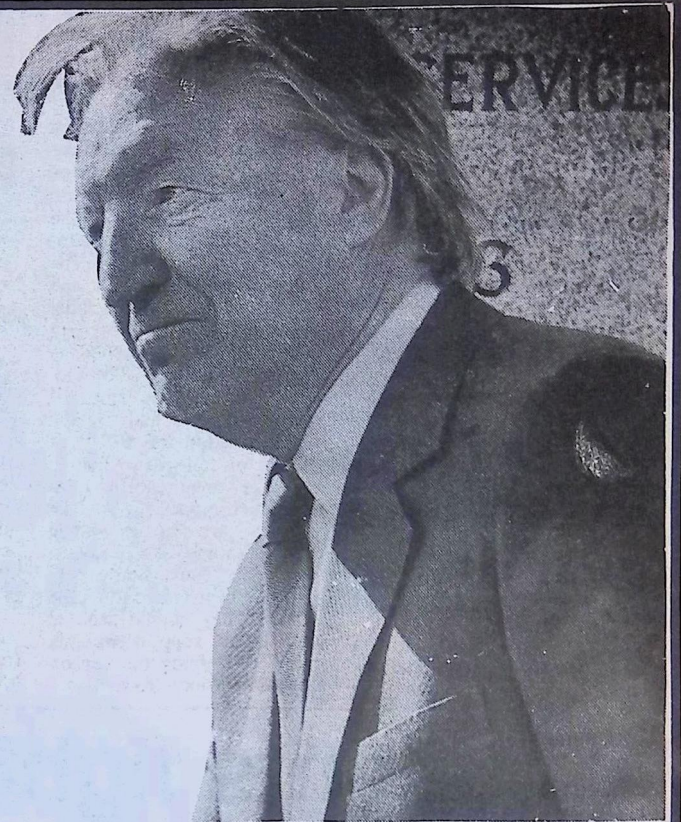


Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

Haughey slashes £300 million ...

FF CUTS SCANDAL



THE IRISH health service is at breaking point.

That has been confirmed by the decision of Charles Haughey to opt for private treatment on the last two occasions he was ill.

Haughey went to

the private clinic for the super rich at the Mater Hospital.

Here there are no waiting lists, no closed down wards, no scrimping on medical necessities.

But the rest of us have to depend on overcrowded hospitals.

Despite the pleas of nurses who have taken

action at James's in Dublin, Haughey's government have done nothing to alleviate the crisis.

When a consultant at Temple St children's hospital warned about deaths, he was denounced as an alarmist. Not a penny more has been found for the health service.

Instead the £500 million that has been coughed up

by the rich in back taxes will be used to pay of the national debt.

This does not mean that it all goes to greedy bankers outside the country. There are plenty of them here as well.

Over half the interest payments on the national debt goes to Irish residents. They make sure they get their pound of flesh while the rest of us suffer.

Last month the Fianna

Fail government announced a new programme of cuts to boost their confidence.

The cuts include:

- The slashing of the local authority house building programme. Next year less than 20 corporation houses will be built in Dublin. Fianna Fail are creating the same type of housing crisis they did in the 1960's.

- University fees will rise by 5%. This will push them well over the £1,000 mark and way beyond the reach of working class students.

- Increased local charges. Already many corporations and councils around the country charge for refuse collection, water rates and even library tickets. Now their budget has been cut back further.

- New attacks on all those on social welfare. Fianna Fail have cut £89 million from its budget. Woods claims that 13,000 more people will be driven off the dole by job harassment schemes. People on disability payment can also expect more snooping and harassment.

But it was not all doom and gloom. The T.Ds will get a 10% increase in pay this year. The President gets an extra 15% to help out on junkets. Mysteriously enough the Secret Service is due an increase of 7%.

Fianna Fail has proved themselves as class fighter for the rich. They rival Margaret Thatcher in their determination. Our Green Tories have the rich jumping with joy. Money is flooding back into the country.

But it is not creating jobs. Instead it is being used to invest in Ireland's national debt where the Irish state pays out vast sums in interest.

But where are the class fighters on our side of the fence? The union leaders are not letting anything get in the way of the National Plan.

When workers at the Office of Public Works are laid off in their hundreds the union leaders whinge about "fair play".

They do nothing to build support for the nurses who are taking action against Fianna Fail's cuts.

All of this is meant to be the "realistic way" of organising our class. It is nothing but cowardice and defeatism.



Students protesting against education cuts smash through a gardai barrier outside the Dail

A World of Hunger P. 6&7

The bigots grimace

THE RIGHT wing bigots of SPUC have not given up their campaign to appoint themselves as moral guardians for the country. They have gone back to the courts seeking the right to take out injunctions against anybody who publishes information on abortion. Their main target at the moment is the U.C.D. student's union.

However opposition to SPUC is growing. A mass meeting of over one thousand students in UCD decided to go ahead with the distribution of the student handbook that contained information on abortion. The vote was over two thirds in favour.

It was clear that some of the executive of the students union did not share the

determination to defy SPUC. They had clearly hoped that students might vote to retreat under the legal attacks. Instead, SPUC antics has brought out deep anger.

Students at UCD must now keep up the pressure to make sure their executive carries through the democratic mandate. They can point to the fact that they will not have to confront SPUC alone. The Trinity Students union, at the initiative of the Socialist Worker Student Society, passed a resolution pledging solidarity. The students union at the National College of Art and Design have decided to defy SPUC. A number of colleges in Britain are also prepared to raise funds and support. The students are in a strong position to give a lead against the bigots. They should publicise their case throughout the unions. They should seek to gain union support for the policy of defying the censorship on abortion information.



SPUC leaving court

Violence on the buses

BUS CREWS in Dublin have threatened action over attacks on late night buses. They had originally planned a "curfew" on late buses. But a number of management concessions led to it being called off.

It is important to understand where the violence comes from in order to get rid of it. More police and more prisons

are easy answers but they're no solution to eliminating violence -- look at the North.

Besides, we already have more police here per head of the population than any other European country. We also have one of the highest rates of unemployment and one in every four Irish children lives below the poverty line.

is in the 80s. Some of the worst bus routes, Ballymun, Tallaght, Finglas, are through areas with up to 70% unemployment, and a "one-person-operator" with £100 or more is an easy target.

Direct links between tenants' groups and bus workers can begin to find ways of tackling the immediate problem. Thugs can be targeted and isolated within the community. More buses with full crews should be used on busy and dangerous routes. Pre-paid ticket systems, especially at night, can cut down on theft-related attacks.

In the end of the day, however, the only lasting solution is fundamental political change and an end to the system that breeds violence. In the meantime we must **FIGHT THE CUTS, DEFEND EVERY JOB, NO REDUCTION IN SERVICES.**

LOW WAGES

Successive government policies -- more cuts, more unemployment, more misery, created the breeding ground for brutality. The likes of Bertie Ahern may well pour scorn on the working class of this city. As part of the 'mercs and perks' brigade, he's well out of it.

Lives of poverty and despair have always produced violence and crime -- with the weakest among the poor themselves suffering the most. This was a true in the 50s as it

Students fight cuts

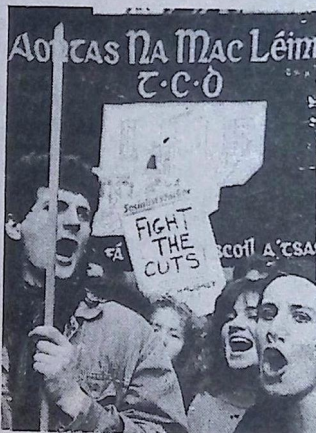
UNIVERSITIES AND colleges across the country are being hit by Fianna Fail's education cuts. Earlier library closing hours--5 p.m. instead of 10 p.m.--are being imposed by the administration of both Trinity and UCD.

The Regional Technical College's library in Cork has a seating capacity of only 170 students when 600 is the recommended number. Kevin Street students are deprived of a common room.

This deterioration in the quality of Irish third level education is combined with an average 10% fee rise each year in most colleges.

This has created a great deal of anger among third level students. Whether this anger is translated into action depends on the Students' Union officers' willingness to take a lead in the fight.

The potential is definitely there. On 19th October a fairly small but militant number of students marched on the Dail. The SU leaders present promised that the march was only the beginning of the campaign.



*EVE MORRISON

Every little cut helps

SO YOU thought there was no money in this country? Last month there was great excitement at the wine auction of James Adams. A certain Mr. Hasset was buying up everything in sight. Only the best clarets and beaujolais was acceptable. His total bill at the end of the session came to a whopping £20,000.

Hasset was only the agent. The man picking up the bill was none other than Michael Smurfit, boss of Ireland's

major multinational and of the state-run Telecom.

Smurfit is famous for his dinner parties. But he has got some funny habits. While the rest of his guests get served bucketfuls of ordinary plonk, Smurfit is served from a special decanter reserved only for himself.

Michael Smurfit's wine bill would keep four people on the Labour Exchange for a year -- or pay the total wages of two lowly-paid clerical workers in Telecom. Yet this disgusting hypocrite has the nerve to lecture us on tightening our belts. Next time we know who to look to for a little sacrifice.

THE SHEIK'S MESSAGE



Hope the jewels cover the private health bill

Quotes

"Drink is the cause of overcrowding in the hospitals"—Fianna Fail TD Dick Roche at a Health Board meeting

"The Government's objective is that Irish people should live and work normally in the United States"—Brian Lenihan



"The promotion and implementation of legislation on divorce and abortion is largely the job of the liberal bourgeoisie. Socialists should stick to bread and butter issues"—"John Dunne" in Making Sense(!), the Workers' Party journal.



"There is no point in giving them extra help if they are just going to continue with the way that got them into a great deal of trouble."—Thatcher on aid to the Third World

Anti Extradition groundswell

FOR A change, the latest Irish Times opinion polls have given socialists something to cheer about. For a start 44% of those polled declared themselves against extradition. Those disapproving to the greatest extent were young people

under 24 and generally working class. This goes against the whole thrust of media and government propaganda of the last few months.

Also, another result which totally goes against establishment "common sense"

was shown in the survey on attitudes to poverty. usually we are told that the rich need their wealth as "incentive" to create more jobs etc. However 88% of those surveyed were in favour of more government spending to reduce poverty and 66% thought the rich should be taxed more to provide funds for alleviation of poverty.

These results provide us with a number of interesting facts. Firstly people's ideas are not totally controlled by what they read in the press or see on TV. Secondly the anti-extradition campaign which centred on winning support from Fianna Fail's grassroots was absolutely wrong, as the greatest opposition to extradition came from Labour and Workers' Party voters.

All in all socialists have something to be happy about as substantial numbers of people show disapproval with ruling class policy in this country.

BRIAN HANLEY

We Think

Anger grows with Fianna Fail

THE SCALE of the Fianna Fail attacks on working people has already begun to radicalise a minority.

Nurses, who have borne the brunt of the health cuts, have voted in several hospitals for "work to rules". Their union, the INO, has also decided to affiliate to the ICTU.

Recent opinion polls also indicate a shift to the left. A quarter of the electorate in Dublin now support parties of the left. Across the country the left vote has almost doubled from an absolute low point over a year ago.

The Leixlip local election gave an indication of how voting allegiances could switch dramatically. Here the right wing parties were given a trouncing as Labour and the Workers' Party took 40% of the vote.

