

Despite the promise of peace and economic prosperity, Northern Ireland has become a barren land

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A reader of the World Socialist Web Site in Belfast submitted the following comment.

Comrades,

The prospect of peace and economic prosperity in Northern Ireland and the manufactured euphoria for that peace that was paid for by the representatives of global capital in Ireland have turned sour.

Sinn Fein/IRA, the self-proclaimed champions of equality and freedom, were given the opportunity to prove their credentials as representatives of the oppressed working class people of Northern Ireland when they created 18 new jobs as assistants to their parliamentary members in the Northern Ireland Assembly. Did Sinn Fein/IRA follow closely the fair employment legislation as was set down by the Fair Employment Commission, which was established after many years of campaigning by civil libertarians to ensure fair and equal treatment of all job applicants?

No. Sinn Fein/IRA didn't advertise the jobs as required, they simply gave them to their family and friends, thus ensuring control of £1.1 million per year in salaries and expenses. In the true tradition of the old Stormont regime, moreover, all of the other parties followed Sinn Fein/IRA in their policy of nepotism.

The peace and prosperity promised to the people of Northern Ireland in the Good Friday Agreement has not materialised. Rather, the cloak of terror, intimidation and economic oppression has cast a broader shadow over working men, women and children.

Since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, the following catalogue of crime has been carried out by the IRA and loyalist terrorists who signed up to the principles of non-violence:

- * Three people murdered
- * Ninety people shot and mutilated

* Three hundred people tortured, beaten and hospitalised

* One thousand, three hundred and forty families forced from their homes

* Five hundred families exiled from Northern Ireland

These are only the incidents that are reported. Many crimes against humanity go unreported due to fear of further reprisals.

On the economic side, the bullyboys of global capital have been no less ruthless with the body, hearts and minds of the working class. Mackies, the biggest employer of manufacturing staff in west Belfast, has announced that its doors are about to close, with the loss of hundreds of jobs. This is in an area that has one of the highest unemployment rates in Europe and one which had high expectations regarding the peace process. It comes on the back of £31 million investment in the plant over recent years by the Industrial Development Board for Northern Ireland. This massive subsidy was to create the myth of manufacturing prosperity for the window shoppers of American springboard capital.

Mackies is only one example of the economic corruption of the present peace process. Across Northern Ireland thousands of people have lost their jobs in a range of sectors due to a decrease in export demands as a result of a downturn in the fortunes of the global market. These workers, many of whom are highly skilled, are not going to be allowed to spoil the lie of economic prosperity by becoming part of the ever-increasing statistics of unemployment. They will be forced into the unskilled and low-paid world of the service sector. This is the only growth sector in Northern Ireland at present.

While America and its investment interest in

Northern Ireland was originally enthusiastic about the potential of Northern Ireland as a cheap but highly skilled labour market, it has, for the present, decided to downsize its venture capital investment here.

Peace with justice, said Sinn Fein as they signed up to the Good Friday Agreement. Yet their IRA comrades continue to torture, shoot and mutilate anyone who deviates from their narrow agenda within their supposed community. They stand silent as men, women and children are forced into cheap labour employment. They remain silent as political opponents are silenced by draconian legislation.

The cracks are beginning to appear on the surface of a peace process that was built on the rotten foundations of capital interest. The governments congratulate themselves on a job well done, where capital and its interests have been protected and the terrorist has been employed as an effective policing agent of dissident voices. The promise of peace and prosperity has been followed with the broken bodies, the torn hearts and minds of our people who have been cast into the world of unemployment and service sector slavery.

The only true peace for our people is the world unity of the working class against the ever more oppressive brute of global capital and its agents of human destruction.

Yours in search of peace,
V.M.



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