

# THE WORKER

## FOR WORKERS POWER AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

### Fianna Fail or Fine Gael—

# EITHER WAY BOSSSES WIN

WHEN THE fake battles of the general election die down, one thing will be clear. Workers in the country are going to face the biggest attack on their living standards since the hungry fifties. Haughey and Fitzgerald may differ on who should be Taoiseach—but they are united on policies that will make workers pay for the crisis.

UNITED on cutting unemployment and disability benefit. By starving those out of work, they hope to give us an incentive to work. But they cannot provide us with jobs.

UNITED on limiting wage increases to 5% next year. That can only mean a massive wage cut.

UNITED on slashing an already miserable health service. They want to cut the number of drugs on the medical card, and charge you £5 every time you go into a casualty ward. UNITED on giving our kids worse education.

Why should we put up with it? Both Fianna Fail and Fine Gael say that we've got to be more competitive. There's got to be more profits going to industry so that the bosses see the sense in taking on workers.

It's rubbish. We have the most highly subsidised boss class in this country. In 1982, the Irish state will have paid out £567 million in incentives to private industrialists—native and foreign. Most of those companies will only pay the most minimal tax. And still they cannot provide the jobs for the 200,000 who are unemployed.

### REFERENDUM

The truth is that Haughey and Fitzgerald have no answers. They are left with arguments about who is more determined to introduce an absurd referendum on abortion—when abortion is already illegal in this country.

Haughey does not make the North an election issue this time around. When a good number of anti-unionists in the North are prepared to show their determination to rid themselves of the Northern state by voting Provo, then Haughey's nationalist rhetoric has become too dangerous. Now is the time to step up repression, and to give Prior a helping hand.

### WITHDRAWAL

The country is crying out for a party that is prepared to fight against the attacks on workers in the South and to commit itself to the battle against the Northern state. A real workers party that says make the bosses pay; that says No to the absurd amendment; that says fight for a British withdrawal. A party that is fighting first and foremost for a Workers Republic..

The trouble is we don't have one that even begins to give the right answers to the crisis workers face on both sides of the border.

The Labour Party lost its leader to Fine Gael. The only wonder is that a good three quarters of the party didn't follow him. Voting for Labour means voting for Coalition. Dick Spring has already made it known his ambition to work as the new junior partner of Fitzgerald. They have already accepted the need of workers to make sacrifices.

The Workers Party says it brought Haughey down because it opposed his Economic Plan. But they also kept Haughey in for nine

## 'Bye, bye, suckers!'



1968: O'LEARY proposes the successful anti-coalition motion at the Labour Party conference.

1972: O'Leary argues for Labour to enter coalition, in order for the Party not to become "irrelevant".

1982: confronted by an even more irrelevant Labour Party, O'Leary leaves the junior party of coalition, to join the ranks of big brother and big business, Fine Gael.

Few had illusions in high-living Mick-O. Presiding over National Wage Agreements, arguing for workers wages freezes in 1976, and, as Minister of Labour during the Bank strike, introducing legislation to limit those workers pay, hardly gave him the image of Labour's best man. The Hibernian Penthouse just crowned the record of a man who clearly preferred power to principles.

The only question is when will the rest of the careerists finally say "Bye Bye Suckers".



Public services cutback planned—see page 3

months. They voted with Haughey on the PRSI increases. They have denounced unofficial strikers as 'ultra-left'. Their only message to workers is 'rely on us, we will do the job from the Dail.'

Their fight is not for a workers republic—but a state capitalist Ireland. In the North they support Prior's Assembly. They want a reformed RUC. It won't be too long before they side with any government in the South who is prepared to take more repressive measures against republicans.

### ORGANISE

Whoever wins, we've got to organise for the battles ahead. Organise to defend our living standards. Organise against Prior's Assembly.

The only thing we can do in the election—is to protest vote. To give a signal that we don't take the line about sacrifices.

That means voting for any revolutionary socialist candidates who are standing. It means voting for any anti-imperialist candidate from Sinn Fein or IRSP if they are standing. And in other areas protest voting for the candidates who are furthest to the left. That includes left Labour candidates or indeed the Workers Party. They are not consistent in their politics—but they 'say' that they oppose the Haughey/Fitzgerald plans on cuts. A vote for them without any illusion in their overall politics, would be a clear signal that we intend to fight.



Unemployment soars under Fianna Fail and Fine Gael.

# Say NO to the amendment

by Goretti Horgan

DÉREK SPEIRS (Report)

Abortion is totally illegal in Ireland. The law on abortion allows no exception, not even those permitted by the Catholic Church. Although about 7,000 Irish women have abortions in England each year, there has been little pressure to legalise abortion here. In spite of all this, two members of the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) came over from Britain in July 1980 to set up an Irish branch.

SPUC was formed in England in January 1967 specifically to fight the already-in-existence Abortion Act. Other SPUC branches, eg in New Zealand, have always been in countries where abortion is already legal. Ireland is the only country which has not yet got legal abortion but still has organised anti-abortionists.

Why is this? Very simply because these groups are using the abortion issue to stop the liberalisation of Irish society. They want to turn the clock back, so, while focussing on abortion, they usually manage to include as part of "the abortion trend" sex education, homosexuality, contraception, divorce and sex outside marriage.



LABEL

"Pro - Life" big - wig Professor Eamon de Valera. One of the wealthiest doctors in the country, he earns £100 an hour.

In Ireland they call themselves "pro-life", not "anti-abortion". This of course implies that we who want to give women a choice on abortion are "anti-life". Yet it is "pro-life" people who oppose the unmarried mothers allowance and argue against giving single parents access to Corporation housing. These people have done nothing to deserve the name "pro-life" but they have been successful in getting nearly everyone to give them that label, instead of the truer one of anti-abortion.

SPUC is the best known of the anti-abortion groups. It claims over 40 branches in Ireland with about 4,000 members. While the English SPUC looks for social and economic reforms to improve the lot of single mothers, the only concern of Irish SPUC is to ensure that all pregnancies come to term. They will not even talk about any related issues like better contraceptive facilities, the law on illegitimacy or support services for single parents. All their concern is centred on the foetus, in whose fate they seem to lose interest once it is born. While not having any policy on contraception, most SPUC's leading lights lump the Pill and IUD together with abortion as being "the same thing."

SPUC's intervention in the last general election, when they distributed leaflets in Dublin North Central "warning" people that Bernadette McAlliskey was in favour of abortion was an extension of the tactics which anti-abortionists use all over the world. In England, SPUC support and canvas for anti-abortion candidates, they even stood a candidate in the 1981 Croydon by-election. However, the only political party in England who support the SPUC is the neo-Nazi National Front Party.

This identification with right-wing politics is most obvious in America where anti-abortion groups have formed an electoral alliance with the New Right and

*A one day old foetus is to have the same right to life as a grown woman. This absurd piece of superstition will be enshrined in the Constitution if Haughey and Fitzgerald get their way. Because that is the real meaning of the wording of the constitutional amendment they both agree to.*

*This is not just a theological issue. The state will 'as far as practicable defend and vindicate that right' (of the foetus) says the amendment. What are they going to do practically? Check that pregnant women going to England return pregnant or with a crying babe? Close down any place that is selling the contraceptive I.U.D. because it is an abortifacient?*

*Some liberals and Protestant Church leaders are claiming it's not so bad after all. It's rubbish. That atmosphere the SPUCists create during a referendum will give them enough drive to search out 'abortionists under the bed' for long afterwards. They will make sure it's only a first step to turning back the 'promiscuous society'*

*Believe it or not they are talking about Ireland today.*

have made abortion a powerful right-wing issue in elections. The anti-abortion Political Action Campaign admit to spending more than \$2 million in the 1980 state elections opposing candidates who support abortion and promoting right-wing anti-abortion candidates. The National Conservative Political Action Committee found during the elections that abortion was the most effective single issue to draw (liberal) Democrats to (conservative) Republican candidates. A leading New Right strategist said recently in "Time" magazine: "If abortion remains an issue, and we keep picking liberals off, this movement could change the face of Congress."

The most influential and sinister group campaigning against abortion in Ireland is the Knights of Columbanus. The aim of this secret, all-male organisation is to keep Ireland Catholic and

conservative. It does this by gathering into itself as many wealthy businessmen, top civil servants and successful politicians as it can. It then works away behind the scenes at the highest levels ensuring that they, the representatives of wealth and power in this country, continue to keep things THEIR way, whatever the mass of people might think. It is generally felt, though because of their secrecy it can't be proved, that it was the power of the Knights of Columbanus which ensured the success of the Pro-Life Amendment Campaign (PLAC) in getting the Government to agree to a referendum on abortion.

