

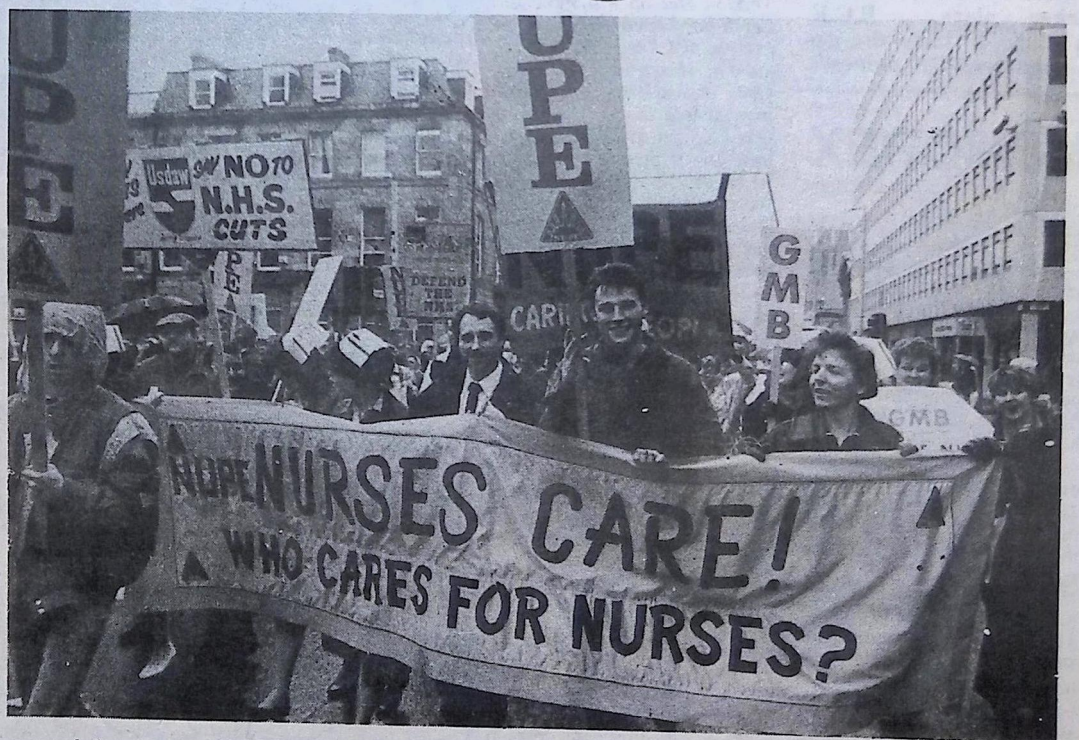
Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism



NORTH AND SOUTH

FIGHT BACK IN '89



1988 WAS a bad year for working class people in Ireland. If 1989 is to be better, what we'll have to do is FIGHT BACK!

North and South, right-wing regimes have been riding roughshod over us—while those who claim to lead the working class collaborate shamelessly with governments and with the capitalist class the governments represent.

1988 ended with 230,000 officially unemployed in the South and 130,000 in the North, and with Haughey and Thatcher united in slashing the unemployed's benefit.

In the South, social welfare minister Woods publicly boasts that another 13,000 people will be harassed off the dole register over the next twelve months. In the North, young people are being conscripted wholesale onto phoney "training" courses to keep the official figures down.

In both parts of the island the health service, too, is under attack, with wards, whole hospitals, clinics and maternity units closing, and charges being imposed for basic treatment.

The Thatcher government is replacing student grants with loans, putting third-level education even further beyond the reach of working class people. Fees in the South are set to rise by five per cent, to well over £1,000 a year, away above what ordinary people can afford.

1989 will bring the first moves to introduce the anti-working class

poll tax in the North, while in the South corporations and councils have already brought in water rates and charges for all sorts of services, even refuse collection.

Meanwhile the screw of repression is turned ever tighter. The Thatcher government shows contempt even for its own laws in sanctioning shoot-to-kill, rigging inquests, muzzling the media, fixing electoral regulations to disenfranchise its opponents, etc.

The Dublin government follows suit, copper-fastening extradition, renewing Section 31, giving its cops the go-ahead to intimidate dissidents and fit up opponents like Don O'Leary of Cork, doing four years for possession of a poster!

Yet despite all this there has been no mass mobilisation in response. Resistance has been sporadic, often localised and politically confused.

It isn't that there's no anger. It's that the anger which does exist among many thousands of workers has not found a focus.

And for that, the "official" leaders of the working class must shoulder most of the blame.

The union bosses in the South stitched up the three-year "national agreement" with Haughey, which gave the green light for job losses and spending cuts and trapped union members inside a policy of no-fight. Union officials from Labour, the Workers' Party and the Communist Party all went along with this.

In the North union leaders

responded to mass redundancies, privatisation and the dismemberment of the health service by begging bishops and right-wing bigots to join them in whingeing to Thatcher.

And they generally line up with Thatcher and Haughey in the repression and even murder of Republicans. Thus they weaken the

working class even further in its ability to maintain the political independence needed to fight back effectively.

If 1989 is to be brighter we need independent, organised, rank-and-file resistance to defend every job, reject every cut, resist every instance of repression.

And that can only be done on the

basis of revolutionary socialist politics which will have no truck with cross-class alliances.

What we need most of all is more reds in the work places, working class communities and in campaigns on working class issues.

WE WISH ALL OUR READERS A RED NEW YEAR.

VICTORY WON AT PFIZERS

Pfizers chemical plant at Ringaskiddy on Cork Harbour with 550 workers is one of the biggest employers in the Cork area.

Eight years ago they employed 770. The cuts have come in the manual jobs while management have stayed largely intact. This has created tremendous stress for workers carrying increased workloads. In some sections numbers have been cut by half with further reductions planned for the new year. A bullying management have forced all this through on a compliant I.T.G.W.U. and crafts unions bureaucracy.

Pfizers are seen by many locals as large polluters of the harbour where many of the

fish are now diseased. A ship leaves Pfizers jetty every day to dump waste chemicals out at sea. This is supposedly under Cork County Council control but in practice Pfizers do their own monitoring and on their own admission regularly breach the bye-laws.

STEWARD

Gerry Murphy has worked at Pfizers as a shiftwork operator for the last ten years and as a shop steward has repeatedly stood up to management on all these things. He has been suspended twice and was recently moved under strong protest from a production area to a packing area—a move which meant a large cut in pay and the loss of a shop stewards

position. He appealed against this and lost.

While packing a container recently he insisted, as per the factory's own safety guide, that he be given a second man as back-up outside a hazardous area he was working in where he was required to wear a plyu-suit with airline attached. He was refused the back-up person and he refused to do the job. He was suspended for two days and on the first day of his suspension placed a protest outside the gate with a placard "Pfizers cuts can kill".

Throughout the course of the day many sections of workers including some management, all the crafts and all I.T.G.W.U. workers joined the unofficial protest. Meanwhile senior manage-



Pfizers workers on picket line

ment and personnel were meeting to have him dismissed. By four o'clock, faced with a complete closure of the plant, Gerry was reinstated without further suspension.

Back at work management

thought up a new strategy—suspension for "one-man picketing". Gerry was put under pressure by the union bureaucracy to accept this as a 'compromise' deal. He refused and again appealed to his workmates who again stopped

work for the period of Gerry's two day suspension and placed widely publicised pickets on the gate.

Gerry has returned to work and is watching his back.

All sections of workers have a new-found unity which has never existed in the plant before and have set up a committee to formalise this. They have been guided by the old trade union principle—an injury to one is an injury to all.

After providing a domestic service to Waterford City for almost 150 years, the Waterford Gas Company is to close down sector of its operations, with a loss of 22 jobs. Waterford Gas Co. was taken over by Bord Gais Eireann in November 1987. The bombshell of closure was announced to the workforce in June of this year. But, as we go to press, no forced redundancies have taken place. B.G.E. planned to have the gas companies 2,000 domestic

FIGHT GAS CUTS

customers disconnected and supplied with free LPG bottle gas cookers in November.

Bord Gais have flatly refused to entertain any conversion to natural gas on the grounds that it would not be profitable enough. The reason for this financial assessment is based on the cost of conversion and on a market research conducted on a random sample of houses. This survey, according to Bord Gais, showed that the 'Existing customers of Waterford Gas Co., on average, tend to have lower incomes, and live in smaller, older houses than the population at large. This is due mainly the fact that the gas grid has not expanded to new housing developments, where the more younger and affluent Waterford city

dwellers live, nor, are they in reach of the present gas grid. Whatever the desires of the customers are in terms of natural gas, their ability to undertake the expense of new appliances and central heating systems is restrictive".

The workforce have argued that natural gas as a national resource should be made available to all the people and not just for those who can afford Bord Gais' prices.

Because of the refusal of the Company to convert to natural gas for the domestic consumers, and their refusal to talk to the union on the retention of jobs, the workforce took a unanimous decision not to co-operate with the company on any changeover to bottled gas. Due to this de-n non-cooperation with Company, Bord Gais were

forced to "withdraw the redundancy notices which would have resulted in the workforce been thrown onto the continually increasing dole queues in Waterford City. In November, the workers have statements to the 2,000 domestic consumers of town gas keeping them informed of the situation at the gasworks. They warned that if the workers are forced to increase their industrial action to prevent Bord Gais from going ahead with their plans to close, that the people responsible will be Bord Gais and the Politicians, not the workers.

Industries in Waterford have been converted to natural gas which will result in sales of £1,000,000 in 1988. But this will be credited directly to

Bord Gais, Cork, instead of Waterford Gas Co. Bord Gais' profits for 1982 to 1986 were £300 million. Bord Gais reserves were £115 million and Bord Gais profits for 1986 were £42 million, which proves once again that under the present political system, capitalism, profits come before human needs. Bord Gais say that in 6 or 7 years they might look at the possibility of providing a domestic service of natural gas to Waterford. Why not now?

Simply because they are only interested in big profits and care nothing for the hardship they will inflict by this decision to deprive working class people of their piped town gas or to convert them to natural gas but to leave them with bottle gas cookers, whether the customer likes it or not. Elderly people who at present have piped gas in an instant will in future have to face the burden and inconvenience of bottled gas. Natural gas is supplied to Cork, Dublin, Clonmel and Limerick. The 1988 cost to the average family in Dublin in a 3 bedroomed house for total heating and cooking is less than £5.00 per week. Natural gas reduces energy costs for the average family by over 50%. Bord Gais has ignored its own reports which recommended total conversion to natural gas for Waterford City consumers.

In 1923 The Waterford Gas Co. workers raised the red flag over the gasworks. It was among one of the last of the 100 workplace seizures which took place between 1918 and 1923. In the present period workers confidence is low in winning disputes but the Waterford gas workers are prepared to put up a fight for their right to work and for the distribution of natural gas to the people of Waterford.