The experience of struggle has been decisive. In Leixlip, for example, a major battle has been mounted for over a year with the Kildare Council. Lights in some housing estates are switched off in the evenings a part of the cutbacks. During refuse collections, the Corporation has sent around an individual with a list of names of those who have not paid the refuse charges. Water has been disconnected from homes—only to be reconnected by an unofficial group of plumbers.

If the left vote were to depend on the antics of Dick Spring or Proinsias de Rossa, it would have been a long time in coming. The polls show that they stand to the right of

their votes. Despite their pledge to back extradition, 60% of Labour and Workers' Party supporters are against it. The left leaders have concentrated on Dail manoeuvres rather than giving any lead.

Their supporters in the union officialdom have pushed through the National Plan. More than anything it has been this peace treaty with Fianna Fail which has bolstered their support. Without the National Plan, the tiny sparks of resistance now evident on the health cuts could be spread. An attack on Fianna Fail pressed on by the mass activity of workers would do more than countless speeches to break traditional voting allegiances to Fianna Fail.

Nor is there any sign that the small revival of the left is affecting the witch hunt inside the Labour Party at the moment. Three Labour branches in Palmerstown have been disbanded because of their opposition to the Spring leadership. *Militant* supporter Joe Higgins has been blocked from standing as a candidate. In Bonnybrook, another *Militant* supporter has not been re-registered as a party member.

It is blatantly obvious that Spring and Desmond hope to revive the Labour vote only to be in a better position to bargain for a new coalition. They have no intention of supporting the scale of struggle necessary to match Fianna Fail's attacks. That is the real reason why they want to tame the left now by pushing *Militant* out.

Tragically, the other major grouping in the Labour Party, *Labour Left* led by Emmett Stagg, have gone along with the witch hunt. Their supporters began the witch hunt as a manoeuvre to oust *Militant* from control of Labour Youth.

At the Administrative Council of the Labour Party, Emmett Stagg voted for the investigation into *Militant*. Even after walking out of a recent A.C. meeting, Stagg's supporters were insisting that they merely objected to Dick Spring's style of dealing with *Militant*.

This disgraceful carry-on stems from *Labour Left's* general approach. They want a no-coalition Labour Party that breaks from the past. But they have little strategy beyond that. They favour campaigns on a local constituency basis, they also see no point in all-out attack on the National Plan. Too many of their supporters in the union bureaucracy would be antagonised by such a move.

Despite their opposition to Spring, they face a major contradiction in their politics which blocks their shift leftwards. *Labour Left* have consistently opposed the fight against the Northern state. They refuse to campaign against extradition. They go along with the general Labour Party consensus that the Southern state must be defended from "terrorists".

All of this means that a Tony Benn type resurgence seen in the British Labour Party in the early '80s is highly unlikely. The left in Labour has already shown its vacillating and inconsistent nature. Moreover, despite their unpopularity, the Spring leadership is determined to hold on. He will use all the bureaucratic structures of the party to defeat the left. Labour Party Conference has been postponed and will only be held next March in Spring's home town of Tralee.

Revolutionary socialists take no joy from the continued dominance of Dick Spring. We defend the right of *Militant* to organise in the Labour Party. But we also think



Left wins in Leixlip

that the recent events show that while Southern workers may look to Labour and the Workers' party in the coming period, these parties cannot satisfy their aspirations. If Spring can get away with his attacks now, then think of the pressure on the left when a general election draws near. As Kinnock has shown in Britain, the left will be beaten into the ground in order to capture the electoral middle

ground. The alternative is to build a strong independent revolutionary organisation now.

Such an organisation must be able to work with Labour and Workers' Party supporters—but also point to the fact that these parties can never become the vehicle to fight for socialism.

Moses fights on

THE TRIAL of Moses Mayekiso, the black South African trade-unionist, goes on as the South African state machine continues its prosecution with little or no evidence. The continuation of a trial shows the determination by the state to smash any opposition to the apartheid regime.

Moses Mayekiso stated in late September that - "The state is getting very serious now. They are trying very hard to get the result they need".

The prosecution's case against Mayekiso revolves around his activities in the Alexandra Action Committee in April 1986. The A.A.C. was the body that took over the running of the Alexandra Township, where Moses lived. The local populace expelled the police and government administrators.

The state is trying to maintain that the township under the A.A.C. was lawless and anarchic, with the so-called peoples Courts condemning innocent victims to corporal punishment.

But even the most hostile witnesses of the prosecution conceded that life under

"Peoples Power" had been preferable to the previous regime. There had been a drop in the crime rate and a much more relaxed atmosphere overall.

The defence, which has now completed its presentation of Moses' case, concluded its events in April 1986 in Alexandra.

The police and the army had repeatedly broken up meetings and funerals with tear gas and bullets. On the night of the 22nd houses were burnt down and several residents were shot. Police vehicles watched the gangs responsible but did not intervene.

Moses told the court that on that night he and some friends were returning from a union meeting in Johannesburg. Their car was attacked by thugs in police uniforms with iron bars, some carrying guns. Moses and his companions drove off, actions which the judge described as irresponsible! His own home and those of several other community leaders had been burnt in Alexandra. Several people were killed. The state denies all responsibility for the attacks.

Mayekiso also defended the A.A.C. and its effect on the community. He explained how the People's Court was a separate body from the A.A.C. and some members of the latter were critical of it. He stressed that the yard and block committees of the A.A.C. were asked to intervene and mediate when problems arose within the township but that no punishments were applied. The committees only voiced the

displeasure and censure of the community.

The prosecution were exceedingly embarrassed when the judge insisted that Moses has said the committees held trials. A tape of earlier evidence was played back and the judge's accusations were proved to be false. Moses went on to explain how the A.A.C. won respect from the township because of its grassroots democracy.

The trial re-opened on 17th October for the cross-examination of the defence by the prosecution. Socialist Worker will have updates on the trial in the coming months.

■ EVE MORRISON



Moses Mayekiso, General Secretary of the Metal and Allied Workers'

Town centre profits

TALLAGHT, the sprawling Dublin suburb that is bigger than Galway, is to get a new town centre at last. The problem is that the Department of the Environment has entrusted the job to a group of property speculators, Monarch Properties.

Monarch Properties have made no bones about the fact that they intend to make a lot of profit on the deal. They took control of the site

by making a leasing arrangement with Dublin Corporation. But they have not yet paid up the full lease. They have only paid £700,000 from the £2.7 million bill.

Last year Monarch produced an excuse for not going ahead with the town centre. There was simply too much unemployment in Tallaght so that they could not find a major supermarket that would become a tenant in the centre.

Now they have managed to squeeze extra concessions from the Fianna Fail government. The Tallaght town centre has

become a designated area. This means that:

- they can claim a 50% tax allowance in the first year
- a 4% tax allowance for every year after that
- no rates for ten years
- a package of grants and financial incentives.

Instead of building a decent town centre with proper amenities, Monarch will build a glorified shopping centre. And they will be subsidised up to the hilt for it.

As in all other areas, privatisation in Ireland means subsidising private capital. The idea that it is more enterprising and efficient is a real joke.

What's On

DERRY BRANCH

DERRY SWM meets Tuesdays in Dungloe Bar, Waterloo St. at 8 p.m. Forthcoming meetings include:

Tuesday 8th: The Political Power of the Catholic Church in Ireland Speaker: Kieran Allen

DUBLIN BRANCH

Dublin Branch meets Wednesdays in Bachelor Inn at 8 p.m.

Wednesday 9th: America after the Presidential Elections Speaker: Catherine Curran

Wednesday 16th: What is imperialism? Speaker: Kieran Allen

Wednesday 23rd: Have the unions failed in the North Speaker: Andy Smith

Wednesday 30th: Child Abuse and the Family Speaker: Crea Ryder

Regular meetings also in Galway, Cork, Waterford, Belfast and Bray. Contact SWM, P.O. Box 1648, Dublin 8.

INTERNATIONAL

Tweedledum Tweedledee

IT DOESN'T matter that this article is being written before the announcement of the American Presidential election result; we've known for months who would win ... Bushkakis!

Without doubt, this was the most conservative contest for decades. On just about every major issue it would have required surgery to separate the candidates.

It wasn't just that Bush and Dukakis were equally committed to the defence of capitalism. Bush favoured continued 'military' aid to the Nicaraguan Contras whilst Dukakis preferred to call it 'humanitarian' aid.

Both supported Star Wars with only minor differences on detail. Both backed American intervention in the Gulf, bitterly opposed Palestinian self-determination and vied with one another in total commitment to the defence of Israel.

PROGRESSIVE

Dukakis was generally portrayed as the more progressive contender. Yet close examination revealed his shortcomings. For instance, although he promised compulsory health insurance for the 37 million Americans who have to pay but can't afford it, Dukakis ruled out tax increases to fund his scheme.

Instead, the money was to come from public spending cuts. In general terms he defended abortion rights and opposed the death penalty but wouldn't commit himself to action on either these issues.

It was unfortunate, then, that so much of the American Left threw their weight behind the Democrats and that so many workers and oppressed groups pinned their

hopes on Dukakis. Most of their illusions, of course, stemmed from Jesse Jackson's campaign to get on the party's Presidential ticket.

His championing of the so-called 'Rainbow Alliance' seemed to promise workers, oppressed women, blacks, Hispanics and many other down-trodden sections of American society relief from eight years of Reaganomics and a better deal in the future.

JACKSON

Yet in the end, Jackson lurched to the right in a bid to carry favour beyond his 'own' constituency and in an attempt to be taken more seriously by the party leaders. Although snubbed in the end, he simply delivered his share of the vote to Dukakis and the Texan Tory, Lloyd Bentson.

By rights, illusions in Jackson and the Democratic Party should be well and truly shattered. Unfortunately, they'll persist. The strategy being pursued by the Left around Jackson is part of a long term project to shift the Democrats leftwards.

The strategy begins from a recognition of the enormous degree of voter passivity in the U.S. particularly among the poor. Many don't register and of those that do, only half ever turn out on polling day.

No American President has ever won a genuine majority, including Reagan, who in 1984 received a proportion of the vote

only half the size of that cast for the Sandinistas in an election he denounced as undemocratic!

If workers and the oppressed can be encouraged to vote in greater numbers, it's argued, the Democrats will be forced to pay more attention to them, thus pulling the party to the left. But the plan to reform the Democrats is fatally flawed.

In 1976, for example, it was the black vote that got Jimmy Carter elected, yet within four years even Jesse Jackson was threatening to back Reagan because of Carter's anti-black and anti-poor policies. Quite simply, the Democratic party is funded by big business and operators for big business.

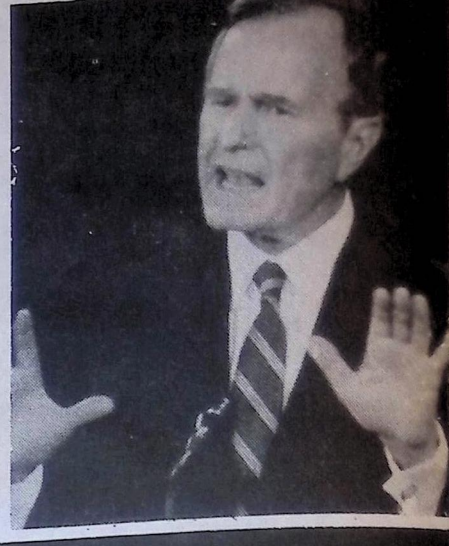
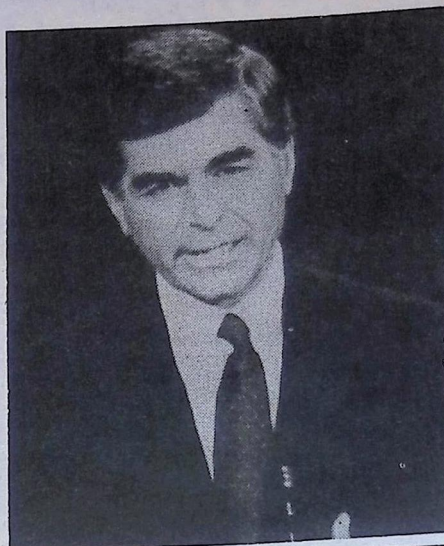
ILLUSIONS

Creating illusions in it merely channels discontent into worthless electoral schemes rather than into the kind of activity that can change things.

