

Reflections on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Easter Rising

Desmond Greaves

CCOURT-MARTIALLED and under sentence of death, the great Marxist thinker and working-class leader James Connolly, who had commanded the insurgents in Dublin, asked his daughter whether she had seen any socialist newspapers. She had not. "They will never understand why I am here," he remarked, "They will all forget that I am an Irishman."

This statement has been misrepresented as a retraction of socialism. It is, rather, a sharp appraisal of the state of socialism in the midst of the war, and an implied commentary on Anglo-Irish relations.

Apart from Lenin, who had in a sense approved the Rising in advance in his theses on self-determination (early 1916), and who wrote his famous polemical defence of it the following July, socialist journalists either condemned or professed complete mystification. And it was precisely another Irishman, George Bernard Shaw, who made the first public protest against the military terror unleashed by General Maxwell in words which like Connolly's point accurately to his contemporaries blind spot.

"I remain an Irishman," wrote Shaw, "and I am bound to contradict any implication that I can regard as a traitor any Irishman taken in a fight for Irish independence against the British Government, which was a fair fight in everything except the enormous odds my countrymen had to face."

In his article in *Sbornik Sotsial-Demokrat*, Lenin used the Irish experience to test the validity of his theses, and showed that history had refuted the views of the opponents of self-determination, which had led to the conclusion that "the vitality of small nations oppressed by imperialism is already sapped, that they can play no role against imperialism, that support of their purely national aspirations will lead to nothing, etc. The imperialist war of 1914-1916 has provided *facts* which refute such conclusions."

British Labour and the Rising

Indeed Marx had already told the British workers plainly that their own emancipation depended on their supporting the "purely national" aspirations of the Irish people.

How then do we explain that so few of Connolly's British comrades grasped the importance of the

Easter Rising for the future of these islands, still less recognised it as the first break in the imperialist war front, soon to be shattered by the Russian revolution?

The silence on the extreme left was of course partly an accident. H. M. Hyndman who controlled its weekly organ *Justice* had tried to lead the British Socialist Party in the wake of the chauvinist leaders of the Labour Party. The decisive conference took place during the weekend of Easter 1916. The left-wing saved the party at the expense of losing the paper. To react effectively in such circumstances was difficult. But there was also widespread confusion.

As for the position of the Labour leaders it is revealed in the fact that Arthur Henderson was a member of the Cabinet that gave over Connolly to the firing squad. The members of the Irish Parliamentary Party, *applauded*, with one exception, Ginnell, who screamed *murder* across the floor of the House. Thus was consummated the alliance of British right-wing social-democracy with the Irish national bourgeoisie, not against imperialism, but against the Irish people.

Unholy Alliance

In his classical work *Labour in Irish History*, Connolly showed how this class shrank from the consequences of its own demands when confronted by the more advanced claims of the people. Its representatives were frequently, though decreasingly, landlords. The Dublin lock-out of 1913, when 404 employers signed a contract to starve the entire working class of the city out of allegiance to Trade Unionism, showed how far it was prepared to sacrifice national aims in deference to class interests. In the midst of the "labour-war" Parliamentarians accepted the exclusion of part of Ulster from "Home Rule" and the consequent mutilation of Ireland.

The Liberals and the Home Rule Party had been joined in an arrangement by which each side in alliance against the Tories, guaranteed the other against the assaults of more radical competitors, that is to say the Republicans and Socialists. Much to Connolly's disgust, the newly established Labour Party, instead of taking its stand on working class internationalism, continued this alliance "with our worst enemies", In 1913 such luminaries as J. H

Thomas sabotaged the solidarity of the British workers with Dublin, and almost simultaneously George Barnes dismissed the protests of the Irish Labour Party at his acceptance of partition with the words:

"I have taken my line all along from the Irish nationalists—The nationalists have sent men to Parliament and the Labour men have not."

