

Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

Millions hurt in capitalist crash



A FEW hours of panic gambling on the stock market condemn even more to the dole queues and many more in the third world to starvation

THE STOCK Market crash has badly shaken the confidence of the rich who rule over our society.

It has exposed the weakness of the rotten system they run.

In recent years the ideas of the new right came to dominate our lives. "Greed is good" was the slogan; privatisation and cutbacks were the only way to organise everything from health, housing and

education to insurance, agriculture and art.

But the ideology of Reagan, Thatcher, Dukes and Haughey has only ever been a licence for their rich cronies to become even richer by selling the essentials of life. Thus wards and entire hospitals were closed while luxury private clinics were encouraged.

We were told that their wealth would "trickle down" to ordinary

workers, improving our living standards too. The stock market crash exposed those ideas for the giant con that they are.

Every effort was made to introduce the ideas of "popular capitalism" to Ireland. No less than three "stock shops" were opened in Dublin in the last year to encourage ordinary people to buy shares.

The financial services centre in the Custom House Docks was to be a yuppies' paradise where the tax breaks and low rents would combine with cheap labour to line bankers' pockets with super-profits at the PAYE workers' expense.



The future of the Customs House centre must be in doubt as savings will be put into banks and building societies instead of the shakey stock market.

Thousands of promised jobs are unlikely to materialise.

Privatisation no longer seems so attractive even for the wealthy.

Haughey will now have problems over the privatisation of Irish Life. Quite simply he would not get as much for it as he would have in the week before the crash.

The collapse of the market has revealed the massive amounts of wealth there are in the country — concentrated in the hands of very few.

Michael Smurfit alone is estimated to have lost well over £110 million. The shares in his Irish company dropped from a high of £7.30 to a low of £4.

And his two and a half million shares in Jefferson Smurfit Corporation of America dropped from 76.5 dollars each to 48.5 dollars — losing him a further 102 million dollars or £69 million to add to his £45 million losses in Ireland.

Another heavy loser was Tony

O'Reilly of the Independent Group, Atlantic Resources, Fitzwilliam and of course Heinz.

The shares of all these companies plummeted with the rest, losing O'Reilly around £35 million.

We needn't feel sorry for these millionaires. Most of their losses will be noticed only on balance sheets. They will keep their mansions, fancy cars and high living. They will remain multi-millionaires.

Of course, they brought it on themselves. In recent years the likes of Smurfit and O'Reilly invested more and more in stocks and shares because they weren't making enough profit from factories and machinery — the kind of investment that creates jobs.

The people who will suffer most now are, as always, the workers who will feel the brunt of what could be the worst recession since the

thirties. Unemployment will grow even worse as companies go bust. Emigration will be even less of an option as the mini-boom in Britain's building industry collapses.

The crash shows that capitalism is not the iron-clad system it is always presented as. It is anarchic, weak, crisis-ridden and prone to panic. It is possible for the working class to overthrow it and replace it with a rational system based on planned production for human need rather than unplanned production in the service of greed.

The response to the crash of the reformists — British and Irish Labour, the Workers Party, etc — has been pathetic. They stand on the sidelines offering "left-wing" suggestions as to how the system could be patched up.

Whereas what we really need is socialist revolution.



Inside: Enniskillen and Republicanism page 3

Video nasties: ban not the way

ON THE 7TH of October the Video Recordings Bill 1987 was circulated by Justice Minister, Gerry Collins. This bill gives sweeping powers to the film censor and the police to control the sale and distribution of videos. The new legislation is said to be aimed at so-called 'video nasties' which depict depraved violence - usually sexual violence directed against women.

Pornographic violence is

detestable and abusive of women. But a close inspection of the new laws reveals that they are little more than a pretext for yet further ugly censorship of a much more general nature.

CHAired

The legislation is based on recommendations made in the Tenth Report of the Select

Committee on Crime, Lawlessness and Vandalism'. This committee was chaired by Michael Woods T.D. and included such notorious right-wingers as Alice Glenn, Liam Cosgrave and Mary Harney.

Their basic position is stated in paragraph 1 of the report, which declares that 'the presence of violence and sexual abuse on videos, film and television was considered to contribute to a lowering of standards in society, generally.'

They go on to argue that the viewing of undesirable videos has a 'corrupting effect' which leads directly to crimes such as rape, sexual assault and child sexual abuse.

There is absolutely no concrete evidence to support this assertion. Whereas studies in Ireland and Holland have shown a direct link between religious orthodoxy and child sexual abuse - 50% of offenders in the Irish study were considered by their families to be excessively religious - the relationship between pornography and sexual assault remains a matter for speculation.

Under the new laws, the Irish film censor will ban those videos which he considers unfit for viewing. This is the censor who recently banned 'Personal Services' from the cinemas - a popular and harmless movie whose offensiveness lay in the fact that it looked at some conservative politicians and their liking for kinky sex.

ABUSED

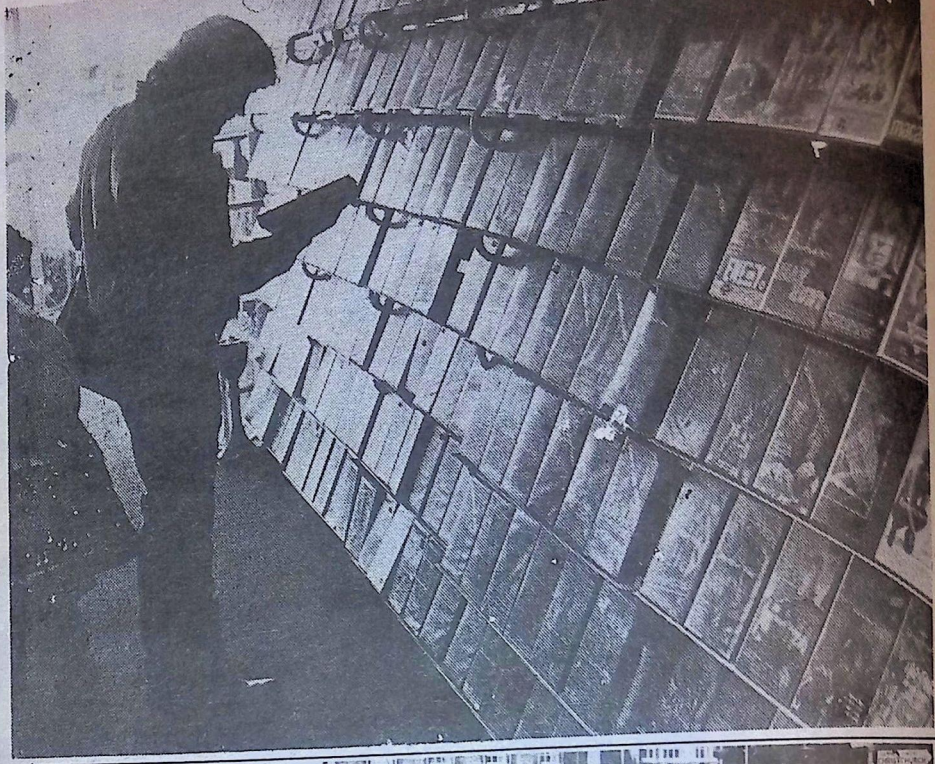
Any study of the history of censorship shows that it is inevitably abused by right-wing governments and police. Anti-porn laws in Britain, which were supported by many 'left thinking' people, were quickly used to shut down non-pornographic gay bookshops while the wealthy porn kings were left untouched. Similarly, laws to control kerb-crawling were used to harass prostitutes, while their moneyed clients have never been prosecuted.

In Ireland, we recently witnessed the banning of 'The Joys of Sex', an educational book by a doctor. Most recently, the attempts of SPUC to 'snuff' a pamphlet giving abortion information, issued by the students union at UCD gives a clear idea of how Collins, Glenn, Cosgrave and Co. intend their law to be used.

These people try to disguise their real repressive motives behind a veil of alleged concern for women and children. But it only needs a look at SPUC's attempts to close down the Abortion Referral Clinics or the Governments recent closure of the Child Sexual Abuse Unit at the Rotunda Hospital to see how utterly indifferent these cynical people are to the victims of their system.

TV and videos do not cause crime, rape, child abuse etc. The causes lie in the material conditions of poverty, inequality and religious oppression in capitalist society, and in the way individuals are forced to respond to these conditions. Banning video nasties will not change that - and supporting censorship will only make it worse.

DECLAN GORMAN



BOMBS AWAY

A MULTI-MILLION pound 'national bunker' is to be considered for construction by Fianna Fail. Located near Government Buildings in Dublin, the thick blast and radiation proof bunker would cater for about 120 persons, and be able to feed and shelter them for approximately one month.

How strange this morbid pessimism seems to us, the great unwashed, considering how we are being constantly told to tighten our belts, and accept the logic of the cuts, in order to open up a brighter future for us all.

Mind you, on the other hand, its a novel idea, considering its potential during a working class revolution, having all that lot together in one bunker..... We could just seal it up like an Egyptian Tomb!



ANOTHER step for Victorian values? For about £400, the Dublin Sandwich Board Company hire out five people for one day. Someone is making a lot of money out of this and you can be sure it's not those carrying the sandwich boards.

Joe Sherlock's ifs

JOE SHERLOCK T.D. for Cork and fan of Padre Pio, has done it again. In order to break the back of the Sugar Company strike, Joe changed jerseys half-way through the match.

ITGWU workers in the Sug-

ar Company plants took strike action last month for a 5% pay rise as recommended by the Labour Court.

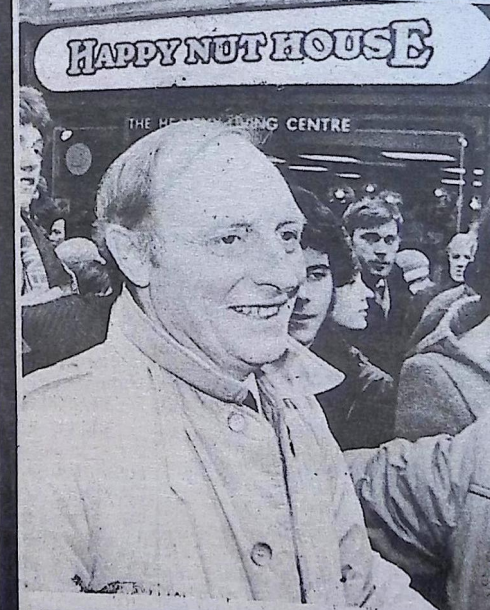
Joe stepped into the fray with a 'peace formula' based on three 'ifs'.

If the company reviews the union's claim next January, and if it provides for the payment of the extra 1% and if there is any flexibility in the government guidelines, then the company will agree to the formula.

Joe has either lost his stomach for workers' struggle, or seen a moving statue in West Cork and now believes in miracles.

LOTTERY

Ticket sales for the National Lottery, now in its 32nd week, are running at £2.25 million per week and have so far totalled £83 million, with £30 million paid out so far in prize money. Director, John Fitzpatrick, said the Lottery's popularity meant that as much as £30 million could be provided for sports, the Arts, health and culture. Then again it could be earmarked for that new nuclear bomb shelter, who knows? What we do know is that £60 million from £83 million leaves £23 million, it could be that they will be playing a lot of poker in that bunker.



THE RECENTLY published charity cookbook, POT LUCK discovered that Ronald Reagan loves Macaroni cheese. Mrs. Thatcher's favourite pudding is a sticky banana and toffee

pie. Labour Leader, Neil Kinnock and his wife Glenys prefer Welsh cake. It makes you wonder is there some truth in the old saying 'people are what they eat'.

ABORTION RIGHT

LAST MONTH marked twenty years since the legalisation of abortion in Britain. Unlike anti-trade union legislation, cuts in Public Services etc. - which are always immediately extended to cover the Six Counties - the 1967 Act has still not been introduced to the North.

This is not because there is no demand for abortion in the Six Counties. Far from it. As was revealed last month at an International Abortion Tribunal held in Belfast by the Northern Ireland Abortion Law Reform Association, women from the North have abortions in the same numbers as women from the South. And Irish women North and South have the same rate of abortion, in the under-35 age range, as do women in Britain.

Official figures show some 2,000 women from the North and 4,000 from the South having abortions in Britain every year. But evidence to the Tribunal made it clear that at least half those numbers again actually get abortions but give the address of a friend or relative in Britain. Altogether, it was shown, just less than 10,000 Irish women have abortions every year.

A further 500 women can get their abortion in the Six Counties because abortion is available here in limited circumstances - when a woman's health is seriously threatened

or when the foetus is grossly handicapped being the usual reasons.

