

Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

Left gains poll-axe F.F.

A slap in the face for Haughey



Haughey: no majority

THE JUNE 15th election result was a slap in the face for Haughey and Fianna Fail.

Haughey called the poll in order to get an overall majority in the Dail for his health-cutting government.

But for the previous two years he was sustained in office by the support of the Progressive Democrats and Fine Gael.

There was a commanding right wing consensus in the Dail that agreed that the poor, sick, elderly, unemployed and low paid workers would have to foot the bill of "fiscal rectitude".

On every major issue Fianna Fail could depend on the unflinching support of the other right wing parties where putting the boot into working class people was concerned.

There was never any question of his government being in danger from the Dail opposition.

Despite this Haughey arrogantly demanded a Dail majority.

And what a surprise it turned out to be.



Jubilant Workers Party members greet Pat Rabbitte's success

Haughey confessed he hadn't realised the depth of feeling and suffering caused by the health cuts.

Well now he knows.

Thousands of working class people deserted Fianna Fail

and switched to voting—not for Dukes and O'Malley—but for the parties of the Left.

Thousands of working class people began abandoning the "we're all Irish" nationalism of the right wing parties and

supporting those outside the cosy consensus, parties claiming to represent the distinct interests of the working class.

The increase in the size of the Left vote is to be welcomed. It provides an opportunity to

encourage resistance to health cuts, low pay, unemployment and the other effects of capitalism in Ireland.

The prospects for successfully defeating the right wing assault on working class living conditions could be given a shot in the arm by determined opposition.

The left parties could give this lead by:

- Organising a fightback in the unions—by repudiating the National Plan for example;

- Encouraging resistance in every workplace to the constant stream of job losses;

- Presenting determined opposition in the Dail—for example, by obstruction and protest that burst beyond the bounds of parliamentary conventions.

The size of the Left vote demonstrates that more and more working class people are bitter with the Right and could be won to red-blooded socialism on this basis.

But a huge obstacle stands in the way.

The Labour Party and the Workers Party see their role as reforming capitalism.

Their worshipping of parliamentary politics and constitutional illusions will make them shy away from an all out assault on capitalism.

And nothing less will do if the mass of Irish people are not to be scapegoated and victimised through cuts and poverty as the ruling class attempts to shore up its crisis-ridden system.

Many on the Left feel that last month's growth in the Left vote can simply be banked and built upon in elections in the future.

This is an illusion.

Having begun to turn from Fianna Fail nationalism the hopes of masses of people could return to demoralisation that would drag down many socialists if the movement does not go forward.

That means not waiting for the next election.

It means not confining yourself to parliamentary protest.

Above all it means rejecting the reformist idea that capitalism can be patched up and made to operate in the interests of working class people.

And that means encouraging every spark of working class resistance and building a revolutionary alternative.

Turn to page 3

Fianna Fail buys paper's backing

HAUGHEY and the rest of the right wing party leaders refuse to name their filthy rich bankrollers.

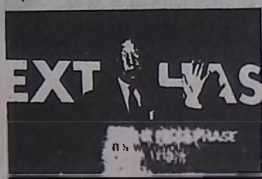
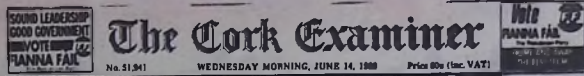
But in Flanna Fail's case at least it's obvious that the millionaires were stumping up serious folding money.

Their election expenses were estimated at over £2 million—enough to keep 60,000 people on the dole for a week.

For the "free and independent" press this was a welcome bonanza with full page ads—at £15,000 a time—crowding out editorial material.

The Cork Examiner couldn't believe their luck when Flanna Fail's election director arrived at their offices with pockets bulging with £50 notes.

And when he ordered



Has Flanna Fail been fair to Cork?
Leftists? No tasks!

What pact?

F.F. ROAD PLAN
9,000 jobs to be created

Incoming Government faces awesome job creation task

Fianna Fail's Cork Examiner

a four-page wrap-around ad designed to appear as editorial matter complete with Cork Examiner masthead and editorial column, all scruples were thrown to the wind

and they happily accepted.

Both the Cork Examiner and Flanna Fail refused to disclose the amount paid for the ad when contacted by Socialist Worker.

Charlie's friends rally

SHOWBAND singer Dickie Rock is another good friend of Flanna Fail.

He organised a meet the people session for chip off the block aspirant TD and Dublin Corpo hack Sean Haughey in Dublin's Darndale estate.

He was also seen enthusiastically canvassing for Flanna Fail during the election campaign.

But it was surely just a coincidence that the day before the election Rock was let off a three-month prison sentence for driving his Rolls Royce at 80 mph in a police chase without tax and insurance.



Goodman: "slip-up"

LARRY GOODMAN'S cash gifts to Flanna Fail may buy him political favours in Ireland but cut no ice with British health inspectors—he'd forgotten to pay them off.

A consignment of meat from his Anglo-Irish Beef Packers plant in Nenagh, Co.

Tipperary, was ordered back by the health authorities in Milton Haven in June.

The £35,000 consignment in 500 cartons is only the latest of Goodman's dubious activities to be uncovered.

It seems the labelling of the cartons was wrong again.

Goodman insists it was a "slip up".

With all the steaming off of labels and sticking on of new ones in dark warehouses at weekend nights it's easy to see how the mistake was made.

THE BIRMINGHAM SIX Haughey's excuses

CHARLES HAUGHEY pays lip service to the need for support for the Birmingham Six in their struggle to get their case re-opened and a chance to prove their innocence.

But in practice he is not prepared to do anything constructive about it.

Haughey says that it would not be feasible for the Irish government to

formally support the petition of the Six to bring their case to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

He uses a technicality as an excuse:

"Their petition has been taken on an individual basis and different procedures exist under the

Convention for Inter-state petitions".

Relatives of the Birmingham Six, while deeply disappointed, are not surprised by Haughey's reply.

"A lot of Conservative MPs in Westminster have done more for the Birmingham Six than Charles Haughey," said one.



Not Jallhouse Rock

Dundalk shows the way

FIFTEEN HUNDRED people marched through Dundalk on the eve of the poll for the general election to protest at the rundown of the local hospital.

Across the town workers responded in good numbers to a call by the Dundalk Trades Council to down tools and join the march.

Banners from the ATGWU, ITGWU, IDATU and the local Health Action Group were prominent on the march.

At a rally in the town square, the Vice Chair of the Trades Council, Tom Dooley, called on workers to vote against the three right wing parties.

"They ran the country

in the interests of the 5 per cent. For ordinary working class people their policy had brought nothing but sacrifice."

Throughout the protest there was a strong anti-Fianna Fail mood.

Speeches

Militant speeches were well received.

Speaking after the march, the Secretary of the Trades Council, Phil Toale, said:

"Dundalk has set an example of how the unions should be responding to the cuts.

"If there had been working class action on

the same scale right across the country the break with Fianna Fail would have been absolutely massive.

"We are at a watershed in Irish politics."

When asked how the Trades Council intend to follow up the action Phil said:

"We are taking this matter to the ICTU.

They are supposed to be the leadership of the working class movement. At the next conference we will be raising the issue of nationwide stoppage on the health service.

"The ICTU should be calling for a 24-hour general strike as a start."



Two hundred and thirty workers at the Unidare engineering plant in Dublin enter their third month on strike. The strikers are fighting a cut in bonus payments imposed without negotiations by the company. Wages would fall an average of £25 a week as a result of the bonus cut. Unidare made profits of £5.8 million last year.

MANDATE FOR MURDER

EARLY in June the Northern Ireland Office announced a proposal to issue plastic bullets to the notoriously sectarian UDR.

Ken Maginnis, Official unionist and ex-UDR officer, welcomed the move, claiming that UDR units were often "baited" by Catholics.

He went on to state that UDR units are not sufficiently able to protect themselves. This is a ludicrous justification for a move which is essentially an escalation of repression in the North.

The reality of the situation is that the UDR has a long history of persecuting Northern Catholics.

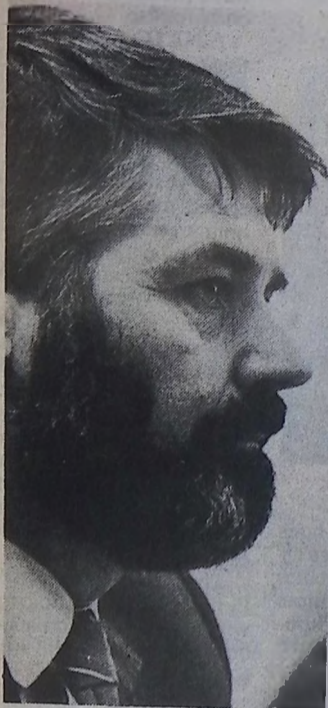
To issue these thugs with plastic bullets is a virtual mandate for sectarian murder.

The move serves to highlight the lengths to which the British Army and its cronies will go to preserve the Northern state and Orange sectarianism.

WE THINK

Left gains at polls...

Now build a socialist alternative



De Rossa

THE RESULTS of the June 15 election in the South show a substantial gain for the Left.

The combined votes of Labour and the Workers Party rose from 10 per cent in 1987 to 15 per cent.

In Dublin the rise was from 15 to 20 per cent.

Most of this gain was a swing of working class voters from Fianna Fail in disgust and bitterness at the health cuts and other aspects of the policy of "financial rectitude".

