

Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

The ugly face of Irish capitalism

BEEF BARONS, super-market tycoons and millionaire "property developers"—that's who's really running the Southern Irish state.

Over the past month Leinster House politicians have been revealed as puppets of the capitalists.

Every week the evidence mounts up:

■ Agriculture Minister Michael O'Kennedy produced lies and half truths in an effort to cover up for Larry Goodman after word leaked out of his multi-million pound beef rip-off.

■ Industry Minister Ray Burke pronounced himself helpless to act in Ben Dunne's "bread war" and as hundred of bread jobs were destroyed.

■ Environment Minister Padraig Flynn put pressure on Dublin County Council to hand over more than £2 million to notorious building outfit Brennan and MacGowan as "compensation" for a piece of land that filed to win planning permission.

In each case the capitalists involved are financial contributors to Fianna Fail.

Goodman and Dunne are personal friends of Charlie Haughey.

Ray Burke himself made a fortune in the sixties and seventies as an auctioneer for Brennan and MacGowan.

Meanwhile a quarter of a million unemployed, single parents and deserted wives are hounded by Social Welfare fraud squad snoopers.

Social Services Minister Michael Woods has boasted publicly that his hit squads have already kicked 13,000 off the Register and intends to double this number by the end of the year.

Bertie Ahern, Minister for Labour, openly insulted SES worker in Donegal who had the temerity to protest against the cut in their miserly weekly

Rich crooks bankroll Fianna Fail



Multi-millionaire fraud Larry Goodman

income.

He described them as "hooked on the dole".

These facts tell us far more about the real nature of the 26 Counties than all the debate and speechifying by politicians and media commentators.

The state is run by and for the rich. The poor don't get a look in.

Goodman owns 80 companies in Ireland which account for nearly 4 per cent of the total wealth produced in the state annually.

His personal fortune is reckoned to be £300 million.

The Dunne family has assets estimated at £500 million.

Like fellow millionaires

O'Reilly and Smurfit, both Goodman and Dunne have become too big to be confined within Ireland.

Goodman has bought 8 per cent of British food giant Unigate. Dunne has opened the first in a series of stores in England.

The notion that Southern Ireland doesn't have a real capitalist ruling class, that everybody in Ireland is part of an oppressed nation and therefore has a common interest in fighting for "Irish interests", is exposed as nonsense by these facts.

Irish capitalism isn't just protected by the corruption of Fianna Fail. The entire capitalist system is based on corruption.

Goodman, Dunne, Brennan and MacGowan are perfect examples of the dynamic, thrusting entrepreneurs who are made heroes of by the entire media and political establishment.

Goodman, for example, built up his vast fortune by legally ripping-off Common Market tax-payers.

His companies currently receive £100 million a year in EC export subsidies which bridge the gap between EC and world prices.

Dozens of capitalist builders are in the queue for compensation for land refused planning permission.

This "right" is actually enshrined in the Irish Constitution, which has been officially interpreted to mean that no restraint can be put on the profit-making potential of private property.

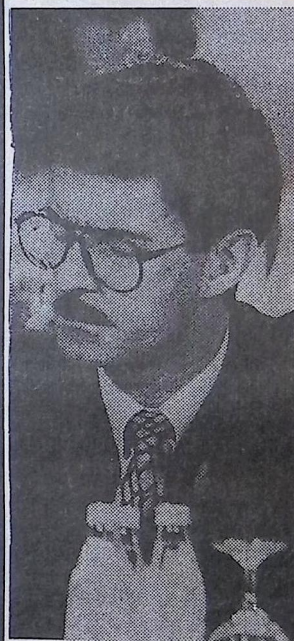
The corruption of Fianna Fail should be exposed certainly. But the only way to bring real change about is to end the system corruption is based on.

That won't be done by moralising and play-acting in Leinster House.

Leinster House doesn't run capitalism. The real message of recent events is that it's the other way round.

The only way we'll ever wipe the grin off the ugly face of Irish capitalism is for the working class itself to organise and fight the system at every opportunity.

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Fianna Fail radio bribes

THE recent deregulation of broadcasting has opened up golden opportunities for jobs for the boys in Fianna Fail.

The spoils include franchises for the National Radio Station, two local radio stations in Dublin, a third national television channel, 25 local radio stations throughout the country, and various community radio enterprises.

In June Minister for Communications Ray Burke set up a commission consisting entirely of Fianna Fail hacks to decide who were to be the lucky recipients.

Bodies such as the National Association for Community Broadcasters were refused a place on the commission, while strong Fianna Fail supporters such as Fred O'Donovan were appointed.

O'Donovan didn't forget his old friends when appointed to such a position. The company in which he previously held a large number of shares, E Sat, was part of the consortium getting the franchise for one of the two local Dublin stations.

While Burke assured prospective investors that "the new stations won't have the same restrictive work practices as RTE", details about the applicants were shrouded in secrecy.

The hearings of the commission were not open to the public, only journalists from each of the national newspapers and RTE was invited, and all details of the applications were to be kept secret.

Protected from public scrutiny, the commission went on to hand out the goodies to their cronies.

Oliver Barry, who helped to organise many a Fianna Fail Ard Fheis, was granted the National Radio franchise; his company, Century Communications Ltd., is jointly owned by Wexford millionaire James Stafford.

Stafford also owns 20% of shares in Atlantic Satellite, which holds the franchise for the Irish direct broadcasting satellite.

Rumour has it that Barry may run as Fianna Fail's candidate for Cork in the EEC elections.

The Dublin stations were grabbed up Radio 2000, combining the money of Jefferson Smurfit, former Garda Commissioner Eamonn Doherty, and ex-Guinness Peat Aviation executive Denis O'Brien.

O'Brien has close links with Stokes Kennedy Crowley, the accountancy firm that originally recommended that competition be set up for RTE.

MAGNATES

Other shareholders in the Radio 2000 venture are the Gallagher family, Irish building magnates and Fianna Fail supporters.

The other Dublin franchise winner was Capital Radio, one of whose directors, Mike Hogan, has been known to answer the phone at Fianna Fail headquarters on occasion.

Michael Smurfit is a major player in the chase for the third national television channel, and is also behind Telecom Eireann's bid to buy out Cablelink, which will be used to distribute those channels.

But Fianna Fail's rural support has not been forgotten. In Co. Mayo, Ms. Sharon Flynn, daughter of the Environment Minister, made the case for Independent Radio Mayo.

One of the directors of Limerick Community Radio Ltd is former Fianna Fail senator Noel Mulcahy.

And in the Louth/Meath area, "Community Communications Ltd" is backed by Fianna Fail senator Paschal Mooney.

In spite of Fianna Fail's new rhetoric of the free market, the old vices of corruption and political patronage are very thinly concealed.

THE EARTH is being destroyed by capitalism. The latest and most serious threat is the destruction of the ozone layer.

The ozone layer is a thin layer 15 miles up into the atmosphere that surrounds the globe. It is a sort of blanket that protects the earth from harmful ultra-violet light.

UVL is what tans people. Too much UVL causes skin cancer.

Scientists say that biological life—plants and vegetation—will also be destroyed by too much UVL. Some believe our immune system is threatened.

Scientists first suspected damage to the Ozone layer in 1974, but it wasn't until 1984 when British scientists on a mission to Antarctica discovered a hole in the ozone layer. Satellites have confirmed this.

AEROSOLS

Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), are widely considered to be the prime cause of ozone depletion.

CFCs are used in refrigerators, aerosols, air conditioning and foam plastics (for example, hamburger packaging).

When these are released it takes them ten years to reach the ozone layer to begin their destruction.

Scientists from NASA now say we are on the brink of a major environmental disaster. They believe the ozone layer is under an immediate threat.

Earlier this year, a converted U2 spy plane, its wings packed full of monitoring equipment, flew deep into the Arctic. So far this plane has flown 15 times, only 11 miles up, on a mission to find out what is happening to the ozone layer.

SPRING

Meanwhile NASA scientists are also monitoring the situation.

The conclusion drawn was that the Arctic was on the brink of a major loss of ozone as the Arctic spring produced climatic conditions most unfavourable to the ozone layer.

There is a fear also that the northern hemisphere will also lose large amounts of ozone.

It took ten years from identification to get a convention in Vienna which was followed by a protocol in Montreal to reduce emissions by a half by the end of the decade. In March, the first World Environmental Summit took place in the Netherlands and Norway to "Save the Planet".

But while our rulers pretend to be concerned at the damage to the environment, their real concern is profit.

Western governments are keen to outlaw CFCs in the third world countries. Poorer countries can produce their own CFCs for fridges. But the replacement chemicals for CFCs are, at the moment, the monopoly of large multinationals like ICI and Du Pont.

WARMING

And the "greenhouse effect"—the warming of the earth, with potentially disastrous consequences—is

chiefly caused by carbon dioxide emissions from car exhausts and power stations.

The technology exists to reduce these pollutants by 90 per cent but Western governments will not demand the power industry invest the necessary capital.

Cheap public transport would reduce car pollution—but the government insists on high fares and service cutbacks.

The millionaires' paradise



Tim Mahony of Killeen Investments tees off for the rich

★ WHAT happens to the profit made from Irish workers?

Is it re-invested to cure the deadly unemployment disease or stem the flow of emigration?

Ease the sick or hunger problems of the impoverished, perhaps?

No way!
Some of the answers

were revealed recently by Tim Mahoney of Killeen Investments (a group of companies that hides money for the rich).

Killeen recently paid £12 million for the 1,411 acre Mount Juliet estate at Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny in order to turn it into what Mahoney coyly refers to as "a haven of tranquillity" for a select number of wealthy people.

Our captains of industry, banking etc. get tired and frustrated at closing down factories, bakeries etc. and need

refreshment and recreation before rejoining battle with that irksome working class of people.

TUITION

Millionaire golfer Jack Nicklaus was retained (fee £1.5 million) to design the new golf course, computer aided tuition provided.

As well, they will have hunting, shooting and fishing inside the high-walled 1,400 acre estate, with sixteen miles of pony trekking, thirty acres of garden and one

and a half miles of fishing on the River Nore (private of course).

Joining fee will be £5,000 and fat fees per annum added on.

A virtual Garden of Eden (serpents and all).

Workers need not apply for membership.

They also plan to instal a clay pidgeon shooting school in addition to 400 acres for the real thing. With any luck they might shoot each other and save us the trouble of sweeping these profanities off the face of the planet forever. □JOKER

REYNOLDS PRSI SCAM

DURING his budget speech Reynolds, the Fianna Fail Minister for Finance, announced that he intended introducing the full rate of PRSI for public sector workers.

There are a number of reasons why the government's proposal should be treated with extreme caution.

■ Payment of the full rate of PRSI entitles workers to unemployment and pay related benefits.

Its introduction would make it easier for the government to change the terms of employment of public sector workers and to enforce compulsory redundancies.

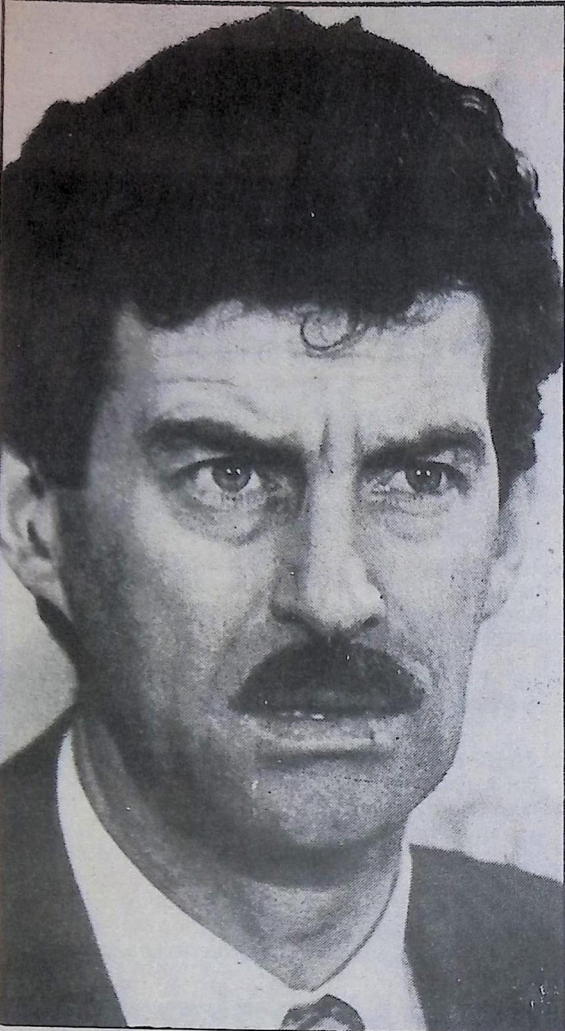
■ It would badly hit the take home wages of the lower paid.

