

THE WORKER

Paper of the Socialist Workers Movement

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The coalition offer us -

NO FUTURE!



This is Ireland '83. A country of poverty and tax free profits. Two hundred thousand are on the dole. Our inner cities are driven to a frenzy of desperation. The Coalition say "There is no alternative."

But look at their record. THE FUMBLE around, rather than oppose an absurd referendum to give rights to the 'unborn'. What about those

who are born and wasting away? **THEY SLASH** our wage packets. **PAYE** workers have seen a drop in their wages. But the Coalition make it easier for the bosses to pay little or no tax. **THEY LOCK UP** an innocent man, Nicky Kelly, because he was a republican and a socialist. They drive him to a hunger strike to try to win his freedom. And they tell us that our police

would never lie and the Special Criminal Court always dispenses justice.

THEY SCREW DOWN the living standards of those on the dole. Pay related benefit is reduced. Disability benefit is reduced. But the real scroungers, the ex-Ministers and TDs get hand-out pensions for basking in glory. **THEY WASTE** money on the pomp of a crazy 'New Ireland

Poverty today in Dublin's Ballymun.

Forum.' The SDLP bureaucrats are wined, dined and given plenty of space to waffle.

Meanwhile, the Irish Army and police work hand in glove with the hated RUC.

There must be an alternative to these policies. And it must be something more than just voting for a rotten Labour Party or a compromising Workers Party.

DID YOU GET TO CONNOLLY'S MASS COMRADE?

SHOULD WE welcome a Mass movement among working class militants?

Put it another way: is it a good thing or a bad thing that hardly anybody turned up at the last Connolly Commemoration Mass at Kilmainham Church?

The poor turn-out was mentioned from the platform at the annual general meeting of Dublin Trades Council last month to murmurers of agreement that we'd have to make an extra effort and not miss Mass again. At least not this particular Mass.

The strange thing about this is that nobody found it strange. Anywhere else it would strike people as totally ridiculous. Particularly when — and we mean no offence in saying this — a fair proportion of the members of Dublin Trades Council rarely darken the door of a church outside of weddings and wakes.

It was an illustration, if a minor one, of the extent to which the influence of Catholicism is naturally and quite unthinkingly accepted in the Southern working class movement.

At one level this is easy to understand, especially in relation to a figure from the struggle for national independence such as Connolly. Since the 16th century — which is a longish time — national and religious oppression had gone hand in hand. One aspect of the freedom which generations fought for was the freedom to be Catholic.

Small wonder, then, that even now a working class organisation will sponsor a Catholic Church ceremony to mark Connolly's death.

If that ceremonial, commemorative aspect of Catholic influence was the end of it, it wouldn't be a problem. But of course there's to it. The annual Connolly Mass is a piece of ritual, and like a lot of ritual it symbolises something deep-rooted and real . . . so deep-rooted that we often don't see the reality.



Cardinal O'Faich

There had been a glimpse of the reality at the previous month's meeting of Dublin's trades council. The meeting was addressed by a speaker from the self-styled "Pro-Life" Amendment Campaign. He got a bad reception and rightly so. And one of those who spoke from the floor to express hostility began by explaining that he was a Protestant.

Immediately he said that, heads turned around and was a noticeable hush in the O'Lehane Hall.

It wasn't that anyone was in awe of a Protestant or regarded him as an odd-ball. It was just that they thought it unusual. Which it is. Because there are very few working class Protestants in Southern Ireland.

Nobody killed them off or drove them out. It's just that, for all the obvious historical reasons, outside the North East very few Irish workers are Protestant and very few Protestants workers.

And because of that, the argument we are having at the moment about the amendment is in many respects an internal argument. It's not about: should we allow the Catholic Church to dictate the law on this issue?

It's about: should we, Catholics allow our Church to dictate the law on this issue?



Irish bishops celebrate Mass with the Pope



some little time, to get the Bishops out of the bedrooms. But there is no determined campaign, nor has there ever been, to get the clergy out of the classrooms.

Demands for multi-denominational schools here and there, certainly, some of them successful: but no sustained campaign ever to end Church control of the basic educational system. And this despite the fact that the Church itself agrees that its social power in Southern Ireland depends crucially on maintaining an iron grip on education.

It is worth noting that things are different elsewhere.

In Spain and Portugal, for example, recent campaigns for abortion rights (far in advance of the essentially negative

campaign against the amendment anywhere) are part of a broad Left movement in opposition to Church influence generally.

The same is true of France and Italy, the other two nominally Catholic countries in Western Europe. What they share with Spain and Portugal, which Ireland doesn't, is that there is no Catholic content in the political culture of the working class.

There is no sense at all in which the freedom for which workers in these countries have had to fight at various times was a freedom to be Catholic.

They have no working class heroes whose memories could plausibly be marked by a Mass.

This is a Southern Irish peculiarity. The only obvious parallel — and it isn't exact — is Poland. And socialists have to face it square.

If it is true — and it is — that organised religion is essentially reactionary, it follows that its power has got to be confronted, its influence challenged and ultimately eliminated. Not in any ultra-left, anti-clerical binge unconnected and unconnectable with the consciousness of the mass of ordinary workers.

We have to confront it when we can, when the opportunities present themselves naturally.

Like when somebody appeals to a meeting of militants to attend a Mass for a Marxist.

by EAMONN McCANN

That might not be the way it's phrased, but frequently it's the way it's felt. The Catholic Church is all around us, all-pervading. So much so that at times we aren't aware of it. Like we aren't aware of the air we breathe.

Thus we challenge particular aspects of Church power when it becomes obtrusive or abrasive, when we notice it like a pungent eddy in the air . . . but we hardly ever challenge Church power itself.

Take education. We have campaigns now, and we have had them in various ways for

Why we say 'Free abortion on demand!'

THE DAIL has passed all stages of the pro-life referendum Bill.

We are all set to launch into the most hysterical right-wing campaign that is supposedly about keeping Ireland safe from the threat of abortion.

There are many reasons for opposing the amendment. It does endanger the life of women. It can make illegal certain types of contraceptives like the IUD or the low dose pill. It is a nakedly sectarian pressure designed to celebrate the power of the Catholic Church over Irish life.

The Socialist Workers Movement is against the referendum for all those reasons. But it goes further. — We do support the right of women to abortion. We believe that abortion facilities should be freely available on the Health service.

Here, Mary Ryder explains why.

Over 60 years ago Stella Browne, a pioneer in the fight for women's rights said:

"Abortion must be the key to the new world for women, not a bulwark for things as they are economically or biologically. It should be available to any woman without insolent inquisitions nor ruinous financial charges nor tangles of red tape".



Out now!

'A New World for Women — the Socialist Case for Abortion,' Published by the Socialist Workers Movement, 20p plus 20p post from: SWM, 41 Herberton Park Rialto, Dublin 8



She saw abortion rights as a part of the general fight to control our lives. It was not about keeping down the population. It was something that should be available to women so that they can have full control over their bodies.

In Britain and in many European countries there have been great advances.

But the attacks on the limited abortion rights continue. For example in Britain the Corrie Bill tried to restrict the availability of abortion. It was backed by the Tory party. Thatcher issued a one line whip and instructed MPs to support the bill. The bill was only defeated because of the concerted trade union campaign that took place.

In Italy, a similar campaign to restrict abortion was backed by the Church. The Pope personally campaigned for the bill. Only through a massive campaign again backed by the unions was the Church given its come-uppance.

In Spain, a law to allow women the right to abortion in very special circumstances is being opposed by the Church and the fascist parties.

Why then is there such a concerted campaign against the availability of abortion by the Church and State?

It would be laughable to say that they are genuinely pro-life. The Church may call abortion murder. But apparently it wasn't murder for Catholic chaplains to bless the B52 bombers that devastated Vietnam. Maggie Thatcher and Ronald Reagan are vehemently against abortion. But they support the massacres in El Salvador. Neither has any qualms about pushing the buttons for the nuclear bombs.

