

AN GHIRIAN
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ISSUE #11

LESSONS
FROM
LOUGHGALL



VOICE OF
MLM IRELAND



It is a long time since James Connolly warned of the Carnival of Reaction that would follow should British imperialism be allowed to partition Ireland. More than a hundred years later, Ireland remains an island playing host to two failed states with a British border running through it. Both the colonial and semi-colonial statelets produced the ruling classes that suited their relationship to British imperialism: The Northern Unionists with their Protestant supremacy and self-righteousness, and Southern nationalism with its backward thinking and craven subservience. To paraphrase Liam Mellows, a Worker's Republic can be erected only on their ruins.

Of great significance was the orchestrated visit in 2011 by Queen Elizabeth of Britain to the Garden of Remembrance, a memorial to those patriots that died for the cause of Irish freedom. As the Queen passed the gathered dignitaries, former Taoiseach Albert Reynolds, grinning like an imbecile, gave her two thumbs up. Naturally the queen ignored the capering of the Free State trained monkey and moved on, her entourage gazing disdainfully at the spectacle of colonial subservience. As always the Irish media pretended not to see the humiliation that was being heaped upon its country. This month the charade continued as royal parasites William and Kate Windsor toured Ireland as part of the same process of normalisation.

Many such events have caused cringing embarrassment to every self-respecting Irish woman and man and delight to the ruling class and its mouthpieces. As always, the custodians of the Free State find ever new lows in their further descent into degradation. Ever looking to integrate into the family of imperialist nations, this ruling class continues to apologise to Britain for every act of resistance carried out by those Irish people that stood up to fight for social, political and economic liberty.

Socialist Republicanism, as the application of Marxism to the conditions of Ireland, has always taken the most correct ideas from international socialism as inspiration. Just as we can see a sequence from Marx to Lenin to Mao, in Ireland we can see the continuity from Connolly to Mellows to Costello and Lynagh, to the countless socialist republicans that have searched for a coherent strategy that will provide a path out of the nightmares thrown up by imperialism.

Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is the inspiration for the most successful secular revolutionary forces of the 21st century. Delivering concrete revolutionary results with all their successes and failures, Maoism fully emerged into the sunlight at a time when capitalism was declaring communism to be dead. While Francis Fukuyama pronounced the end of history, revolutionary movements in Peru, India, Nepal and the Philippines among others, proclaimed that history followed the ceaseless emergence and resolution of contradictions as against Fukuyama's notions of absolutes and historical stagnation. A third stage of revolutionary science, Maoism is an ideological development of Marxism, possessing elements that are universally applicable, rather than just a 'thought' following on from Stalin as the interlocutor of Marxism-Leninism.

Regrettably however, the bourgeois left tends to internalise the narrative of

the dominant Free State class analysis, and countering this takes a degree of commitment that is largely lacking among the Irish left. Many then feel the need to begin their pronouncements with assurances that they are not like Lenin, Stalin or Mao; the practicing Marxists that met with many failures but also got results. There have been numerous myths, many of them wilfully concocted, about MLM: That it is a 'peasant ideology' with no lineage to Marxism. Sometimes also it is ascribed to such people as Robert Mugabe or indeed, the old favourite, Pol Pot.

In a bourgeois democracy the country is run by the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the parameters of debate being rigidly set between only bourgeois parties, from the fascists on one side to the left liberal identitarians on the other. All democratic debate is thrashed out between these two immovable pillars. To step outside is to be ignored or ridiculed. The Irish Free State's current, supposedly sensible, edifice has allowed its citizens to freeze to death on the streets. It continues its active destruction of our environment and the pillaging of our resources, and actively seeks to integrate itself further into the EU imperialist bloc with its escalating aggression. The crimes of the British occupation forces against the Irish people in the North are too numerous to recount here, and the overriding pacification project that has followed the surrender of 1998 is still an obstacle. The forces aligned against revolutionaries in Ireland therefore are significant.

But history has demonstrated that a new world is possible, and as Mao has declared, *'The future is ours, if we dare to scale the heights.'*

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Maoism and Irish Republicanism

On October 1 1949, seventy one years ago this year, Chairman Mao and the Communist Party of China led the Chinese People to victory in the world's second successful, world historic Socialist Revolution, demonstrating that capitalism and imperialism can be overthrown by the organised and disciplined revolutionary actions of the people.

Since the victory of the Chinese Revolution, the most advanced sections of Irish Republicanism have been studying the lessons of both the Russian and Chinese Revolution, and working to apply their universal aspects to the concrete conditions in Ireland.

But the relationship has been two-fold. When developing the proletarian military strategy, the universal theory of Protracted People's War, Mao Zedong paid close attention and spent a long time studying the lessons of the Irish Revolution. Mao was particularly interested in the Irish Republican Army's (IRA) guerrilla campaign against British Imperialism between 1919-1921, its mass character and the efforts of the revolutionary movement to build new power across the country to replace the colonial administration. Mao gave careful study to the IRA's guerrilla campaign in the countryside, but also was impressed by the urban guerrilla campaign the IRA waged in the cities, particularly Dublin, targeting key personalities of the colonial regime for assassination and operating widespread intelligence and sabotage networks to cripple the enemy at the centre of their power.

From this study of the Irish Revolution and from his analysis of the history and conditions of China as well as the revolutionary experience of the international proletariat, Mao Zedong was able to develop his military theories and formulated the great weapon of the working class, the universal theory of Protracted People's War. Mao saw the importance of the Republican revolutionaries methods not only to mobilise the great masses of the people in the revolutionary war, but also in developing a Revolutionary People's parliament and alternative power structures as the backbone of the revolution. This experience, along with the Paris Commune and the world historic success of the Great October Socialist Revolution gave Mao and the Chinese revolutionaries' practical examples to study when working to build Red Power in China.

The purpose of this article therefore, by studying our revolutionary history through the weapon of Marxism, is to argue that Maoism is not a foreign or alien ideology imported to Ireland, but a very natural and organic development of proletarian revolutionary science in this country. It is also an argument, as set out above that the revolutionary experience in Ireland has had an important impact on the creation and development of the proletarian military line, Protracted People's War.

In preparation for the IRA's border campaign from 1956-1962, the key architect of the campaign, Sean Cronin, an IRA Chief of Staff, paid particular attention to Chairman Mao's military writings and strategy as well as studying the examples of Guerrilla Warfare in Ireland, most notably from 1919-1923. Cronin then put together a highly detailed guerrilla strategy, for a military campaign in the British Occupied Six Counties of Ireland. Building on the example of the Tan War, Cronin's strategy paid particular attention to the lessons of the Red Army and the Guerrilla units in the Chinese Revolution, and this was summed up in the document "Handbook for Volunteers", which the IRA produced for its members as a guide to action for the Border campaign.



Sean Cronin, IRA Chief of Staff

While Cronin's plan was militarily sound, his error was not in realising the importance of the political aspects of Mao's teachings for Revolution, and their interrelated nature to military actions, focusing instead almost exclusively on the military elements of revolution. This weakness was later criticised by then IRA Volunteer Seamus Costello who had joined the movement in Dún Laoghaire and was active in the Border campaign. Costello would later play a key role in advancing the struggle for National Liberation in Ireland, stating that the Border Campaign failed "not because of the lack of popular support of the people, but because of the lack of their popular involvement" in the campaign.

In this early study of the Maoist methods by Irish revolutionaries, the IRA leadership had successfully understood the military importance of the theory of Protracted People's War, but had failed to grasp the importance of its political aspects. The IRA leadership therefore had failed to understand the ideological importance of the weapon in its hands and relying on purely military action, the campaign was doomed to failure.

Seamus Costello from Bray, Co. Wicklow, was imprisoned by the Free State Government during the Border Campaign and was subsequently interned in the Curragh Military Base in Co. Kildare. Costello would later refer to this time as his "university days". While in the Curragh, Costello and a group of other IRA prisoners used their time to study revolution and apply the lessons to conditions in Ireland. In particular the IRA prisoners studied the example of the successful Chinese Revolution, the writings of Mao, and were especially inspired by the then ongoing Vietnamese Revolution, led by the Communist Party of Vietnam, and paid particular attention to the writings of Ho Chi Minh and Vo Nguyen Giap, the key leaders of that revolution. Through this study, Costello became convinced that only a People's War with the active political support and involvement of the Irish Working Class, could achieve victory in the struggle for National Liberation and



Seamus Costello

Socialism in Ireland. Building such a strategy became his life's work.

Released from internment and with the failure of the Border Campaign, Costello wasted no time reorganising the IRA to continue the Revolution. Over the course of the next decade, Costello would play a key role in ensuring the Republican Movement adopted Revolutionary Socialism and became involved in the People's Struggles against Capitalism and Imperialism.

From a youthful Volunteer of the 1950s, throughout the 60's Costello rose quickly through the ranks of the IRA becoming first, director of operations and later Adjutant General or second in command of the Republican Movement. Speaking of the reorganisation, Costello would say it was great 'to see the cars flying around again'.

On September 16 1964, as the IRA was reorganising, Seamus Costello went to Paris, knocked on the door of the Chinese Embassy, and officially requested assistance from the Communist Party of China for "the Irish struggle against British Imperialist rule and to establish a democratic People's Republic."

While it remains unknown what, if any, assistance the CCP provided to Irish Revolutionaries, the event is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, the move suggests that Costello and sections of Republican Movement were acutely aware of the two line struggle in the International Communist Movement and were consciously rejecting the "peaceful coexistence" advocated by Moscow, and were adopting an anti-revisionist position. It is clear from this action that Costello and his supporters were looking to Chairman Mao and the Communist Party of China as the leaders of the world revolution. This is further supported by events following the establishment of the Irish Republican Socialist Movement (IRSM) in 1974, when Costello derided the position of the 'stickies' for being counter revolutionary, revisionist and pro-Moscow. Costello understood that the class and national struggle were the same fight, understanding therefore the political and military application of Peoples War. Evidence of the inspiration from Maoism can also be seen from the first name chosen by Costello for the new revolutionary army established in 1974 to continue to wage revolutionary armed struggle. The Army was called the People's Liberation Army and later became the Irish National Liberation Army.

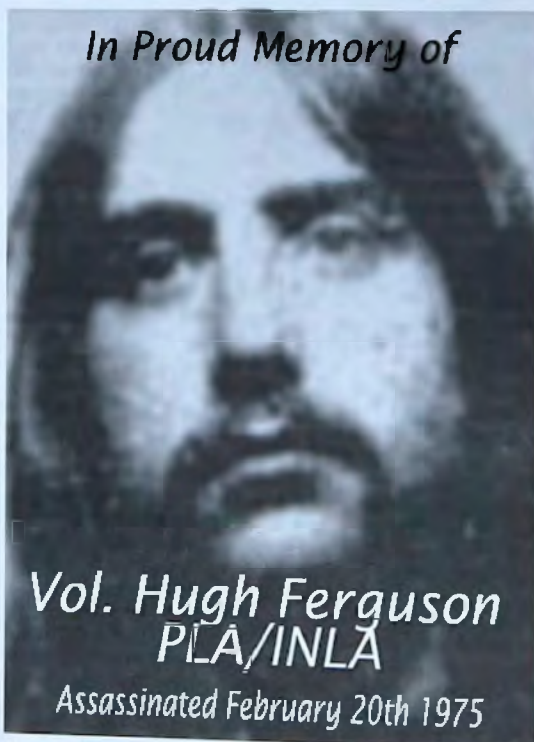
Seamus Costello then can be seen as an anti-revisionist Marxist-

Leninist, who recognised Mao and the Communist Party of China as the leaders of the International Communist Movement, who sought their aid for a People's War in Ireland to establish a socialist, People's Republic.

It is clear then that the advanced sections of Irish Republicanism paid close attention to the lessons of the Chinese revolution throughout the 1950s and based on this experience came to adopt an anti-revisionist Marxist Leninist position in the 1960s. In the 1970s, Maoism would continue to be the guide of the most advanced sections of the Republican Movement.

In November 1972, IRA Volunteer Noel Jenkinson, from Sallynoggin in Dún Laoghaire, was imprisoned for the Aldershot bombing in England. A comrade of Seamus Costello, Jenkinson was also an anti-revisionist Marxist-Leninist and a strong supporter of Chairman Mao. As well as being an IRA Volunteer, while in England, Noel Jenkinson was active in Maoist politics and was a member of both the Communist Party of Great Britain and later the anti-revisionist Committee to Defeat Revisionism, for Communist Unity. The operation Jenkinson was arrested for is widely believed to have been masterminded by Costello, and this suggests that Maoist influenced volunteers were actively working together in the early 1970s. While in prison, Jenkinson rejected the counter-revolutionary and revisionist position of the 'stickies,' and resigned from the organisation, joining instead the Provisional Movement. Jenkinson died in a British Prison, of suspected poisoning by British Intelligence and the Republican Movement was robbed of a deeply committed Maoist Cadre.

During the 1980s as the Communist Party of Peru under Chairman Gonzalo began to synthesise Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as a third and higher stage of Revolutionary Socialism through the People's war in Peru, Maoism would again have a deep influence on the most advanced sections of the Irish Republican Army.



The IRSP remembers PLA Volunteer Hugh Ferguson

LOUGHGALL MARTYRS

1987-2019



**"It is right
to rebel"
- Mao**



IRISH SOCIALIST REPUBLICANS

In the H-Blocks of Long Kesh, a British prison and torture camp in Ireland, Republican Prisoners again began to study and apply the teachings of Chairman Mao to the conditions in Ireland. IRA prisoners around the legendary commanders Jim Lynagh and Padraig McKearney were intently studying "Quotations from Chairman Mao and other writings of Maoist Revolutionaries.

Suspicious of the Belfast leadership, who were viewed as running down the IRA and compromising with Britain, on their release from prison Lynagh and McKearney were concerned that moves were afoot to dismantle the revolutionary armed struggle in and replace it with a compromise with imperialism. Both men were determined to develop the revolutionary struggle in the border counties along the laws of Protracted People's War, putting the war in the hands of the masses, to guard against any such move.

Towards this end, this group of IRA Cadre organised a military conference in 1986 in the Monaghan home of the IRA commander Séamus McElwaine and attended by other important IRA leaders including Patrick Kelly. The purpose of this meeting was to reorganise the revolutionary armed struggle in the border areas into a Protracted People's War and to discuss the necessity of breaking with the provisional movement and establishing a new revolutionary movement to oversee the waging of this campaign.

As the cadre present at this meeting were in command of the majority of the IRA's Brigades and Active Service Units in the border region, the strategy was enacted at once, particularly in the occupied counties of Fermanagh and Tyrone.

The plan was worked out methodically. IRA Guerrilla fighters would embark on the strategic defensive, consolidating the overwhelming support in the border region for the revolution and working to build active base areas by driving the occupation forces in rural communities out of the area entrenching them in the big towns and cities and replacing the colonial administration with the Republican Movement.

A full time flying column was also to be established based deep in the 26 county state and launching offensive operations from the base areas along the border. Through this strategy it was hoped to extend the base areas under the control of the revolutionary movement and move to a strategic equilibrium in terms of power before a final strategic offensive.

This reorganisation by the Maoist Republican Cadre of the Republican Army in the border region caused considerable fear both within the Provisional Leadership, the Colonial office in the Six Counties and particularly within the corridors of power in Whitehall and Westminster.

By this stage British Imperialism had identified a section of the Provisional leadership that it could do business with and were not willing to sit idly by while a credible, ideologically driven alternative leadership that was capable of organising and leading a national revolutionary movement.

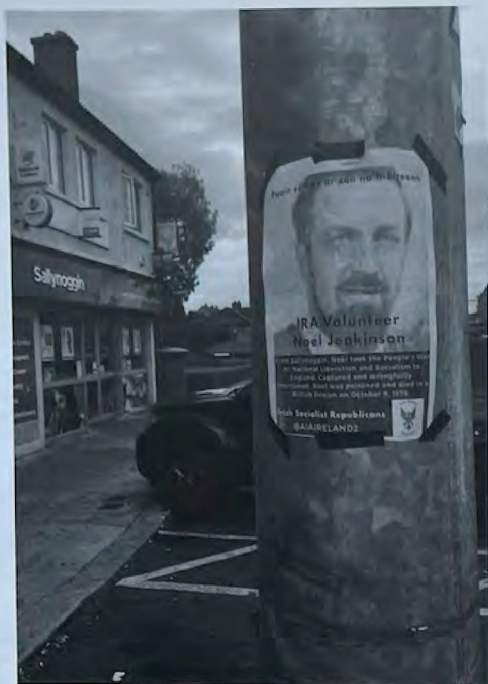
Britain's terrorists in Ireland were ordered to address this threat with immediate effect, and launched a widespread shoot to kill operation against the Tyrone IRA's revolutionary cadre.

By May 1987, Séamus McElwaine, Jim Lynagh, Padraig McKearney and Patrick Kelly had been systematically taken out by the hated SAS paramilitary regiment along with dozens of the Republican Army's most active and effective guerrillas in the border region.

The alternative revolutionary leadership was wiped out by imperialism and the path was now clear for the reformist Belfast leadership to seek compromise and join the colonial apparatus. While the IRA in the border area continued with the PPW strategy, by 1992 the shoot to kill campaign had taken a heavy toll on the Cadre and it became clear that the task of building a Protracted People's War for National Liberation



Jim Lynagh (front right) walks behind the coffin of his close friend and comrade Séamus McElwaine.



Saluting the memory of Noel Jenkinson

and Socialism would be left for another generation.

The compromise reached between the reformist leadership of the provisional movement and British Imperialism was a major bump in the road for revolutionary struggle in Ireland that has taken almost 22 years to recover from.

