

# Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism 30p



## Make jobs, cuts, extradition the issues

FIANNA FAIL, the main party of the Irish bosses, is in big trouble.

Lenihan's lies provoked the crisis. But the underlying reasons have to do with corrupt mismanagement of a shaking economy.

The Goodman affair showed how tax-payers' millions were used to fund reckless speculation by Haughey's pals. Meanwhile, workers were bearing the brunt of savage public spending cut-backs.

The Fianna Fail crook Patrick Gallagher getting off scot-free in the South also exposed FF as a corrupt, capitalist outfit.

This permanent, and endemic, dishonesty had hollowed out Fianna Fail's credibility from the inside long before Lenihan's lies caused it to crumble in public.

All this has presented the Left with a real opportunity. No other right-wing party can replace Fianna Fail as the major capitalist party in the immediate future.

### DISARRAY

With the bosses' parties in disarray, the working class could be mobilised to go on the offensive, making jobs, pay, public services and extradition the big issues.

Instead, the established Left

leaderships have blurred the line of class division and talked about 'political integrity', 'high standards', 'trust'—vague, 'classless' concepts. As if an honest capitalist government is all we need. As if there's any such thing.

Moralising never got the working class anywhere. All socialists should be arguing hard for the Left to take advantage of the Right's problems.

And serious socialists should be involved in building a party based on this perspective.

# OUT WITH THE F.F. LIARS!



**Fight extradition! turn to p. 12**

*Hypocrites in action: Haughey and Lenihan pay homage at Wolfe Tone's grave while preparing to extradite republicans*

# EAMONN McCANN Fianna Fail's fibs

IT'S APPROPRIATE that the Fianna Fail presidential campaign should have faltered as the result of a lie. The party is based on a lie.

Of course this could be said of every political party in Leinster House. They tell the electorate virtually anything to get votes, then act in their own party interests afterwards.

But there's something special, something deeper-rooted, about Fianna Fail's inherent dishonesty.

FF offers itself to the working class as the party of all the people, and especially the ordinary five-eighths. No airs or social graces or smarmy 'Dublin Four' accents. Even those FF leaders who are themselves very rich make a virtue of passing themselves off as essentially 'ordinary' people, hinting that they are in touch with the true feelings of the 'grass roots', in contrast to the likes of Fine Gael and the PDs.

Haughey himself is the best case in point. No election campaign is complete without scenes of Haughey sucking down to working class crowds outside shopping centres.

## STYLE

This isn't just a matter of style. It's shown in the particular way the party pitches its policies, suggesting that "Health cuts hurt the poor, the sick, the elderly" and jeering in a simulated class-conscious style at Fine Gael for being more concerned about 'fiscal rectitude' than the plight of the poor.

Once in office, of course, they outdo Fine Gael in cutting public spending and determination to 'get the public finances right'.

It's the same story with the North. out of office, even senior Fianna Failers can come across as near-Provos. But in government there's no party more willing to put the boot in any 'subversive' who disrupts public order. And the 'ancient enemy' Britain becomes a neighbour and ally.

The least you can



## Partners in crime

say for the other right-wing parties is that they are a little more consistent—particularly on the North.

In all of this the party draws a phoney plausibility from its 'slightly constitutional' early period.

Even when Fianna Fail leaders are involved in outright corruption they present this, too, as evidence that they aren't part of the stuffed-shirt, upper-class element. The image of the 'rogue' and the 'jack-the-lad' rather than the banker or rich merchant.

## DUPLICITY

Brian Lenihan has personified this duplicity for decades.

He was one of the 'mohair suit' brigade of Fianna Fail ministers in the sixties, along with Charlie Haughey, who founded the 'TACA' organisation which brought together a circle of businessmen who would support Fianna Fail in exchange for whatever favours the party could offer in government. At the same time he liked to be thought of as a 'radical' in government.

He has combined a pronounced 'populist' style and cultivated a bland, amiable personality, glad-handing and back-slapping, everybody's friend, while he served faithfully in nine separate anti-working class governments.

Before the 1987 election he denounced the FitzGerald Government's economic policy as 'deeply repugnant to all who believe in putting the interests of the most needy first', then became second-in-command of a

Government which ground down the needy even more.

In 1985 and 1986 he led Fianna Fail 'opposition' to the Anglo-Irish Agreement, and travelled to the US to ask Irish American politicians not to back a measure which 'copper-fastened partition'.

By 1987 he was Minister for Foreign Affairs and treating the Agreement as Holy Writ.

