

Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

NORTH AND South the unemployment is disastrously bad and getting worse.

And none of the major political parties—nor indeed the trade union leadership—has any realistic strategy for turning the tide.

Many working class people simply see no hope. It is passively accepted that thousands of people, especially young people, are "destined" for the dole queues and that there's nothing much can be done about it.

But there *is* something that can be done about it. Although it is not something that any capitalist party or trade union bureaucrat can contemplate.

The grim statistics are relatively well-known. In the North, the official jobless total is now above 130,000.

— with Catholic workers suffering even more at a catastrophic figure of more than 30 percent.

In the South there are close on quarter of a million without work. In fact, there are now more people unemployed in the South than there are working in manufacturing industry!

Employment in manufacturing is falling at a steady rate of four percent a year. Employment in construction is dropping by 15 percent a year. And in the public sector the recruitment embargo makes it *official policy* that the numbers at work should continue to decline.

The reason this happens is not that the rulers in the Six Counties or the Twenty-six Counties want it to happen—although it is crystal clear that they are not exactly losing sleep about the plight of those on the receiving end.

FIGURES

The reason it happens is that, under the present capitalist system, there *is* no way of cutting down the unemployment figures. If there was a way of doing it, they'd do it. Mass unemployment creates political instability and presents our rulers with great problems.

But within the capitalist system, jobs are only created when it is possible to make profit out of them. When there is little possibility of a "reasonable" profit no capitalist will invest in new or expanded production. This is perfectly obvious.

And in the midst of the international recession we are now living through—a recession over which the Irish rulers have no influence, much less control—the prospects for making profit are very poor.

It follows directly from this that any strategy which is based on preserving the capitalist system is worthless. Thus, Alan Dukes in the South and Tom King and his British Tory advisors in the North—direct agents of the capitalist class—don't even pretend to have a strategy for bringing unemployment down. To them the masses of people suffering the misery of unemployment

are merely a "problem" to be "managed"—by a mixture of bullshit propaganda and threats of repression if they dare to fight back.

Every working class person should know where they stand with the likes of Dukes and King. More insidious are the alleged leaders of the working class movement.

About the Free State Labour Party, the least said the better. They have conived in every anti-working class measure the intellectual thugs of Fine Gael have devised over the past three years and finally crowned themselves with disgrace when Barry Desmond announced the closure of eight hospitals last month with a loss of hundreds of jobs and disastrous damage to the interests of the most vulnerable sections of the entire population—the old, the infirm, the mentally ill.

These people are working class representatives only in the sense that they have lived on and off the working class all their twisted lives. They should be spat out.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions make a slightly better shape at things—slightly. Their latest list of "demands" took the form of an argument in the construction industry to build roads, schools and more houses. Undoubtedly, this would be a good thing. But apart from sending copies of their "submissions" to the Department of Finance in the South and the Northern Ireland Office at Stormont, the ICTU has announced no strategy whatsoever, good, bad or indifferent, for getting this done.

The other ICTU suggestions are for the proposed National Development Corporation in the South to be brought into being immediately—to do what remains a mystery—and for an expansion North and South of the entirely phoney youth training schemes.

There is absolutely nothing in this to give any jobless person real hope of the downward trend being reversed.

SYSTEM

The only strategy that will work, which would have a hope of mobilising the unemployed for a real fight, is one that recognises that the working class will have to take the system on.

This would mean, for a start, defending every *existing* job with all the industrial muscle that can be mustered. How can the union bosses convince the jobless they are serious about fighting unemployment when they are selling jobs hand over fist in redundancy deals and "rationalisation" schemes.

If there was a militantly determined fight going on to stop further job losses—involving strikes and occupying if necessary—the unemployed could be rallied to support it.

In addition, there should be an aggressive campaign for the 35-hour week with no loss of pay to expand existing payments.

Demand the right to work

On their own, unemployed people have very little clout. But linked to the organised working class movement, they can exert real pressure. The unions should be made to organise the unemployed, to maintain them in membership, rather than cancel their union cards as soon as they are handed a dole card.

STRATEGY

In these circumstances, there *could* be a meaningful campaign for a programme of public works such as the ICTU suggests.

The problem with all this is that it's a strategy which is openly opposed to the priorities and interests of the capitalist system. It's a strategy which proclaims that we have a *right* to work, and that if the present system can't work, so much the worse for the system.

It requires revolutionary socialist policies to underpin such a strategy. And the force



Cork Labour Exchange

of revolutionary socialism in Ireland is very small.

Thus the task of building a revolutionary socialist party and the fight against unem-

ployment are not separate struggles. They are one and the same thing. And as the dole queues lengthen the necessity to build a Marxist

party, separate from the sell-out Labour Parties—and indeed from all-class Republican organisations—becomes ever more urgent.

Workers bruised as slump deepens

THE CENTRAL Bank has predicted a good year for the Southern Irish economy.

What they mean is a good year for the boss class.

There are now 41,000 more people on the dole than are employed in manufacturing industry. In December unemployment jumped a massive 12,000 to reach 240,000. This rise in the dole queues occurred when the rest of the world was going through a minor pick-up.

Between 1983 and 1985 American borrowing and arms spending led to some growth of the world economy. One sign of this in Ireland was a growth in exports. These came mainly from multi-national firms based here who were able to take advantage of the slight upturn.

But despite the growth of the world economy, and the rise in exports and the fall in living standards (down 15% since 1980)—the numbers out of work in Ireland rose. So much for the lies of the professional economists who are ever ready to call for more "sacrifices".

Now conditions have changed. The world economy is slipping back into recession. The main worry of our rulers is that it will turn into a 1930s style crash on a grand scale with the "default" of debtor states such as Argentina, Mexico and Brazil. These countries owe foreign debts of hundreds of billions, if they were to refuse to pay back their debts many of the leading world banks would go to the wall.

Where does Southern Ireland stand in these changed conditions? In deep trouble.

In the 70s the 26 Counties was the miracle economy of Europe with record growth rates in investment and profits. But these growth rates were achieved by the influx of American capital looking for

a base to re-assemble its goods inside the EEC tariff walls. In 1979, for example, 80% of the IDA planned investment was coming from American sources.

This miracle is now well and truly over. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, it was partially a con. Much of the records set by the Southern economy were the result of the multi-nationals engaging in "transfer-pricing" to avoid tax. This means artificially creating more added value in their Irish subsidiaries and plants to benefit from the tax laws. The South taxes profit at the rate of 10% (before allowances) compared to a European average of 50%. Until recently profits on exports were not taxed at all.

Furthermore, the entry of Greece, Portugal and Spain into the EEC means that there are other low wage economies able to set themselves up as tax laundries in their desperate bid to attract capital. In addition the very

industry that the IDA pinned its hopes on, the computer industry, is now running into severe crisis—that's why Mostek, Apple and Memorex are all cutting jobs.

On top of all that, there lies the problem of the Irish debt. It currently eats up the total of PAYE in interests payments alone. The gamble of the late seventies that Ireland could break into a rising world economy has fallen flat on its face.

One of the biggest problems for the Southern rulers is that native industry cannot pick up the slack left by the decline of foreign investments. Since 1979 gross fixed investment fell by 13%. The famous Telesis report pointed out that larger native Irish firms grew only when they supplied a home market without any competition. It is precisely firms such as Smurfits, Cement Roadstone and McInerney which have begun to move capital out of Ireland as they see their home market shrinking. Instead we are left

with the tiny entrepreneurs' firms—1,400 of whom were set up between 1973 and 1981—who cannot compete except under conditions of appalling low wages.

The fact of the matter is however that the Irish ruling class has not been able to push down wages to the levels demanded by capitalists with money to invest. Despite its spectacular victories over CIE and B & I workers and the hammering it is doling out at the moment to other public sector workers, the ruling class is left with its central problem.

The organised workers movement is beaten and bruised but it is by no means trounced. Indeed that is the situation through Europe generally.

Over the coming period Irish workers will face major confrontations. In those battles ahead it is vital that a strong revolutionary party is built that can find roots in the work places. That is why the SWM exists.

—KIERAN ALLEN



FUE misers cost Pfizers dear

THE Federated Union of Employers has ordered its member companies to bring all personal injury claims to court. The FUE think that workers are getting away with thousands for "mock" accidents.

Pfizers are beginning to regret this policy. One Cork worker, Mr Jim Daly, employed by the Pfizer Chemical Corporation at Ringaskiddy, was awarded £31,500 and costs in his personal injuries claim for negligence against the company at the High Court in Cork.

After a hearing lasting three days, the jury found that Pfizers were negligent, in that they did not fulfill their common law duty to provide a safe system of work. They also found that the company were in breach of a Statutory Regulation under the Factories Act 1955.

Mr Daly told the court that on the night shift on April 12 1982 he was shovelling a soggy product known as "Rondo 1" into a vessel when he slipped

on the product which had lodged on the wet concrete floor and jerked his back. Later, on May 5 when he was manoeuvring a cylindrical cone into a centrifuge, his back stiffened. "I thought I had suffered a stroke because the pain was so bad" he said.

He was removed to hospital by ambulance and spent three weeks on traction. He is still suffering severe pain and his doctor claims that he will probably have to sleep on boards for the rest of his life.

ADMITTED

In an attempt to prove contributory negligence, the company called two foremen who admitted that they had not witnessed the accidents. They claimed, however, that Mr Daly had not used equipment which was available to assist him. This was denied by all the operators who witnessed the accident and who stated that this equipment was not available until some considerable time after

Mr Daly's accident.

The lengths to which the company were prepared to go to prove that the worker was to blame were further illustrated when they produced a Batch Record Book, which they claimed was signed by Mr Daly and proved that the equipment was available at the time.

The company's lawyer was considerably embarrassed when Mr Daly proved to the court that this was a forgery. In the past, most personal injury claims against the company have been settled out of court. Because of the recent change in policy by the FUE, Pfizers were prevented from doing so in this case. It is a policy which could cost Pfizer's management dearly.

The award of £31,500 and costs is peanuts to a company with Pfizer's resources. However, the fact that they have been proven to be negligent by the court could have very serious repercussions for local management of this trans-national corporation.

Corporate management in

New York will be seriously concerned at this development and will want to distance themselves from those responsible. It is not that they do not know what is going on, but that they cannot be seen to condone or to be associated with a management team who have been found out and convicted of negligence. The company is already under strong international pressure from governments and consumer groups following media revelations of a possible link between one of the company's drugs, Feldene, and the deaths of 77 patients.

Socialist Worker has highlighted in recent months the attitude of this giant conglomerate towards its workers and the laws of the host countries in which they operate. We shall continue to do so in the future in the hope that the interests of the workers will be put before the faceless shareholders whose sole interest is the accumulation of further capital no matter what the cost in human suffering and deprivation.

FIFTH COLUMN

Interesting

SOCIALIST WORKER readers with a mortgage will recently have received a letter telling them that their repayments could be going up in March. They will probably go up again after that, thanks to the Budget, but that's another story. Why, you might ask, this increase? For months we have been told that things were looking up; that inflation was down etc. One of the Coalition's biggest boasts was that they had brought the mortgage rate down.

The answer is quite simple. Profit. Irish companies, banks and other assorted speculators, fearing that the Irish pound was to be devalued bought foreign currencies in the hope of avoiding a loss and making a profit. But the foreign currencies have to be bought by selling Irish pounds which means less money is available for lending in this country. Which in turn means the mortgage rate goes up.

And they have cheek to tell us that private enterprise is in the public interest!

Chinese bust

IN FEBRUARY 1985 a study group was set up to draft a law "which would define conditions for declarations of bankruptcy, liquidation of assets, procedures for handling such cases and employee compensation". No, this is not part of a Government Information Services press release, but part of a press release from its equivalent in "Socialist" China. The capitalist crisis with its bankruptcies and redundancies is affecting China as much as Ireland.

We in the SWM have always described China as State Capitalist not Socialist. Those who still think of China as socialist, should think again.

No more favours

ONE OF the great strengths, we are told, of parliamentary democracy is that it gives everyone an equal chance in electing the TD or MP that he or she supports, but the representatives once elected represent the interests of all their constituents. This is in fact not true as anyone who has bothered to study the antics of the average TD will know.

The interests they represent are those of the rich and powerful. Nevertheless, the pretence is kept up and there are many that believe it. This belief plays an important part in maintaining the stability of the system.

In one part of the world, the Six Counties, even this pretence is ignored. Take the statement by Unionist MP Harold McCusker that anyone who was seen not to vote for him would receive no favours from him as a representative. Behind that statement lies the reality of bigotry and discrimination that has affected Nationalists since the formation of the Northern State, and is why many see the only solution lies in smashing that Sectarian State.

—WILLIE CUMMING

STRIKE OVER SHOP SACKING

DERMOT FLANAGAN has worked in Michael Guineys for over seven years. He was sacked in December for making a mistake involving a credit card. This was in the middle of the Christmas rush and the error was discovered and corrected within an hour without costing the Company or its customers one penny.

In the time Dermot has worked in Guineys he has never been out sick nor has he received any warnings.

Dermot told Socialist Worker that an employee who had been with the Company for 5 years was called to the office one day and told "I can't afford you". Within a week three part timers replaced him. Also Dermot and

other full time employees have been told by the boss "I could get three part timers for what I'm paying you".

Guineys have also cancelled their sick pay scheme without any consultation and when Dermot asked for a letter to confirm the sacking, Guiney said he would prepare one but has not done so. This means that Dermot is being denied the first 6 weeks of his dole entitlement.

