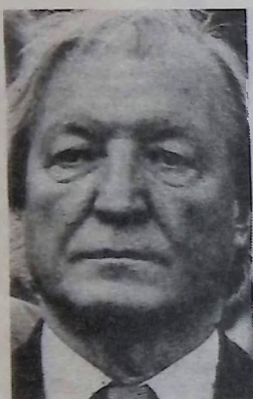


# Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

Low standards in high places...

# CORRUPTION!



★ **HAUGHEY:**  
Millions  
to F.F.  
backers

THE CORRUPTION of the system we live under has been well and truly exposed in recent weeks.

Fianna Fail financial backer, Larry Goodman, seems to be getting a good return on his investment in the Party.

Earlier this year, it was revealed that Goodman had been attempting to defraud the Dept. of Agriculture and the EEC of over a million pounds.

It now transpires that this was just chicken feed to the corrupt beef baron.

Of 300 million pounds put aside by the government to cover losses by exporters, all exporters in the country, some 120 million went to *one* meat exporter. Guess who? None other than Mr. Goodman!

Now, a joint investigation by Agriculture and Customs officials has revealed that meat exporters—including you-know-who—have been involved in another scam.

This time they've been attempting to defraud the Aids to Private Storage (APS) scheme run by the EEC to help meat exporters store their produce while waiting to sell it abroad.

And it's not just Fianna Fail

supporters who are benefitting from the corruption of capitalism. Alan Dukes was among the loudest voices to condemn Fianna Fail's support for corruption in the meat industry. He's been much quieter since it was revealed that he himself had made representations to the Dept. of Agriculture, in an attempt to get a share of the corrupt cake for a *Fine Gael* supporting meat exporter.



And squeaky-clean Dessie O'Malley is not immune either to dirtying his hands with corrupt deals. O'Malley and Molloy may have resigned their right to ministerial pensions. But part of the deal in forming a coalition with Fianna Fail was that the PDs—with six TDs—should receive the perks and allowances of a recognised Dail party.

Dail regulations require a party to have *seven* TDs in order to qualify for this lucrative status. Fianna Fail are, of course, well used to ignoring the rules and it seems as if

Messrs O'Malley and Molloy have no problem in reverting to type when the chance was offered to make up for the lost pensions.

Hundreds of thousands of pounds would seem to have changed hands in corrupting the planning process in Dublin County. Again, a Fianna Failer is said to be involved. This time a backbench TD.

The Gardai are investigating. But past experience would suggest that it would be wiser not to hold your breath waiting for the corruption to be exposed.

On the other hand, the needy few who try to get an extra couple of pounds—and that's the most that could be got—by fiddling the dole are in a very different position.

Last year alone, 23,500 people who had been getting an extra few quid a week by claiming disability rather than the dole, were told that they were 'fit to work' and so not eligible for the extra money.

It's a measure of the inbuilt corruption of the capitalist system that so much work goes in to taking a couple of pounds off working class people while Goodman and his mates can get away with swindling millions.



★ **O'MALLEY:**  
Dail  
perks  
fiddle



★ **DUKES:**  
Sought  
cash for  
pals



★ **GOODMAN:**  
£120 m.  
export  
scam

**Inside:**



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# FAHEY GETS THE WIND UP

FOLLOWING his resignation in July from the Fianna Fail parliamentary party, Waterford TD Jackie Fahey has been saying that he is protesting against Haughey's policies.

Speaking on RTE radio, Fahey said he was sick of Haughey's U-turns on coalition, service charges, health cuts, the Anglo-Irish Agreement and extradition.

But a glance at Fahey's record over 25 years in the

Dail points to self interest as the real reason for his resignation.

■ Before resigning he never once spoke out against Fianna Fail policy on these issues. In recent years he has made no public statement on extradition or any of the other issues he now complains about.

Fahey rose to prominence in 1979 as one of the "gang of five" who manoeuvred Haughey's bid for leadership of Fianna Fail.

■ Before this year's election he was promised a junior job in the government by Haughey but was passed over



as the coalition with the Progressive Democrats was formed.

The real reason for his resignation and outbursts is fear at losing his seat next time following the disastrous showing of Fianna Fail in the general election.

As a result of government policies there have been many jobs lost in Waterford city and county councils as well as private industry.

Massive health cuts have resulted in hospital closure and further hardship.

While Fahey had nothing to say about these, local anger built up. At the election there was a massive swing away from Fianna Fail. The Labour and Workers Parties nearly touched 30 per cent of the vote with Brian O'Shea for Labour topping the poll—a privilege usually reserved for Fine Gael's Austen Deasy.

■ Fianna Fail in Waterford recorded the largest percentage drop in its vote of any constituency, losing one of its two seats.

*A further swing of a mere 1 per cent would have seen Fahey's seat fall.*

Fahey remains a member of the Fianna Fail party and while he will not take the Fianna Fail whip he has indicated he will continue to support Haughey's government of the Right in the Dail.

Neither has there been a single resignation from the local Fianna Fail party.

What this shows is that Fianna Fail remains a bosses' party. There is no incipient split of "grassroots" anger within it. Instead there is an occasional squeal from the odd gombeen whose ambitions are not being fulfilled quickly enough and who cannot take the heat.

## 'No poverty': Smurfit claim

IF you want to know what it's like to be poor, ask the richest man in Ireland.

That's what RTE did recently when they interviewed Michael Smurfit.

Smurfit told us that Irish people aren't really poor at all—they are only *relatively* poor.

In between making cardboard boxes and attending board meetings Smurfit has found time to do a major survey of world poverty.

The results should make Irish poverty agencies, not to mention left-wingers, think twice about complaining.

Smurfit, it seems, has travelled the length and breadth of Latin America studying poverty at first-hand. He has gone into the villages and shanty towns and interviewed poor people.

Smurfit discovered that compared to these people the so-called *Irish people* are rolling in it! Well at least they don't have to do without food.

Meanwhile two Trinity College doctors recently found out that many Irish people do go without food.

Dr Pauline Lee and Dr Michael Gibney studied the diets of fifty chronically unemployed people in Tallaght, Co Dublin.

They found that poor parents cannot afford to feed their children.

Teenage children in particular were affected. A 12-year-old needs £11.90 a week to have the required minimum of 2,500 calories a day. The

social welfare allocation for these kids is between £8 and £9.50 a week.

The most shocking result of the survey was that mothers often do without food in order to give their children a proper diet.

The women in the survey were most at risk of nutritional inadequacy. Their iron intake was low, they lacked fibre and their intake of Vitamin C was practically zero.

It is clear that Irish poverty involves more than doing without "luxuries" like TVs or cars. For many people even fruit is a luxury and hunger is a reality.

Meanwhile buffoons like Smurfit attack the poor because it is in the interests of the rich to deny that poverty exists in Ireland.

We are told that if we tighten our belts and accept unemployment we will reap the rewards.

Of course for Michael Smurfit there is no belt-tightening.

While one-third of Irish people have incomes equivalent to less than £48 a week, Smurfit has a salary of nine million dollars a year.

While thousands survive in low-standard housing, Smurfit has many homes to choose from. If he gets fed up with his "official" home at Monte Carlo, Smurfit can jet off to St Tropez or Majorca or his apartment in Manhattan.

Last year he spent sixteen million dollars on a Gulf Stream jet.

Smurfit and his class have no right to talk about "relative poverty". Relative to the rest of us they have fantastic lifestyles.

## \$70 billion: Taken by Stealth



EVERYBODY knows about the scandalous sums of money that the rich capitalist nations spend on armaments. That industry has long been a prime source of profit that enriches capitalists worldwide. Paid for out of taxes imposed on workers, it has been an essential element that sustains the world capitalist system.

As with all their plans and schemes, however, they sometimes manage to embarrass even themselves. This occurred recently when a US congressional "dog-fight" made public that their latest war machine, the B2 Stealth bomber, is costing too much even for the mighty USA.

"Eight billion dollars a year for nine years for one weapon system?", complained Aspin, the chairman of the US House Armed Services Committee, of the B2 project. "There are only twelve countries in the world that have annual defence budgets that are greater."

And all for one aeroplane. At half a billion dollars apiece, the plane is literally worth its weight in gold! The total cost of the project—\$70 billion.

That amount of money would go a long way to

solve the disease, hunger and economic ills of the entire Third World countries.

The purpose of the B2 Stealth bomber is to destroy mobile military targets with nuclear bombs.

It is designed to be nearly invisible to radar and other detection systems. The problem is that it leaves a vapour trail ten miles wide, has to fly very low and can be detected by "look-down" radar in common use.

So the chances are that the \$70 billion of taxpayers' money will go into the coffers of the arms manufacturers, the project will fall and they will design another expensive obscenity—even dearer.

Imagine how a socialist world could use such enormous wealth.

■ JOXER

## The politics of the GAA

FOR a large number of people September is the climax of the GAA calendar with the hurling and football finals on the first and third Sunday of the month.

The added interest of the year is Mayo's first appearance since 1951 and particularly that of Mayo-Antrim, who last played in a hurling final in 1943.

The Gaelic Athletic Association was founded over a hundred years ago in Thurles, Co. Tipperary. It grew up in social and political conditions of profound change. The Land League had brought thousands of people into political activity.

A cultural revival led to a blossoming of the Irish language and literature—in short, a politics and culture which represented a growth of nationalism. The GAA reflected this growth and for the larger part of its life it clearly identified itself with this trend.

During the War of Independence the GAA identified itself with Sinn Fein. British soldiers and members of the Royal Irish Constabulary were barred from membership. Members of the GAA were banned from playing British games such as soccer and rugby.



The GAA became central to Irish life, particularly in rural Ireland where the local club was the focal point for all social and indeed political life. It became an institution that was deeply embedded in the Irish state, perhaps best seen as the Sunday afternoon ritual of nearly every house in the country tuning in to Michael O'Hehir to listen to the match.

By the early sixties the GAA was the very essence of Irishness. And in its own way it had become quite conservative and backward, unable to really come to terms with the change from a rural to an urban society. If the GAA was to survive as the force that it once was, it would have to change to

meet the needs of a generation which was looking to the future, not backwards at an Ireland that was fast disappearing.