There are other smaller anti-abortion groups - the LEAGUE OF DECENCY, IRISH FAMILY LEAGUE, IRISH HOUSEWIVES UNION. These are seen as being the extremists, they are the people who broke up the Anti-Amendment Campaign meeting in Coolock recently. The meeting was to be held in a pub but they intimidated the manager into withdrawing the room. When the meeting was held anyway in the car park, they set up a powerful PA system which drowned out everything that the people were saying. On one occasion, they used violence to stop AAC people leafletting outside the GPO. But while the PLAC like to disown these groups as "the lunatic fringe", they don't discourage them from trying to intimidate people into being silent. It's quite handy for PLAC that the anti-amendment viewpoint is not allowed to be given while PLAC can remain respectable and SAY that they want all side of the argument to be heard.

The Pro-Life Amendment

## Every child a wanted child



## Back street botched jobs

I TRAINED and worked as a nurse in a busy hospital in north London before the 1967 Act made abortion legal in Britain.

I saw on several occasions the botched results of self induced and back street abortions.

On one occasion a 16 year old girl had to have a hysterectomy because she ruptured her uterus with a knitting needle.

There were cases where women died from infections. More often, women got what is called "salpingitis" which is inflammation of the Fallopian tube.

On a Monday morning it was typical to see twenty women going to theatre for evacuations of the uterus because of uncompleted abortions.

The 1967 Act in Britain changed all that. It made abortion legal and it made it safe.

No doctor or nurse was forced to assist with abortions if it was against their religious beliefs.

If the truth is told, no-one likes abortions. Unfortunately, abortion is certain cases necessary as the only sane solution.

If the religious strictures which exist at the present don't prevent 7,000 Irish women per year seeking abortions in Britain, then neither will any meddling with the law and the Constitution.

The attempts by the so-called Pro-Life people to alter the Constitution in favour of their religious views is really the thin end of the wedge.

They want to prevent any form of contraception which they see as abortifacient. This includes intra-uterine devices (the coil), and certain contraceptive pills.

The amendment, if it goes through, will therefore increase the number of unwanted pregnancies and therefore the number of abortions.

*Ironic, isn't it?*

But then the Catholic Church was never too interested in logic, except in the most abstract way.

MAGGIE BLAKE S.R.N. and R.M.P



Dr Julia Vaughan; Dr John Bonnar; Prof O'Dwyer of PLAC

Campaign has been most politically successful of the anti-abortionists here since it is they who got the commitment from the political parties to hold a referendum on an amendment to the Constitution which would give the foetus citizen rights from the moment of conception. The people behind PLAC are a small group of doctors and lawyers. The Campaign has eleven patrons, they are all consultant obstetricians/gynaecologists, six of them have University professor salaries into the bargain. Two of the eleven - Prof. Eamon de Valera and Prof. John Bonnar - were recently named in "Aspect" magazine as being among the wealthiest doctors in the countries - earning about £100 an hour! How can these types have any idea of the reasons why ordinary women have abortions?

Behind all these anti-abortion groups stands the power, influence and money of the Catholic Church. Because of the power of the Church in Ireland over politicians, the education system and the majority of

people, it doesn't have to be too obvious about its support for anti-abortionists. In other countries, it is more obvious. In 1975 the American hierarchy put aside \$4 million for anti-abortion activities. In England the Church has publicly supported and campaigned for every attempt to change the law on abortion. In Ireland it works only through the anti-abortion groups - this allows them to say that the proposed amendment is not sectarian. But despite their tactical silence, it is the Catholic Church which encourages pro-amendment groups, gives them halls for meetings, gives them the use of the pulpit on Sunday mornings and provides membership and finance.

It's no great mystery really who the anti-abortionists are in Ireland. They're the arch-conservative Catholics, the same people who, ten years ago, didn't want contraception, the people who still argue against divorce. The people who want to decide for us how WE live OUR lives!

## FREE NICKY KELLY

NICKY KELLY who was framed with two others for the Sallins Train Robbery in 1976, now believes he has no option but to go on hunger strike to protest his innocence and secure his freedom.

On Friday 29 October last the Supreme Court in an unanimous decision turned down the judicial appeal of Nicky Kelly. It was the logical conclusion of a farce which had continued for the past 28 months since his return to this country to clear his name.

Over 40 members and supporters of the IRSP were arrested for 'questioning' following the train robbery in Co. Kildare. Nine were singled out and were brutally beaten by members of the gardai 'heavy-gang'. Nicky and two others made statements as a result of their ill-treatment. It took two years before the trial commenced in the Special Criminal Court.

The first trial was characterised by the sleeping judge episode. Efforts to stop the trial failed in the High and Supreme courts. But then the judge died and a new trial took place. The accused stated that they were beaten up and forced to sign statements. Medical evidence of ill-treatment was virtually ignored. The judges found the statements, the only evidence, admissible and said that the injuries caused were either self-inflicted or inflicted in collaboration with others, i.e. they had beaten each other up!

Nicky knew there was no justice in this court and still suffering from the after effects of his interrogation jumped bail and was sentenced to 12 years in his absence. Osgur Breathnach and Brian McNally were sentenced to 12 and 9 years respectively for the robbery which was later publicly claimed by the Provisional IRA. Fifteen months later, the appeal of the two IRSP men took place. The Court of Criminal Appeal quashed conviction and sentence, finding the statements inadmissible. There were calls for the abolition of the Special Criminal Court and for a public enquiry. Yet none ever took place.

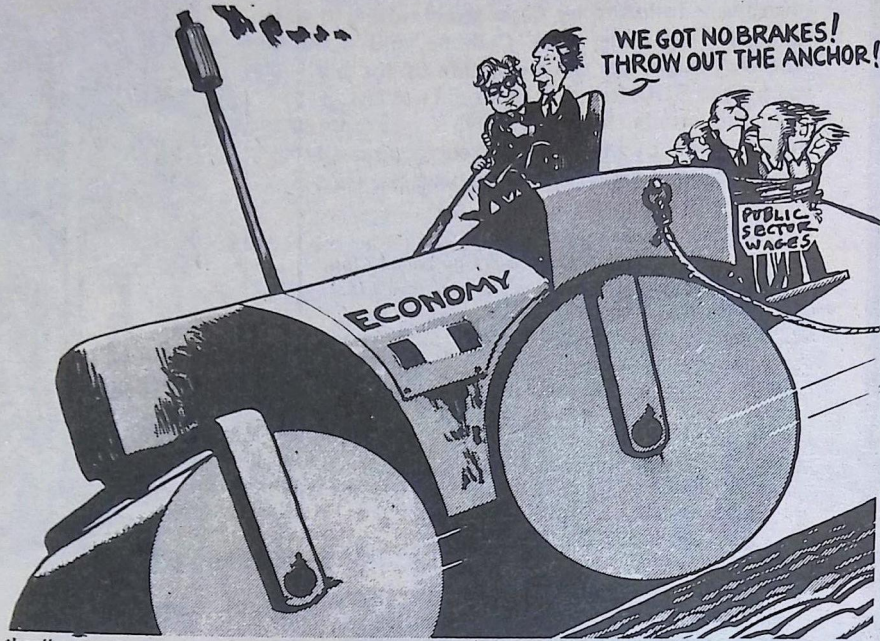
When Nicky returned from the USA to clear his name he was placed in Portlaoise prison and has been there since June 1980. It must be obvious to anyone who has followed this case that Nicky Kelly should not be in prison at all. Amnesty International has expressed its concern and has written to the government as have others. The campaign which is now growing must be supported by all and must be highlighted during the election campaign if a tragedy is to be avoided.

Pickets are held each Wednesday on the Stephen's Green side of Grafton Street 5-6.30 pm, and meetings each Saturday at the GPO at 2pm. Posters, stickers and leaflets can be obtained from committee members.

Your help is needed!

# CAN AUSTERITY WORK

IN THE 1970s it was possible to believe that the Southern economy was going places. It seemed to many that the promise of the Whitaker plan of more than a decade before was at last bearing fruit. That sort of optimism is no longer the dominant mood as greater and greater numbers of people make their way to the dole offices. Whoever wins the election, austerity is the mood for the eighties. Attacks on workers living standards, reductions in social provision and appeals to buy Irish are the themes on which the major parties variations are played. Can it work? KEVIN WINGFIELD examines the issues.