The reactionary nature of politics in the sectarian state was clearly brought out by the fact that none of the political parties which stand for election - Unionist or Nationalist - support the extension of the '67 act. Such was also their position on the extension of the law legalising homosexuality which had to be forced through the European Court of Human Rights.

This unity between parties which normally automatically oppose each other is a clear example of what James Connolly meant when he spoke of a 'Carnival of Reaction' resulting from partition.

The hypocrisy of supposedly left-wing Parties like Sinn Fein is disgusting. They say they cannot support the extension of a British Law to the Six Counties. Yet they are - correctly - the first to start benefit take up campaigns and campaigns against British Social Welfare cuts.

Abortion, however, remains an unpopular issue when it comes to votes, although it is now the case that an Irish Woman, Catholic or Protestant, from North or South of the Border, if she is under 35 years of age is as likely to have an abortion as her English sister.

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WE THINK

Enniskillen and the politics of Republicanism



Socialist Worker accepts the word of the IRA that the bomb that killed eleven people in Enniskillen on November 8 had been aimed at the the security forces and not at civilians attending the Remembrance Day ceremony.

The planned, deliberate killing of Protestant civilians has not been an IRA tactic. There is no advantage in it to the IRA or Sinn Fein. Indeed, a popular reaction to Enniskillen has already made clear, it operates very much to their disadvantage.

As socialists, we hold in profound contempt the sythetic expressions of horror from Margaret Thatcher and her ilk. The mass murderer of the *Belgrano* and world number-one supporter of the Apartheid regime has no moral entitlement to condemn anyone else's political violence.

For the same reasons, we refuse to contribute our trickle to the torrent of moralistic abuse poured on Republicans by the the Right Wing media in both Britain and Ireland. The morality of the media is very selective indeed when it

comes to violence and death.

They whooped with pleasure at the Loughgall killings, their joy at the eight IRA deaths in no way diminished by the "incidental" killing of a passing motorist. They reported straight-faced the message of "distress" at Enniskillen from the leading Godfather of world terrorism, Ronald Reagan.

We distance ourselves absolutely from all these elements. Our disagreement with the Republicans concerns not the morality of their methods but the politics that

underlie the methods, politics which we hold leads inevitably to the risk of disasters such as Enniskillen and which cannot succeed in achieving the end which the majority of Republicans and all revolutionary socialists claim to share—a free Ireland, united and socialist.

The immediate result of the Enniskillen disaster is already clear. The level of acceptance of state repression North and South, has been increased. Opponents of repression are more isolated than before. The most obvious example is that the passage of the extradition act has been greatly eased.

The reason is not that natural feelings of revulsion at the Enniskillen carnage make many

working class people recoil into the arms of the forces of "law and order". More pertinently, many working class people—including many who have no love for either of the statelets on this island—can see little connection between their own interests, immediate or ultimate, and the the thinking behind the Enniskillen bomb.

The Republican "model" of revolution with its foundations in underlying republican politics, does not depend on the direct, active, conscious involvement of the mass of the working class in the struggle. Republicans characterise the present "stage" of the struggle in Ireland as a "national, democratic" revolution. That is to say, they believe the next "stage" in progress towards socialism must be the expulsion of Britain from all of Ireland and the creation of a democratic, 32-County state. This state

would still be capitalist but would be in the anti-imperialist camp and would pursue radical economic policies in the interests of the "nation" rather than of multinational capitalism.

The Socialist Workers Movement believes that this is pure pie-in-the-sky. But we are more concerned here with the implications of this Republican analysis for their immediate strategy and the relevance of this to what happened at Enniskillen.

Since the "present stage" of the struggle does not call for specifically working class action, since it is aimed at vindicating the interests of the nation and not (as yet) of the class within the nation, Republicanism seeks to mobilise support on a *nationalist* basis. The Sinn Fein argument against the SDLP is consistently that the SDLP does not honestly or adequately represent the interests of the "nationalist people".

Republican politics in the North are, as a result, expressed in communal terms and the IRA operates as the cutting edge of communal, nationalist politics.

This gives the armed struggle a "sectarian" content, not in the sense of individual IRA members harbouring feelings of sectarian hatred for Protestants, but in that the Republican perspective effectively accepts the communal basis of Northern politics. The *only* way to challenge the communal basis of politics would be by appealing to the common interests of Catholic and Protestant workers.

But then, the Republican analysis has it that this doesn't come onto the agenda until the British get out and Ireland is united.

Given this background, and even with the best will and the most consciously unsectarian intentions in the world, it is quite inevitable that the IRA, in divising its strategy and translating this into specific tactics, will reflect and be responsive to the Catholic community whose interests it "represents".

It is, inevitable, likely to be more careful of the lives of its "own" community than of the lives of the "other" community. Thus the *possibility* of a mistake leading to an Enniskillen disaster is always present.

The answer does not lie in the IRA bending its efforts to avoid such mistakes in the future, although no doubt they will do this. The answer lies in seriously questioning the bedrock politics on which the strategy which led to Enniskillen was built.

We repeat that it is only by rejecting communal politics, nationalism, as a political ideology and by appealing directly to the immediate class interests to workers of all religions and none and by linking demands based on these interests to the ultimate goal of a united, *socialist* Ireland, that we can avoid finding ourselves in this terrible cul-de-sac again and again.

We call on all who style themselves socialists to stand firm with the Republicans at this time and against the ruling class North and South which has used the Enniskillen disaster as an occasion to tighten the screw of repression on *all* those who would challenge the rule of capitalism on this island.

And we call again on Republicans who are motivated by a desire for socialism on this island to re-examine the political ideas which led to Enniskillen.

Arias Plan: Sandinistas concede to the Right Wing



President Ortega

Report by
MARY KILLIAN

CENTRAL AMERICA is ravaged by war. One in every 125 Salvadoreans have been killed as the right wing Duarte government clings onto power. In Guatemala, US funded death squads terrorise trade unionists. Nicaragua has been plunged into civil war by the activities of Reagan's Contras.

The world press would have us believe that the "peace plan" devised by Costa Rica's president Arias and signed by the five Central American presidents in Guatemala is meant to stop all this. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The plan, which is directed at Nicaragua, calls for an immediate ceasefire between government and irregular forces; a general amnesty for political prisoners (all people included in the "free decree"); a process of democratisation and elections; the setting up of a National Commission for Reconciliation and "the cessation of aid to irregular or insurrectional movements".

Oscar Arias did not, of course, devise all this out of sympathy for Nicaraguan peasants or workers.

Born into a wealthy, coffee-growing family, his English degrees, and his family's influence in government, ensured him various plum jobs and made him president at only 45 - the country's youngest ever. His hero is John F Kennedy, who was responsible for huge increases in counter-

insurgency while simultaneously promoting the provision of small reforms.

Arias gave his full consent to the 3.5 million dollars "humanitarian aid" the US sent the Contras - since the Guatemala Pact was signed.

Reagan wants to continue full funding, with another 270 million dollars - but he has to get Congress to agree first. It's not that the Democrats and others in opposition disapprove of plans to beat the Sandinistas - they just, like Arias, favour different tactics.

To comply with the Arias Pact, the Nicaraguan Army has been unilaterally withdrawn from border areas where Contra gangs roam freely. In El Salvador the FDR/FMLN guerrillas are being forced to negotiate with Napoleon Duarte. The same will be applied in the other countries.

The Sandinistas now boast that they have given free rein to their critics. They have appointed one of their most vocal attackers from the right, Cardinal Obando y Bravo as head of the National Commission for Reconciliation.

This same Cardinal in this year alone refused to condemn the murder of two priests, because it would imply criticism of the Contras.

He has pressured for the release of Somoza's 2,500 National Guardsmen saying "all crimes must be wiped out", and urged full scale negotiations with the Contras.

The Sandinistas are still refusing to negotiate with Contra leadership. But they are empowering priests (appointed by Obando y Bravo) to negotiate with Contra commanders in the field.

They plan to re-open Radio Catholica which has defended the Contras as "fighters for religious freedom", and La Prensa, the property-owners' paper, which re-opened with gloating headlines on October 2nd.

PROPAGANDA

This is just the thin edge of the wedge, as masses of dollar-supported press "information" and propaganda begins to flow into the country.

It is through these means, combined with extreme economic pressures, that Arias expects to see the final defeat of revolution in Nicaragua.

Meanwhile we need not expect to see Duarte of El Salvador or Cerezo of Guatemala encouraging the greater availability of Marxist ideas, as part of the opening up of the media.

The signing of the Arias Plan by the Sandinistas is a terrible retreat. But the way was paved by the nationalist strategy of the revolution.

They paid lip service to the notion of spreading the revolution but concentrated instead in building unity between all classes in Nicaragua.

Jaime Wheelock, an FSLN National Director described it as a new process, one which assigned "a role to each social force". That is workers work



Cardinal Obando y Bravo

and bosses boss. To maintain support from patriotic employers workers have had to bear the cost of the war against the Contras - currently taking up half the national income.

In 1981-86 there was a 1250 per cent rise in prices, while wages only rose 300 per cent.

The owners of the rich central cash-crop latifundios and the industrial capitalists have continued to cream off profits. In Nicaragua, capitalists don't even have to invest - the state invests about 25% of the whole economy in private industry, while private investment, 80% of total in Somoza's last years, has shrunk to a miserable 10% - over 60% of the economy is in private hands. As the FSLN sought to conciliate them, from the very beginning strikes were discouraged.

PERSUADED

Workers who earned any wage at all were told - at first persuaded, and by the 1982 state of emergency, ordered - to donate a share of their wages to unemployment funds. Strikes were then banned and workers only allowed to organise within the Sandinista's official CST, which urged austerity and ever-greater production.

The FSLN did initially nationalise the banks - but by 1981, all currency controls were non-existent, and the bosses were free to drain the economy at will.

It is instructive to compare all this - "peaceful class collaboration, which will bleed Nicaraguan workers dry - with Lenin's ideas in the "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Fight it" written in September 1917. In it he criticises Mensheviks - all revolutionary rhetoric about "taking the profits from the tills of the bankers" - while doing in reality nothing. He urges 1. The nationalisation of all banks; 2. Nationalisation of the largest capital associations; 3. Abolition of commercial secrecy; 4. Compulsory amalgamation into associations of industrialists, merchants and employers generally and 5. The compulsory organisation of the total population into consumers' societies and the exercise of control over it.

This last to ensure that in reality, and not just in talk, all consumer goods would be absolutely equally distributed,

and the burden of the war really equally shared. He stresses that all this could not be achieved without the active full control on every level, over the landowners and capitalists by the workers and peasants

The Sandinistas have no intention of building this type of revolutionary socialism in Nicaragua. The real tragedy is that in 1979, when the world was inspired by the sight of ordinary Nicaraguans in Managua with their home-made bombs, chasing off the brutal puppet Somoza - many other possibilities arose.

In San Salvador, 200,000 people (4% of all Salvadoreans) demonstrated, braving army shots from above, to demand change.

Fraternalism between these two countries alone would have set a different scene.

In 1980, Salvadoran rural workers struck, bringing the whole agro-export business to a standstill - and forced the bosses to treble their daily wage.

But by 1981, the FSLN was already pushing Salvadoran guerrillas into negotiations with the Right.

COSTA RICA

In another immediate burst of inspiration, Costa Rica saw a massive general strike of public service and construction workers, such as had not been seen in over fifteen years.

The Sandinistas had turned their face to national sovereignty and class collaboration. But for the next few years workers in the car plants of Mexico and Brazil (in Sao Paulo, the largest concentration of workers in the world) carried high the banner of the Sandinista Revolution. The capitalists knew what was possible.

The fantastic dollar aid to military and contra was not to protect investment. It has far exceeded its value. The power of the Revolution was not that it could send guns and money - it couldn't - it was in the fantastic moral authority, the power of the overthrow of totalitarian rule by the combined strength of workers united - and possibilities this created internationally.

Reagan's election broadcasts in this period showed graphically how he believed, and feared the possibility of revolution spreading - right to Chicago.