It is the same in Ireland. The 'pro-life' people have never bothered to direct any of their energies against the cuts in education, against the abysmally bad health service, against disgraceful housing conditions that effects actual lives today. The only 'life'

they are concerned with is the potential life of an egg inside a woman's womb.

So the opposition has nothing to do with a passionate record of defence of human life. It has everything to do with re-establishing the old traditions of discipline, respect for authority. Women are in the front line in their attack. By restricting access to abortion they are saying: your fate may be to breed babies. There is no choice, there is no control.

The rich have never had a problem with unwanted pregnancies. Abortion, legal or not has existed as long as pregnancy itself. If you have money, you have no problem in obtaining an abortion in the most favourable conditions. A trip to Harley street or a friendly doctor who will do it on the quiet.

But they are determined that the mass of working women don't have that access to free abortion on demand because that would mean a control over an area of our lives that would give us freedom to explore our potential.

By having control over our fertility we would soon recognise the lack of control we have over other areas of our lives.

The ruling class, represented by Church and state, are totally against working class women having any choice about their fertility. We have to fight this oppression in every way we can and the fight against cuts in wages, in health care and housing are part and parcel of the same fight.

We must be unequivocal about our demand for free abortion as it is an integral part of the struggle for socialism.

Workers Party blows hot and cold on AAC

The Party had to take a stand on abortion, but "it would do the party no good at all to take a snap decision."

So said Pronias De Rossa at the Workers Party ard fheis. He was speaking against a proposal to extend the British 1967 Abortion Act to the North.

Presumably this was the stand the Party was taking. Against abortion.

Another speaker against the proposal said that the Party could not vote in favour of it, because the party was "devolutionist" not "integrationist". The anti-Brit stand can occasionally be useful even to the Workers Party — especially when it is about abortion.

In the anti-amendment campaign down South, the WP has been keener to distance itself from the "abortionists" than it has to get involved in the campaign. Initially, the WP affiliated to the AAC. Then the "pro-file of the Right to Choose stand was too high" and it disaffiliated. It is at present considering re-affiliation.

Maybe the extent of the Anti-Amendment Campaign has made the difference. Maybe the WP cannot really be seen, as THE workers party, to be trailing the old wishy washy Labour Party which has been active in the campaign for some time.

Whatever the case, we will not be looking to the WP to lead the fight for abortion rights in Ireland.

BOOKS THAT CHANGED MY MIND

THE "Communist Manifesto" must be the world's most black-listed book. In schools we are told that it was the one that began it all — the labour camps the tyranny, the KGB.

But anyone who is looking for the Kremlin's Bible will have to look elsewhere. What poses as communism today offers nothing to workers looking for an end to exploitation and oppression.

The regimes of Russia, China, Cuba, etc are state capitalist, where workers end up on the bottom of the pile just as they do in Ireland, Britain or USA.

Those countries have to trade on the world economy to survive. Because of the competitive nature of world capitalism, they have to exploit their workers to pay for their goods. It is only through exploitation that they can secure the vast amount of resources needed for nuclear weapons.

On top of that the traditions of oppression are maintained. Male homosexuality is outlawed in Cuba. In China women are sent to prison for prostitution. Reactionary ideas flourish when there is privilege to be maintained.

Karl Marx would have had none of it. He was one of the greatest revolutionary thinkers of modern times. His theories arose from deep study and analysis.

The "Communist Manifesto" was his first popular work, where his later ideas are presented in a simple and basic form, there he argued that all previous societies were dominated by classes.

But the economic structures of previous societies and the role of the oppressed meant that it was impossible to make a revolution which did away with a privileged ruling class.

Under capitalism it was different. Production is organised on a mass scale. The capitalist who can produce quicker and cheaper wins a bigger slice of the world market. But he has to bring workers together in factories and towns. This enables workers to organise for the first time and become conscious of their power.

Marx argued there can be no peace between worker and boss. Profit derives from exploitation of labour. The boss is driven to sharpen that exploitation if he is to survive. But he no longer faces a mass of scattered disorganised peasants. He faces an organised force with their hands on his jugular. That is what Marx meant when he called the working class the "gravedigger of capitalism".

Marx knew full well that system could never be reformed. The conflicting economic interests of workers and bosses made that impossible. He was a revolutionary who believed that the emancipation of the working class could only be brought about by that class itself.

Read the "Communist Manifesto" — it will allow you to cut through all the lies and distortions written about the man. Its revolutionary message rings clear almost 150 years after it was first written.

by PADDY CARROLL

Poland - the workers will rise again

THE VISIT of the Pope to his native Poland turns the spotlight of world attention back on that country in much the same way as it shone on Nicaragua a few months ago. That attention, when focussed more clearly, should also reveal many of the contradictions involved in the Catholic Church's relationship to Solidarity.

The Pope will have huge audiences. When a workers movement has been defeated, it looks to any available centre from which to re-organise. In Iran, the mosques became centres of resistance to the Shah. In Poland, many of the recent demonstrations have begun after Mass. The weakening of Solidarity has strengthened the influence of the Church.

Solidarity has by no means disappeared, however. The state trade unions were launched last October. The authorities themselves put the membership of these state organisations at two million or 20 per cent of the workforce.



by KEVIN CALLINAN

This is an extremely generous estimate despite offers of various perks including wage rises geared to encouraging workers to reject Solidarity's call for a boycott of these "unions".

Yet the confusion over tactics, that was rife among Solidarity's leadership before its banning still exists. Calls to work towards a

general strike against the military regime have been interspersed with appeals for tolerance coupled with schemes for a gradual change.

The Polish hierarchy under the leadership of Cardinal Glemp have had no small influence on the success or failure of Solidarity's call for action over the last year. Even when Solidarity was on the offensive, the Church counselled moderation and the ruling out of violence. It was that very "moderation"—the refusal to organise for the smashing of the regime — that led to Solidarity's downfall.

Now when the movement has been weakened, the Church's intervention is even more disastrous. Last year the leaders of solidarity called for a general strike. It was in many ways an act of desperation. The groundwork of building the resistance up in the factories had not been done. The confidence of the rank-and-file had been sapped by repression, show-trials of under-



Workers outside the headquarters of Solidarnosc in Gdansk before the military take over

ground leaders and falling wages. Nevertheless the Church came out clearly against the strike and its subsequent total failure is now history.

Similarly, the unofficial demonstrations called by Solidarity for May Day did not meet with the approval of the hierarchy. They do not want their delicate bargaining position with the authorities put at risk. The authorities, who are aware of the calming influence of the Church, acceded to the request for the Papal visit and other minor changes. The Pope's visit is therefore the reward to the Church for their help over the last year.

In many ways the manner in which the Papal visit came about shows in a nutshell the relationship of the Church to Solidarity. Obviously the Church, no differently

from the State, has no interest in radical change from below or the confidence that flows from workers self-activity. But it does want to see its own power and rule in society increased. It wants access to the state-run television service. It wants to take over sections of the education system as it has in Ireland. It can only make progress towards these aims when it is accepted as a moderator between the mass of the population and the regime.

Jaruzelski sees the value of the Church. His regime is isolated. It has to rely on putting on show-trials the likes of socialist Edmond Boluka. They have even tried the Argentinian method of police terror. The beating to death by the of Grzegorz Przemlyk, whose mother was a Solidarity activist was designed to terrify others. But 20,000 came out to march at the funeral. In that situation Jaruzelski has come more and more to depend on the Church to spread the message of moderation.

It is that fact also which is worrying his masters in the Kremlin. In the last month Russian papers have carried criticism of the Polish government for not being tough enough on the opposition. By that they mean that Jaruzelski should banish the Church to the political wilderness. "But how?" the Polish puppet asks, nervously watching the crowds come out for a Polish Pope.

Things are not hopeless. Although the Church cannot and will not liberate the Poles, the regime is isolated and cannot make any serious headway with the deep crisis in Polish state capitalism. The Polish workers will rise again, at first gradually rebuilding organisation in the workplace, collecting dues and building support for local strikes. This has already begun.

