

# Socialist Worker

## For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

### After Packard defeat and Haughey victory:

# BOSSES PLAN TO

# PUT

# THE

# BOOT

# IN

AMID ALL the confusion surrounding the election of the Haughey government in the South one thing stands out clearly—that the working class is going to be hit hard.

Unless workers prepare now to defend themselves,

wage cuts and redundancies will be the order of the day.

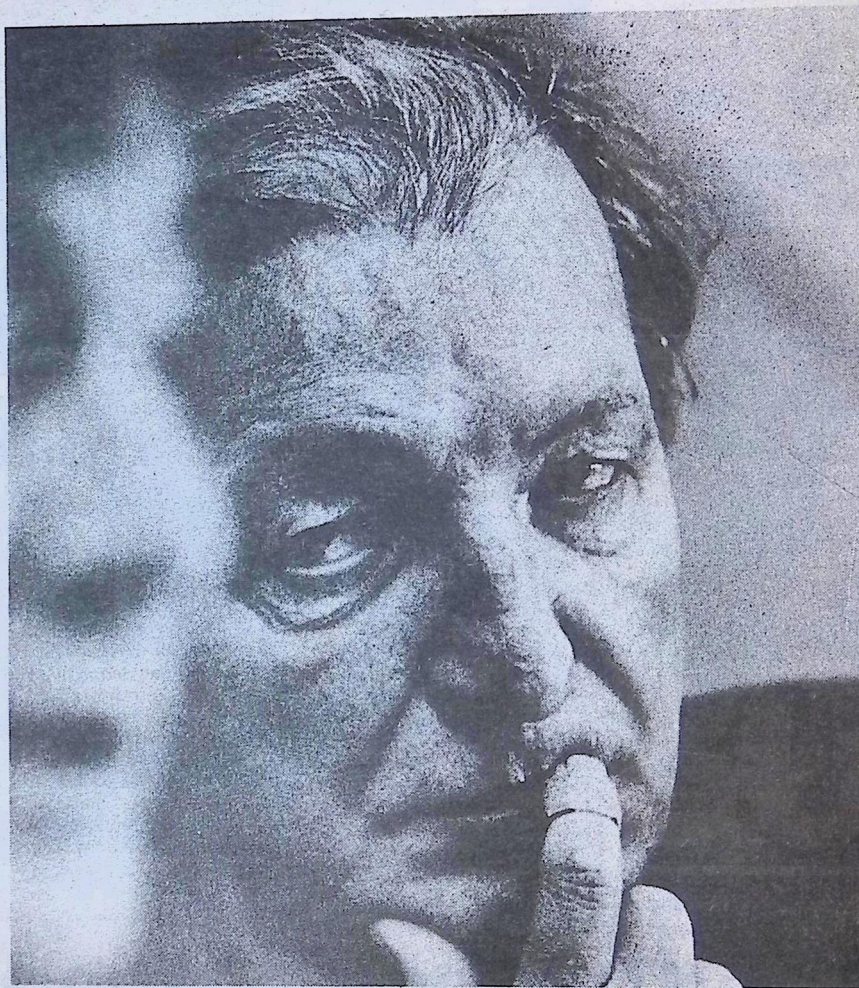
And all recent experience shows that the "official" leaders of the working class movement—the trade union bosses and the Labour and other "Left" TDs—will not put themselves at the forefront of any determined fightback.

While the right-wing parties wrangled about votes and preferences during the campaign, and over the personality of Charlie Haughey afterwards, they were absolutely united on one crucial point—that the economy is in dire straits and that workers must bear the brunt of putting it right.

The public sector is going to be savaged. Already the right-wing economists are calling for a complete wage freeze and further job losses in order to find the money to pay off the international bankers. Spending on health, welfare and education has also been targeted.

In the private sector, the buzz-words of the moment are "efficiency", "productivity" and "competitiveness". Which translated into working-class language means speed-ups, lower wages, tightened

Haughey plans to make the workers pay for the crisis



"discipline" and the destruction of hard-won trade union rights. What happened at Packards will set the pattern for the future.

In this situation it is useless—and worse than useless—for the main leaders of the Left to be contemplating taking part in a "Forum" on the economy involving the bosses and the government. Any talks on these lines will be talks about surrender without a fight.

It is *not* the job of trade union leaders or left-wing politicians to "play their part" in "getting the economy right". It is their job to lead *our* side against the class enemy which has made its aggressive intentions clear.

What we need to do more than anything else is to hold shop floor organisation together, and to rebuild it where it has been weakened and fragmented.

The narrowness of the back-to-work vote at Packards—despite an intense media campaign to demoralise the workforce—shows that there is a very sizable minority ready to stand firm against the attacks by the boss-class. And that minority would be much more substantial if the trade union leadership was at its head.

This points up the urgency of the task of building an alternative rank-and-file leadership and, in the longer term, of building a revolutionary socialist party with the aim not of dancing a duet with the "social partners" but of overthrowing the system based on the exploitation and increasing impoverishment of the working class.

The immediate message must be: *Stand firm—Defend every job—Resist every wage cut—Preserve trade union rights—No cuts in health, welfare or education—Fight Haughey.*

It's *their* system which is in crisis. Let *them* pay the price of clearing up the mess they have created.

Eamonn McCann reviews Gerry Adams' new book: page 8

# PORTLAOISE COPS THROW THEIR WEIGHT AROUND

IN KEEPING WITH THEIR long tradition of coercion, intimidation, and brutality, Portlaoise cops continue to harass any individual whom they deem to be indulging in "anti-social" behaviour. Stephen and Caroline Tynan are the latest victims to suffer at the hands of the navy clad thugs.

On November 7th 1986, the Special Branch, along with several Gardai, raided the couple's home, seemingly convinced that a hoard of hard drugs would be discovered. After ransacking the house and not finding any "illicit" substances, the thugs proceeded to strip search Caroline, who was nine months pregnant at the time, then as a final gesture of the brutality they strip searched the couple's 11 month old daughter, whom they also believed to be concealing hard drugs on her person. She wasn't.

## PRIME TARGET

Stephen Tynan, who was the prime target of the raid was not even at home when the cops called. The cops didn't for some strange reason deem it necessary to question Stephen as to his guilt. There wasn't a shred of evidence to substantiate their accusations. Undeterred by this, they did a tour of the town's pubs 'advising' the publicans not to serve Stephen, claiming he was a drug pusher.

The couple are not Portlaoise's equivalent to the Dunnes in fact neither have ever dealt in drugs. The only connection the cops can claim either of them have with drugs is the fact that back in 1974 Stephen Tynan was fined £10—for possession of cannabis. There is simply nothing whatsoever, either past or present, to support the idea that either of them deal in drugs. Their environment and lifestyle are similar to those of their largely unemployed neighbours and not the lavish lifestyle one normally associates with the large drug pushing networks. The probable explanation for the cops behaviour is that

the couple have a mildly anti-authoritarian image. While this amounts to little more than suggesting various ideas which are in variance with the establishment, i.e. supporting the campaign for divorce. Stephen was a supporter of the temporarily defunct Laois Unemployed Action Group, and has long argued for the legalisation of cannabis. The couple also married in a registry office. Hardly the stuff of a revolutionary, but the local cops are so paranoid that if anyone even asks questions, let alone oppose any single aspect of the system, they are interpreted as being anti-social in their behaviour and then are ruthlessly harassed.

This type of harassment will not come as a surprise to those of us in Portlaoise who have been confronted by machine gun wielding soldiers whilst flyposting for the divorce referendum, or have been questioned about armed robbery because "we heard you were selling a paper at the labour-exchange" or even more astoundingly have been lifted on the way to work for walking too slowly. This type of harassment does actually happen in Portlaoise, where one in every four families have members in the security forces, amongst the highest rate in the South.



Coercion, intimidation and brutality

## Good riddance to bad rubbish

READERS of Socialist Worker would probably agree that most of what goes on in Dail Eireann is quite sickening, but the farewell greetings for Oliver J. Flanagan on his retirement surpassed that institution's normal level of puke inducement.

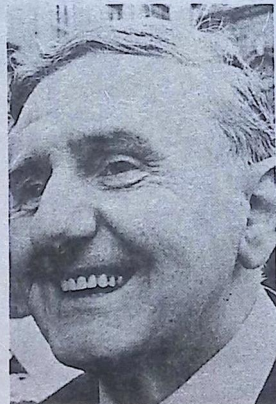
Politicians from all parties indulge in praise of his wonderful contribution to Irish politics. Even the so-called liberal Irish Times was moved enough to join in the act.

Could this be the same Ol Oliver J. Flanagan that we remember? The opponent of

contraception, abortion, divorce and just about every measly reform that was ever proposed in Dail Eireann?

One of his lesser known exploits was his contribution to a Dail debate in 1943. "There is one thing that Germany did, and that was to rout the Jews out of their country, until we rout the Jews out of this country it does not matter a hair's breadth what orders you make. Where the bees are, there is honey and where the Jews are, there is money."

We are glad to see the back of the old bastard.



## CORK: MARYFIELD FLATS

# Corpo slum scandal

THE CONDITION of the NBA flats in Mayfield, Cork is deteriorating into rat infested slum dwellings

The National Building Agency houses and flats were originally built from low standard material 20 years ago and were claimed originally to be a temporary measure only, to curb the rise in the need for housing in the Cork City area.

Twenty years on no measures are taken to maintain the flats, the Corpo maintenance crew are undermanned, due to temporary worker layoffs, and a recruitment embargo.

Meanwhile the tenants particularly those living in the flats, have to live with the atrocious conditions, while the Cork corporation are cutting back on essential services in the City.

Many of the tenants left to stew in the flats are old people and single parents. They are finding it almost impossible to get out into decent housing.

## COMPLAINED

One woman with two children complained to the Corpo about a large nest of rats in the old air vents, and demanded that she be rehoused. They told her to come back when she was married to her boyfriend; even though the rent was assessed on the boyfriend's income.