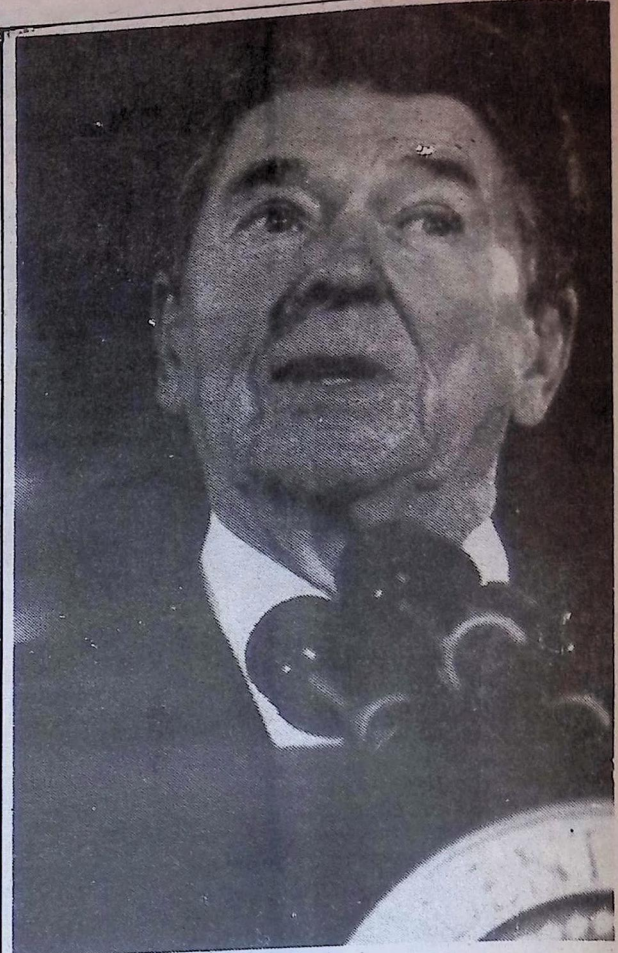
Historic possibilities had opened up - the possibility of working class revolution and internationalism as they have done in other countries at other times.

But the Sandinistas turned from them to nationalism and collaboration with the right.

The Arias Plan is another step to increasing power for the Right.

But revolutionary situations will create possibilities for the working class again in some other base of capital

Unless we learn the lessons of Central America, we will not be ready to embrace and to realise these possibilities when they arise.



Don't ask me, I'm only the President

Crisis at the White House

THE U.S. administration is wracked by crisis.

Reagan is being dubbed a 'lame duck' president. All the attention is being focused on the elections at the end of next year for a new president who will establish a new administration.

But while he spins out the remaining months of his presidency Reagan is becoming less and less able to take the initiative in events.

This was demonstrated clearly last month when his nomination for the vacant seat in the Supreme Court was thrown out by the Congress.

Congress took this unusual step to forestall Reagan's plan to pack the Court with jurists of positively near-dearthly persuasion.

Judge Bork, Reagan's nominee, opposed civil rights legislation, supported SPUC-like 'pro-life' positions on abortion and believed the law should be openly and clearly an instrument for the defence of the interests of the rich and powerful.

Congressmen and women took the view that the interests of the rich and powerful would not be served by a judge likely to make the US judiciary an object of contempt and loathing by masses of US citizens.

On the Gulf, too, there is conflict between the administration and congress. After the defeat of the USA in the Vietnam war, the War Powers Act was enacted in the Nixon era. It's purpose was to rein-in the powers of the president to launch foreign wars.

It provides that congress must be brought in on any such decision. Anti-war agitation at home and around the world, low morale - including widespread heroin addiction and violence against officers - in the army.

and the crippling cost of maintaining the war - and its effect on worsening the competitive position of US capitalism - all combined to create a crisis for US imperialism.

All over the world allies and enemies were beginning to question the position of the USA as the world's number one military power.

Carter's humiliation during the Iran hostage crisis and the retreat of US force with their tail between their legs from Beirut further intensified this crisis.

Although the degree of opposition at home is not as great as during the Vietnam period, the weakened presidency makes it difficult for the US to regain credibility with its intervention in the Gulf.

And to cap it all the Wall Street crash has further weakened the US administration.

Having maintained an artificial recovery since the slump of the early eighties by massive arms spending, fuelling a huge budget deficit, the chickens came home to roost on October 19. The underlying weakness of the US economy - 40% of the world economy - was evident in an enormous balance of trade deficit and indebtedness, principally to Japanese commercial interests.

The balloon burst when the penny dropped that 1988 would see a downswing in the economy, the depth of which no one could tell. Far from easing the situation, Reagan's reassurances and panic measures only served to illustrate to investors that the situation was as near as makes no difference out of control.

The crash itself will further intensify the coming slump and the US ruling class is coming to rue the day it gave one 'for the Gipper'.

- Kevin Wingfield

THE GREAT LIE

By Abbie Bakan

Today a great lie dominates the world - that socialism already exists. We are told that police states such as Russia China or Poland are the model for socialism.

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OUR HISTORY

1917 AND WOMEN



LENIN said "revolutions are festivals of the oppressed and exploited". In our continuing series on the Russian Revolution **GORETTI HORGAN** looks at the lessons of 1917 for women's liberation today.

IN COMPARISON with Russia at the turn of the century, Ireland today would seem a liberal, pluralist society which respects women's rights. The conservatism of the all-pervasive Russian Orthodox Church would make John Paul II appear a bit of a radical.

Peasant society was superstitious and feared social change. The authoritarian Tsar was seen as the 'little father' of his people. Trade unions were illegal and oppositional political activity meant prison or exile. The small, emerging working class lived in misery and for working class women, the misery was greater still.

Yet from the moment the Russian working class started to fight for their rights, women were in the thick of the struggle. Women workers took part in, and often led, almost every strike which took place from the 1890's through to 1905.

The demands of such strikes were not just for better wages and conditions but often for specifically women's demands like maternity rights, time off for breast feeding and an end to sexual harassment and abuse by foremen and managers.

In the revolutionary year of 1905, women workers really came to the fore. Alexandra Kollontai, who was to do more than perhaps any other Bolshevik to advance the cause of women's liberation, wrote of 1905 in retrospect:

'In 1905 there was no corner in which in one way or another, the voice of a woman speaking about herself and demanding her rights was not heard'.

Strike demands in the period 1905 to 1907 very much reflected the needs of women workers. Scarcely a strike document in industries which employed women did not mention demands for maternity leave, time off for feeding infants and for nurseries at the factories. Kollontai drew great inspiration from the upsurge of activity among women workers in 1905. She realised that however downtrodden and lacking in self-confidence a working class woman normally is, 'at a time of unrest and of struggle she suddenly grows and learns to stand tall and straight. The self-centred narrow-minded and politically backward 'female' becomes an equal, a fighter, a comrade' and Kollontai saw, such participation in workers' struggles 'brings the woman worker towards her liberation, not only as the seller of her labour power but also as a woman, a wife, a mother and a housekeeper'.

In those days before the ideas of reformism and of Stalinism had poisoned our vision of socialism, the self-emancipation of the working class meant the self-emancipa-

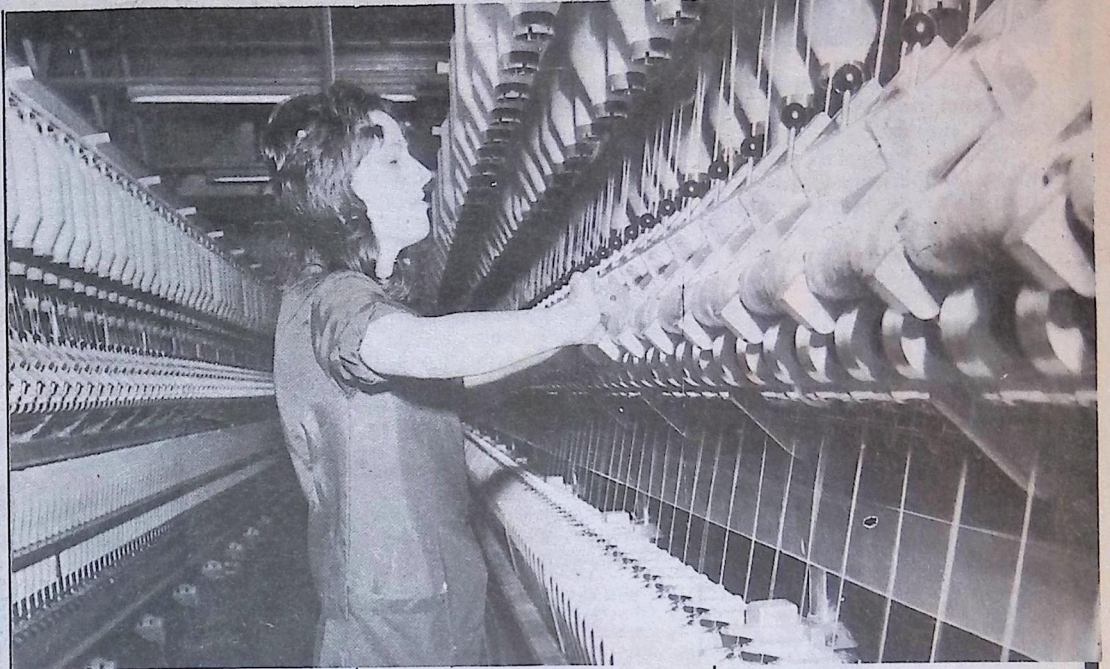
tion of the whole of the working class, women and men. The idea that it was possible to have socialism without women's liberation was seen as the nonsense that it truly is. But the idea that women's liberation is possible without socialism did already exist and had quite a large following gentry and bourgeois women.

The first women's political organisations to appear in Russia were those of the feminists; they emphasised the need for the unity of women of all classes in the struggle for the vote and for equal rights with men.

Kollontai and the Bolsheviks opposed these feminist ideas stressing instead the vast differences which existed between the interests of the feminists and those of working class women. Kollontai saw working class women as facing a clear alternative. She asked:

'Should working women heed the call of the feminists and take an active part in the liberation of women or must they remain true to the traditions of the class and fight for the emancipation not of women alone, but of all humanity from the servitude imposed by contemporary capitalist society?'

Kollontai was very clear that the idea of a single united 'Women's Movement' is not possible in a society based on class contradictions. 'The women's world is divided', she wrote, 'just as is the world of men, into two camps... Thus, although both camps follow the general slogan of the 'liberation of women', their aims and interests



are different'. Kollontai pointed out that for working class women equal rights with men would mean only an equal share in inequality, whereas for the 'chosen few' of the wealthier women equal rights would indeed open the door to new rights and privileges which until then had been enjoyed only by men of the bourgeois class.

Today the situation remains

the same. Feminists call for more women professors, more women judges, more women consultants, more women on the Boards of Banks and of semi-state bodies, more women in the Dail. The scarcity of women in these positions does, of course, point to the inferior status which is imposed on women in class society. Nonetheless, such appointments would ben-

efit only a very few, bourgeois women.

For the mass of working class women, it makes no difference whether the person refusing them a loan is a man or a woman, whether the judge sentencing them or their children to prison is male or female, whether the TD voting another round of cuts is a Mr. or a Ms.

New world for women

The outbreak of the First World War and the events of the revolution in 1917 proved Kollontai correct. When the war broke out, the feminists jumped on the patriotic band wagon. The largest feminist organisation, The Women's Equal Rights Union - which had some 8,000 members - called for a 'women's mobilisation' in support of the war, along the lines of that attempted by Christabel Pankhurst in England.

For working class women the war was, of course, a disaster. Even if they had wanted to, they would have had neither the time nor the energy to knit socks and prepare parcels for the front, as suggested by the feminists. As mass conscriptions took working class men from industry and sent them to die at the front, women were forced to take over. While women had made up less than a third of the industrial

workforce at the start of the war, they constituted half of the workforce by the time the war ended.

The departure of their men for the front not only meant extra, often heavy, industrial work for women. It also meant that the entire burden of housework and childcare was left with the women.

Small wonder then that it was the women workers of Petrograd who in February 1917 started the Revolution. Against the advice of the Bolshevik Party, the women called a mass strike to celebrate International Women's Day. They sent delegates around to the major factories looking for support. By 25th February 200,000 workers were on strike in the city - the Revolution had begun!

In the period between February and October 1917 when the question of who was to rule Russia,

the working class or the friends of the Tsar, the majority of feminists supported the Provisional government of Kerensky and opposed the Bolshevik slogans of 'Bread, Land and Peace' and even more so, the demand for 'All power to the Soviets'.

FEMINISTS

There were, of course, some feminists who were won to the Revolution, but for the majority, their class interests demanded that they oppose demands which meant the end of their classes' rule. By doing so, they did exactly as Kollontai had predicted.