And as their strength grows again they will face the question they ducked — to their cost — last time: the question of power. Only the workers can answer that question, only the workers can liberate Poland.

Ten years on the Chile junta stands alone

CHILE saw its first large scale demonstrations for nearly ten years recently. On May 11, thousands took to the streets to protest at the policies of General Pinochet who seized power in 1973 by murdering the elected President Allende and slaughtering 30,000 left wing opponents. Already plans are afoot to protest on the eleventh of each month in memory of Pinochet's coup of September 11.

The protests were followed by the rounding up of thousands of people into the football stadium. Two workers were shot dead during the protests. Pinochet has already come thundering back on television about an "international conspiracy."

It won't wash. The demonstrations were organised by the copper miners' union. In 1973 they supported the coup against Allende who had sent troops to break their strike for higher wages. They were one of the few unions to remain legal after the coup.

Now the miners have learnt the hard way that Pinochet is their enemy. Their president is Rodolfo Sequel. He was only twenty at the time of the coup and regarded it as a "positive event". But then in 1981, as a working miner he was involved in organising a strike. In the course of it Sequel learnt:



"The military regime was the enemy of the working class. I understood the importance of trade unions and the need for workers to unite."

They weren't the only group of erstwhile Pinochet supporters on the demonstrations. In the middle class areas, women joined the protest by banging saucepans on May 11. Ten years ago, the same empty saucepans were their symbol of opposition to Allende. The middle class and business interests have already begun to desert Pinochet.

The key to the discontent is to be found in the Junta's economic policies. Chile was the ginea pig for the theories of Milton Friedman now openly admired by Thatcher and our own Alan Dukes. Their aim was to allow market forces to do their job without state interference.

Import barriers were removed government spending was cut to the bone, unemployment shot to an official level of 30% and the working class was reduced to pauperisation.

After a brief boom in the late 70s, these policies produced a huge slump last year. Chile, like Brazil and Argentina could not withstand the effects of world recession. Foreign debt soared. Even the middle class could no longer afford the basic goods. In January, eight banks went bust. The international bankers insisted that Pinochet nationalise five of the banks concerned to protect their loans.

Big and small business began to turn against the regime.

The May 11 protests have created opening for the working class movement. But the upper classes who have

joined the protests want to limit it to token actions which persuade other Generals to turn against Pinochet. They want a military regime, or at least an extreme right wing regime, without Pinochet.

Unfortunately, sections of the opposition will go along with such forces. The Communist Party has repeatedly called for the recreation of the Popular Front and its extension to include the Christian Democrats who originally supported the coup. The lessons of September 73 have not been learnt. Those who sell out workers' interests to appease other classes only end up cutting their own throats.

The workers' struggles will run out of steam if they are held back to allow big and small business to join in. And that could allow Pinochet to cling on to power.

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 believe that only through socialism can women achieve full emancipation and that their struggle is part of the whole class struggle 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.

Liam Mellows and the Left Republicans

by WILLIE CUMMING

STUDY THE history of Irish Republicanism in the twentieth century and very soon a distinct pattern of events emerges. A rise in the struggle followed by a fall off, or at least a stalemate, followed by a shift to the left.

It happened in the twenties and thirties, following the defeat in the civil war, with the land annuities campaign and the formation of the Republican Congress.

It happened again after the fifties border campaign with the various republican led struggles on land ownership, housing etc., and the development of the Workers Party.

Today the Provos are following that very same pattern.

It has become clear to them that armed struggle alone will not win victory, so new allies or strategies must be found. This is even more true in the 26 counties. As Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein put it in a recent interview in the Sunday Tribune, "Its become clear that you cannot have a political party in Ballymun on the basis of who is getting their door kicked in on the Falls Road—in that respect the Workers

Party was right. The way Sinn Fein should be going in the 26 counties is combining a correct attitude on the National Question and by doing the groundwork the Workers Party have been doing"

For a historical justification of this shift in policy the Provos often quote Liam Mellows, a major Republican leader of the twenties.

Mellows had a distinguished career as a republican activist.

He joined the Movement in 1911. He was a full-time organiser of the Fianna Eireann and later of the Volunteers in the South Galway area. He led there, one of the few actions outside of Dublin in support of the 1916 Rising. After the Rising Mellows spent four years in exile in America. It was there that he came in contact with the socialist movement. He proclaimed his support for Connolly's arguments as outlined in 'Labour and Irish History', though he disagreed with Connolly's Marxism.

He spoke on platforms of the Irish Progressive League alongside Larkin and American socialists. He broke with the conservative Clann na Gael because they looked on him "as a wild, hot-headed, undisciplined individual—who was liable to get the move-

ment into trouble, by being dubbed a Socialist and an Anarchist".

After his return to Ireland he was made "Director of Purchases" for the IRA.

During the war of independence, Mellows played a purely military role and avoided any political involvement. Nevertheless, the period saw the growing appeasement of Republicans with the Irish boss class.

During the War of Independence, the class war was also raging. Landless labourers took over the estates; workers occupied factories. The Republican Movement set out to prove that it was the party of order.

Workers who seized the Mallow Mills were evicted by Liam Lynch. When farm workers went on strike at Bulgaden in Co Limerick, the local Sinn Fein leader found against them at a Sinn Fein arbitration court. The Land Arbitration Courts had been established "to prevent the land question being used to divert the energies of the people from the national question". Austin Stack condemned those who were "out to create a state of anarchy which ought to be put a stop to!"

All three Sinn Fein leaders—Lynch, Stack and Mellows were to become prominent on the anti-Treaty side.

Mellows himself was in favour of breaking up the ranches and compensating the owners. But at an election meeting in Ballinasloe before the Treaty was signed, he spoke against the seizure of land arguing that they involved a 'religious reprisal' against Protestants.

Mellows position was therefore for a Republican government bringing in social reform—while opposing the independent activity of landless labourers.

When the Treaty was signed Mellows was amongst its most consistent opponents.

He argued against all negotiations. He took command of the anti-Treatyite Four Courts Garrison. It was there that the first shots of the Civil War were fired as the Griffith/Collins government sought to dislodge them from the Four Courts with the aid of British guns and ammunition.

What however sets him apart from Republican leaders of that time, are his prison notes, written shortly before his execution. In these he tried to analyse the failures

of the anti-treaty forces and to suggest new directions for them: "In our efforts to win back public support for the Republic we are forced to recognise . . . that the commercial interest . . . are on the side of the Treaty . . . We are back to Tone . . . relying on that great body 'the men of no property'. The 'stake in the country' people were never with the Republic."

In order to win the support of those men of no property he suggested that the Democratic Programme adopted by the Dail in 1919 should be translated into something more definite i.e. nationalisation of industry banks and land.

But there was a serious weakness with Mellows approach. He saw the struggle for a free Irish nation as primary and looked on the working class more as an ally to be paid back than as a revolutionary force.

In justifying the social programme he wrote, "This is essential if the great body of workers are to be kept on



Battle damaged Four Courts in Dublin

CAN REPUBLICANS REALLY TURN LEFT?

Socialist Workers Movement Public Meeting

speaker: EAMONN McCANN

Trinity Inn
Thursday 8pm
June 30th

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.