Opinion polls a week before the election showed Left support in Dublin at 27 per cent—the highest level since 1969.

The "red scare" of the last week of the campaign had the effect of decimating the Progressive Democrats as frightened middle class voters switched to Fianna Fail compensating for its loss of working class voters.

Haughey's cabinet was split on the wisdom of going for an election. Ministers Lenihan, Ahern, Reynolds, Collins and Smith opposed the move.

They argued that it unnecessarily threatened the right wing consensus of Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Progressive Democrats in favour of hospital closures, social welfare cuts and generally making the working pay for the crisis of Irish capitalism.

It seems as if it was just the obstinacy of individuals like Haughey that was standing out against a drawing together of the conservative parties.

The election was therefore a Left-Right affair in the minds of thousands of people. And marxists have no hesitation in taking sides in such a conflict.

And the emergence of an explicit Left-Right context would represent an great advantage to socialists arguing the way forward.

One aspect of this is the realisation that Fianna Fail is a bosses' party.

This simple truth has been long denied by a variety of people.

Haughey said last year:

"Fianna Fail never was, and never will be a party of the Right".

Brian Lenihan said during the election campaign: "Fianna Fail is a party of the centre left."

Sinn Fein squandered the impetus of the anti-extradition campaign in repeated and fruitless attempts encouraging the Fianna Fail rank and file to pressurise Haughey to stop handing over Irish people to the British courts.

Republican intellectuals with a left wing reputation (like Anne Speed—Sinn Fein's Euro candidate in Dublin) have made a cottage industry out of describing the South as a neo-colony with no real capitalist class of its own.

But Irish capitalists have every reason to be grateful to Haughey.

Under Haughey taxation from profits and wealth only yield 3 per cent of the tax take while PAYE from workers is among the highest in Europe.

Twelve thousand public sector jobs have been destroyed in the past year to safeguard the profits of the rich.

Half of the national debt is owed to the Irish rich who are guaranteed repayment with interest.

And the bosses showed their gratitude. Huge donations from the likes of beef boss Larry Goodman, poured in to fund Fianna Fail's £2.5 million campaign.

Tony O'Reilly's Independent Newspaper group was uncommonly kind to Haughey when the Indo pulled Conor Cruise O'Brien's regular column in the week of the election because he commented on the seamier side of Haughey's past.

Irish bosses like Michael Smurfit (boss of Jefferson Smurfit, pre-tax profits last year: £154 million) may have reservations about Haughey's personal style, but under FF they know they have prospered.

But the left-right division also raises the issue of workers' consciousness.

In the run up to the election the Socialist Workers Movement issued leaflets with the slogan "Vote Left: But Build a Socialist Alternative".

We place ourselves in the camp of the workers' movement—the political strands that operate within the working class and claim to represent the class interests of workers.

The movement consists of trade unionists—militant and moderate, the activists in working class campaigns like

those on tax and unemployment that existed a few years ago and the political supporters of the parties of the Left.

Because marxists believe that the working class is the only class with the potential to transform society, the more workers that think of themselves as *workers* with interests distinct and separate from Irish bosses, the better we like it.

Many working class militants and individual socialists will rejoice at the swing to the Left. But it is important to understand the problems and limitations of the swing.

MODERATE

In the first place the official Left is a very moderate affair.

Proinsias De Rossa spelt out the rightward drift of his party at the WP ard fheis in April:

"Because we want to extract a few rotten teeth, does it mean this party is against enterprise, against money, against going out and doing your own thing? "No, we stand for enterprise, energy, experimentation ..."

"Work will be well rewarded and the lazy penalised—and that means dole spongers as well as tax dodgers, short day shirkers ..."

And so on.

The bottom line was that the Workers Party had abandoned talk of nationalisation and dispossessing the rich. It now



Spring

embraced "market socialism".

At the same time the Labour Party was busily expelling *Militant* and marginalising other left wingers like Emmet Stagg.

That is to say that the Left parties in the South are parties of right wing social democracy. Anything more out of place than the "red scare" of the last week of the

election is hard to imagine.

It should be remembered that hospital charges and health cuts were pioneered by Barry Desmond—now packing his bags for Europe.

And the Workers Party sustained Haughey's minority government of the early eighties.

Both Labour and the Workers Party are shaping up for a period of loyal and "responsible" opposition in the 26th Dail. (That is assuming Spring is not shaping up for another Coalition with the Right.)

The Left gains in the poll open up opportunities for socialists to begin to build a fighting alternative that De Rossa and Spring will never provide.

What is needed is a party that stands for an uncompromising fight by workers against capitalism, in defence of jobs and services.

Such a party would fight for revolutionary politics and not the tame stuff of which Dail debates are made.

The building of that beginning is the task the Socialist Worker Movement has set itself.

POLISH PARTY POLL PASTING

AT THE beginning of June, Poland went to the polls for the first time in forty years.

The elections were agreed at round table discussions earlier in the year between the regime and leaders of Solidarnosc, the independent trade union.

In return for calling for an end to strikes Solidarnosc was allowed to organise itself as a legal union and stand in the elections.

But the official Solidarnosc leaders, most notably Lech Walesa, agreed that to prevent "instability" the opposition would only be able to contest one third of the seats in the lower house.

The other two-thirds would go to nominees of the ruling party or its front organisations.

Solidarnosc swept the board for the third of seats it contested.

And many prominent party members failed to get the necessary 50 per cent in the unopposed seats.

Solidarnosc moderates like Walesa had urged people not to vote against anyone on the regime's list for the lower house. But so unpopular is Jaruzelski's government that many refused the advice.

Solidarnosc also won control of the upper house.

The seats in the upper house were all open to contest. But it has only "advisory" powers. What is more rural areas have only one third of the population but return two-thirds of the representatives.

This gives great influence to the hierarchy of the Catholic Church which has backed oppositionists most favourable to collaboration with the regime.

So one Solidarnosc candidate was dropped after he admitted he was an atheist and another because as a gynaecologist he carries out legal abortions.

A number of Solidarnosc candidates have more in common with key figures in the regime than with the union's rank and file over the key question of allowing manager complete freedom to force factories to close down and to cut wages.

Walesa and other Solidarnosc "moderate" are doing all they can to assist the regime out of the crisis produced by the election results. They have called on workers to stay calm and have patience for the good of Poland.

Two left wing groups—the Polish Socialist Party (Democratic Revolution) and the split from Solidarnosc, Fighting Solidarnosc—urged a boycott of the elections.

While understandable, given the sell-out nature of many on the Solidarnosc list, the boycott tactic was mistaken because it isolated left wingers from the desire of masses of Poles to punish the regime at the polls.

NATO weapons crisis

"THE SHORTER the range, the deader the German."

These words, from a West German politician, encapsulate the fear felt by the population of Europe's proposed battlefield for World War Three.

With nine-tenths of West Germans opposed to the 4,000 short-range nuclear missiles resting on their soil, the Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, has been forced to resist NATO pressure to modernise these weapons, plunging NATO into its latest crisis.

Kohl's bombshell was dropped during a time of wide ranging policy reviews by NATO and Warsaw Pact governments and strategists.

Gorbachev's apparent conciliatory gestures to the West have succeeded in getting the Cold War put on ice, though Thatcher and other "hawks" have not tried to hide their concern at the thaw in East-West relations.

Kohl pointed to Gorbachev's willingness to negotiate as reason enough to resist NATO's insistence on modernisation.

Bush and Thatcher, however, have refused to consider short-range nuclear forces (SNF) reduction talks.

Underlying the row in NATO is a political and economic world situation greatly



US pays 56 per cent of NATO budget

altered since NATO was established forty years ago.

Gorbachev is genuinely interested in scaling down arms spending, though not because he's a pacifist—as the Georgians who recently felt the brunt of his Special Forces will testify!

His motivation for arms talks stems from the deep economic crisis in Russia.

He would like to use some of the money spent on arms to resuscitate the economy.

The potential for more trade with the West, particularly West Germany, and the crying need for access to Western technology, puts a premium

on easing tension.

Red Army generals have been encouraged to adopt a "defencist" posture.

It's hoped that this way the West won't feel compelled to develop weapons technology too fast for Russia to keep up, and that the West's protectiveness of technology might be relaxed.

The USA is grappling with problems of its own.

An enormous budget deficit caused mainly by arms spending is coupled with a diminishing US share in world trade.

Japan and West Germany have, paradoxically,

developed strong economies under US military protection—which contributes 46% of NATO expenditure—whilst spending proportionally less on defence themselves.

Now the US is pressing them to shoulder more of the burden of Western defence spending.

Japan, already the world's fourth largest spender on weapons, is not inclined to increase its military budget, preferring instead to maintain its supremacy in the economic sphere.

West Germany, under-

standably, is not too enthusiastic about the prospect of hosting the next big punch-up of nations.

The row over SNF seems have been resolved by compromise.

A NATO study group will think about proposing SNF reduction talks when they're happy about progress in conventional weapons negotiations.

A West German MP described the idea as "a time-honoured NATO practice of papering over divisions".

In the meantime, NATO and the Warsaw Pact will continue to shadow box with hawks on both sides resisting cuts in their budgets, which together account for two-thirds of annual military expenditure of \$1,000 billion.

The Russian generals want results from perestroika and detente before they'll come to terms with cutbacks.