The cost of the increased deductions to a worker on £10,000 a year would be in the region of £10 per week.

■ There is a myth that civil servants have free pensions.

A recent ESRI report on the Civil Service Superannuation Scheme suggested that they were in fact paying more for their pensions than private sector workers.

"A comparison of employee contributions to the civil service, private sector occupational and the State's contributory old age pension schemes shows that the cost of civil servants' implicit contributions in 1984 was 8.2 per cent of pay whereas private sector employees contributed 7.8 per cent."



We Think

LABOUR SWING RIGHT



STAGG - OUT

LAST MONTH'S Labour Party Conference in Tralee was a knock-out victory for the Right.

Just two years after abandoning coalition with Fine Gael and finding a new left face, exactly those forces and personalities who were the pioneers of Coalition cuts are firmly back in the saddle.

Rising star of the Left and last year's vice-president Emmet Stagg was decisively voted out in favour of right-winger Niamh Bhreathnach.

Conference decided two-to-one to outlaw *Militant*.

Appeals against the winding up of three left-wing Dublin branches were rejected.

In a debate which lacked any controversy Spring attacked "Thatcherite" economic policy and proposed continuing the mixed economy "with a thriving private sector".

Backing Spring and the Right throughout the conference was the ITGWU delegation, headed up by general president John Carroll. Carroll has spearheaded the Irish trade union movement's collaboration with Fianna Fail through the National Plan.

He is also co-architect of the stitch-up merger proposals of the ITGWU and the FWUI.

Not that the conference lacked rhetoric and theatricals.

Dick Spring sang a Massachusetts wool strikers' song and read a poem by Dylan Thomas.

He criticised Ben Dunne—but had nothing to say about how the Johnstone Mooney and O'Brien workers might organise to save their jobs.

Health spokesman Brendan Howlin suggested action in the courts against "illegal" health charges.

He neglected to point out that it was the Labour-Fine Gael Coalition which introduced hospital charges.

Everybody thought that poverty was a bad thing and the coming of VAT to food and transport in 1992 (remember who put VAT on children's clothes? That's right, the Coalition) would make matters worse.

CONSENSUS

Deputy leader Barry Desmond proposed that he and Spring urge

Haughey to try for a consensus to avoid hardship for the poor and underprivileged.

Just a few months ago it looked as though the Left was unstoppable and there was no going back to the bad old days of Coalition.

But with comparative ease and surprisingly little controversy, the Right have regained the initiative.

Irish Labourism has been made respectable again as it combs the middle ground for a few more votes. Spring is preparing the way for some future coalition bargain.

We should not be surprised by this turn of events.

Parties like the Labour Party

start out from the proposition that it is possible to reform capitalism so that workers get a better deal.

The means to do this lie in the parliamentary institutions that capitalism itself has created to serve *its* interests.

PASSIVE

Winning votes and manoeuvring in the Dail replaces organising working people to fight for their own power.

Labourism regards workers as the passive *victims* of capitalism, not as the people with the power to smash exploitation and oppression.

When workers take action to defend their jobs, to fight im-

perialism or to struggle for women's rights, they risk frightening Labour's middle class supporters.

Labour can't risk openly identifying with a fighting minority lest they lose the support of passive workers.

Labourism is about managing capitalism and manipulating public opinion.

Compromise, manoeuvre, diplomatic phrases that mean all things to all people, consensus and coalition are the stock in trade of the successful Labourite.

The internal life of Labour Parties reflect these priorities. Personal loyalty and ambition, schemes and fudges cooked up behind closed doors in shadowy committee rooms and infinitely elastic backbones are the small change of party life.

In a party which contains all strands of opinions, which tries to represent the backward as well as the advanced workers, which attempts to find the lowest common denominator, the wily bureaucrat will always hold the trump cards.

Convinced socialists may be encouraged at one time for their activism and enthusiasm, only at the next to be reigned in and threatened with expulsion.

Here, in Britain and among the Socialist Parties of Europe and beyond, all the experience demonstrates that reformist parties cannot be captured by fighting socialists and transformed into an instrument for smashing capitalism.

Instead they always remain a graveyard of illusions and an alternative government for when the bosses get into trouble and need a left face.

The future for socialists lies in the construction of a working class, openly revolutionary party in opposition to the reformists.

Defend Militant

THE Tralee conference voted to expel *Militant* from the Labour Party.

Instead of leading a fight against the National Plan and Ireland's Green Tories of Fianna Fail, Spring and the rest of the Labour Right have launched a witchhunt against socialists in the Labour Party.

The Socialist Workers Movement has important differences of opinion with *Militant*.

In particular we believe it is mistaken to imagine that the Labour Party can be transformed into a genuine, fighting, socialist party.

We believe that socialists should fight outside the Labour Party.

Also we sharply disagree with *Militant's* neutrality on the North.

We believe it is the duty of socialists to condemn the sectarian Northern state and defend the right of anti-imperialists to fight it, whatever other disagreements we

have with those anti-imperialists.

However Spring and Co did not initiate expulsions of *Militant* because of their views on the North.

They are being witchhunted because as socialists they have stood up to the rightward, anti-socialist moves of the Labour leadership.

Despite Spring's claims to the contrary, *Militant* is being expelled for their socialist views.

A vigorous socialist wing is proving too much of an embarrassment to the leadership as they prepare the ground for another Coalition.

We defend the right of *Militant* to belong to the Labour Party. Labour Party members must organise in their defence.

At meetings of trade unions affiliated to the Labour Party the question must be raised and motions condemning the expulsions moved.

Leading figures in *Militant* have made it clear that they

still see their future in the Labour Party.

They argue that socialists should join the Labour party and "force Spring to the left" to overturn the expulsions.

But there is another road to expending all your efforts in internal and ultimately self-defeating wrangles with bureaucrats bent on your destruction.

We in the SWM believe that an open, revolutionary party must be built outside the Labour Party that fights reformism, Fianna Fail, for women's rights and against imperialism in the North.

We would be happy to discuss with *Militant* and other socialists in the Labour Party this question.

And we would be happy to debate in public our differences, such as on the Labour Party and the North.

In the meantime, we stand shoulder to shoulder against the witchhunters.

INTERNATIONAL

ZIMBABWE:

Ten years after Lancaster House

THE TOP tune in the Zimbabwean hit parade is Thomas Mapfuma and his band with a ditty called "Corruption in High Places".

If art and culture is the reflection of what people feel and talk about then this particular song hits the nail on the head.

The front pages of both national and local papers at the moment are full of a scandal called "Willowgate". Government ministers, among others, are being questioned in a public enquiry about their role in the sale of trucks at highly inflated prices on the black market.

One of the people also being questioned is a white farmer, Padraig Lendrim, who received \$60,000 Zim. for resale of a truck officially priced at \$21,000 Zim.

In Mutare last week a senior Assistant Commissioner of Police shot himself dead at a time when he was under investigation for fraud and corruption.

These are symptoms of the underlying crisis of a newly acquired but limited independence which is failing to meet expectations.

Zimbabwe raised new hopes throughout the world with its liberation struggle in the 1960s and 1970s that socialism could be built in at least one African country.

There was great heroism displayed by the fighters of Zanu and Zanu, just like the MPLA in Angola and Frelimo in Mozambique before them, in the struggle to build a new society out of the horrors of a colonial past. What has happened to the dreams of the survivors of the *Chimurenga* (national liberation struggle)?

The present MP for Mutare Urban, Edgar Tekere, himself a former *Chimurenga* fighter, has openly accused the government of corruption and has said there are Mafia types threatening him and others for being opposed to this.

Tekere has also accused the government of trying to censor the press. For his pains Tekere has already been expelled from the ruling Zanu-PF. He refused to appeal against his expulsion on the grounds that this would involve him apologising.

Before he walked out of parliament last week he called on everyone to defend democracy which he said had gone beyond the "intensive care unit" and was now "in the mortuary". He is opposed to Robert Mugabe's one-party state.

Mugabe has drawn up a "leadership code" to try to stop the corruption and to try and make socialism more than an aspiration.

This code places a certain limit on ownership of property.

But the housing allowance alone for ministers is much higher than the average wage for workers.

People in the rural areas and indeed in some of the townships are still living in little huts.

So is socialism possible now or was socialism possible at independence?

There is no doubt that the vic-

tory of Zanu and Zanu was a defeat for imperialism world-wide and particularly for white rule in Africa. South Africa was forced to pull out its troops when it saw the inevitable defeat of the Smith regime.

But for all that it did not result in socialism because (a) the attempt was based on the false notion that socialism in one country is possible and (b) the struggle was not led by the working class in the interests of the working class.

Firstly, there was already evidence from the country which experienced the first working class revolution in history, Russia, that socialism could not be sustained if it remained confined within national borders.

"Socialism in one country" in Russia resulted in the counter-revolution of Stalinism with all its barbarity. China, which also followed the Stalinist model, is now firmly state capitalist, with increasing elements of free market capitalism.

POWER

Similarly countries like Cuba and Nicaragua, whilst concentrating power in the hands of the state, have nothing to do with workers' self rule, the acid test for whether the basis for socialism has been laid.

Secondly, although workers through the trade unions in Zimbabwe had been in leading roles in establishing both Zanu (Soviet Union support) and Zanu-PF (Chinese People's Republic support), when independence came it was the black bourgeoisie who took control of government and moved to introduce laws severely restricting the right to strike.

Three members of the South African *Militant* have been expelled for intervening in union affairs. All of this is not surprising since even the left wing within Zanu-PF were agreed that Zimbabwe would have to go through a capitalist stage before socialism could be built.

The heated arguments were over how long this period would last.

None saw the possibility of fighting for socialism at the same time as fighting for national liberation. Hence the leadership was handed to the

black bourgeoisie on a plate.

Many observers have seen the explanation for the failed revolution in the fact that the guerilla fighters were being forced out of their bases in Mozambique and Zambia.

They were no longer able to sustain the *Chimurenga* and were therefore forced to sign the Lancaster House agreement with Britain which ended white rule.

This agreement gave very favourable terms to the white farmers and industrialists.

This is to misunderstand.

The real explanation is that where national liberation struggles are led by the bourgeoisie, it is the bourgeoisie who establish their rule afterwards.

Any idea that they will then make way for socialism is a serious and dangerous illusion, whatever the aspirations may be.

Unless the working class through its own organisations fights for leadership within the struggle there can be no chance of real socialism—the emancipation of the working class by the working class—even being placed on the agenda.

We saw it happen in Ireland with De Valera's pronouncement that "Labour must wait".

Zimbabwe is integrated into world capitalism as a largely raw materials producing country. Within that framework it has made some real gains helped ironically by the fact that some industry was established during the Smith period of UDI when sanctions were placed against the country.

Like the industries established behind the "economic war" sanctions in 1930s Ireland, these have survived and continue to thrive. Road and rail transport is good by the standards of surrounding countries and those roads that are there would put Ireland's to shame, so well surfaced and clean are they.

There are thriving agricultural, grain, beef and dairying industries and the country is self-sufficient in food even in drought

years.

There is export of best quality beef to the EEC. There is a building boom at the moment with Sisks, Laings and all the usual names involved.