UNITY NEEDED IN ITA'S

ST. ITA'S Psychiatric Hospital has now been divided into three sections, psychiatric, mental handicap, and psycho-geriatric. Integration of staff is also exercised.

Since this has taken place, attendants—now called "care assistants— have been rostered on night duty in an experimental area of the mental handicap service. Their fellow assistants in the remainder of the services, seeing this as a precedent, have lobbied and requested that they have an opportunity to do likewise.

The ITGWU negotiated with management on the request and they are now advocating that attendants replace a nurse in a two-nurse ward on night duty. Management have promised that those positions lost in the hospital will now be created in the community services.

The PNA have blocked all this by stating 'no' to attendants taking a nurse's position but would welcome attendants as extra.

The management of the EHB were requested to send a team of nursing officers to manage the hospital during the dispute—some of whom are in the PNA.

MEMOREX

FOR THE past five weeks workers at Memorex Ltd. in Clondalkin have been involved in a dispute with management about production workers being expected to take on quality control responsibilities with no extra pay or prior consultation with their union, the ITGWU. The Memorex workers, consisting of a day shift and part-time evening shift numbering about 100 men and women, came out on strike, with their union's backing, over the issue.

For four weeks management refused to talk to anyone, even their own union, the FUE. In the fourth week, however, they were forced to contact the ITGWU to end the strike and resume production. As a result, the picket was ended and fifteen workers returned to work under protest, pending Labour Court negotiations. However, at the Labour Court Memorex Ltd. refused to talk and recently the part-time staff have been made redundant while negotiations continue between Memorex and the union.



We Think

EXTRADITION has, finally, been pushed through. In December, the Southern parliament made its safeguards permanent. These will allow the Attorney General to filter through the more difficult and politically embarrassing cases. Fianna Fail will attempt to have these tried in the South under the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act. The judges of the Special Criminal Court are more than capable of locking them up in Portlaoise.

In the main, working class republicans can now expect a swift transfer over to the tender mercies of the RUC. As Haughey put it, "there is no question that the procedures laid down will act as an obstacle to extradition in legitimate cases".

One politically embarrassing case, however, was Fr. Patrick Ryan. As a priest with family roots in Tipperary, his supporters were able to pull over a thousand people to a protest meeting in Dundrum. For a period it looked as if the case might rock the Extradition Act.

Fr. Ryan described himself as a "militant Catholic" in a letter to the Belgian press. It is not an outlook that *Socialist Worker* has much in common with. We stand for a fight against the influence of the Catholic Church over Southern Ireland.

But our opposition to extradition

is not determined by the politics of the individuals under threat. Thatcher did not break every rule in the diplomatic book to get Fr Ryan because of his militant catholicism. It was his activities in identifying with the republican resistance to her rule that mattered.

Socialists fight extradition on principle because it will strengthen the Northern state. Every republican handed over to the RUC is a blow against those who have risen up against the bigotry of that state. Extradition helps to cement the unity of the rulers of Britain and Ireland in putting down their rebellion. It is part of a general attempt to criminalise their fight.

Tragically, this opposition in principle to extradition is not common on the Irish left. Both major parties—the Workers' Party and the Labour Party—have been among the most enthusiastic supporters of the measure.

Workers' Party leader, Proinsias de Rossa, advised Haughey that the most effective way to get extradition through was to "depoliticise" the issue. He warned that "there should be no surrender to the blackmail of a possible hunger strike by Fr. Patrick Ryan".

Dick Spring of the Labour Party came out against the extradition of Fr. Patrick Ryan. But this was only because an "atmosphere of hysteria was being whipped up on the issue". Spring also spoke in favour of "depoliticising" extradition.

The support for extradition is not

EXTRADITION SELL-OUT

just confined to leaders of these parties. There has not been a single Labour Party banner on anti-extradition demonstrations. Left wingers such as Emmet Stagg and Michael D. Higgins have not been hopping up and down to denounce Spring as a traitor to his class. This despite the fact that over 70% of left voters oppose the measure.

LEFT

This position of the Left parties comes as no surprise. The Workers Party have long characterised the republicans as 'fascists'. They have used this description to justify working with all manner of right wingers against them. The Labour Party, under Spring, imposed a government ban on meeting anyone who was a member of Sinn Fein.

The plain truth is that both the Workers Party and the Labour Party support the continued existence of the Northern state. They talk about the unity of Catholic and Protestant workers. But it is 'unity' that has to be built around accepting the marginal privileges Protestant workers are promised by that state.

Like the parties of the Right, they sense that the republican struggle can pose a threat to the stability of



Community Policing from the RUC

the South. Like reformists everywhere they rush to the defence of the security of their state. Just as the

British Labour Party lined up solidly with Thatcher on the Falklands war, the leaders of the Irish Left defend the miserable 26 county state against any attacks.

One of the reasons why the Left is so weak in Ireland is because it

has abstained on the national question. Workers who wanted to fight on the issue ended up looking to republicanism. The actions of Spring and de Rossa are a continuation of this pattern. They are a scandal to the socialist cause in this country.

It is high time we built a revolutionary alternative to them.

Save Derry Hospital

ABOUT 250 people marched in Derry on Saturday 10th December to protest at the proposed closure of Anderson House Maternity unit. The Unit, which provides a more relaxed, home-like environment for women giving birth, is very popular with the women of Derry, Limavady and Strabane. It is also important in relieving the overcrowding in the main maternity unit in Altnagelvin. It is being closed by the Western Health and Social Services Board as part of the Tory health cuts.

The turn-out was somewhat disappointing, given the amount of work that had gone into building for it. The entire town was postered and some 10,000 leaflets distributed in the city centre. Nearly 5,000 leaflets, issued by Derry

Trades Council, were distributed in workplaces throughout the city. Virtually every major factory, shop and office was leafleted.

This was great work by the campaign. But if Anderson House is to be saved it will need a far bigger fight. The campaign so far may have shaken the Western Health Board but the only thing which will deflect the Tories from savaging the Health Service is industrial action. All experience shows that.

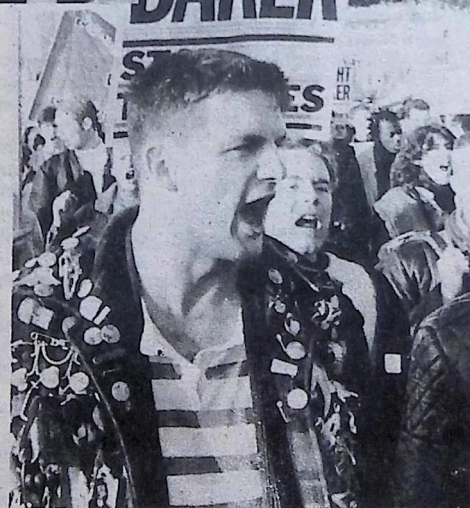
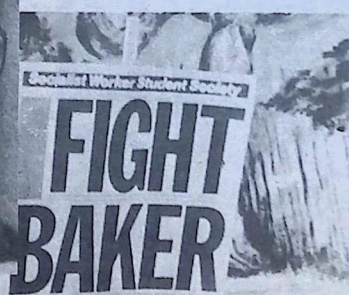
If the campaign in Derry is to be successful in maintaining proper maternity services in the area, it will have to link up with the mood for action which is evident in the hospitals on issues to do with nurses' grading, ancillary workers' conditions and so on. This—and not trying to be "respectable" so as to gain the support of local conservatives—is the way forward.

MORE CUTS in the Northern Ireland Housing Executive budget mean another year of growing waiting lists for housing in the Six Counties.

Despite the fact that over ten per cent of the housing stock is unfit for human habitation, the Tories have cut a further £40 million in the



BAKER: one education for his class, another for us



Housing Executive budget. This means that fewer houses will be built, there will be longer delays for tenants awaiting repairs and fewer Repair and Improvement Grants for private houses.

And for Housing Executive tenants there will be a rent rise of over 10%—an average rise

of £7.50 per month. This rise comes at a time when changes in Housing Benefit rules mean that fewer people are eligible for rent rebates and when changes in other social security rules have left working class families—especially the unemployed—finding it even more difficult to make ends meet.

Students say no to Loans

STUDENTS in the Six Counties have mobilised in an attempt to defeat the Tory attack on their right to education. Thatcher's government intends to introduce a system of loans to replace grants. This would initially take the form of a reduction of the present grant, freezing it at that level, with loans of around £1,000 per year making up the difference. This is obviously only the thin edge of the wedge in scrapping grants altogether. A system of loans will discriminate against working class, women and mature students because they will find it most difficult to meet the repayments. Indeed it will mean a return to the days when only the children of the rich could get a university education.

BELFAST

The march in Belfast on November 16th—when over 6,000 students from colleges in Belfast and across the island took part—gave cause for hope for the future, but the optimism felt on the march must not be allowed to dwindle away.

The NUS Executive have

been resisting demands for a further day of action but pressure from angry students at the December conference in Blackpool forced them to agree to another day of marches and protests—probably February 1st.

The proposal of the students' union to get students and parents to write letters to MPs will do nothing to stop the introduction of loans. In order to win this fight and keep the right of all to third level education, students must spread the struggle. It is only through combined struggle with workers that there can be a victory.

LINKS

Links can be made with workers such as college technicians who came out for a one-day official strike in October against Tory attacks on their own living standards. Calls can also be made to ancillary staff and teaching unions for solidarity action on February 1st. The work to build for this day needs to start now.

This kind of strategy will show Thatcher's government that education is a right we are all entitled to and one we are prepared to fight for.

Mark Riley Queen's University, Belfast

Derry Housing Cuts

INTERNATIONAL

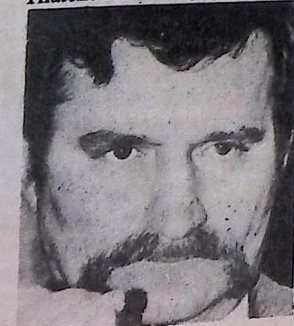
THIS YEAR Poland has again seen strikes which were sparked off by the introduction of huge price rises by the Jaruzelski regime. The price increases were imposed because of the chronic state of the Police economy. Inflation is running at 60% and there are shortages of basic foodstuffs and housing. The only way the government can hope to stabilise the economy and repay even the interest on its crippling debt to American and European banks is by attacking workers' wages and conditions—i.e. "economic reform".

The demands raised during the strikes included, as well as the economic demands for compensation for the price rises, the political demand for the recognition and legalisation of the independent workers' movement, Solidarity.

Solidarity began in 1980 from a spontaneous upsurge of workers and gained its strength as the focus for everyone in Poland who suffered exploitation and oppression. Socialists defend Solidarity just as we defend trade unions in the West. Just as in the West, the fundamental division in Polish society is that between a ruling class and a working class which the competition of the world system forces them to exploit. Socialists support any workers' movement fighting against this exploitation.