With the working class in power after October 1917, the Bolsheviks took immediate steps to carry out the legal emancipation of women with laws to put equal pay and equal opportunity at work into effect, divorce was made easily available, homosexuality legalised, the hold of the Orthodox Church over marriage was broken, the status of illegitimacy abolished and the state took responsibility for the welfare of mothers and children.

But the Bolsheviks recognised that legal emancipation was only the first step to women's liberation. Real freedom for women needed far-reaching changes in social and economic conditions, meant shifting the massive prejudices which had been implanted over centuries in the minds of men and women workers.

Plans were made to make housework and childcare the responsibility of society rather than of the private family. Crèches were set up in every workplace and every local area; community laundries and communal kitchens and cheap

restaurants were to relieve women from the burden of domestic labour.

But Russia was still a very backward country with a mainly peasant population and the hold of reactionary religious ideas was still strong. In particular, there was great resistance to change in the family and sexual morality; the right of women to sexual freedom was greatly feared.

From the beginning the Bolsheviks had recognised that all the other freedoms for women meant little if they could not control their own bodies. Lenin had attacked the laws against abortion or against literature about birth control. Now the Bolsheviks raised the need for the legalisation of abortion; but time and again, the Soviets voted down such proposals.

Here was a time when the importance of the Revolutionary Party for ensuring women's liberation was seen. The Bolsheviks polemicised, fought for, insisted on a whole new world for women. 'Women's Departments' were set up to involve women more centrally in the construction of the new society. Kollontai's now famous essays on 'Sexual Relations and Class Struggle' and on 'Communism and the Family' were written as part of that fight, by the Party, within the class to rid workers of the old ideas.

BOLSHEVIKS

And because workers had come to know that the Bolsheviks gave good leadership, because it was the Party that had led them to take the bread, to occupy the land, and to end the war, because it was the Party which had led them to take power through the Soviets, the workers

listened. Three years after the revolution, in November 1920, abortion was, for the first time in history, made legal on demand on the health service in Russia.

With this historic victory for women's rights the views of Kollontai and of the Bolsheviks of how to advance, and even to win, women's liberation in just three years in backward Russia were staggering. The advances made by the campaigning and lobbying of the feminist movement over the last twenty years bear no comparisons to those three years.

By 1929, power in Russia had passed into the hands of a new ruling class headed by Stalin, hostile to women's liberation and determined to do away with all traces of workers' power - though they kept the rhetoric of socialism and women's liberation to hide what they were doing.

Today the revolutionary socialist tradition holds out a glimpse of how the world can be changed for the better, in the vision of the few years following the Russian Revolution of 1917 before Stalinism took over. We do not believe that feminism - in the sense of a struggle of women against men - holds out any such hope of changing things.

The S.W.M. is not claiming to have women's liberation all neatly wrapped up in a parcel with revolutionary socialism ready to be delivered on the doorstep of the ruling class. We do see the need to build a party that can make the unity of the class struggle and women's liberation a fact. We want to encourage anyone who wants real liberation for women to join us and to play an equal (not a separate) part in that struggle.

Capitalist Justice

Courts not neutral

ONE OF the central myths of capitalist society is that the law is "neutral".

Most working class people know instinctively that this just isn't true, that the "better class" of person you are the better chance you have of getting away with law-breaking.

An unemployed person who manages to get a few extra quid on top of the dole money is denounced as a scrounger and runs a real risk of being hauled up in court. But a businessman who rips off millions in fraudulent grants or property scams is treated as some sort of hero.

It isn't just that the judges themselves come from upper-class backgrounds and are biased against the poor. The law itself exists to serve the interests of capitalist society.

To most people such a statement sounds like Marxist jargon. We are so used to the way things operate that we take it for granted. We tend to see the injustices that happen as aberrations which ought to be corrected, not as inevitable results of the very nature of the legal system.

The law in our society is, first and foremost, a set of rules designed to make the capitalist system run as smoothly as possible. This becomes clearer if we try to imagine what would happen if this wasn't the real function of the law.

What if, for example, there was a law against charging interest on loans of money — as was the case in some pre-capitalist societies?

What if the law forbade one person to buy the labour of another

for less than the amount of wealth the labour created?

What if judges were in the habit of ruling that millionaires who drive around in Rolls Royces were just asking to be robbed — in the same way they frequently suggest that women who are out on their own at night are just asking to be raped?

Each of these propositions is perfectly reasonable and just. The reason they seem "ridiculous" is that, put into effect, they'd bring the capitalist system grinding to a halt.

The legal system operates for the ruling class and against the working class not because judges are reactionary. It's the other way round. Judges are reactionary because the legal system which they head is the legal system of the ruling class and the ruling class's capitalist system.

RECRUITED

So naturally enough the judges are recruited from the capitalist layer of society.

The British Law Lords, for example — the ultimate court of appeal for anyone extradited into the North's Diplock system — comprises nine judges on £71,400 a year plus the Lord Chancellor on £77,000. Nine of the present ten come from rich enough backgrounds to have attended exclusive public schools. Eight graduated from either Oxford or Cambridge.

Under them are 24 Court of Appeal judges, of whom 20 went to public schools and 19 to Oxford or Cambridge.

Below them are 79 High Court judges, of whom 42 went to public

schools and 53 to Oxford or Cambridge. It is at this level that we first encounter woman judges. There are three.

There are 388 Circuit Court judges (14 women), among whom is the single black judge.

The judges are chosen from the ranks of leading barristers. It remains virtually impossible for anyone without a private income to qualify for the bar.

This judicial "pyramid" reproduces the class structure of Britain with uncanny accuracy. The ruling class has absolute control at the top. The working class is totally excluded.

These facts, on their own, give the lie to the most cherished myth about "British justice" about which we have heard so much during the debate on extradition — the myth that the courts are "independent from politics".

The courts may be "independent" in that politicians cannot intervene directly to instruct them what to do in particular cases. (Although quite political pressure is regularly applied.) But the courts are not independent of the class politics of the society we live in. Indeed, they are a very important part of it.

PURPOSE

The real purpose of the courts — and this applies to Northern and Southern Ireland as much as to Britain — is not to protect "society" much less "the public". It is to protect the capitalist system.

It follows that any movement which is serious about social change will inevitably come into conflict with the law. Any movement which doesn't face up to this is rendering itself incapable from the outset of achieving real change.

Orange wigs

THE LEGAL system in the North has tended to be even more closely aligned with the political system than is the case across the water.

For half a century the administrative machinery of the State and the political machinery of Orangeism were more or less the same thing.

So it's not surprising that the leading judges were drawn not just from the upper echelons of society but, more obviously than in Britain, from the top tier of the ruling political party.

The Lord Chief Justice, Lowry, is the son of a Unionist MP and himself a former Unionist Attorney General. Educated at Cambridge, he's also a former British military intelligence officer.

Judge Basil Kelly is a former Unionist MP and Orangeman, Brian Hutton (an Oxford graduate) is a former legal adviser to the Unionist Government, Robert Porter is a former Unionist Minister. And so on.

Four of the ten High Court judges are Catholics, and one of the 14 county court judges.

As ever, the judges are recruited from the ranks of the barristers who themselves are recruited exclusively from the middle and upper classes. And since top barristers in the North "earn" up to £250,000 a year (the troubles have been good to some) even those who started out as merely middle-class will have graduated (as far as life-style is concerned anyway) to the "upper" category by the time they are available for selection for judgeships.

Thus the make-up of the courts in the North reflects fairly accurately the shape of the establishment.

The fact that since the inception of the State in the North the courts have reflected not just the economic but also the sectarian division in society has given the Northern judiciary its unusually sharp

political edge. This has made it difficult for the British to achieve even those mild reform measures which they would like in order to make it easier for FitzGerald, Haughey etc to deliver on issues such as extradition.

For example, the British are not passionately committed to the Diplock court system exactly as it stands as a matter of principle. After all Thatcher signed her name to Article 8 of the Hillsborough Agreement which clearly envisaged some sort of change.

But the Northern judges are, naturally, resistant to any change which would imply fault on their part in the past. And the British are unwilling to force change on them.

EXAMPLE

This is just another example of the sectarian machinery of the Northern State proving irreformable and the Brits backing off in the face of this fact. It is absolutely right that this should be pointed out and appropriate lessons drawn in the course of the campaign against extradition.

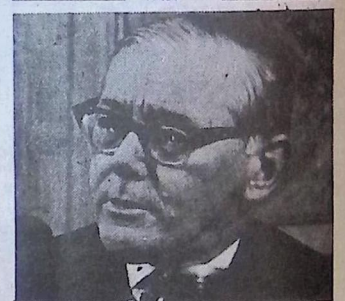
But it would be a grave error to imagine that if three-judge courts could be achieved then justice would be available to all. The class bias of the courts would be as strong as ever.

Even if the Catholic/Protestant balance of the courts were altered and made more "fair" the courts would still have as their main function the defence of the State and would reserve their greatest hostility for opponents of the State.

There is no way a sectarian State can have a non-sectarian court system. And there is no way courts in any capitalist society can operate other than against the interests of the working class.



The judicial system in the North reflects the sectarianism of the Orange state.



Top to bottom: Niall McCarthy; Kelly; Tom Finlay and Tom O'Higgins

EAMONN
McCANN
reports



Arch-reactionary Lord Hailsbam

Political Placemen

THE COURTS in the South are just as political as those in the North.

The legal profession is, again, recruited from the middle and upper classes. The only working class accents you'll hear in courts in Dublin, Cork, Waterford or wherever are from people not wearing wigs.

Judicial appointments have rewarded party-political service just as in the North, with the difference that, in the South, there have been different ruling class parties alternating in office and giving preferment to their own.

For example, the present Chief Justice is Tom Finlay, a former Fine Gael TD, appointed by Garret Fitzgerald in 1984. His predecessor was Tom O'Higgins, a former Fine Gael minister and candidate for the presidency, appointed by Liam Cosgrave.

ACTIVIST

Among the other Supreme Court judges are Niall McCarthy, a long-time Fianna Fail activist, appointed by Charlie Haughey. Former Fianna Fail party treasurer Tony Hederman was appointed by Jack Lynch. Brian Walsh, once legal adviser to de Valera, was appointed by Sean Lemass. Fianna Failer Seamus Hency was appointed by Lynch. If there are more Fianna Failers than Fine Gaelers it's simply because FF has been in office more often.

In fact the judiciary in the South is as directly politicised as any in Europe. The notion of these people acting "independently" is laughable.

They come from ruling class parties, move in ruling class circles, express in their decisions ruling class prejudices and at all times serve ruling class interests.

which had been scheduled for implementation on December 1st is based on the Convention.

However even before an extradition bill was drafted, the 26 County judges fulfilling their role as agents of the ruling class within the legal system, had begun to redefine the law.

In 1981, the case of Hanlon v. Fleming, Judge Henchy, declared that even if it had been shown that explosives involved in the case had been intended for the IRA this would not necessarily have put the case within the "political exception" category.

EXTENDED

The political thinking behind this observation was extended in the case of Dominic McGlinchey. The RUC sought McGlinchey's extradition for the killing of Mrs Hester McMullen near Toomebridge. Fine Gael Chief Justice O'Higgins, ordering the extradition in December 1982, ruled that whether or not McGlinchey had been politically motivated the offence itself was not political.

Political activity, he said, was what 'reasonable, civilised people would regard as political'. By 'reasonable, civilised people' he meant of course, people like himself. On this basis McGlinchey was handed over to the mad-dog RUC (and eventually found innocent).

This means that it is already possible for the 26 Counties to extradite republicans (or anyone else) for politically-motivated offences without the presentation of *prima facie* evidence. It is politically important to the British that the Dublin Government should deliver on the new act. But in practical terms the political judges have already delivered most of what is being asked for.

THE SOUTHERN courts' handling of the extradition issue over the years shows clearly the way the judiciary moves to serve the interests of its political masters.

Until the mid seventies the 26 Counties operated the 1957 Extradition Convention of the Council of Europe. There was relative political stability at the time in Europe as in Ireland.

The Convention allowed for the refusal of extradition if a defence of "political motive" was offered.

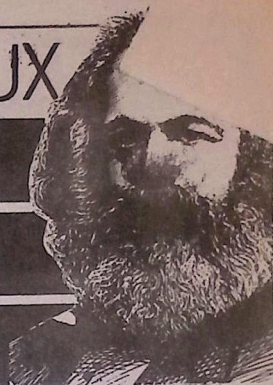
However, to make administration easy, it did not demand that *prima facie* evidence be produced before extradition was granted. Leinster House ratified this convention in the Extradition Act of 1965 - Haughey was Minister for Justice at the time. This is the act which is in operation today.