However throughout the slack period when the revolutionary tide seemed to have ebbed, Maoism continued to provide inspiration and guidance to the most ideologically advanced sections of the Republican movement. Much of this took place behind closed doors and involved intensive discussions by revolutionary republicans, determined to rebuild the movement and the struggle for National Liberation and Socialism.

Though mainly behind the scenes, the influence of Maoism on Republican thinking sometimes spilled out into the open in forums such as the Fourthwrite magazine and in prisoners publications such as the New Republican Forum's magazine (also called Forum). Further evidence of the Maoist influence can also be seen from the fragmentation of the Provisional Movement and with the formal ending of the Provisional IRA campaign in 2005. With the numerous new formations that emerged from this decision, these regrouped explicitly around the ideology of Socialist Republicanism, which has always been the most advanced application of the Marxist revolutionary method in Ireland.

The years of mass working class struggle beginning in 2008 with the economic collapse, through to the campaign against household and water taxes would see revolutionary republicans once again making organic links with the most advanced sections of the working class and engaging in a protracted period of peoples struggle against the puppet counter-revolutionary institutions at Stormont and Leinster House. It was during this period that sections of Revolutionary Socialist Republicans began to study the Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as a guide to action and a way forward for the revolutionary struggle in Ireland.

In 2017, a generation after the systematic assassinations of the Maoist Revolutionary IRA leaders in the border region and the compromise of the reformist Belfast leadership of the Provisional Movement, Irish Socialist Republicans (ISR) was established as a revolutionary organisation upholding Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as a third and higher stage of Marxism and the shining path to Revolution in Ireland.

In the three years since then, ISR by studying and applying Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to the concrete condition in Ireland, have developed a coherent revolutionary strategy to mobilise the masses, defeat capitalism and imperialism and rebuild the All Ireland People's Republic that was violently suppressed in 1922.

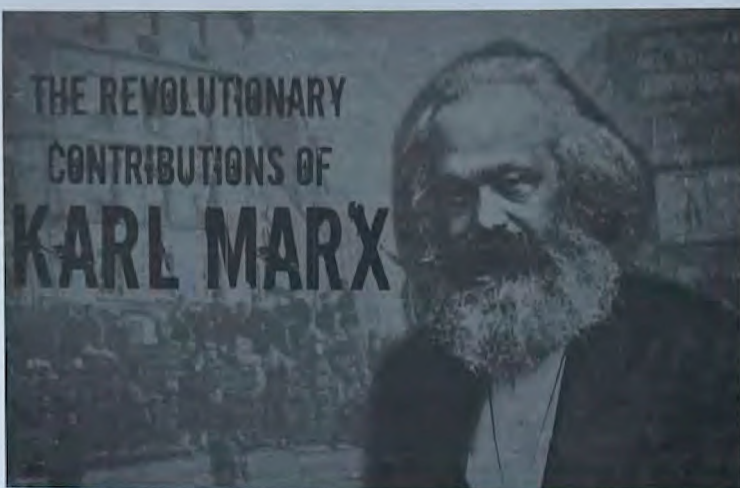
It is this author's opinion that the formation of an explicitly Maoist Republican Movement is a major milestone for the revolutionary struggle in Ireland. Although it remains far too early to assess the impact of such an organisation comprehensively, it is clear that by combining Socialist Republicanism with Marxism-Leninism-Maoism ISR has managed to appeal to new recruits to add alongside its experienced revolutionary cadre, a cadre that includes veterans of the struggle for National Liberation and Socialism whose involvement stretches back before the split in the Republican movement in 1969.

Credibly, within three years ISR has managed to establish a presence across the country, particularly on the east coast and has managed to establish itself as one of the key and most active revolutionary organisations in Ireland's capital, Dublin, marking it out as one of the most ideologically advanced sections of the Republican Movement.

It is this author's hope that ISR will continue to develop along this trajectory in the coming years and through a deepening and developing of Socialist Republicanism and Maoism can, in classic Maoist fashion, move from being an organisation that started small and weak to one that is big and strong and positioned in the leadership to wage a successful protracted struggle for National Liberation and Socialism, that mobilises the masses for the Revolutionary re-conquest of Irish Society.



ISR: Following in the footsteps of giants



Karl Marx, a German philosopher, economist, historian, sociologist, political theorist, journalist and socialist revolutionary, was born on the 5th May 1818, in Trier, Rhenish Prussia. The main components of Marxist ideology were the Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism, Marxist political economy and the theory of scientific socialism whereby Marx developed the science concerning the laws governing the development of nature and society, thus making it an all-encompassing science of revolution.

Because of his political activities, Marx was forced to live in exile with his family in London where he continued to develop his thought in collaboration with German revolutionary Friedrich Engels. His most famous works are perhaps *The Communist Manifesto*, and the three-volume *Das Kapital*, his political and philosophical thought having great influence on subsequent intellectual, economic and political history.

Ideas or theory are always the product of material conditions and this is true of Marx's theory itself. Whenever new material conditions arise, new ideas and theories also emerge, the socio-economic changes of the time providing the basis for the development of Marxist doctrine. Marxist political economy emerged from the Industrial Revolution of 1760-1830, which centred in England but influenced the whole world. It allowed Marx to discover the laws of motion of capitalism, its contradictions and the doctrine of surplus value which uncovers the roots of exploitation. England being the centre of the modern industrial bourgeoisie also provided the intellectual arguments of the bourgeoisie in its struggle against

feudalism.

Marx's critical theories around economics and politics held that human societies develop through class struggle and in capitalism, this manifests itself in the conflict between the ruling classes, the bourgeoisie, that control the means of production and the working classes that enable these means by selling their labour power in return for wages. Employing a historical materialist approach, Marx predicted that, like previous socio-economic systems, capitalism produced internal tensions which would lead to its own destruction and its replacement by socialism. Marx suggests that the instability and crisis-prone nature of capitalism causes class antagonism to exacerbate the working class' development of class consciousness, leading to their conquest of political power and the establishment of a classless, communist society.

Marxism emerged out of German classical philosophy and numerous socialist theories, most of which originated in France, giving expression to the hopes and aims of the emerging proletariat and being both a reflection of and a protest against capitalist exploitation and oppression. Marx drew scientific socialism out of these disparate and flawed socialist theories developing what became known as scientific socialism.

There have been attempts in more recent times to downgrade Marx's theories or, unable to convincingly dismiss Marx's contribution, admit the value of his works, strive to remove their revolutionary character. Marx's ideas however are bound to triumph, for behind them was the whole force of historical inevitability. The truth of Marx's theories ensured that he would always have the last laugh, and, writing to Engels in 1867, Marx anticipated the attacks on *Das Kapital*,

stating that, 'If I wished to refute all such objectives in advance, I should spoil the whole dialectical method of exposition. On the contrary, the good thing about this method is that it is constantly setting traps for those fellows which will provoke them into an untimely display of their idiocy.'

The financial journalist James Buchan writes that, 'Marx is so embedded in our western cast of thought that few people are even aware of their debt to him. Everybody I know now believes that their attitudes are to an extent a creation of their material circumstances - that, on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness', as Marx wrote - and that changes in the ways things are produced profoundly affect the affairs of humanity even outside the workshop or factory.'

The economics correspondent to the New Yorker, John Cassidy, in 1997 reported a conversation with a British investment banker working in New York. 'The longer I spend on Wall Street,' the banker said, 'the more convinced I am that Marx was right. There is a Nobel Prize out there for an economist who resurrects Marx and puts it into a coherent theory. I am absolutely convinced that Marx's approach is the best way to look at capitalism.' As to Clinton's, "It's the economy, stupid", Cassidy pointed out that 'Marx's own term for this theory was "the materialist conception of history", and it is now so widely accepted that analysts of all political views use it, like [James] Carville, without any attribution. When conservatives argue that the welfare state is doomed because it stifles private enterprise, or that the soviet union collapsed because it could not match the efficiency of western capitalism, they are adopting Marx's argument that economics is the driving force of human development'.

The Spectre Haunting Loughgall

County Tyrone is the largest of the Occupied Six Counties of Ireland, stretching from Strabane to the border with the 26 Counties at Monaghan. Across the border into County Armagh there are miles of desolate moor with farmland and scattered towns. The slopes of the rolling countryside around the village of Loughgall are dotted with apple trees, in what is, the County's 'Orchard Country'. As one approaches Loughgall from Armagh City, the Ballegasey Road slopes downwards past a walled copse and a football field to the right, by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) barracks on the left. The road progresses between a row of small bungalows and a former military barracks. On past the local football team's clubhouse and a small telephone exchange, the road then curves uphill to the left into the main part of the village and the church that stands at its centre.

On Friday, the 8th May 1987, just after 7.15pm, the sound of the engine of a JCB mechanical digger, its bucket high, broke the silence as it trundled into the village. A weapon of war, two masked gunmen standing on either side of the driver, the JCB ploughed into the wall like a tank breaking through the wire mesh rocket-proof fencing that surrounded the station, the low wall preventing a full breach, and ramming into the building to maximise the coming blast. Bringing up the rear was a Toyota Hiace van, containing the rest of the eight-man Active Service Unit (ASU) of the East Tyrone Brigade of the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

As the masked men emerged from the van to rake the barracks with gunfire, the three on the JCB disembarked to light the fuse of the bomb stowed in the digger's bucket. Then the shooting began. Directed against the van, over thirty-six men of the British occupation's elite Special Air Service (SAS) that had been lying in wait with heavy machine guns and automatic weapons, fired from at least four points. The bomb detonated, blowing off the barracks roof and largely demolishing it, the high velocity gunfire continuing for five minutes. Some now estimate that the number of rounds fired could have been as high as 1200.

Calm returned to the scene. Four lay dead in the van, which had been riddled. Two more men lay near the barracks, around twenty yards apart, while another man lay sixty yards from the barracks on the road towards the centre of the village. One man made it out of the van, attempting to escape into the football field, climbing a locked gate in the process. British soldiers stationed behind the hedgerows cut him down ten yards into the field. Close-by, Anthony Hughes, a motorist, was killed and his brother Oliver severely wounded. Their car had been fired upon and hit 50 times from a garden 10 yards to their rear.

While the attack was taking place two IRA scouts waited a short distance away at a pick-up point. One of the scouts said later that when members of the ASU failed to appear he and his comrade became concerned. Making their way into Loughgall in separate vehicles to investigate, they came face to face with members of the SAS at the ambush site.

One of the scouts sat "frozen" in the cross hairs of an SAS man's sights as he looked towards the blue Hiace van and the bodies of his comrades lying around it. He was later to recall that while the SAS men he encountered were calm, others were "dancing" around the van. *"At that stage there was an odd isolated shot,"* he said. *"I could see the carnage down at the van... The boys [SAS men] who were with us were in control, but the boys around the van were in a frenzy."*

On that day, the IRA lost some of the cream of its guerrilla fighters: Patrick Kelly (30), Dungannon, County Tyrone, Pádraig McKearney (33), Moy, County Tyrone, James Lynagh (32), Monaghan Town, County Monaghan, Declan John Arthurs (21), Galbally, County Tyrone, Michael Anthony Gormley (24), Galbally, Seamus Donnelly (19), Aughnasklea, County Tyrone, Eugene Kelly (26), Cappagh, County Tyrone, and Gerard O'Callaghan (29), Tullymore, Near Armagh City.

Father Charles Devlin, who administered the last rites to the men, noticed that all had been shot in the head, some in the face. All had

been shot multiple times. No attempt was made to take prisoners, marking a hard line that British imperialism was taking in the border counties area.

In the days that followed, a spokesperson for the East Tyrone Brigade stated, *'We attacked Dungannon courthouse a few days ago (Thursday 7 May) and the Loughgall attack was part of the IRA's plan to hit areas which had remained untouched. We went to show that there is no normalisation and the SAS action proves we are in a war situation. We have always maintained that; they [the British] have always practiced it but never admitted it.'*

It was the heaviest single death toll suffered by the IRA in all the years of the so-called 'Troubles,' and indeed the biggest loss suffered since the 1920s, sparking off disturbances in nationalist areas across the north. In the days that followed, scuffles broke out at Lynagh's funeral between mourners and Gardai, one member of Special Branch being forced to fire his machine gun into the air.

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The ICB digger had been hijacked that day from Peter Markle's farm at 6.30pm near Moy Village by five IRA volunteers. Two of the men stayed with the family to prevent them reporting the hijacking, the digger taking a circuitous route that was nine miles to Loughgall, picking up the 200 lb bomb that they were to use on the way. Scout cars were also in operation throughout the area. The rest of the attacking group were travelling in the blue Toyota Hiace van that had been hijacked from a business premises in Dungannon by masked men at 2.30pm that day.

The British ambush had been taking shape for some days before the attack. The IRA unit had been shadowed by Army Surveillance and Special Branch for some time it appeared. It had also been decided that the twenty-four SAS that were resident in the Six Counties were insufficient, the regiment's HQ in Hereford, providing a further group

of fifteen SAS from G Squadron, a rapid reaction force, that were flown into the Six Counties.

The SAS went into position in Loughgall many hours before the ambush. At one point two elderly dog walkers stumbled upon them but it was deemed safe for the operation to continue. The SAS men were commanded by a staff sergeant, their mission having been defined as an OP/React observation post: A coded term for an ambush. There were two or more 7.62 mm belt-fed General Purpose Machine Guns with the group, the others carrying mostly M16 Armalites and Heckler and Koch assault rifles. The main body, termed the 'assault' or 'killer' group, was deployed in two main groupings. The larger, containing the heavy machine guns, was positioned in the copse overlooking the barracks. The other was in and around the station itself and there were also at least two 'cut-off groups' in the village.

The decision to put men inside the station, six SAS men, two members of the RUC elite paramilitary wing, the Headquarters Mobile Support Unit (HMSU) and a local officer in case a member of the public arrived at the barracks door, was designed to allow a 'clean kill.' While all involved recognised that they were at war, to maintain the British Army's declared status in the north, it was necessary to appear as though the occupation acted in accordance with British civilian law through the 'Army Yellow Card.' According to Mark Urban, an SAS man explained to him that, *'The Yellow Card rules are officially seen to cover Loughgall, but of course they don't. You put your men in the station. That way they [the IRA] are threatening you without even knowing it. That's how you get around the 'Yellow Card.'*

The SAS on the day were backed up by scores of officers from the HMSU and at least fifty of the Army's and RUC's most highly trained officers in surveillance techniques. There were also several companies of Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) and regular army as well as mobile police squads. It was therefore an operation involving hundreds of soldiers and police.



Top Row: Declan Arthurs, Seamus Donnelly, Tony Gormley, Eugene Kelly. Bottom Row: Patrick Kelly, Jim Lynagh, Padraig McKearney, Gerard O'Callaghan



Map of the Occupied 6 Counties of Ireland

The police station itself was a part-time post, manned by just three or four RUC men and open only in mornings and afternoons.

Three of the ASU travelled with the digger while the remaining five went ahead in the van, scouting for patrols and checkpoints, of which there were none. Arthurs drove the digger through the town past the barracks before returning back the way he had come. The van then did likewise. This suggests some doubt in the operation and Arthurs and another IRA man returned in a scout car to look over the area. Arthurs then mounted the digger, O'Callaghan and Gormley climbing alongside, on either side of him.

The JCB flanked by the van moved into the SAS kill zone, which was a three point triangular formation designed to eliminate everybody within its parameters. The SAS opened fire from various vantage points, including from within the station itself and Ireland lost eight of its greatest sons.

When the explosion was heard, another of the surviving guerrilla scouts said that within minutes a large number of 'regular' British soldiers jumped from the helicopter he had spotted earlier, the SAS men disappearing from the scene. A scout car picked up the volunteers at the Mackle Farm and the remnants of the Brigade went to ground.

Brian Arthurs, Patrick Kelly's successor as OC, moved to split East Tyrone in an attempt to isolate any possible informers and for a long time brigade operations were suspended for internal investigations to be carried out. The British claim that information came from electronic surveillance need not be taken at face value and Liam Ryan, who did the intelligence work, concluded that the information came from higher up than Tyrone. It was to be over two years before the IRA would again commit a large number of men to an operation.

The killings were part of a concentrated British Army and loyalist death squad campaign against republicans in the border counties. Within the next five years, the British Army and its proxies killed over twenty IRA volunteers and more than twice that number of sympathisers and ordinary Catholics. The Tyrone Brigade, with its distinctive political-military outlook had support that extended to some of the most active IRA volunteers, not just the bulk of the Tyrone ASU but also those operating in Armagh, South Derry and Monaghan. Of these, such men as Seamus McIlwaine, Dessie Grew, Michael Ryan, Antoine MacGiolla Bhride and Kieran Fleming were to be killed by undercover British operations; Liam Ryan, who had survived the Loughgall ambush, being killed by the loyalist counter-gang, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF).

There was some retribution however, and on the 20 March 1989, the IRA in South Armagh ambushed two senior RUC officers. One, Superintendent Harry Breen, had been pictured in the press alongside a display of the IRA weapons captured at Loughgall. On the 13 December 1989, a unit of twelve volunteers attacked a permanent checkpoint at Derryard, Co. Tyrone, killing two soldiers and severely wounding a third.

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The Sinn Féin newspaper, An Phoblacht/Republican News (14th May 1987) said of Jim Lynagh, 'He was a key figure in some of the most daring and innovative missions in the last few years in the East Tyrone Brigade's operational area...So much was he feared by the crown forces that his name was repeatedly raised by RUC detectives interrogating people in Gough Barracks. They offered massive bribes to set Jim Lynagh up and vowed that they would kill him before next Christmas.'

