

Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

BLATANT



Top judges Tom Finlay and Tom O'Higgins

REPRESSION

IN RECENT weeks the "security policies" of the authorities North and South of the border have been stripped bare and shown for what they are—naked repression!

The shoot-to-kill policy of the British Army, UDR and RUC can no longer be denied. The 26 County Supreme Court has made it clear that the institutions of the state are at the disposal of the British ruling class.

Meanwhile the day-to-day, tried and unproven methods of repression continue. The women in Armagh Jail are routinely tortured by strip searches. At the moment, the Free State government may be willing to do deals on conditions in Portlaoise, but the deal is necessary because of promises broken by them since the 70s.

INTIMIDATE

The Criminal Justice Act is being well used by the Gardaí to intimidate and if they don't want to use that, the Misuse of Drugs Act is handy for harassing young (and not so young) people.

The media is most co-operative in playing down the extent of repression.

The brutal murder of the three IRA men in Strabane was quickly buried under expressions of horror at the shooting of an informer.

The seizure of the £1.75 million by the Supreme Court was greeted unreservedly as a Good Thing. No liberal journalist expressed surprise that not a single TD spoke, or voted against, the seizure of the money.

Not that anyone would have expected the "republicans" of Fianna Fail to speak out. They know their republicanism must never go beyond the armchair.

The Workers Party TDs obviously felt that the cash raised by their own fundraising wing was secure

enough. And you wouldn't want to hold your breath waiting for them to stand up for the Provos, even if the government wanted to hang draw and quarter them. Its got to do with their definition of freedom fighters, you see. And unfortunately for the Provos, they're not fighting over 1,000 miles away.

But even from Tony Gregory there wasn't a peep of protest. The darling of the trendy republican left obviously felt there was no votes in opposing this "measure vital to national security".

Similarly, the significance of the Supreme Court ruling on the extradition of the INLA man John Quinn has been largely ignored. Even the Irish Times relegated it to page 12. Yet the ruling means that the 26 County state admits that it no longer recognises the concept of political sanctuary.

In practice, it abandoned the principle when it handed Dominic McGlinchey over to the RUC in March 1984. But even then it still accepted it in theory.

CRIME

Just 20 years ago, the Supreme Court ruled that extradition for any crime (i.e. including non-political acts) was unconstitutional. But when the 26 County statelet was shaken to the core by events in the Six Counties, the Southern ruling class feared for its existence should the struggle "spill over" to the Southern working class. Collaboration with their partners in the British ruling class became increasingly necessary.

The question of what constituted a political crime was raised. The RUC cleverly sought the extradition of Dominic McGlinchey for the killing of an elderly woman, Hester McMullen.



The 26 County Supreme Court has placed the institutions of the State at the disposal of the Brits.

The Supreme Court was headed at the time by Tom O'Higgins, a close friend and drinking companion of the North's Chief Justice Lord Lowry.

POLITICAL

O'Higgins ruled that the shooting of Hester McMullen was not a political act. He provided a definition of a political act as what "reasonable civilised people would regard as a political activity". (One suspects that a rather large income is a prerequisite

to being a "reasonable civilised" person.)

The way was open for the extradition of political activists. But it was still agreed that the court would take each individual case on its merits and decide whether a political act was involved.

Finlay's recent ruling means that members of the IRA or INLA—or any revolutionary organisation involved in illegal activity—will automatically be refused political sanctuary.

Finlay's words were that the state could now "grant immunity from extradition to a person charged with an

offence, the admitted purpose of which is to further, or facilitate, the overthrow by violence of the Constitution and of the organs of the State"

RULING

This is the ruling of a Supreme Court, which until two months ago had at its head Tom O'Higgins, a man whose grandfather and uncle fought in the War of Independence to "further, or facilitate, the overthrow by violence of . . . the state", a man whose father was a founder of the Blueshirts and

who was himself a Blueshirt as a student.

It was a political activity to try to overthrow the state in the 1920s and the 1930s. Political activity against the state is deemed by the Free State to no longer exist.

A political response is urgently needed to show the southern ruling class that the republican struggle is very definitely political. A mass campaign against extradition should be built. This will have to be initiated by the Republican Movement but it must be supported by all who want to see this rotten system smashed.

What we stand for

The Socialist Workers Movement is a revolutionary socialist organisation that fights for a workers' republic and international socialism.

The system under which we live, capitalism, is based on production for profit—not for human need. It leads to poverty and war; racism and sexism. It is a system that can only be destroyed by the class which creates all the wealth—the working class.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

Capitalism cannot be patched up or reformed—it must be overthrown. That cannot be achieved through parliament as the Workers Party and the Labour Party argue. The real power in this society lies in the boardroom of big business. The structures of the present parliament, courts, army and police are designed to protect the interests of the ruling class against the workers. At most parliament can be used for propaganda against the system—it cannot be the instrument by which workers destroy the power of the rich.

We therefore stand for a workers' revolution which produces a different and more democratic society—one based on councils of delegates from workplaces and areas who are democratically elected answerable to assemblies and subject to recall at any time.

NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW

That kind of socialism does not exist anywhere today. Workers have no control over countries like Russia, China or Poland. They are exploited by a state capitalist class. A workers revolution is required in those countries too.

AGAINST PARTITION

The six county Orange state is propped up by British imperialism. That state divides the working class by the guarantee of marginal privileges in housing and jobs to Loyalist workers. The struggle of Catholic workers to rid themselves of sectarianism and bigotry can only succeed by smashing that state.

The slow task of building working class unity against imperialism must be begun. However imperialism must be fought in the here and now and we support all forces engaged in that struggle regardless of our differences of programme.

We stand for:

- The immediate withdrawal of the British Army
- The disbandment of the RUC and UOR
- No to extradition and collaboration on border security

Connolly wrote that partition would bring a carnival of reaction. He was absolutely right. Irish workers confront two reactionary states. The Southern ruling class have no longer any fundamental conflict of interest with imperialism. They have become junior players in the world capitalist system. Their state props up partition—despite their occasional nationalist rhetoric.

The 'national question' will only be solved in the course of mass working class struggle against both states. Republicanism, by limiting the struggle to nationalist goals, by appealing to all classes in Irish society, can never defeat imperialism. Only a revolutionary socialist organisation that fights openly for the Workers' Republic can unite sections of the working class who have nothing to gain from a bourgeois Eire Nua.

AGAINST ALL OPPRESSION

Revolutionaries oppose all form of oppression that divide and weaken the working class.

We are for real social, economic and political equality for women. We are for an end to discrimination against homosexuals. We stand for full separation of the church and state. We stand for secular control of the hospitals and the schools.

THE UNIONS

Today the trade union movement is dominated by a caste of bureaucrats whose principal aim is to make their compromise with the system. They have destroyed solidarity between workers by the two tier picket system. They have failed to lead any fight over tax, wage cuts and unemployment.

We stand for:

- 100 percent trade unionism
- A 35 hour week to reduce unemployment
- The election of all union officials, subject to recall
- Against redundancies. We say: occupy to demand nationalisation under workers' control
- Full independence of the unions from the state. No reliance on the Labour Courts or the arbitration schemes in the public sector

We fight for the building of a national rank and file movement that links together the best militants to provide an alternative leadership to the trade union bureaucrats.

We fight for the formation of Right to Work committees that link the unemployed to the power of the trade union movement.

THE PARTY

To achieve socialism the most class conscious sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party. The SWM aims to build such a party around its activity in the working class movement. It stands in the tradition of Marx, Lenin, Trotsky and Connolly. We urge all those who agree with our policies to come in and join the SWM.

SOCIALIST WORKER is produced by the SOCIALIST WORKERS MOVEMENT. If you would like more information on our activities and policies, would like to become a member of the SWM or would like to take out a subscription to SOCIALIST WORKER—£3.50 for a year—clip this form and post to SWM, 41 Herberton Park, Rialto, Dublin 8.

- I want to join;
- I want a subscription and enclose £3.50;
- I would like more information about the SWM

Name

Address

Defeat for British miners



AFTER nearly a year on strike a delegate meeting of British miners voted narrowly to return to work at the beginning of the month. This resumption of work without any agreement to reinstate the hundreds of victimised miners sacked during the strike represents a terrible defeat for the whole of the British working class movement.