The dinosaurs in the Pentagon are panicking at what they see as Gorbachev's confidence trick taking in Western politicians.

One quipped: "Scratch a Gorbachev and you'll find a Brezhnev."

In one sense, that's quite right.

Economic and political instability, East and West, makes the world an increasingly dangerous place and no-one should sleep easy as long as Bush, Gorbachev and their ilk are calling the shots.

DOMINIC CARROLL

ARGENTINA:

Can Menem play the Peron card?

FOLLOWING food riots at the end of May, outgoing Argentine president Raul Alfonsin agreed to step down for Peronist president-elect Carlos Menem.

Menem won a sweeping victory in May 14th presidential elections and is taking over six months ahead of the schedule provided for the

country's constitution.

Inflation, foreign debt and government austerity have seen workers' living standards fall by 30 per cent since last Christmas alone.

The phenomenon of Peronism has its roots in the history of Argentina.

When Juan Peron came to power at the end of the Second World War, Argentina was an advanced economy compared with the rest of Latin America, yet much of it was dominated by foreign wealth.

The railway network was British-owned until 1947.

Even before the war sections of the ruling class had attempted to deepen industrialisation to free themselves from subordination to foreign businesses.

As Labour Minister in a military government, Colonel Peron attempted to use the state to deep the process. He also used nationalism to gather support from workers, implementing reforms.

The expanding economy meant it was briefly possible to improve both profits and wages.

When a section of the ruling class thought the reforms had gone too far, it pressed the military regime to sack Peron.

The union leaders and masses of workers fought back with a wave of strikes culminating in a general strike in October 1945. The regime backed down and Peron was overwhelmingly elected president in 1946.

He increased state intervention in order to develop heavy industry and moved to incorporate the working class movement behind his programme.

REFORMS

Wages rose by 74 per cent between 1943 and 1950. The government introduced social reforms, like paid annual holidays, sick leave and pensions.

The union leaders were given a key role in administering the reforms. They also amassed considerable personal wealth, along with corruption and gangsterism.

Peron assured the bosses: "don't be afraid of my trade unionism ... I want to organise workers through the state ... to neutralise ideological and revolutionary currents."

"We have to give workers

some improvements and they will be an easily managed force."

By the early fifties he was repressing strikes and driving down wages.

But this was not enough for the bosses and a military coup overthrew him in 1955.

By the end of the sixties the workers' movement was on the rise again and the ruling class once again turned to Peron.

By the 1975, faced with world recession and wage cuts of 20 per cent in three years, the workers movement threatened a general strike against the Peronist government.

The Left abandoned workers to peronism and turned instead to a disastrous guerrilla struggle.

The military took over again in 1976.

Today, once again, discontent has pushed many workers to look to the Peronists to repeat the reforms and improvements of over 40 years ago.

But the conditions of economic boom which made that possible have long vanished. Menem will disappoint his working class supporters as he attempts to use his links with the union leaders to drive



Juan Peron



Carlos Menem

austerity measures through. This could crack the Peronist illusion of cross-class national unity and raise the possibility of independent workers struggles.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION: The birth of the modern world

by JOSH CLARKE



THIS MONTH, 200 years ago, Louis XVI of France, absolute monarch by divine right found himself to be absolutely powerless in the face of a popular revolution.

The French Revolution was a bourgeois revolution, not a socialist one.

Its purpose was to establish capitalism, not socialism.

So why do marxists get so excited about it?

And why is it that the establishment in France so fears the revolution that one leader of the New Right there says that he spits every time he passes an historic site from the revolution.

The reason is that the French revolution destroys some of the myths about how democracy is won.

We're taught at school, and told by the media that democratic change comes about when far-sighted members of the "better classes", like Gladstone or Gorbachev, decide that the time is right for change.

Democracy is then achieved peacefully, gradually, and is handed down from above.

The French revolution proves otherwise.

It proved that fundamental change only comes when the vast majority of people become involved in activity and take history into their own hands.

Louis XVI stubbornly resisted change.

The middle classes saw-sawed between fighting the king and compromising with him.

Only those around the poorest sections of French society, the *sans culottes* (literal translation: "without trousers"), saw the struggle through to the end, until the last vestige of the old order was destroyed.

More often than not this meant pushing faint-hearted liberals out of the way.

That lesson, that even the most basic democratic reforms have to be fought for—rather than granted from above, is what frightens the French establishment, the heirs of the revolution.

THE HISTORY of the French Revolution is a history of mass action changing the course of events.

1786-88 In the years im-

mediately before the revolution there was protest after protest.

In one incident in Grenoble, magistrates were prevented from leaving the city for five days.

1789 In response to the turmoil Louis called a meeting of the Estates General, a gathering of representatives of the three main Estates (classes) in French society.

This was a far from democratic body. Each Estate had a separate block vote, so that the nobility and clergy combined—the First and Second Estates—could always outvote the mass of people (the Third Estate).

Nevertheless, even calling this meeting was a big concession by the king—there hadn't been a meeting for fifty years.

The Third Estate used the occasion as the excuse to begin the revolution.

They refused to meet as a separate group, demanded that the first two Estates meet with them and even took the name of National Assembly.

TENNIS COURT

On 20 June Louis locked them out of the chateau at Versailles and they were forced to meet in a tennis court where they vowed not to give in until a constitution had been drawn up guaranteeing democratic rights.

It was the invasion of the chateau by the Parisian masses that forced the king to give in.

By June 14th, rumours that the king was moving the army from outside Paris into the city led to the Bastille being stormed, arms were seized and the state crumbled.

1792 In April, the monarchs of Europe declare war on revolutionary France.

In August, a huge march takes to the streets of Paris, the Marseillaise is sung for the first time, a Republic is proclaimed and a new calendar begun with this year as Year One.

1793 The time of greatest trial for the revolution and of the most determined intervention of the masses.

The Jacobins and Robespierre are brought to power on a wave of popular excitement, some of the most revolutionary measures of the revolution are carried through and even more promised.

The Jacobin's rule lasts for just a year before the moderate bourgeoisie regain control and the reaction sets in.

The next five years pave the way for Napoleon's reign.

But even he can't restore a feudal society that has been ripped apart by the Great Revolution.

MANY HISTORIANS agree that it was indeed a popular revolution which depended for its strength on the active involvement of millions of ordinary people.

But, they argue, it was a popular revolution in the sense that it united the vast majority of the French nation against a corrupt ruling elite, for universal political rights, not class based economic demands.

They argue that marxism has nothing to teach us about the French revolution because it wasn't fought by classes for economic reasons.

Not so. You can't understand the French revolution, why it happened when it did, or how it did, or even its aims, if you don't analyse it in terms of class.

At the time of the Revolution, French society was in a state of tremendous economic and social crisis, which affected different classes in different ways.

In 1786, the year of the first major disturbances, and three years after the war in America had ended, the state was all but bankrupt.

The deficit ate up a quarter of all state revenues.

Fifty eight percent of the poor's income went on bread, and this rose to eighty eight percent by the time of the revolution.

The taxes imposed by the absolutist state were reaching breaking point.

For the first time, even the nobles were being taxed heavily by the king, which created divisions within the ruling order.

Just as in Russia today, it was fights between the tyrants at the top of society which allowed a normally subdued people to raise some open opposition.

It was the unrest among the nobles which forced the king to convoke the Estates.

And it was that that allowed the Third Estate to make its move.

But the Third Estate was not just one big blob representing the "people" against the corrupt layer at the top of society.

Within the Third Estate there were class divisions which came increasingly to the surface throughout the revolution.

The 24 million people in the Third Estate, making up more than ninety percent of the population, were internally divided between a developing bourgeoisie, merchants, traders,

lawyers, artisans, richer peasants and all sorts of intermediary groups right down to the poorest, the *sans culottes*.

NOT THAT there was a large working class concentrated in factories.

There wasn't. France was only entering the road of capitalism.

But the important point was that the feudal structure of society, topped by the monarchy, stood in the way of a rising capitalism which needed a free market and a ready supply of free workers.

That's the only explanation of why the French middle-class and even the peasants, who at most other periods in French history have been an ultra-conservative force, were, for a brief period, prepared to raise up the masses against the state.

It also explains why they were nervous about doing it.

Because whatever the rhetoric of freedom, a system of private property and thriving capitalism was going in entail turning the mass of small artisans into propertyless wage-slaves who could be exploited.

That was why even when the National Assembly relied on the *sans-culottes* of Paris to attack the monarchy, they also created a National Guard under middle-class control that was as much for use against the "mob" as against the king.

That was the middle-class tried to patch up a compromise with the king whereby he would remain king, a

symbol of order, without any real power, as in the British set-up.

They hoped this would help keep the mob from going too far.

It was only when the king refused to go along with this compromise and instead urged the monarchs of Europe to wage war on France, that the middle class were forced to stand by and watch as the mob forced a Republic on them and later executed the king.

It was in this period—1792-3—that the Jacobins were brought to power by the will of the Parisian mob.

Their reign showed both the potential and limits of the French revolution.

THE JACOBINS, and especially Robespierre, were the most far-sighted members of the revolutionary middle class.

In social origin they were the closest to the *sans-culottes* and artisans, mainly being drawn from the professional classes.

In order to win the war and save the revolution and private property, they were prepared to curtail the rights of private property and marshal all the supplies needed.

The Girondins, or moderate middle class party, had refused to do this.