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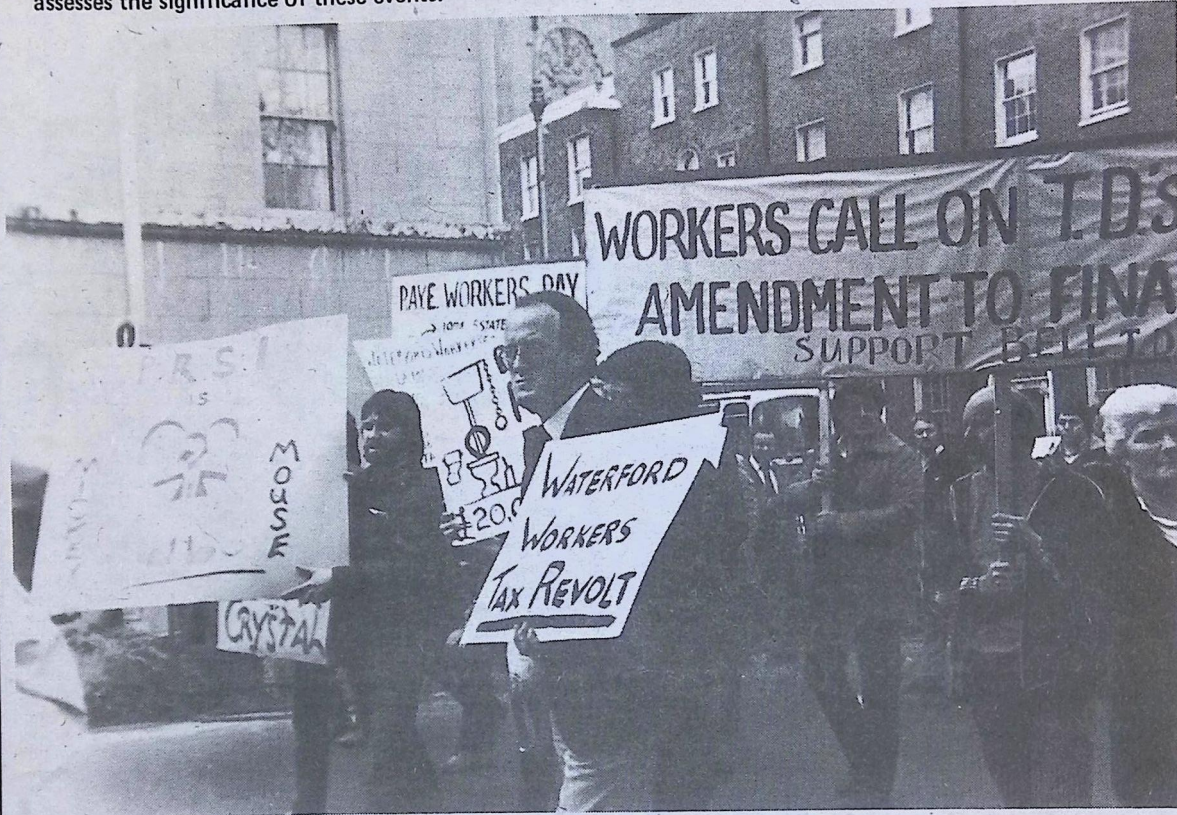
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TAX-TAKE POLITICS TO THE SHOPFLOOR

On May 17, 10,000 workers struck against the tax increases in the last budget. These actions were led by Waterford Glass and co-ordinated by shop steward committees around the country. KIERAN ALLEN assesses the significance of these events.



Over the last three years a minority of workers have engaged in political strikes. It began with the H Block struggle where tens of thousands downed tools. During the imprisonment of of Ranks workers a tiny number struck but the directness of the issue and the immediate popular support it won scared the union bureaucrats and the government into acting. On tax a significant minority moved—but it was totally unable to meet the tasks it set itself.

In all three cases a number of things is clear. The political strikes that have been organised unofficially have been sporadic and unable to develop a momentum. They have involved substantial groups of workers in individual workplaces and closed down totally only a few. They have involved many of the same stewards and same workplaces.

The minority of workers who have struck have been unable to connect up with the vast majority. The reason is simple. A network of rank and file solidarity has not been developed over the years.

Waterford Glass could pull many factories with it in the town because it has been a beacon for solidarity and support over the years. It has been the Glass workers who have raised collections for strikers, who have supported mass pickets, who have given advice and encouragement to win. The same does not apply to other centres.

More importantly, the politics, the arguments have not been carried in the workplaces. Many workers sympathised with the action on tax, but failed to see it as a class issue that directly put them on opposite sides of the fence to their own boss. There has not been developed small socialist forces within the workplaces that could carry the arguments on why strike action rather than reliance of TDs was needed.

The politics behind the 'political strikes' had not been carried openly as arguments inside the workplace.

THE LESSON of the tax campaign is simple: a rank and file organisation that spreads solidarity: that is linked to a set of socialist ideas is desperately needed.

The conditions are not yet ripe for its immediate appearance.

In many jobs and industries the shop stewards organisation is only re-appearing after 10 years of centralised bargaining. But the groundwork has to be laid now.

the side of Independence. This does not require a change in outlook on the part of republicans or the adoption of a revolutionary programme as such."

It was a question of widening the base of appeal for the Republican struggle

The irony was that Mellows advice was directed to one of the most extreme right figures of Irish republicanism, Austin Stack.

It was precisely because the Anti-Treatyites were themselves an all class alliance that it was unable even to meet Mellows's call for a change of direction.

During 1923 factories were occupied and ran as soviets. In Knocklong the workers raised the banner "We make butter not profits." The republicans looked on sympathetically—but had no strategy for extending the struggle even within the areas they controlled.

In Treaty controlled areas, workers strikes were looked on as just another source of disruption. During the postal workers strike of the same year, the anti-treatyites simply availed of the confusion to seize arms from the scab Civic Guards.

There is no doubt that Mellows was far in advance of other leaders of that time.

However it is equally true that he was equally caught up in the ideas of an Irish Nation which unites all classes.

In a later section of his prison notes, he suggested that a pamphlet be produced on the support given by Cardinal Mercier to the republican cause. The armed struggle came first and foremost. The problem for republican strategists was how to widen the base of support for that struggle. They looked to both workers and even Cardinals when available, in fact to any section of the Irish people. But they did not see the leading revolutionary role that only the working class can play.

"The ICTU cannot be expected to remedy problems that arise from the actions taken by voters at the ballot box."

THAT is how the self-same ICTU announced their opposition to further industrial action stoppages on tax and their entry into a new "political" phase.

"If we had 250,000 voting for left-wing candidates rather than striking for a day and marching we would have come nearer to tax reform now."

THAT is how John Carroll, President of the ITGWU justified his union's pouring of cold water on the strikes led by Waterford Glass workers—and his union's entry into the "political" phase.

By political phase they both meant lobbying of TDs. The trade union leadership do not like political strikes. They believe, like Barry Desmond, that it threatens "parliamentary democracy". They like a simple separation: political issues are decided at the ballot box, unions only look after industrial matters. It get them off the hook. Everyone knew that it needed organised and co-ordinated

stoppages to win — a one day strike couldn't break a government on tax. The union leaders threw it back at the rank-and-file—"You voted for Fianna Fail and Fine Gael — you cannot expect us now to organise a general stoppage against the government you elected."

A more extreme version of the same argument was enunciated by one Seamus Patterson, Labour TD for Kilkenny when justifying why his party was supporting the vicious Social Welfare Bill. Speaking in the Dail, Patterson argued:

"90% of the people didn't vote for the Labour Party. If they want to protect the social welfare system, they must start voting for the people who stand for it"

All very sound and practical. But why should the mass of workers ever take "socialist" parties seriously when they prove indistinguishable from their so-called rivals. It is the same with the union leaders. They may talk of the need to politicise their members—but they do everything to demoralise and hold back that very process by selling us out.

The political ideas of the mass of workers change in struggle; every sell-out and subsequent demoralisation confirms the power of right

wing ideas. The betrayals of the union leadership are a tremendous support for the continued loyalty of workers to parties like Fianna Fail.

Barry Desmond is right. Political strikes do threaten "parliamentary democracy". But only because that type of struggle immediately removes the monopoly of "politics" from the tiny few TDs in the Dail and the hacks in the media. The political strike enables the mass of workers to intervene in political life and remove the full power of decision from the boardrooms and the parliamentary chamber.

That it why it is a weapon that terrifies bureaucrats and bosses. Look at the reaction to the Waterford Glass stoppages. The bosses, magazine "Business and Finance" ran a cover story on the city being "a prisoner of the far left."

And the Workers Party? They bluntly told a visiting delegation of Waterford Glass stewards that they couldn't support them until "they had the support of the union executives." When the matter of supporting the strike action was raised in the official channels at the Waterford Trades Council, their delegates quietly absented themselves.