It is of interest that today we find a Labour Prime Minister demanding and securing the relinquishment of fiscal independence from the Fianna Fail leader Sean Lemass, while ignoring the opposition of the Irish Labour Party, not to mention the Irish Workers' Party and Sinn Fein. Mr. Wilson was prepared to "take his lead" from the Irish "nationalist" even though the Labour men had sent 23 deputies to Parliament.

Lessons of History

It can be said without disparagement that the "average educated Englishman" who wants to understand Ireland must be prepared to go to school again. He must enter a world for which his tutors have not prepared him, where all the historical signposts seem to be pointing the wrong way. A few examples will illustrate.

Every English child learns that Julius Caesar conquered Britain, and established a peaceful prosperous Roman province which was periodically invaded and plundered by the "picts and scots" who were little better than poachers and pirates. The Romans never came to Ireland, and the most famous of the invaders of Britain, Conn of the Hundred Battles, is honoured in song and story.

Ireland likewise had no "dark ages" but was the recipient of scribes and scholars who inaugurated a golden age of learning after the fall of Gaul. Private property in land did not exist until Henry II tried to implant Norman feudalism in the late eleventh century. The struggle for the land thenceforth continued uninterrupted for over seven centuries, and was far from finished in 1916.

The bourgeois revolution in England was indissolubly linked with the Reformation. The internal enemies were the landlords (compromised with), the feudal monarchy (transformed) and the land-owning Church (taken over, land and all). The external enemy was feudal mercantile Catholic Spain. These were the preoccupations amid which English democracy was born. But as Shakespeare's treatment of MacBeth, Owen Glyndwr and Mac-Morris (the half-Gaelicised Norman) shows, the English bourgeoisie had its eyes not only on all of the "precious stone set in a silver sea" but on the sister isle as well. In their efforts to make one market in these islands began the chauvinistic element in English nationalism.

The Cromwellian and Williamite confiscations introduced religious sectarianism into Ireland. This phenomenon is widely believed in England to be peculiarly Irish. It was made in England. Ireland accepted the Huguenots when Mary's England would have been a very unhealthy place for them. Cromwell and his successors carried out systematic despoliation under the slogan of forbidding Catholics to be the owners of land. Thus if Protestantism in England was the badge of the merchant seeking freedom of trade, in Ireland Catholicism was the immediately recognisable title to the soil the foreigner had filched.

Or take Napoleon. To the English he was the dread invader threatening to take away such liberties as Pitt had left them. To the Irish he was the potential liberator who still enshrined the principles of the French revolution. A French landing would overthrow the landlord ascendancy, free the peasantry and give the bourgeoisie the opportunities for development which England reserved for her own.

Irish aspirations went down in the counter-revolution of 1798-1800. Ireland was forcibly incorporated in the United Kingdom. Her industry was crippled in forty years, unable to withstand the blast of competition. Then began the emigration, accelerated by the government-sponsored starvation of 1846-48 when Ireland grew enough grain to feed her whole population, but saw it exported by the landlords who had collected it as rent. One million died of hunger. Another million emigrated. Irish society was plunged into a crisis from which the subsequent century has not yet completely extricated it. To the Irishman who came to England, necessity forced him to the land of the enemy. To the English worker who greeted him, he appeared merely as an inconvenient competitor. Was there ever so long and consistent a history making for misunderstanding between peoples?

The issue involved in assessing the Rising of 1916 was thus the recognition of Ireland's separate nationality. The late William Gallacher, one of the stoutest champions Ireland ever had, was fond of quoting the old challenge "Who fears to speak of Ireland as a nation?" When the Labour Government passed the Ireland Act to make Lloyd George's temporary partition permanent, he used to reply "The Labour leaders". And not always only the leaders, for as consistent an anti-imperialist as Lord Brockway recently advocated federation on the grounds that "politics is the art of the possible". Who decides what is possible? To right-wing social democracy it is always imperialism. Nowhere does it recognise the independent revolutionary initiative of the Irish people. Such freedom as Ireland is to be allowed is to be "granted" and "given".

