

# Socialist Worker

## For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

### 3% for the rest of us, but:

# He gave himself a £8,000 pay rise



CHARLES J Haughey, or an Taoiseach as he prefers to be known, has voted himself an £8000 pay rise.

He will now earn a grand total of £60,000 a year from the Dail.

Haughey's salary would keep thirty single people on the dole for a year.

It would pay the wages of ten public sector workers that he claims we have too many of.

His 15 per cent pay rise is five times the amount granted to PAYE workers under the notorious National Plan agreed to by the union leaders.

And that is not even taking account of his other income. Haughey is already a millionaire. He made his money as an accountant to the rich, no doubt advising them on tax dodges.

In the late sixties he took up the popular Fianna Fail sport of land speculation.

Haughey bought up prime

building land in Raheny and then sold it for a fortune after planning permission was given.

*Today he flaunts his wealth over us by owning an island off the coast of Kerry.*

Haughey and the rest of the politicians and top bureaucrats claim they need their pay rise as an "incentive" to keep going.

#### "INCENTIVES"

Funny how the rich always need more "incentives". Yet

the poorly paid public sector worker that this government has been hounding is expected to show great enthusiasm for work on a miserable £90 a week.

The hypocrisy of the Irish rich knows no bounds.

They tell 'us that we live in a poor country. They preach the need for more cutbacks. They do everything to drive as many young people out of the country as they can.

But there is one thing that

unites Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, the Progressive Democrats and shamefully the pale pink Lab Labour Party—it is that they need more money.

#### POVERTY

The callousness of these right wing politicians was shown by a report from the Combat Poverty Agency issued just days after they awarded themselves a fat salary cheque.

*It showed that the bottom 20 per cent of the Irish*

*population have only four per cent of the wealth.*

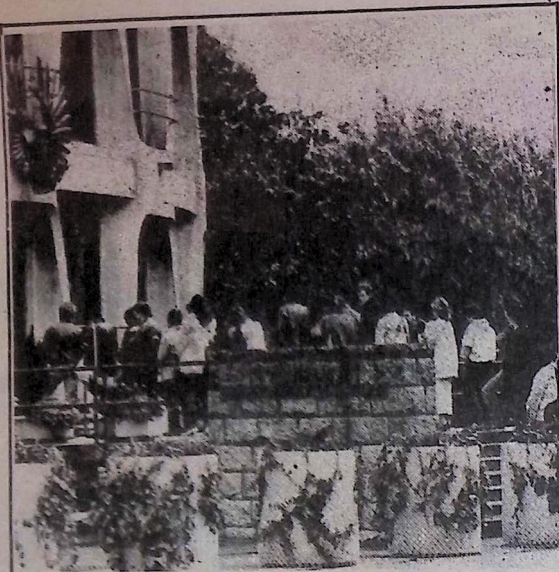
*One in four children are now living on the poverty line.*

While kids in this country go without meat or proper clothing or a decent education, Haughey and the politicians help themselves to more pay rises.

Now more than ever we need a revolutionary socialist organisation here that says to the hypocrites of the Dail: *Out with the scum—Power to those who work!*

Inside: Republicanism in crisis—pages 6 & 7





Queuing for visas at US embassy

## Thousands to take the boat

EMIGRATION from Ireland is a direct result of the socio-economic system that blights this island just as much as it did in the 1950s or the 1850s or any other era you care to recall.

In the USA alone, there are 44 million people of Irish generation!

Two million people have been driven out of Ireland since 1921. There are 30 per cent fewer jobs since that year, 12 per cent fewer than 1980 and two and a half per cent fewer than 1987. These were some of the scandalous facts to emerge from a recent seminar on emigration held in Dublin.

The director of Aras na nGael in Brent, London, Pat Finnegan said: "Contrary to popular belief, the Irish in London are a marginalised, colonial ethnic minority constituting, between first and second generation, about one sixth (two million) of the total metropolitan population. They endure some of the worst housing conditions."

Seventy per cent of Simon Community and two out of seven sleeping rough in London are Irish. And when Thatcher's latest Housing Bill becomes law this month, the accommodation crisis for Irish people, especially young singles, will become chronic. About 40,000 per year in total.

Despite the appeals of London Social Workers, etc, to the Irish government for financial aid, nothing is done. There is a great sense of relief among our rich and middle classes that these social problems are being exported elsewhere. Along with their fat investment portfolios.

Mind you, our very own "Papa Doc" premier, CJ Haughey has made the ultimate gombeen response. Sure haven't we sent over £¼million out of the National Lottery money!

### "ILLEGALS"

And in the USA, how is the Land of the Free treating our 250,000 "illegals"? The lead story here is that the great Irish-American connection is viciously exploiting fine and talented youth. Particularly in the construction industry which employs (according to "Irish Voice" newspaper) 77 per cent of Irish illegals. The Irish because of their legal status (no work visa) cannot join the union. Consequently they are being paid one third the union rate for the job.

There is a chronicle of injustice and oppression right across the board, especially in the case of young Irish women. Au Pairs £20 per week and in many cases virtual incarceration in the houses of their employers. Complaints are met with threats of reporting to the dreaded Immigration and Naturalisation Service and probable deportation. And on and on it goes. No Insurance, medical and dental cover, hospital cover, etc, etc. Small wages and outlandish hospital bills, etc.

And yet we sumtuously wine and dine the US ambassador to Ireland, Reagan's Margaret Heckler (of Irish descent) and plead with the Kennedys, Donnellys and all the other criminals of US so-called democracy, please take our children off our greasy, incompetent hands.

"We must ensure that the young Irish get a better deal in America" says Haughey.

Pat Finnegan of Brent advised Ireland's youth: "Stay at home and demand your share!" We agree. We also look forward to the day when the deportees return and we will join with them on the rising tide of anger and frustration that will eventually sweep the nonsense away forever.

-JOXER

## British save face with jobs bias plan

IN A renewed effort to persuade "international opinion" of its commitment to fair employment practices in the North, the British government has launched a White Paper on new anti-discrimination laws to combat job bias on religious grounds.

The document, which foreshadows legislation in the new parliamentary session in the autumn, contains those measures already signalled by British ministers in recent months.

They include the creation of a Commission to replace the ineffective Fair Employment Agency; a reworked code of employment practice endorsing a limited form of affirmative action to remedy under-representation in the workforce; stronger monitoring arrangements for bosses.

All employers with more than 25 workers will have to investigate their religious composition and this will later be extended to firms with ten or more employees.

There will also be heavier penalties including the denial of government contracts and grants for firms which continue to discriminate.

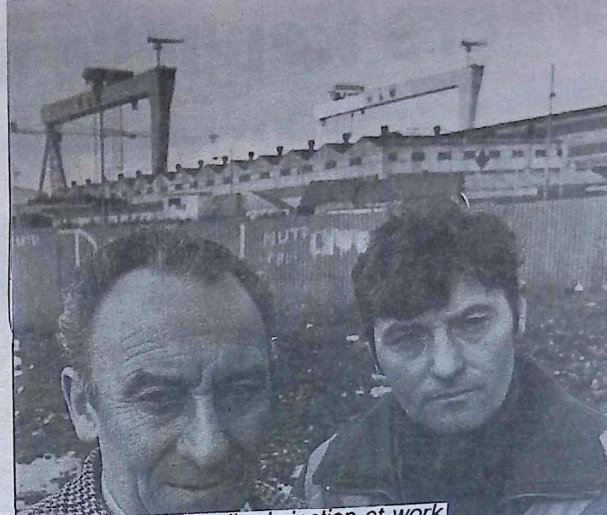
One example of the weakness of the government's present policy is the continuing refusal of Belfast City Council to come up with a religious headcount of its workforce.

Though long suspected of practising discrimination in hiring, it is only recently that the Council has been asked to monitor the religious composition of its workforce.

This it steadfastly refuses to do. And there's nothing that can be done to force them.

The central problem which has spurred the adoption of tougher policies is the profound sectarian imbalance in employment.

After twenty years of "British justice", Catholic workers are still almost three times as likely to be unemployed than Protestant



Harland and Wolff: discrimination at work

workers.

The threat posed by the success of the campaign in the USA to disinvest from firms that do not operate the McBride Principles has sharpened the British government's concern that it must be seen to be doing more.

### PROBLEMS

The anti-discrimination proposals are wider in scope than previous measures, but no-one could have much confidence in the effectiveness of the planned legislation.

As we have pointed out in relation to earlier such initiatives, even if the British are sincere about tackling one of the key features of a state based on sectarianism, they have real problems in improving the figures for discrimination.

Any real change demands the creation of jobs on a huge scale. But in the midst of a recession, the jobs are simply not available. The depth of the economic crisis removes their capacity to buy off the excesses of discrimination.

## Unions back gay rights

THIS YEAR'S round of union conferences has brought more open support for gay rights.

At the Local Government and Public Services Union a wide-ranging programme to counter discrimination against lesbian and gay workers was adopted.

The Union of Professional and Technical Civil Servants (UPTCS) also passed a resolution supporting the guidelines on gay rights previously adopted by the ICTU.

### PREJUDICES

Proposing the resolution at the UPTCS conference Chris Robson said that the guidelines of the ICTU "should be brought to the attention of every branch and every member. This motion will cost nothing except the loss of a few prejudices but it will change workers' lives".

The second largest union in

Ireland, the FWUI, also committed itself to take action to prevent discrimination against lesbian and gay workers. The union was mandated to negotiate

### Phoenix's baiting

A DISGUSTING piece of anti-gay prejudice that was fitting for the *Sun* appeared in *Phoenix* recently. The New York gay priest, Bernard Lynch, was the subject of a vicious piece of vilification. Under the guise of a liberal anti-clericalism, the *Phoenix* joined the chorus of gay abuse.

Tragically, the editor of the *Phoenix* is the republican activist Paddy Prendiville. He once appeared on an anti-extradition platform where he spoke quite rightly on the oppression that Northern Catholics face every day.

But the same man appears blind to the oppression of gays.

agreements with employers which would prohibit discrimination on the basis of AIDS or sexual orientation. Kieran Rose of the Lesbian and Gay Rights at Work group

welcomed these moves and said that "prejudices and discrimination of whatever kind must be opposed because it divides workers and weakens the union movement".



Gay rights demonstration outside Dail last month

Making Belfast safe for yuppies

THE STREET traders and black taxis are gone from Castle Street.

For almost twenty years the "peoples taxis" have been a trademark—waiting just outside the security gates to ferry people to and from west Belfast.

The taxis have been moved to a car park less accessible for passengers, making the taxis more vulnerable to competition from the City buses.

The traders have been completely swept away, considered an eyesore by city planners.

What the planners have effectively done is to push west Belfast back from the city centre as part of their drive to make the city an attractive and profitable place for yuppies to work, shop and invest.

The first stage of that planning has begun with the massive Castle Court Centre being built on the site of the old Smithfield market. Profits for the developers Laing are guaranteed with the government planning to move away many of its civil service departments from Stormont to the new centre.

The next stage of the urban plan includes provision for refurbishment of the docks area of the city, including the building of several marinas—the yuppies will be able to take their yachts out for a lunchtime sail.