In this atmosphere the real traitors, the TUC and the Labour Party leaders are having a field day as they rush to explain the reasons for the failure of the strike: "There should have been a ballot; it was the wrong time to strike; it is not possible to beat the Tories with industrial action..."

In the previous couple of years there had been local fights against pit closures in South Wales and Scotland

which had collapsed due to lack of national support. With this in mind in the first week of the strike 19 out of 27 South Wales pits voted, in a locally organised ballot, against the strike. Their attitude soon changed as the strike took root in the rest of the country and they saw that a real fight WAS possible. South Wales became the most solid are of the strike for the best part of a year. And no amount of ballots can alter the fact that on the eve of the return to work over 50% of NUM members were on strike.

The point that it was the wrong time to strike has more validity. A miners' strike when the winter is over and the coal stocks high is not the best idea. But it is not always possible to choose when to strike. The Coal Board provoked the strike with the announcement of the immediate closure of

two Yorkshire pits. As Yorkshire miners walked out in anger, McGregor made it clear that if he got away with these closures, jobs throughout the industry would be destroyed. He announced his plan for 20,000 jobless in two years.

The miners had no option but to fight.

But it is the idea that it is not possible to beat the Tories with industrial action that is the most dangerous of all. Built into it is the view that the only way to get change is through negotiation and through parliament — in this case electing a Labour government — and not through the direct action of workers themselves. That this is a total lie is well demonstrated by the success of the '72 and '74 miners' strikes.

These were successful because from the beginning

miners went out from their own pits to picket every other industry that used coal. Every industry that used coal had to be stopped. That did not depend on promises from union leaders in those industries but on miners going straight to factory and power station gates and picketing rank and file workers for their support.

The philosophy of most of the NUM leaders this time has been quite different. It was that providing the miners themselves stood firm and played it by the rules, then eventual victory was certain.

ALLIANCES

Instead of sending miners out to picket other groups of workers, the emphasis was on alliances with other union leaders to deliver supportive action. This did not happen despite initial possibilities in the docks and on the railways. For all the fine resolutions passed at the TUC conference precious little solidarity was delivered.

The defeat of the NUM shows that in today's circumstances no group of workers—not even a group as strong as the miners—can win on their own. Solidarity is the key. And rebuilding union organisation at the rank and file level is the task so that workers can say as the Clyde Workers Committee said in 1917: "We will support the officials just so long as they rightly represent the workers, but we will act independently immediately they misrepresent us."

That's a lesson we can learn in Ireland too.



KERRY JOKE

OK, OK, OK. So the Gardaí picked the worst possible place in the country to hold their upcoming conference of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors, ie Tralee. And being the thorough people they are they picked the worst possible day in the year to start it, ie April Fools Day—nobody's perfect.

The Gardaí certainly never claimed to be. They never claimed the ability to forecast when and where the tide of circumstance would land them. If they had, they certainly wouldn't have picked Kerry on April 1st. But we sympathise, we realise that it's often hard, when pressed for an explanation, to come up with a good reason for doing or not doing something, for reaching one way instead of another, for picking this option instead of that one.

Like the last line of defence for many an innocent act, it seemed like a good idea at the time . . .

MAN BITES DOG

CHANCES are you probably don't have much in common with high-ranking members of Her Majesty's Crown Court. But before you write them off completely, consider the following ruling by one Judge Hopkins in Nottingham Crown Court.

Recently he found in favour of a striking miner brought to court for using the imaginative term "scabby dog" when addressing a picket-passer. The judge decided that only a dog could actually consider this an insult.

The British ruling class have long since demonstrated the depths to which they are prepared to sink to break the miners' strike. Obviously even they consider scabbing among the lowest.

"OUR researchers have found that people are becoming more and more illiterate, thanks to television, new technology and larger classes in school". So speaks Brian

O'Connor, marketing person for An Post.

So what have An Post decided to do to change this situation, run a few night classes in basic writing? Sponsor competitions in schools? Actually no. They prefer to exploit the situation by printing such things as ready to send St Patrick's Day cards, 4 million of them this year. "Last year it created a market that wasn't there" states a happy Mr O'Connor.

Not that the idea of ready to send banalities are a new idea to us. We've been paying for the privilege of getting them from T.D.'s for years.

ALLEGEDLY "Socialist" Rumania has launched an anti-abortion offensive.

Married women will undergo monthly pregnancy tests and must explain "persistent non-pregnancy". Women who fail to bear four children may lose their jobs and those who lie about miscarriages face a years jail.

—reprinted from the "Battler" the paper of the Australian I.S.

EARLY BA'ATH

A LITTLE something to ponder next time you are feeling hard done by 'cause everyone else has gone off to the pub, you still have 50 posters to put up and it's raining.

Recently in Sudan 4 members of the banned Sudanese Arab Socialist Baath were sentenced to imprisonment and flogging for possession of printing machines, typewriters and anti-Government leaflets.

The Sudanese government must have been on to Garret for advice on how to deal with subversives, mere internment being a joke to him.

BIG DRIP-

US MARINES are tough. Real tough. So tough in fact that they don't use umbrellas, even when it's raining. The use of such cissy devices is officially frowned upon by the US Navy and Marine Corps.

Some have argued that they don't feel very tough when standing sopping wet at a bus stop surrounded by civilians who are sheltered and dry. In fact, they say, they feel silly.

Special allowance has been made for service women, but otherwise the generals are adamant. They don't want the Russians to think their boys are softies who need umbrellas. Then again the brass don't stand at many bus stops. The debate continues.

What would John Wayne make of it all?

—JEAN CROSS

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Stop the strip searches!

FRIDAY 8th MARCH 5 pm.

24 hour picket of the British Embassy

SUNDAY 10th MARCH.

Picket on Armagh Jail.

(coaches leave Municipal Gallery, Parnell Square at 12 noon, £5 return)

Reformism- can it work in Ireland

Last month in *Socialist Worker*, Mary Smith explained the origins of the world-wide crisis in capitalism which has brought record levels of unemployment and growing attacks on working class living standards. Here **DERMOT BYRNE** looks at some of the political traditions which claim to have a working class answer to the crisis.

LET'S face it, Karl Marx was right. He wrote his analysis of capitalism over 100 years ago, and although interested in Irish affairs, didn't pay too much attention to the backward peasant society of the 1880s.

But today, it is to Marx we must turn to find the key to the crisis in Ireland, North and South. There are about a quarter of a million unemployed in the South, over 180,000 in the Six Counties. As industry after industry shuts up shop, more workers are put on the dole.

The reason why Marx is so important is that Marx explained that the crises which confront the capitalist ruling class in a national state such as the 26 County reflects the world crisis of capitalism.

That's why the bosses parties in the South cannot get out of the mess. That's why Labour Party/Workers Party talk of reforming capitalism has become, more and more, a utopian reactionary dream.

Mind you, of all the reformist Labour/Social Democratic Parties in Europe, the Irish Labour Party has sunk to the lowest depths of compromise and betrayal. Barry Desmond, while introducing a cowardly half-measure on contraception, is slashing the already meagre health service. Dick Spring openly supports the recent attacks on the public service unions. Sean Treacy actually voted *against* the pathetic Family Planning Bill.

REFORMING

The Coalition Government of which Labour is a part is now hell-bent on doing what Thatcher has done in Britain. In ruling class terms this makes sense. The government is on the side of the bosses; they know that if you are running a capitalist economy, you must run it in the interests of capitalism. In an economic crisis then, the best methods are Thatchers.

So even talk of "reforming" the Labour Party, bringing it out of coalition and

getting it to adopt a more left-wing programme makes no sense. As long as you accept the capitalist framework, as long as you are not intent on overthrowing the system, you end up working in the bosses' interests.

Similarly, the plans drawn up by the reformist trade union leaders or by the so-called Workers Party are pie-in-the-sky or simply based on getting more left-wing TDs elected. In the meantime neither of them give a single lead to workers who attempt to fight for their jobs or for a decent living wage.