Jim Lynagh joined the IRA in his teens and operated with the East Tyrone Brigade until, in 1973, he narrowly escaped death when the bomb he was carrying went off prematurely. He spent the next five years in Long Kesh. On his release, Lynagh was then elected a councillor to Monaghan Urban District Council in 1979 for Sinn Féin. In 1980 he appeared in court in the 26 Counties charged with membership of the IRA, but released a few months later. In 1982, Lynagh was arrested in possession of twelve rounds of ammunition and sentenced to five years in Portlaoise Prison in the 26 Counties. After his release in 1986, Lynagh was kept under close surveillance.

Lynagh had a reputation as a fearless volunteer with personal charm although the media would attempt to paint him as a suitably clichéd dour fanatic. Lynagh had become close to Pádraig McKearney, whom he met in jail. After his arrest in 1972, McKearney spent some of his time in Magilligan Prison in the company of Lynagh. It is here that they are known to have studied the works of Chairman Mao. McKearney had been one of the escapees from the Kesh in 1983 and he and Lynagh later worked together on operations after McKearney re-joined IRA activity in early 1984 in his native East Tyrone. Former IRA member Vincent McKenna once said, 'Lynagh was into Maoism and all that sort of shite because he'd had time to read in jail. The likes of Tom Murphy and Kevin McKenna had probably never read a book in their lives.'

Lynagh commanded a group of IRA members in Monaghan, North Armagh and East Tyrone, his methods somewhat different to those of most other IRA leaders. Where other commanders might arm only 1-2 volunteers, Lynagh would lead ten or twelve armed with assault rifles. In January 1981, Lynagh was thought to have led a twelve man group in an attack on the house of Sir Norman Stronge, the former Speaker of the Stormont Assembly and long-term MP for Mid-Armagh. His son James, who had inherited his seat for the Official Unionist Party, was also present. Both men were shot dead and an armoured car that arrived in the aftermath was badly shot up as the unit left the area.

###

Lynagh, McKearney and other members of the Tyrone Brigade opposed much of the Adams agenda, especially the dropping of abstentionism, fearing that the accepting of the Free State parliament would ultimately lead to the recognition of the Stormont and Westminster parliaments. This, they reasoned, would likely lead to the dilution of armed struggle, the Republican movement being led down the dead end of constitutionalism. Their opposition to the Adams leadership was expressed in both military and political terms. At the 1986 Tyrone-Monaghan brigade convention, which chose delegates for the Army Convention, Lynagh and McKearney spoke against the motion, clashing with Chief-of-Staff Kevin McKenna who was in Tyrone but politically in the Adams camp.

According to writer Ed Moloney, when the brigade convention voted however, the majority went with Adams and when Lynagh and Paddy Kelly attended the 1986 Army Convention and voted against Adams, they were in the minority within the brigade delegation. Their military critique also opposed the Adams Army Council's Long War strategy whereby the campaign was to conduct armed propaganda, forcing Britain to leave when enough soldiers were killed. This strategy, contained within the regulations of the IRA's Green Book, meant that volunteers would have to operate from within enemy controlled land. McKearney and Lynagh did not believe in this approach as Britain was not fielding a conscript army and they pushed for total war as a radical departure, endeavouring to force Britain out of their bases and liberate territory within the Six Counties. They also believed that the enemy would not allow rebels to survive within its belly.

Brigadier Frank Kitson appears to be in agreement. *'An excellent example concerns the way in which the Law should work. Broadly speaking there are two possible alterations, the first one being that the Law should be used as just another weapon in the government's arsenal, and in this case it becomes little more than a propaganda cover for the disposal of unwanted members of the public. For this to happen efficiently, the activities of the legal services have to be tied into the war effort in as discrete a way as possible which, in effect, means that the member of the government responsible for law, either sits on the supreme council or takes his orders from the head of the administration. The other alternative is that the Law should remain impartial and administer the laws of the country without any direction from the government.'*

The strategy of Protracted Peoples War was not truly foreign to Ireland, Mao Zedong himself having studied Michael Collins as he developed his military theories. From its early stages in China to being used against the twin imperialist powers of France and the US in Vietnam, the political-military strategy of Protracted People's War was first developed by Mao. According to this theory, in the initial stage of Strategic Defence, the revolutionary forces conduct their war in rural areas where the enemy is weak with a view to establishing a stronghold that will become a revolutionary base area. As the revolutionary forces grow in power, the People's War enters the stage of Strategic Equilibrium, continuing to create liberated areas, extending its influence throughout the surrounding countryside, becoming the governing power and gaining popular support through such programmes as land reform. Arriving at the third stage of Strategic Offence, the revolutionary forces encircle and capture towns then cities, eventually seizing power in the entire country.

As part of their emerging strategy, Lynagh and McKearney went to Chief of Staff Kevin McKenna with their plan to set up of a flying column of 20-30 men, based deep in the south with its own training camps. This column would strike three to five times a year aiming to cause maximum disruption to the occupation forces. They further planned for satellite groups of two to three men to continue to attack on a harassment basis, collecting intelligence for the larger operations. McKenna however turned down the idea claiming that it was 'impractical.'

Naturally, there were tensions between McKenna and the Lynagh/McKearney camp. *'McKenna tried to put Lynagh in one zone and McKearney in the other,' recalled an associate. 'It was possibly also an attempt to divide and conquer, to cause rivalry over assets and the like.'*

McKearney, like Lynagh, advocated the commencement of what they called the "third phase" of the armed struggle, the 'strategic defensive', in which the RUC, UDR and the British Army would be denied all support in selected areas. In 1985 Patrick Kelly became commander of the East Tyrone Brigade and put this strategy into action.

According to Ed Moloney, in the months between the 1986 conference

and the Loughgall ambush, McKearney had been putting out feelers in Dublin and elsewhere to source weapons for a new organisation should they break with the Provisionals. He had made contact with Dominic McGlinchey's Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), through Mary McGlinchey who had been leading the group while Dominic himself was in jail. This contact halted however when Mary was killed in January 1987 by unknown gunmen.

Later, in spring 1987, just weeks before the ambush, members of the emerging faction came together in Seamus McElwaine's family home on the Monaghan-Fermanagh border. Among those present was one man from Belfast who had a background of loyalty to the Adams leadership. The meeting discussed the breaking away and arming of a new organisation. McKearney and Lynagh however, did not live long enough for any such plans to reach fruition.

###

The IRA's infrastructure of ASUs, or cells, was grouped in clusters in certain areas around the Six Counties. In the mid-80s however, the Tyrone Brigade began drawing groups of ASUs together to mount complex attacks. Developing skills in making bombs and mortars, its members went on operations carrying assault weapons and wearing body armour. Letting, as Mao suggested, the enemy be their quartermaster, they frequently supplied themselves with captured occupation weapons.

As early as 1985 the Tyrone Brigade had begun its campaign to bomb and mortar RUC and UDR bases, setting up a form of flying column that came together for specific operations rather than the fulltime, secure, column that had been previously envisaged. Up to Loughgall, there had been twenty-two attacks on RUC stations alone. There was a network of 24 of these small stations across rural Tyrone, typically run by 4-5 officers during daytime. It was difficult for army patrols to protect these and any contractors drawn in to do repairs were threatened. The most spectacular was carried out in Ballygawley.

On the 7th December 1985 the Tyrone Brigade attacked Ballygawley RUC barracks. According to the Republican magazine *Iris* (No. 11, October, 1987), *'One volunteer took up a position close to the front gate. Two RUC men opened the gate and the volunteer calmly stepped*





forward, shooting them both dead at point blank range. Volunteers firing AK47 and ArmaLite rifles moved into the barracks, raking it with gunfire. Having secured the building they planted a 100 lb bomb inside. The bomb exploded, totally destroying the building after the volunteers had withdrawn to safety.'

The IRA secured a number of weapons and documents from the attack, the remaining RUC fleeing the scene through the back door. Ten days later there was a mortar attack on Castleberg Station. This was followed, two days later, by another mortar attack on Carrickmore Station.

In autumn 1986 the Brigade launched the attack on the RUC station in 'The Birches' near Portadown, Co Armagh. The station was surrounded by high wire fencing to protect the building from rockets, grenades and stones. Iris magazine (No 11) describes how, 'The carefully coordinated attack involved a dozen volunteers using a commandeered low-loader and a Volvo mechanical shovel. The IRA placed a 300lb bomb on the shovel and rammed it against the wall, before detonating the bomb. The barracks was demolished and as the volunteers withdrew they raked the remains of the building with 200 shots.'

Newsnight presenter Mark Urban appears to have had privileged access to British intelligence operatives, and although their honesty is more than questionable, the information that he gleans is worth considering. 'Early in 1987 I was given a briefing by a member of the security forces which contained a detailed account of how the attack on the Birches had been carried out. There had been several teams with different tasks. One group had staged a diversionary incident in Pomeroy, more than 20 kilometres north-west of Dungannon, which was designed to draw security forces away from the target. Another group had hijacked the digger and other vehicles needed for the job in Washing Bay, several kilometres to the east of Dungannon. A further team had mounted the attack itself. The attackers evaded security forces roadblocks after the raid by escaping by boat across Lough Neagh. When hijackers, 'dickers' [scouts], gun-carrying members and bombers were included, the attack had involved thirty-five people, the person giving the briefing said.'

###

In his book *Low Intensity Operations*, Brigadier Frank Kitson, writing in 1971, was under the impression, 'that Northern Ireland and Viet Nam will both be settled within five years'. The early 70s were certainly defined as the guerrillaist phase of the struggle whereby the Provisionals and for a time, the Official IRA engaged the British forces. British counter-insurgency strategy however took advantage of the 1975 ceasefire to strengthen its position. Becoming focused on a campaign to criminalise those in prison, British imperialism now

pursued a strategy of 'Ulsterisation, criminalisation and normalisation,' established to contain the armed struggle to within acceptable levels.

This precipitated the blanket protests in Long Kesh, eventually progressing to the hunger strikes that were to have far-reaching political consequences. Providing a catalyst that gave fuel to the electoral interventions and mass agitational politics of this period, it impacted on the ideology and political strategy of the republican movement into the 80s. After 1975, the IRA retained its support base but had little prospect of advance and was close to defeat. In response to the realisation that the British were not about to withdraw, the Provisionals moved towards a political-military reorganisation that developed into the 'Long War' strategy. The struggle for political status of republican POWs in the prisons and the eventual hunger strikes coincided with Sinn Féin's emergence as a radical party with a mass base that became known as the 'communities of resistance'. The Long War strategy would be underpinned by a mass movement mobilised under the auspices of Sinn Féin, previously wary of mass politics and unsure of its potential to retain public support. It was supposedly a break from the militarism and the conservatism and traditionalism of the earlier movement under southern leadership.

The Long War emerged from the shift northwards and the creation of a Northern Command whereby the IRA adopted a cellular structure. Although the IRA proved a highly adept military organisation over the years, problems within the Long War strategy caused changes in the balance between the political and military dimensions of the campaign. An unidentified IRA member explains,

'The thinking behind the cell system and the Green Book, with intensive anti-interrogation techniques, was that this would allow IRA personnel to survive at home whilst using the legal system to their own advantage. I suspect that this was seriously detrimental to the progress of the IRA in the sense that it facilitated the penetration of the IRA by the security services. This basically neutralises whatever benefits came from the cell system. It also went along with the creation of a logistic mentality, and this in turn facilitated progress towards reformism as opposed to radical transformation.'

Brigadier Kitson brings clarity, 'But if the government builds up a really effective intelligence organisation quickly, insurgents operating without the insulation provided by a closely linked system of secure cells, will be eliminated before they can become dangerous, because they will have to make their own contacts with the uncommitted population of the city.'

By the late 1980s, a sense of stalemate had descended over the republican campaign. In an attempt to break this impasse the IRA renewed its activity from December 1986 after what had appeared to be a winding down of its operations. It marked a return to bombings and shootings in the south and south-west counties, primarily in rural areas. From the hunger strikes of 1980-81 however, the republican movement made serious advances in the political field and during the 'ballot box and the ArmaLite' era some looked to the former as a way forward. Brendan Hughes recalls, 'I believe that in the 1980s that there were people in the leadership who believed that the war could not be won and that an alternative route needed to be found.'

The new armed struggle strategy, that appears to owe much to the Tyrone Brigade's suggestions, was greatly influenced by the example of the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, the aim being to establish liberated areas near the border and ultimately sought to make parts of the Six Counties ungovernable. A major change in IRA strategy, this was met by the occupation's overt use of terrorism through its arming and guidance of the loyalist counter-gangs and the shoot-to-kill policy which was an undeclared war of annihilation against certain parts of the IRA. The victory of the state's response made the drive towards constitutional politics inevitable thus strengthening the hand of those that pushed this agenda, perhaps believing that it would somehow bring

victory.

The idea of a Tet Offensive to be launched when the Eksund guns arrived seems out of step with the Adams leadership's approach and there should be little surprise that this was greeted with scepticism. The Tet Offensive launched by the National Liberation Front (NLF) and the People's Army of Vietnam in the north, mounted a widespread assault on US forces throughout the country. Although it ultimately led to a military defeat, the offensive produced a resounding propaganda victory, deeply affecting US public opinion and morale. A side-on glance at Chinese and Vietnamese history however, exposes the flaws in this idea. Given the IRA strategy up to that point, conditions did not facilitate the sudden change to a People's War strategy. Also, the Vietnamese experience was aided by a revolutionary northern state that could be set against Ireland's neo-colonial southern regime.

Perhaps however this situation was the result of contending forces within the republican movement whereby the Lihyan arms burst into the situation and certain tendencies were rising to prominence. Brendan Hughes, whose opinion can be taken as free from the defeatist agenda of Adams, had his doubts about the Tet Offensive approach. *'In 1987 there was an awful lot of gear coming in. The objective was to take over villages in key areas, engaging in major operations and arming sympathetic local people. I was totally opposed to it because we would never have got away with it since the movement wasn't strong enough. The weapons were there but we weren't ready. And this is where some suspicion comes in. Why opt for that strategy? Given the way things worked out a lot of people died needlessly. Loughgall was an example, what the fuck was going on?'*

Also discussing that time, Anthony McIntyre states, *'I remember talking to a very senior IRA man in around 1987/88 and he said the next eighteen months would be crucial in determining whether this strategy was possible. At the end of that period both they and the British realised that they couldn't accomplish it. I did also hear in prison from a senior volunteer in Tyrone that in fact the IRA had no intention of using the gear except as a threat. Who knows?'*

The Tyrone men were key members of the IRA and would have been central to the post-Eksund 'Tet Offensive.' Jim Lynagh being sent to Libya in 1986 for training in weapons supplied by Qaddafi. The major escalation of violence was hoped to cause Britain to reconsider its options, the IRA relying on the 'spectacular bomb' strategy of attacks on England to provide leverage in peace talks. Some however, link the Loughgall ambush to this emerging 'peace process.'

###

The partition of Ireland in 1920 had been inaugurated in Britain's imperial interests, directly through colonial occupation in the Six Counties, and indirectly through the neo-colonial regime in the southern 26 Counties. Complicating the anti-imperialist struggle was the problem of loyalism. A product itself of colonialism, loyalism was a sectarian and protestant supremacist ideology operating in the interests of imperialism, and struggling to maintain a foreign identity, constantly threatened with dilution as the decades passed.

Niccolò Machiavelli once explained why it is logical, *'to establish settlements (colonies) in one or two places which will tie the state to you. If you do not do this, you will have to keep part of your army there. A prince does not have to spend much on such settlements, for with little or no expense he can send the settlers there and keep them there. He offends only a minority of the citizens from whom he takes land and houses to give to the new settlers... In conclusion, I say that these settlements are not costly, they are more faithful, they injure less, and the injured, as has been said, being poor and scattered, cannot hurt... However if instead of settlements the prince maintains armed men there, one spends much more, having to spend on the military presence all the income from the state.'*

With the British occupation doing its best to wipe out the revolutionaries and pacify the reformers, the loyalist counter-gangs were increasingly utilised. Tommy McKearney explains, *'The Loyalist campaign of violence was pure British logic. Counter gangs happened in Aden, in Egypt, Kenya and elsewhere. Even with the 'Shankill Butchers,' who mutilated people because just killing wasn't enough, it was designed to terrorise Catholics into rejecting the IRA. It was indiscriminate and, to a degree, it worked. People were very scared.'*

###

With Lynagh and his comrades gone, new impetus had been given to the search for a peace settlement. Significant in this was the implications of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985 and the end of abstentionism in 1986. It was to be a shift away from armed struggle towards what was presented as a revolutionary mass mobilisation that ultimately was to lead towards an accommodation with the status quo.

The Hume-Adams dialogue held out the prospect of a pan-nationalist front whereby broadly nationalist concerns could be articulated to pressurise Britain towards post-colonial reforms. This would require Britain to leave behind its imperial self-interest, allowing the republican movement to compromise with unionism in an attempt to win this community over to a united Ireland. The Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), the Dublin government and elements within the US would supposedly unite with the Republican movement in this pan-nationalist front. Presented in itself as a protracted campaign, this 'New Republicanism' would reach an understanding with Unionism in reflection of the peace deal, the Good Friday Agreement (GFA).

The GFA contained all-Ireland and cross-border national elements, the emphasis being on this as a 'transitional' process to 'the Republic,' an argument that finds echoes in the origins of the Free State. Great importance was placed upon the need to implement the agreement but compromise by unionism in comparison, from the beginning, has always appeared somewhat lacking.

