

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

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Media acting as 'racist cheerleaders'

REPORT EXPOSES LIES ON REFUGEES

A RECENT conference in Dublin attacked the media's attempts to whip up racism against refugees.

Eilish McCourtney Baldwin of the Harmony group described the media as 'racist cheerleaders'. She attacked sensationalist newspaper headlines and radio programmes like the Pat Kenny Show and the Chris Barry Show.

Already black people say they have noticed a change in the way they are treated on the streets.

A recent murder in Dublin's O'Connell St was blamed on a Bosnian national, leading to a racist slur against all Bosnians living here.

The media have been peddling lies to give the impression that refugees are scroungers, taking Irish jobs, houses and benefits.

Myths

A Report on Homelessness, Housing Need and Asylum Seekers in Ireland which has just been published by the Homeless Initiative goes a long way towards debunking these myths.

The numbers of asylum seekers arriving in Ireland is actually very small.

It amounted to just 1,176 in 1996, that is less than one percent of all the asylum seekers who came to EU countries.

The housing shortage existed long before refugees started to arrive.

According to the report there were 37,000 households on the housing waiting lists in 1996, with more than one third on them for two years or more.

Just 2,676 local authority houses were built last year.

The shortages are obviously caused by the failure of the gov-

ernment to invest in building programmes.

Asylum seekers can't even apply for a local authority house.

Emergency services for homeless people and travellers operated by the Eastern Health Board have been under huge strain for years because of inadequate funding, staff shortages and lack of resources.

The fact that many asylum seekers are now dependent on the services has increased the strain, but is not the cause of it.



Refugees are not to blame for shortages

Dangers in Refugee Act

MANY PEOPLE are calling for the immediate implementation of the 1996 Refugee Act so that asylum seekers can have their situation regularised.

However there is a danger that the new legislation will be used to deny people refugee status and to cut down on the numbers coming here.

Some concerns have already been raised about the Act.

In particular, aspects of the Act reflect a new trend in Europe to restrict entry of refugees. It lays down twelve situations where refugee status will be denied.

This includes lying or forging

documents or travelling with false documents without reasonable cause.

But how can a refugee who is fleeing torture have all their papers in order?

Often the only way to escape a police state is to use false passports.

Identity

The Refugee Act also means that asylum seekers can be held in detention centres if they have false identity documents or have failed to establish their identities.

There is no limit placed on the length of time for which they can be held.

FIGHT THE REAL ENEMY!

THE RACIST ideas surrounding the refugee issue have to be opposed. The best way is to fight against all immigration controls.

Political refugees and people who flee poverty have as much right to come here as the Irish had to emigrate across the world.

Racism feeds off people's disillusionment with the sys-

tem and its failure to deliver them a decent job or standard of living.

Focus

But it is time now to focus the anger on the real enemies: the bosses who are getting richer and richer as the economy continues to boom, while bleeding the rest of us dry.

The new measures demanded at the Alumina plant would mean the emission of sulphur could be controlled.

But it seems the company directors are more concerned with protecting their profits than with taking measures which could save lives.

Afraid

And they are no doubt afraid that the new measures would improve the situation and show that the plant was responsible for the problems.

Aughinish jobs blackmail

The Aughinish Alumina company has tried on some old fashioned blackmail at a hearing into pollution from its plant near Limerick.

The company's financial controller, Michael Collins, has warned that the plant may close if it is forced to adopt new pollution controls.

Aughinish is trying to distance itself from the pollution on a number of farms in the Askeaton area. Cattle have died, trees are also dying and people living nearby have suffered health problems.

Torturer hides in the vatican

ONE OF the Catholic church's most senior figures faces accusations of involvement in torture and executions.

Cardinal Pio Laghi was the Vatican ambassador to Argentina in the 1970s when the Argentinian military regime launched its "dirty war" against political opponents.

Thousands of trade unionists and community activists simply disappeared. Many were tortured and executed by military death squads.

The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo have been campaigning ever since to find out what happened to their sons and daughters who vanished.

Now they have ac-

cused Pio Laghi of direct involvement in the atrocities.

Testimony

Backed by the testimony of senior Argentinian church figures, they say Laghi even ordered the torture of Catholic priests suspected of involvement with left wing groups.

Witnesses claim Laghi was regularly seen at the Argentinian government's torture centres, where he personally decided the fate of some detainees and ordered the execution of liberal priests.

"Pio Laghi was the di-

rector of a crusade against communism," read the official legal complaint against him. "Priests, missionaries, union leaders, political leaders—all suffered the punishment of the Inquisition he decided to impose."

The cardinal is now back in Italy where human rights groups are demanding his prosecution.

That may not happen, however, as Laghi enjoys diplomatic immunity as a representative of the Vatican papal state.

He has even been appointed to head the Vatican's Congregation of Catholic Education, responsible for supervising church schooling worldwide.

Can Robinson change the UN?

Mary Robinson's appointment as United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights was widely welcomed. She received a standing ovation when she spoke at a recent conference against racist scapegoating of refugees.

Robinson was elected President in 1990 because she was associated with the fight for women's rights in Ireland.

Her election reflected the new mood of opposition to the way the Bishops had dominated Irish society.

The welcome for Robinson's new appointment shows the hope many have in her ability to reform the way the UN deals with human rights abuses. But the optimism is misplaced.

The United Nations has never lived up to the expectations placed in it as a defender of freedom, as its record shows:

The United States has dominated the UN from the beginning. When the UN was set up in 1946, the US ensured this domination by marshalling the support of corrupt Latin American dictators.

By 1950 many UN employees found that their human rights work was being hampered and they were wretchedly hunted for their jobs.

The UN oversaw the partition of Palestine between Jews and Arabs in the 1940s but turned a blind eye as Israeli terror gangs drove out half a million Palestinians and robbed their land.



President Robinson

In the 1980s the UN continually condemned Israel's invasion of Lebanon but did nothing to stop the massacres there.

But when Iraq invaded Kuwait the US used the UN as a cloak to launch a bloody war for oil profits.

The recently deposed dictator Mobutu took charge of the Congo

in the 1960s after UN troops kidnapped and killed the nationalist leader Patrice Lumumba.

Yet the Congo intervention is claimed as the high point of Ireland's participation in the UN.

Mary Robinson appeared on the world stage when she visited war torn Somalia during the famine of the early 1990s.

She made an emotional appeal from the town of Baidoa for UN intervention to stop the starvation.

But the US only allowed the intervention to go ahead when the worst of the famine was over.

The 'peacekeeping' forces gunned down hundreds of Somali civilians.

The US has always favoured Mary Robinson for a senior UN post because of her profile in the area of human rights.

Image

They believe Robinson will restore the UN's image as a champion of the downtrodden.

In reality Robinson's appointment confirms the status of the Irish ruling class as a junior partner in the Western camp.

Dick Spring has led a diplomatic campaign to have Robinson appointed.

He even wooed the corrupt rulers of Mexico for support for Robinson. So much for human rights!

what we think

Where is the IRA going?

The killing of two RUC officers in Lurgan on the week before the marching season can only have been designed to increase sectarian tensions. It was a particularly stupid act which socialists oppose.

None of this means that we should fall for the hypocrisy of the establishment media. The coverage and condemnation of the IRA killing was in stark contrast to the treatment of the Robert Hamill killing.

Here was a young Catholic man who was beaten to death on the streets of Portadown with gangs shouting 'Die Fenian Die' while the RUC looked on. Yet there was no condemnations of the RUC for their collusion in this killing.

No one should pretend that the RUC are village bobbies who exist to guide traffic. Their own record of sectarian brutality, of summary execution of republican opponents, of torture in stations like Castlereagh makes hollow their appeal to humanitarian feeling.

But what do the Lurgan killings tell us about where the republican movement is going?

They reflect the glaring contradictions that are opening up at the heart of republican strategy.

For the past two years Sinn Fein has asked for entry into all-party talks and have, rightly, pointed out that as the third largest party in Northern Ireland there should be no pre-conditions.

But while the whole focus was put on entry to the talks, the more fundamental issue of *what* they were to talk about was ignored.

The election of the Blair government in Britain has brought matters to a head when Labour adopted a slightly different strategy to the Tories.

On one hand Mo Mowlan eased the conditions for Sinn Fein's entry to all-party talks. Sinn Fein were told they could join six weeks after an IRA ceasefire and that the talks would not drag out beyond May 1998.

Even the arch bigot Trimble was leaned on to agree that de-commissioning should be 'pigeon holed'.

But at the same time, Blair made it clear that the content of the talks would focus on an internal settlement.

Not even the youngest child in the room could hope to see a united Ireland in their lifetime, he told



an audience in Belfast.

He presented himself as a clear advocate of the union rather than even being neutral on the issue.

Republican strategy in recent years has been based on the idea that Britain could act as a 'persuader' to move the Protestant population into accepting a united Ireland.

Yet Blair is now ruling this out completely.

Rival

The Lurgan bombing shows that either the IRA as a whole or a section it has now balked at entry to the talks.

Amongst some of them,

there even be a rival strategy emerging of upping the ante in the hope that they could make gains from an outright sectarian conflict.

Socialists have to stand resolutely desperate talk about 'wanting to have the civil war, and get it over with'.

We are against violence being visited on working class people whatever their religion.

The increased sectarianism that comes with this rhetoric only benefits a wealthy minority who gain from working class division.

But we not should pretend that the Adams strategy has any realistic chance of success.

The whole process of working with the White House and Fianna Fail is based on a lie: these forces have no interest in ending the oppression of Catholic workers.

Space

At most they want a space for the new Catholic middle class within the structures of Northern Ireland.

There is a different road to the dead-end alternatives of republicanism.

Today there are thousands of Protestant workers who despise the bigotry of Trimble and Paisley.

They want an accom-

modation with their Catholic fellow workers but all they get from Sinn Fein is talk of pan-nationalist fronts.