It seemed confusing and sickening, therefore, when Solidarity leaders and huge numbers of Polish workers welcomed Thatcher so enthusiastically when she visited Poland in November. Her blatant hypocrisy was evident in posing as a champion of civil rights and defender of free trade unions when just the previous week she had sacked workers at GCHQ for refusing to leave their union. She shed crocodile tears over the closure of the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk, having herself thrown thousands on the dole in Britain. General Jaruzelski declared he was "full of admiration" for her "consistent and aggressive economic policy".

How could such an idol of Jaruzelski's gain such support from the victims of his "reforms"? Thatcher has voiced her hatred of communism time and time again. Polish workers living under a regime which falsely calls itself communist also find its repression hateful. Some of these mistakenly see Thatcher as an ally.



Most of the leading figures of Solidarity, including Walesa, argue that Poland needs reform. They look to western capitalism as a more progressive economy in much the same way that many militants in the West look to the USSR for the same reason. They see "market reform", similar to perestroika in the USSR, as the remedy. The introduction of the market and the emergence of small businesses is seen as progressive because they are outside of the state sector.

Those in Solidarity who argue for market reform undermine themselves, however, because they are arguing on the same basis as the government. Walesa's acceptance of the notion of a "national interest" and the economic reforms the government is trying to push through meant that he was constantly arguing for "moderation" during the strike waves and trying to dampen down workers' militancy.

Some Polish workers are openly critical of Walesa's increased accommodation with the regime and are looking

SOLIDARNOSC!



THE AUTUMN strikes showed workers still have power. Will the closures now demoralise the movement?

ing instead to the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) for a more uncompromising lead against that regime.

It was the lack of any real political opposition to the government that led to the creation of the PPS in Warsaw in November 1987. The party

is an important development because it means the need for a workers' party has now been recognised by hundreds of activists. The PPS has always been ahead of Solidarity in calling for strikes and mass actions in defence of living standards. Nor did it fall into

the trap of seeing Thatcher as an ally of Polish workers, but drew the parallels between her and Jaruzelski and looked instead for support to the victims of her policies—the British miners, seafarers, health workers, etc.

Despite everything, Poland

shows not the strength of the Eastern regimes but their weaknesses. The system has created in opposition to itself a class capable of challenging it for power, just as Marx predicted capitalism would.

GER TUOHY



THE PALESTINIAN National Council—the Palestinians' "parliament in exile"—has recognised Israel's right to exist by endorsing UN Resolution 242. It also declared an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. It was Yasser Arafat's personal response to the Intifada, or Uprising, inside Israel.

Despite the declarations, the 4.5 million Palestinians are no closer to having a state in which they can hold up their heads as equals. There is no prospect of either major party in Israel coming round to the idea of an independent Palestinian state on Israel's doorstep. The most even the Labour Party will countenance is giving back some land to Jordan that was stolen in 1967 on the West Bank.

But the results of the last election, when Labour's vote fell to 30% and the right gained, showed that the Israelis are in no mood to compromise with those involved in the uprising.

That's no surprise. Israel was founded upon the expulsion of nearly one million

Palestinians by legal and illegal means following the 1947 UN settlement. Zionist terror groups like the Stern gang used intimidation. After the massacre at Deir Yassein, murder was used to clear the Palestinians off the land and make room for Zionist settlers. Today, the racist Law of Return ensures that any one can settle in Palestine who happens to be Jewish. Arabs who left after the 1967 war, and the 2 million Palestinians who live in a diaspora, cannot return to their homeland.

The only just solution would be the smashing of the racist state of Israel. It should be replaced with a secular, democratic state of Palestine. This would be home to Arab and Jew alike, on equal terms: this was the policy of the PLO till the latest concession.

Zionism established a separate state in Israel by making a deal with imperialism. US imperialism has been only too happy to fund Israel up to the hilt and keep it militarily and economically alive. In return for this Israel played the role of watchdog for imperialism in the Middle East.

Since 1951 Israel has received 1,500 million dollars out of the total 2,800 million the US

P.L.O. PLAN NO ANSWER

has distributed in "world aid". This was the only way Israel was able to survive economic crises like the staggering inflation rate of 165% in 1983.

In return, Israel fought a war in 1967 against the Arabs, just a time when the Arab oil producers, organised in OPEC, were threatening an oil crisis for the West.

Israel has also served as a useful source for arms and technology to the states that the US can't openly court. Israel has been one of the only countries to ignore the UN embargo on arms sales to South Africa; many Latin American dictatorships have modern, well-equipped armies and airforces thanks to Israel.

Zionist efforts to identify anti-Zionists with fascists and anti-semitics is disgusting. The truth is that Zionism, by linking the fate of the Jews to imperialism and world reaction, has too often found itself on the same side as the real anti-semites.

Jim Allen's play *Perdition* dramatised the facts about Zionist collaboration with Hitler, when the founding of Israel was put before the lives of individual Jews in Europe. Gore Vidal has pointed to the unholy alliance in the US on questions concerning the Middle East between the Zionist lobby and the ultra-right and overwhelmingly anti-semitic business lobby. In Argentina, under the Junta, Jewish groups were asked by the Israelis not to draw attention to the anti-semitic murders of Galtieri's regime

so as not to threaten trade between the two countries.

Worst of all, the massacres at the Palestinian refugee camps of Shabra and Shatila in Beirut during the Israeli occupation were carried out by the Christian Phalange, genuine fascists whose founder went to Berlin to meet his hero, Hitler. The massacres took place under the eyes of the Israelis and thus with their tacit approval. This was only one act in the ongoing alliance between the Israelis and the Lebanese Maronite Christian fascists who have been funded up to the hilt by the Israelis and who envisage their own final solution to the Palestinian question.

All this makes Arafat's plan seem all the more utopian. But even were it to be successful, it would be disastrous: a small Palestinian state on the West Bank, most of whose people would still depend on migrant labour in Israel. There are 120,000 Palestinian day-labourers in Israel at the moment. It would be militarily dominated by its two neighbours, King Hussein and Israel. It would be about as "independent" as the Bantustans are in South Africa.

Last time such a plan was mooted, as part of the Camp David agreements between Egypt and Israel, there was a massive wave of opposition in the Palestinian camps. Arafat was forced to backtrack quickly. The reason it has been welcomed this time has to do with the strengths and weaknesses of the Intifada.

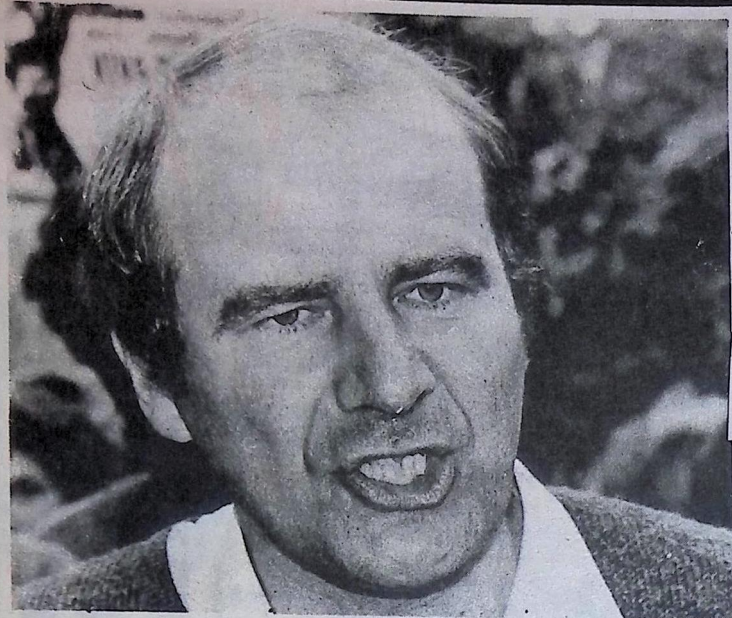
The uprising has hurt the Israeli economy, because of its dependence on cheap Palestinian labour. Even the US has been forced to add Israel to its list of suspect countries regarding labour rights, something which threatens Israel's special trading privileges with the US.

But the failure of the Intifada to win concessions from the Israelis shows how desperately the Palestinians need help from outside the West Bank. That desperation and impatience with the PLO has led to the growth of fundamentalist influence among the Palestinians. Some of the best fighters in the Intifada now come from pro-Iranian groups like Hezbollah and Jihad.

Everything points to the failure of previous PLO strategies of looking for support from the reactionary Arab states and guerilla war. The Arab regimes have always shown by their actions that they are afraid of Palestinian movement.

There is an alternative force—the huge and powerful working class that has grown up in Egypt and the Gulf. But mobilising that force means breaking with the stalinist tradition of the Middle East left. This has meant subordinating workers' power to the 'democratic stage'; in practice, it has meant allying with totally reactionary bourgeoisies and monarchs who have never shown themselves interested in democracy or anti-Zionism.

JOSH CLARKE



DEFEND JOHN MITCHELL



WOMENS' CONFERENCE

AS A result of a motion to last year's ICTU Women's Conference, a special conference was called in Belfast at the start of December on the theme of what women can contribute to "Peace, Work and Progress". Leaflets publicising the conference said that its purpose was to "give women from trade unions and community organisations an opportunity to investigate how they can work together more effectively for an end to sectarian violence in Northern Ireland".

Like other conferences organised as part of the "Peace, Work and Progress" campaign, little emerged of any practical use and there appeared to be a distinct unwillingness on the part of the organisers to face up to the root cause of sectarianism and of violence in the North of Ireland.

SWM members who were delegates argued that the fact that we were all women did not necessarily mean that we could overcome sectarian barriers—that the wife or sister of an RUC officer has little in common with the wife or sister of a man in Long Kesh for his political activities. And that while both women might be victims of a situation not of their making, this did not give them a reason to come together.

On the other hand workers, we argued, have to come together and co-operate together every day. And even when we work in segregated workplaces, we still have to come together in action over pay and conditions, in defence of the health service etc.

The other main argument in the workshops was what exactly does "peace" mean. The bureaucrats were clear: it meant the Provos laying down their arms. The argument that the Northern Ireland state had been built on violence and sectarianism and that any "peace" won by a ceasefire at present would be short-lived and illusory was not reported back to the main body of the conference. Few of the contentious arguments were. Afterwards, many women were heard wondering if the conference had been worth the effort to get there.

GORETTI HORGAN

JOHN MITCHELL was sacked as general secretary of IDATU because he had been too militant in support of his own members. When all the smears and confusions are cleared away, that's what's at the heart of the IDATU dispute. It's the main reason why socialists should put their backs into the campaign for his reinstatement.

In six years as IDATU general secretary Mitchell's tendency to endorse strikes and sit-ins—rather than plod through "agreed procedures"—perturbed both ICTU bosses and many on IDATU's own executive.