The world economy is in slump. Recession is hitting everybody's home market as unemployment rises and people have less money in their pockets. And everybody's home market is everybody else's export market. There is a rush on to try to insulate home economies from the effects of world slump. In pretty well every developed country, government ministers are unveiling austerity plans (they have never done anything else in the backward countries). Plans which are designed to make home industry more competitive by cutting costs on unnecessary frillery.

The sort of frillery they have in mind is living wages, health services, public education and so on. So in capital city after capital city across Europe and America, workers are being called on to sacrifice.

**COMPETITORS**  
The story goes: if you accept a few years of belt tightening we can get the costs of Belgium, Italian, French, Spanish, British, American (whatever the case may be) industry down below the costs of French, Spanish, British, American, Belgium, Italian, (whatever the case may be) competitors.

And in a stagnating world market we will grab a larger share and so ensure the future prosperity of Spain, Britain, America, Belgium, Italy, France (whatever the case may be). Up steps Fianna Fail in October and proposes four years of further belt tightening and

then "economic recovery" Wage increase in the public sector must be lower than the rate of price increase - a further cut in real pay.

Haughey's plan, entitled "The Way Forward" also proposes: "The very considerable expenditure now incurred by local authorities and the Health Boards and the greatly increased numbers of professional and administrative staff employed by them warrant a rigorous examination of their structures and special measures to ensure the greatest possible efficiency and economy in the provision of services and to eliminate waste, duplication or over-lapping.

The government therefore intend to establish without delay a special investigation team to go into local authorities and the Health Boards to investigate their administration and finances with a view to ensuring the most efficient use of existing resources and providing full value for money to both rate-payers and tax-payers."

**EFFICIENCY**  
Now everybody would love a more efficient health service, housing provided more efficiently and the whole gamut of social services functioning in such as way as people's needs were efficiently met. But this is not what they have in mind. The bill has to be reduced so for "more efficiency" read "more cuts." Again, the plan would "remove the present disincentive

to work by reducing the flat-rate unemployment benefit for short time workers..."

You or I might suppose that the chief "disincentive to work" was the fact that there are no jobs to be found and the main reason for short time working was that the boss had put you on short time.

Nonetheless Social Welfare recipients are to receive the full glare of this cost cutting light.

The list is nearly endless: reduced food subsidies; introduction of charges for services that are presently free, higher taxes on the goods you buy, etc. But for what purpose?

To reduce the amount of government spending which it is hoped will reduce the amount owed to foreign bankers and will have the additional effect of forcing down the cost of labour.

**DESTITUTE**  
Of course this plan, if implemented will increase considerably the amount of misery which poor and working class people face. Of course it will swell the ranks of the unemployed, the poorly fed, the chronically sick and the destitute.

But in a world recession these sacrifices are necessary to ensure future profitability for Irish industry. The trouble is that it will do no such thing. The reduction of peoples standard of living will REDUCE the market at home for goods. Much of that demand

would have been met by industries in Ireland which will now be forced closer to bankruptcy. More workplaces will shut their gates rather than less under austerity. But Haughey and the rest hope that those that are left will be better able to compete internationally. But precisely the same "remedy" is being used in Britain, America and the rest. Factories are closing abroad as well. Workers living standards are declining there too. Less is being bought in those countries, so markets collapse and firms, all over the world whether importers or exporters, all face the threat of ruin and all are desperately trying to be more competitive than the next.

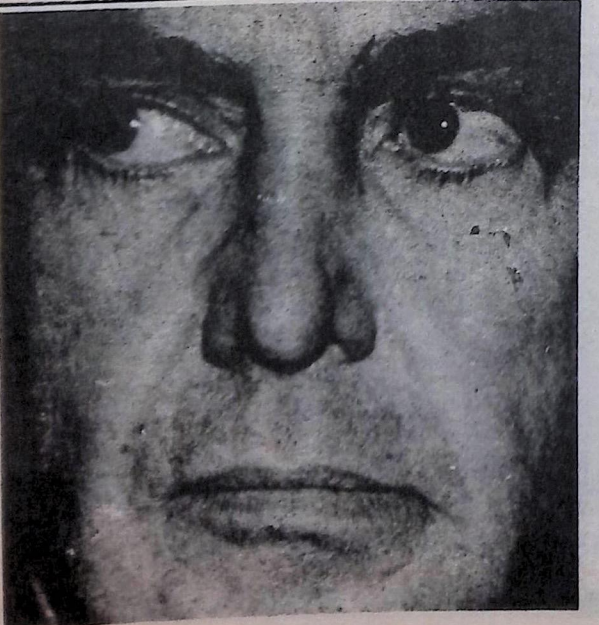
## CAPITALISM

The post war boom which meant world markets expanding and encouraging the sort of development that the South experienced in the 60s and 70s is now over. Long term stagnation is the out look.

Some recovery in the world economy is possible in the next year or two, but the sustained international growth of the post war period will not return.

As mankind's domination over nature reaches its highest in the history of this planet, when human productivity has grown to unprecedented proportions, when the means to ensure a life free from want for everyone exist, at the same time the world political and social order - capitalism - consigns millions to the privations of unemployment.

The system is well and truly irreformable. And the plans of Haughey or Fitzgerald are only attempts to ensure some sort of survival of their class at our expense.



## DE LOREAN MAKES YOU PAY THROUGH THE NOSE!

The millionaire part owner of the San Diego Chargers American Football team announced this August that he was selling his share in the club, because the team's players were found using drugs.

"I though it was too important to the youth of America," he said. "They looked at those guys as a bunch of heroes and they were turning the whole world into dopeheads."

The name of the conscience stricken Millionaire? You guessed it, John Z De Lorean.

# SOLIDARNOSĆ

THERE IS a joke circulating in Poland just now: Mr Brezniev has just returned from a fraternal tour of Eastern Europe and is boasting to a Party official that he could always tell where he was simply by drawing down the train window and sticking out his hand to check the weather.

"If it's raining," says Mr B. "then it's Hungary. If it's sleet, then it's East Germany. If it's snowing, it's Czechoslovakia." "But what about Poland?" asks the Party official. "Ah, simple!" says Mr B. "By the gobs of spit..."

Not a great joke maybe, but an indication, along with the banners at the gates of the Gdansk ship yards a few weeks ago "Send the Junta to Moscow" that Polish workers are more aware than most in the Eastern bloc who the enemy is both at home and abroad. No illusions in Mother Russia there.

This month we've seen Polish workers return to the streets and to factory gates in Warsaw, Gdansk and all along the Baltic coast in response to Jaruzelski's continuing attempts to suppress any authentic voice of Polish workers. In this case by the removal of legal recognition for the independent trade union movement Solidarity.

Demonstrators prepared to confront armoured cars and tear gas attacks with little better than slogans is always impressive, But despite the existence of many thousands of activists prepared to mount a display of defiance to military rule wherever possible, in reality Solidarity is in a weakened position to provide any effective challenge to the power of the Polish state.

Most workers are reeling from the repression which followed the introduction of martial law. Their confidence has taken a severe blow. Solidarity now faces the dual problem of not only harnessing the workers' will to fight but of showing them how to fight and win.

The Poland of internment, of frequent deaths in unexplained circumstances, of trials of key Solidarity members, with the militarisation of certain work places, coal mines, shipyards to force increases in production—largely for export to get foreign creditors off Jaruzelski's back—is not the Poland that Solidarity was born into.

How long the bureaucracy can maintain the level of recession without provoking even more violent reupings in Polish society is debatable. But it depends undoubtedly on whether Solidarity can rebuild worker's confidence and maintain itself under the new conditions as some kind of credible and effective force at the workplace, either in terms of being able to secure some improvements in workers' economic conditions or in defence of victimised activists.

Events have revealed one problem more clearly than any. Solidarity has at times fed illusions in both possibility of reforms and the mediating power of the Catholic Church. Poland NEEDS a revolutionary party capable of giving leadership and direction to workers demands, and consciously aware of the need to smash the state at all times. Militant trade unionism is not enough, of itself to secure the demands of workers in Poland, or anywhere else.

But there is still reason for hope. Polish workers have shown themselves capable of learning through struggle, of rebuilding out of defeat and again over the last 25 years. That struggle against the stalinist bureaucracy is now more obviously than ever being led by young working class militants rather than any easily isolated group of intellectuals.

With them lies the future not only of Poland but the prospect of a renewed struggle for socialism in the Soviet Union and the whole of Eastern Europe.