The GAA responded to these changes by modernising itself. New comfortable grounds were built and new clubhouses with social and bar facilities brought money into the game. Sponsorship and commercialisation were embraced as the GAA sought to attach itself to a new materialist culture. The old anachronisms were done away with. The ban on foreign games was lifted. The tradition of a Catholic bishop throwing the ball in to start the All-Ireland finals was dropped. The GAA was preparing itself for its second century and was in good shape.

But then in the late sixties the North erupted and the GAA found itself facing all the social and political problems it believed it had put behind it. Whether they liked it or not the GAA was seen as being a part of the nationalist movement in the North.

The GAA itself came into conflict with the Northern state. The British army occupied the local GAA ground in Crossmaglen. In Craigavon the Unionist Council refused the GAA use of Council sporting facilities. During the H-Block campaign many clubs passed resolutions in support of the hunger strikers.

In the South the GAA tried to distance itself from an identification with the struggle in the North. Congress passed resolutions condemning all violence, and later banned any political issues from being discussed at Annual Congress.

But sport and politics cannot be separated as easily as that, whether it's South Africa or Ireland. The nationalist community in the North identified more and more with hurling and Gaelic football in order to assert their Irishness.

Whether they liked it or not, the GAA was promoting nationalist ideals. If you walk around the streets on the Falls Road or Andersonstown, you will see something you never now see on the streets of Dublin—young kids playing hurling on the streets.

Thousands will travel from Belfast to support Antrim in the final, and win or lose they will see it as more than a game.

The GAA faces the same problems that any organisation has which is almost a state institution but with a mass membership. While the leadership is part of the establishment, their members and supporters are sometimes in conflict with that establishment.

Sport can never change the world, but neither can it pretend that it has nothing to do with politics.

■ PAUL O'BRIEN

# WE THINK

## 12,000 march for troops out but...

# Where were the Left?



THE size of the march to the British embassy in Dublin to mark the twentieth anniversary of British troops being deployed in the North will have boosted the morale of anti-imperialists throughout the South.

But there was one significant element missing. By and large the Left stayed away. There were no Labour Party or trade union banners to be seen. The Workers Party went so far as to condemn the demonstration as "sectarian".

### UNUSUAL

The result was that the Socialist Workers Movement found itself in the unusual position of being the only sizeable Left-wing contingent present.

The reason given by many Leftists for non-attendance was that the march was a purely nationalist affair. This was not true.

There were indeed a number of crude nationalist speeches from the platform. But there were also speeches from two British Labour parliamentarians which were at least couched in the language of class. The SWM speaker argued clearly that only a movement based on the working class could undercut sectarianism and win the support of Protestant workers. The SWM speaker denounced any notion of an all-class nationalist alliance.

The former Dunnes Stores striker Catherine O'Reilly delivered an inspiring address appealing to the trade union and labour movement to take up the fight for British withdrawal.

So there was a distinctively socialist presence on the day.

This is not to deny that the general atmosphere was nationalist rather than socialist. The SWM's clump of red flags was overshadowed by a forest of tricolours.

But the reason for that was precisely that the major forces on the Left had abstained. Up to a point, their complaint about the nationalist character of the proceedings was self-fulfilling. The SWM believes that this is a disastrous mistake for the Left to make. We appeal to supporters of Labour, the WP and others to reassess their position.

The main reason the national question remains unresolved is precisely that the Left has persistently abstained from it. Leadership of the fight against the sectarian Northern state has been abandoned to nationalists.

There's no need for any latter-day de Valera to proclaim that "Labour must wait". The main working class forces today have seemingly decided to sit this struggle out.

### PLATFORM

But, as the SWM argued from the August 26th platform, the nationalists can't win the struggle. They can match the mood of oppressed Catholic workers in the North, but they have nothing to offer Protestant workers or workers in the 26 Counties.

Only the working class, North and South, fighting under socialist leadership, can solve the problem. Socialists should be in the thick of the struggle, proclaiming this fact and refusing to allow the Northern issue to seem the "property" of nationalist forces.

The Left abstains from the Northern struggle at its own peril.

Over the last twenty years, in

the course of collaboration with British imperialism, Southern capitalism has equipped itself with a whole range of repressive weaponry. Armed police and soldiers at roadblocks, nationwide house searches, extradition, political censorship of the airwaves, no-jury courts, Heavy Gang brutality... All this has become commonplace.

How can anybody who is serious about socialism not see that this formidable array of repressive armoury will be used when it's necessary to crush any working class challenge to capitalism?

Those in Labour or the WP who declare that campaigns on extradition, Section 31, the harassment of republicans etc are no direct concern of the working class are deluding their

### MAJORITY

own followers. They are advising workers to stand by while the capitalist state arms itself to the teeth.

The Left should note, too, that while the politics of the August 26th march were predominantly nationalist, the overwhelming majority of the marchers were young working class people from both North and South. A major reason such people might be attracted towards nationalism rather than socialism is precisely that the major parties which style themselves socialist were nowhere to be seen.

The SWM urges socialists of all persuasions to think these issues through and to ensure that on the next such demonstration there is a big enough socialist presence to ensure that the specifically working class interest in defeating imperialism is represented to the extent that it should be.

## Socialist Worker says: TROOPS OUT NOW

IT IS time the British troops were got out of the North. And key to getting rid of the troops is getting the Southern working class involved in the struggle.

There was a big swing to the Left in the Southern elections in June. This showed the extent of working class anger against the Leinster House establishment. But this anger by-passed the anti-imperialist candidates.

The bulk of working class people saw no connection between the health cuts, poverty, emigration etc and the collaborationist policies of the establishment.

Media propaganda, Section 31 etc has all been blamed for this. But it's also true that the anti-imperialist movement hasn't tried to base itself on working class interests.

Instead it looked to Fianna Fail nationalists, cultural activists etc — no matter where they stood on the class issues. But unity with such people has involved ignoring the issues which are foremost in working class people's minds.

We have to make a stark choice. EITHER we continue to look to "all nationalists", OR we look to the working class.

The Socialist Workers Movement argues that only class politics holds out any hope.

The reason Haughey, O'Malley, Dukes etc collaborate with the British authorities is that they represent the Irish capitalist class which wants political stability and is tied into world capitalism along with Britain.

It's for the same reason — the class they represent — that they close hospitals, slash public spending etc, etc.

THIS is the connection between the issues we are marching about today and the issues which are uppermost among working class people.

The connection can't be made on a nationalist basis. It can only be made on a socialist basis.

It's socialism, not nationalism, the red flag rather than the tricolour, which can lead us to victory.

The Socialist Workers Movement issued the ONLY socialist leaflet on the march

## INTERNATIONAL

## POLAND:

## All change in Warsaw

THESE ARE exciting times in Eastern Europe. Nowhere more so than in Poland. More than 40 years of monolithic "Communist" rule have ended.

For the first time in Eastern Europe since the war the "leading role" of the Communist Party has been dropped. Tadeusz Mazowiecki is the new Solidarnosc prime minister.

In the West, where democracy is equated with parliaments and election, the transition from a Communist to a Solidarity-led government has been treated as a revolution.

It's certainly a slap in the face for Poland's bureaucratic rulers. In the days before Mazowiecki was confirmed as prime minister the Polish CP, known as the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP), was openly speaking of its determination to use any means short of a coup to prevent it.

When they began the "round-table" discussions with Solidarity which prepared the ground for elections and the legalisation of the union, they never intended to see the government slip out of their hands.



Jaruzelski: The latest survival plan

They *did* want a grand coalition, but with their leading role guaranteed. However, a combination of the election results, Poland's dire economy and growing workers' militancy convinced the more far-sighted bureaucrats, particularly General Jaruzelski, that only Solidarity's leaders in government could hold back workers in the factories.

Since the coup in 1981 the Polish ruling class—the state capitalist bureaucracy—has been totally without a base in society, solely dependant on repression for its power. But repression wasn't enough.

Last year saw two great waves of industrial unrest and earlier this year there was renewed unrest. After the election, the bureaucracy imposed a 500 per cent price increase on food. They realised that only Walesa and Mazowiecki had the influence to prevent Polish workers resisting this. That is why Solidarity was allowed to head the government.

But this "peaceful revolution" has not fundamentally changed the set up in Poland. This is the latest survival plan of Poland's ruling class.

Ordinary Poles weren't half as excited as the Western press and TV. Most have a healthy cynicism towards the new government. While wishing him success, they see little prospect of Mazowiecki shortening the queues.

Even if he could, he is far from having a free hand. The president, who has the power to dissolve parliament and install martial law, is Jaruzelski. The party will remain control of the army and police through the ministries of defence and the interior and were holding out for the ministries of foreign affairs, finance and media—80 per cent party-owned already.

Mazowiecki has indicated that Poland will remain within the Warsaw Pact and "respect its international obligations". This was the price of Gorbachev's acceptance.

The shift from open terror to

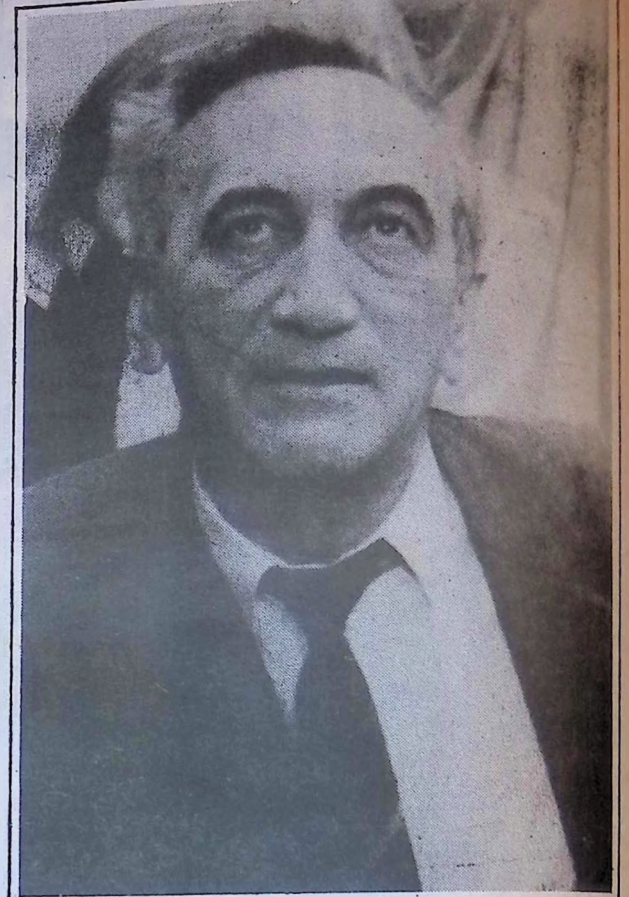
the fig leaf of parliament is a great step forward. It's a tribute to the striking workers who have pushed their rulers up against a wall. But it is not enough.