His involvement in campaigns, for Palestinians, black South Africans, travelling people, Polish solidarity, etc. reinforced his reputation among union bureaucrats as an awkward customer. Most of all, his strong stand against the sectarian Northern state alarmed those who regard the North as too dangerous for the unions to touch.

The way the dispute developed is fairly well known by now. In January 1987 in an interview with *Andersonstown News* Mitchell denounced Northern union leaders for staying silent about discrimination and repression and lashed out in particular at the British-based shop-workers union USDAW as "an Uncle Tom union... reactionary and useless".

USDAW complained to the ICTU which expelled Mitchell from its executive. And although IDATU's executive argued that Mitchell had been speaking personally, the ICTU suspended the union from Congress.

The controversy coincided with the negotiation of the three-year "National Agreement" between the ICTU and the Haughey government. The Agreement—which gave the go-ahead for public sector spending cuts and redundancies and tight control on wages in the private sector—was a rotten bargain from the working class point of view. ICTU leaders, who were finding it difficult to sell the package to their members, were further enraged by Mitchell's public rubbishing of the Agreement as a "sell-out".

USDAW

They regarded the complaint from USDAW as just the excuse needed to put Mitchell beyond the pale.

Although IDATU's annual conference in Limerick at Easter 1988 overwhelmingly backed Mitchell's stand, the union's executive ached to be back in the ICTU fold. Three weeks after the conference they suspended Mitchell for a fortnight—over the hiring of a union hall for a Republican meeting—and began the process of pulling out of the North.

The explanation for pulling out of the North contained in an executive circular to branches last September was that the Northern operation was not "viable"—as if trade unions were businesses in which unprofitable branches are to be closed down—and that the two Northern branches, in Belfast and Derry, were recruiting on a sectarian basis. This second allegation was a straightforward lie.

At an executive meeting in early November Mitchell was

accused of giving "moral support" to Derry IDATU members campaigning to be allowed to stay in the union. A couple of totally irrelevant charges—to do with his driving record, for example—were thrown in for good measure. When he refused to resign he was sacked, on November 15th.

CAMPAIGN

The campaign for his reinstatement was launched at a meeting in Dublin on November 25th attended by IDATU members from Dublin, Cork, Dundal and Derry as well as supporters from other unions and socialist groups.

The campaign is aimed at winning a majority at the union's conference in Tralee next Easter to overturn the executive decision. This will mean mobilising rank-and-file members around the country to attend branch meetings and to elect and mandate delegates to conference.

In the course of the campaign the political questions

which arise will have to be faced head-on. The National Agreement is a sell-out. The ICTU's hands-off attitude to bigotry and repression in the North allows sectarianism to flourish within the trade unions while leaving leadership of the struggle against the sectarian state to groups based on communal and not on class politics.

The SWM doesn't regard Mitchell as some sort of revolutionary socialist saint. Far from it. Although a thorn in the side of union bureaucrats generally, he himself operated in a bureaucratic manner. "He led the union by the nose", one of his strongest supporters has put it. And as long as he was leading it in a leftwards direction many socialists in IDATU were content enough.

RANK AND FILE

They should have learned by now that a left-winger at the top is no substitute for an organised left wing at rank and file level.

Mitchell never built a rank

ORGANISE

An open, vigorous campaign which seeks to rouse the rank and file and which doesn't dodge the issues can succeed in putting Mitchell back in. Just as important, it could create a network of active, organised, rank and file militants which, whatever the outcome at Tralee at Easter, would provide the basis for a fight in the future to make IDATU a union run by and for its members and for the working class generally, against the cowardice and collaboration of union bosses who see it as their business to keep the membership under control rather than give them leadership in struggle.

EAMONN McCANN



WOODS CUTS FUEL

HUNDREDS OF families have been robbed of their winter fuel allowance by a cynical and subtle change in the rules ordered by the Minister for Social Welfare.

This year any family with a dependent over eighteen years living at home and in full-time third level education will no longer qualify for the fuel scheme, irrespective of the amount of young children in the family.

This is despite the fact that in nearly every case, the income of the family will be considerably lower than this

time last year, when they qualified for the scheme.

This new rule can affect the young working class students who often feel guilty of depriving the family of badly needed income. In the long term it could further reduce the already small percentage of working class students following third level education.

And to add insult to injury the Minister of Social Welfare has also deprived these same families of the free EC food scheme administered by the St. Vincent de Paul. To qualify for this scheme a family must be in receipt of the 1988/89 fuel scheme.

Socialist Worker has been informed by an official in the Waterford Department of Social Welfare that in recent months there have been a number of subtle and



unannounced changes in the Social Welfare code. These deprive many people of monies which in the past they would have been entitled to. The Waterford community officers have also been told by memo to tighten regulations regarding payments.

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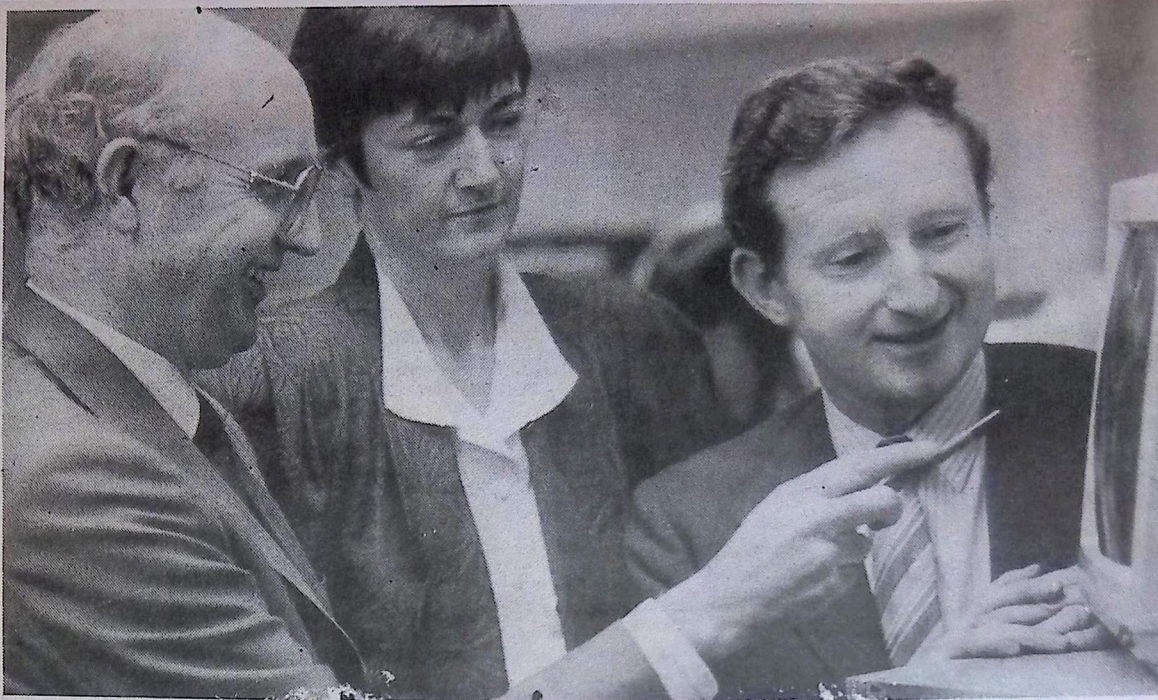
In 1958, the Fianna Fail government did an about turn. It dropped its programme of economic nationalism. Up to then 50% of the capital of all companies in the country had to be in Irish hands. Tariff barriers kept out foreign produce. But a report by its leading economist, TK Whitaker indicated that the policy had been a disaster. It was necessary to link up with the multi-nationals.

Southern Ireland joined the world economy as a weak, backward member. Its main advantage lay in cheap labour and the 'stability' of its right wing governments. But these were not enough to transform it into a success story. The levels of emigration and poverty are enough to show that.

Many on the left have responded to the crisis in the Southern economy with a plea for a return to the days of economic nationalism. The argument goes that the South has failed because it has remained a neo-colony of Britain. Economic sovereignty is the remedy offered. Two recent books carry the analysis for the neo-colonial position.

Raymond Crotty's 'Ireland in Crisis' argued that "the continuing underdevelopment of Ireland has been the enduring pathological consequence of British capitalist colonialism". He went on to advocate a free enterprise solution where the state was broken up and each citizen held a 'national dividend'. But despite this, his book sold mainly on the Left because of its picture of the South as a neo-colony.

Gerry Adams in 'The Politics of Irish Freedom' took a step further



and claimed that "the ruling class (in the South) is not based principally on native capitalism but is an agent class acting as agents for foreign capital". This is principally British capital.

The statement by Adams lies at the heart of the republican analysis. Because the South is run by puppets of Britain, it is possible to unite all other classes against them around a programme of economic sovereignty. Adams' economic analysis underpins the political strategy of looking to sections of Fianna Fail.

A neo-colony means that the economy of a particular region is distorted to serve the metropolitan power. Surplus profits find their way to its banks and com-

panies. The 'agent class' who run the region have no interest in industrial development but have a parasitic role. This economic dependence translates directly into political dependence.

The problem with this analysis is that it cannot come up with any mechanism by which the whole of Ireland is exploited by Britain. As a result it ends up with a wrong view of the Southern ruling class.

The facts are that the ties with the British economy have been loosening in the last decade.

Employment in direct British owned firms has been halved. In 1973, 29,000 workers were employed by British manufacturing firms. Today it is 14,000.

British investment in the South is

ICC bosses watch profits rise

falling. In the the 1960s a half of all foreign capital entering the South was British. Since 1976, British capital has never represented more than one tenth of all foreign capital entering the South on an annual basis. German investment, for example, has always been higher than British according to the IDA annual reports.

LENIN

There is simply no evidence to show that British economic dominance is based on the export of their capital to the South. Neither do the patterns of trade between the two countries show a mechanism by which British domination could be guaranteed.

In the 1920s when Southern Ireland was a neo-colony of Britain 98% of its exports went to Britain. These were mainly agricultural goods for which the prices were kept artificially low. Britain could charge higher prices for its manufactured goods because it had a monopoly on their import.

Today this mechanism does not exist. Only one fifth of Irish exports are agricultural goods. And the vast bulk of its exports do not find their way to Britain. One third of exports now go to Britain.

MECHANISM

One group, the People's Democracy have claimed that the mechanism by which Britain dominates the South is through 'finance capital'. This rests on the mistaken notion that the modern capitalist economy is controlled by the banks. Nevertheless even here there is no evidence for their views.

British capital is more represented in the banks than other sectors. But in the largest bank, the Bank of Ireland it is doubtful if it controls more than 40% of the shares. More importantly, the situation where Irish banks invested in



Tony O'Reilly

WHO RULES?

