

MARXIST - LENINIST

★ W E E K L Y ★

ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF IRELAND (MARXIST-LENINIST)

HOW CAN BRITISH GOVERNMENT CLAIM TO UPHOLD RULE OF LAW?

On November 14th the British Home Secretary, Mr David Waddington, confirmed that the British government was to maintain its powers to detain suspects under the Prevention of Terrorism Act for up to 7 days in violation of Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights which stipulates a limit of 48 hours.

What are people to make of this stand of the British government, especially when it comes so hot on the heels of the revelations about the true, anti-Irish character of the British judicial system made with the recent release of the Guildford Four?

Come to that, what are we to make of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which is said to be to encourage the rule of law in everything in Anglo-Irish relations, and through which the Irish government is supposed to be able to ensure that Britain corrects past injus-

tics and comes at last to properly abide by the rule of law?

Such a stand of the British government on the PTA is in direct defiance of the judgement delivered by the European Court of Human Rights of November 29th, 1988, in the case brought by a number of Irish people detained in this way under this act. Under the European Convention derogation from Article 5 is only acceptable in "time of war or other public emergency threatening the life of the nation" and the European Court clearly adjudicated that such conditions did not apply.

Britain's stand on the PTA vis a vis the European Convention on Human Rights shows that the British imperialists simply ignore the rule of law where it suits their interests in just the same way that the US imperialists refused to attend the International Court at the Hague to answer charges

for violating international law by mining the harbours of Nicaragua not so long ago.

These big imperialist and social imperialist powers, especially the two superpowers, US and Soviet social imperialism, make it standard practice to ride roughshod over all rule of law at the same time as posing as the authorities on which the global rule of law depends. But no wonder; they have had the example of British imperialism, the greatest world power and hypocrite of the last century, as their tutor. But - as the last twenty years of events in the north of Ireland have shown - the British imperialists have not lost their touch themselves.

In the first nine months of this year some 109 people have been detained under this act, after a total of 170 for 1988. And here we are not really

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Groundless euphoria over breaching of Berlin Wall

Last week the mass media had a field day with the scenes at the Berlin Wall which ensued from the decision of the East German government to end restrictions on travel by their population.

The talk of commentators was all of 'the end of the Cold War', the possibility of accelerating the pace of superpower detente and so on. But is there any truth in this perspective?

The big powers themselves, from Bush to Gorbachev, have followed up by urging what they call 'caution', saying that not only is German re-unification not on the agenda but neither is the dismantling of NATO and the Warsaw Pact nor the withdrawal of Soviet or NATO forces from Europe.

The propaganda about an end to the Cold War on the basis of an end to 'the conflict between communism and democracy' with the 'collapse of socialism and the victory of capitalism' is actually merely a repetition of the same analysis made at the time of Khrushchev's so-called 'Secret Speech' at the 20th Congress of CPSU in 1956. But did the arms race diminish after that? Quite the opposite. It was to become the perpetual nightmare of the people of the whole world.

The point is that the basis of the threat of world war is not any kind of contention between democracy and communism. It is between rival capitalists who are competing in life and death struggle in the conditions of the world crisis, where the achievement

of monopoly of the world market and sources of raw materials etc. is really the only sure basis of survival at all. What Khrushchev achieved was the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union. So for all his talk of detente Khrushchev actually set the Soviet Union on the course of the foreign adventures and imperialist striving for world domination which would lead to Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan and ever sharper confrontation with US imperialism. Foreign imperialism was the inevitable outcome of the internal restoration of capitalism in Russia, if not the Khrushchevite revisionists original motivation.

Meanwhile the arising of the Soviet Union as a new imperialist rival to the older monopolist, US imperialism, has simply spurred the American

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touching on the true dimensions of the use of this draconian legislation, i.e. the many thousands more who are stopped and questioned and greatly inconvenienced through the justification of this act, but who are not actually officially detained. In addition some 100 individuals are specifically excluded from entering Britain under the provisions of the PTA. Who are the people affected?