And Sinn Fein's economic programme is uncannily like that of the unions and the Workers Party. The same ideas are put forward as an answer to the crisis: the nationalisation of building land and of minerals, gas and oil; state development of the food processing industry; a ban on the export of capital abroad and controls on imports into the country.

ADMIRABLE

These measures, if they could work, could certainly improve the living standards of workers. But, and this is the crucial point, these policies ignore the *international* nature of capitalism and of the crisis. Any government, no matter how left-wing, would find itself unable to carry out these admirable reforms. It simply wouldn't be allowed by the International Banks who lend governments the billions they need just to carry on; multinationals would pull out; the economy, in capitalist terms would be left in tatters.

It's not just that these reformist solutions don't give workers' control of society, not just that they still leave a situation where production is for profit, not for need—it's that they *just can't work*.

That is why the only solution to the crisis is a total transformation of society, a workers' revolution. And the struggle for such a revolution starts in the here and now in the fight for jobs and higher wages.

That's why we must support every strike and occupation. Why we must fight social service cuts. Why the confidence of workers on the shop floor must be rebuilt. Why we must recognise that the system cannot be reformed.

Now more than ever we have nothing to lose but our chains.

—DERMOT BYRNE

Nicaragua compromises

The recent expulsion of the Cuban advisors from Nicaragua shows just how far the Sandanista Government is willing to go to appease the USA.

Here **JEAN CROSS** looks at the background to the Sandinista decision.

IN 1934 Augusto Cesar Sandino was murdered in Managua on the orders of Somoza, the leader of the National Guard. The country had been through eight years of a civil war after the US-supervised elections of 1926. Faced with mounting opposition at home and no victory in sight in Nicaragua the Americans had withdrawn in 1933 leaving Somoza a willing puppet.

Though Sandino's ideas originally derived from straightforward nationalism, the length and course of the war had led him to the understanding that "only the workers and the peasants will take the struggle through to its ultimate consequences". But he failed to clarify just what the ultimate consequences might be, and apart from the broad notion of a peasant army he did not define exactly how his supporters could achieve them.

When in 1963 the newly-formed National Liberation Front adopted the name Sandinista the movement opted to follow his strategy of a guerrilla war based on the peasantry. The politics of the movement lacked definition and, as the FSLN grew, its main aim of overthrowing Somoza seemed enough to

unite its various, albeit left-wing strands.

In the early seventies two main groups formed within the FSLN. The GPP group who argued for long preparation and protracted peasant warfare. The second, or Proletarian Tendency (PT) pushed for organising within the growing working class and the formation of a revolutionary party.

By 1976 a third tendency was gaining increasing support from the ranks of the FSLN. This was the idea of a broad alliance which could exploit the economic recession and force Somoza out of power. Then the transition to socialism could begin.

By 1978 demonstrations were attracting hundreds of thousands of people and the situation was fast becoming explosive. The FSLN were forced to take a leading role in a revolution that had begun in spite of their not being ready for it, or relinquish the opportunity forever.

Having defeated Somoza by mass mobilization the FSLN leadership did not use the opportunity this created for the establishment of the instruments of workers' power. Instead, the power of the masses was channelled into achieving "patriotic unity" of

all classes against the traitors—the US-backed "Contras".

At this crucial stage, or indeed afterwards, there was no discussion of the definition of Socialism, the need to base the revolution on the working class, or even the difference between the socialist state often referred to by the FSLN and the bourgeois "democratic" states of, say, Western Europe.

ILLITERACY

The reforms brought about by the revolution are real and impressive, especially in view of the economic and military warfare the Sandinistas have been subjected to by the Reagan administration. They have been able to provide health care as a basic right to all, eradicating polio since 1980. Illiteracy, once over 50% is now down to 3%. More than two million acres of land has been distributed to the peasants.

The Somoza legacy however was an economy stricken by crisis. Since his overthrow the situation has worsened. Because of the continuing war much of the vital coffee crop remains unharvested. CIA mines in Nicaraguan ports ensure vital exports are severely disrupted. For example, a huge consignment of cotton was devalued by a third because as it waited to leave a mined port world prices fell by 30%.

Faced with a huge international debt and with grow-

ing economic crisis, the Sandanista government must decide who will pay for Somoza's legacy.

They could refuse to pay Somoza's debts to the world banks. This would of course leave them even more isolated in a capitalist world. To do this they would have to be serious about spreading the revolution to the rest of Central America. A socialist Nicaragua could not survive unless Central America was under workers' control.

Without the solidarity of all of Central America the revolution would soon be defeated by the might of the US and its capitalist allies.

Instead the Sandanista government has decided to lean more and more on its working class to pay the escalating foreign debt. Strikes are banned in an effort to increase productivity while holding down wages. Social welfare has been cut and subsidies on food removed. Socialist policies have been shelved in line with conditions for European financial aid. Ideas about exporting the revolution had to be scrapped to win Mexican support.

PROPAGANDA

The offices of the El Salvadorean guerrillas in Managua have been closed by the Sandanistas.

Meanwhile the bosses' organisation COSEP, which is connected with the contras, has been allowed to organise and print its propaganda paper *La Prensa*. Meanwhile the workers are asked, less and less politely, to subordinate their class demands to the "national interest" or more precisely to the international interest of high finance.

While all socialists everywhere should defend the Nicaraguan Revolution, there are also lessons we should learn.

The most important lesson is that nationalist-orientated revolution has little to offer the workers of any country. Their interests lie in working class revolution and in forming and consolidating links with workers in other countries to eventually bring about world-wide socialism.

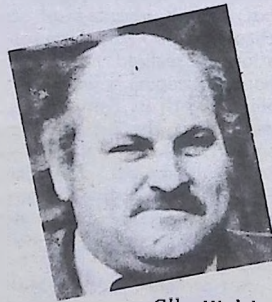


Waterford rates shock

THREE HUNDRED people turned up to picket Waterford Corporation's meeting in February on the issue of water rates and cut backs. Since 1982 60 jobs have been lost in the Corporation. The housing list is now longer than in 1979. Charges have been introduced on a variety of services and refuse collection has been cut. On top of all that the city manager, Michael Doody, is demanding a new levy on the workers of Waterford to make up for the £1 million deficit left in the Corporation budget.

Most of the left political organisations in the town were involved in the picket alongside the Trades Council and the Residents associations.

But one organisation, the *Workers Party* outdid itself. They issued a leaflet to "salute those who joined our campaign!" Yet the same party voted for the cuts over the years.



Cllr. Walshe

In 1981, Workers' Party councillor, Davy Walshe argued that a failure to vote for the cuts would mean the abolition of the council and their replacement by a "faceless bureaucrat".

Those who picketed the council then — SWM included — were denounced as "riff raff and rabble rousers" by one Davy Walshe.

Nothing like a local election to bring out the brightest colour of red on the most seasoned opportunist!

NEWS FROM SWM

SWM, 41 Herberton Park Rialto Dublin 8

The Socialist Workers Movement is a revolutionary socialist organisation with members in Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Waterford, Galway, Dundalk, Dungarvan and Portlaoise. Its regular branch meetings are open to those who want to find out more about the politics of the SWM.

DUBLIN:

Thursday March 7/*Industrial Workers of the World*/spkr: Tony Rigney.

Thursday March 15/*Nicaragua—what sort of revolution*/spkr: Kieran Allen.

Tuesday March 19/*PUBLIC MEETING: "Capitalism in Crisis"*/ speaker: Paul O'Brien.

WATERFORD:

Waterford branch meets every second Monday. PUBLIC MEETING with Eamonn McCann on "The Revolutionary Road to Socialism" in March. Details on branch and public meeting from local paper sellers.

DUNDALK

Dundalk SWM meets every second Wednesday, phone 36868

CORK:

Cork SWM meets every Thursday, phone 932828.

GALWAY:

For details of Galway meetings phone Kathleen at 24682.

For details of meetings in Belfast, Portlaoise and Dungarvan write to SWM, 41 Herberton Park Rialto Dublin 8.



1913 to 1926 was without doubt the period of greatest social and working class upheaval in this or any other century.

