

CONTRADICTIONS AND STRUGGLES IN NORTHERN IRELAND

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Introduction

THE essay which follows was written in August 1971, shortly before internment and the escalation in violence which came with it. Overnight everything seemed to have changed: the scale of events, the lines of battle and the political issues and priorities. Until then it had been possible (by stretching things a little) to interpret the conflict as a confrontation between Catholics and Protestants, with the British Army in an essentially mediating role. Now, it seemed, the mask had finally been dropped: the British Army was engaged in a one-sided combat against Republicans and left-wing radicals. So completely had it adopted the **provocatory** function and the repressive zeal **of** the Protestant extremists that the latter were no longer needed in the streets. Their weight now only made itself felt on the political stage in the form of a threat of impending backlash.

At the time of publishing the essay, yet another page has been turned: Direct rule is being proclaimed. No-one knows what things will look like when the essay reaches the reader, but **it** is a likely bet that today's issues, struggles and priorities will look as distant and irrelevant as do those of 1968, 69, 70 or 71. Under these circumstances it may seem pointless, and perhaps even misleading, to burden the reader with an analysis of the strategy options of Irish socialists, written as much as half a year before.

In fact I do not think that an analysis loses any of its pertinence in so short a time. The very diversity of the struggles and the rapidity with which they alternate are evidence, if any had been needed, that the importance of these struggles is only incidental. They are only the phenomenal forms of underlying contradictions. The task of strategy is to find these contradictions, and, with them, the points at which political action can be applied most effectively. Therein lies all the difference between political improvisation and theory-based strategy. And in this perspective, it can be seen, the changing struggles on the political stage do not affect strategy directly. Their importance lies elsewhere: in terms of political praxis they delineate the field within which tactical operations must be conducted, and in terms of theory

they provide the evidence against which one's understanding of the underlying contradictions is to be tested.

The escalation of the conflict between the IRA and the British Army in the fall and winter of 1971 and the imposition of direct rule in the spring of 1972 have changed the conditions of political action radically and irreversibly. But this essay is not concerned with the translation of strategy into tactics. It is concerned with the outlines of strategy itself, in other words with the character and evolution of the dominant contradictions. As far as this is concerned I do not think that recent political developments render necessary any substantial revision in such analyses as could be conducted half a year ago. Some refinements on secondary points have become possible, and I have made the corresponding revisions in the text.

The aim of the following analysis is to show that behind the shifting political constellations of these years there is a principal contradiction in the social structure, of which they can be thought to be the successive manifestations. This contradiction opposes on the one hand a traditional "clientelist" form of a capitalist social formation which finds expression in such institutions as the Orange Order and the Unionist Party, and, on the other hand, the "normal" contemporary form of a capitalist social formation which is associated with the large international corporations and the concepts of monopoly capitalism and the welfare state. Had struggles on the political stage been straight "reflections" of underlying contradictions — which, of course, they never are — we should have witnessed, not the battles of Catholic and Protestant workers or the shifting triangular and polygonal confrontations of the last years, but an inter-Unionist factional strife. And that is indeed the form the conflict took in the mid-sixties, personified in the opposition between O'Neill and Paisley. Under direct rule this could again become the main battle-line, but this time with Faulkner and Craig as the personifications of the opposite aspects of the contradiction.

The dominant theory of the Irish (Catholic) left and of socialist groups outside Ireland is a different one. According to it, the fundamental contradictions opposes imperialist domination on the one hand, and on the other the struggles for national liberation and socialism. To these different conceptions of the principal contradiction there corresponds of course totally different strategies for the left. As I try to show the strategy of "national liberation" which the left is presently pursuing, is based on a faulty analysis and leads absolutely nowhere. It portrays the windmills of British imperialism as a mighty army and overlooks the real enemy. In so doing, far from enriching the revolutionary experience of the working class and preparing the ground for the more meaningful struggles of the future, it is trapping the

working class ever more firmly in its sectarian ideologies. Suitably romanticised, the bloody and pointless battles of these years will probably one day take their place alongside the trophies of 1690 and 1916 to fulfill their only possible role: to cripple the consciousness of future generations in Ireland.

To make a theory of a conflict is to determine the principal contradictions; and to do that is to identify an enemy and, in Clausewitz's terminology, the centre of gravity of a strategy. In consequence, I spell out at the end the main lines of the course of action which according to the theory would turn the struggles of the Irish left to productive ends. But when escalation and polarisation have gone as far as they have in Northern Ireland the task of devising optimal strategies in the abstract becomes a futile one.

Partition

It is first necessary to sketch certain aspects of the economic and political developments leading up to partition in order to understand the emergence of two different nationalisms in Ireland in the second half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. This also provides the necessary perspective on the rise of the Orange coalition in Ulster and on the present moves towards the reunification of Ireland in economic terms.

In the eighteenth century the economic situation had been the reverse of what it is now: the South had a mixed economy of comparatively large industries and agriculture, while the North was almost entirely agricultural. But by the end of the century the industries in the South had begun to decline: the use of coal in industry — the power-loom, iron smelting by coal, and the application of steam engines to blast furnaces — left Irish industries at a disadvantage *vis à vis* British competitors. Also the introduction of labour-saving methods in industry was rendered difficult by the archaic guild-type organization of labour in eighteenth century Ireland and the weakness of her propertied class, which was predominantly land-owning and commercial, rather than industrial.

Agriculture in the South was so poor that it did not constitute a sufficient basis for an industry catering for the domestic market. This was related to the tenure system in the South, the tenancy-at-whim system, which consisted of very short leases, rarely of more than a year. This had discouraged land improvements and encouraged rack-renting. The North, on the other hand, had been planted much later and another tenure system known as "Ulster custom" had developed. This involved long-term security of tenure. In fact, the counties of Antrim and Down along the North-Eastern coast, now the most developed parts of Ulster, were not planted by the English government at all,

but privately by Scottish immigrants. The "Ulster custom" made investment in agriculture profitable for the tenant and permitted the growth of cottage industries, principally linen manufacture. It thus facilitated local capital accumulation and the emergence of a domestic market for industrial and artisanal goods. Moreover, Ulster's linen industry was based on off-season agricultural labour, instead of all-year wage labour as in the South. It was therefore able to survive the period of intense British competition in the early nineteenth century when the industry collapsed in the South.

Ulster was therefore able to benefit fully from the growth of the linen industry after 1820. Industries began to develop up- and down-stream from linen manufacture: shirt-making in Derry and an engineering industry to equip the textile industries. In contrast to the superficial and vulnerable industrialisation of the South in the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century industrialisation of Ulster came as a "normal and healthy development".¹ Towards the end of the nineteenth century Ireland again consisted of two economies, but these were now geographically separate: the South had a vast subsistence level peasantry which was only slowly recovering from the years of the Great Famine and a thin upper stratum of landlords and trading bourgeoisie. Industry was not far developed. In Ulster, on the other hand, the economically dominant class was the industrial bourgeoisie, and this class was in the process of achieving political dominance as well against the landlord class. Belfast was a rapidly expanding modern industrial and commercial centre with all the dynamism, self-confidence and abject popular misery of early capitalism. In short, the South was a kind of neo-colonial society while Ulster was no more nor less than an integral part of the British economy.

These were the hard realities behind partition.² The orange sashes and green banners were merely their political manifestations. They rendered the united and independent Ireland of the Nationalists utopian. Not only were the economies of the two halves of the island different, they were neither complementary nor compatible. The Northern industries were entirely dependent upon the preservation of the British market, and to it the market of the South was no alternative. Nor was the North a possible market for the agricultural products of the South. Both of them were exporters. But first of all the interests of the dominant classes in the North and in the South were opposed: the industries in the North could only survive with a free trade policy towards Britain; but such a policy was not to be expected of an Irish republic, for the development of industry in the South would not be possible except behind the shield of a protective tariff.

Religious divisions have been a constant feature of the Irish scene for centuries. Some have sought to conclude from this that religious

antagonism in Ireland is just a colonial relic, the residue of attitudes dating from the days of the plantation and handed down from generation to generation within the segregated institutions of Ulster such as schools and lodges. Others have sought to explain this constancy in terms of the permanence of material factors such as domination by British imperialism and its interest in dividing the working class. In contrast to this it is a major thesis of this essay that even in cases like Ireland, where the opposing cultural or racial groups appear to be the same over long periods of history, the struggles in each epoch are nonetheless expressions of contradictions which are specific to that epoch. One could liken the society in Ulster to a crystal: whichever the strains acting upon it or within it, it always breaks in much the same way. But from the sameness of effects the sameness of strains does not follow. The impression of continuity over centuries of conflict in Ireland is as much an illusion as is the impression of discontinuity over the past four years.

This becomes evident when one looks back over history. The dividing lines between antagonistic groups have been shifting several times, and the bigotry and sectarianism found nowadays in Ulster cannot be traced further back than the eighteen thirties. Moreover, the contradictions which found expression in the crises of 1920 and of 1970 are quite different, even though on the surface these crises look very similar.

In the late eighteenth century the population of Belfast was almost entirely Presbyterian. The city had no industry but was a thriving trading centre with a strong liberal tradition. The American and French Revolutions were followed with ebullient enthusiasm and the fall of the Bastille was celebrated in the streets. Belfast Presbyterians were among the leaders of the United Irishmen, a secret society turned against the Anglican ascendancy and with a programme rather similar to that of the French revolutionaries. This Presbyterian-led rebellion sought to build upon a Catholic peasant uprising, so that the Belfast Presbyterians of 1798, in stark opposition to their present image, were at once fiercely Liberal and the main advocates of Catholic Emancipation.