Tommy McKearney concludes, *'The Good Friday Agreement flowed logically, almost inevitably, from the decision by Sinn Féin in the late 1980s to negotiate a settlement within the framework of Northern Ireland. I remember the first ceasefire when people were encouraged to drive up and down the Falls claiming some kind of victory. I recalled a point made by Chou Enlai at the Paris negotiations during the Vietnam conflict - you never gain at the conference table what you did not take on the battlefield.'*

Accepting the GFA was a significant fall from republican values. Frankie Molloy, in March 1999 said that Republicans, *'... are prepared to administer British rule in Ireland for the foreseeable future. The very principle of partition is accepted.'*

Years later, Brendan Hughes was to reflect, *'What we hammered into each other time after time in jail was that a central part of Brit counter-insurgency strategy was to mould leaderships whom they could deal with... A few Republicans have slotted themselves into comfortable positions and left the rest of us behind. In many ways the Nationalist middle class has been the beneficiary of armed struggle. It has not been Republicans - apart from those Republicans eager to join that class.'*

###

According to Brigadier Kitson, *'It is sometimes said that insurgents start with nothing but a cause and grow to strength, while the counter-insurgents start with everything but a cause and gradually decline in strength to the point of weakness.'*

In a post-GFA world, the parameters of debate were presented as being very narrow, set between militarism and a politics that involved a

constitutional path. The banal expressions of how desirable peace is propped up this process, which in spite of its name, was just another aspect of Britain's war against Ireland so that an armed occupied Six Counties state remained intact. The unionists on panel discussions continue to make side-swipes about 'Republican terrorists' while the erstwhile republicans of Sinn Féin, many of them lowering their faces and changing the subject, rarely rise to the challenges constantly spread by the triumphant and self-righteous pro-imperialists.

The Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM), with the benefit of the experiences of the many groups within it and indeed those that had gone before, provides some light to the question. *'The key to carrying out a new democratic revolution is the independent role of the proletariat and its ability, through its Marxist-Leninist party, to establish its hegemony in the revolutionary struggle. Experience has shown again and again that even when a section of the national bourgeoisie joins the revolutionary movement; it will not and cannot lead a new democratic revolution, to say nothing of carrying this revolution through to completion. Similarly, history demonstrates the bankruptcy of an "anti-imperialist front" (or similar "revolutionary front") which is not led by a Marxist-Leninist party, even when such a front or forces within it adopt a "Marxist" (actually pseudo-Marxist) colouration. While such revolutionary formations have led heroic struggles and even delivered powerful blows to the imperialists they have been proven to be ideologically and organisationally incapable of resisting imperialist and bourgeois influences. Even where such forces have seized power they have been incapable of carrying through a thoroughgoing revolutionary transformation of society and end up, sooner or later, being overthrown by the imperialists or themselves becoming a new reactionary ruling power in league with imperialists.'*

Proclaiming what active revolutionaries thought or should have done reminds us of Dylan Moran's categorisation of football as, 'men with beer-guts shouting advice to highly trained athletes' and words are cheap, especially those that are expressed in a pub. But evidence points to the Tyrone Brigade's advances in strategy providing the germs to other paths that did not come to fruition. It is of course wrong to ascribe opinions to dead men and while history is full of 'ifs' and 'if only', it would be foolish and unscientific to proclaim any bold predictions of how the Tyrone Brigade's strategy might have further progressed.

The prospect of fighting a new border campaign against a technologically superior and better armed military that ultimately will respond, as Loughgall proves, with white terror would require a massive shift in Republican forces both north and south. The realities of imperialist power, unvarnished by pious pronouncements about 'democracy and human rights', and also the diminutive size of the Six Counties, continues to be somewhat daunting. A further problem comes with the settler mentality of the Unionist/Loyalist protestant community which would have serious implications for swimming like fish in friendly water.

Certainly it might be considered relevant that the arrival of such weapons as the SAM 7s and Soviet Heavy Machine Guns could have led to these being used to bring down helicopters, forcing the British to use ground transport that would make them more vulnerable to ambush. This would probably have depended upon a massive response that would move Irish society south of the border to a more radical position and bring the IRA into direct conflict with the southern forces, spelling the end of 'General Army Order No. 8, which prohibits offensive action against the administration in the 26 counties or its Forces.'

The proposed move away from the 'Long War' strategy to the idea of republicans controlling their own areas, is perhaps linked to the study of the early experiences of Mao's Red Army on the Hunan-Kiangsi borders, building up the early Chinese Soviet Republic in such areas as the Chinggangshan Mountain range that had allowed the communists to stave off massive Kuomintang attacks up until the break-out and the beginning of the Long March. Mao however wrote,

'The long-term survival inside a country of one or more small areas under Red political power completely encircled by a White regime is a phenomenon that has never occurred anywhere else in the world. There are special reasons for this unusual phenomenon. It can exist and develop only under certain conditions.'

The East Tyrone Brigade however, remains significant, and it must still be considered relevant to the debate over whether or not Protracted People's War is a universally applicable revolutionary strategy. It should surprise no-one that the Tyrone strategy arose. Given the histories of anti-colonial struggles around the world, it is only natural that new analyses would emerge, seeking to provide answers to questions that the situation within republicanism would create. Tommy McKearney however, points out,

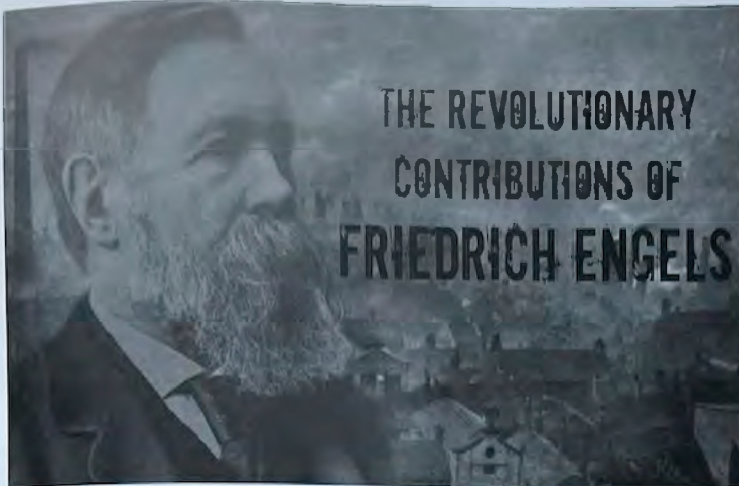
'But the idea of genuine consultation is slightly different in the IRA. It is more often someone coming from the strata above to explain the leaderships' position. Essentially the Army Council will draw up a policy and takes it to GHQ staff. GHQ is told to disseminate this through the ranks. So GHQ will attempt to persuade brigade staff of the benefits of the leadership line. This in turn feeds down into the ordinary members.'

A revolutionary organisation that has no facility for two-line struggle cannot give voice to contending factions, opening lines of debate by which options could be fully explored. In his interview with El Diario, Peru's Chairman Gonzalo asserted that without a two-line struggle there can be no basis for party unity. *'Without a forceful and shrewd two-line struggle in the party, the ideology cannot be firmly grasped; nor can the programme or the political line be established, defended or applied, much less developed. The two-line struggle is fundamental to us and has to do with conceiving of the party as a contradiction in accordance with the universality of the law of contradiction.'*

Ultimately, although there were a number of indicators suggesting a path towards Protracted Peoples' War, one clear surgical strike that had been given limitless resources, caught the Tyrone Brigade off-guard and destroyed the vital organs of that tendency. Behind a media-driven wave of propaganda British imperialism had identified a target that, like the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) and the associated Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), had to be exterminated before the bourgeois elements of Republicanism could be properly pacified. The Adams leadership was successful in its side-lining of other views and ensured that only its vision came through. Any wishes for revolutionary alternatives have in more recent times, emerged somewhat incoherently within what are termed, the 'dissident republicans.'

It must be remembered however that those that control the present need not control the future and, as Albie Sachs reminds us, *'All revolutions are impossible until they happen. Then they become inevitable.'* Brexit demonstrates how things can suddenly change and, in the words of Lenin, *'There are decades where nothing happens, and days where decades happen.'*

History informs us that revolution comes about in a critical moment when a society's internal contradictions surface and reach a boiling point. The contradictions that gave rise to the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland however have not been solved, merely blunted and glossed over by a considerable propaganda campaign that set the parameters for debate within strict limits. Over thirty years later, Ireland continues to be partitioned and under imperialist control, and, as a spectre of things that might have been, the prospect of another path to liberation and the merit that worked to achieve it, now haunt the country roads around Loughgall.



THE REVOLUTIONARY CONTRIBUTIONS OF FRIEDRICH ENGELS

Friedrich Engels is one of the most important teachers of the International Proletariat and a key theorist on the Proletarian Military Line. With Marx, Engels first developed Scientific Socialism in the 1840s and set out the method for how the proletariat can take revolutionary control of Society.

Born in Prussia in 1820, the Engels were wealthy factory owners with large cotton textile mills in Germany and England. In 1841 Engels entered his military service with the Prussian Army, as a member of the Household Cavalry. This Military experience would later stand to Engels as he grew to become an important military tactician, working on a proletarian Military Line based on his experience in the Prussian Military and during the German Revolutions in 1848, in which he was an active participant.

Assigned to Berlin, Engels quickly became involved in revolutionary activities, first associating with the Young Hegelians and later writing articles exposing the poor wages and conditions of factory workers which were published in the Rheinische Zeitung, a paper edited by Karl Marx, but the two men would not meet until late November 1842.

Concerned by his involvement in radical politics, when Engels's Military Service ended, his parents sent him to Manchester to work in the family factory there. While in Manchester, Engels began to develop the closest association with the workers and became linked to the revolutionary workers organisation, the Chartist.

Engels fell in love with an Irish factory worker Mary Burns, who was a radical and militant Irish Republican. Through Mary Engels learned of the depth of

exploitation experienced by the Manchester Workers and also of the oppression of Ireland by England. Engels became a strong supporter of the Irish National Liberation struggle and later the Fenian Movement, of which Mary Burns was closely connected and to which he is said to have given material support. Marx and Engels were strong advocates on behalf of the Fenian prisoners and the IRB was a member organisation of the First International.

It was during this time that Engels began to conduct an in-depth study of the conditions of the workers in Manchester which would later become his important book, *The Conditions of the Working Class in England*. It was also during this period that Engels came to understand the revolutionary nature of the proletariat. He came to see the working class as the fighting class whose actions would determine the type of society that would develop in the future.

During this time Engels also conducted deep personal study of Socialist Theory, a study that led him back into correspondence with Marx. Engels practical experience with the workers helped to shape Marx's view of Capitalist Society and from 1844 the two men were working in the closest communion developing the ideology of Communism. Becoming members of the underground Communist league in 1846, Marx and Engels were tasked with writing the revolutionary manifesto of that organisation, which was published in 1848 as '*The Communist Manifesto*', one of the most important documents in Proletarian History.

Engels returned to Germany and volunteered for service in the Revolutionary Army in 1848-1849. First, in May 1849 in his home town of Elberfeld, from which he was rapidly expelled for fear that a 'red' such as he might rub off on the local Committee of Public

Safety. In June and July he fought in the ranks of the insurrectionary army of Baden and the Palatinate, with the remnants of which he finally fled to Swiss territory in face of the Prussian offensive.

Engels was convinced of the need for the revolutionary overthrow of society by the Proletariat and believed the proletariat needed not only its own party, but armed formations under worker's leadership. He dedicated the rest of his life to the study of military tactics and concentrated on maintaining his own physical fitness to be ready to play a full role in the revolution. His writings would be key to the development of future Proletarian strategy and in particular, the use of guerrilla tactics by a small force against a larger one. On Revolutionary Strategy Engels wrote, '*Firstly, never play with insurrection unless you are fully prepared to face the consequences of your play. Insurrection is a calculus with very indefinite magnitudes, the value of which may change every day; the forces opposed to you have all the advantage of organisation, discipline and habitual authority; unless you bring strong odds against them, you are defeated and ruined. Secondly, the insurrectionary career, once entered upon, act with the greatest determination, and on the offensive. The defensive is the death of every armed rising; it is lost before it measures itself with its enemies. Surprise your antagonists while their forces are scattering, prepare new successes, however small but daily; keep up the moral ascendancy which the first successful rising has given to you; rally thus those vacillating elements to your side which always follow the strongest impulse, and which always look out for the safer side; force your enemies to a retreat before they can collect their strength against you; in the words of Danton, the greatest master of revolutionary policy yet known: de l'audace, de l'audace, encore de l'audace!*'

These tactics would be taken up and developed by Lenin and Mao and are still in use by Revolutionaries today anywhere the fire of People's War has been lit.

Often overshadowed by Marx, Engels has a lot to teach the revolutionaries of today, particularly in his military writings which have long been overlooked but which advocate the adoption of a Proletarian Military Line to overthrow the old society and give birth to the new revolutionary society under the democratic control of the workers.

A New Red Sun over India

'Maoists are the single biggest threat to the internal security of India'
Manmohan Singh, Indian Prime Minister 2006.

'If there is to be revolution, there must be a revolutionary party. Without a revolutionary party, without a party built on the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory and in the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary style, it is impossible to lead the working class and the broad masses of the people in defeating imperialism and its running dogs.' - Chairman Mao, "Revolutionary Forces of the World Unite, Fight Against Imperialist Aggression!" (November 1948)

'The new Communist Party of India (Maoist) will continue to act as a consolidated political vanguard of the Indian proletariat. Marxism-Leninism-Maoism will be the ideological basis guiding its thinking in all the spheres of its activities. It will continue its struggle against right and left deviations, particularly against revisionism, by taking this as the main danger for the communist movement as a whole. It will still seek to unite all genuine Maoist groups that remain outside this unified Party.' - Joint Press Statement Upon the Merger of MCCI and CPI-ML (People's War) and the Founding of the Communist Party of India (Maoist)", Oct 14, 2004.

A new red sun rose over India on September 21st 2004. As groups of revolutionary cadre met under tight security in the thickest jungle a truly historic event was occurring. Under the rising red sun, the Communist Party of India (Maoist) was established to lead a Protracted People's War in India until Communism, through a merger of two of the leading Maoist Revolutionary organisations, The Communist Party of India- Marxist Leninist (People's War) and the Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI). The armed formations of the two organisations also merged creating a Unified People's Liberation Guerrilla Army, continuing the name of the revolutionary army that had been established on December 2 2000, under the leadership of the People's War group.

The founding statement of the CPI (Maoist) set out clearly the role of the Army in the Indian Revolution, 'armed struggle will remain as the highest and main form of struggle and the army as the main form of organization of this revolution, hence it will continue to play a decisive role, whereas the UP will be built in the course of armed struggle and for the seizure of power through armed struggle.'

The waging of revolutionary armed struggle as a tool for the liberation of the masses was not a new concept in India. The Maoist revolutionaries could trace continuity back to the Naxalite Uprising of May 25 1967, in a small village in Western Bengal. Here,

Revolutionary Communist Cadre who would quickly go on to form the Communist Party of India (Marxist- Leninist), including Charu Majumdar Kanu Sanyal, and Jangal Santhal led an armed uprising of the peasant population.

It was during this period that Charu Majumdar wrote the 'Historic Eight Documents' which are considered the ideological foundation of the Revolutionary Maoist Movement in India, arguing that revolution must take the path of armed struggle on the pattern of the Chinese revolution. The same year, these revolutionary cadre broke away from the revisionist party and formed the All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries which in 1969 founded the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)—with Majumdar as its General Secretary. The Naxalite Movement was born. In one form or another, the revolutionary armed struggle that began with the Naxalite uprising in 1967 has continued down until today and is now under the leadership of the CPI (Maoist).

The CPI (Maoist) is a banned organisation with the reactionary Indian state also banning any organisation it believes to be supportive of the communists. This includes mass organisations and civil society groups. The work of the CPI (Maoist) is therefore clandestine taking place underground and any outspoken support for the Maoist Revolutionaries can land a person in gaol. With this repression the Maoists have learned to master the secret methods of revolutionary work and continue to build the organisation across the country despite the restrictions placed on its cadre. The CPI (Maoist) pays particular attention to propaganda work among the masses as a way to combat the lies of the reactionary establishment. Handwritten posters and leaflets conveying revolutionary messages are distributed at night in villages and CPI (Maoist) cultural units put on concerts and shows for villages that also convey the revolutionary message to the people. This work is carried out by armed cadre who organise the towns and villages into the new structures of Red People's Power.

Adhering to Maoist strategy, it is the party that commands the gun. The leading body of the CPI (Maoist) is the Politburo, with thirteen members elected by the membership. Beneath the Politburo is a 32 strong central committee that is responsible for implementing the orders of the politburo throughout the organisation. Next to the Central Committee, is the party's main Military body, the Central Military Commission, which is established by the central committee and is responsible for overseeing the direction of the Protracted People's War and the Peoples Liberation Guerrilla Army.

It is estimated that the PLGA has over 10,000 armed fighters in the field. These volunteer soldiers fight for the freedom of their people and do not receive any wages. Further estimates suggest that at least 40% of the armed cadre are female with women holding command positions along side of their male comrades. This is of major importance in a country where the people are restricted by the repressive caste system. Involvement in the revolutionary struggle is a way for women to break the social barriers imposed by the patriarchal society and find her place as an equal in the ranks of the Party and the People's Army.





The CPI (Maoist) is to be praised for their work in developing the revolutionary theory of Proletarian Feminism, a central component of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. The concept was first put forward by the late central committee member Anuradha Ghandy arguing that *'the struggle for women's liberation cannot be successful in isolation from the struggle to overthrow the imperialist system itself.'* Ghandy set out her ideas on Proletarian Feminism in a pamphlet entitled *'The Philosophical trends in the Feminist Movement'*, which is a criticism of Bourgeoisie Feminism for misleading women and an argument that women can only be liberated through the victory of the working class against capitalism and imperialism. Unfortunately, Anuradha Ghandy died prematurely aged just 54 on April 12 2008 and the world lost a revolutionary fighter and Maoist Theorist.