By the mid-seventies Europe was a lot less stable. The end of the post war boom, coupled with the oppression of the Palestinian people and growing pressure on political structures such as in Ireland - produced a reaction which alarmed the ruling class. One response was the 1977 European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, designed to make it easier for capitalism as a whole to deal with anti-state violence. (State violence, of course, continued and increased.)

Central provision of the Convention was the removal of the 'political offence' objection to extradition. The Extradition Act

JOHN MOLYNEUX

Teach yourself Marxism



CUTS in colleges have been harsh. Many part-time teachers have been let go. Libraries are becoming more overcrowded. The students union USI has pledged itself to a militant campaign.

Over the next year, the Socialist Worker Student Societies will be holding meetings in the main colleges. These will aim to pull as many students as possible towards revolutionary socialism.

It is therefore also an opportune time to reflect on the role of students in the struggle for socialism, for unless we have a degree of political clarity about this, our practical work is bound to suffer.

It is important to avoid either underestimation or overestimation of the significance of students.

There have always been some would-be revolutionaries and even some would-be revolutionary organisations who have dismissed students out of hand as irrelevant to the working class struggle.

Sometimes such people develop a line in cheap anti-student jibes and talk about "student politics" and "student revolutionaries" only with a sneer.

Hangover

The best that can be said for this view is that it is a hangover from the days prior to the post-war expansion of higher education when students were a tiny elite almost entirely drawn from and destined for secure positions in the ruling and upper middle classes.

In fact it is an example of crude non-Marxist workerism which displays crass ignorance of the history of 20th century revolutions, in which students have frequently played a very considerable part.

May 1968 in France is the most obvious example, Hungary 1956 being another.

On the other hand there has sometimes been the temptation for revolutionaries to become so drunk with the drama of the high points of student struggle that they lose sight of its objective limits and start talking about students as "the new revolutionary vanguard" or concentrate on students to the exclusion of the working class.

This is just as much nonsense as writing all students off. It forgets the simple fact that students are not workers in that they do not sell their labour power and therefore lack the economic and consequently the political power to really challenge capitalism.

The starting point for correctly estimating the role of students, as of any other

Students and revolution

social group, is understanding their class position.

Students come from a variety of class backgrounds ranging from the top to the bottom of the social scale. They include a small minority from the ruling class proper—mainly being trained for the highest positions in society. A larger minority are from the manual working class and a preponderance from the professional middle class and white collar working class.

They are headed for a variety of class destinations, with white collar and professional positions preponderant.

However, what is special about students is that they are going through a period of transition in which they are relatively free from the ties and pressures of family and job.

Compared to workers, students are privileged in terms of the pleasant nature of their work, the liberality of the regime to which they are generally subjected, the length of their holidays and the free time available to them.

Against this can be set the fact that the low level of student grants ensures many students live in conditions of poverty not much above those of the unemployed.

But the poverty is temporary and therefore not so demoralising in its effects and, in contrast to the unemployed, the university or college makes students part of a collective.

Also peculiar to students is the fact that some of them are actively encouraged by their courses to analyse society. There is also, within student unions, a level of freedom of political organisation and debate which is unmatched by any other official institution in normal times.

In overall terms students are best classified as part of the petite bourgeoisie or middle class but they are a section of the middle class uniquely open to socialist and Marxist ideas, even though by themselves they lack the power to give effect to those ideas.

In analysing the situation of students it is necessary to distinguish between the role of mass student struggles and the role of students as individuals within the revolutionary movement.

The potential of mass student actions has been seen recently in France, Spain and most spectacularly in South Korea.

The students by their daring and initiative catch the government unawares, overwhelm its outer defences and open a breach into which the big battalions of the workers can march.

Having said this, two words of warning are necessary. The first is that this "student ignition" process is not automatic. A spark can light a prairie fire, but only if the prairie is dry and ready to burn. On a number of occasions, for example America in the 60s, big student struggles failed to draw the mass of workers into battle.

Secondly, student struggles can flair up with amazing rapidity but then go down again just as quickly. They go up like a rocket and fall like a stick.

At the present moment in Britain the student movement, resembles a burnt out stick and therefore it is the role of students as individual revolutionaries that is currently more important than mass action.

Balance

The conditions of student life outlined earlier are such that even in periods of deep downturn considerable numbers of students can be won to the revolutionary movement on the basis of overall Marxist ideas.

It is vital that this is done because they bring with them youth, enthusiasm, energy and a lively interest in theory—all invaluable qualities.

At the same time, however, these conditions of life distance students somewhat from the life of the working class. So they can be prone to academicism and middle class intellectual fashions.

These are tendencies which must be combated by involving revolutionary students in the class struggle outside the colleges so they can learn from the working class movement.

This recognition of the strengths and weaknesses, the potential and the limitations is the balance Marxist must strike in their approach to students.

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EXTRADITION

Extradition



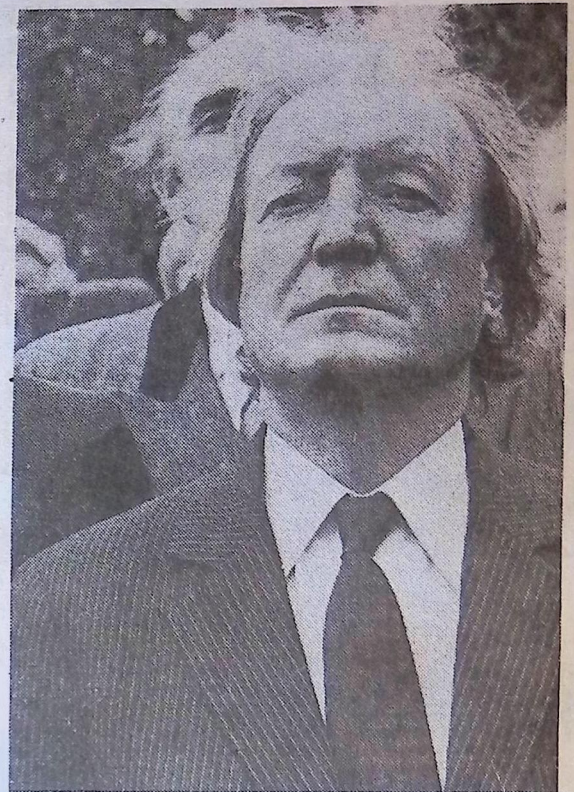
Lord Chief Justice Lowry; Basil and Tom O'Higgins

ANALYSIS

Why the bureaucrats signed the Haughey Plan



(Photo: Derek Speirs, Report)



IN NOVEMBER, the ICTU meets to ratify the National Pact with the Fianna Fail government. If passed it will number among the greatest sell outs in union history.

To see why you have to look at last years strike figures. The strike figures always give a crude guide to the level of workers activity. Last year they reached an all time low. But only 40 of them were unofficial - in other words, fought without the support of the union officials. They represented in all, a loss of only 20,000 days. There were virtually no white collar strikes.

In the seventies, two thirds of all strikes were unofficial. Sometimes workers didn't care if officials backed them or not. They felt sure of winning in sharp short fights.

Today the scale of the bosses' offensive has changed all that. To be an active shop steward today is to risk victimisation. Increasingly, workers look to the official structures for support. The union official is the key figure in starting or sabotaging resistance.

The 'Programme for National Recovery' - to give it its grand title shows what the ICTU will do with this influence. The pact with Haughey lasts for three and a half years. It outlaws industrial action over the period on pay and conditions. Not only is the longest ever deal with a government - it also ties up the union movement when it has to really fight. The Wall Street crash of '87 heralds a new recession on a world scale. The effects on the already weakened Irish economy will be catastrophic.

THE DEAL

The ICTU - Haughey deal:

* Endorses the programme of cuts that have already taken place. The pact recognises 'the need for the achievement of a reduction in the number of public employees'. It only asks that they take place voluntarily - or that there

be talks beforehand if they are to be compulsory. 20,000 jobs in the public sector will go.

* It provides a cast iron support for every private employer who wants to resist union wage demands. According to the ITGWU - and there may be some huffing involved - the going rate on the 27th wage round was 5%. The pact sets a ceiling of just half that. It also gives employers a let out in an inability to pay clause.

But by far the deepest effects of the pact are political.

Historically the Irish working class has been fragmented politically. Fianna Fail still commands the majority vote. 90% of the South voted for the right wing parties last time around. This electoral pattern has not prevented huge upsurges of militancy. But they have not been generalised enough to break the dead weight of our political traditions.

Today however, the left in Ireland has been given its greatest opportunity. The great debates between FF and FG turn out to be no more than a tiff at a tea party. All of them want to roll back every little gain that workers made in the seventies. All of them believe that 'this little island is too small to support all its people'. A determined fight now against the cuts, against the redundancies could break the illusions of thousands in FF and FG.

If Phil Flynn, had been prepared to throw all his influence into a fight against the health charges, he could have won thousands of workers away from FF.

If Des Geraghty had launched a fight against every collaborator with FF in the ITGWU, he could have broken their stronghold on the union.

If the ICTU had backed every worker who refused to cover for the cuts, if they had organised real - rather than token - resistance, then this country would now be undergoing an earthquake in political allegiances.

If, if, ifif only the bureaucrats weren't bureaucrats.

The ICTU desperately wanted the deal with Haughey. They looked across the water. They saw their colleagues reduced to the status of the buffoon Norman Willis. There would be 'no say' in government. No way the state machine could be pressurised to squeeze a few reforms without a fight.

The ambitions of the union bureaucracy in Ireland are set by two limits. They either want Labour in Coalition - or they want a 'special relationship with Fianna Fail. You have only to read Liberty News to see this. They use the exact same arguments that Spring and Desmond used for Coalition with Fine Gael to justify the present national pact. The same nonsense about Fine Gael and the Progressive Democrats being far far worse is there; the rubbish about how the deal 'softens the blow'; how it pulls FF back on the road of consensus and away from the 'new right'.

STRUGGLE

Change the actors -- and you have the same old script.

A Labour/Fine Gael coalition - or an ICTU-Fianna Fail understanding. This is the circle the bureaucrats travel.

The reason is that they dare not launch the type of struggle that could change the equation. To establish bureaucrat class based politics in an underdeveloped country like Ireland would demand an earthquake. To root out the traditions of decades would demand constant struggle, constant fight. It would mean pulling every little workplace into a general tide of resistance. And if it is one thing that the bureaucrats hate it is struggle!

Their jobs depend on selling labour at a price. They are there to negotiate, to set deals and stick with them. Their status in the movement depend on their 'negotiating skills' rather than their record of a fight.

That is why their role as bureaucrats transcends all other divisions between them. Phil Flynn, Joe O'Toole, Des Geraghty, have been among the most active in pushing the deal as much as their colleagues on the right. The treachery of the Left knows no bounds.

Take Phil Flynn. Flynn is/was a member of Sinn Fein. His (former?) comrades are hounded by Haughey's Special Branch. Until recently, he was banned from RTE himself. Yet according to journalists, Flynn has been the most active of the ICTU in setting up the deal. He has sat on a full three of its sub-committees.

In order to get the deal, he did everything to sabotage the fight against the health charges. Right after the cuts started, he still had O'Hanlon around as the guest speaker to the LGPSU.

When the deal was struck, Flynn feared the reaction in his union. On the day before the National Executive meeting of his union, Flynn rushed out a circular calling for support for the deal. If he had waited, it would have been stopped by a union executive that voted to reject the deal.

You can only understand that level of treachery if you understand that it is not a personal sell-out. It comes directly from his role as a bureaucrat and his republican politics.

The bureaucracy need involvement with the state as much as a life support apparatus. 'Having an ear' of a Minister, or the ability to make representation is a sure fire alternative to industrial action.

They will sacrifice the interests of the rank-and-file to get this sort of hearing. But in present conditions, that plays straight into the hands of the Right.

No matter how radical union leaders like Flynn claim to be, the harsh truth is that they have signed a deal which helps Fianna Fail to continue their dominance of Southern politics.

The issue goes further than this latest pact. The union leaders have rushed like sheep to embrace the cause of 'new realism'. This means recognising that "the country is in difficulties" and coming with suggestions about how the cuts should be made.

Two recent cases show the depth of this collaboration. In H Williams, the union leaders came up with a joint plan with the directors that would have cut 600 jobs.

When the banks turned down this offer, the unions were flumoxed. They themselves had accepted the arguments for cuts and now the bankers wanted more.