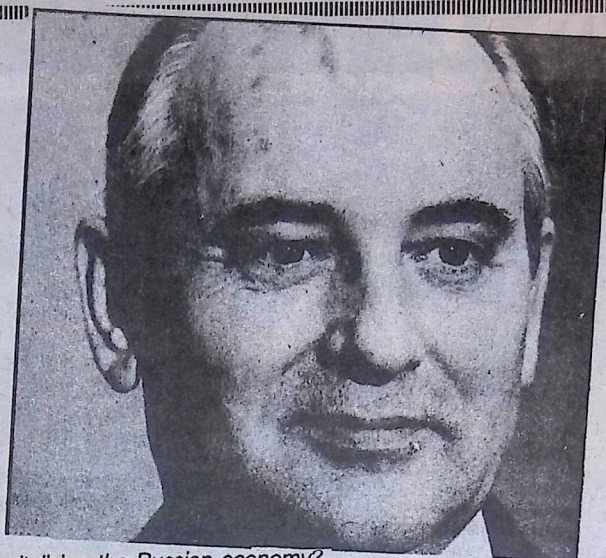
Needless to say, the urban plan pays no heed to the needs of the large working class communities around the city centre.

The desperate need for play space, local shopping and laundry facilities, and more decent housing are ignored.

Once again we see the government provides for the rich while the poor continue to suffer.



# WE THINK Midday in Moscow



Revitalising the Russian economy?

THERE IS a lot of excitement in the western media over the changes taking place in Russia following the Special Party Conference last month.

For marxists, these changes have two sides.

First things first. It is to be very much welcomed that Russian people are now more able to express opinions, organise meetings and demonstrations with less risk of being summarily arrested and detained.

There are, of course, limits. During the conference, police and plain-clothes men tolerated some demonstrations outside in Red Square and broke up others.

But the central point remains. Any relaxation of repression of the expression of opinions, individually or collectively, has got to be a good thing.

But on the other hand, the economic programme of perestroika looks set to hit the mass of citizens of the USSR very hard.

And it is this programme of "market socialism" that is the driving force behind Gorbachev's genial liberalisation.

The economy of the Soviet Union—and its satellites in eastern Europe—is in bits.

The period of high stalinism was dominated by the attempts of the state capitalist bureaucracy to build up industrial capacity in the USSR. The purpose of this build-up was to be able to compete—particularly militarily—with the west.

Centralising all power in its hands, the bureaucracy in the thirties pushed forward the pace of accumulation. With great brutality the peasants were forcibly collectivised into large-scale state farms.

## LIMITS

Trade unions became just ciphers of the state as wages were driven down in industry and production norms expanded to unrealisable limits in successive five year plans.

Millions disappeared into slave labour camps, many never to be seen again. Party members were routinely "purged", "liquidated" and some brought before spectacular show trials as Stalin's bureaucracy removed any possible core of opposition.

It ought to go without saying that none of this had anything to do with socialism or the ideas with

which Lenin, the Bolsheviks and Russian workers had fought in 1917. It was the barbaric attempt of Stalin and the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy to secure their position as a ruling class in a world dominated by military capitalist imperialism.

And in its own terms it was pretty successful. Stalin's armies triumphed in the second world war, not only defeating the armies of Hitler, but exporting the Russian system—at the point of a bayonet—to the countries of eastern Europe.

A backward, impoverished society had been transformed into a modern industrial power, second only in greatness to that other post-war imperialist giant, the USA.

But once the first wave of industrialisation had been accomplished, the problems—from the point of view of Russia's rulers—became apparent.

The rigid, centralised control of the economy led to waste, inefficiency and corruption. Commandism robbed the factory managers of initiative. Quantitatively fulfilling the norm in order to qualify for the bonuses meant shoddy, poor-quality output.

If Russia is to compete effectively in a world economy dominated by high-tech, high quality, inventive

industries something will have to change.

Gorbachev has identified some of the weaknesses—from a state capitalist viewpoint—of the Russian economy. His recipe for improvement is "market socialism". Dismantling some elements of the command economy, the introduction of stricter profit and loss criteria in state enterprises, the institution of "price reform"—the removal of subsidies on basic foods like bread and meat (when available), hiking rents, etc—these measures, he believes, will make possible the removal of inefficient units from the economy and the exposing of all enterprises to the bracing winds of the market.

He may be right. Russian industry may be more "profitable", more "competitive" if food prices rise, if rents go through the roof, if numbers of "surplus workers" are thrown on the dole.

Again it should be obvious that none of these things has anything to do with socialism.

The political reforms associated with glasnost follow from the economic programme of perestroika. If the economy is to be made more efficient, powerful vested interests among the bureaucracy must be confronted.

The old technique of mass purges and liquidations is not an option if modern, flexible, professional management of undertakings is to be encouraged. A manager who fears for his life follows orders—he doesn't innovate.

The creation of, and appeal to "public opinion" is an attempt to overcome the suffocating conservatism of the bureaucracy by mobilising forces outside the party. It was tried by Mao in the sixties—with unforeseen consequences.

Of perhaps greater importance is the fact that a modern ruling class needs mechanisms by which differences within the ruling order are settled without too much blood letting. Proposals for a French-style presidency and great power for more genuinely elected assemblies are an attempt to meet this need.

Capitalists in the west have discovered that allowing the population to vote every five years usually poses no real threat to the ruling class and has the advantage of providing a constitutional safety-valve with which to disperse peacefully workers' dissatisfaction.

But the greatest impetus for political reform comes from the realisation that the depth and scale of the attack on working class living standards entailed by economic restructuring could not be got away with without some political concessions. Over the last forty years the countries of the eastern Bloc have been shaken on several occasions by attempts of unpopular governments to raise meat or bread prices, or increase the tempo of exploitation at work, and workers resistance to it.

And this is the real hope when all the western television crews have packed up and gone home. The ruling order in eastern Europe is obviously split. The working class is much stronger today than in the past. The political concessions forced on the rulers combined with the attacks on workers that cannot be long delayed could provide the opportunity for millions of workers to regain confidence in their own ability to throw off their oppressors once and for all.

## FF's housing shambles

FIANNA FAIL's Housing Bill 1988 was supposed to get to grips with the problem of homelessness.

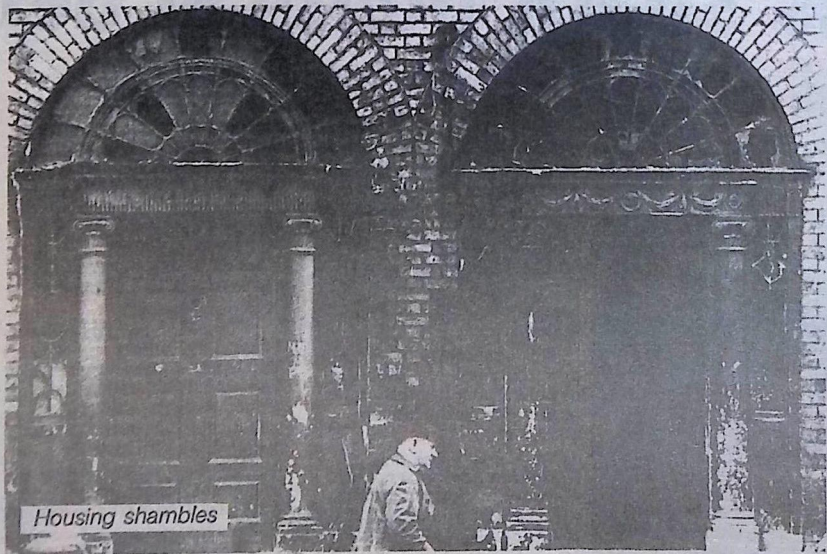
It is a shambles. A new law was needed because local authorities were refusing to house homeless people.

One homeless person recently had to wait one year to get a flat.

But under the new legislation the local authorities are not obliged to house homeless people. Instead homelessness has been redefined. People living in hostels are not to be regarded as homeless. Neither are women facing violence in the home or travellers without halting sites.

Another section of the bill allows local authorities to disregard people if they feel they have contributed to their own homelessness. This vague clause has been used in Britain to throw large numbers off the housing lists.

There has been no official study done of homelessness done in Southern Ireland. Estimates suggest that there are around 2,000 but the true



Housing shambles

figure may be higher. The seriousness and depth of the problem are ignored.

Homeless people are entitled to no social welfare. As a result many, both male and female, are driven to prostitution for survival. This in turn can lead to drug abuse.

Fianna Fail's hypocritical

bill only disguises the way their economic policies are forcing people onto the streets.

## CRISIS

Health cuts in the psychiatric services has led to the discharge of long-term patients onto the

street. The cut backs in the housing programme is leading to the biggest housing crisis since the sixties. Their policy of forced emigration is also leading to hundreds of young Irish people sleeping rough in London and other cities where the cost of accommodation is astronomical.

## SPUC OFF!

SPUC supporter Michael Woods has done himself proud.

He has disqualified 800 unmarried mothers from their allowances.

According to figures issued from his department about a quarter of them were disqualified for "co-habiting".

No doubt the snoopers of the Dept of Social Welfare are following up any reports of any men coming out of the homes of unmarried mothers.

This disgusting repression must be opposed by all socialists.

The Alice Glenn mentality which has sought to victimise the unmarried is now in full swing.

The hypocrites who claim a respect for the "right to life" are determined to make life as miserable as possible for single parents.

## SITES DEATHS

THE building industry in London is booming.

It is one of the areas to which advocates of "positive" emigration believe we should be moving to.

But prospective emigrants should beware.

In 1987 thirty seven people were killed in the London

area in construction-related accidents.

This is the highest figure since 1974, the year of the last great building boom.

Already in the first four months of this year 12 workers have been killed.

## WHO said:

"NATO is an organisation to protect freedom and democracy"?

- (a) Ronald Reagan
- (b) Margaret Thatcher
- (c) Pope John Paul
- (d) Brian Lenihan

ANSWER: It's the Pope. Neutral Ireland, you'd better get into line with the Vatican!

## STONED AGAIN

WHEN first told Haughey's illness last month most SW readers would have said "nothing trivial, I hope".

For while the rest of us must take our place in longer queues as hospital budgets are cut to the bone, Charlie breezed into the Mater Private Clinic.

And it was the stone in his kidney, not the stone in his heart that the private services of top-urology specialist John Fitzpatrick was engaged to remove.

Hope he didn't have to mortgage his private island to pay the Bill.



## INTERNATIONAL

# South Africa: Black workers fight back

**TWO EVENTS** last month show very clearly the strength and weakness of the continuing resistance in South Africa today.

Its strength was demonstrated in the massive support for the general strike against new anti trade unions law. Its weakness was seen in the possible US sponsored deal on Namibian independence.

The State of Emergency, introduced in June 1986, has broken the popular resistance in the townships. The United Democratic Front, the largest anti-apartheid organisation, has been dismembered with many of its leaders banned or jailed.

COSATU, the trade union federation, is the only major anti-apartheid organisation which is still legal. This is not because the regime likes it so.

Like the UDF, many of its leaders have been imprisoned. The anti-trade union legislation proposed—restrictions on picketing, banning of sympathy strikes and of political strikes, etc—is a further attempt to break COSATU.

The regime has argued that the legislation is similar to that existing or proposed in many western countries. In a sense this is true. But in a country that does not allow any significant political activity by the black majority, strikes, even on pure "economic" issues quickly become political.

In effect, the legislation would ban all strikes. If the legislation succeeds it would mean the effective dismembering of COSATU and the smashing of trade union activity.

The success of the general

strike shows that the only way the regime can do this is by a massive and dangerous escalation of repression—for which neither the state nor big business at present have the stomach.

This situation will not remain static. At some stage, if COSATU does not extend and deepen its organisation of the black working class, the regime will take the risk of attacking union organisation in a head-on confrontation.

But at present the strength and the potential of the black working class stand out more clearly than ever.

In contrast, the possible US-sponsored deal on Namibia will put the ANC strategy of guerrilla war under increasing pressure.