The political strike is one of the highest forms of class struggle. It breaks the sectional factory-by-factory fragmentation. It develops an awareness of class and power. It brings politics back to the shop floor and away from the reliance on the constituency clinic TD. That it why it is pre-eminently the weapon of the rank-and-file.

Despite their occasional left talk, it is a weapon that union bureaucrats will avoid. The Dublin Trades Council have called several stoppages on tax. They may call another on June 17. But they are no more than extended demonstrations. Limited strikes were organised only to bring more onto the streets. And they wanted more on the streets to impress the TDs in the Dail. There was no question of an organised industrial power to force the Dail to act.

How different were the actions of Waterford Glass They took the lead with the one day a week stoppages. They toured the country to extend them. They aimed to build to a rolling general stoppage. In the process, shop stewards committees made their first appearance since the early 70s.

The movement didn't roll forward. It broke and retreated. The question is why?

Irish Labour Party - 'transition' to what?



Brendan Corish

THE Labour Party is in coalition with Fine Gael. Criticism of Government economic policies comes from both the trade union movement and from within the Labour Party itself. There are calls to trade unions to disaffiliate from Labour and from trade unions for Labour to withdraw from participation in this anti-working class government. Sounds familiar? The year is 1983, right? Wrong, it's 1956!

That's really what struck me most about Michael Gallagher's book *Labour Party in Transition, 1957-82* - the number of times you realise that everything that's being said today - about coalition, disaffiliation of the unions and the possibility of the Labour Party "turning left" has been said over and over before.

The "transition" that the Labour Party is supposed to be in was from being a conservative party to a "socialist" one. In fact, everything in the book shows that not only is the Irish Labour Party not a party OF the working class, but it is not even a party FOR the working class which most West European Social Democratic parties pretend to be.

The story which Gallagher tells of Labour's "transition" does much to explain its inability to relate to workers struggles. It has never been a working class party or even the party of the trade union movement. By the end of the 40s both the ITGWU and the ATGWU had disaffiliated from it.

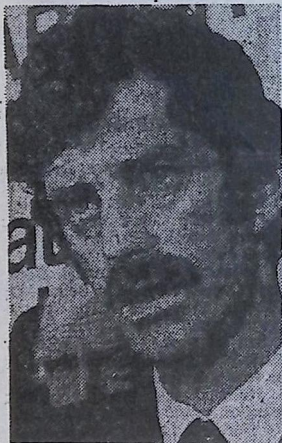
It was not until the late 60s that the unions started to affiliate again - although this made little difference in terms of rank-and-file

workers involved in Labour. This period marks the height of Labour's socialist aspirations. The 69 Conference, held under the slogan "The Seventies will be Socialist" approved a radical programme and it seemed that Labour had finally turned left.

For example, the document on workers democracy called for "full participation by all workers in all decisions involving the utilisation of resources employed by an enterprise". It spoke with contempt of the "workers participation" schemes which it correctly denounced as a "device for controlling and exploiting for private profit." Labour's objective was "fundamental change" which would require "new structures in the workplaces".

Unfortunately, these documents - although passed by the Party Conference - made not an iota of difference to Labour's performance in the 73-77 coalition. Some cynics were led to remark that far from the seventies being socialist - the socialists would be seventy before Labour would dream of trying to put the radical policies into practice.

But the rot set in long before the 73 coalition. Even during the election campaign on the radical programme, Labour candidates were moving fast to distance themselves from their own "socialist" policies. They claimed they "are based on solid christian principles of equality and justice and thank God we are not Communists or



Dick Spring



Michael O'Leary

fellow travellers." One candidate claimed: "I have taken great care to read all the encyclicals of Pope John XXIII and find we are much behind the ideas he propounds."

In his conference speech in 1969, the then leader Brendan Corish explained that "socialism meant a belief in equality, a belief in freedom and in the right of every man to develop as he wishes." No mention of working class struggle - socialism is redefined as the aspiration of every good and true man. The image of Corish as Ireland's Tony Benn became a little tarnished when it was revealed that he had been a long-standing member of the Knights of Columbanus!

When it comes down to it, what comes through in this book is Labour's inability at any time to relate to everyday struggles of workers - in strikes and occupations. The sixties saw Southern Ireland top of the world's strike record. The Labour Party was totally cut off from involvement in those issues as a party. It seems that they were more interested in fighting among themselves about whether they were left christian Democrats or sincere Social Democrats.

For those who are still waiting for Labour's turn to the left after this Coalition, it should make good but depressing reading.

by GORETTI HORGAN

*Labour Party in Transition 1957-82, by Michael Gallagher, published by Gill and MacMillan.



Ger Lane, Irish centre-half clears the ball during UEFA Championship match vs England last November.

Soccer is not just for the boys

MOST people go along to a women's soccer match for a laugh, however they leave with an entirely different impression - women's soccer is certainly not a giggle. It is played with the same, if not more dedication as men's soccer throughout the country.

The sport has grown in popularity in recent years. There are nine official leagues affiliated to the IFAI, with the Civil Service League being the biggest with 48 teams, 6 divisions and 780 registered members.

It was founded in 1971 as a social activity within the Civil Service. However as more interest developed in the sport, it became a Public Service League allowing semi-state bodies and Institutes to enter and hopefully before long it will become an open League.

Unfortunately although attitudes have changed towards women's soccer since the early days and we have less of the 'nudge-nudge' and sexist remarks from the 'lads' on the

sideline, women's soccer is still the poor cousin and this is reflected in many ways.

First, the women's league is only a summer league because of the unavailability of pitches throughout the winter when the men's soccer season is in full swing, and apparently they have top priority when it comes to obtaining pitches.

Although there are certainly some good referees involved in the Women's League, quite a large proportion of them are the scrapings of the barrel who would not be allowed to referee mens matches. Some of the geriatrics that arrive to referee womens matches are only short of carrying a white stick!

Womens soccer is still not taught in most schools throughout the country which is a shame. If young girls were playing soccer from the same age as young boys they would be far more experienced and skilful. At present most girls only start playing soccer when they start work at approxi-

mately 18. They have a lot of catching up to do, however the idea is considered bizarre and outrageous, especially by convent school authorities who deem the sport as most unladylike.

Most importantly, it is a disgrace the lack of or poor coverage the. Womens soccer gets in the media.

After one of the toughest finals in the Country recently for the 'Presidents Cup' - a competition in which the top teams from each league play each other, (this time the final was between the top Civil Service team from Dublin Castle and Leinster League team Glade Celtic), a photograph appeared on page three of a morning paper of two Dublin Castle players after their victory with the caption 'eat your heart out Eoin' with the usual sexist undertones. The competition was not even mentioned on the sports page where it undoubtedly belonged. Apparently after 12 years of womens soccer, some journalists still consider it a novelty!

If anyone has any doubts regarding the dedication and commitment put into womens soccer, I suggest they check out the International team whose panel members train two nights during the week and Saturday, as well as playing at club level.

Some Monday or Thursday take a walk in Fairview Park, Bushy Park or the Phoenix Park and see for yourself the amount of women who arrive in all weather conditions to play League, Cup and Shield matches.

Matches to watch out for this year include "The Presidents Cup," "Bracken Trophy," Cup Finals of the various leagues and the "Puma Cup" - the first Women's International tournament to be played here. It is being hosted by Top Civil Service team Dublin Castle, who themselves have competed in the international tournament the "K-Cup" in Oslo for the past two years. It will take place at UCD from July 14-17 and students will be admitted free.

Finally, don't forget next time the International team are playing at Dalymount Park go along and give your support - help women's soccer gain the recognition it deserves.

by PAULINE GRAY

Compete or die say 'left'

Jobs and Wages, the True Story of Competitiveness by Socialist Economists, £1.50 from P.Sweeney, 36 St. Kevin's Parade, Dublin 8.

THE SOUTHERN economy - as is well known - is in bad shape. The Right claim that the problem is competitiveness. Southern industry, they say, cannot compete effectively on world markets and it is this which accounts for the large levels of unemployment. A key factor in this lack of competitiveness is high wages - we have been paying ourselves too much. The remedy: income restraint - that is further cuts in real wages.