After 1958, the Southern ruling class hitched their fortunes to those of the multi-nationals. High levels of grants, tax breaks, cheap wages were offered. So whereas most other countries in Europe were taxing profits at the rate of 50%, in Southern Ireland Corporation profit tax was put at a nominal 10%

But the aim of the Southern state was not simply hand-outs to the multi-nationals. Irish capital was also to be built up by the opportunities created. From the very start of the industrialisation programme, grants to native Irish capital totalled 40% of all grants. £12,500 was awarded to Irish employers to create one job in manufacturing while £8,450 was granted to the multi-nationals. Both Irish and foreign capital benefited from the huge subsidies to capital.

The result has been a total harmonisation of interests between native and foreign capital. One factor that accounted for this was the fact the foreign capital made no attempt to invade the markets previously dominated by Irish companies. 90% of the produce of American, German and Japanese factories were exported. Southern Ireland was merely a staging post for re-exporting.

This, and their past failure to grow, explains the total lack of opposition to the 1958 turn. There was not a whimper out of Fianna Fail, the party most associated with native capital. This despite decades of nationalist rhetoric.

Southern capital has grown with the industrialisation programme. It has produced a small number of multi-nationals which have outgrown the Southern economy. The most prominent has been Smurfit's which employs 33,000 workers in 13 countries. But there is also Cement Roadstone which has 80 plants in the U.S.; James Crean which has begun to buy frozen food companies in the U.S.; McInerney's which has interests in Spain and the Middle East; and Goodman International, which has Fianna Fail T.D. Liam Lawlor on its pay roll. Its major banks have been speculating in debt to Latin American countries. Last year the Bank of Ireland had to put aside £30 million to cover these debts.

NATIVE

But as well as the bigger sharks, there has also grown thousands of minnows. Between 1973 and 1980 when Southern capitalism was at the height of its boom, 1,300 native companies were created. 70% of them employed less than 30 workers. It is from the ranks of these small time capitalists that parties such as Fianna Fail draw their base. They realise clearly that they have no future in any talk of economic sovereignty. They have grown with the multi-nationals.

The backwardness of Southern capital means that it exhibits certain peculiarities. One of these is a search for quick safe profits. The Irish Stock Exchange, where its

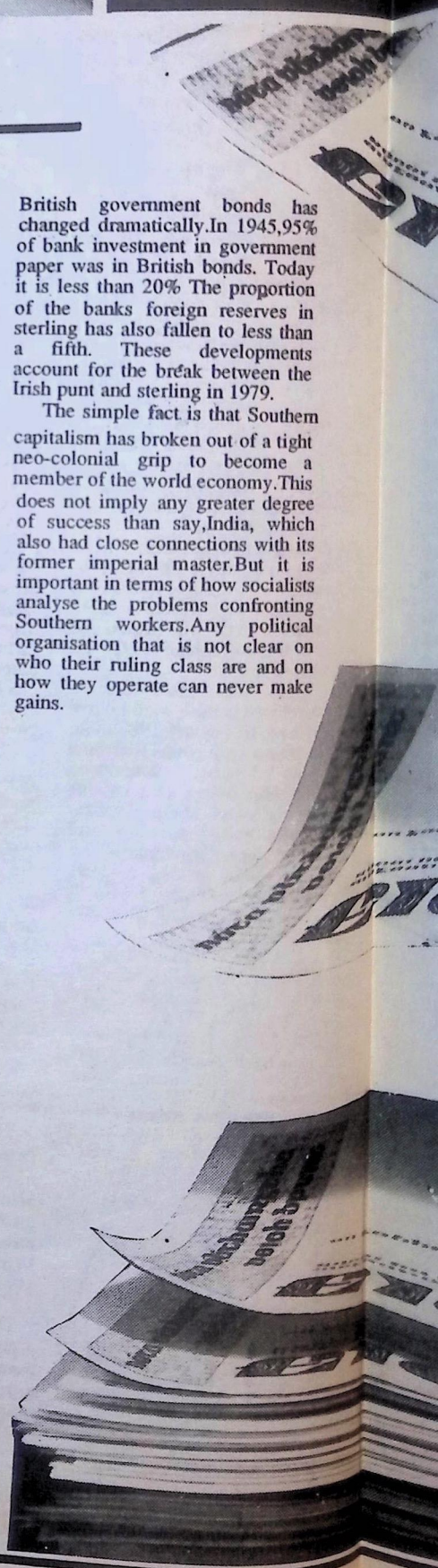
savings are collected, reflects this. A mere £223 million was raised for direct investment in manufacturing companies between 1969 and 1981. Double that figure was raised for speculation in commercial property.

One other area for relatively safe investment has been the public debt programme of the Irish state. Many on the left have seen this as a key sign of how money is sucked out of the country. This is true to an extent. But it ignores the massive dependence of Irish capital on the debt programme. Over 50% of the interests payments on the Irish public debt are made to Irish residents. In 1985, for example, £1,002 million was paid out to the Irish rich compared to £795 million paid outside the country.

The Southern state operates as the watchdog for the joint interests of native and foreign capital. Both gain from the huge subsidies on capital. There is little competition between the native and foreign wings. Both sponge off the Irish working class, forcing it to pay high taxes and suffer appalling cuts in order to pay off its continuing debt. There is an absolute identity of interest between them.

Many on the Left attempt to ignore these realities in one of two ways. It is sometimes claimed that Irish capitalism is made up of 'chip shop owners and second hand car salesmen' only. Or else it is claimed that Irish capital is dominated by those who wish to suck out wealth to Britain. All the evidence shows that both pictures are false.

THE NO LO BRITIS



THE SOUTH: DANGER A SH NEO-COLONY

PARTITION

One further argument used to justify the neo-colonial analysis is the question of partition. Because Britain rules the North of Ireland, it is claimed, that they can dominate the whole island. In this way Britain rules Ireland in the interests of world imperialism.

This is false for a number of reasons. The bourgeoisie can rule under many different conditions. It would prefer a unified national state with a secular democratic constitution. But it can also live without them. The fact that it lives in a partitioned land does not stop it being the masters of its own house.

If that were the case countries such as South Korea would have to be regarded as Russian colonies simply because North Korea is in the Russian sphere of influence.

They have a direct interest in partition. They do not need British prompting to lock up, intern or torture republicans. They see the struggle in the North as a direct threat to their stability.

This is shown by the fact that the Southern rulers can on occasion 'stand up to Britain' and still repress republicans. During the Second World War, De Valera stood up to Britain on the issue of Irish neutrality. Yet he also launched the greatest wave of repression ever seen against republicans. They were hung, interned and left to die on hunger strike.

HERMON

During the Falklands war, Haughey broke EEC ranks to condemn Britain. But, according to the RUC supremo, Hermon, he was also giving unprecedented co-operation on border security.

At the moment, the Irish parliament has been unanimous in 'standing up' to Thatcher on her intervention on the Fr Patrick Ryan issue. They have proudly defended the institutions of the Southern state against British interference, reminding her that they are 'no longer a colony'. But they have also just as unanimously made extradition a permanent feature of the Southern legal system.

INTEREST

The failure to understand that the Southern establishment's defence of partition stems from their own class interests means that republicans are often duped by those who mouth nationalist rhetoric. They continually build up nationalist allies in the ranks of the political establishment only to have to cry 'treachery' after the inevitable sell out. Ultimately it stems from their failure to break from the neo-colonial image of the South.

PROTECTOR

More importantly, the idea that it is the British state which is the protector of the interests of the multi-nationals lets the Southern state off the hook. It is they who organise their laws and police force to protect the multi-nationals. When workers oppose the multi-nationals it is the Irish Gardai and courts they face and not some puppets who are carrying out Thatcher's orders.

Nor can it explain the central issue of why the Southern state collaborates in protecting the border. Republicans have

argued that they do so because they are under British influence. Hence the slogan during the H Block crisis 'Haughey, stand up to Britain'. The thinking was that if he got a little more backbone he might act like a good nationalist Irishman.

What this ignores is the fact that the Southern ruling class them-



SMURFIT

REVOLUTION

In looking at the experience of the 1905 revolution in Russia, Leon Trotsky came to propound his theory of Permanent Revolution. This argued that no section of the bourgeois would fight for democracy in Russia. They might hate and despise the Tsar but they feared the working class more. The democratic tasks of the Russian revolution could only be solved by the working class. But they would only do so as part of their fight for a workers state in Russia that was linked to an international struggle for socialism.

It is a theory that fits Ireland like a glove. Southern capital is intimately linked to the multi-nationals. As a member of the Western Alliance it has no intention of taking on its more powerful British neighbour to demand an end to partition. It fears the energy and militancy of Northern Catholics far more than it aspires to a United Ireland.

Only the Irish working class have a direct interest in smashing the border. It must take on the fight against oppression if it is to move

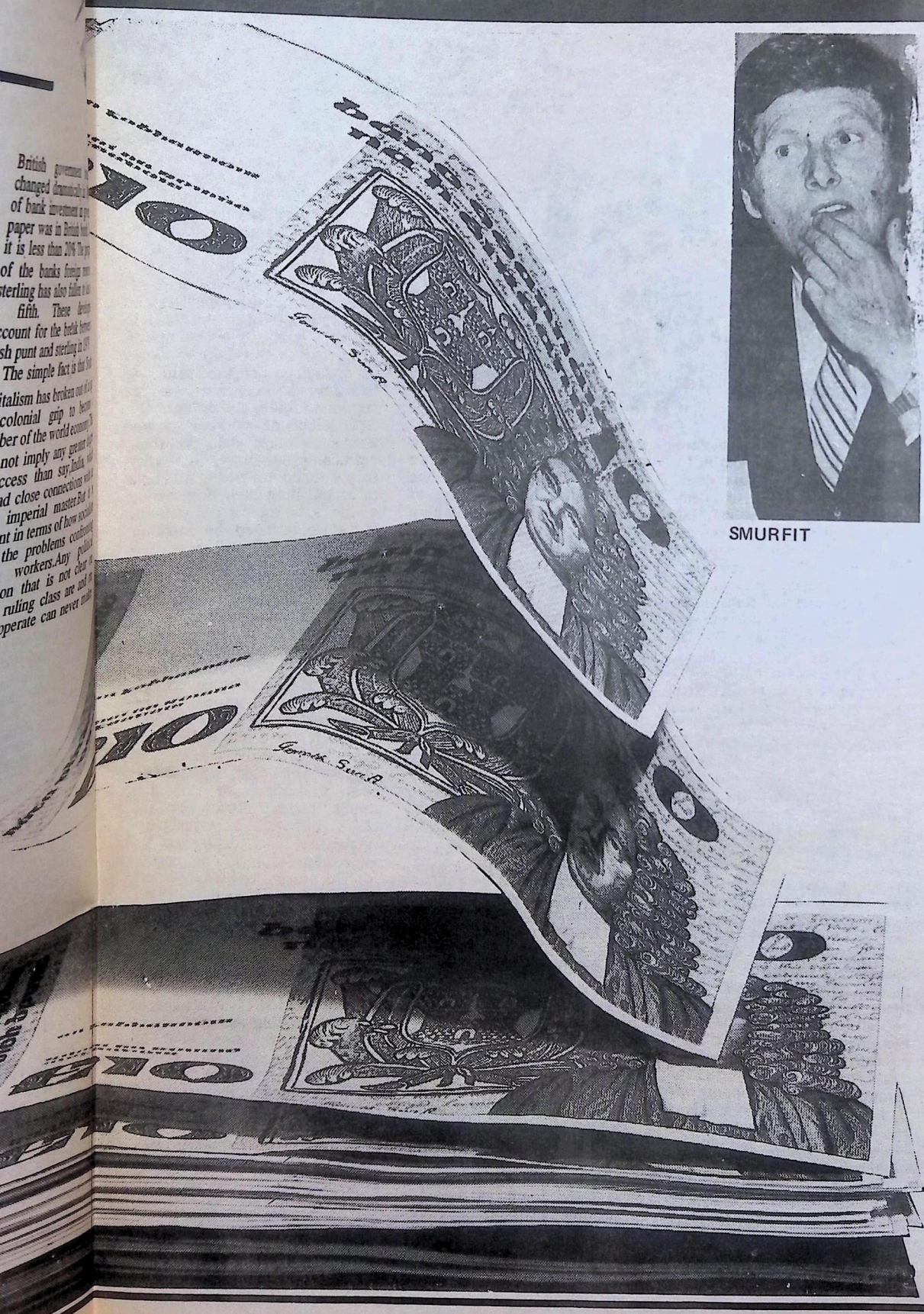
forward. There is none more pressing than that of Northern Catholics. By making the issue of partition central, it can create the conditions for the unification of itself on a revolutionary basis.