This struck a chord with the mob who were suffering from high prices. Indeed the guillotine started out on wheels as a way of punishing greedy merchants!

In order to smash the counter-revolution that started in the countryside, the Jacobins abolished all compensation for the nobles whose land had been seized by peasants.

This won over the peasants. In order to smash the church, whose priests had begun the counter-revolution, the Jacobins seized church land and severed all links between church and state.

They proclaimed a new religion of reason which subjected all social institutions to ruthless criticism.

As for the Terror which was meted out to the nobles and the Jacobins' opponents, not only was this essential in preventing any return to the old set-up, it was also less severe, in terms of numbers killed, than what happened in the years after the Jacobins were replaced by the "moderate" parties.

So marxists have no difficulty defending the Jacobins, as thorough revolutionaries, against their modern liberal critics.

BUT NEITHER should we forget that they were bourgeois and not socialist revolutionaries.

One law that remained in place throughout their rule was the one against strikes.

In addition, when the war was secured, they relaxed controls on prices as a gesture to private property, a measure which hit the poor hardest.

The Jacobins were great revolutionaries.

But the aims of their revolution are not the aims of ours.

Ours will be a working class socialist revolution.

Perhaps one of the greatest fruits of the French Revolution was the vision of a socialist society which those on the extreme left of events developed, even if they had no real chance of making it a reality.

No working class, so no socialism.

But we can agree with Babeuf, one of the leaders of that extreme left, who was executed for forming a "Conspiracy of Equals":

"I believe that in some future day men will give thought again to the means of procuring for the human race the happiness we have proposed for it."

THE BRUTAL crushing of the month-long uprising in Beijing has given China's rulers a breathing space and no more.

Their bureaucratic state capitalist system is in deep crisis and the movement they drowned in blood threatens to rise again at any moment.

For more than a month millions of students and workers occupied Tiananmen Square in the centre of the capital disregarding all entreaties and threats by the ruling Communist Party bosses to leave.

For more than two weeks the army was paralysed and unwilling to attack the demonstrators and enforce martial law.

Millions of workers backed the students and hundreds of thousands joined strikes in their support. Unofficial, independent trade unions were set up in defiance of repression.

What had started as a "patriotic" movement in support of reforming elements in the party leadership turned into the defiance by virtually the entire population.

Now the rulers of China are split and arguing among themselves as the economy careers out of control.

Deng Xiaoping and his fellow butchers have little to celebrate.

Nonetheless, the military bloodbath of June 3-4 is an enormous setback to the movement which was seen by Western commentators as "unstoppable".

It has exposed the crucial weaknesses in the "democracy" movement which allowed Deng and Li their opportunity. As the forces of resistance reassemble the lessons must be learnt—and we in the West must take note too.

CHINA HAS a long history of colonial dismemberment that dates from the Opium Wars of 1839-42 when Britain invaded to enforce its "right" to traffic in drugs and open the coastal provinces to trade. It was at that time that they seized Hong Kong.

Soon all the imperialists had a finger in the pie. By the end of the First World War Germany's interests were handed over to Japan. This sparked the 4th May Movement—a protest by students and intellectuals against imperialism. Within a few years workers and peasants had joined in a revolutionary wave that was only finally crushed in 1927.

During the 1930s Japan launched an invasion which the weak, pro-Western government of Chiang Kai-shek was unable to seriously resist. It was out of the war against Japanese imperialism that Mao's Red Army grew and was finally victorious despite massive US support for Chiang's forces.

Although Mao's rhetoric was left-wing, it's nationalism which has been the official ideology of China since the Maoist victory in 1949. In the name of building a strong, unified, independent China, the regime was able to call forth enormous sacrifices from the mass of the Chinese people.

And, indeed, this year's protest movement contained a large measure of nationalist illusions. Students criticised the party leadership for allowing widespread corruption, complaining that China was "humiliated in front of the world".

Students demanded that the government recognise their protest as a "patriotic movement"; they tried to march to the monument to Sun Yat Sen—the

founder of modern Chinese nationalism.

They avoided any attacks on the party as a whole and defended the giant portrait of Mao in Tiananmen Square against attack.

Like the workers of Poland in 1981, they believed "their army" would not attack a patriotic movement of the people. And like the workers of Poland they were proved wrong.

The failure of the movement to recognise that China's rulers were simply using nationalist rhetoric to exploit and oppress the mass of the people and to support their own position as a ruling class led the movement to underestimate the determination with which the regime would crack down.

BECAUSE OF this nationalist ideology, the movement failed to understand the depth of the crisis facing China and the system's inability to provide serious reforms.

This is why the protestors seemed content to demand changes in the personnel of government and legal reforms.

While militant and intransigent in their occupation of Tiananmen Square, it seems that no attempt was made to seize the radio and television stations, or the press and telephones, which remained in the hands of the government.

The fraternisation with the soldiers who were in a state of semi-mutiny was not translated into demands that the army's weapons be distributed among the protestors.

There was no direct challenge to the existence of the government itself. In this situation the soldiers will have understood that if the regime continued, sooner or later they would have to give an account of themselves to their officers.

They would either have to start obeying orders or do away with those giving the orders.

Regular units of the army were clearly reluctant to fight the demonstrators and the regime eventually used the elite corps of the 27th Army—withdrawn from the Soviet border in the north, complete with all their own supply and air units—to form the assault troops.

By raising a protest against corruption and demanding democratisation, by fraternising with the army, by giving an example of the vulnerability of the regime to workers, the movement posed a mortal danger to the party bosses.

But by limiting their objectives to reform, the protestors signalled to regime that in a fight to the finish, their movement would

back off. It was a combination of circumstances which made it certain that the regime would try to crush the movement outright.

THE STUDENTS quite obviously had the support of masses of workers. This opened up the possibility of enormously strengthening the movement.

For if workers fight, they must organise. And workers' organisation—independent trade union groups, committees of strikers, delegates from workplaces—would have given a coherence and direction that the movement with the students at its head lacked.

Naturally, if large numbers of workers are on strike, the question of maintaining food supplies and essential services is automatically raised.

By taking over these tasks the workers' movement could have presented a "government in waiting".

Although strike action took place, it seems that many stu-

dents, right up to the massacre, discouraged concerted strike action from workers. And few among the students appear to have understood the crucial importance of workers taking the lead in the movement.

It seems that when the regime was at its weakest and the movement at its strongest, organised revolutionaries did not exist in sufficient numbers to influence serious numbers of people.

Had a party of revolutionaries—even a small one—existed, there is no doubt that it could quickly have established the relevance of its ideas, possibly effecting the re-orientation of the movement onto the working class.

It is not yet clear whether the massacre was a devastating blow that will take years to recover from or whether the movement will quickly re-emerge. In any event the instability of the regime and its economy will persist. And numbers of people must now be rethinking their old ideas.

In 1905, workers in Petrograd—full of moderate ideas and religious notions—pet-

itioned the Tsar for reforms. They approached as loyal subjects. At their head was a police spy and priest, Pr Oshon. What happened then was not unlike what happened in Tiananmen Square.

The Cossacks launched a murderous attack on the unarmed demonstrators. The workers paid a high price to learn the lesson that it was madness for them to put their trust in Tsarism.

In the next few months a massive revolution developed that came within an ace of toppling the Tsar. Bolshevism became a mass movement. A little more than a decade later it was to triumph.

Uphavah as great as China's will occur in the West too. As the system staggers from crisis to crisis the only question is how long can they be delayed.

And when they come the same questions will have to be answered: Nationalism? Reformism? The People or the Working Class? The influence of revolutionary ideas will depend on whether the basis of a revolutionary party has been created in the previous period.

After the BEIJING massacre

by KEVIN WINGFIELD

BEHIND THE political crisis in China lies an economic crisis of "market socialism".

During the fifties and sixties Mao's China had attempted to industrialise on the model of Stalin's Russia.

Agriculture was "collectivised"—peasants were herded together on large state-owned farms. The state-appointed managers of industries were set wildly ambitious targets in five year plans.

The intention was to force higher and higher production from the workers and peasants so as to build up a modern industrialised economy that could compete with the rest of the world.

However it was a failure. Starved of investment, agriculture stagnated and the enormous exploitation of the peasants deprived them of all motivation—except persuasion and coercion—to produce more.

Successive "campaigns" in the countryside to raise productivity only led to farm managers falsifying the returns—claiming to have produced more than they had. The policy of the "Great Leap Forward" during 1958-60, of creating small scale back yard steel smelters, consumed more industrial grade steel than it produced.

In industry, ambitious plans ran ahead of the ability of the economy to provide investment, roads and railways, electricity, raw materials and skilled labour. When China produced its own nuclear weapon it consumed two-thirds of the country's electricity-generating capacity.

In order to secure their positions, factory managers simply exaggerated the amount of goods produced. This in turn led to a planning nightmare where no-one knew what had been produced or what was available as input into further production.

With the death of Mao in 1976, the way was open for the faction

CHINA'S HISTORY OF STRUGGLE

BRUTAL repression has been the standard response of the regime to opposition. But it has never managed to stifle resistance for long.

The "Cultural Revolution" of the middle sixties was an attempt by Mao to mobilise support among students and youth for himself and his faction against other party leaders.

Although officially sponsored, it quickly developed a life of its own as groups of students and workers began to put forward their own

demands and develop as an opposition to the whole regime.