This however is severely hampered by a severe shortage of cement because the output of the two cement factories in Harare and Bulawayo is restricted by ancient equipment.

There is a lack of foreign exchange to either buy new capital equipment or to import cement.

There has been a huge growth in population since independence, from 7 million to 10 million, and the secondary school population has grown from under 50,000 to over half a million in less than ten years, despite the fact that it is still fee-paying.

Zimbabwe plays a leading role in SADCC, the economic union for the front line states yet it has adopted a go-it-alone policy for electricity generation and proposes to build its own dam even though Zambia has a 40 per cent surplus of electricity from the Kariba dam.

There are constant reminders of the nearness of the racist state of South Africa.

Zimbabwe, a land-locked country, is forced to direct 70-80 per cent of its imports and exports through South Africa.

The racist regime in South Africa backs the MNR guerrillas in Mozambique which makes it difficult to use the nearest port, Beira in northern Mozambique.

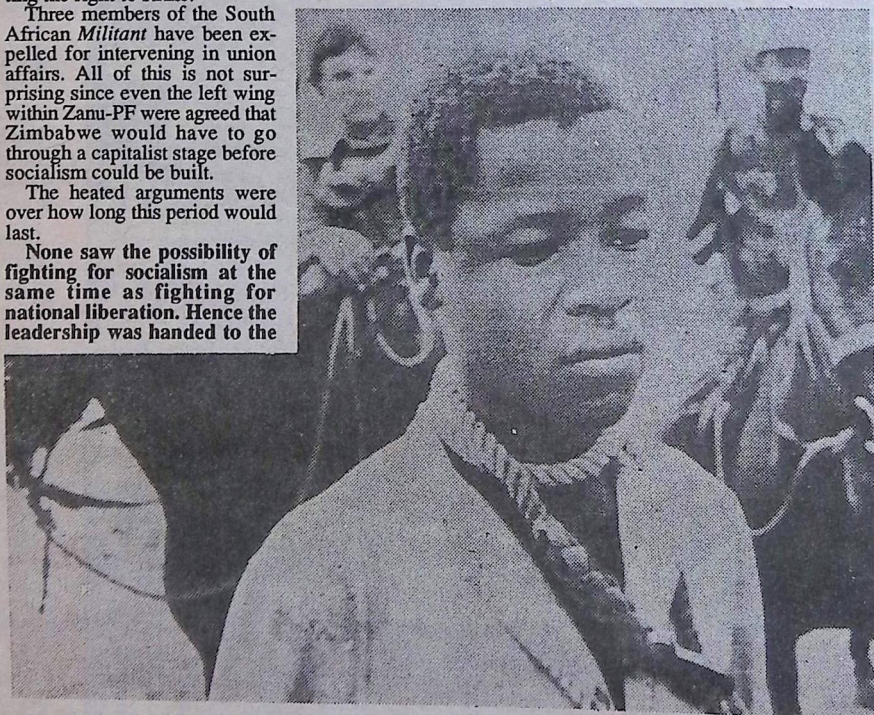
Zimbabwe is thus forced to maintain 12,000 troops in Mozambique to support the badly battered Frelimo government in power and to keep a check on the MNR.

Zimbabwean television regularly reports arms finds and military successes against the MNR but yet they continue to make raids across the border into Zimbabwe.

MNR retain at least some popular support because of the reported brutality of the Frelimo army. The Frelimo government, badly battered by war, starvation and virtual siege from South Africa, is therefore highly dependant for its continued existence on the assistance of comparatively better placed Zimbabwe.

But when the most powerful force in the whole region, the black working class of South Africa, rises to its feet, socialism will again appear to be possible to achieve.

SEAMUS DE BLACA



Pre-Independence brutality from Smith's cavalry

International Roundup

Russian dockers black nukes

SOVIET dockers blacked a Russian nuclear-powered container ship last month.

The vessel, the *Sevmorput*, spent several days seeking a port to anchor after workers at the Soviet Far Eastern ports of Magadam and Vostochny refused to handle the ship.

The ship was finally commissioned last year after being built in conditions of top secrecy. After the action Soviet authorities cancelled a planned sister-ship.

Aquino cuts for IMF

CORIE AQUINO's "reforming" government in the Philippines has launched an austerity drive.

With international debts of \$28 billion, the Manila government got approval last month from the International Monetary Fund for a service cutting programme.

The IMF will lend another \$1.3 billion to pay the interest on existing debt and Aquino will attack public spending and privatise state-owned corporations.

Texas banks crash

US STATE and Federal regulators shut down three more Texas banks, bringing to 20 the number of banks that have failed in the state in the first ten weeks of 1989.

Since the Crash of October 1987, there has been a steady collapse of many US domestic banks and building societies.

Texas accounts for 20 of the 29 banks that have failed throughout the USA this year.

Allies threaten Berlin

LAST MONTH'S elections in West Germany saw a swing away from the ruling right-wing Christian Democrats as discontent with Chancellor Kohl's policies—particularly social security cuts—grew. In West Berlin—under pressures of a housing crisis and 13 per cent unemployment—the Christian Democrats lost 14 seats. Their coalition partner, the liberal FPD, was completely wiped out.

This means the city is to be governed by a coalition between the social democratic SPD and the left-wing Alternative List dominated by the Greens.

The rise in the Left vote has been fueled by anger against nuclear missiles and the murderous low-flying antics of the NATO forces. The Allied powers—USA, Britain and France—still legally control the city with 10,000 troops.

Allied officials have threatened to step in. One said, "If we thought a mistake was being made ... we could just sit back and let it happen." He said Allied powers would act to prevent Greens being appointed to any "sensitive" posts.

Venezualean riots

RIOTS REACHING near insurrectionary proportions swept the cities of Venezuela last month. Tens of thousands of troops and police shot dead at least 300 rioters—mostly from the poorest shanty towns—who took to the streets against austerity measures. The package—including 30 per cent bus fare hike and a 90 per cent rise in petrol prices—was enforced by the IMF in return for loans to cover Venezuela's mounting debts.

Trade union leaders have supported the government of President Carlos Andres Perez's Democratic Action party but are losing control of the situation as real wages have fallen 38 per cent since 1983. Despite curfews, raids on left-wing parties and repression, Perez was forced to concede a 30 per cent wage rise, a freeze in basic food prices and a transport bonus for the lowest paid.

Birth of the UVF

MARGARET Thatcher has made clear her distaste for the Protestant community's "unconstitutional" opposition to the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Protestant determination to block any move seen as being in the direction of a united Ireland is regarded as a nuisance by the Tories, now that they want to be on good terms with Haughey and the Southern ruling class.

Unionists are urged by Thatcher to accept the authority of the House of Commons at Westminster and not to take to the streets in opposition to the Agreement.

Thatcher, as usual, is being hypocritical. For in the years before partition, when Protestants were arming to keep the north eastern counties in the Union, the Tories were involved up to the hilt in helping the Ulster Volunteer Force to fight Home Rule.

Irish Home Rule was a major issue in British politics in the early part of the century.

The 1910 general election gave the Irish Parliamentary Party the balance of power in the House of Commons—a further general election reproduced this result.

The Liberal government, therefore, had to try to bring about some measure of Home Rule in order to retain the support of Parnell and the Irish Parliamentary Party.

Parnell, in return, had helped the Liberals to solve the "land problem" in Ireland by promising to uphold British "law and order" on the land and assist the repression of the Land League.

The third Home Rule Bill

by **LINDA MOORE**

was introduced by the Liberal government in April 1912. The Tories were enraged.

Ireland was part of the British Empire—to lose it would strike a blow at the very heart of imperialism. Economically, Ireland (and particularly Belfast) was important to British capitalism.

Furthermore, the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland was an integral part of the landed aristocracy which had governed England until the close of the 19th century and was still powerful. Irish Home Rule would further weaken what was left of their political influence.

The Tories, together with some sections of the Liberal Party, were determined to assist those forces in Ireland who were opposing Home Rule—the Unionists in the North.

And they didn't care whether that opposition was "constitutional" or "unconstitutional". When the interests of their class were at stake they were prepared to use whatever methods were necessary to defend them.

Lord Salisbury put the position clearly: "On Tory principles the case presents much that is painful, but no perplexity whatever. Ireland must be kept, by persuasion if possible, if not by force."

Tory leader Bonar Law agreed, telling a Unionist rally in July 1912: "I can imagine no length of resistance to which Ulster can go in which I should not be prepared to support them, and in which, in my belief, they would not be supported by the overwhelming majority of the British people."

Bonar Law bluntly declared that even if Home Rule was passed by a majority in the House of Commons and it was resisted by Unionists in the north they would have the full support of the Conservative Party.

Tory warnings that they would oppose Home Rule using violent methods were not empty talk.

Lord Amery, Conservative MP for South Birmingham, worked with the British League for the Support of Ulster and the Union.

The League enrolled 10,000 members "mostly for the purpose of going over to Ulster to join the volunteers if it came to actual fighting".

Amery himself argued that what was needed was an organisation which would paralyse the activities of the government in England before Home Rule could be implemented in Ireland.

The British League assisted the UVF in gun-running and in recruiting English officers for the force.

Colonel Hickman, one of their leading members, publicly announced in November 1913 that he was buying rifles for Ulster and that he had interviewed 26 officers who wanted to go to the north at their own expense to serve without pay.

Tory leader Bonar Law sympathised with the League's activities providing they weren't openly linked with the Conservative Party.

The UVF depended on the British ruling class for much of its financial support. Lord Rothschild, Lord Iveagh and the Duke of Bedford gave around £10,000 each. Rudyard Kipling, the Empire poet, donated £30,000.

Even the British Army was prepared to defy the government over the Home Rule question. In March 1914 army regiments based at the Curragh camp in the south were ordered on manoeuvres to the north.

Fifty officers mutinied—refusing to act against the Unionists. The crisis was only overcome by the government assuring the officers that in future they would not be called upon to "enforce" the Home Rule Bill on "Ulster".

The lessons of the Home Rule crisis for socialists are clear. Thatcher and the ruling class are keen on presenting themselves as the champions of democracy.

They are liars.

When it suits them the ruling class are prepared to defy the elected government, using violence if necessary, to defend their own interests.

And those who believe that the army in any capitalist state is completely under the control of parliament are mistaken. The Curragh incident shows that the army will act on behalf of the ruling class against the government in times of crisis.

There is another aspect of the anti-Home Rule campaign which is of interest to socialists in Ireland today. That is the cross-class nature of Unionism.

The Tories were firmly behind the Unionist campaign. Edward Carson, Ian Paisley's hero, is a good example of a Tory who led working class Protestants in their defiance of Home Rule and yet was viciously anti-working class in his political views.



"On Tory principles the case presents much that is painful but no perplexity whatsoever. Ireland must be kept, by persuasion if possible, if not by force"
—Lord Sainsbury



Carson was appointed Solicitor General in the Tory government of 1900. In 1894 he had voted against a reduction in miners' hours.

In 1900 Carson led the Tory opposition to the Trades Disputes Act which sought to restore to trade unions the right to picket without being sued. He also, in 1908, voted against the introduction of old age pensions.

Carson did not restrict his reactionary behaviour to economic issues. He was against any move to increase democracy in government—he opposed the proposal that MPs should be paid a salary and also voted against the abolition of plural voting (by which businessmen had more votes than anyone else).

Carson was motivated more by ruling class greed than by loyalty to Britain. He warned that if the British parliament did not give Unionists what they wanted they would turn to the German Kaiser.

Despite Carson's record, the Protestant working class accepted him as leader of the campaign to "keep Ulster British".

In 1914, when Ramsay MacDonald argued that Protestants were being duped by the Tories, a group of Protestant trade unionists replied: "How can you think we hold our lives so cheap as to become catspaws or dupes of any class or section of the community?"

In one sense those trade unionists were right. Working class Protestants were not simply the dupes of the ruling class. They were, and still are, given marginal privileges over Catholics in return for their loyalty to the Empire.

