

W THE WORKER

Paper of the Socialist Workers Movement

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SOLIDARITY CAN WIN!

THE GOVERNMENT didn't cave in after the last tax demonstration.

No one thought they would.

But a stroll around the streets and a few speeches is as far as the union leaders are prepared to go.

Waterford Glass workers haven't sat back.

By going on a two day strike each week, they have pointed to a different way.

Namely that strike action is the only way to win any reform. Shop stewards in Dublin have already set May 16th for stoppages in support.

The Ranks workers proved the power of the strike



weapon. They were locked up in jail on the order of a court injunction.

Their own union told them to respect the law. Thousands of workers ignored the officials and took strike action.

They opened the gates of Mountjoy for taxis to drive back to Ranks.

Strike action—not marches and speeches, produce results.

The battle that Waterford Glass is starting is a political fight. No one should be under any illusion that there is an easy victory in sight.

It means taking on the full power of the bosses and the state on an issue they consider fundamental.



If workers are to pay less in tax—the bosses have to pay more. They don't give way easily.

They will use every weapon—the media, the government and the union leaders—to defuse the situation.

Waterford glass must not be isolated and crushed.

The bureaucrats of the ITGWU and the FWUI will do everything to block solidarity action.

Left wing officials like Matt Merrigan cannot deliver the goods. It is only through factory delegations, leaflets, clear arguments with other workers on what the fight is for, that solidarity can be built.

The fight on tax cannot be divorced from the battles on wages and jobs. A shop stewards co-ordinating committee has been formed in Waterford.



It should be spread to other areas. But it would be madness to confine itself to the tax issue. Support has to be built with every group of workers who want to fight on wages or resist redundancies.

There should be no truck with any idea that it is pointless fighting for a wage increase until the whole tax question is solved.

If you are not strong enough to win a few pounds

in your own workplace, you haven't got the power to take on the boss class as a whole.

You cannot win on wages or jobs by fighting in the old way.

The old way was the two tier picket, the endless Labour Court meetings, the negotiations of a good redundancy deal.

Every battle now is a tough one. It demands the maximum of solidarity and militancy.

Take Irish Biscuits. Their firm is one of the leading members of the FUE. They demanded a pay pause from their workers before a minimal increase was granted.

That is the line the bosses want enforced.

The workers at Irish biscuits are in three different unions. But they took a joint ballot on strike action.

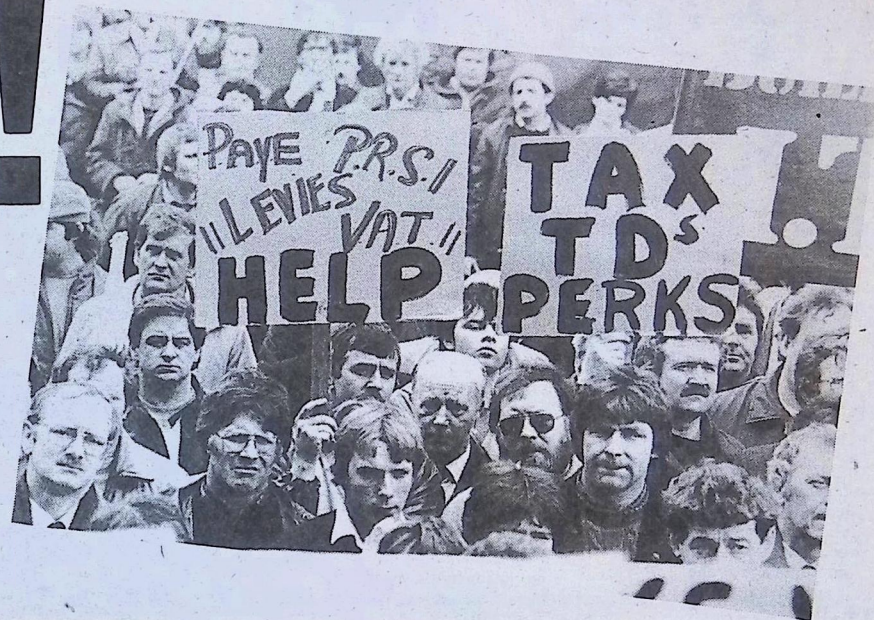
The claims of the manual and clerical workers were linked. There is no two tier picket. It is the only way to win.

Collections and solidarity must now be organised for this key group of workers.



Solidarity was the name of a rank and file Polish trade union. Solidarity has to be our watch word over the next few months. There are big battles ahead. They can only be won through the rank and file placing no trust in the union officials and developing maximum support for every group of workers in struggle.

by
KIERAN ALLEN



Nicky Kelly is innocent

AT THE time of writing, the Nicky Kelly Hunger Strike was just starting.

His hunger strike has been undertaken as the last resort to try and ensure his release from Portlaoise Prison.

He is serving 12 years there for the Sallins Train robbery.

The other two people originally condemned with him have been released after it was proved that statements used to convict them were lies.

They now enjoy freedom but Nicky Kelly has been forced to serve 12 years, as he fled to America while on bail and did not appeal at the same time as the others.

When the others were successful he returned to Ireland assuming that the same treatment would be given to him. But despite appeals to the High Court and the Supreme Court, his appeals have been turned down and he was condemned to serve 12 years.

He has been convicted by

a juryless court and on a charge of which he is innocent and on which his two companions have been released.

The only way that Nicky Kelly can now be released is by a special decision of the Minister of Justice, Michael Noonan—and Noonan has refused to allow his release.

There are good reasons that Noonan refuses to release him. If he'd agree to do so, it would immediately show up the Special Criminal Courts for what they really are—the corrupt oppressive arm of the state. It would also show up the way in which convictions are obtained by terrorising and torture techniques of the Gardai, which would in no way stand up in a courtroom in front of a jury. Hence the juryless courts and the repressive tactics of the Special Branch and the Gardai go hand in hand.

By releasing Nicky Kelly, Noonan would have to as good as admit that the juryless courts are corrupt.

Noonan will not release Nicky Kelly unless he is put under enormous pressure to do so. This pressure must not just come from the left, or the liberals who will be drawn

in on the humanitarian arguments. It must essentially come from the only force that any government really listens to—the voice of the Labour movement.

Not alone is it good enough to ensure that resolutions are passed in your local union branch, but it also necessary to become involved in the campaign itself.

The imprisonment of Nicky Kelly is just one more act of repression by the state which they cannot be allowed to get away with.

Support the coming events being organised by the 'Release Nicky Kelly Committee'.

Release Committee
11, Grange Terrace,
Blackrock, Co Dublin
Tel: 801438 - 331463

Shut up and

pay up!



SEAN HUGHES is a small shop-keeper of the old school.

He wears a pioneer badge and has been known to get very disturbed about young kids trying to pinch the odd Yorky Bar.

His Dun Laoghaire shop does a fair business, and he shops for his supplies at the local Cash and Carry where he stocks up for the week ahead. Sean, also stood some time ago as the local Workers Party candidate for the local election. Being well known as the local shopkeeper he secures a very respectable vote.

His shop is well decorated with copies of "Workers Life" and other WP publications. Sean however is caught in a bit of a trap which small shopkeepers have been trying to get out of for many a year.

Capitalism as a system does not give much room to the middle strata (or petty bourgeois) to survive.

Society, as Charlie Marx daid gets divided into two main classes and pushes sections of the middle classes down where they have no option but to become workers and sell their labour to the ruling capitalist class in society. The small shop-keeper and his fight with the multi-national food producers and supermarkets is a classic case of the fall of the petty bourgeoisie.

The battle has raged for years and years, and the fight is often very bitter indeed.

The shopkeeper used to be of course the main retail outlet for

all foodstuffs up till about fifteen years ago. There were thousands of small shops in Dublin for example, but today most of them have been sold off. In fact there is now only a third of the small shops left.

R.G DATA, the small shopkeepers union has put up a bitter but losing battle against the Multiplas, as they are called.

These are huge companies (eg. Ben Dunne) who are able to buy in vast bulk from the manufacturers and so undercut the shopkeeper and sell at slightly cheaper prices.

The wholesale firms throughout the country who supply the shopkeeper and who restrict their sales to shopkeepers only have blocked manufacturer after manufacturer to try and get the same price as the supermarkets.

Sometimes they have been successful but most times their demands are ignored by the manufacturers. The manufacturers have become so powerful that they now often have their own supermarkets or "co-ops" where they sell to the consumers.

From the point of view of many workers whether Johnson Brothers, R.H.M. Dunnes Stores, or Lees Cash and Carry, the whole mess is seen quite rightly as Big Business men fighting with small business men. The truth of this

by DERMOT BYRNE

viewpoint is seen in the struggle for union rights in all the major firms and outlets whether small shopkeepers or multiples.

R.G DATA blame foreign imports and multi-nationals for the smashing of the small shopkeeper.

It's a bit of a joke. During the strike last year at the Irish Sugar Company one small shopkeeper wholesale firm (Cash and Carry) imported German sugar.

R.G DATA constantly talk about "the small Businessman" as the backbone of the food industry and wholesale firms which supply the small shops after appeal to workers for wage restraint because of competition from the supermarkets and multiples.

In fact the businessmen who control the wholesale firms are staunch members of the FUE as are their "enemies" in the multi-nationals.

