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The End of the Ceasefire and the Politics of Inter-imperialist Rivalry

Anarchist Communist Federation

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Independance

Sinn Fein, of course, is only being realistic. it really has no alternative but to take the part of one imperialism against the other. Independence, national liberation is impossible and the leadership of all such movements know it. The task now is to get the best deal available and even the best, in the case of Ireland, isn't looking like very much at all.

It should also be born in mind that if the Loyalist paramilitaries, or a faction of them, respond to the IRA 'resumption' of bombings on the 'mainland' (sic) then there is always the possibility of a return, against the wishes of the Republican and Loyalist political leadership, to sectarian slaughter. And rest assured there are Loyalist militants gagging at the bit for a fight to the finish. And rest assured also that it will be working class people who will be on the receiving end, as usual.

Peace of the Graveyard

So, what is in this dismal Peace Process for workers? Well if we keep passively sitting watching channel new world order plc. then its going to be less and less. At bottom, only class struggle can screw-up the plans of the various bourgeoisie's who plan our futures. One way or the other the only real peace the ruling classes offer us is the peace of the graveyard. Unless the working class of Ireland can unify itself in opposition to all the imperialist forces and impose its own interests then the choice will be between this cemetery peace and peaceful exploitation by 'native' or foreign bosses.

With increasing numbers in both sides of the community looking for revolutionary answers it is, as ever, the task of Irish Libertarians to forge an organisation that can offer them an alternative.

Nowhere in the world are the power politics of inter-imperialist rivalry more sordid and machiavellian than in the relationship between all the players in the act known as the 'peace process' presently being performed in Belfast, Dublin, Washington and London.

This particular series (presented to us by New World Order plc.) is showing regularly on a T.V. screen near you but we also an saw explosive live performance in Canary Wharf on February 9th, with deadly consequences.

After almost 18 months of prevarication, stalling and what amounted to provocation from the British State, the IRA have been forced to apply a little pressure on Major and co., in the form of a large explosion in the British capital. Although the IRA cease-fire officially ended on February 9th, it would be wrong to see this as a return to the 'war of liberation' which the Provo's had been engaged in prior to the cease-fire. Although security has, understandably, been tightened in 'nationalist' areas, the republican movement has not been put on a war-footing, 'War News' has not returned to the pages of An Phoblacht/Republican News and the 'unarmed strategy' has not been dumped.

Criticism

The Canary Wharf bomb and the ostensible return to armed struggle has served a twofold purpose. One, it has reminded the British state that the IRA has not gone away and that it is not amused by the British tactic of chancing its luck. Two, it has delayed any potential split in republican ranks caused by the minimal tangible benefit accrued from the unarmed strategy by showing its preparedness to engage the enemy. The response within the republican movement to internal criticism of the bombing has been to rally behind the Army Council in the safe knowledge that on June 10th, talks which will require not the prior decommissioning of

IRA weapons but a commitment (total and absolute, of course) to the “principles of democracy and non-violence”, will include Sinn Fein. Although the British have now confirmed these talks, they have also remained committed to elections, called for 30th May, to a peace forum. The elections will feature a new, hybrid, electoral system which guarantees not simply a Unionist majority but representation for ‘fringe’ candidates potentially helpful to British interests, such as the Progressive Unionist Party and the Ulster Democratic Party. Opposition to this election exists amongst Sinn Fein, particularly at grassroots level, which would favour a boycott if the SDLP would join them, but as Gerry Adams says “we live in the real world” and the elections are Sinn Feins ‘formal’ invite to the talks on June 10th after all. What bothers Sinn Fein is that the Pan -Nationalist front already has an ‘electoral mandate’ and that democracy, a trademark of new World Order plc., is being used against them at a time when they find it difficult to say no. And on it goes...

Peace Farce

The response of the British left has been in predictable, as the ‘hardest’ of the Leninist left (for example the Communist Party of Great Britain) defend the bombings (often whilst criticising the ‘petit-bourgeois’ politics of Sinn fein) in the name of anti-imperialism and the defence of the right to national self-determination. They have taken great pleasure in berating the softies of Militant Labour and the SWP for their condemnation of the IRA but the Leninists, hard or soft, as usual, miss the point completely.

The present peace farce being enacted over the heads of the working class of Britain and Ireland is the product of a conflict not between an intransigent British state dedicated, at all costs, to maintaining its military presence in the six counties and an anti-imperialist movement operating, somehow, independently,

but between the long-term economic (and short-term) political interests of US imperialism and the same interests of its erstwhile little buddy, British imperialism.

As we have stated before (see Organise! No.36 ‘Processed Peace – the IRA and Cease-fire and the Pax Americana.), following the end of the cold war the price of continued conflict in the six counties is no longer worth it to the British state. When the Brits talk about no longer having any strategic interests it is stating fact. Even as a counter-insurgency/military training ground it’s no longer required now it has Bosnia. It wants out, militarily. Economically, however, it wants to reap the benefits of de-militarization-multi(trans)national investment in the north, which could follow ‘peace’ (i.e. an absence of war, instability and economic draining of resources). On a domestic level it unfortunately has the baggage of the unionists, not least their present importance in parliament. The US too wants ‘peace’ and for the very same reasons. The northern and indeed, southern working classes are seen as having potential for super-exploitation, 3rd-world style, by both sides. But since both Britain and the US have national interests they are both keen to be No.1 in exploiting the potential. The question is who will get in their hardest and heaviest, the US or the Anglo-Europeans?

Sinn Fein has naturally backed America in this struggle. this is quite obvious with its opening of a mission in Washington, its very own “voice on the hill” and its dropping of silly talk of a united socialist Ireland. The republican movement’s rank and file is now asked to move heaven and earth for...a place at the negotiating table. It’s rather short of ‘Ireland united and free’ but it’s an opportunity that cannot be ignored.