It saw socialist revolutions in many European countries, factory occupations, mine sit-downs and mass strikes which shook and shocked the old order to its very foundations. At the end of the Great War Lloyd-George was prompted to write to French Premier Georges Clemenceau: "The whole existing order, in its political, social and economic aspects, is questioned by the masses from one end of Europe to the other."

Apart from the October Revolution in Russia in 1917, and the founding of the first Soviet Socialist Republic, nowhere was this more apparent than in the heartland of Europe, the old continent's most industrialised country, Germany.

On top of the shock of the military defeat in the War and the humiliation of the peace terms of the Versailles Treaty, Germany experienced the most incredible inflation. Before this crisis had run its course, millions of Germans who had passively accepted the bumpy transition from Empire to Republic suffered deprivations that shattered their faith in the system they lived under, and left them cynical and alienated.

KAISER

The excitement of the Kaiser's entry into World War One rapidly turned to disillusionment for Germany's industrial workers and war-weary soldiers and sailors, who had to take the brunt of the whole carnage. Well into 1918, Germany's ruling classes were still trying to sound the fanfares of victory. The realisation of the truth, that the war was in fact lost, produced a universally shattering effect.

The Hohenzollern dynasty had ruled Prussia for over a century, and been Kaisers of the whole of Germany for 50 years. Suddenly, in the space of a few days it collapsed and hardly a shot was fired in its defence. Wilhelm II fled over the frontier to Holland and was replaced by his cousin, Prince Max of Baden, as a provisional prime minister.

Matters came to a head in the Baltic and North Sea ports. Events started in Kiel, with what can be fairly described as an admirals' rebellion against Prince Max's government. Fearing that the armistice would



The banner reads: "Donations for the revolutionary Russian and German workers."

require an ignominious surrender to the Royal Navy, Admiral Reinhard Scheer attempted to order the High Sea Fleet to steam out of Kiel on a suicidal attack against the British Fleet. In some warped sense this was supposed to redeem the Reichsmarine's tarnished honour.

Rumours of the projected operation aroused resistance among the enlisted men, whose relations with officers had, for over two years, been marked by open and bitter disputes over rations and working conditions. A mass meeting of over 20,000 men elected a sailors' council, with Karl Artelt, a ship's stoker, at its head. By the morning, the council was the authority in the city. The German Revolution had begun.

The mutiny soon spread to the nearby ports of Cuxhaven and Wilhelmshaven. In a matter of 48 hours the revolution had spread to Germany's biggest port, Hamburg. The revolution spread like wildfire as contingents of Kiel seamen moved from city to city. In the first week of November workers' and sailors'/soldiers' councils were in power in Kiel, Hamburg, Bremen, Altona, Rendsburg, Lockstedt, Munich, Braunschweig, Hanover, Oldenburg, Rostock, Magdeburg, Halle, Leipzig, Dresden, Chemnitz, Duesseldorf, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Darmstadt, and Nuremberg. Parts of the capital, Berlin, were under revolutionary workers' control, but by and large the city remained a bastion of governmental power.

Two groups led these upheavals, they were the war-weary troops returning from the front, some doubtlessly in-

spired by their Russian brothers. When Trotsky arrived as head of the Soviet delegation at Brest-Litovsk on December 27th 1917, Bolshevik soldiers distributed thousands of leaflets to their German brothers. There also took place a rapid radicalisation of capitalism's instrument of death, the industrial workforce, who saw their pre-war wages and living conditions greatly reduced in the aftermath of Germany's defeat. But while many of the leading figures of the old order were removed, the basic structure of the old state remained intact: the Army and police, the civil service, the judiciary and the education system. Rosa Luxemburg wrote: "History is not making things easy for us as it did for the bourgeois revolutions; then it was sufficient to overthrow the official power and replace it by a couple or a couple of dozen new men. But we must work from below to the top, and that is in exact accordance with the mass character of our revolution and its aims, which involve the fundamental nature of our present social order..."

SOCIALISM

Socialism cannot simply be brought by the introduction of a few new faces, it must come from below. It is one of the basic tenets of Marxism that socialism must be the "self-emancipation of the working class."

Capitalism in Germany had been dealt a bad body-blow, but it took advantage of the chaos and disorder of the situation and realised that its only hope of keeping power was in alliance with its despised pre-war enemy, the Social Democrats (SPD). The right-wing Social Democrat Friedrich Ebert was made prime minister with the equally right-wing Philipp Scheidemann as his deputy.

But capitalism and big business made a more deadly move to regroup their forces and restore the old order, by the raising of mercenary armies. These mercenary forces were raised with comparative ease, from the officer castes and a lot of demobilised NCOs and troops who yearned for their old military life-styles and had a very different perception of the world from industrial workers and miners. These well-armed and equipped mercenary troops were used to strike terror throughout Germany, and were brutally employed to put

GERMANY THE LOST REVOLUTION

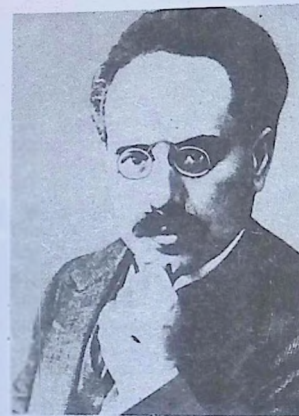
down not only the minority of revolutionary workers, but against any workers' organisations. The Frei Korps as they were commonly known, were used to bring city after city and town after town to heel. In Bremen they had to fight street by street against the sailors and workers under the revolutionary leadership of Johann Knief and Paul Froelich. They managed to take the city, but only through the use of heavy artillery and with great losses. Unfortunately the pattern was set.

The vanguard or most revolutionary sections of the working class movement at that time was the Spartakusbund. It was a loose organisation numbering several hundred members during the War. Its core was well grounded in Marxism and schooled in the tactical ideas of Rosa Luxemburg, the international revolutionary from Poland. Its other most prominent figures were Karl Liebknecht, Franz Mehring, Leo Jogiches, Paul Levi, Wilhelm Pieck and Klara Zetkin.

ORGANISATION

It was far from a coherent organisation with some pretty divergent ranges of opinions and far too small to make a real impact on the revolutionary situation in Germany at that time. Despite individual brilliance, Luxemburg made a fundamental mistake by staying inside the SPD right up to the War's end. This mistake was to prove fatal in the years of upheaval that ensued. There were other revolutionary groups of workers and shop stewards, notably Knief's in Bremen and the revolutionary Obleute in Berlin, headed by Richard Mueller, but all were tiny. The Spartakists founded the German Communist Party (KPD) at the end of December 1918, but it was too late.

Despite the great leadership of Liebknecht and Luxemburg, they could not build in the space of a few months a disciplined, mass, revolutionary party, like the Bolshevik party which it had taken Lenin over 20 years to build. Such a party must learn and improve through the turmoil of struggle and de-



Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg

feat until the moment is right to lead the working class to final victory.

Not all regions of Germany were moved to revolution in the same degree. Yet even Bavaria, traditionally the bastion of conservatism and by no means an industrial region, was caught up in the revolutionary tide. Contingents of revolutionary sailors, passing through Munich, together with some workers, declared the Bavarian Soviet Republic in November 1918, with Kurt Eisner at its head. However, it was to be short-lived. Eisner and his second-in-command were killed by a right-wing Count in February 1919 as they made their way to the Bavarian Parliament. Despite an initial spate of retaliatory strikes in Munich and other Bavarian cities, the Bavarian "Soviet" Republic fell asunder a few months later.

GERMAN

But the German working class movement was to suffer its most fatal blow in January 1919. A contingent of Frei Korps arrested Karl Liebknecht and an ailing Rosa Luxemburg and drove them to the Berlin Zoological Gardens, where they were brutally murdered. Rosa's death was particularly horrific — her skull was smashed in with a rifle-butt. These bloody murders inflicted a wound on the German working class movement from which, it could arguably be said, it never recovered.

The history of German

Communism since 1919 has been an unedifying one. The idealism, the open exchange of views, the ideal of a united working class marching towards a common goal that had characterised the Spartakists and the early days of the KPD, did not long survive the deaths of Liebknecht and Luxemburg. Factionalism became prevalent within the party councils and many talented members, such as Paul Levi, were driven out.