Just how much workers have in common with those who supply the small shops was reflected when ten shop stewards representing over 250 workers put forward a claim last month for 20%. After being offered 6% as a wage freeze, the workers took strike action in some jobs and "go slows" in others.

The result was 14% which is about the average settlement at the moment.

There are a number of things to be watched by workers whether working for Ben Dunne or for the wholesalers who supply the small shops. When it comes to it a boss is a boss.

Small shopkeepers or not the aim of any business man as to keep wages low and profits high.

Until food is produced for people's needs and not for vast profit, the small and large manufacturer and retailer will always scramble for the market and try to put one another out of business.

Our job is not to take sides with the competition but to demand proper wages and proper conditions and in the long term nationalisation under workers control of the supermarket and food industry.

ANTI AMENDMENT CONVINCING WORKERS

by MARNIE HOLBORROW

FROM the beginning, the amendment was a dirty political game. Dirty, because of the hypocrisy and opportunism of its supporters.

And dirty, because of the humiliation it doled out to its victims—women.

As the saga went on, the dirt got worse. Catholic bishops, not content with lending parish pulpits to SPUCists, ordained the Fianna Fail wording to Holy Writ.

Oliver J. Flanagan and his right wing cronies came out of the woodwork, his long awaited platform found.

It looked like a Mother and Child affair all over again.

And over what? Three wordings, one from Fianna Fail and then two from Fine Gael, that all had a lot in common. They saw "the protection of the unborn" as the issue of the day; that abortion must remain illegal; and that women themselves don't enter into it.

Sanctimonious, a political cover-up of the real issues like tax and unemployment, and opposed to women's rights. The amendments were that. No shameful murmurings about Fine Gael's being "better", open to amendment, as the Workers Party said, could gloss over that fact.

The Anti-Amendment Campaign has, to some extent, asserted this position. But publicly, it has hidden behind the more respectable arguments, and despite formal opposition to all wording, flirted with the Fine Gael "softs".

Through the smooth mouths of endless lawyers, academic and reverends, the assumptions have been that the minority churches were the key to a successful campaign and that "respectable" legal and academic arguments were the most important.

Neither, however, is the case. Obviously the support of the minority churches proves a point—but that point is that the state should be separate from any Church, whether Catholic or Protestant. Indeed, it is less the small minority churches that need to be won to the campaign than the vast majority of ordinary 'Catholics' who knowing the realities of

"Irish" abortion, rebel against the pontification of their bishops.

Secondly, "respectable" arguments about the constitution and legal practice, will in fact win very few to the campaign—as anyone who has leafleted pubs, shopping centres or workplaces will know. The Irish Times is one thing; Irish workers, men and women, are quite another and the concerns and realities very different.

To date, the liberal element of the campaign has sought to create a "climate of opinion" in which its arguments—pluralism, civil rights, legal precedents, etc.—become acceptable. In this, it has been far more successful than many of its most cautious liberals ever imagined.

But "climates of opinion" are of secondary interest to socialists. Ideas cannot, in themselves, change the world. Likewise, the idea that the Amendment is Wrong is a long way from the concrete winning of the kind of women's rights that so many people who are opposed to the amendment want.

Often "opinion" does not affect the reality at all. For example, society recognises that women should earn the same as men; the courts have even legislated on it. Yet the reality in the workplace is glaringly different. To change that, women and men workers must challenge it through fighting it whenever it occurs.

Ultimately they must change the society that perpetuates it. The struggle of, say, the Dunnes women to secure an aspect of that equal pay achieved far more than the equal pay act of 1974 or "opinions" on women's equality have.

Put simply, struggle pays; ideas alone do not. The same goes for the Anti-Amendment Campaign. The winning of public opinion will guarantee us nothing. Even votes against the amendment will be a statement, and only that.

To begin to win the rights for women that opposition to the amendment really means, an active mass campaign has to be built, which means relying on no benevo-

lent TDs or anyone else.

That does not however simply mean blind activism at the root of the campaign, nor does it mean stressing that because it's a woman's issue, women alone must do it. It means seeing the issue in terms of how it can be won.

The Corrie Campaign in Britain showed that only organised working class support forced the government to retreat. Similarly here in the AAC, the support of workers, men and women, in trade union branches, in the workplaces and in the areas is key for the long term success of the campaign.

Not simply because, as vote-catchers will point out, they are numerous, but because they alone hold the power to change the institutions at the top. Ranks workers proved that about the courts; and the same goes for the role of the church.

The winning of that support from workers means taking the arguments out of the press editorials and into the working class areas and workplaces. It is not easy; the amendment is the last thing on many workers minds.

Because of that it means making the links between the amendment and the assertion of a right wing whose ideas in times of crisis suit only too well the government. It means pointing out the hypocrisy of pro-lifers who care nothing for the welfare of those already born and the cuts in services for them.

It means also pointing out that women have the right to determine their own lives and that means controlling their fertility—something which the wealthier women, despite the Church's teaching can do so if they wish.

Working class women, without available contraception and, if that fails, abortion have not that luxury of choice. It must be a right not a luxury.

Working class support will guarantee the success of the campaign.

Furthermore, it will do more than change "public opinion"; it will open the way to winning the right of women to control their lives.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT - RIP-OFF

THE BOSS class in this country have always exploited any person or situation when they can make a profit.

But the way in which they have exploited the Youth Employment Agency scheme and have been allowed to get away with it, is just another example of how the law is made to protect the ruling class.

Remember how the Ranks workers were treated when they fought for their jobs.

The YEA scheme consists of giving young people job experience on a temporary basis, in public and private enterprises, to prepare them for future jobs. "Some hope".

But in reality what actually happens is employers taking on teenagers, getting as much work out of them for a short period, paying them £20 to £30 per week and probably getting £35 off the state for each worker.

They are making profits out of all workers, because the sickening thing is we pay 1% levy towards this, and the state collects seventy million a year from the PAYE sector. Although there are some full time jobs available the bosses won't fill them as long as they can get away with this racket.

This has only been seen in some factories, but knowing the

boss class, they are at it everywhere—all those back street unorganised places that you won't hear about.

The workers involved in these factories know exactly what is going on, but feel helpless about stopping it.

The trade union movement is also aware, but seem reluctant to intervene, arguing that they have no proof. All they have to do is talk to their members!

It's happening in Documentation in Finglas and Pit Stop garage in Glasnevin industrial estate, and they will tell them about it.

But what is needed is for workers to take militant action

themselves and this is what happened by the workers in Pit Stop garage.

Having seen their workmates getting kicked out every few months only to be replaced by others, and knowing that there were full time jobs available, they joined the union for protection. Management reacted by sacking 2 apprentices and the shop steward.

They went on strike immediately and after 2 weeks on strike, the management gave in and they were all re-instated.

This should be an example to other workers in this dilemma—that you can take on the bosses and win!

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I want to join; I want a subscription and enclose £3.50;

I would like more information about the SWM

Name

Address

LEBANON the night of the long knives

JACKIE McKENNA went to Beirut five months ago as a relief worker. She worked in a sociomedical centre in Chattila camp where 4,000 Palestinian men, women and children were murdered.

Jackie has since been deported as an 'undesirable'.

She spoke to the "The Worker".

"You have to get a picture of the Palestinian camps. They are nothing more than shanty towns. There were 16,000 people cramped into the Cantila camp—all in little concrete slabs with a corrugated roof. They were the poorer Palestinians—the professional classes live elsewhere. Today there are only 8,000 left.

"On the night of the massacre, the Christian militia and the Israeli army surrounded the camp. They went from house to house—knifing people, slitting their throats. They used knives so that there was no sound. It went on for two days. In other parts of the massive camp people didn't know or believe it was happening. There would have been a lot more massacred if it wasn't for the fact that the Palestinians had a few guns left and began to resist.

"When I got there, there was a very strange feeling. You would talk to a Palestinian woman about her lost husband or son. She would be near tears, at first, then laugh a lot and finally ask in a very matter of fact way about the corrugated roofs for her house that was bulldozed down. It was only after two months that the numbness had gone and the overwhelming feeling of sadness and despair could be felt."

Jackie is particularly bitter about the official agencies.

"I really want to talk about what groups like the Red Cross and UNICEF are doing. They get millions but do nothing for the Palestinians.

The Red Cross is a real disgrace. They are refused access to the Palestinian prisoners inside Lebanon and Israeli jails and make no protests. I spoke to prisoners who had been badly beaten—yet the Red Cross had handed little docketts back to their relations saying they were being looked after.

Amongst the relief goods for the Palestinians, there were biscuits from Kuwait and ear-picks from another Arab country. The Red Cross accept them politely and say nothing."

One effect of the Israeli invasion has been that the Christian fascists have now taken full control of the state machine in Lebanon. Their militia have been integrated into the Lebanese army. They run the security police. Jackie explained the political role of Pierre Gemayel—the new Christian Lebanese Prime Minister. "Gemayel says he wants a free independent Lebanon. He makes some noises about the Israeli occupation. But he is only trying to cover his real intentions and give an image of being good for everyone. Gemayel is not interested in Lebanon—his only concern is Beirut. Lebanon as a nation is finished. The Israelis occupy the South—the Syrians, the East.