Dermot's union, IDATU, is processing a claim against unfair dismissal and also has sanctioned an official strike, to push for re-instatement.

These pickets have been successful in turning away 60% of customers on Saturdays recently.

JOHN HARROLD

WE THINK Halting the retreat

1986 BEGAN with a number of massive defeats for workers. In CIE, management have finally succeeded after 18 years of pushing through driver-only buses. Over 1,000 jobs will now be lost over the coming years as a result. In Band 1 shipping, the new executive Alex Spain has managed to crush the Seamen's Union and see off any resistance to his redundancy package. In Cork, the ESB linesmen were finally starved back to work after months of heroic struggle to defend their conditions. And in the public sector, John Boland has split open the unions and pushed through an 18 month wage deal with a phased 7% increase.

The common thread that links together these defeats has been the cowardly and despicable behaviour of the union leaders. In the case of CIE the bus workers voted ten to one to reject a Labour Court recommendation on driver only buses. But instead of building on this spirit, the union leaders stalled and retreated before management until they had finally demoralised the workforce.

In the public sector, on October 15, 150,000 workers downed tools for the day to protest against Boland's ultimata. Massive and enthusiastic pickets were formed outside offices that had never seen strike action before. But one by one the union leaders trooped in to meet

Boland and settled for a miserable offer that virtually closed the door on any special payments.

These defeats cannot be blamed on merely the "right-wing" union leaders. Take the two best-known "left-wing" officials. Phil Flynn is a leading member of Sinn Fein and also the general secretary of the LGPSU. It was the same "republican socialist" who was first off the mark to settle with Boland. Pat Rabbitte is a leading member of the Workers' Party and a Group Secretary in the ITGWU. He presided over the settlement of the UCD cleaners' dispute. Twenty cleaners lost their jobs after Rabbitte tricked them into believing they had won!

SELL-OUTS

The fact of life is that sell-outs come second nature to all union officials. They do so because they accept the limits of the system. They rule out as "utopian" the possibility of revolutionary change. Their isolation from the shop-floor leads them to elevate their negotiating skills above the confidence and organisation of the rank-and-file. Their ties to institutions like the Labour Court forces them to play by the bosses' rules.

These defeats will continue until the rank-and-file organise to take back their unions. But in many shop floors up and down the country the mood of confidence to go beyond the union officials does not exist. How can this change? When and under what conditions will workers move out of this pattern of defeat?

Historical experience shows that workers go on the offensive for different reasons. Firstly, a slight pick-up in the economy restores confidence and revives the shop-floor organisation. This pick-up need not be massive. In the thirties, workers went through the depths of depression with giants of capitalism going to the wall. But in or around 1936, unemployment figures dropped from ten million to eight million in the USA. An explosion of working class militancy developed as workers occupied the gigantic car factories and set up the industrial union, the CIO. In Ireland, the boom in the economy in the sixties after decades of depression sent it to the top of the international strike league.

Secondly, the bosses are often forced to push beyond what workers will accept. Since 1979 wages have fallen. But not evenly for all sectors. Throughout Europe, wages have not yet been forced down to a level that can guarantee a revival of industrial profits. At the

moment the class war resembles more of a First World War trench-style campaign. The bosses are pushing us back inch by inch. But any attempt to break through our lines can provoke a response that unsettles previous patterns. The last two or three years have seen massive explosions of workers' anger in countries as diverse as Britain, Germany, Denmark, Poland and Belgium. Southern Ireland remained one of the more troubled economies of Europe. Its boss class must continually push for more cuts and always risk provoking a wave of anger.

MILITANTS

Thirdly, a political crisis can often be the catalyst for workers taking the offensive. In 1981, the union leaders condemned the H Block movement. But throughout the country groups of militants came together to organise for action to save the prisoners lives. In particular towns such as Dundalk and Waterford (where a small socialist presence had been built inside the factories) workers built strong unofficial organisations. In Dundalk, for example, a shops stewards committee was able to take the initiative in calling industrial action.

It is therefore difficult to predict the exact conditions under which the tide will turn. But turn it will. The pattern of defeat will not last. And when workers do move there is a hell of a lot of stored up bitterness to be brought out.

The key task for revolutionary socialists in this period is to build a sizable organisation based on the strength and clarity of its politics. Inevitably that will mean recruiting in ones and twos. Inevitably it will mean swimming against the stream. The drift in left-wing politics today is away from organised working class politics. One sign of this has been the flight of left-wingers into Sinn Fein with its stress on "class alliances". But a party that can build itself as an open, clear Marxist organisation, that can relate its politics to the minority of workers who see the need to fight, that can remain firm on the central Marxist view that only the working class can fundamentally change for the better the conditions under which the mass of humanity live and work—such a party can lay the foundations in these dispiriting days for the massive battles that lie in the future.

Small as we are, the Socialist Workers Movement is the embryo of that party. Come and help us make it a reality.

Des O'Malley's Progressive Democrats do it 'our way'

IT IS said that over 14,000 people have signed up to Dessie O'Malley's Progressive Democrats. This is a party which has as yet no policies — and there is only one constantly repeated fact on their platforms — that they are a post civil war party.

What, you may ask, does this mean? Judging by interviews with Dessie O'Malley (and it's the only thing that anyone has to go on as possible policy of the fledgling party) it means to hell with the "problem" in the North, let's go on with developing the economy in the South — our way.

"Our way" means taking Ireland a more active member of the world capitalist system. "We need to get better value for our investments" he says. This would mean major cut backs in the public sector — even among nurses, corporation workers and gardai! But do not worry, the work now being carried out would be handed over to private firms to the "many people who are only dying for the opportunity to work and to work harder and even to work longer and therefore to earn even more and have more in their pockets". No mention of the quarter



of a million unemployed who have no work and so cannot work harder. But don't despair. Dessie and cohorts will not leave you without a hero to aspire to — he suggests John De Lorean. Of De Lorean Dessie says: "a very able man, and an awful pity he didn't make a success of the thing." He should just have been more orthodox and all would have

been well. So do remember to be "more orthodox" and you are on the road to success!

Progressive Democrats are also being hailed as more liberal than the established parties. This is a party led by the man who introduced the Offences against the State Act, the Forcible Entry Act and the Special Criminal Court. In 1986 he says of the Special



Two leading members of the PDP.

Criminal Court: "I don't think it could seriously be claimed it ever convicted anyone who shouldn't have been convicted." Ask Nicky Kelly what he thinks. You may be innocent but if you "should be convicted" (because they decide) then the Special Criminal Court will do it.

They're looking for separation of Church and State — for a more liberal attitude to contraception and divorce. Abortion, of course, isn't mentioned. Yet it was Dessie O'Malley who described the 1976 Fine Gael Family Planning Bill as "a licence for fornication". The Bill allowed contraceptives only to married couples — but then the Catholic Church would regard them as "fornicators".

It is pretty obvious that instead of having two centre right parties — we now have three. So what's in it for socialists? Nothing. Except that it provides ample opportunity to discuss politics — our politics. And when the discussion gets round to the party worth joining — say it loud and clear, the revolutionary party — SWM.

—MARY RYDER

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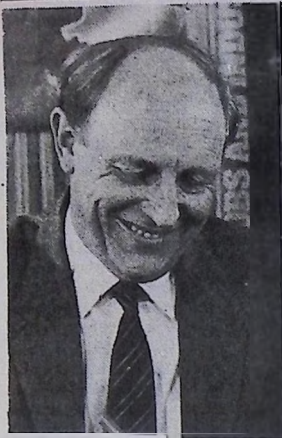
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INTERNATIONAL



Neil Kinnock

NEIL KINNOCK has launched a witch hunt against the "hard left" in the British Labour Party. Supporters of the Militant paper have been expelled from several branches. The National Executive Committee set up an "inquiry" in Liverpool to investigate allegations of "corruption" by Labour Councilors there.

Leading councillors like Derek Hatton and Tony Mulhearn were threatened with expulsion.

Yet Liverpool Council's only "crime" was to attempt to provide decent jobs, houses and services for the people of the city. When other councils had given in to the Tories, Liverpool continued to fight against rate-capping until it voted to accept cuts in November.

And while Socialist in the Labour Party are being attacked, right-wingers like Robert Maxwell remain safe. Maxwell is the millionaire owner of the Mirror newspaper and a consistent union-basher. Recently he sacked almost 2,000 of his workers. Yet he remains a member of the Labour Party and no "inquiry" has ever been set up to investigate his behaviour.

The reasons for the witch hunt lie in Labour's reformist politics. For Labour, the key to changing society lies in the Party's election to government. Therefore every activity is subordinated to the need to win votes. This means appealing to "public opinion".

Unfortunately "public opinion" is dominated by the media. Any semblance of radicalism is attacked by the TV and the capitalist press. Therefore, even if Labour wants to bring about major reforms, it has to lower its sights before every election.

Kinnock goes for Militant

Meanwhile people like Militant are subject to media scandals and witchhunts!

Furthermore party "unity" becomes all important in the run-up to an election. This time "unity" requires that the left ditch their ideas in favour of Kinnock's vague reforms. The "soft left" including the supporters of Tribune newspaper have joined in the witch-hunt. At their conference in Liverpool, the Labour Coordinating Committee—including former left-winger Peter Hain—voted by 200 to 2 to support the NEC's "inquiry" "inquiry".

Despite the attacks being made on them, Militant continue to foster illusions in the Labour Party. Thus when it was revealed that Kinnock would have supported sending troops into Liverpool, in the event of a Council workers' strike, they expressed amazement at the idea. A November issue of Militant state that: "The whole of the labour movement will be flooding the party with resolutions demanding that the NEC and the shadow cabinet pledge their opposition to the use of troops against the trade union movement under any circumstances."

Surely Militant has learned by now that resolutions passed in branches and by Party Conference have no bearing on what the leadership does.

Successive Labour governments have sold out time and time again on their election "promises", even when such "promises" have been watered down versions of policies decided at Conference. In the 1940's and the 1970's troops were sent in by Labour governments, to break strikes.

Such betrayals have not come about simply because Labour ministers are nasty or weak-willed. They are the natural outcome of electoral policies. Strikes rarely win the support of the "general public" that is the people whose votes are required to re-elect

Labour. Labour's strategy requires that workers in struggle are either used to get a Labour government elected, or else attacked.

Sadly, the Labour Left in Liverpool, including Militant, seemed itself to have illusions in reformism. When the Council was under attack from the Tories, the Council workers' Joint Shop Stewards Committee called an All-Out strike in defence of the Council for September 25th.

To the union bureaucracies this seemed too much like workers taking things into their own hands. The unions insisted on secret ballots, and played on every fear and backward idea to get a No vote. In spite of pressure from their own unions and outrage from the media, 47% of council workers voted to go on strike.

Members of the SWM's sister organisation in Britain,

the SWP, and other union militants argued that the 47% should be brought out and that their pickets would quickly bring out the other 53%. However, the Militant dominated Joint Shop Committee fell for the tricks of the union bureaucrats and called off the strike.

After that, the Council gave up on the organised working class as the way to save its policies. Instead they looked for all kind of schemes and deals and ended up in the arms of Swiss bankers! But the money from the Swiss banks brought with it the proviso that they accept the Tory cuts. The main losers in this deal were of course the working class people of Liverpool who for a while had seen the hope of a better life. The real advances made for working people under the left-wing council will be turned



Liverpool fight

Marco hangs by a thread

AS the Presidential election campaign in the Philippines gathers steam, it emerges that President Marcos has been buying hundreds of millions of dollars worth of property in the USA. The days of his regime are numbered and he seems to realise it. In what the Americans once described as "the showcase of democracy in Asia", popular discontent has reached massive proportions. Little wonder given the nature of the government and the widespread poverty and repression.

A recent survey indicates that over 50% of the population suffer from malnutrition, and 70% are under the poverty line. There are 20,000 child prostitutes in Manila alone. Political murder is a daily occurrence and the number of oppositionists imprisoned is

unknown, but by all accounts huge. Furthermore, the economy has been in constant decline throughout the eighties. Inflation is running



President Marcos

at 25% with the growth rate this year expected to be in the region of minus 5%.

The regime is under assault from all quarters. The most immediate threat comes in the form of Corazon Aquino, whose husband was murdered at Manila airport in August '83, on returning from exile. As Marcos' opponent in the election, she has great popular appeal. But should she win the election, there is no guarantee that she will win the count. Marcos and his cronies are seasoned election-fixers, the last being the sham following the lifting of ten years of martial law in '81. In the present campaign, the election overseers are all appointees of Marcos, and foreign observers have been banned from all polling stations on election day.

A more formidable opponent in the New People's Army, which is now the largest guerrilla organisation in the world. With up to 50,000 full and part time members, they control an expanding amount of rural territory.

HOMEGROWN

Their leftish politics, which are a homegrown mixture of populism and nationalism, are attracting increasing numbers of recruits. It is unlikely, however, that they will be able to directly confront the national army of 200,000 for some years yet. In the meantime, they are causing enormous headaches for the authorities with their lightning actions.

back over the coming period.

The attack on Militant is an attack on all socialists—not just within the Labour Party. Anyone who doubts this should look at the behaviour of Alistair Graham, right-wing leader of the Civil and Public Services Association, who urged his members to kick Militant out of office throughout the union itself.

But there are people in the Labour Party who are disgusted by Kinnock's behaviour. Tens of thousands have signed petitions condemning the witch-hunt. This shows a level of feeling that can be organised.