In the West we have parliaments but real power lies with unelected judges, generals, police chiefs and boards of directors. State ownership of the means of production makes conceding a parliament more tricky but not impossible. In the West people accept the fact that "nationalised" industries are run by unelected and unaccountable managers. There's no reason why enterprise managers in Poland couldn't escape "democratic" control by parliament.

Nor does the end of the party—if this is what eventually happens—mean the end of the bureaucracy as a ruling class. In the state capitalist countries the party is a means by which those with economic and political power organise themselves and dominate society. But the party is only an ideological cover for that power—which can exist without the party to justify it.

There have always been members of the bureaucracy, such as enterprise managers and generals, who have not been party-men. The Polish party has been virtually defunct since politically since the coup, when its government was removed by the generals.

The bureaucracy will continue, whether behind a par-



Tadeusz Mazowiecki the new prime minister

liament or party facade.

Mazowiecki was supposed to bring stability to Poland. It will be a miracle if he succeeds. His answer to the \$39 billion debt is the market and austerity. There's no way Solidarity's working class base can accept that without a fight.

Days after the new prime minister being confirmed Walesa had to use his authority to stop a major rail strike. It remains to be

seen if he can hold the line indefinitely.

It was only the shared belief in more democracy that has held together the different strands within Solidarity. Now it's a question of what to do with the new freedom. In the long run there can be no agreement on that between right wingers like Walesa and the militant workers who built Solidarity.

■ JOSH CLARKE

## LEBANON:

## A Country held hostage

LEBANON is often portrayed as a crazed bloodbath. The kidnapping and killing seems random and mindless. The root of the problem is, of course, imperialism, but the complexity is a result of the changing types of imperialism visited on the country.

As European power declined it gave way to US imperialism, which in turn has been superseded by local superpower imperialism.

Lebanon is roughly half Moslem and half Christian. About 65 per cent of the Christians are Maronites. The majority of the Moslems are Shites, with a sizeable minority being Sunni. Also there are about 180,000 Druses, followers of a religion containing both Christian and Moslem elements.

Under French protection since 1860, the Lebanese economy prospered. The French used the classic imperialist scheme of divide and rule. They developed the urbanised Maronite Christians as their client group, leaving the rural Moslems without power.

In 1926 the French set up the Lebanese Republic, but continued their military occupation so as to ensure Maronite control.

Following World War II, European imperialism was replaced by the US. De Gaulle, under pressure from the Americans, granted independence to the Lebanon in 1944. The constitution guaranteed power to the Maronites, who held the presidency.

The Sunnis traditionally have held the prime minister's jobs. The Shites were given the position of Speaker of the Parliament. This fragile

balance between the main groups was meant to ensure loyalty without allowing power to slip away from the Maronites.

When Israel was set up in 1948, huge numbers of Palestinians were expelled from their homes in Israel and fled into the neighbouring countries. The Gaza Strip in Egypt, Jordan and the Lebanon got a large number of refugees, angry and radicalised by their experience.

The carefully constructed equilibrium of Lebanon became increasingly unstable. In 1958 the President, Camille Chamoun, refused to hand over power to General Chehab, a Maronite more

sympathetic to the Moslems. The arrival of the US Marines saved the situation for the moment.

The 1970s saw an increase in wealth of the oil producing countries like Syria, and a



Left: June 1982, Israeli troops invade Right: Israeli-held hostages blindfolded in South Lebanon

reorganisation of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO). The PLO attempted to organise among the Palestinian refugees and the Shia Moslems, the most oppressed sections of the population. In 1975 the PLO made a bid for power in Lebanon.

They came close to winning, but Syria intervened to prevent them. 40,000 Syrian troops were sent into the Lebanon on the pretext of keeping the peace, but in fact massacred the PLO. Supported by Christian militias, 10,000 Palestinians were murdered in the Tel al Zaatar camp.

Israel had been bombing and shelling Lebanese villages since the late '60s. They were awaiting the chance to invade Lebanon in order to destroy the PLO and regain Biblical Israel. In 1978 they invaded south Lebanon, killing 2,000 civilians and driving 250,000 from their

homes. The Israeli army eventually withdrew, but left client militias behind doing their work for them.

In 1982, after a month of shelling south Lebanon, the Israelis invaded again. In two months they killed 18,000 civilians. They got to the suburbs of Beirut and laid siege to the city. After the Israeli airforce had systematically strafed and bombed the city, the PLO withdrew. Under Israeli protection Christian militias murdered Palestinians in the Sabra and Chatilla refugee camps.

The outcry was so great that a US-dominated UN force came in. The US started equipping and building up the Christian government's army. However, when 241 Marines were killed in a suicide attack, the US withdrew.

The main local superpower apart from Israel is Syria, which set about destroying any organisation which could

oppose it. It armed a faction of the PLO sympathetic to itself and allowed it to murder its way to control. It allowed revolutionary guards from Iran into the country.

These developed into Hezbollah. In May 1985 it encouraged the Moslem Amal militia to besiege Palestinian camps. The result was a number of competing militias, none of whom could oppose Syrian power alone.

In the latest twist Iraq has been arming and funding the Christian militias, who have been united under General Aoun. It seems likely that Iraq, backed by the Western powers in the Gulf war, has been "put up to it". The West would not like Syrian power to go unchallenged.

In the meantime Beirut's population has decreased by one million while Lebanese people are killed or made homeless in the interests of rival superpowers.

■ JOHN STITT

# Was WWII the people's war?

by JOSH CLARKE

**MOST** people, even the school history books, accept that the first world war was an imperialist war and nothing else.

However, each anniversary of World War II is accompanied by a barrage of propaganda purporting to show that it was a "good war", an anti-fascist war.

And just about everybody, right and left, will agree. Are they right, was there really a good side and a bad side in this war?

Marxists do not repudiate all national wars. We do support wars by the oppressed against their oppressors. We do defend Nicaragua, Iran and any other non-imperialist power that comes into conflict with the United States.

The question is, *were the various powers involved in World War II fighting to defend their nations against foreign oppression, or were they fighting over who would dominate the rest of the world?*

We are not indifferent in a fight between fascism and democracy. The point is that the allies were fighting German imperialism, not fascism, and they were defending their own empires, not democracy. World War II was undoubtedly an imperialist war.

The seeds of the conflict were sown in the 1930s. In the wake of the crash and the ensuing depression, ruling classes all over the world responded by stepping up the extent of direct state intervention in the economy. One result of this was that market competition was partially displaced by military competition and it became essential for each major power to have a firm grip over "its" bloc.

## EXPANSION

Britain, France and the US, with their "sterling", "gold" and "dollar" areas, were relatively comfortable. For Germany and Japan, with no empires of their own, military expansion was the only option.

Imperial interests dictated British policy towards Nazi Germany. Initially Britain favoured Hitler's rearmament programme as a bulwark against both Stalin's Russia and imperial France. They didn't bat an eye when Hitler seized the Rhineland, Austria, and then the Sudetenland. Only when Hitler threatened Eastern Europe and by implication British interests in the Mediterranean, and the Middle East, did the British get seriously worried.

Even after the war had started their commitment was dubious. A large section of the British ruling class hoped the war would peter out and the government even had plans to side with Hitler's Finnish allies in their war with Stalin. The half-hearted efforts of the British government resulted in the ignominious retreat from Dunkirk.



Crowds of working class people celebrate the victory over Hitler. Left: Millions were mobilised to defend imperialism

A real fear gripped British workers that their rulers would follow the example of the French ruling class and surrender to Hitler without a fight and watch him nazify British society.

In the event Britain's imperial interest outweighed her sympathy for the fascist system and Churchill came to power, vowing to defend the British empire.

Churchill himself made it clear he wasn't against fascism as such, but rather rival imperialism. His admiration for Hitler is well known.

On the Spanish Civil War he said: *"Franco has all right on his side, because he loves his country. Also Franco is defending Europe against the Communist danger... But... I prefer that the other side wins because Franco could upset British interests."*

On Mussolini: *"If I had been an Italian I am sure I should have been wholeheartedly with you in your triumphant struggle against the bestial appetites and passions of Leninism."*

Britain and the US stood by while Japan carved up China, the US only being stung into action when the Japanese threatened US tin and rubber supplies in South East Asia.

Britain and the US stood by while the Spanish Republic went under. Later, veterans of that war were relegated to positions as cooks and clerks in the American army and had the label PAF—"Premature Anti-Fascist"—put on their files.

Senator Truman in the US expressed a widely held cynical view when he said of the German-Russian

conflict that he hoped that they'd destroy each other and "kill as many as possible".

Imperial interests and how best to defeat the Nazis didn't usually coincide. Throughout the war Churchill focussed his attention on the Mediterranean and British interests in the Middle East and India.

He opposed an invasion of France in favour of an invasion of the Balkans in order to keep Stalin out. This left Stalin facing 70 per cent of the German forces alone in mainland Europe and unnecessarily prolonged the war.

When his secret agents told Churchill that only the Communist-led resistance movements in Europe could successfully oppose Hitler from within, he sacked them and recruited agents who were prepared to overlook facts.

The barbaric destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was presented as a quick way of ending the war. In reality it was a quick way of starting the cold war.

Japan was all but defeated, but the Russians had just entered the war in the Pacific and the US feared they might beat them to victory over Hirohito. Dropping the bomb was the first act in the war of nerves with Russia.

In the Atlantic Charter agreed in 1941 Churchill and Roosevelt declared that theirs was a war to defend all nations' right to self-determination. Yet the same year Churchill clarified that that did not apply to India. British troops were stationed in India throughout to suppress a nationalist mutiny.

The US assured the French neo-fascist government of Vichy, whom they favoured over "anti-American" de Gaulle, that the US would defend French claims on Indochina. In 1945 the US urged nationalist China to hand Vietnam over to France, regardless of what the Vietnamese might want.

Throughout the war the US manoeuvred to replace the British as the main imperial power in the Middle East. The rhetoric of free trade employed by the US hid the attempts of

their monopoly capital to penetrate areas previously closed to it.