At that point all wings of the bureaucracy united in repressing the dissenters and had millions of students deported into the countryside.

In the mid seventies groups of workers again organised strikes and demonstrations.

In 1979 the Wall Poster Movement began as a movement in support of Deng and the "modernisers" and stuck posters on walls criticising

conservative elements in the bureaucracy.

Again the actions grew beyond official lines and developed a vigorous oppositional movement producing a number of journals.

The authorities moved in to repress it when workers in 1981—under the influence of Solidarnosc in Poland—began organising free trade unions.

The regime responded with public executions in which thousands perished and thousands more were deported to the countryside.

Throughout the mid 80s, workers' resistance to attacks on their living conditions led sporadically to strikes.

Now, despite the murder of thousands in the army massacre, it is certain the movement will rise again, and this time on a new basis, with fewer illusions in the party.

The bureaucracy has sacrificed all popular consent to win a military victory.

But a regime as isolated as China's has no long-term future.



STATE CAPITALISM IN CHINA

MAO CAME to power in 1949 at the head of a multi-million strong peasant army which had defeated first the Japanese invaders and then the US-backed forces of Chiang Kai-shek.

This was a genuine revolution and a magnificent slap in the face to the dominant imperialisms of the post war world.

It succeeded for the first time in the modern era in expelling foreign invaders, defeating the barbaric war lords and uniting the country.

But it was not a workers' revolution. And the regime was not socialist.

All the decisive fighting took place in the countryside. As the Red Army approached the cities messages were sent ahead demanding that workers should not strike, that factory managements remain in control, and that police and public officials should stay at their posts

to ensure order and allow a smooth hand-over of power.

It was well into the fifties before large scale nationalisation of factories was undertaken. And then many of the old owners were kept on as managers.

The ideology of Maoism was nationalist. The regime wanted to build up an independent country able to defend itself against foreign attack. For that to be possible, industry had to be developed that was competitive with the West.

The new ruling class of China—the Army and Party bosses and factory managers—did not base themselves on the working class and were in no way answerable to the working class.

In place of a policy of working class revolution at home and abroad to smash the world system which oppressed the mass of people the world over, they opted for national

development within a capitalist world.

This meant squeezing workers and peasants to accumulate the resources necessary to industrialise at home, and cementing diplomatic links with some of the most reactionary regimes throughout the world.

Mao's China supplied military hardware to Zia in Pakistan and Pinochet in Chile.

Huge resources were devoted to the creation of genocidal nuclear weapons depriving the mass of Chinese of consumption goods.

The enormous sacrifices demanded of workers and peasants in the fifties and sixties did not produce industrialisation.

To be competitive in today's world is a far tougher job than it was even in Stalin's time. Eventually the policy of self-sufficiency was abandoned.

The change in policy to

"market socialism" was intended to link China's development more closely to the needs of international capitalism.

It was simply a different strategy for China's ruling class to secure their position.

Just as Lemass abandoned De Valera's protectionism when it had failed, Deng tried another path to state capitalist development.

The Maoist rhetoric and pseudo-marxist phrasemongering was no more than an ideological smokescreen for the self interest of the ruling state capitalist class.

China's masses have not been rebelling against socialism because they never had socialism. That will be built when the workers and peasants of China overthrow Deng, Li, Zhao and all the rest of the rotten regime and unite with workers in the West to smash capitalism world wide.

around Deng Xiaoping to change course. In an attempt to benefit from closer integration into the world economy and the introduction of internal market mechanisms the "Four Modernisations" were announced.

China moved to open up to the outside world by importing foreign high tech plants and encouraging foreign investment by offering IDA-style tax breaks to foreign capitalists.

In agriculture, the collective farms were dismantled and a policy of "household responsibility" instituted on small family strips of land free from central direction and price controls.

In industry too, managers were freed from central direction and encouraged to produce for a larger free market. The abolition of more and more price controls made profitability the central concern of enterprises.

The effects of this policy were uneven but dramatic. In the past ten years farm output has risen by 60 per cent and the economy as a whole has grown at up to 12 per cent per year.

But the social costs have been enormous. And the state has effectively relinquished any pretence at control over the economy.

In the countryside "household responsibility" has meant that each family rents a one- or two-acre plot of land from the state and pays a fixed rent.

The government hoped rising incomes in the countryside would be translated into investment in irrigation, fertilizers and agricultural equipment by prosperous family businesses, leading in turn to more efficient farming.

This has not happened. Instead, production has shifted from the staple diet of grain to cash crops like cotton, jute and tobacco.

The result has been shortages of basic food for the poor in the cities, while luxury produce is in plentiful supply.

The family farms are too small to encourage investment. Increased production has been achieved instead by peasants removing their children from school to work on the farm.

Secondary school enrolment

has fallen from 46 per cent in 1978 to 30 per cent in 1983. And today less land is machine-ploughed or sown than in 1978.

And with no social welfare in the countryside—doctors must be paid for and there is no old age pension—all family members have to be productive. When you have a child it had better be a boy—particularly since the government insists that the population is too big and therefore permits only one child per couple. In 1984 there were 600,000 reported cases of female infanticide as a result.

Massive disparities between rich and poor have begun to develop in the countryside as land leases begin to be bought and sold and poor peasants are forced from the land.

In industry the story is no better. The importing of foreign plant and technology to produce modern new factories ran into a shortage of foreign exchange and has slowed to a trickle as many large projects stand unfinished.

Special Enterprise Zones have been set up offering foreign capitalists cheap labour, 3-5 year tax holidays, no tax on the import or export of raw materials and state investments of up to 75 per cent.

The Governor of Fujian province expressed the philosophy exactly:

"We are now studying wage rates in Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea. We believe our wage levels will be lower than these places. In order to protect the investor's profitability, the wage rate cannot be too high."

So eager is the regime to mould the economy to the needs of international capitalism that great tracts of the Gobi desert are now a nuclear waste dump for West Germany.

Throughout industry central planning has receded and the panoply of subsidies and price controls which enabled most workers the necessities of life have been progressively abolished.

The unplanned growth has led to chronic shortages of energy, transport and raw materials. At least 20 per cent of factories lose money and a third are subject to

short time working because of power shortages—some are on a three-day week.

In this atmosphere corruption is widespread. In a recent case the managers of a radio factory in Hianan imported 2.9 million colour tvs; a quarter of a million video cassette recorders; 122,000 motor bikes; and 10,000 cars; and pocketed the millions in profits.

The chief of a power utility cut off the local theatre for refusing him free tickets and the boss of a gas works had "privatised" a section of the pipe network through which gas

was stolen which he sold privately to those connected.

But the routine method is for a party functionary to pack scarce materials or machine parts bought at low state prices into the back of a van and sell them at the inflated free market prices to the managers of local factories whose production has been curtailed for want of these goods.

The profits from these activities have made millionaires of thousands of party officials.

It is the workers who are being made to pay the price for this "market socialism" and its crisis. In 1986 the Minister for

Labour announced:

"Fifteen million people will become surplus labour at the state owned enterprises during the next five years."

As if making one sixth of the urban working class unemployed without any dole was not bad enough, he went on to say that the traditional welfare benefits of workers that account for a half of their earnings must also go and that there would be an end to subsidies on food and housing.

While wages are held down inflation in the cities is over 30 per cent (and higher for food).

Last autumn, following price

increases, there was a wave of panic buying that left the shops empty. The government moved to temporarily centralise and announced an austerity package in the face of the growing economic crisis.

The only certainty now is that price rises, wage cuts and the removal of subsidies must follow as China's rulers attempt to come to grips with the tattered economy and strive to entice in foreign capital.

That is why their attack on dissent has been so ferocious and their panic like that of a wounded tiger.

ANALYSIS

AFTER years of opposition to the Common Market, many on the Left are now looking to it to provide the social improvement which the Irish government will not provide.

Workers Party leader Proinsias de Rossa claimed in the Euro-election that he would work:

"For peace in Europe, for a positive Irish neutrality ... for a common jobs policy. He will oppose VAT on food, children's clothes, school books.

"He will fight for an Irish standard of living equal to that of our European neighbours and for a new deal for Dublin."

Prominent Labour Lefts have been saying that it is pointless to continue to oppose Irish membership of the EC.

They are even going so far as to say that EC legislation is a progressive influence on Ireland.

They point to EC equal pay regulations and the recently unveiled European Commission's "Social Charter" as reforms imposed from Brussels that would not have been forthcoming from Leinster House.

But the idea that the common market is anything other than a bosses' club is nothing but an illusion.

Europe's capitalists looked towards creating a new trade bloc after the war.

They saw it as a way to help rebuild their economies and profits and enable them to compete with the superpowers.

Until the 1960s Britain remained aloof, believing its "special relationship" with the US and the vestiges of its empire would protect its economic position.

By the sixties it was clear that it could not go it alone.

At the same time the Southern Irish ruling class had decisively rejected De Valera's failed protectionism and saw the only way forward as further integration with the world economy.

DESPITE the move toward closer links between European bosses and states, the degree of integration between Common Market members was in reality very limited.

For a long time the only truly integrated strategy was the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

It is estimated that every family in the Common Market has to spend £13.50 a week to finance the scheme which results in large mountains of unsaleable produce, wholesale destruction of fruit and vegetables and pollution of food and water.

It is the biggest farmers, together with the food processing and distribution industries, who benefit.

