

THE WORKER

FOR WORKERS POWER AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM



OCCUPY, NATIONALISE, FIGHT FOR JOBS

IN DUBLIN WEST

Vote Corr, build the fightback

There is one question that none of the major parties in this election has anything to say about - unemployment. From north to south the only growth sector is the army of jobless. But a campaign in Dublin West - Ballyfermot and surrounding areas - threatens to make an issue of dole queues during the election and long after too.

Sean Corr is standing as an independent. His slogan is 'Fight for Jobs'. And as a worker recently made redundant from J&C McLoughlin, he knows what he is talking about.

McLoughlins is part of the TMC group - owned by the home-grown tycoons Jefferson Surfitt and Maurice Buckley. Their TMC group - which includes Pierce Ltd of Wexford, Hammond Lane of Dublin and the Waterford Iron Foundry - has laid off 600 workers in the last year.

But Sean Corr is not saying "elect me to the Dail and your troubles are over". Quite the reverse. The main purpose of the campaign is to drive home the message throughout one of the most industrial parts of Dublin, "Employed and unemployed unite and fight for jobs". And such a fight would not stop after February 18th when the posters of Haughey and Fitzgerald are taken from the lamp posts.

One of the arguments Corr will be taking up is that there is no way "wage restraint" or trade union "moderation" will safeguard jobs. Unemployment is caused by the crisis of the bosses system and the worldwide slump will not be cured by workers tightening their belts. In fact bosses are more likely to move against a docile work force that accepts restraints and gives the impression that it is not going to fight back.



Corr is campaigning for an end to overtime working - with no loss of earnings to save jobs as well as an end to flexibility and productivity. Most importantly he is asking workers to spread the tactic employed by the threatened Clondalkin Paper workers - where a company cannot guarantee jobs, occupy to demand nationalisation. This campaign is an activist campaign to draw together all those who want to fight over the weeks and months ahead. Already members of the Dublin Unemployed Action Group have got involved and the Socialist Workers Movement have pledged their full and active support. If the fightback can be built, if the contacts can be made to ensure the success of a march for jobs planned by the Dublin Unemployed Action Group for later in the year, with the support of employed workers, if rank and file trade unionists gets a shot in the arm, then nobody will look too hard at the final vote.

But the campaign needs money. No big business will support with the sort of cheques they give FF or FG, unemployed workers have hardly enough to live on let alone pay election expenses, so send to SWM, 41, Herberton Park, Dublin 8, and we will send it on.

Work place collection sheets are available.

IN CLONDALKIN

Paper workers show the way

The closure of Clondalkin Paper Mills on January 22nd does not automatically mean that another 458 workers will join the dole queues.

Clondalkin management may have finally pulled out but if the workers can now launch a fighting campaign for nationalisation then the mills - the last paper mills in the South - can be saved.

Since the liquidator was appointed in early December the workers bent over backwards to persuade Clondalkin management to invest in the mills. They offered to let 157 jobs go; they offered to go on indefinite short-time working; they offered to put up £660 each for new capital. It wasn't enough for Clondalkin who at the eleventh hour asked for cuts in the £24 per week bonus. For workers on £85 basic this was too much. They would only agree to consider the demand so management shut the gates.

Looking back its obvious that Clondalkin had no real intention to invest in the mills unless they could absolutely screw both the workers and the government. Quick profits from re-zoned land sales proved far more attractive to these asset-strippers than future investment on even the most favourable terms. The government, through Foir Teo, was prepared to give them anything they asked for but the workers had to draw the line somewhere.

So now the real fight has begun. The workers have some weapons: occupation of the mills is preventing machinery being moved, all the workers in the Clondalkin group and many in the local area are united in wanting to retain the jobs, there is unity across the unions involved and - most importantly - the demand for blacking imported paper is being taken up by the wider trade union movement. What is vitally needed now is a massive campaign of marches, pickets, protest actions during the election period to force the next government to nationalise the mills with guaranteed job levels and decent wages and conditions.

The Talbot carworkers, faced with a similar situation, showed that by taking a determined stand they could force the government to at least guarantee their wages until 1984. This being the season when politicians promise the sun, moon and stars, the Clondalkin workers can maybe go one better.

But the pressure will have to be maintained to make sure they deliver.

Another bosses election

THE PAPERS say this election was the result of Kenny's refusal to vote for the coalition in the crucial budget vote. In a sense they are right. After loyally supporting all the anti working class measures of the government as if he had been a fully paid up member of Fine Gael, Kenny the "independent socialist" from Limerick knew he would have to baulk at VAT on children's cloths if he was to retain a vestige of credibility.

He hates Fianna Fail because "they are soft on militant republicans" - a "fact" the H Bloak hunger strikers had no evidence for - but let us agree with him that FF is a reactionary anti worker party. Then for him the task was to keep them out, which meant in practise supporting the reactionary anti worker FG. The Labour Party followed the same reasoning but decided in addition to take a few government Mercedes.

These squalid compromises are not new. As long as there have been parliaments there have been individuals and parties who believed, or claimed to believe that it was possible to reform society in the workers interests through parliament. And they have all either sold out or been wiped out.