In terms of the direct effects, it is people like the northern Ireland parents of a fifteen year old boy who was killed by a British plastic bullet, who were detained recent-

ly under the PTA when they went over to speak at a meeting protesting against a British fireworks manufacturer which also produces plastic bullets. It is the relations and friends of Irish people held in jails in Britain, i.e. to harrass them and prevent them from making visits to their far-off loved ones. But indirectly the PTA is a blanket instrument of intimidation against the whole Irish emigrant community living and working in Britain and all their friends and relations in Ireland, as well as against the entire population of the north of Ireland.

What operates in the relations between Britain and Ireland, so long as imperialism remains to dictate these relations, is not the rule of law, but the theory that might is right. The Anglo-Irish Agreement has done nothing to change this situation. In fact it has only enabled the British imperialists to further raise the level of their hypocritical propaganda about how concerned they are to defend the rule of law as a still more effective screen behind which they can actually step up their use of force and intimidation against the Irish nation.

AN END TO 'FREE' STATE CUTBACKS?

Subventions cut for places in old people's homes

As we go to press the row is just beginning over the truth about the Minister of Finance, Mr Reynold's contention on the occasion of the publication of next year's government spending estimates: that "the days of big cuts are pretty well over".

But meanwhile the cutbacks are actually going on unabated and the crisis in the state welfare, health and education system is continuing to sharpen, causing great hardship and heartache to many thousands of people.

A case in point is the provision of state assistance for placement of elderly people in homes in the Dublin area.

It is reported that the Eastern Health Board has run out of money to fund the scheme because of the escalation of the demand for the service this year. The budget allocation of £2.4 million for the year had already been used up by July with subventions of \$39 to £45 per week being granted to 200 new cases between January and June. In the four months since then only a further 14 elderly people have received the subvention as the processing of applications has been 'slowed' by the EHB, leaving at least another 50 on the waiting list

and forcing families without the means to pay £150 to £200 monthly towards places in homes if they can afford to pay for this at all. Many families are having to keep on elderly people needing 24 hour nursing care in their own homes, and even such support services as could help the families cope have been cut.

One doctor said that "We have half the number of long-stay beds at St James's hospital as we had 10 years ago, yet we are dealing with an ever-increasing number of elderly." In addition four other hospitals in the state system which formerly had long-stay facilities have been closed in recent years. The EHB has turned to the subvention of patients in private nursing homes as the alternative (about 1,000 on an annual basis) and this is what has led to this present crisis.

It seems that only £30 million will be made available for new developments in the state health system in the public spending estimates. And this is the point about the so-called 'increased spending' of these estimates in general. Such a scale of increases is not capable of making up for the past cuts, the effect of which is

that they bite ever more deeply with the succeeding of the years. Such a scale of increases for the welfare of the people certainly does not compare with the allocations for new prison staff, new clerical staff to release garda officers for police work and about 1,000 new recruits for the 'Free' State army.

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bourgeoisie to still more desperate efforts to maintain their old hegemony.

Gorbachev's policy of 'glasnost', openness or 'democracy', is simply a demagogic enticement to the Soviet working class to accept still greater exploitation to overcome the economic and political crisis of revisionism in their bloc by the open restoration of capitalism (known as perestroika), so that the new Soviet bourgeoisie can the more efficiently finance the sinews of capitalist competition in the world market and also the sinews of war.

The events in the Soviet bloc, each more rapidly following the other, do not augur a reduction in international tension and the danger of inter-imperialist war.

(Next week, an article to explain further how the so-called 'contention between democracy and communism' cannot be the basis of the threat of world war since these are not opposites in the first place.)

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN BRAZIL

by João Amazonas

From Left to right :
João Amazonas,
Luis Inacio Lula da
Silva and Renato
Rabelo.

Inset : Senator
Jose Paulo Bisol -
vice presidential
candidate of the
FBP



Reprinted below is an article by João Amazonas which appeared in the Canadian magazine - "The New Weekly Magazine" recently. João Amazonas is the National Leader of the Communist Party of Brazil and is a member of the Frente Brasil Popular (FBP) whose candidate is one of the main contenders in the election for President of Brazil.