COUP

In March 1920, the extreme right-wing attempted a coup which has come to be known as the Kapp Putsch (after a minor Prussian politician named Wolfgang Kapp), with both the overt and covert connivance of some of Germany's top military leaders, notably Von Luettwitz and Von Seeckt plus the brutal, leader of the Frei Korps, Von Maercker. Yet despite its military success and the exposing of the SPD government as being weak and vulnerable, the coup failed.

The tide was turned by the rising of a united working class and a series of mass strikes. In militant Germany, the Kapp putschists were crushed by armed workers.

In March 1921, there was another attempted coup, this time from the left, which was ill-conceived and ill-timed and which ended in a crushing defeat, leaving the already strife-torn KPD in tatters.

Working class militancy continued to manifest itself with massive strike waves through-



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NY- ST ITION

by JOE O'BRUADAIR

out Germany. But the lack of effective revolutionary leadership meant that the workers failed to find any proper way to channel the spontaneity of their militancy.

Parallel with this wave of working class militancy there was a corresponding increase in marauding right wing armies of nationalistic, racist organisations.

The last great possibility of a successful revolution came in 1923, which was the most crisis-torn year of the period. The KPD's ineffectual leadership failed to properly co-ordinate what could have been a successful rising and the initial enthusiasm of the militant workers turned to dismal disillusionment as the Communist leadership failed to mobilise its enormous potential.

Dollar Quotations for the Mark;
Selected Dates, 1914 and 1919-23
(monthly averages)

July, 1914	4.2
January, 1919	8.9
July, 1919	14.0
January, 1920	64.8
July, 1920	39.5
January, 1921	64.9
July, 1921	76.7
January, 1922	191.8
July, 1922	493.2
January, 1923	17,972.0
July, 1923	353,412.0
August, 1923	4,620,455.0
September, 1923	98,860,000.0
October, 1923	25,260,208,000.0
November 15, 1923	4,200,000,000,000.0

Militant workers and revolutionaries awaiting the aid of the SPD workers were tragically disappointed. The SPD's history of sell-outs and compromises once again manifested itself. Because of the failure of the leadership to mobilise the Saxon working class, on the 13th October, General Mueller was able to move the army into Saxony and immobilise and disarm its proletarian hundreds.

On November 8th there took place Hitler's much-celebrated "Beer Hall Putsch", which was easily suppressed the following day in Munich's Odeonsplatz, after a few shots from the police. The future Fuehrer was captured and imprisoned.

The question is often asked,

was there really a revolutionary situation in Germany in the 1918-23 period? Some historians maintain that the German working class was not revolutionary. That they had no "revolutionary consciousness". These historians view consciousness as a fixed characteristic of individuals. In fact, it is one aspect of their dynamic, ever-changing interaction with each other and with the world. As a result, in the words of Friedrich Engels, the dialectical approach means that "the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made things, but as a complex of processes."

This is crucial in understanding the historical role of classes. In looking at a class's place in history, we have to consider it not in terms of its actual state at a given moment in time, but rather in terms of its potential for development. The German experience in 1918-19 is an example of the huge fluctuations in consciousness that can occur at a time of great social change.

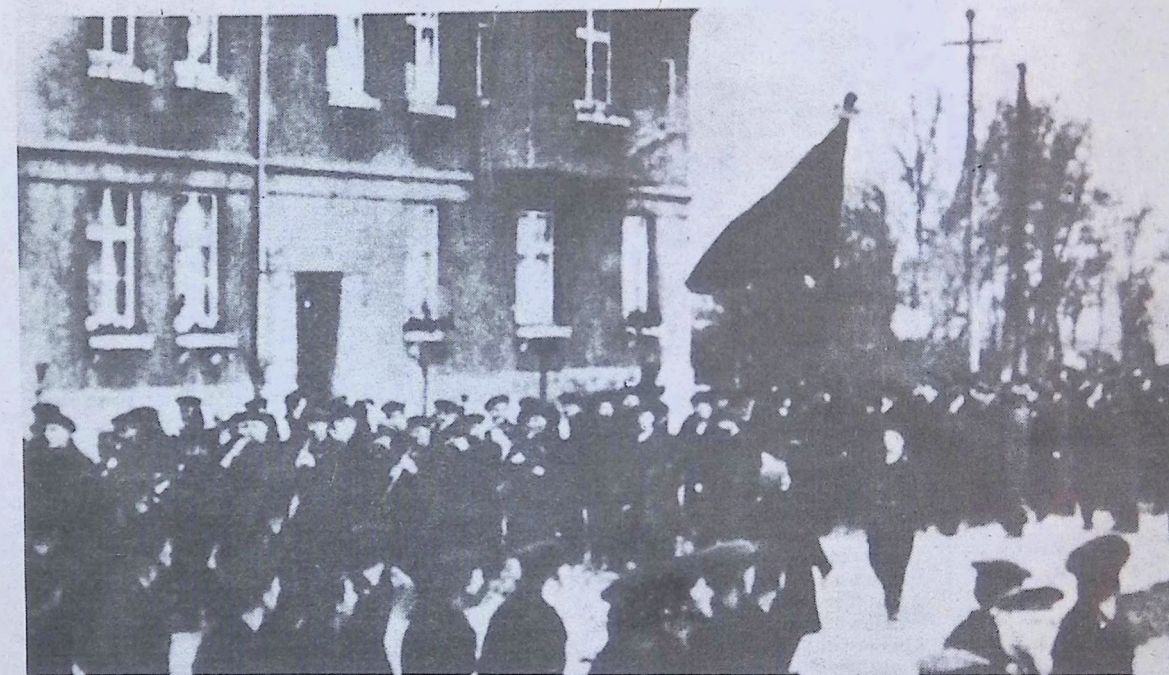
Workers' ideas change in struggle, and the ideas of the German workers in that period were in flux as they began to comprehend new possibilities.

REVOLUTION

The existence of a revolutionary party based in the working class, organising the most militant of workers and arguing always to bring the revolution forward, would have transformed their ideas even more.

There was a revolutionary situation in Germany at that time. Society and the social order to a great extent had disintegrated. There were the preposterous reparation demands of the Allied powers, which could only be repaid by the sweat and labour of the German workers. The workers were being punished for a capitalist war.

The incredible hyper-inflation then is simply beyond our comprehension in 1985 and makes economies such as Argentina's, Israel's and Brazil's look rock-solid. Tales of German workers bringing their wages home in wheel-barrow have entered lore. There was



Above: Workers soldiers and sailors during the declaration of the Bavarian Soviet Republic, Munich 1918

Below: The rebellion of the Kiel sailors, November 1918.

massive unemployment and some people were literally starving, with history bearing witness to some of the greatest strikes and factory occupations the world has ever seen.

For a period of a couple of months, workers' councils were the power in most German cities. Their importance was great. Trotsky wrote: "For the countries of the East, just as for the countries of the West, Soviets are the form of organisation which can and must be created from the very first stage of the broad, revolutionary struggle. Soviets usually arise as revolutionary strike organisations and then extend their functions and increase their authority in the eyes of the masses. At the first stage they become organisations of a revolutionary uprising. Finally after the victory of the uprising they are transformed into organs of revolutionary power."

To further elaborate Lenin wrote: "Soviets are necessary for welding the masses together, for creating unity in the struggle . . . but they are not sufficient . . . for organising an uprising in the narrowest sense of

the word." And this is of paramount importance. Two months after the flowering of the workers' and soldiers' councils, the council system lay in shambles. There was no mass revolutionary party around to give political direction to their needs, to argue the necessity of the councils to take full power and smash the bourgeois state. No mass party rooted in the working class like Lenin had developed with the Bolsheviks over a period of

twenty years, through defeat after defeat and struggle after struggle.

Despite great leaders like Luxemburg and Liebknecht, the Spartakists — engulfed as they were in the SPD for so long — had failed to build such a revolutionary party. There was no party in Germany, as there had been in Russia, to argue for workers taking state power. That, perhaps, is the

central lesson of the German Revolution which we, here in Ireland, need to learn today.

