliament, I will take the first opportunity in each session of having a discussion upon Repeal, and will resist every infraction of the constitution until there shall be equal security for the life and property of the poor man, as for the life and property of the rich man; as I never will recognise any distinction in these respects, between the monarch on the throne and the poorest subject in the land.

In conclusion, my Countrymen, you must cease to revile your English brethren, who are your best, your bravest, and most consistent friends. You must adopt the Land Plan in Ireland, and believe me, that one thousand virtuous, moral, industrious and peace-loving Tipperary men, located in their own castles, each standing in the centre of the husbandman's labour field, would create an agitation in Ireland, which no foreign invader could suppress until industry was set free, and every bloody statute was erased from England's bloody code; when crime would be branded as sin, when its causes were

removed, and when every honest labourer would cheerfully join in the pursuit of the criminal, without being compelled by Act of Parliament, because each would then have an interest in the preservation of peace.

In the name of God, then, my Countrymen, discard your every dissension, fling your every cause of difference to the wind; and if the terms 'Old Ireland' and 'Young Ireland' threaten to perpetuate that strife which desolates the land, let all call themselves 'Irish Repealers', and under that defined and distinct appellation, let all contend for fatherland, vowing to sacrifice life itself rather than abandon the pursuit of liberty.

Willing to take every one of the above pledges as the test of my fitness to represent even an English constituency, and holding fast by the immutable principle, that the cause of justice is the cause of God, and that Ireland is my country though the world is my republic,

I remain, fellow countrymen,

Your sincere, devoted and
unpurchaseable friend,

Feargus O'Connor

The SWP Harman(ises) with Ali

by Mike Banda

First published in the News Line, December 10 and 11, 1981

Tariq Ali's defection to the Labour Party reformists has predictably created a stir amongst his fellow revisionists in the Socialist Workers Party. Although the SWP (formerly the International Socialism Group) claims to have profound political and methodological differences with the International Marxist Group (IMG), they have not in any way prevented the development of a thoroughly promiscuous political relationship between these two groups. The common denominator of this unprincipled collaboration has been — and still is — a complete subservience to spontaneity and a pathological hatred of Marxist theory and revolutionary organisation. What this has meant concretely is a continuous political adaptation to the Labour bureaucracy which, as Lenin pointed out, is the embodiment of bourgeois ideology, i.e., the consciousness which dominates the spontaneous movement of the working class and allows the ruling class to dominate it politically.

The forms of this adaptation are not everywhere identical. The IMG, for example, represented a trend led by Pablo, Mandel and the late double agent Hansen of the American Socialist Workers Party who believed in entry into Stalinist and social democratic parties with the aim of latching on to whatever centrist trend happened to emerge. While the IMG maintained a formal, if grotesquely sectarian, independence of the Labour Party, in practice its political line was indistinguishable from left-reformism. While it acquired a student middle-class base, the SWP had different origins. It began in social

democracy but soon moved out of the Labour Party and became obsessed with trade unions. It rejected any attempt to develop a *political* struggle against the bureaucracy. Instead, it projected a reactionary idealist conception of a non-political rank-and-file movement which denounced the betrayals of the bureaucracy on the factory floor, but sustained it politically outside with its undiluted syndicalism. One of the chief features of the IS-SWP activity which separates it from the Marxist movement is the belief that the working class can spontaneously establish socialism and that revolutionary theory does not come from outside the working class. From this flows a corresponding hatred of Bolshevik centralism and discipline, the only condition on which cadres and theory could be developed and spontaneity, i.e., bourgeois ideology, fought. Instead, a spirit of liberalism and anarchism was encouraged.

Tony Cliff, founder and theoretician of the IS-SWP, made this abundantly clear in his writings on Lenin in the early 1950s. In order to substantiate his sceptical argument that Stalinism emerged organically out of Leninism, Cliff consciously distorted Lenin's writings on the struggle for socialist ideology. To convince politically backward workers that Lenin in 1905 had reversed the arguments advanced in *What is to be Done?* three years before in 1902, Cliff quoted Lenin's writing thus:

> The working class is instinctively, spontaneously social democratic . . . extend your bases, rally all the worker social democrats round yourselves . . . etc.

What Lenin did write was the opposite:

> The working class is instinctively, spontaneously social democratic, *and more than ten years of work put in by the social democrats has done a great deal to transform this spontaneity into class consciousness* . . . Extend your bases, rally all the worker social democrats . . . (page 32, Volume 10, Lenin's *Collected Works*).

For further information on this kind of middle-class duplicity, readers would be best advised to read the SLL pamphlet: *Falsifiers of Lenin* by Peter Jeffries (SLL Pocket Library, No.9). Behind the differing tactics of both groups is the unstated, yet easily identifiable, assumption that pressure and protest can move bureaucracies. This is why Chris Harman, one of the leading lights of the SWP, in a letter to

The Guardian (Monday November 23, 1981), bemoans the fate of fellow protestor Ali. Harman reproaches Ali for having abandoned his previously critical attitude to the Labour Party and for propagating the reformation of this reformist body. 'He (Ali) is the latest to play a tragic role in the farce so well described in Ralph Milliband's book, *Parliamentary Socialism*.'

Harman's attempt to pose as an inveterate opponent of bureaucracy and a fighter for revolutionary socialism, however, is about as credible as Ali's claim to represent Trotskyism — inside or outside the Labour Party. The history of Harman's group is one of wretched genuflection before bureaucracy crudely covered-up with a veneer of radical phrasemongering and pseudo-revolutionary posturing. The International Socialism group, from its inception in the Labour Party in the 1950s, never once challenged the right-wing bureaucracy in any significant way. Its sterile and sceptical theory of state-capitalism summed up in the banal slogan 'Neither Washington nor Moscow', gave it a licence to abstain from every major struggle involving the interests of imperialism and its social-democratic agencies. This political 'neutrality' was in effect a shame-faced support for imperialism's attack against the working class and colonial peoples. Thus in 1950, Harman's co-leader Tony Cliff opposed the North Korean and Chinese peoples' struggle against US imperialism and the United Nations on the grounds that these were Stalinist regimes and represented 'Stalinist imperialism'. The position of the IS-SWP fitted in perfectly with the requirements of the British social democracy and the Labour government — one of the principal participants in this imperialist aggression.