The alternative to Labour is to begin to build, among this minority, a revolutionary party basing itself on the idea that the only working class can change society in a socialist direction. Such a party must be independent of the Labour Party, building itself instead by intervening in the day to day struggles of workers. Because it is only in struggle that workers realise their own power as a class—relying on Labour governments condemns them to passivity.

The lessons of Liverpool and of Kinnock's witch-hunt must be learned and learned well. Socialist in Ireland who believe that progress can be made within the Labour Party here, should also take heed.

—DAVID McDONAGH

PARIS COMMUNE 1871

The

LOUIS NAPOLEON, or to give him his proper title, Emperor Napoleon III was the nephew of the Napoleon of Waterloo renowned Louis Napoleon's greatest claim to fame was that his ego and ambitions were outshone only by his incompetence.

In 1870, he declared war on the recently-united Germany. Under the leadership of Otto von Bismarck, the powerful Prussian military machine quickly and easily defeated the demoralised French armies. Prussian troops besieged and conquered Paris.

Patriotic Louis Napoleon fled to England, where he lived in exile of luxury until his death in 1873. Germany took back the province of Alsace and most of Lorraine. These were German speaking and rich in minerals and industries. France was ordered to pay 5 million francs in war reparations and German soldiers paraded through the streets of Paris. French national pride was at its lowest ebb.

On 4th September 1870, the people had risen, the Emperor fled and the Second Republic had been declared. Adolphe Thiers, the leader of the new bourgeois republican government announced early in 1871 that all rents and debts had to be paid immediately with interest. A moratorium on the payment of all rents, debts etc., had been instigated during the war. The already hard-pressed workers and poor of Paris simply couldn't pay. Disturbances and upheavals shook the capital and those that could, the very rich and the middle classes, streamed out of Paris to country residences.

On February 26 the mainly working class soldiers of the National Guard seized over 200 heavy cannon. By this stage Thiers, his government and followers had debunked to nearby Versailles. Thiers quickly realised that the growing workers' power, the "vive multitude" as he called them, had to be crushed. In the early hours of the morning of March 18 an attempt was made to recapture the cannons. A surprise attack by the troops of General Vinoy in the Montmartre area was initially successful but later repulsed by the re-grouped militia men of the National Guard.

The workers of the French capital rose and on the evening of March 18 the Paris Commune was declared.

WORKERS

But the elected delegates of the Paris Commune of 1871 were not wholly or largely proletarians. Only 21 of its members could be classed as genuine workers; another 30 were journalists, writers, painters and assorted intellectuals and 13 were office clerks and small artisans. However, most of the delegates did represent the interests of the working class and when compared with the revolution of 1848, almost all of the leaders had been drawn from the bourgeoisie, the founders of the Commune of 1871 were far more working class.

The two main political factions influencing the Commune were the Jacobins headed by Charles Delescluze and the Blanquists led by Auguste Blanqui. Blanqui had already spent over 25 years in prison and at the time of the Commune was held in prison by Thiers. The Blanquists were in the Anarchist tradition of Proudhon. Many of the most active and finest members of the Commune were members of the International Workingmen's Association, better known as the First International and followed Karl Marx. To give the Commune an even more

The organised working class suffers from a lack of independent political leadership. Despite this, 1985 saw the greatest wave of strikes ever in the country, including the virtual shutdown of large industrial areas in Manila in June. For genuine socialism to succeed Marcos, it will be necessary for the most militant sections of the class to break from the "legal" unions and opposition and organise at ground level.

Without this the immediate future of the country presents a depressing scenario. There is talk of the USA intervening — something approaching hysteria is smouldering in Washington for fear they'll lose their puppet. On the other hand, victory by the Aquino opposition will result, at best, in a bourgeois democracy, propped up by capitalist interests.

The country is ripe for radical change. As the Marcos election slogan ironically states: "Now more than ever".

—TOM O'DONOGHUE

first time that workers ruled

nationalist flavour many of its greatest participants were not French nationals. Indeed a lot of foreigners in the Commune were active members of the First International. The name of Leo Frankel a Hungarian Jew will always be associated with the Commune. The Poles, Jaroslaw Dombrowski and Walerj Wzoblewski were certainly two of the Commune's most courageous military strategists. Marx's friend Elizabeth Dimitrieff, a Russian exile, fought valiantly on the barricades. And there were many more.

What, then, was the Paris Commune? In his famous tract "The Civil War in France", Marx wrote: It was essentially a working class government, the produce of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour".

In other words, The Paris Commune was a new kind of state—a workers' state. The state is nothing but a machine by which one particular class dominates society. In capitalist society, the minority ruling class uses the state and its armed forces of violence and repression, to rule over the majority working class. But the state set up by the Paris Commune was one which imposed the will of the majority working class on the minority capitalist class. It was the first example of a "dictatorship of the proletariat".

And they soon showed that no more democratic form of government had ever been instigated than this dictatorship of the masses.

The regular army was abolished. Under the Commune a workers' militia carried out the functions of defence and policing. This militia was no professional standing army, cut off from and with authority over the rest of society. It was in fact the working class, armed to defend itself against counter-revolution.

Officials and delegates including judges of the Commune were elected by the workers of Paris, and subjected to immediate recall if they failed to carry out their mandate.

As Marx wrote: "Instead of deciding once in 3 or 6 years which member of the ruling class was to misrepresent the people in Parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people, constituted in Communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for the workmen and managers in his business. And it is well known that companies, like individuals, in matters of real business generally know how to put the right man in the right place, and if they for once made a mistake, to redress it promptly".

Thus the Commune created forms of government and administration never seen before, and taught profound lessons to revolutionary socialist about how the working class organises true democracy.

This democracy ensured that the laws passed by the Commune represented the wishes and the interests of the workers. The detested Rent Act was, of course, abolished. A three year moratorium was put on the payment of all debt obligations. Gambling was banned. The notorious pawnshops of Paris were forbidden to sell all pawned objects. A decree was passed limiting



Paris 1871, workers in power.

the salaries of all Government officials to 6,000 francs a year, which was roughly equivalent to a workman's wages. Lenin was to praise this step as marking "the break from a bourgeois democracy to the proletarian democracy".

The employers of Paris had long managed to reduce wages by levying fines upon their workers under every and any pretext. The Commune prohibited this practice, under penalty. In a similar move against the bosses, the Commune encouraged associations of workers to take over and run all the closed workshops and factories, whether they had been closed by the capitalist absconding or whether the boss had simply locked the workers out.

CHURCH RUN

In the short span of the Commune's life, huge advances were made in education system. Under Napoleon, one Parisian child in three got no formal education at all. Of those who did, more than half had to go to Church-run schools. Girls' education was even more under church control than boys'.

The Commune took significant steps to change the system radically towards a state funded system of compulsory education, free of clerical influence, with special attention being given to girls' education.

Early efforts were also made to help working women by establishing day nurseries near the factories.

On April 17, Marx had written to his friend Ludwig Kugelmann: "The struggle of the working class against the capitalist class and its state has entered upon a new phase with the struggle in Paris. Whatever the immediate results may be, a new point of departure of world historic importance has been gained."

Marx's prophetic words ring true down to the present day. The Commune remains an inspiration today. But we must be realistic and admit the Commune had many limitations and made some avoidable errors. Doubtless, most of these could have been resolved and made good, given time. But in Marx's words, time was not allowed to the Commune.

One limitation, for example, was that despite the enormous role played by Louise Michel and other women in the development and subsequent defence of the Commune and despite the advances made for women, universal suffrage meant only universal male suffrage!

From a purely pragmatic viewpoint many of the Commune's most damaging mistakes were of a military nature. By mid-March, at the time of the declaration of the Commune, the regular Army, because of the armistice terms, had been reduced to a single division. The National Guard having retained its arms plus over 200 heavy cannon, were by far the most powerful armed force in France!

Preoccupied with changes in their society and internal wrangling, the Communards failed to capitalise on their initial advantage. Commenting on the 1848 Revolution, Marx wrote: "the defensive is the death of every armed uprising; it is lost before it measures itself with its enemies."

The first military commander appointed by the Commune was Lullier, an inept drunkard who at one stage had to be forcibly restrained from throwing himself from a high window. The Communards delayed 13 precious days before moving against Thiers' army encamped at Versailles. When they finally did move against Thiers, the assault was a disaster.

Most of the assault troops were mercilessly slaughtered by the

What will it be like? Will it be worth the struggle? Is it possible? How will it happen and who will do it? These are questions that marxists are asked and ask themselves all the time about socialist revolution.

We have no blueprints. But we do have the history of the working class struggles and workers' revolutions to give us some idea of what the answers to those questions might be. For the early marxists and indeed for Marx himself, the example of the Paris Commune gave a vision which was indeed worth fighting for.

Here, Joe O'Bruidair looks at the background to the Paris Commune, the inspiration of its successes and the lessons of its failures.

Versailles forces, including Flourens and Duval, two of the Communes' ablest military leaders.

The extremely slow move of the Communards against Thiers was, in the estimation of both Marx and Lenin, one of the two cardinal errors committed by the Commune. The other was their failure to over-see to seize the Banque de France, for in its vaults lay over 2 millions worth of assets which could have provided the Commune with its most powerful weapon and hostage.

Marx said, "The whole of the French bourgeoisie would have brought pressure to bear on the Versailles government in favour of peace with the Commune".

P.O. Lissagaray, a member of the Commune and possibly its most famous chronicler used somewhat more colourful language about their failure to seize the Bank's assets: "Through it they held the genital organs of Versailles: they could laugh at its professional experience, at its arms. Without expending a man, the Commune had only to say to it: 'Come to terms or die'".

Perhaps Lenin summarised best the mistakes of the Commune in an article written for the anniversary of March 18, 1908:

MAGNANIMITY

"The proletariat stopped half way; instead of proceeding with the expropriation of the expropriators, it was carried away by the dreams of establishing supreme justice in the country . . . institutions such as the bank were not seized . . . the second error was the unnecessary magnanimity of the proletariat; instead of annihilating its enemies, it endeavoured to exercise moral influence on them; it did not attach the right value to the importance of purely military activity in Civil war, and instead of crowning its victory by a determined advance on Versailles, it heitated and gave time

Western perimeter of the wall at St. Cloud, 70,000 of them poured into the city. Western middle class districts were quickly overrun. The Prussians moved up 10,000 troops around most of the Eastern perimeter of Paris to block any possible attempt at escape by the Communards.

Fighting was bitter and grew even more intense as the defenders were pushed eastwards, in the eastern working class districts of Belleville, Montmartre and Menilmontant, the Communards made their last stand.

But here they were fighting on home ground, surrounded by a sympathetic population. But they could not, despite incredible heroism, stave off the inevitable. The remaining Communards finally capitulated on May 28, there was though a small group who managed to hold out for a day longer at Vincennes. Even people like de Goucourt were grudgingly forced to praise the heroism of the working class defenders.

Special mention must go to Paul Antoine Brunel, the Poles Dombrowski, who was killed, Wzoblewski and the anarchist Louise Michel. The atrocities perpetrated by MacMahon's troops shocked even members of the bourgeoisie. Today almost all historians agree that between 20,000 and 25,000 supporters of the Commune were massacred during the second siege. And in the aftermath of its fall thousands more were deported, especially to New Caledonia. Some managed to evade capture.

On May 29 Times of London was to write:

"The laws of war. They are mild and christian compared with the inhuman laws of revenge under which the Versailles troops have been shooting, bayoneting, ripping up prisoners, women and children during the last six days. So far as we can recollect there has been nothing like it in history . . ."

But the retribution and fatalities inflicted on the people of Paris is indeed typical of all such occasions when the masses of humanity have in an attempt to seize power from their "masters".

In 1871 after the defeat of the Commune Marx wrote prophetically "There can be neither peace nor truce possible between the working men of France and the appropriators of their produce... the battle must break out again and again in ever growing dimensions . . ."

In 1917 when Lenin had to escape to Finland his final exile, he was only able to bring two books, and one of them was Marx's "The Civil War in France". It most certainly merits a read.

VICTORIOUS

The echoes and ripples set up by the Paris Commune, its mistakes as well as its successes, have been an inspiration to socialists right down to the present day. An old Bolshevik commented after the Civil war in Russia, "In those grave moments we said, 'Look, workers, at the example of the Paris Communards and know that if we are defeated, our bourgeoisie will treat us a hundred times worse'. The example of the Paris Commune inspired us and we were victorious".

After the massacres, many bourgeois commentators asked why it was the people of Paris, men women and children were willing to die on the barricades rather than see the Commune smashed. The answer lies in what the Commune was and did for them.

The Parisian workers had stormed heaven. Women and men revealed, for a moment, a glimpse of human potentialities, of human freedom. Frederick Engels pointed out that most reformists are filled with terror at the words, dictatorship of the Proletariat. Like him, we say do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."

Why the Northern State



The Anglo-Irish deal has been greeted as "the solution to the Northern Ireland problem". The British and Irish ruling classes are sure that it can work, provided the Unionists can be won over. But the Hillsborough Agreement is only the latest in a series of "initiatives" designed to reform the Northern Ireland state and bring it into line with "normal" western democracies. Here, GORETTI HORGAN looks at why this deal or any other can't work—why the Six County state cannot be reformed but must be smashed.