There is an alternative tradition in the U.S. of workers and the oppressed fighting. That's how they built unions, improved working conditions and wages and began to change things for women and blacks.

Ultimately, they'll have to fight to change the whole lousy set up over there. When the efforts wasted on the Democrats are re-directed towards building a revolutionary alternative based on struggle, things will begin to look up.

DOMNIC CARROLL



A Carnival of reaction

A THIRD of Yugoslavia's communist party leaders are due to be purged over the next month.

Nationalist riots and a worsening economic crisis has thrown the country into turmoil.

The country has a similar economic profile to Southern Ireland. It has a foreign debt of £20 billion. Unemployment has reached 18% of the working population. But inflation has also shot through the roof, running at 240%.

In May the government was forced to turn to the International Monetary

Fund for stand by credit. In return the IMF demanded a lifting of the price freeze, public spending cuts and relaxation of control on foreign capital.

Last month the president of the trade union federation said that a family of four would need an income of 900,000 dinars a month just to cover basic needs. In August the average worker's income was around 300,000 a month. The government refuses to raise wages without the approval of the IMF.

Workers have responded to the economic crisis with tremendous levels of militancy. In 1987, almost a quarter of a million workers were involved in 1,300 strikes. Demonstrators have stormed the Yugoslavian parliament.

However the failure of the movement to go forward has led to an opening of right wing nationalist elements. The Communist party leader in the province of Serbia, Slobadan Milosevic, has whipped up a vicious racist campaign against ethnic Albanians.

ALBANIANS

The Albanians make up 90% of the province of Kosovo. Under the 1974 constitution Kosovo was granted limited autonomy. This followed a revolt by the ethnic Albanians in 1968 and 1971. Up to then they have been deprived of all cultural rights. Just after the state was founded in 1945, Tito's right hand man, Rankovic, the head of the secret police began a campaign against the Albanians. It has continued ever since.

The Albanians are the poorest ethnic group in Yugoslavia. 50% of them are unemployed. Milosevic has pointed to their Muslim religion as a means of stirring up hatred. He demands that they be brought under the control of Serbia.

Tragically he has succeeded in diverting the workers movement. During demonstrations in Novi Sad crowds chanted "down with the red bourgeoisie". But they also backed the Serbian nationalist leaders. These are the very people who have backed the IMF to the hilt.

Milosevic has strong leadership ambitions. He is already being compared to a Mussolini. Liberal elements in

the media in Serbia have been purged. Milosevic is now demanding extra places for his supporters in the country's leadership.

Yet his economic policies are the exactly same as the present leader, Milkulic. Both favour more 'liberalisation', openings to foreign capital, more prices rises, and sackings to make industry more 'efficient'. The only difference is that he wants the reform programme implemented from the top so as to safeguard the power of the Serbian party chiefs whereas the other six provinces favour more decentralisation.

REACTION

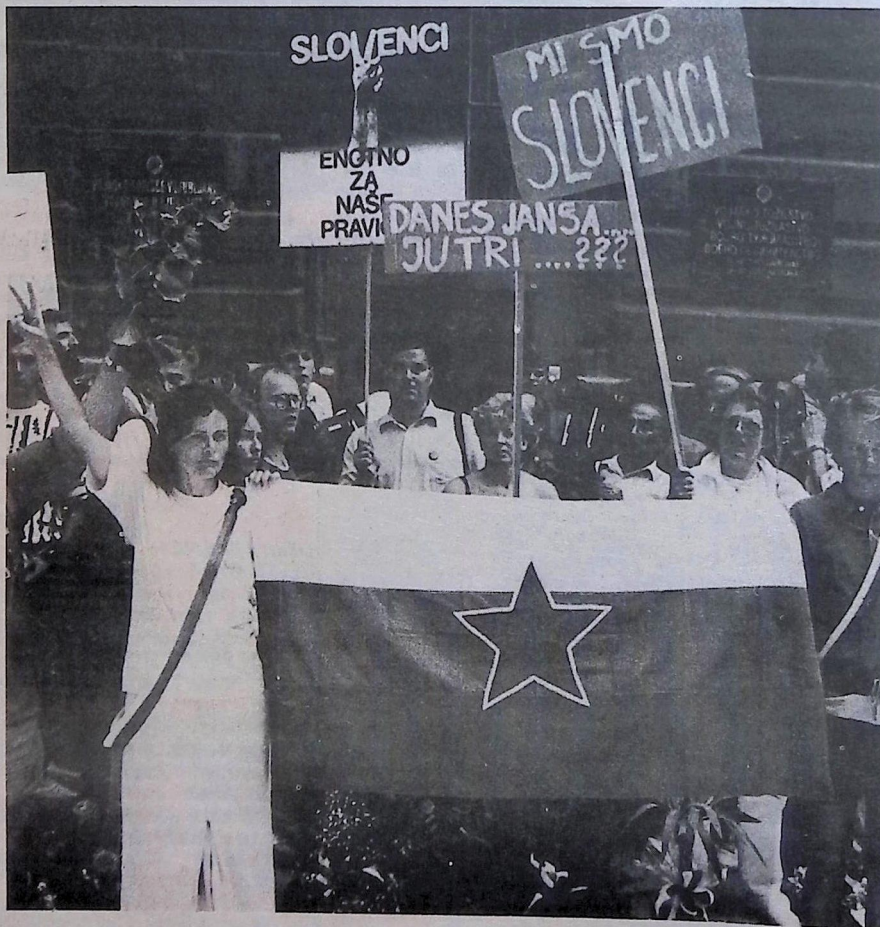
The carnival of reaction now gripping Yugoslavia carries important lessons for socialists here. Yugoslavia was once hailed as the model 'socialist' country where self-management was operating in factories. In reality workers were involved in Japanese style 'quality circles' to compete with other industries for extra bonuses. It was the prime example of 'market socialism' before Gorbachev's changes in Russia.

The crisis today shows that market socialism will fail as much as the traditional methods of bureaucratic planning. Despite their pretensions to being workers states, countries such as Yugoslavia are part and parcel of the world economy. They suffer in a more extreme fashion the exact same problems that other weaker capitalist countries such as Ireland face.

NATIONALISM

The rise of nationalism in Yugoslavia also shows the hollowness of the former leader, Tito's claim to have produced a democratic answer to nationalism. The political base for Communist Party leaders lies in the disposing of patronage and opportunities for corruption at local level. This in turn leads them to play the nationalist card when under threat.

The tragedy is that none of the opposition movements in Yugoslavia developed into independent workers organisations. Only such genuine socialist movements could expose the nationalist trickery of the party bosses.



SLOVENIANS demonstrated behind nationalist slogans in July

AIDS
THE SOCIALIST VIEW

£1.50 including post
from SW Books, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

The First Mass Socialist Party

GERMAN SOCIAL Democracy traces its origins to the aftermath of the failed revolutions of 1848. For a few short months in that year, most of the old ruling aristocracies of Europe were shaken to their foundations by bourgeois-led uprisings.

Just as quickly as they had flowered—the middle-class challenges to the old order were crushed. Panic of going too far had set in. “Iron Chancellor” Bismarck was to say of the bourgeoisie of his period: “More than they hate me, they fear revolution”.

Great repression followed 1848 in Germany; executions, imprisonment, censorship & much more. But from the 1860s some more liberal changes were forced into place.

On May 23, 1863, the Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiter Verein (ADAV), the first German workers' party was founded in Leipzig, Saxony, by Ferdinand Lassalle. Lassalle was a flamboyant character, from Silesia, an industrial region that was to become the biggest coal-mining region in all of Europe. Lassalle's expectations for the growth of the party—he envisaged 100,000 members in a relatively short period—were not realised.

The party had 1,000 members three months after its founding, and 5,000 one year later, when he died as the result of a duel. Despite several important differences with Marx, he realised that only the working-class was a vehicle for changing society. The rest, the feudal aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, he referred to as “a reactionary mass”. Unfortunately this convinced him to refuse alliances with sections of the bourgeoisie against the “old order”. Some of his other ideas were disastrous. He became opposed to class struggle as such, did not favour strikes and believed that socialism was feasible through parliamentary means.

CONFERENCE

In late June 1863, another workers' party, the Verband der Deutschen Arbeitervereine (VDV) was founded. The Austro-Prussian war of 1866 led to the unification of the German states under Prussian tutelage, excluding Austria. Workers' unity grew and in 1869 a breakaway group from the ADAV joined forces with the VADV at Eisenach, Thuringia, to form the Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands (German Socialist Workers' Party). The SAPD soon affiliated to the International Workingmen's Association (IWA), with which Marx was closely connected.

At the conference held at Gotha, Thuringia in 1875, those that had remained with the original ADAV joined with the SAPD. Henceforth there were two main factions, the moderate or reformist members from the ADAV, who became known as the Lassalleans after their founder and the radical or revolutionary faction headed by August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, known as the Eisenachers.

The famous Gotha Programme which issued from the conference was attacked by Marx for its incoherence, with non-compatible revolutionary and reformist elements vying for dominance. A dangerous trend was set which ultimately was to lead to disaster for the German and international working-class movement.

By 1890, the SAPD had become the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands or SPD.

“Germany” had changed radically in the space of 3-4 decades. The 39 separate states of 1848 became a single, federated, imperial country in 1866.

The Franco-Prussian war of 1870 re-



turned Alsace and Lorraine, the former important for textiles & high-class food produce, the latter for iron ore. Between 1870 and 1890 Germany became heavily industrialised and between 1870 and 1914 the population almost doubled. By the outbreak of the first world war, it was the second most industrialised country on the face of the earth.

Certainly in those decades real wages rose and living standards were raised but at the cost of far more repression than existed either in France or Britain. State intervention into working class life was not restricted to industrial disputes (and in the boom period between 1860 and 1874 with the huge growth in union membership there was a veritable strike wave). In some German states workers needed police permission to marry and cohabiting couples could and were made to separate and were prosecuted by the authorities. Almost all forms of working class leisure were subject to the supervision of a suspicious police force. An American visitor to Berlin in 1914 was flabbergasted to learn that even the colour of automobiles and the length of hats were set out by official decree. For all intents and purposes pre-first world war Germany can be described as a police state.

In 1878 two unsuccessful attempts on the Kaiser's life gave Bismarck the opportunity to implement his infamous Sozialgesetz, which banned the Social Democratic Party. The law was enacted initially for 3 years, but was renewed three times, finally falling with Bismarck himself in 1890. The anti-socialist law did not exclude the Social Democrats from contesting elections to the Reichstag (Imperial Parliament) or the various Landtage (regional Parliaments). From a 9% vote in 1877, the Social Democratic vote declined to 6.1% in 1881, but rose again to 19.7% in 1890 when the law lapsed. The bulk of the leadership and party editorial board went into exile, initially in Switzerland and subsequently in London, from where the paper “Der

Sozialdemokrat” was printed and covertly distributed throughout Germany. The experience of illegality served to radicalise the party, with the result that marxism made strong inroads.