SILENT ON EXPULSIONS

While the paper of the Trotskyists, the *Socialist Outlook*, was witch-hunted and banned and many members of the movement were expelled from the Labour Party for their unequivocal defence of the colonial peoples and their opposition to the 'mixed economy' policy of the right wing, history records that not a single member of the IS group was expelled or disciplined by the social democrats. The IS were conspicuous by their silence in front of the right wing and their open hostility, particularly in the Labour Party League of Youth, to

any independent challenge to the Transport House bureaucracy. When the Labour Party youth movement was re-formed in early 1959, it almost immediately passed under Trotskyist leadership and provoked a series of savage reprisals from the Labour bureaucrats, which finally led to the split of the most important industrial areas from the right wing and the formation of the revolutionary Young Socialists of today. In this crucial struggle there was no question of neutrality between Transport House and the revolutionary aspirations of the youth. It was at this juncture that the IS demonstrated its notorious ability for unprincipled manoeuvre and slavish adherence to reformist bureaucracy. The state-capitalists immediately sank their identity in a joint-venture with two groups of revisionists, the Rebel group, supporters of Pablo and Mandel, and the Rally group, supporters of Ted Grant, whose principal claim to fame was his abstention on the expulsion of fellow Labour Party members Bill and Rae Hunter by the Labour Party right-wing in Islington. Together these three groups founded the paper *Young Guard*.

If today Harman is grieved by Ali's renegacy it is probably because he recalls the odious alliance of all revisionist groups in a conspiracy with Transport House to isolate and smash the Young Socialist majority influenced by the Socialist Labour League — predecessor to the Workers Revolutionary Party — and organised around the paper *Keep Left*. While *Keep Left* was peremptorily banned by the right-wing for its uncompromising advocacy of revolutionary socialism, the paper *Young Guard* was never touched or banned. It was cultivated by the bureaucrats deliberately as a counter-weight to *Keep Left*. The state-capitalists and their revisionist allies connived with the social democrats to expel supporters of *Keep Left* from the Young Socialists, for which they were given due recognition by the Labour Party officials. After the Labour Party Young Socialists split, they quietly abandoned the Labour Party.

Unlike Ali, Harman never entertained any idea of reforming the Labour Party. The sole aim of his group was and is to patronise the trade unions and prevent workers from developing a revolutionary political consciouness. While other revisionist groups work in the Labour Party to confuse constituency members and keep them trapped within the straitjacket of social democracy, the SWP concentrates on supplementing the revisionist mis-education and mys-

tification outside the Labour Party and provide a safety net for the Labourites. That explains the continuous collaboration of the IS-SWP with the Stalinist-led and virtually defunct Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trades Unions which betrayed every struggle of the working class and kept the trade union militants tied to the Labour government in the 1960s and 1970s. Adventurism combined with complete cynicism in relation to the revolutionary capacity of the working class is the red thread connecting the early IS with the SWP of today. This bohemianism and cynicism is proudly asserted in its official history:

> It was part of this success of *Young Guard* that it was able to break out of the traditional milieu of revolutionary politics. The cultural atmosphere around *Young Guard* — characterised *mainly* by beer-drinking and folk-singing — may not have met with the approval of revolutionary purists or puritans (*sic*) . . . ' (Page 7, *SWP – The smallest mass party in the world – Socialist Workers Party, 1951-1979*, by Ian Birchall) [my emphasis].

The complete absence of a revolutionary perspective — itself the most conclusive proof of the absence of a revolutionary theory — and an exclusive reliance on spontaneity is openly acknowledged by the SWP official historian, Birchall.

LOWEST FORM OF COGNITION

For Marxists science begins with the transcending of bare facts and the establishment of the interconnections between them which enables us to reach beyond appearance to the essence of facts, in order to establish the difference between them. For Ali, Birchall and Harman, knowledge is nothing more than immediate sense experience. They do not feel obliged to criticise facts, interpret them and integrate them into a theory. They begin and end with the finite 'fragments' of sensation, the lowest form of cognition and the most unreliable. For them the necessity to go into abstraction and practice and to transcend the finite relative and particular never arises. Their hostility to dialectical materialism and their insistence on the facts of sense impression compels them to equate appearance with the truth of reality, deny the potentiality of the development of things and people and assert a dogmatic defence of the 'status quo'.

This method and outlook leads Ali into the cesspool of reformism and Harman into the swamp of trade unionism from which there is no exit. This cynical opportunism typified the collaboration of the International Socialism group (fore-runner of the Socialist Workers Party) in the now-defunct National Association of Labour Student Organisation with every anti-Trotskyist group from the Stalinists to fake-left MPs. But it was primarily when the Labour Party came to power in 1964 that a new era of unprincipled collaboration between IS and the International Marxist Group (IMG) began. Both groups vied with each other in diverting every strike into syndicalist channels and creating the utmost confusion within the students' movement with the theory of 'student power', 'red bases', and the fetishistic attacks against academic institutions and other buildings. The nexus of this operation was the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign — a forum for every charlatan, adventurer, police-provocateur and political carpet-bagger in Britain.

The combination of a reformist government and a credit boom was more than Harman and Ali could resist. They became the greatest propagators of the myth of a crisis-free capitalism with built-in stabilisers. Opposition to the Vietnam war was turned by the IMG and IS into a form of support for the reactionary Labour government of Wilson. Rejecting the struggle for new leadership in the working class, Harman and Ali saw every struggle from the standpoint of a struggle to pressure Wilson and to extract concessions. Their opposition to the war was hypocritical. At the founding conference of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign in 1966, the IS and IMG combined to stand bail politically for the British and Moscow Stalinists and exclude the Socialist Labour League. The greatest exposure of this revisionist fraud must certainly be the despatch of British troops to Ireland by the Labour government. Harman's virtuosity in the Labour Party is torn to shreds the moment anyone examines the nauseating record of IS. Neither Harman's group nor Ali's could say a principled word against this barbaric intervention. They supported the Labour government and they implicitly acquiesced to all the atrocities of British imperialism since. The Irish workers owe them nothing. Their subsequent efforts to curry favour with the Irish with the inane slogan of 'Victory to the IRA!' and blanket denunciations of the Loyalists were equally bankrupt. The contemptible cowardice of the IS is abundantly expre-

ssed by their own writer — Ian Birchall — in a recent document trying to explain the history of this political bankruptcy.