In the countryside the situation was different. For the Protestant tenants Catholics represented a threat of eviction from the land because they were often willing to forego the advantages of the "Ulster custom" and accept short leases. A number of secret societies were formed on both sides to protect tenants' interests, if need be by terrorism. The Orange Order, founded in 1795, was one such Anglican (i.e. High Church) society. It was used successfully by the landlords in 1798 to crush the rebellion of the United Irishmen.

The first decades of the nineteenth century saw a long drawn-out

struggle between Liberals and Conservatives for the control of the Presbyterian Church. The **Conservative** wing eventually prevailed. A great number of Liberal leaders had been executed after **1798**. Belfast's industries were growing rapidly and so was its Catholic proletariat. The proportion of Catholics **rose** from about one in ten to one in three between **1800** and **1830**. They would often work for starvation wages so that divisions between Catholic and Protestant workers began to appear in the cities too. By repealing discriminatory legislation against Presbyterians and deliberately fostering anti-Catholic bigotry among the urban poor, the Tory wing of the Presbyterian Church succeeded in gaining control. In **1829** the Liberal wing broke off to form the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, leaving the bulk of the Presbyterians in the orbit of the Tories and landlords.

Liberalism remained strong in the urban bourgeoisie, but as a result of this split it lost much of its influence over the workers, artisans and small traders. To ensure that an anti-landlord league on the model of the United Irishmen could never rise again, the Orange Order was reactivated and opened for Presbyterian membership (officially in **1834**). Orange marches and recurring riots, several of which were certainly provoked with full deliberation by the Presbyterian clergy, served to reinforce sectarianism and to intimidate the Catholic poor. The first major riot seems to have occurred in **1835** and from then on and till the close of the century they were re-enacted at three to ten years' interval.³

At the time of the first Home Rule Bill in **1886** three parties dominated Irish politics: the Tory or Conservative Party, which in contrast to its British counterpart was still based on the landed aristocracy; the Whig or Liberal Party which was based on the industrial bourgeoisie, and which was in the process of regaining its strength in Ulster; and the Nationalist Party which was a somewhat confused conglomerate of lower middle class bourgeoisie, lesser property owners and a clergy-led peasantry. The introduction of the Home Rule Bill by the Nationalist supported Liberal cabinet in London caused a virtually instantaneous and universal swing of Irish Liberals to Unionism, fusing the landed aristocracy, the big bourgeoisie and the Orange lodges into a compact bloc. This swing, of course, was not a swing in policy, **only** a matter of priorities — a reorganisation whereby the ancient feuds of industrialists and landlords were postponed till times of lesser emergency. The Orange Order, in particular, with "its system of local lodges, affiliated to a Grand Lodge in each County, supplied the ready-made framework of an effective organisation. Immediately after the introduction of Gladstone's first bill in **1886** it received an immense accession of strength. Large numbers of country gentlemen, clergymen of **all** Protestant denominations, business and

professional men, farmers and the better class of artisans in Belfast and other towns joined the lodges, the management of which passed into capable hands; the Society was thereby completely and rapidly transformed and, instead of being a somewhat disreputable and obsolete survival, it became a highly respectable as well as an exceedingly powerful political organisation".⁴ Anti-Catholic bigotry helping, the whole Protestant community in the North became aligned behind Unionism, thus creating a mass base which could be relied upon if it became necessary to take up arms. Yet at the same time the Orange complexion of the Unionist alliance blocked any possibility of compromise between the business interests in the North and the Nationalists, in the form, for example, of land reforms or of economic concessions to the middle class, because it shifted the focus of Unionism from economic and social issues to the issue of religious, or, more precisely, of national differences.

As the crisis grew in the years up to World War I the major factor which served to hold the Unionist coalition together was a genuine community of short-term interests, but this was facilitated by the inability or unwillingness of the Nationalists to recognise the true character of the Unionist opposition to Home Rule. Ulster was no doubt the more progressive part of Ireland, and its refusal to be coerced into a state with which it had no affinity of nationality, no community of interests in economic terms and which promised to be politically reactionary and dominated by the Catholic Church was never well understood by the Nationalists. Instead, they seemed to assume that the Unionist movement consisted of little more than a lumpen bourgeoisie and a lumpen proletariat which landlords were leading by the nose. The problem of Ulster's opposition to Home Rule was therefore seen as a question that would solve itself in due course and which, if need be, could be dealt with temporarily through coercion. In fact the most advanced sector of the Irish working class, the Protestant workers of Belfast, were firmly aligned behind Unionism, and this for no bad reason: Home Rule constituted a direct threat to their jobs and incomes, as it did to those of most other people in the North.

Today one can find this same tendency among Catholic Nationalists to attribute Protestant working and lower-middle class opposition to the reunification of Ireland to plots and manipulation by imperialism and by the Ulster ruling class. In the nineteen seventies as in the nineteen twenties this results in a gross underestimation of the forces Nationalists are up against.

The political predominance of the landlord class in the Unionist movement was out of all proportion to its real strength — at least in Ulster. Before Partition came in 1920 it had been all but destroyed by the land reforms at the turn of the century. While it is idle to speculate

about historical "ifs" it is nevertheless worth noting that a number of characteristics of Ulster Unionism, its Orange complexion, its links with the British Conservatives and its politically archaic and oligarchic character are largely the result of the fortuities of timing.

As things happened, however, the industrial section of the Unionist bloc largely left the political initiative to the landlord class.⁵ The Unionist Party emerged as an alliance with liberal economic policies (free trade), ultimately deriving its strength from the industrial bourgeoisie, but dominated in its ideological outlook by the landlord class on the one hand, and on the other, by the working and lower-middle class sectarianism of the Orange Order.

The Orange System

After Partition a peculiar social and political system developed in Northern Ireland. It was based on two main elements: on the one hand the continued threat to the state posed by militant Republicanism in the South and Catholic disloyalty in the North, and, on the other, the perpetuation of the "Orange" coalition and its sectarian policies. This social formation is now rapidly breaking down, but in order to understand the contradictions underlying the present struggles in Ireland it is necessary to deal briefly with this system which has prevailed in Ulster for about half a century.⁶

As do other political systems, the Orange system rests on the organised solidarity of the various elites. It is, however, original in this that the strength and cohesion of the system is to be found at the *local* level, rather than at the level of the Province as a whole. This solidarity builds upon a close alliance between local government, the Orange Order, the Protestant churches, the local Unionist party organisation, local business and the liberal professions.

The Orange Order is the cornerstone of this conservative alliance. It is a secret society of a Masonic character with a predominantly working class and lower-middle class membership. Its size is unknown but probably one adult Protestant male out of three is a member. There are also lodges for the professional and salaried classes, but in normal times the middle classes tend to look down upon the Order and its secret rites and antiquated paraphernalia. The police have their own Lodge, the "Cromwell's Ironsides", and the Order is linked to a variety of other similar but much smaller organisations such as the "Apprentice Boys of Derry" and the more extreme "Royal Black Preceptory" and "Royal Purple Arch". To the rank-and-file member the Order functions as a mixture of a non-denominational church, a local club, an interest organisation, and a link to the ruling classes.

Both formally and informally the Order is linked in a number of ways to the Unionist Party. This is an umbrella party grouping the

Protestants of all classes. It has an assured majority on almost all local councils. Floating votes hardly exist. Voting patterns are so rigid and election results so predictable that up to 70% of all seats have been uncontested at a general election.

The control of local councils is important for a variety of reasons. One is that the councils build and own about a third of all houses and have a large say in the location of the remaining two thirds. They are therefore in a position to control the size and religious composition of electoral wards, and can encourage Protestant settlement and Catholic emigration.

The same purposes are achieved through discrimination in employment. The County Councils are in charge of health, education and welfare services and directly or indirectly appoint everyone from the hospital surgeon to the school bus driver. Discrimination in the allocation of such jobs and of all jobs associated with the local administration is rampant. The local councils are also in charge of road building. This employs a substantial number of workers and is a flexible instrument for regulating unemployment. It is considered quite normal that such jobs should go to trusted loyalists. Public works employment thus serves to reinforce loyalty among the poor, and much of it being part-time work it is particularly important for the small farmers, many of whom can only make ends meet if they have a job in the winter months. Enlistment in the B-Specials played a similar role. Recruitment took place mainly through the Orange Order and provided an extra income for part-time work for the more fanatic loyalists in the lower-middle and working classes. With a troop strength nearing 10,000 in a province with 40,000 unemployed it is clear that the B-Specials served not only to protect the state against I.R.A. terrorism and to intimidate Catholic dissenters (and occasionally strikers in general) but that an equally important effect it had was to reward militant **loyalism** among lower class Protestants.

Job **discrimination** is also widespread in private employment, but overall figures are not available. In the small towns the characteristic form of enterprise is the small family business, owner-managed, closely integrated in the local community and run in patriarchal fashion. At least until well into the fifties the predominance of this type of company in Northern Ireland was in marked contrast to the rest of the UK. The proportion of private to public companies does not differ much from the UK average, but private companies are much larger in Northern Ireland and account for a much larger part of capital and labour. In 1950 private companies in Northern Ireland accounted for three fifths of all paid up capital as compared with one third in the UK as a whole. Employment in these companies is often a matter of patronage and tradition. Many jobs are regarded almost

as a family prerogative and are transferred from father to son. For the worker seeking a job it is often a matter of getting the Master of the local Orange Lodge to "speak for him". In any case, news of a vacancy, both in public and in private employment is often transmitted through the grapevine so that only "the right sort" will apply. This is done on both sides. but vacancies for Catholics are of course much fewer.