Another woman single parent with two children was just told straight 'you've no chance of getting a house'.

Old people seemingly don't fare any better. One old couple is still living at the top of a three storey flat after 8

years. The old woman has been having treatment to an ulcerated leg. She received signed documentation from her doctor that she should be allocated proper housing immediately so as not to have to limp up two flights of steps.

This situation of discrimination and rapidly deteriorating conditions can only be turned around by the collective action of the tenants themselves and the corporation workers who are being continually hammered by low pay, bad conditions, and undermanning.

Tenants associations could be set up linking up with NATO and the rent strike. Putting forward a real fighting demand for better housing and lower rents.

## EXPERIENCE

The Corpo workers need to regroup after the sell out they experienced at the hands of their union officials over parity with their fellow Dublin workers.

A start can be made by Cork corpo workers on the twin areas of low pay and undermanning in leafletting workers to attend rank and file meetings to discuss these and other problems facing the workforce. Also electing their own shop stewards to pressurise the officials and management from below.

The real potential of linking up these areas with the demands of local authority tenants would be a real collective force which would not easily be extinguished or ignored by our bosses and landlords.

- Eamonn Lewsley  
Cork SWM

# Is Gorbachev's 'openness' genuine?

RUSSIA and its leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, have been much in the news lately. Some 140 dissidents have been released from prison camps and another 140 releases are promised. More Russian Jews have been allowed to emigrate to Israel. As part of their policy of 'glasnot' or openness, Soviet journals are publishing articles on previously taboo subjects like masturbation as well as publishing letters criticising inefficiency and corruption. In the arms-reduction propaganda war, the Russians are winning, repeatedly appearing to take the initiative. Is this a huge con trick or are genuine changes taking

place in Russia? To get an answer we need a closer look.

Mr. Gorbachev and the Russian Bureaucracy wishes to compete with Western Capitalism, particularly the USA, on the world stage. The Russian economy is inferior to the US economy. For a start it is actually smaller; estimates vary from 40% to 75% of the US economy. It is inflexible and the quality of the goods it produces is, on the whole, low. With Reagan's America determined to 'compete it into the ground', a huge amount of resources has had to be committed to the arms race, 15% of GNP (compared with 8% in

the USA), thus putting a severe strain on the economy.

## RESPONSE

Gorbachev's response has been two sided. First, he has been importing Western technology, enabling a productivity growth of 9% a year. However, this has been bought with oil paid for in dollars and with the drop in oil prices and the depreciation of the dollar, his scope here has been restricted. The other approach has been to revive his own economy by some decentralising of economic power. To aid this, he has sought

to make political and social power less centralised and 'liberalise' Russian life, hence the release of prisoners etc.

When we examine this more closely, we find that most, if not all, of these dissidents applied for pardons and promised not to continue their criticism of the 'Soviet State'. These dissidents were pardoned for their 'crime' and Article 70, under which 'anti-Soviet propaganda or agitation' is a criminal offence, remains. Last year 914 Russian Jews were allowed to emigrate to Israel, pretty far short of the estimated 400,000 who wish to do so.

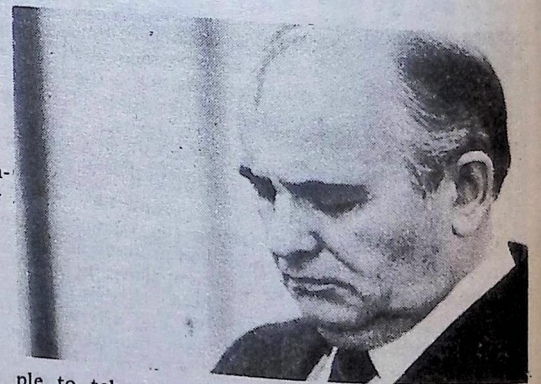
So 'liberalisation' looks like a pretty thin sand-

wich.

This 'liberalisation' has been tried before. In 1965 Kosygin introduced economic reforms which foundered when the central Ministries were able to claw back the powers they had conceded. More importantly, in the 1950's Khrushchev tried to ease the political and social controls, but when the Hungarians tried to initiate change themselves, the tanks rolled in and reform stopped.

## ENCOURAGE

At root, Gorbachev has the same problems as his predecessors. Any freedom will encourage peo-



ple to take things into their own hands, as events recently in China have shown. The consequences of reforms in the USSR will be the same. Once initiatives start to come from be-

low, the state will attempt to reverse the reforms. Whether it succeeds will depend on the strength of the Russian working class.

## Video ban for Techs in Dublin

EARLIER this year, students of Bolton St. College of Technology and similarly Kevin St. learned that the goods provided in their Students Union shop would be limited and pool tables and video machines would be banned when their offices and common room were moved to new college buildings.

This is a very serious implication because not only will it be an end to subsidised stationary and other course-related material, as well as loss of funds for clubs and societies, it also calls into question the right of students to trade on campus.

According to Aidan Kerins, Union President: "Student Unions are doing the work that the colleges should be doing... we provide welfare for students... arrange tours and entertainment for students that just don't exist otherwise".

So far, an all-out one day strike has been held in Bolton St. and the College canteen has been randomly boycotted. A 2 day all-out strike has also been planned.

These actions will have to be escalated to ensure victory for the students and the maintaining of these important facilities at both colleges.

## Kowloon Hush-up

AN ORGANISED cover up is underway on the Kowloon Bridge disaster. This ship broke up off the Cork coast line spilling thousands of tons of oil. Now, however, there is not a word about the ship as tourist elements led by Bord Fáilte try to keep a gag on the incident.

But there are 200 five gallon drums of a deadly chemical compound TBT still stored on the ship. TBT (tributyl tin) is an anti-fouling agent for ships. It is banned in some countries because of its dangers to marine life. A small amount of TBT would be enough to wipe out all marine life in a big lake.

Recent reports also suggest that oil is still leaking from the Kowloon Bridge. In some parts of Cork, the coastline is covered a few inches thick - and the oil is still coming in.

In a statement to the press, the Kowloon Bridge Emergency Committee has called for an end to the cover up. Instead, they demand that all technical resources are mobilised to deal with the spillage. They estimate that 800 to 1,300 people per square mile are needed to do an efficient clean up.

But the establishment in this country are well used to environmental cover ups. They co-operated with the British authorities in keeping quiet on Sellafield for years.

# WE THINK

## Class realities behind election arithmetic

FOLLOWING the inconclusive result of the general election, a new "Alliance of the Left" will appear attractive to many workers in the South. Tony Gregory has argued that Haughey could be coaxed into making "major concessions" if he was confronted by a united grouping of himself, the four Workers' Party TDs, Jim Kemmy and, possibly, the Labour Party. For its part, the WP has asked for talks with Labour. And a number of Labour TDs have indicated that they would welcome the formation of a "Left Liaison" group in Leinster House.

The notion of a broad "Left" pulling together in the new situation makes sense. A grouping along some such lines could possibly operate to restrain Fianna Fail from putting the boot into health, social welfare and education spending as viciously as the right-wing economists are demanding, and, up to a point, it could help to protect the public sector generally from the ravages of the privatisers and the advocates of cuts, cuts and more cuts in all directions.

Every sensible socialist will agree that the left-wing TDs should put their highest priority on organising themselves in the best possible way to protect the working class from attack over the period of this parliament. In fact all sensible socialists will demand that they do this.

But that's not the end of the matter. It is necessary also to be aware of just how little *can* be achieved by use of the Leinster House arithmetic and, more generally, of the reasons the Left finds itself in this marginal position anyway - with some bargaining power to play with but still definitely not numbered among the big political battalions.

The left TDs, without any exceptions, are committed to the parliamentary system they have just won seats in. In many instances it has precisely been their willingness to work diligently within this system, to be "better at it" than candidates from the Right, which has given them their electoral support. Voters have awarded them high marks for hard work.

There is a price to be paid for playing this game.

The Labour Party accepts that there "must be" cuts, and argues about where they should be, when they should come and how deep they should go.

The Workers' Party suggests a new "Forum" to tackle unemployment involving government, trade unions and the employers.

These policies are very significant. They make it clear that the Left in Leinster House is set to use its bargaining power to challenge the directions of some of the policies of the latest Right-wing government, and to suggest "decent" alternatives. They are not set to confront the Right-wing head-on.

This reflects both the mild reformist policies (such as the above) on which they have been elected and also the continuing weakness of the Left-wing forces as a whole. The fact that, potentially at least, the Left is in a pivotal position in Leinster



Flashback to last year's Dublin Corporation strike

House should not blind any of us to the fact that socialism in Southern Ireland remains very much a minority interest. Eighty-five per cent of the voters - a figure which must include a substantial majority of working-class voters - chose Right-wing candidates, not Left. The Left's combined percentage poll (13 per cent, including Sinn Féin) compares with the 17 per cent the Labour Party achieved on its own in 1969. In terms of popular opinion there has not been a "breakthrough".

This weakness is far more important than the sensitive position or bargaining skills of TDs in Leinster House. Notwithstanding some notable exceptions, it has been the absence of widespread grass-roots militancy, the lack of an obvious readiness by workers to fight back themselves, which has cleared the way, in Ireland as everywhere, for Right-wing governments to cut jobs and attack workers' living standards in order to make the working class pay the price of the capitalist crisis. Much more important than a united Left group in Leinster House, what is needed in the next weeks, months and years is organised resistance to the Right by the working class itself. If the Left TDs were to use the platform and prestige

which goes with a seat in parliament to say loudly and plainly to workers: *prepare now to defend every job, get organised to resist every cut*; if they were to campaign throughout the labour movement to put heart into that minority which *is* willing to resist, they *could* transform the political situation.

But it has been the absence of just this sort of leadership from the Left parties now represented in Leinster House which, more than anything else, has made the demoralisation and rank-and-file disorganisation we can see all around us inevitable. And there can be no confidence that this will change.