> The first major crisis to hit the organisation came in August 1969. Following a year of mounting struggle in the North of Ireland, fighting erupted in Derry and British troops were sent in ostensibly,' [lovely word, what] to preserve the peace. This presented IS with serious problems of tactics and principles. On the one hand, IS had campaigned consistently for the withdrawal of British troops from the North of Ireland.' [What troops?] However, in the immediate situation in which Catholic forces were very much the weaker — neither the IRA nor the People's Democracy was demanding the immediate withdrawal of British troops. IS had to combine its internationalism (its concern to have the same position as comrades in Ireland) with its responsibility to bring home to British workers the role of British imperialism. In the event it was decided not to make 'Withdraw the Troops Now!' an agitational slogan. (*SWP – The smallest mass party in the world – Socialist Workers Party, 1951-1979*)

Writing about the problems of a propaganda group Birchall makes a virtue out of this method of empiricist adaptation to reality, now known as single-issue politics:

> As long as IS was within the Labour Party there was a framework within which specific issues could be related to each other. Racialism, foreign policy, housing, education and incomes policy could all be located in the context of a struggle against the Party's right wing. Without the Labour Party to serve as a focus, there was a tendency for IS comrades to see each struggle in isolation, to submerge themselves in a particular 'fragment' and postpone the question of generalisation to a remote future. Essentially, this was a healthy situation. [!] (Page 12, *SWP – The smallest mass party in the world – Socialist Workers Party, 1951-1979*

Birchall here gives us an unvarnished summary of British empiricism, the philosophy which states that human cognition cannot pass beyond individual brute fact to the general objective laws which explain the development of all material processes and thought.

In brief, the IS did what it aways does. It ran for cover under the skirts of the bureaucracy! An academic like Birchall however, has to put it more prosaically.

In November 1977 the SWP formed a protest-diversion circus called the Anti-Nazi League (ANL). It was a resurrection of the VSC in a new guise, falsely portraying fascism as an impending danger and as a single issue appealing to all church and political parties from

Tories and Liberals to the Latter-day Adventists. Like all its previous adventures, this instant-panacea fraud was not based on any theoretical analysis but on the petty-bourgeois fantasies of Cliff and Harman. The measure of their political sterility is demonstrated in their founding statement which completely exaggerated the danger of the National Front because the NF had pushed the Liberal Party into fourth place in some parliamentary by-election. The premise on which the ANL was based was a completely reactionary one: the belief that the working class, back in the 1930s, was defeated and atomised and that only a new Popular Front would defeat fascism.

The WRP refused to join the ANL and condemned its diversionist punch-ups with the police which led to hundreds of arrests and victims of police brutality without any corresponding gain in political consciousness. On the contrary, many youth were convinced of the futility of fighting thousands of police in order to reach a handful of racists. After the death of Blair Peach the ANL slid into obscurity. The opportunist and reactionary nature of this front of confusion is explained by the cynical Birchall:

> The problem for the SWP was rather to distinguish its own revolutionary politics within the broader movement. Thus, for example, the ANL did not have a position of opposition to immigration controls. (page 27, *ibid*)

Readers should now listen carefully to Birchall's involved defence of this revolting betrayal of immigrant workers' rights.

> It is undoubtedly true that in the early stages of the building of the ANL, the SWP had such influence that it could have forced the adoption of such a position. *Had it done so*]please do not laugh — *ed*], *however, it is unlikely that the ANL would have been able to grow so fast.* [!!] SWP members, however, argued for their position to the *broader* audience offered by the ANL. Thus *Socialist Worker* vigorously criticised Sid Bidwell, *a sponsor of the ANL,* for his support for immigration controls on the Parliamentary Select Committee on race and immigration.

It would be difficult to find in revisionist literature a more despicable piece of treachery towards oppressed minorities than this. How dare Harman attack Ali about a sell-out? The position of *News Line* was based on Trotsky's evaluation of Stalinism's betrayals of the Popular Front and the abstract, classless 'anti-fascism' of reformism and revisionism:

> We have to take strong measures against the abstract 'anti-fascist' mode of thinking . . . 'Anti-fascism' is nothing, an empty concept used to cover up Stalinist skulduggery. In the name of 'anti-fascism' they instituted class collaboration with the Radicals. Many of our comrades wanted to give the 'Popular Front', i.e. class collaboration, positive support in the same way that we are ready to support the united front, i.e., the separation of the proletariat from the other classes. Starting from the thoroughly false slogan 'People's Front to power', in the name of 'anti-fascism' they go still further and declare that they are inclined to support Bonapartism . . . (page 244, Trotsky's *Writings, 1935-1936*)

OUTLOOK OF REVISIONISM

Unfortunately the working class has not seen the end of Cliff-Harman skulduggery. Just wait till an SDP government comes to power. Every Labour government has met with the same response of the IMG and SWP — it is always posed as 'the only credible alternative to a Tory government'. So there is only the ruling class and the bureaucracy. The working class is organically incapable of fighting and smashing the capitalist system and the state. That is the *real* outlook of the revisionists. This does not prevent (in fact it presupposes) Harman or Ali from periodically calling for disruption of Labour Party meetings or even abstaining from voting in a general election. But when the Labour government is in, then it is all hands to the wheel — with protest of course. For the same reason Harman tries to discredit Ken Livingstone who — according to this overgrown dilettante — 'quite rightly lowers fares, but insists on financing this from a regressive tax (rates)'. Here indeed is a man who can swallow an Irish camel and suffocate on a London gnat. Harman's sense of justice is outraged by the fact that Livingstone, in order to parry a major blow from Heseltine's axe, is forced to tread on some middle-class corns with a supplementary levy on the rates. For Harman and his group, the objective world is, as Ireland proves, 'ostensible' — including the attacks of the Treasury and Heseltine on the services provided by local government and the jobs of thousands of direct-labour workers. No problem — resign, go into deficit, forward to Poplarism.