A "group of socialist economists drawn from public and private sector, from research institutions and from trade unions" have produced *Jobs and Wages, the True Story of Competitiveness* to challenge the Right's arguments and "raise alternative strategies for discussion from a socialist point of view." Their challenge is feeble; their alternatives are day dreams.

The post-war period has seen a great intensification in the process of the internationalisation of capital. A capitalist invests in order to get the best possible rate of return. He does not care in what he invests or where.

This is generalisation and like all generalisations it is something of an oversimplification. But it is a generalisation that is truer today than at any time in the past. Multi-national conglomerates dominate the world economy of which the 26 counties are only a part. Multi-national means they operate in many sites around

the world and can move their operations nationally. Conglomerates mean they operate in many unrelated branches of industry. Petro-chemical companies diversity into entertainments, food and drink manufacturers get into distribution and retailing; construction outfits move into newspapers and all, it seems, are ready to invest in property or banking.

Capital, then, seeks a return as good if not better than the average rate of profit obtaining on the international market. The source of profit is exploitation of workers. The larger the share of social production that is covered by wages, the lower the surplus available for profits, interest and rent. That is why there is a constant conflict of interest between labour and capital over the price of labour.

The world crisis of capitalism which is responsible for the current slump, is an expression of the fact that the average rate of profit has fallen. This has intensified the conflict between labour and capital of which the Right's claim that workers must make sacrifices is a part.



In order to try to restore profit rates capitalists must attack workers. But capitalism is a system of world competition. As well as fighting their own workers, capitalists must fight each other as competitors. With slack world markets the task of selling profitably his production is made more difficult for each capitalist. That is the significance of all the talk of "uncompetitiveness" from the Right.

In a stagnant world market if Irish capitalists can grab a larger share, Irish industry will be relatively more profitable - at the expense of French, Belgium, etc, industry. The fact is that the same lectures are being delivered to workers in Paris and Brussels as in Dublin by their capitalist spokesmen.

To the extent that workers accept the argument the situation develops where workers are in competition with one another driving down each other's wages. Trade unionism was built on the struggle to fight this competition. Workers established, by bargaining, a "rate for the job". Efforts were made by trade unionists to ensure that no one accepted wage rates below this level which would drive down wages by competition between workers.

The periods of growth of trade unionism correspond to periods of relative prosperity. Slumps in the past - with an attendant rise in unemployment, the reserve army of labour - obviously weakened workers ability to enforce a rate for the job. That is why trade unionism, although some sort of defence against the depredations of capitalism in boom times, was never adequate on its own in times of slump. Under capitalism, the interests of workers and bosses cannot be reconciled and it is necessary for workers to go beyond defence within capitalism on to the offensive for socialism.

Trade unionism is national. Perhaps it is possible for workers in Dublin and Cork to prevent competition between them driving down wages. But today a multi-national company can choose among several sites in different countries. No serious international trade unionism exists to

combat such a situation, nor is its development facilitated by workers accepting arguments that they as Irishmen, Frenchmen, etc have interests which override class interests.

Put simply - if you accept that the problem is lack of competitiveness of Irish industry, you accept that you must pull together with Irish bosses to undercut French firms and French workers. On the international plane, the bosses have then won - a disorganised working class.

One might have hoped that a group of "socialist" economists writing a pamphlet to counter our rulers' exhortations for us to pull in our belts to improve competitiveness would have developed some of these ideas. Not so.

They accept the bosses view that the problem is competitiveness, but argue that wages are not the only factor and that too much attention is focussed on wage restraint.



My account so far has been abstract in order to get the main thing clear. Of course life is more complicated. In physics we learn that all bodies fall to earth with the same rate of acceleration whether they are light or heavy. When you get down to cases factors like air resistance complicate the picture. Nonetheless any attempt to explain falling bodies solely in terms of secondary features like air resistance and streamlining would miss the main thing if it ignored the central idea of equal acceleration.

In the real world competition is never perfect. Transport costs make it extremely unlikely that low value high weight products like soft drinks produced in USA would compete in the Irish market with local substitutes. Similarly, large scale investments in high tech take time to put

into operation, and time to recoup outlay - they are long term projects so capitalists will look to long term factors like political stability, etc. Management ability and marketing skills undoubtedly play a part in the success or failure of an enterprise. In a word cause and effect are separated by time lags and mediated by the accumulated effects of capitals' operations.

So our "socialist economists" accept theoretically - competition - what Alan Dukes accepts in practice - that we should prostrate ourselves before the alter of capitalism - by focussing exclusively on secondary features like management, marketing and the mix of Irish industry and income in exchange for some income restraint (less than the bosses demand but more than workers can afford) trade unionists should have access to company information and a voice in policy making, that government should take a firmer hand in directing investment decisions - doubtless relying on think tanks composed of economists like themselves - so that Irish bosses and workers can together compete on world markets and win prosperity.



And here another failure of their argument is obvious. Workers must exchange an attitude of struggle against a system that exploits and oppresses them for one of taking responsibility for the effective promotion of the system's imperatives. This is indeed the capitalists' dream! Thus workers must accept the closure of "lame duck" factories and these "socialists" denounce what they call "the mindless pursuit of self-interest by small groups of workers with considerable bargaining power" (page 41). Perhaps the second edition of this work will carry a glowing introduction from John Carroll - if



Irish industry stagnates

certainly deserves it!

The world has never been short of middle class nostrums that would happily reconcile the classes in peace and prosperity. The Paris Commune of 1871 sounded the death knell for utopian socialists by announcing the arrival on the historical stage of capitalism's gravedigger - the working class. It is upon this international and irreconcilable struggle of labour and capital that the future depends, not the haughty day-dreams of budding bureaucrats still peddled by the "Left".

That is why we support every strike by workers against their boss, every occupation in defence of jobs - any genuine socialist must.

If you can pick your way through the misprints, you might find some of the statistics interesting.

by KEVIN WINGFIELD

Wages-united we stand...

TWO YEARS ago the bosses chopped the National Wage Agreements. That type of bargaining had served its purpose during the mini-boom in the South in the seventies. It ensured wage restraint and a guarantee against the development of shop-steward power.

The recession that broke in 1979 signalled the emergence of a new approach. The discipline of unemployment was thought sufficient to push down wages — even lower than those granted under the National Wage Agreements.

MARNIE HOLBOROW looks at how workers have fared under the current 23rd round. WORKERS have, in spite of recession and unemployment, put up a fight in the 23rd Wage battle.

It hasn't been uniform and militant across the board, but here and there and even where job losses were threatening workers have refused to accept puny wage rises.

Workers in Irish Biscuits, in the hard-hit confectionary industry, put up a three week strike against a lengthy pay pause and tiny increase. In the end their gains were small—a two month pay pause and 11% over fifteen months—but at least they had put up a fight. PJ Carrolls workers reacted angrily to a six month pay pause offered to them and after strike action, got rid of the pause and 13% for 13



Two-tier pickets defeated Hoover workers

months. Shop and dairy coop workers not prepared to accept 10% and 11% and threatened strike action. Public sector workers in Aer Lingus and CIE are set for a fight on wages.

The FUE arguments, then, have certainly not been taken lying down. But strength on the ground, however, has not always enabled workers to put up a sustained fight. In industries where job losses have particularly threatened, workers have had to climb down. For example, in the sweet and biscuit industry, the 20% original claim has in many cases been reduced to single figures in the final settlement.

Often this has been because of acceptance of the bosses argument about "job security or wage increases — not both". The most glaring example is the print industry whose workers — 2600 in all — were originally offered a seven month pay pause and a five per cent increase over fifteen months. Clearly the bosses were very confident that job losses were going to intimidate workers into acceptance of this scandalous offer. And the bosses weren't far wrong. The offer went into the Labour Court and became a recommendation for a measly 12% phased over sixteen months and an effective pay pause since the agreement was not to be implemented until the end of May.