Overall unemployment has seldom been less than 7% of insured workers, and has been much higher in some areas and trades. In Londonderry male unemployment averaged 20% and in Strabane 25%. Among Catholics and unskilled (most of whom are Catholics anyway) it is of course still higher. Unemployment figures broken down by religion are not available, but in one town surveyed in which there are equal numbers of Catholics and Protestants, the former were found to constitute 90% of all unemployed. In fact, even such figures grossly underestimate the magnitude of the problem, for many Catholics tire of waiting on the dole and emigrate instead. Broadly speaking one out of three Catholics and one out of seven Protestants emigrate between the ages of 17 and 27.⁷ Evidently a large part of the difference between Catholics and Protestants in respect of emigration and unemployment is accounted for by the greater proportion of Catholics among unskilled workers and poor farmers and among the population of the depressed areas west of the Bann. But it is also the result of a deliberate policy to keep the number of Catholics down. This has been very successful until recent years for the proportion of Catholics in the population has remained almost stationary at 35% since the 1920's, despite a Catholic birth rate almost twice that of the Protestants.

As can be seen from all this, control of local government is an essential element of the system, and to allow corruption, patronising and discrimination to go on unchecked it is necessary that this control be total and permanent and unrelated to the extent to which specific electoral demands are, or are not satisfied. Thus it was necessary to rig the electoral system to assure Unionist majorities on all councils and at the same time to forestall fragmentation within the Unionist ranks. The former was achieved by limiting the franchise, by redrawing the boundaries of constituencies, and in some cases by extensive electoral fraud. The limited franchise had the double advantage of diminishing the relative importance of the Catholic vote and of favouring traditionally conservative sectors of the population such as farmers in preference to rural labour, and small business and traders in preference to workers. Once electoral boundaries have been gerrymandered (the latest case appears to have been in County Fermanagh in 1967), housing and employment discrimination suffice to maintain the voting pattern.

It needs stressing that the essential point is not that the system is "undemocratic" because in some places a minority can remain in power. What matters here is the stability and the rigidity of the system which permits open corruption and completely shields the local government from any control, popular or otherwise. With a permanent majority in the council the opposition parties serve only as window-dressing, and it is in effect a one-party system. Catholic opposition is forced into the Streets and Protestant opposition is forced into the Unionist and Orange organisations where it would be foolhardy for anyone who has a house, a job or a business good-will to lose to raise his voice. It is therefore only in the relative anonymity of a large town such as Belfast that an opposition party has any chance of drawing even a small fraction of the Protestant vote.

To prevent splits among the Unionist voters and to check the growth of class-based parties is the one thing the Protestants cannot achieve without some sort of assistance from the Catholics. While political unity among the Protestants has been aided by the one-man constituency system and by the extensive means of pressure available to force dissenters into line, the main factor has nevertheless been that the threat posed by the refusal of Catholics North and South of the Border to accept the existence of Northern Ireland as a separate political entity, has remained credible throughout. Thus the issue of partition could be reactivated prior to each election to override any specific grievances and divisions. It is probably no exaggeration to say that without the sporadic attacks of the I.R.A. and the loud noises from the Republic about its determination to see Partition ended, the Orange system could not have survived. Militant noises in the South were largely rhetoric. Nevertheless this rhetoric was a political necessity in the South, and it both reinforced, and was itself reinforced by the sectarian and oppressive character of Unionist rule in the North. Thus there has been a curious *de facto* alliance between Unionists in the North and Fianna Fail (and other parties) in the South in which they have kept the Partition issue alive, thus helping one another to remain in power. The direct costs in the form of repression have been paid by Catholics in the North. But indirect costs have been much greater and much more evenly distributed, for this state of affairs has prevented any genuine understanding from developing. The sorry state of class consciousness and political organisation among workers in Ireland and the religious and nationalist ideologies which have prevailed bear witness to this. But more of this later.

The underlying structure of the Orange system is of course not unique to Northern Ireland. Close analogues can be found in other societies which find themselves in an embattled situation, which are divided along ethnic or racial lines, and where political life is centred

around the small provincial town. In Mississippi, for instance, there is (or was until very recently) the same type of coalition of all classes with the Democratic party on the one hand, and the Citizens' Councils and the Klan on the other, playing much the same roles as the Unionist party and the Orange Order respectively in Northern Ireland. One finds there the same cult of historical myths (about the ante-bellum South and reconstruction), the same patriarchal type of rule by local bosses, and the same united front in the dominant group, based not on unity of political aims in the normal meaning of "politics", but on an ideology of ascendancy, bolstered by religious fundamentalism; loyalty being maintained when necessary by economic pressure, ostracism, and, occasionally, by exemplary violence. Nor does it seem to be an accident that apart from Northern Ireland the main areas where the religious fundamentalism of the original Calvinist and Wesleyan faiths has survived are South Africa, Prussia and the American Deep South, all of them "settler" or "frontier" societies.

An adequate theoretical and empirical investigation of this type of social formation remains to be done. Nonetheless one may tentatively point to a few important aspects of it which seem to distinguish it from the bourgeois formations we are accustomed to and in which the dominance of a relatively pure capitalistic sector of the formation is very strong. In the Orange system there appears to be much less autonomy between the economic, political and ideological regions of the social formation. For instance the economic struggle of the dominated classes (say, for improved housing and employment opportunities) cannot be conducted on its own, but directly calls into question certain political relations. It is inevitably a political struggle as well. In fact it appears that the regions of the superstructure, the political and ideological spheres, have a more dominant role relative to the base, the economic sphere, in this social formation as compared with the usual capitalist formations. There is nothing surprising in this. Aristocratic-feudal types of patronage relationship are after all more characteristic of this social formation than is a classical contractual relation to wage labour. Those parts of society where a purer kind of capitalist relations of production have a more prominent place—Belfast—are also those where organisation along class lines poses less problems, where non-sectarian political parties have a certain appeal, and where trade unionism and reformism, the typical working class ideologies in bourgeois society, have been best able to hold their own against working class sectarianism.

The ideological sphere — the set of notions in terms of which people experience their lives and interpret and integrate their experiences — appears to contain an important admixture of aristocratic-feudal elements, even though, of course, it is profoundly marked by the

bourgeois character of the society and also by the patriarchal and (in a wide sense of the word) "racial" forms associated with settler colonialism. This combination of bourgeois and colonial elements is visible in the "*Herrenvolk* egalitarianism", the *ideology* (not to be confused with *reality*) of in-group equality one finds in the Orange Order and in the class-transcending character of the Unionist Party. But the dominant region within the ideological sphere is the religious one (as it is also mostly in the feudal mode of production).⁸ The cult of tradition and *mythology* in other regions of the ideological sphere — moral, political, conceptions of national identity, etc. — is evidence of this dominance of the religious region. In other bourgeois societies it is religion which has received the imprint of those ideological regions which were dominant (particularly the politico-legal region),⁹ and religion has come to be thought and experienced in categories derived therefrom (for instance the notion of "religious freedom" and the individualistic and egalitarian perspective on religion are evidence of the impact of politico-legal ideological categories). This is the process of secularisation in which the religious ideology is desacralised, deprived of its character of a system of social imperatives, reduced to a set of private norms, and embedded in a subordinate position in the ideology of a society of free individuals. In Northern Ireland where religion has remained the dominant region of the ideology, it has not been "contaminated" in this way. If anything it is the other ideological regions which have been "contaminated" by being thought in religious categories. This is the reason why religion is not just more strongly experienced in Northern Ireland than it is elsewhere. It is the religion itself which is *qualitatively* different from what it has developed into elsewhere, say, in Britain. Whence the survival of fundamentalism noted above with its social elitism and Christian militancy. Whence, too, the irrelevance when studying the Irish scene of *our* ideologies of religious toleration and separation between religion and politics.

As already stated all this is in dire need of further study and must remain largely hypothetical. The aim has simply been to suggest that the Northern Irish social formation is not simply British bourgeois society overlaid with discrimination, religious fervour and constitutional disputes, but that the entire structure of this social formation differs radically from those we are accustomed to, even at the most fundamental levels (such as the degree of autonomy of the political, economic and ideological spheres, the relative dominance of these and the greater importance of the superstructure). Hence there is no such thing as a gradual transition by means of minority-rights legislation from this "Orange system" to a society on the British model. The transition is a recasting of the entire political, economic and ideological structure, and is hence a genuinely revolutionary one. The struggles

which have been going on in Northern Ireland since 1968 precisely bear witness to the revolutionary character of this change, and to the complete reordering of the society it renders necessary. The underlying contradiction which manifests itself in the ongoing struggles is that which opposes two incompatible social systems: the Orange system which may be conceived of as a paternalist or "clientelist" version of capitalist social formation, and twentieth-century managerial capitalism.

Convergence

The Orange system has been described above as a tight coalition of the Orange Lodges, local business, the Unionist party machine, local government and administration and the hierarchies of the Protestant denominations which maintains its ascendancy through discrimination, patronage and the fear of real and imagined bogeymen, such as the spectres of Home Rule and Popery. Nevertheless this emphasis on the consistency and stability of the system should not blind one to the contradictions which are inherent in it and which must eventually bring it down. Two inherent sources of instability immediately spring to mind: first, its lack of responsiveness to pressures from below and the ease with which the burden of its failures can be shifted onto the backs of the Catholics so that instead of adapting to changing conditions it allows tensions to build up unto the breaking point; secondly, the double mask it has to wear because the colonial and bourgeois elements in its ideology are mutually inconsistent: it must at once appear openly repressive and yet not depart too far from the liberal ideology — a balance it is all the more difficult to strike as the state does not enjoy full sovereignty but has to take account of the prevailing ideologies in Britain. Important though both of these factors have been in shaping recent developments it is the economic developments on both sides of the Border which have been the most important in undermining the Orange system.