Irish Republicanism

It was therefore a sign of genius on Connolly's part to recognise beneath all the historical antagonisms, the ultimate identity of the Irish and British democratic movements. That of Ireland, which he knew first, took the form of Republicanism, under the influence of the American and French revolutions. If Ireland produced a Wolfe Tone but no Babœuf, at least the rising of 1798 was initiated by something approaching a rudimentary General Strike. Tone was in close touch with the left-wing Jacobins. His successors Emmet, Mitchel and Lalor were thorough-going democrats, the last coiner of the slogan "mankind will yet be masters of the earth".

After the famine Irish republicanism was fertilised once more from France to which surviving leaders of the struggles of 1848 had escaped. Stephens, founder of Fenianism, was impressed by the teachings of Blanqui, still imprisoned for his part in the rising of 1837. With his ineradicable hatred of compromise, he brought back to Ireland also much sectish exclusiveness, and the belief in "making a revolution" through the efforts of the chosen few. The Fenians, or Irish Republican Brotherhood, were the main organisational force preparing the Rising of 1916.

Connolly, born of Irish parents in the slums of Edinburgh, grasped the enormous potential of this national heritage while a young member of the Social Democratic Federation. The workers of Dundee were seething with discontent, and he had a vision of the dispossessed Irish peasant recapturing his economic freedom by joining with the workers of Britain in conquering the citadel of imperialism. The SDF traced back its origins through the Chartist clubs to the radical corresponding societies of the turn of the century. Through Marxism, the SDF went back historically to the Communist League, the Federation of the Just, and thus again back to the left-wing Jacobins and French socialists. Connolly drew the conclusion that it was impossible to counterpose socialism and nationalism within Ireland. The two were different aspects of one democratic transformation of society.

Irish Language Movement

One further element should perhaps be referred to, namely the Irish language movement. Next to Latin and Greek the oldest literary language in Europe, Irish was spoken in every county of Ireland until the days of the famine. The British Government sought every means of discouraging it. The merchant class, enriching themselves by distributing English imports, added their snobs' cachet to the cosmopolitanising tendency. The main trade routes became salients pushing ever further into Gaelic territory and soon the native language survived only in widely separated and dwindling enclaves.

Ireland had been overwhelmingly Gaelic-speaking for between fifteen hundred and two thousand years. Every hill, stream or well, fortification, ancient road or boundary, through its name, progressively rendered into more modern Irish, told of a past when the land belonged to the people, their very names often remaining attached to the places they had inhabited. In the late nineteenth century a sense of the irreparable loss the English ruling class were inflicting through their educational "murder-machine" affected important sections of the petit-bourgeoisie and working class. The Gaelic League was founded in 1891 and proved a constant recruiting medium for the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

"Home Rule" Crisis

The Irish independence movement taken as a whole thus stood for separation from Britain, the land for the people, freedom of religious practice throughout Ireland, fiscal independence and the preservation of the Gaelic tongue. On this basis of free national development, Ireland could rebuild her industries, repopulate the country, sweep away the slums, and provide the working class with the best environment for the pursuit of its ultimate aims.

It is obvious of course that the bourgeoisie was too narrow a class vehicle for a revolutionary potential of these dimensions. It never succeeded in imposing bourgeois policies on the whole. The question thus arises as to how it became enmeshed in the web of revolution from which it only extricated itself at heavy loss in 1921-22. There seem to be two main reasons, first the Tory counter-revolution in Ulster, and second the crisis precipitated by the imperialist war.

Gladstonian Home Rule was regarded in Britain merely as a constitutional device to broaden the base of British rule in Ireland while placing the burden of land purchase on an Irish exchequer. Asquith added the aim of saving the British taxpayer the cost of Irish social services. Clearly any Government in Dublin would require to raise considerable revenue. How was this to be done? The national bourgeoisie replied by protective tariffs which would also encourage Irish industry. This Britain refused to concede. The alternative was inevitably a tax on industry for the benefit of agriculture. The most vigorous current of taxable production lay in the industrial north-east. Here also was a predominantly protestant working class occupying a privileged position in relation to the Catholics. "We will not have Home Rule" said the captain of industry, thinking about his taxes, and proceeded to organise the protestant workers under the slogan of "Home Rule is Rome Rule", so defend your privileges.