The CAP will remain.

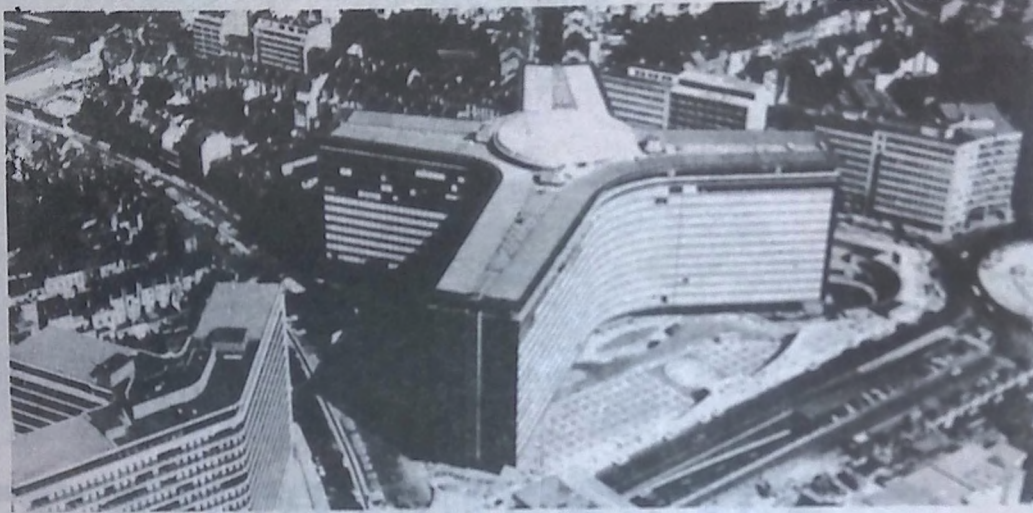
But it is no longer enough.

If European big business is to compete with the United States and Japan much more is needed.

In 1983 the then EEC President Gaston Thorn declared:

SINGLE EUROPEAN ACT.

1992 and all that



Thatcher and Delors - Now they're falling out

"Europe is in a state of crisis. The community has been seriously weakened ... paralysed by its internal contradictions and by its inability to make decisions."

This realisation spurred member states to agree the 1992 programme—a group of some 300 measures that will cut through varying tax rates, regulatory standards and so on to create a single gigantic market.

CARLO DE Benedetti, head of the giant Olivetti corporation, spelt out the aim:

"Nineteen ninety two is the only possible response to market globalisation and to the growing competitiveness of the US and Japan."

What impact will a single European market have?

"The long term effect", an EEC report says, "will be to make

the strong stronger and the weak weaker."

"Europe's companies are marching off to war" says De Benedetti, "a war that will have its dead and wounded."

Former ICI chairman Sir John Harvey-Jones told a bosses' conference last year that more than half of Europe's factories might close in the next ten years and half its companies disappear or be taken over.

The same EEC report predicts 525,000 job losses in the first year alone.

Fianna Fail looks set to bask in the glory of the structural fund bonanza, but beyond a few extra miles of motorway there is no certainty that any long term jobs will result.

Southern bosses are faced with this dilemma.

The opening up of Europe's markets to Irish companies is also the opening of Ireland to competi-

tion from Europe's more developed industries.

And it is this dilemma—that no European state can go it alone, but each fears the competition and diminution of power that deregulation brings—which explains the constant squabbling of Europe's capitalists.

From wheeling and dealing over milk quotas and grants to Thatcher's strident chauvinism can be heard the unmistakable sound of capitalist brothers falling out.

THE EEC has always represented an uneasy compromise between nationalism and internationalism of capital.

It is reflected in the community's political institutions.

The European parliament is largely toothless.

It shares some control of the budget but little more.

Decision making lies with a council made up of government representatives of member states.

Policies are drawn up by the European Commission—appointees of those governments.

Each member state had the power of veto and despite some modification under the Single European Act that power essentially remains.

Despite contrary pressures, the national state remains important to our rulers.

Even multi-national companies—though they operate across a world market—look to particular states to protect their interests.

Just as US-based oil companies look to the White House, the likes of Larry Goodman expect and receive the support of the state in return for the thousands of pounds bankrolled to Fianna Fail.

And the nationalist ideologies that underpin local rulers control of "their own patch" make it impossible for the dream of capitalist European unity to be realised.

MANY ON the Left have been seduced by the "social dimension" of 1992, citing the European Commission's recently unveiled Social Charter.

It is a list of "social rights", some concerning issues like child labour, sexual equality, and health and safety.

It mentions the need for a maximum working week, "fair pay" and rights of association, and also the "right to information, consultation and participation of workers".

All this is couched in vague and limited terms, and none of it is enforceable.

It is designed as a cosmetic sop to trade union resistance when it argues: "Economic growth in the Community cannot be sustained without social consensus".

The pressure of competition within the Common Market will more and more force down wages and conditions as Irish firms strive to keep up with larger, more efficient firms.

It will be easier for firms to up sticks and relocate if workers do not accept low pay and poor conditions as Hanlon's Longford ambulance factory did last year when it walked away from a strike and opened up in Liverpool.

Sinn Fein's nationalist dream of capitalist development in Ireland outside of Europe is a reactionary utopia.

For Ireland's bosses there is no going back.

But equally reactionary are illusions that a single European market will bring development and progress to Ireland.

The Left's hope for social reform from Brussels cannot be squared with the realities of capitalism in Europe.

Workers must organise to defend themselves from this challenge, linking up with their brothers and sisters in Europe.

In that way a socialist United States of Europe can be posed as an alternative to both Irish and European nationalism.

What would happen?

A COUPLE of days before the June 15th poll the Financial Editor of the *Irish Independent*, Brendan Keenan, published an article which asked the very interesting question: what would actually happen if the economic policies of the Left were put into practice?

This was the only national newspaper article in the course of the campaign to deal with this specific subject.

And it's easy to see why. Although the opinion polls had been signalling an advance in the fortunes of Labour and the Workers Party for some weeks, everybody knew that there was no way they'd be able to form a government.

So, naturally enough, there was little consideration of what they would do in government.

Keenan calculated that Labour's proposals for the health service alone would add £250 million a year to government spending and the Workers Party proposals £500 million a year.

And health spending was only one in a series of proposals in the two parties' manifestoes which would call for major increases in spending.

These sums, he pointed out, could come from only two possible sources—extra taxation or extra borrowing.

Both Left parties have talked—albeit in vague terms—about raising extra revenue from new taxes, on capital, wealth, profits and property.

But at the same time they have undertaken to substantially reduce the tax burden on the PAYE sector.

So some of the revenue from the new taxes would have to go towards substituting for this short-fall.

The result would be that the level of new taxation necessary to fund the Left parties' spending proposals would be such as to frighten money out of the country.

The Irish rich would put their money into businesses and property overseas—and the international finance markets would, in the time-honoured phrase, "lose confidence" in the Irish



Mitterrand's failure

economy.

Something similar would happen if a Left government tried to fund all or part of its spending programmes by new borrowing.

Assuming that international banking and Irish finance institutions could be persuaded to bankroll a Left government, it would be on the basis of cast-iron guarantees about repayment.

And the revenue to fund the repayments would have to be found, again, through increased taxation.

BORROWING

Keenan points out that the Irish economy has been strengthened over the past few years by foreign money coming in, not just as a result of borrowing but as investment in Irish money markets.

German banks and pension funds, for example, have been steadily buying Irish government bonds, or "gilts".

Foreign holdings of Irish gilts have now reached £2,500 million.

The presence in the

system of all this foreign loot has been one of the reasons Irish interest rates are so low, thus making it relatively cheap for Irish capitalists to borrow money for investment and so forth.

However, the presence of this foreign money also makes the economy even more vulnerable to the whims and dictates of international finance.

If, for example, German finance chiefs didn't like the way the economic winds were beginning to blow in Ireland and decided to get out, the implications for the Irish economy would be serious.

Quite quickly, Irish investors, too, would decide to put their money somewhere safer.

And, just as the EMS made it easier for foreign money to come in, so also has it made it easier for Irish money to pour out.

Again, "confidence" in the Irish economy would collapse.

We know what happens after that—or even before this stage is reached—because we have the experience of other Left governments to go on.

In Britain in the 1960s

and again in the 1970s Labour governments elected on a programme of economic expansion and increased public spending found themselves heading into exactly this predicament.

On each occasion, being committed to operating the existing system of economic organisation, they had no option but to reverse their policies totally, to cut public spending and put the boot into any working class groups which resisted.

In 1981, a Socialist Party government under Francois Mitterrand was elected in a programme very similar in general terms to the proposals of the Left parties in Ireland.

Hundreds of thousands of socialists took to the streets with red flags to rejoice.

But within a year, Mitterrand had been brought to heel. Public spending was cut, union militancy hammered and racist ideas espoused in order to deflect anger away from the system.

It would happen here, too.

Keenan says: "Irish politicians will have to come to terms with the fact that, whatever they may tell the electorate, their freedom on financial policy has been curtailed."

That's the plain fact of the matter.

Neither Labour nor the Workers Party has been forced to face up to it only because they have had no serious prospect of government.

But like the Labour governments in Britain and the Mitterrand government in France, they, too, are committed to operating and "reforming" the present economic system: any remaining doubts about the Workers Party's position on this score were dispelled at the recent Ard Fheils.