In January 1918 Lenin wrote: "Without the revolution in Germany, we are doomed". Doom was to strike in a way he had not envisaged. The failure in Germany resulted in the increased isolation of the Soviet Union and the strengthening of Stalin's hand.

It has been said that Social Democracy begat Nazism in the West and Stalinism in the East, with the resulting horrors for mankind. But it need not have been so. For a brief period in 1918, workers' councils were the chief power from the Urals to the North Sea. There was a world movement with its Red Armies in the Ruhr as well as Siberia, Bavaria as well as the Don Basin, Soviet Republics declared in Austria, Bavaria and Hungary, Workers' Councils in command in Turin and Bremen as well as Tsaritsyn and Petrograd.

But the Revolution in Germany was lost, and the ill-fated Weimar Republic tottered on for another ten years. By 1933 Hitler was in power . . .



Engineering firm closed by strike in August 1917

Occupations can save jobs

UNEMPLOYMENT in the Republic has reached desperate levels. The country now tops the European-wide dole figures with 18% of its workforce jobless.

Emigration has become official government policy. Irish agencies in Britain estimate that 30,000 have emigrated in recent years.

Once again Irish capitalism is proving that it has to export its own people.

What can be done about it?

The union leaders have few answers. The Workers Party offers great "industrial plans" — for when they become the majority government. Sinn Fein believes it is only a matter of waiting for the Eire Nua or in the meantime encouraging co-operatives. Very few organisations offer concrete ideas. Yet it is not as if workers have taken redundancies lying down. After 1980, when the first wave of recession hit Southern Ireland many workers followed the example of the Clondalkin Paper Mills workers and occupied their jobs. Indeed, in Datsun, Clondalkin and even Ranks to some extent—workers have actually saved jobs through occupations. The example began to spread so much so that the Labour Minister, Ruairi Quinn had to warn that the IDA would give no assistance to finding new owners for factories that were under occupation.

However, as the wave of militancy was broken in the early eighties, so too has the tactic of occupying degenerated. In the last year many occupations have ended in defeat. At Winstanley Shoes in Dublin, workers gave up their occupation on the advice of their union official. A short occupation at Storage Technology in Finglas ended after the liquidator offered to employ the workforce on a temporary basis. In Telephone Cables Ltd the occupation finished after a few weeks. In Clarks of Dundalk the protest for jobs collapsed with



Workers sitting in at Coolock Foods

the acceptance of a miserable offer of a week and a half for every year service. Increasingly occupations are now fought for more redundancy money, rather than to defend jobs.

Many of the occupations failed through the lack of politics. Because if the tactic of occupying is to win, it must be seen as a political fight from the beginning. That was the secret of the victory at Clondalkin. An occupation is a political fight in two ways.

First, it is a break with the whole basis of the bosses' laws. The law in the Irish

Constitution guarantees the rights of private property. There is not a court in the land that will not uphold an employer's right to shut down a factory and sell off their machinery. By occupying, the factory workers are forcibly breaking with the rights of private property. They are holding the machinery and the assets to ransom until the right to work is guaranteed.

CONFRONTATION

Immediately, they must be prepared for confrontation with the police and the courts. They move very quickly from an economic to a political fight.

Second, the occupation can only succeed as a demand upon the state. Redundancies arise from the failure of particular capitalists. While there is always a chance of another buyer taking over the factory, the cost will be a cut in jobs and conditions if they are to succeed where the last capitalist failed. For that reason the demand for preserving the jobs has to be placed onto the state itself. Nationalisation of the factory is the only sure way of maintaining the jobs.

Every occupation, no matter how it starts, must then raise the possibility of nationalisation and confrontation with the full force of

law. For that reason it cannot be fought through the old bureaucratic fashion of most trade union activity. The occupation has to be seen as a centre for organising.

As long as the sit-in lasts it must be an example of workers control—involving every single worker in the running of the occupation; serving as an example to other workers who will be looked to for solidarity.

LIQUIDATOR

It is on the basis of the experience of the occupations that have occurred that a number of simple points can be made on how to conduct the occupation.

—Keep the liquidator out. The first thing workers are confronted with is the liquidator whose primary interest is to win a pound of flesh for the capitalist creditors. The carrot often offered to the workers is the prospect of a few weeks extra pay and his co-operation in trying to find another buyer. But allowing the liquidator in means handing over control of the factory. Increasingly, liquidators like Donnelly have gained a tremendous experience on how to defuse occupations by using their control of the factory to demoralise the militants. Although some workers believe that an occupation can be resumed after a period when the liquidator is in charge, it becomes virtually impossible to hold together the morale.

In De Lorean, in Belfast, the occupation collapsed once they allowed the liquidator to come in. In Mollins in Derry they gave up when the IDB offered to look for another buyer.

—Win the majority of workers. Occupations often start with small militant minorities—but they will succeed only so far as they draw in the majority of workers. Occupations are not about the moral rights of particular individuals to work — you need the full backing of the workforce to win the demand for nationalisation. The Clondalkin Paper Mills was a fantastic example of mass involvement in the occupation.

BLACKING

A mass meeting was held once a week. The rotas for occupying were read out. Various sub-committees, from publicity to blacking, were established to involve the most active militants. A new occupation committee was elected — rather than simply leaving matters in the hands of the older-established shop committee.

—Build for solidarity. It is pointless simply sitting about waiting for the bosses to collapse. The key to victory in every struggle today is solidarity. The first step in seeking solidarity is collections. Collections are not about some sort of charity — they are the first commitment to support that workers in other workplaces give. The delegations that bring in the collections lay the basis for greater solidarity if any attempt is made by the police to break the occupation. —Don't rely on the union officials. The ITGWU has currently taken the attitude that they cannot officially back occupations because they break the law. Other unions may give official sanction but rarely are the officials prepared to take the measures that are necessary to win. When Clondalkin workers went on hunger strike, the officials promised strike action to force the government into nationalisation — but delayed the strike long enough for the government to find a private buyer.

—KIERAN ALLEN.

WORK PLACE NOTES

STORAGE TECH

THE FATE of Storage Technology, the American-owned computer factory in Finglas, still hangs in the balance after the liquidation of the parent company. One hundred workers have been retained by the Irish liquidator, Donnelly. He attempted to let the remaining workers go in small batches in order to ease into full control of the factory. But so far, the workers have refused to accept his proposal.

In the meantime one of the former managers of Storage Technology, Ray Canton has set about saving his own skin. He has received American backing to set up a new computer company, Dahlstrom Manufacturing Ltd, in Coolock, Dublin. He has already approached the IDA for assistance with grants and premises and has received the old Ever-Ready factory.

However, there is a small catch. Canton had previously signed an agreement with the unions at Storage Technology

for the transfer of 58 workers from the fabrication department to his new computer firm. This included acceptance of conditions and the payment of disturbance money. But since the liquidation of Storage Technology, Canton has been trying to pull out of the deal. He is trying to recruit his own choice of workers and establish himself without any union agreements.

Workers at Storage Technology are demanding that their union, the FWUI, have nothing to do with this! They demand that the former agreement be adhered to. But they have a fight on their hands to make Canton comply. He was originally brought into the Finglas plant as a hard-line macho manager with a reputation of having forced through redundancies in Raleigh and Technicon.

At Storage, as in every other occupation, the key to victory is to understand the political nature of the struggle — and to base the struggle on the active involvement of all workforce, with no reliance

on the union leaderships or on the "good-will" of liquidators or ex-managers.

SEMPERIT

WORKERS at the Semperit factory in Ballyfermot are to have their shop-stewards system re-organised. At a meeting of their section AGM in February the union officials argued for the election of the shop stewards committee on a factory-wide basis rather than from separate sections in the factory. The move to factory-wide stewards was proposed by a leading Sinn Fein member.

It is a retrograde step. The strength of the shop-steward system has always rested on its accountability. The fact that the steward worked alongside his/her members; the fact that they had to report back to a definite body of workers meant there was less danger of a separate bureaucracy developing. But once elected on a factory-wide basis, without a tight constituency, they will be more subject to pressure from management and the union officials than to pressure from the workers on the shop floor.

