

## northern ireland

# Irish Workers Join Third World, Police Themselves into Slavery

Sept. 7 (IPS) — The Rockefeller plan now underway to turn the British "home island" into a CIA-British Army colony is well advanced in Northern Ireland. The economy of that country has become an Atlantic version of a third world labor pool. There, under test-tube conditions, with a target population of only 1.5 million, the British government has terrorized workers by constant street battles and threats of unemployment into submitting to self-policed slave labor.

### Strength Through Joy

The General Secretary of the Irish Trades Union Council recently reflected on the submissive psychology of the Irish workforce: *"I think there is almost a therapy in going to work in Northern Ireland. Work is a place where you can have a social contact which has been prevented in other areas. Management and trade unions have found, arising out of this informal situation, a reason to provide some sort of positive machinery — a new means of communication."*

This point has not been lost on industrialists. According to a spokesman from Simms Steel Holdings Ltd., which has just announced a \$10 million steel expansion scheme, *"Despite the civil unrest, the Province has a record of industrial achievement that compares more than favorably with the rest of the U.K. I see nothing to hinder this rate of progress being maintained."*

The growth of industry in Northern Ireland over the last five years has demonstrated optimal conditions for capitalists. During the height of recent disturbances, unemployment dropped to 5.3 per cent, productivity increased by 44 per cent, total trade jumped 77 per cent, and external trade 84 per cent. The number of days lost through strikes is the lowest in the U.K. While Britain has a rate of 147 days lost per 1000 employees, the record for Northern Ireland shows only 14 days lost per 1000.

### Industries Rush to Cheap Irish Labor

Leading international industrialists have rushed into this investors' paradise. In the past few years, the major chemical companies — notably, DuPont, ICI, Monsanto, and Shell — either have expanded or opened new chemical processing plants in the Province. In 1960

DuPont constructed the Maydown Industrial Base outside Londonderry on the site of an abandoned airfield. This year Britain's largest synthetic fiber group, Courtaulds, announced a \$70 million investment plan which would create 4000 new jobs in the Londonderry area. German firms, especially engineering companies, have recently opened up new works in Ireland, enticed by cheap Irish labor. And two large Japanese firms, Bridgestone and Komatsu, recently announced the joint development of a plant in Northern Ireland, Iran, Indonesia, Brazil and Mexico — the sites of their other new plants indicate Northern Ireland's third world qualities attractive to capitalists.

### Co-Participation: Hiding in the Factories

Although Northern Ireland, like similar areas in Britain, was designated a development area at the end of the 1930s, the real push towards economic development did not come until the early 1960s. This was coordinated with a move to set up the trade unions as formations willing to maintain the controlled environment of the workplace at the expense of the workers. Today Northern Ireland has the most effective worker participation schemes in the U.K.

When the MI5 section of British Military Intelligence launched its infiltration of the Catholic troublespots outside Londonderry in the late 1960s the IRA (just having split into the Officials and the "Provos") was still performing its "blockwatcher" role. Catholic workers, controlled by their self-policing mentality, and their Protestant counterparts hid in the factory as the government activated its agents inside the paramilitary sectarian organizations.

Managers trained in the Tavistock Institute counter-insurgency transformed this fear into workers' "control" of their own firm. *"You cannot afford to allow a small external irritant to come into the factory,"* commented one industrialist. *"The trouble will not go away over here; more likely it will fester. So it is necessary to be a good manager and iron away potential trouble before it ruins the industrial peace we enjoy."*

### Financing Fascism

Exploiting workers' neuroses to the fullest, the government has recently started a system of advance fac-

tories where pre-trained workers set up their own working teams, providing eager industrialists with a smoothly-running machine ready to be worked into the ground. Fourteen such schemes are already in existence, all in low-employment areas of the Province.

These development schemes cost money and require a strict overlord to make sure investment goes where intended. In 1972 the Northern Ireland Finance Corporation (NIFC) was created for precisely this purpose, and was given \$120 million to offer industry inducements to locate where the government chose. The enterprise proved so successful that London announced this year its decision to extend the plan beyond the original three years. Typical was NIFC's program with Andus Electronics of West Berlin: The company agreed to locate in Northern Ireland, with a grant of \$4 million and the

NIFC taking a 40 per cent interest in the firm.

And yet the Irish worker is not better off. New production in petro-chemicals, steel, textiles and shipbuilding will not benefit the workers of Northern Ireland. Whatever is produced will be exported immediately.

To facilitate this, the government has embarked upon massive infrastructural development — roads, bridges, rail and harbors. British Rail is expanding freight services between Northern Ireland and other development areas in Britain, like the Liverpool Docks and Scottish oil refineries, to ensure that the in-flow of raw materials and out-flow of finished goods is not held up by out-dated transport systems. Electricity and other power sources have been developed to fuel these huge new works, while most Irish workers live in 19th-century tenements with no inside plumbing and, for the fortunate, coal-burning fires.