Comrade B. may yet know more of the Polish people than the weight of their spit. For this reason, if for no other, the need for solidarity by trade unionists here in Ireland was never more vital.



## What we stand for

The Socialist Workers Movement is a revolutionary workers movement organisation which aims to organise the working class in the struggle for power and for the overthrow of the existing social order.

The system under which we live, capitalism, is based on production for profit and not for human need. It is a system that leads to poverty and war, racial and sexual oppression.

Only the working class can destroy capitalism and build a socialist society based on workers control of production.

Our political action to prepare the working class for that is based on the following principles:

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

There is no parliamentary road to socialism as the left in the Dail believe. The system cannot be changed by piecemeal reform. The state machinery—the courts, parliament, the police and army—are used to maintain the dominance of the ruling class. The real power lies in the boardrooms of big business.

We stand for a workers revolution which produces a different and more democratic society—one based on councils of delegates from workplaces and localities who are democratically elected and subject to recall at any time.

### NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW

That kind of socialism does not exist anywhere today. Workers have no control over countries like Russia, China or Poland. They are exploited by a state capitalist class. A workers revolution is required in those countries too.

### A SOCIALIST ANSWER TO THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The six county Orange State is propped up by British imperialism. By bribing loyalist workers in the past with privileges in, for example, housing and jobs, Protestant workers have come to see their interests as being served by the British-backed Unionist boss class. This divides the working class and delivers a section of the workers as allies of imperialism. The Northern state is sectarian in essence and must be smashed.

The slow task of building working class unity against imperialism must be begun.

However imperialism must be fought in the here and now and we support all forces engaged in that struggle regardless of our difference of programme.

We stand for: Immediate withdrawal of the British Army. Political Status Now.

The Disbandment of the RUC and the UDR.

In the South, the bosses are junior partners with other European and American bosses in world capitalism. The main enemy is the boss at home. Nationalism or a united capitalist Ireland offers nothing to workers. The only republic worth fighting for is a workers republic.

### WOMEN'S LIBERATION

We support feminism as being the legitimate progressive and necessary struggle by women against their oppression as women and believe that the self-emancipation of women as a sex is central to the meaning of socialism.

Only through socialism can women achieve full emancipation and therefore the women's struggle must be led by working class women as part of the struggle of the whole working class for socialism.

### FOR A RANK AND FILE MOVEMENT

The main area of political action for socialists is the mass organisation of the working class, particularly the trade unions. We fight for the independence of the unions from state interference, democratic control of all union affairs and the election of all union officials.

We oppose all anti-union legislation and all forms of national wage understandings and wage restraint. We oppose all redundancies. We say: Occupy to demand Nationalisation-under workers control. Fight for a 35 hour week. We support the building of a rank and file movement which draws together militant trade unionists to oppose the class collaboration of the union leaders.

### FOR A REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS PARTY

The SWM is a democratic centralist organisation open to all those who accept its principles and objectives. The struggle for a workers republic in Ireland is inseparable from the international struggle. The SWM fights to build a mass party of the working class as part of a revolutionary international of working class parties.

THE WORKER is produced by the SOCIALIST WORKERS MOVEMENT. If you would like more information on our activities and policies, would like to become a member of the SWM or would like to take out a subscription to THE WORKER—£3.50 for a year—clip and post this form to SWM, 41 Herberton Park, Rialto, Dublin 8.

I want to join;  I want a subscription and enclose £2.50;

I would like more information about the SWM

Name.....

Address.....

OCTOBER 1932 has gone down in history as the month when Belfast's Catholic and Protestant unemployed united to fight for their common interests.

The month was marked by a series of mass demonstrations followed by fierce street rioting in which, for the first time ever, Catholic and Protestant workers fought on the same side of the barricades against the RUC. But that unity did not last.

In this article, MIKE MILOTTE recalls those turbulent events of fifty years ago and explodes some of the myths with which they have been surrounded.

In October 1932 the Six Counties, like most of the capitalist world, was in the grip of a deep recession. Over 72,000 workers were registered as unemployed and another 30,000, mostly women, didn't bother signing on.

Living conditions for all were miserable, but worst of all for those whose unemployment benefits had been cut off under the government's 'economy measures.'

Many thousands of these impoverished workers had no alternative but to seek 'relief' from the Board of Guardians, a clique of Unionist hacks who administered various schemes of outdoor relief—hard labour on the roads—for which they paid the lowest rates in the United Kingdom.

A married man with one child, for example, was paid 60p a week, while his counterpart in some English cities could get £1.40.

The Unionist Government was quite indifferent to the plight of the unemployed. Parliament broke for holiday in May and when it met for a few hours at the end of September the only item on the agenda was a motion to extend the holiday until November!

Prime Minister Craigavon boasted that 'he did not care a snap of his fingers so long as he had the staunch loyal and Protestant majority at his back.'

But many thousands of those now suffering from

dire poverty were the former elite of the Protestant workforce, shipyard and engineering workers whose factories had come to a virtual standstill as the depression deepened.

Their privileged position was suddenly eroded and they didn't like it. Their anger would soon boil over into open revolt.

In the summer of 1932 a Relief Workers Committee had been formed, mainly through communist efforts, and it called several demonstrations in August and September.

Then, at the end of September, the relief workers voted to strike for increased benefits from October 3. The strike was 100 per cent solid, and on the first evening no fewer than 20,000 marched through Belfast in support.

Further mass demonstrations were held at the workhouse over the following days and as anger mounted, confrontations developed between police and unemployed.

Batons were drawn, clothes and food shops were looted, and there were many arrests. The Relief Workers Committee decided to escalate the protest with a vast demonstration on October accompanied by rent, hire purchase and school children's strikes.

The Unionist regime suddenly woke up to the dangers and banned the proposed demonstration under the notorious Special Powers Act.

# Will the w



BELFAST, 1932. Workers take to the streets

On the morning of the 11th, the working class districts of Belfast were put under virtual siege by the RUC. Seven hundred extra police had been drafted in and British troops were on standby.

Many policemen had been issued with rifles as well as their customary revolvers.

### THE RUC ATTACK

As the unemployed gathered in defiance of the ban, the RUC attacked. The fighting began in Protestant East Belfast and spread quickly to the Catholic Falls, then to the Protestant Shankill, and so on until the whole city was affected.

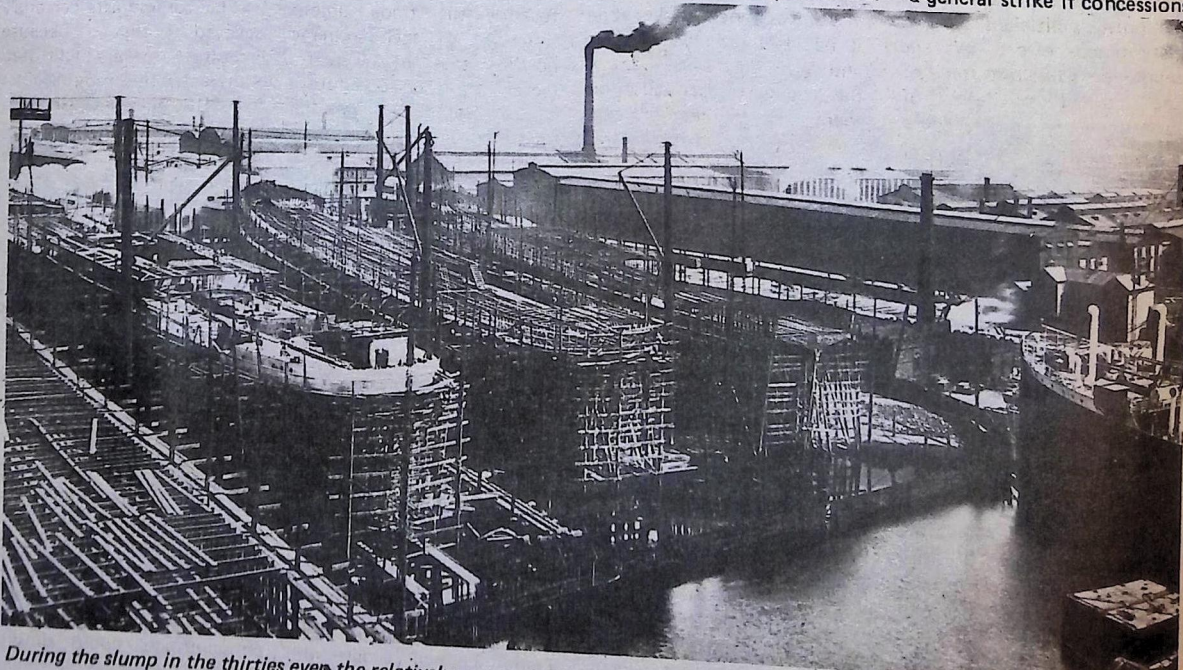
Barricades went up, trenches were dug across side streets and missiles were stockpiled at street corners. As the RUC were forced to retreat from both Falls and Shankill Roads, they drew their guns and opened fire.