"One Army officer told me—from Gemayel to the lowest army person the aim is to get the Palestinians out. It is true—but unfortunately for them, they can't do it. They are therefore trying to demoralise the Palestinian population.

"One result of the Israeli invasion was that the backbone of PLO activists was smashed. The PLO army and the services they provided was destroyed. The job of the Lebanese army and state is to make sure that it is never revived.

"Whenever more than three or four Palestinians gather the Lebanese army and police move into arrest them. They are doing a better job than the Israelis because they are there all the time."

The Israeli proclaimed that their invasion of Lebanon was to be temporary. But the Zionists are committed

to continual expansion. Begin has often said that the 'real Israel' must stretch up the Litani river in the middle of Lebanon. Jackie explained the role of the Israelis in the South.

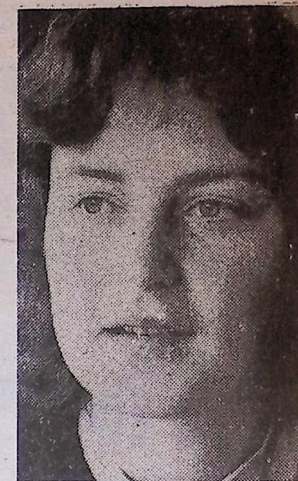
"Don't anyone believe that the Israelis are leaving. They control the whole country from the Southern

outskirts of Beirut to their own border. They have every intention of staying.

"They have built a major runway outside Beirut. They are building expensive office blocks in the area. They have brought busloads of tourists right up to central Lebanon. Their produce is being freely sold throughout the South.



Another Palestinian dies at the hands of the Israelis. This 17-year-old youth was shot through the heart as he demanded freedom for his people.



Jackie McKenna: "Don't anyone believe the Israelis are leaving."

"They are also making more administrative arrangements for a longer stay. There is a conscious move to drive the Palestinians out of towns like Sidon to villages where they are more easily controlled. In Sidon, Haddad's men may distribute a leaflet calling for the expulsion of local Palestinians. The next day a few families get evicted. It goes on all the time."

"The Israelis are trying to establish 'village leagues' all over the South. This means imposing a village head who will collaborate with them and then form a small guard unit of about 30 men to protect the village from the 'terrorists'. They have insisted in putting up neon lights around the Palestinian villages".

1933—THE DARKEST DAYS

FIFTY years ago, Adolf Hitler seized power. In January of this year the German people remembered the anniversary.

There was a boom of publications of leaflets and books. In public speeches by members of the political parties, the unions and the churches, the population was asked not to forget this event in German history and to stand for their democracy.

The facts are: On January 30 1933, the German President Hindenburg, elected with the support of the SPD (the German Socialist Party), made Hitler Chancellor of the Reich. This challenge to the German workers was accepted by their official organisations and so there was NO organised resistance of the labour movement against this event.

The consequences for this gross mistake followed rapidly: mass arrests; banning of the KPD (the German Communist Party) and the SPD; capitulation and the joining of the ADGB (former German Trade Union Council) to the fascist "labour organisations" on May 1, 1933.

All this was accepted because the German labour movement was split in various sections: Social Democrats (SPD) and Communists (KPD). There was no force that argued

for a workers united front that fought fascism and tackled the system which produced it.

Historically there was — and is — a close relationship between the Social Democrats and the Trade Unions, so that the policy of the unions was guided by their "political partner" the SPD.

The officials of the SPD and the ADGB feared extra-parliamentary actions because they knew that the Labour Movement once in action would have gone further than the mere defence of the existing "democratic state."

The workers would have fought a revolutionary struggle, a struggle for their rights.

This threat to the capitalist system would have endangered the basis of both the SPD and of the unions and their officials.

The KPD wanted a strong extra-parliamentary fight but it was not able to create the conditions for it. Lots of workers were disappointed by the unions and their own party. But the KPD was not able to win their confidence.

The KPD had founded their own unions which had cut them off from the mass of Social Democratic workers. More than that, the KPD denounced the Social Democrats as being no better than the Nazis, as "social fascists."

This ultra-left turn "forgot" one simple point: the very existence of even reformist organisations was incompatible with the emergence of fascism.

The KPD branded the reformists as simply the agents of

the fascists. Their crazy policy cut them off from the millions of social democratic workers who recognised the mortal danger of the Nazis, and were beginning to see through the weakness of their leaders — but would not swallow the idea that they were "social fascists".

There were groups who saw through the crazy KPD policy—but they were tiny. They argued for a united front of the left to win the mass of workers for a revolutionary struggle against Hitler.

By 1933 the KPD had begun to change direction. Thalheimer — its leader wrote to the SPD asking for a meeting to discuss an immediate general strike.

But it was too late. Hitler's seizure of power was the end of the German Labour movement. After the second world war the unions were officially restored but the movement never recovered its strength.

The KPD was banned again in the 50s. The boom in the economy and the increasing cold war rhetoric meant that German workers did not re-build the old traditions. Workers simply didn't have to fight so hard.

Times are changing. The boom is over. There is an extreme right-wing government in Germany willing to impose the Cruise missiles and wage cuts.

It's time to fight again.

WOLFGANG KOENIG



LIEPZIG January 1933: One of the last Communist Party demonstrations before Hitler came to power

WORKERS AND THE

The way forward

IN ALMOST every other country the demand for tax reform is the cry of the rich and powerful.

In Ireland it has become a workers struggle. There are good reasons for that.

Capital in Ireland is heavily subsidised. Native and foreign bosses are entitled to huge grants, to interest-free loans, to hand-outs of all sorts.

Yet they pay little in the way of taxes. A mere 2.7% of the state's revenue comes from tax on profits.

In addition, massive borrowings were undertaken in the seventies to shore up the economy. The Irish state is currently in debt to the tune of £5 billion.

Each year the interest payments on that debt amount to £1,631 million. Almost every penny deducted in income tax from workers pay packets goes to pay off the interest to native and foreign banks.

Workers gained little from the borrowing. It was necessary to keep the profits flowing. Yet we pay for the consequences. The tax burden on Irish workers is high because Irish capitalism has managed to offload the costs onto our backs.

A workers struggle for tax equality is therefore like any other fight. It is seeking reforms in an area where the rich have no intention of giving way.

For any easing of the tax burden means that the bosses must pay up. The political logic of the tax campaign is one of striking directly at the power of capital and the state.

Yet that is a logic which the thousands who have marched have not fully grasped.

The numbers marching is fantastic. They represent the biggest workers' demonstrations since the founding of the state.

The tax protests signal the growing awareness of Irish work workers in seeing themselves as a class.

But the demonstrations are also largely silent affairs. There are no slogans or demands. A class in struggle needs politics.

The more generalised the struggle the deeper the political awareness that is required.

There is a contradiction at the heart of the tax campaign—the demonstrations are massive—but there is little understanding of why or what we are fighting.

With any attempt to take the struggle beyond the limits set by the ICTU, the contradiction becomes more acute.

They look on the tax marches as a means of letting off steam. They know that any battle for wage increases must be fought for hard. The old habits of the two-tier pickets will have to be discarded if workers are to win any increase.

The ICTU hoped that a one day stoppage would be enough to re-inforce their credibility as bureaucrats in negotiations—and that is all they wanted from the campaign.

Thousands of workers want to go further. Yet there exists little rank-and-file leadership that can patiently explain what the struggle is about and where its going.

A leadership that proposes a militant form of struggle and which can explain politically where the campaign is directed.

Take Michael Power. Michael

is one of the chief shop stewards of Waterford Glass. That factory is the rank and file leadership when it comes to the tactics of militancy. Speaking at a rally in Waterford he said:

"We don't want to be seen as Marxists or Leninists. We don't want to overthrow the state. We only want to improve its workings"

Or look at the Dublin Trades Council. It spent one evening discussing the best tactic for winning—without talking about what the fight is about.

The bosses have a far sharper view.

Business and Finance the bosses bulletin, had this to say on Waterford Glass:

"The move to withhold PAYE and PRSI contributions by some unions is not only illegal but dangerous. That path leads to anarchy"

In a previous issue, G McIlwraith, managing director of RP Hall, wrote,

"The state should not rule out the ultimate sanction".

He meant prison for the Glass workers.

The workers are overwhelming on the streets; weak in the work places and have not yet grasped what is at stake.

The bosses are tiny; confident in the factories at the moment—and full sure what their class interests demands. As long as the gap between the understanding and the action continues—the media will treat the campaign with kid gloves.

But a group of striking oil workers or building workers—who know what they are about, fight for more limited wage demands—would be pilloried by the same press.

The union bureaucrats do everything to encourage the

confusion. They talk about tax evaders, as if they weren't to be found on the boardrooms of big business. They argue that a simple change in accounting techniques will solve the issue. They spread the illusion that you don't have to tackle the bosses to win.

As long as you don't see it as a fight against the power of capital, then a once off show of strength on the streets is enough.

But what was the experience of 1979. The movement got nowhere. Worse, the tax burden on workers increased.

Why? The bureaucrats of the ICTU were the chief culprits. They bowed to the likes of Barry Desmond who told them that "political strikes threatened parliamentary democracy"

They turned the thousands on the streets into names on a petition. They called off the campaign once a "commission" was set up.

But the ICTU is only half the answer. The ICTU met little resistance to their sell-out. Many believed that if one half day stoppage wouldn't do the trick then another demonstration might. They thought you could win without treading on the bosses toes.