To this the national bourgeoisie had no reply. Their class position precluded them from appealing to the protestant workers.

The use made by the Tory party of this dilemma is well known. Craig, Carson, Bonar Law and "Galloper" Smith set up the Ulster Provisional Government and organised the "Ulster Volunteers", and ran in guns for them. When ordered to move north to protect arms dumps from them, the officers stationed at the Curragh resigned their commissions. The mutineers defeated the Government which returned to extracting further concessions from the miserable Redmond.

The Irish Republican Brotherhood had been gaining strength during the heightening crisis. It seized on the new situation to establish a nationalist military counter-organisation, the Irish Volunteers, which soon had over 100,000 members. Almost simultaneously Connolly founded the Irish Citizen Army in whose ranks the socialist and republican traditions became one. In sum, the Tory counter-revolutionaries succeeded in paralysing the Home Rulers, and with them the national bourgeoisie they represented, while raising up far more dangerous opponents in their stead.

For seven months the Home Rulers intrigued till they gained political control of the Volunteers. But then came the war. Redmond then tried to recruit them into the British army. A split ensued in which the much reduced Volunteers were left firmly under the control of the IRB, and slowly there was forged an understanding with the Citizen Army, who ultimately fought under the one command.

The bourgeoisie angled for war orders, the workers were at the outset more grateful for increased employment than resentful over increasing prices. Farmers could dispose of all they could produce. Connolly was disappointed at his failure to win the majority of the working class for the national revolution he was planning. Certain of the IRB leaders, impressed by the supposed failure of the risings of 1798, 1848 and 1867 through *delay*, were also growing impatient. Pearse, Clarke and MacDiarmada began to fear the opportunity might be lost, and urged dispensing with the generally agreed preconditions for an effort in arms, namely, adequate German aid, an attempt to impose conscription or disarm the Volunteers. The IRB decided to deceive the titular leaders of the organisation, MacNeill and Hobson, and prepared an alternate military cadre within it centred on Pearse the Director of Organisation, who became secret Commander-in-Chief.

Preparing the Rising

Success depended above all on the landing of adequate supplies from Germany in County Kerry. The plan was that while the Volunteers kept the

British forces busy in the vicinity of the police and army barracks, railwaymen should run special arms trains up the west coast. The Northern sector, held by Mellows, who was to receive reinforcements from Ulster and the Midlands, was to be extended towards the Shannon thus drawing off forces investing Dublin on the landward side. Activity in the South and East was to hinder the landing of fresh British forces from England. The main blow was to be struck by the Volunteers and Citizen Army in Dublin, using such arms as they had or could capture. It was hoped that the Germans might stage a demonstration on the East coast of England, and that the consequent diversion of British energies might give the insurgents time to seize control of the key centres, and set up a working administration. This could claim belligerent rights and ensure representation at the peace conference at any rate in the event of a German victory; it might even be possible for an immediate settlement in which Britain would recognise Ireland's neutrality. There was thus in Easter week nothing of "propaganda by the deed".

But the German arms were never put ashore. Hobson discovered the secret plans and MacNeill cancelled the Easter Sunday manoeuvres under cover of which they were to have been put into effect. Casement, landing by submarine to warn of the inadequacy of German aid, was captured and taken to the Tower of London. At an emergency meeting of the IRB Military Council a postponement of one day was agreed upon. The Rising was timed for midday on Monday, April 24th, 1916.

The Rising

But thanks to the conflicting orders only three counties rose, Dublin, Galway and Wexford. In Dublin a week's heroic fighting began with Pearse's reading of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic from the steps of the General Post Office. This guaranteed all citizens "equal rights and equal opportunities".