This was made easier by the Bretton Woods agreement of 1944 and the creation of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Since voting was proportional to capital contributed, the US made the running.

With the establishment of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development—which was really a vehicle for US foreign investment, and the United Nations—the US was set to dominate the "non-socialist" areas of the post-war world.

Regardless of the Atlantic Charter, at the Yalta Conference in 1945 the so-called "allies" cynically divided Europe between themselves. Churchill made it clear that there was to be no self-determination for the prisoners of the British empire.

## CYNICISM

The cynicism of the conference was illustrated when Churchill passed Stalin a piece of paper with a list of European countries and his suggestion for how much say in each the various powers should have. In a moment Stalin had placed a large tick on the paper and the fate of millions of people had been decided.

The powers drew a line between East and West. Apart from dangerous tensions at the key points along this border and actual conflict in Korea, both sides settled into the post-war settlement. NATO and the Warsaw Pact were the fruits of this great war against aggression!

The real attitude of imperialism to fascism was revealed as the fascist states crumbled. Allied policy, East and West, having broken the backs of the fascist regimes in the areas "liberated" from the "occupation", was to preserve as much as possible of the fascist state apparatus. These were their first line of defence against the rising wave of workers' struggles that gripped Europe towards the end of the war.

In France, Italy and Belgium the Communist Party grew massively during the war, thanks to its prominent role in the resistance. All over Europe workers set about demolishing the fascist states before the allied military authorities could do anything about it.

## SPONTANEOUS

In many cities and in whole regions, spontaneous workers' councils grew up and there was a feeling among many workers that the bosses who had benefitted from fascism should not be able to continue with business as usual.

The allies weren't having any of this. In Germany and Japan in particular they did their best to hamper the rebirth of workers' organisations and to suppress political parties of the left.

Despite this the radicalisation of these societies was such that even the German Christian Democrats, today's Tories, were forced to adopt a socialist-sounding manifesto at their first conference after the war.

What finally saved the West's goose was Stalin. Yet again he used his influence with the Communist parties to ensure that they held back the class struggle for the sake of "anti-fascist unity", even when the fascists had been defeated.

In return for urging moderation the Communist parties were included in coalition governments all over Europe. Later, when the danger had subsided, the bosses could afford to ease them out. In 1948, in Italy, when a CP-Socialist state seemed headed for power, US battleships were stationed off the Italian coast during the election.

In the East Stalin suppressed independent socialist parties, trade unions and peasant organisations. Often socialists found themselves being tried in so-called People's Courts by the same judges who had presided over the Nazi courts.

Before long the "allies" were using left-over Nazi agents to spy on each other. A fitting epilogue to a war to make the world safe for democracy!

# Environment - a class issue

**THE WORLD'S largest area of tropical rain forest is being destroyed. The Amazonian Basin, an enormous tropical area in South America centred on Brazil, is disappearing at the rate of 50 million acres a year.**

The effects of this destruction are frightening. Two million species of plant and animal life are under threat of extinction. This is more than a matter of sentimental concern. One sixth of prescription drugs depend on tropical plants for their active ingredients.

Scientists fear dramatic and unpredictable effects on the world's climate as a result of the "greenhouse effect".

The burning of fossil fuels emits carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. This builds up as a sort of blanket that traps in the sun's warmth. Some claim that in the next few years this could cause the melting of polar ice caps, with rising sea levels flooding vast areas. Weather patterns could be altered to make deserts of enormous stretches of currently fertile land.

Last year alone, 12 million acres of Amazon rainforest were ablaze. It is estimated that this burning contributed a quarter of new carbon dioxide additions.

There are two explanations for the deforestation commonly given in the press and television.

## IGNORANCE

The first is that the Brazilian rural poor, through ignorance, are clearing tracts of land or engaging in small scale smelting using charcoal created by burning the forest.

The second is that Western workers are greedily consuming too many hamburgers. It is said that demand for beef is responsible for clearing for cattle grazing. Every Big Mac is another tree felled.

Both explanations are seriously misleading.

In the first place the deforestation is being accomplished by dispossessing the peasant and Indian population. They are its victims.

Secondly it is the pursuit of profits by the capitalists of the region, with the backing of reactionary governments, which is the motive.

In Brazil in 1964 a coup brought the army to power. In an effort to secure its borders, hold down the rural population and encourage money spinning enterprises, the government first built roads into the interior and then offered subsidies, cheap loans and grants for the clearing and settling of the forest region.

Some 350 big ranches—500,000 acres, often larger—were set up by the Brazilian capitalists cashing in on the tax holidays and cheap credit offered by the government. This fuelled an enormous speculation in land as cleared land provides rights to the gold and mineral deposits underneath and gives title to yet more land and credits.

But the region as a whole

still remains a net beef importer. The cleared land quickly loses all fertility and regresses to sub-standard pasture. The land-owners have no real interest in ranching as the profits from beef are not great. The point is that the value of the land and the mineral rights it now possesses are three times that of uncleared forest.

In their greed for land the capitalists forcibly clear the peasant and Indian population with great violence—the bombing of Indian villages is common.



We became environmentalists by accident

Encouraged by the government a gold mining boom has taken off. The gold mines save the expense of mechanisation and modern safe methods of extraction. Instead dispossessed peasants are forced to work in the most primitive conditions, extracting gold by mercury process.

For every ton of gold produced a ton of mercury is disgorged into the environment threatening half a million people with poisoning. Many gold workers are soon "mad as hatters" as a result of working the process and through the food chain large populations are slowly poisoned. Expectant mothers contaminated by even minute quantities of mercury give birth to horribly deformed babies.

The capitalists have been encouraged to get in on low cost ore smelting using charcoal. This involves more deforestation as a means of saving heavy investment costs. Again the first victims are the rural poor forced by poverty to work in these unhealthy conditions.

## VIOLENCE

But the working people of the area have put up stiff resistance to the exploitation, oppression and violence of the landowners.

The great rubber plantations of Brazil were until recently worked on a semi-slave basis. The plantation owners practically owned the tappers who were constantly in debt to them. This was maintained by not allowing tappers to cultivate food crops on the land they rented. Instead they had to buy from the plantation boss. Also they were forced to sell the latex tapped not on the free market but to the plant-

ation owner who gave only a fraction of its value.

Infractions of these rules were met with beatings and burning alive the rubber workers.

But the development of synthetic substitutes as well as the land speculation boom led many of the landowners to abandon rubber and start clearing the lands. The rubber workers organised to smash the semi slave conditions but were then faced with the even more ruthless ranching companies clearing them from the land so it could be given over to grazing and speculation.

## STRIKES

Behind these companies stood the government and the banks. Brazil's foreign debt stands at 120 billion dollars and soaks up 28 per cent of export earnings just to pay the interest.

Pressure to raise cash to service this debt has fuelled the move to uproot rubber tappers, forests and Indians.

Under the influence of the huge metal workers' strikes in Sao Paulo in 1978, 1979 and 1980, the tappers organised the rubber tappers' union. The ranch owners were prepared to use any means to destroy the union and in 1980 workers' leader Wilson Pinheiro was shot dead by gunmen hired by the bosses. At least 90 others have been murdered since.

Instead of seeking out those responsible, the government unleashed a wave of repression, imprisoning and torturing hundreds of tappers. But the union organisation stayed strong.

Under the leadership of Chico Mendes, a wave of successful occupations of land scheduled to be taken over by the ranchers was organised.

## ORGANISING

Mendes started working as a tapper at the age of nine and had no formal education—schools were banned from the plantations until 1970. But his success in organising resistance made him a marked man. After years of threats he was finally killed by hired gunmen on December 22, 1988.

For Chico Mendes and the rubber tappers' union, the defence of workers, the environment and the indigenous population became inextricably linked.

The rain forests are being destroyed so that brutal estates backing murderous capitalists can raise the cash to pay interest to genteel international bankers.

And the uneducated rubber workers who have never slept under a roof that didn't leak have braved hired killers and state torturers to take them on.

That's what makes the environment a class issue.

KEVIN WINGFIELD



by KIERAN ALLEN

IN 1971 the Labour Party Conference committed itself to opposing the EEC. The conference declared that it was for "European unity but not on the basis of a capitalist free for all."

In the referendum in 1972 on EEC membership, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the Irish Transport and General Workers Union ran a vigorous campaign for a "No" vote. Among the most militant fighters against the EEC was the Workers Party.

Today the situation has changed dramatically. The two major parties of the Left, Labour and the Workers Party, support the EEC and believe that it can become a vehicle for "progressive" policies. According to the Workers Party, "an increase in power for the European Parliament will enhance democracy and accountability and make it more amenable to progressive policies".

This shift in left thinking is common across Europe. The reformist left parties have taken such a hammering from the hard Right that they have come to believe that what has been lost at home can be regained with the support of the EEC bureaucracy.

In particular, they hold out great hopes for the DeLors plan. DeLors, a supporter of France's President Mitterrand, was the author of a document called "The Charter on Fundamental Social Rights" which calls for legislation to guarantee minimum wages and maximum working hours in a post 1992 Europe.

However, socialists who believe that gains can be made from the EEC are living in a dream world. They misunderstand the real nature of the 1992 project. Far from opening the door to proposals for social justice, it is designed to allow the most brutal forms of

# 1992: Has got the an



capitalist competition to be unleashed.

Initial planning for the Single European Act began in 1984 when EEC Commissioner Spinelli devised a draft treaty for European union. The EEC at the time faced considerable difficulties. Investment had stagnated since the capitalist recession of 1974. In response, member states drew up a series of informal barriers to trade within the EEC to protect their own native capital. Under the guise of health standards, for example, products from one EEC country could be banned in another.

## PENETRATE

On a world level also, European capital was falling behind in key areas. European videos, for example, had a 48 per cent cost disadvantage over Japan. In textiles, exports from the Newly Industrialising Countries of Asia were beginning to penetrate the market.