What is needed in the North is a more powerful group of socialists who champion the cause of workers' unity.

This means arguing for resistance to Orange bigotry and opposition to sectarian marches through Catholic areas.

It also means breaking with the republican idea that a right wing politician like Bertie Ahern has more in common with a Catholic worker than their Protestant counterpart.

No ifs or buts: £5 an hour minimum wage

THE SMALL businessmen of Ireland are up in arms over talk of a minimum wage.

Groups like ISME claim that is no need for it because Irish employers do not exploit or pay cheap wages.

They argue they will be driven out of business.

The reality, however, is that a quarter of Irish workers are on low pay, according to official ESRI figures.

The numbers below the poverty line has increased from 31% of the population to 35%—mainly because of the low wages being paid to workers in the catering, security and cleaning industries.

Threaten

Every time there is the slightest demand for improvement the employers threaten to shut their business.

But they have cried wolf once too often.

A minimum wage only means that they have to cut back on some of their profits.

If the propaganda of the employers is left aside, the real issue is what exactly is meant by a minimum wage. After all, even Bertie Ahern has committed himself to supporting the idea.

The FF/PD government have no intention of threatening the profits of their business friends. Ahern will only contemplate a measure that sets the figure at just above the existing Joint

Labour Committee rates and allows exceptions for 'business difficulties' or for young workers.

The trade union movement should not fall for Ahern's rhetoric.

Instead it should organise a fight for a minimum £5 an hour rate to be paid across the board.

Such a campaign should be linked to the issue of union recruitment.

Organise

Recent experience has shown that unions like MANDATE and the INO added to their numbers when they were seen to organise a fight.

If the unions guaranteed to back any group of unorganised workers who wanted to win the £5 an hour standard they win tens of thousands of new members.

They would also ensure that the issue moved from polite rhetoric to becoming a reality.

When babies were killed in Ireland

IN RECENT years many people have been moved by the terrible stories of infanticide of Chinese baby girls.

The combination of population control policies and traditional ideas that boys were better than girls led to this horrific situation.

Now a new documentary film, *Infanticide in Modern Ireland*, has revealed that widespread infanticide existed in Ireland just over fifty years ago.

Nearly 100 women

were brought before the courts on charges of killing their own babies between the foundation of the Irish free state and the early 1950s.

The situation was so serious that an Infanticide Act was introduced in 1949 to reduce the penalty for murder of a baby from death by hanging to manslaughter.

Pretend

The revelations show what nonsense it is to pretend that child abuse and neglect only happens in modern 'materialistic, consumer' societies.

It shows that religion and traditional morality offers no defence against these practices.

No country in the world was more Catholic than the Ireland which was run by Eamon de Valera and Archbishop John Charles McQuaid.

The makers of the documentary also make another telling point: that the women who killed their children were neither mad or morally depraved.

The stigma on illegitimacy meant that women felt they had to find ways of getting rid of their babies.

Up to the Second World War, some women were able to import illegal contraceptives from England or organise backstreet abortions there. But once the war broke out, this stopped.

The women were literally forced into the murder of their own children.

Moralists

It was not a matter of individual 'choices', as the moralists in today's tabloid press might put it. Infanticide reflected the social conditions of a repressive Catholic state.

None of this is

international news

France:

Big business pushes Jospin to break pledges

FRANCE'S SOCIALIST Party prime minister, Lionel Jospin, faces growing pressure from big business to abandon his election pledges to cut unemployment and defend welfare.

Europe's rulers lined up against Jospin's call to take measures to tackle unemployment at the recent Euro summit in Amsterdam.

The *Financial Times* last week laid down the determination of big business to use all its power to force Jospin to put profits before ordinary people.

It demanded Europe's governments protect profits by "attacking public expenditure".

And it warned, "Mr Jospin should not expect to get away with a move in the opposite direction."

At the Amsterdam summit Jospin was pushed into dropping demands for measures to tackle unemployment, and he agreed to

stick by the public spending cutting "stability pact".

On Jospin's return to France, Philippe Seguin, the new leader of the RPR conservative party, taunted him: "You are going to have to choose between the word you have given to our European partners and the word you have given to your electorate."

Hostile

Big business was delighted that British Labour prime minister Tony Blair lined up with Germany's conservative leader, Helmut Kohl, against Jospin at Amsterdam.

Blair is hostile to any spending aimed at tackling unemployment, and in-

stead talks of the need for Tory style "flexible labour" and "deregulation" as the way forward.

But though there is immense pressure on Jospin from bosses and bankers, that is not the only pressure he faces.

Workers' revolts broke France's right wing government and allowed Jospin to win the election last month.

Those revolts pushed Jospin to make pledges to benefit ordinary people.

So Jospin also now fears workers' reaction if he does not fulfil at least some of those pledges.

The twin pressures on his government were shown clearly in Jospin's first speech to France's National Assembly last week, outlining his programme for government.

He warned that "the public finances are in a serious situation" and called for a review of public spending over the summer.

Decisions

That meant postponing decisions on key election pledges until the autumn, though Jospin still insisted he would honour his promises.

But there are clear signs many could soon be either abandoned or watered down.

Jospin did, however, have to make some gestures to the pressure from below.

So he honoured a promise to increase the minimum wage—though the 4 percent rise was much less than unions had hoped for.

He increased a form of child benefit and announced plans for a boost to public house building.

He scrapped a plan to build a new nuclear reactor and announced plans to grant residence papers to up to 40,000 immigrants who had been declared illegal by the previous government.

Though such measures are popular they could not hide the clear signs that Jospin's government is likely to crumble before the pressure from Europe's rulers and big business on his central election pledges.

French workers will have to look to their own strength if they are to win any of the real changes they voted for last month..

Exposed: Brutality of UN 'peace-keepers'



UN troops make sport by 'roasting' a young Somali over open fire.

THE BLOOD and lies behind United Nations "peace-keeping" operations are being exposed by a series of shocking revelations about what happened in Somalia four years ago.

This week three Belgian paratroopers faced a court martial on charges that they had tortured and murdered Somali civilians, including children.

Claims by the Belgian government that its troops were carrying out an honourable peace mission have been shattered by pictures of Belgian soldiers roasting a Somali child over a fire.

There is also evidence that a young Somali man was left

locked in a metal container in scorching temperatures until he died.

Now the Italian government has been forced to order an atrocities investigation after the publication of pictures taken by Michele Patruno, a former Italian soldier in Somalia.

Patruno says that in addition to the torture shown in the picture above, locals were denied food and water, had the soles of their feet burnt and were hurled against razor wire.

Murdered

He says that at least five Somalis died under torture.

Canadian troops on the UN mission have already been shown to have murdered a So-

mali who had crawled into their camp looking for food.

A few days later they captured another and tortured him to death.

Canadian troops videoed beatings and torture of Somalis for their "entertainment".

The UN invasion of Somalia brought terror to the population, not peace.

The UN troops had utter contempt for the Africans they had come to "save".

Women were gang raped and civilians were killed for "fun" and "target practice".

The United States government, which commanded the operation, was determined to show its power to be "policeman of the world".

Several US oil companies also hoped to ex-

loit Somali resources.

It was a naked colonial intervention—outside forces imposing their swaggering rule backed by the gun.

It was 19th century imperialism intensified by the 20th century's technology of death.

Failed

The UN is dominated by the big powers who have no interest in true freedom or genuine democracy in any part of the world.

From the Gulf to Panama to Somalia, outside intervention has failed.

The United Nations is now supporting Italian military intervention in Albania.

It is clearer than ever that UN forces bring horror, not lasting peace.

TURKEY

Army force prime minister to step down

THE TURKISH military succeeded in its campaign to drive Islamist prime minister Necmettin Erbakan from office last week.

The army had been making veiled threats of a coup for months against the government headed by Erbakan's Welfare Party.

Senior generals claimed they were defending Turkey's secular constitution and standing up to "the threat of an Islamic fundamentalist takeover".

But no one should be fooled that the army and Turkish president Suleyman Demirel are upholding democracy.

Admitted

One senior general admitted the real problem with the Welfare Party is not its leaders, who have behaved like previous right wing governments, but the party's "radical roots".

These are the urban poor who want a redistribution of wealth.

The pressure on Erbakan's government went hand in hand with a clampdown on the left

and on civil liberties campaigners.

The last month has also seen a renewed Turkish military offensive into northern Iraq against the Kurdish nationalist PKK movement.

There is enormous popular anger at austerity measures alongside the blatant corruption among bosses, top generals and establishment politicians.

Policy

The formation of a new government headed by Tory Mesut Yilmaz will do nothing to relieve these pressures.

But some socialist forces in Turkey have mistakenly supported the army's removal of Erbakan.

Such a policy can only strengthen those whose overriding aim is to crush the left, the workers' movement and the struggle for Kurdish rights.

Loyalists thugs kick Catholic to death

No one in the Portadown area was surprised when Robert Hamill was kicked to death after being chased through Portadown town centre by a loyalist mob. He was a Catholic and he dared to walk through the town after dark.

As the loyalist thugs danced on his body, and shouted "Die Fenian", an RUC patrol watched but did nothing to save him.

"It was only a matter of time until somebody was killed" a local community worker told *Socialist Worker*.

This view was confirmed by Portadown people who told the *Irish News* that "that few Catholics would have the courage or stupidity to go into Portadown of an evening, most just stay indoors after dark."

Even in daylight, Catholic schoolchildren have to get out of their school uniforms before they go into the town. "It wouldn't be safe not to"

No one in Ballymoney was surprised either when RUC man Greg Taylor was kicked

to death by a loyalist mob. "The only surprise was that it was a policeman and not a Catholic", says Lorraine a secretary from a Protestant background who lives in Ballymoney.

"The thugs have been on the streets every weekend, some of them just back from Harryville.

"They would beat up any Catholic or anyone who was a stranger to them.