After the surrender began the executions. Thousands were rounded up and questioned. Hundreds were imprisoned or sent to the Fron Goch concentration camp in Meirioneth. Fifteen were shot in the first three weeks, and Casement was tried for treason without the realm, and hanged the following August.

Quite apart from the solidly proletarian Citizen Army, it would be a safe assumption that the majority of the Dublin insurgents were of the working class, although their officers would include many small professional people and artisans. The great lockout had influenced the outlook of all these. In County Galway, on the other hand, the artisans and small farmers had had their political consciousness moulded in recent struggles against rural and

urban landlords and saw as their immediate objective the elimination of the still considerable remnants of feudalism. An important result of the Rising was thus to give city and country, traditionally very much apart in Ireland, a common national purpose, which grew even more universal in the jails and concentration camps.

Effects of the Rising

The Irish people did not at once grasp the significance of the Rising, springing as it did from the seemingly barren earth. But there was no misunderstanding the executions. Within weeks the murdered men had taken their places alongside Tone and Emmet. Within months the Parliamentarians were a waning force, the masses flocking to Sinn Fein while simultaneously doubling the membership of the Trade Unions. Lloyd George had to balance conscription in Ireland against the need for American intervention, as the Tsarist war effort ground to a halt, and the victorious October revolution announced that the final crisis was at hand.

The Bolshevik victory was immediately popular in Ireland where its plebeian inspiration was at once grasped by the horse-sense of the ordinary people. The Irish were no longer alone. From country after country came reports of growing war-weariness and unrest. Not until April 1918 did the British Government dare to attempt the imposition of conscription in Ireland, and the effect of the bare announcement was electric.

Sinn Fein

Mass indignation reached boiling point. The Parliamentarians had to put themselves under the leadership of Sinn Fein. The Irish T.U.C. and Labour Party called a General Strike which paralysed all Ireland but for part of Belfast and the adjoining areas. All shops were closed. The British Government gave in, and contented itself with faking a German "plot" and arresting the people's leaders. Attempts by the Parliamentarians to regain their political independence were met with contempt. In the khaki election of December 1918 Sinn Fein won three-quarters of the votes, and the bourgeoisie was left with neither party nor representation.

The Sinn Fein deputies met in Dublin on January 21st, 1919, issued to the world the Declaration of Independence, established Dail Eireann as their constituent assembly, and elected an interim Government, to which they called on all Irish people to give their allegiance. A situation of dual power came into being.

Lloyd George was in the position of a juggler with too many balls in the air. There was rivalry

with France over dividing the loot won from Germany, Austria and Turkey. There was collaboration lest the United States snatch away the lion's share. There were revolutions in Eastern Europe, rumblings of discontent in India, Egypt and the "Dutch East Indies", and a rising tide of revolt in Britain itself. In these conditions the Irish leaders hoped to influence the peace conference with the aid of the Americans, and did not pursue the alliance with the Bolsheviks, although a treaty of friendship and co-operation was drawn up between the Irish Republic and the R.S.F.S.R.

When it was clear that the Irish people were indeed giving their allegiance to Dail Eireann, it was declared illegal. From a position of illegality it built up a functioning administration, with departments of finance, local government, and Justice. Before long the Crown Courts were deserted and the Sinn Fein judges were settling all disputes, often in out of the way barns, surrounded by scouts and guarded by armed volunteers. Clashes were inevitable. In the struggle that ensued the police force gradually moved over to the side of the people, and was rendered ineffective by resignations. The "black-and-tan" auxiliary police force was then sent and spread a reign of terror throughout Ireland. The Volunteers (now usually called the Irish Republican army) resorted to guerilla tactics and gradually forced the enemy back into the larger towns. In the meantime British imperialism was busy reviving sectarianism in the North-East. In the anti-Catholic programs of July 1920 thousands of workers were driven from their employment and burned out of their homes.