The South, predictably, engaged in protectionist policies after Partition and the Civil War. Tariffs were imposed against such British manufacturers as could, given protection, be produced in the Republic. This resulted in a spectacular growth in manufactures (output rising by 30% and employment by 40% in the four years from 1932 to 1936), but the goods were generally dearer and of lesser quality than those on the international market. Moreover the smallness of the domestic market meant that the limits of this policy were soon reached when all imports that could profitably be substituted had been so. A first trade agreement with Britain was signed as early as 1938 and it was only because of the war and the post-war boom that the protectionist policy could last for another decade or two. In the early fifties the need to

expand into the international market, and hence the disbandment of protectionism, again became imperative. The basis of protectionism, the Manufacturers Act was repealed in 1959, and in 1965 the Free Trade Agreement was signed with Britain. Under its terms all tariffs were to be abolished gradually over a ten year period. As a further step towards the creation of a competitive manufacturing industry a policy of grants and tax inducements to attract foreign investments was implemented from 1954 onwards.

In economic terms then, the union with Britain is rapidly being restored and the period of genuine "anti-imperialist" policies was only a brief parenthesis. With the efforts to attract British investments and the policy of free trade, the attempts to build an independent bourgeoisie in the Republic and a fully diversified economy, were in fact shelved as incapable of execution.

In the North too economic conditions had been changing after World War II. The traditional industries, linen and shipbuilding, would no longer find adequate markets abroad and the private owner-managed businesses had insufficient access to capital to diversify and modernise.¹⁰ To avert stagnation and decline the same policy of attracting overseas industries by means of financial inducements was enacted as early as 1945. In the early sixties it was expanded into a vast scheme. Given this *de facto* convergence between North and South in the economic sphere, Partition itself, anti-Partition militancy in the South, and the Orange system in the North are all becoming obsolete.

In the long run this transition from family-based to public companies (in many cases these have not even been independent companies but subsidiaries of large corporations) is bound to weaken the Orange system decisively. The new industries are not dependent upon the co-operation of the establishment in those communities where they settle down and, because they are not so tied to the local community, they also do not have the same political ambitions as the old ones. For the same reason they have a less personalised relation to the employees and have been less prone to discriminate in employment. Where discrimination occurs it is generally the result of shop-floor decisions rather than management policies and it has therefore been less consistently to the advantage of Protestants.

Since the early fifties the North and the South have thus been facing much the same economic problems and adopting much the same solutions. Both have sought to expand production and avoid a rise in unemployment by offering financial inducements, cheap labour and unimpeded access to the British market to potential investors. To remedy the lack of a sufficient base in domestic demand, which has perhaps been the main impediment to economic expansion, both

governments came to see the need for greater economic co-operation and integration between the two halves of the island. The first timid co-operation schemes in the fields of rail transport, power generation and fisheries date from the early fifties.

Normalization of political relations between North and South, itself a precondition for effective steps in the economic sphere, presupposed that the South would recognize the *status quo*. This again, by depriving it of a *raison d'être*, would further weaken the Orange system in the North. Moreover, for a rapprochement to be politically possible for the Government in the South, discrimination against Catholics in the North would have to end, or, at least, to appear to be on the wane. From this stems the hopeless contradictions, the pathetic rhetoric and wavering of O'Neill's administration: in the North, Catholics had to be convinced that change was under way, yet Protestants would have to be convinced of the opposite, lest the Governments lose the support of the Unionist grass-roots and the local bosses.

The welfare policies of post-war Labour governments in Britain also served to undermine the *ancien régime* in Ulster. The foundation of welfare policies in Britain has been the Barge degree of autonomy between the economic and political spheres of its social formation: economic concessions to the dominated classes could be made without directly threatening the political order.¹¹ In Northern Ireland, however, there was no such autonomy, and "fair" employment practices, "equal" access to education, "full" employment, etc., would undermine the social order itself. So when after the war the Unionists at Stormont continued the "step-by-step" policy of copying Westminster legislation (more or less faithfully) as a *quid pro quo* for Westminster's non-interference in the affairs of Northern Ireland, they were digging their own grave.

The effect of introducing national insurance, family allowances, state aid for education, etc., was to diminish the pressure for emigration on the Catholics and shield them from the worst rigours of the system, to contribute to the rise of a Catholic middle class, and, by bringing the North ahead of welfare and social security measures in the South, to temper the enthusiasm of Northern Catholics for unification under Dublin. All of these factors helped destroy the very foundations of the Orange system.

Forms of the political struggle

The history of political strife in Northern Ireland since 1968 is well-known, and there is no point in summarising it here. What needs to be done is something different: namely a study of the forms taken by the political struggles to show that they are indeed the "reflection" or "manifestation" of the basic contradiction between the old and the

new order, and that they are fully accounted for in those terms. Without this procedure of validation, the above contentions as to the nature of the principal contradiction involved in the present struggles must to some extent remain speculative. However, that study would be so extensive that it would far exceed the scope of this analysis. Also, it needs saying: in all essentials that study remains to be done. What I propose to do here is simply to point to the extremely complex character of the relationship between contradictions and the struggles they give rise to, and to sketch as briefly as possible how it comes to be that the contradiction between the old and the new order gives rise to the forms of struggle actually observed in successive phases of the conflict.

The present conflict, it has been claimed, is the manifestation at the political level of the transition from one variant of a capitalist social formation to another. At the present time, what one finds in Northern Ireland is a combination containing elements of both forms without any clear dominance of either. The co-existence of these elements gives rise to contradictions in all regions of the social formation: political, ideological, social, economic, etc., because the new order inevitably saps the foundations of the old in each of these regions, and in ways which have already been touched upon. Struggles (in the widest sense of this word) appear in each region, and their character is specific to that region. The political struggles take the form of group formation, antagonism and confrontation; the ideological struggles more often appear as certain beliefs and rationalisations which seek to reconcile inherently incompatible ideologies. The struggle in each region is determined not only by the specific character of the contradictions in that same region, but also by the development of the struggles in each of the other regions and by the specific historical context in which the contradictions arise and develop.

The "reflection" of theoretical contradictions in actual political struggles is therefore an extremely complex and mediated one. Ideological rationalisations affect the political struggle and are themselves affected by it. In principle an analysis of the forms of the political struggle would have to consider all these spheres together and keep track of all their mutual determinations and of the way in which the struggles in each sphere "distort" the struggles in all other spheres. Simplistic notions of a parallelism between the different spheres, or the vulgar Marxist idea that everything is a relatively straightforward "reflection" of the economic sphere, are totally unwarranted. Alignments in the struggles actually taking place at a given point in history are not a more or less direct expression of the objective interests of classes and class fractions in relation to the underlying contradictions; "false consciousness", so-called, is ubiquitous in this type of conflict.

In the case of Northern Ireland the failure to take the complexity of these determinations into account leads one to the mistakes of seeking the basic "contradictions" in the relation between Irish and British (represented by the Army) as many Irish do, or in the relation between Catholics and Protestants as many British do, merely because it is here that the main battle-lines are found.

Nor is it a general rule that as contradictions sharpen, alignments become more nearly representative of objective class interests and the struggles more direct expressions of the contradictions. In Northern Ireland the opposite has happened, and the reasons are readily understandable. As the contradictions sharpen the coupling between the regions becomes stronger, the implications of struggle in one region for struggles in other regions become more direct, and given conditions in Northern Ireland, particularly the utter confusion and distortion in the ideological sphere, this has led with the passing of time to a more complex, not a simpler relationship between contradiction and struggles. This is readily apparent if one considers events as far back as a decade.

The new economic policies in the North, and their corollary, the timid moves towards reconciliation with the Catholics, gathered momentum after 1963 when O'Neill took over as Prime Minister. At this time the slogan "O'Neill must go" began to appear on Protestant house walls and initial support was rallying around the Rev. Paisley. In this phase of moderate struggle the conflict did not attract much attention outside Northern Ireland, but its basic character was readily apparent: it was a *conflict between Protestants*. Ostensibly, the issue was policy *vis à vis* the Republic and Catholics in the North. In a deeper sense it was a confrontation between two irreconcilable views of the future political, economic and social order in Northern Ireland.

Catholics did not play any significant role until the emergence in 1966-67 of the Campaign for Social Justice. This organisation represented the Catholic professional strata which post-war developments in the economic and educational field and the emergence of the welfare state had helped create and strengthen. Its direct association with the rise of modern capitalism in the North is readily apparent from its dismissal of Republican-Nationalist ideologies and its espousal of a liberal ideology of "civil rights" and "social justice". Significantly, it sought to achieve its aims by appealing to British politicians and British public opinion, thus explicitly showing that the struggle was directed against the Orange and Unionist oligarchy and the entire system they represented, not against the link with Britain. Objectively as well as subjectively it was on the side of the moderates and reformers in and around the government in Belfast.

The upholders of the old order thus became engaged in a two-front struggle in which pressure and intimidation were directed both against the Catholics and against the Government (albeit the means were different in the two cases). It is primarily this and the Orange thuggery and repression which went with it, which, from the summer of 1968 to the summer of 1969, succeeded in mobilising large sectors of the Catholic community around the marches and demonstrations of the Civil Rights Movement.