FROM THE "O'Neill policy" of 1968 which promised some small improvement in the lot of Catholics in the Six Counties, through the "Downing Street Declaration" of 1969 which abolished the notorious B-Specials appointed an Ombudsman and initiated a points system for the allocation of houses, to the Sunningdale Agreement of 1974 which instituted formal power-sharing between moderate Unionists, the SDLP and Alliance, down to today's Anglo Irish deal, the rulers of both Britain and the 26 Counties have been offering the carrot and the stick to anti-unionists North and South.

The carrot of an end to discrimination and more democratic government has never materialised while the stick of repression has grown stronger and more efficient.

Orangeism rules OK

The man who is supposed to be the saviour of the Northern nationalists under the new Agreement—Peter Barry—has admitted that the 26 County government is about to sign the International Convention against "Terrorism". This means that anti-unionists wanted in the North for political offences will no longer be able to live safely in the South.

To understand why it is that these deals never work, we must look back in history to the beginnings of Orangeism and of loyalist bigotry.

AMERICA

The end of the eighteenth century, brought about a new emerging class—the capitalist or bourgeois class. Like their fellow would be capitalists in France, America and all over the world, they wanted to control industry in their own country and, in particular, to control the home market. Like the Americans, this meant abolishing the restrictions placed on Irish trade and industry by the imperial British parliament.

Industry in the 32 counties of Ireland was affected by these restrictions but it was Ulster, with its thriving linen industry that was most severely hit—

precisely because industry there was more developed. Spurred on by the example of the American colonists in their War of Independence, a movement was formed to demand independence from Britain.

The most militant member of the emerging class was Theobald Wolfe Tone—"the father of Irish Republicanism". In the United Irishmen, Tone forged an alliance between the Protestant industrialists of Belfast, the Protestant poor who worked in those industries, and the mass of poverty stricken Catholic peasants who supported Tone's movement simply because it was "agin the landlords".

But the United Irishmen never had the support of the majority of Ulster Protestants. Antagonism between Catholic and Protestant peasants was fierce because of competition for land. In 1795 the Orange Order was formed as a militant Protestant organisation dedicated to preserving Protestant supremacy, and it immediately began driving Catholics out of parts of North Armagh and South Tyrone.

RESTRICTIONS

The failure of Tone's '98 Rising was followed by the Act of Union and the abolition of all formal restrictions on Irish trade. This spelt disaster for the new and struggling industries of the South and West of Ireland; they were totally destroyed, unable to compete with the mass produced goods coming from Britain. The robbery of huge rents from the countryside meant that capital could not be accumulated to invest in industry. The Southern part of this island became an out-farm to supply cheap food to the working class of Britain and high rent to now-declining landlord class. In this situation, ideas of nationalism and of separation from Britain grew among those whose industries were destroyed.

SHIPBUILDING

However, Ulster and especially Belfast prospered under the Union. Through a series of moves from Linen to mechanised cotton production, back to linen and then to engineering and eventually shipbuilding, Belfast became a major industrial city like Birmingham or Manchester.

The industries depended on links with the British empire for markets, credit and raw materials.

A whole section of the Irish capitalist class now had no interest in separation from Britain. On the contrary, the prosperity of the Protestant businessmen of Belfast and the surrounding counties was dependent on union with Britain. They now defended that union—no longer nationalists but Unionists.

Towards the end of the last century, then, the Home Rule issue brought these different capitalist interests in the country to a head. The smashing of the Land League left the struggle against British rule squarely in the hands of those who wanted Home Rule with tariffs to build

up native Irish industry. There was a growing material reason for this insistence by the Southern middle class on protectionism.

Between 1870 and 1888 Irish agricultural output had declined by a quarter. Having reduced the Southern part of the country to an agrarian economy, British imperialism was now looking elsewhere for its food. In the early 1900s the cry for tariffs on all imports was taken up and shouted even louder by Sinn Fein and IRB.

PRIVILEGES

The Unionist bosses could now show their workforce that there was a direct threat to their material interests. Protestant workers flocked into the Orange Order and committed themselves to guaranteeing their privileges.

The Unionist bosses cemented the Orange link and secured the allegiance of Protestant workers

workers! But Protestant workers did, occasionally break out of the prison of Orangeism.

In 1907 and again in 1919 Protestant and Catholic workers fought side by side in General Strikes, for their class interests against the bosses.

But given the Catholic, conservative nature of the independence movement developing in the South, it was easy for Unionist bosses to "play the Orange card" and insist that only Protestants could be trusted to remain loyal.

Both strikes were followed by sectarian riots. In 1920, over 10,000 workers were driven from their jobs in the shipyards and engineering industry of Belfast.

They were not all Catholics. Protestant socialists and union militants were included.

Thus, the lack of any socialist content in the Republican movement and the resulting ease

THE SAME OLD STORY

IN SPITE of the much heralded reforms in the Six Counties local government, little has in fact changed over the last 15 years. For example, a points system for the allocation of houses was introduced but 23% of dwellings in Catholic West Belfast are still over-crowded.

The B Specials may have been disbanded but the UDR have shown themselves equally vicious successors. And recent events have shown that assurances in the Anglo Irish Deal about controlling them were nothing but empty talk.

Internment too has gone. It has been replaced by the Diplock Courts, the system of "internment by remand" and of course the Supergrasses.

The main function of the Fair Employment Agency seems to be to inform us of the continuing massive levels of job discrimination against Catholics. A recent study carried out for the FEA by the Economics Department of Queens University indicated that even multi-national firms tended to locate new factories in Protestant areas.

Another report which is about to be published shows that discrimination is not confined to manufacturing but affects the service industries too. The financial sector has been one of the few growth areas in the North in the last 5 years. Yet the FEA report shows that building Societies discriminate massively against Catholics at

all levels. Taken together, the 9 Societies investigated employed 78% Protestant and only 17% Catholics. The Catholic percentage of the workforce in some Societies was as low as 4% and the overall percentage of Catholics working in Building Societies was very much increased by the fact that the two national building societies—The Irish Permanent and the Nationwide—employ 40 - 46% Catholics.

The only place that Catholics are well represented is on the dole queues and there too things are as bad, in fact worse, than ever.

Cambridge economist Bob Rowthorn, writing in a recent issue of "Fortnight" magazine, found that not only are there more than twice as many Catholics unemployed as Protestants, but that the sectarian gap is continuing to widen.

Thus, in 1971 the male unemployment rate for Catholics was 17.3% as compared to 6% for Protestants. By 1981 it was 30.2% for Catholics and 12.5% for Protestants. This means that in those 10 years the unemployment rate for Catholics increased by 12.9%, while for Protestants the increase was 5.8%. In some areas the disparity is far greater. In Cookstown for example 43% of Catholics are unemployed, 14% of Protestants. In Antrim 24.5% of Catholics, 10.5% of Protestants and in Belfast 31.4% Catholics are on the dole compared to 16% Protestants.

Life for Catholic workers in the North is, it seems, nothing but the same old story.

by a systematic policy of discrimination against Catholics which left the Protestants with a virtual monopoly of the well-paid skilled trades, especially in the shipbuilding and engineering industry.

As early as 1886 Harland and Wolff employed only 225 Catholics out of 3,000 men (7½%). In 1911, the proportion remained the same. The situation was easily like this as recruitment was in the hands of the Orange foremen. One whole district of the Belfast Orange Lodge was actually made up of shipyard

with which the Unionist bosses kept Protestant workers within Orangeism meant that in 1920-22 when the future shape of Ireland was being negotiated, the only Irish interests being considered were those of Northern capitalism and emerging Southern capitalism. These interests, with the ready agreement of Britain, partitioned the country. And as Connolly had predicted, the Orange state was born in a carnival of reaction on both sides of the border.

Bloody Sunday 1971

Nor

ONCE THE Northern state was established, the Unionists set about organising affairs in such way as to guarantee, they thought, that their power could not be broken. Orange power was a reality in many parts of Northern Ireland. Now, with blessing of the British, they intended to build the Orange machine into the structure of the state.

Through the Unionist party the Order controlled local government authorities in Protestant areas. By gerrymandering of constituency boundaries and abolition of PR, soon meant almost every council hitherto controlled by Catholics, pass into Unionist hands. Even constituencies like Omagh and Cookstown, Strabane and Derry City which had considerable Catholic majorities, were arranged to return Unionist majorities.

Control of the Councils gave the Unionist party, the ability to deliver some sense of privilege to the Protestant masses.

Jobs and houses are what the working class people need more than anything else, and local authorities had jobs and houses to distribute. The success of the Unionist party in putting the own supporters into key local government jobs was shown in a 1957 study of County Council of administrative officers; Tyrone (55.3% Catholic) had Protestant and 6 Catholic officers; Armagh (46.5% Catholic) had 47 Protestant and 3 Catholic officers. Fermanagh (54.3% Catholic) had 60 Protestant and 6 Catholic officers—and so on and on.

Clearly, Catholics would have to be "discouraged" from attempting to change the situation. So the Orange machine set about arming itself. By October 1922 the armed wing of the Orange



The State must be smashed

No reforms

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Clearly, Catholics would have to be "discouraged" from attempting to change the situation. So the Orange machine set about arming itself. By October 1920 the armed wing of the Orange

Order, the Ulster Volunteer Force, was constituted by Westminster as a Special Constabulary. One third of the RUC was subsequently recruited directly from the Specials.

The appointment of judges and magistrates was similarly made on a sectarian-political basis. In every decade since partition, the Unionists have had to use internment, repression and special police to defend the existence of their state. The Orange bosses knew how to consolidate their position and British imperialism aided and abetted them.

SUPPORTERS

But certainly the main weapon in that consolidation was the Unionist ability to deprive Catholics of jobs and houses and give them to their Protestant supporters as a way of keeping them loyal. In 1951, Derry City Council employed 206 non-manual workers of whom only 16 were Catholic. In Tyrone there were 156 non-manual workers with only 18 Catholics. All over the Six Counties of a total of 1095 non-manual government employees, only 130 or 12% were Catholics—although Catholics made up 34% of the population. The situation was the same, and often worse, in the private sector. Even in 1970 there were only about 400 Catholics among the 10,000 workers at Harland and Wolff. Catholics were a tiny minority even in Mackies and the Sirocco Engineering works although both these firms were located in Catholic ghettos.

This discrimination continued right up to 1969. For example in that year, Fermanagh Co. Education Committee employed

77 school bus drivers. In Fermanagh half the people are Catholics—but only 3 of the 77 drivers!

The housing allocation scheme was where discrimination became most blatant. The bottom line in the allocation of houses by the gerrymandered Unionist councils was to avoid allocating houses to Catholics, if at all possible. One main reason for this was that only householders could vote. To give someone a house then, was to give them a vote and the Unionist Party with its carefully gerrymandered constituencies had to be careful to whom it gave votes.

As a result no houses at all were built by any of the three Fermanagh Rural Councils between 1921 and 1945. After 1945 they started to build and by 1967 had built 1,048 houses of which 195 or 18% went to Catholics, although Catholics were in a majority and, being poorer were in more need of housing.

In Derry City, Catholics had an overwhelming electoral majority in the South Ward. So any Catholics were only given houses and therefore votes, in the South Ward—since it would make no difference to their number on the Council. When the Council ran out of building land in the South Ward, they simply stopped building houses.

DOGMA

This discrimination against Catholics was not the result of some Unionist dogma, the Virgin Mary or the transubstantiation of bread and wine. They were anti-Catholic because they wanted to stay in power and thereby to preserve the economic position of their class. The Catholics had to be browbeaten into submission in order that the state could exist. The Protestant lower orders had to be bought off by the marginal



privileges accruing from Catholic second class citizenship.

Today much has changed. Socialist Worker has, in recent months, outlined the changed nature of British interests in this island. With the decline of the Northern industries and the growth of the Southern economy, the South had economically, become more important than the North. The new multi-national firms that set up in the North—Du Pont, ICI, Courtaulds etc., weren't interested in people's religion, were outside of the Orange machine. Accommodation of the new economic powers in the North and recognition of the new balance of forces in North-South-British relations were all demanded that something would have to be done about the way Northern Catholics were being treated by their Protestant rulers.

But Britain soon found that the state structure it had relied on for 50 years had a life of its own. The machine existed to discriminate and gerrymander. It had been created in order to protect Protestant business and landed interests and that was the only way it could deliver that protection. If it could not deliver minor privileges to the Protestant masses it could not deliver the Protestant masses on polling day.

The Orange machine was Northern Ireland. To attack it or attempt to take away its power was to weaken the state itself.

REMOVED

Yet faced with a militant Civil Rights Movement and then with the growth of the Provos, British imperialism had to rely more and more on that state. Direct Rule removed the direct hold of the Orange Order on that state machine, but the machine—the Orange machine—remained intact.

And it is the existence of that Orange state machine which is the major reason that the Anglo Irish Deal or even for that matter, Harold McCusker's Tripartite Conference cannot succeed. Most of these "initiatives" seem attractive to the oppressed Catholic minority at first—after all, anything is better than what they've got—but in the long run the deals can't work. They can't work because the Orange state is built on the system of discrimination against Catholic workers which gives the Unionist bosses the ability to win the allegiance of Protestant workers.

Such a state cannot be reformed. The repression of, and discrimination against Catholic workers is built into the state. For repression and discrimination to be ended, the state must be smashed. And the only way the Orange state can be smashed by the revolutionary overthrow of the parasite class whose interests it represents.

MARXIS MADE

by John Molyneux

THE CAPITALIST class has a love-hate relationship with crime, as can be seen from glances at the capitalist media.