At the first party congress held on German soil for 12 years, at Erfurt, Thuringia, the famous Erfurt programme was adopted. The first part drafted by Karl Kautsky, contained a marxist description of the inevitable decline of bourgeois capitalist society, through class struggle into socialist ownership of the means of production. The second part, drafted by Eduard Bernstein, contained demands for reforms, which were not even specifically socialist.

The problem with this programme containing minimum demands as well as the maximum principles was that it was the minimum demands which came to be the real concern of SPD party activists on a day-to-day basis. To Karl Kautsky, the party's leading theorist, the goal of revolution was far away in the unforeseeable future. In the meantime, the most important task for party members was to win as many votes as possible in elections.

The return to legality did not inspire the party leaders with new revolutionary fervour for the overthrow of bourgeois society. Instead they operated in fear of a re-introduction of the anti-socialist law. In practice, legality often meant little. Between 1890 and 1912, Social Democrats were sentenced to a total of 1,244 years in prison, many of them hard labour.

From 1890 onwards trade union membership increased hugely. The trade union bureaucracy, the General Commission of the Free Trade Unions of Germany, under Carl Legien, became extremely powerful with great financial muscle from union dues etc. By the early years of the 20th century, the “Second Pillar” of the labour movement as it became known called the shots with the SPD.

Two examples demonstrate this. First, the Second International

repeatedly pressed the Germans for the marking of a May Day demonstration with a one day strike for the 8-hour day. The General Commission steadfastly refused this pressure, deeming it “counter-productive provocation”. Secondly, when Rosa Luxemburg, under the influence of the Russian revolution, argued that the party should push for mass strikes against the state, she found the national leadership doing its utmost to stop these. And when she returned to the argument again after a new wave of strikes and clashes between the police and demonstrators for the vote in 1910 to 1912, she was opposed by Kautsky himself.

BUREAUCRATS

A secret resolution was worked out between Legien for the unions and Bebel for the SPD, making it clear that the party could not call a general strike without the approval of the General Commission. To the bureaucrats, preparations for a future revolution had no meaning; they were well aware that it was in their interests to seek an accommodation with the society in which they lived, rather than involve themselves with militant opposition to it.

And here two leading lights of the SPD should be mentioned, because it was they, more than the doctrines of Marx or Engels, or militant left-wingers such as Liebknecht or Luxemburg, who came to epitomise and dominate the party, in its historical perspective. The first, Eduard Bernstein, son of a Berlin Jewish family, was the instigator of what became known as Revisionism. Bernstein believed that various aspects of marxism were no longer adequate to newly developing circumstances. He rejected the “Hegelian Dialectic” with what he termed its “exaggerated importance on conflict and force”. He did not accept Marx's “Labour Theory of Value”. He saw colonialism as beneficial, and some imperialisms, such

as the British version, as positive. It should be noted that “Revisionism” which placed no worth on theory, long preceded “Revisionism”, though both tendencies brought similar conclusions on action to the party's right. It is to Bernstein that post-second world war SPD leaders such as Brandt and Schmidt often fondly refer.

Also worthy of note was Friedrich Ebert, later President of the Weimar Republic (1919-1925), elected to the SPD executive in 1905, and co-chairman of the party executive after Bebel's death in 1913. He was a stereotypical party functionary, in full-time party employment since the age of 29, dour, efficient and above all a reformist who feared workers' revolution. It was just this fear which caused him to support the monarchy in 1918.

The “Third Pillar” of the German labour movements was that of the cultural and leisure associations which German workers joined on a nationwide level & in massive numbers, for which there is no equivalent in any other country. In 1914, several Social Democratic cultural or leisure organisations had over 100,000 members: the Choral Societies mobilised almost 200,000, the Cyclists' Organisation over 130,000 and the Gymnasts' Association almost 190,000. The SPD also ran chess, rambles' and educational societies and much more, right through

EDUCATIONAL

the Second Reich.

The politicisation of these cultural or leisure societies is often called into question by historians. This assumption is generally incorrect. Membership of the cultural organisations almost always coincided with SPD membership. It is not without significance that almost all these organisations had the work “Arbeiter” (Workers) in their title. There were plenty of other more nationalist, Catholic, or right-wing organisations for them to join.

Membership of workers' organisations often brought harassment from the police. And by way of an example, the choral societies sang radical & revolutionary songs, as well as operatic and more popular tunes. In these organisations workers learned independence and self-confidence. An amazing and vast working-class counter culture was developed. To belong to a workers' leisure society was to identify with fellow workers and to a great extent to give a “Harvey Smith” to bourgeois society.

By the first decade of the 20th century, the SPD had over 1 million members, received 4 1/4 million votes in the 1912 election, with over 90 daily newspapers, it was the biggest working-class party in the history of organised labour. The tragedy was this huge, lumbering party, revolutionary in its rhetoric, with a marxist programme, was extremely reformist in practice.

Decades of working through legal aid schemes and insurance schemes, in the latter-day equivalents of welfare rights centres and above all, decades of seeing electoral activities as more important than strikes, inevitably had its effect on the party membership. The marxism of the Erfurt programme came to seem something reserved for May Day and oratory at suitable times, hardly connected with what the Party actually did.

In August 1914, despite all the anti-war hot-air to the contrary in previous months, the 200-plus SPD deputies in the Reichstag were swept away on a tide of “patriotism” and “putting the nation first”. As a result, not one of them voted against war credits for the Kaiser's imperialist war. Only in November 1914 did one MP, Karl Liebknecht, break rank to put class before nation. For this, Liebknecht, in his 40s was sent to the front-line to fight, and like his father before him, later imprisoned for high treason.

The great betrayal had taken place. The SPD, the biggest working class party in the world had joined with the German ruling class against the workers of other countries. The slaughter of the First World War was not averted. From then until the Russian Revolution, Socialism was buried in blood.

JOE O BRUADAIR

A WORLD OF F



THE RENEWED pictures of famine and disease and flooded out families desperate for clean drinking water show us once more the crushing poverty affecting millions in huge areas of the world.

The deaths continue unabated in Sundan and Bangladesh as well as in countries not classified (usually for political reasons) as famine-struck.

In more "successful" countries like Argentina and Brazil child labour, rural poverty and shanty town misery abound.

And things are getting worse. In September of last year, two separate reports showed that the number of malnourished children in Africa had grown by 25% in the 1980s.

By every indicator, UNICEF reported a decline. Fewer Africans now receive even basic health care than in the 1970s. Deaths from simply-prevented diseases like diarrhoea soared, and deaths in childbirth have increased. (One in ten women worldwide now dies in pregnancy!) African access to even basic schooling has declined.

The world slump which was seen first in the 1970s and lurched deeper in 1980-81 affected all low-income countries similarly.

Jamaica—which in the early 1970s had the second-highest income per head in southern America—started the '80s with a 25% drop in income; with one in every three adults unemployed; mass emigration of skilled workers; exceptional levels of street war;

and a sharp crisis of food and medicine supplies.

In the Philippines, children starved as workers were laid off in the rich sugar plantations.

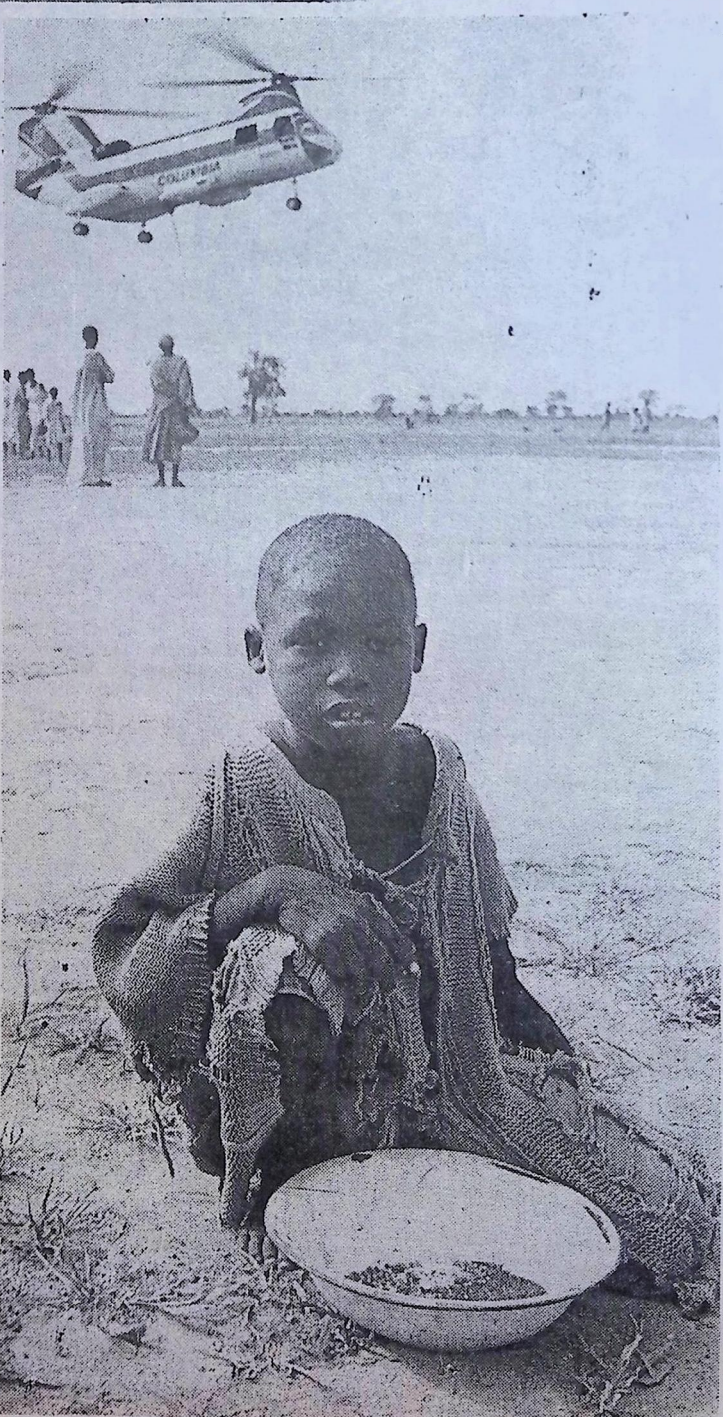
Bolivia—a classic low-income country—had survived on tin exports. But exports collapsed and the country was bankrupted. Workers were left with no possibilities outside working the coca plantations for the growing cocaine industry.

In Brazil, with a still-growing economy, inflation shifted upgear to reach over 100% by 1981. Growing crisis brought increasing austerity measures. Last year's vicious measures meant a 30% real cut in workers' living standards. Meanwhile worsening rural conditions bring millions of people to the cities to live in cardboard "homes" wherever they can find space.

Everywhere, from 1981, came the same reports: in Argentina, waves of bankruptcies, and a workforce in industry shrinking from 1.03 million in 1976 to 790,000; in Tanzania, imports bills unpaid and unpayable; in Mozambique, uncharted famine, etc. etc.

All this was connected to the slump. As profit margins narrowed and demand fell, big business and the stronger governments switched gear. Markets in many primary products (raw materials) collapsed, or saw a steep dip in prices. Naturally the countries most affected were those that relied on exports of just one or two primary products.