This time around anyone who says it is not a political struggle is crazy. The lack of political ideas will lead to defeat. Everyone knows that the ICTU is a bunch of treacherous crawlers. But there is not yet a clear majority who are saying: Make the bosses pay.

Thousands of workers took unofficial action for Ranks. The call for solidarity came from a tiny unofficial rank-and-file group. But workers knew what they were fighting for—the release of the workers from jail.

In this special report, KIERAN ALLEN argues that the tax to the workplaces and KEVIN WINGFIELD looks at trade

The facts of the

WORKERS ARE used to seeing the purchasing power of their wages reduced by inflation, but the attack by the coalition on workers wages is quite different this time.

The actual take home pay has been reduced, by increases in PRSI to 8½%. Also the tax bands have not been adjusted this year to take account of inflation.

The last budget was the biggest attack on the living standards of workers since the thirties.

Why has this happened? The deficit on government spending over income was £1200million last year. The coalition have pledged to eliminate the deficit altogether by 1987.

This means further attacks on the jobs and living standards of working people, for the coalition have made clear by their actions and deeds that the PAYE worker will bear the brunt of additional taxes needed to eliminate the deficit.

PAYE workers paid 87% of all taxes collected in 82/83. Corporation tax is a mere 10% for manufacturing companies while any real wealth or capital taxes just do not exist.

Ireland has the lowest proportion of capital taxes and the largest amount of capital grants to industry in all the developed countries.

Right through the seventies both governments have concentrated on reducing taxation for the rich.

1974 Estate duty abolished

1978 Wealth Tax abolished

1978 Capital Gains Tax reduced

1978 Capital acquisition reduced

1979 2% Farm levy imposed and abolished in same year.

1980 Resource Tax abolished

By comparison the PAYE workers share has increased.

A couple with two children would pay on an average industrial wage:-

1967/68 no income tax

1982/83 50% in tax & PRSI

That type of rank-and-file action on tax also needs clear precise goals.

It needs very simple popular slogans that go far ahead of the abstract nonsense of 41 demands that the ICTU talk about. The shop stewards who are pressing for solidarity with Waterford Glass must be saying openly 'we want the recent tax impositions on our wage packets removed. We want the last levy abolished, we want the PRSI increase removed; we want the tax bands indexed—and we want the bosses to pay.'

There is another way of looking at it.

The workplace and the streets. There are thousands on the streets, everyone is together; the movement looks strong. Back in the workplaces it is a different story. The bosses are screaming about redundancies, cash flow, profit margins when there is any mention of wage claims. There is not the same confidence to push forward.

The wage claims are sitting in the Labour Court—two or three months after the last agreement ended.

The settlements to date have been reasonable. But they have only involved tiny groups of workers. The bigger battalions have not moved. The public sector were told in the last budget that there was no money for pay increases this year. There hasn't been a 2 minute protest against this embargo.

When you are weak in the workplace you look elsewhere. When you don't feel you can fight on wages you look to the tax.

You think that we look powerful on the streets and that something must be done.

The trade union bureaucrats have encouraged that idea up to a point. Bureaucrats who accepted last year's tearing up of the public sector agreement were screaming blood on tax—up to a point.

The Waterford Glass workers threw a spanner in their works. They took the tax issue further.

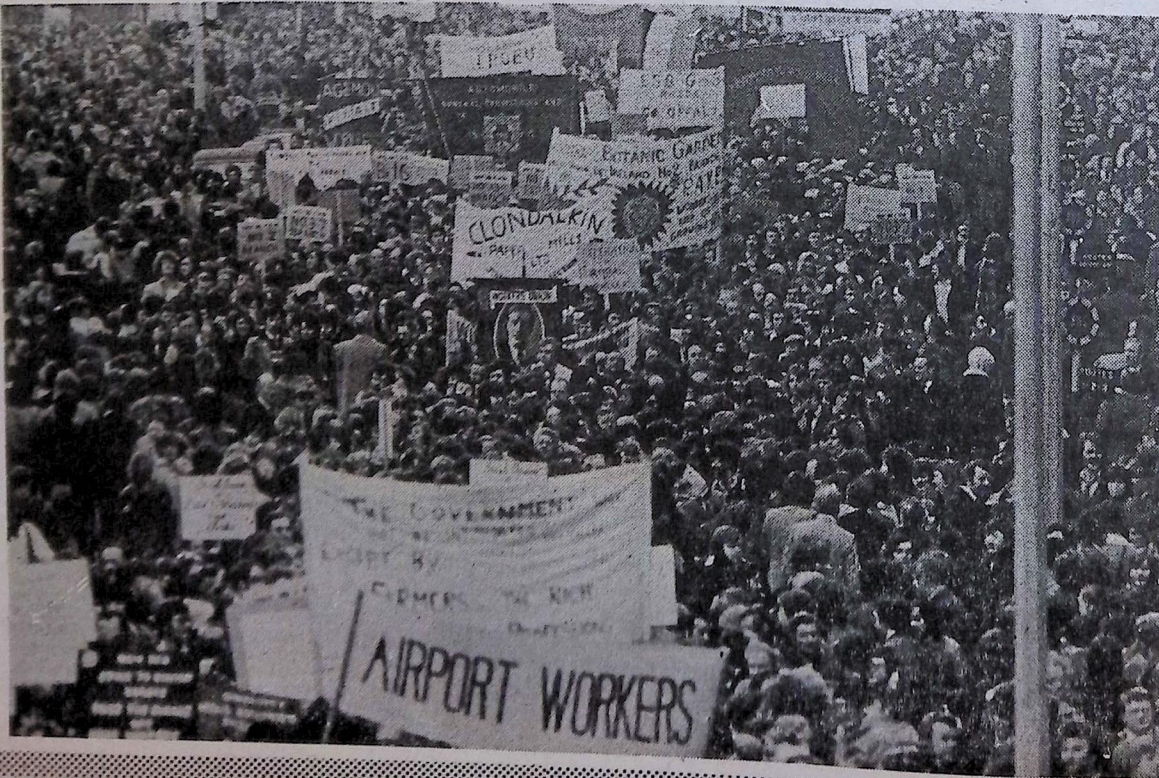
But the tax campaign cannot be a substitute for fighting on wages. Those who are weak look to the heavens. The movement on tax will rise to the heavens and crash like a lead balloon if the gap between the workplace and the campaign isn't narrowed.

You cannot defeat a government on a decisive issue—if you haven't got the confidence to fight back against your own boss in the workplace.

At the end of the day it is a question of living standards.

Whether or not there is reform of taxation, there is still a battle on wages. The two go together. More than that they feed into each other. A determined campaign to make the bosses pay—must also be saying screw them in the workplaces for increases to compensate for the taxes.

A determined fight on wages will also mean fighting to make sure it is not eaten away on taxes.



THE TAX CAMPAIGN

campaign must be taken
union officials, right and left.

The tax

But the biggest scandal of all is the fact that companies and the self-employed do not even pay the taxes that they owe. The total tax outstanding by this section at the end of 1982/83 is £1866 million, more than enough to make up the deficit for the next 1½ years.

Some of this amount has been owing for so long that it may never be collected.

Companies have been liquidated or set up under new names.

APRIL 1983 TOTAL TAX OUTSTANDING

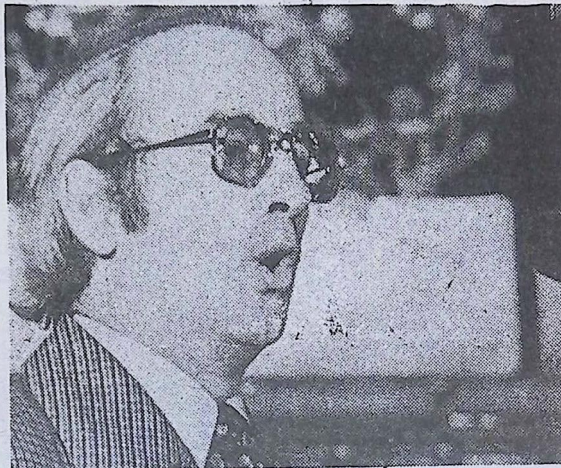
Self-employed	£922 M.
PAYE/PRSI deducted by employers but not paid to the state	£105 M.
Companies	£604 M.
VAT	£177 M.
Capital gains	£58 M.
TOTAL:	£1866 m.

Source: ATGWU Educational Committee, Waterford Bulletin, Number 1.

Why won't the ICTU fight?

THE EFFECTS of the world slump in the South have been dramatic. Unemployment soars and bosses have seized the opportunity to claw back concessions won in the past—to cheapen the cost of labour by attacking real wages; The increases in tax and PRSI are part of this bosses' offensive.

But the possibility of a generalised fight-back depends on the degree of self-confidence, political consciousness and organisation of workers. An important, at times decisive, factor is the leadership available.



John Carroll of the ITGWU

If the ICTU were to vigorously campaign throughout the trade union movement for action against the tax burden, for decent pay and against job loss, the situation could be transformed. Such a campaign—involving intensive counter-propaganda against the poor-mouthing of employers and government; encouraging and backing every action taken by workers; building solidarity and linking every struggle; most important: focusing action not on "safety-valve" demonstrations, but on the workplaces, where workers have their strength—such a campaign would rebuild morale, put flesh on the ossified union structures and transform the balance of forces so the bosses would be running scared of workers.

