

God not the issue in Ireland

Irish struggle based on economics

by Dorothy Wigmore

"The real struggle in Ireland has always been the ownership and control of Ireland by Irish people", says Sean Kenny, a member of the IRA.

Kenny spoke to a fairly enthusiastic audience of 200 students and non-students on November 23 in the SUB MacInnes Room. He is on a tour

of North America to inform people about the Irish struggle and to raise funds for aid to political prisoners held in internment camps in Ireland.

The IRA, Kenny said, is "a people's revolutionary movement armed and organizing the working class to fight back against the system which is strangling our coun-

try...a system which exists to this day in the north and south."

"The fight in Ireland", he continued, "is not against British soldiers, but is a national struggle against landlordism, capitalism. We're fighting for a democratic socialist republic with the Irish people owning the rivers, the mines, the lands and the industries."

"We seek to smash forever the strangle-hold of British imperialism in all its forms over our political, cultural and economic affairs", he added.

There is only one difference between the north and south of Ireland. The north has British soldiers on the streets. They have been there for 500 years "oppressing and suppressing the feelings of the Irish people. They're there to protect the rich. They are, as far as the Irish people are concerned, the terrorists of Ireland."

Since the struggle is an economic one, religion is not the question.

"God is not the issue involved in Ireland". He explained that deliberate and inaccurate reporting on the subject made religion a part of the struggle "to confuse the issue of Irish freedom".

Economic violence is meted out to the Irish people regardless of religion, by the ascendancy class and the imperialists who took the land and never recompensated the Irish people, he said.

Religion is also not a question for British soldiers. "They

don't ask you if you're Protestant or Catholic when they pull the trigger to shoot you", he said.

The IRA does not agree with the bombings and sniping attacks on British soldiers in the north. They are being carried out by the provisional wing of the IRA and by British Intelligence agents, "because they know that's the way to keep the working class people divided."

"The bombings and other attacks on Irish people, are also an attempt on the part of Britain to force an abortive revolution on the Irish people to try to force us to take up an armed struggle before we were ready and organized to do it."

People who used to like the army, whether they were Protestant or Catholic, Kenny continued, are now starting to show a dislike for the British army. This and aggressive British "have always helped to recruit people into the IRA and they're certainly doing it now."

"Mindless militarism like the bombings and snipings is pretty dangerous", Kenny stated. "You've got to build for a revolution. You've got to build people's confidence politically. If there's any need for armed struggle the people will participate."

"It's not our policy to injure the working class. It's our policy to organize them."

The IRA changed its strategy in 1962 and in 1969. In 1969, they voted 39-12 to remove the embargo on parliamentary participation. The 12 people who objected formed the provisional wing, and all contact with them has virtually been lost.

This is one of their problems, Kenny pointed out. The provisional wing, by its needless bombings and snipings in working class areas, shows it does not understand the issue in the Irish struggle is working class struggle and British imperialism.

The IRA does recognize this. As a result, they are working with the people on "people's issues".

They are working in the Civil Rights movement organizing peaceful demonstrations such as the Civil Disobedience Campaign, in which 30,000 people are refusing to pay rents, mortgages, etc. They are also working in the trade unions, where the struggle is not for better wages, but for co-operative ownership. They are organizing fish-ins to bring out the issue of privately owned rivers and lakes.

The IRA makes two long-term demands of the British government. They are to renounce all claim to sovereignty over Irish land, announce their intentions to withdraw their troops and administrations and begin the process to phase out on a planned timetable.

"If Britain does not do this now, we say, she'll have to do it in an unplanned manner later", the IRA spokesman stated.

Short term demands were also mentioned. They included an end to the internment of Irish political prisoners, an end to the torture in those camps, withdrawal of British troops from the streets, particularly in the working class districts, the abolition of repressive legislation and restoration of democracy and civil rights.

The Irish political prisoners Kenny referred to are the 480 people detained in an internment camp outside Belfast. They are being held without trial inside barbed wire, watched over by armed guards and Alsatian dogs, and often tortured. The torture charges were proved in a recent British government inquiry.

He also said that Canada is involved in the Irish struggle for freedom, which is not unlike that in Quebec. One thousand British troops are coming shortly to Alberta for counter-insurgency training. They will return to Ireland, and perhaps later England, to use their training against the Irish and English people.

A total of \$65.40 was collected from the audience for aid to political prisoners.



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