The CPI (Maoist) has successfully mobilised the broadest masses in the struggle against Hindu fascism and imperialism particularly the indigenous tribes collectively termed Adivasi. The CPI Maoist work among the masses has led to the establishment of base areas and Maoist control of vast swathes of the country, the areas with the strongest Maoist presence being known as the Red Corridor. These correspond to the most socially disadvantaged areas in India including Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana, and West Bengal and eastern Uttar Pradesh states. According to a study of the newspaper *The Times of India*, 58% of people surveyed in the state of Andhra Pradesh have a positive perception of the guerrilla, and only 19% against it.



This level of support for the Maoists is of great concern to India's ruling elite and led Manmohan Singh, then prime minister of India to declare in 2006 that they were the *"single biggest internal security challenge ever faced by our country"*.

In response to the threat posed by the CPI (Maoist) the Indian government launched Operation Green Hunt in 2009 as an all-out offensive against the Maoists, particularly in the Red Corridor. Through Operation Green Hunt the government are using the Police and Paramilitary Units to fight the Maoists and attack their supporters as well as unofficially deploying the Indian Army against the Maoists.

The Maoists have fought back against Operation Green Hunt, launching a series of high profile attacks against the government forces. On 15 February 2010 at least 25 policemen died after Maoists overran a security camp in West Bengal state. Naxalite-Maoist leader Kishenji claimed responsibility for the attack. He was quoted as saying that, *"We have attacked the camp and this is our answer to P. Chidambaram's [the Indian Minister of Internal Affairs] 'Operation Green Hunt' and unless the Centre stops this inhuman military operation we are going to answer this way only."* On 6 April 2010, Maoist rebels killed 75 policemen/CRPF men in a jungle ambush in central India, the most security forces ever killed by the insurgents in a single conflict. On the same day, Gopal, a top Maoist leader, said the attack was a *"direct consequence"* of the government's Operation Green Hunt offensive. This raised some voices within the ruling class for the use of the Indian Air Force against the Naxalites. These were declined however, citing *"We can't use oppressive force against our own people"*. On 29 June 2010, At least 26 policemen have been killed in a Maoist attack in the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh. On 11 March 2014, at least 16 people - including 11 CRPF personnel, 4 policemen and 1 civilian - were killed in an ambush in a thickly forested area of Gheerant Ghati in Sukma district of Chhattisgarh. On 1 December 2014, 14 CRPF personnel, including 2 officers (Deputy Commandant B.S Verma and Assistant commandant Rajesh Kauria), were killed in Sukma district of South Chhattisgarh in a Maoist ambush. On 11 March 2017, 15 CRPF police and a civilian were killed in a Naxalite attack on the border of Bastar and Sukma districts in Chhattisgarh.

While operation Green Hunt led to some setbacks for the CPI (Maoist) in terms of where it could operate, in recent times the organisation has moved to strengthen itself. In a reorganisation that took place in November 2018, long term General Secretary of the Party Muppala Lakshmana Rao, commonly known by his nom de guerre Ganapathy, stood down and was replaced by his second in command Nambala Keshava Rao commonly known by his nom de

guerre Basavraj or Gaganna. Before becoming the General Secretary, Basavraj was the Chief of the Central Military Commission and the Party's foremost Military Commander. Considered an expert Military Tactician, Basavraj is also known for his expertise in using improvised Explosive devices which he has deployed with deadly effect against the enemies of the Indian Revolution. Under his leadership the CPI (Maoist) has again strengthened the revolutionary armed struggle and has seen an upturn in armed actions.

Alongside the Armed Struggle another key tactic of the CPI (Maoist) is an electoral Boycott. The Party calls on the people in the districts where it has support not to vote in the bourgeois elections, although it does not physically prevent people from voting. The electoral boycott is usually combined with revolutionary armed actions against reactionary forces during the election campaign in the form of bombings and guerrilla attacks. Writing in 2009 in an article entitled 'On The Election Boycott Tactic Of The Maoists', the martyred CPI (Maoist) leader Azad wrote, 'We think that the trend of the Boycott will grow stronger as the revolutionary movement grows stronger; the organs of People's Revolutionary Power come into being in vast tracts of the country, the armed strength of the People grows and the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) makes impressive gains and wins decisive

victories in some areas. Without the consolidation of the party, people's army and revolutionary mass organisations, organs of people's power and without gaining an upper hand over the enemy in a significant area, one cannot imagine people coming out in huge numbers to boycott the polls. The emergence of an alternative to the parliamentary institutions will bring about a qualitative change in the perception, preparedness and approach of the people towards parliament and the contesting political parties.'

The above quote illustrates a lot about the revolutionary strategy of the CPI (Maoist). It outlines the party's position to build new revolutionary organs of peoples power to replace the old failed state through the Protracted People's War. The Armed Actions of the PLGA will be complimented by the Political work of the CPI (Maoist) in building the new revolutionary state.

At the time of writing, as 2020 dawns, 16 years on from the founding of the CPI (Maoist) the renewed armed actions of the revolutionaries demonstrate that the People's War is set to continue until it finally defeats the forces of reaction in India, establishing Red power and liberating the masses.



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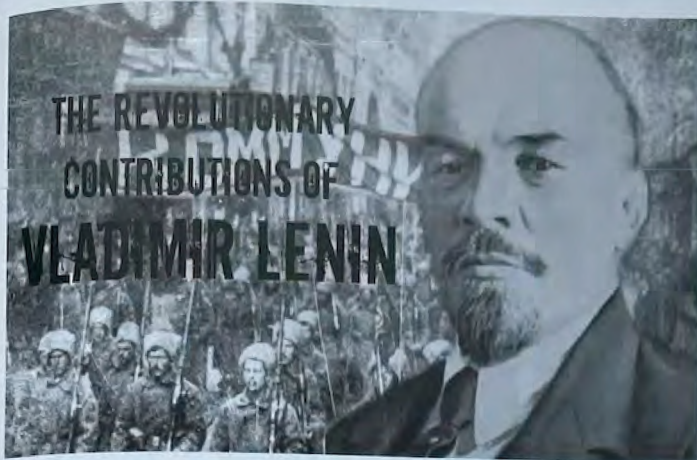
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"Leninism is Marxism in the era of imperialism and of the proletarian revolution" - Stalin

The major fundamental tenets of Lenin's development of Marxism and revolutionary theory and practice are such:

- (I) the struggle against opportunism, revisionism and reformism in the working class movement and the re-establishment of class struggle as the motivating force in world history
- (II) the revolutionary proletarian party
- (III) the national question
- (IV) the dictatorship of the proletariat (the state and revolution)

(I) Lenin is rightly credited with rescuing Marxism from a reformist and opportunistic path and re-establishing it as a revolutionary guide and method to action and revolution. Lenin achieved this by a fierce protracted ideological struggle within the working class movement.

Revisionism had found a receptive ear in opportunism which deemed socialism achievable without a violent struggle. These revisionists and opportunists believed that capitalism could be reformed out of existence, primarily using constitutional means. In other words the system could be voted out of existence.

Another opportunistic trend was economism. Lenin exposed how this view meant bowing to the spontaneity of the working class movement neglecting the role of consciousness and leading role of the revolutionary party.

Foundations of Leninism states: "The theory of worshipping spontaneity is decidedly opposed to the revolutionary character of the working class movement; it is opposed to the movement taking the line of struggle against the foundations of capitalism; it is in favour of the movement proceeding exclusively

along the line of "realisable demands, of demands 'acceptable' to capitalism; it is wholly in favour of the 'line of least resistance.' The theory of spontaneity is the ideology of trade unionism."

Since the 2000's a plethora of such movements have sprung up such as the Occupy movement which though questions capitalism does not seek to smash it or construct socialism in its place. It is "in general, to surrender the labour movement to the hegemony of the liberal bourgeoisie."

- (II) The revolutionary vanguard party.

Lenin's plan for revolution involved the unifying of all revolutionary Marxist groups into a single revolutionary party. To this end the key was the setting up of a political newspaper, then the greatest means of communication for the masses which would politically and organisationally unite all the scattered study circles, groups and organisations. This newspaper Iskra, meaning Spark was an important tool in educating the working class and promoting the revolutionary party.

Lenin considered that the party should consist of two parts a) a close circle of regular cadres of leading party workers, chiefly professional revolutionaries, that is, party workers free from all occupation except party work and possessing the necessary minimum of theoretical knowledge, political experience, organisational practice and the art of facing and fighting the Tsarist police; and b) a broad network of local party organisations and a large number of party members enjoying the sympathy and support of hundreds of thousands of working people.

For further reading on Lenin's ideological and organisational basis of the proletarian party see 'Where to Begin?' 'What is to be done?' and 'Letter to a Comrade on Organisational Questions.'

(III) Lenin having developed an analysis of imperialism, deeming it monopoly capitalism (the highest stage of capitalism), stated that the

national question of nations under the imperialist or colonial yoke can only be solved in connection with and on the basis of the proletarian revolution. And that for imperialist nations to have a successful revolution of their own it will involve a revolutionary alliance with the liberation movement of the colonies and dependent countries against imperialism. The national problem is part of the general problem of the proletarian revolution, a part of the problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

However "this does not mean, of course, that the proletarians must support every national movement, everywhere and always, in every individual concrete case. It means that support must be given to such national movements as tend to weaken, to overthrow imperialism, and not to strengthen and preserve it. Cases occur when the national movements in certain oppressed countries come into conflict with the interests of the development of the proletarian movement. In such cases support is, of course, entirely out of the question. The question of the rights of nations is not an isolated, self-sufficient question; it is a part of the general problem of the proletarian revolution, subordinate to the whole, and must be considered from the point of view of the whole."

Lenin put his theory to practice when during World War I (which was an inter-imperialist war) he supported the toppling of the Russian government. Another leading working class activist to oppose the war was James Connolly who famously through the Citizen Army was the vanguard in the blow against British imperialism in 1916, seeing England's difficulty as Ireland opportunity.

The international socialist parties and groups organised into the Second International had earlier agreed that in the event of a world war they would oppose their own government. However as a result of national chauvinism and opportunism within the working class movement socialist parties supported their own government in the war effort

(IV) One of Lenin's greatest contributions to Marxist theory is State and Revolution, exposing the class nature of the state and claiming that it is merely a veneer in which class struggle is contained. What is needed to smash capitalism (a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, or minority) is a dictatorship of the proletariat. Ultimately with the working class in control of the state the state itself will eventually wither away.

With these main tenets Lenin was able to lead the working class in Russia to overthrowing the Tsar, bourgeoisie and enacting a dictatorship of the proletariat: The world's first socialist state.

Nepal: The Withering on the Vine



In February 1996 the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), launched coordinated attacks nationwide, largely in the west of the country but also in the central regions. At this point Nepal was a constitutional Monarchy with a bourgeois parliament, although this status would change several times over the course of the war as the Monarchy was still highly influential. The People's War in Nepal grew from a small group of radicals with limited weaponry in rural largely peasant populated areas, to holding sway over 70-80% of the country, controlling much of the Nepali countryside. The CPN (M) leadership believed that they had achieved a position of strategic equilibrium, and then even perhaps a strategic offensive stage, the final stage in the protracted people's war against the State where the People's War goes on the offensive and increasingly adopts positional warfare as it prepares for final seizure of power and the establishment of a New Democratic state.

In the initial phase of the People's War, small loose groups called "ladaku dals" raided essential state infrastructure and in particular police stations. In addition these units would confiscate land from landowners and bourgeois politicians and distribute them to the poor peasants. This was all coordinated by a central command under the control of the party. In response to this the Nepali parliamentary government unleashed a white terror in the rural areas, particularly brutalising detainees and carrying out summary executions, in the process driving many into the arms of the party. The state forces were often quite open about their intent, as evidenced by the words of a general deputy inspector of the police: "Terror must be created to control terrorism". In the process of this white terror the party did experience significant losses, particularly in a major counter-insurgency operation in May 1998, but these only fuelled the party's recruitment efforts.

By 2000, the local police presence in many areas of Nepal had been severely reduced. For example, in Rukum District, the number of police stations had been reduced from twenty-three to six. Police increasingly had to be brought in from other districts or flown in by helicopter as the Maoists were consolidating their forces. In this way the CPN (M) was establishing base areas under their direct control, as well as replacing the old state with a new state through the removal of outside political entities, such as representatives of the liberal Nepali Congress party. Without the protection of police these corrupt bourgeois parties were incredibly vulnerable and their influence removed with ease.

Often the Nepali Maoist forces would avoid direct conflict with the Army and instead focus on the police. Pushpa Kamal Dahal aka

Prachanda, the Chairman and leader of the party, was to admit years later that this was part of an effort to keep negotiation open with the Royal family who controlled the army, as opposed to the Parliamentarian controlled police force. This was part of a strategy of playing off the Monarchy and the Parliamentary parties, with the Palace only being too happy to undermine Parliament. The balance of power in Nepal between these forces shifted dramatically however, when in June 2001 the Crown Prince Dipendra assassinated King Birendra, his mother and his siblings as well as shooting a number of others while they were having dinner, before promptly shooting himself. In this way he handily outdid the Bolsheviks, having become a double regicide by killing the reigning King and becoming King only to die in a coma several days later by his own hand. This laudable act of republicanism was to lead to the ascension of King Birendra's brother Gyanendra, who had little interest in any sort of bourgeois democracy. He quickly went about undermining the Nepali constitution and amassing greater powers.

As it became increasingly clear that the Nepali police were incapable of combating the People's War, and with their infrastructure and influence largely destroyed as the revolution consolidated its base areas, the role of the Royal Nepalese Army increased dramatically. In late 2001 the Nepali government declared a state of emergency, passed draconian terrorist legislation, and deployed the army in full against the People's war, with King Gyanendra's backing. By this point the People's War had reached such an extent that it was capable of carrying out more audacious operations, such as an attack on a military position in Ghorahi which killed 21 military and police personnel. In May 2002 the Parliament was dissolved. By October 2002, the King felt he had undermined the authority of the government enough that he dissolved it and took executive power, in the midst of delayed elections. He appointed his own prime minister and cabinet of ministers. Most bourgeois democratic rights such as the right to protest and freedom of press were restricted. The RNA received an enormous increase in budget in the following years and was more than doubled in terms of personnel by 2004. The state forces received the support of American imperialism in terms of materiel and military advisors, and were also aided by Britain, India and Belgium among other powers. The RNA quickly developed a reputation for brutality that the police could not match. The aim of the RNA from the beginning was the same as Gyanendra's, the reestablishment of the Monarchy as the supreme authority in Nepal, and its officers were dominated by the upper castes in Nepali society.

This marked another shift in Maoist strategy, as the Monarchy became more of a primary enemy, and the Parliamentary parties' potential allies. Negotiations which previously were mostly entered with the Palace switched to negotiations with the Nepali Congress and revisionist "socialist" groups like the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninists) with proposals for an alliance and an aim to establish a new Constituent Assembly. Despite this many in the party still recognised the Parliamentary parties and the Monarchy as being equally the enemy of the revolution. Many among the leadership believed this was merely a temporary shift and that Prachanda was humouring Baburam Bhattarai who believed firmly in an alliance with the parties, even as Bhattarai spread the message that the Maoists were seeking only peace as leader of the United Front. In particular we can see Mohan Baidya aka Kiran as being opposed to this line in this period.

The People's War brought great advances in women's liberation and class struggle, sweeping away feudal and capitalist exploitation and ethnic and caste discrimination. The acute oppression of women in Nepal in particular was an enormous draw, with many women leaving their families and homes to join the forces of the revolution. The divisions between men and women became far less stark in the course of the People's War as many testimonials from women revolutionaries attest to. A good example from an ex-combatant named Sapana Tamang, speaking in 2014 is reflected in the accounts of many other



Baburam Bhattarai (L) and Prachanda (R)

women of the time:

"In the yudha (war) I worked together with Maoist men. The daily routine was made up of both public (war) related tasks and private tasks such as cooking, cleaning, fetching water, washing dishes. Men also cooked food, washed dishes and clothes and did other feminine duties. I saw with my own eyes that men can also perform household duties like women. In the war I found male colleagues were very disciplined, they treated women with respect. This was striking as back in village men never touched such feminine things (cooking, cleaning), whatever happened."

In the Battle of Beni, a major operation in 2004 designed to show the strength of the revolutionary forces, supposedly 30-50% of the thousands strong force that took the town were women. The Maoists allied themselves in a broad front with progressive ethnic groups, many of whom had their own armed militias, while always struggling against backwards and superstitious elements.

Given that the Nepalese revolution was once in the vanguard of world revolution, how could it go so far astray? From the beginning there were always major unresolved contradictions in the CPN (M). Figures like Baburam Bhattarai generally favoured aligning themselves with the Parliamentary Parties to oppose the Monarchy. Bhattarai believed that many aspects of communism were outdated, and that what really should be aimed for was a constituent assembly where the Maoists would compete as just another party. A state controlled by the party would allow opposition parties, even if they represented the interests of the bourgeoisie, an idea totally incompatible with the dictatorship of the proletariat. As revisionism often manifests itself, he portrayed this version of "socialism" as a newer type, a "socialism for the 21st century" that would learn from the mistakes of past socialist countries such as the USSR and PRC. As with most revisionism this "new" brand of socialism was nothing more than the repetition of the kind of "peaceful transition" to socialism, peaceful conflict with capitalism and imperialism which Khrushchev and his allies had pushed in the place of genuine Marxism, and which the anti-revisionist Marxist-Leninist movement had combated internationally for decades. Bhattarai was offering old wine in new bottles. What this line represented was the total liquidation of revolutionary forces, and this reformist and parliamentary ideology was to spread throughout the party like a plague and be adopted by most of the leadership.