The ICTU will not initiate

such a process—why?

In the heroic age of Irish trade unionism—the heyday of Larkin—the workers movement imagined that decisive questions for Irish labour were going to be answered—one way or another—very quickly. On a rising tide of struggle the trade union movement was built very rapidly, using such tactics as the sympathetic strike and the blacking of "tainted" goods. Structures and rule-books were less important than the fact that trade unionism was bringing broader and broader layers of workers into an organised fight against the employers.

Leaders were as important as their capacity to facilitate this process.

1913 was—if not a turning point—the beginning of changed fortunes. By the 1920s it was clear that both capitalism and trade unionism were going to be around for a while. Routine replaced the perspective of decisive struggle and consolidated those leaders and officials whose administrative or managerial attitude overrode their passion for a fight.

In every trade union movement in the world the period of retrenchment and consolidation brings forward those whose concern is with ensuring finances are in good order, that head office functions smoothly, that agreements entered into are honoured, etc. More than this, periods of relative social peace between the

classes create an atmosphere where negotiation replaces struggle.

If the unions learn to live with capitalism, and the bosses with unions, then striking a bargain with an adversary replaces the perspective of gaining a victory. The relative positions of the bargainers may have to be tested from time to time with a strike, but negotiation is the rule.

Those who occupy these positions inside the trade union structure are a group of people with interests of their own—they are a bureaucracy. Their interests in social peace—because it makes them important people.

They must control the trade union movement, otherwise they have nothing to bargain with. At the same time they must play the rules of the game—accepting and promoting the continued existence of capitalists to negotiate with, and capitalism. They have a radical face to show the rank-and-file—to demonstrate that they are championing their interests, and a conciliatory face to show to the capitalists and state—to show they really want to achieve an amicable settlement. This and their relatively privileged position, sets them apart from the mass of workers. They balance between the bosses and the workers.

They are therefore a brake on the movement. Whilst for bargaining purposes a show of militancy may be made, any action of workers that is not under their control attacks their position.

That is why so much of an officials time is spent urging workers to return to work so talks can resume.

However when the bosses go too far, they must act. The jailing of Ranks workers threatened their position, as as that of the rank-and-file.

Threats of mass demonstrations and dark hints of general strikes were enough to force the government to concede.

So to answer our question—why won't the ICTU act in a red-blooded fashion over wages/tax/unemployment? They accept that Capitalism is here to stay, that its government is legitimate, that its crisis must be over come by sacrifice from "all sections of the community". They have a vested interest in capitalism and could not therefore launch a fight drawing on all the resources of the working class against capitalism.

If in spite of their efforts, a fight breaks out, they will seek to assume leadership of it, but only so as to be able to bargain it away.

The union bosses cannot and will not lead the movement forward. The rank-and-file must develop their own organisation and leadership WITHIN the unions through the struggle.

That is why an occupation by a few dozen workers is a hundred times more important than a fiery speech from a trade union boss.

Can the left officials give the lead?

THERE ARE not many militants in the trade union movement who really believe that the likes of John Carroll are going to lead a fight-back.

There are many who are impatient with the lack of a lead coming from the top of the trade union movement. But many fear their own incapacity to organise a grass-root revolt. Perhaps, they feel, not all trade union leaders are as bad.

And it is true. The trade union bureaucracy, although balancing between the workers and the bosses, although objectively representing a brake on the movement, does have a right and a left.

Some will seek to drive a harder bargain with the employers and the state, some will be more conciliatory. A lot of it is rhetoric pure and simple. Unions organise different industries with different patterns of employer/worker relationships. Most unions are in some sense in competition with others. The different level of organisation, self-confidence and militancy among different sections of the working class finds its reflection in the public attitudes struck by union officials.

And on top of this is the subjective ideas of individual leaders. Take the ATGWU's Matt Merrigan. He is in many ways the best of contemporary

trade union leaders. His prolonged public opposition to National Wage Agreements and Understandings; his leading role in the Socialist Labour Party—the short-lived left wing split from the Labour Party; his appearances on public platforms for a host of "progressive" issues and his permissive attitude to militants in his own union together put him in a different category to the time-servers and gangsters at the top of most unions.

The temptation is to believe that figures like Merrigan can lead the struggle. But it would be a mistake to place reliance on him in this regard.

The role of trade union leaders does not arise out of a moral deficiency on their part but the objective situation in which they act.

Matt Merrigan has played a key role in the tax stoppages.

It was his circular which created the refusal of Waterford Glass workers to deduct PRSI.

At a rally at the GPO he called for the breaking of the link with the Labour Party and the taking of the campaign forward to a general strike.

But words are one thing. Action and power are quite different. Matt Merrigan called

for a general stoppage—but he did not call for direct support for the Waterford Glass workers who were then refusing to deduct PRSI.

To call for specific solidarity would be to cut across the likes of John Carroll who was on the same platform.

And that is called breaking union conventions.

Therein lies the nub of the problem. It is one thing to call for a general strike, from the back of a lorry at the GPO—it is another to organise for it to happen.

The difference between words and action. To agitate and organise for a stoppage would mean travelling around factories, appealing over the heads of the ITGWU leaders—put simply breaking all union conventions.

Matt Merrigan is in no position to do that. He is an individual socialist at the tip of the union.

He has got no organised rank and file forum inside the union that could control or support him when necessary. Isolated at the top, there are certain conventions he has to respect.

To be fair, Matt Merrigan has a hundred times better attitude to organising the rank and file than the rest of the bureaucrats. But it is important to understand his

role—so as not to rely on him.

The left leaders cannot deliver.

The shop steward meeting in April was a case in point. The organising was left up to Matt Merrigan. Many felt that this was enough to attract 2 or 3 hundred. Only 70 or 80 stewards turned up, mostly in the ATGWU.

The same applies to the stoppage on May 16th. It won't happen if it is just Matt Merrigan that endorses the call. It needs the real delegations of Waterford

Glass workers to tour the factories of Dublin.

It is because of his scepticism about the possibility for rank and file led strikes, that Matt Merrigan has proposed the formation of a new workers party based on the unions.

What you cannot achieve through strike action, you must win politically.

Now everyone agrees that a struggle like tax or even wages—become a political today. But

Merrigan's notion is one of a new party which gears itself up for elections. What you cannot win through strike action, you wait until your Dail representatives can achieve.

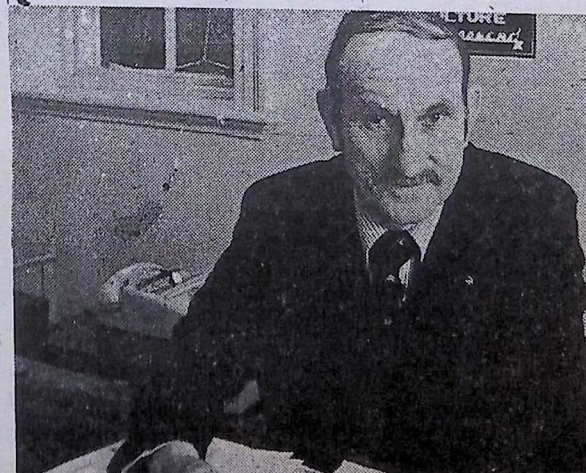
A new radical Labour Party will only try to fill the ground occupied by the Workers Party— with additional anti-imperialist and anti-Stalinist policies.

It will be a party hamstrung by union conventions. It will not be the organisation of the minority who want to connect the struggle of today with the fight for socialism. It will be a party that puts the primary emphasis on putting up Trades Council candidates for elections.

What is required is building the rank-and-file confidence, organisation and morale through each small local dispute, arguing that action must be spread and generalised and that solidarity is the key. It is in the workplace that workers have the power to fight capitalism. And Tax, PRSI, pay unemployment and the rest are all facets of capitalism.

Militants cannot rely on the likes of even the best trade union officials (as Merrigan certainly is).

When the workers move into action against capitalism, the deadening weight of the trade union bureaucracy is something they must be strong enough to overcome.



Matt Merrigan of the ATGWU

Socialist case for abortion

WHY DOES a socialist organisation publish a pamphlet on abortion?

The answer may seem obvious. We are in the midst of the greatest right-wing crusade this country has seen since the 30s.

The lunatic right who argued that contraception removed all thought of sin, have got themselves a catch cry with "Abortion kills Babies".

There are many who sense there is something wrong here—but have not broken with the notion that abortion is murder.

A "woman's right to choose" has become a popular slogan but many would not accept its full implication for the right to free abortion on demand.

If this pamphlet did nothing else, it explains in clear English how women came to have abortions and why it is theirs of right. It pulls no punches. It is written in a style that takes all the mystery from the subject.

But the pamphlet goes further than that. It gives the socialist case. The fight for women's liberation and for workers power have not always been held together.

Stalinism transformed the socialist movement into one that fought purely on bread and butter issues and defended the great Soviet Union. It turned its back on women's liberation as Stalin removed the gains won by women with the Bolshevik revolution.

Women in Russia became breeding machines to increase the population.

On the other side of the coin the new feminist movement that arose from the universities of the sixties, ignored the workers movement. Sophisticated theories argued that working class men gained as much from the oppression of women as their bosses.