This mobilisation had a very important ideological effect because it diminished the influence of the professional and middle classes among Catholic militants. Policies and ideologies shifted from the middle class demands for liberalisation within the context of a Northern Irish state to the traditional nationalist and more left-oriented stance of the Catholic masses, thus bringing things back, at least subjectively, to the old pattern of a nationalist struggle with sectarian overtones. The change in attitude among Catholics towards the British troops since they arrived in August 1969 is a result of this change in composition of the Catholic militants. The ideologies associated with this shift in the political confrontation are discussed later.

The upper-middle class, reformist and "progressive democratic" sector of Catholic opinion has not disappeared, but by losing the political and ideological leadership among the Catholics it has been reduced to its true political importance. Like similar groups on the Protestant side it of course never constituted the moderate (and so far silent) majority which the British government and press have been talking about for years. Actually it has been a rather noisy minority throughout. Together with like-minded Protestants this sector is now to be found in and around the Alliance Party and similar formations. The extreme political weakness of these groups, which is illustrated by the inability of the leadership of the Unionist Party to impose its reform programme against grassroot opposition, is balanced by their dominance in the economic confrontation. The political struggle has been lagging behind the economic one, and it is this which has given rise to the political instability in Northern Ireland over the last few years. Direct rule from Westminster will no doubt diminish that lag by further depriving the Catholic and Protestant masses of political influence. As such it accelerates the transition to the new order which must come in any case. Despite their current weakness, upper-middle class political organisations such as the Alliance Party are therefore likely to gain rapidly in importance over the coming years. Their political outlook of a social democratic or labourite type (democratic reform, support for big business, economic concessions to labour when and as the competitiveness of the "national economy" permits) corresponds to a potential compromise between the professional middle class, big capital and

labour. As the Orange system breaks down and the socialist revolution fails to materialise these policies may be found increasingly to correspond to the actual political needs of these several groups.

Until the end of 1969 the supporters of the Orange system had been successful in preventing or watering down reforms, and whereas the government was talking and promising, it was doing very little else. This served to dissociate the Catholics from the Belfast government, and, later, from the British government after the latter had got itself into the same position of well-intentioned impotence. It also facilitated the I.R.A.'s takeover of ideological and tactical leadership.

In the first phase this resulted in a triangular confrontation where increasing violence in the streets and increasing pressures from both sides reduced the British and Northern Irish governments to the equilibrist's role of "keeping the peace" between the warring groups, leaving them very little scope for independent political action. On the surface, therefore, the situation came to resemble a sectarian war with the British troops in a politically passive role in the middle, trying to follow the lines of least pressure.

In the spring of 1972 that is still, despite appearances, the underlying reality of the situation. The principal aim of the British Army and government is neither to prevent nor to promote change in the political conditions or the constitutional set-up in Northern Ireland. Their main concern is to hush up the whole affair. In relation to this aim specifically British interests in Northern Ireland assume only marginal importance. In the nationalist struggle which is now going on — but not, of course, in a genuine socialist struggle if there had been one — the British authorities may be assumed to be indifferent. But indifference is not the same as neutrality; it means, precisely, to follow the lines of least pressure. Whence the hopes of the I.R.A., the fears of Protestant loyalists, and the repressive character of British "peace-keeping".

The Ultra-Orangists

For almost half a century Unionism, **Orangism** and Protestantism have been so closely identified in the ideology of the Orange system as to be virtually synonymous. Nevertheless these concepts must be clearly distinguished because, historically, they have not always gone together. Moreover, in the present situation of social disruption, the different forces which contributed each of these aspects to the ideology of Northern Irish Protestants are no longer firmly united but tend to pull in different directions. Once this is realised it becomes clear that there is no real paradox involved when the Protestants of Shankill Road attack the British Army with waving Union Jacks and in the name of loyalty to the Queen.

A system which discriminates against Catholics is not *ipso facto* beneficial to Protestants. In the very short run and in terms of the competition of individuals for a particular job this may be so, but in the longer perspective, and given the particular socio-economic structure and stage of development of Northern Ireland, the opposite is probably closer to the truth; the splitting of the working class and of the petty bourgeoisie along sectarian lines, the ready availability of a bogeyman for all evils, the disenfranchisement, in fact if not in law, of all the little people, and the political atmosphere of continual emergency have all contributed to weaken the pressure for reform, and this has ultimately been as detrimental to the majority of Protestants as it has been to Catholics. The Protestant slums of Shankill Road are there to prove it.

The structural changes in the economy towards greater emphasis on modern capital-intensive industries has benefited some groups of skilled workers and the professional classes, but unskilled workers and others are paying the cost in the form of deteriorating employment opportunities. The lower-middle class of small self-employed in sales and services have also been among the losers. Many small shopkeepers were ruined when the British chain stores moved in in the mid-sixties. Many streets in Belfast present the desolate picture of small shops which are never going to open again. It is a fair guess that a substantial part of the hard-core Protestant extremists consist of these part-time unemployed and of unskilled workers with the *dole* at the door, and of the petty bourgeoisie of small traders which has been forced out of business and thrown onto the labour market when they did not emigrate.

But it would be a grave mistake to assume that Protestant hard-liners are merely a collection of ill-advised lumpen-sectors of the Protestant proletariat and bourgeoisie. In the struggles leading up to Partition the fundamental mistake of Catholic Nationalists had been to assume that the opposition to Home Rule consisted of such elements, led by the nose by Tories and landlords. In consequence, so the argument ran, opposition would subside soon after independence, and in any case could not claim to express a genuine and informed popular will.

In precisely similar fashion it is commonly believed by left-wing Catholic Nationalists that today's Protestant opposition to the unification of Ireland is attributable to ideological manipulation by British imperialism, the Orange hierarchy and capitalists seeking to divide the working class, and that it does **not** represent anything of much depth. There is a failure to recognise that the Unionist workers are not the lumpen proletariat of Ireland but the most advanced sector of the Irish working class, and a failure to account for this in terms other than those of conspiracy and mystification.

The advanced character of the Protestant working class is perhaps most evident in the remarkable restraint and discipline it showed when in recent months it was exposed to the provocations of the I.R.A. We return to this blind spot in the Catholic Nationalists' conception of their opponents after a few comments on the more activist sector among the Protestants.

It must be recalled that these people have been reared on the idea that their rights and freedoms were under assault and that one day they might be called upon to defend them as their forefathers had been in 1690 at the battle of the Boyne and at the beginning of this century when they fought for the Union. They have been told that their miserable condition is a privileged one. To them, losing it means final disaster. By 1969, even their government seemed to have sold out to those it itself described as "revolutionary and subversive elements which have been seeking to destroy the constitutional structure of the State". For several years the government has been repeating that while promised reforms would be carried through, all reasonable demands had now been met and there would be no further surrender. But, soon afterwards, the government would move yet another step under the combined pressures of the Civil Rights Movement and the British. Yesterday's "unacceptable demands" became today's official policies, and a new line was drawn which, it was claimed, would never be transgressed. Naturally the conviction grew on Shankill Road that the Government was part of a Fenian plot. The reforms were not seen, and could not be seen as positive steps towards a new and better future for Ulster but only as an unending series' of betrayals. It was the Government itself which made them seem so by its reluctant inch-by-inch approach and its portrayal of the Civil Rights movement as subversive and Republican-oriented.

Today, Protestant activism has subsided into a relative (and probably temporary) lull. But it is significant that this did not happen until the authorities at Stormont and Westminster were so hard pressed on law-and-order that reforms were shelved and the British Army was given the role of the former B-Specials and was defending the Protestant community with a zeal and by means which the B-Specials could hardly have improved upon.

But the eruptions of the Protestant poor and their resistance to all reforms must also be understood in the context of the social and moral isolation which had befallen these people. More than a deliberate move to pressurise the authorities, the Protestant riots were the reaction of despair of people who have been let down and rejected by everyone and can find sympathy and identification nowhere. Their Government, the Republic, Britain and her Army, the BBC and the press, all betrayed them, all despised them and all rejected them.

With the disarmament of the R.U.C. and the disbandment of the B-Specials, the defence of Northern Ireland, and hence its very future as an independent entity, was entrusted to those men the people of the Shankill — with good reason — had come to distrust most of all: the government at Westminster. About the only thing which by then united the Shankill and the Falls was their common hatred of the British Army which was felt to protect neither and to betray both. Whatever their apparent and immediate causes the riots were ultimately the results of slums and ghettos and their policing by an ever-present army, and of the perfectly legitimate fears on both sides of what the future might bring. Save for the provocations by the I.R.A. it is probably fair to say that neither among Catholics nor among Protestants was there much of a deliberate purpose behind the street fighting from the autumn of 1969 and until the middle of 1971.

The strength of the Orange bloc arises from its character of being a conglomerate of several elements: the fears and moral isolation of the Protestant working and lower-middle classes, the self-preservation instincts of the local Orange power structure and the many petty vested interests it represents, and, finally, the ideology of Protestant Northern Irish nationalism.

The first of these we have already considered at some length. The people of the Shankill represent in its most extreme form the Protestant people whose world is breaking apart and who, like the same classes in the Germany of the thirties, are in search of leadership and ideologies which can make events intelligible and restore their self-respect. The Rev. Paisley had been providing both by portraying Northern Ireland as a bastion in the great struggle against the world-wide conspiracy of Rome. William Craig, leader of the Vanguard, is today attempting much the same thing. But it would be foolish to see in such leaders a fascist threat. They represent a formidable potential for disruption in the streets and in the Unionist party, but they were born half a century too late. There is not, and there never will be the necessary backing of big industry which Hitler had. Quite the opposite: in Ulster today big business is on the side of reform and moderation and, ultimately, of reunification.