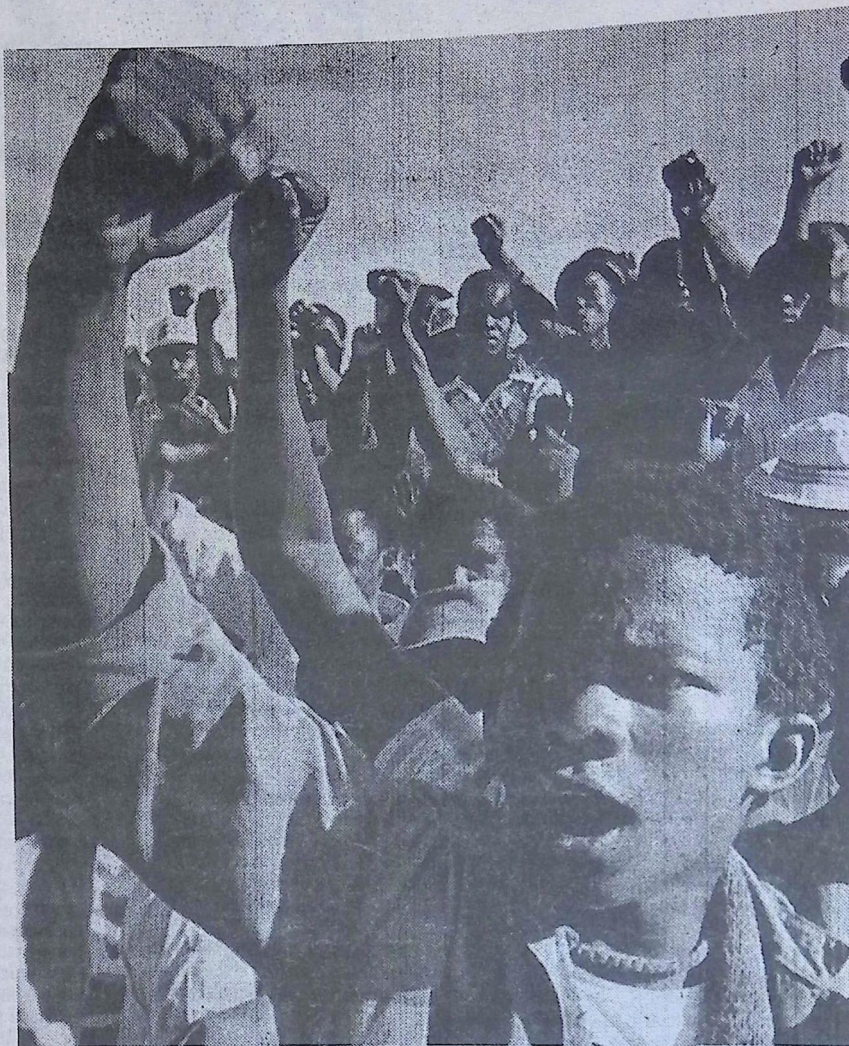
In return for the nominal independence of Namibia, the new regime would have to sign a non-aggression pact with South Africa and to refuse bases to the ANC guerrillas.

Angola two would be forced to throw out the ANC. The South African regime's dream of an ANC free zone along its northern borders would be achieved. The nearest ANC base would be over 750 miles away.

Namibian independence would be nominal. The South African regime would retain a military enclave at the main port of Namibia, Walvis Bay, ensuring their total control of the area.

If the new Namibian regime stepped out of line they would be swift military retribution by either a puppet liberation front, as is happening at present in Mozambique, or by direct military intervention.

The ANC's guerrilla strategy dates from the early sixties. They were not alone in



adopting such a strategy. Other African nationalist organisations had used it and won in Kenya, Tanzania, Algeria and elsewhere.

But central to any guerrilla

war is the need for bases from which to build and extend support. In every successful guerrilla struggle this has been provided by the peasantry.

Moreover, the South African

regime is quite a different animal to the colonial regimes of the rest of Africa.

It is more powerful in terms

of numbers and arms. The South African whites are defending their interests on home ground. Most important, South Africa was and is an urban country in which the strategy of rural guerrilla struggle and creating liberated zones in the countryside is a nonsense.

The sixties also saw another development. The South African economy grew massively. Its growth rate was second only to Japan. The number of black manufacturing workers grew three times between 1951 and 1980.

Increasingly these were skilled or semi-skilled workers. They couldn't just be thrown out and replaced at the bosses' whim. With the growth in numbers grew new trade union organisations.

Initially these were illegal. But in an attempt to co-opt a section of black workers, limited trade union rights were granted to some. The attempt failed and the regime, faced with a new upsurge of struggle in 1984, was forced to recognise trade union organisation for all black workers. COSATU with over a million workers is the most powerful anti-apartheid organisation in South Africa.

Trade unionism alone is not enough to smash apartheid. As the experience of Solidarnosc in Poland clearly shows, if the movement does not go forward and organise to take state power, the state will take the opportunity to counterattack.

As the stakes get higher in South Africa, the only way forward is for black workers to fight the bosses, overthrow capitalism and its baby, apartheid.

—WILLIE CUMMING

## Poland: Workers' actions spark political debate



The Polish workers movement is still alive

**THE Polish working class movement is alive and kicking.**

In May there were strikes and occupations throughout Poland. In some towns students took to the streets in support of the striking workers.

The regime had to resort to brutal police force to stop the upheaval.

Unfortunately, despite this new militancy, the leadership of Solidarnosc has shifted far to the right in the last few years.

They now argue that Gorbachev's reforms coupled with free market economics offers a way forward for Polish workers.

But what of the independent political organisations? A number have recently been formed. One of the most active and open opposition groups is the pacifist "Freedom and Peace" movement.

It held demonstrations under the slogan of "No Freedom without Peace". It campaigns for the demilitarisation of Europe

and against nuclear power.

Another group which is much more orientated on the working class than "Freedom and Peace" is Solidarnosc Walczaca—Fighting Solidarity. It was founded in 1982 and takes a very internationalist stance. It has published leaflets in Ukrainian and Russian calling on workers in the USSR to form organisations like Solidarnosc.

However Fighting Solidarity is a small grouping and remains extremely confused in its thinking. It has called for armed struggle, which at present is ludicrous. Its programme also calls for an independent Poland, based on a non-communist, non-capitalist free market economy!

### DISTRUST

Many activists apparently distrust Fighting Solidarity because of its secretive and sectarian behaviour.

By far the most important achievement for the Polish Left has been the formation last November of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS). The main grouping behind the forming of PPS was the publishers of

the Warsaw bulletin *Rabotnik* (The Worker).

Although a small organisation, the PPS called for strike action before Solidarnosc during the May events. It organised solidarity with various groups of workers in Nowa Huta and Gdansk.

After riots in Rumania last year over forty PPS members were arrested at a demonstration outside the Rumanian embassy in Warsaw.

At the present, however, the politics of the PPS are muddled. Some of its members apparently see the PPS as becoming some form of Social Democratic Party along the lines of the Labour Party here.

Others have been involved in translating Trotsky's "The Revolution Betrayed" into Polish.

Its members have shown great courage and many have been jailed. The PPS has shown uncompromising opposition to the regime and hostility to the "new realism" of Solidarnosc leaders.

While the political direction of the party is still unclear, the PPS is a tremendous step forward for working class politics in eastern Europe.

—BRIAN HANLEY



# 1,000 years of whose Dublin?



Dublin 1920

**OFFICIAL Dublin celebrates its Millenium. Carmencita Hederman, the middle class lady of ladies, is forever opening fetes, exhibitions and gardens.**

**But there is another side to Dublin they will not be mentioning.**

**Here EVE MORRISON looks at a city wrecked by colonialism and how the early working class fought back.**

THE history of Dublin is a history of colonialism. In 1800, Dublin was among the ten largest cities in Europe. It was the second largest city in the British empire. But by the end of the century it had been reduced to a provincial backwater that housed the colonial apparatus and ensured that the agricultural produce of Ireland flowed to the British empire.

The working class of Dublin had an occupational structure like none other. 40 per cent of women workers were in domestic service in 1901. They were employed as maids in the houses of the empire civil servants.

Manufacturing industry declined in Dublin in a period where everywhere else it mushroomed under the impact of the Industrial Revolution.

The biggest concentration of employment was in transport. Dublin like many other capital cities of a colony, was at the hub of a network that linked the agricultural hinterland to the centres of the empire.

What little industry that remained was often concentrated in producing luxury goods for the landlord class. This often had terribly conservative consequences for the skilled labourers involved there. At a Dublin Trades Council meeting in 1889 the Land League was denounced for reducing landlords' incomes and so hitting the market for hunting boots.

The mass of workers were hired on a casual basis. Poverty reached

unbelievable proportions. In 1907 20,000 families were living in one room. A third of the city's population was squeezed into the tenements. By the end of the 19th century the ownership of these tenements had fallen into the hands of the native Catholic rich. Excluded from opportunities to build up an industrial base they led a parasitic existence through the control of tenements, pubs and shops. Their control of the city council ensured that the laws regulating housing were not implemented.

Dublin, therefore, had a fantastically high death rate. It was the fifth highest in Europe in the nineteenth century. In 1910 142 infants per thousand were dying in Dublin compared to 103 in London. TB was one of the main killers of adults. But an attempt to build a sanatorium in the city was attacked by the Catholic middle class. Arthur Griffith summed up their sentiments when he wrote that it might "convey the impression abroad that its products bring the germs of fatal scourge wherever they are distributed.

In the midst of this misery alcoholism was high. Dublin contained the highest proportion of methilated spirits drinkers in Europe.

Prostitution was also rife. One side of O'Connell Street was virtually reserved for the "respectable citizens" while the other side was populated by prostitutes. Just off the main street, there existed the Monto, famous for the huge number of women forced into prostitution.

Workers rose up from this misery by their own struggles. The middle class of the day despised and feared them. But the activities of revolutionary socialists such as Connolly and Larkin and the efforts of earlier trade unionists laid the basis for the rise of the working class.

The millenium celebrated by the like of Carmencita Hederman and the bourgeoisie of Dublin today will pay no homage to those fighters.

**THE earliest evidence of trade unionism in Dublin dates back to 1729.**

**In that year the first anti-combination act was passed in the Irish parliament.**

The act prohibited "unlawful combinations of workmen, artificers and labourers employed in this kingdom". This was followed in 1743 by an act making illegal assemblies of "three or more persons for the purpose of making by-laws respecting journeymen, apprentices or servants". These acts, like many that were to follow them, were ignored by working men.

They continued to organise secretly and press their employers for wages increases and shortening of the working day. The only legal means of expressing their grievances was by way of a petition presented to a parliament which was made up entirely of wealthy landowners.

The ineffectiveness of this method of protest was made clear when in 1749 journeymen broadweavers of Dublin brought a petition before the House of Commons asking for "settled prices for labour".

They complained that they were forced to do servile labour as well as the work at their looms.

Sir Richard Cox was sent to inquire into the situation. He actually supported the broadweavers' demands and called for re-evaluation of the workmen's combinations.

### IGNORED

The Irish Parliament ignored Cox's findings and did nothing to help the journeymen. Labour unrest continued to grow unabated through the 1750s and 1760s. Two more anti-combination laws were passed that had no more effect than their predecessors.

The first trade union mentioned by name, in the early 1760s, was the Regular Carpenters of Dublin. Their stated aims were to support sick members, bury their dead, provide for widows, raise money to finance litigation between carpenters and employers and regulate wages.

By the 1770s the employers or Masterguildmen, joined forces to suppress all trade union activity. Guilds, dating back to the middle ages, had once been fraternities of masters, journeymen and apprentices.

But by the 18th century were organisations of the masterguildsmen alone.

They collectively passed resolutions to encourage employers to keep a black list of union activists. They agreed a set of wages and hours that all employers would impose on journeymen.