The total inability or unwillingness to learn from historical mistakes is one that is depressingly familiar in Ireland. We have seen over the past century, successive waves of groups fighting for National Liberation

gradually accommodate with the system before total surrender and integration and the dismantling of any sort of People's Army. Whether it is Fianna Fail or the Provisional movement, they see themselves as continuing to carry the torch of Republicanism even as they embrace the constitutional nationalism of Redmond or the SDLP. Each time it has only served to redirect the revolutionary struggle into forms which are acceptable to imperialism.

Prachanda himself was at times opposed to Bhattarai's position, and appeared to be engaging in genuine two line struggle with him and his supporters. In fact, at a certain point, shortly before capitulation, he even had the man placed under house arrest and accused him of betraying the party and of being an agent of Indian expansionism. But Prachanda's leadership of the party was marked with opportunist vacillation throughout his tenure. The party as a whole was riven with division when it came to the question of how to deal with the rather unique political situation in Nepal, in which there was both a bourgeois parliament and a monarchy as major institutions, often jockeying for power and replacing each other as the ruling group. Within the party itself there was a fundamental contradiction with those who favoured an alliance either with the Monarchy or the Parliament against the other, not only on a tactical basis, which caused unnecessary confusion. In certain cases this led to wise tactical decision to create weakness among their enemies, but within the party there were elements who saw the wholesale destruction of only the Monarchy or Parliament as a goal in and of itself rather than a steppingstone to state power.

There was a time when the Prachanda leadership was weary of reformist and revisionist ideas. Prachanda said the following in 2000, looking back on the debates within the party on the initiation of the People's War:

"So in making the plan for initiation there was a great debate over how to go to the armed struggle because many people were influenced by peaceful struggle, work in parliament, rightist and petty bourgeois feelings, and a long tradition of the reformist movement. Then we said that the only process must be a big push, big leap. No gradual change. There was some thinking from different people in the party that first we should do some actions without declaring people's war, and then see what happens And we said no, this is not revolutionary, this is also reformism. It is a conspiratorial approach. And armed struggle is not a conspiracy."

From here we can see, as the Peruvian experience also showed that only combating the revisionist lines through successful two line struggle within the party can lead to the successful initiation and growth of a People's War. Unfortunately combating the petty bourgeois and reformist ideas of the movement was not taken up as a regular task during the course of the People's War to the extent necessary to avoid revisionism. This was to be crucial in the final stages of the People's War.

By 2004, the People's War held sway over the majority of the countryside, to such an extent that they were able to establish a blockade of Nepal's capital, Kathmandu, in December. Prachanda declared this same year that the People's War was entering the stage of Strategic Offensive. The party at this point still wavered on who its main target should be between the now powerful King and the out of power parliamentary parties, with negotiations continuing with both despite the ongoing war, and fierce struggles within the party, with Bhattarai even being dismissed from his position, and detained with along with his supporters. As the situation worsened for state forces, King Gyenendra took the decision to totally dissolve the puppet government he had setup in February of 2005, and cracked down on all political dissent, instituting total censorship and arresting all manner of political leaders, activists and trade unionists. After various military operations were less than successful in combating the newly reinforced RNA, such as the Battle of Khara where approximately 200

revolutionaries were killed in an unsuccessful attempt to conquer an RNA base, the Maoist leadership negotiated a close relationship with other political parties by the end of the year to oppose the Monarchy. It had finally decided which force to definitively align itself against. A Seven Party Alliance was declared, and a shared memorandum of 12 points of unity agreed to.

The beginning of 2006 saw a renewed offensive by the People's Liberation Army against the RNA. In conjunction with this, there was a coordinated effort made with other parties and progressives building towards a national strike. When the strike was initiated the PLA stood down, and thousands of protesters flooded the streets of Kathmandu demanding the end of the Monarchy and the return of democratic rights, with the United Front organisations of the CPN (M) playing a major role. By the end of April, after several protesters had been killed and fearing total instability, Gyanendra relinquished his new-found authority to a new cabinet, and a few days after was to address the nation to announce the reinstatement of parliament. The new government soon entered lengthy peace talks with the Maoist leadership.

In November 2006, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed between the Government of Nepal and the CPN (Maoist). This agreement was comprised of a comprehensive ceasefire, in which the management of arms by the military forces of both would be overseen by the United Nations. It also called for a dedication to "human rights", a truth and reconciliation committee, a new Constituent Assembly and UN observation of all electoral processes. All property belonging to the Royal family was to be nationalised, and a vote held on the very existence of the monarchy.

In the first few years following the Peace Agreement it appeared to some observers that the Party was going from strength to strength, at least in electoral terms. In the April 2008 Constituent Assembly Elections the Maoists were victorious with 220 out of 575 seats, easily defeating the bourgeois Nepali Congress party and other socialist groupings. It was clear that the People's War had given the party an enormous legitimacy in the eyes of many Nepalis. Internationally there was cautious optimism from certain groups in the International Communist Movement. The neighbouring Communist Party of India (Maoist) spokesperson Azad greeted the news in the following fashion:

"Our Party looks at the election results in Nepal as a positive development with enormous significance for the people of entire South Asia. We send our revolutionary greetings to the people of Nepal for rejecting outright the monarchic rule and the comprador-feudal Parties during the April 10 elections to the Constituent Assembly. These results point to the real aspirations of the Nepalese people and should serve as a guide to the CPN (M) for its future course of action."

At the same time Azad was quick to warn of the dangers of the path that the Party had taken:

"To the extent possible, the Maoists should use their relative control over the state to help the masses in their struggle for freedom, democracy and livelihood. But it would be an illusion to perceive the state as an instrument for bringing about a basic change in the lives of the people."

He also reiterated the warning that the CPI (Maoist) had issued to their Nepali comrades upon the signing of the Peace Agreement in 2006:

"The agreement by the Maoists to become part of the interim government in Nepal cannot transform the reactionary character of the state machinery that serves the exploiting ruling classes and imperialists. The state can be the instrument in the hands of either the exploiting classes or the proletariat but it cannot serve the interests of both these bitterly-contending classes. It is the fundamental tenet of

Marxism that no basic change in the social system can be brought about without smashing the state machine. Reforms from above cannot bring any qualitative change in the exploitative social system however democratic the new Constitution might seem to be, and even if the Maoists become an important component of the government. It is sheer illusion to think that a new Nepal can be built without smashing the existing state."

The former Maoist leaders eventually betrayed everything they have stood for in the name of "peace" and the mistaken belief that true change can come from merely seizing state machinery. This was despite the fact that the Nepali Maoist forces held an enormous position of strength in Nepal with control over huge swathes of the country, despite their inability to conquer power in the major cities. Some of the details of that betrayal are familiar to revolutionaries in Ireland. For years Prachanda and his allies strung along hard-line revolutionaries with promises that their parliamentary strategy was just a ploy, that they truly still believed in revolution, that preparing for armed insurrection can quite comfortably sit alongside parliamentary agitation. Prachanda in 2008 addressing PLA commanders said:

"Yesterday, war meant holding a machine gun and killing or being killed by our enemies. Today war means sitting with our enemies at the same table and sipping cups of tea. Although the war looks different now, its essence is the same"

What was certainly not helpful in terms of combatting the Prachanda line was the adoption of Prachanda Path as the official ideology of the movement in Nepal, and the application of Marxism Leninism Maoism to the country's conditions. This was adopted in 2001. While a guiding thought in this way does not necessarily lend itself to revisionist ends, the fact that Prachanda Path was ultimately a revisionist formation made it very difficult for the correct elements in the party to challenge the leadership.

In 2009, a representative of WRPM Ireland interviewed Comrade Binod, a member of the central committee. In this interview Binod firmly re-iterates that he believes the party still to be on a revolutionary path in the lead up to the drafting of a new constitution and formation of a new government. He also reiterated that insurrection was inevitable, and that although the weapons of the PLA were locked in containers, the Maoist party held the keys to these containers and still firmly controlled the army even despite the policy of integrating the Nepalese Army and PLA. This same interview also indicates the general trend of revisionism however, by defending the idea of parliamentary elections even after the New Democratic Revolution, and that a united front could be formed entirely within parliament.

It was common among members of the CPN (M), at this point renamed Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), in particular the youth, to believe that the parliamentary strategy was part of a strategy of



Female PLA Fighters

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deception and that there would soon be a re-initiation the war and a revolutionary overthrow of the State. They believed this even until 2012 when the parliamentary strategy had become wholly dominant. Only too late did the genuine revolutionaries in the party realise that they had been betrayed. The cadres and revolutionary soldiers were abandoned, given severance packages from the state. Those most loyal to the Party line were integrated into the Royal Nepalese Army and given cushy positions. When many of the PLA soldiers resisted the total decommissioning of weapons in 2012, Prachanda and the rest of the party leadership sent in the Nepalese Army to crush the revolt. The very army the people had struggled against was now being used to oppress and disarm revolutionaries, just as now the RUC/PSNI have the full support of Provisional Sinn Féin in rounding up Republicans. Those times that Prachanda had quoted Mao in saying that "without a people's army, the people have nothing" had been exposed as a sham. The "peace" they have embraced is the peace of the exploiter, the peace of the bourgeoisie, just as the "peace" in Ireland is the peace of the occupation.

Today Prachanda's party is nothing more than an establishment party which takes its turn to rule in coalition with others, yet another faction representing the bourgeoisie as they engage in various forms of parliamentary cretinism. Bhattarai has departed from the CPN and formed his own social democratic party, abandoning even the pretence of Marxism. Many of the former leadership now live in luxury, and some have even been embroiled in corruption scandals. Hsila Yami who once wrote so eloquently of Proletarian feminism was among their number. It is common now for party members to be derided by the Nepali masses for having traded in People's War for palaces.

In the place of the New Democratic revolution to sweep away feudalism, fulfil the tasks of the bourgeoisie and pave the way for socialist transition, there is typical parliamentary jockeying for votes. The party now no longer calls for the revolutionary transformation of society. Caught in the quicksand of parliamentary politics, every move they made towards any sort of radical reform was opposed vigorously by the Army, the other parties and the Nepalese upper class. Even as the ruling party they could not bring the army under the control, or even enforce simple reforms such as an attempt to make the Nepalese bureaucracy send their children to state schools. They neglect the grassroots organising and deep roots with the poor peasants and workers that made them a force to be reckoned with in the beginning. A movement that began as proletarian, socialist, anti-imperialist and revolutionary is now none of these things.

When we compare the experience of the People's War in Nepal and the National Liberation struggle in Ireland it is important of course to recognise serious distinctions in both situations. The Provisional movement, while adhering to certain socialist ideas and having Marxists in its ranks, never became a Marxist movement as a whole and never reached the same astounding heights as the Nepalese People's War for a variety of reasons. With these points aside, the leadership of both movements went about their liquidation of the revolutionary movement, and we can see common roots to the collapse of these revolutions. We can also see similarity in conditions in that both Nepal and Ireland are small nations that are surrounded and dominated by much more powerful imperialist and expansionist nations.

A clear example of how much the party that had led the People's War has changed is its recent merger. The Communist Party of Nepal (UML), a revisionist organisation that had denounced the CPN (Maoist) as a terrorist organisation, in 2019 decided to merge with the CPN (Maoist). In this case it is a matter of the CPN (M) having adopted the same "right-revisionist line known as people's multiparty democracy" over time. The UML never changed its position. In the words of a Maoist splinter group leader, Comrade Basanta:

"What is clear to all is that UML was a reactionary party neck-deep in parliamentary cretinism. It had not made any

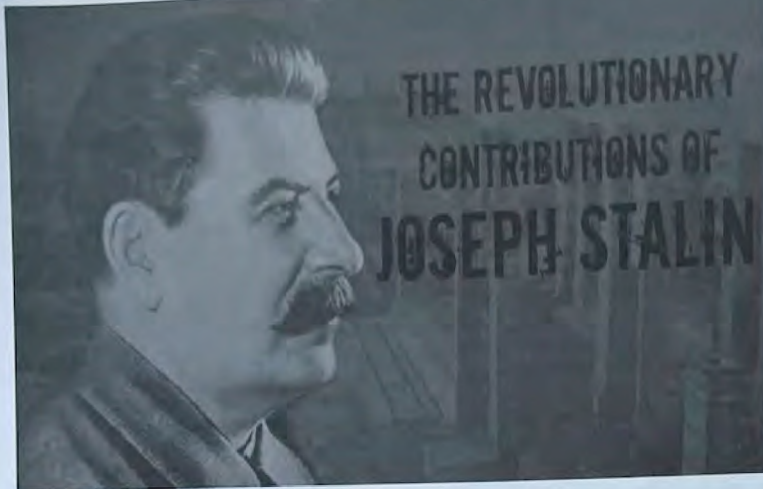
change to its previous ideological and political position till before the merger. Yet unity took place between these two centres. How was it possible? To be precise, it is the total submission of the CPN (Maoist Centre) to the CPN (UML) line that made this merger possible... The recent merger was only the open revelation of their shared ideological and political essence. It was a clear manifestation of Prachanda's degeneration into reaction. This whole process has once again justified Mao's assertion that in the final analysis revisionism is reaction."

In its total abandonment of principle the CPN (Maoist) made it possible for the total assimilation with the line of a party that had denounced them for decades. A similar process of ideological overhaul occurred with the Provisional movement, which upon the signing of the Belfast declaration abandoned essentially all Republican principles it had fought for to become essentially another version of the Social Democratic Labour Party, another constitutional nationalist endeavour. The revisionist Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness leadership were successful in isolating and removing the revolutionary elements of the Provisional leadership over the course of the 80s and 90s. In both cases we can see the decision to embrace parliamentary institutions of the bourgeois State as the beginning of a decline towards total liquidation and parliamentary cretinism. As Ruairi Ó Brádaigh was to famously put it in his address to the 1986 Sinn Féin Ard Fheis in favour of Abstention:

"How can serious social change come out of Leinster House? How can the fundamental change in property relations come out of Leinster House? No way can it do that. What we are asked to do today is to tip the scales that little bit in favour of parliamentary, constitutional and reformist action. Once you go in there, you sign the roll of the House and accept the institutions of the state. Once you accept the Ceann Comhairle's rulings you will not be able to do it according to your rules."

The fundamental relations and power in the state have not changed. The bourgeoisie still rule, the upper caste still holds most of the power and India still dominates Nepalese political life. As Sinn Féin has satisfied itself with merely helping to administer capitalism and British rule in the Occupied 6 Counties, Prachanda's party now merely administers Indian and Nepali capitalism on behalf of the bourgeoisie of both countries.

The response from genuine revolutionaries was disorganised after the defeat of the People's War. As we have seen, in the first few years they attempted to steer the Maoist party back on course, before realising that this was no longer possible. Today, as with the revolutionary struggle in Ireland, there are those who oppose the mainstream revisionism and reformist path of their leadership, notably at this time the Bikram "Biplav" Chand led group. Revolutionaries in both countries face a similar situation in that they have been betrayed and abandoned. It will be a long struggle both in Ireland and Nepal to reconstitute organisations capable of bringing the revolutionary war back to previous heights. Nonetheless the Nepalese experience was for a time a shining example of how the masses properly mobilised by a People's War, led by a revolutionary party armed with Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, can make incredible gains in a short time. It also came at a time when many "left" intellectuals have arrogantly declared an end to Marxism and the armed struggle for socialism, not to mention the common idea of an "End of History" following the collapse of the USSR and the running down of Socialist and National Liberation struggles worldwide. The Nepalese experience, as with the ongoing People's Wars in the Philippines and India, reasserts the vital importance of politics in command, the importance of following and developing the ideology of the proletariat. Avoiding the revisionist pitfalls and fundamental misunderstandings that derailed it is vital for movements in Ireland and abroad.



At the turn of the last century, there was a young working class revolutionary operating in the Wild East of Central Asia.

He & his band would stick-up banks and rob billionaire Oil Barons to raise funds for the Revolution.

They organised wildcat strikes for migrant workers, stopped racist marches, executed fascists, broke comrades out of prison, wrote theory, organised a guerilla army and penned poetry - all while on the run from the secret police.

His nickname was Koba but years later - after the revolution he was part of became successful and he rose to leadership of the socialist state - he was condemned from almost every political side as a tyrant and monster worse than anyone else in history.

By that time he was known around the world as 'Man Of Steel', or Stalin.

Mao, and the communist movement, was the only political side not to join the conservative, liberal, social democrat, fascist, anarchist and trotskyite chorus of condemnation.

Mao summed up the contributions of Stalin: they were 3 parts bourgeois and 7 parts Marxist, 30% bad and 70% good.

The Maoist way of struggling with of comrades is UNITY-STRUGGLE-UNITY, so we can apply that here. We unite with what we consider the principal contributions of comrade Stalin:

- Continuing to take the shining October Path towards communism as led by Lenin, without deviating to the

Right or 'Left'

- Industrializing the backwards Soviet Union into an economic superpower and collectivising agriculture to eliminate famine
- Leading the people in defeating Nazi fascism

We criticise the principal errors that Stalin made:

- Ceasing the class struggle under socialism
- Interference in how revolutionaries around the world conducted their struggle
- Not leaving succession plan in place or rooting out traitors such as Khrushchev

We unite with the secondary contributions Stalin made

- Tireless in fighting for the racially and nationally oppressed people as well as exploited workers
- Struggled for increased democracy within the USSR, though he was ultimately foiled
- Expressed Marxist and Leninist theory in simple, clear ways that ordinary people could understand and use

The Maoist method is also one of criticism and self-criticism: Mao applied these same criticisms of Stalin to his own Communist Party.

Are we holding ourselves and our comrades up to these standards?

It's worth addressing the "cult of personality" around Stalin: after his death, revisionists, capitalists and fascists built an enormous negative cult around the memory of the man.

This had nothing to do with material reality and real errors as analysed by communists such as Mao.