The middle class element in the Orange coalition is not adequately described as reactionary in the political sense, only in the historical sense. It is traditionalist rather than conservative. It does not necessarily oppose all reforms as such, but it has been affirming that the Civil Rights Movement was an I.R.A. and Republican inspired plot to overthrow Northern Ireland, and that as long as the majority of Catholics are Nationalists the internal defences of the state must be kept up. The vehement opposition to the disarming of the police, the disbandment of the B-Specials and the government's gradual sur-

render of power to Britain ,(from the assignment of troops in August 1969 to the complete take-over in March 1972) was a logical consequence of this view which, as we have seen, is correct in all essentials. The state of Northern Ireland is in fact gravely endangered, and Britain is the most unreliable of allies in this emergency, as she has been on previous occasions (notably during the fight over Home Rule and during the last war when Churchill was prepared to give up Ulster to secure the entry of the Republic into the war). In fact, Britain is more than unreliable: she is part of the plot to reunite Ireland. Without its Orange forces Northern Ireland is defenceless.¹² Without any allies, and given the distinct possibility of Northern Ireland's absorption into a Catholic-Nationalist state it is not surprising that private defence organisations should spring up. On various occasions there have been murmurs about U.D.I. (a Rhodesia-like Unilateral Declaration of Independence). That idea is ridiculed already by Northern Ireland's economic situation but it is evidence of an increasingly militant Northern Irish nationalism.

Northern Irish nationalism is no new phenomenon, but it has not been clearly visible hitherto because it took the form of Unionism as long as the Union with Britain was the best safeguard for Northern Ireland's independence from the South. It therefore shows up as a partly anti-British force now that Britain's loyalty can no longer be taken for granted. In political and emotional terms (as contrasted with the business interests which we are not considering at this point) the Unionist loyalty to Britain has always been fraught with contradictions and has often had a hollow ring because it never rested on a positive identification with Britain and British institutions. It was a reaction to Catholic nationalism and a self-assertive settler-ideology dressed up as Unionism. Even though it is true that Northern Ireland never asked for a separate parliament, nevertheless Stormont has both reflected Northern Ireland's non-Britishness and enhanced it.

It is important to realise that with Orangism there is no point in arguing for moderation, concessions, reform and reconciliation. Appeals to "reason" make no sense, for the policy of maximum pressure on Stormont and Westminster, and of threatening to start a civil war is the most reasonable one the upholders of the Orange system can pursue. They correctly perceive themselves as being in an embattled situation, with their world in danger of crumbling, with enemies pressing from all sides, and totally without allies; and their belief that every concession they make, whether to Catholics or to the authorities in London and Belfast, will eventually be used against them is perfectly correct. This will become clear after we have considered the predominant ideologies of the Catholics.

Nationalism and Socialism.

From every point of view, save those of territoriality and statehood, the Protestants and Catholics in Ireland constitute two distinct national groups. These are usually described as Catholic and Protestant but the difference between them is not only, not even primarily religious. It is two entirely different cultures with little in common apart from language. True, one finds among Protestants as well as among Catholics a feeling of "Irishness", but the similarity stops at the label. Behind it one finds national mythologies, conceptions of Irish history and Irish destiny, and social and political ideologies which have virtually nothing in common. It is not much of an exaggeration to say that despite their blending into one state in the North, the two national groups have two completely distinct ruling ideologies.¹⁸

The ruling ideology of the traditional sectors among the Protestants with its feudal-colonial character has already been touched upon briefly; and, as noted, a new form, dominated by technocratic and politico-legal conceptualisations is gaining ground, both in the Protestant and in the Catholic middle classes. This is most clearly seen in the current relative success of the Alliance Party. What needs to be considered here in greater detail is the traditional *Catholic* ideology, centred around the concepts of national oppression and national liberation, and the political perspectives which arise from its fusion with socialist ideologies.

As is nationalism elsewhere, Catholic Irish nationalism is a relatively recent phenomenon dating from the mid-nineteenth century and the period of the Gaelic revival. Like other nationalisms, it has sought to establish a continuity with a past which has been reinterpreted in romanticised terms. It thus incorporates an entire set of myths about the Irish struggle against English domination and the Protestant Ascendancy and about a pre-plantation Gaelic society of a communistic type — all of them myths, the foundations of which in historical fact are as tenuous as those of the corresponding Protestant ones.

British domination is thus seen as the root of all the problems of Ireland. In the socialist ideology British domination becomes British imperialism. In this way everything fits nicely into place in what appears to be a consistent socialist theory. The severing of the links with the British oppressor becomes the precondition for socialism in Ireland. The Orange oligarchy in the North (as well as the Green Tories in the South) become the middlemen, the neo-colonialist agents of British imperialism, and the Unionist workers, lured by petty privileges, its helpless tools. Most important: the existence of the common enemy, British imperialism, fuses Catholics and Protestants into one "people" in so far as their *objective* interests are concerned. National differences conveniently recede into the background.

Divisions among the people are the result of "false consciousness", itself the consequence of the divide-and-rule policies of imperialism and its local executioners. Of course, any socialist theory would hold that in an ultimate sense Catholic and Protestant workers have common interests. But bringing in British imperialism has the distinct advantage that it is then clearly seen to be the Protestant, rather than the Catholic workers, whose consciousness is "false". In the end they will join the Catholics in their struggle, and they will do so in all essentials on the terms now demanded by the Catholics.

Theories which ultimately reduce to notions like these are held with only minor variations by such diverse groups as the Communist Party, the I.R.A. and People's Democracy. It is the traditional Republican view, and agreement on this kind of interpretation of the situation is virtually the only thing which still unites the "green" and "red" I.R.A. In the inter-war period it was almost the official ideology in the South (apart, of course, from the idea that "Green Tories" are also the middlemen of imperialism), and it is hardly an exaggeration to say that in some form or other it is part of the ruling ideology of the nation of Irish Catholics. Nor is it surprising that it should have gained such wide currency throughout the Catholic left and far into nationalist circles. Its attractiveness lies precisely in the fact that it reconciles nationalist and socialist ideologies. By means of it, the struggles for socialism and for the "liberation" of "occupied Ireland" become the two sides of the same coin and they come to appear as the logical continuation, or, more properly, the rightful heirs of the whole romanticised past of Irish struggle against British rule and of Catholic struggle against Protestant oppression. The simple device of interpreting events in terms of an enemy, British imperialism, which is at once non-Irish, anti-socialist and readily identified with Protestant rule in the North disposes of all ideological contradictions, resolves all dilemmas of strategy, and cements together a diversity of deep-rooted traditions into one unified political ideology.

Given the nationalist character of the dominant Catholic ideology and the leftist flavour of its central concepts of national oppression and anti-imperialist struggle it was inevitable that the Catholic left should take over this ideology and make a re-united Ireland part of its programme. Few nationalist ideologies could have provided a more fertile soil for socialist ideas than did the Irish since the socialist and anti-imperialist struggles were so easily shown to be two aspects of the same thing. In fact, of course, the Catholic left did not "take over" a nationalist ideology; it was born of it and grew up in it. Its own ideology remained a variant of it, with somewhat different priorities, certainly, but with the main concepts and beliefs unchanged. This fusion of nationalism and socialism is particularly marked in the

writings of James Connolly in the first decades of this century. Piety towards him has been such that all socialist groups today claim to be his heirs, and no-one even begins to ask whether his demand for an all-Irish Socialist Republic is as valid today as it was in his time. Instead, he has become part of the myths and the dogmas — a further "proof", if any had been needed, that a Socialist Republic is a 32-county Republic as a matter of course.

Imperialism and Colonialism

This theory of the left in which British imperialism provides the connecting link between nationalism and socialism and explains the main features of Orange rule in the North cannot stand up to closer scrutiny. The "cement" in the theory, the force which connects everything and explains everything, British imperialism, is simply not an important force in contemporary Irish politics. Moreover, to the limited extent that it is, its interests are *antithetical* to those of Protestant rule, not coincident with them.

British interests in Ireland (past and present) can be grouped under a number of headings each of which ought to be considered in detail. Here there is space for only a few remarks. One heading is the strategic importance of Ireland: its possible use as a back-entrance to Britain in the wars with Spain, France and Germany. Another is the feudal-type exploitation of Ireland which came with plantation: the expropriation of the land on behalf of English landlords. Both of these have had considerable importance and seem to be sufficient grounds on their own for the initial conquest of Ireland, but they have of course lost all relevance today. In the early 19th century two other factors seem to have played a certain role. One was that direct rule over Ireland enabled British manufacturers to check the growth of competing Irish industries (particularly in textiles other than linen). The other was a kind of quasi-capitalist exploitation of British labour by means of Irish agriculture: the pauperisation of Ireland enabled Irish agricultural products to be bought very cheaply in terms of British exports, thus bringing down the value (the maintenance cost) of British labour and enabling the rate of exploitation in British industry to be raised.¹⁴ These factors have also lost all importance today.