The *politics* of the Labour Party, the WP and the individual Left TDs means, inevitably, that they will continue to direct workers' energies and aspirations away from rank-and-file self-organisation and towards reliance on what can be achieved by parliamentary manoeuvre. When they direct their attentions towards activity in the trade union movement they will continue to urge workers to rely not on their own capacity to fight but on the abilities and advice of full-time officialdom.

The Socialist Workers' Move-

ment position is that the Left TDs should certainly be supported in whatever efforts they make to ease the impact of the Right-wing offensive, and should be encouraged to operate in the most effective, co-ordinated way towards that end.

But at the same time workers should be under no illusion that solutions can be found or the Right-wing decisively defeated by looking to Leinster House. In the end, what's needed is a revolutionary socialist party based on the struggles of workers themselves, rather than on activity conducted "on their behalf" in the opulent surroundings of Leinster House. The SWM exists to try to bring such a party into existence.

More immediately, the scattered groups of militants who do exist and who might accept the general thrust of this analysis, who may be members of various Left-wing organisations or none, should come together and take precise steps now to lay the framework of a rank-and-file organisation which could take the lead in coordinating the resistance which assuredly will be necessary when the onslaught on our working-class rights and conditions of living gets fully under way.

# INTERNATIONAL

## Food surpluses soar while millions starve

Our television screens are again filled with scenes of widespread famine in Africa — this time in Mozambique. Here NIGEL HARRIS examines why famine has become such a common occurrence and finds that much of the blame lies with the EEC's Common Agricultural Policy.

THE CAMPAIGN FOR famine relief in Ethiopia and Sudan had the merit of spotlighting the terrible conditions there. But it had the bad effect of concealing just how many other countries were starving or close to starving. The chart shows the countries where the average calorie intake has fallen below what is medically considered the minimum between 1974 and 1983.

The chart does not include all the countries that, in 1984, had insufficient food per head; 44 of the 96 main developing countries were in that position. And it does not include some key famine cases, for example Ethiopia and Sudan, because they "improved" their position between 1974 and 1983 — from 82 to 93 percent for Ethiopia, and 88 to 90 percent for Sudan.

Above all, the figures do not tell you who actually eats what; the figures are based upon the availability of money to buy the foodstuffs.

However, despite these severe weaknesses, the chart does show that a lot of countries now have access to only four fifths of what food is needed to maintain a minimum standard of life (and it is a pretty austere minimum). And it highlights some catastrophic cases—Mali, Ghana, Chad. Ghana is especially extreme—like to a lesser extent, Zimbabwe—because of the disastrous fall between the two years.

It also illustrates one of the elements in the growing import of foodstuffs

by developing countries. Between 1970 and 1984 these imports increased 71 percent. Now there is no harm in food imports—indeed, the enhancement, enrichment and diversification of diets requires increasing trade—provided developing countries have an equal opportunity to export those goods where they have an advantage.

That is the problem. Agriculture is one of the most extreme cases of tight control within world capitalism—indeed, a new theory of imperialism could be based upon the control of foodstuffs rather than capital or manufactured goods. And it is here where we can identify one of the most powerful sources of famine.

### NOTORIOUS

The good citizens of Europe, North America and Japan pay roughly an extra £51,000 million annually to subsidise food production at home. The Europeans, especially generous in this respect, pay about £66 for every man, woman and child in Europe each year.

As is notorious, this prodigious open handedness has built mountains and lakes of surplus foodstuffs, now sufficient to feed the whole population of Africa five times over. World cereal stocks are approaching 200 million tonnes — when the countries of the Sahel region in Africa needed only 3 to 4 million tonnes to keep their starving alive.

The size of European food stocks is at last becoming insupportable. The value — £8,760 million — is notional,

because if an attempt were made to sell the stocks, world prices would crash so low that less than half the notional value would be recovered.

The cost of storage is now coming to exceed the value of what is stored. Take, for example, the one and a half tonnes of butter (ten pounds per head of the European population). It costs £143 million per year just to keep it — and even then an unknown quantity is deteriorating into nasty butter oil.

No wonder the EEC is so desperate to offload the stocks in any way at all provided it does not reach needy consumers in Europe. They are now selling butter stocks at under 3p per pound (as against £1 per pound on the European retail market) to be fed to calves. And this year the Russians will be given a £143 million subsidy to take EEC butter.

This astonishing heap of corruption is not, however, the problem, nor simply the way in which European governments oblige the inhabitants to pay astronomical prices to produce foodstuffs that must in the main be pure waste. The real problem — and where it connects with famine — is that the EEC subsidises agricultural exports.

Europe spends £3-4,000 million annually to dump foodstuffs on the world market — which then wrecks the export markets of developing countries. As a result, developing countries are denied the opportunity to earn the revenue that allows them to buy grain (even though prices are now desperately low) to offset famine.

### INEFFICIENT

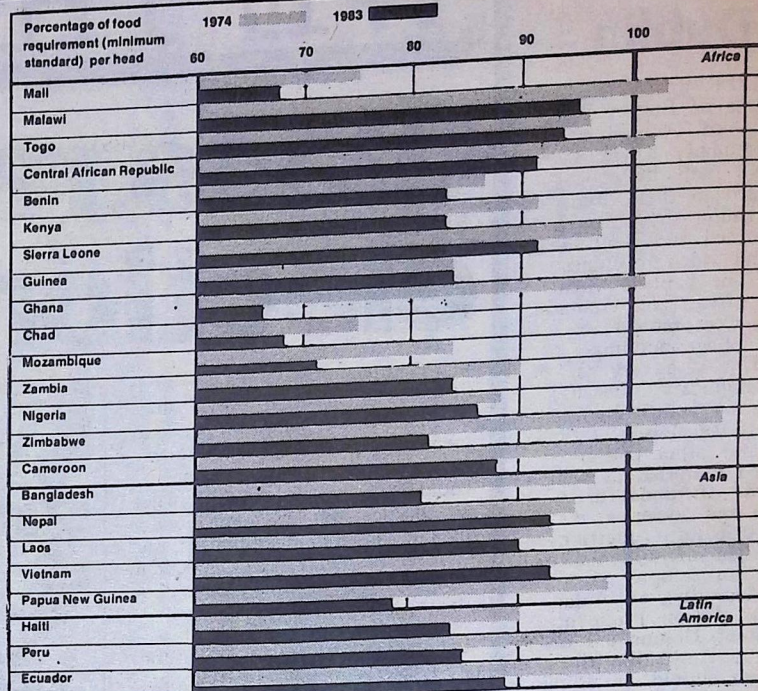
Take, for example, sugar. Because of the subsidies, the EEC has now become the largest exporter of sugar in the world, even though, compared to sugar cane growers, sugar beet producers are very inefficient. In the sixties Europe supplied about 8 percent of world sugar exports; in the eighties over 20 percent.

The scale of subsidies is scarcely believable — especially, compared to most EEC politicians' views on social spending. In mid-1984, when the EEC exported sugar at £93.50 per tonne, it was buying it from European sugar refiners at £346.50 per tonne. The subsidy — of £253 — was nearly three times the value of the sugar on the world market. You wonder why they don't just pay the money and cut the sugar out altogether.

Such a scale of subsidy is death to Third World producers. On the island of Negros in the Philippines there is a famine because of the mass sackings that have resulted from the low sugar price that Common Market exports have caused. Filipino exports — 2.6 million tonnes in 1977 — were 600,000 in 1985.

Mozambique is now an endemic famine area; 100,000 are said to have died in the famine three years ago, and over three million people are at risk in the season 1986-87.

The chart shows how hunger is getting worse



## PHILIPPINES: Will Aquino be able to pacify the army?

THE PHILIPPINES HAS continued to be in the news in recent months. In the referendum on Feb. 7th 78 per cent of the population voted in favour of the new constitution proposed by President Cory Aquino. The main thrust of the constitution was that the army was to be confined to a secondary role.

The role of the military under the Marcos regime and the attempted coup last November has inspired fear of the military. The size of the vote in favour of the new constitution is then an indicator of this fear rather than being an indicator of a high level of support for Aquino herself.

Internally Aquino is facing major problems, not just from the military threat from the right, but also from the Communist led New People's Army (NPA). General Ramos, the Minister of Defence claims the NPA control at least 19% of the country's villages and that they operate in most regions of the country.

A ceasefire had been in operation since Dec 10th. The National Democratic Front (NDF) the political front of the NPA, had been involved in peace talks with the government; they were pushing for participation in a coalition government, redistribution of land without compensation, a revamp of the military and a rewritten constitution; they also refused to give up the armed struggle.

The NDF pulled out of negotiations in January after 15 farmers, marching for land reform, were shot dead by government troops outside the Presidential Palace. The ceasefire ended officially on Feb. 8th. The NPA has refused Aquino's offer to return to the negotiating table as no progress was made during

the ceasefire. Aquino has since ordered the resumption of this 18 year struggle, taking up Marcos' unfinished business. Since the ceasefire ended more than 40 have died. Villagers in Lupao, Nueva Ecija province, north of Manila, claim that the military massacred the 14 civilians who died there on Feb. 13th. The rebels have met in Agusan Mindanao to prepare for a protracted struggle against what they claim are U.S. supported counter-insurgency tactics by the government.

Since the overthrow of the Marcos regime in February 1986 little has changed in the Philippines for the farmers and workers. The murder of 15 farmers outside the Presidential Palace is an indicator of the lengths the present regime will go to to stop any protests at its failure to introduce reforms.

Economically the Philippines is suffering because of its massive foreign debt (\$26 billion) and the collapse of the raw materials market on which it depends for export revenue; at present the price of sugar, one of the Philippines main exports, on the world market is less than its production cost in the Philippines.

Financing reforms will be difficult for Aquino and to pacify the military and big business she will have to deal with the NPA. A compromise with the left seems ruled out by the failure of the negotiations. The next period will be a big test for the resources of the NPA. Its ability to link its struggle to the struggles of the 21 million Filipino workers will be crucial. Under Aquino strikes have increased by 60% and is an indicator of the increased confidence of the working class after the ousting of Marcos.