"Four Glorious Years"

All dispossessed classes were preferring their claims. The workers used their new strength to end the starvation wages of pre-war days. Landless men began to seize the undistributed holdings of landlords and ranchers. Emigration remained at its lowest level since before the famine. These were the "four glorious years" and, in the event, British imperialism proved unable to quell the popular movement in the greater part of the country, not even by wholesale murder, assassination and the incendiarism of whole towns. At the height of the struggle Lloyd George was preparing his political alternative. The Government of Ireland Bill was piloted through Parliament in the autumn of 1920. It provided for the partition of Ireland, each part having a Parliament with restricted powers, subordinate to Westminster. Fiscal independence was with-held.

That there were two regional policies for Ireland shows that Lloyd George considered the maintenance of the Unionist base in the North-East

took precedence over placating the national bourgeoisie, who suffered heavily in the terror and were compelled even if only in self-protection to support Sinn Fein. The Northern Parliament was established in June 1921, and this success freed British policy for its next step, namely a settlement based on accord with the most "moderate" sections in the South.

That a basis for such existed is clear. When the land seizures began, landowners flocked to appeal to Dail Eireann. The petit-bourgeoisie could not find it in its heart to expel the suppliant landlords from the nation. The suspension of the agrarian movement was ordered in the name of national unity. When workers seized mines and factories, an increasingly severe tone was taken. Redmondites began to creep back into positions of influence. The cessation of hostilities in the summer of 1921 was followed by six months of bargaining, brow-beating and intrigue, which ended in the offer of fiscal independence for the twenty-six counties. The bourgeoisie, now speaking through the mouths of Griffith and Collins, was dissatisfied at the limitation of its national market, but glad of the chance to re-establish itself against its class enemies. This was done when Lloyd George handed over the British power to an *appointed* Provisional Government to which the *elected* Dail Eireann was slowly assimilated.

The process demanded a bloody civil war lasting ten months. Simultaneously went wage-reductions often amounting to one-third. Defensive strikes were widespread. A catastrophic economic crisis engulfed the country, and the disillusioned workers and farmers began mass emigration again. For the bourgeoisie which had stood aloof in 1916, and which had supported the subsequent revolution from the sidelines, had proved the sole beneficiary of the sacrifices of the common people.

Partition

Lloyd George's master stroke was of course the establishment of the separate administration in the six counties. By this means he removed the Irish question from British politics and posed before the world as having solved the Irish problem. In a sense the settlement represented the freezing of a deadlock, the relinquishment by each side of what the other had the power to hold. But this was true only within the framework of world forces. Lloyd George's decision to seek a political solution coincided with the advent of the Washington Naval Conference, in which the US Government finally dashed the hopes of the Irish-American lobby. It promised non-involvement in Ireland as part of a package deal which brought the end of British naval

supremacy and the non-renewal of the Anglo-Japanese alliance.

Still more to the point was the attitude of the British Labour Movement which alone had the power to forbid partition by insisting that Lloyd George hand over Irish destinies to those who represented the majority of the people. The Labour Party had sent a committee of investigation into the black-and-tan atrocities, and was prepared to advocate any settlement short of independence. The newly established Communist Party had given direct assistance to the Irish revolutionaries. That brilliant lecturer and educationist T. A. Jackson spoke and wrote constantly in favour of separation. Communists were active in the "Hands off Ireland movement". But the working class whose unofficial industrial action could tie up the Jolly George and foil Churchill's intervention in Eastern Europe, felt no comparable urge to spring to the defence of the island in the west. Its leaders feared to speak of Ireland as a nation, the rank and file did not understand and Ireland was cut in two.

To those sceptical of the fateful effect of this event upon British working class development a little exercise in imagination will give answer. If, off Britain's western coast, instead of two antagonistic reactionary governments each dependent on British backing to keep down their own people, there had been a vigorous independent national democracy (Dail Eireann in a word) would that fact not have influenced every political decision taken in Britain over the ensuing years, and need any body doubt this would have been to the advantage of the working class and progressive forces? The age-long spectre of the British ruling class, the unity in action of all the democratic forces of these islands, might well have appeared. This indeed is what the black-and-tans had been sent to exorcise.