And the pressure from management and union officials will *always* be towards moderation and against a militant stance.

STRIKE

"WE ARE as determined as ever to win this strike" that was the reaction of Karen Gearon, Shop Steward at the Henry Street branch of Dunnes Stores as the strike entered its 31st week.

The strike began when one of the workers, Mary Manning refused to handle South African goods in accordance with a union directive. The management responded by placing her under suspension and she was joined on the picket line by eleven of her fellow workers.

The strike is not only a blow against the brutal system of Apartheid, but is also a blow against the Dunnes management who have, from the very beginning, seen the dispute as an opportunity for union bashing.



Dunnes shop steward Karen Gearon

The strike has dragged on for eight months but management have so far shown no sign of giving in. At least some of the blame for that must lie with the union officials who have shied away from spreading the dispute to the other branches. Had they done this the strike would have been over by now. But like all officials they see talks with management as more important than strike action by workers.

But the strike can still be won if the strikers themselves go directly to other Dunnes workers — and those involved in supplying the stores — to argue for solidarity. They have taken some first steps

in this direction. They have been in touch with workers at the Wexford branch of Dunnes who are also out on strike. In a gesture of support the Henry Street workers collected £31 from among themselves for the Wexford workers. They have also been in touch with workers at a number of branches of Dunnes in Dublin where there is considerable, if passive sympathy for the strikers.

Action from other workers can hit Ben Dunne where it really hurts—in his pocket. Already Dunne's profits at Henry Street have been hit. But increased solidarity can ensure victory.

WATERFORD GLASS-NO TIME FOR SACRIFICE

THE Waterford Glass Group has recorded huge profits. Last year the group turned in a whopping £14.6 million—a rise of 44% on the previous year. The rise has been helped by the surge of the American dollar where much of the crystal is sold.

The workers at Waterford Glass are not so lucky. Over the last two years they accepted very low wage rises, after the defeat of the tax strikes they led. And management at the Glass factory are determined to keep wage increases low. They have come up with a three-year wage offer which includes:

- * A paltry 5% increase over each of the three years;
- * 1,000 shares to each worker for each year of the agreement. The shares could only be cashed in after seven years if they were to be tax-free;
- * Early retirement to craft workers at 55 on two-thirds of their wages. The same to apply to general workers at 60.

The management have claimed that the offer of shares in compensation for low wage increases is designed to achieve maximum tax benefits for workers. But the level of the shares today will not be maintained in seven years time. They are now artificially buoyed up by the rise of the dollar. The company's real intention is to give workers the illusion of having a stake in the company. This would help make them more amenable to the introduction of new technology and the accompanying high productivity and job losses.

The new owner, Globe Investments, have seen that the strength of the shop-floor organisation is the biggest threat to their record profit. They cannot take on the union head-on. The recent strike at the factory over the dismissal of a worker showed that the solidarity between the three glass factories in the group meant that workers could score a major victory

over management. They have therefore adopted a strategy of integrating workers into the system for a short period while they bring in new technology and shake out jobs. The offer of shares is one prong to that strategy; the involvement of the stewards in participation schemes is another.

WAGE CUT

The fact is that 5% over three years will represent a major wage cut. If the unions cannot get a proper wage increase when the company is making record profits, they will never achieve one. Now is the time to make up for past wage cuts. By accepting a three year agreement, workers would be giving management a free hand to set about a fundamental re-structuring of the workforce while the union is tied down to a ridiculously long agreement.

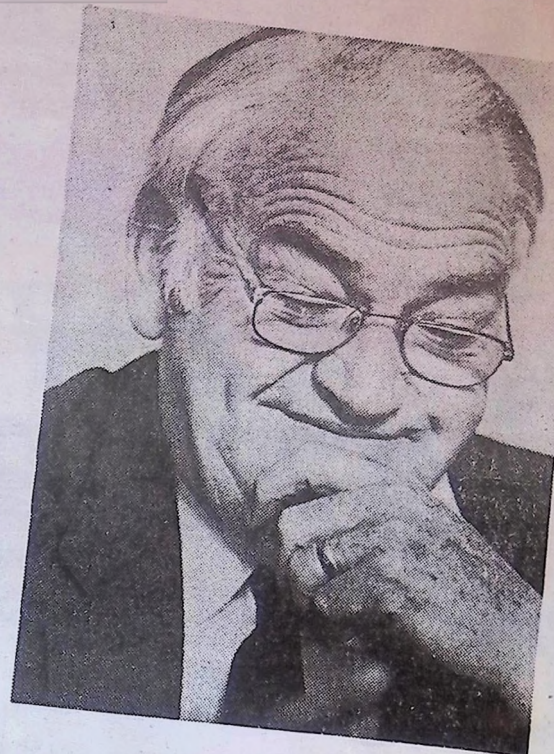
The other big carrot the company is using is early retirement. They have

attempted to create a division between the craft and general workers, with different ages for retirement. In any case, the issue of retirement should be negotiated entirely separately from the annual wage review.

The Shop Stewards' Committee in the Waterford Glass Group should have nothing to do with this offer. They should not start out negotiating on the details but offer a clear alternative around which the whole workforce can fight. They should be talking about:

- * A twelve month deal with a catch-up claim and no strings;
- * A reduction in working hours so as to win the benefits from new technology.
- * No redundancies or natural wastage;
- * No redeployment which leads to the doing away of jobs;
- * No contract labour in the factories.

By pushing for a short agreement and by emphasising the need to reduce the hours the workforce will maintain a free hand to build on the recent victory. They will also be helping to set an example



Record profits for Paddy McGrath

to the wider working class movement which has suffered heavy defeats over the last two years. By contrast if the FUE can get away with pointing to a long agreement with only 15% over three years in a company with

record profits, it is an example they will point to when any group of workers fight for their rights.

That is what is at stake in Waterford Glass.

—Waterford SWAL

Corpo sell-out

ONE of the worst, if not the worst, wage offers in the 24th pay round was accepted by 4,000 General Operatives in Dublin Corporation on the 10th February. It was right on the 11th hour, the day before strike action was to commence.

The offer was a 19-month agreement; 7 month pay pause, 3% from January, 3% from July ending on 31st December 85, with a £60 lump sum to compensate for the 7 month pay pause which in a previous offer had only been for 4 months! This amounts to £7.92 less tax on £130 p.w.

The fact that the offer was accepted (although only narrowly, 1067 to 1017 with one union, the FWUI actually rejecting it, 354 to 107) can be attributed solely to the cowardly and treacherous behaviour of the union officials.

These so-called union leaders, just two days before they put the insult of an offer to their members, approached the 14 Craft unions and the white collar LGPSU and told them that the all-out action which had been sanctioned by Congress was being deferred at their request from February 11th till 25th. The excuse they gave to their members for this incredible sell-out, was that a few sections such as the Fire Brigade, Library and Rent officers, representing a mere handful, compared to the thousands of general operatives, could not be depended on to come out.

Apart from the Fire Brigade, (whose support was considered unlikely anyway) the other two are non-vital sections, which is not to say their support wasn't sought and would have been welcomed. The fact is the overwhelming majority of workers employed in departments

such as Waterworks, Cleansing Sewerage, Public Lights, and Housing, backed up by 1,000 craftworkers and several thousand clerical officers—members of the LGPSU—were more than enough, and the effect of the withdrawal of these services on private industry as well as the general public would have been felt in a very short period of time.

But to make matters even worse, the IMETU (Irish Municipal Employees Trade Union) at their meeting in the Mansion House decided to act independently of the other two unions FWUI and IEGWU, if their vote was for strike action. This went against their earlier decision to abide by the aggregate vote of all three unions. More importantly it gave Sean Redmund (Gen. Secretary of IMETU) the opportunity to further demoralise his members by pointing out that their strike pay would run out in 3 weeks!

The lack of shop-floor organisation meant a sell-out was inevitable, but the depths to which the union officials sank even surprised the hardest militant.