If ever they do get into government they'll discover that far from their reforming capitalism, capitalism will comprehensively reform them.

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 our 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 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.

What's on: SWM meetings and activities

■ Belfast Branch

☆ Meets every Monday at 7.30 pm in the Ulster People's College, 30 Adelaide Park, Belfast (between Lisburn Road and Malone Road, opposite Queens Elms Halls of Residence)

■ Bray Branch

☆ Meets every second Tuesday at 8.00 pm in Hibernian Inn, Marine

Terrace

■ Cork Branch

☆ Meets every Tuesday at 8 pm in the Anchor Inn, George's Quay

■ Derry Branch

☆ Meets every Tuesday at 8.00 pm in Dungloe Bar, Waterloo Street

■ Dundalk Branch

☆ Meets every second Tuesday at 8.00 pm in ATGWU, Francis Street

■ Dublin Branch

☆ Meets every Wednesday at 8 pm in the Bachelor Inn, O'Connell Bridge

■ Kilkenny Branch

☆ Meets every Tuesday in the Club House Hotel

■ For more details of regular branch meetings in BRAY, DERRY, DUBLIN, DUNDALK, DUNGARVON, GALWAY, KILKENNY, PORTLAOISE 6 WATERFORD contact: SWM, PO Box 1648, James's St, Dublin 8

Join us!

■ If you would like to join the SWM or want more details, complete and send to:
SWM PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

Please send me more details of SWM

I want to join the SWM

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....



REVIEWS

Fighting for women's rights

"UNFINISHED Revolution" is a short collection of essays on the Irish women's movement.

It is written by women living and working in Ireland who are "contributing to local and national movements for social change"—many of them are community activists.

The three main themes of the pamphlet are patriarchy; the effects of the church on women's lives in Ireland; and partition and feminism.

There is a broad agreement running through the articles that patriarchy is the root cause of women's oppression and that British imperialism is responsible for the particular form that sexism takes in Ireland.

Most of the contributors are writing from the standpoint of working class women.

Mary Nelis, in particular, gives a harrowing and vivid account of the lives of working class women in Derry during her childhood.

She tells of families living, eating and sleeping—four to a bed—in one room.

Life for women trying to raise families in this environment was tough: "There were no washing machines, nappies or sanitary towels.

Washing facilities consisted of a communal water tap in the street or if you were up-grade, a tap in the back yard."

But despite the acceptance by the writers that life for working class women is particularly hard, the overall argument in the collection is that gender and not class is the fundamental divide in society.

Marxists would argue, however, that it is capitalism which divides working class women and men from each other and which has created the particular form of the family which is now in existence.



Most of the articles quite rightly argue that the women's movement must take up the question of imperialism in Ireland.

Donagh Marron, active in the anti-imperialist movement in West Belfast, tells of her experience of being shut out and rejected by many in the women's movement because of her refusal to be silent about the question of imperialism.

Many women in the North (and the 26 Counties) claim that to talk about the British presence is divisive and must be avoided in the interests of unity.

The women in this pamphlet courageously argue that imperialism must be opposed.

Where the problem lies is in their interpretation of how anti-imperialist and women's struggles are linked.

Mary Nelis argues that patriarchy leads to imperialism: soldiers "identify their weapons with their male sexual organs".

Unionist misrule in the North is seen as an example of male power.

It is true that British imperialism uses sexual harassment to further extend its oppression of the working class in the North—as evidenced by the strip searching of women prisoners.



However, imperialism does not cause women's oppression in Ireland—capitalism and the division of society into classes does that.

The 26 County state oppresses women not because it is a neo-colony—for it is not—but, rather, because to do so suits the needs of the capitalists who run the place and of the Catholic Church whose authority they depend on.

Sometimes the interests of these two groups may conflict to a degree—but both church and state are agreed on the need for a family structure in which women raise the new generation of workers for society.

The authors argue that what is needed in Ireland is a broad front of women committed to social change—a front which must have room in it for anti-imperialist women.

Whilst agreeing with the women's rejection of reformism as a solution, Marxists believe that only the working class—women and men together—have the power to bring about an end to capitalism.

It is only when they are involved in common struggle against the system which divides them that working men and women can overcome the sexism which, as Nell McCafferty correctly points out, has plagued the labour movement.

Maggie Feeley argues that lesbians have "made a choice to put women first in every aspect of our lives."

"We have taken sides". To argue this is just to accept the labels which society and capitalism have placed upon us.

It is to accept the arguments of the right wingers who say the oppression of women is "natural".

There are two major classes in society—the working class and the ruling class.

The miners' wives who fought alongside their menfolk against the scabs and the police were not "aiding with the oppressor" as separatists might argue—through their common struggle many of the sexist ideas held by the miners began to be broken down.

That is how sexism can be ended—by men and women fighting alongside each other against the system.

The only revolution which can eradicate women's oppression will be a socialist one.

The Unfinished Revolution of this pamphlet—which is one of women against patriarchy—can never be finished, because the theory of patriarchy offers only one explanation of women's oppression.

It offers no hope of change. Marxism, on the other hand, offers both an explanation of women's oppression and a way to win women's liberation.

LINDA MOORE
Unfinished Revolution, Medbh Publishing Ltd. £1.50 (Belfast)

Reform or Revolution

YOU KNOW the way the working class is dead.

Marx, Engels, Lenin were all very well in their day but this is the 80s and everything is different now, because people have Sky TV and Next clothing (which logically concludes that workers won't fight back).

Well I'll tell you something interesting.

In Germany about 100 years ago, this bloke Bernstein had a set of theories—they were "practical" and "realistic", not the dreamy stuff of conscious working class organisation.

They went something like this: "The working class is dead."

"People are different now from Marx's time."

"Marx and Engels were very well in their day but this is the 1880s..."—got the gist?

Rosa Luxemburg's "Revolution or Reform" is an attack on Bernstein's reformism.

It deals for the first time with reformism as a political movement and demonstrates that the methods that reject work-

ing class activity for the "reality" of working within the framework of capitalism is not just a question of a different milder road to achieve the same ends, but is in essence a completely different end, one that is alien to struggle, and seeks not to achieve Socialism but reform Capitalism.

The effectiveness and sheer might of this book is the amazing farsightedness that only comes from a real understanding of the struggle, not as a one dimensional appearance of society isolated from history, experience and the contradictions within the system.

"Revolution and Reform" is relevant and essential.

No doubt Bernstein and his predecessors today, would say it is out of touch and dated.

He wrote the same of Marxism in 1889—just a few years before the Russian Revolution took place...

—CATHY BERGIN
Reform or Revolution, Rosa Luxemburg, Available from SW Books, PO Box 1648, James's St Dublin 8, price £2.50

Film of the month

Mississippi burning

MISSISSIPPI BURNING, Alan Parker's new film, is loosely based on the real-life murder of three civil rights workers in 1964 in Mississippi.

The film focuses on the relationship and experiences of the two white FBI agents, Gene Hackman and William Defoe, who are sent down to investigate the disappearances.

It is a very good film, despite a couple of glaring political weaknesses.

The film's political shortcomings can be dealt with quickly.

Black people in Mississippi Burning are shown entirely as victims of white hatred.

They don't fight back

and are used as helpless backdrops to highlight the moral right of our heroes—the FBI.

The film seems to overlook the fact that it was the militancy of southern blacks that

brought northern civil rights activists and the FBI to the south in the first place.

Also, to portray the FBI as sympathetic to black struggle or the civil rights movement is to see history through rose tinted glasses indeed.

The FBI were often known to harass civil rights workers and had only limited power to combat racist violence.

They also infiltrated,

with a view to disrupting left wing organisations—including the civil rights movement.

Despite these faults, Mississippi Burning is definitely an anti-racist film, and that is the most important criterion by which to judge it.

The film truly wants its audience to despise the racist police and Ku Klux Klan it portrays.

It even touches on, albeit briefly, the roots of white racism in the American south.

Gene Hackman, playing a southern-born FBI agent, recounts to his partner how his father killed a mule belonging to a black neighbour.

The father couldn't



Mississippi Burning: anti-racist message

afford one himself and when questioned by his son said, "Son, if you ain't better than a nigger who are you better than?"

This theme in the film is followed up more subtly in the character of Mrs Pell, wife of a racist cop.

In the film she goes from being silently

acquiescent that her husband was involved in the murders, to eventually making the confession that enables the FBI to prosecute the murderers.

Gene Hackman gives a performance at least as worthy of an Oscar as Dustin Hoffman.

The film is worth going

to see for him alone.

But most importantly, the anti-racist message of the film is as important today as it was 25 years ago.

Recently in America a known Klansman was elected to the Louisiana legislature.

EVE MORRISON

INDUSTRIAL

Low pay scandal

by DAVE MCDONAGH

IRISH WORKERS are among the lowest paid in the European Community.

Only in Spain and Portugal are workers paid less.

For a married couple with two children gross pay is 7 per cent better here than in Britain.

But when deductions and benefits are taken into account, the Irish couple is 7 per cent worse off.

In Britain, low paid workers pay 40 per cent less tax and 40 per cent less social insurance than in Ireland.

Women and young people suffer most from low pay.

60 per cent of women in industry and 70 per cent in textiles, clothing and footwear are low paid.