Attempts were made by the employers to crush the trade union activity of taylors, weavers, bakers, coopers, shipwrights, cabinet makers, tallow chandlers, cotton spinners and cutlers all jailed.

In 1780 the most repressive anti-combination law to date was passed in parliament under the auspices of Henry Gratton and the Patriot Party. It called for the suppression of ALL trade unions.

The trade unions fought back vigorously. On the day the bill was to be debated, 20,000 trade unionists with their families and supporters, marched from Phoenix Park to College Green. The bill was passed but it proved as ineffective as ever.

In 1781 an architect from England, James Forden English came to Dublin to work on the Customs House. He was forced by the Dublin trade unions to allow his workers to join a union.

The last twenty years of the 18th century saw an increase in militancy by the workers.

When the Irish Parliament was dissolved in 1800, a special anti-union law for Ireland was passed that was even more repressive than the law passed by Wilberforce in 1799. It was to remain in effect until the general repeal of anti-combination acts in 1824.

The militancy of Dublin workers continued into the first part of the 19th century despite the best efforts of the employers.

In 1824 Dublin carpenters beat up their employer for not dismissing a man who had been expelled from the union. In July 1825 there were riots in the Liberties when women silk weavers went on strike. In 1826 Dublin experienced what was probably the first general strike in Irish history. Employers were found to be paying their workers with worthless money—bad coins, counterfeit and slugs. Shop keepers refused to pay more than 12 Irish pence to an English shilling worth 13d. Workers came out onto the streets to protest. Employers retaliated by declaring a lock-out and violence escalated.

**IN 1832 Westminster passed a Reform Act giving the vote to the middle classes but not to workers.**

**The demand for the vote for the working class gave rise to Chartism.**

Unfortunately very few Irish trade unionists joined the Chartists. Instead they backed the Repeal Movement, led by Daniel O'Connell. The unions in Cork and Dublin were some of the main organisations which rallied support for the Repeal of the Act of Union.

But the alliance with O'Connell was fatal for Irish labour. O'Connell was not simply a Catholic nationalist. He was also an enthusiastic supporter of the Whig Party in Britain. In 1835 O'Connell supported the new poor law which denied outdoor relief to able-bodied unemployed. It drove thousands into the workhouse where conditions were appalling.

### ATTACK

After first accepting trade union support for the repeal movement, O'Connell now launched a full scale attack on them.

In the House of Commons he proclaimed that:

"There is no tyranny equal to that which was exercised by the trade unionists in Dublin over their fellow labourers".

O'Connell urged the Whig government to set up a Special Committee to enquire into the activities of Dublin unions.

O'Connell's image of a perfect society was summed up in his attitude to child labour. In 1833 a mild piece of legislation had been passed in the House of Commons banning the employment of children under nine. O'Connell opposed it viciously as a piece of "ridiculous humanity which would convert manufacturers to beggars".

O'Connell's opposition to the unions led a minority to seek an open alliance with the British Chartists. In 1839 a trade union group invited a Chartist speaker to Dublin. But the meeting was set upon and wrecked by O'Connell's supporters.

O'Connell had managed to inflict a severe blow against the unions of skilled workers. Irish labour was not to recover its militancy until the efforts of Connolly and Larkin to build the ITGWU.



# Republicanism

## in crisis

THE PUBLICATION by the *Irish News* of leaked Sinn Fein documents shocked and confused many Republican supporters last month.

The documents were presented to a private conference of the party on June 25th by Sinn Fein general secretary Tom Hartley, Belfast councillor Martin O Mulleoir and Barry McElduff. Their thrust was that Sinn Fein should seek co-operation not conflict with the SDLP, that there was a contradiction to be recognised between the armed struggle and the party's electoral activities, and that Sinn Fein should be careful about castigating the Catholic Church since this risked isolating the movement within the Catholic community.

The conference wasn't a policy making one and the documents had no official status. Nevertheless, the fact that the presentations were formally made and by senior members of the party, were clear indications of the drift of thinking at the top within Sinn Fein. And this drift is clearly towards the right.

Within the South, too, all the evidence is of Sinn Fein backing off from strategies which would divide and distance it from green-tory nationalism.

At education seminars women members of the party have been urged to "pull back" from discussion

of abortion and related issues, the argument being that "the people" are not ready and that pushing abortion-related issues might alienate "moderate" opinion.

On the economy, the leadership line in recent discussions has avoided any mention of a straightforward, class-based fight-back against Haughey's Thatcherite assault. Instead, the party has been urged in documents to concentrate on a campaign for "economic sovereignty".

Such a campaign, it is suggested, could unite workers with nationalist-inclined groups and individuals from other classes.

In the anti-extradition campaign Sinn Fein has rigidly insisted on an orientation on the rank and file of Fianna Fail, in the hope that pressure from below can force Haughey to abandon extradition proceedings.

Sinn Fein has refused to countenance a strategy of looking to the victims of Fianna Fail and linking the fight against extradition to the fight against closures and cuts.

All this is part of Sinn Fein's efforts to "enter the mainstream" (as Danny Morrison put it) and become accepted as an element in a pan-nationalist alliance.

All this is happening despite the glaringly obvious fact that the SDLP and Fianna Fail have no interest or intention whatever of being involved in opposition to British imperialism.

On the contrary, the SDLP and Fianna Fail are engaged in delicate and determined efforts to fashion a new settlement which, while altering the "balance of power" between

nationalism and unionism, would preserve bourgeois property relations and keep Ireland as a whole within the Western "sphere of influence". (Meanwhile the Catholic Church, which Sinn Fein is increasingly reluctant to alienate, operates as the religious wing of the Northern Ireland Office.)

The extradition issue throws a harsh spotlight on the utter futility of the Sinn Fein strategy. While Sinn Fein members denounce as "ultra-left" and "unrealistic" any suggestion that the campaign should be turned against Fianna Fail, and give gushing welcomes to any Fianna Failer who can be coaxed onto an anti-extradition platform, Haughey's government gets on with the routine business of extraditing Republicans.

Robert Russell is to be handed over at the end of August while Haughey expressed his "dismay" and grovelling apologies at the maverick decision of a Portlaoise court to reject the warrant for Patrick McVeigh.

Even the trivial reforms which Garret FitzGerald says Britain had promised in return for extradition—three-judge Diplock courts, RUC men to "supervise" UDR patrols etc—have been totally forgotten by Fianna Fail. Equally forgotten is the relevance of the Birmingham and Guildford cases etc, etc.

Likewise with the business of "economic sovereignty". Is there a rational person in the 26 Counties who could seriously argue that a multi-class alliance can be built against the domination of the Southern economy by multi-national capital?

Isn't it a plain as the nose on Charlie Haughey's face that Fianna Fail—and the SDLP—see themselves, and see themselves accurately, as representing a fully-fledged and well-integrated element in world (in the first instance European) capitalism?

Indeed it is precisely in order to be "competitive" in that environment that Fianna Fail shuts hospitals, forces through redundancies, slashes social welfare and educational spending and generally attacks working class rights and living standards.

OVER THE past year it has become more obvious that support for the Republican Movement is unlikely to increase much further, North or South. Debate is now raging within Sinn Fein on how to break out of this impasse.

The leadership of Sinn Fein sees "broadening the base" as the way forward. EAMONN McCANN explains how this is essentially an attempt to move the organisation to the right.

Meanwhile, within the prisons, the debate has moved the ground more to the left. GORETTI HORGAN looks at what has emerged from the debates and discussions of the Sinn Fein prisoners.

Ultimately it is for the same reason—their integration into and identity of interest with British and world capitalism—that Fianna Fail (and the SDLP) cannot break decisively with Britain over the North.

Sinn Fein's refusal or inability to recognise that connection is reflected in the party's approach to the problem of sectarian division in the North.

Since class divisions within "the nationalist community" are dismissed as being of no immediate relevance, it follows naturally that the "Loyalist community" too is seen as a homogenous group. The idea that the Protestant working class might have interests distinctly different from the Orange bosses just doesn't feature in Sinn Fein's statements.

This is a long, long way from Connolly . . .

The left within Sinn Fein seems to have gone tamely along with this development. And this is reasonable enough in a sense. *Socialist Worker* has argued repeatedly that it wasn't the whims or weaknesses of republican leaders down through the decades which had led to repeated shifts towards the right and eventually towards bourgeois, constitutional ("mainstream") politics; that the problem lay at the heart of Republicanism itself.

No matter how left wing you honestly believe yourself to be, if you see national divisions, not class divisions, as the most fundamental in society, you will inevitably see other nationalists, of whatever class, as possible allies. And in seeking alliances with such people, distinctive working class interests will inevitably be ditched.

SINCE 1968 hundreds of young men and women have been imprisoned for their political beliefs and actions. Many of them have now been inside for more than sixteen years. Most serve sentences of ten to twelve years.

Sitting in prison it is inevitable that they wonder how and why they ended up there. One question which seems to enter the minds of most prisoners is whether the cause they are fighting for is worth the sacrifices they are forced to make.

Because there are so many political prisoners thinking, discussing and passing books, papers and magazines between them, the level of debate can often be higher than on the outside. However, these discussions are by necessity abstract as the ideas produced cannot be tested in the outside world.

*Questions of History* was written by republican prisoners and published by Sinn Fein's education department in an attempt to bring some of that debate and discussion to a wider audience than that in the prisons. The preface of this book makes it clear that while Sinn Fein publish it, "the views and ideas in the book are those of the prisoners".

*Questions of History* is an attempt to use the experiences of the last 200 years to promote discussion about the problems facing Irish socialists and left republicans today. The book aims "to illustrate to some degree, the role of both capital and labour in the development of Irish society and

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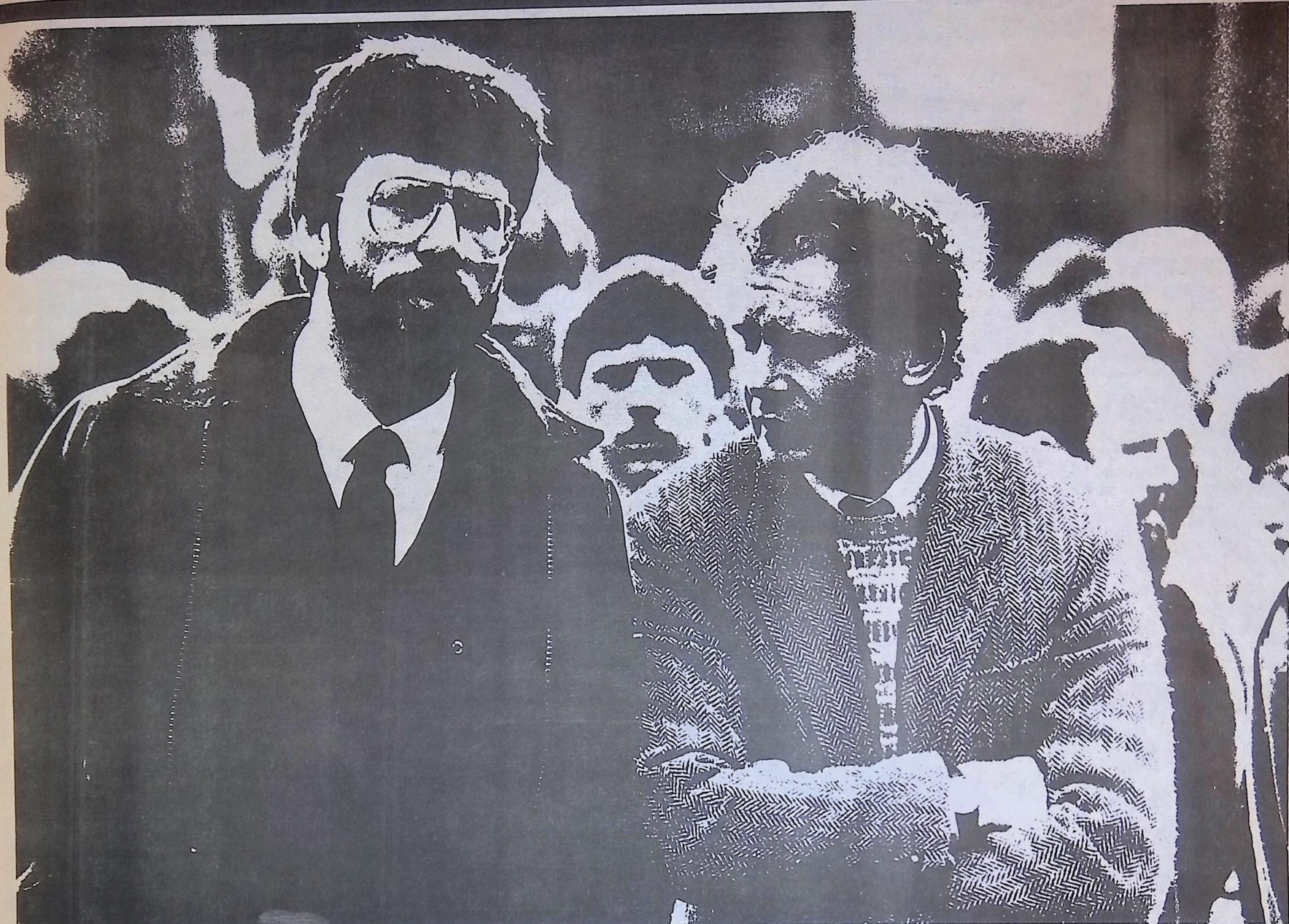
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the class conflict they inevitably engender."