The weakness on the ground, has not been helped by the legacy of a decade of centralised and bureaucratic wage bargaining. Few shop stewards on the ground have had either the confidence or experience to challenge the old structures of the NWAs. The two-tier picket has been maintained and official scabbing has been organised to weaken the fight for wage increases. At Hoover in Finglas the two-tier picket led to the defeat of clerical workers. Other aspects of NWAs have also remained intact. Almost exclusively, for example,

has the old practice of phased agreements been retained?

The phased agreement was one of the biggest cons of the NWAs. Delayed payment of a second or sometimes a third instalment saves the bosses money at the expense of the workers real wages. Over the period of the agreement workers' real wages fall quite considerably.

On top of that, the phased agreements are based on Government figures of inflation, usually very conservative estimates and which seldom reflect the reality of price increases which workers experience. This year, for instance, the Central Bank forecasts inflation at ten per cent for the year. However, current exchange rates and the EEC farm price settlement alone would put 4% on that. With this in mind the average settlement of about 11% especially as it is phased, means workers taking a wage cut once again.

The real area of weakness has been the public sector. For many workers the last agreement expired in January of this year. The union leaders have known for some time that there has been no provision made in the budget for any additional increases. Yet there has been little movement or rank-and-file outcry. Why?

Last year the ICTU quietly sold an acceptance of the government's right to tear up and re-schedule the last agreement it made. It was a tremendous blow to the public sector union organisation. Any revival of militancy will demand the maximum co-ordination of the claims. But that would raise the temperature of the struggle to a level the trade union bureaucrats fear. They would prefer to see Aer Lingus workers, Corporation workers, ESB workers fight separately and

face defeat rather than co-ordinate the claims and the struggle.

In the meantime the only signs of action are threatened limited stoppages from ESB and the Bus workers. This selective action can not win. The nurses and the civil service in Britain proved the uselessness of those tactics. There is no alternative to all-out action and co-ordination of the claims.

In periods of recession, the fight for a basic wage increase becomes fantastically hard. Workers feel forced to rely more on their union officials. But the officials are concerned to maintain an orderly system of wage bargaining.

The period of the National Wage Agreements fully institutionalised the bargaining procedures. The Labour Court became central to negotiations. From handling 200 cases per year in 1971 it was handling 12000 cases in 1979. In addition, the officials took full control over the unions by imposing the two-tier picket.

Today, the National Wage Agreements have disappeared — but the bureaucrats are determined to maintain the structures of bargaining and trade union practice that grew up along side them.

Those habits cut across the only type of trade union action that can win in a recession—extensive solidarity action.

Wage battles today can only be won by full respect for the picket, by extensive collections, by blacking.



LIFT WAGES CLAIM

THIRTY WORKERS at Pickering lifts are on strike for a decent rise. The workers have stuck in a 30% claim.

Their company, in line with other smaller companies in the Lift business are sticking to the FUE line. They have "offered" a pay pause and a 9% phased increase.

Their strike is officially backed by NEETU and ETU. The company is out to break a militant union organisation.

During the tax protest, Pickering workers took part in the one day a week strike in support of the Waterford Crystal workers.

In order to break the stalemate on negotiations, workers are considering extending their pickets to the building sites.

It is the only way to win. At present, managers in some companies are coming in at night to mend broken lifts. By stopping building sites, where lifts are being put in, the pressure would be turned on the companies.

In the meantime collections must be raised to support the strike.

Send donations to the Pickering Strike Committee, c/o NEETU Hall, 6, Gardener Row Dublin 1;

Cork-Verolme, Dunlop plan jobs loss

OVER A thousand Cork workers are threatened with the sack in the next four weeks.

The industrial capital of Munster is being devastated by the slump. But already there are some sparks of resistance.

JIM BLAKE reports on Dunlop Tyres and Verolme Dockyard.

Verolme Dockyard plans to make 400 workers redundant. It means cutting the workforce in half. But the shop stewards and workforce have no intention of taking it lying down.

When the local Fine Gael TD Peter Barry went to the opening of Ringaskiddy, he landed himself with a most unpleasant welcome. Hundreds of workers surrounded his car and placards were thrown at him in protest at the closure.

Workers have been angered by the behaviour of Managing Director Van der Paul. This particular parasite earns £60,000 a year. But it apparently isn't enough.

He decided to take two weeks holidays in the middle of the negotiations on redundancy.

The workers are by no means defenceless. The 80,000 ton Irish Shipping boat has just been built. It shouldn't be delivered until the jobs of the workers are guaranteed.

Occupying the yard and building a campaign of support is the only way to fight.

The workers of Clondalkin showed that nationalisation is a demand that can be won if fought for in a determined fashion.

DUNLOP HAS been in Cork for 47 years. Now it is threatened with a full closure.

700 workers are to be consigned to the dole queues.

Most are over 40 years old and a considerable number have 20 years service.

Dunlop's have never had a record of militancy. They have constantly met their productivity target of 25,000 tyres per week.

They offered to increase the production target to 35,000 but management refused.



Sir Campbell Fraser

There is over production of tyres in the world. Some estimates put it at 25% surplus capacity.

Dunlops need an expert market. They can supply the Irish market with 1/2 day production.

But the surplus production is the result of the slump. The more workers like those at Dunlops who are made redundant, the less cars are bought and the less tyres are used. It is part of the anarchy that is capitalism.

Workers have little choice but to resist or have their living standards slashed. They have only to look at the hypocrisy of those who tell them to respect the laws of the market.

The head of the British CBI Campbell Fraser, is a managing director of Dunlops. He just voted himself a £13,000 increase. His annual salary is £83,000 a year.

CORPO WORKERS DEFEND RELATIVITY

ANGER IS mounting amongst local authority craftsmen around the country about management plans to defer payment of a relativity increase.

At a meeting organised by the rank and file Corporation Crafts in Dublin, the craftsmen voted for strike action.

Since then the message has spread to the rest of the country.

The National Association of Craftsmen and Mates is to campaign to mobilise its members and supporters for strike action.

The basis of the issue goes back to 1979. After a six month work to rule, the craftsmen won the right to an 'analogue' payment.

This was a relativity increase based on the movement of wages in a list of semi-state and private enterprises. The work to rule was organised unofficially by the Corporation Crafts Group.

This year management have tried to break the principle of an automatic increase. Undoubtedly it is a first step in claiming inability to pay at a later date. They have tried to phase the relativity increase and provided for no retro-spection.

The official unions have conceded the principle that this hard won gain is negotiable by bargaining with the Corporation. In the

current year the relativity increase if granted fully, would mean an additional £5.60 a week into the wage packet.

Because of the union sell-out, the Crafts Group has sprung into action.

It proposed all-out strike action. This has since been deferred until the rest of the country has been mobilised in support.

However when it looked like the strike was going about immediately, one former militant played a key role in an attempted sabotage.

One John Montgomery, prominent member of the Communist Party, toured the depots urging workers to pass the unofficial pickets. It was about the lowest he sunk. But Montgomery has an obsession about 'unofficial action' of late. At the Trades Council he lambasted attempts to build support for the one day a week strike for Waterford Glass.

Maybe the CP might like to spend more time attacking the bosses rather than the militants.

To strike over the analogues should be backed up with mass pickets. It will demand that to build up a momentum.

The strike should also take on board the whole matter of the general wage increase.

There is no point going out on one issue and having to come out again a week later.

We reproduce below part of a Dublin Bus Conductor's pay packet. £81 take-home pay for a 40 hour 5.4 day week, working shifts! The NBU has balloted on a 20-per-cent claim and is planning 'limited industrial action'.

HOURS/DAYS WORKED	WEEK NO.	TOTAL PAYMENTS	TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	CUMULATIVE PAY TO DATE	TAX FREE ALLOWANCE	CUMULATIVE TAX TO DATE	NET PAY
035.00	67	115.78	34.78	839.15	66.35	162.09	81.00

THE WORKER

Paper of the Socialist Workers Movement

Scrap Special Court and: FREE KELLY

NICKY KELLY is innocent.