In the B and I, the unions have consistently advocated job cuts. Pat Rabbitte, the Workers Party candidate for Dublin South West, pressed a plan that would mean hundreds of job losses for a workforce that had already made sacrifices.

If they are advocating cuts now, what will they be doing when the new recession bites.

It is time to build a rank and file alternative to this treachery.

But at its core must be a revolutionary socialist understanding.

Without revolutionary politics today, you will be drowned in "realism".

-KIERAN ALLEN

THE GREAT LIE

By Abbie Bakan
Today a great lie dominates the world—that socialism already exists. We are told that police states such as Russia China or Poland are the model for socialism.

If you want to find out the truth behind this lie—to find out what socialism really is and what it is not—the this pamphlet is for you.

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Trotsky: the man they tried to forget

THE GUARDIAN'S man in Moscow reported recently on a momentous event which seemed to hint to indicate that *glasnost* might have more profound implications for the future of Soviet society than has hitherto been recognised.

It seems that in an academic publication a professor of history or something such had, matter-of-factly, referred to Leon Trotsky.

The absence of Trotsky from the Soviet State's account over the past sixty years of its own history - other than as a briefly-mentioned demon-figure to be denounced and then immediately discarded - is the greatest historical cover-up of this and maybe any other century. It suggests too, in a twisted sort of way, that Trotsky was a person of tremendous significance, not just as an individual-in-history but as the personification of ideas of some continuing relevance.

It cannot have been that the rulers of the Soviet State simply took a dislike to the man and decided to ignore him.

A rough parallel in Southern Ireland would be the writing of Connolly out of all accounts of the events surrounding the foundation of the State: out of school-books, academic studies, newspaper and magazine articles, radio and television accounts, so that entire generations might grow into adulthood quite ignorant of his role and his thinking, aware of him only as a mysterious figure who had flickered malevolently for a moment amid great events, then been somehow erased from the scene.

Trotsky was the chief organiser of the Russian Revolution, the seventieth anniversary of which is currently being celebrated in the Soviet Union with great pomp and State ceremony. On the first anniversary of the revolution Stalin wrote: 'All the work of practical organisation of the revolution.....the party owes principally and above all to Comrade Trotsky'.

'Comrade Trotsky' was a Ukrainian Jew, the son of well-to-do peasants. At the age of nineteen he was imprisoned for eighteen months for agitating against the Tsar, then deported to Siberia. He escaped (in a haycart) and went into exile. He spent some time in London, mostly around the King's Cross area in the company of Lenin and other emigre marxists, publishing small-circulation newspapers full of dauntingly-detailed articles and arguing in rooms above pubs about the coming revolution. In 1905 he returned to Russia and, elected president of the Petrograd Soviet, was the single most important figure in the abortive revolution of that year.

He spent the next twelve years back in emigre politics, then hurried again from New York to Russia after the fall of the Tsar in February 1917. He joined the Bolshevik party and quickly became second only to Lenin both in the councils of the party and in popular reputation.

On a BBC 'Timewatch' programme last month, an

EAMONN McCANN

aged Russian recalled a Petrograd in October, 1917. 'Lenin and Trotsky were always pronounced in one word. It was 'Lenin-Trotsky'.. like that. I suppose for a time I imagined it was one person. Trotsky was never mentioned without Lenin. Lenin very rarely without Trotsky.'

Today, as part of the anniversary celebrations, the cities and towns of the USSR seem to have been wall-papered with likenesses of Lenin. Of Trotsky there is no sign.

Trotsky was the chief organiser and commander of the Red Army. It is scarcely remembered now in the West that at one point Britain, the United States, France, Canada and Japan all had armies on Russian soil attempting to suppress the revolution. Trotsky was the commander-in-chief of the force which repelled them. That's not at all remembered in the USSR now. He was meantime involved also at the highest level in every area of State policy and activity.

The situation in Russia in the twenties was terrible almost beyond description. Pictures from the period might easily be mistaken for pictures from famine areas of the Third World today. In his history of the period Trotsky refers to reports of cannibalism in the countryside. Industrial production fell to a fifth of what it had been immediately prior to World War 1. The options open to the leaders of the infant Soviet Republic were few.

A section of the leadership took the path of isolating the

USSR as far as was possible from the surrounding capitalist world, abandoning the remnants of soviet democracy and ruling by terror when and where necessary - and it was necessary almost always, almost everywhere - and building heavy industry at break-neck speed in an effort to out-strip the West and construct 'Socialism in One Country'. As a logical extension of this, it became the 'duty' of communists around the world to work as a first priority not for revolution in their own countries but to serve the foreign-policy interests of the Soviet State.

AMUSEMENT

'Marxists who think along these lines are not in short supply today. They are sometimes identifiable by an enthusiasm for the USSR coupled with an affected amusement for talk of revolution here.

From 1923 Trotsky led the opposition to this trend. He was expelled from the Communist Party in 1927 and from the USSR in 1929. For the last eleven years of his life he was hunted from country to country. The massive propaganda machinery of the new class of state officials which had tightened its hold on the USSR continuously pumped out vilification of him. He was represented as an agent of the Nazis, or of Roosevelt and Churchill, of the Emperor of Japan, or of some sinister Jewish conspiracy. Stalinist references to Trotsky as a 'cosmopolitan without a fatherland' referred not just to his refusal to revere 'Mother

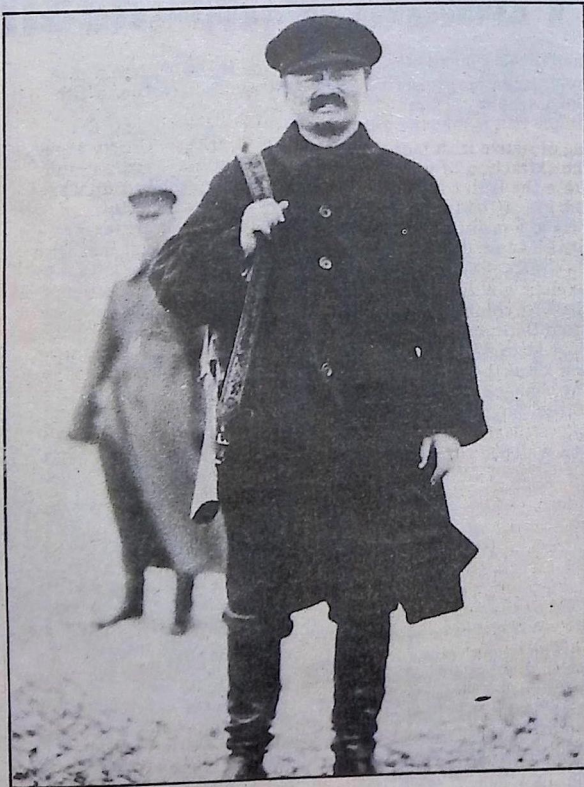
Russia' or to his forced wandering of the world, but - as was clear from the distortion of his features in caricature - to his Jewishness. He was murdered by an agent of Stalin in called Mercador in Mexico in 1940.

Arguing for revolutionary politics while maintaining that the USSR represented a betrayal of revolution, Trotsky's scattered, isolated followers made little headway and frequently fell victim of the tiny-sect disease of grand illusion and dialectical nit-picking. Writing about literature, as he often did, Trotsky once observed that the essence of tragedy lies in the contrast between great ends and insignificant means. In that sense Trotskyism has had a tragic history.

For all that, it remains true that, as Isaac Deutscher put it, Trotsky was 'the residuary legatee of classical Marxism'.

The Russian Revolution was the single most important event in the shaping of the world we live in. At the time it caused a carnival of optimism in the minds of millions of oppressed people. That the working class could take power on a vibrant promise to end forever the rule of one class over another and to remove from human relations all consideration of difference according to race, gender, nationality or creed so that all people could live freely and enjoy equally the great riches of the earth and realise the potentialities within them, their lives not stunted by poverty or their spirit soured by oppression, this was, as it most assuredly still is, the most powerful idea ever let loose in the minds of human beings. It is the brilliant idea at the heart of revolutionary Marxism and it was represented more accurately by Leon Trotsky than by any other figure in history. It is for this reason that his name was unspoken in Stalin's Russia and is spoken even now only in the safe confines of academic discussion, and in a whisper.

Shortly before he was murdered, in February 1940, Trotsky wrote: 'For forty three years of my life I have remained a revolutionist; for forty two of them I have fought under the banner of Marxism. If I had to begin all over again I would of course try to avoid this or that mistake, but the main course of my life would remain unchanged. I shall die a proletarian revolutionist, a Marxist, a dialectical materialist and, consequently, an irreconcilable atheist. My faith in the communist future of mankind is not less ardent, indeed it is firmer today, than it was in the days of my youth. Natasha has just come up to the window from the courtyard and opened it wider so that the air may enter more freely into my room. I can see the bright green strip of grass beneath the wall, and the clear blue sky above the wall and sunlight everywhere. Life is beautiful. Let the future generations cleanse it of all evil, oppression and violence and enjoy it to the full'



Trotsky; written out of Russian history

WHAT V STAND FOR

The Socialist Workers Movement is a revolutionary socialist organisation that fights for a workers' republic and international socialism.

The system under which we live, capitalism, is based on production for profit - not for human need. It leads to poverty and war; racism and sexism. It is a system that can only be destroyed by the class which creates all the wealth - the working class.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

Capitalism cannot be patched up or reformed - it must be overthrown. That cannot be achieved through parliament as the Workers Party and the Labour Party argue. The real power in this society lies in the boardroom of big business. The structures of the present parliament, courts, army and police are designed to protect the interests of the ruling class against the workers. At most parliament can be used for propaganda against the system - it cannot be the instrument by which workers destroy the power of the rich.

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

NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW

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

AGAINST PARTITION

The six county Orange state is propped up by British imperialism. That state divides the working class by the guarantee of marginal privileges in housing and jobs to Loyalist workers. The struggle of Catholic workers to rid themselves of sectarianism and bigotry can only succeed by smashing that state.

The slow task of building working class unity against imperialism must be begun. However imperialism must be fought in the here and now and we support all forces engaged in that struggle regardless of our differences of programme.

We stand for:

The immediate withdrawal of the British Army
The disbandment of the RUC and UDR
No to extradition and collaboration on border security

Connolly wrote that partition would bring a carnival of reaction. He was absolutely right. Irish workers confront two reactionary states. The Southern ruling class have no longer any fundamental conflict of interest with imperialism. They have become junior players in the world capitalist system. Their state props up partition - despite their occasional nationalist rhetoric.

The 'national question' will only be solved in the course of mass working class struggle against both states. Republicanism, by limiting the struggle to nationalist goals, by appealing to all classes in Irish society, can never defeat imperialism. Only a revolutionary socialist organisation that fights openly for the Workers' Republic can unite sections of the working class who have nothing to gain from a bourgeois Eire Nua.

AGAINST ALL OPPRESSION

Revolutionaries oppose all forms of oppression that divide and weaken the working class.

We are for real social, economic and political equality for women.
We are for an end to discrimination against homosexuals.
We stand for full separation of the church and state.
We stand for secular control of the hospitals and the schools.

THE UNIONS

Today the trade union movement is dominated by a caste of bureaucrats whose principal aim is to make their compromise with the system. They have destroyed solidarity between workers by the two tier picket system. They have failed to lead any fight over tax, wage cuts and unemployment.

We stand for:

100 percent trade unionism
A 35 hour week to reduce unemployment
The election of all union officials, subject to recall
Against redundancies. We say: occupy to demand nationalisation under workers' control
Full independence of the unions from the state. No reliance on the Labour Courts or the arbitration schemes in the public sector

We fight for the building of a national rank and file movement that links together the best militants to provide an alternative leadership to the trade union bureaucrats.

We fight for the formation of Right to Work committees that link the unemployed to the power of the trade union movement.

THE PARTY

To achieve socialism the most class conscious sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party. The SWM aims to build such a party around its activity in the working class movement. It stands in the tradition of Marx, Lenin, Trotsky and Connolly. We urge all those who agree with our policies to come in and join the SWM.

I would like more details about the Socialist Workers Movement

NAME

ADDRESS

Send to SWM, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8.