World markets in tin and copper dried up, as companies sought cheap or synthetic alternatives. Coffee prices dropped in a world glut. At the same time cartels ensured a rapid rise in the price of vital oil supplies.



Dear Food Poli

BUT THERE were other, more complex factors too. In the post-World War Two boom (the longest period of continuing expansion since the dawn of capitalism) there was a growing tendency for production to spread outward from the strongest western economies.

The more labour-intensive sections—the manufacture of cars and high technology for

example—were farmed out to countries in South America, Asia and (to a lesser extent) Africa.

At the same time a number of less developed countries—in particular the Pacific Rim countries of South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore—and in Latin America, Brazil and Mexico—broke into world markets with considerable manufacturing export successes, particularly in specialised sectors like microchips.

Meanwhile, the figures showed a marked increase in service industries in the developed countries, and a corresponding decrease in manufacturing; the World Bank predicts that the share of W. Europe and N. America in manufacturing will have decreased to a half of what it once was by 1990. Remaining production shows a tendency to specialise. This division of production means that today not even the richest economies of Japan or the US could survive in isolation from the world economy.

AGRICULTURE

One of the targets for specialised development was agriculture—and it is here that the real nature of the crisis is most clear.

The recent development of the richest states' share of agriculture has been a story of protection rackets, bloated food prices and costly food mountains—leading back to yet more famine.

Debt Cr

OVERSHADOWING all this and removing any hope of recovery is the crisis of debt. As the value of their exports fall less developed countries (LDCs) have no choice but to turn to world, multinational or state banks for loans to buy vital imports.

Without fertiliser and transport fuel, there can be no agriculture; without oil and other basics, even minimum export levels can not be maintained.

In the second half of the '70s, US bank loans to the top twelve LDCs increased by 17% per year (to \$40 billion in 1980) and non-US loans by 42% per year (to \$48 billion).

Then, in 1982, lending dropped because of fears that whole countries would default. The fears proved true, as from Brazil to Poland countries defaulted, leading

Japan toward hardship. Rice production world the ne subsidie fed th seven In th mounta caves o farmers and gra its eat might a estimat cannot a

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HUNGER

MARY KILLIAN



Policies

Japan's high-capital drive towards growing food has brought hardship to the poor of Japan itself. Rice prices shot to ten times the world price as humans subsidise the new agribusiness. They also subsidise Japanese pigs, which are fed the same rice at one-seventeenth of the human price!

In the US, milk lakes and beef mountains are concealed in the caves of the Rocky Mountains; big farmers are paid not to plant food; and grain is dumped in the sea lest its eating by starving children might affect profits. Meanwhile an estimated 12-30 million Americans cannot afford a healthy diet

ROTTING

Europeans in 1987 paid sixteen and a half billion pounds to maintain over ten million square metres of rotting and unusable food, and they paid at least twice the world price for the food they ate (wheat 229%, skim milk 252%, sugar 326%).

At the same time the drive to export whatever of the stocks could be sold led to the poisonous decision to undercut world competition by selling at a loss. EEC sugar was floated on the world market at one third the cost of production—bringing disaster to traditional sugarcane exporting countries from the Philippines to Latin America, to Angola and Mozambique.

In other sectors—beef, cotton, rice—the same story was repeated—with the same disastrous results.

Crisis

in turn to fears that the banks would pull the plug on their economies.

But the global integration of world markets makes banks hesitate to do that, lest they provoke a knock-on crisis through the entire system. So debt problems amassed. From a total LDC debt of \$68 billion in 1980, the debt of Mexico alone stands today at \$98 billion—at a cost of \$25-30 billion annually in interest.

For the rich countries and international banks, in the '70s sloshing money around the world in loans seemed to provide a solution to declining profits and trade deficits. Their aim was to offload the imbalance onto the LDCs. And initial pickings in interest payments were rich. But today debt, and default provisions, all add to the crisis.

For the poorer economies, debt means no way out. Export earnings fail to balance debt interest, let alone repayments. In 1985, millions of pounds were raised worldwide for famine relief—but for every £1 that went to the hungry in Ethiopia, £2 was paid out to service the country's debt.

WORLD SLUMP—or rather, the reactions to it of big business, bankers and their governments—is the decisive factor in the overall worsening of people's lives, not "natural disaster" or failed harvests.

But slump only aggravates existing conditions. In the 1945 Cold War carve-up of the world, a number of small states, and the huge land mass of India and China, looked on, seemingly left out of the picture.

The mass of their people seemed locked in a permanent cycle of deficiency and low life-expectancy, working small scale cultivation in primitive conditions, while a small and usually corrupt ruling class lived in ostentatious luxury.

But the picture was not complete. One important extra factor was industrialisation and the growth of cities. The other, and

crucial, factor was the condition of these countries' middle class.

In the colonies or neo-colonies of Africa, Asia and Latin America the middle class and the intelligentsia were ambitious, large, well-educated and discontented. They found their way forward blocked—either by the ruling elite or just by the country's economic backwardness. Ambitious to change all this, they set out to achieve an aim which they described at length in reports, conferences and talks from the 1940s—the aim was to create a new, strong, independent state, of which they would be the new ruling classes.

The classic example of this process (contrary to the illusions of many on the "left") is the Chinese Communist Party of Mao Zedong, which came to power in 1949.

Here were expressed none of the socialist and internationalist ideals of the 1917 Bolshevik. Mao was quite clear: "Our aim is to regulate capital, not to destroy it." In his rejection of the role of workers, Mao pioneered a notion still very popular with the Chinese rulers today—"Marx did not understand oriental countries".

Mao based himself on "patriotic" landlords, small property owners, the intelligentsia and the peasants.

On winning power, he launched a drive to build a strong economy which would be closed to world markets.

His first target was to match unit for unit the defence capabilities and heavy industrial base of the developed world. Raising living standards was not a factor in this equation.

In industrial terms, there was growth in Mao's China, but in a world boom, others were growing faster. Mao announced (in 1958) a Great Leap Forward. Workers in the cities were dragooned into working 18-24 hour shifts without meal breaks or safety provisions. In the countryside a wholesale

collectivisation of peasants into communes was undertaken. Small local iron processing mills were set up. The intention was to use profits from agriculture to bolster national steel capacity.

Not only human tragedies ensued. The machinery in the factories as well as the workers wore out. The much-vaunted local steel mills chewed up more steel than they produced! Previously-achieved growth was wiped out; and famine struck in two provinces.

By 1961, the failure to achieve a fully-functioning economy independent from world markets was admitted. And this was the cause of rifts among top CP bosses through the 1960s—reflected especially in the incredibly sordid, continent-wide manoeuvres of the Cultural Revolution, in which literally millions of disaffected school students and young people were set against one another by

party bosses to fight out on the streets, with passionately-believed and totally confused ideological slogans, the economic disagreements of their rulers.

Today in China all this is forgotten. Capitalism is now official. To quote Deng Xiaoping (the reformer who won power after the death of Mao) "it doesn't matter whether the cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice". "Socialism with Chinese characteristics" allows for bankruptcies, the sacking of workers who do not reach productivity targets, and up to 60% food price rises (as subsidies shift, like in the EEC, from the worker who needs to eat to the subsidising of rich farmers). Entrepreneurial skills are celebrated: it is glorious and civilised to be wealthy through hard work.

One hero of the Chinese ruling class, Zhang Gioxi, now owns a furniture empire with 3,000 work-

ers in 32 factories, with seven companies in China and offices in Hong Kong, Japan and West Germany.

Under the bankruptcy law managers are given leases of an enterprise -- to use whatever combination of carrot and stick they think will bring back profitability. Bonuses for working longer hours or faster shifts are discretionary, and often amount to 80% of a worker's salary. Sackings are also discretionary.

The same processes are at work in agriculture. Most notable is the industrial area of Dongbei (the historic fought-over province of Manchuria). There, in a vast area (3,000 miles of coastline alone), thousands of factories and stores have been left out to franchise, to both indigenous and foreign capital, in a free-enterprise drive scarcely distinguishable from that of Margaret Thatcher.



The struggle of the South African working class shows a different image of the Third World.

The World Economy

IN ESSENCE, state-led capitalism was turning to world market capitalism.

In almost every developing country we see a repeat of the same process -- no matter what ideology its ruling class claims to espouse.

Capitalism brings violence, alienation and want to workers in the developed countries, and famine to whole populations in the less-developed areas. There are those who argue that we, the working class of the developed countries, have a stake in this system; that we have more food, more fridges and radios, and more comfort, because their lives are a daily misery.

Academics dedicated to Third Worldism, foreign Aid agencies, and many of their volunteers, take this line. Nothing could be further from the truth. In 1985 millions of people were involved worldwide, through giving money, and through many actions in raising millions of pounds to stop famine in Ethiopia. For ordinary working class people, it was a source of non-comprehension that food stocks

were held, at great cost, to rot, while people starved. There were demonstrations against Intervention warehouses; and it is well known that a poll taken in any European country would have shown a sweeping majority for giving all the food stocks to the hungry. It did not happen -- because it was not in the power of ordinary people to decide.

The food mountains continue to exist because this suits the needs of the world economic system of capitalism. And the operation of that system is not affected by the wishes -- or votes -- of the working class.

SWEAT SHOPS

The real argument is about *how* to fight -- and *what* to fight. In the fast-changing world system the terms Third and First Worlds are transformed out of usefulness anyway. There are "Free Trade Zones" and sweatshops in the heartlands of the US. Moves like News International from employing £400-a-week Fleet Street compositor in Fleet Street to £60-a-week non-unionised and uniformed girls in the regimented conditions of Wapping create virtually a "Third" World in the "First".

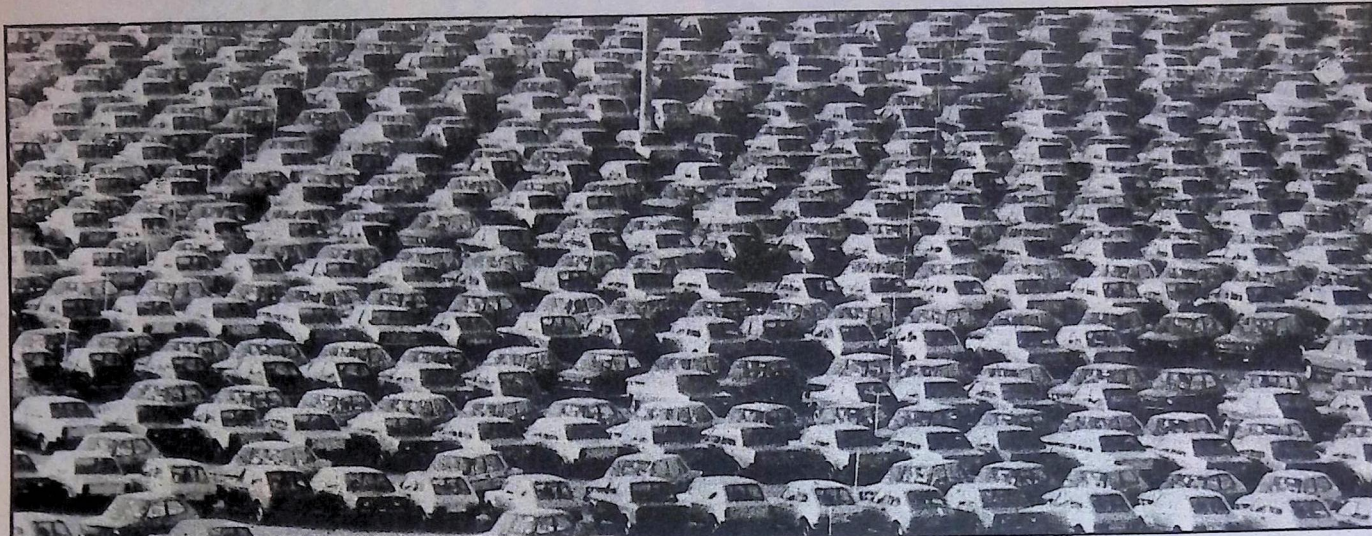
But the other side of this is internationalisation. A car is manufactured in Germany, Brazil and Mexico, and assembled in Nigeria; computers have parts from, maybe, two Asian countries, are part-assembled in Ireland, and completed in Britain.