The newspapers dutifully condemn crime but they also delight in crime stories. 'Sex Monster', 'The Beast', and 'Crime Rate Soars' are among Fleet Street's favourite headlines.

TV and films are the same. There must be a thousand cops and robbers shows for every film or play dealing with a strike (the capitalists are unequivocally opposed to this).

Nor is this just a matter of boosting sales and chasing ratings. The ambivalence reflects deep-rooted class interests.

On the one hand the ruling class is officially, and in a sense genuinely, opposed to crime.

It needs the 'rule of law' to prevent the poor helping themselves to the property of the rich who do not appreciate being arbitrarily deprived of their Rolls Royces and diamond tiaras, even if they are insured.

Moreover, the smooth running of capitalism requires a degree of order in its business transactions, though this does not prevent numerous capitalists and capitalist officials committing all sorts of crimes.

Anti-social

On the other hand, the ruling class knows that crime does not really threaten it—a class cannot be dispossessed by any number of individual robberies—and it knows that it reaps considerable benefits from the existence of crime.

Every time the state is seen to deal with a crime it reinforces its claims to represent the general good of society against anti-social elements—to be the defender of the weak against the strong—and masks its essential function of defending the rich against the poor.

There is nothing like a real or imaginary crime wave for giving the state an excuse to strengthen its repressive powers.

There is nothing like the 'law-and-order' issue for electing right wing governments and putting 'moderate' and 'soft' left-

'CRIME AND TO E

ists on the defensive.

For the capitalists, plays the same role external 'enemy'. If did not exist it would necessary to invent i

But the ruling need have no fear that score, for the italist system pro crime like running duces sweat. economy based competition, gr exploitation and ation cannot otherwise.

Engels summed u matter in a speech in

'Present day societ said, 'which breeds hc between the individual and everyone else, produces a social war against all which they in individual cases as a brutal, barbarously lent form—that of cr

Consequently, all politicians' speeches p ising a crackdown on are so much hot air. italist governments ca more end crime than can end capitalism.

But what of socialis the speech quoted a Engels also maintained a socialist society v 'put an axe to the ro crime'.

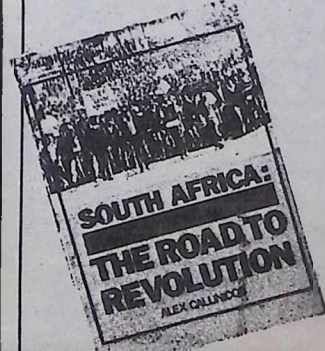
To many this might a far-fetched claim, provided we understand 'socialism' what Marx Engels understood b and don't confuse it Russian-type state cap ism masquerading as sc ism, then it is not har see how crime could abolished.

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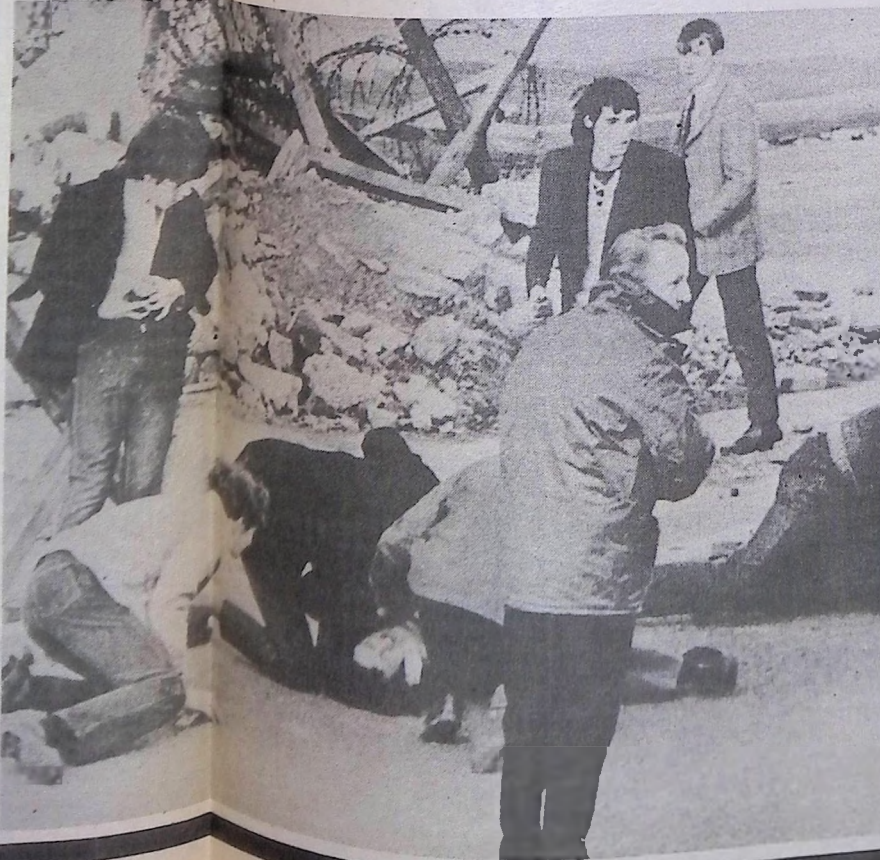
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Available at 8 from SWM, P Dublin 8



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Reforms

Order, the Ulster Volunteer Force, was constituted by Westminster as a Special Constabulary. One third of the RUC was subsequently recruited directly from the Specials.

The appointment of judges and magistrates was similarly made on a sectarian-political basis. In every decade since partition, the Unionists have had to use internment, repression and special police to defend the existence of their state. The Orange bosses knew how to consolidate their position and British imperialism aided and abetted them.

SUPPORTERS

But certainly the main weapon in that consolidation was the Unionist ability to deprive Catholics of jobs and houses and give them to their Protestant supporters as a way of keeping them loyal. In 1951, Derry City Council employed 206 non-manual workers of whom only 16 were Catholic. In Tyrone there were 156 non-manual workers with only 18 Catholics. All over the Six Counties of a total of 1995 non-manual government employees, only 130 or 12% were Catholics—although Catholics made up 34% of the population. The situation was the same, and often worse, in the private sector. Even in 1970 there were only about 400 Catholics among the 10,000 workers at Harland and Wolff. Catholics were a tiny minority even in Mackies and the Sirocco Engineering works although both these firms were located in Catholic ghettos.

This discrimination continued right up to 1969. For example in that year, Fermanagh Co. Education Committee employed

77 school bus drivers. In Fermanagh half the people are Catholics—but only 3 of the 77 drivers!

The housing allocation scheme was where discrimination became most blatant. The bottom line in the allocation of houses by the gerrymandered Unionist councils was to avoid allocating houses to Catholics, if at all possible. One main reason for this was that only householders could vote. To give someone a house then, was to give them a vote and the Unionist Party with its carefully gerrymandered constituencies had to be careful to whom it gave votes.

As a result no houses at all were built by any of the three Fermanagh Rural Councils between 1921 and 1945. After 1945 they started to build and by 1967 had built 1,048 houses of which 195 or 18% went to Catholics, although Catholics were in a majority and, being poorer were in more need of rehousing.

In Derry City, Catholics had an overwhelming electoral majority in the South Ward. So any Catholics were only given houses and therefore votes, in the South Ward—since it would make no difference to their number on the Council. When the Council ran out of building land in the South Ward, they simply stopped building houses.

DOGMA

This discrimination against Catholics was not the result of some Unionist dogma, the Virgin Mary or the transubstantiation of bread and wine. They were anti-Catholic because they wanted to stay in power and thereby to preserve the economic position of their class. The Catholics had to be browbeaten into submission in order that the state could exist. The Protestant lower orders had to be bought off by the marginal



privileges accruing from Catholic second class citizenship.

Today much has changed. Socialist Worker has, in recent months, outlined the changed nature of British interests in this island. With the decline of the Northern industries and the growth of the Southern economy, the South had economically, become more important than the North. The new multi-national firms that set up in the North—Du Pont, ICI, Courtaulds etc., weren't interested in people's religion, were outside of the Orange machine. Accommodation of the new economic powers in the North and recognition of the new balance of forces in North-South-British relations were all demanded that something would have to be done about the way Northern Catholics were being treated by their Protestant rulers.

But Britain soon found that the state structure it had relied on for 50 years had a life of its own. The machine existed to discriminate and gerrymander. It had been created in order to protect Protestant business and landed interests and that was the only way it could deliver that protection. If it could not deliver minor privileges to the Protestant masses it could not deliver the Protestant masses on polling day.

The Orange machine was Northern Ireland. To attack it or attempt to take away its power was to weaken the state itself.

REMOVED

Yet faced with a militant Civil Rights Movement and then with the growth of the Provos, British imperialism had to rely more and more on that state. Direct Rule removed the direct hold of the Orange Order on that state machine, but the machine—the Orange machine—remained intact.

And it is the existence of that Orange state machine which is the major reason that the Anglo Irish Deal or even for that matter, Harold McCusker's Tripartite Conference cannot succeed. Most of these "initiatives" seem attractive to the oppressed Catholic minority at first—after all, anything is better than what they've got—but in the long run the deals can't work. They can't work because the Orange state is built on the system of discrimination against Catholic workers which gives the Unionist bosses the ability to win the allegiance of Protestant workers.

Such a state cannot be reformed. The repression of, and discrimination against Catholic workers is built into the state. For repression and discrimination to be ended, the state must be smashed. And the only way the Orange state can be smashed by the revolutionary overthrow of the parasite class whose interests it represents.

MARXISM MADE EASY

by John Molyneux

THE CAPITALIST class has a love-hate relationship with crime, as can be seen from glances at the capitalist media.

The newspapers dutifully condemn crime but they also delight in crime stories. 'Sex Monster', 'The Beast', and 'Crime Rate Soars' are among Fleet Street's favourite headlines.

TV and films are the same. There must be a thousand cops and robbers shows for every film or play dealing with a strike (the capitalists are unequivocally opposed to this).

Nor is this just a matter of boosting sales and chasing ratings. The ambivalence reflects deep-rooted class interests.

On the one hand the ruling class is officially, and in a sense genuinely, opposed to crime.

It needs the 'rule of law' to prevent the poor helping themselves to the property of the rich who do not appreciate being arbitrarily deprived of their Rolls Royces and diamond tiaras, even if they are insured.

Moreover, the smooth running of capitalism requires a degree of order in its business transactions, though this does not prevent numerous capitalists and capitalist officials committing all sorts of crimes.

Anti-social

On the other hand, the ruling class knows that crime does not really threaten it—a class cannot be dispossessed by any number of individual robberies—and it knows that it reaps considerable benefits from the existence of crime.

Every time the state is seen to deal with a crime it reinforces its claims to represent the general good of society against anti-social elements—to be the defender of the weak against the strong—and masks its essential function of defending the rich against the poor.

There is nothing like a real or imaginary crime wave for giving the state an excuse to strengthen its repressive powers.

There is nothing like the 'law-and-order' issue for electing right wing governments and putting 'moderate' and 'soft' left-

'CRIME' AND HOW TO END IT

ists on the defensive.

For the capitalists, crime plays the same role as the external 'enemy'. If crime did not exist it would be necessary to invent it.

But the ruling class need have no fears on that score, for the capitalist system produces crime like running produces sweat. An economy based on competition, greed, exploitation and alienation cannot do otherwise.

Engels summed up the matter in a speech in 1845.

'Present day society', he said, 'which breeds hostility between the individual man and everyone else, thus produces a social war of all against all which inevitably in individual cases assumes a brutal, barbarously violent form—that of crime.'

Consequently, all those politicians' speeches promising a crackdown on crime are so much hot air. Capitalist governments can no more end crime than they can end capitalism.

But what of socialism? In the speech quoted above Engels also maintained that a socialist society would 'put an axe to the root of crime'.

To many this might seem a far-fetched claim. But provided we understand by 'socialism' what Marx and Engels understood by it, and don't confuse it with Russian-type state capitalism masquerading as socialism, then it is not hard to see how crime could be abolished.

A fully socialist society, in the Marxist sense, would be a society in which there was an abundance of the necessities of life (quite within reach of modern technology), and in which goods were distributed according to need—that is, truly equally.

In such a society, economic crime would become progressively pointless and impossible.

Assume, for example, that everyone wanting a car could have one supplied

free and that all cars were designed for use, not prestige or status.

There would then be no reason to steal cars—they couldn't be sold—and if some eccentric wanted to accumulate cars for personal use it would both be glaringly obvious and not matter much.

Alternatively, assume that cars are discontinued and that instead there is a free and comprehensive public transport system which takes everyone wherever they want to go. Again, the opportunity and motive for crime would disappear.

Proportion

Socialism would mean that eventually all goods and services would be put on this kind of footing.

This leaves crimes against the person, committed not from economic motives but from anger, passion, jealousy, bitterness, etc.—crimes such as murder, rape and assault.

Even today these are only a tiny proportion of crimes and they too have social roots—roots socialism will put an axe to.

Again let's take an example. At present one of the main causes and arenas of such crime is the restrictive capitalist family, which binds people—through social pressure and economic dependency—in relationships they find intolerable.

Socialism will abolish this oppressive family by spreading the responsibility for child care and housework and cutting all ties of dependency.

People will be free to live, or not live, with who they want.

In fact socialism will humanise and liberate all personal relationships. This cannot help, at the very least, but greatly reduce all crimes against the person.

The conclusion is simple. The only real fight against crime is the fight against capitalism—itsself, the biggest crime of all.

Now available...