This book is only the first part of an intended larger project and covers the period from Grattan's Parliament to the Republican Congress. The ideological basis of republicanism is outlined and its developments since the time of Wolfe Tone.

The prisoners are quite honest about Tone's legacy to republicanism today. It is, they explain, the idea of an Ireland independent from Britain; an Ireland which could only be won if all classes of "Irishmen" were to: "forget all former feuds, to consolidate the entire strength of the nation, and to form for the future but one people". The other two parts of the legacy of the United Irishmen—the use of physical force and ideas of secularism—are also outlined.

What is not discussed is just what kind of Ireland Tone wanted. Tone wanted independence; the kind of independence that the French Revolution sought—in fact the kind of independence the French Revolution won and which they have in France

today—the freedom to create a viable, democratic, capitalist state. Tone's famous "men of no property" statement is quoted to imply that were his revolution to come to fruition, men of no property would be in power in Ireland.

On the contrary—and this is a fact few republicans, however left wing, are willing to face—that piece was written by tone as a warning to his own class, to the gentry. He was warning them that if they did not take the leadership in the coming revolution, then the men of no property would have to be called in.

Tone's project was indeed revolutionary at the end of the 18th century. Times have changed however. Yet, as we can see today in Sinn Fein's wooing of the SDLP, Tone's ideas of an all-class alliance to get rid of the Brits remains.

On this issue the book is somewhat confused. The authors conclude, again and again, that only the working class has both the interest and ability to rid Ireland of British imperialism. Nonetheless an attempt is made to justify Sinn Fein's attempts to align itself with ruling class parties like the SDLP and Fianna Fail. Connolly's involvement in the 1916 Rising is the principle excuse offered. After all if Connolly could unite with "progressive" elements of the bourgeoisie, why shouldn't anti-imperialists today do the same?

*Socialist Worker* has argued consistently that it was a fatal weakness of Connolly's politics that he failed to understand that he could stand

squarely with Republicans against British imperialism yet at the same time reject the all-class ideology of Republicanism. Instead he tried to pull the republican tradition over into socialism—something which his and subsequent experiences proved simply cannot be done.

But at least in Connolly's day there was a "progressive" element among the emerging nationalist ruling class. There was a section of the Irish bourgeoisie which still had an interest in banishing British imperialism. That section wanted to set up protection barriers behind which Irish capitalism could thrive. However, as the other article on this spread explains, such an option no longer exists for Irish capital. Today the principle interest of Irish capitalists is maintaining stability and the status quo.

The authors of *Questions of History* are clearly greatly influenced by David Reed's *Ireland: The Key to the British Revolution*. Although Reed belongs to a "Trotskyist" tradition his analysis of the struggle for socialism in Ireland owes more to the "stages theory" of Stalinism. "Get rid of the Brits first and only then will we be able to fight for socialism" just about sums it up.

The analysis includes an approach to the Protestant working class which goes something like this: A successful fight for socialism demands a strong, united working class; because the nationalist working class in the North is effectively powerless (due to discrimination) and because the Protestant working class is tied to the state, the working class power needed to bring socialism will not be available until the Brits have gone.

This view is essentially parti-

tionist. By far the largest, and strongest, section of the Irish working class is in the South. In a situation of mass workers' action, when the Southern state was about to be overthrown and a start made to building socialism, some sections of the Protestant working class in the North could well be won to the fight against capitalism.

But they will never be won as long as there is any suspicion that what they would be fighting for had any hint of being a 32 county version of the Free State. Protestant workers would have to be very foolish to accept lower standards of living and Catholic supremacy.

On the other hand, if it were clear that in return for abandoning their marginal privileges, they could have not just a few extra crumbs, not even a bigger piece of the cake, but the entire bakery, then Protestant workers could not but see that their interests lay with their nationalist fellow workers in ending capitalism and, at the same time, British imperialism.

None of this is likely to happen, however, unless there is built a serious revolutionary party with roots in the working class. Time and again throughout *Questions of History* the authors ask whether the intervention of such an organisation would have made a decisive difference to the outcome of potentially revolutionary situations.

The recognition by the prisoners of the need for such a party is a very positive development and a complete contrast to the rightward direction

being taken by the Sinn Fein leadership on the outside.

How the role of the revolutionary party is perceived by the prisoners is, however, somewhat tinged with ideas of "socialism from above".

When those of us who believe that socialism can only be brought about from below talk about the need for a revolutionary vanguard it is not because we believe that such a party should take power and bring about a revolutionary change in society. Quite simply we don't believe that capitalism can be smashed, or socialism initiated, by any party however radical or well-meaning.

Socialism can only be brought about by the mass of the working class uniting in the struggle to change society. The role of the revolutionary party is to organise the most politically conscious workers (the vanguard). This is necessary, not to take power but to argue with other workers the need for the working class as a whole to smash the capitalist state and to take power as a class.

Such a party is also needed to unite workers by arguing against all the divisions—between men and women, black and white, Catholic and Protestant—which have allowed the capitalists to rule.

That kind of party cannot be built overnight when the need arises. It has to be built now when the struggle is low and ideas of socialism seem lost. The Socialist Workers Movement is trying to lay the basis for such a party. Those involved in, or following, the debate around *Questions of History* should consider whether this, rather than an attempt to revamp the republican tradition, is the best way forward.

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**James Connolly**

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## ANALYSIS

# A bleak 'socialism'

THE Workers Party is the largest left-wing party in the Dail. In Dublin its vote is higher than that of the Labour Party. Many working class people see the WP as being far to the left of the Labour Party. Some of its members even describe themselves as revolutionary socialists.

Just how left-wing is the Workers Party? What kind of vision of

socialism does it have? What do its four TDs and its local councillors have to say about the important issues which face working class people in Ireland today?

Here, BRIAN HANLEY looks at the WP approach to the economic crisis, at its attitude to the Six County state and its position in regard to the so-called socialist countries.

THERE is no blueprint for what a socialist society might look like, nor for how it might be achieved. But there are some basics without which socialism could not be possible.

For Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky socialism meant a free society where things were produced for people's needs, not for profit and where the mass of workers themselves controlled society and made the decisions which affect their own lives.

Such a society cannot be GIVEN to people, the mass of people must bring it about for themselves or they would not have the will or the confidence to run the new, free society. Hence Marx's maxim "the emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself."

When it comes to the ins and outs, the strategy and tactics, of the fight for socialism, revolutionary socialists have two questions on which to base their attitude to any particular strategy. First, who will benefit most, the working class or the ruling class? Second, will this strategy increase the confidence of working class people in their ability to overthrow capitalism and to run society for themselves?

It is with these basic in mind that we look at the practise and policies of organisations which call themselves socialists.

The Workers Party did not come from the socialist tradition but from republicanism. When they split from Provisional Sinn Fein in 1970 they were known first as Official Sinn Fein, then as Sinn Fein the Workers Party until eventually they dropped the Sinn Fein title completely.

As official Sinn Fein in the early 1970s, they outlined their view of how socialism could be won in the 26 counties. "The Irish Industrial Revolution" argued that socialism was not yet a possibility in Ireland because the country was too backward. Several stages of development would, they argued, have to be gone through before workers in Ireland should even think about fighting for socialism.

The first of these stages was, the

document outlined, the creation of an urban working class. The working class is, of course, a creation of capitalism so Official Sinn Fein/Workers Party called for a large scale programme of industrialisation by multinational companies.

Multinationals were, they said, progressive in the Irish context because they could industrialise the 26 counties faster than would the native capitalists. Irish capitalists, were, according to the WP, "lazy" and "avaricious". By this they meant they did not exploit enough Irish workers with enough vigour and viciousness. The multinationals would do the job much better.

This attitude to multinationals led the WP to some rather peculiar stands—like for example, their support for the siting of toxic waste dump at Ringaskiddy, Co. Cork. Everyone knew the dump was dangerous; the local people didn't want it. But the chemical industry in their area did, so the WP said it must be a good thing.

Their more recent economic document "The Road to Prosperity" continues this grovelling attitude to foreign investment. True, there is talk of the need for a major expansion of the public sector to create jobs and tackle the economic crisis. But, they argue, the part of the national debt owed to foreign banks must be paid, just in case foreigners see Ireland as an unsafe place to invest.

There is no explanation of the causes of the economic crisis, no pointing the finger at the capitalist system which breeds crisis after crisis and which condemns working class people to the dole or to pay half of their low wages towards paying the national debt. The debt, like the crisis, was not caused by working class people. Any group claiming to represent workers' interests must make it clear that since it's not our debt, we don't believe it should be repaid—to Irish capitalists or to foreign ones!

In one vital area of Irish politics the Workers Party plays a particularly reactionary role. In relation to the sectarian Northern state the WP position is more suited to a Unionist party than one which calls itself socialist.

The WP says it is opposed to violence whether it comes from the



Workers Party—not the only alternative

loyalist or the nationalist side. But the violence of the forces of the state—the army, RUC or UDR—is totally ignored. They refuse to call for the disarming and disbanding of the RUC. Indeed they have hailed the RUC as "the best community police force in the world".

Their support for legislation so repressive that South Africa's PW Botha said that he would like to have it they explain by saying that Sinn Fein is a fascist organisation. This nonsense then allows them to support Thatcher, Paisley, Hume and Haughey in their attempts to murder and repress republicans.

So, for example, the WP oppose Section 31 in its present form but want to see it replaced by an even more draconian ban to keep Sinn Fein—or anybody who dares to question the British presence in the North—off the airwaves and out of the newspapers.

Similarly, they support the principle of extraditing political prisoners to Britain and the North. Their only quarrel is about the conditions in which the extradition takes place.

This characterisation of Sinn Fein as "fascist" also determines the allies they seek in the North. In the tradition of the stalinist "Popular Front against fascism" they unite with what they term the "progressive" elements of the establishment in the North. Thus they frequently ally themselves with the moderate unionist Alliance Party.