# Where now for South Africa?

**WILL BOTH** continue to increase the repression or will he be forced to return to some sort of reform programme after the spring elections?

IT IS NOT exactly clear what is going to happen. But one thing is certain. There is a deep economic and political crisis in South Africa. The ruling class cannot continue to rule in the old way, as someone once said.

It has offered numerous fake reforms designed to co-opt a layer of leaders from the black middle class and demoralise the movement.

But the level of struggle, particularly in the townships, has meant this strategy is really a non starter now.

In industry it is clear that the government saw the Weihan reforms—which legalised independent black unions provided they registered with the Industrial Council—as the start of a major change. They provided a basic structure for “containing conflict” in the words of the Manpower Department.

Sections of big business say the reforms have been successful, that trade union leaders and employers are starting to behave as they imagine they should in a western democracy.

In a certain sense they are right. The trade unions have had to develop a means of working through bureaucratic negotiating procedures with the bosses and the Industrial Council. Workers are behaving less unpredictably.

But if Botha tries to base his rule on these sort of reforms they will have to be of real interest to significant sections of the black population.

He may even have to seriously consider the multi-racial representation being proposed in Natal by Inkatha leader Chief Gatsha Buthelezi.

Equally the government might try to develop a similar strategy for the townships to that of the homelands. This would involve a higher degree of credibility and patronage for the local leaders, and more resources for the township police.

But full scale reform of the Weihan nature would require massive resources and a significant liberalisation. The government is just not capable of supplying those resources.

And it knows such reforms open up space for action and organisation to develop.

The possibility of negotiations with Nelson Mandela and his possible release, which Inkatha lays down as its starting point for a deal with the government, has been on the threshold for two years now.

In the press last year all the talk was of an offer made to Mandela. Maybe it will happen, anything seems possible.

All of these are possibilities, but I think we have to assume for now that the repression will intensify.

**WHAT ABOUT** the bosses. What are they proposing?

**WHAT IS AMAZING** is how much the so called liberal capitalists are prepared to go along with the state.

Eighteen months ago there seemed to be a broad alliance starting to develop between the United Democratic Front (UDF), the churches and liberal bosses.

The Federated Chambers of Industry produced a “business charter” that was basically a manifesto of liberal democracy. But with the first bit of pressure from the government these bosses completely folded up.

COSATU, the main union federation, pushed some bosses to formally dissociate themselves from the state of emergency. But very little has happened since then. Basically the bosses are not suffering. All the indices of business confidence rose in every month after the emergency.

A recent survey on management's attitude to the emergency showed about 40 percent of them were not opposed to it. A minority even said it was a good move because it got rid of the stewards from the factories and strengthened their hand on the shop floor.

Most of them have just learnt to live with it. It only affects them where a shop steward has been detained and they have been forced to provide for the family.

**IS THERE** much concern about disinvestment?

**THE BOSSES** don't like disinvestment. It is a massive international slap in the face to South

African capitalism.

But conscious political motives are not really behind the withdrawals of IBM and General Motors. The process of “South Africanisation” was going on anyway.

The economy is dominated by South African multinationals like Barlow Rand and Anglo American. These companies are quite capable of making bids for companies like Barclays Bank when they pull out.

Take the case of General Motors. In the car industry there are seven manufacturers. But they have the problem of a small market, which is kept small because of institutionalised racism. The export market is also in decline.

On top of this, exchange pressures two years ago meant that the value of South African investment halved overnight. In other words, the earnings of foreign companies with South African investments have declined drastically.

Companies have pulled out because South Africa is a much less attractive proposition. Added to this is the political pressure from the anti-apartheid movement.

**HOW HARD** has organisation been hit since last year's state of emergency was declared?

**ONE INDICATION** is the size of the strike that followed the Kinross mine disaster last September. It must have been the biggest health and safety strike in world history—right in the middle of the emergency!

Up to 300,000 miners—about half the industry—took action in the Kinross strike on 1 October, making it the biggest ever strike in the mines.

The black miners' union, the NUM, could not believe the success of the action. Another 100,000-250,000 other workers came out on strike in solidarity.

In terms of township organisation the Eastern Cape seems to have been particularly hard hit. In some areas people have been removed street by street, committee by committee.

The UDF has been the hardest hit by the latest detentions. The police are now going after targeted individuals in a clear attempt to smash the UDF national leadership.

But the rent boycotts are still continuing. These require a level of organ-

Socialist Worker talks to a South African political activist



**BLACK MINERS** stage a massive protest strike while the regime sends security forces into the townships

isation, so it is a good indicator that some of it is still intact.

The youth are more and more looking to a military solution. They have faced the police and the army day after day for years, without weapons. They identify with MK (the military branch of the ANC) because of this. At most large gatherings wooden replicas of guns are on display.

The hold of the ANC ideas has not weakened. But there is a feeling that the strategy of “liberation before education” and “ungovernability” in the townships is over for the time being.

The youth feel they can't win the struggle in just one township. Even though some have become no go areas for the security forces, the struggle has always been contained in the townships. Therefore, they reason, the only solution is a military one.

**HAS UNION** organisation changed as a result of the emergency?

**THE organisation** of COSATU is very much the same as it was at the time of its foundation a year ago.

The long established, big industrial unions are still very largely under worker leadership—those who put industrial workers in the centre of organ-

isational power.

Some populists—people who put emphasis on community based organisation—also have influence.

The leadership of COSATU is, however, overwhelmingly populist. This has meant COSATU becoming identified more with the ANC.

The workerists have not come out with a perspective that is any real alternative. They are often silent about national issues which COSATU has to take a position over. It is left to UDF people in such situations.

There is a tendency among the workerists who have been tired out and demoralised by day to day struggles to withdraw into the individual unions.

The left has concentrated on maintaining their bases through education and shop stewards councils. The metal workers' union, MAWU, is developing a whole range of shop stewards councils. It is due to merge with the motor assembly industry union, NAAWU, and the motor mechanics' union MICWU, and is starting to make big gains.

They have organised most of the major private sector engineering employers now and may move into the state sector, which employs at least 50,000 potential members.

In the mines there is now a demand from the NUM for the shaft stewards—the miners' shop stewards—to take over the health and

safety jobs. It also wants to get rid of the bonus system.

These demands follow the Kinross mine disaster. At present white miners have sole charge over health and safety. But their main role is maximising production. The situation is made more acute by the bonus system.

White miners can double or treble their earnings on a bonus system based on the productivity of black miners, who get next to nothing from it.

**THERE HAS** been a dispute at the Beartix mine which culminated in miners from one tribe going home. What lies behind this sort of conflict in the mines?

**THERE IS** a tendency in strike situations to get conflicts, and very often groups of miners will just give up on it and go home.

There is a level of tribalism, which is even reflected in the membership of the NUM in various localities. But it basically comes from 100 years of enforced tribalism by management. Their strategy has always been to divide and weaken.

It differs considerably from mine to mine. But, in general, management spread various myths about miners from different tribes. They say that

Sotho are good face workers, for example, while Zulus make good security police.

On top of this the compounds are segregated according to tribe.

And this doesn't just happen on the mines. There are segregated hostels in the industrial areas. MAWU made its big expansion in the early 80s by recruiting workers from the hostels.

One worker at a hostel would be signed up, and very soon the rest of the hostel would also join. So the result is that the union temporarily gets a tribal character in a particular locality, reflecting the composition of the hostel.

But the NUM has a declared policy of non-tribalism. The leadership of the union certainly comes from a variety of the different tribes.

There is not even a specific problem with Zulu workers. The strikers at the long running dispute at BTR Sarncol, for example, are overwhelmingly Zulus. But they are 100 percent solid behind the strike and the union, despite the attempts by Inkatha (the Zulu tribal organisation) to split them away.

Tribalism is only really a major feature in the mines where the employers strictly control the situation—and, of course, in Natal, where Inkatha's attack on union organisation has had some effect. But it is not an issue in general industry.

**AIDS — Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome** — seems to have no bounds to its destructive potential. But fighting the disease is not impossible. It depends on clearing away the bigotry and anti-gay hysteria that is compounding the problem. Here, **GORETTI HORGAN** looks at the disease which has produced more moral than medical debate, at the chances of a cure being found and at how the spread of AIDS can best be stopped.

**AIDS MAY BE ONE OF THE MOST** serious health threats to face the world for some years. But in the four years since medical scientists isolated the virus, there has been less talk about how to fight the disease than about the morality of the most effective way to fight it. AIDS has been used by the 'Moral Majority' to provoke fear, prejudice and conservative attitudes to sexual morality which they hope will roll back even the very limited sexual freedoms won by women and gays in the 60s and 70s.

The reasons for fear are real enough. It is estimated that as many as ten million people world wide may be infected with the HIV virus, the cause of AIDS. In the USA by Jan. of this year, there were 16,667 deaths from the disease. It is estimated that by the end of 1991, 270,000 cases of full blown AIDS will have occurred in the US, causing 179,000 deaths in the ten years since the virus was first identified in 1981.

In Britain, there are already more than 30,000 AIDS carriers. Over 550 people have been found to have full blown AIDS. Half of these are dead. And the number of people with AIDS in Britain doubles every ten months.

In Ireland, the numbers are still relatively few. In January of this year, the Southern Dept. of Health had fifteen registered cases of full blown AIDS and at least 520 people were known to carry the disease. Thirteen Irish people have died of AIDS — nine in the South, four in the North.

But in spite of this, and in spite of the fact that the spread of the virus can be slowed down by safer sexual practices, the Southern government has yet to begin its mass education campaign on AIDS. Such a campaign would be meaningless unless it were to advocate the use of condoms to protect against the virus, yet the delay in getting the campaign under way is due mainly to indecision on this point. The Health Education Bureau has produced only one booklet on AIDS and that was of little use since it refused to

encourage the use of condoms and the other "safe sex" practices promoted by groups like Gay Health Action.