The struggle inside the factory paled into insignificance.

This little pamphlet cuts through all that. For its author Goretta Horgan and the Socialist Workers Movement, socialism is about workers power. It has nothing to do with a gigantic state machine increasing its accumulation targets. It is everything to do with controlling our lives.

Women are half the working class. There is no way they can control their lives without also controlling their own bodies.

The right to contraception, to crèche facilities, to abortion are basic to the fight for socialism.

More than that. Women are not just a special interest group who act as a permanent lobby inside the workers movement. They must become the enthusiastic fighters for their rights as workers and women.

It is up to workers to build a different society where there is not only bread but roses too.

That society, if it is worthy of the name, socialism, will guarantee women's control over their bodies.

Read this pamphlet—take a few copies and sell them around.

"A New World for Women — the Socialist Case for abortion" by Goretta Horgan, published by the Socialist Workers Movement, 20p. Available from SWM, 41 Herberton Park, Rialto Dublin 8.

Gandhi and the cult of personality

ONE OF the features of Capitalist History is the glorification of the role of individuals in shaping history—Hitler started the second world war; Stalin destroyed the Russian Revolution; Gandhi won India's Independence.

Class struggle or the conflict of different forces within society never comes into it.

This mainly serves the purpose of instilling into the mass of the people the idea of their own powerlessness—Richard Attenborough's film on Gandhi falls into that very same trap.

Two images remain in my mind after seeing the film.

The first is a clip from an old newsreel of Gandhi visiting a Lancashire cotton mill and being cheered and hugged by the workers.

The second is of him arriving for a meeting with the leaders of the Indian Congress Party in a house of fantastic opulence and richness. They had just been discussing how they would get rid of Gandhi when he had served their purpose.

For the millions of oppressed people in India and throughout the world he represented the hope

and the possibility of a better future. For the British and the Indian bourgeoisie he was a means of controlling the masses.

While there is no doubt that he was a great popular leader, his leadership helped to prevent the independence movement from dividing along class lines.

The British administration had for years been institutionalising the divisions between the Muslims and the Hindus. They made direct appeal to the Muslim minority. The limited franchise for the puppet assemblies was based upon income and education. A Hindu could only vote if he paid tax on an income of 300,000 rupees; for a Muslim it was 3,000 rupees—or a Hindu graduate could vote if he had held a degree for 30 years, for a Muslim it was 3 years!

The only way of over-coming these religious differences and of solving the massive problems of poverty and hunger that afflicted India was for the workers and peasants to raise their own

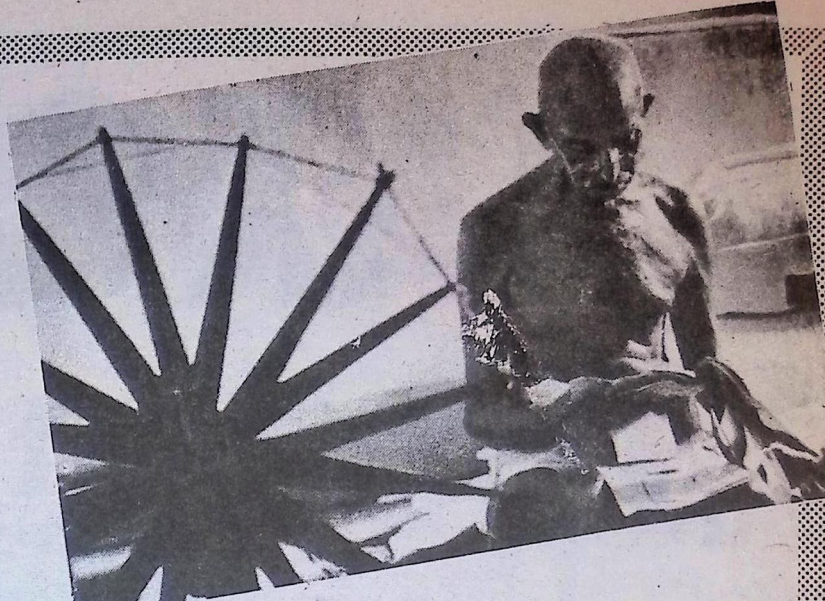
demands and to fight in their own interests. However Gandhi believed that the Indian people was a family. The lot of the work workers and peasants was to be bettered by persuading the 'landowners and employers to behave ethically as trustees of property they hold for the common good'.

The tragedy is that the movement didn't develop along class lines and the result, which is brilliantly shown in the film, was the partition of India, the columns of refugees moving between India and Pakistan and the millions killed in fighting between Muslims and Hindus.

The parallels with Ireland are many and obvious, even if they are not of the same scale.

For this reason and the good political discussions it will provoke in the pub afterwards, I recommend this film.

by WILLIE CUMMING



IT IS CLASS THAT MATTERS - NOT SEX

"What is to be Done About Violence Against Women?" by Elizabeth Wilson, Penguin £2.50 UK.

ELIZABETH WILSON, the English socialist-feminist, has published a book that promises a lot.

In 240 pages "What is to be Done About Violence Against Women?" has chapters on Rape, Battered Women, Prostitution, Incest and Pornography and others entitled "Constructing Sexuality: The Law, Welfare, the Media" and "Sex in a Moral Vacuum". It is published under the auspices of the Socialist Society, a debating circle of British intellectuals, mostly Benite in orientation, peppered with Communist Party members and the odd ex-revolutionary.

Although a lot of ground is covered, the text is rambling and no clear central argument emerges.

The most repetitive themes are that violence against women is not the result of mental illness, alcoholism or out of control sex drive but the attempt by men to control and dominate women.

She argues that the patriarchal family of the nineteenth century has broken down but it's authoritarian ethos is being replaced by a permissive "anything goes" attitude to sexual matters. That in this transitional period men try to roll back the clock by using violence against their wives, daughters, lovers and occasionally women in general. Much pornography is an expression of this, she argues.

Modern society is without any moral code. Liberalism has replaced the moral certainties of the past where everyone knew their place. And men assert their authority in this vacuum by violence or the threat of violence.

Two points are immediately apparent about her analysis. First it seldom comes down from the skies. Violence is simply explained in terms of the ideas in peoples heads—hence the repeating theme of sexuality in a "moral vacuum".

And this approach leads to the way of fighting back that she approves of.

Women must fight male sexist ideology, we are told and children should be brought up to be more responsible—making their own beds etc.

A great deal of the book is concerned with psychological explanations, which may or not be sound but the fundamental questions—Why are some ideas important? Why do they change? and why do they cause people to act in certain ways? are seldom discussed. For a socialist associated with the British Communist Party, the bland assumption that the Marxist tradition has nothing to say about women's liberation is positively breath-taking. Indeed the only socialists mentioned with approval are the pre-Marxist utopians for whom the emancipation of the mass of humanity was a moral crusade confined to the realm of ideas. There was no connecting link for them between their worthy dreams and reality.

Which brings us to the second glaring omission. There is scarcely a mention of class in Wilson's book. We are supposed to feel outrage at the case of a woman manager whose incapacity to tolerate sexist jokes was used as an excuse for not promoting her to the board of directors of a company. There is certainly no mention of the important struggles of women workers—during the seventies of those at Trico

and Grunwicks in Britain—which did as much as any feminist agitation to break down male prejudice.

She is much more interested in the feminist agitation such as 'Reclaiming the Night' marches and picketing sex shops with the help of a local "left-wing" Labour MP and the constant wrangling of various and assorted feminist groups who tie themselves into moral knots over the rights and wrongs of prostitution and pornography.

Violence against women is one dimension of women's subordinate position society.

Because of women's biological function of child-bearing, when primitive communal property broke up with the development of agriculture and the beginnings of class society, women were excluded from production.

This was the material basis for patriarchy. Yet by Marx's time it was clear that patriarchal production and the family were being transformed.

The bourgeois family—an instrument for the transmission of property through generations—remained, although the oppression of bourgeois women was and is pretty trivial.

The working class family was no longer the basis of production, modern factory production had replaced that—but a unit of reproduction. The sexual division of labour was not a conspiracy of all men to do down all women but the only mechanism which allowed maximum exploitation of the male workers by the boss class while the next generation of wage-slaves were reared.

The roles imposed by capitalism were oppressive to both males and females within the working class and remain to this day.

What has changed since is that the availability of effective contraception, the post war demand for more labour during the long boom, and improved—although still meagre—child-care facilities, provided as a response to this increased demand, women once again were beginning to participate in production and have the possibility of power.

It is this which posed the question which only the socialist revolution can answer—women's liberation.

The feminist movements were a reflection of this—NOT its initiator (Wilson claims that increased consciousness of women's

oppression is the result of the girl friends of hippies and anti-Vietnam war students rebelling at their boy friends sexism!)

With world recession and capitalist crisis stretching as far as the eye can see, the fight for women's liberation is thrown into reverse and feminist movements around the world stagnate, disintegrate, become more cranky and swing to the right.

Only by rejecting Wilson's socialist-feminist reformism and its petty-bourgeois idealism can we see a way forward.—The revolutionary unity of working class men and women.

by BARBARA WILSON

WORKER FUND

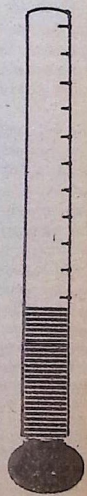
During 1983 we need £1000 for the production of THE WORKER. The money is needed to improve the regularity and quality of the paper.