This does not mean that British imperialism no longer plays any role in Ulster or in Ireland. All it means is that the interests of British imperialism are today of such a nature that they are served just as well in the Republic as they are in Northern Ireland.¹⁵ These interests do not depend in any substantial way on continued administrative control. The upkeep of Northern Ireland is a considerable drain on the British Treasury and it is hard to think of any compensating benefits for British capital.¹⁶ Nor do the interests of British imperialism militate in

favour of continued Orange rule and the perpetuation of the divisions in the working class. On the contrary, as was argued above, the Orange system is antithetical to the interests of the "new order". To British capital Ireland provides a supply of labour, a protected environment for ailing companies and a not unimportant export market. None of these would be jeopardised by Irish unity and Irish independence.

The truth of the matter is that British control over Ireland had lost most of its importance by the middle of the 19th century and has today become an almost pure liability. This is the reason why Gladstone was willing to grant Home Rule in exchange for no more substantial benefits to British capital than a transient Liberal-National coalition at Westminster. This is also the reason why opposition to Home Rule was not led by British capital but by Ulster Protestants and British Tories, army officers and landlords. It was these forces which imposed Partition. It was Ulster, not Britain which insisted on the Union, and it was only reluctantly (at first) that Ulster accepted a separate legislature at Stormont, which was forced upon it by Westminster. It is only by recognising that British imperialist interests in Ulster are quite marginal that one can explain how it came to be that over a period of half a century Westminster virtually never used its right of supervision over Stormont. Even the strictly economic importance of Ireland is now quite marginal. Had this not been the case, "British imperialism" would not have accepted the genuinely anti-imperialist policies of the Republic in the 1930's.

The mistake arises from a failure to make a clear distinction between imperialism and colonialism. The consequences this entails in terms of socialist strategy we return to later. Here what must be pointed out is that even at the crudest level of approximation there are not **two** but **three** agents involved: natives (Catholics), settlers (Protestants) and the agents of imperialism (British capital, local managers, etc.).¹⁷ Imperialism and colonialism have often gone hand in hand, and when they do, the two latter agents can be treated as one from the point of view of strategy. But their identity can by no means be taken for granted. In the general case of imperialism and colonisation (thinking not specifically of Ireland) the settlers develop interests which are distinct from those of capitalists back home. As a result one often finds that they make a bid for independence once they no longer need the colonial power to support them against the natives. In one form or another this has happened in all settler-colonies, beginning with the United States and ending with Rhodesia. Ireland has been no exception as shown by the Protestant opposition to the Act of Union in 1801, the U.D.I.-noises certain Orangemen have made, and the Protestant fears of direct rule from Westminster.

The imperialist power, on its side, has usually been reluctant to grant

independence to settler-regimes, and much more willing to do so to native-led governments, as the whole history of decolonisation shows. Nor is it difficult to find plausible explanations: a native-governed country is more easily maintained (or is more likely to remain) in a neo-colonial state, for instance as producer of cheap raw materials. In the case of Northern Ireland many things are different, but it should be clear that it is by no means uncommon to find that the principal struggle is between the settlers and imperialism, the natives' interests being, even if only temporarily, coincident with those of imperialism. To put it in very general terms: such a struggle reflects the contradiction between two different ways of exploiting the natives and the country's resources, hence between two incompatible types of social formation. What has been said of the Orange system and the "new order" in Ulster illustrates this.

Concepts such as imperialism and colonialism which have a meaning in the case of the underdeveloped countries do not necessarily make much sense when applied to contemporary Anglo-Irish relations, and I have maintained above that imperialist interests in Ulster are very limited. Nevertheless it is clear that to the extent that such interests exist, they are to be found on the side of the "new order", not of the Orange system. It is with the new public companies, not with the private family-businesses, with the Government and administration in Belfast, not with the local councils, and with Ireland as one economic entity, not with the parochialism of Northern Ireland, that "imperialism" is involved. Conversely, the colonialist ruling class is precisely the Orange oligarchy. Whence the analogies with Mississippi and South Africa noted above. It is certain that we must either dismiss all talk of imperialism as a major intervening external force in Irish affairs on the grounds that its influence is marginal — and a good case can be made for doing so — or else we must admit that the principal contradiction in Ulster is between imperialism and Orangism. This again fits the facts: Westminster has consistently (i.e. since 1968) sought to accelerate the reforms. These reforms, significantly, have been such as would sap the Orange system at its core (disbandment of the Orange private army, the B-Specials, electoral reform at the level of local councils, transfer away from the local councils of power over housing policy, replacement of the 73 existing local authorities by 17 area councils, etc.). At the same time the relative lack of interest of successive British governments has been evidenced by their reluctance to contemplate direct rule and by the priority given to ending the fighting in the streets, even if this meant concessions to Orangism.

It should be stressed that the point is not to deny that Northern Ireland is part of an imperialist structure. By any reasonable definition

of imperialism it is. But to evoke imperialism in the way in which it is done, is to specify a contradiction, to name an enemy, and, with it, to map a strategy. But the nature of that enemy is contradictory and its unity is mythical. To adopt **Orangism** and imperialism as *the* enemy is to ignore those strategies which consist in exacerbating the contradiction between them.

Questions of strategy

In the preceding analysis considerable emphasis has been put on ideological factors. This is so because it seems to me that the sorry state of class consciousness among Irish workers, and their distorted vision of the situation in which they find themselves, constitute the main difficulties blocking progress towards socialism. Indeed, prevailing ideologies are so inadequate to the needs of a revolutionary struggle that already for this reason it can safely be claimed that socialism is not on the immediate agenda and that Connolly's Socialist Republic will remain a chimera for a long time to come. While it may seem less defeatist to go on regardless with agitation for "socialism now", I believe that the real effect of such propaganda is not to create a socialist consciousness, but to deepen the ideological confusion by adding new myths to old ones.

Therefore it seems that under present circumstances political action must aim primarily at the ideological sphere. This means that a revolutionary strategy does not, at this juncture, consist in producing the socialist revolution itself, but in producing its ideological preconditions. Political praxis must be geared to this, both as regards its material and its ideological aspect. Specific political actions must thus be judged by the extent to which they help produce the objective conditions under which the ideological emancipation of the working class becomes possible, and by the extent to which they are conducted in a revolutionary fashion, i.e. the extent to which the experience gained from participation in the struggle is itself productive of correct analysis and correct consciousness.

Instead of fighting their little battles on the side in the hopeless endeavour to turn a Catholic nationalist wave into a force for socialism, Irish socialists would in my opinion be better advised to engage directly in the main struggle. It is here that things are decided and it is here that participation in the struggle can contribute to ideological clarification. It needs to be recognized that the destruction of the Orange system and its replacement by the "welfare state" of managerial capitalism is historically necessary and historically progressive. It is progressive even from a socialist point of view, and it is so despite the certainty that the new order will be of a neo-colonialist type. It is progressive in much the same way as were the French Revolution and

Europe's conquest of the world; it destroys a stagnant social order, helps emancipate the working class from its medieval ideological straitjacket, facilitates the regrouping of all workers along class lines and promotes political equality and certain limited but nonetheless genuine forms of democratic power. All of these gains are of decisive importance in the wider socialist struggle.

To see this struggle as merely a dispute between various bourgeois fractions, an inter-Unionist quarrel of no concern to the left, is to discard the important potentialities inherent in it from the point of view of developing a revolutionary working class consciousness in Ireland. Of course, whatever socialists do, and however great the political forces behind Orangism, the economic forces are such that the Orange system is doomed in any case. But the way in which the attendant social transformation takes place is not immaterial. Left to itself it will take the form of economic stagnation and decay as we see it now, creating a situation in which Unionist appeals to British capital and to Westminster's assistance will seem the only constructive policy, and the socialists will appear to be mere troublemakers rendering more difficult the necessary task of creating new jobs for the workers. The left will have failed in its leadership role and will have handed over the political initiative to the progressive sector of the bourgeoisie. Ideologically and materially these are the conditions for a patient, obedient and reformist working class.

Alternatively, if the left engages directly in the struggle it can exploit it in two ways: to educate the working class and arm it ideologically by giving it a correct understanding of its objective situation, and to create the material conditions under which working class solidarity and a genuine socialist struggle will no longer be utopian.

This does not mean a return to the early Civil Rights Movement and its meliorist demands, for the aim of the left must be to assume ideological leadership and turn the struggle against the Orange System into a revolutionary one. This implies a complete *reshuffling* of alliances. It will inevitably alienate sectors of the Protestant working class and, since the struggle presupposes acceptance of the *status quo* as regards the Northern Irish statelet, it cannot fail to alienate large sectors of the Catholic masses as well. A major benefit lies precisely in the fact that if and when socialists side with "British imperialism" and the Protestant liberals, the professional, managerial and administrative elites in Belfast—a number of myths will have to be revised. On the other hand it is evident that this alliance with the agents of the new order can only be of a purely tactical character. It is necessary and progressive at this particular juncture; nothing more should be claimed for it. Its strictly temporary and tactical character must be made clear to the workers on both sides, and this would be one of the main

tasks because, as noted, ideological clarification must be the first priority.

Therefore the struggle must be presented, not as a struggle for "civil rights" but as a revolutionary struggle bent on crushing the remnants of a social order which has effectively prevented any progress towards socialism and will do so as long as it continues in existence. Civil rights and other reforms which are on the immediate agenda must be presented and fought for, not in the ideological perspective of the middle class, that of liberal reformism, palliatives and "justice" for Catholics, but in the ideological perspective of revolutionary socialism: it is not an end in itself, an *object* of the struggle, but a means and, as we have seen, an extremely effective one, to attack the Orange system at its roots.