He was tried before the juryless Special Criminal Court and the only evidence against him was a signed confession.

The notorious Heavy Gang, a special torture squad inside the Garda, were responsible for beating the confession out of him.

So blatant was the case that his two fellow defendants on the charge of armed robbery have subsequently been released. The only reason that Nicky Kelly has been forced on hunger strike to prove his innocence is because as Michael Noonan says "his release would set a precedent and undermine the judiciary". An innocent man may face death to save the credibility of the judges bench.

But who are the "best legal brains" that Noonan says he must respect. They make up the top echelons of the Fine Gael party supporters. They include the type of people like Supreme Court Judge Thomas O Higgins. A fanatical ex-blueshirt, he has distinguished himself by ruling against the rights of trade unionists to picket and the rights of gay men and women.

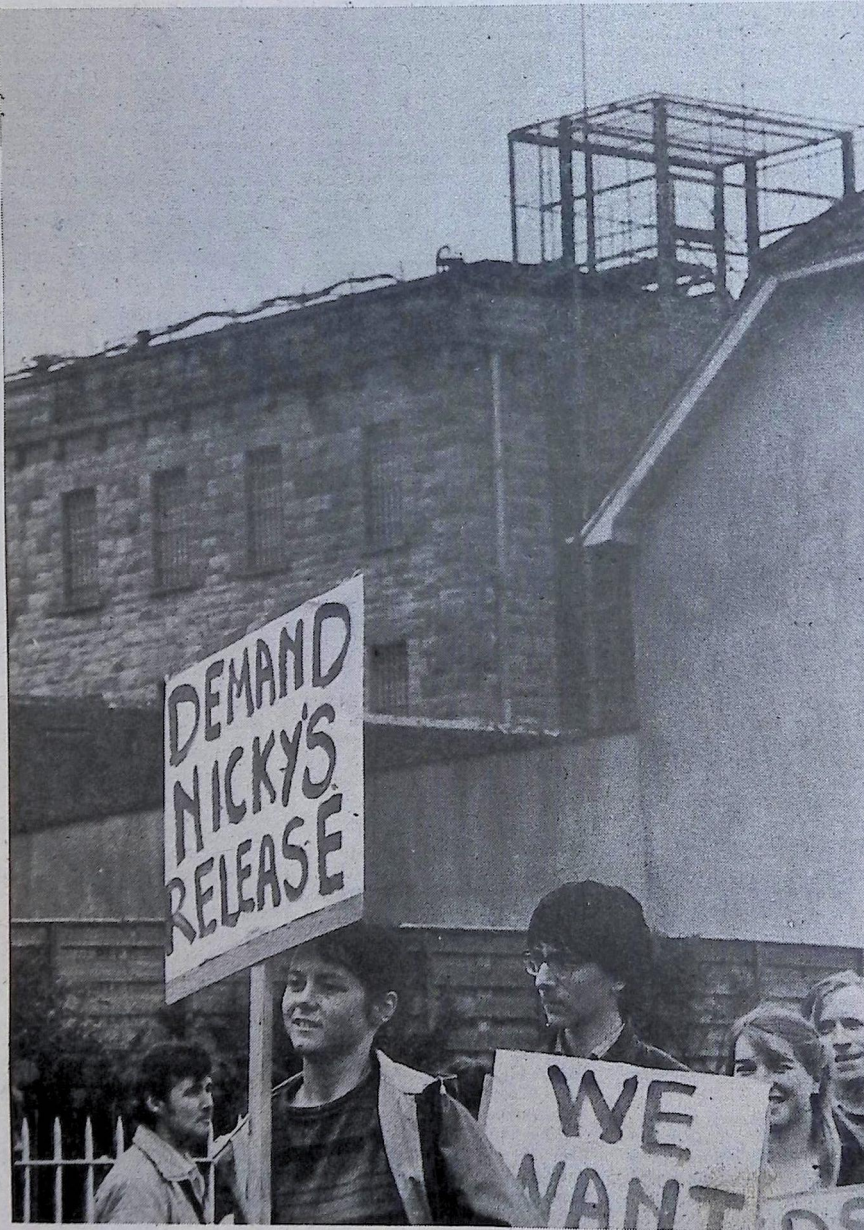
At the core of the whole rotten system that tried Nicky Kelly was the Special Criminal Court. The Court has already sentenced over 1,000 political prisoners in the South. It accepts as gospel the word of the police.

It is currently involved in implementing the notorious Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act. It has also sent a young man, Patrick Keogh to prison for three years for marching to the British Embassy on a H Block demonstration.

The campaign to release Nicky Kelly is growing by the day. At its annual conference the ITGWU unanimously passed a resolution calling for his freedom.

Even the Workers Party who have consistently opposed such resolutions was forced to lie low. Several other unions have passed similar resolutions.

The sympathy must now be translated into action. Over the next few days and weeks, the demonstrations to release Nicky Kelly should be broad-



ened far beyond the traditional republican and left-wing supporters. The unions must be pressurised, not just to pass resolutions but to campaign to bring their members on the streets behind their union banner.

The Nicky Kelly campaign can win. It can inflict a major defeat on this vicious government. The cracks have already begun to appear in the Labour Party. But it is up against powerful forces.

A section of the Gardai

organised around the political police pull every string to see him in his grave rather than free.

If it is to win it is going to need the massive power of the unions to open the gates of Portlaoise.

Sinn Fein- militant but not socialist



MAGGIE THATCHER has ridden high in the British General election. She has stood over four million unemployed and argued "There is no alternative." She has mauled the Labour Party into confusion over whether or not they would get rid of the Bomb.

But one area stands out like a beacon of opposition.

The impact of Sinn Fein throws a warning shot across the bows of 'constitutional politics' in Northern Ireland.

It is the Southern government who have most to lose by the decline of the SDLP. They rushed to stage the pomp of the new forum in the midst of the election campaign.

The battery of repression that they have built over the last few years has depended on a set of ideas that the 'terrorists' and subversives are a tiny minority.

Thatcher has already faced up to the prospect of a declining SDLP. They have long outlived their role. Gone are the days when they could deliver a moderating influence. As a result they were not even given the sop for modifying the plans for an assembly.

Unlike the Southern government, her position is not as dependant on the survival of a middle class, middle-aged constitutional party.

A vote for Sinn Fein was a progressive vote. It is a blow against the British and Irish ruling class. It signalled a belief that the Northern state is rotten to the core.

And it promised a break with all forms of moderation for putting an end to that state.

But the matter does not end there. A vote for Sinn Fein today spells less likelihood of mass activity on the streets than it did a year or two ago. Why?

For Sinn Fein the election strategy is fulfilling the same role as a successful military operation. You can sit at your front room telly and put two fingers up at Thatcher by having popped out to the ballot box. And there will be plenty of opportunities. Having done it in the general election you can repeat it in the local government and European election.

Sinn Fein has encouraged that passivity. It ran its election campaign under the slogan: "for principled leadership, a pro-Irish stance, and active constituency service." In order to broaden its support beyond those who back the armed struggle it placed fantastic stress on its advice centres. They are run by 'full-time voluntary workers rather than the old careerist politicians'.

Sincerity and enthusiasm in dealing with questions on welfare or harassment was regarded as one of the principal differences with the SDLP.

Sinn Fein provides the better service. Sinn Fein can achieve more for you than the SDLP. You only have to elect and support a 'new leadership'.

That unfortunately was the critical message of the Sinn Fein campaign.

The move to the left inside the organisation was lovely to be seen. The campaign was fought on who is the most determined nationalist. There was no mention of how the fight against unemployment can begin now. The socialism was tagged on as a last line, as a type of society that Sinn Fein will peacefully advocate in the far distant future.

But that is to be expected. Sinn Fein organises the most determined fighters for a Britless Ireland. It includes many individual socialists in its ranks. But it can never become a socialist organisation, despite its recent claims.

That is why we say. Vote for Sinn Fein but start the job of building a socialist alternative.