Even so, the Irish revolution was not pushed back to its starting point. An Irish State, albeit incompletely independent, had in fact been established. It was of course impossible to confine the great Irish popular movement within its narrow bounds. The workers and petit-bourgeoisie defeated the treaty party in 1932, and Fianna Fail ruled with Labour support. Once more British imperialism hit out indiscriminately at all classes in the twenty-six counties. A new unity was forged for a time. The fact that imperialism was still imperialism forced an unenthusiastic national bourgeoisie once more to appeal to the people for the strength to resist. And despite the Wilson-Lemass pact it would be rash to imagine that this could never happen again.

Notwithstanding the limitations imposed by neo-colonialism the period of bourgeois supremacy showed some real achievements. In the period of economic resistance a strong infra-structure of

State industries was established. Industrial production increased many times. Agricultural productivity rose rapidly as a result of mechanisation, but the industry established was insufficient to absorb the workers displaced. Hence the million strong Irish community in Britain who can exert enormous influence by spreading the understanding of the Irish question in their capacity as British workers. There has been a notable increase in living standards resulting from Trade Union activity and great advances in urban and rural housing. Nobody would choose to go back to British rule. At the same time partition has imposed a trade imbalance on each part of Ireland which has only been met by the constant admission of foreign capital, so that the percentage of the national wealth in foreign hands is steadily rising. This is the background to the "economic integration" movement set on foot by the bankers.

Today

There have been changes in class composition. The proportion of industrial workers to those employed in agriculture has risen enormously. The Irish working class was never so strong or well-organised as it is today. The tenant has given way to the agricultural owner-occupier, and the land question has lost its key significance. But small shop-keepers now face the attempt of British supermarkets to capture the entire distributive trade of the country. The cosmopolitanising influence of the advertisement-financed radio and television services alarms the members of the Irish language movement. Fenian traditions are still strong in the urban and rural petit-bourgeoisie.

In the North also changes, perhaps not so spectacular have taken place. Sectarianism is weakening, and the feeling for a united Irish working class is increasing. In the six counties however the anniversary of 1916 is most likely to be celebrated by clapping a few republicans into Crumlin Road jail.

While the tinsel dangles and the Dublin streets are bright with green white and orange flags, the bourgeoisie is busy giving its own account of 1916. Philistine professors who never expressed a republican sentiment in their lives, are producing learned papers well-documented from official sources. One would almost be led to believe that the Easter Rising was what put into power the class and government who are in power today. Thus has the bourgeoisie torn away the banner of the common people to make trappings for itself.

But the "brave strong faithful common people" as Pearse called them, are still there. There will be other celebrations as well as the official ones, whose spirit will be nearer that of the men of 1916-22.

The future depends on the rapid spread of a consciousness of its own power and responsibilities among the working class who are, in Connolly's words, "the sole incorruptible inheritors of the fight for Irish freedom". The unity of all anti-imperialist forces around the working class is being consistently fought for by the Irish Workers' Party and its sister-party in the six counties. And perhaps as the next round of struggle begins, the new generation that has grown up in Britain, when asked "who fears to speak of Ireland as a nation?" will reply promptly "not we!" The enforced political unification of these islands may be necessary for the imperialists; the peoples can manage to work together without it. Indeed the recognition of national self-determination is an essential pre-requisite for socialist reorganisation.

WORLD MARXIST REVIEW

1966—No. 3

A. BARJONET

France's Fifth Plan

V. PERLO

**Exploitation of Labour and the Main
Contradiction in the U.S. Economy**

R. DALTON

**Student Youth and the Latin-American
Revolution**

Price 2s. 6d.

from

**CENTRAL BOOKS LTD.,
37 Grays Inn Road, London, W.C.1**