The strategy that was gradually evolved by the boss class in Europe in response to this stagnation has led to 1992. Essentially, it is based on the promotion of mergers and take-overs, the re-division of the market, and the creation of a "Fortress Europe" which acts as a base for more intensive competition on a world

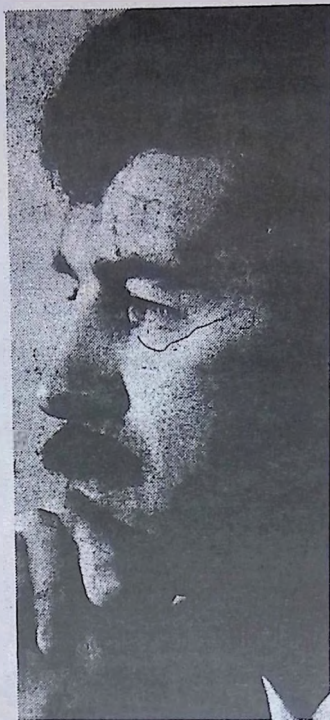
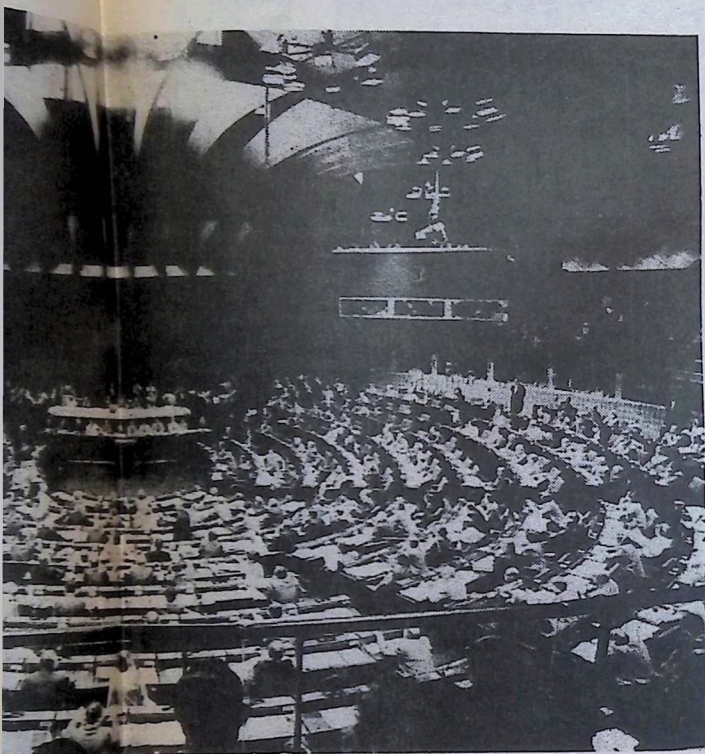
level with Japanese and US capital.

The pace of trans-European mergers has been hotting up dramatically in the run up to 1992. The German VW car company has bought 75 per cent of the Spanish car manufacturer SEAT. The Dutch giant DAF has bought the British company Leyland Trucks. In telecommunications, the European giants Siemens, GEC and Plessey have begun to work closely together and a merger is expected. A survey of the largest 1,000 companies in Europe has shown that there were 52 mergers and takeovers in 1986 compared to 38 in 1983.

The creation of ever larger companies is designed to ensure access to economies of scale. In the car industry, for example, capitalist experts reckon that a company that can produce 1,000,000 cars annually for an EEC-wide market can cut costs by 10 per cent and begin to compete with the Japanese. Far from capitalism moving towards "smaller and more flexible companies" as the trendy ideologues of New Times argue, it is moving towards ever more vicious competition at a world level with the consumer faced with less choice from fewer suppliers.

The pattern of mergers and takeovers is associated with a new division of the market. Increasingly "white goods"—washing

# Yes the Left answers?



prices on workers inside the European Community, the EEC is now beginning to challenge the US as a major exporter of agricultural goods. EEC sugar, for example, which is overpriced inside the EEC, is able to sell at below the price of countries such as Cuba, the Philippines or Thailand thus driving these economies into chaos.

Hoping that the "socialists" in the European parliament will do anything about these problems is utopian. DeLors, for example, was one of the principal architects of the Mitterrand's right wing turn in France which brought thousands of redundancies in its wake.

Where "socialist" parties are already in government, as in Spain, they are to the fore in pushing for privatisation and wage austerity. Asking trade unionists to look to Brussels, therefore will only add to the problems facing the workers' movement.

A number of socialists have responded to these developments by calling for increased emphasis on "sovereignty". In the case of Sinn Fein this has led to calls for a complete withdrawal from the EEC. But this misses the point. The developments towards a super-market where giant monopolies compete is an inevitable product of capitalism. The EEC is only the institutional expression of these developments. Calling for a return to a 1950s style economy in Ireland is not a viable option for Irish capitalism.

The internationalism of the bosses can only be met by an internationalist strategy on our side. In practice this means workers building links across national boundaries. Some years ago the Packard strike in Tallaght, for example, got a small echo from German workers in another subsidiary of the same multinational, General Motors.

During the miners' strike in Britain, solidarity across frontiers was immense.

The building of these links will demand a set of politics that rejects the post war consensus approach of the social democrats. These have looked to arrangements to bind workers into cooperation with their "own" native capital.

machines, fridges etc—are produced by Italian giants while heavy engineering and chemicals become associated with German capital. Inside each country the re-division of the market will bring the emergence of new giants in particular sectors.

The classic case here is Ireland's own Larry Goodman. From being a petty meat factory owner in the early seventies Goodman has become—by means of state favours to the tune of £80 million in grants—the Irish agricultural giant ready for competition in 1992.

Huge corruption and bribery is not an accidental feature of the system in the present period. In countries such as Ireland or Greece the state has a tremendous influence on which company comes to dominate the local market in preparation for 1992. Bribes and graft is the natural result.

The third element of the 1992 strategy is the creation of a "Fortress Europe". Although the EEC is officially committed to free trade through the GATT agreements, there is ample scope for bending the rules. Anti-dumping laws have been exaggerated to limit the extent to which companies such as South Korean Hyundai can enter the European market. Rows have developed with the US over the "standards" of its agricultural produce, in particular its "hormone enhanced beef".

By the mid 1980s one third of Japanese exports to the EEC were already subject to Voluntary Export Restrictions which limited their volume. All of these mechanisms will find increased use after 1992 as European capital demands strict tit for tat arrangements for openings into their market.

1992 will therefore mean an intensification of capitalist competition. The DeLors document pretends to lend a little bit of "social values" to the growing brutality of capital. It proposes a mild series of aspirations to "regulate" the intensified competition. But all the indications are that the DeLors document is also designed to disguise the realities of 1992.

Already a report from the EEC Commission itself on "Employment in Europe" has predicted a loss of two million jobs as a result of the drive to increased competition. It added that "half of all industrial employment would be sensitive to the impact of 1992".

Despite talk of reform, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) subsidising of high food prices will remain. In 1984, the EEC spent £41 billion on subsidising the big farmers of the EEC. Their aim was to allow these farmers to sell their produce at below cost prices outside the EEC.

Through CAP, which at the same time imposes high food

## Is the IRA fascist?

THE Workers Party often calls the Provisional IRA fascists. Are they using the term in an indiscriminate and abusive way, or are they ignorant of what fascism is?

Since they consider themselves a serious marxist organisation, we must assume that they are not just indulging in abuse and that they mean what they say.

The best analysis of fascism was made by Trotsky in the early 1930s before it had triumphed in Germany.

Along with the Italian marxist Gramsci, Trotsky was one of the few marxists of that period who fully appreciated the threat posed by fascism.

According to Trotsky fascism was different to other forms of counter-revolutionary dictatorship.

It was a spontaneous mass movement issuing forth from the crazed middle classes with the aim of destroying the independent organisations of the working class—its political parties, trade unions etc.

Judged by these criteria, can the Provisionals be considered fascists? Even the most thick-headed person can see the stupidity of the description.

### FAILURE

Is it a spontaneous mass movement? The Provisionals grew as a result of the failure of the civil rights movement.

The civil rights campaign began spontaneously and grew into a mass movement.

The Provisionals counterposed the "armed struggle" to the mass movement of the streets.

Although the armed struggle has widespread support, it is inherently the work of an elite.

The consequences of this is that street demonstrations, for example, are called in support of and are assumed to be subordinate to the military campaign, which is the "cutting edge".

Are the Provisionals middle class crazies? The Provisionals draw their support overwhelmingly from the working class of the ghettos—both in votes and membership.

The fact that some members of the IRA may be of middle

class origin is not decisive.

Do the people from the Malone Road support them? Hardly.

The Catholic middle classes give their allegiance, by and large, to the SDLP, and are quick to join prayer vigils and "peace" movements aimed at defeating the IRA ideologically.

Do the Provisionals aim to destroy the independent organisations of the working class? Apart from the fact that this would be a blow at their own supporters, and, therefore, illogical, the evidence suggests the opposite.

Many Republicans imagine themselves to be "socialists", to be fighting on behalf of the working class. But the movement does not put working class at the heart of its strategy.

Indeed because of the nature of republican politics, they can only see workers as another interest group to be pulled in to support the national liberation struggle.

But that being said, those Sinn Fein members who are active in trade unions are often good militants, and far from destroying trade unions, contribute to their independent activity.

### REFUSE

The IRA, it may be argued, have shot workers who are working for the "Crown Forces".

Of course, this just illustrates the point. Workers in a strong, well-organised union could refuse to do this work.

It is precisely because workers have been poorly organised, or have a low level of political consciousness, that they can be pressurised into this kind of work. The tactic of shooting them does nothing to remedy this situation, but is not therefore "fascist".

Some might argue

from a non-marxist point of view about fascism. Aren't fascists people who use violence and espouse right-wing, racist and nationalistic ideas?

The use of violence does not define fascism.

Marxists accept the necessity of using violence precisely because the ruling class will use the army, air force, police and paramilitaries first.

To refuse to use violence is to guarantee defeat and annihilation.

The views of the IRA are not racist or even sectarian.

Unionist paramilitary groups make their appeal on a purely sectarian, anti-Catholic basis.

### ACTIVE

The IRA do not, and a number of Protestants have been active in the movement. But it is inevitable that that membership will be overwhelmingly Catholic since it's the Catholic population who have been the most oppressed.

Are the views of the IRA conservative and nationalistic? Yes, but their nationalism is more like the nationalism of the late nineteenth century.

This nationalism, of the kind espoused by Garibaldi, was one of equal nationalities struggling for the right to self-determination and in solidarity with all other nationalities.

This is a qualitatively different type of nationalism to the Nazi master-race nonsense, which saw other races as inferior and promoted imperialism.

We reject any kind of nationalism as having nothing to offer the oppressed.