That policeman was just unlucky that there were no Catholics around to entertain them."

Horrific

The horrific picture on this page of Martin Garvin, shows the reality of Loyalist violence. He made the mistake of walk-



Martin Garvin: victim of sectarian hatred

ing down the Crumlin road in North Belfast after dark.

The 21 year old Catholic had his throat cut by five middle aged men, leaving a seven inch gash under his chin.

Doctors told him that if the cut had been half an inch to one side, he would be dead.

As they left him for dead they shouted "Fenian Bastard".

These bigots do not represent the majority of Protestants in Northern Ireland, most who are horrified by this savagery.

Unfortunately some people on the Catholic side do blame all Protestants and the loyalist thugs.

A nationalist mob in Derry tried to kick Ian Hetherington to death over a month ago. We will probably see more of this kind of savagery over the coming weeks. Protestants and Catholics must unite against this bigotry.

Occupy to defend jobs

United technologies Automotive (UTA) have announced that they are closing their Derry plant and moving most of the 525 jobs to Portugal and Spain. The plan has devastated the Bogside and Creggan areas where UTA provides the only local employment.

Management at UTA have tried to blame the the closure on the workers' refusal to accept new shift patterns a few ago. In fact, after enormous pressure from management and their own union officials in the AEEU, the workers accepted the new shift pattern.

They accepted the anti social hours and reduction in wages because they were told this would safeguard their jobs.

The response from local politicians of all parties, in-

cluding Sinn Fein, has been to call for talks with the UTA management - as if it were possible to appeal to their better natures over the profit motive.

But the jobs don't have to go. The machinery used at UTA is modern, worth millions, and due to be moved to Portugal and Spain. If the workers occupied the plant, they could force the company to stay.

Saved

That is how workers on the old Molins plant saved their jobs in the mid 80s.

When Mollins said it was leaving Derry, the workers responded by locking the gates, occupying the plant and using the machinery as a bargaining tool. Several hundred engineering jobs remain in Derry today because of the occupation. An occupation by the UTA workers could save their jobs too.

MONTUPET STRIKE:

The union leaders 'stabbed us in the back'

THE NINE week strike at Montupet car components factory has ended in an unnecessary defeat.

On 18 June the remaining strikers voted to accept a £4,500 payout for the sacked strikers and the option of returning to work or a redundancy payment for the other strikers.

With dwindling strike funds and a drift back to work or to other jobs, many of the strikers felt there was no other option but to accept the deal.

"Most of the men are absolutely gutted," one of the sacked strikers told *Socialist Worker*, "especially the people who stayed out with the sacked men for all those weeks. They're getting nothing out of this, a couple of weeks pay, that's all. But by the end we thought we'd done all we could. They threw everything at us and we stood our ground but we were stabbed in the back by the union, there's no doubt about it."

The Montupet strike was a magnificent example of rank and file action against a ruthless management who were out to destroy the union at the plant.

Around 300 workers walked out when two workers were suspended for observing a work-to-rule, after months of bitter pay negotiations.

The responsibility for the defeat lies squarely at the feet of the AEEU and ICTU union leaders, who betrayed the strikers at every step. Mass pickets and solidarity action by AEEU members in car plants supplied by Montupet, such as Ford Bridgend, could have won the strike in a matter of days.

Instead, the AEEU, refused to support the strike because it hadn't been properly balloted for and was therefore "illegal" under the Tory anti-union laws.

In the first week, in an attempt to intimidate workers,

by COLM BRYCE

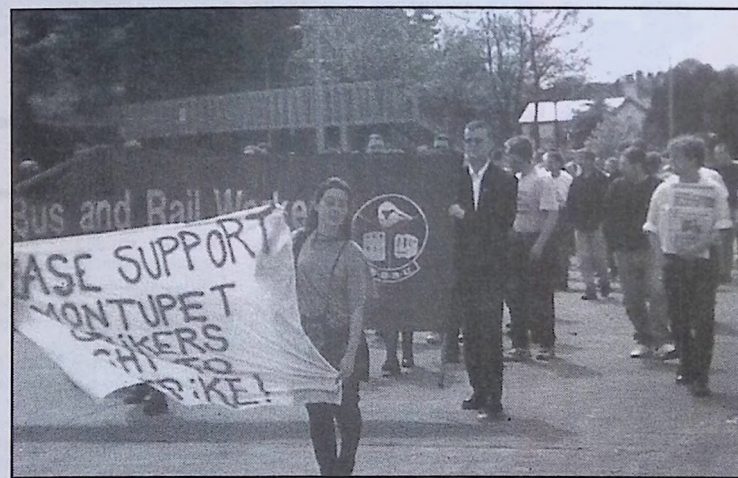
the management sacked twenty of the most prominent strikers. This was followed by the serving of writs for damages on 28 strikers. Five strikers were eventually brought to court and threatened with jail sentences for breaking the injunctions preventing them from picketing the plant.

This was first time in over 20 years that strikers faced jail under the anti-union laws and represented a serious threat to union rights to strike.

Responded

Their union official, Peter Williamson, responded by trying to lead a group of scabs through the picket line, signing a three year wage deal with Montupet in the middle of the strike and telling AEEU workplaces throughout Britain and Ireland not to collect money for the strike fund.

The strikers approached other workplaces directly and got pledges from stewards at Harland and Woolf, Shorts, Mackies and elsewhere to lead walkouts if any of the strikers were jailed. Black taxi drivers from the Catholic Falls and the Protestant Shankill Roads promised to bring the city to a standstill.



Only then did Terry Carlin from the ICTU in Belfast act to make a deal with management, centred around a payout for the sacked workers, in order to head off the walkouts before the strikers reappeared in court. Carlin had earlier voted to prevent the strikers using the offices of the trade union-run Unemployed Resources Centre in Belfast as a strike headquarters and prevented them speaking at the annual May Day rally.

The original deal was rightly seen as a pathetic retreat, addressing none of the issues of pay or union rights that had sparked the strike, and was rejected by the strikers. They marched to the ICTU offices and tore up the

letters outlining the offer at a demonstration outside.

The ICTU's reaction was to send a disgraceful letter to shop stewards all over Ireland, slandering the strike and telling trade unionists not to support them.

The effect of the letter was obvious in the low turnout at a mass picket on Saturday 14 June at the factory gates in Dunmurry, outside Belfast. Workplace collections were being made more difficult.

Mailing

The CPSU public service union in the South, whose members voted at the recent conference to take official collections for the strike, responded by mailing the ICTU

letter to every shop steward.

For the last four weeks, the strikers had only been receiving around £20 per week from the strike fund.

The strikers are returning to work without any of their original demands and with union organisation in the plant destroyed.

Already management have reduced overtime rates for weekend work and introduced 12 hour shifts, a move that had been resisted by workers before the strike.

Despite the defeat, the Montupet strike provides a number of important lessons for trade unionists.

The threat of jail under the anti-union laws was faced down by the strikers and the courts and management were

forced to back down.

The strikers said they were prepared to go to jail in defence of their rights.

Union leaders in the North and Britain continually use the threat of fines under the anti-union laws as an excuse for delaying and avoiding strike action. The laws mean that effective picket lines or solidarity action by other workers are deemed "illegal".

Courts

The Montupet strike showed that the courts are powerless when faced with the threat of widespread action.

The strike also showed the massive sympathy that exists for workers fighting back.

"We didn't think we'd be out this long", a striker told *Socialist Worker*, "and we were slow off the mark in getting collections going, getting the support in."

"You have to go to people directly, tell them what it's about and you'll get that support. If we knew then what we know now we could have beaten those bastards within a couple of weeks."

Everywhere the strikers went, from Derry, Kilkenny, Waterford, Dublin and further afield in Glasgow, South Wales, Birmingham and Edinburgh the support from other workers was overwhelming.

Thousands of people identified with the harassment the workers had faced before the strike, the continual pressure to speed up and the refusal to negotiate a decent wage in-

crease.

Above all, the strike showed how workers from different backgrounds can come together when they are united behind a common goal.

The strikers at Montupet were a totally mixed work force of Catholics and Protestants from many different parts of Northern Ireland. Montupet management tried to divide them on the basis of their religion.

The AEEU officials put around rumours that the strike was being manipulated by "republicans from West Belfast" in order to undermine support.

Working class unity became a prominent theme in the strike.

A striker, who is from a Protestant background, told supporters at the last mass picket of the plant, "We're facing another Drumcree, another summer of division and bitterness."

"But we're showing here that we can stand together, that we need to stand together if we are to win anything."

The actions of the police in breaking picket lines and serving injunctions on strikers at their homes in the middle of the night, and the courts in threatening to jail strikers were dramatic examples that the state structures in Northern Ireland act in the interests of the bosses, not the workers of either community.

The bitter lessons of the Montupet strike need to be learnt by socialists and trade unionists throughout Ireland, who need to lay the basis of a network of rank and file trade unionists that can deliver solidarity without relying on union leaders for the struggles ahead.

The Last Post sounds in Hong Kong

On 30th June, Hong Kong, one of the last outposts of the British empire will be handed back to China. But the story of how Britain first grabbed it is largely hidden from view.

Up to the Middle Ages, China was a highly developed society which produced inventions like the compass and gunpowder. Wealthy merchants from the East India Company were determined to grab a share of the wealth.

Chinese imperial officials were willing to trade with British merchants but under strict regulation. The merchants were only allowed to trade in Guangzhou, the capital of the Guangdong province. They also had to deal only with named Chinese merchants.

The Chinese rulers also refused to allow many British goods into China.

At the start of the 18th century, Britain took over Bengal and began to import tea. It became hugely popular with the working class in British cities and the East India Company were determined to make profits. They needed, however, to sell other goods to Asia in order to buy the tea from Bengal.

Their solution was to produce opium on a huge scale. Drug dealing at the time was a respectable activity for British capitalism to engage in.

At first they smuggled opium into China and their illicit trade grew massively.