What Harman wants is not an organised struggle of the whole

working class and the patient preparation of millions for the taking of power. He wants martyrs and defeats to give scope to his talent for protest and rank-and-file movements. All recent articles of the SWP have conveyed this sense of bewilderment, depression and despondency in relation to the Labour Party and, in particular, the campaign of Benn. The SWP's impressionist method sees the Labour Party as an irrelevancy and Benn as an embarrassment. The rejection of revolutionary politics in place of rank-and-file protest now means that the SWP cannot understand the changes within reformist organisations reflecting the revolutionary pressure of the working class. For the SWP, every struggle is an unprincipled manoeuvre. The only prospect is the endless search for 'more solidarity', 'more unity', 'more militancy', and more martyrs. The only difference between Ali and Harman on the issue of the Labour Party split is that Ali gives the most fulsome support to the Fabian Benn while Harman turns his back on Benn and the Labour Party. But they both strengthen Social Democracy and divert workers and youth from the struggle to overcome this old leadership and build a new one. Harman's letter and his laughter at Ali will prove to be premature. Ali is only blazing a trail for him to follow.

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Discussion article

Comments on Omelyanovsky's 'Dialectics in Modern Physics'

by Chris Talbot

In an article in the August 1980 issue of Labour Review entitled 'Quantum Mechanics — a proof of dialectics, denial of positivism', the book *Dialectics in Modern Physics* by M.E. Omelyanovsky is reviewed in glowing terms. Whilst not disagreeing with the reviewer's conclusions that the wave of new books on physics and philosophy from the Soviet Union is an important development, containing much of interest to Marxists and natural scientists, uncritical acceptance of Omelyanovsky's book in particular would be a serious error. The book contains very little on Quantum Mechanics which has not already been developed by the leading Soviet physicist V.A. Foch,[1 2] and much of the remainder, rather than developing Marxist theory, tells us more about the ideology and attitudes to natural science of the Soviet bureaucracy.

Let us start at the beginning with Omelyanovsky on the theory of knowledge. In Chapter 2 'The Problem of Objective Reality in Quantum Theory', Omelyanovsky considers the paper 'Symbol and Reality' by a major contributor to Quantum Theory from its inception, Max Born.[3] Born says that in looking at a modern science text-book we

> . . . will be struck by the amount of mathematical and other symbols and the scarcity of descriptions of natural phenomena. Even the instruments of observation are indicated only symbolically by diagrams. And yet these publications claim to deal with natural science. Where in this accumulation of formulae is living nature? How are the physical and chemical symbols connected with the experienced reality of sense perceptions?

He was asked by a philosophically-minded cousin:

'What do you exactly mean when you call this leaf here green or the sky blue?' I regarded this question as rather superfluous and answered: 'I just mean green and blue because I see it like that, exactly as you see it.' But this did not satisfy him. 'How do you know that I see green exactly as you see it?' My answer 'because all people see it in the same way, of course' still did not satisfy him. 'There exist colour-blind people who see the colours differently; some of them, for example, cannot distinguish red and green.' Thus he drove me in a corner and made it plain to me that there is no way to ascertain what another person perceives and that even the statement 'he perceives the same as I' has no clear meaning.

Thus it dawned upon me that fundamentally everything is subjective, everything without exception. That was a shock.

Born thinks he can rescue some degree of objectivity by getting common agreement on comparisons with, for example, one green object and another, and he thinks that this kind of comparison is the basis of mathematics. So mathematical symbols correlated with observed phenomena form the basis for objective reality; hence the text-books full of mathematical symbols.

Born dismisses Marxism, or rather the Stalinist version of it, as dogma:[4]

> The fundamental axiom is 'the existence of a real, objectively knowable external world'. Since in the East LENIN'S philosophy has become a kind of official religion, a problem which has occupied and worried the minds of so many thinkers has now become an article of faith guarded by the power of the State.

This comment is typical of the potted epistemology of the bourgeois scientists who attack Marxism, and we may expect Omelyanovsky to present a clear defence of the Marxist theory of knowledge, and annihilate Born's position. But what in fact does Omelyanovsky have to say? Writing of the concepts in classical physics he comments:[5]

> Classical theory, however, could not by-pass the problem of objective reality. How could one know that the 'green' one saw was the same 'green' seen by another observer? This was an example from everyday experience, but classical physics frequently based its conclusions on such experience. Our analysis will begin exactly with just this example.
>
> The question posed is, as a matter of fact, the question whether the sensation 'green' corresponds to something objective. The answer given by practice is positive: to answer it, it is sufficient to imagine a driver who is daltonian or colour-blind. The fact that we know about colour blindness

> and can avoid its undesirable qualities to some extent, moreover, only confirms another fact, that the sensation 'green' corresponds to objective reality.

Here is Omelyanovsky's empiricism, which dominates the whole book, exposed. The concept 'green' (he began by discussing concepts in classical physics) is merged with the sensation 'green' and everything is tested out 'in practice'. Giving this seemingly concrete example of 'green', in fact confuses the whole issue, and leaves the door open to Bertrand Russell, Sir Karl Popper and all the other empiricist, i.e., ultimately idealist, philosophers.

MATERIALISM AND EMPIRIO-CRITICISM

In *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* Lenin takes up Bazarov, as follows.[6] Bazarov, attempting to paraphrase Engels, says:

> ' . . .But what do you term "correct"? — Engels rejoins. — Correct is that which is confirmed by our practice: and consequently, since our sense-perceptions are confirmed by experience, they are not "subjective", that is, they are not arbitrary, or illusory, but correct and real as such . . . '
>
> You are muddling things, Comrade Bazarov! You have substituted for the question of the existence of things outside our sensations, perceptions, ideas, the question of the criterion of the correctness of our ideas of 'these things themselves', or, more precisely, you are *blocking* the former question by means of the latter. But Engels says explicitly and clearly that what distinguishes him from the agnostic is not only the agnostic's doubt as to whether our images are 'correct', but also the agnostic's doubt as to whether we may speak of the *things themselves*, as to whether we may have 'certain' knowledge of their existence. Why did Bazarov resort to this juggling? In order to obscure and confuse what is the *basic* question for materialism (and for Engels, as a materialist), the question of the existence of things outside our mind, which by acting on our sense-organs evoke sensations. It is impossible to be a materialist without answering this question in the affirmative; but one can be a materialist and still differ on what constitutes the criterion of the correctness of the images presented by our senses.
>
> And again Bazarov muddles matters when he attributes to Engels, in the dispute with the agnostics, the absurd and ignorant expression that our sense-perceptions are confirmed by '*experience*'. Engels did not use and could not have used this word *here*, for Engels *was well aware* that the idealist Berkeley, the agnostic Hume and the materialist Diderot all had recourse to experience.

