

## Teacher's notes on mural traditions

- Mural tradition in Ireland as old as Mexican tradition
- Range of themes in Ireland much more limited
- Loyalists began to paint murals in the early 1900's amidst political turmoil that led to establishment of NI state – first in appeared on the Beersbridge Road in 1908
- Mural painting became integral part of celebrations of the Twelfth – generally depicting King Billy – create and celebrate unionist identity
- Loyalist murals are unique in that they do not attempt to inspire social change, liberation, etc but instead aim to reinforce and preserve the status quo
- Imagery began to change in late 60's, early 70's with IRA campaign and British moves to reform NI state – militaristic and violent images and slogans
- NI was dominated by Unionism, Nationalists did not paint murals until the Hunger Strikes of 1981 when 10 prisoners died - young Nationalists began to draw support for the hunger strikers
- Nationalist murals often include other political references – comparisons to the Palestine Liberation Organisation, the African National Congress (ANC), the Southwest African People's Organisation. The Sandinistas. Nelson Mandela, Ché Guevara, Zapata and Lenin portrayed in mural art.
- Consider differences between murals which reject a certain situation and those which offer a vision for the future – Brits Out etc
- Murals are cultural emblems, territory markers and political commentary
- *For too long visual arts have been underplayed as a vehicle of cultural interpretation and learning. In recent years it is a pleasure to see [people taking] afresh look at murals and the impact they have on the community, instead of [viewing them] as a badge identifying the residents of the area with a certain creed and condition. – Ian Paisley Junior*
- Most murals represent the community they are situated in - painted by people from the local community – they are closely tied in with their surrounding society and any attempt to understand them divorced from the community would be meaningless.
- Murals play an important role in the life of Nicaragua. There are a number of reasons for this but many are to be found in the violent history that the country has suffered over the past 30 years. Murals first became a strong element of life in parts of Nicaragua in 1987. They were linked to the Sandinistas and were initially painted by people as political statements from a community that had been racked by poverty and violence.