Socialists have to be to the fore in raising the issue of partition. This is not because they have illusions that it is possible to ride a nationalist tiger half way to socialism. Nor is it in the belief that the republican struggle will automatically lead to revolution. Partition and all its associated ills have to be raised as part of the necessary training of the working class to fight oppression. Only in that way can the workers movement raise itself to give a lead to the wole of society

This does not mean fighting for 'economic sovereignty' or an 'Eire Nua'. The idea that that workers could gain from a more nationalist brand of capitalism is absurd. The misery of Dev's Ireland of the fifties shows that. Building up a new version of the protectionist model could only mean massive sacrifices.

The interests of the Irish working class lies in internationalism. World revolution not an Eire Nua should be our goal.

British government changed dramatic of bank investment in paper was in Britain it is less than 20% of the banks foreign sterling has also fallen fifth. These account for the break sh punt and sterling The simple fact is that imperialism has broken colonial grip to become ber of the world economy not imply any greater access than say, had and close connections imperial master. But in terms of how the problems working class are not ruling class are not operate can never



GERMANY NOVEMBER 1918

AT THE outbreak of the First World War workers across Europe rallied to the cries of nationalism. They had been betrayed by their 'socialist' leaders who called on them to join the slaughter in the trenches. Revolutionary socialists such as Lenin, Connolly and Luxemburg were a tiny minority. The price was paid in the blood of millions.

10 However, after four long and bitter years, workers all across Europe rose up. They set about ending the immediate bloodbath and destroying the system that caused it. In Germany the same tensions that had caused the workers in Russia to set up the first workers' state year earlier led to the collapse of the largest industrial empire in Europe. What had been the dream of but a handful of revolutionaries only a few years before became a reality almost overnight. These momentous events were sparked by the mutiny of sailors at the Kiel naval base on September 1918. They rejected their officers' orders to put to sea and make a "last stand" against the British Navy. Although attacked by troops loyal to the Kaiser, within five days the town was under the control of the mutineers. They governed through a sailors' council elected at a 20,000 strong mass meeting. Other naval units followed suit. By the end of the month Cuxhaven, Wilhelmshaven and Hamburg were under the control of various workers' councils.

By November these spontaneous actions were being followed across Germany. Virtually all German towns set up "soviets". The authority of the dying empire fell away. The focus of the revolution quickly moved to Berlin. Its control was key to influencing the direction the new Germany would take. On the one hand the reformist Social Democratic Party (SPD), by far the largest and best organised party of its type in Europe, was anxious to take control of the revolution and use it to consolidate their position as the new rulers of Germany.

However it was the revolutionary left that took the initiative, led by Karl Liebknecht. On November 8 he led a demonstration to the Imperial palace to knock out the Kaiser. Emil Eichorn, a member of the Independent Socialist Party (USPD)—a party which vacillated between reformist and revolutionary positions—seized the police headquarters and became the new Chief of Police. A spontaneous general strike had brought Berlin to a standstill. With the balance of class forces set almost completely against him, the Kaiser fled to Belgium to escape.

Liebknecht took the only logical step open to him. He proclaimed what all workers and soldiers were agitating for: a German Socialist Republic. On the other side of Berlin Scheidemann of the SPD announced that Ebert, the party's leader, had been installed in power to the large crowd



DEMONSTRATION IN Berlin. The placard reads "All power to the workers' and soldiers' councils"

The lost revolution

outside. The announcement, apart from its dubious legality, did not inspire the listeners until he added "Long live the German Republic."

Liebknecht and Scheidemann however were poles apart in their motives for declaring the new German republic. The SPD saw the end of the empire as the start of a new parliamentary republic: a scenario that could not allow workers' power to develop. Liebknecht and the Spartakusbund (later to be the cornerstone of the first German Communist Party) were concerned with strengthening and deepening the workers' power through the workers' and soldiers' councils.

However the weakness of the radical left was soon evident. Most workers, though acting in a revolutionary way, remained aligned with the SPD. This is not surprising, given the SPD's traditional strength in the working class and their apparent support for the new German state.

This dominance by the SPD manifested itself when the first Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils was called in Berlin by the Spartakusbund and the left USPD. The SPD had a majority among the delegates and they used their majority to dissolve the national Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils and instead to back the setting up of a parliament. At the same time the SPD began to move against the leaders of the far left both by slander and intimidation.

The masses however were

moving, despite the manoeuvrings of the SPD. In Berlin by December Spartakusbund could command huge street demonstrations. (The USPD left government in order to remain popular.) The soldiers continued to abandon the government's side, recognising that merely placing the imperial reins in the hands of the SPD was no real changeover of power to the working class.

By late December the SPD leadership was in crisis. What little authority it had was rapidly evaporating. In order to "restore order" it turned to the officer corps of the old Imperial Army. They had promised secretly to support the SPD's bid for power in return for the government's help in maintaining discipline in the army. As a result, the infamous Freikorps were raised from the remnants of the regular loyal army specifically to crush the workers' and soldiers' uprising. They saw Eichorn's control of the police in Berlin as a serious threat. In January 1919 they tried to take control of the police from the radical left; Eichorn was sacked, thus freeing the city to be "pacified" by the Freikorps. A peaceful demonstration in support of Eichorn developed quickly into an occupation of the SPD newspaper's offices and railway stations.

However the leaders of the newly formed Communist Party (among them Rosa Luxemburg) were extremely cautious about proceeding with an insurrection. Workers in Germany as a whole still backed the SPD and were

not prepared for revolution. But on the other hand a fight must be launched against the counter-revolutionary threat of the Freikorps. Luxemburg argued that it should stop short of seizing power. Despite this, a Joint Revolutionary Committee was formed by Liebknecht for the KPD (Communist Party) and the leaders of the USPD and the Revolutionary Shop Stewards of Berlin. However their lack of preparation and indecision lost them what little hope of success they ever had in launching the premature uprising.

On January 11 the Freikorps entered the city. Without the necessary leadership, the masses waited and many were killed by the Freikorps as they moved through Berlin.

On January 15 Liebknecht and Luxemburg were arrested and murdered at the behest of the "Socialist" government. The rising was crushed and with it the first threat to the German ruling class.

Although for the next four years (until 1923) Germany remained in turmoil, with workers and soldiers fighting heroically to defend the gains of November 1918, the Freikorps systematically put them down. The Communist Party failed to grasp even its opportunity to seize power with mass workers' support in 1923.

It seems tragic that such a promising revolutionary situation ended in frustration—not only in that it eventually led to the ruling class resorting to fascism to quell dissent by

1933, but also because of the profound effect that the revolution's failure had on the course of the Russian revolution.

Why was the German revolution lost, and what are the lessons socialists must draw from it?

Firstly, the power and influence of reformist leaders and the attraction of their ideas to workers must never be underestimated. In Germany the SPD used their power and influence to betray the very workers that supported them. Although the SPD talked of workers' power at some future date as their political programme, in reality they were committed at all costs to establishing their dominance within a bourgeois parliament. If that necessitated the crushing of workers and militants, the murder of their leaders, the resuscitation of capitalism, then it would be done, all in the name of social democracy.

That is not to imply that a strong reformist labour party and trade union bureaucracy precludes the chance of a successful revolution. In Germany the revolutionary left was only fused into a coherent party in December 1918. The KPD was the only organisation with the vision to lead the revolution in Germany but its 3,000 members were instantly embroiled in an unplanned insurrection leading to the deaths of its most brilliant leader, Luxemburg, in January 1919. Without a tradition, a programme and strict discipline the chances of success were small.

When a party of this nature does exist, like the Bolsheviks in Russia in 1917, it is capable of both leading and restraining the working class and of launching the strike against state power at the optimum moment. Seventy years on, the lessons of the lost revolution show socialists that no matter how militant or advanced the working class become, it still requires the impetus of the revolutionary party to overcome the tendency to "trust" reformists: the stronger the reformists, the greater the need for the revolutionary party.

GORDON JELLEY

LETTERS

Send to: Socialist Worker PO Box 1648, Dublin 8



Dear Comrades, In his letter last month (Socialist Worker, November) Tom McCarthy criticises the SWM for supporting the demands of the rank and file soldiers in the Irish army. He points quite rightly to the repressive role the army plays in order to maintain the capitalist state—scabbing on strikes, or hunting down republicans. All this is very true, and socialists should support and indeed encourage mass action,

Independent of the trade union bureaucracy if necessary, to stop the army scabbing in any strike.

During the Corporation dispute, for instance, the strategy of mass picketing was constantly argued by the SWM. Unfortunately it was not put into practice by the Corporation workers, and hence, with the exception of Moore Street, the scabbing by the army went almost unchallenged.

So the disagreement with Tom McCarthy is not on the role of the army under capitalism. It is more on the

question of: can the consciousness of the rank and file soldiers change if they themselves are in struggle with their employers, the capitalist state? The answer to that question must be yes, and if we examine the structure of the army we find some of the reasons why.

The army is not a small task force like the Special Branch. It is made up largely of people from working class or low income families. The majority of them do not join the army to scab or do border duty. They join more for job security than national security. Often the choice

facing them is the army or the dole.