Opium

At the turn of the century just 4,000 chests of opium were being shipped to China a year. By 1838 the number had increased to 40,000.

The growth of the opium trade seriously worried the Chinese government and from the 1820s they tried to enforce its anti-opium laws. They were soon outnumbered both by British merchants and the pirates who were trading with Britain.

Tensions rose steadily until 1839 when the first Opium War broke out. The war was a one sided engagement in which Chinese troops fled from Britain's vastly superior fire power.

The war ended with the signing of a 'treaty' in 1842 after British warships threatened to bombard the city of Nanjin.

The Chinese government was forced to allow the opium trade and to give up Hong Kong to the British. China was now 'opened up' to the major imperial powers.

Britain took control of the 'New Territories' while France took over areas around Shanghai.

However, the new territories around Hong Kong were not annexed by Britain but taken over on a lease.

In the twentieth century a huge nationalist movement grew against this foreign domination. Throughout the resistance, the Chinese workers began to advance its own distinct demands.

In 1925, British and French soldiers fired shots into a demonstration in Guangzhou, killing 52 and wounding hundreds. A general strike was called in Hong Kong which lasted 17 months. During the strike, 250,000 strikers and their families left the colony and imposed a complete blockade on all shipping in and out of the port.

Control of the strike lay in the hands of a "Strikers Delegate Congress" comprising over 800 delegates which was a kind of workers parliament.

Tragically the Chinese Communist Party which had the allegiance of many workers accepted that only a nationalist revolution in China could occur. Under instructions from Stalin and the Communist International, they agreed to accept the discipline of the nationalist movement, the Koumingtang.

But the workers and peasant struggles threatened all capitalists, Chinese and foreign alike, and this pushed the nationalists into seeking an accommodation with the imperialist powers. In 1926, nationalists staged a coup in Guangdong, arrested the Hong Kong strike committee and ended the blockade. It was a prelude to a wider massacre of revolutionary workers by nationalist forces in Shanghai a year later.

Today the majority of Hong Kong's workers show no real enthusiasm for the handover to China but few actively oppose it either. Hong Kong was never democratic under British rule and was run until recently by a largely unelected Executive Committee.

Murders

The best indication of workers' true feelings came during the 1989 Democracy Movement in China when a million people answered a call from Hong Kong socialists to protest at the murders in Tiananmen Square.

Socialists should neither mourn nor celebrate the handover of Hong Kong. In the short term very little will change for the majority of the population—Hong Kong will be as undemocratic as exploitative as before. In the long term, the prospects for Hong Kong's workers are now bound up with the struggles of the Chinese working class as a whole.

THE ORANGE OR Protestant or sectarian

AS A crisis over Drumcree 3 looms, Orange leaders claim that their marches are part of Protestant "culture".

Those wanting to prevent or reroute Orange marches are accused of seeking to deny Protestants their "identity".

For Catholics Orange marches are triumphalist and intimidating displays of sectarianism.

Thousands leave their homes as whole towns and neighbourhoods are taken over for the day. Those who remain face taunts and physical danger.

by KEVIN WINGFIELD

For example Orange marches passing the betting shop in Ormeau Road where Catholics were killed in a sectarian loyalist outrage three years ago have cheered and chanted slogans celebrating the murders.

From the previous day the Catholics are under effective curfew as roads are sealed off and access in and out of their streets is denied to Catholic residents.

In an attempt to end these sickening confrontations, residents in Catholic areas have sought to discuss with the Orange Order the rerouting of marches—so far without success.

Although opinion polls show 60 per cent of Protestants wanting to see talks and a negotiated solution to the prob-

lem, Orange leaders are now taking up the refrain: "Stop talking start walking!"

Far from being an innocent cultural or religious institution, Orangeism was built, fostered, revived and armed by vested interests to promote sectarian strife in Ulster.

It provided up to a fifth of the delegates to the Ulster Unionist Council—the Unionist Party's governing body.

Senior civil servants, judges, all Northern Ireland's prime ministers have been members of the Order. Orangeism was institutionalised in the Northern Ireland state to enforce sectarian discrimination and to keep workers divided.



Sowing the seeds of

The Orange Order was founded in the 1790s as Catholic peasants clashed with Protestant landlords in County Armagh.

To defend themselves the landlords organised themselves into the Orange Lodge which was open only to Protestants.

The British government was quick to see the potential of Orangeism to maintain its grip.

The Order was armed by the British to defeat the 1798 uprising and to smash the mainly Protestant United Irishmen.

As an army general told General Lake in charge of suppressing the rebellion: "I have arranged ... to increase animosity between Orangemen and the United Irish. Upon that animosity depends the safety of the centre counties of the north."

Voting

The Orange Order backed every reactionary movement from that time on.

In the 1890s it opposed Ballot

Act which introduced secret voting into parliamentary elections. Until that time landlords and bosses could use intimidation to force the poor to vote for their nominees.

As one Orange leader exclaimed: "Votes were given to a minority to be exercised for the benefit of the majority and should therefore be in public and not in secret. I believe landlords have a legitimate influence."

As Belfast expanded in the 1800s, so did early trade unions. But as the boom of the Napoleonic wars turned to slump and the cotton industry collapsed after 1818 trade unionism took a battering. Sectarian tensions rose as Catholic and Protestant workers vied for scarce jobs.

The first sectarian riots occurred in 1835 and soon the Orange Order was able to make gains. In the years leading up to the 1870 the number of members and lodges tripled as the Order recruited among the poorest Protestant workers.

In the 1880s during the land war the Orange Order organised scab labourers to work boycotted farms in the South and West of Ireland.

As a series of Home Rule bills were debated in the House of Commons in the 1880s, Northern Ireland biggest industrialists feared any loosening of ties with the British empire would affect their access to markets and finance.

Expanded

The Orange Order now hugely expanded as employers and industrialists rushed to join to defend their profits and markets.

They saw the possibility of a

mass sectarian organisation being off the threat of Home Rule.

As key Northern employers like Mackies and Shorts Brothers turned to a policy of employing only Protestants, the Orange Lodge became crucial for access to jobs.

And from the heads of the Orange Order and the previous Liberal but now staunchly Orange industrialists and employers the Unionist Party was formed.

In the early years of this century the Orange Order was used to recruit to the armed wing of

Unionist As par a Six Co British a heavily c

In 191 was a w hour we ments th Protestar ing, the trades. In loc

How the Orange Order brought discrimination

"We are satisfied that the Unionist councils have used their powers to make appointments in a way that benefits Protestants....

"In...October 1968 only 30% of Londonderry's Corporation's administrative, clerical and technical employees were Catholic....

"In county Fermanagh no senior posts (and relatively few others) were held by

Catholic...this was rati reference to "proven lo sary test for local govern ments.

"In that county, amo five drivin of school bu were Catholics.

"This could appear case of sectarian politio tion."...Official British

ORDER:

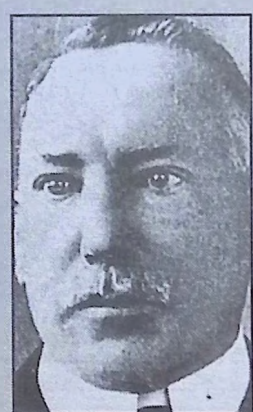
Orangeman culture is a poison?



The Orange hall of fame

■ **SIR EDWARD CARSON:** As a lawyer he represented Irish landlords against tenants; prosecuted Oscar Wilde
 In parliament: opposed reduction of miners hours, opposed law providing minimum trade union rights; voted against Old Age Pensions.
 Carson said in 1912 on Poor Law reform: "The able bodied paupers if well conducted might be placed in labour colonies, if ill-conducted in detention centres."
 In his old age he encouraged repression in India to defeat the independence movement.

■ **JAMES CRAIG** — later Lord Craigavon—(right): First prime minister of Northern Ireland. Millionaire industrialist: "I have always said that I am an Orangeman first and a politician afterwards, all I boast is that we are a Protestant Parliament for a Protestant state."



■ **BASIL BROOKE** (Lord Brookeborough): Great landowner who became NI prime minister:
 "Many in the audience employ Catholics, but I have none about the house ... In Northern Ireland the Catholic population is increasing to a great extent. Ninety-seven per cent of Roman Catholics in Ireland are disloyal and disruptive ... If we in Ulster allow Roman Catholics to work on our farms we are traitors to Ulster."



Sir Edward Carson inspecting members of the UUVF

Is of hatred

Unionism, the UVF.
 As partition and the creation of a Six County state loomed the British and Orange bosses relied heavily on the Orange machine.
Returned
 In 1919 and early 1920 there was a wave of strikes for the 44 hour week and other improvements that united Catholic and Protestant workers in engineering, the shipyards and building trades.
 In local elections 97 Labour candidates were returned in the Ulster counties.
 Afraid of this growth of working class unity the Orange bosses turned on a campaign of sectarian hatred.
 Orange mobs drove from the shipyards Catholic workers. Protestant socialists and trade union activists were also targeted.
 Men were beaten up, thrown in the Lagan, pelted with rivets having to swim for their lives. 12,000 workers were driven from their jobs.
 Orange gangs then drove Catholics from their homes in an orgy of sectarian attacks which left more than 400 people dead over the next two years.
 Northern Ireland's first prime minister, James Craig told a meeting of Orangemen in the shipyard that he approved wholeheartedly of what they had done.
 As the Northern Ireland state was set up in 1921 the exclusively Protestant Ulster Special Constabulary was recruited in Orange Halls as para-military wing of state.
 Whole units of the illegal UVF was incorporated into the RUC, others into the armed reservists and the brutal B-Specials.

Orange Order discrimination
 Catholics: this was rationalised by reference to 'proven loyalty' as a necessary test for local government appointments.
 "In that county, among about seventy five drivers of school buses at most seven were Catholics.
 "This would appear to be a very clear case of sectarian political discrimination." — Official British report 1968.