This refusal is not all that surprising since homosexual acts between men are still illegal in the Twenty Six Counties. While homosexuality is no longer illegal in the other Six, anti-gay bigotry is still rife with the DHSS doing as little as possible for fear of the combined wrath of the Catholic Church and the remnants of Paisley's 'Save Ulster from sodomy' campaign.

Nor is it only in relation to the sexual transmission of the disease that the governments, North and South, have their heads in the sand. The highest risk group by far in Ireland is not gay men or haemophiliacs. It is heroin addicts — intravenous drug users. Yet there has been no sign of the kind of dramatic action needed if the spread of the disease among the country's drug users is to be stopped. Sharing needles with someone who has the AIDS virus is perhaps the most certain method of contracting the disease. Sharing needles is common among junkies, the only way it can be stopped is by giving free needles to addicts.

Not only has there been no official move towards distributing free needles, but according to a recent *Hot Press* article, the kind of facilities available for testing addicts for the virus are so overworked as to be totally useless.

When addicts come to the Drug Unit in Jervis Street hospital in Dublin seeking phsyptone, a substitute drug for heroin which lessens the withdrawal effects, they are given a blood test for the HIV virus.

The addict receives the phsyptone for two weeks, after which there is no further contact with the Drug Unit. However, it takes about three weeks before the results of the blood test are available. The addict is no longer attending the clinic and normally the contact address which they have given is false

— for obvious reasons since possession of heroin is a crime.

Of course, it needn't take three weeks to get the test results. Under ideal circumstances, results of the HIV tests could be available in a day and a half. But ideal circumstances demand proper funding of laboratories and full staffing levels. Ten times more people are now being screened for AIDS than when testing was initiated. The number of staff remain the same. Increasing the laboratory staff would not cost very much, would not involve facing up to the Church or the moral majority, yet even this simple step has not been taken.

Indeed the attitude of many of those dealing with heroin addicts, including that of the Coolmine Treatment Centre has effectively been that addicts should be punished for their illness by refusing them free needles or other facilities which might prevent them contracting AIDS.

## Here are the facts

\* AIDS is caused by a virus, HIV (human immuno-deficiency virus). This attacks the immune system, which is used to fight off infection. Once the immune system is broken down the body is easy prey to diseases, and death follows. Not all people infected with the virus however go on to develop AIDS.

\* Like all viruses HIV is tiny — about one thousandth the size of the blood cells it infects. And like all viruses it can only reproduce itself within living cells. It specifically attacks those white blood cells known as 'helper' T-cells that trigger our immune system to destroy invading micro-



A scene from the American film *Buddies* about coming to terms with AIDS

organisms. It is because semen contains many of these T-cells that the disease is so easily sexually transmittable and why using a condom can protect.

\* By January of this year, thirteen Irish people had died of AIDS while another 600 people were known to carry the virus. The highest risk group in Ireland is not gay men, it's drug addicts. This explains why Ireland has the highest incidence in Europe of babies being born with the AIDS virus.

\* In Britain, mainly as a result of individuals taking basic precautions, the number of new cases of AIDS among gays has started to level out. In London, the incidence of other forms of sexually transmitted diseases has fallen by two thirds among gays.

\* Despite all the hysteria, the virus is not easily transmitted. For example, of more than 650 reported cases of 'needle stick' injuries involving HIV-infected blood — where a doctor or nurse is accidentally punctured by a syringe needle — not one has resulted in infection. The only instance of a health worker being infected at work is when a nurse fell on a syringe containing infected blood and 'injected' herself.

\* The HIV virus cannot survive outside the blood and body fluids and all the evidence is that it can be transmitted only in blood, in semen and, it seems, in breast milk. There is a hypothetical risk attached to deep or 'French' kissing since tiny amounts of virus have been isolated from the saliva of some carriers. But there is no evidence whatever of the virus being transmitted in this way.

\* The AIDS virus cannot survive on the skin, is not transmitted in sweat and is in no way airborne. It has not been found in urine or faeces, though even if it had there would be absolutely no risk from toilet seats or swimming pools.

\* The virus is easily destroyed by simple health measures used to protect against much more highly infectious blood borne diseases such as hepatitis B. It is killed by household disinfectant and bleach, and no additional precautions are necessary for health workers, lab workers and so on.



Above: Hysteria about AIDS  
Below: A doctor tries to dispel hysteria that the disease is not infectious

## Africa: why millions may be facing death

'The Gay Plague', 'The disease of Sodom' are the kind of labels which the media has attached to AIDS. But these labels hide the fact that the disease has never been confined only to gay men. Africa's tragedy is grim proof of this.

Africa is devastated by disease. Polio, measles, tetanus, diphtheria and dysentery are rampant. They kill six million African children each year. For the past five years AIDS has seemed like just one more disease amongst many. Now it threatens to out-kill them all.

Already a quarter of the people in some central African cities are infected with the virus which causes AIDS. Anything between 30-70 percent of these will die. Maybe all of them. Third

World agencies predict that half the population of some countries will die. Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Zaire and Ghana are among the worst hit countries.

The vast majority of people infected

are in their 20s and 30s, as many women as men. At least one million will die in the next ten years, possibly many more.

Eighteen percent of blood donors in Kigali, capital of Rwanda, have the virus. In Zambia, Lusaka 33 per cent of all men aged 30-35 are infected.

The key to explaining this frightening speed of AIDS in Africa is poverty. The surest protection against AIDS and all other sexually transmitted diseases is the sheath. But just one percent of the world's production of condoms reaches Africa and the Middle East. And those that do are often old and defective, 'dumped' on the Third World market by profiteering companies.

Screening blood stocks for HIV contamination is expensive. It requires special equipment, training and chemicals imported from the west. So it just doesn't happen. Yet the need for blood transfusions is vastly greater in Africa. In Rwanda, one child in three requires a transfusion against anaemia caused by malaria. Large numbers of

women need transfusions for anaemia following multiple pregnancies.

The shortage of needles for hypodermic syringes means that disposable needles are used over and over again. If not properly sterilised they transmit the AIDS virus. Yet hospitals in Kampala (Uganda) often lack so much as bleach!

Crippled by international debts, African governments cannot attempt even the kind of miserly campaigns begun in the six counties and promised in the South. Some governments have produced posters and leaflets. But what use is explaining safe sex where there are no condoms. And what effect can leaflets and advertisements have when in much of the region no more than one in two adults can read?

Millions, maybe hundreds of millions, face death from AIDS in Africa. They could be saved from infection by simple health measures. Instead, they will continue to be screwed for debt repayments.



# What's behind the scares

## Why they try to blame gays

SINCE the AIDS virus was first isolated in 1981, it has been portrayed by the media as a "gay plague"; the ruling class has exploited understandable fears about the disease to try to impose their much talked of, but little practised (by them), "family values" and to attack "promiscuity" and homosexuality. To the born-again Christian element of the moral majority, the virus is a "punishment from God" for all sex outside marriage and especially for gay sex.

The Catholic Church's attitude to AIDS has been downright dangerous. They say that governments shouldn't encourage "safe sex" practices such as the use of condoms — that sexual intercourse is right only within marriage and that the use of condoms, which are barriers to conception as well as disease, is forbidden by the Church.

The majority of people, even perhaps the majority of younger practising Catholics, don't hold to the view that sex should be confined to marriage. But AIDS appears to have given the forces of reaction some medical "evidence" for their view of what is "natural" and "right". In fact, it does nothing of the kind. To start on a minor, but telling, point: the one group in society least likely to contract AIDS is lesbians. Vaginal secretions can carry the AIDS virus but only at such a minute level that it is not easily transmitted. Semen on the other hand contains highly transmittable levels of the virus — so for women who want to avoid AIDS marriage is not the best solution. Having sex only with other women is much safer.

The most important point to be made, however, about the sexual attitudes of the moral majority, is that it is precisely

such attitudes which have allowed AIDS to become the major health problem it now represents. The virus has always killed more heterosexuals than homosexuals. But the majority of such deaths were in Africa and ignored. When the virus first hit the Western world, it killed mainly homosexual men, drug addicts and prostitutes. As long as the disease affected only these "marginal" groups, nothing was done about it. It was only when the death rate crept into the thousands among gays and only when it became obvious that it would soon kill thousands of heterosexuals that Western governments started to do anything to stop the spread of the virus. By then the disease had already spread to all sections of the population.

The notion that the disease could have been confined to the gay community was based on a fundamental misconception. The stereotypical image is that gays live and move in a small ghetto, quite separate from "normal" society. This is rubbish.

In fact about ten per cent of men in Ireland are gay — at least one hundred thousand men North and South. A further twenty percent are bisexual and it is estimated that about a quarter of a million Irish men have had a homosexual experience leading to orgasm at some point in their lives. In other words, homosexuality is an integral, if largely hidden, part of our entire society.

The idea pushed by the Catholic Church, fundamentalist Protestant churches, the "moral majority" and the government is that AIDS spreads because too many people, and too many gays in particular, are having

sex with too many other people. They are pushing this view because it bolsters the ruling class idea that sex should be confined to one faithful marriage — as something to be endured not enjoyed, its sole purpose to bring children into the world. This view puts gay sex way beyond the pale, since it is in no way connected with reproduction.

It is because sex with someone of the same sex is so totally separated from reproduction that gays are made outcasts in society. Because this separation challenges all the stereotypes of man-woman relationships, all the ideas about sexual love being possible only within the family set-up.

In fact, people have always found ways of breaking out of the artificial limits placed on their sex lives by social and religious morals. In the 6th-8th centuries, when Ireland was known as "the island of saints and scholars", all heterosexual intercourse was deemed to occur within marriage; there were, however, different grades of marriage. So a one night stand was a very low grade carrying with it very few rights, while a legally contracted marriage, complete with dowry and property settlements, was a grade one marriage with many rights and responsibilities.

This historical fact goes to show that in every age, regardless of public morality or religious commandment, sex has been enjoyed, overtly or covertly, by as many people as have the opportunity. Humans have a capacity for enjoying sex way beyond what is required to reproduce the species. And in

different societies, homosexuality has often had equal status with heterosexuality. So neither heterosexual nor homosexual promiscuity is in any way unnatural or "new".