If it is to engage effectively in the struggle against the Orange system the left must necessarily dissociate itself from 32-county nationalism and accept the existence of the Northern State. As long as the left does not do this but, more or less wholeheartedly, plays the tune of Catholic nationalism it is in fact shoring up that system by providing it with a badly needed scarecrow to frighten Protestant workers.

The question of the attitude to adopt towards demands for national self-determination is one which has often created difficulties for the left because of the tendency to invoke general principles which inevitably end up in pure moralism. The subdivision of states into smaller states of greater ethnic homogeneity, whether it be the separation of Ireland from Britain or the separation of Ulster from Ireland, is of course not progressive *per se*. If anything it is regressive because strong nationalist movements so easily mask the class struggle under ideologies of "national consensus". In fact there can be no general rules. Demands for national independence must always be analysed in *concrete terms*;¹⁸ in terms, namely, of the particular way in which they affect the socialist struggles of the peoples concerned.

The affirmation that Northern Irish Protestants constitute a separate national entity with a right to refuse incorporation in the Republic is usually considered to be divisive of the working class and therefore anti-socialist. On the contrary I think that it is the stubborn affirmation of unity and solidarity where none exists and the extravagant claim of Irish Catholics to the whole island which is divisive. The Catholic left demands a 32-county Republic and tries to sweeten the pill for Protestants by affirming that this will be a socialist, and *ipso facto* a secular Republic. Protestants would be fools if they believed it. Socialism in Ireland is not for tomorrow, and, even if it were, deeply entrenched ideologies do not disappear overnight. The Catholic left, by its espousal of the demand for a united Ireland, has demonstrated

that even those who claim to constitute the socialist vanguard are trapped in nationalist ideologies.

Ultimately it is to put the cart before the horse to demand a 32-county Republic and hope that it can then develop towards socialism. There is no surer way of perpetuating religious divisions than to impose Irish unity against the will of almost a quarter of its population, and a state so created would be socialist, if at all, only in name. The unity of Ireland will come after the feudal and colonial remnants in the North have been swept away and after the South has given up its demands. Then, to paraphrase **Marx**, after the separation there may come *federation*,¹⁹ but federation on the basis of equal rights for nations and international working class solidarity. To start with an imposed unity is to betray the ideals of internationalism, socialism and democracy. But it is also to betray the working class and its struggle for socialism. For to insist on the right of Protestants to stay aloof from an Irish Republic is not primarily a demand for "justice" for Protestants. Its importance lies in the fact that it is a *precondition* for the ideological emancipation of the *Catholic* working class. For as we have seen the demand for Irish unity by the Catholic left, the attempt to reconcile socialism and nationalism, leads it to adopt impossible theories and to tilt at windmills. It thus precludes a correct understanding by the workers, whatever their religion, of the objective situation in which they find themselves. Genuine unity and genuine socialism cannot arise out of ideological confusion and misdirected battles.

To conclude I submit that there is a need for a reorientation of the struggle of the Catholic left, by which it would leave aside the windmills of British imperialism and the wholly counter-productive demands for Irish reunification, and would concentrate on the real issue of today: crushing the Orange system; and doing this in a revolutionary, rather than a reformist way, exploiting the opportunities it gives for raising the revolutionary consciousness of the workers — which simply means their understanding of their own objective situation. Both among Protestants and among Catholics it is widely assumed that the Protestant ascendancy and the Union with Britain are two sides of the same coin: that the interests of "colonialism" and those of imperialism, those of Orange rule and those of Westminster and British capital are coincident. I have tried to show that on the contrary it is here that the principal contradiction is to be found. To develop correct insight and hence revolutionary consciousness among Irish workers the best strategy seems to be to expose and to sharpen that contradiction. For in so doing both Protestant and Catholic workers will be forced to revise their received notions. As this contradiction is brought out into the open they will have to align with one side and against the other, but they cannot continue to align (or to believe they align) with both as

do the Protestants, or against both as do the Catholics. Thus, whatever realignments occur they will facilitate common action by workers on both sides of the fence. The most pernicious aspect of the current struggle against "British imperialism" is precisely that it perpetuates the false identification of Union with Unionist rule which lies at the very core of those ideologies which divide the working class.

Considerations of strategy are not the exclusive prerogative of Irish socialists. Well-intentioned people in Britain and elsewhere have had a considerable influence on events in Ireland in the past, and they have a corresponding share of responsibility and leverage as regards future developments. The initial breakthrough of the Civil Rights movement would have been impossible, and the Protestant reaction to it unnecessary, but for the vast sympathetic audience the Catholic cause attracted outside Ireland. The highest priority of the British Army is to create a semblance of justice and order which will seem credible to people outside Northern Ireland. Whether it perseveres in repression and whether it is ultimately withdrawn probably depends as much on reactions in Britain and abroad as it does on the development of the struggles in Northern Ireland itself. Last, but not least, the prospects for the I.R.A.'s policy of ousting the British by raising the cost of "occupation", depend upon the support its aim of forcible reunification of Ireland can command in Britain and abroad. It is therefore important that British and other socialists should realise that in responding to the call for "solidarity in the struggle against British imperialism" they are in effect betraying socialist ideals and backing policies of national oppression of the Protestant minority in Ireland.

NOTES

1. Conrad Gill: *The Rise of the Irish Linen Industry*, Oxford 1925.
2. On this question see "The Economics of Partition", published by the Irish Communist **Organisation**.
3. See Andrew Boyd: *Holy War in Belfast*, Dublin 1969.
4. Ronald McNeill: *Ulster's Stand for Union*, London 1922.
5. See Sir Horace Plunkett: *Ireland in the New Century*, London 1904.
6. For reasons of space I present no more than a sketch and refrain from citing any evidence. Reliable documentation on discriminatory practices can be found in the publications of the Campaign for Social Justice in Northern Ireland (Castlefields, Dungannon), in Orange and Green, put out in 1969 by the Northern Friends Peace Board (Brigflatts, Sedbergh, Yorkshire and in many other places). See also my "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Northern Ireland" *The Spokesman*, No. 17-18, October-November 1971.
7. This might have changed in recent years. The figures refer to the fifties.
8. I emphasise that in both cases this dominance is a matter of ideological perception only. One should not read this to mean that the issues are religious. As noted, the dominant **role** in the perpetuation of the social

formation we are concerned with is held by some combination of ideology and politics. It is these that are determinant in the real struggles which go on and in the class struggle in particular. The ideological emphasis on religion veils this fact but does not alter it. Moreover, to say that religion is ideologically dominant is not to say that issues which we conceive of as secular **are** conceived in doctrinal terms in Ireland. It is not a question of looking up answers to social and political problems in the scriptures. It is not the things thought which are religious, but the way of thinking them, the mode of thought which is (importance of historical mythology, of tradition, of symbolism, and of ritualisation).

See Nicos Poulantzas: *Pouvoir Politique et Classes Sociales*, Paris 1971, Vol. II, Chapter 2.

10. See Isles and Cuthbert: *An Economic Survey of Northern Ireland*, HMSO Belfast 1957, especially Chapters VIII and XI.
11. Poulantzas, *loc. cit.*
12. Presently, of course, the British Army fulfils exactly the role of a Protestant vigilante force, defending the set-up in the North against Catholic Nationalist attacks. But there is no certainty that this will continue. If and when the I.R.A. discontinues its attacks, the British government will again become the most unreliable of allies for the Protestants of Northern Ireland.
13. This existence of two distinct nationalities, however obvious to outside observers, is denied by the larger part of the Catholic left. It is thought to be divisive of the working class to affirm it. It is known as the "two-nation theory" and was revived in the late sixties by the I.C.O. (Irish Communist Organisation—not to be confused with the Communist Party). On other points as well the analyses in the theoretical organ of the I.C.O., *The Irish Communist*, are of unparalleled lucidity.
14. cf. Christian Palloix: "Impérialisme et mode de production capitaliste", *L'homme et la société*, No. 12, 1969, p. 190.
15. The interests involved in contemporary imperialism (as a worldwide phenomenon) are of course manifold: political, economic, ideological, strategic, etc. As regards economic benefits the main factor is probably not the oft-vilified repatriation of profits from foreign investment but rather the reproduction through imperialism of certain features of underdevelopment in dependent areas whereby the prices of their export goods remain low. Substantial economic exploitation could only occur via the terms of trade as other transfers are not very large cf. (Arghiri Emmanuel: *L'échange inégal*, Paris 1969). To the extent that imperialist exploitation is inherent in the terms of trade primarily, Ireland (North and South) is certainly at the profiteering end of the world imperialist system, not its victim.
16. A recent source estimates the total annual subsidy to Northern Ireland to be between £110m. and £140m. This is taxpayers' money. That part of it which reappears as subsidies to British capital invested in Northern Ireland is certainly not more than 10% of the total. (cf. Bades and Scott: *What Price Northern Ireland?*, Young Fabian Pamphlet, No. 22, Nov. 1970). At any rate British companies receive much the same subsidies in the Republic at no cost to the British Treasury.
17. See Arghiri Emmanuel: "White-settler Colonialism and the Myth of Investment Imperialism", paper given at the International Symposium on Imperialism, April 1971, Institute for Peace and Conflict Research, Denmark.

18. cf. **Marx's** change of opinion on the question of Irish independence (Letters to **Engels** dated Nov. 2 1867 and **Dec.** 10 1869). He favoured Irish independence on two grounds: Ireland's need for tariffs against Britain and for agrarian reform, and his belief that the emancipation of Ireland had become a precondition for the emancipation of the British working class. See also Lenin: The Right of Nations to Self-Determination, esp. section 8.
19. **Marx** to Engels, Nov. 2 1867.