Nevertheless, working class disunity in the North has meant that although they are better off than Catholics, Protestants are worse off than workers in Britain.

There was another reason why Protestants were so hostile to Irish Home Rule.

Many Protestant workers know that they have been used by the British ruling class.

A loyalist broadsheet complained, "The loyalist people have certainly paid a heavy price for the privilege of being British... our sacrifices in two world wars and our service to British count for nothing when the chips are down. We are being used in a dirty political game by those whom we depend on."

The tragedy is that when Protestant workers burnt Margaret Thatcher's effigy, during an anti-Anglo Irish protest outside Belfast's city hall, they did so for the wrong reasons.

The truth is that they have been used just as much by their own Unionist leadership as by the British ruling class.

Now, however, Protestant workers at Shorts and Harland and Wolff are in dispute with Thatcher for the right reason—because she is taking away their jobs.

They should remember in this struggle that they will continue to be sold out by their Unionist leaders who have different class interests from themselves.

The history of the anti-Home Rule campaign shows that Protestant workers have been used by both the British and Unionist ruling classes when it suits them but their class interests are still fundamentally opposed.

It is this contradiction which means that the Tories who thanked Protestant workers for defending the Empire in 1914 are the same Tories who are throwing them out of work in 1989.

The only form of Irish independence which was on offer at the time was that of a bourgeois capitalist united Ireland.

Such a set-up had nothing to offer Protestant workers—indeed they correctly feared that they might well be materially worse-off under this arrangement.

The only sort of united Ireland which might have appealed at least to a sizeable minority of the Protestant working class would have been a socialist republic—an Ireland controlled by all of the workers in the country.

That Ireland is still not being offered to Protestant workers by the republican movement but it is something which socialists must fight for.



Protestant determination "a nuisance"

Marxism Made easy

SOCIALISTS AND RELIGIOUS BELIEF

IN almost every part of the world, religion has had an influence on, and has sometimes dominated, the course of events.

On occasion it has supported the oppressed (for example in Nicaragua and Poland) while at others it has hindered the course of class struggle, as with the Catholic Church's involvement in the anti-divorce and anti-abortion campaigns in this country.

With these seeming contradictions what, then, is the Marxist attitude to religion?

The first point is that socialists stand absolutely firm against attempts anywhere in the world, West or East, to oppress or persecute people on account of their religion.

We support the right of any individual to profess and practice any religion, or no religion at all.

We see it as a private decision, not one to be dictated by the state or any group.

advance of society from food gathering to the agricultural stage and with it the beginnings of a class society.

In the type of class society we live in today—capitalism—people are denied control over their own labour, the products of that labour, and as a result are ultimately deprived of effective control of almost every aspect of their lives.

Their response to this has frequently been to project their wish to control their destiny on to some supernatural being

are god's laws which leave them unopen to question and challenge.

However, religion doesn't always have such a clearcut reactionary role.

In order to retain its hold on people's thinking it must be flexible and adaptable.

Because of this it has often allied itself with the poor and with popular movements of oppressed groups.

The growth of Liberation Theology in Central and South America is an example of this.

And because the consciousness of the oppressed has been dominated by religion for centuries, rebellious movements often tend to spontaneously acquire a religious colouration.

The prominence of Islamic fundamentalism in the fight against imperialism in Iran is a case in point.

Despite the strength and prevalence of religious ideas it isn't impossible to combat them.

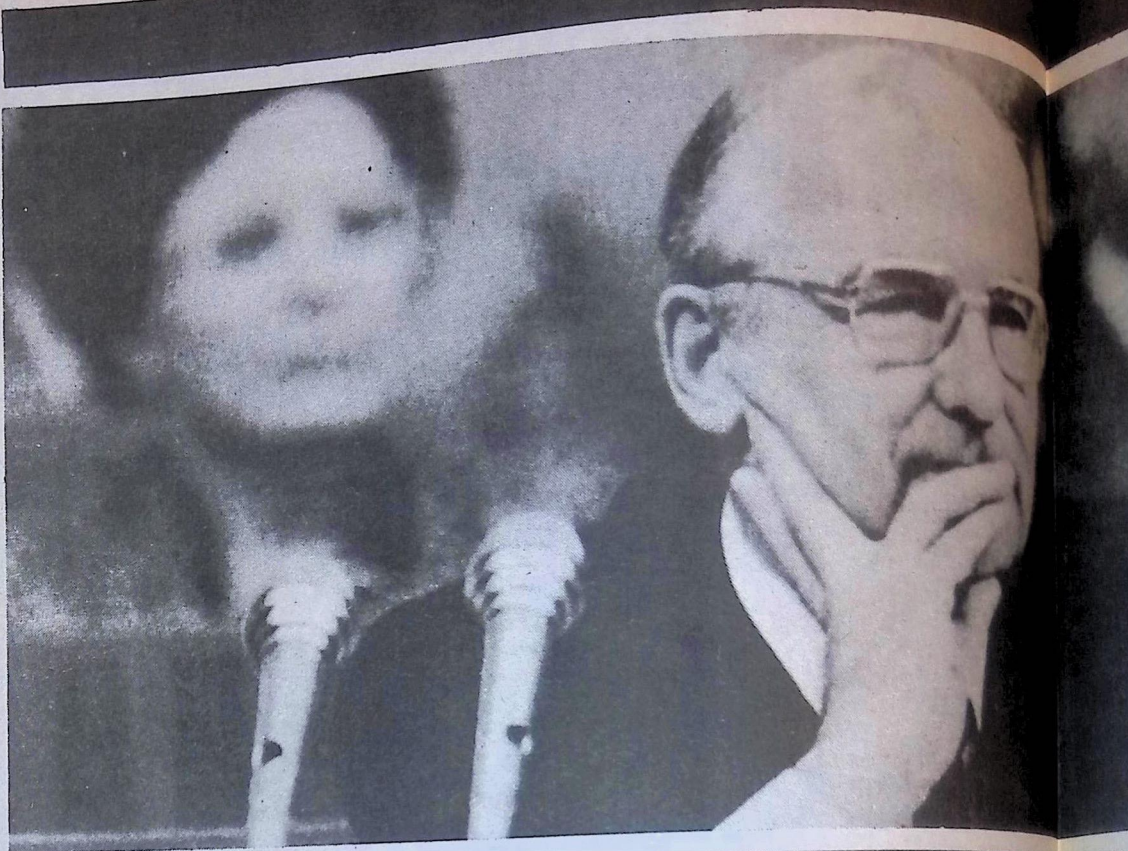
Because Marxism explains ideas as products of material conditions rather than vice versa, it follows that when workers challenge conditions they have previously endured or taken for granted, the relevant ideas are also challenged and often refuted.

Capitalism itself creates the conditions of class conflict which open workers' minds to ideas which are quite opposed to those which the system has taught them.

In such situations where workers experience their own real power they will no longer need the ideological crutch of a substitute power.

With genuine revolution and the victory of world socialism will come the gradual withering away of religious ideas.

GER TUOHY



Where is Russiag

THE IDEA that Russia is in some sense "socialist" or at least a more progressive form of society than exists in the West has had a profoundly damaging effect on the Left throughout the world.

For some this meant arguing that the barbarism of the gulags and repression of the secret police were all CIA propaganda.

Larger numbers saw the lack of democracy and the existence of a privileged bureaucracy in the Soviet Union as a small blemish that would disappear with time.

In any event the identification of "socialism" with a regime over which where the mass of workers have no control is complete opposite of Marx.

He argued that the emancipation of the working class is the act of the working class.

Glasnost has destroyed some old illusions but created some new ones.

It is no longer possible to simply deny the reality of Stalin's despotism when official historians now record some of the essential facts.

It is impossible to claim that the system is democratic when Gorbachev himself at last year's special party conference described the Supreme Soviet—the supposed pinnacle of Russian democracy—as a bureaucratic rubber stamp when proposing its replacement by the new "Congress".

But for many on the Left the promise of reforms represents the "completion" of revolution, a renewal undertaken by the leaders of the very bureaucracy who yesterday were filling the

jails with dissidents.

A book recently written by Tariq Ali (*Revolution From Above*, published by Hutchinson) coherently argues the case that Gorbachev's reforms represent a move towards socialism.

Ali writes: "Gorbachev represents a progressive, reformist current within the Soviet elite, whose programme, if successful, would represent an enormous gain for socialists and democrats on a world scale."

RESERVE

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Tariq Ali was a trotskyst student leader in Britain in the sixties. He regards himself as a marxist and puts into words a mood which affects many socialists.

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And if workers can't change society, we have to back some supposed reforming current within the ruling order. And the consequence of that is to demand that workers adapt themselves to the priorities of the reformers.

And the priorities of ruling class reformers, East and West, is to preserve the system—with reforms if possible, without if necessary.

Before last year's special party conference, Gorbachev felt it necessary to offer concessions to the conservative bureaucrats in order to win over a majority of the delegates.

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the wolves. Ali writes: "It is an open question whether the relationship of forces within the politburo would have enabled Gorbachev to do anything else."

The inference is that when, for example, Gorbachev denounces nationalist movements among the Soviet Union's non-Russian nationalities, he should not be opposed because "If Gorbachev succeeds ..." in his reforming programme, "the socialist project will have achieved an enormous boost."

And the implication of this line of argument is masses of Estonian workers demanding an end to Russian domination ought not to embarrass Gorbachev.

Ali and others are led down this road because they believe that Russia is a fundamentally different from the Western

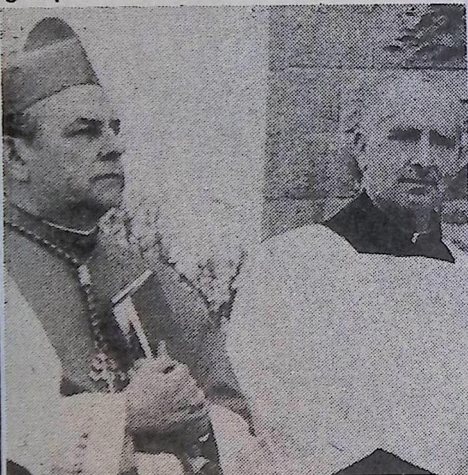
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He regards the bureaucracy as quite unrepresentative of the ruling classes of the West. Instead it is a narrow elite of party managers which does not represent the like

BACBONI

"It is an amoeba which has no backbone of its own. It is not a formed entity, a force."

This means it relies on workers to sustain it. It has the power to hit workers' lives on the ground. The "USA" and other c



Most Marxists, however, are atheists because there is a basic contradiction between religious faith and socialist conviction. Philosophically, the Marxist outlook is a materialist one.

It holds that the ideas in people's heads, including religious ideas, are rooted in and are a response to the material social conditions of their lives.

So that, god didn't create human beings in his own "image and likeness" but rather humanity created god—different gods depending on their concrete social situations.

Like magic, religion has its origins in humanity's inability to control nature.