...a new pamphlet on South Africa by Alex Callinicos, which looks not just at the apartheid system and at how it fits into the world economic order, but asks: Can apartheid be removed peacefully? If revolution is inevitable, what force will make it?

Available at 85p post free from SWM, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8



ANALYSIS

Who are the real terrorists?

"LIBYANS!" shouts the boy in the film "Back to the Future" as gunmen burst into the laboratory, spraying bullets everywhere. "Gadhafi: God-father of Evil" said the front cover of the ruling class Economist magazine. No doubt about it, if anyone shoots anyone anywhere in the world, Reagan and the media are likely to blame Libya.

How did Libya get this reputation by which it has replaced the dreaded Russians as the "threat to freedom and democracy"?

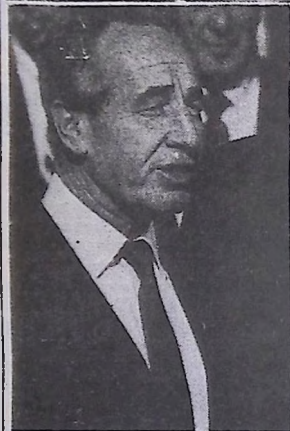
Colonel Gadhafi has been unpopular among the US ruling class ever since 1969 when he led the coup to overthrow the corrupt King Idris. Idris had squandered millions of dollars brought in by Libya's huge oilfields and let most of it go out of the country and into the accounts mainly American multinational oil companies.

Gadhafi immediately nationalised much of the oil industry and started to put the oil millions to better use. Houses, hospitals and schools were built. Irrigation projects were started to make farming more productive. Factories to allow Libya itself to produce many of the goods it's backward economy had been forced to import.

ISLAMIC

All in all, Libya under Gadhafi is an immeasurable a better place to live for the mass of the people. Gadhafi is a very popular leader. Anyone who has been to Libya will tell you of people in shops and cafes asking with visible pride "Have you seen our new school?" or hospital, or bridge, or road.

In spite of the grinding sexism of the Islamic tradition, women and girls in Libya are educated to the same level as men, work normally, are in the armed forces and do not



Left, Israel's Peres. Above, aftermath of Israel's Tunis raid. Right, PLO's Arafat and Abbas.

The "Peoples Congresses" mass meetings of which all Libyans are automatically members and which are supposed to make all the decisions about the direction of Libyan society did not develop spontaneously as an expression of mass democracy.

The idea for them came from above—from Gadhafi. And the low level of attendance at most "Basic" (or local) Congress meetings shows how little this supposed expression of mass democracy means most to most workers and farmers. Nor are all options available up for discussion at the Congresses. The falling price of oil has caused an economic crisis because of the huge foreign debt. But the only option presented to the Peoples Congresses to tackle the crisis was that of austerity measures—cut backs in public

wear the veil—altogether their position is far better than in any other Arab country.

However, in spite of talk of "the government of the masses" Libya far from being socialist is little more than a popular dictatorship. Although production is co-operatively managed and the workers have more say about working conditions than in most countries, they do not control the means of production. They do not decide what to produce or what is to be done with the fruits of their labour.



services, education and building programmes. The option of refusing to pay the international bankers was not even considered.

IMPROVEMENTS

But it is not the massive improvements in the living standards of the mass of people in Libya that makes it so hated by the ruling classes of most of the world, but especially of America and Britain. Other third world countries have achieved the same effect through their national revolutions. What Reagan hates so much about Libya is its continuing and consistent support for the cause of the Palestinians.

When Reagan talks of Libya harbouring, training and arming "international terrorists" he means that Libya welcomes the Palestinian fighters who have nowhere else to go. And they have nowhere else to go because of the policy of genocide which the Israelis have carried out against Palestinians for forty years now—with the backing of the US and British governments.

It isn't Libya that forced over a million Palestinians from their homes at gun point and terrorised over a million men, women and children into fleeing their country and trying to eke out a living in a series of refugee camps. That campaign of terror was carried out by the Zionists of Israel with US backing—and Reagan has the cheek to call Gadhafi a terrorist.

Not content with driving the Palestinians from their home-land, Israel has hounded Palestinians in every Arab country in which they have taken refuge. Last October the

Israeli airforce launched a full-fledged air attack on PLO Headquarters in Tunis. 90 Palestinians and Tunisians were killed—20 of them civilians. Yet no cries of "international terrorists" went up about this.

In 1982, Israel launched a full scale invasion of Lebanon. Their target was the 100,000 Palestinian refugees. Since then the Israeli military has entered into what is virtually a full scale war with the majority Muslim population of Lebanon.

In September 1982, Israeli backed militia men sealed off the Beirut refugee camps off Sabra and Chatila, then went in and brutally slaughtered thousands of men, women and little children. The world was shocked and repulsed but no-one suggested sanctions against Israel for an act which would not even be contemplated by those whose Israel's friends like to call terrorists.

In the face of these attacks by the Israeli military machine, backed by the world's most powerful country, what are Palestinians to do?

Some Palestinians have decided to hit back and use similar methods to those Israel have used against them for over 40 years. It is not surprising that the US is also seen as an enemy or that Libya is seen as their only true friend.

Other Arab states are supposed to support the Palestinians, yet time after time, country after country, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia—they have all turned their backs on the PLO.

They condemn this act, regret that one and faced with Israeli-US military might, allow the whole sale massacre of Palestinians or else turn them out of their countries.

Libya alone continues to give unconditional support to the PLO and to welcome the so-called terrorists. In spite of the international pressure in

the weeks following the Vienna and Rome airport killings, Gadhafi came out loud and clear "We support the PLO and we will continue to give safe haven to its fighters".

Oddly enough, although the tactic of hi-jacking aircraft is always blamed on the Palestinians, it was the Israelis themselves that started the practice of taking over civilian airlines.

In 1954, the Israeli secret service took control of a Syrian airliner and forced it to land in Israel. In 1968, the same forces destroyed the fleet of Middle East Airlines at Beirut Airport, although at that time Lebanon was at peace with Israel. In 1973 an Iraqi airliner was forced to land in Israel in an attempt to capture a leading Palestinian who was believed to be on board.

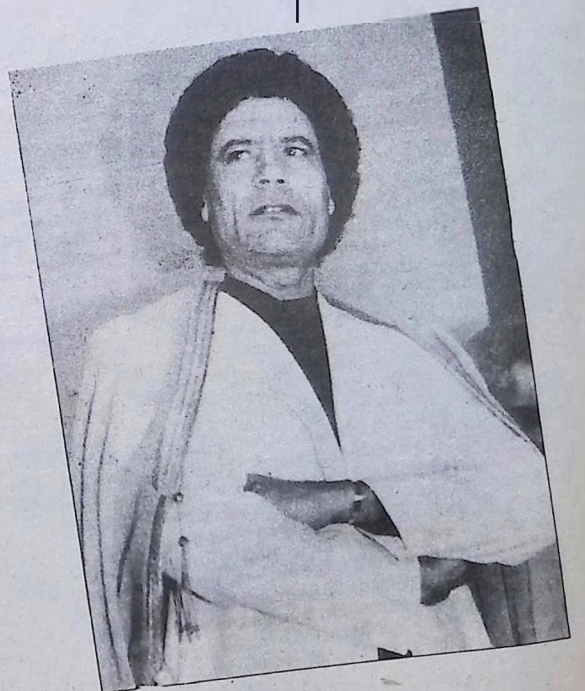
OPERATIONS

Of course, these were minor operations compared to Israel's usual actions of invading and occupying Arab countries.

The pages of Socialist Worker have regularly carried articles explaining the limitations of the armed struggle and the need instead to organise and agitate among the mass of the working class.

But, our first role as socialists is to argue against Reagan's claims to be the defender of "freedom and democracy" and against the hysteria launched against Libya and the Palestinians in the media.

Against the hysterical hype of the media we must point out that the world's real terrorists are those of the actual actual power—through their nuclear weapons, armies and police forces—to terrorise the mass of humanity, often leaving little option for those oppressed by that terror to retaliate by whatever means they can.



Colonel Gadhafi



Israel still holds hundreds of Palestinians in camps like this one. Reagan's posturing is sheer hypocrisy.

NEWS FROM SWM/LETTERS

LETTERS

Write to PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

SF can beat Brits

FIRST of all I would like to congratulate your paper on the fine work you are doing. It certainly is good to see a socialist movement in this country that doesn't find any problem in supporting the armed struggle in the Six Counties. And not like the so-called Labour Party and the Workers' Party who condemn it because it is the popular thing to do and it allows the easy way out, or so they think.

I agree with you when you say that the Workers' Party will do anything to get to power fast. But I would hate to be the one to break the news to them.

However I would like to make a few points about your article - Marxism made Easy - and what you said about the politics of the Republican Movement. First of all you say Socialism cannot come about until British imperialism is removed. And then you say the IRA cannot defeat the British army. There are two points I would like to make on that.

First, if British imperialism must be removed it will hardly go of its own accord without opposition, and who are giving the British the only and real opposition in the North? The IRA know only too well that they can never defeat the British army but they also know they CAN defeat the British government with constant military and political pressure. That is why it's vital for true socialist movements like your own to continue to support the armed struggle.

The second point I'd like to make is about the all class reliance the IRA depend on for support. You must admit that the liberating war that is in progress in the North is unique as it cannot be compared to any other country in the world even South Africa, although there are similarities. It is the Nationalist population versus everyone else. They are harassed, imprisoned, murdered day in, day out and this is the foremost issue with them at all times. So for someone who knows that the British connection is the cause of all their problems and to break that connection their problems will cease - at least their immediate ones - then it would be suicide for the IRA to ignore the People's need to hold on to their National Identity. And wasn't it James Connolly, the father of Irish Socialism, who said: "to be an internationalist you must first be a Nationalist".

Let me give an example of the need of Northern Nationalists to cling to their identity. If you were made redundant and had no Social Welfare or other income and your children were on the verge of starving, you would know in your own mind that the cause of your problem is unemployment and if you had a job you could get money to buy food. But your children wouldn't be interested in excuses about jobs or the like. All they would want is a meal on the table in front of them. Later, when you had fed them and explained why you got into your predicament in the first place, then I think they would be more likely to understand.

Having said that, it should also be realised that while the Republican Movement do not turn away support from people with capitalist leanings, the vast majority of their supporters are progressive people. In the Assembly elections two years ago and the local elections this year, the trend showed that Sinn Fein did not take away support from the right wing SDLP. But what they did do was capture the potential young voters who might otherwise have voted for the SDLP. You might have seen the SDLP Conference on the TV news recently. There was hardly a person under the age of thirty there and the amount of women present was few and far between. Contrast this with the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis and you would get my point.

Part of Sinn Fein's success is their involvement in community work. This is something the SDLP never got involved in. But they are learning by their mistakes and are now getting involved. But the real

reason for Sinn Fein's success is their open opposition to the British rule of Ireland.

When the Brighton Bomb went off and nearly wiped out the British Government it coincided with the miners' strike. The workers of Britain had no difficulty in identifying with the IRA because they realised they had a common enemy. Likewise, three years ago when the black youth of Liverpool took to the streets against the unemployment and living standards they had to bear, they were heard marching down their streets shouting the slogan "We are the Black IRA". They too recognised they share a common enemy who harass, murder and practice racism and sectarianism against them. Surely people living under such conditions can see who the capitalists are and who the socialists are and who's on their

Party needed

THE reason for revolutionary socialists to make a distinction between Trade Unions and political parties is of vital importance. The old ideas that trade unions if powerful enough can overthrow capitalism still prevail.

The failure of working class political parties to ever maintain workers' living standards let alone overthrow the system is largely responsible for creating the illusion that direct action of a spontaneous nature is possible and could happen sooner or later. The fact that the ruling class is politically organised means a corresponding political organisation of the working class confronting them is necessary even to defend our living standards. The worst aspect of illusion in trade unions is one which leads to sectionalism. The refusal to generalise the struggle, the belief that MY union or MY industry are the Be all and end all of the class struggle. The most recent example of this was demonstrated recently by the EPTU in Britain where the Gen Secretary Hammond went as far as calling it "progressive". It is in fact the opposite.

If the working class fail to organise as a class and act as a class it will be a failure, not just in class terms but even in trade union terms, as no union can progress at the expense of another.

The only organisation that will be capable of defending workers' class interests must be political if it is to generalise the struggle. In periods of industrial decline the tendency of sectionalism in Trade Unions will increase with the inevitable result. A proletarian organisation based on the direct action of the working class on similar lines to the Socialist Workers Movement is badly needed.
FRANK DALY,
Donegal.

side.

The politics of Sinn Fein can better be judged in the Twenty six Counties where there is no physical struggle in progress. They are slowly gaining ground in places like inner-city Dublin where poverty is at its worst and where the working class is feeling the full brunt of the capitalist recession. You could well imagine their success if the undemocratic Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act was not enforced.

As you might have gathered by now I am a member of Sinn Fein myself and I too went forward for the local election in the Cobh area this year. On my election literature there was only one paragraph about the North and that was: "Sinn Fein aims to establish a 32 County Socialist Republic and unreservedly supports the right of any Irish person to take up arms against the British occupation of Ireland". The rest of the literature - which was lengthy - consisted of Socialist and working class issues. Out of 19 candidates, I polled joint seventh first preference, and I have no illusion that the majority of people who voted for me voted because of my involvement in their community not my views on the North even though a smaller percentage of people probably did vote for me because of them.