Two workers were killed, one Protestant, one Catholic. Many more suffered gunshot wounds, several shot in the back as they tried to flee.

Next day the RUC concentrated all their forces in the Catholic districts while Unionist politicians and press screamed about an IRA conspiracy and a communist plot financed from Moscow. There is no doubt that this deterred some sections of the Protestant unemployed who quickly retreated from the fight.

But another factor contributed as much, or more, to the defusion of the crisis: the intervention of the Belfast Trades Council which opposed direct action and had stood aloof from the struggle until the rioting began.

At that point the Trades Council leaders suddenly warned that they would call a general strike if concessions



During the slump in the thirties even the relatively secure skilled Protestant shipyard workers faced the threat of unemployment

# Workers in the North ever unite?



of the North of Ireland to fight—on that occasion the Catholics and Protestants were on the same side.

weren't granted to the outdoor relief workers.

No one, least of all the Government, took this threat seriously, but the Unionists decided to seize the opportunity for concocting a deal with 'responsible' officials that could defuse the trouble on the streets. Substantial increases in relief payments were offered, and although one vital demand was ignored—relief payments for single persons who were automatically excluded—the terms negotiated by the Trades Council were accepted by the strikers and work resumed. The crisis had passed.

## CLASS UNITY

It has been a fairly common response to dismiss the events of October 1932 as a mere flash in the pan, a spontaneous display of anger that was quickly and easily subdued by a combination of sectarian hatemongering by Unionist politicians and a determined effort by the employers to restore some of the eroded privileges of Protestant workers. These things certainly did happen, and by 1935, as is widely known, Belfast was again in the grip of sectarian riots in which worker killed worker.

But such a response glosses over important details and is unduly pessimistic, if not utterly fatalistic, about the prospects for working class unity.

For one thing, the October events were not entirely spontaneous. For a couple of years beforehand militant socialists, members of the Revolutionary Workers Groups (the RUG, forerunners of the Communist Party) had been organising among the unemployed and had scored some successes in

Protestant areas.

In May 1930, for example, three unemployed communist candidates standing on a hard revolutionary ticket polled an impressive 1,200 votes in the Board of Guardians election. In the summer of 1931 the communists organised several large unemployed rallies in the solidly Protestant towns of Ballymena and Ballymoney, and by the autumn of that year the communist paper, *Workers Voice*, had a circulation of 1,200 copies a week in Belfast.

At that time too, daily demonstrations were held at the main unemployment exchange in Belfast and the communists held meetings in traditional working class Unionist strongholds such as Sandy Row and Ballymacarrett.

These activities no doubt contributed to the rebelliousness of many Protestant workers during the October upheaval. But by then the RWG was much weaker than it had been the year before and was unable to control the events or capitalise on them. Its earlier progress has been halted by ultra-loyalist and RUC attacks in Belfast, and, even more decisively, by right-wing Catholic reaction in the Free State which led to the virtual suppression of the RWG and the *Workers Voice*.

The communists set the unemployed struggle in motion, but were too weak to see it through.

One vital aspect of how this affected the course of the struggle was the way the Trades Council leaders were able to intervene just at the moment when the State was beginning to retreat, and negotiate a deal that fell far short of complete victory. The revolutionaries were powerless to stop them.

In fact it is very important to recognise that the struggle ended not in the tremendous victory that is usually claimed for it—not least by the Communist Party—but in considerable confusion and disarray, with much bitterness and frustration, particularly among the single unemployed who, believing themselves betrayed, split away from the communist-led Relief Workers Committee and set up their own organisation. Shortly afterwards the Trades Council set up its own moderate unemployed organisation, and, with the unemployed movement now split three ways the Guardians began to renege on their agreements, cutting and withholding payments arbitrarily.

## SOCIAL FASCISTS

The communists themselves cannot escape all responsibility for these developments. In early 1930s their attitude towards the trade unions was one of such extreme hostility that they were reluctant to organise seriously or consistently within the unions.

Rather than try to organise a rank and file opposition to the compromising officials, the communists believed it was enough to denounce the union bosses as 'social fascists' in order to win over the rank and file to communism. But under the circumstances, where most workers weren't even Labour supporters, but Unionists and Nationalists, the RWG found it almost impossible to recruit members, particularly among employed workers.

Because they had no base in the factories or unions the communists could neither challenge the compromising Trades Council leaders who sold the struggle short nor

make effective their own call for a general strike in support of the unemployed.

In truth, then, it was a far from victorious working class that was subjected to all the sectarian propaganda the Unionists poured out over the next weeks and months. A confident and successful working class could not have been so easily disrupted and divided, for the merits of maintaining unity would have been obvious.

Nevertheless, there were to be other, if less spectacular, examples of working class unity over the next few years. In 1933, for example, there was a tremendously important, and solidly united, railway workers' strike that spanned not only the sectarian divide, but the border as well. However, thanks again to the compromising union officials, it too ended in defeat, confusion and bitterness.

## BREAKING LOYALISM

The communists certainly believed that because Protestant workers had rioted and erected barricades against the RUC, they had actually broken with Unionism and imperialism.

Jim Larkin Junior, one of the RWG's most prominent leaders, described the events in Belfast as 'a revolt against the British Empire and all that the Empire stood for.' The *Workers Voice* described it as 'a desperate struggle against the imperialists,' and used the slogan 'forward to United Republic.' The British Communist Party described the unemployed struggle as one 'for bread and independence.'

These were unjustified assertions, for such a spontaneous emergence of proletarian anti-imperialist consciousness could simply, *not be assumed*.

Yet by so assuming the communists actually denied the need to fight politically for anti-imperialist awareness among the working class. And if the revolutionaries would not fight for that, who would?

Indeed, the disillusionment of Protestant workers with the Unionist regime was unlikely to develop into opposition to Unionism itself in the absence of some conspicuous force South of the border which could convince those workers that a united Ireland would be to their advantage. But no such force existed in 1932.

Fianna Fail, which came to power in Dublin with a majority of working class votes only a few months before the Belfast riots, was then engaged in an 'economic war' with Britain that had no purpose other than to develop native Irish capitalism. This had no appeal to Protestant workers in the North.

On the other hand, the Irish Labour Party was a spineless outfit that regularly bowed to the Catholic hierarchy and that, in 1932, could be distinguished from Fianna Fail only in that it was to the right of de Valera on several issues. It had no appeal whatever to Protestant workers.

The Republican too was moving rapidly rightwards in 1932 after the debacle of the year before, when the IRA, through its new political wing, Saor Eire, had come into conflict with Church and State on the question of the IRA's supposed communism.

Although the IRA claimed 20,000 members in 1932, it was no longer concerned with working class struggles, North or South, but concentrated on a 'boycott British' cam-

paign, designed to benefit Irish small businessmen.

A few volunteers fired off the odd shot at the RUC during the Belfast riots—all of which missed—but the IRA as such contributed virtually nothing to the struggle and had no involvement in the organisation of the unemployed. Like Fianna Fail and the Labour Party, it offered nothing to Protestant workers.

Yet, within two years of the Belfast riots and despite Unionism's campaign to stir up sectarian animosities, an important development took place which showed that a movement actively pursuing working class struggles North and South of the border, and linking these struggles to the fight for a united and independent socialist Ireland, could win support from a significant number of Protestant workers.

This was the Republican Congress movement, set up by leftwingers who split from the IRA together with some independent socialists. It had branches in Protestant working class districts of Belfast and many of those who joined had been radicalised in the events of 1932 (but steered clear of the communist movement because of its unprincipled and unpredictable behaviour).

The rise and fall of the Republican Congress is another story, but the very fact that it was able to win Protestant working class support was evidence enough of the possibilities that history occasionally throws up for uniting the working class on a principled, anti-imperialist and socialist basis.

For this, if for no other reason, the events of October 1932 and their aftermath, deserve to be taken seriously—and remembered without illusions.

## Fianna Fail—

# Nailing the lie

by KIERAN ALLEN

"A MAN of no Property" was published by Mercier books in November. It's not the story of any radical or working class militant. It is the biography of Todd Andrews, the general manager of CIE for years and prominent supporter of Fianna Fail.