In a phrase, Brian Lenihan, like the Fianna Fail party, has looked to the working class for votes while faithfully serving the interests of the capitalist, advocated change while working to sustain the status quo.

Thus lying and spoofing has been a 'natural' necessary element in him and his party. After so many years at it, at such a high level, it's possible Lenihan wouldn't always be able to recall when he was lying and when not.

## PERFORMANCE

This is probably the explanation of his disastrous performance over the Hillery phone-call.

It was a minor lie compared with the bedrock lie on which the Fianna Fail party has been built. It is indicative of the way the system works that it was the minor lie which caused a rumpus while only 'extremists' ever dwell on the far more glaring major lie about the class interests it serves.

The real question is not about Lenihan or Fianna Fail's 'fitness to govern' or about the 'need for high standards in public office'.

It's a question of class politics.

# Bush loses support

THE U.S. IS SENDING a further 100,000 men to the Gulf—bringing the U.S. total to 310,000, more than three fifths the maximum ever deployed in Vietnam.

But, as the *Independent on Sunday* reported on Oct. 28th, "the mood of American public opinion is definitely anti-war, and may grow more anti-war as the crisis drags on".

Bush suffered a 20-per cent crash in his approval rating as the number of Americans willing to go to war over Kuwait dropped below 50 percent for the first time since the crisis began.

In France, only 22 percent would approve involvement in an attack on Iraq.

In Britain—where the SWM's sister organisation has been prominent in the anti-war campaign—Thatcher has failed to re-kindle any 'Falklands Factor'.

As one *Times* commentator admitted: "It's too obvious it's about oil".

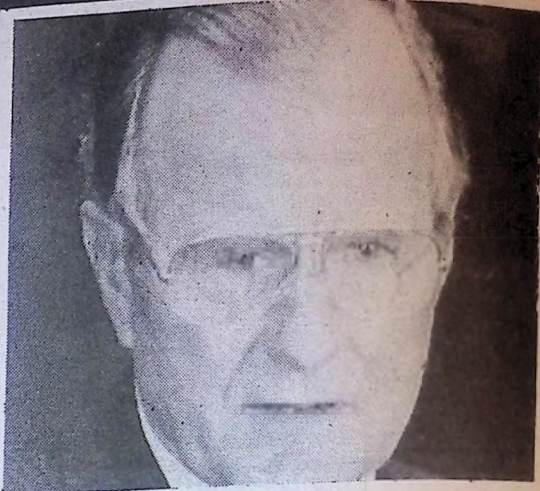
In Egypt, Syria and in Saudi Arabia, there is increasing nervousness about the reaction of their own people to an attack on another Arab country.

At the same time, there can be no doubt that the Western leaders want war. To pull back now would be to show weakness to a world they are finding it increasingly difficult to control anyway.

The force they have assembled in the desert is clearly for attack, not defence: its very presence creates its own momentum for attack.

In this situation, war could erupt at any moment. The issue is not one of sanctions, 'peaceful means' or neutrality.

Socialists have to take sides against western imperialists and demand their withdrawal. The time to build the anti-war movement is now.



**★ ANTI GULF WAR NEWS**

*Hell no, we won't go! We won't fight for Texaco!*

This is the chant which greeted George Bush in growing volume as he campaigned across America in Congressional elections in the last month. Opposition to war in the Gulf has grown along with understanding of what it's really about—not the 'defence of small nations' but of oil profits. Opposition has also been building in Europe and in Ireland North and South.

SWM members have taken the lead in organising well-received street petitions and protest meetings. Although the movement is still small, the basis is being laid for the mass activity which will be necessary when and if open war breaks out.

The fact that we are still in a 'phoney war' situation has convinced many who are against the US-led presence that there's no need for activity. This will change quickly as soon as shooting starts.

Last month in *Dublin* the SWM was to the fore in the No to War in the Gulf Committee's rally at the GPO and picket of the US Embassy.

In *Belfast* and *Derry*, members have collected signatures at shopping centres for the 'U.S. and Britain out of the Gulf' petition.

The SWM in *Limerick* has been involved in organising the first public protest, focussing particularly on the re-fuelling of US war-planes at Shannon.