We have no advertisers or rich backers to pay for its production. We are appealing to all our supporters and readers to send a donation to the paper.

With each issue we will keep you informed of the progress towards our £1000 target.

The total to date is £543. Many thanks to all who contributed and a special effort please for next month.

Send your donation to:
The Worker, 41 Herberton Park, Rialto, Dublin 8. (Cheques payable to 'The Worker'.)





Dirty profits from Hoover

completely different ways. Management see it as an increased efficiency, lower costing trouble free system both labour-wise and machine wise. Workers see it as loss of jobs, mass enslavement to the machine and worsening of present conditions on the job.

The reason the workers see it like this and are correct is that the people who develop and control the new technology are not interested in the quality of our lives: they are only interested in increasing profits.

So instead of new technology being the basis of a new world of leisure and freedom, it is instead bringing the fear of mass unemployment into the hearts of all those under its threat.

The new technology in the P.O. will, if management and unions allow, mean enormous job losses which in turn means enormous loss of confidence among the workers.

This means more attacks by management as they realise at what a low ebb the resistance of workers has sunk to.

Workers in the P.O. are in the driving seat at the moment. New technology cannot be further introduced unless we agree to it.

No agreement should be reached until it absolutely guarantees NO loss of jobs, longer holidays and shorter working week with no loss of earnings. The enormous profits that will accrue to the P.O. in the next five years, just like the £70 million pounds in 1981 made by British P.O. due to modernisation, must be profits that we will share in.

We must fight for our share and push our union bureaucrats to realise we want jobs not redundancies.

CLERICAL STAFF at the Hoover plant in the Glasnevin Industrial estate, have been out on official strike for the last two weeks.

They are members of the No 2 Branch of the ITGWU and are on strike for an increase in wages.

Some of the staff earn as little as £50 per week. Management have offered an average of 17% which has been rejected by the workers, who would still be 30% below the national average.

There are two other unions involved, the ASTMS and FWUI who have instructed their members to pass the picket.

But some of the manager members of the ASTMS have gone a step further, by doing the work of the strikers.. The members of the FWUI have refused to handle any work the strikers would have done.

The bosses are determined to break the union. They have already attempted some stunts, by asking the workers to return to work, in order that they could negotiate, when the workers returned. They issued a statement to the press announcing that the workers had accepted the 17%.

Because of the low wages and the attitude of the management the workers are determined to win this strike, no matter how long it takes.

The Socialist Workers Movement has already been in touch with the strikers regularly, and have produced leaflets for them, to explain their case to customers.

by PADDY CARROLL

SOLIDARITY

A PICKET has been placed outside the Unidare plant in Finglas by workers employed by Conservaboard, a contractor employed by Unidare.

It is over the sacking of one of the workers, Charles Tierney, who after injuring his hand on a plant in Limerick, was told by the company if he claimed for

damages, he would be sacked.

The picket was respected by over fifty workers, who then decided that they would return to work if the contractor was thrown off the site.

With this kind of support, Charlie Tierney should soon be back at work.

—PADDY CARROLL

RANKS WORKERS DEMAND JOBS

THE RANKS workers who were jailed and re-occupied their factory again when they were released, are still there.

But this time they are sitting in with some comfort.

About a month ago they took over the Managers office and are determined to stay there until their demands are met.

They have had Ranks and the police up there asking them to leave with threats of jail again.

But the workers say that they want their jobs back—that the factory is going to be used again and that they are the ones who should work there.

During the first week of sitting in the Managers office the telephone never stopped ringing with orders for flour.

The Dublin workers are also in touch with the workers in the Limerick plant—110 of them are in occupation.

Next week, Limerick workers will join with Dublin workers from both mills to go round Supermarkets, seeing shop stewards and getting support in order to black Ranks flour.

Their union, the ITGWU have now come out in support for their members and even Eddie Browne their Group secretary says he's right behind them!

It's welcome but a bit late in the day. The same Eddie Browne told them to respect the law,

Once again it proves the point the rank and file have to organise themselves.

—BARBARA WILSON

NEW TECHNOLOGY THREATENS JOBS IN POST OFFICE

NEW TECHNOLOGY is being introduced into the Post Office.

"Yippee" say the irate frustrated subscribers to this modernisation of the telephone exchanges.

"Hear Hear" say business people to the changes in the postal service.

But along with these expressions of joy from those outside the Post Office, the air of gloom and doom that prevails among the Post Office employees throughout the country must be listened to.

The reasons for the feeling of depression are justified and maybe a little bit of the steam should be taken out of the joy expressed by the labour movement at this modernisation plan, when it is realised just what it means to the workforce in the country.

The adaptation of new technology in the Post Office will in the short term reduce unemployment minimally.

On the telephone end, the smaller exchanges are closing down at a very regular level, and each time 3, 5, 10 employees are made redundant or are re-deployed into the bigger exchanges around the country.

Management insist this is not redundancy—it is a voluntary severance settlement by the employees in question.

What's the choice between going 60 miles away to the nearest exchange or taking the money? That's no choice! It's forced redundancy.

On the postal side increased use of new technology has meant increased loss of work in many areas. Job losses have occurred but not in the obvious way. There is a ban on recruitment and even though you are entitled to employ one person for every three people who leave this does not apply to the Post Office.

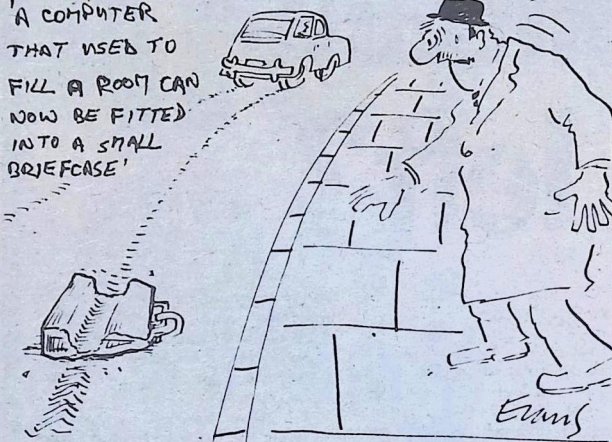
Virtually no staff losses are replaced which means increased workloads—there will be no work at all.

So why replace workers in the short term when it would only increase severance payments (redundancy to you) in the long term.

New technology in itself is not a bad thing for workers. It can reduce to a minimum the boring humdrum tasks which in the PO take a big percentage of the workload.

But there is no doubt that management and the workers see the advent of new technology in

'A COMPUTER THAT USED TO FILL A ROOM CAN NOW BE FITTED INTO A SMALL BRIEFCASE'



Diary of a jobless marcher



IN THE last week in April 50 unemployed marchers left Cork for the May Day Parade in Dublin.

JIM BLAKE was on the march. Here is his diary.

MONDAY Somewhat bedraggled, wet and apprehensive, the People's March for Decent Jobs set out in pouring rain from Cork.

The banners gave a great splash of colour. Red and white for the People's March, black for the Finglas group and the freshly painted blue and white for Cork. The media turned up and the cameras clicked and rolled, but the rain had kept away many of the Cork supporters.

The rain had eased off by the time we reached Dungarvan.

The reception was much better. We were met by the Trades Council and a pipe band and the march went to Dungarvan Crystal.

This was more like an effective link between employed and unemployed.

At a meeting later in the evening delegates from the Trades Council and Dungarvan Crystal argued that capitalism itself increased unemployment.

Joe Foley from the Trades Council argued that we needed a new party which will represent the working class. But "I don't know whether it will be the Workers Party or the Labour Party". Afterwards Joe entertained us at the Soccer Club social with some powerful Tom Jones type songs and explained to me privately that he was once the

workers who had struck for a week in Waterford in defence of 2 jobs..

One of the best actions so far was the marchers however joining the ATGWU picket at Ardken General Hospital where workers had been on strike for three days in protest at the victimisation of one of their shop stewards, Jim Grant. Brigid Waters an ATGWU shop steward said "this was part of the overall cutbacks in the Health Service. They had an embargo on the unit where Jim Grant worked for the last six months. This was not sufficient because management had carried on". Unfortunately only half the workers had come out though they had got support from St Otterans and St Patricks hospital locally. We told Brigid we would 'get along the following morning at 7am. It was easy to wake up as the light streamed through the uncurtained windows at the ATGWU hall where we spread our sleeping bags on the floor.

WEDNESDAY Next morning we were met by a Mr Sweeney, a hospital administrator and their uniformed gardai. The gardai made us move our van and Mr Sweeney demanded all our names and addresses explaining that he was somehow a constable.

We also refused his request to leave the picket line so he stood fuming at us over the other side of the road.

The scabs walked in in an escorted bunch looking extremely sheepish at 7.30 AM.

We left the picket line at 8.30 promising them that there would be an occupation at the South Eastern Health Board in Kilkenny.

After breakfast, we march through town again and meet the Lord Mayor at the City Hall. He was heard muttering something about meeting "fucking socialists, again" before he opened the doors. We complained to him about the intimidation at Ardkeen General Hospital and he explained he was a member of the South Eastern Health Board and would see what he could do.