Talking about his experiences of UCD in the twenties he wrote "I was determined to work hard for my degree. I intended to do my share in whatever efforts might be made to re-build the Republic."

This little gem tells us a lot about the nature of that peculiarly Irish representative of capitalism, Fianna Fail. For its supporters like Andrews, the "struggle" was about re-building a republic through bettering themselves. All the "man of the people"

style is there but the vision is an ordilly life where the republican middle class at last get their chance.

Fianna Fail has always been a difficult party for socialists to get to grips with. If it were just a matter of votes, Fianna Fail is a working class party. The majority of the manual working class continue to vote for it. For anti-unionists in the North, the occasional rhetoric of Haughey can offer straws to grasp in the hope that support from the South is coming. "Haughey stand up to Thatcher" was one of the most common slogans on the H Block marches — as though it were about encouraging one of our own to get a bit of backbone.

Class politics have taken little root in this country. The failure of the Labour movement to get to grips with the national question or to overcome its industrial weakness — as Connolly tried on both fronts — ensured that there has only been a

shadow of a Labour Party. In its place there developed Fianna Fail as "the party of government" holding all the strands together in an uneasy mixture. A populist party — but also a bosses party.

Populist, in that unlike Fine Gael it has made a conscious appeal to the working class, the small farmers and all those concerned to destroy the horror of partition. But a thoroughly ruling class party in that it sets out to weaken and destroy any independent organisation of those groupings. It held out the possibility of prosperity and national liberation by all working together. Patronage and favours to individuals has been its alternative to class organisation.

That Fianna Fail relied on breaking any sign of independent class organisation or indeed militant republicanism as a condition for its survival as a populist organisation, is seen by its record. Take its nationalist role. The chain of the love/hate relationship between Fianna Fail and the republicans is forged with internment, executions, torture, hunger strikes and the unique creation of the relationship, the Special Branch. For De Valera to appear as an individual who personified the defiant republican, it was necessary to crush the movement that actually fought. For Haughey to repeat the act, it is even more necessary to give us the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act, the Special Task Force and a record on collaboration that was according to one senior RUC inspector "never better."

Less well known is its relationship with the Labour Movement. Many workers joined it as individuals, cut off from any base in the unions, with notable exceptions. It has never been able to organise in the unions and instead could only split the movement on the issue of British-based unions. Despite the support of manual workers, Fianna Fail's record on combatting union militancy is second-to-none. The Wages Standstill Orders during the war, the forcing through of the National Wage Agreement under threat of legislation, the jailing of ESB workers in 1967 stand out as pillars of its achievements.

The sections of the capitalist class who have identified with it directly are those who have gained from their dependence on the actions of the state machine. The building industry stands out, but for the mass of small businessmen, its policies on protectionism, or today, of subsidising their growth under the aegis of the multinationals, has helped. For the rest, its ability to guarantee capitalist stability has been sufficient to set them up as their most reliable representatives.

## But for how long more?

Haughey, more than any of his rivals for power in Fianna Fail, walks in the tradition of De Valera. But he operates under con-



ditions that make him look like a second-rate walk-on substitute. The economic base for the class alliance is fading. The growth of Southern capitalism has produced its own grave-diggers. Haughey made a pitch for working class support a year ago. Then he talked of "inhuman monetarism". Now he has forgotten the humanity. His Economic Plan is brutal and simple. Make the workers pay is his only answer.

Ten years ago he may (or may not) have run guns to the North. He may still make the occasional clear and dramatic statement that "the North as a political entity is finished." But the rhetoric is more dangerous

today when the actual struggle has grown independently and threatens to challenge the SDLP. And now Jim Prior is knocking at the door looking for some help. It has become safer to unleash a rabid right-wing sectarian amendment campaign to cover over the cracks.

There is a growing realisation among the boss class that the Haughey (or the De Valera) con trick is a more unstable mixture. Personality clashes aside, the dispute between Haughey and the further right faction of Colley and O'Malley, reflects these worries. Haughey is not the most reliable, or consistent representative, that can

guarantee capitalist stability in dangerous times.

The battles at the top are always fascinating. The divisions in the ruling class are important — but we also need a force that can exploit those divisions. There is a danger that the weak state of the Irish Left can lead it to look at divisions in Fianna Fail or between it and Fine Gael as representing something fundamental.

There will be further cracks in Fianna Fail. But it would be a crime for socialists to see Haughey or his party as offering "something better than the other Tories."

We are fighting for a little more than the lesser of two evils.

## THE FACTORY GIRLS

a new play by  
FRANK  
MCGUINNESS

WE SPEND a lot of our time at work. But our workplaces are hardly ever considered a fit subject for plays and films. The generals and princesses, the struggling bosses are supposed to have a more dramatic life.

Now a new play, *Factory Girls* by Frank McGuinness gives us a glimpse of how it could be different.

*Factory Girls* demonstrates that the most ordinary of environments, the factory floor is where people live out what should be the most stimulating part of their lives. Yet power over their workplace is in the hands of the owners.

The characters are extremely well played by experienced actors from the Abbey. Maureen Toal, Nuala Hayes, May Cluskey, Kate Flynn and Martina Stanley play five hardened veterans of the sewing machines. They make shirts for a boss who wants to increase the output from a dozen in sixteen minutes to a dozen in thirteen minutes.

The boss is a pin-striped idiot who behaves predictably when the women occupy his office — "now ladies be sensible — all right you're sacked then!"

The interesting character for socialists was Bonner, the trade union official played by Peadar Lamb. He makes it clear that he can control his members and take the abuse they give him, "It's water off a duck's back to me", but he can't function unless the boss plays ball with him. He explains to the boss, Rohan (who is still wet behind the ears):

"Let the wildcats run around in circles. When they're exhausted they'll lie down." He explains to him how to negotiate:

"You made a mistake there in letting slip the new rate."

The occupation of the office becomes the test for those prepared to fight it out and those who want to cave in. Rosemary, the youngest, holds out. So does Una who goes to first mass on Sunday and has illusions about things having been better when there were Protestant owners.

But the surprise was Rebecca, "a lovely spoken girl" who emerges as the most far sighted.

Aristotle said that the aim of drama was to create an illusion of action; action which springs from the past but is directed towards the future and is always great for things to come.

This play portrays action which is relevant for all of us who still have jobs. And it points a way for the future — fight rather than sacrifice.

Well worth seeing.

JIM BLAKE

## Radharc whitewashes Church

IT'S not very often *'The Worker'* has a television review, but I went through so much teeth-grinding watching a *Radharc* programme (RTE 1, 7.30 Tuesday), that I had to put pen to paper.

RTE is such a conservative station. Besides the daily diet of American crap there seems to be little but Gay Byrne, and 'up for the Match' Donaha O'Dualain, and it likes to put forward the Catholic Church as the best thing since G.A.A. football. I mean whoever heard of the main item of news being a sermon from Bishop so and so.

Radharc, of course fits the bill just nice. Its team of religious reporters runs around the poorer corners of the world seeking out how the ethics of the Catholic Church deal with military juntas and fascist dictatorships. The church, of course comes out flawless.

Its first programme on Chile showed the Catholic Bishops of Chile and the wonderful 'human rights' priests. Cardinal Silva of Santiago, we are told by such a concerned voice, has courageously denounced injustice and inequality at every opportunity.

Monsignor Precht was also concerned about trade unionists and socialists being shot. Now this is only half the truth. It is true indeed that the church has made noises about the American backed

butchers of the working class. But the other half of the story and the question never asked is where was the Catholic Church over all the years when workers revolts were taking place, and when these Junta's took power with American aid? That is the question Radharc won't be dealing with.

When Allende was elected in 1970, in Chile as a socialist, and tried against the wishes of the Christian Democrats (Catholic Party) to introduce socialist measures, the Catholic Church did not like it one bit. Allende thought he could bring socialism through parliament. That was his mistake. Like many of the left in Ireland, he thought he could reform capitalism and keep the state and the army neutral.

### DEPOSITS

When the American multi-national ITT company tried the first coup in 1970 where was the church? When workers began to take over factories to stop their owners trying to close them down, which side did the church take? When the rich began to withdraw their bank deposits, and then take capital abroad while stopping investment in industry and agriculture did the church back the poor and the the workers when riots began? Of course not. Only when the military murdered Allende and

and started their reign of terror over workers did the church in order to hold power over its 'flock' show concern for 'human rights'.