But anti-gay propaganda and moralism about promiscuity continues to allow AIDS to spread. People who suspect they have the disease have to keep quiet for fear of victimisation and to avoid being attacked for being gay, or using drugs, or even enjoying sex. This moralism makes the promotion of "safe sex" more difficult as it causes people to adopt an "it-will-never-happen-to-me, I'm not promiscuous" attitude. But a single contact with a virus carrier is enough to transmit the disease. So having fewer sexual partners only cuts the risk, it doesn't eliminate it. Promoting the use of condoms and of the spermicide which kills the AIDS virus, whether people have one sexual partner or many, is the only way to stop the spread of AIDS.

But a campaign advocating safe sex is unlikely in the Twenty Six Counties where it is illegal to advertise the sale of condoms or any contraceptive. Nor can we expect the Southern government to tell gay men how to have illegal sex more safely. It is clear then that the section of the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act which makes homosexuality illegal must immediately be repealed. No campaign to stop the spread of AIDS has any real hope until gay men can openly admit to their sexuality without fear of harassment or even imprisonment.

counter at all health centres North and South.

Safe sex really does stem the spread of AIDS. In Britain, the number of new cases of AIDS among gays has started to level out as a result of gay groups' "safe sex" campaigns.

An open, frank and straightforward information campaign like those conducted by the gay organisations is needed in schools, condoms and spermicide should be freely available, drug addicts should be provided with free syringes and sexually transmitted disease clinics and counselling services need to be improved and expanded.

Such action requires two things which are unlikely to be forthcoming North or South—money and an open, non-moralistic attitude to sex. If AIDS does assume massive proportions in this country, it will be because it has had fertile ground to grow in a sick society that denies people the right to a free and open sexuality.

**SAFE**

Hugging, holding, cuddling  
Body to body rubbing  
Massage  
Kissing  
Wanking together  
Toys (not shared)

**VERY RISKY**

Anal or vaginal intercourse without a condom  
Watersports in your mouth, eyes or on broken skin  
Sharing drugs, toys or douches  
Rimming (mouth to anus contact)  
I.V. Drug users sharing needles

**POSSIBLY RISKY**

Sucking — if you stop before your partner comes  
Watersports (pissing) on skin without sores or cuts  
Anal or vaginal intercourse with a condom  
Cunnilingus (mouth to vagina contact)

The Gay Health Action's "safe sex" information card

## What can be done to stem the spread of AIDS?

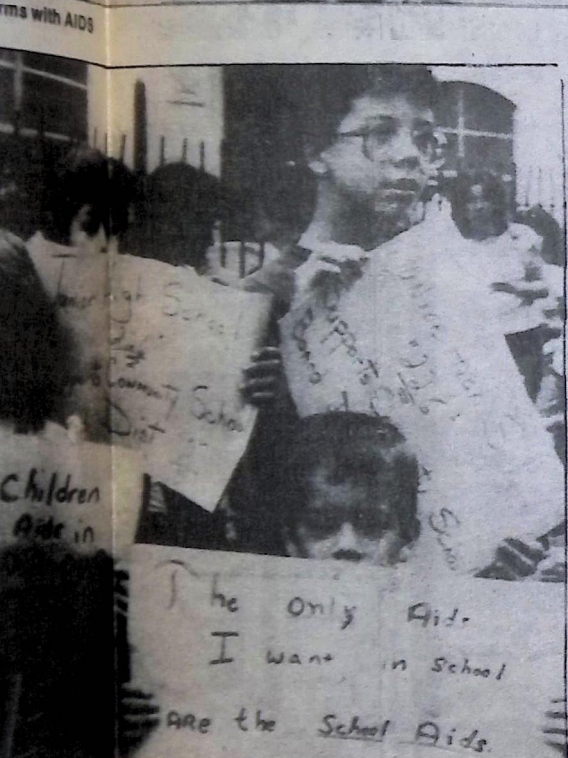
In spite of what the Moral Majority say, AIDS is not like the Great Plague or the Black Death. We know now what a virus is and how to fight its spread. AIDS will undoubtedly be peculiarly difficult to cure. But despite the difficulties in finding a cure, there is no reason whatsoever for AIDS to become an epidemic in the same way as the bubonic plague, cholera etc. did.

But one thing is certain: a cure will only be found when huge resources are given to research. It means taking over research efforts from private drug companies that see AIDS not as a disease for which a cure must be found as quickly as possible but as the source of potentially vast profits. For example, the Wellcome company which has developed the drug AZT explained why they weren't worried that the drug only suppresses the symptoms of the disease, instead of curing it. 'In the drug world' said Wellcome's Dr. Barry, 'treating large numbers of people for life means very big earnings'.

But while waiting for a cure to be found, we don't have to become celibate in order to avoid contacting

the virus. Any type of sexual activity which doesn't involve an exchange of bodily fluids — like mutual masturbation — is perfectly safe. The risk from sexual intercourse is greatly reduced by using a condom. In case the condom bursts or tears, it's a good idea to use a spermicidal cream which contains the active ingredient NONOXYL-9. Nonoxyl-9 has been shown to actually kill the AIDS virus; it is available in Ortho-Gynol II (with the silver stripe) and Delfen spermicidal foam. Using the spermicidal jelly is particularly important for anal intercourse as its lubrication will also cut down on the likelihood of condoms tearing.

Both condoms and spermicides are, in theory, available free on the health service in the Six Counties, but it is necessary to make an appointment at a family planning clinic and to see a doctor in order to get them. They should be available free on demand over the



# THE POLITICS OF GERRY ADAMS

GERRY ADAMS's book, *The Politics of Irish Freedom*, is well worth reading. It's the clearest and most extended account yet of the thinking of the present Republican leadership. It highlights the strengths of the present Republican Movement — and at the same time reveals what from the socialist point of view are the fatal weaknesses of the Republican ideology itself.

Adams clearly establishes the political "legitimacy" of Sinn Fein and the IRA, in the sense that they grew out of the reality of life in the nationalist ghettos of the North.

In much of the Left, as in the bourgeois media, the Republicans are portrayed as an alien presence which has pushed its way violently into political life. As Adams says: "The IRA is commented on in an unreal way, as if its motivation were the pursuit of violence for its own sake."

In fact the Provisional IRA emerged in the North in the early seventies as an entirely natural result of circumstances created by the British presence. The campaign for civil rights had been met by fierce repression from the RUC and sectarian assault by loyalist extremists. Civil rights moderates like Gerry Fitt and John Hume had high hopes that this would change after the British Government intervened directly in August 1969 and sent the British Army onto the streets to take over from the RUC.

## CURFEW

Within months, however, it looked obvious from the ghettos that that's all that had happened: the British Army had taken over from the RUC. Adams recalls the dramatic impact which the "Falls Curfew" of July 1970 had on young working class Catholics.

Three thousand British troops stormed into the Falls on July 2nd while, from helicopters hovering overhead, the entire population was told through PA systems that until further notice anyone found outdoors would be shot on sight.

All intruders, including the press were excluded, the area cordoned off. British soldiers rampaged through the streets emptying them. Hundreds of doors were kicked in. Furniture, fixings and floorboards were smashed up. Any who resisted or complained were beaten up in their own homes. Five people were shot dead. More than a hundred more were arrested and taken away. And as people huddled in their houses the *Fermanagh* squire Lord Brookeborough, of the Orange Order and the Unionist Party, toured the area in a British army land-rover, lordling it over the locality.

That's what created the IRA: That and a dozen other incidents like it...such as the casual killing of two young

by EAMONN McCANN

unarmed men, Seamus Cusack and Desmond Beattie, in Derry the following month. And Bloody Sunday. What had begun as a campaign for very basic civil rights within the Six Counties became, because of the way the State responded, a violent fight against the existence of the State.

Adams describes this process (too briefly) in a calm, matter-of-fact way. His assessment of particular incidents can be argued with. But the general thrust of what he has to say is a very effective response to those in the Labour and trade union Left whose analysis of the last 18 years is based on the proposition that if only the Provos had never come into existence things would be much better for socialists now. The only thing which would in theory have stopped the Provos coming into existence would have been the granting of the civil rights demands at an early stage and the dismantling — as opposed to the deployment — of the apparatus of repression. It proved impossible for the Six County State to do that.

Adams is able to show, too, that today's IRA can plausibly trace its tradition back to the "old" IRA of the War of Independence, which also lacked the type of "democratic mandate" for war which constitutional nationalists denounce today's IRA for lacking. He writes, quite accurately: "In reality it was a small number of Republicans who advanced the struggle and it was only when that struggle was about to become successful that it enjoyed

**"The IRA is commented on in an unreal way, as if its motivation were the pursuit of violence for its own sake"**

mass support". (In fact, it can be doubted whether the "old" IRA ever had mass support in the sense of being actively encouraged towards war by the bulk of the nationalist population.)

There is another area, too, in which today's Republican Movement can claim a close affinity to the Republican leadership of the 1919-1922 period: that is, its attitude to class politics and to the relationship between Republicanism and socialism. And it is here that the SWM, as a Marxist organisation, disagrees sharply with Adams's position.

Adams writes very interestingly about political developments within Sinn Fein between the mid-70s and the present. He frankly admits that until near the end of the last decade Sinn Fein wasn't a political party at all in any meaningful sense of the term, that there was little discussion of political ideas or perspectives within it and that it operated mainly as a rather loosely-structured support-group for the IRA, and not



Derek Speirs (Report)  
Gerry Adams addresses Sinn Féin supporters

taken entirely seriously by the IRA.

He describes the impact on the organisation of the H-Block campaigns of the mid-to-late seventies, the hunger strike struggle of the early eighties, Sinn Fein's entry into serious electoral politics in the course of the hunger strike and of the effect this had both on the existing membership and in terms of influx of new members. This has been the "shift to the Left", which has been much commented on and which has been expressed in a greater concentration by the party on social and economic issues and in the decision of the last Ard Fheis to drop abstentionism in the South.