Omelyanovsky has, like Bazarov, compounded these two stages of cognition: the sensation and the concept 'green', while he takes care to avoid the term 'experience', referring instead to 'practice'. He is sufficiently indefinite in his use of the term to leave us in doubt as to his meaning, which only becomes clear as we follow his argument through the book, when it is evident that his notion of 'practice' is remarkably close to Bazarov's 'experience' or trial and error.

To deal with the first question: the existence of 'things outside our sensations, perceptions, ideas'. Lenin has dealt with colour as follows:[7]

> This means that outside us, independently of us and of our minds, there exists a movement of matter, let us say of ether waves of a definite length and of a definite velocity, which, acting upon the retina, produce in man the sensation of a particular colour. This is precisely how natural science regards it. It explains the sensations of various colours by the various lengths of light-waves existing outside the human retina, outside man and independently of him. This is materialism: matter acting upon our sense-organs produces sensation. Sensation depends on the brain, nerves, retina, etc., i.e., on matter organised in a definite way. The existence of matter does not depend on sensation. Matter is primary. Sensation, thought, consciousness are the supreme product of matter organised in a particular way. Such are the views of materialism in general, and of Marx and Engels in particular.

And as for the second question: whether our ideas of 'green' etc, are correct; he quotes Engels:[8]

> The most telling refutation of this as of all other philosophical crotchets (*Schrullen*) is practice, namely, experiment and industry. If we are able to prove the correctness of our conception of a natural process by making it ourselves, bringing it into being out of its conditions and making it serve our own purposes into the bargain, then there is an end to the Kantian incomprehensible [or ungraspable, *unfassbaren* — this important word is omitted both in Plekhanov's translation and in Mr V. Chernov's translation] 'thing-in-itself'. The chemical substances produced in the bodies of plants and animals remained just such 'things-in-themselves' until organic chemistry began to produce them one after another, whereupon the 'thing-in-itself' became a 'thing-for-us', as, for instance, alizarin, the colouring matter of the madder, which we no longer trouble to grow in the madder roots in the field, but produce much more cheaply and simply from coal tar.

Thus Lenin carefully distinguishes between sensation and the ideas which arise from it. There is nothing inherent in the colour green which tells a driver what to do at the traffic lights. The driver who cannot distinguish green from red does not learn the correct procedure by a process of personal trial and error, nor by enquiring as to the general consensus of opinion; if he did so his life would be short. He learns through a particular social practice of employing an expert driving instructor. Thus a child also learns that grass is green by social education. When a child paints it will often ask what colour a particular object should be painted, and the teacher or parent will give an appropriate response. This response however does not belong purely to the level of sensation, but of extremely abstract, conceptual thought. When the artist approaches the same problem of colour it is from the basis of a long training in living perception. The trained artist is aware of the nuances of colour within the grass, and so could paint a green object set upon the grass, while a child could only achieve this effect by defining the limit of the object by a contrasting line. As the history of art shows there is nothing automatic about using paint to recreate the sensation derived from colour in nature. This is in fact a comparatively modern development, closely related to scientific study of light; far more common has been the use of colour in an abstract, conceptual manner, as for example in iconography.

TRIAL AND ERROR

By making this apparently simple example from everyday experience which we can understand with our own common sense, Omelyanovsky, in fact, confuses the issue. A colour-blind driver who has been taught the correct procedure at traffic lights does not respond to the sensation 'green'; he responds to the sensation of a light in a particular place. On the other hand a driver with perfect vision who has not learnt the procedure at traffic lights will receive the sensation of 'green', but will not respond to this in any special way. Lenin takes from Engels a genuinely concrete example of the way in which we grasp colour as a thing in itself. We reproduce those substances which have the property of reflecting some wave-lengths of light and absorbing others, and which we can use to dye textiles, make paints etc.

The form of practice which the majority of scientists, and following

them Omelyanovsky, advocate, is trial and error. Let us consider, for example, Einstein's views on epistemology and what Omelyanovsky has to say about them:[9]

> I see on the one side the totality of sense-experiences, and, on the other, the totality of the concepts and propositions which are laid down in books. The relations between the concepts and propositions among themselves and each other are of a logical nature, and the business of logical thinking is strictly limited to the achievement of the connection between concepts and propositions among each other according to firmly laid down rules, which are the concern of logic. The concepts and propositions get 'meaning', viz., 'content', only through their connection with sense-experiences. The connection of the latter with the former is purely intuitive, not itself of a logical nature. The degree of certainty with which this relation, viz., intuitive connection, can be undertaken, and nothing else, differentiates empty phantasy from scientific 'truth' . . .
>
> . . . All concepts, even those which are closest to experience, are from the point of view of logic freely chosen conventions . . .

Einstein then denies the possibility of a dialectical logic, which is the logic of evolution of concepts reflecting the dialectical development of matter, but supports free, creative, intuitive thinking. The last 30 years of his life were spent in the futile attempt to create such a theory of Universal Fields, which would encompass all previous physical theories. But what advice does Omelyanovsky offer?[10]

> One has to agree with Einstein when he stated, with the formal logic in mind, that the axioms of physics cannot be deduced logically from the empirical data. The axioms of physical theories, he noted, could not be reached by the 'logical path' but only by that of 'intuition based on penetration into the essence of experience'. The term 'intuition', it seems to us, should be replaced by 'fantasy'; the most rigorous science cannot do without fantasy, as Lenin aptly said in his *Philosophical Notebooks*. And that is not far from the idea that scientific creative work and dialectics are always in harmony.