Rather, these deceitful scoundrels projected their own evil deeds into the socialist USSR.

This was a way of derailing the revolutionary project led by Marx and Lenin and continued by Stalin.

But more fundamentally it was a way of telling the world's working class: "Look! Whenever you try to make revolution it becomes a nightmare, worse than Nazi Germany. Don't try it, just give up"

The lies made up about "Stalin" (really referring to the collective revolution by the Soviet peoples rather than the man himself) were first invented by Russian counter-revolutionaries, spread in the American capitalist yellow press, then taken up by the Nazis before being handed back to the CIA and Western Media Barons. But these lies could never have become the truth without revisionist traitor Khrushchev proclaiming them as the official USSR version of history, and deploying tanks against the people when they took to the streets in protest of this slanderous paradigm.

Today this shameful process bears strange fruit: "totalitarian" Communism is progressively banned by liberal bastions like the EU while the underground Reich re-emerges.

The relevance (in the context of capitalist apocalypse looming over us) of reclaiming our recent radical past, is that we - the exploited & oppressed masses of the world - have successfully won revolution, and can do so again. And we won't be fooled or intimidated by a phony fascist spectre of "Stalinism" to prevent us.

Stalin, or Koba, left home aged 16 and dedicated the rest of his life to revolution. Such commitment through the many tumultuous years of revolution and socialist construction are what's needed from us: we have a world to win.

So in sum: let us study the real socialist history of Stalin's (and the USSR and Soviet people's) experience, and struggle to be more than 70% Marxist in how we apply the lessons.

When the Andes Roared

Part 1: Signposts to a New World

In Western leftist circles, the Peruvian Communist Party (PCP), referred to in the media as 'Shining Path' was the ghost at the banquet. Dominated by petit bourgeois class outlooks, they shied away from its horrifying visage or pretended that they could not see it. Huddling together in their small ineffectual cliques, resentful at what had entered their world; their discomfort came from the prospect of a left that was something other than a disparate place for eccentrics to gather, fervently hoping for the spirit of revolution to leave and business to return to normal.

From the inception of its armed struggle, the PCP was a reviled entity. By a predominantly bourgeois left that wanted to change the world, but not to the degree that it would adversely affect their privileged lifestyles. By a pro-Soviet, revisionist left that preferred not to engage with the ideology, insinuating that the PCP had not expressed any political position and making suggestive references to the Khmer Rouge. Even by middle-class feminists where it was common to claim that the PCP's approach to women was that they were to supply children for the revolution, a deliberate lie that reality could not support.

The bourgeois left, in all its guises then, was happy to parrot the mainstream narrative of the corporate-owned media, uncritically churning out myths about how the PCP ruled by terror. However, the September-October 2010 issue of the Military Review, the Professional Journal of the US Army, contained the assertion that,

'Sender Luminoso did not need to build bonds with the population; they were the population.'

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Edith Lagos was 19 years old when she was martyred by the Peruvian state on September 2, 1982. Wounded in a shootout with police in Apurimac (southern highlands of Peru), she was reportedly taken prisoner while alive, raped, tortured and finally bayoneted to death.

Recently graduated from a Catholic high school run by nuns in Ayacucho, Lagos had been a model student, her parents sending her to Lima to study to be an attorney. Lagos however, often skipped school to watch movies from India, because, she said, she liked to cry. But Lagos had also been affected by the injustices she saw around her and she was rapidly recruited into the PCP. Her rousing speeches electrified Indians throughout the Southern Sierra. She spoke of revolution, of a new world where the downtrodden were not condemned by birth or

indeed class. At age 17, she was already a guerrilla commander, captured several times by government forces, a photo of her in government custody in 1981 shows her face swollen by beatings.

Her steadfast revolutionary spirit, Indian features and proud bearing inspired many in the Indian peasant community and Comrade Edith went on to lead important actions including an attack on the Ayacucho jail in which her unit blew a hole into the wall to liberate her captured comrades.

With her death, her father retrieved her body and took it back to Ayacucho. A procession gathered along the way and was repeatedly stopped as throngs of peasants poured into the road to mourn their dead heroine.

Her funeral and mass were held in the main Catholic cathedral in Ayacucho city, the chapel packed with peasants, storeowners, government workers, all dressed in Indian garb. There were even several nuns and priests in the crowd. As her coffin was borne out of the church, a rousing, clapping chant rose from the crowd as it pressed forward to drape a hammer and sickle flag over her casket. The cry went up, *"Comandante Edith, presente! The blood that you have spilt will never be forgotten!"* Over 30,000 people (in a city of 70,000) would march behind her coffin. The huge crowd had defied a ban on her funeral, the commanding officer of the police ordering all of his men to stay inside during the procession.

Lagos is still regarded as a heroine by the local Indians and Edith Lagos banners, poems and sculptures continue to hang in the city of Huamanga. In the market of Huancayo, Edith Lagos wooden statues are sold, most often a depiction of a young woman standing before a budding tree. Her grave had become a local shrine. Three times, government death squads blew it up to kill her vision and three times her father rebuilt it. Each time he rewrote part of the poem that Lagos had composed before her death as her epitaph.

*Wild herb, pure perfume
I beg of you follow my path
You will be my balm and my tragedy: my perfume and my glory.
You will be the friend that flowers upon my grave.
There, let the mountain cover me. In stone, all will be engraved.
Where the blood of the people
Pours out; that is where
The yellow flower of the Retama blooms.*

Her words were to fill the hearts of those she inspired, and stung the faces of her enemies. Every year on the anniversary of her death, her



Funeral Procession of Edith Lagos

mother brought a bouquet of Flor de Retama (yellow broom flowers) to the grave, the PCP's symbol of resistance.

The Peruvian journalist, Gustavo Gorriti, while visiting the newly reopened El Fronton prison in 1982, where PCP prisoners were incarcerated en masse, remarked on how he heard someone call out,

"Comrade Edith Lagos."

And a chorus of voices replied, "Present in the armed struggle."

###

The decision of the PCP to launch its Protracted People's War was finally taken at a Central Committee meeting in 1979. Utilising the Maoist method of the Mass Line, the PCP had sent out students to teach in the countryside, study local anthropology and develop deeper links with the Indian peasantry in Ayacucho. Before the launching of the armed struggle in 1980 there was a year of concentrated preparations. An in-depth survey of the conditions and sentiments of the masses, along with geographical considerations were used to determine where the armed struggle should begin. A study of revolutionary struggles throughout the world and those that had been attempted previously in Peru were closely analysed. The strategies formulated by Mao Tse-tung were deemed to be of especial relevance. Peruvian guerrillas in 1965 had attempted to launch a "focoist" campaign by concentrating their efforts in the sparsely populated upper parts of the Andean mountains. According to Mao however, a revolution would have to rely on the masses, concentrating in those areas where it was possible to develop revolutionary base areas. These first embryos of the revolutionary

regime would lead to the mobilising of the masses in these areas, exercising revolutionary influence in the building of the new society.

According to Gordon McCormick of the RAND Corporation, *With patience, and careful political work, Sendero managed to establish an impressive network of supporters and contacts before its first move against the government of Peru. This approach, with very few exceptions, has since been the hallmark of the organisation.*

For months, Naval Intelligence had reported that students from the universities were disappearing into the Ayacucho jungle, ostensibly for hunting, but actually for shooting practice. Others were training in sand dunes to the north of Lima. Police intelligence also reported that there were about 500 PCP organised people's schools in Lima alone, educating its cadres. In Ayacucho, government employees had begun being driven out of the villages by locals and a liberated zone had sprung up in Apurimac, where local authorities had been ejected. In the department of Andahuaylas, forty army conscripts deserted with their weapons. Dynamite was also being stolen in significant amounts. In April 1980, police intelligence reported that the PCP was set to begin their revolution the following month.

At 2 AM, on 18 May, 1980, the morning of the general elections, six hooded figures entered the offices of the registrar in the village of Chuschi, in Ayacucho. They tied the registrar up and burned the ballot boxes and the registry book before retreating into the night. It was to be the opening salvoes of the largest rebellion in Peru since the Manco Luca revolt in 1536. Led by a schoolteacher, the incident was scarcely even noted in the press. This 'Starting Plan' however was the single spark to light the prairie fire.

The revolutionary forces had largely concealed their activities well however. Their leader, Abimael Guzman Reynoso, known to his comrades as Chairman Gonzalo remained a shadowy figure to the Peruvian state. A professor of philosophy, Chairman Gonzalo had served as head of personnel at San Cristóbal de Huamanga University, leaving in the mid-70s to pursue a revolutionary path. Under Gonzalo's leadership, the PCP developed Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, Gonzalo Thought, as its charted path to revolution. Gonzalo Thought was the application of MLM to Peru's specific conditions.

The PCP's first campaign, 'Initiate the Armed Struggle,' began in the countryside. Focussing on the land question, it conducted seizures of crops, land invasions of landlord's fields, sabotage of infrastructure, boycott of elections, armed agitation and propaganda and mobilisation in most of Peru's departments, especially in Ayacucho, Lima and Junín. The party's first inexperienced detachments of fighters, consisting primarily of party members, gradually grew to platoon size. Largely armed with traditional Indian weapons; Huavacas (hunting slings), machetes and spears, the guerrillas searched out and stole firearms and dynamite.

The guerrillas learned quickly and by necessity to move rapidly through mountains, fighting and marching without pause, avoiding being encircled and suppressed. They marched by night, avoiding roads and attacking by day. The revolutionary forces would divide up, forcing the enemy to do likewise to follow them. The PCP majority was made up of young Quechua speaking Indians, their language having been considered a mark of inferiority. Most of the cadres were young Mestizos, male and female, of high school to college age, from the big cities on the coast and the provinces. Later there were many supporters amongst settlers in the jungle, the ever-oppressed Indians in the Highlands, some jungle Indians and the urban poor and working class in Lima. Among their targets, mines, government offices, banks, electricity pylons, General Velasco's tomb, and police posts, were blown up.

In the shantytowns, urban party units had the task of 'forming armed detachments to put themselves at the head of the mob.' Learning how to



inspire large crowds of people to muster and surround a government building, destroying it, then scatter, cities were often blacked out to facilitate guerrilla attacks and as a show of strength. On mountain peaks overlooking the cities, giant burning hammer and sickles lit up the sky.

The shantytowns and slums were also used to encircle the cities in preparation for urban insurrection in an adaptation of the Bolshevik strategy. There were almost an equal number of attacks in Lima as in Ayacucho, demonstrating that, contrary to what is claimed of Maoists, high importance was placed by the PCP upon the urban front.

That July, President Fernando Belaúnde Terry, his entire diplomatic corps and several thousand invited guests at the annual military parade were treated to the spectacle of the air being filled with red balloons painted with hammer and sickles that held banners proclaiming: *'Long Live the Armed Struggle!'* *'Long Live the PCP!'* The PCP urban guerrillas had studied the wind currents, it seemed. Pigeons carrying similar banners were also released and dozens of penguins wearing presidential sashes were thrown into the parade contingents. Naturally, the police arrested everyone in sight, the penguins included.

The PCP was also mindful of its international responsibilities. As part of its struggle against the revisionism of China's new rulers, on Mao's birthday, in the early morning of 26th December, dogs were found hanging from the lamp posts of Lima with signs proclaiming, *'Deng Xiaoping, son of a bitch.'*

In order to seize arms, build up fighting units and open up base areas, the PCP launched a campaign called, *'Dealing blows.'* Police outposts were wiped out, eradicating the old political power, in five of the northern provinces of Ayacucho. By the end of the first year, the PCP had opened up a number of zones where they could operate openly, along with new zones where they established influence.

January 1981 began with the *'Plan to Develop the Guerrilla War.'* Guerrilla zones for eventual *'support bases'* were established in *'operations zones,'* where guerrillas attacked and withdrew. The guerrillas dynamited telephone, television and electricity installations, embassies, political party offices, hotels, factories, court houses, local government buildings, banks, water tanks, dams, railway tracks, bridges, and newspaper offices. The horse track of Arequipa was also dynamited as was Ayacucho's airport control tower. Haciendas were raided and their resources redistributed. Around the upper class areas of Miraflores, a district of Lima, Molotov cocktail attacks on selected targets demonstrated the wide reach of the revolution.

By April, PCP attacks had gone from small actions against state offices in small towns to the blowing up of pylons of the interconnected system of the Mantaro hydroelectric plant in the central highlands, the largest energy supplier in the country. The first blackout in Lima took place in September that year.

The PCP now embarked upon the Second Wave of Military Plan II, *'Conquer, Remove and Beat the Field.'* According to Chairman Gonzalo, it came as a huge surprise the ease with which they had created a power vacuum in vast areas where they operated. This forced the PCP to make decisions that were not originally considered at the beginning of the armed struggle, driving them to begin construction of the *'new state,'* on the basis of People's Committees. Gonzalo explained, *'We created a vacuum in the countryside and we had to create a New Government without having defeated large Armed Forces... If we had not done this... we would be sitting around waiting for the Armed Forces to arrive.'*

Thus, in the Second Wave of Military Plan II, which lasted from May to July, the strategy involved the continuing search for weapons and the driving out of the police. *'The Third Wave,'* lasting until September, continued this strategy.

In March 1982, a small guerrilla force in Ayacucho City destroyed power lines, surrounded and pinned down police and counter-insurgency troops in their barracks and blew their way into the departmental capital's prison. The 247 prisoners and guerrillas raised the red flag, sang the international and escaped. The police murdered three guerrilla suspects in their hospital beds the next day in reprisal. On May 2, in one of the PCP's most impressive actions, 500 guerrillas raided and took over the city of Huamanga. They blew up the local jail and liberated 304 prisoners, Edith Lagos among them. Six months later, Lagos was bayoneted to death, the outpouring at her funeral shaking the country and the foundations of the Belaúnde government.

Guerrilla attacks continued, mostly in Ayacucho, Lima, Junín and Apurímac. Only two of the country's twenty-four departments remained unaffected. By the end of 1982, most of the police and civil authorities had been driven out of the villages around Ayacucho, forcing them to retreat into the cities. The People's Committees continued to spring up all around providing the germs of the new state apparatus. Government Minister Manuel Ulloa concluded that there was coordination or overlap between what he called *'terrorist attacks'* and labour disputes, referring to strikes and other civil disturbances. As had been anticipated by the PCP, Belaúnde finally sent in the military, giving it overall control. The army however tended to use pacification rather than winning hearts and minds. Using counter-insurgency methods that had been utilised in Argentina, ferocious massacres of Indians, often as reprisals, were carried out over the next two years.

Some of the worst excesses were carried out by the Mesnadas, paramilitary bands based among rich peasants. Often led by retired military officers and sometimes directly run by the counter-insurgency forces, they effectively acted as counter-gangs. The revolution continued to advance however, and the PCP mined roads as a precursor to ambushing army patrols and by 1983, most of the mesnada units had been destroyed.

General Luis Cisneros, the Minister of War under Belaúnde, who oversaw the intervention of the armed forces, in late 1982 said, *'In order for the police forces to have success, they would have to begin to kill both senderistas and non-senderistas, because that is the only way they could be assured of success. Kill sixty people and at best there are three senderistas... I believe it would be the worst alternative and that is why I am opposed, until it is strictly necessary, that the armed forces enter the fight.'*

The Peruvian military also started providing training and funding to a counterrevolutionary peasant militia, the *'Ronda Campesina'* counter-gangs. Referred to as the *cabezas negros* (black heads), due to their wearing balaclavas and indeed the blackness of the reaction that they supported, the rondas were used as fodder for the military. Rondas were also used to settle scores and they became a serious problem for the



The black heads of reaction

revolution. Those that refused to join the rondas would sometimes have their heads blown off with dynamite because, *'they didn't know how to think.'*

In 1983, directed by the military, the Rondas went into operation, leading an attack which led to the deaths of thirteen PCP members. A month later, another attack took place in Sacsamarca, killing several leading members of the PCP within the region. The following month, the Rondas struck again. This time it led to the death of Olegario Curitomay, a popular leader of the town of Lucanamarca. The killing was excessively brutal, in which Curitomay was stoned, stabbed, set on fire, and then shot to death.

In the face of such provocation, the PCP responded, launching counter-attacks within the region of Huanca Sancos, including the towns of Yanacollpa, Ataccara, Llacchua, Muyaacruz and Lucanamarca. In what became known as the "Lucanamarca Massacre," by the reactionary media, sixty-nine people were killed. It was claimed that the PCP had executed "innocent peasants, women, and children". There have however been no official reports containing any evidence behind the execution of children, or indeed if these were victimized deliberately or due to cross-fire. The PCP did not ease the pressure and attacks continued to be waged against the Rondas in other regions.

In January that year, eight journalists had gone into Ayacucho to investigate what the government said was the spontaneous slaughter of guerrillas by locals supposedly tired of being 'bothered by the PCP'. The journalists however, were all slaughtered by the military that later claimed to have mistaken them for guerrillas. Added to this, mass graves were increasingly being discovered by the peasants, sometimes the military claiming that these had been dug by the PCP themselves to dispose of their own dead.

The PCP now launched Plan Three, 'Plan to Conquer Support Bases' that was designed to last between 1983 and 1986. This process included the reorganisation of the party, the formal launching of the People's Guerrilla Army (PGA) and the development of the first support bases.

There was a significant turnover of members in the first few years of armed struggle, and a heavy toll had been exacted upon party members, largely students from peasant families, and the ranks were swelled by poor peasants and workers. Education of these was highly important and a military academy was established to teach new cadres.

On the curriculum were, Mao's writings, including 'Struggle in Chiangkang Mountains,' 'A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire,' 'Problems of Strategy in the Guerrilla War against Japan,' as well as his writings on philosophy. Works by Lenin were also studied, including 'Imperialism and the Split in Socialism' and the 'Collapse of the Second International,' together with selections from Mariategui among others and also the writings of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM).