But there are two problems with their concern. Firstly, the Catholic Church holds that the right to private property is sacred. It forbids disrespect and disobedience, not only to one's parents, but also to the civil authority, except if it is unjust. But it is not unjust when it is a 'normal' society.

### BRIBERY

It forbids bribery, graft, cheating, fraud and the like. But when these are working under 'normal' economic conditions against the exploited — without need for Chilean style dictatorships — the Church considers it wrong to interfere.

Secondly and this follows, nomatter how proressive the 'human rights' priests, they will still act as priests who channel workers resistance into passive, individual, religious ways for justice. To go further would be to break with the ideas of the Church.

Some are beginning to see these contradictions — that's what our John Paul very worried.

DERMOT BYRNE

# INDUSTRIAL NEW NEWS

## Breakaway unions – are they an answer?

Every good militant in a union finds out very quickly that their trade union officials are dab hands at selling out.

But what can be done about them?

"We need our own union – a real militant union" is one answer that many workers give. It's an idea that has won some support among Dublin Corporation craftsmen.

JOHN BYRNE, EETPTU and Corpo crafts worker looks at the problems of the 'breakaway union'.

The struggle to make workers aware of their power within the unions can only be done at the shop floor level. The basic confidence and unity at the workplace against the boss is an only real guarantee for maintaining and improving our conditions.

In the longer run, it will help to show us we have power to change the whole bloody system. That simple fact may seem obvious to socialists. But some shop stewards still need convincing.

Rank and file work can be slow and labourious. It involves lots of time and effort and often only minimal success. In times of recession it takes more courage and militancy to win the simplest battles.

It can be very disheartening for shop stewards who put a lot of effort into organising workers to find that a union official can undo months of hard work by their sell-outs.

One of the effects of this is for workers to demand their own union. If we had our own union, the argument goes, it would be more democratic. We could make it the one union that wouldn't sell out.

But what is the experience of the 'breakaways'. Militant

busworkers left the ITGWU in the sixties and formed the National Busworkers Union.

They organised the militants initially at the high point of a struggle. But thousands of more 'moderate' busworkers were left in the ITGWU – cut off from the arguments on the need to fight – and more open to the opinions of the bureaucrats.

The NBU, because it was too small to fight effectively, was forced into the old policy of compromise – indeed sell-out.

The average busworker today is still coming out with lousy wages, a miserable

pension and an overall cut-back on recruitment.

The general operatives of Dublin Corporation thought that the Municipal Union would be the answer to all their problems. Was it? All the founding of the Municipal Union meant to workers in the Corpo was that instead of three unions they had four – and none of them worth a damn.

Or take the Post Office. Telephonists deserted en masse their old union to join the POWU. But the best of all sell-outs of the POWU is legendary today.

Today the idea of a 'new breakaway' is being raised

## Pub picket saves jobs

WORKERS AT the Reginald Bar and Grill have won a victory in saving their jobs after the management tried to sell the premises over their heads.

But the struggle was won through militancy solidarity of other workers in the town.

The Reginald Bar was owned by Baldwin Developments – a consortium of members of the medical profession. Amongst the directors were M.S. Keogh, a doctor, T.J. Carroll and Mr Mulligan, both chemists, and Heffernan a local dentist.

Not worrying much about their workers welfare, they decided to sell the pub and gave only two days notice.

There was no question of redundancy payments. Or so they thought.

The workers who were members of the ATGWU placed pickets on the premises of their former bosses. They were soon brought to their senses and conceded the unions claims.

But the problem was that their new buyer, Reddy was still insisting on vacant possession – the premises without the workers.

Reddy owns another pub, Paddy Browns in Waterford and other pubs around the country. He is a vicious anti-union boss.

The workers and their supporters decided to picket his own pub. Reddy got an injunction but it was largely ignored.

In the end, he backed out of the deal to take over the Reginald.

A new buyer was found who was more willing to take back the workers.

Unfortunately, the grill end of the premises had been condemned by the Medical officer as unhygienic.

Keogh had allowed it to run down badly over the years.

But the 12 bar staff were kept on. And the rest of the workers also managed

to extract redundancy payments from Keogh and his associates.

There was no provision, though, for the casual workers who were not in a union.

Twelve jobs were saved through militant action. But many activists in Waterford are asking why it took a

Twelve jobs were saved through militant action.

But many activists in Waterford are asking why it took a full nine weeks to win.

Some of the blame is being attached to the ATGWU. They didn't encourage open meetings which could have brought more union activists into the struggle.

They also insisted on 'orderly' picketing rather than positive picketing that would have stopped people to explain the issue.

Nevertheless a victory is a victory – particularly when it comes to saving jobs.

## 'No scapegoats' reviewed

AT THE end of July, the Haughey government made the announcement about cuts and a wage freeze in the public sector.

It was nothing more than an attempt whereby it could use the international capitalist crisis as an opportunity to weaken the working class and their unions.

The prime targets were their social services – housing, health and education. A timely Socialist Workers Movement pamphlet entitled "No Scapegoats" exposes the myths and

hypocrisy of such economics.

But the hypocrisy is not just confined to the government. The ICTU by its calls for restraint to unions who wanted to take industrial action succeeded only in destroying the pattern of co-ordinated stoppages which were beginning to develop.

The myth generally held by workers in the Private Sector that workers in "secure" employment in the Public Sector are continually getting "special claim" pay awards are exposed in the pamphlet. It argues that these myths are put out by the media to create a division between workers in the Public and Private sectors.

With the inevitable sell-out by the ICTU, the way the pamphlet points out that solidarity action at industrial level and support for stoppages in key sections with levies, can smash the apathy and hopelessness created by the likes of bureaucrats in the ICTU.

The pamphlet now needs some updating. The ICTU have succeeded in achieving their aims by splitting Public Sector workers who have special claims from those who do not. The real battle on wages will begin on the next round when, whichever government is elected, they try to hold us to five per cent.

This pamphlet takes on the battle of ideas about "sacrifice." For that reason alone it is well worth a read.  
CHARLIE NOLAN  
U.C.A.T.T.

amongst Corporation craft workers. It looks crazy. There are already eleven craft unions in the corpo and some of the union activists believe that a new union is needed because of the apathy of the rank and file.

But if the work is not done on the shop floor, workers will not become militant just because they change unions.

Militance comes from gaining confidence in fighting on the small issues. It doesn't come from new names or initials at the top.

The only effect of a breakaway union is to weaken the militancy in the union they break from.

To retreat into a small sectionalist union is nothing more than a cop-out. For activists there can be no substitute for patient rank and file work.

All the experience proves it.

## Asian seamen

FOR A number of months the crew of the Liberian registered ship 'Purcell Livestock' was tied up at Waterford new.

The crew, who were members of the Pakistani Seamen's Union, were being paid only £40 a week for a 16 hour day.

They had got in touch with the ATGWU in the town, who were acting on behalf of the International Transport Federation, and were seeking a rise in wages.

Then, mysteriously, the ship left port. Reports indicate that the seamen were reluctant to leave.

They face possible jail sentences when they get back to Karachi in Pakistan for striking for higher wages.

Trade unionists in Waterford are demanding to know who made sure the ship left port.

The Trades Council Member on the Harbour Board will be raising the issue.

The Worker will carry a full report on the issue once the full facts are known.

Letters.

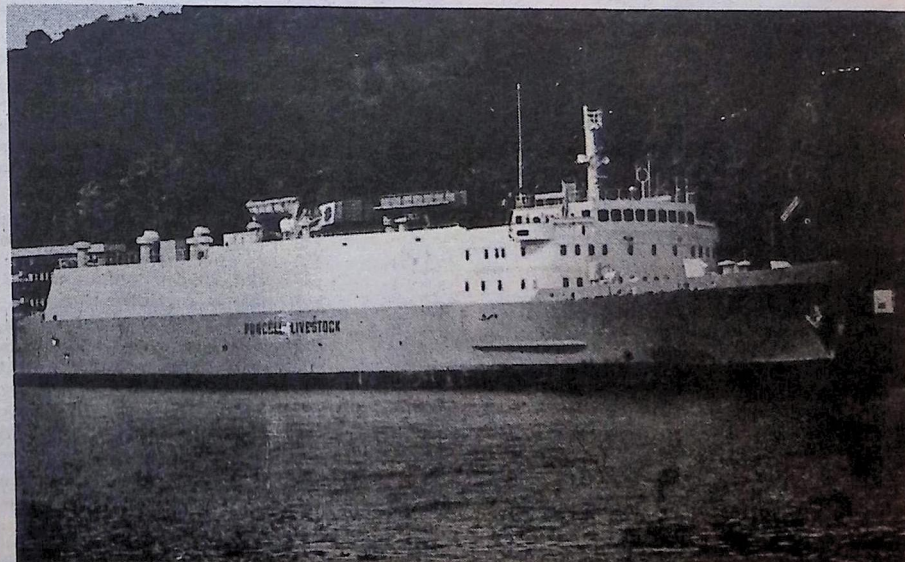
41 Herberton Pk. Dublin 9



LATE last February, I was engaged by Manpower to work for a sub-contractor, Patrick Dunne. He had an address at a pub on Usher's Quay. I agreed to work a back week. But the following week he never showed up with my wages. We decided to take action. On the following Tuesday, he arrived with some cash and paid me and my fellow workmates. We then decided to be paid on a proper basis. But the next Friday, he didn't turn up again and left word that we were sacked. The reason given was bad workmanship. I went to the union – UCATT to get advice. But I was told to come back in a few days. When I asked for the number of the Head Office in London, I was abused by one of the officials. Back at work, the general foreman of P.J. Walls threatened me with a blacklist if I continued with the issue. Finally, I decided to take action and got the support of the other subbies on the site. We told the general foreman of Walls that a picket would go on the main gate.