On our TV screens we see, everywhere, workers fighting back. Last year a strike in an Irish company making steering harnesses for General Motors got supportive backing from workers in Holland, Germany, Portugal and even won a won a shutdown in one.

In 1982 the Australian Storemen and Packers' Union put a ban on supplying Nestle products to warehouses or to the retail trade in support of striking workers in Manila in the Philippines. *This* is the way forward.

As the colossal system sprawls worldwide, so does our potential power to attack it and win. What is needed is the organisation of workers, whatever country we are in. Famine and want are the most pressing reasons to do it; only through workers' action have we the power to bury the cause of this misery for good.

ANALYSIS



THE END of standardised mass production?

MANY ON the left now argue that the working class is in decline and that consequently class antagonism is no longer the fundamental division in society. The reasons given for this are varied.

The argument goes that the recessions of the 70's and 80's and the restructuring capitalist of production will ensure that, numerically, the working class will be so dramatically reduced that socialism will become an outdated ideal.

High unemployment will be with us forever. Micro-electronic techniques and robotics will guarantee increased productivity and those with jobs will be well off and those without will become the new "under-class". This new under-class will inhabit a barren industrial wasteland giving only a security problem to the rest.

The logic of the argument is that the left must look for realistic politics. This will mean tailoring politics to suit the tastes of the middle class. These sections could be convinced that the rich do not get too rich and that more of the 'cake' is distributed to the needy/unemployed.

This is not the first time that this type of analysis has been propounded. It happened in the 50's, 30's and on and off since the Industrial Revolution began in the 18th century.

The working class has never had any fixed structure of occupations or indeed unemployment. In Marx's time, for example, the biggest single group of workers was domestic servants. Even in industry, the type of automated production, familiar to the 20th century worker, happened only in this century with the arrival of mass production assembly lines in the U.S.A.

Periods of crisis have always been due to the restructuring of capitalism. Competition increased, so new techniques were introduced and inefficient sectors were run down. Bankrupt capitals were taken over and more efficient capitals took their place.

This in turn leads to a re-shaping of the working class.

For the moment, however, let us attempt to establish the factual state of the working class in these 26 counties. The figures shown in the table provided should be taken with the usual kilo of salt. All governments manoeuvre and sanitise statistics. "The last figure to look at,"

says Wall St. journalist Druker, "is the official government unemployment figure. Statistically it is

Is the Irish Working class In decline ?

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Total at Work	1,156	1,146	1,146	1,124	1,103	1,079
Agriculture	209	196	193	189	181	171
Industry	371	363	355	331	319	306
Services	576	587	598	604	603	602

an abomination, an Alice in Wonderland stew." Nevertheless, the figures shown here have been checked against various sources and seen to be consistent.

The most striking feature of work statistics for Ireland is the movement of workers from the land (Agricultural) to Industry and Services. In 1926 there were 654,000 agricultural workers. This had reduced to 169,000 by 1988. In many ways, this has turned Ireland around from being an agricultural to an urban population. Working class consciousness tends to accelerate in urban environments due to organisation in the workplace. Later, we shall see that this indeed has been the case.

In Industry and Services, the number of workers increased from 560,000 to 890,000 in 1988. The heavy emigration of the 50's took its toll off the land mainly and it is not really until the period 1971-1980/88 (see table) that the "industrialisation" of Ireland gets under way.

It is interesting to note that unemployment was 91,000 in 1980 out of a total workforce of

in a downward tailspin and high emigration is a bonus for successive right wing governments.

For all that, the workforce of 890,000 Industrial/Service workers is holding. It is one of the best organised in Europe. Workers in these two categories joined the unions en masse during the '70's. Organised labour at 65% of the workforce is one of the highest in Europe. The rate of increase was in fact, the highest in Europe. In the U.S.A. only 20% of the workforce is unionised.

Most certainly the working class, as a numerical and organised force, is far from dead. But do the changes in its structure mean that it is becoming "middle class"?

The core of this argument from the critics of the left is really their confusion about the 'class' element of the working class. The cloth cap image is disappearing, manual work is in decline, workers own

1.25 million compared to the present figures of 240,000 unemployed out of a workforce of 1.3million. Four out of five people are still at work within an increased workforce.

The industrialisation programme since the 1960's also led to a 'baby boom' which fed into the labour force. The population increased by 400,000 between 1971 and 1981, most of them became young workers.

The immense growth in the Southern economy was halted after 1979 when the world economy entered the second major slump in a decade. Like many other weaker capitalist states, the recession has continued longer here and they have not been able to borrow their way out or run up huge trade deficits like the U.S. or Britain.

Since the early 80's a net immigration to Ireland has turned around to become a net emigration out of Ireland to approximately 35,000 per year. It is this figure that continues to distort the real picture of the true economic state of Ireland. With a National debt of £25b. rising by £1.5b. per annum, capitalist economics have remained

cars, have mortgages, go on sunshine holidays and so they must have merged with the middle class. "What about the £400 a week docker?" hollers Kinnock in Britain. Consequently class division within society is a thing of the past. Who needs a revolution?

This is a very dangerous and stupid analysis. The argument revolves around two main perceptions and interpretations regarding occupation and income.

If your occupation is "white-collar", a teacher, nurse, computer programmer or salesman, then the theory is that you are not working class. Only 'blue-collar' manual workers and possibly some semi-skilled workers are "real" working class.

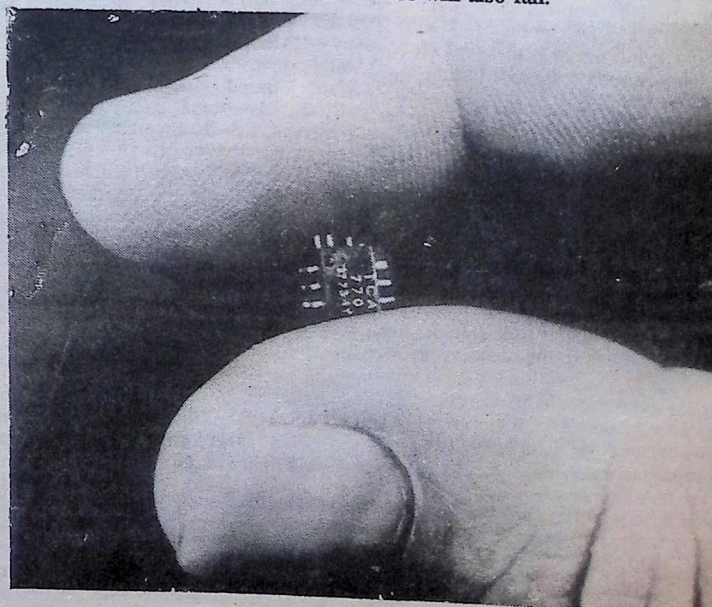
This cynical theory is a contradiction to the industrial relations facts of the last decade. All classes of workers have been joining trade unions. We have also seen industrial action by teachers, civil servants, nurses on the increase in the last ten years. Are these not the actions of an alienated workforce? Isn't it the simple truth that exploitation of labour, anybody's labour, has always been and continues to be the greatest source of society's antagonisms?

It is only where white collar workers come to wield high levels of authority over their own and other workers conditions that we can categorise them as part of the new middle class. This is not the case with the vast bulk of white collar workers who do boring and routine jobs. It is these sections who are joining the unions in vast numbers.

The £400 a week docker and the arguments about higher income becoming the cause of working class decline hardly merit comment. In the 26 counties, one-third of the population subsists below the poverty line of £49 per week. One-third of the workers earn less than £100 per week (full-time). Third level education is beyond 80% of the populations means.

Using 'occupation' and 'Income' many provide a basis for labelling people for statistical purposes. But it does not even start to describe the dynamic social forces that vie with each other over the distribution of wealth and resources.

We are surrounded by the results of a heartless economic system that seeks only the comfortable survival of the few at the expense and misery of the vast majority. All attempts at reform have failed. Cloaked references by half-baked socialists, about a dying working class, for their short sighted political ends will also fail.



LETTERS

Send to: Socialist Worker PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

Extradition: say no to Thatcher

The Editor,

The Republic of Ireland is unique among European States in the manner in which it will extradite people to another jurisdiction. Eight

European States will not extradite their own citizens, while others reserve the right to determine what is a political offence. All the E.C. countries are signatories to the European Extradition Convention. However it is unlikely that

any government of these states (with one exception, Ireland) would extradite their citizens to a jurisdiction where justice is known to be patently maladministered.

Charles Haughey's government while criticizing the sort of British "justice" which allows people like Aldan McAnesple to be harassed and murdered still has the gall to extradite political prisoners at Thatchers whim. The Birmingham Six,

The Gullford Four, the Maguire family, Judith Ward etc. etc. are all typical of the British "justice" to which our people have been condemned. Have Irish people not suffered enough at the hands of

the British judicial system (with the help of the gutter press) without having our government assisting in the perpetuating of this suffering?

The father of the Minister for Justice, Jerry Collins was actively in-

involved with the I.R.A. The British would call him a terrorist. Would Mr. Collins extradite his father who fought to rid his country of foreign occupation?

We say that the British are the real terrorists and Owen Carron, James Plus Clark and their fellow potential extraditees deserve the protection of the Irish people from this terror.

It is time we learned to say "NO" to Thatcher.

STEPHEN MULLALLY, Chairman, Killkenny

Unemployed Action Association

Is the South Britains Neo-Colony

THE correspondent from Belfast (*Socialist Worker* last month) wanted to rattle some old bones. The SWM does not regard the South as a neo-colony of Britain. This he claims will make us 'Bourgeois Socialists'. Our support for the struggle against the Orange State is also in danger.

Facts are stubborn things. They are also helpful.

'Native industries employ only a small percentage of the population' he claims. Wrong. 60% of employment in Irish manufacturing industry is from native sources. Most of the services sector is dominated by native capital. By contrast, direct British employment in Irish manufacturing has declined to 12,000 workers.

'British capital dominates the finance sector' he claims. Wrong again. The largest insurance company is the 90% state owned Irish Life. It is also one of the major share-holders in the AIB banking group. In the

1950's Irish banks channelled much of their funds into British government stock. Today they have switched to lending to the Irish state where they are guaranteed super profits courtesy of the Irish working class tax payers.

In fact, British investment in manufacturing in the South has never amounted to more than 5% of foreign capital entering this country since 1973.

The dependence of the South on the British market has never been less. In 1926 98% of Irish exports went to Britain. In 1988, it was less than one third.

We could go on. But the facts of the matter are hardly beyond dispute. Our Belfast revolutionary confuses two things. Southern Ireland is a weak, miserable capitalist country. But that does not mean it is a neo-colony of Britain. The SWM has never claimed that Southern Ireland is an 'equal partner in the world of international capitalism' for the simple reason that there are no equal partners. Capitalism is precisely about accumulation and competition and therefore

massive inequalities in power.