What do socialists say?

Why calculators cost less today

THERE IS one thing in Marx's account of the economics of capitalism that defenders of the present system always attack.
 This is the notion that labour is the source of value.
 The reason for these attacks is simple enough. If labour is the source of value, then all the profits of the giant companies and all the super-inflated salaries and executive bonuses of the fat cats originate in the hard work of the rest of us.
 As even Adam Smith, the hero of the free marketeers, recognised 229 years ago, the rent of the landlord and the profit of the manufacturer are a "deduction from the product of labour".
 Pro-capitalist thinkers usually insist that labour cannot be the source of value. Instead they say that what matters is the "utility", (the usefulness) of what is produced.
 Then they claim the "abstemiousness" of the rich (to be seen in Ben Dunne's US trips, for example) or the "entrepreneurial skills" of businessmen (exemplified in the beef industry?) produce as much "utility" as the hard work of the mass of people.
 But occasionally they inadvertently admit the centrality of labour.
Whenever they claim "the economy can only prosper" if there is "increased productivity" and more "flexible working", they are effectively admitting the dependence of their system on our labour.
 They are admitting it as well in one of the scare stories they are currently pushing across the whole Western world.
 This is the myth of the "demographic time bomb" caused by the growing number of old people.
 The problem, they claim, is that in 20 or 30 years time there will not be enough people of working age to provide for those of us who will be retired by then.
 Yet, if the new technology that is continually coming on tap produces value, there should be no problem.
 This technology should mean that the average worker will be able in 20 years time to produce considerably more goods or services than today—just as output per head in much of manufacturing now is about twice what it was 20 years ago.

Goods

The point is that under capitalism the immediate aim of production is not the satisfaction of human need. It is focused on turning out goods that can be sold at a profit on the market.
 And the price of anything on the market is not a measure of how much human need it satisfies.
 Take a simple example, that of the calculator.
 Thirty years ago the only calculators you could get were electromechanical ones, a bit like old fashioned cash tills.
 They were very expensive. One such calculator would have cost about £50 in 1967 money—the same cost as several hundred loaves of bread.
 Today an electronic calculator of the same power costs perhaps three pounds, or the price of half a dozen loaves of bread.
 Yet today's calculator is at least as useful as that of 30 years ago.
 There is only one way you can explain the fall in the price. The amount of labour needed to make it has

Labour

fallen, from about the same as that required to make several hundred loaves to that required to make half a dozen loaves.
 Similar considerations apply to the whole range of electronic goods from computers to televisions.
New technologies have cut the amount of labour needed to produce goods in these industries, and with it the prices of these goods compared to those of other industries.
 This fall in the value of electronic goods did not happen all at once.
 The first company to mass produce electronic calculators, Texas Instruments, could get away with charging a price close to that of the old electromechanical calculators.
 But once rival firms began producing them in competition, it was forced to cut its selling price until it reflected the amount of labour used up.

by CHRIS HARMAN

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Fianna Fail and Irish Labour

RICHARD BOYD BARRETT reviews a new book by Kieran Allen

THE FIANNA FAIL party has dominated the politics of the Irish State almost since its foundation.

The party has consistently gained the support of a significant section of the Irish working class at the expense of the Irish Labour party who have remained one of the weakest social democratic parties in Europe.

A number of reasons have been put forward to explain Fianna Fail's domination and the weakness of class politics in Ireland.

The usual explanation is that Ireland is a particularly conservative nation dominated by a rural catholic mentality.

The partition of Ireland into a Protestant dominated north and a catholic dominated southern state is said to have reinforced this conservatism and maintained nationalism and civil war politics as the central divide in Irish society.

Some commentators have suggested that Ireland is a less class divided nation than normal capitalist states.

Many on the left conclude that class politics will only develop fully in Ireland after the "national question" has been solved.

Kieran Allen's new book *Fianna Fail and Irish Labour* sets out to challenge this view.

Allen shows that despite the Republican rhetoric of Fianna Fail its appeal to workers was based more on the promise of economic prosperity and employment than on nationalist sentiment.

He shows that Labour's weakness had more to do with its own conservatism than with any backwardness among the Irish workers.

Like the Peronists in Argentina or the Congress Party in India, Fianna Fail were a populist party that promised to turn a backward Irish economy, subordinate to Britain, into a modern independent capitalist state.

FF's major concern was to serve the interests of a rising Irish capitalist class frustrated by Britain's economic domination over the country.

As late as the 1940's Ireland was still virtually a neo-colony of Britain.

The project of industrialisation and establishing a more independent national economy served primarily the interests of Irish capitalists but it could also appeal to Irish workers ravaged by high levels of unemployment and poverty in the 1920's and 30's.

Through a policy of protectionism and state support FF successfully developed Irish industry and moved the economy away from

dependence on Agricultural exports to Britain.

However, FF's grip on Irish workers was not always secure. Time and again struggles broke out that brought workers into conflict with FF and threatened to expose the idea of an all-class alliance on which the party was built.

When such struggles broke out FF could not have succeeded in maintaining the support of Irish workers were it not for the complete failure of the Labour party and the trade union leaders to support workers fighting back and offer some real alternative to Fianna Fail.

During the War of Independence Labour had shown their willingness to lay down before nationalism rather than put forward an independent working class position.

Between 1918 and 1923 workers and landless labourers in dozens of locations around the country had gone beyond simply opposing British rule and began seizing landed estates and occupying creameries and other workplaces.

But Labour stood back as Sinn Fein moved into quell the militancy and support Irish landowners through the land courts.

Labour did not even stand in the 1918 election in order to leave a

In 1925 Labour leader Tom Johnson declared "I am a community-ist and a nation-ist before I'm a trade unionist".

Labour embraced the national-ist idea that "Labour must wait" as a matter of principle with the result that their policies were barely distinguishable from Fianna Fail.

In some cases Labour's enthusiasm for moderation even led them to take a more conservative position than FF themselves.

In the 1920's De Valera argued against paying the land annuities owed to Britain under the treaty. Labour, who were solidly pro-treaty and opposed to any illegality, argued that the money should be paid.

Time and again struggles broke out that brought workers into conflict with FF and threatened to expose the idea of an all-class alliance on which the party was built.

With nothing between the two parties on policy and Fianna Fail often sounding even more radical it was not surprising that Fianna Fail began to rapidly gain support from the workers that should have been Labour's natural constituency.

As Sean Lemass put it: "The Labour Party is the most



Unemployed workers demand jobs in the 1950s

Labour camps for the unemployed.

Major demonstrations involving thousands of workers and the unemployed followed and a series of strikers among corporation workers and turf workers.

At the next election FF's vote tumbled to the lowest since 1927.

Labour's increased massively, leaving them poised to make a major breakthrough in Irish politics. Labour saw its membership rocket from a 174 branches in 1941 to 750 by 1943.

Fianna Fail, supported by the catholic church, responded by launching a witch-hunt against communism in the Labour party,

them to form the National Labour Party. Soon after the ICTU split on the issue of British based unions with ten Irish based unions forming the CIU.

Party leader Norton declared during the election campaign of 1944 that "the Labour party proudly acknowledges the authority of the catholic church in all matters relating to public policy and public welfare."

Labour's capitulation proved a disaster losing 70,000 votes and nine seats. Fianna Fail had crushed the Labour challenge because of Labour's failure to defend class politics and stand up to the catholic church.

In the late 1960's under the impact of the radicalisation across the world and an explosion of militancy here Labour took a left turn.

They talked openly for the first time about being socialist. The party's vote reached 24% in the 1969 general election. Labour were faced with another opportunity to make a major leap forward.

Civil Rights

However the new crisis in the North around the civil rights movement and a massive maintenance workers strike in 1969 showed again that Labour's loyalty to the establishment was always greater than that to workers.

Instead of supporting Catholics in Derry and Belfast defending themselves against the RUC and Loyalist mobs, Labour moved quickly to support the role of Troops sent in by the British government. Their main fire was reserved for "extremist" elements on the civil rights side rather than attacking the sectarian northern state.

In January 1969 maintenance workers defied union leaders recommendations and took strike action to secure a pay increase.

After two months workers had secured a massive victory. Rather than support this action ICTU and Labour leaders denounced "Do-it-yourself trade unionism" and a system of two-tier picketing designed to prevent such action in the future was introduced.

Labour's backing of the establishment could only disillusion workers radicalised by the northern crisis and the strikes.

Fianna Fail were also bitterly opposed to the maintenance workers strike but could present them-

selves as more radical on the national question particularly after Charlie Haughey and Niall Blaney were charged with running guns to the IRA. Haughey's record before and since shows, in fact, he was more concerned to choke off left wing influence among northern republicans than to support any real challenge to the Northern state.

But Labour's failure to support struggle North or South and their willingness to enter coalitions with the likes of Fine Gael has meant they have been unable offer any serious alternative to Fianna Fail right up to the present day.

In the 1980's it meant that Fianna Fail often had as much influence among union leaders as Labour themselves.

In this period Haughey got union leaders to sign up to a number of social partnership agreements that held down workers wages and prevented serious strike action.

Profits and economic growth increased rapidly as a result but wages have been kept down and workers have continued to carry the overwhelming burden of tax.

Even at the end of the eighties when a series of scandals engulfed FF around the Beef Industry Labour refused to press home the attack.

In 1992 Labour got a massive increase in its vote as workers turned away from FF in their droves. Tragically Labour took those votes and joined a coalition with FF and later with Fine Gael. Labour's commitment to managing the system rather than looking to workers to overthrow it has meant that they always betray workers interests.

The latest scandals involving Haughey taking money from arch capitalist Ben Dunne have further exposed FF as a party of the rich not of workers.

The new government made up of FF and the PD's is a weak right wing alliance certain to make further attacks on workers.

Fianna Fail and Irish Labour shows however that workers are going to have to look to their own struggles and genuine socialist politics rather than the Labour party if they want to see real change in Irish society.