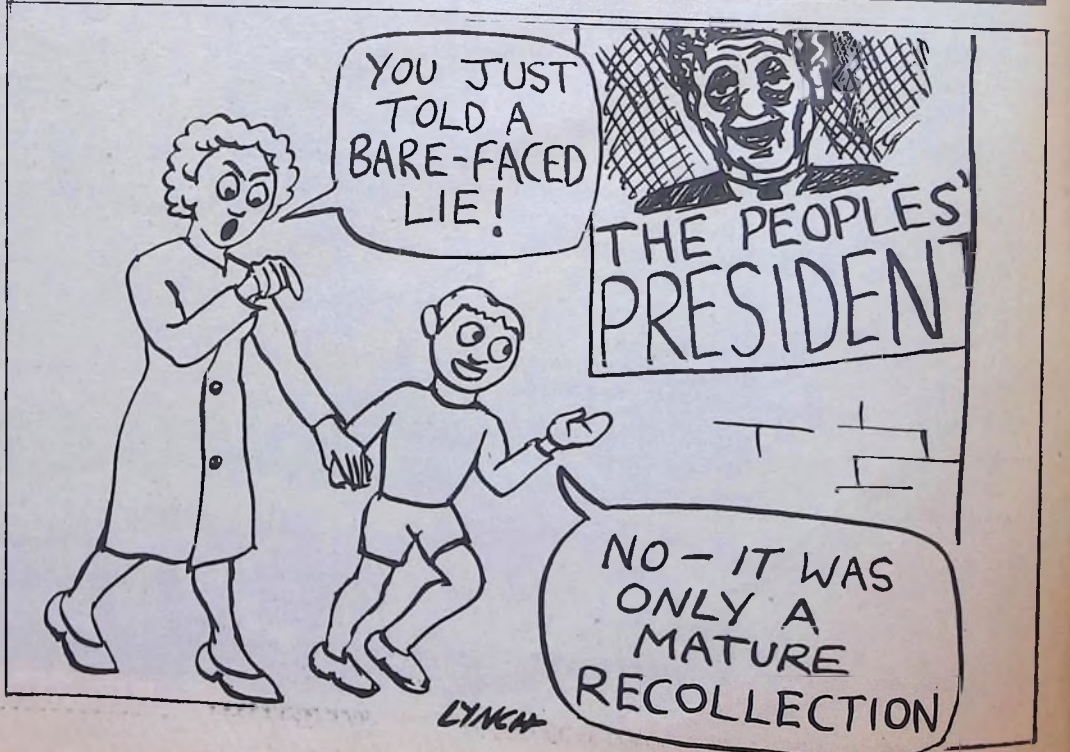
Anti-war protests

**CORK ACTION**

Opposition to war in the Gulf is mounting in Cork. A meeting called by CND in October, which drew a magnificent audience of over 150 people, heard Senator Brendan Ryan lambast Bush for sending troops and threatening terrible war to re-store a feudal monarchy in Kuwait and to ensure a continuous flow of cheap oil.

The Cork branch of the SWM followed up the meeting by writing to all left groups in the City proposing the formation of an anti-war campaign. The launch meeting proved successful, and within a week campaigning was underway. Thousands of leaflets have already been distributed, and a petition against US military re-fuelling at Shannon is gathering many signatures.

The early priorities have been to build a public profile for the campaign, and to pull more people into activity. If a solid base is established now, the campaign can grow and become very effective.



# WE THINK

## NOT A MORAL ISSUE

THE UPSURGE of violence in the North last month prompted the usual spate of moralistic condemnation.

The IRA's use of people who do work for the security forces as 'proxy-bombers', in particular the killing of Patsy Gillespie in Derry, drew especially strong reaction.

Some churchmen, politicians and media commentators have speculated that revulsion might be so deep as to drain support away from the IRA in nationalist areas.

Even some who are generally sympathetic to the Republicans have voiced disapproval of recent killings.

But in fact there is no reason to believe there will be any serious effect on IRA support.

The IRA's credibility arises from the fact that no way can be devised of incorporating the Catholics on equal terms

within the Northern state. The collapse of Peter Brooke's 'talks' initiative the day after the 'proxy bombs' bears this out.

It isn't just a question of no formula being found for 'power-sharing'. Catholics in the North are materially disadvantaged—more than twice as likely as Protestants to be jobless, for example.

It's often argued that the degree of oppression which exists doesn't justify armed struggle. This is an abstract moral calculation.

The point is that as long as no constitutional remedy for the oppression can be found there will be a sufficient basis for the armed struggle to continue and it will.

And it will continue to involve grisly incidents like last month's. This is the nature of the enterprise. Those—and they are many—who wish the campaign were 'cleaner' so that they could feel more comfortable about supporting it are missing the point,



probably deliberately.