One other argument from our Belfast correspondent clutches at straws. Southern Ireland lacks a 'heavy

goods' sector. One is tempted to ask so what. In 1959, Britain controlled 45%

of the shipbuilding industry of the world. Today it is less than 3%. Does that mean it is becoming a neo-colony? Norway has hardly any heavy goods sector but it is one of the richest countries in the world. Does that put it in the Third World?

Does a real understanding of how Southern capitalism operate lessen our commitment to fighting the Northern state? What an absurdity. The working class does not depend on direct economic connections to justify a fight against oppression. The Northern state was an artificial state built to guarantee discrimination and the division of the working class. Southern workers need to fight all aspects of oppression to transform themselves into a revolutionary class. Top of the list goes the fight against the Northern state.

Finally, there is a political reason why this argument is important for revolutionaries. Nationalists have always claimed that the source of the ills facing Southern workers is Britain. They want to claim that fighting for 'economic sovereignty' is a way out of the crisis.

The very notion that the central dynamic of the Southern economy stems from the manner it is involved in the capitalist world system is an anathema. This is what enables them to claim that they have something for all classes. 'Economic Independence' they claim, will benefit both workers and oppressed native capital who, in Gerry Adams words, do not make up the ruling class in the South.

The theory of the neo-colony underlies the political practice of looking to sections of F.F. on extradition. It is time that 'revolutionaries' such as our Belfast correspondent made a full break from republican politics.

KIERAN ALLEN, Dublin.

Think again on army pay ...

SOCIALIST WORKER says it is for an increase in army pay. A few months ago it supported the prison officers when they were on strike. If the Special Branch take action, will it be backing their demands?

It is ridiculous that revolutionary socialists should be supporting these agents of repression. More pay for the army will mean more recruits. And more recruits will strengthen the state.

We all know what the Irish army is used for. It certainly is not there to defend us against a "foreign power". Even their own generals admit they would take to the hills in the event of an invasion. Can you imagine them fighting as guerillas?

The Irish army exists to break strikes and smash republicans. It has scabbed on the Corporation strike last year.

It is very short sighted of *Socialist Worker* to support their pay demands. I hope you will think again.

TOM MCCARTHY, Limerick.



What we stand for

The Socialist Workers Movement is a marxist organisation fighting for a workers' republic in Ireland and for socialism internationally.

FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM

We begin from the proposition that what determines the nature of any society is the system by which its wealth is produced. In the system we live under, capitalism, production is geared to profit, not to human need. Among its inevitable features are poverty, war, racism and sexism. Capitalism cannot be destroyed and these evils thus eradicated by piecemeal reform. It can only be destroyed by revolutionary action by the class which creates all the wealth, the working class.

The machinery of the capitalist state—parliament, courts, army, police etc—is designed to protect the interests of the ruling capitalist class, not to regulate society in a neutral fashion. At most, parliament can be used, sometimes, to make propaganda against capitalism. It cannot be used to smash capitalism. Only a workers' revolution can do that and establish a truly democratic society in which workers hold power directly through delegates elected from workplaces and areas and are re-callable and replaceable at any time by those who elect them.

NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW

This kind of socialism does not exist anywhere today. Workers do not have control in Russia, China, Cuba etc. Instead, power is held by a state-capitalist class. A workers' revolution is needed in these countries too. We are against NATO and the Warsaw Pact and all weapons of mass destruction. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination.

FOR AN END TO PARTITION

The Northern State was created by British imperialism in its own interests. Sectarianism and bigotry were built into it and will continue to exist for as long as the state exists.

The marginal privileges given to Protestant workers are just that: marginal. It is in the immediate interest of Protestant as well as Catholic workers to fight against their exploitation. It is in the interest of all Northern workers to unite against the state and aim at socialism in Ireland.

We support all forces struggling against imperialism and the Northern state, regardless of differences we may have with them.

The interests of the Southern ruling class are no longer in fundamental conflict with those of imperialism. Southern capitalism is a junior player in the world capitalist system. The Southern state too, props up partition, despite occasional nationalist rhetoric.

The "national question" can be solved only by mass working class struggle against both states. Republicanism, by limiting the immediate struggle to the achievement of "national unity", and by appealing for all-class alliances in pursuit of this goal, can never lead the working class towards the defeat of imperialism.

FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION

We oppose all forms of oppression which divide and weaken the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women. We fight for free contraception, abortion on demand and the right to divorce. We oppose all discrimination against gays and lesbians. We stand for secular control of hospitals and schools. We fight for the complete separation of church and state.

FOR A FIGHT IN THE UNIONS

Trade unions exist to protect workers' interests under capitalism. The role of trade union leaders is to negotiate with bosses over workers' position within capitalism. To destroy capitalism, we need a rank and file movement in the unions separate from the leaderships and fighting for workers' interests regardless of the needs of capitalism.

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To destroy capitalism and achieve socialism the most class conscious sections of the working class must be organised in a revolutionary party. The SWM aims to build such a party through spreading its ideas and through its activity in the working class movement.

Join us!

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REVIEWS



20 Years On—Edited by Michael Farrell (£4.95)

TWENTY YEARS ON

THE twentieth anniversary of the first civil rights march in Derry has been a field day for that growth industry - the rewriters of history. According to this school of thought the Peoples Democracy (P.D.) march from Belfast to Derry provoked sectarianism; the Provisional IRA turned a peaceful movement into a violent one, etc.

"Twenty Years On" a collection of essays edited by Michael Farrell is a timely response to this nonsense. The best parts of the book are when it describes the atmosphere and actual events of that period.

The growing prosperity of the sixties gave a new confidence to the Catholic population who had suffered almost fifty years of discrimination. Their demands were not, at first, for Irish Unity but for basic democratic reforms within the context of the Northern State.

But as Ellis McDermott puts it in her essay "by demanding elementary reforms, we were - without meaning to be - a threat to the state".

The 5th October March in Derry was met by RUC batons and water cannons.

The P.D. march was harassed over its whole route and brutally attacked by loyalists at Burntollet with the active participation of the R.U.C. and the B. Specials. The marchers' intentions were far from sectarian.

BURNINGS

The Provisional IRA didn't even exist in those early days. It was only formed in 1970 in response to loyalist and police attacks on and burnings of Nationalist areas. It was not until February 1971 that the first soldier was killed by the IRA.

The first policeman was killed not by the IRA but by loyalists in a riot in 1969 following the announcement of the disbanding of the B. Specials.

The other highlight of the book is Bernadette McAlliskey's account of her days as a Westminster M.P. "A peasant in the Halls of the Great", as she puts it. Parliament and its procedures was not something to be treated with awe and respect.

Instead, she used her position as an M.P. to help struggles not only in Ireland but in Britain and elsewhere. When presented with the keys of the city by the mayor of New York she presented it to the Black Panthers.

But on finishing the book you are left with the question, What Now? Where do we go from

now? This question is never answered.

Most of the contributors would have considered themselves to be revolutionary socialists at the time. Slogans of class and not of nation were central. But the reality was that despite their slogans the socialists were just seen as the radical

wing of the movement.

When Bernadette McAlliskey was elected M.P. she was elected not for her socialist politics but as a representative of the nationalist people. At the time, it didn't seem to matter. But later other forces could also claim the role of defenders of the nationalist people, the IRA,

or more 'sensible' representatives, the SDLP, and the socialists lost whatever influence they had.

Socialists believed that the most important thing was to be the best activists, the best fighters. This was obviously important. But also important, was to have a solid organisation that would continue when the heights of the mass activity would diminish, as it inevitably would and did.

A revolutionary socialist party was seen as "old hat" and unnecessary. This view came from the politics of the time that believed that the mass

struggle would, of its own momentum, go from height to height to ultimate victory. This didn't happen and because they hadn't the politics to explain what had happened those that did not give up altogether moved closer to the emerging major force - republican politics; or concentrated on their own specific interest, women, trade unions, the media etc.

Despite the criticisms it does capture for a new generation of activists the mood of excitement and of struggle of the time. This, at a time when very little is happening is important as a reminder of what has happened and is possible again. But the lessons of what happened will require another book.

□Willie Cumming.



Radio Vietnam

THERE HAVE been a lot of films made recently about Vietnam. "Good Morning Vietnam" must be about the best of them. Firstly it is probably the only film to show the Vietnamese as ordinary people and not just as "gooks" hiding behind trees in the jungle or as little yellow devils. This is important.

We've had many films about the suffering of American soldiers. Not that this is not important, but if the Vietnamese are not shown, then they become the faceless enemy. In this way, the political role of the American army in Vietnam cannot be questioned. And this is where "Good Morning Vietnam" is at its best. It is set in 1966 in the period before the escalation of the war. It is about a radio broadcaster, Adrian Cronauer, and the Vietnamese youth he has befriended, deals with the question of who is the enemy. For Cronauer, it is a

information broadcaster and his involvement with a Vietnamese youth and his sister, all the major contradictions of the American presence in Vietnam are exposed. The news that Cronauer can broadcast is edited.

NEWS

No information is allowed through that might suggest that the American presence is other than as a police force. The Vietnamese who actively oppose the Americans are treated as terrorists. We are shown a group of youths been assassinated by American M.P.s. (There are obvious similarities with the perception of the struggle in the North of Ireland).

One of the main confrontation scenes between Cronauer and the Vietnamese youth he has befriended, deals with the question of who is the enemy. For Cronauer, it is a

revelation to realise that he and the American army are seen as the enemy through the eyes of the Vietnamese. The film shows more idyllic moments of life in a Vietnamese village and of the Vietnamese countryside with its patchwork of rice fields. For anyone with any knowledge of the horrors of the bombing campaign which began not long after, these scenes are quite tragic. There is a magnificent sequence showing the beginning of this campaign, set to the old Armstrong song "What a wonderful world".

And Cronauer's broadcasting is subversive in its irreverence. His editing of a sequence of Nixon interviews is brilliant. For its use of music it also shows the way music was becoming a part of a new culture which was to challenge the established order.

JOE O'BYRNE

Mellows

"LIAM MELLOWS and the Irish revolution" was first published in 1971 but has recently been reissued in paperback.

Despite its title the book is not simply a biography of the republican leader's life.

It is in fact an analysis of the role of the working class in the War of Independence period. It is because of this, that it is valuable to revolutionary socialists.

Prior to World War I, the Constitutional Nationalists in the Home Rule Party dominated Irish politics. John Redmond, the leader of the party, supported the war and urged Irish men to join the British Army. The Irish capitalists and big farmers saw in the war a chance to make profits. But the British Ruling Class had other ideas. Southern Irish industry was run down, thousands were forced into unemployment and many joined the British Army because there was no other way to live.

This was the background to the 1916 rising. At first the rising enjoyed almost no support but by 1919, the militant republicans Sinn Fein won 73 seats in the Westminster election. Republican legend has it that after 1916 the Irish people rose up, drove the British out and then were stabbed in the back by the signing of the Treaty by the "Free Staters".

Greaves destroys this "hero turned traitor" view of history. The truth was that the Irish bourgeoisie wanted peace with Britain. They needed friendly relations, raw materials and markets. When the Home Rule Party failed them, they were forced to back the republicans. It

was the all class nature of republicanism which led to its collapse in 1921.