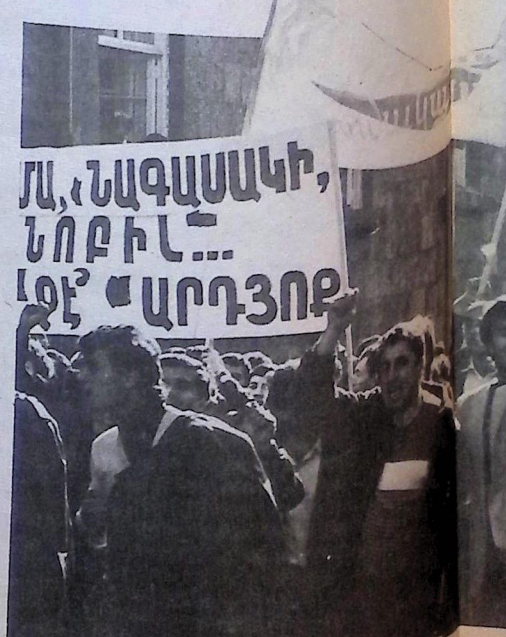
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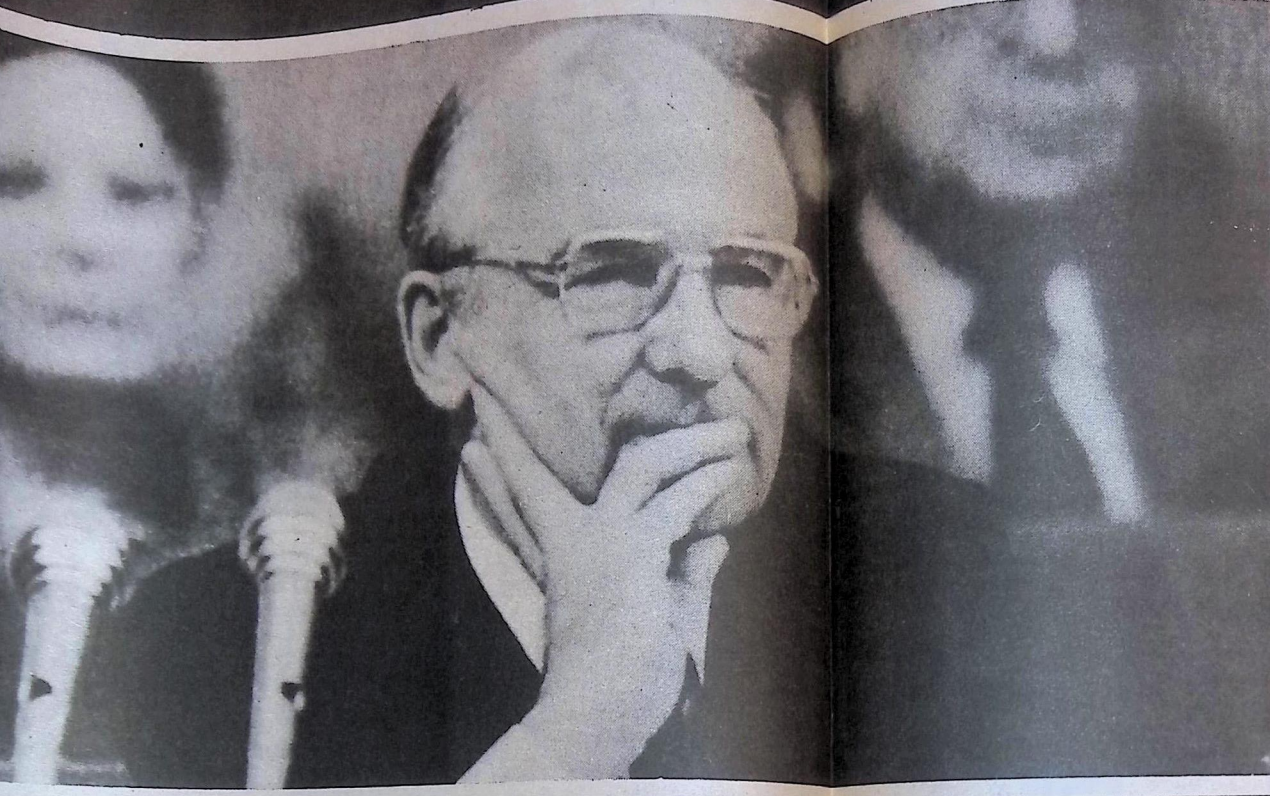
they have created who is completely omnipotent.

The inequalities and countless hardships they encounter in this world will be obliterated in the imaginary afterlife where, as Joe Hill put it, "there'll be pie in the sky when you die". This illusion actually serves to make people passive, because such a view means that there is no point in fighting to change and improve conditions in the here and now.

Instead we postpone it in the "knowledge" that eventually "the meek shall inherit the earth".

Religion has become an ideological weapon in the hands of the ruling class, encouraging submission to their laws, which by implication





Where is Russia going?

secretaries at town and district levels had university degrees. The higher you go, the less working class the party composition becomes.

And it's not true that the regime is incapable of attacking the working class like its counterparts in the West.

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There are two fatal flaws in the reasoning of socialists who believe Gorbachev is a socialist reformer.

The first is their failure to recognise that perestroika and glasnost is a response by Russia's rulers to a growing crisis of state capitalism.

And the second is to view the development of society not from the point of view of the clash of classes, but in terms of policies and attitudes struck by "great men" within the ruling order.

Stalin's brutality was an attempt to create a modern industrial power that could compete—militarily in the first instance—with the major powers of the West.

By stamping out all vestiges of workers' power, squeezing workers' living standards to build up the might of the Russian industrial state and creating centralised, bureaucratic control of a command economy, it proved possible in the thirties, forties and fifties to drag the Soviet Union into the twentieth century.

However, since the sixties, the inefficiencies of these methods have come more and more to the fore. From growth rates typically double those of the West in the fifties, the Russian economy is now stagnating and lagging behind its major competitors.

If that situation persists, the existence of the Russian empire—from which the privileges of its ruling class derive—is in question.

A section of the Russian ruling class saw the necessity of restructuring the economy. But this required stepping on some powerful people's toes.

More efficient capitalist production requires the closing of unprofitable factories, the sacking of unsuccessful bosses as well as workers.

Any significant re-organisation of the Russian economy will entail upsetting the cosy arrangements of powerful regional party bosses and many more managers and more junior bureaucrats on whose support they depend.

To overcome the fierce resistance this will provoke, Gorbachev has sought to mobilise support from intellectuals, newspaper editors and even "public opinion" in support of his faction within the ruling class.

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will involve.

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But he recognises that this would in today's circumstances provoke massive workers' resistance so it must be deferred for "three to four years".

In any event, Gorbachev is not getting everything his own way. The relaxation of central controls on the economy has not resulted in great improvements in efficiency but the reverse.

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The report claims that two million square metres less housing space than planned has been provided; there is a fall in the number of pre-schools opened. There is a scarcity of footwear, clothing, vacuum cleaners, TVs and furniture.

The problem is that having taken off the central controls, local managers find they can increase their bonuses by simply raising prices or moving production form cheap to expensive goods. And this has led to scarcity for inputs for other industries.

Official sources reveal that, for example, locomotive factories are not producing rolling stock of the right sort because of shortages of inputs.

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He regards the ruling bureaucracy as quite unlike the ruling classes of the West. Instead it is a "narrow political elite of party and state officials" which does not include "managers and the like".

BACKBONE

"It is an amoeba which does not have a backbone of its own, it is not a formed entity, a historical force."

This means it relies on the workers to sustain it. It does not have the power to hit ordinary workers' lives "on the scale of the "USA and other capitalist

governments".

So as it saw the country facing growing long term problems in the early eighties "a section of the apparatus" had no choice but to reach out and "mobilise support from below".

To do so it had to "democratise" the party. But this in turn allows the mass of workers to "participate" in running the country, since "more than half the party members are workers".

All this means that the "political revolution" from above begun by Gorbachev can be completed by him, without the need for "civil war, barricades and a storming of the Winter Palace/Kremlin".

Each step in the argument is false.

Although small—though no smaller than western ruling classes—the Russian ruling class can depend on the backing of the privileged layers below it—factory managers, military officers, police and senior civil servants. Just like the capitalists in the West.

The Russian ruling class is as pampered as its counterparts in the West with special schools, better health care, party shops and holiday areas.

Such a ruling class does not allow its privileges to be taken away without a fight.

And the Russian Communist Party is less a workers party than Fianna Fail!

The figures for 1987 show only 45.3 per cent of party members were classified as "workers"—and that includes foremen and full time officials in the state trade unions.

Workers make up only 17 per cent of the members of local cell committees, while a third of cell secretaries have university degrees.

In 1969 91 per cent of party

Demonstrations erupted in Armenia a year



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Eamonn McCann

Rape and the Law

TWO incidents last month—one in Britain, one in Belfast—focused attention on violence against women and on controversy about the way the issue is handled in the courts.

At Leeds Crown Court, Judge James Pickles sentenced a young woman to seven days' jail for contempt of court. Her offence? She'd been too terrified to go into the witness box and give evidence against the man accused of assaulting her.

Feminist groups, Labour MPs and others expressed outrage and demanded that Pickles be sacked.

A few days earlier, at the Court of Appeal in Belfast, a man given life last year for rape had his sentence reduced to fourteen years.

The Belfast Rape Crisis Centre protested that this diminished the seriousness with which the courts took rape offences.

In both cases the anger against the court decisions was perfectly understandable.

Women victims of physical and sexual assault are commonly subjected to further abuse in the courts in both Britain and Ireland while excuses for the offenders are not just accepted but are sometimes made by judges.

Despite this, Marxists do not join in demands for higher sentences for rape, nor do we back campaigns for the sacking of judges like Pickles.

The reason we take this line is best explained by looking at the judicial set-up behind the Leeds and Belfast decisions.

(Although it's the British set-up which is relevant here, exactly the same argument can be made in relation to the South.)

Marxists take the view that it is *not* the function of the legal system to dispense justice, fair play and so forth; that, on the contrary, its function is to defend the existing order of things.

And since judges preside at the very top of the legal system, they will tend to express in a particularly "pure" way the priorities and prejudices of the existing order.

This is the underlying reason judges sometimes appear as caricature personifications of the establishment.

A close look at who



Judge Pickles

the judges actually are illustrates the point.

Lording it over the legal system of Britain and the North are ten Law Lords. Nine of the present ten attended expensive public schools, eight went on to Oxford or Cambridge.

Below them are the 24 judges of the Court of Appeal. Of these, 20 went to public schools, 19 to Oxford or Cambridge.

The next tier consists of 79 High Court judges, of whom 42 went to posh public schools, 53 to Oxbridge.

It's at this level that we first encounter women judges—three of them.

And then there are 388 Circuit Court judges, from exactly the same background, 14 of them women, one of them a black.

All of these judges have been recruited from the ranks of barristers—the tightest closed shop in existence, excluding all but the wealthy.

It's obvious from this that judges are not in any way "representative" of society at large, except in the twisted sense that the judicial "pyramid" reproduces the shape of the British ruling class with uncanny accuracy.

At the very top, old, white men. Only a tiny number of women, and an even tinier number of blacks in evidence, and then in

the lower reaches.

The working class—men, women, black, white—are excluded altogether.

This is the structure and the system which ensures that a poor person caught thieving a few pounds has a good chance of being jailed, while it's almost unknown for a rich man caught ripping off millions to see the inside of a cell.

It's this system which sees to it that a black person in Britain is twice as likely to go to prison as a white person if convicted of the same offence.

And it's this system, too, which results in women who have suffered abuse running a real risk of suffering further abuse if they go into court.

Marxists, of course, won't lose sleep if Judge Pickles is sacked. In fact, we wouldn't be distraught if he fell under a bus.

But we say that to demand that he be sacked, and another, perhaps more subtle, representative of the same system be put in his place, is no solution to anything.

Similarly, we say that calling on these same judges to make more use of the power they have to hand down sentences will not lead to any solution either.

Indeed, such calls tend to blend in with the demands of the right-wing "law 'n' order" mob for a crack-down on all sorts of unruly or "deviant" elements.

"Tougher" courts would *not* be good news for women—or blacks, gays, trade unionists etc.

The marxist case is that if our calls and campaigns aren't linked into a strategy for confronting the class-divided society of which sexism is an integral part, the battle against sexist bigotry will never finally be won.

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...going?

capitalist states, that "the USSR is a proletarian state in transition to socialism".

He regards the ruling bureaucracy quite unlike the ruling classes of the West. Instead it is a "narrow political elite of party and state officials" which does not include "managers and the like".

BACBONE

"It is an embryo which does not have a backbone of its own, it is not a formal entity, a historical force."

This means it relies on the workers to sustain it. It does not have the power to hit ordinary workers living on the scale of the "USA" or other capitalist

governments."

So as it saw the country facing growing long term problems in the early eighties "a section of the apparatus" had no choice but to reach out and "mobilise support from below".

To do so it had to "democratise" the party. But this in turn allows the mass of workers to "participate" in running the country, since "more than half the party members are workers".