From the socialist viewpoint, it's the tactic of armed struggle itself, not the particular application of it, which is the problem.

The armed struggle relegates the mass of the people to the position of spectators at the struggle. The masses can be called in

when needed to show support for a particular aspect of the struggle, but are always in an ancillary role.

The essence of socialism, on the other hand, is that people must accomplish their own liberation. Socialists argue, therefore, that we should look to the mass of the

people, and in particular to the organised working class, and not to any secret army, for a way out of the oppressive sectarian set-up.

Such a strategy cannot be advocated alongside support for the tactic of armed struggle. These are clear-cut alternatives, not two sides of the same coin.

## BELFAST: Women's conference

NEARLY 200 women from all over Ireland gathered in Belfast last month for a weekend conference on Women in Ireland in the 1990s.

The Conference, organised by the Women's Studies branch of the Workers Educational Association, was intended to explore the gains and gaps in women's lives and to address the major demands of women as we go into the 1990s.

The Conference organised around forty workshops and did give women the opportunity to discuss activities and demands on a wide variety of issues.

Areas such as health, housework, equal opportunity, political action, education and childcare were among the many topics discussed.

One of the positive aspects was that it brought together women who have been working separately from each other in a wide range of areas such as rape crisis centres, local women's centres, workplaces and in health care and education.

The weekend also made a start in addressing some of the differences which

had caused major divisions several years ago.

Certainly the most popular workshops were those relating to the role of republicanism and catholicism and unionism and protestantism and the divisions among women in the North.

### HESITANT

Much of the discussion was hesitant, reflecting the many years since serious political discussion on issues relating to partition, unionism and feminism had taken place.

There was general agreement on the need for

further exploration of the issues that were just beginning to be addressed—basically on how to work together in a divided society.

Most disappointing about the weekend was the lack of any discussion of activity to address the many areas of real need for women. There was no report back from the many workshops to the plenary which ended the conference. So there was no opportunity to take up the many proposals relating to childcare, education, work and abortion rights that had been discussed in the workshops.

A proposal made at the plenary to protest against the Operation Rescue organisation, recently set up in Belfast, was rejected by the conference committee. It was made clear that we were there to talk, not act.

JOAN MCKIERNAN



ON October 24 over 350 students marched on Leinster House to pro-

test against the grants system. Up to seven weeks after con-

firmation of their grants, the majority have not received a penny.

Students in the South whose parents earn more than £11,000 gross are ineligible for a grant. This rises gradually taking into account the number of dependant children, but it means that the majority of students receive no financial help whatever.

Maintenance grants for the poorest students are only £550 per year. Students living less than 15 miles from their place of study receive up to a third of the maintenance grant of those living over 15 miles from their college.

This frequently means students can't choose where to study.

There is no appeal procedure if you are refused a grant. Fees have risen over 400 per cent in the last ten years, grants have risen by a mere 50 per cent.

To make matters worse, local authorities sit on these grants (which can be huge amounts when you consider the number of students) for as long as possible to earn as much interest as possible in the bank.

Pat from Dublin is 25, married with two children. He has been refused a grant to study at UCD even though his household income is less than that required for a grant—because his parents earn over the limit!

USI has launched a campaign in response to horror stories of overcrowding, squalor and education cuts. Unfortunately the emphasis seems to be on writing letters to the *Irish Times* and winning "public opinion".

The demonstration to the Leinster House was lively but instead of having a rally, a band was the main attraction. This just left people to stand around passively and drift away.

USI need to realise that we have to fight to win. We need to be building in the colleges, with meetings, demonstrations and leafletting. We need to make links with various teacher, and lecturer's, unions and bring them into the fight against education cuts.

Nothing will be gained by a passive campaign based on letter-writing.

UCD SWSS

# No Left lead from Robinson

"THE BEST thing to happen to the Left since the foundation of the State" has been one summing up of Mary Robinson's presidential campaign, and it's easy to see why.

The campaign has proved a much more successful vote-winner than any previous Left effort—far ahead of the combined Labour-Workers Party poll in all recent elections.

Any boost for the left is to be welcomed if only for providing a more congenial atmosphere for socialists to work in. But the enormous limitations of the Robinson campaign, and the weakness and vagueness of the politics involved, have to be faced up to as well.

One of Robinson's main points of appeal was that she represented something 'new'. The very fact that she wasn't Fianna Fail or Fine Gael was a plus point with a section of the electorate fed up to the teeth with the vicious bickering of the two right wing parties.