Fianna Fail and Irish Labour by Kieran Allen, Pluto, £11.99 from SW Books, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8



De Valera and Lemass

clear path for Sinn Fein.

Labour's abdication before the nationalists was to set the pattern for the years that followed.

The 1920's saw Labour drop any commitment to the socialist politics of Connolly.

Its leaders openly rejected the traditions of trade union militancy in favour of a concentration on elections.

The language of class was ditched and Labour encouraged workers to act responsibly and make sacrifices in the interests of the nation.

respectable party in the state. So long as they can't even be accused of being pale pink in politics they seem to think they have fulfilled their function towards the Irish people."

Labour was displaced by Fianna Fail not because it was too radical but because it was not radical enough.

Again during World War two a wave of workers struggles broke out against the FF government.

FF tried to limit trade union rights, imposed a wage freeze and even made an attempt to establish

particularly after the election of Jim Larkin in Dublin. They also resorted to trying whip up division between Irish workers by attacking British based unions.

None of this would have been successful if the Labour and ITGWU leaders stood up against the witch-hunt and the divide and rule tactics. Instead they capitulated and joined in.

Its leaders first tried to block Larkin's nomination as a candidate and then organised a split after his election, taking five of the eight ITGWU sponsored TD's with

Ireland's trade in babies

by Ger Tuohy

BANISHED BABIES reveals how, for almost three decades, the Catholic Church organised the export of Irish babies to America. Between 1949 and 1970, more than two thousand passports were issued to young children to facilitate their adoption by rich American couples.

The figure is a gross underestimation of the actual number of babies sent to America, many with false documentation.

These adoptions were organised by nuns who ran the orphanages, industrial schools and mother and baby homes. The nuns often received the equivalent of thousands of pounds in today's terms for one baby, either in direct payment or ongoing donations from the adoptive parents.

Ireland was seen as a happy hunting ground by wealthy American couples who wanted to be assured of getting white babies.

Colluded

At the time, the state colluded with the church to enforce a strict Catholic sexual morality.

They demanded pre-marital chastity and banned birth control. Despite their efforts there were more than 100,000 births outside marriage between 1920 and 1970.

Many more women fled to

Britain to have their babies in secret, giving rise to the term PFI (Pregnant from Ireland). The Irish orphanages were full not with orphans but with "illegitimate" children. The Catholic Church did everything to deny the reality and hide single women away and got rid of their babies. These "fallen women" were forced to do manual work for their keep in harsh religious run institutions.

Mike Millotte captures the cruelty and contempt the church held for these women and children. In 1962, Pat was training as a nurse in a children's home run by the sisters of charity, a home which sent almost 600 children to America for Adoption.

When she became pregnant a social worker at the behest of a priest, took her into a mother and baby home where she was given a false name her clothes were taken from her and she was obliged to work. "Some one always made a run for it, but they were caught and dragged back... I suppose it was like a prison."

"I remember so clearly bringing him down to the side door, hugging him, cuddling him and kissing him and he was just swiped out of my arms by a nun... I saw him getting into a car with a nun... that was the last I saw of him"

Pat describes how her baby was taken from her when it was twenty months old: "I was just called over by one of the nuns and was told he was going the next day... I was given a bundle and told to get up early the next morning, to give him a bath and get dressed for the journey... I remember so clearly bringing him down to the side door, hugging him, cuddling him and kissing him and he was just swiped out of my arms by a nun."

"All I could do was run as fast as I could up to the top of the house to look out this small window to try and get one last look at my child. I saw him getting into a car with a nun... that was the last I saw of him."

Pat is convinced that the Dublin priest, Michael Cleary (himself the father of at least two children), was instrumental in her detention in the mother and baby home and her baby's subsequent adoption. A few weeks after her baby was taken, Cleary callously got Pat a job looking after a baby who had been adopted by a well known personality.

Despite the many obstacles put in her way by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Pat eventually traced her son's adoptive parents in 1996. She discovered that her son had died in tragic circumstances thirteen years earlier. She also found that her signature on at least one of adoption papers had been forged, not a uncommon occurrence.

Forged

While the baby trade from Ireland was well publicised abroad, Archbishop McQuaid enforced a ban on all publicity in Ireland.

McQuaid frustrated all attempts to introduce legal adoption in Ireland until 1952 because he feared that Protestant couples might adopt children who wouldn't be reared in the Catholic faith.

He preferred that children were wrenched from mothers and sent over 3000 miles away.

McQuaid also dictated the conditions to be met by American couples before adopting an Irish baby: proof of being a Catholic, recommendation from their parish priest; a sworn guarantee to rear and educate the child in the Catholic faith; medical evidence that they didn't use contraception and proof of their income.

The government accepted these conditions, effectively legalising a mail order service to purchase babies.

There was no vetting of prospective parents to check their suitability to care for a particular child who may have had special needs.

The state willingly abdicated its responsibility for Irish children's welfare and safety to the church whose motivation were purely repressive and monetary. A department of External Affairs internal memo read "We shall have to be careful not to do anything which would embarrass the Archbishop." - the same Archbishop who prevented Noel Browne's Mother and child scheme, a proposal for a basic health service. His power led the Irish Times to conclude in 1957 that "the Roman Catholic Church would seem to be the effective government of the country"

American social workers subsequently revealed that children had been placed with unsuitable couples who had already been rejected by other adoption agencies because the children's well being may be at risk.

The transatlantic trafficking in babies ceased in the 1970's because of changed social attitudes, the popularity of adoption in Ireland and the introduction of an allowance for single parents, enabling them to keep their babies.

Extent

However the true extent of the horrors of the past only



Archbishop McQuaid knew all about the trade in babies and even forced rules on those trying to adopt

It would be easy to give the necessary information to wishing to trace their lost children or vice versa.

However, the Dept. of Foreign Affairs refers those concerned to the old adoption societies - the same nuns who sent their children away.

Refuse

They refuse to divulge the information which would help identify the child and sometimes give false information

adding to the torment the women have already endured.

The next time someone suggests we give the Catholic Church a break from the criticism of the past few years tell them to read *Banished Babies*.

It shows that it was not just a few individual priests and nuns who were cruel and abused children but that the Church institutionalised a trade in babies, with the support of the Irish state.

Banished Babies - The secret history of Ireland's baby export business. Mike Millotte. New Island books £7.99.

Gay Pride

Celebrate diversity but fight for liberation

This years Gay Pride week takes place in what on the surface seems like an improved atmosphere for Lesbians and Gay men.

Since the decriminalisation of Homosexuality there has been something of a boom in the Dublin Gay scene. With more pubs, clubs and guest houses, Dublin is now a venue on the European Gay tourism tour.

All this is to be welcomed, gone are the days when two run down pubs desperate for customers were the only safe if somewhat seedy places Lesbians and Gays could socialise. Yet the idea that liberation has arrived, is deeply flawed.

Situation

Yet this in a situation where the Supreme court has ruled that to outlaw discrimination is unconstitutional. So Lesbians and Gays still suffer systematic discrimination in employment. The number of physical attacks on gay men in particular still is on the rise.

It is often argued that the growth of the gay scene has meant improved employment for gay people. It is true that the person serving the overpriced designer beer or coffee may well be in a safer working environment to be gay. Yet

the division that dare not speak its name - that of class - divides the gay scene. The low wages paid by the pink economy are as bad as in the rest of the economy. The owners of the bars and the coffee shops need to exploit their workers to make any money.

Also it is still the case that the overwhelming majority of Lesbian and Gay men are not out and have no contact with the scene at all.

The ads in the gay press for gay friendly financial advisors and weekend breaks mean nothing to working class lesbians and gays trapped and unable to come out to work.

The slogan of this years pride is celebrate diversity, we should; but we also need to fight for gay rights so that we can have an inclusive diversity that isn't trapped in a ghetto.

That means raising discrimination in the workplace, uniting with straight workers against the bosses attempts to divide us.

Gay Pride is worth celebrating, it is also important to remember the tradition that produced it.

Gay Pride commemorates the Stonewall riots in 1967; Stonewall was a three day rebellion against police harassment and the corruption of those making money in the Gay ghetto.

That tradition of fighting against homophobia is what pride should be about.

Letters

Send your letters to: Socialist Worker Po Box 1648, Dublin 6.

The media are whipping up racism

FOR THE last few months in the Irish Media there has been a sustained attack in regards to refugees seeking asylum in this country.

Papers such as the Irish Times, let Liz O'Donnell write about how refugees are flooding and milking the system.

The Herald and The Star have also sensationalised the situation, one headline read in the Star "Refugee Rapists are on the loose in Dublin". This article was the most appalling piece of journalism I have seen in years, it went on to say that Romanian and Somalian refugees were attacking prostitutes around the Mountjoy Square area. That when they were brought to the police station "they pretended not to be able to speak English" yet apparently they had no "problem speaking English in Discos". This kind of Gutter Journalism is not only reckless, but ex-

remely dangerous.

It really shows who's side they are really on.

They don't give a damn about working class people. This type of Journalism panders to all the worst prejudices in society.

These papers we should remember are owned by one of the richest people in Ire-

land, Tony O'Reilly.

The rich will always try to divert the anger of people to illusionary scapegoats of anybody whether that be travellers, single mothers or the current scapegoats asylum seekers.

Say no to racism in Ireland.

—Gino Kenny
Neilstown

Leftwing tidal wave

Following the incredible Victory in France of Jospin, it now seems that a tidal wave of centre left governments are dominating the geography of Europe.

This tidal wave has had as its back drop the growing militancy of workers rejecting the attempts to forge a bosses Europe.

Major struggles have been tasted in France and other places. It is likely that

we will face the same thing here in the very near future. The race to EMU will inevitably mean attacks on workers and as a consequence more militancy.

Anybody who saw the unofficial stoppage of bus workers last budget day or the recent electricians march will recognise what is to come.