The actual passage in Lenin is as follows:[11]

> The approach of the (human) mind to a particular thing, the taking of a copy (= a concept) of it *is not* a simple, immediate act, a dead mirroring, but one which is complex, split into two, zig-zag-like, which *includes in it* the possibility of the flight of fantasy from life; more than that: the possibility of the *transformation* (moreover, an unnoticeable transformation, of which man is unaware) of the abstract concept, idea, into a

> *fantasy* (in letzter Instanz** = God). For even in the simplest generalisation, in the most elementary general idea ('table' in general), *there is* a certain bit of fantasy. (Vice versa: it would be stupid to deny the role of fantasy, even in the strictest science: cf. Pisarev on useful dreaming, as an impulse *to* work, and on empty day-dreaming.)

In other words while Lenin recognises the role of fantasy he adds this almost as an afterthought to the main line of his argument here: that fantasy in the final analysis transforms the abstract idea into a divinity. Omelyanovsky has transformed Lenin's statement into a vindication of Einstein's idealism. That Einstein's abstract ideas developed into fantasy in his later years, as a result of his empiricism, seems to have escaped Omelyanovsky.

To begin a critique of the theory of Quantum Mechanics as practised and understood by present-day physicists, the origins of Quantum Mechanical concepts in classical physics must be fully grasped. Without a thoroughgoing analysis of classical physics and its history, the most we can do is tear Quantum Mechanical examples and problems out of historical context and lose much of their significance.

Omelyanovksy's approach is outlined on p.34:

> In classical physics (and that includes the studies of Boltzmann and Einstein mentioned above) it was sufficient, in order to explain the phenomena observed in the instruments, to link the observed data by chain of appropriate reasoning (with the addition, where necessary, of assumptions of one sort or another) with the system of basic concepts and axioms of classical mechanics. As for the problem of objective reality, it meant that the transition from what had been observed in the apparatus to knowledge about the objects being studied could be reduced to the construction of some mechanical macroscopic model.

The concepts used in this mechanical model, as he says on p.31 are 'not very different from that of notions developed in everyday experience.'

That concepts like mass, velocity, force, energy and so on are close to everyday concepts is a stupid misconception probably emanating from scientists who have forgotten the years of study it took them to understand classical physics, and a facile outlook which ignores history. The development of classical ideas and the origins of the special and general theories of relativity are brilliantly outlined in a little book by R.L. Worral,[12] who expounds the theories of matter, space, time

and energy from the standpoint of dialectical materialism. For the purposes of our criticism of Omelyanovsky on Quantum Mechanics let us quote the following passages:[13]

> Physics grew out of classical mechanics, i.e. out of the study of corporeal matter and its behaviour, and still clings to the machine-cut philosophy of its youth, in spite of having outgrown it through relativity theory and quantum theory. Any physical structure which does not consist of one or more particles, and does not obey the laws of mechanics, is still treated as something separate and distinct from matter.
>
> Physical fields do not fit into the traditional picture of matter inherited from eighteenth century physics, and are therefore denied a material character.
>
> This arbitrary division of physical reality, into material particles and 'non-material' fields, is responsible for the crises of theory to which modern physics is now chronically subject. The difficulty of co-ordinating particle and field theories is due basically to a false division of physical reality into material and allegedly non-material structures. Across this metaphysical gulf of absolute differentiation, the most daring hypotheses fail to throw a bridge of theoretical consistency.
>
> Only by recognising particles and fields as two interpenetrating states of matter — corporeal and incorporeal — can theoretical physics escape from otherwise insoluble contradictions.

The recognition that particles and field (waves) form a dialectical unity of opposition in quantum mechanics is of basic importance. Omelyanovsky tells us little by going over the well worn ground of the 'two-slit experiment' as a demonstration of 'wave-particle duality'. But the importance for dialectical materialism is not just one more example of united but opposite tendencies in nature. Worrall brings out clearly what Omelyanovsky ignores — that quantum mechanics means the smashing up of all views about the world which left matter as inert with non-material forces, ethers, fields or anything else including God as the source of activity.

As Worrall puts it:[14]

> From the point of view of orthodox physics, matter is annihilated when an electron and a positron are transformed into two quanta of light energy. Conversely, a 'materialisation' of energy is said to occur when light is transformed into material particles.
>
> This point of view is a product of the outworn doctrine of classical mechanics, according to which matter consists solely of absolutely inert

particles, and energy is an entity separate and distinct from matter. Clinging to this doctrine, physicists will not admit that the energy-containing fields of light are material structures. On the contrary, they commonly describe light as 'radiant energy', in contradistinction to 'inert matter'.

If the material character of radiant energy was recognised, it would not be possible to regard matter as absolutely inert. Matter would then be seen to have an active as well as a passive quality; motivity as well as inertia. Instead of the current view that inert matter is acted upon by non-material energy, matter would be recognised as self-motivated.

All this would conflict with theology, which teaches that something supernatural is ultimately responsible for the activity of 'inert' matter. Physics therefore retains the assumption that matter s absolutely inert, and that radiant energy is non-material in character.

Modern materialism has no such attachment to theologically inspired assumptions. Defining matter as that which exists independently of thought, we can see that matter is active as well as passive, self-motivated as well as inert. While mass is the quantitative aspect of matter's inertia, energy is the quantitative aspect of matter's motivity.

From our materialist point of view, matter is transformed from its corporeal to its incorporated state, when particles are annihilated in the creation of radiating electromagnetic fields. Conversely, matter is transformed from its incorporeal to its corporeal state, when radiating fields produce material particles.

We are stressing here that the dual, contradictory nature of matter as 'particles' and 'fields' is not merely an example of the dialectic to be lifted from Quantum Mechanics; rather Quantum Mechanics brings to its most developed level a conception of matter which was anticipated by certain Ancient Greek philosophers. Reflecting nature in an infinitely deeper and all-sided way, it necessarily breaks up the attempts of scientists to hold on to fixed mathematical systems — however accurately these may describe their limited domains.