REVIEWS



Lessons of the revolution

Leon Trotsky; *The Lessons of October*, £2.50 (inc post) from SWM

'THE LESSONS OF OCTOBER' was written as a sort of revolutionary handbook for the European Communist Parties. The tradition of a revolutionary party is built not on critical clarity' said Trotsky, and the lessons he drew from the period February 1917 to February 1918 remain as relevant today as when they were first written. Published in 1924, it was also a direct challenge to the ruling group in Russia who, under the auspices of Stalin, were trying to establish the 'infallibility' of the Bolshevik Party to consolidate its power. After the February rev-

olution the Bolsheviks were anything but infallible. The majority of the leadership failed to react to the changing situation in Russia. With the exception of Lenin, the party swung dangerously to the right in support of the provisional government and the war. Lenin alone realized the necessity to fight for proletarian revolution. He argued long and hard, in the months leading up to October to convince the Bolsheviks of his position. Trotsky emphasises the importance of a decisive party leadership combining 'conservatism' with 'revolutionary initiative' who will

realise the moment for insurrection has arrived and take action. He compares the German revolutions of 1918 and 1919 and the Finnish Revolution of 1917 with the October Insurrection in Russia and shows how the lack of such leadership leads to the failure of a revolution. This book shows how a workers revolution is won. The principle lesson to be drawn from Russia in 1917 and all subsequent revolutions is the importance of a well-trained and educated revolutionary party. Such a party is the necessary ingredient for victory. - Eve Morrison

'Rosa Luxemburg' shatters illusions

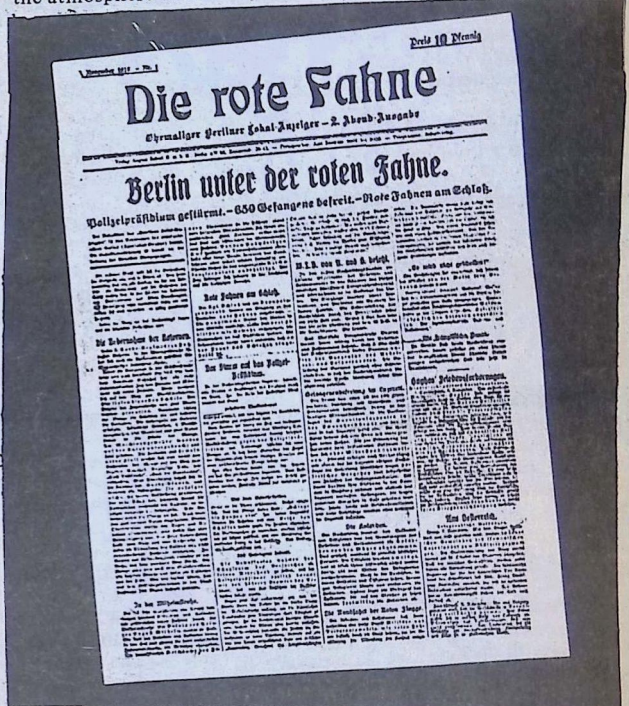
THE FILM BY Margareta Von Trotta 'Rosa Luxemburg' about the life of Rosa Luxemburg is now on general release at the Screen Cinema. Films about revolutionaries are few and far between. There are no well known films about Marx, Lenin, Trotsky etc. 'Rosa Luxemburg' is a great exception. And it is exceptional in its portrayal of the great revolutionary, Rosa Luxemburg. The film succeeds in presenting her as a tough and committed revolutionary and at the same time as a warm and feeling human being. The film shatters the commonly held notion that revolutionaries are fanatics. She is committed, but on the basis of clearly thought out and rational ideas which rise out of an intense commitment of life. That is the tragedy of Rosa Luxemburg. When we see her body at the end disappearing into the river it is impossible not to feel that a terrible injustice has been done. Barbara Sukowa's portrayal of Rosa Luxemburg is brilliant. It is played with such intensity and conviction and she draws the spectator into the character of a revolutionary.

The most tragic thing about Rosa Luxemburg's death is that it happened at a time when her own party, the German Social Democratic Party, the SPD, was in power. The film portrays Rosa Luxemburg fighting a continuous battle with the reactionaries and revisionists within this party. It was at the time the strongest and largest of the European parties of the working class and was the great hope for leading the working class to power. In 1914 they sold out to the war (as did most of the European left) and voted in parliament for the war credits which made the war effort

possible. The contradictions within the party, between the parliamentarians who gave in to nationalism and war, and the minority who still believed in revolutionary methods and opposed the war, are portrayed very clearly in the film in the verbal battles between Rosa Luxemburg and the other leaders of the SPD. This is very clear until the last part of the film. Her party comes to power in the aftermath of the war. The open contradictions between her and the reactionary policies of the SPD lead her and Karl Liebknecht to form their own party 'Spartacus', after the famous Roman slave leader.

The film fails to create the atmosphere and reality of

the revolutionary situation that existed in Germany in 1918-19. And consequently fails to make it clear that the revolutionary opposition of the Spartacus movement to the reactionary SPD ruling party was what led to her death (and Liebknecht's). This is a pity as the tensions in the SPD had been made very clear in the early part of the film. For people who know nothing of the historical situation and about Rosa Luxemburg's life, the film can be quite confusing. Despite this, it is a very good film. It is a great portrait of a great revolutionary and deserves to be seen by as many people as possible. It is rare that we get a chance here in Ireland to see films like this.



Crotty's deeply conservative 'radical nationalism'

Kieran Allen reviews 'Ireland in Crisis' by Raymond Crotty (Brandon)

ANY BOOK that calls for the cancelling of the national debt should, you would think be welcomed by socialists. All the more so when it also sets out to deal with the economic wreckage that colonialism left in this country. Unfortunately, Raymond Crotty in 'Ireland in Crisis' does all these things. But his standpoint is very different from that of socialists. Crotty describes himself as a 'radical nationalist'. This does not mean that he is adverse to using the language of Marxism. The book is peppered with references to 'capitalism' and 'imperialism' and even 'capitalist colonialism'. Modern day nationalists increasingly use such language without moving one iota from their nationalist stance. The secret lies in giving a totally abstract account of the working of capitalism so that you miss its fundamental contradiction. Crotty does precisely this. Capitalism, he claims, came into existence "when the circumstances confronting the Indo-European pastoralists 4,000 to 5,000 years ago made it possible and necessary to

adapt capitalist production." These circumstances were, by the way, mainly ecological which explains why the colder wetter climate in Ireland prevented the native development of capitalism! Now this is pure fantasy. To argue that capitalism came into existence 4,000 years ago is to confuse the feudal, slave and capitalist modes of production. It is to reduce capitalism to nothing more specific than an 'individualist system'. It is to ignore the roots of the system in the exploitation of wage labour. But it allows you to use the language that is close to the left and still reach very conservative conclusions.

ABSTRACT

The same abstract method is involved in Crotty's view of colonialism. He sees it mainly in cultural terms, at first. It is the imposition of 'individualist' values on pre-Norman Ireland so that land becomes the property of individuals rather than a clan. This image of a golden 'primitive communist' Ireland is dear to the heart of nationalists.

But it does not stand up. Modern historians have shown how the clan based system was already breaking down before the Normans arrived. A class of semi-feudal tenants held their land through a form of 'metayage' where they provided their own stock but gave 1/2 their harvest to the lord. By the 12th century, Gaelic literature records that there existed a class of 'bothachs' and 'fuidhirs' who took stock from the chief and paid tribute in return, sometimes in the form of labour. By the 16th century historians have pointed to the existence of Gaelic chiefs who held large demesnes and demanded labour services in ploughing, weeding and reaping. So although there were differences between Gaelic and Norman society, they cannot be put down to an individualist culture being imposed on a collectivist culture. Crotty's analysis of colonialism in the 18th and 19th centuries is by far the best part of the book. It is a useful reminder of the role of colonialism in bleeding this country dry. Some of its facts - like on the emergence of the banking system - give good arguments against those 'revisionist' historians who try to pretend that Irish

underdevelopment was caused by a 'lazy bourgeoisie' or even the 'Catholic culture'. The simple fact is that the crushing of native Irish industry, the extraction of massive rent from the Irish countryside, the use of the Irish market, played a major role in giving British capitalism a lift up. Crotty, however, does not explain why Ireland became the first colony to withdraw from the empire. The republican struggle played a crucial role. But there is nothing on the changed economic interests of the empire in an age of imperialism where interests had widened to include half the globe. However the main argument with the book is on the current situation. Crotty sees colonialism at work today and as being the cause of most of the problems which the country has economically. This he tries to show by claiming that colonialism leads to 'incorrect factor prices'. Specifically that land costs too little, that labour is too high, and that there is too much borrowing. Crotty's pro-private enterprise view is evident here. If only the 'factor prices' were correct, then the market would be

fine. It is the age old plea that goes back to Griffith. Let's take one of the factor prices'. Crotty argues that a militant trade union movement pushed up wages in this country. How amazing! Almost every survey has shown that Irish wage rates are the lowest in Europe. That is precisely why multinationals come here! The argument that the high cost of labour is the result of colonialism and is holding back Irish capitalism is just nonsense.

SOLUTIONS

Finally, there are Crotty's solutions. There is firstly the idea that you can cancel the national debt and not cause problems for Irish capitalism. Unfortunately, for our utopian, 52% of the national debt is domestic debt - i.e. owed to Irish men and women. Furthermore, the idea that you can withdraw from the international credit system of the banks and can expect to go on as normal is pie in the sky. You can only do so by organising for a workers' republic. There is the notion

that every citizen in Ireland should be given a share in Ireland Ltd. This £70 a week share comes from the break up of the education service and the 'state bureaucracy'. Eventually, every Irish person can set off onto the free market, untainted by colonialism - free to rise or fall in an ideal capitalist world. Such proposals would go down well in the libertarian fringe of the Conservative party. Fortunately, the illusion of a share owning democracy has now suffered a grave blow - since the Wall Street Crash of October 1987. Despite Crotty's far out approach, his book will be influential. It has already had its second printing. Given the absence of a large Marxist organisation in this country, any book that makes references to 'colonialism' or 'capitalism', will have an attraction for those who want a way out of the crisis. It is the duty of revolutionary socialists to stand clearly for the cancellation of the huge debt - but to point to the deeply conservative conclusions that lie in the economic programme of 'radical nationalists'.

INDUSTRIAL NEWS

ISPCC out 23 weeks

ON TUESDAY November 3, the ISPCC strike enters its 21st week

The strikers will hold a demonstration at 12 noon on that day at the Society's headquarters in Molesworth St, Dublin. All supporters of the strike are urged to attend.

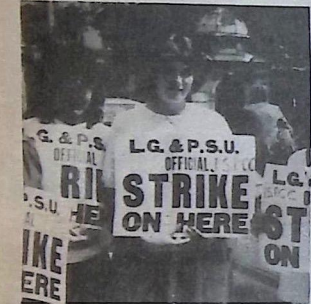
The dispute arose from the sacking of a book-keeper who was also an LGPSU shop steward. This followed voluntary redundancies which were recommended by an ISPCC Task Force whose report explicitly stated that the book-keeper would be retained in employment.

The Society recently made an "offer" to the workers which amounted to an insult.

Management offered to POSTPONE the redundancy by three months. In fact, this offer had strings attached! The workers would have to accept a whole range of new work procedures in return for this postponement.

This included opening by management of all outgoing and incoming mail.

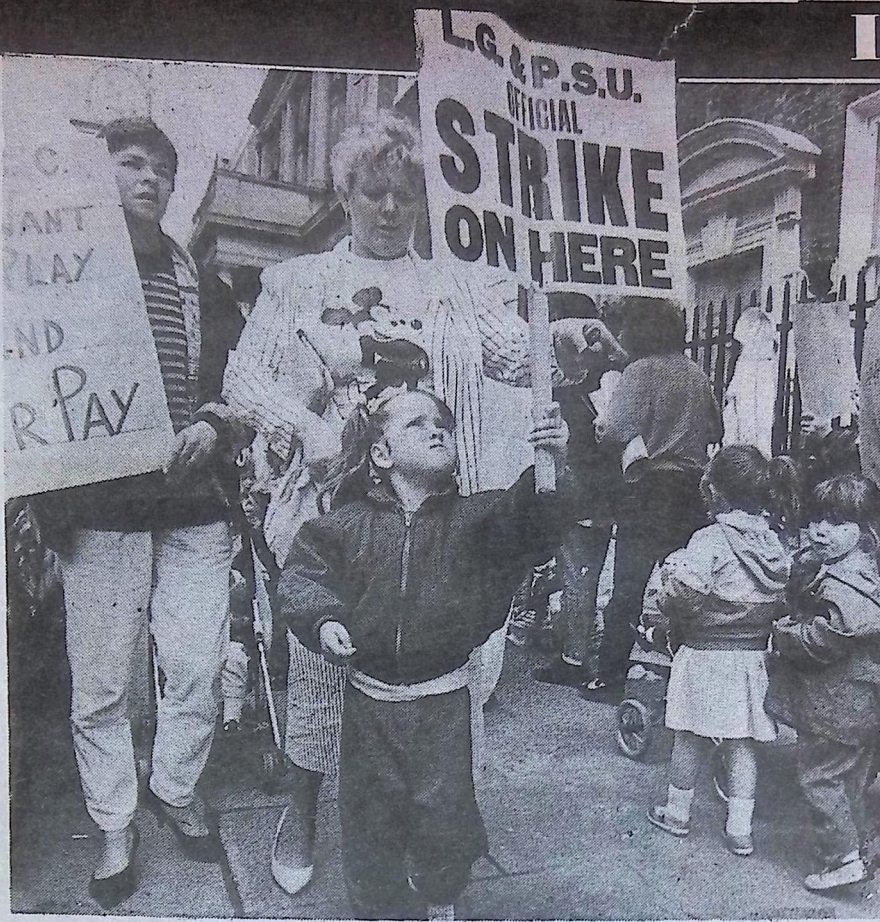
New terms of employment were also included. Holiday



entitlements would be restricted. Employees would have to sign a mobility clause and new staff would have to go through a 12-month probationary period.