All this means that the "political revolution" from above begun by Gorbachev can be completed by him, without the need for "civil war, barricades and a storming of the Winter Palace/Kremlin".

Each step in the argument is false.

Although small—though no smaller than western ruling classes—the Russian ruling class can depend on the backing of the privileged layers below it—factory managers, military officers, police and senior civil servants. Just like the capitalists in the West.

The Russian ruling class is as pampered as its counterparts in the West with special schools, better health care, party shops and holiday areas.

Such a ruling class does not allow its privileges to be taken away without a fight.

And the Russian Communist Party is less a workers party than Fianna Fail!

The figures for 1987 show only 45.3 per cent of party members were classified as "workers"—and that includes foremen and full time officials in the state trade unions.

Workers make up only 17 per cent of the members of local cell committees, while a third of cell secretaries have university degrees.

In 1969 91 per cent of party

Demonstrations erupted in Armenia a year

ANALYSIS

The socialist way forward

THIS year's conference of the Socialist Workers' Movement took place against a backdrop of continuing world economic crisis. Of course, there aren't too many governments who will admit this.

The Financial Times has waxed lyrical about the confidence of the world's ruling class, claiming that the stock market crash of '87 turned out to be "the non-event of the decade".

Increased world trade and improved gross national products certainly reflect the skillful intervention of governments to prop up the world's leading economies. But the impossibility of staving off recession indefinitely has gradually dawned on them, and all the talk now is of how to avoid "hard landing".

IN THE South of Ireland, Fianna Fail has convinced itself that a £25 billion debt, unemployment at 18 per cent and 40,000 emigrants a year amounts to an economic miracle.

Unfortunately, too many people have fallen for the myth of a turnaround, encouraged by the boasting of the trade union bureaucracy for its part in the Programme for National Recovery.

In reality, all the economic indicators reveal just how shallow the "recovery" is.

Low inflation merely reflects the depression of workers' spending power; the drop of unemployment is attributable to emigration and job harassment schemes, and low interest rates are a product of high investment in government bonds by speculators impressed with Haughey's hammering of the working class.

This money and the windfall from the tax amnesty has been used to service the national debt rather than

increasing industrial capacity.

Haughey's success in forcing cutbacks and holding down wage rises has only been possible because of the low level of confidence among workers, brought about by a decade of recession, redundancies and defeats.

The number of strikes last year approached an all-time low and were overwhelmingly defensive.

But a crucial factor ensuring the continuation of this state of affairs has been the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' collusion with Fianna Fail to "get the country back on its feet".

ICTU'S complete unwillingness to give a lead has created a mood of despair in the unions, illustrated by the decision of the Waterford Glass workers to accept redundancies and company restructuring without a fight.

The grip of the right has been further tightened by sell-outs, the expulsion of John Mitchell and the thoroughly bureaucratic manoeuvres to amalgamate the ITGWU with the FWUI to create an undemocratic "super union".

The down turn in workers' militancy is both reflected and deepened by the major left parties.

Labour has concentrated fire on its own left wing so that even Emmet Stagg admitted that the left parties "were passing up an opportunity to grow because they weren't saying

anything relevant".

The Workers' Party—rather than give a militant lead—have come up with the idea of a rainbow alliance with, among others, the Catholic Church.

Both parties are operating under self-imposed restraints because their union officials have become willing prisoners of Haughey.

Nevertheless, the sheer scale of government cutbacks and the bosses' offensive guarantees sporadic resistance.

The strong showing of the left in Leixlip local election is a case in point. And even though strikes are rare, they still occur and show a way out of the doldrums.

The successful strike at Premier Disposal in Kildare and the brim-

THE SWM conference considered the situation in the North, where industrial militancy is slightly healthier, while the political position remains deadlocked.

Nurses and postal workers were involved in industry-wide strikes, only to be short-changed by the bureaucracy.

Workers at *Harland and Wolff* and *Shorts* flexed their muscles against privatisation but have yet to see the necessity for booting bigots like Peter Robinson of the DUP out of the campaign, particularly since the Unionists have consistently supported Thatcher's privatisation drive.

Of course, the situation in the North is dominated by the twentieth year of the deployment British troops. And the failure of the armed struggle has become all too apparent.

Gerry Adams, criticising the IRA's mistakes, called on them to be more

by **DOMINIC CARROLL**

ming confidence of the women contract cleaners in Dublin demonstrate how the tide of defeats can be reversed.

Elsewhere, the enormous degree of opposition to extradition at the time of the Ryan case provided an opportunity to take on Fianna Fail.

But the failure of Sinn Fein to expose the hypocrisy of Haughey meant that he came out the winner with a runaway lead in the opinion polls.

Nationalism can cut both ways and will never be the basis for building an effective anti-imperialist current.

careful so as to avoid alienating Sinn Fein's electoral support.

The SWM conference took a different view.

While defending the right of the Provos to fight, we consider the entire strategy—mistakes and successes—to be a blind alley. It'll take the working class, not a small substitutionist elite, to smash the Northern state.

Sinn Fein has recognised its failure to break through in the North or gather mass support in the South. But the proposal for a broad anti-imperialist alliance is based on the same failed nationalist politics.

Blaming the problems workers face in the South and women's oppression to British imperialism and the multi-nationals as *Sinn Fein* does, is to cover up for the Southern capitalist class and its parties—like *Fianna Fail*.

The SWM is always keen to unite for action with republicans around concrete issues, but will continue to argue for class politics as opposed to the pan-nationalist appeals to Hume, Haughey and all the other green Tories.

BUILDING TODAY

Conference also discussed and debated a range of other issues, including the continuing crisis in Russia and how perestroika has created a welcome opening for workers to take on Gorbachev and the entire stalinist edifice in Eastern Europe; the effects of 1992 were considered and other discussions centred on women's oppression, reformism, students and the unemployed.

Having arrived at an overall assessment of the situation internationally and in Ireland, the conference turned its attention to the question of how we continue the job of building a viable revolutionary socialist movement.

Because of the dead weight of nationalism and reformism, this task is necessarily difficult, and is harder still in the current climate.

But there are always openings and the SWM has managed to make worthwhile interventions in strikes and campaigns, maintained a high profile and achieved a growth in membership.

Of course, in real terms we're tiny, so the problem facing us is how we get from where we are now to where we'd like to be.

Although there are no short cuts, one thing we are not is pessimistic. The experience of the past year demonstrates that individuals can be won from isolation to our politics.

The key is to be clear on the situation, avoid the pull to the right, pursue realistic initiatives and through a process of steady and consistent activity, we reckon we can achieve an organisational strength that can make itself felt when things start moving again in Ireland.

The crucial factor is organisation. Nobody can do anything on their own. If you haven't joined yet, what are you waiting for?



S.W.M. BRANCH MEETINGS

Dublin Branch

Meets 8 p.m. Wed., Bachelor Inn pub, Bachelor's Walk

April 5th: "Is Ireland ruled by the multinationals?"
Speaker: Catherine Curran

April 12th: "What is historical materialism?"
Speaker: Marnie Holborrow

April 19th: "Should socialists defend Irish culture?"
Speaker: Kieran Allen

April 26th: **Public Meeting:** "The revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx"—see posters for speaker and venue

May 3rd: "The Roots of Racism"

Dundalk Branch

Meets 8 p.m. Tues. fortnightly, ATGWU, Francis Street

Belfast Branch

Meets 7.30 p.m. Mon., Ulster People's College, 30 Adelaide Park, Belfast (between Lisburn Road and Malone Road, opposite Queen's Elms Halls of Residence)

April 3rd: "The changing working class"

April 10th: "Marxism and religion"

April 17th: "Rosa Luxemburg"

April 24th: "Afghanistan: Russia's Vietnam"

Belfast S.W.S.S. Meetings

Tues, April 18th: "The changing working class" J'town Students' Union, Seminar Room, 1 p.m.

Mon, April 24th: "The Catholic Church and the Left in Ireland" QUB Students' Union, Fitzwilliam Room, 1 p.m.

Bray Branch

Meets every second Tues., Hibernian Inn, Marine Terrace

April 4th: "West Bank and Gaza: Israel's Soweto"

April 25th: "Will the working class fight?"

Cork Branch

Meets every Monday, Dungloe

News from SWM

Last month's Labour Party conference showed any genuine socialist why there is a need for a revolutionary alternative.

The Labour Ministers who played such a terrible role in Coalition were back in the saddle.

Good socialists such as the *Militant group*, who had tried to change the party, were thrown out on their ear.

Kilkenny where none previously existed.

In the North a vibrant presence has been built in towns like Derry and Belfast to challenge republican politics.

Each week the SWM meets to organise around their politics.

Each meeting starts with a political talk and discussion.

The SWM puts a high premium on developing political

Two new pamphlets from the SWM

MARXISM AND OPPRESSION

by Josh Clark

Where do the ideas of racism and sexism come from? How is it possible to overcome oppression of all kinds. This pamphlet examines the Marxist case and brings it up to date.

50p plus postage

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

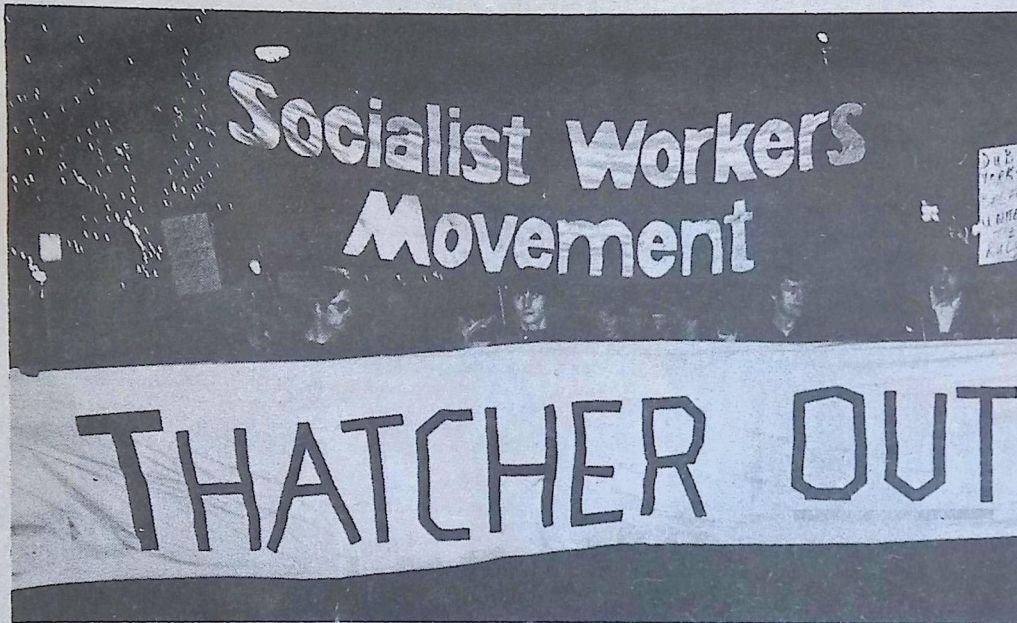
We oppose all forms of oppression which divide and weaken the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women. We fight for free contraception, abortion on demand and the right to divorce. We oppose all discrimination against gays and lesbians. We stand for secular control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



Bar, Waterloo Street

April 4th: "The Russian Revolution"

April 11th: "Should socialists defend Irish culture?"

April 18th: "Workers and the War of Independence"

April 25th: "New marxist theories"



For details of regular branch meetings in

GALWAY, DUNGARVON, DERRY, PORTLAOISE and WATERFORD

contact:

S.W.M., PO BOX 1648, Dublin 8.

Instead of real political discussion on how to organise the fight against Fianna Fail, there were cheap gimmicks from Spring.

If the future of the Irish left is bound up with the Labour Party, then we are indeed condemned to a terrible fate.

Many ask if it is possible to build outside the bigger reformist parties.

The experience of the SWM over the last few years shows that it is.

Branches have been formed in towns like Bray and

ideas and giving a good education on Marxism.