At this stage in Irish history it is not only reactionary, but also a handicap.

However, we say that accusing the IRA of being fascist is not just wrong, but pernicious.

■ JOHN STITT

## ANALYSIS

# Nationalism in the USSR

NATIONALIST unrest is the most serious threat facing Gorbachev's reforms. Since the introduction of *glasnost*, strikes and demonstrations against national oppression among the USSR's 140 plus national groups have multiplied.

From the Baltic Republics to Georgia, demands for greater independence are being raised. In Armenia and Azerbaijan ethnic violence has broken out, sparked off initially by discrimination against Armenians in the enclave of Nagorno Karabakh.

It is only a matter of time before major revolts hit all of Soviet Central Asia with its predominantly Muslim population of over 50 million. These live in some of the most economically deprived areas in the USSR.

In his book *Perestroika*, Gorbachev claims that the non-Russian nationalities "appreciate and take pride in the fact that their nations belong to one big international family". But the reality is very different.

For the majority of non-Russians their daily existence is marked by discrimination throughout all aspects of life. But this was not always so.

For Lenin and the Bolsheviks the overcoming of the nationalist oppression and Russian chauvinism that had been fostered by Tsarism was essential. This was necessary if Russian workers were to unite with non-Russian workers and peasants in the struggle for socialism.

Lenin wanted the Bolsheviks to prove in practice that they were the best fighters against "this great-Russian nationalist poison that is polluting the entire all-Russian political atmosphere".

Central to the programme were demands for "full equality of all nations and languages", with "no compulsory official languages", "no encroachment whatsoever upon the rights of a national minority" and "wide regional autonomy"—demands that were to be guided by their general principles proclaiming "the right of nations to self determination" including "the right of secession".

While the Bolsheviks supported the right of secession, that didn't mean that they always advocated the implementation of that right. Rather they hoped that after the non-Russian nationalities had their own revolutions and obtained the

by GER FRANCIS

right to secession they would actually rejoin Russia and realise that their best interests lay in a free union of socialist nations.

Nonetheless the rights of various nationalities to secede from Russia was not made dependent on the regime they established in their own country. So it was in the case of Finland, for example, that the country's independence was immediately recognised in 1917 despite the fact that there was a capitalist anti-socialist government in power there.

After the victory of the revolution the Bolsheviks started putting their principles into practice. Shortly after the insurrection in 1917 a "Declaration of the rights of the peoples of Russia" proclaimed the right of nations to self determination including the right to secession.

Independent soviet republics were proclaimed in Estonia and Latvia in 1918. A workers commune of Volga Germans was established in the same year. A socialist federation was formed in which non-Russians were to have their own autonomous regions.

By the end of the civil war in 1924 over twenty of the autonomous regions inhabited by non-Russian populations were brought together in a socialist federation.

In some areas the local bourgeoisie took advantage of the nationalities policy to collaborate with the invading white armies to try to overthrow the new workers' state.

Despite this and the immense hardship of the period, with Russia

racked by civil war and famine, the Bolsheviks were still able to build up real support among the nationalities because they showed themselves to be serious in tackling national oppression.

However, with the rise of Stalin and subsequent degeneration of the revolution, the gains enjoyed by workers and peasants—both Russian and non-Russian—were soon abolished to make way for break-neck industrialisation and forced collectivisation.

Stalin's new nationalities policy became a central component in shaping the economy to the interests of capital accumulation. It was the means by which the non-Russian areas could be "Russified" to ensure their subordination to the centre.

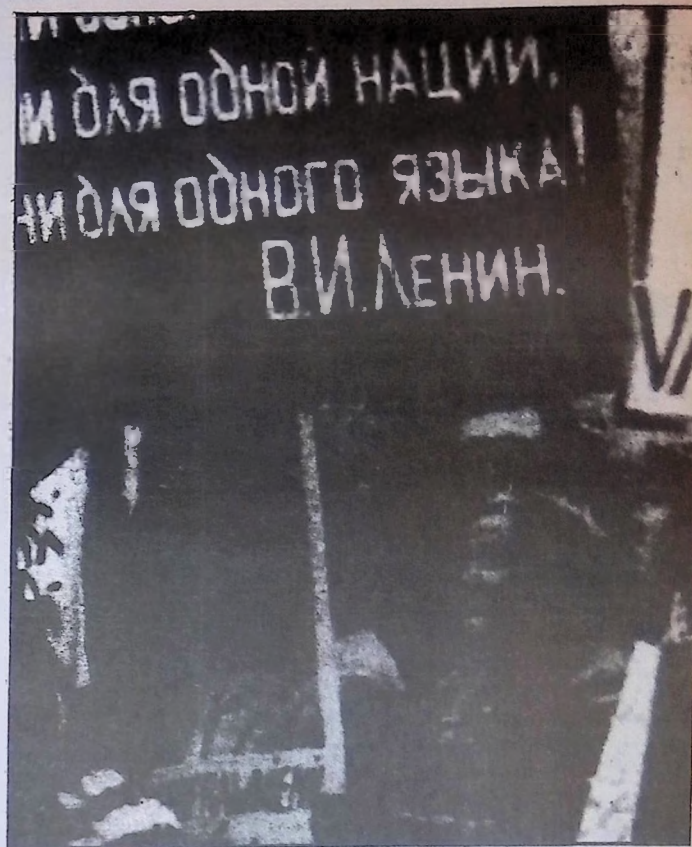
Where in the past Bolsheviks had recognised the language of the Tartars on a par with Russian, now teaching Russian was made compulsory.

Oppositionists were either purged or liquidated. This happened to the majority of the 30 national governments in the USSR during the purge of 1937-38. The main charge levelled against them was their desire for secession from the USSR.

The Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939 saw Moscow's annexation of Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia and Moldavia. Populations were deported to avoid the risk of rebellion.

On the night of 14th-15th June 1941, for example, 60,000 Estonians, 34,000 Latvians and 38,000 Lithuanians were deported.

On 28th August 1941 the entire population of the Volga German republic was transferred to the East. Decrees passed in December



Lithuanian demonstrators appeared with banners quoting Lenin in their struggle for greater national autonomy

1943 deported the whole of the Kalmyk republic (some quarter of a million people) to Siberia.

1944 saw deportation of other nations: 700,000 Chechens, 250,000 Crimea Tartars, 190,000 Karachi. It was only when *Pravda* gave a list of the constituencies for the general elections in October 1945 that it was discovered that a large number of the republics and autonomous regions formed by the revolution had simply disappeared.

Stalin's policy of divide and rule between Russians and non-Russians was faithfully carried on by his successors.

In Latvia, for example, as a rule new houses were given to Russian workers ahead of Latvians, despite the fact that many Latvians had been on waiting lists for 20 to 25 years. Every Latvian had to learn Russian or miss out on promotion, while those coming from Russia didn't have to study Lettish.

Throughout the USSR the pattern is similar. In Kiev, the capital of the Ukraine, only 23 per cent of children are taught Ukrainian, although over 58 per cent of the population uses

Ukrainian as a native language. Despite the fact that the non-Russians comprise half the total population, newspapers and journals in non-Russian in 1984 comprised only 17.4 per cent (in 1958 the figure was 18 per cent).

National oppression takes other forms. In Soviet Central Asia, the heart of the cotton growing region, decades of chemical pollution poisoned water supplies affecting tens of thousands of inhabitants.

In the Karakalpak region bordering the Aral Sea two-thirds of the people suffer from hepatitis, typhoid or throat cancer according to an article in the official Communist Party *Socialist Industry*. An estimated 83 per cent of children suffer serious illness. Infant mortality in Soviet Central Asia is four times the USSR average.

The cultivation of cotton at the expense of everything else (in Russia it's called "white gold" because of its ability to earn hard currency or the export currency in export markets) has meant the destruction of fertile land and shortages of meat, fruit, vegetables and drinking water.

For Gorbachev, fears of the potential nationalities time bomb has speeded up his attempts to rejig the Soviet constitution to grant greater autonomy.

Often local party bosses and conservatives heavily influence the national movements, emphasising their own brand of chauvinism, be it in Azerbaijan or Estonia. The extent to which real gains can be won however will depend on whether the movement can be taken out of their hands and widened to encompass all sections of the oppressed.

The recent miners' strike, uniting both Ukrainian and Russian workers, marked a welcome respite from all the reports of ethnic violence and illustrate that workers' unity against the real enemy, the Kremlin, shows the way forward.



Demonstrators in Azerbaijan



## What's on: SWM meetings and activities

### ■ Belfast Branch

Meets every Monday at 7.30 pm in the Ulster People's College, 30 Adelaide Park, Belfast (between Lisburn Road and Malone Road, opposite Queens Elms Halls of Residence)

### ■ Bray Branch

Meets every second Tuesday at 8.00 pm in Hibernian Inn, Marine Terrace

### ■ Cork Branch

Meets every Tuesday at 8 pm in the Anchor Inn, George's Quay

### ■ Derry Branch

Meets every Tuesday at 8.00 pm in Dungloe Bar, Waterloo St

### ■ Dublin Branch

Meets every Wednesday at 8 pm in the Bachellor Inn, O'Connell Bridge

### ■ Dundalk Branch

Meets every second Tuesday at 8.00 pm in ATGWU, Francis St

### ■ Kilkenny Branch

Meets every Tuesday at 8.00 pm in the Club House Hotel

### ■ For more details of regular branch meetings in

**BELFAST, BRAY, DERRY, DUBLIN, DUNDALK, DUNGARVON, GALWAY, KILKENNY, PORTLAOISE & WATERFORD** contact SWM at:

■ PO Box 1648, James's St, Dublin 8

■ PO Box 418, Tomb St, Belfast BT9 5PU

## Socialist Worker PUBLIC MEETINGS

### Crisis in Eastern Europe

Speaker:

**KIERAN ALLEN**

Dublin: Wednesday 13 September, 8.00pm  
Kinlay House, Lord Edward St (Top of Dame St)

■ For details of meeting in your area contact local paper sellers or write to SWM address.

## 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.

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A weekend of political discussion and debate organised by the Socialist Workers Movement.