Omelyanovsky's approach is an attempt to weld together the illusions of scientists in the omnipotence of their chosen system of study with dialectics, which is only required when a new theory is born. Thus:[15]

> If we take physical knowledge as knowledge abstracted from its origin, movement, and development, it appears to be deductive knowledge. In that case, it is usually (when physics is considered as theoretical physics) in the form of a deductive theoretical system (or several deductive systems),

e.g. classical mechanics, thermodynamics, relativistic mechanics, quantum mechanics. The laws of formal logic (traditional or modern) are then sufficient to solve the problems of cognition relating to physics that arise.

If, on the other hand, we take physical knowledge as it exists in reality, i.e. from the point of view of its origin (from experience) and development, then formal logic proves to be limited when used to solve cognitive problems. Such physical knowledge already appears as a succession of theories, as the emergence of a new theory, with new principles and basic concepts, from an old one. Here materialist dialectics comes on the scene as dialectical logic, which is concerned with developing knowledge and the laws of development of scientific cognition.

Note in passing the elevated position of formal logic supported by the review article on Omelyanovsky's book in Labour Review. That formal logic does not suffice, even within the limited spheres of cognition in physics, was grasped by philosophers at the beginning of the period of modern science as they broke from mediaeval scholasticism.[16]

DIALECTICS vs EMPIRICISM

Omelyanovsky also supports the virtual worship of mathematics which is a major component of modern empiricism. Nobody could deny the importance of mathematics as a tool in scientific work, but the extremely abstract and specialised nature of mathematical concepts must limit them for the depth and subtlety which cognition demands. Let us study what Omelyanovsky says:[17]

> In classical theories physical concepts for the most part represent a direct generalisation of notions that are employed by so-called common sense. The physical concept of length, for instance, represents a generalisation of the fact that perceived things possess various extensions. The comparisons of dimensions made billions of times by man in practice before systematic scientific investigation of nature led to the development of scientific concepts of a constant scale and units of length, and through the latter to rules of the correspondence between the lengths of perceived things and certain numbers. The length of every perceived thing could thus now be measured precisely, i.e. generally speaking, the concepts developed in everyday experience and mathematical abstractions could now be unified in that profound synthesis of sensual and abstract cognition without which physics as a science does not exist.

It would be the purest pedantry, of course, to demand that all the physical concepts figuring in classical and non-classical theories should arise in exactly this way. i.e. in a way by which a physicist always proceeds from the perceptible readings of an instrument to mathematical abstraction. That way is typical of the concepts of classical mechanics, for the reason that the latter arose directly from everyday experience and took shape before the other theories of classical physics, serving for some time as their model of scientific cognition.

The mathematical apparatus of a physical theory (which is interpreted here as a theory *at the stage of formation*), which represents a certain system of abstractions, possesses relative independence and has its own logic of development; by virtue of that certain concepts appear initially in certain conditions in a physical theory, which is becoming established, as a mathematical abstraction: only later is the physical meaning of the mathematical concepts revealed, i.e. they find, as one says, their physical or empirical interpretation. Discovery of the physical meaning of mathematical abstractions is a most important necessary aspect of the development of a physical theory. Without it the theory is, after all, a mathematical scheme and not a *physical* theory. Only this aspect gives mathematical abstractions physical flesh: consequently, only by taking it into account is it possible to formulate the laws of those physical phenomena that must be reflected by the theory; which means to give the physical theory a really developed form.

This is very revealing of Omelyanovsky's exposition and takes us to the heart of the dialectical as opposed to the empiricist conception. In the first paragraph Omelyanovsky is correctly summarising how the quantitative scientific concept of length arrived on the scene historically as a development from the more basic concept of extension. As Worrall puts it:[18]

> Sophisticated speech has dimmed our appreciation of the quality of extension, although it is a universal mode of existence of matter. *Distance, size* and *shape* are spatial terms which have been cut adrift, so to speak, from their material origin, namely the quality of extension. Yet a physical distance is essentially a one-dimensional quality of extension, while the shape of an object is the external form of its extension. As for the size of an object, it is the amount of extension of the object as a whole, relative to the length of a measuring rod or some other quantity of extension.
>
> Every physical measurement is a measurement of some physical quality — some mode of existence or mode of behaviour of matter. A physical quality is a form, or a state, or process, or tendency of matter, the quantitative aspect of which is defined numerically by means of measurement.

But what about the 'profound synthesis of sensual and abstract cognition' in which 'concepts developed in everyday experience and mathematical abstractions could now be unified'?

From the next paragraph we must presume that 'sensual cognition' = instrument readings, e.g. the measurement of lengths by a measuring rod, which in fact are highly abstract and which are only presented by the empiricist as somehow basic. In the historical process the qualitative concept of extension 'derived by comparisons of dimensions made billions of times' came first. The quantitative aspect of extension, the measurement of length, developed out of this and then the study of relationships between these quantities i.e. mathematics, geometry in particular.

Confusion over this development now leads Omelyanovsky to an idealist position in the next paragraphs. Physicists may *think* that they proceed from mathematical abstractions, to physical concepts and perceptible instrument readings. It is not pedantry as Omelyanovsky suggests to maintain that they must proceed in the same way as the Ancient Greeks, but rather the defence of materialism itself. A deeper study of the way in which the theory of relativity and at a later date Quantum Mechanics developed than that which Omelyanovsky gives in his book shows that what *preceded* the mathematical theory in both cases was a very searching criticism of the most basic concepts of matter and motion, space and time, etc., and how these concepts adequately reflect the external world.

CONCEPTS OF MODERN PHYSICS

The quantitative aspect of these concepts was developed on this basis and taken by itself is as useless as Euclid's geometry to somebody who has never developed concepts of extension and space by using rulers, compass or protractor, etc.

As Engels put it:[19]

> . . . But, as in every department of thought, at a certain stage of development the laws, which were abstracted from the real world, become divorced from the real world, and are set up against it as something independent, as laws coming from outside, to which the world has to conform. That is how things happened in society and in the state, and in this way, and not otherwise. *pure* mathematics was subsequently *applied* to

> the world, although it is borrowed from the same world and represents only one part of its forms of interconnection — and it is only *just because of this* that it can be applied at all.