The offer was, of course, rejected but full solidarity is now needed if the strikers are to be successful.

This is why all trade unionists should support the demonstration on November 3.



PRIMARY SCHOOLS NO COVER FOR CUTS

PRIMARY schools in the South are in for a devastating blow with the new rounds of cuts. Minister for Education O'Rourke has issued guidelines to raise the pupil-teacher ratio, An eleven teachers school, for example, will now need sixty extra pupils just to hold the present number of teachers. The changes come into effect in January.

Classes will be broken up and distributed around the school, while teachers are made redundant.

The INTO believe that over 2000 teachers will find themselves redundant and then re-deployed.

Even before the cuts Irish class sizes are very high. Almost a quarter of classes in Irish primary schools have more than 36 pupils.

Southern Ireland already holds the record for the highest pupil-teacher ratio. The average of 27 pupils to

one teacher compares with Denmark at 11 to 1, Belgium with 18 to 1 and England's 22 to 1.

It also already spends the lowest per head on education at school level. So Denmark, for example, spends twice as much as Ireland on education per head of school-going population.

The increase in pupil-teacher ratio will hit working class children hardest. They provide a higher proportion of slower readers for example. In large classes they will be virtually ignored.

O'Rourke's cuts will also affect school building. £15 million is to be slashed from the building programme. This means that virtually no new schools will be built.

INTO

The response of the INTO, has, so far, been weak. Incredibly, the INTO leadership are pushing for a yes vote on the National Plan. INTO Gerry Quigley was one of the main negotiators of the plan. But even left-wingers in the union, such as Senator Joe O'Toole have argued for support for the Plan - despite the clear commitment to public sector redundancies.

It's a bit like "turkeys voting for Christmas".

In an effort to force through the deal, the INTO leadership have stooped to the most scurrilous methods. Well edited excerpts of the Plan were distributed stripped of any mention of the commitment to redundancies.

In some cases, branch meetings were rushed through before the full effects of the Plan became known.

When it comes to opposing the cutbacks, the executive of the union are proposing a unified front of parents, clerical managers and teachers to lobby the TDs. According to Quigley, "industrial action has not yet been even contemplated". Clearly the INTO leadership has in mind the peace clause of the national plan.

PARENTS

Parents organisations should be brought in to support any campaign against the cuts. But teachers should be aware from their pay campaign that lobbying TDs get absolutely nowhere.

The only strategy that stands any chance of success is industrial action. This needs to begin with a clear and simple directive to union members from January 1st. Namely: that there be a rigorous policy of no cover implemented.

Teachers should refuse to cover for the cuts by doing extra work. In political terms, they should refuse any extra pupils on January 1st.

A rigorous no cover policy would make the cut-back unworkable. But to carry it out would mean the revitalisation of the union at school level. Regular meetings, with full open discussion that was not dominated by principal teachers would build the confidence to carry through the no cover policy.

Dublin Corpo cuts campaign

AT A meeting in Liberty Hall on October 15 a campaign was launched against cuts in the public sector. The initiative was taken by the Dublin Corporation Liaison Committee. The meeting was attended by seventy shop-stewards and activists from the 14 unions in the Corporation.

The campaign is a welcome development considering the present climate of defeat and demoralisation. In recent months the fight against health cuts has faded while the ICTU has been busy talking to the Government and agreeing to a National Plan which opens the door to more cuts. The Corpo unions' campaign offers trade unionists and socialists an opportunity to reverse this trend.

However, there are serious arguments to be made about the direction being taken by the Liaison Committee.

The emphasis is on political lobbying rather than industrial action. Paddy O'shaughnessy, an official with the Bricklayers Union opened the meeting and said that the purpose of the campaign was to organise all union members in their constituencies where they would join with tenants' organisations and community groups to put pressure on local politicians.

This is a waste of time and ignores the real power of trade unions. Workers are powerful in their workplaces where they are collectively organised not in their constituencies where they are simply a collection of

individuals.

The case for an alternative to the lobbying tactic was also made at the meeting.

FIGHT

A prerequisite of any fight against the cuts is the rejection of the National Plan. P Corr (IMETU) said that the plan would shackle the public sector unions into an alliance with the government which would end the possibility of a fight back.

At least half a dozen speakers proposed industrial action as a way forward.

Sam Nolan, UCATT's Regional Organiser pointed to one recent example of this where a day of action saved 130 County County jobs. But he did not

argue for more of the same and said that "a more political form of action" was needed - ie, lobbying politicians.

The official desires to "play by the rules" and to separate politics from industrial action should not deter activists from pushing for a fightback.

The least that is required is a day of action involving a demonstration of trade unions, tenants' organisations and community groups.

Because it would challenge the Government, such action would be political and it would be much more effective than trying to win over right-wing politicians.

One day of action would not be enough but it would give workers a feel for collective action that can force the Government's hand.



All good pals: Australian premier Bob Hawke, Haughey and Dukes compare notes.

Union busting- Australian style

AUSTRALIA'S Labour government has gone in for union bashing on a level that would earn it Thatcher's deepest respect.

On Tuesday 13 October in Victoria, Australia, 150 cops including the elite anti-terrorist unit smashed their way into the offices of the building workers' union, the BLF.

They seized \$1.5 million in union funds and all the union's assets.

Phones were ripped out of the wall, radio equipment was smashed and everything in the office seized, including the union's membership lists. One organiser was brutally kicked and jumped upon when the

police found out he had a heart condition.

Later that same day the government passed a new law to legalise the police action.

Never in the history of Australia have we seen such a vicious attack upon a union. And it wasn't our equivalent of Thatcher who did it. It was our Labour government who presided over the attack and then sanctioned it.

Here in Australia the Labour government has been campaigning to smash the militant BLF for the last three years.

Eighteen months ago the government pushed through some of the most draconian anti-union laws ever passed

through parliament. The aim was to make it virtually illegal to employ BLF members.

Armed police were sent onto building sites to force BLF members to join a rival soft left union. All this was done with the support of most of the Labour left. The BLF was a danger to them because it was unwilling to accept pay cuts that were central to Labour's economic policy.

But the BLF survived. And so the full scale attack was launched last week. Getting rid of the Tories is no guarantee against union bashing.

□PHIL GRIFFITHS,
Melbourne, Australia

Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

NO LET-UP ON EXTRADITION

THERE MUST be no let-up in the campaign against extradition.

The apparent failure of Brian Lenihan and Tom King to stitch up a deal at their meeting in Stormont last month does not mean that the issue has gone away.

In fact, it is more important than ever to push the case for no extradition on principle.

The principle seems almost to have been lost sight of in the course of the campaign.

All of the objections put by the Dublin Government concern the "concessions" they might get from the British — to do with Diplock Courts, the Birmingham Six, Guildford Four, etc.

The clear implication is that if the British move on these matters Dublin will have no compunction about automatically handing over anybody the RUC wants.

As explained elsewhere (see centre pages) the South's politically-motivated judges have already gone a long way down this road anyway. To that extent, the 'official' argument is largely phoney.

It is phoney, too, in that a change from one judge to three in the Diplock Courts would make little or no practical difference — and indeed there has been no campaign for this "reform" from within the nationalist community.

The cases of innocent Irish people imprisoned in Britain have even less direct relevance. The only relevant demand should be for their unconditional release.

The significance of the issue goes far deeper than any of these items of controversy would suggest.

Dublin politicians have repeatedly summed up their main concern as being that Northern nationalists should have "full confidence in the administration of justice". When (rather than if) it becomes their position that Northern nationalists should have this "full confidence" it will immediately and obviously follow that in Dublin's eyes opposition to the security forces and system of law in the North will have lost all legitimacy.

The follow-on from extradition will logically be full support for the RUC, the UDR, the court practice and procedure etc. It will mean, in practical terms, that the Dublin government will have accepted the legitimacy of the Northern State. This will further imply increased repression within the South of

opponents of the Northern State.

So while the issue has been posed in a phoney way, its implications are profound.

As *Socialist Worker* has consistently argued there is no longer any important contradiction between the interests of the Southern ruling class and the interests of the British ruling class. They both want stable political arrangements on this island — particularly since their economic system is in such dire straits. They both want very much to eliminate the troublesome North as a source of instability.

All the ruling class parties in the South want a settlement with Britain. Their interests are bound up with those of Britain. None has the slightest interest in opposing Britain.

Unless the campaign against extradition is built around an understanding of this it is certain to fail.

It is thus worse than useless to campaign on a perspective aimed at recruiting the "grass roots" of Fianna Fail to the anti-extradition cause.

The effort to appeal to these "grass roots" has necessarily meant concentrating on arguments designed to have appeal in such areas . . . the Diplock Courts, the Birmingham Six etc — and avoiding the political considerations which are central. This means that if the Birmingham Six win their appeal and if the British ready up some cosmetic change in the Diplock procedures, the campaign will have been stripped of most of its arguments.

This is an extremely dangerous situation. It can only be remedied by tackling the issue head-on. And that means appealing to the only section of the population which does not have an interest in the stabilisation of capitalist rule throughout the island and which indeed is daily being hammered on the economic front to pay for the capitalist crisis. That is to say, the working class.

Looking to the working class does not mean — contrary to the way some republicans have caricatured it — issuing calls for instant general strikes. It does mean having a perspective of working toward strike action by arguing patiently in the unions and wherever else a working class audience can be found that the economic attacks of the Free State ruling class — on jobs, wages, hospitals, schools and



Seamus Shannon and the RUC

welfare rights etc — have the same ultimate source as the attack of the right of opponents of British imperialism to asylum in the South.

Generally speaking, the campaign should appeal to the masses who are victims of Fianna Fail, not to the minority who are its membership. The Fianna Fail party should be

attacked — not "lobbied".

The presence of a small number of individuals in Fianna Fail — such as James Kelly — who have consistently opposed extradition in any circumstances should not be allowed to confuse us about the fundamental nature and role of the party.

In the South, fighting extradition means fighting Fianna Fail. The same applies to the Free State ruling class's political echo in the North, the SDLP.

Our watchword should be — no common front with any ruling class party but a common struggle against ruling class policies.

Belfast: SF election success

THE DOUBLE Sinn Fein victory in last month's West Belfast by-election went almost unremarked in the national media

That's not so surprising. When the Anglo-Irish agreement was signed two years ago, its chief aim was to end "Nationalist alienation" (ie support for Sinn Fein and the IRA).

The election of Fra McCann and Mairtin O Muilleoir is a welcome sign that the agreement has not succeeded in this respect. The result has shown that there is still some fightback in the Nationalist working class.

The problem, of course, is the direction in which Sinn Fein is leading that resistance. The all-class politics of republicanism directs all the energies of those willing to fight back into drain-fixing electoralism and support for the armed struggle, but offers

no socialist alternative to the disarray of the establishment parties.

This is underlined by the appearance of yet another official report demonstrating that sectarianism is still alive and well in the Six Counties.

The report of the State-sponsored Standing Advisory Committee on Human Rights shows that Catholic workers are two-and-a-half times as likely to be unemployed as Protestant workers. It further states that religious discrimination is social rather than geographical and has resulted in a significantly lower standard of living for Catholics in comparison to Protestants.

The hype surrounding the Anglo-Irish agreement pretended that serious progress would be made in eliminating discrimination. It is now crystal-clear that it offers no prospect of improving the lot of the North's Catholics.