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### Sessions include:

*Debate with Labour Left*  
*Debate with Greens*  
*Gorbachev's Russia*  
*Socialists and the market*  
*The French Revolution*  
*The Middle East today*  
*Is there a solution to the North?*  
*Trotsky versus Stalin*  
*What causes violence against women?*

### Speakers include:

**Eamonn McCann,**  
**Chris Harman (Editor Socialist Worker Britain),**  
**Kieran Allen (Author of forthcoming book on Connolly),**  
**Pat Stack (SWP, Britain),**  
**Paul O'Brien**  
and speakers from *Labour Left* and the *Greens*.

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REVIEWS

# Arguing it's time to go

Why Britain must get out of Ireland by Paul Foot, MacMillan, £8.50

THIS is a timely book by a leading British revolutionary.

Paul Foot's individual style of polemical journalism has for long been the bane of the British establishment.

Previously he has written several books exposing the murkier side of the British state and "justice".

In his 1977 pamphlet *Why You Should Be A Socialist*, which was a best seller, he demonstrated his unique ability to explain in an accessible fashion the most basic ideas of socialism. This latest book carries over the same style to a question of vital importance for British and Irish socialists.

It was published in the run up to the August 19 commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the introduction of troops on to the streets of Northern Ireland. With 10,000 to 12,000 people marching in Dublin for a British withdrawal and the formation of the Time To Go campaign in Britain, there will obviously be an audience for this book's arguments.

Time To Go has taken the Irish question out of the virtual ghetto it had fallen into on the British left. Most importantly, with the participation of Labour Lefts and even the affiliation of NUPE, it has made it possible to raise Irish issues in the labour movement. In the long run this is the only hope of success for those who wish to see the troops leaving—that workers on both islands, as part of a general fightback against their ruling classes, take up the question of the Northern state. The moderate success of Time To Go reflects the growing mood of discontent with Thatcher and her unpopular policies on the NHS, poll tax, etc.

## OPTION

The book begins by describing how the Northern statelet was set up. The War of Independence had lit the fuse of Irish resistance and the only option left to the British ruling class was to play the Orange card: "Their policy was to hold down the South of Ireland by the most savage violence, while preparing to save the North for the Empire. There was no attempt even to talk to the elected representatives of Ireland while this foul process continued."

The southern capitalists and their politicians were quite prepared to see Ulster bled off and turned into a sectarian nightmare, as long as they were given their own patch to look after.

Paul goes on to show how the plight of the Catholic minority remained ignored by all sides until 1968, when the working class Catholic ghettos exploded. It was the grave threat posed by this upheaval to capitalist stability in these islands that prompted the use of the troops. At every stage since then the British state, in its own interests, has refused to fundamentally alter the root cause of the conflict, the sectarian state. Twenty years on the discrimination and repression continue unabated, if in more disguised forms.

In the final chapter Paul deals with some of the arguments against withdrawal. The most important is fear of a bloodbath if the troops go. Paul points out how the Protestant

monolith is much more divided and unsure of itself than at its foundation. Chronic unemployment and poverty have replaced the imperial heyday.

Without the British state to prop it up, the Unionist monolith would look a lot weaker. The shock of not being able to depend on the British state would most probably debilitate the Loyalist terror groups. Couple this with the fact that the most likely scenario for the troops withdrawing is one of massive working class upheaval in both these islands, and the possibility of the "carnival of reaction" finally being ended seems high indeed.

The book makes an excellent case for withdrawal. It's a pity then that it should be marred by Paul's formulation of how withdrawal should proceed. He writes: "The British government

should declare that it intends to withdraw its troops from Ireland..." He does not call for "Troops Out Now". In this he is being quite consistent with the demands of the Time To Go campaign, but not with those of British revolutionaries, including the SWP.

The weaker demand assumes that there is some progressive role for the British state to play in the run up to withdrawal. Revolutionaries demand "Troops Out Now" because we do not accept that and because we want to mobilise people in struggle against the state, as the only way of forcing the Brits out.

That said, this book remains the best contribution to the present debate on the British presence and should be read by all socialists.

■ JOSH CLARKE



# Women and trade unions

*The Obstreperous Lassies, a History of the Irish Women Workers Union* by Mary Jones, Gill and MacMillan, £11.75

THE IRISH Women Workers' Union (IWWU) was founded in 1911 in an attempt to improve the lot of women workers.

As Mary Jones points out in her book *These Obstreperous Lassies: A history of the Irish Women Workers Union*, the need for such an organisation had been demonstrated time and again in previous months and years as militancy increased

among women workers, especially in Dublin.

Just a month before the union was founded, 3,000 women at Jacob's factory went on strike and won higher wages. Then, as now, women workers earned considerably less than their male counterparts, hours were long for both sexes, holidays few and working conditions a breeding ground for disease. Today, feminist writers like Bea Campbell blame women's inequality in the workplace on male trade unionists who, they say, must accept lower pay so that the pay of women workers can be increased. Very early on in their fight to improve the lives of women workers, the IWWU came to realise two important facts. Having an all-women union did not mean that they could sidestep the problem of divisions in the working class

and if they were to be successful in improving the pay and conditions of women workers, they would need the support of their male fellow-workers. Delia Larkin soon discovered that the ideas of 'craft unionism'—that some workers are better than others and have to protect 'their' patch against other workers—was not a peculiarly male phenomenon. The divide-and-rule tactics of the bosses affect women too. She complained that typists stood aloof from girls in trade, 'they in their turn looked down haughtily on the factory hand, and again you do not find the factory girls associating with the girls who hawk their goods in the street'. In the early days of the union rank and file militancy proved to be the key to uniting the different grades of women workers to fight for their rights. During strikes, scabs

were named and their addresses printed in Jim Larkin's weekly paper *The Irish Worker*. As a result of such tactics, wage rates and conditions among Union members improved. The problem remained, however, of convincing male trade unionists that solidarity was necessary between the sexes too. This was not an easy task. Women were seen as a threat to male employment as the bosses replaced well paid men with poorly paid women. Small wonder then that *The Irish Worker* should receive letters complaining that in many workplaces women were being brought in 'to learn the work and thus dispose of men... This bringing in of women to do the men's work must be stopped'.

Delia Larkin, and her successor Helena Molony, argued consistently that the displacement of men by women workers was not a problem of sex but of wages. Thus, when in 1919 the Bookbinders' Society complained that women were encroaching on the jobs of their (male) members, the response of the IWWU was to recruit the women to the Union and to enter an agreement with the Bookbinders Society. That where vacancies occur at processes of book-binding for which men are paid a higher fixed scale of wages, such vacancies shall not again be filled by female apprentices or

learners on any terms other than the scale of wages paid to the men on similar work.

Once the men were assured that their jobs would not be lost by women undercutting their wage rates and that wages and conditions were not going to suffer as a result of women working beside them, their solidarity was forthcoming. In July 1919, the IWWU found itself unable to give strike pay to its members in Hely's printing works. The male workers in Hely's—members of the Bookbinders Society—appreciated the solidarity offered by their women fellow workers and raised a levy to ensure the women had something to live on.

Such solidarity between men and women workers is not a peculiarity of history. In the last two-three years, a number of women in Britain and Northern Ireland—shop-workers, canteen assistants, cleaning staff—have won their claims for equal pay for work of equal value. In all cases, they had the support of the men with whom they claimed parity. The NUPE members who made such a claim in the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast say that, to start with, the men didn't support them and felt very threatened. But once it was explained that their own pay and conditions would not be threatened, they were happy to give their support to the women.

The lesson for anyone wanting to get a better deal for women workers today is clear. It is by breaking down the divisions in the working class, not strengthening them through separatist organisations, that women workers will improve their lot. ■ GORETTI HORGAN

# Matewan on video

THE history of working class struggle is in all countries obscured, misrepresented and often left out altogether by the media and conventional works of history.

The American working class are possessors of a rich and militant history of which they are almost entirely ignorant.

Only a handful of American films have portrayed working class struggles. John Sayle's film, *Matewan*, is certainly one of them.

Set in the coalfields of West Virginia in 1920, it recounts the true story of the fight for union rights by

miners employed by the Stone Mountain Coal Company. The film is quite obviously a tribute to the Wobblies. It shows how under the influence of Joe Kenehan, an ex-Wobbly and veteran union organiser, the miners overcome racial and other divisions as their class consciousness develops.

The coal company uses ruthless measures to try to break the strike. They employ both immigrant Italians and blacks as scabs. The miners' initial reaction is racist—lashing out at their most visible "enemy".

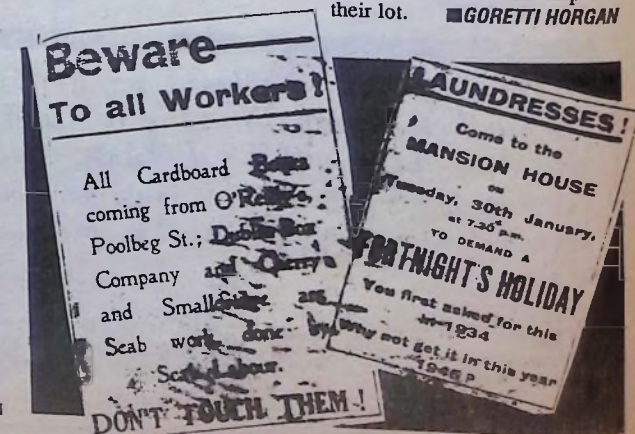
But Kenehan, in one of the best scenes in the film, convinces the miners that if

they exclude any group of workers from the union, it isn't a union at all. The result is that both the blacks and the Italians down tools and join with the miners.

*Matewan* manages to portray the miners realistically, warts and all, while at the same time showing the deep humanity and cooperation of a conscious working class fighting a common enemy.

Unfortunately, *Matewan* was never shown in Irish cinemas. Luckily it has recently been released as a video and is now available in Ireland. It's a brilliant film. Don't miss it.

■ EVE MORRISON



E a m o n n M c C a n n

# Faking the news



THE old fool GK Chesterton once remarked that there is no sight more ridiculous than the English middle class in one of its periodic fits of morality. He was wrong.

Much more absurd is the sight of reactionaries in Ireland mounting their high horse about violence.

We had a good example last month when an orgy of breast-beating, head-banging and hand-wringing broke out over foreign photographers allegedly stirring up violence during the twentieth anniversary of British troops coming in.

A spokesman for the RUC entered the lists first, claiming that certain "irresponsible" journalists had been inciting youngsters to stone cops in West Belfast.

Then the sectarian alrhead Reg "Empty" Empey, Lord Mayor of Belfast, got in on the act, inviting visiting press people to "go to Beirut if you're looking for violence".