Their "moderation" has won them praise from Official Unionist MP Ken Magennis, Lord Gerry Fitt and former Northern Ireland Secretary of State James Prior.

Such people find themselves able to praise an organisation which calls itself socialist because they are, in fact, on the side of British imperialism.

It was then little surprise to socialists and republicans in the North when Tomas McGiolla ended his presidential speech to this year's WP Ard Fheis by advising loyalists to remember the old cry of "No Surrender".

Workers' Party activity in the South both in the Dail and in the unions also gives the lie to their claims to be socialist. While they had

always joined with the Left in condemning the Labour Party's coalition with Fine Gael, the four WP TDs voted not just to put the minority Fianna Fail party into government but also for its vicious budget of March 1982.

When Labour right-winger Barry Desmond introduced a Bill to allow soldiers to join trade unions, the WP voted against it, saying it would lead to anarchy!

These are just some small examples of their treachery towards the working class within the corridors of Leinster House. In no way at all do they use the Dail as Lenin said a bourgeois parliament should be used—as a dung-hill to stand on while proclaiming the need to get rid of the dung.

## DIRTY-WORK

Time and again within the trade unions it has been WP officials who have done the dirty work in keeping workers firmly under the control of the bureaucracy and under the heel of the bosses.

There are a number of WP members in high positions within the trade union movement—Des Geraghty, Eamonn Gilmore and Pat Rabbitte are probably the best known examples. But none of these got their jobs because of a left-wing upsurge within the rank and file. Far from it. Most were appointed straight from student union politics. Many of them have never worked in an "ordinary" job and so do not have a clue of what life is like on the shop floor for most of us, most of the workers they are supposed to represent.

These facts go a long way towards explaining their disgraceful sell-outs of workers' struggles. During the seventies the WP consistently supported the National Wage Agreements and now they staunchly defend the National Plan.

Time and again WP officials insist that workers obey Court injunctions against picketing, use the Labour Court and respect the scab's charter, the two-tier picket. The WP denounced the oil workers strike in 1980 as "ultra-left".

Only last year Pat Rabbitte

worked hard to ensure that workers did not fight the health cuts and supported right-wingers John Carroll and Billy Atlee in their calls for the "new realism" of British trade unions—the same "new realism" which is bringing in no-strike deals and which sold out the miners, teachers, nurses and, more recently, the seafarers.

The vision of socialism which the WP leaders have can be most clearly seen through their attitude to the Eastern Bloc countries. Criticism of the so-called socialist countries they denounce as "Pro-western propaganda" or "Trotskyite lies".

The Hungarian workers revolt of 1956 is described by them as "counter-revolutionary" and "fascist". Solidarnosc is seen in a similar light. The WP supported the banning of Solidarnosc and the imposition of martial law in Poland.

Even Stalin's mass murder of hundreds of thousands during the 1930s is defended (which is more than the Kremlin is doing these days!). A WP publication stated: "the Kulaks stranglehold on the land, its resources and their attempted blackmail of the state had to be confronted and overcome. Trotsky and his followers and their attempts to subvert the party and the state had to be defeated."

That is indeed a bleak vision of socialism and one which would inspire few to leave their armchairs by the fire, still less to work for it. If socialism meant just exchanging our present capitalist bosses for party/state bosses, the struggle for socialism would have been given up long ago.

But the states of eastern Europe have nothing to do with socialism and those who say they have, including the WP, are merely discrediting the kind of free society under workers control which socialism really represents.

The problem is that for many workers in Ireland the Workers Party seems the only alternative to the right-wing antics of the other Dail parties. It is for those people that this article has been written—to show that the Workers Party cannot lead the working class of Ireland in the fight for socialism. Indeed to show that building a real socialist alternative in Ireland necessitates a complete break with their politics.

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# LETTERS

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## Should socialists support Gorbachev's reforms?



Dear Socialist Worker  
Why have you got such a grudge against the Soviet Union?

OK, so things have not always been the exact way a western socialist might want things to be, but why don't you accept that it is a more progressive society that capitalism in the west?

At the moment when half a million people are without jobs on this island, there is no unemployment in the USSR.

When some Fianna Fail loving gombeen can up sticks and move to sunnier climes—as Hanlon's ambulance works in

Longford has done with a devastating effect on employment in the area—surely the fact that all industry in Russia is nationalised has got to be a good thing?

And don't forget that the socialist government of Nicaragua is continually being threatened by Reagan's contras. The Soviet Union is the only government supplying essential medicines and other aid to beleaguered Sandinistas.

Gorbachev's reform programme is putting the mistakes of the Stalin period right and removing the blemishes which western propaganda has made such a song and dance about.

At the same time it was Gorbachev who proposed the elimination of all nuclear weapons and forced Reagan to negotiate an arms treaty.

Politics is the art of the possible and Russia has pushed the possible much further than any other country. Isn't it time Socialist Worker came off the fence?

—PATRICK BURNS, Wexford

Dear Comrades,

Every socialist must of course welcome the opportunities that Glasnost opens up in the Soviet Union. But it's important to see the limitations.

For years those who defended Russia claimed that it was a free and democratic country and that claims that the mass of the people had no control over the bureaucrats was all CIA propaganda. Apologists for the USSR denied that Stalin had murdered his opponents and committed millions to slave labour camps. Workers, it was said, could elect their factory managers and decide the direction of Russian industry.

Now that myth has been exploded. It wasn't the CIA or dissidents groups but Gorbachev himself who exploded it.

At last month's party conference—the first for over forty years—he proposed erecting a monument for those murdered by Stalin. He accepted that Bukharin and other party leaders who were murdered in the thirties as "counter-revolutionaries and fascist spies" were perfectly innocent and had been framed.

He even proposed that there should be limited elections to Soviets and a few less lies printed in the media. He admitted that the instrument of "Russian democracy" the Soviets were entirely filled with party appointees and that the government had not been subject to any democratic control for sixty years.

Even the reforms are two-faced. It seems redundancies, wage-cuts and removal of food subsidies are to become the official norm. And he allowed his one-time ally, the reforming Moscow ex-party boss Yeltsin to be thrown to the wolves.

The only way forward lies with workers taking over. Your headline last month summed it up perfectly: "Neither Washington nor Moscow but International Socialism".

—MARY MCCARTHY, Athlone

## Laois tenants defy rent hike

**THE County Council tenants in Laois have been fighting a bitter struggle to stop rent increases.**

The fight began in January after the tenants received a note from the council increasing rents by 300 per cent.

Minimum rent went up from £2 to £5.

As soon as the notices appeared, local NATO activists got over 300 people to picket County Hall in Portlaoise.

At a local meeting later that week local NATO members drew up a letter of protest and handed it to every councillor.

So terrified were the councillors by the anger over the increases that they began describing them as "savage" and "draconian". This despite the fact that they had known about the increases for over a month previously and had done nothing.

Now confronted with the anger of the people they did an

about turn. They voted to suspend the increases in January.

The County Manager agreed to the suspension of the increases for one month. They clearly felt that the anger would not be sustained and at the end of the month they would be able to impose the increases in some form.

NATO members were alive to this danger and made plans to deal with it. Late in February tenants received notice of rent increases. The main concern was that minimum rent increases were going up by 50 per cent.

Many tenants also found however that they would be paying more with arrears and service charges. One widow on £95 a week was being asked for £22.

Laois NATO responded by asking tenants to implement a rent freeze; to ignore demands for increased rent and to refuse to pay service charges. 1,000 leaflets were distributed and the estates were toured by a van with a loud hailer. On the first day the rent increases were due their was complete support for NATO advice. 90 per cent of tenants backed the rent freeze.

As the protest enters its fifth month, this figure has reduced slightly due to intimidation by the council. But still 70 per cent of tenants in Portlaoise are refusing to pay the increase.

In the past few weeks the campaign has entered a new phase. The council has sent out letters threatening action. Up to now they had relied on intimidation from the rent collectors.

NATO responded in a newsletter threatening a total rent strike if there were any evictions. A picket was also called for the next council meeting on July 29th.

The Laois rent strike shows the willingness of working class people to defy the right of privileged to dictate to them. However they are also sadly aware that they remain an isolated area. There has not been similar action in any other area where rent increases have been imposed prior to negotiations on a national rent scheme between NATO and the government. Fianna Fail had agreed to this in their election manifesto.

The fact that the tenants in Laois have held the council at bay for five months shows what can be done. Other NATO branches should follow the example.

—WILLIE PHELAN

## What we stand for

The Socialist Workers Movement is a marxist organisation fighting for a workers' republic in Ireland and for socialism internationally.

### FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM

We begin from the proposition that what determines the nature of any society is the system by which its wealth is produced. In the system we live under, capitalism, production is geared to profit, not to human need. Among its inevitable features are poverty, war, racism and sexism. Capitalism cannot be destroyed and these evils thus eradicated by piecemeal reform. It can only be destroyed by revolutionary action by the class which creates all the wealth, the working class.

The machinery of the capitalist state—parliament, courts, army, police etc—is designed to protect the interests of the ruling capitalist class, not to regulate society in a neutral fashion. At most, parliament can be used, sometimes, to make propaganda against capitalism. It cannot be used to smash capitalism. Only a workers' revolution can do that and establish a truly democratic society in which workers hold power directly through delegates elected from workplaces and areas and are re-callable and replaceable at any time by those who elect them.

### NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW

This kind of socialism does not exist anywhere today. Workers do not have control in Russia, China, Cuba etc. Instead, power is held by a state-capitalist class. A workers' revolution is needed in these countries too.

We are against NATO and the Warsaw Pact and all weapons of mass destruction. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination.

### FOR AN END TO PARTITION

The Northern State was created by British imperialism in its own interests. Sectarianism and bigotry were built into it and will continue to exist for as long as the state exists.

The marginal privileges given to Protestant workers are just that: marginal. It is in the immediate interest of Protestant as well as Catholic workers to fight against their exploitation. It is in the interest of all Northern workers to unite against the state and aim at socialism in Ireland.

We support all forces struggling against imperialism and the Northern state, regardless of differences we may have with them.

The interests of the Southern ruling class are no longer in fundamental conflict with those of imperialism. Southern capitalism is a junior player in the world capitalist system. The Southern state too, props up partition, despite occasional nationalist rhetoric.

The "national question" can be solved only by mass working class struggle against both states. Republicanism, by limiting the immediate struggle to the achievement of "national unity", and by appealing for all-class alliances in pursuit of this goal, can never lead the working class towards the defeat of imperialism.

### FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION

We oppose all forms of oppression which divide and weaken the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women. We fight for free contraception, abortion on demand and the right to divorce. We oppose all discrimination against gays and lesbians. We stand for secular control of hospitals and schools. We fight for the complete separation of church and state.

### FOR A FIGHT IN THE UNIONS

Trade unions exist to protect workers' interests under capitalism. The role of trade union leaders is to negotiate with bosses over workers' position within capitalism. To destroy capitalism, we need a rank and file movement in the unions separate from the leaderships and fighting for workers' interests regardless of the needs of capitalism.

### FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To destroy capitalism and achieve socialism the most class conscious sections of the working class must be organised in a revolutionary party. The SWM aims to build such a party through spreading its ideas and through its activity in the working class movement. We stand in the tradition of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. We urge all who sympathise with our politics to join us.

## Join us!

I would like to join the SWM  
 I would like more details of SWM

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

send to SWM, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8



## REVIEWS

# Iran's lost chance

"Revolution, and Counter-Revolution in Iran" by Phil Marshall, Bookmarks, price £3.50 plus 50p p.&p. from: SW Books, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

IN THE popular imagination Iran is a country where history has gone backwards.

A modernising, pro-western regime has given way to a medieval, Islamic tyranny of fanatics.