We got in touch with contracts manager at Walls who eventually agreed to pay us a sub until Dunne himself came up with the money. By making that commitment, they were admitting responsibility – so we agreed. During the week, Dunne arrived on the site and offered me a job on another site if we dropped strike notice. We refused and he also told us that he wouldn't be paying us until he got his money from Walls. The strike went ahead and we got support from all the site except for two carpenters. After talks with Walls, they agreed to pay us our dues and get us our P45s. Our consolation was that an apprentice who was working with us was employed directly who some time later had let him go. One interesting fact that did not come out was that the CIF and P.J. Walls broke a written trade union agreement by allowing Dunne the contract for the job as he was not a bona fide sub contractor which meant that he should supply materials, machinery and labourers.

MATHEW McDONALD



# THE WORKER

FOR WORKERS POWER AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

## SINN FEIN - WHICH WAY NOW?

SINN FEIN's success in the Northern Assembly elections is to be welcomed.

By taking five seats and ten per cent of the poll the Provos have shown that anti-imperialism is far from a spent force.

They have also shown - and this is not contested any longer by any serious observer - that there is no way Stormont can be brought back.

The nationalist community just won't stand for it.

And since the main loyalist parties will settle for nothing other than Stormont brought back, this means - as revolutionary socialists have always argued - that there can be no solution to the Northern problem within a Six County framework.

There ain't going to be "cross community support" for any "internal settlement. James Prior is even now putting that in his pipe and trying to smoke it, and it will probably choke him.

This fundamental lesson about the nature of the North has, predictably, sent established commentators and television analysts on both sides of the Irish Sea into a tizzy of fretful apprehension.

No-one ever suspected, they claim, that so many people actually supported the "gun-men". Bourgeois bull-shitters like Conor Cruise O'Brien have delivered stern, and sombre lectures.

by  
**EAMONN  
McCANN**

Newspaper editorials have scabbled over recent history seeking some explanation of the shock poll and predicting imminent civil war.

It's all Prior's fault for being a bone-headed Brit and not fully understanding the Irish.

Or it's Roy Mason's fault for having introduced criminalisation policy which led to the hunger strike which then led to a wave of emotion in Catholic areas which in turn led to Catholic voters being not quite rational when it came to casting their votes a full year later.

It was the "Irish Times", always the most imaginative of Dublin newspapers, which offered that particular explanation. Somewhat down market, the Sunday World attributed the result to the silly Brits harassing kids in West Belfast in the week before the election, thus causing tens of thousands of outraged Catholics to rush out and vote Provo even though they don't really support the Provos at all.



Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams, pictured after his success in the Assembly elections.

And so on. The truth, as always, is much simpler. It is that a very great number of Northern Catholics, including a solid majority of Catholic working class youth, want the Brits out and an end to Partition, and the Provos quite clearly represent that aspiration.

### HOLIDAY

It does not mean that every Sinn Fein voter makes a holiday in his or her heart every time the IRA bumps off a UDR man. Some do. But many others who don't reckon that, even so, the Provos still represent their interests more accurately than any other available party.

And this isn't just a belief. It's also true.

Catholic workers in the North desperately need a radical change in their situation and none of the other parties contesting the election represent any force for change. (Apart from the Unionists, that is, who want to change it backwards).

The SDLP, the Alliance and the Sticks want, at best, marginal modification, not a different order of things.

This - the RELEVANCE of the Provos to the lives of tens of thousands of workers - has to be faced up to. Socialists in the South who foul-mouth Sinn Feiners as backward nationalists and go on to dismiss them on that account are just wrong.

Wrong, that is, to dismiss them. You can't dismiss nationalism in Ireland because you can't dismiss the national question.

What we can dismiss is the potential of the Provos actually to BRING ABOUT radical change - even though they represent an aspiration for it.

The Ard Fheis showed that. The main debate, about whether to drop the Eire Nua scheme for a "Federal Ireland", revealed the inability of the organisation to get to grips with class realities.

Eire Nua - with its notion of "parliaments" in Connacht and a nine-county Ulster and so forth - is daft. The fact that 103 out of 370 delegates voted to retain it, illustrates that some members of Sinn Fein live in a world of their own. (They share this world with those delegates who wanted, via motion 110, to instruct "Republican News" to carry "a series on Irish proverbs".)

On the economy Ruairi O Bradaigh, in his presidential address, lashed out at both Fianna Fail and Fine Gael and the failure of both Labour and Workers' Party to present real alternatives. He then proceeded to present as Sinn Fein's alternative a policy of "self reliance". Whatever that means.

General secretary Joe Cahill admitted that in trade union affairs party activity had been "very slow". This is a wild exaggeration.

These things don't arise by accident. They happen because Sinn Fein sees itself as a "national" movement, with a place in it for all classes of person. It can't involve itself in any clear and vigorous way with specifically working class struggles because if it did it would cut across the interests of some of its own, mainly Southern, petit bourgeois supporters and even members: it would undermine its own "national" ideology which has to hold the "nation" supreme above any single class within it.

### SOCIALIST

Trapped inside that ideology Sinn Fein CANNOT open out towards the Left and become a recognisably socialist party.

Yet only socialism holds out any hope of ending the cycle of violent sectarianism in the North. Only a socialist movement could simultaneously challenge both Irish states.

AND IT IS ONLY BY CHALLENGING BOTH THAT A SOLUTION OUTSIDE THE SIX COUNTY FRAMEWORK CAN BE FOUND.

The fundamental truth revealed by the Provos' Assembly success is also the fundamental reason they cannot lead on to a final solution.

Only socialism can do that. It may be that socialism and civil war are the only alternatives now.

## The unkindest cut of all

THE LATEST round of health service cuts announced by the Government are such a blatant attack on the quality and standards of living of the working class that the "socialist" TDs knew their constituents could never forgive them if they allowed Fianna Fail to push them through without a fight.

The Government started their attack by reducing the value of the medical card by taking over 100 drugs of the free prescription scheme.

Their latest attempt to make us pay for their economic problems is to instruct hospitals to charge £5 per visit to people attending the out patients section.

Woods, the Fianna Fail Minister for Health, dismissed criticisms of the charges by saying that most people who attended the out patients could just as easily be seen by their own doctors.

That is true, but it is because people can't afford to pay the doctor that they go to the hospital.

Now it is going to be just as expensive to go to the hospital as to your doctor.

It is most frightening, of course, for people with kids.

Because you just can't take risks with kids.

The nurses in Crumlin Children's Hospital realised this and tried to stop the hospital charging the £5 a visit.

They managed to get the hospital to informally agree to charge "only" £2 a visit and not to charge for repeat visits.

However, the Union was not involved in this agreement and when the Hospital got the Government instruction, they went along with it.

The nurses say the whole scheme is ridiculous.

As one nurse said "if a child is burnt, it will have to be brought back every second day to have the dressing changed - are we supposed to charge them £15 - £20 a week?"

Whether we get a Fianna Fail or a Fine Gael government after the election will make no difference to these cuts and charges.

Both parties are committed to massive spending cuts.

The campaign to stop the cuts must start now, that campaign must be first and foremost based around the trade union movement.

The cuts will only be stopped if Fianna Fail and Fine Gael are shown in no uncertain terms that we are not willing to accept their inhuman policies.

# the worker

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