And then new NIO supremo "Babbling" Brooke chipped in incoherently.

Then came a section of the media themselves—the editor of the *Sunday Independent*, the TV critic of the *Sunday Press*, RTE journalists, the Belfast Press Photographers Association etc. A whole hubbub of voices made the point that foreign journalists were not just recording violence but causing it.

Now it should be said that some photographers and TV crews do try to set up scenes which will give them "good" pictures. This has happened before and it certainly happened in both Belfast and Derry over the August 12th/14th weekend.

And it is indeed "irresponsible" in that young people are encouraged to put themselves at risk of arrest,

injury or worse in order to provide a dramatic image to titillate readers or viewers in the US, Europe or wherever.

But the people who have been leading the outcry are total hypocrites.

For a start, the antics of a handful of media people visiting the North for a few days cannot distort the picture to anything like the extent of Section 31 and the British ban on members of Sinn Fein appearing on TV or radio.

This distortion cuts a whole section of the population out of the picture altogether. But the very people who have been shouting loudest about a few "set-up" pictures are enthusiastically in favour of Section 31 and Thatcher's ban. Indeed, many of them demand more censorship, more distortion.

Apart from the "official" distortion, there's the even more serious matter of the day-to-day self-censorship which the media indulge in. The reality of house-raids, harassment and sectarian abuse is rarely presented to the public, whether in Britain, the 26 Counties or further afield.

In fact, outside the working class areas where it actually happens, these facts of Northern life are scarcely made known at all.

"Set-up" pictures are, anyway, a common feature of coverage of the North. For example, TV news programmes frequently carry footage of British soldiers or RUC men on patrol, whether in landrovers or foot-patrol through city streets or stomping across fields. All such pictures are set-ups.

Does anybody seriously imagine that the soldiers or cops shown in these sequences are behaving exactly as they would if the cameras were not present? The question is hardly worth asking.

All such footage gives a distorted picture of the North. But there's no

outcry from the advocates of "responsible" journalism. *Because it distorts the picture in a direction they approve of.* It makes the forces of the State look good.

What they objected to about press photographers contriving riot pictures last month is that the images which resulted were images of defiance, and this contradicts the picture of the North which they would like to convey.

In other words, the moralising reactionaries are not against distortion at all. It's just that they want things distorted in a way which favours their side.

And since they and the class they represent have effective control over the media that is the way things usually are distorted.

More generally, blaming photographers for riots is just another example of trying to explain the violence away. For twenty years the ruling class and its agents have tried to argue that there's no real reason for violence. So they have to come up with some other explanation.

At various times they've suggested rioters have been misled or manipulated or blackmailed or intimidated or even paid.

In fact, in the overwhelming majority of instances, the reason young people hurl missiles at the troops and the cops is that they hate them—and with good reason.

The fact that some gung-ho freelance photographer might occasionally encourage a group of youngsters to reenact such behaviour at a time when, left to themselves, they might head off home instead, does not alter this fact in any way.

Nor does it alter the fact that it's the ruling class and its tame hacks in the media who, week in and week out, do ninety-nine per cent plus of the distortion.

# INDUSTRIAL

## Privatisation threat at Harland and Wolff

PRIVATISATION of the Harland and Wolff shipyard is scheduled for 7th Sept. But workers at the shipyard have been warned that the Olsen-management takeover won't go ahead unless they invest 2.3 million pounds in the new company.

The threat is nothing short of blackmail. Norwegian shipowner Fred Olsen has invested £12 million in the new company. Top management in the yard have invested some £150,000. The new firm needs a further £3 million, some of which it hopes to raise from specially invited local business people. If all that was required was to raise £2.3 million pounds, it would be far easier to raise it from the wealthy who are used to buying stocks and shares.

But getting the workers to buy shares isn't about raising money. It's about tying them closer to the firm and so weakening their ability to organise as workers in order to extract better wages and working conditions from the new management.

Already the workers have agreed to new terms and conditions of employment which the management say are designed to make the shipyard "more cost-effective and increase flexibility". In fact, they're designed to do increase productivity, do away with jobs and weaken union organisation.

Semperit :

## Tyre workers yield to plan

WORKERS at the Semperit tyre plant in Ballyfermot have finally been pressurised into accepting a four-shift system under terms and conditions imposed by management.

The new agreement, settled after workers returned from holidays on 8th August, gives workers a mere £11.40 extra per week, with two days extra holidays per year and a £150 lump sum payment. In return for this paltry amount, they now face a seven-day, four-shift system, instead of the previous five-day, three-shift system.

Yet this package had been rejected in a vote taken before the annual holidays. Workers wanted an 11.25 per cent increase instead of the 6.25 per cent one on offer, in addition to three extra days holidays. They voted by 262 to 132 votes against the deal.

Productivity had increased by 25 per cent since 1987, yet the company response was simply to squeeze the workers harder. Management's task of breaking down unified resistance to the plans was helped by various interested parties. It is important to recognise the role played by the Labour Court, the ITGWU leadership, Labour Minister Bertie Ahern, and others, in destroying workers' morale.

At the general meeting called by the union on 15th August, a letter from Bertie Ahern was read out. The Flanna Fail minister urged workers to accept the deal, in order to secure their future and the future of the company. IDA managing director Padraig White sent a letter to John Carroll, president of the ITGWU, with similar menacing undertones.

This was also read to the assembled workers. In the opinion of Mr White, the workers had never had it so good, and the parent company, Continental, was losing



Mr John Parker

John Parker, the chief executive of the new company, openly admitted that the shares buy-out was about binding the workers to the new company. He said that the workers' investment was important "not so much for the volume of money, but for their commitment to the yard".

This commitment would then, of course, be used to argue against

strikes. It could even be used to argue against pay rises since the workers could be fooled into thinking that they'd get more from their share dividends than from a pay rise.

## DIVIDENDS

The truth is that it is Olsen and the big business investors who'll make the money on the dividends while the workers, who are allowed to buy a maximum of 900 shares (at £1 each) will, even in a time of high profits, receive only a small payout.

The importance that the new company places on the workers being financially tied to it can be seen by the lengths that they've gone to to make it easy for workers to invest. They're offering one year interest-free loans and a share purchase scheme whereby workers can buy more shares gradually over the next year.

Unfortunately, despite the rightful cynicism of many of the shop stewards in the yard to the scheme, the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions has not opposed the scheme. They have encouraged the workers to "give a positive response to the share proposal". The chances are, then, that the workers will support a scheme which is directly opposed to their interests.

## JET OIL STAND

OVER 30 clerical members of the ITGWU at Jet Oil voted to take industrial action if any of their members were disciplined in pursuit of their claim for a wage rise to bring them into line with the non-union members in Jet.

The oil industry has been decimated by redundancies over the last five years, over half the work force has gone. When management approached the clerical workers with their "survival plan" looking for four redundancies, there was not really the confidence to oppose it.

The best that could be won was a reduction in the number to go from the unionised ranks and that it would be on a voluntary basis only.

But then, by accident, the workers found out that management were paying the non-union staff—a minority of the workers employed—more than the union scales the mood changed. A general meeting of the section voted to pursue a claim for parity with the non-union staff, a rise of £20-£30 a week and non-cooperation with the survival plan.

What the situation shows is that even in this period of a low level of militancy, the mood of workers can change. There is no tradition of militancy in Jet, but union organisation has been maintained over the years.

Clerical workers are being forced to organise and fight in defence of basic rights and conditions, as the discipline of the factory is transferred into the office.

While not confident enough to go for an all out strike, Jet workers have forced management to the negotiating table to discuss the pay claim. If management refuse to pay confrontation looks inevitable. If management can get away with paying union members less, then that is the end of the union's ability to protect workers on all issues. The Jet workers know this, and it has made them more determined to fight this out to the end.

# Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

# BAN PLASTIC BULLETS NOW



SEVENTEEN people, eight of them children, have been killed by plastic bullets since they were first used on the streets of the North in the early 1970s.

Hundreds more have been injured, many seriously, by the lethal weapons.

The fact that over one million pounds has been paid in compensation by the British government for deaths and injuries, is an admission by them that most of the victims were not involved in rioting.

Invariably, the stories issued by the RUC or British army after a death or injury blame the victims. They're accused of rioting, stone-throwing and worse. When all the controversy has died down, the Northern Ireland Office admits the innocence of the victim and quietly pays the blood money.

Now, in a letter to the British *Independent* newspaper, a leading supporter of the use of plastic bullets in the North, Dr PAJ Waddington, director of Criminal Justice Studies at Reading University has said that the weapon used to fire plastic bullets is "so in-

accurate that it borders on the criminally reckless to issue them."

While there can be little doubt that the army or RUC aimed directly at many of those killed and injured, others have died or sustained serious injuries through being hit by a rogue plastic bullet. Dr Waddington says that such accidental deaths are avoidable but the governments miserliness has prevented the introduction of the more accurate alternative weapons which had been developed by the Royal Ordnance before it was privatised.

The gun used to shoot plastic bullets is a converted signal pistol. It was never designed to be aimed in any way—though its clearly cheaper than the alternative.

## KILLER

The argument for banning the use of these killer bullets has been strengthened by the decision to issue them to the hated Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR). This was first proposed some months ago. In the storm of protest after the announcement, it seemed that the

proposal had been dropped. But at the end of August, the British army announced that the UDR were being trained in the use of the plastic bullets.

Whether it's the RUC, UDR or British army, all the "security forces" in the North are sectarian. They are, after all, defending a sectarian state. But it is the UDR which is most open and provocative in its sectarianism.

Anyone living in a nationalist area knows that plastic bullets are *not* used as a last resort in a "riotous" situation. They're used as a *first* resort—very often in what might be described as "normal" police situations.

## SATURDAY

For example, when you hear on the news that plastic bullets were fired in Derry on a Friday or Saturday night, the chances are that it was not rioters, but a crowd on the way home from a pub or disco, that were on the receiving end. It might be a "hostile" crowd but then groups of working class people who meet up with squads of cops are often hostile to them—especially if they've had a few drinks. If someone gets injured, or worse, then the incident has to be described as a "riot" by the RUC press office.

Its obvious, then, that the idea of handing these already indiscriminately used bullets to a force as openly sectarian as the UDR is a recipe for disaster. And it is young working class nationalist people who will suffer the results of the disaster.