For twenty-nine years there have been no elections in Brazil to choose the president of the Republic. During this period the country lived through decades of fierce military dictatorship. The struggle of the Brazilian people overthrew the dictatorship, in 1985 but did not manage to impose direct elections for the presidency.

After the promulgation of the new Constitution, in October of last year, direct elections in two ballots were set for the 15th of November. Twenty-two parties, with their candidates, seek success. Nonetheless, only three or four have a chance at victory. A fundamental feature of the campaign is the division of the electorate into two well-defined camps. The camp of the ruling conservative elite and the camp of the popular forces which advocates a programme of advanced transformations for the country. It is the first time such a thing occurs in

Brazil.

The definition of the present political spectrum is due, in large part, to the creation of left wing front - the Frente Brasil Popular - which brings together the Workers' Party (PT), the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB) and the Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB). The PCdoB was the first proponent of the Front. The candidate for the presidency of the Republic is Luis Inacio Lula da Silva, of the PT, a well-known trade union leader and popular left-wing personality.

The campaign of the FBP is having tremendous repercussions amongst the people, especially the workers. During these past few months dozens of meetings have been held, bringing together hundreds of thousands of people. Conferences, gatherings, debates, meetings at the factory gates, take place daily, one after the other, throughout the country. At the pre-

sent time the candidate of the Frente Brasil Popular appears to be one of the two probable winners of the first ballot.

The success achieved to this point indicates an unequivocal tendency of the electorate towards the left. The right wing candidates, are generally repudiated by the large masses of the people. This fact is linked to the grave situation in which the country has been placed under the rule of the generals and the conservative, reactionary politicians. Brazil suffers the terrible consequences of the payment of exorbitant interest of the huge foreign debt of some 130 billion dollars. The imperialist exploitation is brutal and unbearable. From 1980 to 1987 alone the country paid the international bankers 74 billion dollars in interest on this huge debt. On top of this, the latifundio continues to be untouchable. One percent of the rural property owners own more than half of the arable land, while 12 million peasants don't own any land to cultivate. A handful of very rich people enjoy two-thirds of the national product. Inflation is 1000% a year. Forty

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million Brazilians live under the poverty line.

In the face of this terrible situation, the electors are making up their minds. The perspective for victory of the left wing candidate has made foreign capital, the big bourgeoisie and the landlords jittery. For this reason, they are now talking about a coup d'etat, and they are preparing themselves, in the event of such a victory, to sabotage it, and for repressive measures and desperate resistance to the popular govern-

ment, in an attempt to make it retreat from its objects. For this reason, the political consciousness of the people who want to see the 13 point programme of the Frente Brasil Popular put into practice, is rising.

The Communist Party of Brazil is the fearless defender of the unity of the people and is going all out to consolidate and broaden the Frente Brasil Popular. Together with its allies, it will support the struggle for the democratic and national transformations, and it will fight for the socialist future of our country.

Resurgence in El Salvador

Following the car bomb which was set off outside a union headquarters killing at least 7 people and injured 30 in the capital San Salvador on October 31st, the patriotic Salvadorean forces broke off peace talks in protest at this state-organized terrorist outrage and initiated a powerful new military offensive against the fascist Arena government. The attack began with an assault on the residence of the Arena-backed president Cristiani. The scale of the fighting seems to be extending with every day since then, the capital is increasingly surrounded and cut off by the insurgents and the patriotic united front is reported to have called on the population to rise in a

general insurrection.

The struggle in El Salvador has been continuing since January 1981. Some 70,000 people have been killed, most of them by the notorious Arena death squads led by Major Roberto D'Aubisson. But all this oppression has been organized and financed directly by US imperialism which has spent \$3.5 billion over the past ten years to crush the liberation forces. However, the patriots control about one-third of the country despite this; and this new resurgence shows that the spirit of the Salvadorean people, far from being cowed, has been steeled to continue on the struggle to final victory. The government has declared a state of siege.

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.....
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.....

Saturday,
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