While recognising and welcoming the genuineness of the "shift to the Left", the SWM has argued consistently that there are very strict limits to how far Left the Republicans can move. We have also argued that whatever support the Republican Movement gathers by campaigning under Left slogans will, inevitably, be directed not against the capitalist system, towards the achievement of socialism, but towards the age-old Republican objective of a united capitalist Ireland. We have argued, against some in the Republican Movement itself who style themselves 'Marxists', that the movement is NOT in the process of transforming itself into a working class party serving specifically working class interests.

Adams's book clearly confirms the correctness of the SWM's assessment.

He writes that in Ireland socialism has not yet come onto "the historical agenda", that it is necessary to win "national independence"

before a seriously intended struggle for socialism can begin. He makes it plain that the independent nation which the republican struggle is now aimed at achieving is a capitalist independent nation: "This classical view of the matter contrasts with the ultra-left view, which counterposes republicanism and socialism and which breaks up the unity of the national independence movement by putting forward "socialist" demands that have no possibility of being achieved until real independence is won..."

De Valera expressed it more succinctly in 1918: "Labour must wait".

Adams follows the logic of this line by arguing that the Republican Movement can and must make room for both those who regard themselves as socialists and those who do not: "The Republican struggle should not at this stage of its development style itself as 'socialist-republican'. This would imply that there is no place in it for non-socialists".

By the same token in Adams's analysis there is no reason the Republican Movement as a whole shouldn't make tactical alliances with groups or parties which would go some of the way towards "national independence" but not an inch of the way towards socialism — such as the SDLP for example!

"...the emergence of Sinn Fein may have unnecessarily brought out some of the class differences between ourselves and the SDLP leadership. These differences are there, of course, indeed they are dictated by the class nature of the struggle and they should not be disguised, but it might have been better in this phase of the independence struggle if there could have been some kind of general unity, in which both parties would have agreed to disagree on social and economic issues and maximise pressure

on points of agreement".

Adams traces his argument from the proposition that socialism is impossible within the confines of either the Six County State or the Twenty Six County State, that it is necessary therefore to achieve "national independence" before socialism can be put onto "the historical agenda".

The SWM on the other hand argues (from what Adams would regard as an "ultra-left" position) that it is only by putting socialism on the agenda right now that national independence can ever be achieved.

## CLASS

It is not in the interests of the capitalist class in Ireland — North, South, Orange, Green — to achieve "national independence" in any sense in which Gerry Adams might mean the term. It is for this reason that the partial independence which native capitalism won in 1922 (or which rather — and this should be of some significance for Republicans — was won for it by the IRA struggle) was never used as a springboard for achieving "full" national independence.

To be sure, there have been contradictions between the interests of "independent" native Irish capitalism and those of British capitalism. These were reflected most clearly in the "economic" war" which De Valera dabbled in in the thirties as he tried in vain to protect the tiny Irish economy from British competition. And there can from time to time be conflicts of interest still.

But these are of no significance whatever when compared with the broad and well established identity of interest between "national" capitalism on the one hand and British and indeed world capitalism on the other.

There is no possibility — NONE — of any section of

the Irish capitalist class joining in an anti-imperialist struggle.

The only class in Ireland which has both an interest in settling accounts with imperialism and the potential power to do it is the class which is ground down by imperialism and by imperialism's local, capitalist representatives. That one class is the working class.

The SWM argues from this that it is only by basing our selves on working class struggle now that a movement can ever be built which will carry the fight against imperialism through to a successful conclusion.

The fundamental difference between this perspective and that described in *The Politics of Irish Freedom* is clear.

Gerry Adams makes it quite explicit that, contrary to what members of Sinn Féin who regard themselves as Marxist argue, the Republican Movement is not in the process of shifting steadily leftwards along the political spectrum towards a revolutionary socialist position. It is siphoning into itself a considerable amount of socialist energy and channelling it towards what has always been the objective of Irish Republicanism — a united Ireland in which capitalist property relationships would still dominate. The Republican Movement is a more left-wing nationalist organisation than it used to be. But it is still, and will continue to be, a nationalist and not a socialist organisation.

All the ramifications of this argument cannot be contained in the space available here. But it might be common ground between Republicans and the SWM that these are important matters which deserve serious discussion. The SWM repeats that it would welcome any opportunity to debate these issues publicly with Republicans.





## REVIEWS

# Revolutionary eye-witness

KRONSTADT AND PETROGRAD IN 1917 by RASKOLNIKOV 1892-1939. £5 sterling

RASKOLNIKOV was a member of the Bolshevik Party involved in the October Revolution of 1917. Unlike thousands of others, he wrote a history of his experiences during the revolution and was, in fact, quoted by Trotsky in his "History of the Russian Revolution". Raskolnikov's story was first published in the 1920's but withdrawn by the Stalinist bureaucracy as soon as they began rewriting and distorting history. It has recently been re-published for the first time since that period by New Park publications and can be ordered through the SWM.

Raskolnikov, though not really a Trotskyist, became an enemy of Stalin's secret-police and was poisoned by them in France in 1939.

Raskolnikov joined the Bolsheviks in 1910 while still a student. He began working on Pravda in 1912 as an editorial secretary, was arrested and sentenced to three years imprisonment but managed to escape Russia - only to be arrested by the Germans as a Russian spy and sent back.

He was called up to the armed forces in 1914 and joined the Tsarist navy as an officer-cadet. When the February Revolution of 1917 took place, Raskolnikov was sitting examinations for his commission in Petrograd, now Leningrad. He describes how the revolution began with the women's march for "Bread, Freedom and Peace" on February 23, 1917. Armed workers and soldiers took to the streets and a group of them descended on the Cadet college on February 27.

The Commanding Officer for naval cadets, Frolov, went to meet the crowd, several

thousand strong. The crowd said they wanted all cadets sent home and all weapons surrendered. "Gentlemen that's not possible," Frolov objected, "We are holding examinations" One voice from the crowd shouted: "All Russia is now taking an examination!" The crowd surged in and seized all the weapons. Raskolnikov says "Joyfully, I left the stuffy barracks and joined the risen people".

He was sent by the Bolsheviks to Kronstadt which was the main naval base in Russia. He described how the argument went on within the Bolsheviks whether or not they should give full support to Kerensky's Provisional Government. Raskolnikov stated his own position: "Our party could have no confidence in the Provisional Government, given its bourgeois composition but since Tsarist power still threatened a backlash, we must support it".

## INSURRECTION

It was not until Lenin arrived back in Russia that the Bolsheviks got around to their own military organisation and preparing for insurrection.

Lenin's speech, when he did arrive in the Famous Finland Station in Leningrad was "Long live the worldwide Socialist Revolution". His speech and his activity united the Bolshevik party in organising the working class and themselves in such a way that the October revolution became possible.

Raskolnikov was involved in the organisation by the Bolsheviks of the sailors at Kronstadt in support of a real workers' and soldiers' uprising to win state power for the working class.

Kronstadt occupies a special place in the story of the Russian revolution. All

through 1917, Kronstadt was a hive of revolutionary activity. In the February revolution, the soldiers there had sought revenge for the mistreatment by the officers and several had been taken out and executed. Raskolnikov records that once the Bolsheviks had won the majority of the Soviet (council of workers and sailors) they put an end to lynch law.

He makes the point that the sailors, even in the excesses of lynch law, had executed only the most brutal of the officers and, therefore, it was not indiscriminate killing.

Throughout 1917, Raskolnikov brought out a paper called Golos Pravdy which was important to Bolshevik organisation throughout Petrograd. He worked at this from morning to evening and recounts how manuscripts arrived in enormous numbers from workers, soldiers and sailors. He asserts that intellectuals played no part in the running of the paper or in writing for it. The evening was given over to Marxist education classes for workers.

This was the period of "dual-power" when the country was economically in the hands of the workers and soldiers councils or soviets but when state power still lay in the hands of the provisional government which wanted to stop total revolution. But the Bolsheviks were winning the argument for revolution. Raskolnikov describes how the sailors used to drag him out to make speeches to visiting women workers or to part of the civilian force. The Bolsheviks sent speakers round to the various ships and on occasion whole Companies asked to join the party. The Bolsheviks succeeded in winning the mass of workers at Kronstadt to the need for revolution and for a revolutionary party to lead



Revolutionary ferment in the armed forces made October 1917 possible

that revolution. Besides the Bolsheviks, only the anarchists had any influence.

Raskolnikov describes how the anarchists engaged in adventurist actions, they seized buildings in Kronstadt without any reference to the Soviet on which they were represented. They did use the Soviet in May when the Bolsheviks were not present to effectively declare an "independent Kronstadt Republic" with "All power to the Soviet". The Bolsheviks opposed such unilateral action by individual workers' councils because of the danger of

isolation by the provisional government's forces. Within a few days, however, Trotsky's arguments had convinced the sailors that they must withdraw their declaration until the power of the soviets was established throughout most of the country.

## DIFFICULTIES

Raskolnikov describes the immense difficulties faced by the Bolshevik Party through the summer of 1917—and no-where was it more difficult than in Kronstadt—as it tried

at one and the same time both to advance the support and organisation of the working class for the seizure of power and to hold back those sections of the class—like the anarchist influenced Kronstadt sailors—who wanted to stage an insurrection immediately, even though the majority of the working class had not been won to revolution.

There is something tremendously refreshing about firsthand accounts of events as momentous as workers' revolution—that's what makes Raskolnikov's book well worth reading. —JIM BLAKE.

## INTERVIEW WITH THE HOUSEMARTINS

# SITTING ON THE FENCE?

THE Housemartins is the band which took "music with a message" to the top of the charts again.

MARTIN BOTTOMLEY went to Hull to ask two members of the band, Hugh and Paul, where they stand.