The finest chapters in Greaves' book are those which deal with the role of the working class during the War of Independence. The Republican Movement and the Labour bureaucracy both tried to keep their movements separate from one another. The Labour leadership stood aloof from the anti-imperialist struggle, while the republicans were either hostile to the workers' movement or wanted the workers to wait until national independence had been won.

But despite these drawbacks the level of class struggle was massive to today's reader. Some of the incidents, recounted by Greaves are astounding. A general strike against Con-scription, land seizures, a general

strike in Limerick, strikes and occupations in almost every town in Southern Ireland and red flags hoisted over occupied buildings.

The Republicans failed to make links with these struggles. The anti-Treaty forces' real class interests would later emerge with De Valera's Fianna Fail.

The biggest weakness with Greaves' analysis is that while he believes the working class was the key to the situation only a "democratic revolution" was possible. Had the working class taken the lead, the struggle could easily have developed into an all out fight against capitalism. Greaves' failure to see this is a result of his adherence to the Stalinist stages theory.

Despite this major weakness, the book is still the best description of the other side of the War of Independence and the Civil War. It is of immense value for revolutionaries.

□BRIAN HANLEY

Disposable scabs in Naas

SEVEN WOMEN have been on strike since September 19th last from premier Disposable Ltd., a small factory who make disposable nappies in Naas, Co. Kildare.

The factory employs 20 people altogether, with 14 of these on production. Of these 14, 7 are women.

Dissatisfaction began long before the women actually came out on strike. The women were earning less than half the wages of their male counterparts for doing exactly the same job.

The women earn £64 per week, for a 40 hour week, with half hour for lunch break. For the same hours and work, the men in the factory receive £120 per week - nearly double the amount. And for shift work, women get an extra allowance of £4, while the men get an allowance of £21. Blatant discrimination!

Not only were the women earning less, but they were subjected to other forms of discrimination and harassment in the job. In effect, they were treated as second class citizens in the factory.

The ITGWU in the Kildare area were trying to organise in similar type factories, to try and unionise them. So the women in Premier Disposable Ltd. joined the union.

They came out on strike in



September for union recognition and pay parity with their male counterparts. One of the male workers came out in solidarity. All the other workers stayed inside and are continuing to scab. Scabbing for £130 a week is not worth it. They should join the

women on the picket line in fighting for decent wages and conditions for all workers at the factory.

The strike has been very militant. The women have great support among trade unionists in the area and from local people. Locals have been beeping their horns as

they pass the picket. There is a constant picket on the factory.

They have also been noting down the registrations of scab trucks delivering to the factory and have been successful in getting blacking of them in other unionised firms, including Guinness.

It seems the strike will continue for a while yet. The boss, Farris, has the backing of the police and the courts and refuses to negotiate with the union.

Stepping up the solidarity work, that has been happening and has been successful, is the

only way forward for the strike. Connections must be made with other unionised workplaces, meetings organised with the workers in these places, collections made and hopefully stoppages in solidarity. Only these sort of activities will win this strike.

MARXIST CLASSIC:

Their morals and ours ...

SOCIALISTS have nothing but contempt for the selective "morality" of the ruling class.

It is selective because it is always directed at those who in some way challenge the system.

The right claim there is a "moral code" which we are all required to observe. Trotsky's pamphlet, "Their Morals and Ours" exposes the myth.

Trotsky argued that our rulers use morality as a means of ideological control.

Indeed the "moral code" is altered as the needs of the ruling class are changed.

In peacetime, killing is forbidden and the bishops preach "Thou shalt not kill".

When capitalism's drive for profit leads to war the reverse applies. Those who refuse to fight are shunned while the bishops bless those who join in the slaughter.

"Their Morals and Ours" was written in 1939.

Stalinism had destroyed the Russian Revolution and fascism had risen in Europe.

The polemic was directed at liberals, anarchists and some socialists who, in horror, denounced left wing "extremism" and saw fascism and communism as twin evils.

To the liberals, stalinism was the offspring of Leninism. They resurrected the argument that revolution always leads to tyranny.

The material conditions of an isolated backward country were ignored.

Despite this, the moralists said that the Counter-Revolution had its roots in the "undemocratic" nature of the Bolshevik party.

They pointed to the Civil War when the Bolsheviks had taken hostages and sent thousands of workers to their deaths.

For the Bolsheviks the Revolution was a major step on the road to human liberation. They had to wage a bloody civil war to defend their gains.

For socialists it is not a question of whether an action is moral or immoral. It is a question of whether or not that action aids the struggle of the working class.

In using this method today, we would argue that strikes are progressive because they build the confidence of the working class.

Are we for or against violence? That depends on where the violence leads.



If workers successfully defend a picket line by fighting the police, then their violence is justified.

If the IRA shoot a British soldier the question is more complicated.

Firstly, we are not pacifists. We reject ruling-class "pacifism" as hypocritical. Indeed we defend the IRA's right to use arms against a corrupt and violent state.

But the armed struggle as a tactic, has proved to be a dead end. Shooting soldiers one by one is no substitute for mass struggle and only strengthens repression and reaction.

In that sense, the armed struggle is not a progressive strategy.

Like Trotsky, we also have to deal with Liberals of various shades. Reformist leaders are the main upholders of morality in the workers' movement.

In Britain, Neil Kinnock reflects the strategy of refusing to pay the Poll-Tax. He argues that Labour cannot break the Law since it will need to use that law when it comes to power.

In reality reformist leaders frown on any action that belittles their role as

"saviours" of the working class.

But when workers' struggles intensify these leaders are more way of condemning illegality. They recognise the need for workers' votes.

Today, those who fight back are isolated and easier to condemn. The political spectrum has shifted to the right.

As Trotsky put it, in a period of reaction we are subject to "twice the usual amount of moral effluvia".

DAVE McDONAGH

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Socialist Worker

Thatcher's Section 31 ..

FIGHT GAG ON SINN FEIN



AS THE Anglo-Irish Agreement approaches its third anniversary, the Thatcher government has admitted that it's a failure.

Banning Sinn Fein from the airwaves and removing suspects' right to silence is a clear admission that the Pact has failed in its main aim of isolating Sinn Fein and incorporating the Catholic minority into the State.

Talk of ending Catholic "alienation" is now forgotten. With local government and European elections looming, the British are out to reduce the Republican presence not by reforms which would give Catholics a sense of belonging in the State but by straightforward repression.

Socialist Worker has always been critical of the Sinn Fein performance in the councils. Far too often they have been distinguishable from the SDLP only by the leather

jackets and support for the armed struggle.

But the presence of Sinn Fein, and the positions of chairs of committees and the access to the media which this has given them, has been a constant irritant to Thatcher and a contradiction of the picture she portrays of Republicans as unrepresentative thugs.

Banning Republicans from radio and television will reduce the profile of Sinn Fein in the run-up to the elections. The credit for initiatives such as Dodie McGuinness's in Derry, starting a campaign against the closure of the GP maternity unit, Anderson House—will not be so clearly Sinn Fein's.

Generally speaking, the ability of Sinn Fein councillors to project themselves as democratically-elected representatives of a sizeable section of the nationalist community will be damaged.

Reform of the Diplock Courts was the main carrot offered by the Anglo-Irish Agreement in an effort to bring Sinn Fein voters back into the constitutional fold.

But the carrot has now been withdrawn in favour of a bigger stick -- making the courts even more repressive by removing the right to silence.

The juryless Six County courts are infamous for their bias against Republicans, the willingness to accept tortured confessions, their acceptance of hearsay evidence and their reversal of the innocent-until-proven-guilty principle. Giving these courts even more power and defendants even fewer rights brings us very close to effective internment without trial.

The intention to remove the right to silence in Britain as well illustrates the way in which the British ruling class uses the North to acclimatise its "own" people to a loss of civil liberties. Plastic bullets, tear gas, shoot-to-kill and strip-searching became more "acceptable" in Britain once they had been imposed in Ireland. So a fundamental right which has existed for a thousand years can be snuffed out in Britain once British people accept that its removal

by "their" government from the Irish is acceptable.

This is a crystal-clear illustration of the argument made by revolutionary socialists for two decades—that the British working class should oppose its "own" government in Ireland not out of sentimentality or pity for the Irish but because it is in their own class interests to do so.

Similarly, the intention to withdraw the right to silence in Britain also shows that Thatcher is not acting merely out of anti-Irish feeling but in order to strengthen her own class's position in Britain as well.

This new repression has given South Africa's Botha an opportunity to gloat that if this sort of thing is good enough for the "mother of democracy" it's sure good enough for South Africa too.

But there's a lesson in that for us all. The whole barrage of repressive law, censorship, torture and murder in South Africa hasn't ended struggle against apartheid.

It has created difficulties, just as the new measures in the North will create difficulties.

Eamonn McCann

AT THE '68 commemoration meeting in the Union Hall in Derry on October 8th Gerry Adams suggested the creation of a "Freedom Charter" campaign in Ireland along the lines of the ANC's Freedom Charter in South Africa.

This is an idea which demands serious debate among socialists and anti-imperialists both North and South. It would, obviously, make sense for all those opposed to exploitation and oppression to achieve the maximum unity so that a coordinated, concentrated challenge could be made to the root causes of our political ills.

At the same time, it would be pointless to underestimate the difficulties in the way of achieving such unity.

The way a "Charter" campaign would relate to the Southern State is an obvious area of difficulty. What would such a Charter have to say about the rights of women? About divorce, contraception, abortion? What would its line be on the right to work and rights at work?

And would the Charter be a statement of aims or a guide to action in pursuit of aims? For example, would a Freedom Charter campaign be actively involved in urging and organising rank-and-file trade union resistance to cuts in jobs and services?

A Charter which took a positive stand, and which was engaged in positive action, on those issues would clearly not attract support from Fianna Fail, whether at leadership or grassroots level. That is to say, such a Charter could not be reconciled with a strategy on extradition, shoot-to-kill, strip-searching etc. which had the "lobbying" of Fianna Failers at its centre.

It would also be important to have clear the basis on which groups would come together around a Charter. If it is intended that there should be a vague, mushy "unity" around a set of general demands the idea isn't worth the expenditure of any socialist's energy.

An effective united front would combine full unity in action with open, vigorous debate about the way forward between the different elements involved in the united front.

This in turn would require a democratic structure for the Charter throughout the 32 counties. It would be pointless for Sinn Fein, which would presumably be much the biggest organisation involved, and other groups, perhaps with the endorsement of prominent individuals, to announce a "Freedom Charter" and try to direct activity from the top.

What's needed instead is a coming together in each area of the groups and individuals generally in agreement with the idea to discuss the organisational and political basis on which it might go forward. There would have to be some preliminary discussion between organisations about the calling of these local meetings.

And in time—enough time to allow for local organisation and debate, not so much as to push the idea into the far future—a national conference would be needed to formally launch the Charter.

These are some general, preliminary ideas on the subject. The SWM would be anxious to have them explored further in discussion around the Charter initiative.

There's no sense avoiding the fact that, given Sinn Fein's perspective on issues relating to the national question, it may turn out to be impossible to establish a basis for joint, united front activity. An active united front of socialists and anti-imperialists is one thing. A paper campaign shaped so as to allow for the possibility of some Fianna Fail backing would be another thing.

The media unions, the NUJ, ACTT, BETA should refuse to accept the gag. Programmes and items which would be made unbalanced by the gag should be blacked. Motions to this effect should be moved in branches and chapels.

More generally socialists and anti-imperialists should work together to build resistance to this new round of

repression. We call again for a single united front organisation against repression, North and South