—A Dublin reader



Workers create all the wealth in capitalist society. A new society can only be constructed when they collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution.

FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be reformed out of existence. Parliament cannot be used to end the system.

The courts army and police are there to defend the interests of the capitalist class not to run society in a neutral fashion.

To destroy capitalism, workers need to smash the state and create a workers' state based on workers' councils.

FOR REAL SOCIALISM, EAST AND WEST:

The SWP welcomed the break-up of the USSR and the end of the East European dictatorships. These states were not socialist but were run by a state-capitalist class.

We are against the domination of the globe by imperialist powers and we oppose their wars. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination.

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 stand for: free contraception and free, legalised abortion and the right to divorce; the complete separation of church and state, an end to church control over schools and hospitals; an end to discrimination against gays and lesbians; an end to racism and anti-traveller bigotry.

We argue for working class unity in the fight against oppression.

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH:

Northern Ireland is a sectarian state, propped up by the British Army. Catholic workers are systematically discriminated against by the state.

The division between Catholic and Protestant workers weakens the whole working class.

Workers' unity can only be won and maintained in a fight to smash both the Northern and Southern states.

We stand for the immediate withdrawal of British troops. Violence will only end when workers unite in the fight for a workers' republic.

FOR A FIGHTING TRADE UNION MOVEMENT:

Trade unions exist to defend workers' interests. But the union leaders' role is to negotiate with capitalism—not to end it.

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY:

To win socialism, socialists need to organise in a revolutionary party. This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system. The SWP aims to build such a party in Ireland.

How do we change the unions?

TRADE UNION membership in Ireland has increased again over the last few years and now over half of all Irish workers are organised.

Even where management has implemented a non-union policy in companies like the computer multinational Intel, unions such as SIPTU are said to be building up a "sleeping" membership.

Yet inside the unions there is also huge discontent at where they are going. 38,000 workers, for example, voted for Carolann Duggan in the SIPTU presidential election when she slammed the union leaders.

But how do we go about changing the unions so that they actively represent their members.

The main obstacle to change is an entrenched trade union bureaucracy. Most full time officials in Irish unions are appointed instead of being elected by their members.

Lifestyle

Their material conditions give them a different lifestyle to the workers they represent. When a union official negotiates more flexibility or redundancies, their own jobs do not suffer.

They will still retain their big salaries and their job security.

The bureaucracy arises from the nature of trade unionism itself. Because unions are concerned with winning the best possible deal for their members within the confines of the existing system, a full time layer emerges which tries to reconcile workers demands to the interests of capitalism.

This layer will always try to manage discontent, supporting the interests of their members only up to a certain point.

When it comes to the crunch this often means trying to sell workers a shoddy deal.

Of course, there are divisions within this bureaucracy between the left and the right. The right wing leadership of SIPTU, for example, make it harder for

workers to organise within their union than the more left wing officials in ATGWU.

But these divisions are secondary to the overall gap between the rank and file and the bureaucratic layer.

In the Packard dispute, for example, the left wing officials of the ATGWU and the right wing officials of SIPTU worked together to persuade workers to do an extra two hours work a week for free in the futile hope of 'saving the company'.



Build the rank and file

In Ireland social partnership has played a key role in this country in tying unions into the system.

This is ideal for the bureaucracy because it strengthens their hand over the rank and file.

The social partnership deals are based on the idea of workers giving up their main weapon; the right to strike.

The disastrous effects of these deals are shown in the latest Partnership 2000 agreement. Here there was a real increase of one percent in pay at a time when Ireland has the highest growth rate in the developed world.

Militants need to maintain a widespread opposition to this deal.

But in the longer term the real alternative is to build a strong rank-and-file movement which is based on strong shop stewards organisation.

This has to start in the indi-

vidual workplace. Shop stewards need to establish well organised union committees and keep in constant touch with the people that they are representing.

In practice this means doing everything possible to recruit people into the union, and to get them involved, through regular bulletins and meetings.

But militants should also try to create links outside their own jobs.

Crucial

This can be crucial in taking up general issues.

When the CIE workers were under attack, for example, at the start of 1997, the union leaders claimed they could do little because of the Industrial Relations Act.

It fell to an unofficial rank and file grouping, the Busworkers Action Group to call strike action in defiance of the law.

During the last upsurge of militancy in Ireland in the late sixties and early seventies, several of these unofficial organisations made their appearance.

This strategy for change does not win universal approval even on the left.

In the past many have focused on an altogether different strategy for building the unions, that of building Broad Left alliances.

In essence, what this has generally meant is getting left-wing officials elected.

But in practice this strategy means looking to a small group of individuals, and putting in their hands the fight for change.

It means a minority of people substituting for the majority of workers.

One of the other dangers that union representatives can fall into is sectionalism, ignoring the plight of other workers.

This can only be avoided by recognising the importance of solidarity.

This means making links with other workers, organising collections for strikers, bringing in delegations.

In the process this brings people towards understanding

that workers have to stand together, that united we stand, divided we fall.

By building a strong, confident union organisation ordinary rank-and-file members are also in a position to develop a more critical relationship with officials.

The slogan of the great Clydeside rank-and-file movement in 1915 still holds true today: "We will support the officials just so long as they rightly represent the workers, but we will act immediately they misrepresent them."

Confidence

Socialists in the unions are crucial in building up this level of organisation and confidence on the ground.

Socialist politics are key not just in holding union organisation together but by building a politically organised community of militants in different unions and industries are the force that can push for real struggle to take on not just individual bosses but the system as a whole.

News from the SWP:

Fight racism! Defend refugees!

THE Socialist Workers Party has been to the fore in organising against the racist hysteria being promoted by the media.

While radio presenters like Pat Kenny give the racists free airtime to attack refugees, SWP mem-

bers have been on the streets gathering petitions in opposition.

Public meetings on racism were organised in Dublin, Cork, Waterford and Galway and further meetings are planned in Dundalk and Maynooth.

SWP members in Rialto attended a meeting in their area to challenge politicians like Ben Briscoe who was attacking the rights of refugees to take up housing.

Afterwards, the local branch went door to door in the area to gather petitions against racism.

Now SWP is stepping

up its campaigns. A special factsheet, *Fight Racism: Refugees are welcome here* has been produced for distribution in workplaces and working class communities.

Hundreds of badges and stickers with the motto *Refugees Are Welcome Here* are being produced.

A special model resolution for the unions has also been prepared. If you want to support the fight against racism, then order some of these materials by filling out the form below.

SWP branch meetings

BELFAST

Meets every Wed at 8pm Morning Star Pub

CORK

Meets every Weds at 8pm in Dennehy's Pub, Cornmarket St.

DERRY

Meets every Tues in Badgers Bar at 8pm

DUN LAOGHAIRE

Meets every Tues at 8pm in Christian Institute

DUNDALK

Meets every Weds at 1pm in Dundalk RTC

ENNISKILLEN

Meets every fortnight Contact national address for details

GALWAY

Meets every Thursday at 7.30pm in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square

LIMERICK

Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in Costello's Tavern, Dominick St

MAYNOOTH

Contact 8722682 for details

WATERFORD

Meets every Thursday at 8pm in ATGWU Hall, Keyser St.

DUBLIN NORTH-WEST

Meets every Tuesday at 8:30pm in The Snug, Dorset St.

DUBLIN ARTANE/COOLOCK

Meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm Contact 8722682 for details

DUBLIN DRIMNAGH

Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in the Black Forge (formerly the Bentley), Drimnagh Rd

DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL

Meets every Wed at 8:30pm in Conways, Parnell St.

DUBLIN RATHMINES

Meets every Wed at 8pm in O'Connell's Pub, Richmond St.

DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL

Meets every Thur at 8pm in the Trinity Inn, Pearse St.

DUBLIN TALLAGHT/CLONDALKIN

Meets Monday at 8pm in the Steering Wheel, Clondalkin

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If you want to join *Socialist Worker*, fill in this form and send it to: PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Tel: (01) 872 2682

Name

Address.....

Phone.....

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I want _____ *Refugees are welcome here* badges (50p each)

I want the model resolution for the unions on racism

Name

Address

Phone

Return to SWP, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Tel (01) 872 2682

There are *Socialist Worker* members in: COLERAINE; LURGAN; CAVAN; DONEGAL; NAAS; KILKENNY; DUNDALK; ATHLONE; DROGHEDA. If you would like to get in touch, contact our national office at (01) 872 2682, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

news & reports— politics; the unions
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Electricians:

We want a £33 a week rise now

UNION POWER is growing. Two weeks ago 500 electricians staged a march in Dublin to show their determination to win a £33 a week wage increase. Co-ordinated unofficial action took place across a number of sites in Dublin a few days later.

Among the sites hit by strike action was the giant Intel plant in Leixlip and the neighbouring Hewlett Packard plant.

These US multi-nationals are building extensions to cash in on the computer boom.

The call for the action came spontaneously from an angry union meeting where the officials were denounced for being in the pockets of the employers.

Officials

"The union leaders are not listening to us. They have gone asleep. Over the last fifteen years few people attended meetings but now things are changing. The members are going to call the shots," one electrician told *Socialist Worker*.

The contract electricians have fallen behind maintenance electricians by an estimated £3 an hour. In 1992,

they submitted a claim for a £39 a week increase.

When nothing was done about this, they voted by a staggering 96% to take action.

Eventually the Labour Court came up with an offer of £33 a week to be paid on a phased basis.

Although some employers are saying that this is too much, thousands of electricians believe that it is too little.

As soon as the Labour Court recommendation came out, the TEEU suspended the ballot for strike action without consulting their members. It led to an explosion of anger.

Anger

"The union leaders tried to get us to accept the deal. Finn Lawless for the TEEU played a major role in the negotiations but he is well out of touch with his members. We want the £33 paid now



The boom in building has led to huge profits for the bosses but little reward for workers

in full and backdated to January 1st.