That, it is said, is the significance of the revolution of 1979.

Phil Marshall's new book sets out to put the record straight.

In 1908 large reserves of oil were discovered in an otherwise pretty backward country. The Shah sold exclusive rights to the oil exploitation to a British company in return for royalties. From that time on imperialist interests have continually interfered in Iran.

During the second world war Britain and Russia occupied Iran to secure vital oil supplies. At the end of the war the region of Azerbaijan—which has given Gorbachev so many headaches recently—was annexed by Russia.

In the developing industrial economy, these years saw a great growth of the workers' movement with strikes and mass trade unionism. At the same time local bourgeois interests were getting more and more impatient with western imperialism's parasitism.

In the years 1912 to 1933 the British Anglo-Persian Oil Company made profits of £200 million out of Iran's oil but had paid in royalties to the Iranian government just £16 million. After the war the process was accelerated.

In the five years after 1945 the same company's Iranian operations made £250 million in net profits but paid only £90 million to Iran.

The Iranian business class, small businessmen, merchants and professionals provided the impetus for the National Front under Mohammad Mossadeq, a bourgeois nationalist leader.

The main party operating in the workers' movement, the pro-Moscow Tudeh, used their influence to subordinate the working class to the bourgeois National Front.

Mossadeq came to power in 1951 pledged to nationalise the oil industry and limit the power of the Shah, but was forced to concede many

workers' demands under the impact of mass radicalisation.

As the actions of workers increased, the National Front shattered as sections of the bourgeoisie took fright. The Tudeh party continued to argue against independent working class politics and the Mossadeq government turned on the workers. As the workers' movement was defeated, the British and US governments organised an army coup against Mossadeq and re-installed the Shah, Iranian oil was once again safe for the west. Massive repression followed.

## DEFEAT

The Left failed to learn from this devastating defeat. The Tudeh continued to promote the idea that all classes of Iranians should unite to expel imperialism and remove the Shah, that workers should limit their demands to those acceptable to "progressive" elements among the national bourgeois class.

The Left's stalinist legacy left them unable to grasp that in any serious fight to change Iranian society, the "progressive" bourgeoisie would take fright and run into the arms

of US imperialism as they had in 1951.

After the massive rises in oil prices in the early seventies, the flow of revenues to the Iranian state greatly increased. The state had long been promoting investment in domestic industry—a job the local bourgeoisie had been too weak to accomplish on its own.

After 1973 the tempo of growth increased to fever pitch. Thousands of former peasants were attracted to the cities to become workers in the burgeoning industries and demand for skilled workers particularly encouraged a revival in the workers' movement.

But as the industrial economy boomed, agriculture went into crisis as it was denuded of resources. When the world slump hit a year or two later, Iran could not insulate itself from its effects. Massive cuts in public spending coupled with huge hikes in food prices provoked widespread workers' opposition.

Strikes and occupations rose to a crescendo and the Shah's regime was thrown into desperate crisis.

It would have been possible for the workers to take the leadership of the mass of Iranian people who were

suffering under the effects of US imperialism and the Shah's rule. But the traditions of the Iranian Left and the absence of a revolutionary workers' party meant the opportunity was let slip.

Although the workers' actions threw up strike committees, there never developed more than the beginnings of workers' councils—delegates of workers from each factory, plant and refinery—that could formulate political demands and begin to pose themselves as the alternative to the Shah. Instead political leadership fell to other forces.

## SCAPEGOAT

The Shah had turned on the small businessmen, merchants and craftsmen of the bazaar, the traditional marketplace of Iran's traders, small capitalists and artisans. He sent in thousands of inspectors and police in a campaign against "corruption" in order to scapegoat the bazaar.

The bazaar's traditional links with the mosques provided the opportunity for the religious leaders, the mullahs and in particular the exiled Ayatollah Khomeini, to formulate political demands and

take effective leadership of the traders, artisans and unemployed.

As the oilfields remained strikebound and strikes and demonstrations climaxed, the machinery of the state crumbled and US President Carter let the Shah know the game was up—he fled to Egypt.

Within a few weeks the old Shah's state disintegrated amid mass insurrection and Khomeini returned to form a new government. The interests it represented were of those sections of Iran's bourgeoisie that had not been hopelessly compromised by its involvement with the Shah. Its political base was among the small capitalists of the bazaar and the professionals and technicians.

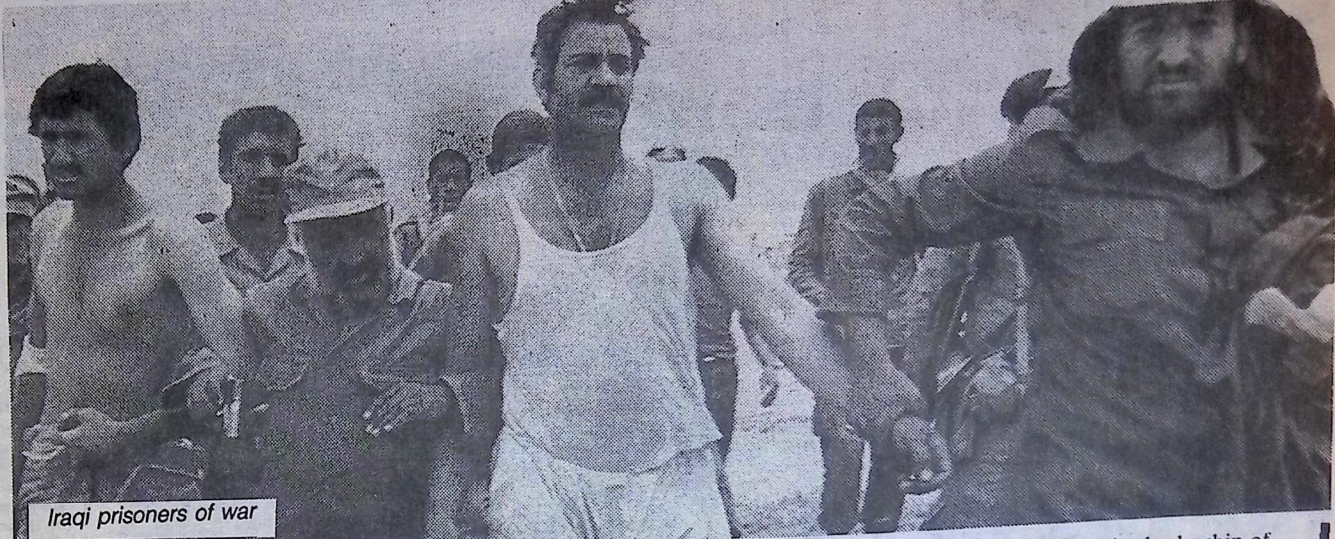
Khomeini's problem was to demobilise the workers' movement. He attempted, at first unsuccessfully, to outlaw the strike movement. The beginnings of workers' councils appeared in the "shoras" in the workplaces, but the development of the shora movement was stunted by the politics within the working class movement.

The pro-Moscow Tudeh declared Khomeini's regime to be "anti-imperialist" and offered its support. When Khomeini organised a referendum to declare the revolution over and the establishment of an Islamic state, the Tudeh mobilised the "yes" vote.

As the following months unfolded, the workers movement—the spearhead of the anti-Shah revolution—was defeated and repressed while the Left looked on in confusion. Islamic counter-revolution was in the saddle.

Marshall's book provides a necessary account of the period and its lessons for us today. It is indispensable reading.

Marshall's book analyses the defeat of the Iranian left with great clarity.



Iraqi prisoners of war

# The soul of Wilde

Pelican has just published a new biography of Oscar Wilde and Journeyman have reissued "Soul of Man under Socialism" and "The Ballad of Reading Gaol"

OSCAR WILDE was born in Dublin in 1854 and should be widely recognised as one of the best radical writers of his time.

Yet today he is better known for his children's stories like the "Happy Prince" and his more constrained writings "The Importance of Being Earnest", "Lady Windermere's Fan" and "The Picture of Dorian Gray".

All these are a good read and take a very clever, witty and satirical look at the ruling class and its social behaviour. This is the society where money talks and your opinions about others and your friends were determined by the size of your fortune and theirs.

He attacks their naked

hypocrisy and arrogance.

Even though his plays were widely acclaimed at the time, he did manage to put a sting in the tail of most of his entertainment, describing very clearly the amorality of their twisted values which meant continued suffering for others.

He was a great polemicist and a highly entertaining speaker and was in great demand as a lecturer throughout the English-speaking world.

## TAUNTED

He taunted the ruling class about their foibles and took great pleasure in promoting the fame they imposed on him.

On arrival in the USA he was asked if he had anything to declare: "I have nothing to declare but my genius!" he replied.

And near-genius he was—which allowed the ruling class to overlook Wilde's excesses—his advocating of socialism and his homosexuality.

He saw the need for change

in this rotten world. He felt that by savaging the ruling class in his books exposing their hypocrisy and excesses, he would encourage others to see through the ruling class and help to fight for a more equal society. But he went too far for the ruling class.

He wrote a powerful book, "The Soul of Man under Socialism"—an inspired essay on Utopianism and showing how life could be in an equal society. In it he advocated sexual freedom for all, and he tried to live it in his own life.

Being homosexual, it would have been expected that he would be discreet about his own sexuality in such high society.

He was blatant to the point of exhibitionism, challenging society to confront their hypocrisy. When encouraged to "tone down" his homosexuality he replied with a taunt: "Beautiful sins like beautiful things are the privilege of the rich".

His continuing challenging of the system was permitted once he played his part as writer and lecturer. But when

he overstepped the mark by taking a libel action against the Marquis of Queensbury, he was crushed.

All his criticism of the system was now used against him. He lost the case and he, himself was sentenced to two years in prison with hard labour.

## EXPOSES

In prison he wrote one of the most moving and political of his books "The Ballad of Reading Gaol". Written in the form of an extended poem, it exposes and savages the horrors of the prison system and recognises who the prisoners are, and that it is the organisation of society that puts them there.

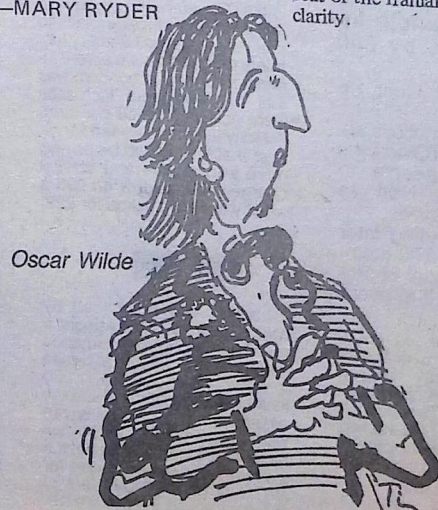
Oscar Wilde died in poverty in Paris—a far cry from the wealth and fame he experienced some years earlier. The ruling class had punished yet again one of those who they see as a threat to their system.

We should remember Oscar Wilde for his two most powerful and directly political works:

"The Soul of Man under Socialism" and "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" and not for the tame books the ruling class encourages us to believe were his great works.

These last two books have just been reissued by Journeyman publishers after being out of print for a long time.

Get them for a stimulating holiday read!  
—MARY RYDER



Oscar Wilde



# Fight 'new realism'

**THE FIRST** cracks in the ICTU's collaboration with the Fianna Fail government have begun to appear.

At its annual conference this year, the ESB Officers Association put down a resolution attacking the National Plan for Economic Recovery.

This union faces the prospect of losing a thousand jobs as the ESB plans more redundancies. The Teachers Union of Ireland has become more critical of the National Plan after its members voted to oppose cutbacks in Vocational Schools from next September.