There is not space here to show the essential driving force of Neils Bohr's historical and philosophical approach in the birth and growth of Quantum Mechanics. But one remark of Heisenberg's may show how he never accepted the mathematical fetishism and axiomania of modern physicists.[20]

> But I noticed that mathematical clarity had in itself no virtue for Bohr. He feared that the formal mathematical structure would obscure the physical core of the problem, and in any case, he was convinced that a complete physical explanation should absolutely precede the mathematical foundation.

Omelyanovsky's position, that in modern physics concepts appear as mathematical abstractions, later to be given physical flesh, shows unquestioning acceptance of what physicists think they are doing, rather than probing the actual history of the concepts involved.

Because he rejects a thoroughgoing examination of the historical and dialectical development of the concepts of modern physics, Omelyanovsky fails to deal adequately with the mechanical outlook which is very predominant amongst scientists and which relates to the role played by mathematics in the development of science. That role, uncritically accepted, is the source of the current fetishism with mathematical, quantitative approaches (nowhere more absurd than in economics and the so called social sciences).

In discussing the concept of the motion he says:[21]

> One can speak of a certain analogy between Zeno's paradoxes relating to motion and the particle-wave duality. In the first case the point is not so much the sensual certainty of the motion, of whether there is motion, as how to express it in the logic of concepts. In the second case one also has in mind the need to understand the empirical certaintly of corpuscular and wave properties of the micro-objects because the certainty alone is not enough. The corresponding problems in the two cases are solved by dialectics; the cases differ, however, as regards the nature of the dialectical unities that emerge. In the case of motion (mechanical displàcement) the latter does not directly lead to the idea of contradictoriness, and even now one cannot help feeling amazed at the virtuosity of Zeno's dialectical mind (a virtuosity not yet conscious in many modern scientists), when he, so to

> say, 'divided the single into two'. In the case of particle-wave duality, on the contrary, the 'split' is usual and it is the empirical fact of electron diffraction that causes surprise, or visual experiments with light of **low** intensities, which mean that the particle and wave aspects *merge together*.

Instead of grasping the connection between motion understood as contradiction and particle-wave duality, we are told that mechanical motion does not directly lead to the idea of contradictoriness. But why was this? And if matter is inherently contradictory and that is how its self-motion can be understood — which is the Marxist position — how was this contradiction concealed in history?

Worrall shows that the answer may be found in the mathematical treatment of motion, developed particularly by Newton and Leibnitz in the calculus, which was crucial to the enormous step forward in science made in the 17th and 18th centuries.[22]

> As far as classical mechanics is concerned, a physical position is a position *of rest* of a material body. The term *position* means a state condition, as far as physical reality is concerned.
>
> The idea that a body's translatory motion is a series of infinitely close positions of rest is a fallacy, however, as Zeno showed in his famous paradoxes.
>
> Mathematical teaching asserts that translatory motion is the change of a body from one position of rest to another. Instead of this teaching being given as the convenient fiction that it is, students are usually asked to swallow it as gospel truth! . . .
>
> . . . All this is merely mathematical make-believe. To quote T. Dantzig, a somewhat exceptional professor of mathematics:
>
> 'Our senses perceive motion as something individual, uninterrupted. The very act of resolving motion into elements results in the destruction of the continuity which we have resolved to preserve. For the purpose of number, it is necessary to regard the line as a succession of infinitesimal resting-stations, and this is repugnant to the very idea of motion conceived by us as direct opposite of rest.'
>
> The difference between continuous motion as we percieve it, and 'the mathematical fiction masquerading under the same name', has been clearly brought out by Dantzig, who continues (as if he were Zeno speaking):
>
> 'You say that just as space consists of an infinity of continuous points, so time is but an infinite collection of contigious instants. Good! Consider, then, an arrow in its flight. At any instant its extremity occupies a definite

point in its path. Now, while *occupying this position* it must be *at rest* there. But how can a point be motionless and yet in movement at the same time?'

'The reply of the mathematician', continues Dantzig, 'ignores Zeno's paradoxes by referring to a *mathematical* definition of motion. Motion is defined as a correspondence (a "function") between position and time.'

This definition mistakes a mathematical treatment of motion for the actual motion itself. Ignoring the physical continuity of actual motion, mathematicians present their convenient fiction that motion is essentially a series of discontinuous positions of rest, *as if the fiction was the reality!*

To quote Professor Dantzig again (p.127): 'Mathematical motion is just an infinite succession of states of rest, i.e. mathematics reduces dynamics to a branch of statics . . . motion made up of motionless states is no more nor less absurd than a length made up of extentionless points, or a time made up of durationless instants.'

'True this abstraction is not even the skeleton of the real motion as perceived by our senses! When we see a ball in flight we perceive the motion as a whole and not as a succession of infinitesimal jumps.'

As Eristotle pointed out long ago, the fallacy demonstrated by Zeno's paradoxes is the assumption that physical motion is actually a body's transference from one position of rest to another.

To this we might add that whilst the creators of this mathematical edifice may have imagined there was no contradiction involved in the leap from ordinary numbers to 'infinitesimals' and other such abstractions, their descendants are to this day wrestling with the impossible task of reconciling higher mathematics with formal logic. They will not succeed. As Engels retorted to Dühring:

> For that matter, Her Dühring will never succeed in conceiving real infinity without contradiction. Infinity *is* a contradiction, and is full of contradictions. From the outset it is a contradiction that an infinity is composed of nothing but finites, and yet this is the case. The limitedness of the material world leads no less to contradictions than its unlimitedness, and every attempt to get over these contradictions leads, as we have seen, to new and worse contradictions. It is just *because* infinity is a contradiction that it is an infinite process, unrolling endlessly in time and space. The removal of the contradiction would be the end of infinity. Hegel saw this quite correctly, and for that reason treated wiih well-merited contempt the gentlemen who subtilised over this contradiction.

Not surprisingly, the mathematical treatment of motion, concealing its inner discords, has become the paradigm of bourgeois

scientific thought with all its horror of contradiction. It is the limited outlook of the Stalinist bureaucracy, paying homage to the dialectic on the one hand but on the other preferring its 'closed systems' and 'formal logic', which explains Omelyanovsky's reticence to probe these questions.

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