Build the rank and file movement

THE ELECTRICIANS movement is spontaneous and angry. To go forward it needs organisation. The key to bringing change is the building of a rank and file movement.

Every site should elect a shop steward and if they are big enough form union committees.

A Dublin wide electricians shop steward committee should be established to co-ordinate further unofficial action

Support

The motto of all rank and file movements is to support the union leaders when they rightly represent the members but

to act independently of them when they do not

If the shop stewards are to the fore in winning this claim, it can set the tone for years to come. As one representative said,

"When we win this one, there are many other social issues that need tackling".

After the magnificent march in Dublin hundreds of electricians turned up to their union hall to demand that the strike action go ahead.

There was so many there they had to go to the back yard outside the union hall.

Views

"The union leaders did not even provide speaking equipment. It would have cost £30 to hire it — but they were not interested in hearing our views.

"Frank O'Reilly the Union General secretary sat up in his office for a half an hour until

he was called down. When he spoke it was like he was doing his own party piece and did not know what was happening".

Eventually on a suggestion from the floor it was agreed to take the one day unofficial action.

As soon as the call went out, informal links were established across the sites.

Right across Dublin hundreds of electricians downed tools. The action was barely reported by the media.

It is too frightening of the implications of the growing militancy of the building sites.

SIPTU election

FIVE CANDIDATES have now been nominated for the post of Vice-President of SIPTU.

The main establishment candidate is Des Geraghty, the former MEP of Democratic Left. Geraghty's supporters describe him as someone who will bring change to the union.

But a recent report issued by the Strategic Development Initiative which he heads gives little ground for hope.

Jargon

The report is full of recent management jargon about 'centres of excellence' and a 'world class union' but there are no proposals for more democracy in the union.

Other candidates who favour the present direction of the union include George Hunter and Noireen Greene.

One union official in the race has publicly come out against Partnership 2000. He is Norman Croke, who has received only one

branch nomination.

Croke was formerly the leading contender for the left in the union but his recent conduct has discredited him.

He pulled out of the last election for the union presidency after attempting a witchhunt against the SWP member Carolann Duggan.

Croke is now trying to recover some ground by stepping up the militant rhetoric — but few are likely to fall for it this time.

The main opposition to the current direction of the union will come once again from Carolann Duggan, the Waterford factory worker who won 38,000 votes in the presidential election. She is the only shop floor rank and file candidate who is opposed to Partnership 2000 and wants an extension of union democracy.

Voting takes place in August and a major campaign is now building up in the unions grassroots to gather votes for Carolann Duggan.

TEAM set for strike

SEVEN HUNDRED craftsmen at TEAM have balloted by a huge 9 to one margin to take strike action.

The workers have missed out on a series of wage increases since January 1996 and are also demanding the restoration of

their incremental scale.

Two weeks notice has been served on the company and strike action is due to begin from July 3rd.

Action

"The ballot is a mandate to take action up to an including

24 hour strikes. We are not going to tell the company when we will move.

"We are not just going to walk out in the slack periods as we did before. But we are going to hit hard," one representative told *Socialist Worker*. The decision about when to call action is now in the

hands of a strike committee composed of key union activists.

One of TEAM worker said, "When the members heard that a five and a half percent rise had been awarded to Aer Lingus and that TEAM workers were excluded, it just added fuel to the fire".

CPSU leader scuppers solidarity

THE MONTUPET strikers from Belfast were delighted with the support they received at the conference of the CPSU, the South's main civil service trade union.

But outgoing CPSU General Secretary, John O'Dowd, went on to scupper further solidarity.

The conference had instructed CPSU head office to issue a circular about the strike within one week.

But O'Dowd delayed this by three weeks until after the union's new Executive Committee had met.

The circular was supposed to urge

branches to take up collections for the strike.

But it was worded neutrally, simply informing members of the wording of the conference motion.

Worse still, O'Dowd insisted on also sending out three statements denouncing the strike.

Refused

Two of these were from the strikers' own union, the AEEU, which had refused to sanction the action. One was from the ICTU's Northern Office.

The CPSU Executive agreed that these letters should issue.

Tragically the Broad Left grouping on the executive supported sending out the attack on the Montupet strikers arguing that "you can't deny information to the members".

But this 'information' amounted to lies and half-truths about the strikers.

In any case, no attempt was made to get the strikers' side of the story before issuing the letters.

As a leading ICTU figure, O'Dowd was determined to toe the line of the official trade union leadership.

The fact that the Broad Left did not stand up to him is a worrying sign for the future.

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

NO TO SECTARIAN MARCHES!

CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT workers in Northern Ireland are dreading a third standoff at Drumcree which could plunge the North into months of sectarian violence this summer.

The Orange Order has no right to parade down the Garvaghy Road or any area where it is not welcome.

The only ones who benefit from triumphalist Orange parades are bigoted politicians desperate to maintain divisions.

The murder of Robert Hamill who was kicked to death in Portadown by Loyalist thugs a few months ago shows the vicious bigotry that Orange marches encourage.

At the Drumcree stand-off last year, Unionist politician David Trimble openly associated with the local convicted UVF leader Billy Wright.

Orange church services only give a veneer of respectability to naked sectarian hatred.

That is why cultural traditions are not the issue at Drumcree.

The Orange Order is leading marches down the Garvaghy Road in order to maintain the tradition of keeping Catholics in their place, not to defend its so-called cultural heritage nor

because of a love of hymn-singing.

The civil rights it claims to defend are nothing but the right to discriminate against Catholics.

The Northern Irish state was built on this sort of discrimination, and the Orange leaders are trying to defend what's left of their "Protestant state for a Protestant people."

This was clearly seen in the role the RUC played in last year's disturbances.

A virtual RUC mutiny led to the order to turn on nationalist demonstrators on Garvaghy road in order to force the march past the nationalist estate.

Blocked

The RUC stood by as handfuls of Loyalist protesters blocked roads all over the North.

The RUC sat on its hands for five days as thousands of Orangemen descended on Drumcree but they completely sealed off the Ormeau Road to prevent any nationalist protest against the Orange march on the 12th of

July.

When rioting erupted in protest at the RUC's sectarian brutality, police and soldiers in riot gear fired 5,000 plastic bullets into nationalist areas - out of a total of 6,000 fired throughout the stand-off and its aftermath.

Forced

Even Cardinal Cathal Daly was forced to remark that "there is a ... huge crisis of confidence in the police among the nationalist community at large."

"Catholic confidence in the RUC has been totally shattered."

"Restoration of confidence will require immense and prolonged efforts on the part of the RUC."

In a survey for the Police Authority in December 1996, 82% of Catholics thought the RUC should be reformed, replaced or disbanded.

Among Protestants 32% felt the same, an increase from 23% the previous year.

Yet when Labour's Northern Ireland secretary Mo Mowlam addressed the Police Federation in May of this year she was told that the RUC had 'zero tolerance' for reform.

The RUC remains a sectarian police force. There is no way it can be relied on to prevent sectarian marches.

Orange Order caves in to hardliners

OVER THE past few months the Orange leadership seemed to be making halting moves towards dialogue with residents groups.

Now they have retreated into hardline bigotry.

Middle class Orange leaders want to have it both ways.

Claims

On the one hand they dread the upheavals seen last year be-

cause they damaged their business.

On the other hand they are desperately trying to arrest declining membership in the Orange Order, which has safeguarded their privileged position in Northern Ireland.

This is why so much emphasis has been put on Orange marches in the past few years.

The number of parades has increased to over 2,000 per year since the 1980s.

This is what makes

a mockery of Orange Order claims to have made as many concessions as they can.

While the Orange Order in Portadown publicly distanced itself from the Harryville pickets it did nothing to prevent Orange bands from supporting them.

Refused

It has refused to expel Joel Patton, the leader of the Spirit of Drumcree group, who is rallying support for another stand-off on the Garvaghy Road.

Labour could stop this

MEANWHILE, new Northern Ireland secretary Mo Mowlam has refused to ban any of this July's triumphalist Orange parades.

The Labour Party leadership says it is waiting until the last minute to decide what to do about Garvaghy Road.

But Mowlam could announce today that the sectarian parades will not be allowed past nationalist areas.

Instead the increased numbers of troops being brought into Northern Ireland are more likely to be used against nationalist protesters if there is a repeat of last year.

Afraid

The Orange Order is afraid of the possibility of reform in Northern Ireland.

Unionist politicians are wary of losing any of their control.

The election of the Labour government with a huge majority and the end to the Unionists' special relationship with the Tories was an opportunity to force them to accept reform.

Instead Tony Blair threw them a lifeline with his speech in Belfast in which he declared that the union was safe and accepted the unionist veto over any changes in Northern Ireland.

BRITAIN IS NOT A NEUTRAL PLAYER

British governments since the early part of this century have always backed away from challenging Loyalism.

That's why the British government set up the sectarian Northern Ireland state in the first place, and locked in the sectarian divisions encouraged by the Orange Order.

Faced with the choice between democratic reforms and maintaining the rotten structures of partition they have always chosen the latter.

To justify their propping up of the sectarian state they have always relied on the myth of tribal divisions between Catholic and Prot-

estant in the North.

Britain has never been a neutral player.

Its main role in the last 28 years has been to crush any resistance to the Northern Ireland state in Catholic areas.

Abolition

Real change in Northern Ireland, —such as the abolition of the rotten Stormont regime —have only ever been achieved by mass movements involving thousands of people struggling for democratic rights.

The Civil Rights movement for the first time achieved voting rights and

decent housing which no British government would ever have handed down voluntarily.

The mass movement of the late '60s and early '70s was supported by significant numbers of ordinary Protestants who could see the rottenness of 'their' state.

It is a similar sort of movement that is needed in the North today which holds out the possibility of uniting Protestant and Catholic workers in a struggle for better living standards, genuine democracy and an end to the Northern state.

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