Afterwards, there is a business agenda that discusses how the branch is fighting for its politics in the local area.

Branch meetings are open to non-members who want to find out more about the organisation.

For those who want more information on the politics of the SWM, documents are available from the national address at: SWM, P.O. Box 1648, Dublin 8.

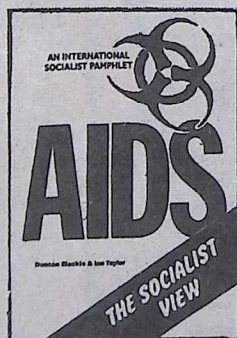
IS SOUTHERN IRELAND A NEO-COLONY.

by Kieran Allen

Nationalists argue that unemployment, poverty, emigration and industrial backwardness is caused by Britain's dominance of Ireland. Is this true? What of the Southern capitalists? Kieran Allen explodes a myth.

50p plus postage Available from SW Books, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

BOOKS



AIDS: THE SOCIALIST VIEW by Duncan Blackie and Ian Taylor

Aims to cut through the hysteria and misinformation surrounding AIDS. It shows how the AIDS crisis has been deepened, and lives lost, because of the rotten priorities of the society we live in

SOCIALISM FROM BELOW by David McNally There are two currents in the socialist tradition. One is 'socialism from above', that of the 'leave it to us' reformers of the West and the anti-democratic bureaucracies of the East. The other is 'socialism from below', the living tradition of workers' struggle. £1.20

ROSA LUXEMBURG by Tony Cliff Sixty years after she was murdered, the ideas of the Polish/German revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg are still the subject of passionate debate. Tony Cliff's book, first published in 1959, remains the best short introduction to those ideas. £2.75



For full list write to SWM, P.O. Box 1648, Dublin 8

Join Us!



- I would like to join the SWM
- I would like more details of the SWM

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

Send to SWM PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

REVIEWS

On the brink of revolution

by KIERAN ALLEN

SEVENTY YEARS ago the War of Independence began. It coincided with a period of tremendous militancy by workers.

Many people have heard of the big events such as the Limerick Soviet.

Workers took over the town in protest against the presence of the British Army. Or the Munitions strike when railway workers refused to carry weapons and ammunition for the Black and Tans.

In the main, however, they are considered an interesting side show or adjunct to the real fight: the armed struggle. Missing entirely is an understanding of the sheer depth of the working class upsurge. Emmet O'Connor's new book will rectify this.

A few facts will indicate the scale of the struggle. Between 1917 and 1921 there were 28 strikes involving over 1,000 workers.

There were 18 local general strikes. These closed down small provincial towns such as Dungarvan by mass picketing.

Charleville experienced five general strikes although it had no previous history of trade unionism. Up to September 1921 there were eight work-place soviets established.

The mass unionisation of Southern Irish workers was brought about these militant struggles. The ITGWU grew from 16,000 in 1916 to 120,000 in 1921.

Trades Councils, (or Workers Councils as they were called after the Russian Revolution) sprung up everywhere.

O'Connor's book is particularly good on the struggles of farm labourers. It should be read by all those influenced by the miserable politics of "post-

Fordism" who argue that it is impossible to organise workers in small workplaces.

The ITGWU organised 60,000 agricultural workers in this period by a militant fight. During the unionisation drive in Meath and Kildare, railway lines were dug up, trees felled and sympathetic action invoked in the Belfast docks to stop the Irish Farmers Union distributing their goods.

employers to more easily concede wage increases helped to fuel the movement. Once underway the breakdown in state authority during the war of independence added to radicalism and depth of the fight.

Secondly, O'Connor's book is useful as a counter attack to revisionist historians such as Workers Party supporter Paul Bew.

Bew has argued that there was

period. The union movement was led by William O'Brien and Tom Johnson who had both been active members of Connolly's organisation, the Socialist party of Ireland.

Under the guise of a syndicalist ideology, they concentrated on building up the union machine rather than contesting for power. They did this by combining the most militant of rhetoric with the most craven forms of passivity.

On May Day 1919, Johnson preached holy terror against the bosses—but the previous April he had sabotaged the Limerick soviet by calling on workers to evacuate the city. He told the workers that they were "not prepared for revolution".

The syndicalism of Johnson and O'Brien was also a cover for accommodation with republican politics. By 1921, Johnson and O'Brien were sitting on a sub-committee of the Dail to devise a labour policy for an independent Ireland.

Once the Free State was established they took up a role as the loyal labour opposition.

Emmet O'Connor's deserves to be read by every socialist who wants to learn about the traditions of the Irish working class. There are some weakness, however.

O'Connor sees syndicalism as an "irrational impulse". At one point, he even sees Johnson and O'Brien's break back into conventional labour politics as "putting their trust in progress" as against the irrational pessimism of the syndicalists.

This can give the impression that the period 1918 to 1923 belonged to a romantic spring that can never be repeated. This however is a limitation common to all works of the academic Marxist variety.

Lastly, the book costs £20 which is excessive. It can however—if the cuts permit—be ordered from your local library.

Syndicalism in Modern Ireland: Emmet O'Connor



Postal workers strike, 1922

O'Connor makes two arguments that are important for socialists. Firstly, these struggles did not arise simply as a "by-product" of the War of Independence.

They arose primarily out of a revival of working class confidence in changed economic circumstances. Farm labourers were able to organise, for example, because of the introduction of compulsory tillage during the First World War which made labour scarce.

In the cities, the economic upturn of 1919 which allowed the

no revolutionary possibility in this period—that the battles were primarily about wage increases, O'Connor shows clearly the anti-capitalist sentiment that lay behind much of these struggles.

He quotes a correspondent from the Manchester Guardian who wrote about the 1920 general strike that secured the release of republican prisoners in Mountjoy: "there is no exaggeration to trace a flavour of proletarian dictatorship about some aspects of the strike".

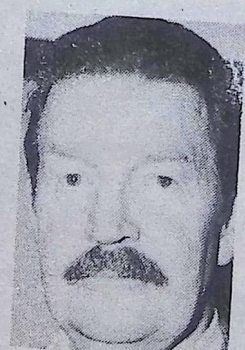
O'Connor also shows the weakness of syndicalism in this

actors are enthralling and their acting, like the film, is virtually flawless.

Brenda Fricker plays the role of Christy's mother, who is a tremendously strong character. She is the mainstay of support and encouragement for Christy. She struggles to feed and bring up her family while living on a shoe string with a domineering and sometimes violent husband, played by Ray McNally.

Religion features strongly in the film, with Christy's mother being staunchly Catholic. The young Christy is consumed by guilt and fear caused by religion.

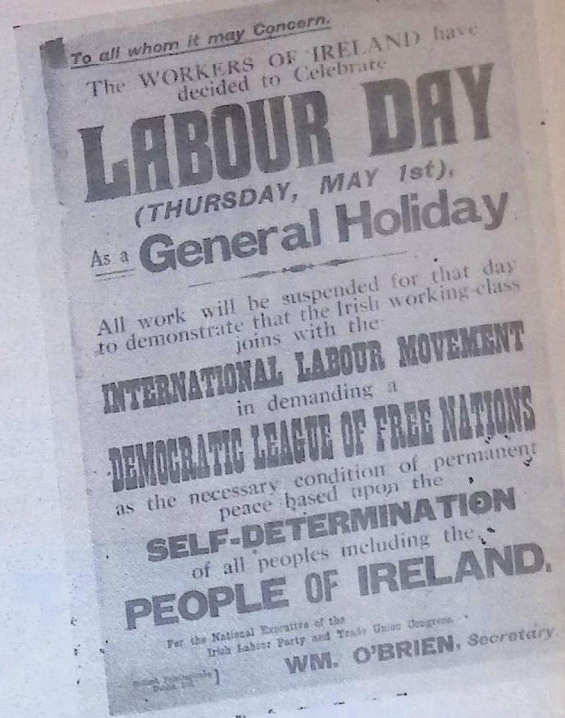
My Left Foot openly and honestly reflects religious, sexual and social life in Ireland. It is superbly filmed and written. The film is a



Ray McNally

humorous and moving account of the life and times of Christy Brown.

The spontaneous applause that rang around the cinema after the showing that I went to see just about sums it up. *My Left Foot* is one definitely not to be missed.



Ever since Darwin

by PAUL O'BRIEN

STEPHEN Jay Gould has done much over the years to popularise natural history.

His writing is pleasurable and accessible, with a gift of explaining complex ideas in a way that can be understood by most people.

He does so by communicating excitement about the ideas, a wonderful use of examples from nature, and challenging you to think.

The topics he writes about range from Darwin's theory of evolution to the study of intelligence testing.

The books are mainly a series of essays, not always related, taken from a column he writes in *Natural History Magazine*.

If there is a common theme running through his writing, it is to defend evolution and science in general from attack by right wing scientists who over the years have used pseudo-science to justify racism, sexism, and all the other divisions of society which are used against us.

In order to justify slavery, it was necessary to show that black people were inferior to whites.

Scientists were only too willing to allow their own prejudices to influence their results.

Indeed he goes further and shows that Sir Cyril Burt, the leading exponent of the view that intelligence is hereditary, falsified his results in order to prove the point he wanted to make.

Another popular theory was that brain size was supposed to show that white European people were more intelligent than blacks.

In his book "The Mismeasure of Man" Gould exposes these arguments for the rubbish they are. Louis Agassiz, who believed that blacks are a separate species, and one of the leading scientists of the last century, was shown to be an out and out racist who allowed his hatred of black people to distort his research.

But Gould is at his best when defending Darwin's theory of evolution. Darwin's ideas have been attacked perhaps more than any other theory since he first published "Origin of Species" in 1859.

The reason is not that it is a complex and difficult idea to comprehend, in fact it is quite simple.

Species have evolved by adapting to the environment they live in.

The reason that Ian Paisley calls for it to be banned in schools is that it challenges the idea that God created the world.

It conflicts with the biblical version of creation. And of course it challenges the very idea of the existence of God itself. We have seen a resurgence of the evangelical right.

In Britain the Natural History Museum has been forced to include a creationist view of the world.

Arguments that seem ridiculous just a decade ago have re-entered the mainstream of politics—given a new lease of life by Reagan and Thatcher.

Biological determinism is all the rage now because it appears to show that some people are genetically superior to others, therefore it is argued that they will naturally move to the top in society.

The rich are rich not because they exploit other people, but because they were born cleverer than others.

Gould takes on all these arguments and shows that it's not the facts that are in dispute, no one has yet been able to refute the facts of evolution, but it is the politics which are the problem.

Science must be understood as a social phenomenon, scientists don't stand above society collecting pure information, but are influenced by the dominant ideas of society in how they present their facts and theories.

Science reflects society and Gould consistently shows up this contradiction between science and politics.

Stephen Jay Gould has now five books published by Pelican. The best one to start with is "Ever Since Darwin".

If you are fed up with people who say "well it's human nature" to every problem we face, then these are the books for you.

Ever Since Darwin
The Panda's Thumb
Hen's Teeth and Horse's Toes
The Mismeasure of Man
Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle

Film of the month

Reviewed by Vicky Kavanagh

My Left Foot

THE film *My Left Foot* is an adaptation of Christy Brown's autobiographical book of the same name. Directed by Jim Sheridan and produced by Noel Pearson, it's a brilliant portrayal of working class family life in Dublin in the 1930s, 40s and 50s.

The film traces Christy's life from birth in 1932 to the day he met his wife to be, Mary Carr, in 1959.

Christy Brown was born severely handicapped by

cerebral palsy. His family were poverty-stricken and of 22 born, 13 survived.

It is an astonishing story of how he struggled to overcome both his physical disabilities and the prejudice which surrounded him.

At the time of his death in 1981 he had written four novels and three books of poetry and painted numerous pictures with the only part of his body he could move voluntarily, his left foot.

Daniel Day-Lewis plays Christy with Hugh O'Connor as the young Christy. Both

ITGWU-FWUI AMALGAMATION:

Bosses welcome tame super-union

WHEN a Fianna Fail Minister is happy about something we should be suspicious.