Working class soldiers are subject to the same pressures of capitalist society as the rest of us. They face bad housing, low pay and so on. The very fact that the army is made up of rank and file soldiers who hold a key role in maintaining the state means that when there is the slightest agitation within their ranks the ruling class gets extremely worried.

The granting of trade union rights would cause the officers real problems—but it is not impossible under capitalism. One only has to look at some Scandinavian countries, where the army has full trade union rights. But what is far more important is the struggle for these rights and the possibility of the consciousness of the rank and file soldiers being raised in that struggle. It's then that the whole contradiction of the rank and file soldiers' role in the army can be brought to the fore. For when they are fighting the state for the same demands as Corporation workers, ESB workers and bus workers it's possible that a section of them can be won over from scabbing on workers to that of supporting them.

STATE

In his letter Tom McCarthy also states that to support the army is to help recruitment. What he fails to grasp is the fact that the standing army is a vital part of the capitalist state. The ruling class will never allow its numbers to fall to any great extent because of low pay etc. They have and will again engage in massive recruitment campaigns in order to maintain its numbers. The fact is that the rank and file soldiers are not going to leave the army in droves because of low pay etc. But what's not so certain is how long they remain passive while they are still in it.

John Byrne, Corporation worker.

MAKING LIFE IMPOSSIBLE

NOT MANY people stop to think about the damaging effect of public opinion. They go through life being or doing what is expected of them by others. So it is important to stop and think what you want as an individual and to see if this is the same as what society expects. You may have to reject society's expectations. Otherwise you could become an empty vessel for public opinion to flow through.

Many young people getting married are under tremendous financial pressure. The cause stems from the system we live under. It forces them to borrow money and spend hundreds on a proper wedding. These expectations don't match working people's incomes—let alone those of the unemployed.

Another popular held view is that if a man loves a woman he buys her an expensive wedding ring. If the ring is cheap a lot of people will say that if he

really loved her he would have gotten a better ring.

These are just simple examples of how public opinion distorts things and how the system we live under makes it impossible for us to live up to the expectations it puts on us. People living below the poverty line are forced to steal to feed themselves not through a matter of choice but as a matter of survival.

Under a socialist society this would of course change. People would be able to live the way they wanted to live and not be forced to live as they are now with little or no choice. In a socialist society you would still have public opinion. But it would not be distorted and censored to what the ruling class would wish us to believe. People would not try to conform in order to appear normal. There is no such thing as he normal or average person. These are illusions forced on us by a system which treats us as statistics

and which encourages us to hide that in ourselves which seems different.

PETER HOMAN

Dear Comrades, There are some raised voices coming from a small number of clerical members of the Catholic church. They complain strongly about the hardships and all the related problems of unemployment. It is quite easy to jump to their support as they are one of the few groups that speak out against unemployment. But to speak out against unemployment is one thing, but to have a proper analysis of its cause and a possible solution is another thing. The thrust of the clerical argument is that it is all caused by an unchristian society. From the ranks of the unemployed myself, I cannot see this as the cause. To me, this only puts the church on the clerical fence.

The danger of the argument is that it blinds people to the real facts. The reason people are unemployed is nothing to do with being christian or not. We are all victims of the market forces of capitalism. So if we are really going to solve unemployment we must move forward to build a socialist society. Only then can we have a just society and liberate ourselves from the misery of poverty for once and for all.

Aidan Dunne

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!

I would like to join the SWM

I would like more details of SWM

NAME

ADDRESS

send to SWM, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

REVIEWS



De Valera

GREEN AGAINST GREEN



The Free State Army takes over Dublin Castle after the 1921 settlement. An Irish officer makes arrangements with his British counterpart.

'GREEN AGAINST GREEN—THE IRISH CIVIL WAR' — Hopkins £12.95.

The civil war from July 1922 to April 1923 is one of the most confusing episodes of Irish History. After a bitter war with Britain, former comrades turned their guns on one another.

The confusion is further added to by the traditional view that the Free Staters were for a 26 county state and the Anti-treatyites or Republicans for a united Ireland. But as the book describes Collins, the Free State Commander in Chief, tried to organise a united IRA offensive in the Six Counties just before the outbreak of the Civil War. He arranged for guns, supplied to the Free State by the British, to be swapped for guns from Republican units so that no arms with British serial numbers would be captured in the North.

REPUBLIC

What was the war about? It is important at the outset to state that it was not for or against a 32 county Republic. Essentially it was over what would be the constitutional arrangements for bourgeois rule in the 26 counties.

The Treaty of 1921 gave a limited sovereignty to the 26 county state within the confines of the British Empire. Allegiance would still be sworn to the British Crown. Foreign policy would have to

conform with Imperial policy. De Valera for the Republicans argued for 'External Association'; in effect the position of Canada or Australia today in the Commonwealth. For both sides the question of the border was to be resolved through the Boundary Commission which was to establish the line of the border between the Northern and Southern states. The belief was that the Northern state would be left with such a small area that it could not

survive and would therefore ultimately come into a 32 county state.

Collins joint Northern offensive was more an attempt to force the unionist government to respect the rights of the Nationalist community than an attempt to unite the country.

Hopkinson in this book gives a good general background to the Treaty debates and the events of the Civil War. But you are still left at the end of it with the question of why the different

view-points developed. There is the impression that sides were chosen on the basis of likes or dislikes of leading personalities.

For an explanation it is necessary to look at the class interests of the two sides. The Free Staters represented the larger farmers and the old established middle class whose fortunes depended on continuing links with the British markets. For them there was an immediate priority to put an end to the



Michael Collins

chaos of the previous years. "To put down brigandage, protect life and property and enforce payment of taxes", as Collins put it.

The Republicans represented those that saw that their interests lay in developing a closed protectionist economy as later implemented by DeValera and Fianna Fail in the thirties and forties. Some individuals held more radical social views. But these views played no part in the war.

STRIKE

The Republicans, for example, did not view a threatened postal strike as a struggle to support in its own right but as a chance to disrupt the Free State Government. In the first six months of 1922 there was a wave of land agitation and seizures and seeing the chance to win local support an instruction was issued to local republican army commanders "to seize certain land and properties". This was never acted on!

An understanding of the politics of the Civil War are essential to an understanding of the origins of the two major Southern capitalist parties, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. This you do not get from this book.

LABOUR IN VAIN

'THE LABOUR PARTY—A MARXIST HISTORY' Tony Cliff and Donny Gluckstein Bookmarks 1988

THIS BOOK is a comprehensive study of the British Labour Party covering its evolution from the late nineteenth century to the present day. Its major argument is that while the Labour Party bases itself on workers' votes, it does not fight for their interests, indeed at this stage of its evolution it hardly recognises that a working class exists at all.

This thesis is supported by meticulous research. Lenin's contention that "the Labour Party is an organisation of the bourgeoisie which systematically dupes the workers" is confirmed by its

founder, Kier Hardie's announcement that "I am in agreement with the present programme of the Liberal Party".

Cliff and Gluckstein also demonstrate clearly the powerful and destructive influence of the Fabian Society. This was an elitist, middle class organisation that shaped Labour's politics. Beatrice Webb's virulent contempt for the working class ("I cannot see how malingering can be staved off...") and the arrogance of the Fabian assumption of the "diseased minds" and "deformed bodies" of the working class should have warned potential socialists.

Labour historians throughout this century have commented sadly and somberly on the alienation of the Labour leadership from the

grass roots of the party. This history makes it very clear that the leadership has not been alienated at all; it never had any connection with the revolutionary aspirations of the working class. This is very clearly seen in the response of Herbert Morrison to the London "Poplar Rates Strike": "Sir, I say there is a distinct tendency... which is dangerous to National Government and to Local Government."

Margaret Bondfield, the first woman cabinet minister in the thirties, initiated the Act which prevented married women from claiming the dole.

Thus the saga of betrayal goes on and on and is carefully documented and systematically investigated.

The trade union bureaucracy tried to steer a middle course between con-

taining its members and pleasing its masters. Inevitably, the masters won and to this day continue to do so.

Gaitskell's attack on Clause Four ("for Labour against Capital") at Conference 1959 aroused vociferous protest. But this protest never evolved into anything more than the occasional token gesture.

This book is required reading for those socialists who believe that socialism can be achieved by parliamentary means. It displays an understanding of the good will of working class reformists but shows that only the object lesson of a real revolutionary struggle can focus working class attention towards the greater issues of socialism.

Finally, the book shows where Kinnock's modern day yuppyism comes from. It goes back to Labour's perceived notion of socialism based on electoral success. This was spelled out by Keir Hardie in 1893: "...the number of Labour members in the House of Commons. This to me is the question of questions."

JOXER

MARXIST CLASSIC

'THE HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION' Leon Trotsky

WRITTEN IN 1930, this book covers the course of events from the February through to the October Revolution 1917.

The revolution of February 1917 was carried out by the workers and soldiers of Petrograd. The workers and soldiers elected, through the soviets, leaders of the Menshevik and Social Revolutionary flavour. However these leaders were none too pleased to have the power and proceeded to cooperate with the representatives of industrialists, landlords, generals and Western leaders. They masked their actions in revolutionary rhetoric. What emerged was in essence a dual power.

This was a situation based not on two sides competing to run the country (as in Ireland during the War of Independence) but one side (the soviets) in reality holding all the power but believing the other (the Provisional Government) to be acting in their interest. Trotsky traces the growing realisation by the masses of this deception, resulting in the growth of the Bolsheviks and ultimately the October Revolution.

The Bolsheviks correctly understood this situation and thus their slogan of "all power to the soviets" correctly fitted the mood of the masses. It was not the case that the Bolsheviks successfully conned the masses with their propaganda: in many cases there were peasants, workers and soldiers demanding 'all power to the soviets' who had never even heard of the Bolsheviks.

For revolutionaries the book provides useful insights into the role and necessity of a revolutionary party. The sham nationalism of our rulers is also well illustrated.

Don't be put off by the polemical style or heavy use of irony. The book provides excellent ammunition with which to counter the ideas we are bombarded with continuously. Those same ideas the workers and soldiers of Russia saw for what they were. Give it a go!

VASCO PURSER



Leon Trotsky

T.C.D. NAZI FREE ZONE

Students at Trinity college Dublin won an important victory recently when they prevented a debate featuring revisionist historian and nazi organiser David Irving from going ahead.

Some months ago the Socialist Worker Student Society in T.C.D. discovered that the Philosophical Society had invited Irving to a debate on the Nazi Holocaust. SWSS, T.C.D. Labour party and the Socialist Society initiated a campaign which won support at a Student assembly. Thousands of leaflets and posters were distributed around Trinity, exposing Irving's record as a Nazi organiser and his policy of using colleges to recruit members.

In a tremendous display of solidarity, the union representing porters and staff in the college, the FWUI, went on a work to rule on the night of Irving's visit, and issued a statement condemning his views.