These moves are very welcome—but they do not yet signal a major revolt against the ICTU's collaboration. At the ITGWU conference this year, for example, there were only 18 votes for a clear, principled opposition to the National Plan.

The problem is that the strategies that led to the collaboration have deep roots in the policies and practices of the Irish trade union movement. These are threefold.

Foremost among these is a form of nationalism that backs the efforts of the Southern state to "build the economy". In the thirties the unions gave full backing to Fianna Fail's

efforts to build up native industry.

In the sixties and seventies, they supported the turn to the multi-nationals in the hope of industrialising the country. To do so they sat on a variety of bodies such as the National Productivity Council.

This nationalism has rarely been tackled in the union movement. Instead all the major forces of the left have cooperated in the belief that the workers' movement must take some responsibility for industrialising the country.

The Labour Party's and Workers Party's stress on forming National Development Corporations have dovetailed with the traditional nationalist consensus. No substantial force has existed in the unions which argued for absolute independence from the Southern state and its industrialisation programme.

## RUNDOWN

The ICTU's three year deal with the Fianna Fail government is the fruit of decades of economic nationalism. The union leaders have rushed to the assistance of the state in its rundown of public sector employment in return for consultation. The deal is constantly sold as an

appreciation of the "country's economic difficulties".

The second factor behind the National Plan is the weakness of the white collar unions. The major supporters of the deal in the ICTU are Phil Flynn of the LGPSU and Gerry Quigley of the INTO.

Both represent unions that are hit hard by the cuts. But they have encouraged a situation where the level of union organisation in the workplace is weak in the extreme. They have not faced a substantial strike in decades. As a result, union activity is concentrated around a minority of activists at official branch level.

Opposing the government would have demanded a massive battle and the beginnings of a change in how these unions are organised. Faced with this the union leaders preferred to collaborate.

The third factor behind the National Plan is the absolute victory of the "new realism" approach in the Irish unions. This argues that the unions must desert older forms of struggle in favour of lobbying and consensus building around limited issues. Above all, they must not allow themselves to be excluded from the "corridors of power" by the bogey men of the New Right.

The leading proponents of the

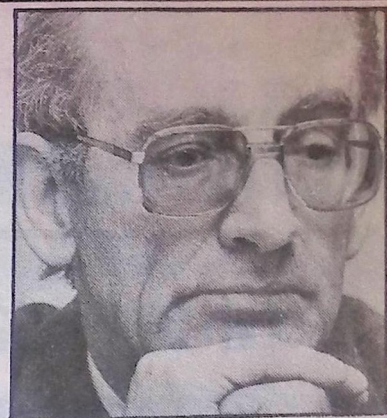
"New Realism" approach are precisely the left. Throughout the unions the Workers Party, in line with its policy of opposing anything that goes beyond militancy at the ballot box, have backed the strategy of the National Plan. So too have individual lefts such as Sinn Fein member Phil Flynn and Independent Senator Joe O'Toole in the INTO.

Unfortunately, the networks of militants in the unions in recent years have been based around these forces. They have seen their major task as being the election of left officials rather than the building of workplace militancy. The desertion of the traditional left to new realism has left a vacuum in the unions.

The fight against the National Plan will therefore be difficult. More and more unions will be forced to see the contradiction between the general strategy of the National Plan and the effects on their own public sector members. But this will not automatically mean that they will break from the National Plan.

The INTO, for example, was able to continue to support the deal even though it will lose a thousand jobs in the rundown of primary schools.

The fight against the National Plan will demand a political response. Clear socialist arguments on the importance of struggle to break the



New Realist John Carroll

majority of workers from voting Fianna Fail; and the need to break with the economic nationalism of the ICTU will be required.

So too will a concerted effort to build a fighting tradition in white collar unions against the terrible effects of the cutbacks.

But it is also important that there is unity between the best militants prepared to oppose the National Plan. Every struggle against the cutbacks must win solidarity from activists in those unions whose leaders are supporting the national plan.

In the coming year it will also be necessary to organise broadly-based meetings and protests of those who want to fight the worst piece of unions/government collaboration in recent times.

# Liverpool workers back Hanlon strike



● Staff picketing the Hanlon factory in Longford.

**AFTER** the closedown of the Hanlon ambulance at Longford and the bitterness caused in that town, Noel Hanlon may not find his profitable plans to move to Liverpool—or anywhere else—all that easy to implement.

Already Liverpool unions are joining up with Liverpool City Council to ensure Hanlon's sleight-of-hand treatment of Longford receives the proper response—ie: Go Home Noel!

Meanwhile in Longford, workers and their families suffered the latest blow to their bleak futures when the High Court in Dublin made an order for the winding up of the ambulance company, with debts of £1.2 million, wages owed to workers over £200,000 and insufficient money to pay.

Our local Longford lad turned millionaire, Fianna Fail member, chairman of various state bodies courtesy C Haughey, has been casting his net outside Longford for some time. That may seem surprising news to Longford people when they view what workers in Longford have achieved for this darlin' boy.

He owns a great deal of commercial property there and twenty or so houses on a new estate in which many of the workforce live (Talk about owing your soul to the company store!). He even owns the ITGWU offices. However his clothing company is, at times, on a three-day-week and

offers little in the way of future prospects.

It is obvious that Hanlon's insistence on a "no strike" clause in the last round of talks was inserted to force local workers into an impossible position. The workers voted a massive 125 to 7 votes against.

All this has sorely embarrassed the ITGWU bureaucracy and in particular one John Carroll. "I think we'll see the idea of no-strike clauses becoming a fact of life", said he last March, shortly before the April-November '87 phase of the Hanlon strike commenced and on the back of his union's acceptance of a no-strike deal with Packards in Tallaght, Dublin.

A move to Liverpool is attractive to Hanlon. He already has premises at Aintree where he employs 14 workers in maintenance work. Every other job that he brings there will pay him £10,000 per job in grants from British taxpayers

## CONSOLIDATE

It would also consolidate his marketing base in the UK, his prime customer being the DHSS. Watch out for the flight of more native Irish capitalists as 1992 approaches.

Dublin Trades Council has arranged a meeting with a deputation from the Trades Council of Liverpool. In this even the SWM and British SWP support this move and urge that Hanlon is stopped from starting operations in England.

Also the ITGWU must organise its members to force the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) to re-open the Longford plant and guarantee continuity of employment for the Longford workers—or is this in breach of the ICTU three year sell-out to Charlie Haughey?

It is totally unacceptable to Irish workers that any individual capitalist be allowed to treat them in such an exploitative fashion. —JOXER

## IPC strike wins more support

**WORKERS** at Irish Printed Circuits in Dublin have been on strike since March over union recognition.

The fourteen strikers are operating a round-the-clock picket, using a caravan as a headquarters.

The owner of a nearby factory has threatened an injunction against the strikers over the use of the caravan.

Plenty of harassment and intimidation has come from employers, scabs and the gardai.

Last month one striker told Socialist Worker that the cops had told him that they would only listen to the company's side of the story.

However the IPC strikers have not been deserted by other workers.

Firemen at Dolphin's Barn have donated £300 left over from their own strike earlier in the year.

Workers at KC Confectionery, who won a great victory for union rights a few years ago, have also donated money.

An ITGWU branch has pledged £250.

Workers at the Well Woman Clinics—involved in their own campaign against closure—have also donated.

Further collections have come in from Pretty Polly and Unidare.

SWM members are involved in accompanying strikers to other workplaces to look for support.

The highlight of the strike was a mass picket in May which succeeded in closing IPC for a day.

A social was held in the Royal Dublin Hotel in May and another planned for the Grahame Hotel on July 8th.

This strike is a fight against Michael Clear—the ex-IDA whizz-kid who treats his workers like dirt.

Give the strikers your support.



# Socialist Worker

## For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

Stalker-Sampson, Gibraltar:

# COVER UP!

**THE NOTION that the North can be reformed took another couple of knocks last month**

First the Police Authority decided that no further enquiries were necessary into the role of the North's three top policemen in the Stalker-Sampson shoot-to-kill cover-up.

Then, a call by Amnesty International for a judicial enquiry into the disputed killings by the RUC and British Army was rejected out of hand by the Northern Ireland Office.

Policing has been at the heart of the "Northern Ireland problem" since the troubles began, and reform of policing at the heart of every of every reformist initiative.

Indeed, the Police Authority which decided by one vote not to look into the shoot-to-kill role of Hermon, his deputy Michael McAtamney and Special Branch boss Trevor Forbes is itself the result of a "reform".

It was set up after the 1969 Hunt Report on RUC attacks on Civil Rights demonstrators and catholic ghetto areas. The Police Authority was seen as a means of making the RUC answerable to an impartial, non-political body. It was the Authority's responsibility to

supervise RUC behaviour and handle complaints.

The hope was that Catholics would trust the new body and, by extension, accept the RUC. But the opposite has happened.

The Police Authority, its members appointed by the Northern Ireland Office, has itself become part of the problem it was set up to solve. It's another barrier protecting the cops from being made to answer for their crimes.

This has happened *not* because the Authority—or successive

British governments—have wanted or welcomed a sectarian, corrupt police force, but because no police force serving the Northern state can be other than sectarian and corrupt. As everywhere, inevitably, the police force reflects the nature



Sir John Hermon

of the society it exists to defend. There's nothing much any police authority can do

about this.

What defending the Northern state involves was

## Spitting on rights

**TORY minister John Stanley announced last month that the RUC is to have powers to forcibly take saliva swabs from "suspects".**

*The swabs are the basis of the new "genetic fingerprinting"*

tests.

*British police will not be permitted to take such swabs from unconvicted persons. But "normal" rights mean nothing when it comes to defending the Northern state.*

*Scientists of the ICI*

*company—which has exclusive rights to the technique—say that swab tests won't work anyway. But that hasn't stopped the Tories giving the RUC the go-ahead for new waves of assaults on people they have picked up.*

# Reagan is the biggest terrorist

RONALD Reagan has the blood of 290 men, women and children killed on the Iranian civilian airbus in July on his hands.

The attack on the airbus represents a murderous escalation of the war in the Gulf.

It has exposed Reagan as number one terrorist in the world.

Imagine the reaction if Iranian forces had "defended" themselves by blowing up a Pan Am jet just taking off from New York.

The holding by pro-Iranian guerrillas of a handful of Western hostages in Beirut has been the occasion for a constant stream of denunciation of Iranian "terrorism" on our television screens for the past year.

Western consciences grapple with the "moral dilemma" of whether to "negotiate with terrorists" over their release.

Yet these same consciences fall curiously silent when a civilian aircraft, flying in an internationally accepted civilian air corridor, on a regular scheduled flight, climbing after take-off, is summarily blown out of the sky by the world's most powerful navy.

The US presence in the Gulf is a straightforward attempt by US imperialism to reassert its will in the region.

If it gets away with it, the Rambos of Western capitalism will strut with increased confidence, and the system that oppresses millions will be stronger.

That is why *Socialist Worker* says "Western forces out of the Gulf".

evident from the Amnesty report, the 94-page document focuses on 38 killings by the RUC and British Army since 1982. It concluded that it "couldn't rule out" the possibility that the RUC had carried out, and British government sanctioned, the deliberate, planned killing of people suspected of membership of paramilitary groups. Amnesty declared that a judicial enquiry was "vital to prevent future unlawful killings".

The NIO retorted that an enquiry would not be "helpful".

In effect, the NIO was admitting that the Northern state *cannot* be maintained by "normal" means; and, therefore, that looking too closely into the deaths of citizens at the hands of the state could only cause the state harm.

The notion, dear to the hearts of the Workers Party, Irish Labour Party leftists and suchlike, that socialists should push for piecemeal reforms in the North, rather than for the dismantling of the Northern state, flies in the face of all the obvious facts.