The bosses rule modern society principally through their economic power. Their ownership of all the industries and banks puts them in a commanding position. To protect their economic interests from the mass of the people, they have taken and adapted for their purposes all the power of the modern state - the army, the police, the courts and the civil service machine. Thus the capitalist class exercise complete social domination over the patch of territory that comprises their nation.

Democracy means literally "rule by the people". The bosses represent their class rule in their interests as rule by the representatives of the people. If most people believe that capitalism is, if not desirable, at least unavoidable, then the public regulation of affairs of state can be entrusted to an elected body. Politics is then reduced to questions of which policy will advance capitalism, the question of the existence of capitalism itself being taken for granted.

The masses are given the walk on part of voting every few years for one or other of the capitalist parties. If by some mischance a few radicals find their way into this parliament or Dail they quickly find that the real levers of power lie elsewhere - in the boardrooms of the banks and major companies and among the judges and police chiefs.

Of course, parliamentary "democracy" requires a certain stability in the economic and social order. Since the war, capitalism has been able to provide much of this stability for much of the advanced world. But economic and political crisis make the operation of this con unworkable in the long run. The usually tame disputes between the constitutional parties threatens to unleash forces outside parliament. In short the question of whether the bosses can continue their rule is raised. Under these conditions democratic rights begun to be disbanded. States of Emergency are declared, constitutions suspended, elections postponed - perhaps indefinitely and political parties, even tame ones, banned. The rule of the bosses loses its democratic veneer and takes the form of terror.

We have not reached this stage in Ireland as things stand, but history shows that "democracy"

under capitalism is not rule of the people but just one of the forms capitalist rule can take. As such the real power lies outside parliament and is determined by the struggle of classes. The possibility of changing society is the possibility of changing the class that rules, overthrowing the boss class, dispossessing them of their social and economic power and raising the working class into the ruling class. This requires the smashing of the old capitalist state which is but an instrument of bosses rule and developing a new workers state based on factory committees and the like.

Because as the world wide crisis of capitalism deepens and unemployment increases as do the attacks by the bosses, the defence of workers by workers takes on increasing importance. Militant trade unionism, the fight for jobs and against wage restraint is the order of the day. That is why the Socialist Workers Movement is supporting Sean Corr in Dublin West. He is standing in order to spread the fight for jobs by tactics like those of the Clondalkin Paper workers sit in. This is a mile away from the leave-it-to-us attitude of the run of the mill candidates from the large and small parties in this election jamboree.

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On to a British Withdrawal Campaign

McAliskey

stands



Mrs McAliskey

The last Dail helped to kill off one of its own members — Kieran Doherty — the TD for Cavan Monaghan. They showed themselves to be completely on the side of Thatcher in her battle with the prisoners of the H Block.

That was only natural from their point of view. Both Fianna Fail and the Coalition are capitalist parties. Just as they attack the economic conditions of workers in the South, so too do they line up with the British army against the resistance in the North. They have a vested interest in capitalist stability in Ireland, North and South.

One candidate who has a magnificent record of opposing their rule is Bernadette McAliskey. Bernadette is a revolutionary socialist. She was in the forefront of the H Block campaign. For that she paid through an attempt on her life by the sectarian assassins of the UDA.

A high vote for Bernadette would be a signal that the attitude of cutting off the Northern struggle would be ended. It would be an encouragement to build a solidarity movement that could force the British army to withdraw.

But she is not simply standing as a candidate on the North. She stands clearly for resistance to the attacks on workers living standards and for nationalisation of the banks.

However, it is regrettable that the opportunity that the election provides to get across socialist ideas has not been fully taken up. To call on workers to vote "for a united independent Ireland" rather than to agitate and fight in the here and now with the goal of a workers republic is unrealistic.

VOTE TO PROTEST

In this election, the only option open to militant trade unionists and socialists is to protest vote. A high vote for candidates who say they stand against unemployment and wage cuts and for the withdrawal of the British army from the North will at least be a signal and an encouragement to fight.

Such candidates include some independents like Sean Corr and Bernadette McAliskey. Also worth a protest vote are candidates from the IRSP, Sinn Fein and the Communist Party.

PHONEY "WORKER'S PARTY"

SFWP believe that they can make real gains in this election by going for the traditional Labour vote.

They claim to be the only workers party in this election. They are nothing of the sort.

* Their aim is an Ireland run by a State-Capitalist regime, where workers would make sacrifices to push forward industrialisation.

* Their unelected union officials have constantly sold militant striking workers down the river.

They lambasted the oil workers as being ultra-left. They have aligned themselves with the Unionists in the North in calling for a devolved government and a reformed RUC. They totally opposed the H Block campaign.

Don't be taken in by words, it's action that counts.

Are we living beyond our means?

"The country is bankrupt". . . "We are living beyond our means" — ITS A LOAD OF RUBBISH.

WE are not living beyond our means when 141,000 are on the dole queues or 25 per cent. of the population is below the poverty line.

THEY are living above their means when—

- Paddy Gallogher can sell a race horse for half a million pounds
 - Smurfit and Cement Roadstone are making profits of over ten million a year.
 - the banks are turning in profits of over £200 m.
- The finances of the government may be in a mess. We had no responsibility for that. And we should have no responsibility to bail them out.

The Worker Election supplement