Now I think I've made my point even though it probably won't make any difference to your own views. I hope you live up to your own point you made about socialist taking a bit of criticism and go on to print this letter.

I look forward to reading your paper in the future.

KIERAN MCCARTHY,
Republican Socialist,
Ballymore, Cobh, Co.Cork.

Speaking tour against the Anglo-Irish Deal

IN January, the SWM held public meetings in eight different towns against the new Anglo-Irish agreement. The main speaker was Eamonn McCann. He spoke on the developments within Irish capitalism which led to the Anglo-Irish deal.

"Every socialist worth their salt must oppose this deal and the growth of repression that comes with it" said McCann.

The SWM was the sole organisation on the left with the politics and the membership that was capable of mounting this campaign against the agreement.

Building in Waterford

Waterford is just one of the towns where SWM has been growing over the last year. It now sells 150 papers a month on the dole. When the ESB linesmen were on strike, it organised a tour for a delegation from the strikers around local factories.

On February 1, it hosted a Day School for SWM members and supporters from the South East area. Sessions on the Provo armed struggle, the unions, the Trotskyist tradition ensured lively discussion. The meeting agreed that the task of building a revolutionary party in the coming period will be a hard slog. Workers struggles are on a down and it is the clarity of the political ideas that is crucial to building such an

organisation today. That means being hard on the ideas of republicanism and reformism.

Off the Presses

Two simply written pamphlets spell out the politics of SWM. "What we stand for" contains four articles: on the unions, the North, Women and Russia. "Why we need a revolution in Ireland" spells out the revolutionary socialist case. Get both together for the bargain price of £1.20 post free from SWM, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8.

Regular meetings

The SWM meets regularly in the following areas:

Dublin South - Tuesday
Dublin Central - Thursday
Waterford - Monday
Cork - Thursday
Belfast - Tuesday
Dundalk - Wednesday
Galway - Tuesday
Dungarvan - Monday
Portlaoise - Saturday

All meetings are open to supporters of the politics of the SWM. For further information, write to SWM PO Box 1648, Dublin 8.

Public meetings

*The Fight for a Socialist Ireland, speaker Eamonn McCann/Thursday February 6
Conway Mills, West Belfast, 8pm.*

The fight for a Socialist Ireland, speaker KIERAN ALLEN/Henderson's Hotel, 8pm Wednesday February 19, Portlaoise.

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 UDR
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 forms 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:

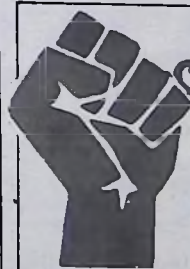
100 percent trade unionism
A 35 hour week to reduce unemployment
The election of all union officials, subject to recall
Against redundancies. We say: occupy to demand nationalisation under workers' control
Full independence of the unions from the state. No reliance on the Labour Courts or the arbitration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



JOIN US!

I would like more details about the Socialist Workers Movement

NAME

ADDRESS

Send to SWM, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8.

REVIEWS

JESUS & MARY

AS THE man in "In Dublin" says this is "far more than an antidote to the hard and sane blandness of the charts", indeed it is more! When you purchase this album you are purchasing no more than the greatest piece of vinyl ever moulded in the name of rock and roll.

With "Psychocandy" everybody's favourite kings of the alternative culture - The Jesus and Mary Chain have exceeded everyone's expectations from their recent trio of singles. The first, "Never Understand", thrilled a cult minority and smashed a million Walkmans. Its triumphant mixture of sixties pop melodies, straight from the Monkees or the Beach Boys, with a searing wall of feedback a la Phil Spector created the perfect contrast of hard and soft, of "Psycho" and "Candy" - hence the name. This album comes from that age-old tradition of taking pieces from all musics, from all decades and creating something that is still revolutionary (dare I use that word in this paper?) in its originality.

For those of you who have yet to experience such an aural orgasm, you don't know what's in store! From the opening "Just Like Honey" to the last whiplash chord of "It's so Hard", the Jesus and Mary Chain play no-holds-barred rock and roll. And it's a healthy attitude which harks back to the better side of the late seventies punk movement, the original anti-establishment stance, a gob in the eye of conformity and the norm. In an era where the main aim of the successful pop groups seems to gear towards achieving a mention in the New Years Honours List, (I thought Lennon's handing back his MBE made that unfashionable anyway??) this attitude of the Mary Chain boys and the whole sound of the music in its unconventionality, can only be applauded.

As for the album, it's an essential part of any record collection. Your stylus is just waiting to devour it. To go through the songs one-by-one here would just lead to a mess of adjectives and a ream of influences. The record silences one with its sheer brilliance. If you don't have this record, how can you EVER call yourself a REBEL again.

Give your ears a break, go straight for the jugular! Take a dose of "Psychocandy".

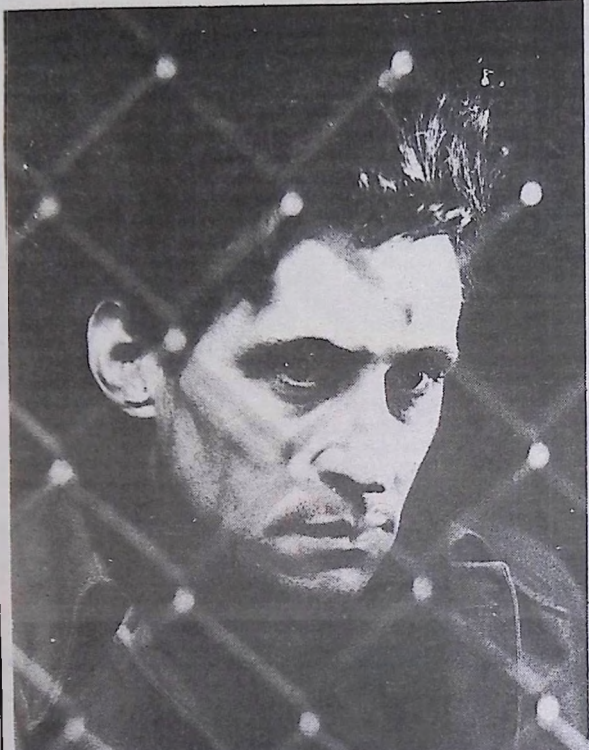
-GARRET KEOGH

Cuba, Castro and Socialism

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Red scares and state secrets

Socialist Worker reviews the film "Defence of the Realm".



Nick Mullen (Gabriel Byrne) fenced in by the state

secrets

THE FILM is the story of a newspaper reporter, Nick Mullen (Gabriel Byrne) who is fed false information in order to smear a politician. In fact, the politician had discovered a cover-up of a nuclear near-disaster and was about to go public with it. The plot thickens as Mullen discovers this and in his attempt to undo the damage done comes up against the repressive machinery of a state based on patriotic values known to us from the recent Falklands war

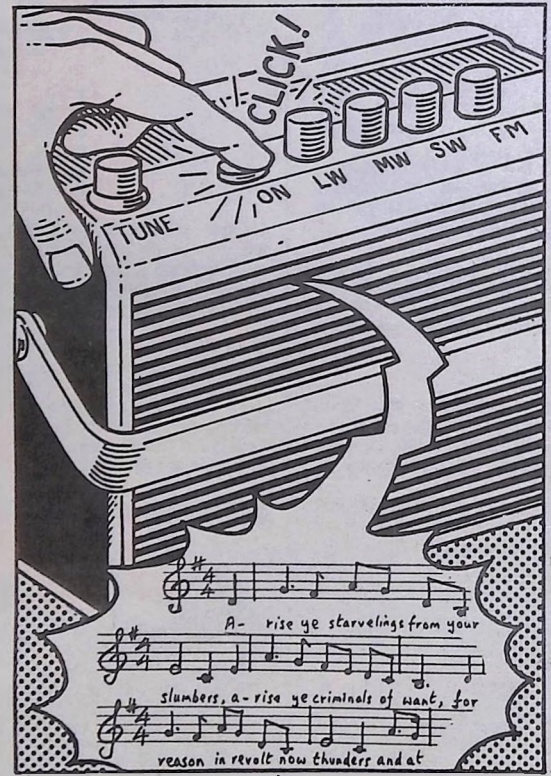
being transmitted about them. The film makes in its own way all the key points, but one of the key factors is how these points are balanced; the film fits into the typical mould of the truth-seeking journalist versus the bad bureaucratic government functionaries, ruthless in their attempt at cover-ups. The dramatically most exciting scene in the film is where Mullen is interviewed by the triad of stiff bureaucrats who grill him on his motives. They then let him go and obviously order the planting of the bomb which should have killed him. In doing this it takes the attention away from the newspaper baron, who is the lynchpin of the plot, and obscures the role capitalism plays - governments and bureaucrats are only its public puppet men. This is politically the film's weakness as the feeling at the end is of the hopelessness of the individual's attempt to do anything to change the system. And no alternative is offered.

-JOE O'BYRNE

MEDIA

In this way, the dangers of the media and particularly that of sensationalist investigative journalism are exposed. We also learn how newspapers and the media are integrated into the overall system - the owner of the newspaper for which Mullen works also has large financial interests in the construction of British nuclear plants and so is in league with governmental functionaries to stop the truth

The blunt end of the wedge



Redskins are the only political band in Britain whose politics are consistent and follow a direct political line. Others such as Bragg and Weller waver from their politics and constantly contradict themselves. Thus Weller's financial aid to scabs during the miners strike and Bragg's ignorance and stupidity of issues such as Northern Ireland. So why not the Redskins? The answer lies in the politics of the SWM and our sister organisation, the SWP (of which the Redskins are members.) The words of Chris Moore and the Redskins: "When you look at Liverpool City Council and then at Neil Kinnock you can see what I'm talking about. That's the state of the Labour Party that Red Wedge has been wheeled on to show the wonderfulness off to the world, an organisation that has moved massively to the right."

In this situation you have gone away from dealing on political issues with rank-and-file Labour members and you become involved in no less than advertising for Neil Kinnock and saying what a nice guy he is.

Of course it is also essential that it is a Labour government that is returned at the next election but more because it is a protest against the Thatcher regime and the only alternative. The arguments of reformism versus revolution are ones that are returned to again and again. But in Britain the SWP urge voters to vote Labour in the same way that here we say vote for Sinn Fein. Not that we believe it will make much difference but firstly as a protest and a state-

ment against the current regime. No doubt Red Wedge will go from strength to strength with the list of supporters now including most of what is worthwhile, musically, on the Pop and rock scene in Britain. A lot of good people are involved. We don't necessarily agree with their politics but some like Billy Bragg, do a lot of worthwhile work and play damn good rock and roll. Then again if it gets young people up from in front of the T.V. and out arguing politics that must be a healthy exercise. The point is, however, is to get them arguing politics that are socialist and can win.

-GARRET KEOGH

SPECIAL OFFER

CLASS STRUGGLE & WOMEN'S LIBERATION 1640 to the present day

£5.50 post free from SWM PO Box 1648 Dublin 8

ON THE 25th of January, the first gig of the much discussed "Red Wedge" tour took the stage in Manchester. The bill consisted of Paul Weller, Billy Bragg, The Communards, Junior, Tom Robinson and Lorna Gee. At other venues in Britain they will be joined by Lloyd Cole, Johnny Marr (of the Smiths), Jerry Dammers and "Tin Tin" Duffy. The cause?

Red Wedge, a "Broad Left Alliance" or in other words an election machine with uncritical support of Neil Kinnock. The tour is the first in a series of other projects under the title of "Red Wedge" to help Mr Kinnock gain that much-desired youth vote. One question that strikes you first is why aren't the Redskins involved? The

WORKPLACE NOTES

Cork ESB sold out

THE CORK ESB strikers went back to work last month with banners flying and heads high after a magnificent struggle to defend jobs and conditions which the ESB management was attempting to cut in clear breach of agreement.

But there is no doubting that they suffered a defeat. Although, the back-to-work formula envisaged talks on the central questions of job levels and whether linesmen should have to take over drivers' jobs, it seems that the principle of defending existing conditions has been lost.

The blame lies not on the workers or on local union officials who stood rock-steady throughout against overwhelming odds, but on the scandalous behaviour of national officials of the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' union.

Top ATGWU bosses Jimmy Tinkler and John Freeman behaved like outright scabs, refusing to make the strike official - despite four secret ballots for strike action, all in full accordance with the union rule-book. Tinkler and Freeman were the best friends the bosses had.

The Socialist Workers Movement did its best within its very limited resources to give the strikers backing.

UCD cleaners

THE STRIKE by women cleaners at University College Dublin is not over.

Although the 23 women involved voted in November to end the dispute after 17 weeks on the picket line, the bosses have reneged on the deal. This deal was for eight jobs within the PRSI system at UCD. This wasn't a victory, but neither was it full-scale defeat.

But only five women have been allowed back to work. And significantly, two of the three who have been left outside are the strike leaders, shop-stewards Marie Lenihan and Concepta Carroll. The women were back on the picket line on January 30th as new UCD president Paddy Masterson (who had personally scabbed on the strike) was being installed.

As we go to press the women are waiting for the outcome of a promise by Masterson to "look into" their grievance.

If Masterson doesn't come up with the goods and force the contract cleaning firms to honour the agreement and take the three women back, the chances are that the strike pickets will be placed on UCD again. If that happens, there must be an all-out effort to spread the action, both within the UCD and to other contract cleaning operations.