Eddie Glacken, Branch Sec. of the FWUI, at a general meeting of his members, the following Tuesday succeeded in getting the previous 3 to 1 decision for strike action overturned by demoralising them into having a second ballot! With, this time, a recommendation for acceptance which he got—262 votes to 247. The efforts of the LAW group, (Local Authority Group) although not enough to prevent the sell out by the officials did succeed in bringing together for the first time ever craft workers, general operatives and clerical officers at a general meeting in the CIE Hall on 1st Feb.

That meeting proved unity was there, but rank and file control of the unions means agitating and organising at shop floor level if we are to prevent further sell-outs.

—CHARLES NOLAN
Shop Steward UCATT
Dublin Corporation

Radionics fight 'stop and search'

TWENTY-FOUR workers, members of Branch 13 ITGWU at Radionics Ltd in Crumlin have been on strike since December 14th. The management locked them out after they refused to sign a "Consent to Right of Search".

Radionics import and distribute electrical components from England. The company was owned by the Brownlee family up to 3 years ago when a multinational named RS Components bought 60% of the company.

As with all multi-nationals they centre their manufacturing

where the labour is cheapest, in this case third world countries. They import finished goods into Britain and from there to here.

The present company has things very much their own way in Maggie's Britain. On one occasion they closed down a plant in London and laid off the workers with the understanding they would be re-employed when a new plant was opened 90 miles away. They were re-employed alright but management had included a "Consent to Right of Search" in the terms of their employment. And then to cap it all it was management who then suggested they should join a "trade union"—in fact a staff association, so when they came to introduce the same scheme here they were shocked by the unified response of the workers.

"We respect the right of the owners to protect their property, but that does not give them the right to degrade us with what is practically strip-searching" said one of the workers.

"This situation would be laughable were it not important that we stand up to this bullying. Here is a company dealing in space age technology attempting to deal with their workers in a totally Victorian manner".

An agreement was reached with the manager Brownlee, whose family still hold 40% of the company, but this was turned down by his multinational bosses.

Management were not expecting the strike to last this long and have had to resort to

dealing from their own homes to keep the customers away from the pickets. They have even denied there was a strike on when dealing with county customers.

They have now delivered an ultimatum to the workers.

"Return to work and sign the agreement by March 8th or be dismissed." Management have offered to negotiate on the "Right to Search" after they return but this is an empty offer as they would have already signed and the agreement clearly states "it is irrevocable."

MEETING

Recently management have tried to negotiate a settlement which included the "right to search" clause. But the Radionics strikers have stayed solid. Their organisation in this dispute is excellent—regular meetings of all strikers, elected strike committees running the strike, picket rotas involving all strikers, contact with other workers in the RS group and appeals for blacking and financial support from other trade unionists.

The bosses will weaken — Radionics is the only outlet of this type in Ireland — their volume of trade is too profitable to be let drop.

Messages of support and donations to:

Strike Committee Radionics, c/o No. 13 Branch, ITGWU Liberty Hall, Dublin 1;

—BRIAN O'REILLY



Union leaders call demos but won't lead a real fightback.

Socialist Worker

Bending the knee

The Minister for Health, Barry Desmond receives Communion from the Archbishop of Dublin Dr McNamara



THE fuss over the passing of the Family Planning Bill in the Dail last month shows not that the 26 Counties has become a "progressive" State but only what an appallingly reactionary place it still is.

It shows, too, that it is utterly futile to depend on members of Dail Eireann to change this situation.

What did the Bill achieve? Some contraceptives will be slightly more freely available. That's all.

Indeed, in a speech which was widely praised as the best thing since sliced bread, Desmond O'Malley claimed that if the Bill was rigidly enforced it would mean contraceptives in some circles being less freely available. For example, the selling of condoms in both UCD and Trinity would be stopped.

The fact that this timid mouse of a measure can be touted as a great "break-through" by Labour Party "socialists" and by Irish Times type liberals is just pathetic.

LABOUR

And what's more, both Labour and Fine Gael have signalled clearly that they are not going through this hassle again before another election. So we can kiss goodbye to any hopes of divorce or a law to give equal rights to "illegitimate" children. And of course abortion is still a totally taboo subject.

What the "progressives" in the Coalition were aiming at by bringing in this legislation had nothing at all to do with socialism or with concern with the plight of working class women condemned to a life of household drudgery and child-bearing.

Their aim was to strengthen and update Irish capitalism.

But the fact that a few women will be a little better catered for is welcome, but is incidental to the main point.

What FitzGerald, Spring etc. want to do is to move the 26 Counties into the mainstream of western European politics. Their political attitudes directly reflect the economic interests of their class — the Irish capitalist class. As the economy of the Free State has broken out from its isolationism of the thirties and gradually become enmeshed in modern European (and world) capitalism, so have the attitudes and ideas of "modern society" permeated into the Irish middle and upper classes.

IDEAS

Some of these ideas and attitudes have a lot to recommend them when compared with "traditional" Irish Catholic thinking. For example, the existing legislation prohibiting discrimination against women at work—weak and inadequate as it is—came directly from a decision of the Common Market. And it certainly represented a modest advance on the previous situation.

However, another aspect of this drift of opinion has profoundly reactionary implications.

Those who wanted the 26 Counties to become a proper little modern State, comfortably at home with its up-to-the-minute neighbours, were, naturally enough, uneasy about continuing the messy old feud with the nearest neighbour of all. They saw more and more clearly that their interests and the interests of those in charge next-door—the British capitalist class—were identical.

So why not bury the hatchet, let bygones be bygones, and get on with the business of co-operating together to streamline the economy and

screw the working class . . .

Thus it is that some of those (Conor Cruise O'Brien of Labour, John Kelly of Fine Gael, Des O'Malley of Fianna Fail) who are on the "liberal" wing of their parties as far as social legislation is concerned, are on the illiberal wing when it comes to backing up the Brits with Heavy Gangs and repressive laws to put down those who continue to struggle against British imperialism.

It is also worth noting that these elements don't stint themselves when it comes to the reactionary, right-wing side of their politics. They are pretty consistent and tough-minded in putting the boot into Republicans and revolutionary socialists, scornful in their reactions when "wets" voice worry about erosions of civil liberties or, say, the Nicky Kelly case.

But they are not consistent

about pursuing their "progressive" ideas in the field of social legislation. They backed off like frightened rabbits when the "pro-life" gang put the pressure on for an abortion referendum in 1982 and spent the next two years wriggling and squirming. As mentioned, they've effectively given up on divorce and their Family Planning Bill was as timid as the proverbial church mouse. (Catholic Church mouse, it goes without saying.)

This is because, while wanting to be accepted as fully paid-up members of the EEC Progressive Residents Association, they want even more to hang on to political office. And they know that the bishops still have considerable clout: when it comes to the crunch it's their own immediate interests which win out.

So it's not a question of

them standing a half mile to the right of the political centre on the question of British imperialism, and a half mile to the left in regard to social reform. They are a mile and a half to the right on the North, 50 yards to the left on "pluralism", and shuffling, as shifty people tend to do.

There is only one section or layer of the population of the 26 Counties which stands to gain from taking a consistent position against both imperialism and its native partners and against the reactionary power of the Catholic Church. This is the working class.

The working class loses as Free State capitalism copperfastens itself in collaboration with foreign big business. That way lies redundancies, wage cuts, repression and attacks on health, education, social services—all of which we see

around us day and daily.

And it is the working class which is also hardest hit by the absence of freely available contraceptives, access to divorce, and safe abortion and so forth. It is working class women who are commonly in dire straits as a result and with the least possibility of finding a remedy.

The only answer is for workers to organise themselves for themselves, as a class. And that can only be done through a party with a clear, class perspective, operating outside and independent of organisations which are compromised one way or the other and which cannot, therefore, take a consistent and unashamedly socialist line on all the issues which affect the interests of working class people.

—EAMONN McCANN



Barry Desmond's contraception Bill was yet another half-way measure. That was the point that 100 placard waving demonstrators made outside the Dail when the Bill was being debated. The picket had been called by the Socialist Workers Movement around the slogan "Free, Legal Contraception, Now!" One TD, the notorious right-winger Oliver J Flanagan told Desmond: "This is the first Bill to be passed in the Dail with the clenched fist and the Red Flag flying outside the gate."