The ICTU's equality officer, Margaret Nolan, reported that "every day the ICTU gets complaints from women in shops, restaurants, hotels, bars and other small employments who are paid scandalous wages of £40 to £60 per week for long hours".

70 per cent of workers under twenty survive on poverty wages.

In 1983 under-twenties earned, on average, half the wages of workers over twenty.

Now they earn 40 per cent of what "adult" workers earn.

Low wages are associated with cleaning contractors, burger joints and other sweatshops.

But this ignores the thousands of public sector workers who are not doing much better.

Joe O'Callaghan of the Cork District Council of the ITGWU reported that 30,000 health and local authority workers were low paid.

A worker in such employment might start at £144 per week, rising to only £154 per week after eleven years.

In this situation a single person would take home £95 a week.

A married couple with two children would have to survive on £115 a week, leading many to seek Family Income Supplement.

In the civil service and An Post thousands more are on similar rates of pay.

With mortgage interest rising many work long hours of overtime just to make a living wage.

The scandal of low pay is only matched by the scandal of the union leaders' failure to lead a fight on wages.

The ICTU's strategy on low pay is confined within the limits set by the National Plan.

There are four main elements to this strategy: pressing for legislative changes; pressing for improvements in taxation and social welfare; negotiating future wage agreements.

But "arguing", "pressing" and "negotiating" will not win decent wage increases.

Only by fighting, using their industrial muscle, can workers win.

A real strategy to end low pay would involve:

■ Breaking from the

National Plan.

The plan limits annual increases to 3 per cent with a mealy £4 a week for the low paid. It also includes an "inability to pay" clause.

■ Unionising the sweatshops.

Instead of waiting for the workers to come to the unions, the unions should be going out to the workers.

■ Strike action to demand flat rate increases.

The Irish rich are delighted with low pay, saying that it has increased productivity and profitability.

But what use are productivity and profitability when you cannot afford a holiday?

With the National Plan under their belts and strike figures at their lowest for 26 years, the bosses are smiling.

A fight for a living wage would wipe the smiles off their faces.

BELFAST:

Pasolds move strike

TWO HUNDRED women workers at Pasolds Clothing factory in Belfast have come out on strike over terms of a move to a different part of the city.

Management at the factory in West Belfast told the workers at the company that that company is to move to the site of the former Ben Sherman factory at Castlereagh in East Belfast.

Workers were told that they would have to accept the move or lose their jobs.

Most of the workforce have reluctantly agreed to the move but are demanding £300 disturbance money to compensate for the problems and extra expense involved in getting to the new site.

Management have offered them £50 plus a £25 bonus for this Christmas and free bus fares for 6 months.

Strikers have rightly described this offer as pittance and are sticking out for proper compensation.

In the first week the strike was 100 per cent solid with a strong picket line.

Lorry drivers have been honouring the picket.

The National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers will be backing the dispute and declaring it official.

Although the factory's present site is in a Protestant area of West Belfast the workforce is mixed.

The strikers are angry because more jobs are being taken out of West

Belfast which already suffers from chronic unemployment.

One striker told *Socialist Worker* "West Belfast is a ghost town as it is".

Strikers told us of the difficulties they will face over the move.

They are expected to start work in the new factory at 8.05 in the morning, half an hour earlier than at the old site even though they now face a lengthy journey getting to work.

Many of the women will now have to arrange for friends or relatives to take their children to school in the morning.

They feel angry at being given no choice at the move and feel they have been provoked into striking by management's lack of concern about them.

One striker noted that while they stuck it out on the picket line management were lying sun bathing in the factory yard.

Having got an all out picket which is preventing movement from the old site the best way forward for the strikers is to talk to other workers already employed by the company on the new site.

If management win on this one they will treat the entire workforce with contempt after the move.

The strikers should not wait for union officials to spread the strike but it would be better to try to talk to other workforces, themselves and argue for solidarity.



AN POST:

Postmen fight bosses' attack

THE DUBLIN district offices of An Post took strike action in defence of an agreement which has been reached with management and which management tried to renege on.

Although the issue at stake may on the surface appear to be fairly minor it was a reaction to the militant and confrontational style of management adopted by the senior management in An Post.

John O'Callaghan has consistently been aggressive and provocative in his dealings with the PTWU.

In a previous dispute involving Post Office clerks, he sent a circular to every clerk threatening to remove from the payroll all who refused to work as required.

He also stated that any clerk who was removed from the payroll would have to sign an undertaking to observe their contract of employment.

In the dispute involving the district offices, an agreement was reached on payment for overtime for clearing a backlog of mail.

On the April 11 it was agreed that local union representatives and local management would agree the amount of time required to deliver the mail.

Senior Management repudiated this agreement on May 17 and insisted that each postman should sign his own time.

Postmen found this arrangement unsatisfactory, with times being changed by local inspectors resulting in non-payment for overtime worked.

Following a series of meetings agreement was nearly reached but management's intransigence wrecked the deal.

The General Secretary, David Begg, was committed to attending the annual

delegate conference of the Union of Communication Workers in the UK.

Normally in these circumstances, a truce is called in disputes.

John O'Callaghan, however, decided to make a major attack on the PTWU.

In an interview, O'Callaghan made a number of provocative statements.

In particular he made re-

ference to phantom workers and phantom overtime in Fleet St. He implied that the print unions had been beaten in London and that An Post would similarly take on the PTWU.

The questions that are raised by this are:

Why did John O'Callaghan make these provocative remarks knowing that the General Secretary was out of the country?

Why attempt to escalate a relatively minor dispute?

Following this total breakdown the Minister, Bertie Ahearn intervened—no doubt anxious that literature for the general election be delivered.

He brought both sides to the Department of Labour and insisted that an agreement be reached.

After a marathon session an agreement was finally reached.

The agreement was that the status quo should be maintained pending further negotiations.

In conclusion, it is apparent that with the belligerent and provocative style of management being adopted by An Post, industrial relations could become stormy in the next year or so.

While industrial disputes may not be inevitable, they are highly probable.

POSTAL WORKER



More disputes probable in An Post

Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

NI Local and Euro polls spell ...

Election blow for Unionists

"CRISIS" may be too strong a word for what's happening in Loyalist circles but there's no doubt that the recent elections have damaged the credibility of the main Loyalist leadership.

The fragmentation of the Loyalist vote in the May and June polls reflects the fact that the Paisley-Molyneux strategy for getting rid of the Anglo-Irish Agreement has proved a total failure, and neither the DUP nor the OUP has anything to put in its place.

The boycott of council business has quietly collapsed and nobody bothers any more to gather and harass meetings of the Anglo-Irish Conference.

At the same time Paisley and Robinson have thought better of associating themselves openly with paramilitary squads, thus alienating the small groups of hard-liners.

They've failed with constitutional methods and they're frightened of unconstitutional methods.

In that situation it's not surprising that many in the Loyalist camp have been toying with alternative ideas.

The solid performance of the "Model Conservatives" in North Down in the local elections, and of their leader Laur-

ence Kennedy in the Euro election, shows that a section of the Protestant middle class is turning away from the communal politics of the North and looking to link up with "authentic" British Toryism.

By implication they are acknowledging that there can be no solution within the confines of the North, that Six County politics can only reflect the problem, not get rid of it.

It was the OUP which tended to lose votes to the "Model Conservatives".

But in working class areas the DUP was damaged to a greater extent, both by voters simply staying at home and, particularly in the local elections, going towards a scattering of individualists and small, local groupings like the "Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party" in the Waterside in Derry.

Part of the reason for this, as mentioned, has to do with the disillusionment of die-hard sectarians.

But it's relevant too that as the campaign against the Agreement has petered out over the past couple of years the minds of many workers have been concentrated more and more on economic issues.

The cuts in the health service have hit at workers right across the board.

This has been reflected in the involvement of almost wholly-Protestant workplaces



Paisley: election setback

such as the shipyard in the anti-cuts campaign.

The threat to jobs posed by the privatisation of the shipyard, Shorts and the electricity service has also brought their workforces into sharp confrontation with economic reality.

And, because of sectarian patterns of recruitment in the past, these workforces are, of course, overwhelmingly Protestant.

Workers on all sides have also had to grapple with cuts in social security payments

and young workers have been subjected to economic conscription under the phoney YTP scheme.

Involvement in issues like these has put thousands of Protestant workers into a frame of mind which isn't matched by the stock Loyalist sloganising of Ian Paisley.

This is only one aspect, but for socialists it is the most important aspect, of what's happened to the Loyalist vote.

It doesn't mean that there has been a permanent, significant shift in allegiances.

Far from it.

What it does mean is that there may be a modest possibility of small socialist advance.

The tragedy of the situation is that there is no credible socialist presence able to test what is possible.

There is a galaxy of groups in the North arguing for some sort of class rather than communal approach to politics—the Communist Party, the Workers Party, at least two groups claiming the mantle of "Labour".

What they all have in common is an unwillingness to relate the class questions to the question of the existence of the State itself—to the "National question".

Thus they don't challenge the "instinctive" Loyalism even of those workers who are moving away from the Loyalist camp.

In other words they are repeating precisely the mistake which has led to the disintegration of every sizeable Labour grouping ever established in the North.

Meanwhile, of course, the nationalists persist with the line that there's no point discussing the class concern of Protestant workers until such times as Ireland is "free".

The need for a party offering militant leadership on both the class and national questions was never more obvious.