HUGH SAID: "I believe the working class and all oppressed people should be allowed to have their destiny in their own hands. My outlook is still revolutionary from the point of view that I don't think we can come to agreements with the ruling

elite.

Hugh used to be a member of the Workers Revolutionary Party. He left because he felt the leadership kept betraying the party's principles. Paul, on the other hand, has never been a member of a political party. He sees his ideas as a gut reaction to his experience.

Paul said: "Political thought stems from reaction. I'm still maturing and there's still a lot I'm not sure about. But I'm sure there will be a day I'll commit myself to an organisation of the working class. I'll have to see.

Both have major criticisms of the left, which

they claim to be borne out by their personal experience. These criticisms amount to accusations of middle class opportunism and a failure to relate to the working class socially.

According to Paul: "The SWP may be involved with struggles, but not socially. And this is really important. If there's a strike at Hull docks they'll all be there. But what about the rest of the year? I want people to know I'll be around for a lifetime."

Hugh added: "The problem with the far left is how they orientate to the Labour Party. The big question for me is how do we forge links with them?"

"I'll vote Labour and would be in favour of the band lending its support to them. But I wouldn't argue with someone for an evening to support them, because I understand how people feel about their betrayals."

An obvious way for the Housemartins to lend support to the Labour Party is through

Red Wedge. As there have been no visible signs of this, I wondered whether they saw through Red Wedge's contradictions?

Paul said: "The problem with them is lack of clarity. Red Wedge is to the left of the Labour Party and wants to speak out, but can't. It's in the same building, it's financed by them, and it's run by careerist liberals who won't sacrifice their career for Red Wedge."

"We want to know what they think about Northern Ireland, the royal family etc. Until they clarify their position, they're just a loose conglomerate of anti-Tory words."

The Housemartins are neither reformists nor revolutionaries, but stuck somewhere in between. Until they clarify their position they'll remain sitting on a fence of their own making. But hopefully their commitment to seeing a socialist society means they won't end up on the wrong side.



WHAT IS the message in their music?



# Socialist Worker

## For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

### As SPUC go on the rampage

# Defend the clinics!

by MARY KILLIAN

FOR TWO months now, the ruling of Justice Hamilton, which closed the pregnancy counselling facilities of Qpan Line and the Dublin Well Woman Centre has been in operation. These were only two agencies which offered to women with unplanned pregnancies a full, unbiased service which involved advice on abortion and abortion referral.

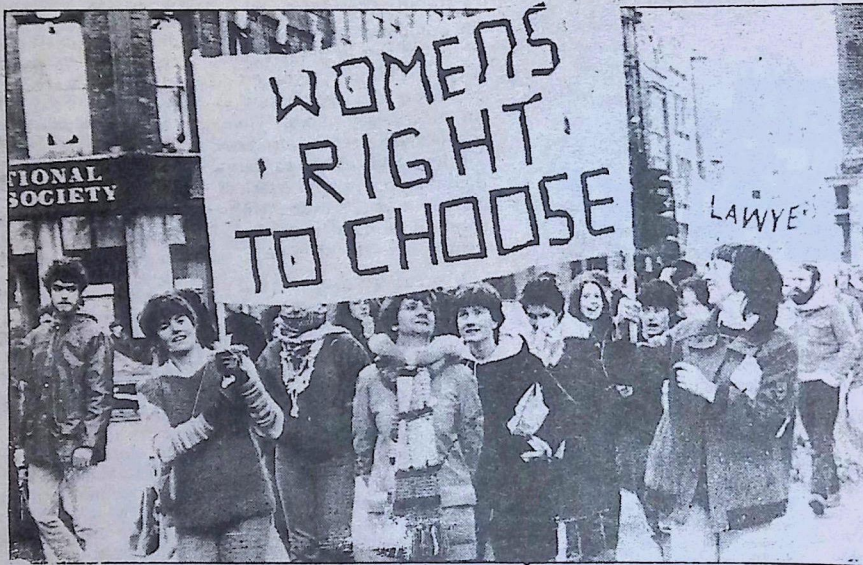
This judgement makes the passing on of information about how to get an abortion illegal. Its aim is to intimidate and push women further back into the Catholic and family mould favoured by our rulers; to make sure that those who move outside of it are severely punished—by law and by the denial of basic medical and information rights. It is the latest example of the right wing backlash being orchestrated by SPUC and their allies in the Catholic hierarchy.

The Defend the Clinics Campaign was set up last year to fight the ruling. An information sheet, with clinics' phone numbers and addresses—now being extended into a full pack—has been prepared for distribution through women's and community groups. One trade union has also volunteered to take the information. A spontaneous picket on the Sunday before the injunction took effect on January 12th brought a large number to stand in the snow outside the Four Courts, under a banner bearing a telephone number of a London abortion clinic. Displaying this telephone number is now illegal.

150 people had to be turned away from a public meeting already 400-strong in Liberty Hall, and a demonstration on February 7th drew about 600 people—one of the largest street actions in recent days on any issue.

Yet in spite of all this support, the campaign is not really carrying its message across to new activists—in fact, numbers at planning meetings are dwindling and energy is being lost.

The reason for this lies in the defeats and demoralisation of the '80s which have taken their toll on the women's movement as much as on workplace activity. The leadership of the Defend the Clinics Campaign are still following the disastrous tactics of the Divorce Campaign—aiming to cultivate as much as possible the support of the centre middle classes.



*A fighting campaign in defense of the referral clinics is needed*

This is very clear from their emphasis on, for example, a woman's right to counselling rather than on abortion. It is even clearer in the mistaken idea being strongly expressed that if we do not alienate 'public opinion' we will be able to continue indefinitely supplying information about abortion through the Helpline that has been set up.

Symptomatic of the lack of fight in the campaign is the reliance on figures like Kadar Asmal to argue our case. There is a proposal to find 100 such similar 'prominent' people to stand publicly in favour of the campaign. While such people may advance our aims somewhat, this strategy is no substitute for a militant, broad-based campaign.

#### FOOLISHNESS

Aside from the foolishness of relying on prominent names, who often have a less than real interest in genuinely fighting, it is very demoralising to those large numbers many of whom have already come forward, who want to act—and to shout back and to say we are not letting SPUC call the shots on women's lives today.

People will act when they see they are not alone in their anger; and the anger which is undoubtedly there must not be allowed to die away. There is nothing more powerful than mass street action for giving people the confidence to fight on—and there is no doubt that a mass public response, which must be organised now, would cause the likes of SPUC and Family

Solidarity to draw in their horns, as well as protecting individuals in the campaign from becoming victims of the law.

The issues of the campaign must be clearly enough expressed—and events well-enough organised—to draw in all the possible activists. The ultimate in wasted energy was seen in the large and successful demo on 7th February, when potential supporters in the streets did not know what we were demonstrating about.

The lead banner, bearing the

formally-agreed slogan: 'Women have the Right to Know', led one woman to guess it was about access to university education; another thought it had to do with women TDs!

The main event planned for International Women's Day, on Saturday 7th March is a picket of SPUC. There should be a massive turnout of all activists—watch out for posters announcing details.

One of the most positive decisions has been the calling of an Activists' Conference;—this will be on Saturday 21 March. The energetic involvement of all will be necessary to argue against the defeatist and anti-action mood of the present, and to prevent the conference getting bogged down in wasted discussion on structures, etc. Through this conference, an open, activist-led campaign must be built which will:

- \* Picket and show up SPUC at every move, demolishing further attacks they might choose to make;
- \* Instigate clear, unashamed defiance of the law through mass leafleting, street-stalls and street actions with phone numbers and addresses and abortion info displayed everywhere;
- \* Get the unions involved in publishing phone numbers and addresses and campaign information and to get the Trades Council to follow their words with actions of support;
- \* Build a clear, political, militant campaign which will be open at all stages to the involvement of new activists which can then proceed to make this vicious law unworkable.

#### Events planned for International Women's Day in Dublin:

Saturday 7th March:

*Picket on SPUC — watch for posters with details;*

*All-woman vigil: 5.30 GPO;*

*All-woman social: 8.00: SFX Hall;*

Saturday 21st March: 1.00pm:

*Activists' Conference — venue to be announced.*

Meanwhile, if you are pregnant, and want to contact an abortion clinic, numbers to phone are:

*031-251 6332 (London) or; 031-671 1541 (London);*

*035-727 1851 BPAS (Liverpool)*

*or the voluntary Helpline in Dublin can be contacted at: 787160 or 680043*

## WHY THIS CRAZY FEUD?

WORKERS throughout Ireland have been sickened by the INLA/IRSP feud. As claim and counter-claim follows each grisly death, the impression is reinforced of two groups of fanatics motivated by nothing apart from murderous hatred of each other.

Both North and South, the police forces have shown remarkably little concern. This low-level response—when compared with the massive reaction to a single shot fired at a British patrol, for example—is striking. The authorities know that the main result of the feud is that people are repelled from militant republicanism. The common reaction is: if this is what the "armed struggle" leads to, we want no part of it.

Whatever the immediate issues in the dispute, the general underlying issue has to do with the political ideas on which the IRSP/INLA was based. It set out in the mid-70s to be an organisation structured along traditional Republican lines, but more left-wing than the Provos.

However at no time did it try to base itself on the working class. Instead, the political wing rapidly became subservient to the military.

"Politics" didn't matter much. The IRSP virtually ceased to function.

What were left were highly-committed INLA volunteers, operating as a clandestine army but with no clear political direction. The INLA's tactics and strategy were determined not by political ideas which had been argued out and publicly expressed, but by operational requirements and opportunities.

In this situation, inevitably, "leadership" was based not on politics but on military prowess. And just as inevitably, disputes over leadership came to take the form not of political challenge but of physical attack.

No small group of people no matter how highly-motivated or willing to risk imprisonment and death, can "free Ireland" or "free the working class". Only the working class itself can take on and defeat imperialism and native capitalism. A socialist organisation must BEGIN from that standpoint and then argue and organise within the working class.

When you try to take short-cuts you end in a blind alley.