He gave no promises on keeping Dungarvan Maternity Hospital open.

We bade goodbye to Alderman Joe Cummins and left for Kilkenny where we marched in brilliant sunshine through the town and occupied the SEHB

vocalist with the Flying Aces in the Showband era.

Our billets were hospitable and friendly, so much so that it was difficult to assemble all our marchers next morning for the march to Waterford.

Our first day had been great and the fact that all the papers and the television gave us coverage cheered us on our way to Waterford.

TUESDAY Waterford was fantastic. We marched to the exchange where we got great support. It was in Waterford we swapped our application for something more powerful with a listening range of 700 yards.

At a quick meeting the Waterford comrades impressed us all with the visits they had arranged. Waterford Glass being top of the list in every way. Also Johnny Cluno explained that it was difficult to arrange a visit to the Cherry Ale Brewery because of the staggered shifts!

A mainly womens delegation with Brid and Geraldine went to Robey Clothing where the women workers had been on strike.

Some marchers went to Norco Engineering where the shop stewards explained that they manufactured many components for the American Space and armaments industry.

There were also visits to Dunnes Stores and a local youth club who sent along three marchers to join us on the road to Dublin. We also visited the CIE

WORKER

FOR WORKERS POWER AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

Can Republicans really turn left?

"A COMPLETELY new leadership has emerged within Sinn Fein, very akin to the sort of radical elements now involved in the Labour Party over here in Britain."

So Ken Livingstone says in last month's issue of *London Labour Briefing*.

He's wrong, of course.

But it's easy to understand why he'd think it. Livingstone one of the most courageous and consistently honest British Labour leaders to have emerged in recent years, had just returned from his visit to the Provos in Belfast.

He was understandably impressed — in fact he appears to have been quite bowled over — by the fact that people like Adams and Morrison are hardly the cold-eyed killers with fangs dripping blood depicted in the popular press.

On the contrary, they are personable types, with an amiable line in radical chatter and obviously very popular with local people.

Moreover, as Livingstone noted and rightly made much of, the Provo bookshops offer a wide range of material on, for example, feminism . . . not the class of literature which used to dominate the traditional Republican's shelves.

The Provos are not at all like the popular press image. And they are not at all like the Provos of yesterday . . . even quite recent years. And they DO resemble, in some ways anyway, the radical elements who have come controversially to the fore in the British Labour Party.

But perhaps this last fact tells us more about the British Labour

Party than about Irish republicanism.

The "revolutionary" strategy of Peter Tatchell in Bermondsey, for example, appears to have centred on attempts to rouse local working class people to demand either a massive repair programme or the demolition of the slum tower blocks in which more than fifty per cent of the electorate lived. Shades of Divis Flats . . .

There is nothing distinctively socialist about such a campaign, whether in Bermondsey or Belfast. It's more social work than socialism.

So part of Ken Livingstone's problem, part of the reason he's wrong, is that among his very many admirable qualities we can not include absolute political clarity. His vision is vague and fuzzy at the edges.

None of this is to deny that the Provos have moved to the left or that this movement is devoutly to be welcomed. In the last year, a significant number of people associated with left politics has joined the Provos, arguing that the Republican Movement has broken definitively with the green-nationalist conservatism which was once its hall-mark, and that this development could and should be encouraged and accelerated.

Obviously, the more socialists there are, anywhere, the better. But how far left have the Provos REALLY moved? And how far more is it POSSIBLE for them to move?

A glance at any issue of "Republican News" helps to answer the first question. It has the best coverage of the "Third World" of any radical paper in Ireland and is clearly no longer inhibited by fear of alienating the right wing lobby in North America. It takes a much greater interest than previously in internal Free

by EAMONN McCANN

State politics, and strikes a straightforward pro-worker stance on industrial disputes, tax and PRSI issues and so on. On the North, the usual, vigorous, polemical assaults on the Brits are complemented by detailed coverage of "community" issues, focused mainly on Catholic areas.

What we DON'T get is any clear class line on the crucial matter of industrial struggle. There is a difference between being generally on the side of the workers — which the Provos are — and offering workers a socialist lead — which the Provos don't. The first may be indicative of a moralistic commitment to "the oppressed". The second flows directly from a class analysis of society. And, despite all, it is a class analysis of society which the Provos lack.

In fact, their analysis is very different indeed. Their fundamental belief is that "the Irish people" are oppressed: some classes more oppressed than others, no doubt, but sharing a common oppression nonetheless.

This, after all, is at the very root of Republicanism. And it sets limits to the extent of any possible leftwards development in the Republican Movement.

In the end, the cause of "Ireland" and of the "Irish people" is always paramount in the Republican mind, over and above any divisions within the nation. That is what Republicanism MEANS.

It is no accident that the trade union movement in Ireland developed parallel and sometimes in harmony with Republicanism. But — despite the creative re-writing efforts of some republican commentators — it was never the

same development. For example, despite an overlap in both membership and ideology between Fenianism and the nascent working class movement, the two never meshed together.

Many Republicans were involved in the massive class battles which coincided with the growth of the Irish nationalist movement at the beginning of this century. But even so, Republicanism had no organised presence in the class struggles.

And at the same time it was possible for other Republicans to be involved in the same class battles . . . on the other side. That tells more about the essence of Republicanism than stirring calls for solidarity with the Sandinistas or vigorous declarations of support for PAYE marchers.

And it helps explain how come the same issue of the movement's paper can carry an excoriating attack on US policy in South East Asia . . . and quite uncritical, indeed euphoric, coverage of a passionate supporter of that policy being appointed grand marshal of the New York Paddy's Day parade.

It explains why some of the deepest-dyed male chauvinists in the land can happily co-exist in an organisation with promoters of feminist literature.

It's all for The Cause, if a sortie into feminism helps deliver a certain constituency to The Cause, so be it.

If involvement in class struggles solidifies a different area of support, then by all means get involved.

If an octogenarian advocate of US imperialism can bring publicity and a certain credibility to The Cause in the US, don't reject that, either.

This is not to suggest that there aren't genuine feminists and working class militants in the Republican movement. There are many of both. It is to suggest that these strands of politics are not ESSENTIAL to Republicanism. They form no necessary part of Republican ideology, and indeed are ultimately in contradiction with it.

And when and if a choice has to be made between the class and The Cause, only a fool could doubt what way the "completely new leadership" of Sinn Fein will go.

Of course many in that leadership believe such a choice need never be forced upon them. But it will.

And the reason it will is simply that The Cause will never encompass all classes. Causes can't.

PRIOR'S BRIBES CAN'T REVIVE N.I. ECONOMY



Anti-cuts demo in Belfast

by MALACHY HIGGINS

THE CRISIS in the Northern economy has brought some dramatic responses from the British State.

Recently Jim Prior announced a package which, he claimed would make Northern Ireland the most attractive investment spot in Europe.

The package was given a cool response by the economists who claimed it was "too little, too late."

Prior's financial package is as follows:

30 per cent grant available for approved energy conservation projects;

80 per cent Corporation Tax relief on approved projects;

No rates to be paid on industrial premises starting next year;

Special grants to supplement the salaries of managers to attract "good quality management for Northern Ireland."

Mr Saxon Tate, Chairman of the Industrial Development Board says he hopes that these new incentives will immediately create 5,000 jobs — 2000 from abroad and 3000 from expanding companies. This figure, he claims should rise to 10,000 within two years.

This optimism flies in the face of reality.

The Department of Commerce published a survey recently of the views of American, British and German businessmen. The same Department has been expanding its offices in America and Germany in the hope of attracting foreign capital.

But its survey showed that they placed Northern Ireland 11th out of 12th in locations for promotional sites for investment in Europe.

The I'D B will have its job cut out if it is ever to replace the job losses in Northern Ireland over the last decade.

Unemployment now stands at 120,000 or 20% of the working population. The numbers out of work is just

above the level of people working in manufacturing industry which stands at 97,000. Manufacturing employment has declined by 73,000 since the troubles began 14 years ago.

In the last three years the toll of job losses has reached a tidal wave. Ten thousands jobs were lost in 1980, 22,000 jobs went in 1981.

1982 started off bad with the closure of De Lorean and ended with the unexpected closure of Michelin tyre factory at Mallusk with the loss of 2,000 jobs.

New investment from abroad has fallen since 1975 despite the fact that the cost per job provided by the Department of Commerce has risen from £2,825 in 1975 to £17,612 per job in 1979. The minimal recovery of 1982 produced 3721 new jobs — but 2,000 were in the ill-fated De Lorean.

The conclusions are clear. There is no possibility that Prior's new package can significantly alter the decline.

Like their counterparts in the South, the Northern State is trying to buy into world capitalism through increased subsidies. As that system stumbles from recession to slight recovery and back to recession, the competition between the different states get hotter.

The hand-outs to foreign capital have to be upped. Wages and living standards have to be pushed down.

In the end of the day the only loyalty of capital is to profit.

The "accidents" of the system increase. The massive subsidies attract high risk companies that are starved of capital and locate only in Northern Ireland for the hand-outs. The industrial history of the North is littered with the likes of De Lorean, of Lear Fan, of Shortheam.

Prior's package offers nothing to the workers of Northern Ireland.

Capitalism, like the state itself has failed.

It is unworkable.