On the night of the debate over 400 protesters sur-

rounded the debating hall and although Irving gained entrance (through a side door, an hour before the picket assembled) he never even attempted to address his tiny audience. The college authorities demanded the debate be cancelled, but on hearing that Irving was due to appear on R.T.E. later that night the picket was kept up until 12.00.

The excellent response to the call for a picket and the victory that was gained shows that students can be mobilised once an active lead is given and the arguments are put to people. The fight against the cuts in the colleges needs to be organised on a similar basis.

IRVINGS COMMENTS

"TERRORISM AND PSYCHOLOGICAL INTIMIDATION"

"SOCIALIST WORKER TROTSKYITES AND MEMBERS OF THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS"



NCAD

STUDENTS at the National College of Art and Design occupied the NCAD administration building in December. They were protesting against the implementation, by the college board, of budget cuts in part-time teaching, materials and supplies. A scheme to assist students suffering from financial hardship has also been cut. The protest succeeded in getting the college board to defer making a decision on how to implement the reduced budget allocated by the Higher Education Authority.

Students protest at Irving. Photo: Derek Spiers (Report)

DON'T CLOSE TEMPLE ST.

TEMPLE STREET Children's Hospital is threatened with closure. It is the only children's hospital on the Northside of Dublin city. In the last year alone it treated more than 30,000 children—between outpatients, casualty and general admissions.

Cuts have already been made. In 1986 there were 160 beds, today 110. The average length of stay for a child has been reduced from 5.5 to 3.5

days. The casualty unit was built before World War I.

A cruel irony is that it is only a stone's throw from the Mater Private Clinic, where Charles Haughey recently got the finest treatment money could buy. It was Haughey's government that refused the £3 million needed to update Temple Street—funds that had already been promised by the previous administration for the purpose.

Last month a public meeting in Liberty Hall about the threatened closure drew over

100 people, many of them angry parents whose children depend on continuing care at Temple Street. A delegation from St. Mary's, a geriatric hospital in Dundalk, also under threat, attended the meeting to show support.

It demonstrated an important point—that we should not have to choose between care for the young or care for the old, but rather fight the cuts wherever they are threatened. The fight to defend Temple Street is only just beginning.

HUNGARY DOLE

HUNGARIAN workers are soon to join the millions of workers in the West in the unemployment queues. On January 1st unemployment benefit was introduced. Hungary is the first Eastern Bloc country to have the dole. The new system is being introduced in anticipation of the large-scale redundancies the government plans to impose in the New Year.

IRISH RACISM

TRAVELLERS and supporters picketed in Castle Street, Dublin on December 10th against the imposition on all Dublin Travellers of a new Fianna Fail ruling that from now on they will have to sign on at a separate unemployment exchange from other members of the public—allegedly to stop them from claiming at more than one dole office. This is portrayed as part of government 'saving' on social welfare. It will mean further hardship for many Travellers who will have to come long distances to sign on, often without being able to afford bus fare, and the idea is probably that some will stop claiming their entitlement. It has strong racist implications, further stereotyping Travellers as an 'antisocial' group. Socialists must stand with them in their fight to get this ruling overturned.

THE PROFITS OF SMOG



THE PEOPLE of Dublin are continuing to suffer the appalling effects of smog.

In mid-November the EC limits were exceeded in some areas by seven times the safety limit. Dr. Clancy of St. James's Hospital reported that in 1982 there were sixty deaths in Dublin city directly attributable to smog. He says that the number of deaths this winter will be more difficult to establish because of the Fianna Fail health cuts and consequent lack of resources to measure the problem, never mind medical treatment for the problem.

Smog mainly hits poor people—the old and the very young. It is a serious and painful health hazard to all those unfortunate people who suffer chest complaints,

asthma, bronchitis and other respiratory illnesses prevalent in this damp island. It can cause cancer and retard growth in the very young.

CITIES

Other cities have long since solved this problem. Belfast is the best example. Since 1969, in spite of its troubles, Belfast Corpo has been progressively designating smoke control zones which are now virtually smog-free. It should be noted that Belfast has no source of natural gas, as there is in Dublin.

In the mid-1970s the government in the South was giving grants to householders to install back boiler central heating (50,000 houses) as an alternative to oil. The vast

bulk of these houses burn bituminous coal and this factor is the main cause of the high smog levels in Dublin.

The reasons for smog have been well known for years. In 1987 the government passed the Air Pollution Act. This should have given the Corpo authority to designate smokeless zones. But it did not.

The answer is at the centre of the entire problem as far as Dublin people are concerned. Fianna Fail, for all the latest whinings of Collins/Flynn/Ita Green—"It's the people's own fault—they shouldn't burn coal", amended the Pollution Act to accommodate the coal lobby and frustrate the efforts of the Corpo to get on with the job. That is why we still have, and, throughout

the rest of this winter, will continue to suffer the ill effects of the smog.

The coal lobby, championed by the monopoly supplier, Coal Distributors Ltd. (CDL), have openly opposed the designation of smokeless zones in Dublin for years. That scheme would eat into their massive profits.

DAIL

When questioned in Dail Eireann as to why this ridiculous amendment to the Pollution Act was passed, Minister Flynn answered: "to largely satisfy the concerns expressed by Coal Information Services (CIS)". CIS is a subsidiary of CDL. Clearly an atrocious demonstration of Fianna Fail in collusion with

big business, to the detriment of the health and safety of the Dublin people.

How about this for sheer cynicism? Mr. Sean Lenihan of CDL/CIS addressing a press conference last year: "Banning coal and creating smokeless zones is not only unscientific, it would have fatal repercussions for the elderly and lead to hypothermia deaths". These are the people who influence governments to amend legislation in favour of accumulating profits and capital. This is the real politics of Dublin smog.

All manner of solutions to the smog problem have been proposed by all manner of people. Worthy of support they certainly are but Socialist Workers say that the effective solution is the permanent removal of Fianna Fail/Fine Gael and the economic system that they will always prop up. Only then will the interests of the Dublin people be best served.

TONY CLIFF and DONNY GLUCKSTEIN

The Labour Party —a Marxist History

Traces how the party has responded to—and reacted against—the ebb and flow of working-class struggle of the past 100 years. £7.95 from bookstalls, bookshops, or by post (add 50p postage) from

SW Books, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

Socialist Worker

AS BUDGET CUTS BITE DEEPER

FIANNA FAIL TURNS ON THE UNEMPLOYED



FIANNA FAIL are planning a major new attack on everyone on social welfare. Michael Woods, the minister responsible, has announced a major crackdown by the Joint Investigation Unit from January 1989.

The Joint Investigation Unit is the snoopers' branch of Social Welfare. Their staff has been increased six times over the last two years. In Mayo, a Fine Gael TD, Jim Higgins, reported that they had taken to photographing those signing on. They pay rewards to all prepared to spy on those on social welfare.

Fianna Fail's aim is to drive people off the Social Welfare. Last year, the Jobsearch programme cut off 16,000 people from signing on. 1,811 unmarried mothers were stopped from claiming benefit. Claims for disability benefit have dropped by 40%.

Fianna Fail claims there is massive fraud on social welfare. It is a deliberate lie.

A report done by the accountants Gray Gardiner showed that there was only 1% fraud on claims for disability benefit. In fact the £1/4 million paid to Craig Gardiner for its report was way above any fraud, yet still 40% of recipients have been driven off.

A secret report from the Social Welfare Department itself showed that only one-third of those entitled to Family Income Supplement were getting it. This is because Fianna Fail is deliberately not advertising the scheme. There are far more people not getting their rights than the tiny minority who are fiddling the system.

Those who have been driven off social welfare have been harassed. Jobsearch is insisting on letters showing applications for work.

The real spongers are those who are living off the national debt. Last year over £1,000 million was paid out in interest to Irish residents who have a stake in the national debt.

These are the real parasites of Irish society.

It is time the unemployed got themselves organised to meet these new attacks. It's time we had a return to some 'old style' militancy to show our contempt for Woods, the sponger.

Unmarried mothers who have any relationships with men are charged with cohabiting. It is part of a deliberate strategy to force those on social welfare to emigrate.

All of this is designed to save Fianna Fail money. The biggest cut this year will be in social welfare. Already there are signs of the penny pinching misery all around.

Community Officers are being instructed to reduce

assistance to those who cannot pay their ESB bills.

Free turf for pensioners has been abolished.

All categories except the long term unemployed were barred from the EEC cheap food scheme.

The fuel scheme has been tightened up to cut out thousands of people.

Travellers are coming under increased surveillance by a racist method of forcing them to sign on at one labour exchange in Dublin.

Fianna Fail's attack on the poor is designed to please the bankers and the rich. They have become a costly burden on their miserable system. All the talk of "spongeing" is just pure hypocrisy.

As the recent tax amnesty showed, there are hundreds of millions of unpaid taxes held by the rich.

The same people who talk of spongers are getting thousands in grants from the IDA.



BOYCOTT CHELSEA GIRL

IN THE run up to Xmas last year, the workers of the Belfast branch of the Chelsea Girls fashion shop chain were asked to work three extra hours without pay during the seasonal shopping rush. The staff refused and the company backed down. As a result all the full-time workers joined the Union of Shop Distributors and Allied Workers.

The recent dispute was over the introduction of Tuesday late night shopping, when the workers were told to work alternative nights with no extra pay or benefit. 34 workers refused and were dismissed on 13th September. They then began picketing the shop and were effective in gaining support from the public, and so severely reduced Chelsea Girl's trade.

Consequently, management began legal action. They got a series of injunctions from the court which attempted to restrict the workers' activities. These included limiting the picket to six people and insisting on the wearing of armbands.

Proof that the powers that be were worried about the picket and its growing momentum in public support and union action came in the form of the RUC, who arrested eighteen people, of whom fifteen were charged with obstruction they were distributing leaflets.

The picketers and their supporters face continual

police harassment. Some of those arrested have been charged under the Public Order Act. This was initially brought in to deal with loyalists opposing the Anglo-Irish Agreement, but predictably has been used against labour activists.

Recently an industrial tribunal rejected the workers' demand for interim release by which they would have got paid while their claim for unfair dismissal was heard. This was rejected because they were told that their case was unlikely to succeed.

There has been a combination of court injunctions, state forces and a failure by the union to spread the strike and activate solidarity among other Chelsea Girl outlets and other shop workers. The employers' real argument with their employees was about their right to belong to a union. They refused to recognise USDAW and would not even talk to the workers when they insisted on union representatives being present. The union leaders have allowed themselves to be intimidated by threats and injunctions. As a result there is now a smug declaration in the window of the Belfast shop telling the public of the dismissal of the "disruptive minority".

However, despite the pressure, the strikers are determined to carry on. This whole dispute highlights the need for greater union support and mobilisation if management are to be prevented from treating workers in such a way whenever the word 'union' is mentioned.