The establishment of the PGA marked a higher level of military organisation within the revolutionary movement. Some units were primarily made up of women, many reaching the top levels of leadership.

Campaigns now had a cyclical pattern comprising preparation, intensification of actions, guerrilla warfare, a climax and complementary actions. The PGA had extensive flexibility, precision and foresight, the Central Committee stipulating that the key question was where and for how long momentum was to be applied. The Central Committee also defined how to react to the reactionary forces responses, and when to withdraw in order to consolidate and readjust in order to rearm and prepare in order to advance, all in periodical and gradual actions, with initiative, flexibility and planning. All the while the PGA would apply the principal of concentrating and dispersing. The brutal response of the military was anticipated to increase polarisation



Red fighters of the People's Guerrilla Army

between the state and the masses.

The growth of the People's Committees ensured that the PCP was growing in political power and they merged together in zones that were to become support bases, while the state's power decreased. The Peoples Committees were set up secretly in villages or urban districts and groups of these then formed the support bases. At first the five members of each People's Committee were chosen by all the people in a village at a public meeting. This policy however proved unworkable in the face of state murder of the committee members. Members were then chosen by representatives of the masses to maintain security. This took the form of the People's Revolutionary Defence Movement which coordinated the people's organisations in a village to form a people's assembly. This in turn would elect the commissars on the People's Committees.

Each Peoples Committee comprised five commissars. These included the Committee Secretary and the Security Commissar. The former was concerned with political orientation while the latter was responsible for internal security, the watching over of class enemies, and coordination of the local PGA. There was also the Production Commissar that organised agriculture, trade, as well as the exchange of goods between other committees. She looked after widow's lands and the welfare of war orphans. A Commissar for Community Affairs dealt with the registry of births and marriages, education (many teachers having been driven out by counter-revolutionaries), recreation, the resolving of judicial problems, officiating at marriages, divorces and the running of the health service (herbal medicine being encouraged). The fifth, Commissar of People's Organisations, coordinated the activities of mass movements and party generated organisations.

In rural areas there were six such fronts: The Movement of Class Conscious Workers and Labourers, the Movement of Poor Peasants, the People's Women's Movement, the People's Intellectual Movement, the People's Youth Movement and the Pioneer Movement (for children). The latter was unforeseen by the party but came about due to the demands of children themselves.

An organising committee of the People's New Democratic Republic had been set up on the basis of these Peoples Committees and in conjunction with the developing of the Revolutionary Front of Popular Defence in the cities (both forms of united front organised according to the party's conception of different tasks in the countryside and in the cities).

A captured document recording the decisions of the first mass meeting that established revolutionary power in a shanty town near Lima, was published in the Peruvian press in 1984. The document explained how decisions were made to ban gambling, drugs, fortune telling, and



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'Sinchis' commandos with captured PCP flag in Huanta, Ayacucho

continuous drunkenness. Beating women or other family members, robbery, bullying and collaborating with police were also illegal, penalties ranging from fines, to the shaving of heads, to execution.

As the new state was being built, so too was a new economy and culture; collective land use, planting and harvesting, embraced traditional Indian communal methods. If a peasant's cow ate another's crops, the relevant commission would ensure that he would pay for the damage. There were moves away from production aimed at markets in towns and cities, designed as both a blockade of the markets and the suppression of the profit incentive. Widespread education was promoted, all aspects linking theory to practice. Quechua was protected but Spanish was also taught as a universal language. As the state advanced, creating liberated zones, land invasions accompanied.

The support bases were surrounded by guerrilla zones, the PGA conducting actions outside this band, slowly pushing the national forces back and in this way towns were gradually encircled. The PGA had divided up Peru into military regions which contained these support bases. The PGA itself comprised three kinds of militia: the principle force, the local force and the base force. Each military region had a principle force which moved throughout the designated area. Each region was split into zones which each had a local force. Every village within a zone had its own base force. The PGA carried out plans laid down by the party Central Committee that followed overall strategic political-military objectives, subdivided into more specific targets.

This strategy was in line with Mao's dictum, *'Our principal is that the party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the party.'* Except for important actions, the party's regional committees dealt with local concerns. These regional committees comprised local organisations that corresponded to the local forces and were made up of local cells which conformed to the base forces.

The PCP ultimately had ambition to arm all of Peru's 22 million people so as to render its red army obsolete. After the revolution, it was believed, a standing army would be vulnerable to revisionists as had occurred in China and the USSR. Once armed, the PCP reasoned, the people would not lose power.

In the last part of 1983 and the beginning of 1984, the PCP engaged its campaign to 'Defend, Develop, Build.' The plan being to defend the People's Committees, develop its mass work and the guerrilla war, and build new Peoples Committees. The PCP also began transferring numbers of political cadres and military leaders to the Upper Huallaga Valley in the Departments of San Martín and Huánuco, senior party member Osman Morote going with them. This campaign made the June 1984, 'Begin the Great Leap' offensive possible.

By the launching of the June offensive, around 100,000 people lived under or participated in the new political power. The 'Begin the Great Leap' offensive involved guerrilla units launching attacks on rural police outposts and military patrols in and around the towns of Ayacucho. The PCP continued to maintain relatively stable base areas in the south-central Andes, especially in the northern half of Ayacucho Department and the adjoining provinces in Huancavelica to the west and Apurímac to the east.

In the shantytowns, euphemistically called *pueblos jóvenes* or 'young towns,' people were forced by oppression and starvation off the land and into the outskirts of the cities where they seized state land and threw up shacks. Now the PCP struck from within the shantytowns of Lima and the largest cities. The media, that had ignored the rising People's War, suddenly could do so no more. The guerrillas had broken through the blackout. Now the international media turned to outright distortion.

Popular among such outlets was the consistent claim of what they called narco-terrorism, insinuating that the guerrilla fighters were little more than criminals, waging war for high returns. However, in a US Directorate of Intelligence Research Paper on Peru's cocaine industry, compiled for the CIA, a sanitised copy of the 1985 paper being released in 2011, the writer found that, *'Another development that could quickly cause both the government and military to move strongly against the drug trade would be discovery of a working arrangement between the traffickers and the Sendero Luminoso guerrillas... This lack of contact between the guerrillas and the traffickers does not preclude future cooperation, [Text Classified] Guzman's ability to dictate Sendero Luminoso policy toward the drug trade depends on his ability to maintain tight authority over the guerrilla organisation. Lower level insurgent leaders who want to improve the organisation's armaments and logistical shortcomings may be willing to enter into private arrangements with drug traffickers in their operational areas without Guzman's approval. [Text Classified] Future insurgent involvement in drug trafficking could be direct - cultivating, processing, and trafficking of coca - or indirect - protecting trafficking operations in exchange for arms or money.'*

The US trained anti-narcotics units in and around the Huallaga Valley had seen little action before they clashed with the PGA, perhaps saying something about their true mission in Peru. The traffickers themselves were well supplied with aircraft, speed boats and the most up-to-date weapons, while the guerrillas fought with stolen weapons, a fact that even Peruvian journalists could not ignore.

The Sinchis (Quechua term for all-powerful warrior), a paramilitary wing of the Guardia Civil police modelled on the US Green Berets, in



Female Red fighters

the face of the offensive, were withdrawn from the countryside and the military given full control of all anti-guerrilla operations. In the White Terror that followed, many guerrilla suspects were hacked to death or crucified, their heads cut off for display around Sinchi encampments to instil terror.

The military command had begun openly boasting that it took no prisoners. The original head of the armed forces in the emergency zone, General Cisneros spoke openly of how it was necessary to kill sixty peasants to get three 'Senderistas'. His replacement, Clemente Noel, explained how army communiqués consisted of body counts, saying that, 'We don't have time to identify dead "Senderistas".' At first, disappearances were covered up, but later it was thought more expedient for the military to publicise its terror.

July also saw the state adopt new measures. The Armed Forces Joint Command was given the power to intervene in any part of the country, to establish emergency zones at will and political-military commands to carry out their orders. In an attempt to separate the masses from the party, the military adopted such initiatives as 'Strategic hamlets', of the kind practiced in Malaya, Vietnam and Guatemala.

In its war against the revolution, the military laid waste to whole communities. General Julian Juliá, the commander-in-chief of the army in 1984 stating, 'The demented action of a group of subversives will never separate us from the western and Christian culture in which we have been trained.' His citing of 'western culture' over the majority Indian population spoke volumes.

However, evidence of how the new world that was shaking the old, came in Le Nouvel Observateur's edition of 7th December 1984, 'What do you want', said the lieutenant, 'These kids are fanatics. Fourteen, fifteen years old at the max; they yell, "Long Live the Communist Party of Peru!" as we shoot them.'

The January 1985 Amnesty International report on Peru lists by name, age and occupation, 1,005 people that were 'disappeared' after arrest by police, army or paramilitary forces, in thirteen provinces under military rule from December 1982 to October 1984. The report was limited in that it did not discuss occurrences in the rest of the country including other emergency zones.

True to form, Amnesty stuck to 'respectable' evidence, only listing those that had been reported to the government or AI themselves. This was not an approach without its flaws as some that had enquired after the disappeared, were disappeared themselves. The report however cited conclusive evidence that these disappearances were the source of fourteen heaps of mangled corpses discovered during the 1984-85 time period. In spite of its bourgeois prejudices, the report stated, '...the bodies of the victims were found naked, with marks of torture, and with a single bullet wound in the head. In many cases the bodies of the victims were found blindfolded and hands tied behind their back. It was impossible to identify many of the victims; their clothing had been destroyed, their faces mutilated and the bodies thrown far from where they had been arrested.' The report admitted that AI had received no reports of such actions by the guerrillas.

The government's failure to deal with the revolutionaries led to splits within the ruling class and it became common in some sections to begin talking of a military coup as a means to retain their power.

Then as 1985 dawned, in spite of the PCP being inexorably on the rise, the party, under some pressure, suddenly decided to withdraw and readjust. In Ayacucho, during this consolidation, attacks on the state halved compared to 1984. For a time the military dared to hope for a breakthrough in its counter-insurgency operations. But as the PCP in Ayacucho breathed in, guerrilla operating zones suddenly opened in the Upper Huallaga Valley, the departments of Pasco, Cajamarca, La Libertad, Junín, Puno and Cuzco. The PCP had laid its groundwork

well and attacks in these areas had doubled by the end of the year. Attacks also doubled in Lima.

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When Pope John Paul II visited Nicaragua in 1983, Ernesto Cardenal, a prominent liberation theology priest that was serving as his country's Minister of Culture, fell to his knees on the Managua airport runway in deference. Displaying the arrogance and personal charm of unchallenged power however, the Pope proceeded to scold the man, his finger wagging imperiously, for his resisting of the Pope's order to resign from the Sandinista government, admonishing him to, 'fix your affairs with the Church.'

The Pope's visits to Latin America were part of a 'new evangelisation' attempt by the Catholic Church in Latin America, where half the world's Catholics continue to reside.

When the Pope made his three days of appearances in Peru in 1985, culminating his twelve-day Latin American tour under the guise of spiritual concern, he was to find the PCP to be less than indulgent. On his arrival on the 3rd February, the Pope made his first appearance in Ayacucho city. There had been mass 'preventative' roundups of people and the banning of traditional Indian hats and cloaks in case they concealed weapons. 4,000 military personnel and tanks were deployed on the day with helicopters overhead.

'I want to urgently address those men who have put their faith in the armed struggle,' he said, 'those who have let themselves be fooled by false ideologies so much that they think that terror and aggressiveness, by exacerbating already lamentable social tensions and forcing a supreme confrontation, can lead to a better world.' The Pope went on to denounce, 'those who claim that social injustices can disappear only through class hatred or the recourse to violence and other anti-Christian means.' He further offered his appreciation to, 'the authorities and those responsible for public order' whose work 'becomes supremely delicate in the present circumstances and is even thankless and not understood.'

The Indian peasants that had suffered massacres and brutality at the hands of the military stood behind the wire, taking in the spectacle. The Pope never left the tarmac of Ayacucho airport, on its high plateau. Speaking from behind rows of barbed wire and sandbags he cut his planned hour long visit short by 20 minutes.

When the Pope touched down in Lima the following day, 50,000 police and military had been deployed in the capital. In spite of this, dynamite knocked out an electric power plant 45 kilometres north of the city plunging it into darkness. This set the scene for the sky to be lit up by a giant flaming hammer and sickle on the Cerro San Cristobal that dominated the Lima skyline, made up of rows of fuel-filled milk containers. The Pope's caravan of limousines and armoured vehicles was heading for the Nunciature (Vatican embassy) at the time, where he was due to speak. News reports claimed that the cortege was seized with panic, setting their sirens wailing as the symbol of revolution flared above them.

In the corridors of power or among the loyal opposition, those that had blandly declared the PCP to be fanatical and messianic now fell on their faces before the carnival of pomp and ceremony. But in the countryside and amid the shanty towns round about, the PCP maintained an unflinching revolutionary aggression. As the urban PCP leader in Lima, Laura Zembrano Padilla, or Comrade Meche, summed up, 'What is developing today is a political conjuncture in which the forces of two republics confront each other. One of them is outmoded, rotten and shot through with its own contradictions; the other, a new republic, a new social order, a new dictatorship which is the first really free republic in our country, is arising from the masses themselves in the heat of the armed struggle...'

THE REVOLUTIONARY CONTRIBUTIONS OF MAO ZEDONG



It is difficult to briefly summarise all the many contributions that Mao Zedong has made to Marxism both in China and across the world, and so this article will focus on only those contributions which have had the most influence on worldwide revolutionary struggle. The Chinese Revolution remains a world-historical event, tipping the worldwide balance of power in favour of Socialism. At this point in 1949 the USSR was still engaging in socialist construction, which meant two of the largest nations on Earth were under socialist control. Even revisionists will often praise Mao for his role in leading the peasants and working masses of China to victory against Japanese imperialism, the forces of feudalism and the reactionary pro-imperialist Chiang Kai-Shek regime. Land was redistributed to the Peasants on a staggering scale, the power of the feudal landlord irrevocably broken. The liberation of China inspired anti-imperialist revolutions around the world.

The theory of New Democracy developed by Mao in this period is an important development in terms of how a Communist Party can win the struggle for National Liberation and Socialism in a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country as China was at this time. In New Democracy, the proletariat and its Party lead an alliance of the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie (the bourgeoisie that is oppressed by imperialism, as opposed to the comprador or bureaucratic bourgeoisie which aligns with and profits from imperialism) to defeat Feudalism, combat imperialist domination and carry out the tasks of the bourgeois revolution.

Mao further developed the military strat-

egy of the proletariat to new heights in his conception of Protracted People's War, drawing from ancient Chinese strategy such as the writings Sun Tzu as well as the study of guerrilla experiences across the world, including those of Irish revolutionaries during the Tan War. In this strategy there are three phases: strategic defensive, strategic equilibrium, and strategic offensive, an explanation of which is provided in our article on Lough-gall. This same strategy has been deployed from Vietnam to Nepal to the Philippines with incredible results.

In the course of the Chinese Revolution, Mao also developed dialectical materialism through his theorisation of the universality of Contradiction. This posits that there are contradictions in all things, although the character of the contradiction can differ. For example, the contradiction between the imperialist nations and oppressed nations is inherently antagonistic, and therefore can only be resolved through revolutionary struggle, while other contradictions such as that between men and women are not antagonistic. Contradictions are in essence a unity of opposites, just as capitalist society is the unity forged by the struggle between the bourgeois and the proletariat.

Mao was quick to see that the attacks of Khrushchev on Stalin and the era of leadership was in fact an attack on the essence of Marxism-Leninism as a whole. This was soon proven by the adoption by Khrushchev of such policies as "peaceful coexistence with capitalism" externally, the speedy adoption of reforms aimed at the restoration of capitalist relations internally, and the general minimisation of the role of class struggle. As well as ensuring that China took a stand against the modern revisionism of the Soviet leadership, Mao developed from this the understanding that a new bourgeoisie will rise within the ranks of the Communist Party

following seizure of state power. Mao saw top members of the CCP who were opposed to socialist construction and who instead favoured the Capitalist Road. From this he developed the concept that class struggle continues even under socialism. While the bourgeoisie may have been deprived of the means of production, they still held influence in the cultural sphere, as the superstructure still retained bourgeois influence despite the changing material conditions.

Much of Mao's political project was to ensure that the party was capable of rectifying its errors, particularly errors that had led to failure in the USSR. The Mass Line emphasises the dialectical relationship between the Party and the masses, pushing for cadre to always investigate and distil the will of the people, going back and forth between the party and the masses to ensure that the correct policies were implemented. In this way the Party would also be held accountable to the people.

The culmination of Mao's theories on how to ensure the party did not slide into revisionism was the launch of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. This was directed at those "capitalist roaders" within the Communist Party, with Mao instructing the masses to criticise and struggle against them openly, "bombard the headquarters" and encouraging them to rebel against reactionaries attempting to derail the revolution. This ignited enormous struggles throughout China in an attempt to not only root out those enemies within the Party and correct mistaken ideas, but also to totally transform the culture of China, removing reactionary cultural ideas that impeded transition to socialism and championing proletarian art and ideas.

Unfortunately the reactionary elements within the Communist Party and the Army were ultimately successful in defeating the CR, decisively so after the death of Mao and the removal of his successors the Gang of Four in 1976. Nonetheless the lessons of the Cultural Revolution are vital to the future success of any socialist project, and represent the greatest advance yet made by a socialist state.

Send all correspondence
and other materials to:
isrmedia@protonmail.com.



Title: An Ghrian Dhearg, No. 1
Organisation: Irish Socialist Republicans
Date: 2020

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