VEHA Wicklow

VEHA workers, nearly 200 of them, have been in dispute now for nearly seven months. Joe Van Der Pijer, boss of the outfit, through a number of shady deals owns the Wicklow factory. Joe had a problem though - a well-organised workforce, so when he decided to try and

Ireland next for print union busting?

THE PRINT workers' fight against newspaper baron Rupert Murdoch in London is the most important industrial dispute in these islands since the miner's strike.

And it is a dispute with direct and urgent relevance to workers in the print industry in Ireland.

Murdoch has used new technology to bust the print unions, SOGAT and the NGA. Five thousand Fleet Street workers have been sacked and a few hundred electricians brought in—with the connivance of the scab leadership of the electricians' union—to work new computerised machinery installed in the barbed-wire fortress at Wapping.

A majority of journalists on Murdoch's papers—The "Times", "Sunday Times", "News of the World" and "Sun"—have defied an NUJ instruction and cooperated with the new operation.

If Murdoch manages to

break the powerful print unions every other Fleet Street boss will immediately ride rough-shod over them to introduce similar operations.

And Dublin newspaper owners, who have their own plans for new technology, are watching the battle carefully for an indication of whether they, too, could get away with a Murdoch-style anti-union blitz.

Unfortunately, the leaders of the print unions in Britain have clearly learned nothing from the miners' strike. Instead of going on the offensive with mass picketing and calling out the whole of Fleet Street, they have put their faith in manoeuvres at the TUC—the very people who

sold the miners down the river—and instructed their members to "stay within the law". Only six pickets at a time have been placed on the Wapping works!

At the same time, the TUC has backed off from dealing with the electricians' union, the EEUPTU, which has now set itself up as a scabbing service for any employer trying to bust the unions.

This pathetic pussy-footing is a sure recipe for defeat. There are 30,000 print workers on Fleet Street.

Every one of them should be involved in a picketing rota at Wapping. And other trade unions in the London area should be urged to show solidarity as well, both by

joining the pickets and by organising blacking of Murdoch's publications everywhere.

No other strategy has a snowball's chance of winning. Yet in Britain, as in Ireland, union bosses run a mile from such straight forward class confrontation.

One thing emerges very clearly. If the journalists hadn't backed Murdoch against the printers, the Australian thug wouldn't have been able to get his papers out.

Part of the reason for the journalists' sell-out is the long-standing rivalry between themselves and the printers, a combination of white-collar elitism and resentment against the high wages and

good conditions the printers have traditionally enjoyed.

This stupid sectionalism left the way open for Murdoch to blast through the unions.

Any journalist in Ireland who thinks that it is in their interest to have the print unions broken should read carefully through the document reprinted on this page from the NUJ paper, the "Journalist". It speaks for itself. It shows beyond all doubt that once the power of the print unions is broken, the power of ALL unions is broken. To help to break the printers' unions is to go like a lamb to inevitable slaughter.

There is an urgent need for a united approach by all

workers in the industry to new technology. Rank and file workers should insist on joint negotiation of all technology is on the agenda and the principle of "no redundancies" asserted. There should be a commitment to joint industrial action if ANY union is threatened.

The experience at the "Irish Press" last year, where the Irish Print Union was carved up while other unions stood idly by, should serve as an additional lesson to all.

As the Press tries to speed up the introduction of further technology, and the "Independent", "Cork Examiner" and "Sunday Tribune" gear up for direct-input typesetting and computerised make-up, Irish print workers should be looking closely at what is happening in East London and making plans to ensure that it doesn't happen here.

Solidarity, not sectionalism is the key to protecting the jobs and conditions of members of every union in the industry.

—EAMONN McCANN

Below we reprint extracts of Murdoch's draft agreement.

1.1 There will be a legally-binding collective agreement ("the Agreement") between the Employer and the Union

1.2.1. ... The Union and its members will respond flexibly to any changes required in working practices, working conditions and duties, and in the use of equipment. The Employer recognises its obligation to provide training and retraining where appropriate. Manning levels will be determined by the Employer.

1.2.2. Employees will undertake all tasks within their (reasonable) competence, but otherwise with complete flexibility. There will be no demarcation lines. The Employer will, in respect of journalists, recognise only the Union, but membership of the Union will not be compulsory; there will not be a closed shop.

4. The Union will not be recognised in respect of employees of [Heads and Deputy Heads of Department].

5.1 The Employer will determine the number of journalists required for the production of the London Post. The starting and finishing times of each journalist will be fixed by departmental heads, and may be changed upon [] days' notice.

5.2 Employees will perform any work assigned to them by the Editor (or those to whom he delegates authority) which they are reasonably competent to perform.

5.4 The Employer's employees will have the right to belong to the Union but there is no obligation upon them to do so.

5.5 Employees who are members of the Union may leave the Union at any time without this affecting in any way their employment by the



News International's Wapping plant in East London: protecting Murdoch's profits

Employer. There will be no discrimination by the Employer against any employee who is or is not a member of the Union.

5.7 All new employees will be subject to a probationary period of not more than [] months. During that period or (if employees are confirmed to the permanent staff in less than [] months) until they are so confirmed they will not have the right to appeal against dismissal; nor will the Union treat their dismissal as a matter capable of pursuit under the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures.

6.2 The Editor (and those to whom he delegates authority) may dismiss employees (1) for incapacity; or (2) for incompetence; or (3) for neglect of duty; or (4) for misconduct; or (5) for breach of office rules and regulations; or (6) for redundancy; or (7) because they cannot continue to work in the positions they hold without contravention of some statutory or other duty or restriction; or (8) for some

other substantial reason.

8.9 The following procedure shall apply to any reference to arbitration:—

(i) the Employer and the Union shall use their best endeavours to assist the arbitration process. The reference shall be heard without unavoidable delay, and in any case within six weeks of the date of the reference of the dispute or difference to arbitration or such longer period as the parties may agree;

(ii) neither the Employer nor the Union shall be represented by counsel or by solicitor unless not less than 14 days before the hearing it shall have notified the other party of its intention to be so represented;

(iii) the reference shall be heard and determined in private unless the Employer and the Union shall otherwise agree. The decision shall be binding on the Employer and the Union.

9.2 The Employer's and/or the Editor's rights to manage

the business and direct the work force include, but are not limited to, the right to plan, direct and control all the operations and services performed; to schedule the working hours; to classify and re-classify employees; to hire, promote, demote and transfer employees as required to suit the need for efficient production; to determine the make-up of the work force and the assignment of work within the work force; to suspend, discipline, dismiss, lay off employees from work; to make and to enforce work rules and other standards; to introduce new technology and to improve methods, materials, equipment or facilities or to change or eliminate existing methods, equipment or facilities.

9.3 While reserving fully its right to manage its business the Employer recognises the need for regular consultation with the workforce, and the positive effect on industrial relations which such con-

sultation can have. Accordingly the Joint Standing Committee will also meet at least [four] times each calendar year to discuss matters of mutual interest to the Employer and its employees.

10.1 No more than [] Union Representatives will be recognised by the Employer at any one time.

10.2 The Union Representatives shall be elected [by secret ballot] by all employees who are Union members and who are employed by the Employer and will serve for one year.

10.3 Save in the first two years of the Employer's operations to be eligible for election as a Union Representative an employee must have been employed by the Employer for a minimum of [] year[s]. No individual who has received any formal warnings from the Employer under its Disciplinary Procedure will be eligible for election.

10.5 The Union Representatives will be allowed reason-

break the union, he came up against trouble. He started on Donal Dunne, 19 years with the company, 14 of them in his present job working the computer, and most of that time a shop-steward.

In March 1985, Joe announced at a Labour Court session to discuss a productivity deal, that he wanted redundancies, despite three previous agreements saying there would be none. He wanted Donal Dunne to go.

But Donal wouldn't. He tried getting rid of him as an organiser by offering 6 months suspension with pay. When that failed, he intimated that he had his hand in the till, to destroy Donal's credibility not just with his mates in the office, but on the factory floor.

Nothing worked, so in May, Donal was suspended for insubordination to a manager. After many meetings, and a secret ballot among the office

staff, they decided to strike from June 24.

At first, the office workers only stopped deliveries, to starve the production process, so that the factory floor would be laid off, and thereby entitled to dole payments, a dangerous tactic, but here the office and factory workers were solid.

The callous disregard by Joe Van der Plier however, for the safety of not just his workforce, but of Wicklow

town speeded up the need for an all out picket!

Because the deliveries of the gases used by VEHA, were being turned away, Joe got the managers of Eirgas to load a scab hackers truck with two eight-ton tanks of liquid propane. This is highly dangerous. Purpose built tankers should only be used and even then you are talking about a mobile incendiary bomb, like the one that killed sixty-odd people

in Spain recently when it overturned.

An all out picket was granted. Only 7 scabbed, most of them management, and despite court cases and the ever intransigent Joe, the entire workforce is solid and maintaining a round the clock picket.

Attempts to starve them back have failed, including orders direct from Barry Desmond's office to the local welfare officers trying to deny

the strikers and their families much needed fuel and footwear allowances.

The VEHA workers can win. There's two million pounds worth of plant in the factory, and thousands of radiators.

Their's is a war of attrition, they need financial support to beat the boss at his waiting game.

Money and messages of support to Donal Dunne, 108 Wicklow Heights, Wicklow.

Socialist Worker

Teachers: All-out strike is the way to win

CIE: job losses after OPO defeat

CIE Bus workers will lose 1,200 jobs. That's the bottom line of the deal that was packaged by management, pushed by the Labour Court and sold by the union leadership.

The recent dispute was confused and poorly-orchestrated from the start. It was about the introduction of the one-person-operated scheme (OPO) in Dublin. OPO's were accepted in principle by most of the unions since the seventies. What was at the time a notional acceptance of an up-dated and expanded service, in fact paved the way for the cuts in jobs to come.

Late last year, busworkers, with the recommendation of the executives of the unions, voted to reject a proposed OPO scheme.

The company's plan received a massive No vote.

Just before Xmas, management tried to push the scheme anyway, insisting that selected drivers should go on special training courses for OPO. Under union instructions, the drivers refused and were suspended.

This could have been the cue for strike action. There was a strong possibility of stopping the DART electric commuter train, of picketing out the freight service and getting support in the provincial services. Instead, the unions organised a levy for the suspended workers and allowed what amounted to a progressive lock-out to roll on.

The NBU eventually called for a strike and for picketing of the Dublin garages and DART, to start on Monday January 13. By this time the suspensions had been going on for five weeks. At no time were there meetings held in the garages, nor at union offices, to explain what was happening to ordinary busworkers.

Confusion and rumour were rife, calls on the union executive

for mass meetings were ignored, and the negotiating team, made up of the three unions involved, NBU, ITGWU and FWUI, spent the week prior to the strike call in negotiations in the Labour Court with an ever-intransigent management.

At the eleventh hour the strike was called off. The negotiating team said they had "won" an acceptable package from management. Actually, this package amounts to no real change — OPO is in and jobs are out. The unions announced mass meetings to take the deal to the membership, who were to vote on it the following day. Again confusion reigned. Some of the mass meetings were loud and angry in their condemnation of the executive that had kept them in the dark, gave them an ultimatum and sold them out.

An Ad-hoc rank-and-file committee got out a hastily-prepared but effective leaflet urging a No vote. It was hotly debated at the NBU meetings, and the closeness of the vote in the NBU, with a large minority rejecting the deal, was a tribute to the effectiveness of the arguments of the rank-and-file militants, once the opportunity to put them had arisen.

The whole argument of CIE management is profitability. If it doesn't make a profit it has to go. Our argument is that transport is a service already paid for from taxes, and just like water, electricity or health care, is a right and not a luxury. Ask any woman with bags of shopping and small kids in tow if she needs a conductor on the bus. Ask any busworker what their chances of another job are if CIE, in the name of efficiency, gets rid of them.

Rank and file busworkers appreciate these arguments, even if their union executives don't, and if an effective stand against the company is to be taken, then it is the rank-and-file who must organise immediate action wherever a job is threatened.



ANYBODY WHO thought that the one-day strikes of late 1985 by the three teachers' unions were going to win has been brought down to earth recently.

The latest government offer comes nowhere near the arbitrator's 10% award, back-dated to last September. It amounted to a miserly offer of 10% over three years starting from 1987!

Pathetic as it was, the government were "taken aback" at the refusal of the unions to ballot their members on the offer. There is undoubtedly more to this than meets the eye.

The union officials have striven very successfully to keep the dispute in their own control. The one-day strikes were orchestrated affairs. Instead of recognising that their limited success was an indication of teachers' militancy, they emphasised that it was merely a vote of confidence in the officials. It makes their job so much easier when it comes to making the members accept a sell-out compromise. Anyone who thinks that the officials are not resigned to this need only listen to them when they say they are prepared to accept deferment. The truth is

that the government offer was just too insulting for the officials to have maintained any credibility.

It can be seen now that the one-day strikes allowed the members to vent their anger in a way that enabled the officials to maintain control. Socialists within the unions should argue even more strongly that there must be a stepping-up of action and not shy away from the call for all-out action.

At present there is talk of regional three-day strikes, but this will not be decided before the teachers' union's special conferences in early February.

More concrete action is of course welcome but regional strikes over a few days will not win the dispute. It has failed in Britain in the long and bitter teachers' strike there. Having three unions united in action (TUI, INTO ASTI) is useless if the action is half-hearted.

Sooner or later the teachers must face up to the government on their own determined terms. Otherwise, the 10% pay award will become just a forgotten statistic in the list of government's cuts.

—JAMES McELHINNEY