We should therefore be very suspicious of trade union mergers because Bertie Ahern is over the moon about them. He is especially delighted about the planned merger between the ITGWU and the FWUI.

As Minister for Labour, Ahern has promised legislation which will give financial help to unions who enter merger talks—even if they don't amalgamate.

The same legislation will make it harder to go on strike. Secret ballots will be compulsory and picketing will be restricted.

We should be even more suspicious of the leaders of the "Big Two" unions. John Carroll (ITGWU) and Billy Attley (FWUI) were to the fore in encouraging acceptance of the National Plan.

At the 1986 ICTU conference, Carroll and Attley called for a return to National bargaining.

At a speech in Galway later that year Billy Attley called for "the for-

mation by government, trade unions and employers of a four to five year rolling plan".

Fine Gael—then in government—were skeptical. They believed such a plan would give unions too much power.

The bosses' unions—the CII and FUE—were also cautious.

But Fianna Fail welcomed the proposals and put them into operation when they took power in 1987. The result was the Programme for National Recovery.

Fianna Fail have always been a bosses' party. But they have also projected a populist image—persuading workers that we are all "on the one road", rich and poor alike.

Fianna Fail could deal

with the unions in a way Fine Gael could never manage. They agreed to allow the unions to act as "social partners" with the government and bosses.

In return for vague promises of job creation Haughey persuaded the ICTU to accept wages rises of less than 3 per cent, as well as public service cuts and redundancies.

As a result the unions have ditched the fight against cuts and boosted Haughey's popularity. The anger which greeted hospital closures in 1987 has been replaced with acceptance that Fianna

Fail are "doing something" about the economy.

When the National Plan was being discussed the ITGWU and FWUI published similar literature encouraging a "Yes" vote.

They put a joint advertisement in the papers advising workers of the closing date for the ballot.

Whenever the "Big Two" have co-operated in the past few years it has been to further the cause of class collaboration.

Now they are planning to join forces in order to collaborate more efficiently.

Oppose the stitchup

THE Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union is not a reincarnation of Larkin's fighting union.

Neither are the leaders of the ITGWU and FWUI trying to promote union democracy.

●The merger proposed is not the result of open discussion in the two unions. Secret talks between the leaders took place for months before the announcement.

●The deal will be voted on by secret postal ballot, without a proper debate.

●The proposed Rule Book for SIPTU is not yet available to the members.

Advance copies of the Rule Book give a picture of a union doing its best to prevent any initiative

by rank and file members. The bureaucracy will be as strong as ever.

●Shop stewards will be under the control of Branch Committees and will not be able to call a strike without higher approval.

●Secret ballots will be compulsory before taking strike action. Even then the bureaucrats will consider the number who voted and the size of the majority before action is allowed.

●The National Executive will have power to end a strike without consulting the strikers.

●Workers with less than six months paid-up membership will not be entitled to strike pay.

●The Regional Executives and the NEC will have power to remove from office any member of a Section

Committee. ●If the NEC wishes, it can appoint Branch Secretaries over the heads of Branch members.

The bureaucrats' intentions are made clear by these proposed Rules.

■They want to prevent strike action from taking place outside of their control.

■They also want to control, and if necessary to discipline, any activist who pushes for a fight.

In this context, and in the context of the present leaders' collaboration with Fianna Fail, the merger should be opposed.

An amalgamation should only be accepted on terms which increase union democracy and open the door to a fight against the bosses.

One Big Union?

RIGHT-WING manoeuvres are often clouded in left-wing rhetoric.

The leaders of the ITGWU and FWUI claim that their merger is a return to the tradition of Jim Larkin's "One Big Union".

Yet their collaboration with the bosses stands in contrast with Larkin's uncompromising class battle.

The proposed SIPTU rule book is a recipe for preventing rank and file action. Here there is also a contrast with Larkin.

James Sexton, a conservative leader of the Dockers' Union, once complained that Larkin "would order a strike as casually as he would ask for bacon and eggs for his breakfast, trusting to luck for the funds, even if he hadn't a copper at his command".

Under Larkin the ITGWU was a fighting union which won the right to organise for thousands of "unskilled" labourers.

While Larkin was in America the union became bureaucratized. It fell under the control of the more conservative William O'Brien.

Before Larkin returned from the States in 1923, O'Brien had a rule passed to reduce the former leader's power in the union.

In 1924 Jim Larkin founded the Workers' Union of Ireland as a militant breakaway.

The WUI eventually became the FWUI, with a bureaucracy as conservative as that of the Transport Union.

Their present leaders stand a million miles away from Larkin's tradition.



Bread jobs down the pan

WORKERS at Dublin's Johnston Mooney and O'Brien bakery voted 5-1 to accept management's redundancy package last month.

This followed the Bakers and Food Workers Amalgamated Union's general secretary Pat Shanley's early acceptance of job losses and official union backing for the package. At least 500 jobs are at risk in the £2 million package.

Johnston Mooney and O'Brien's parent company—the multi-national Odlum group—are looking for a buyer. A possible management buy-out was proposed.

Oldlums have received £4.5 million for the site holding, and before the "bread war" had made plans to dispose of the bakery.

Also last month, four small bakeries in Kilkenny, Co. Carlow and Co. Laois announced job losses.

Union leaders echoed bakery bosses in blaming the bread war and demanding a government price order to raise the price of a pan from 59p. The bread war is a crude

attempt by the major companies to consolidate their market position. But socialists cannot demand higher bread prices—we are for low prices. Workers in bakeries threatened with redundancies have to occupy and demand nationalisation of the bakeries.

If higher bread prices are demanded other workers will be the losers and still jobs will be lost. Instead the demand should be for low bread prices—with government subsidies—and no job loss.

Waterford concede

WATERFORD Glass workers last month conceded the implementation of the company's plan for a six month trial period. Workers have accepted management's demand for complete flexibility, a wage freeze and erosion of union facility time.

This is the second such defeat in two years the workforce have suffered. It follows the mistaken acceptance by the Glass shop stewards of the company's claim that it is no longer

While Larkin rages Attley and Co smirk

profitable. A consultant accountant hired by the stewards confirmed the company's claims.

It follows too the rejection by the company of the union's demand for 33 per cent of the shares in the company for the workers in return for working the new arrangements. Some strange people supported the shares-for-workers idea.

●John Bruton, right wing Fine Gaeler welcomed the idea that workers were looking for a stake in the company as indicating a more "responsible" workforce.

●ICTU Assistant general secretary Kevin Duffy praised the proposal. The ICTU never showed any enthusiasm when the Waterford Glass workers took the lead in action on PAYE in the early eighties.

●The Labour Conference in Tralee, dominated by the party's swing to the right, applauded wildly the Waterford share claim as representing an exciting new development in industrial

relations. While the financiers and capitalists dominate industry, workers are subordinated to the requirements of profitability. The socialist argument is that workers should take no responsibility for the profit or loss-making position of a company. Instead they must defend their own interests on jobs, pay, conditions, health and safety etc.

Socialist argue that all industry should be under the control of workers and production organised for need, not profit. Taking a stake in the company is to accept the capitalist lie that workers and management are "partners" in the success or failure of the enterprise.

By proposing the share deal the Glass stewards focused the attention of the workforce on the trading position of the company and not on resolute resistance.

That is why Bruton, ICTU bureaucrats and Labour right wingers welcomed the tactic. And that is part of the reason Glass workers have suffered this latest defeat.

Advertisement

Eve of Ballot Public Meeting
Say No to SIPTU

Monday 24th April 8pm
North Star Hotel, Amiens St
Dublin 1

Say No To SIPTU Group 47 Synges St Dublin 8 ph:783503

Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

Stop the

sectarian

slaughter!

"Tit for tat sectarian killings return to the North."

That's been the line of the press and politicians over the past month as killings by both the Republican and Loyalist paramilitaries have escalated.

There's no doubt that sectarian tension has grown. In Belfast particularly the fear in working class areas is as high as at any time since the mid 70s.

But to characterise this as "tit for tat sectarianism" is both an oversimplification and politically dishonest.

The dishonesty was clear in Seamus Mallon's claim that the killing of the RUC men Breen and Buchanan at Jonesborough was "another sectarian murder".

It's obvious the reason the IRA ambushed the RUC

men's car had nothing to do with their religion.

The UDA and UVF campaigns on the other hand are straightforwardly sectarian. For example, Niall Davies, shot dead in Glengormley on March 17, David Braniff, killed at his home in Alliance Avenue on March 19, and Patrick Feeny, the factory security man killed in Donacloney in February, were killed for no reason other than that they were Catholics.

Politically, the Republican and Loyalist campaigns cannot be equated. This is awkward for people who want to be able to prove how "non-sectarian" they are by denouncing "both sides" equally. But that amounts to a refusal to face the facts of the Northern situation.

The Loyalist para-

militaries are fighting to defend a sectarian state, the Republicans are fighting to end it.

This does not mean that socialists support the Republicans' tactic of armed struggle.



The armed struggle is based on nationalist politics, not socialist politics. It looks for support to the nationalist community, not to the working class. And, for all the obvious historical reasons, the "nationalist community" in the North means essentially the Catholic community.

Thus the IRA tries to further the interests of its "own" Catholic community, which on occasion means hitting back at those it believes to have attacked the Catholic community.

This is the political basis of both the Jonesborough ambush and the assassination of UVF and UDA leaders such as John Irvine in North Belfast on March 16.

In pursuing this campaign the possibility of totally innocent Protestants being cut down—as happened in Coagh on March 7, whether by accident or, to put it delicately, over enthusiasm—will always be present.

Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness have said that they regret such innocent deaths, and we have no reason to disbelieve them. But the real answer lies in questioning the nationalist politics on which the tactic of armed struggle is based.

A movement which bases itself on nationalism will always be trapped within the sectarian set up of the North—whether it likes it or

not.

Only a movement which rejects communal politics; which appeals to the class interests of all religions and none, South as well as North; which links demands based on those interests to the ultimate goal of a united socialist Ireland: only by building such a movement can we avoid finding ourselves in a sectarian cul de sac again and again.

When establishment parties and their hangers on are pouring general abuse on Republicans it is necessary for honest socialists to stand with the Republicans and against the sectarian state.

At the same time we call again on Republicans who are motivated by a desire to see socialism on this island to re-examine the political ideas which have led into the present desperate situation but which show no sign of being able to lead out of it.

Lightning strikes at Shorts

3,500 shop floor workers at Shorts aircraft in Belfast have been carrying out an overtime ban and a series of lightning strikes in support of a long standing pay claim.

1,600 managerial and technical staff recently joined the overtime and strike actions.

They have been fighting back despite government plans to privatise the company.

Prospective buyers came to Belfast on the day workers totally stopped production.

"Let them see what they're getting", said one shop steward.

Shorts workers haven't had a pay rise since 1985. Their wage claim from 1987 hasn't yet been settled and in 1988 they were offered a lump sum payment instead of a percentage increase.

Management and government are bending over backwards to make the company an attractive prospect to potential buyers.

The government has cleared a £390 million loan to the company, but this isn't going towards any wage increases.

Instead management is trying to get a totally flexible workforce. They are now proposing that workers should come in to work at any time without receiving overtime payment for extra hours.

The action of Shorts workers should provide a guide for workers at Harland and Wolff which has been sold to a management-employee group with the support of at least £500 million from the British government.

After announcing government backing for the sale, Tom King warned that workers would have to "recognise the need for new methods, new procedures, new commercial vigilance".

That can only mean fewer jobs, more productivity and less pay for shipyard workers.

Ballymena walk-out

HOSPITAL workers in Ballymena walked out when private contractors tried to sneak on to the hospital site.

Union leader Inez McCormack said they wanted to investigate how to "make profit out of our members' sweat".

Nurses, cleaners, administrative staff, laundry workers and ambulance members of NUPE followed the contractors around the site to make it clear that they were not wanted and to warn that they would fight them every inch of the way.