Indeed, she may have been helped by the fact that she wasn't even a Labour Party member either, but had a semi-detached relationship with them and a separate WP endorsement. This made her a vaguely non-party candidate with strong Left associations—an attractive proposition for many people who have grown cynical about the entire Right-dominated party political system in the South.

She was boosted by her personal association with various progressive campaigns over the past twenty years. She was involved in campaigns for contraception and divorce, led the legal attack on anti-gay legislation and for ending of 'illegitimate' status on children born outside marriage.

As a barrister she has represented the students charged with distributing abortion information and is the NUJ's counsel in the case against Section 31.

She had a lot going for her and was already established as the main alternative to Lenihan by the time Fine Gael got its candidate into the field.

But there were no clear-cut socialist ideas in the package Robinson put before the electorate. The fact that this was a presidential and not a parliamentary election meant that no sharp-edged commitments were necessary. This is not to say that she couldn't have offered the electorate hard choices—on the right to abortion information, for example. But she didn't have to, and chose not to.

She concentrated on talking about how the role of the Presidency might be modernised and made more 'relevant', within the existing constitutional set-up. What all this amounted to was that Mary Robinson offered a new, vigorous, progressive image for the presidency—which, clearly, many people found attractive.

It was obviously attractive far outside the ranks of Left voters. Many thousands who never voted Labour or WP must have given her their number one. But it is far from

clear that these were attracted over to the Left.

Robinson was also the darling of the yuppies. Her previous stance on the North had a lot to do with this.

She resigned from the Labour Party in 1985 in protest

of the PDs in some constituencies.

Thus not only did Robinson's support-base extend outside the Left, it included elements who are explicitly and forthrightly anti-Left. Robinson was content to accept this support, indeed actively sought it, just as she openly sought transfers from Fine Gael.

Nobody in Labour or the Workers' Party publicly dissented from this strategy throughout the campaign. This tells us something about the drift of thinking within the established Left parties.

It also gives us reasons to be careful about how to read the result. The notion that the size of Robinson's vote shows the Left the way forward is a



Mary Robinson

against the Anglo-Irish Agreement, arguing that the Loyalist viewpoint had been ignored. She is a long-time opponent of Articles Two and Three of the Constitution. And she has spoken strongly in favour of extradition.

These views harmonise very well with that sizable section of the middle class which wants the South to become a fully 'modern' European state, neither hidebound by religious prejudice nor caught up in any old-fashioned nationalist sentiment. They tend to be in favour of divorce and free access to contraception etc. and also want nothing to do with the North. They hate union militancy, prefer Ken Maginnis to John Hume, probably vote PD.

It was no accident that Robinson had the active campaigning support of members

dangerous delusion. In the first place, it is wrong to categorise it simply as an explicitly Left vote.

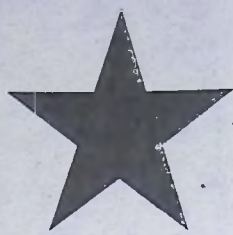
And insofar as it does represent an advance for the Left, it's an advance based on compromise, fudge and opportunist alliance with the Right.

Most important, there was no whiff whatever of struggle from the Robinson campaign, no notion that working class people and oppressed groups in Irish society might best free themselves through their own efforts, through organising, mobilising for a fight.

Instead, they were told that Mary Robinson as president would somehow symbolise a better Ireland for all.

This is not the way forward for serious socialists. But it is likely the way forward the established Left leaderships will now opt for.

## NORTH AND SOUTH, EAST AND WEST,



# The fight

## College campaign goes on

STUDENTS returning to third level colleges in October found no information on abortion in Trinity or NUI Colleges student handbooks.

Students in Dublin City University, some of the Dublin Institute of Technology Colleges and some Regional Technical Colleges were luckier. It is still unclear whether SPUC are going to take any action against those student unions who carried out their mandate to provide the information.

Socialist Worker talked to Gillian Ni Barlo, Welfare Rights Officer in Dublin City University, about the Right to Information Campaign.

When we published our Student Union Handbook in October, we included the telephone numbers of the Women's Information Network here in Dublin, and the British Pregnancy Advisory Service numbers in London. After that, there were various articles in newspapers saying that SPUC (the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child) was consulting with its lawyers. But they haven't actually moved on us at all. Of course, we don't know whether they are going to, or whether they will wait and see what we do next.

What will you do if they move? If they do move it will probably be the Student President here, Brian Gormley or myself that gets hit. That's what they did in Trinity last year, and UCD the year before. When we publish our welfare magazine the information will be in that as well. We are not going to stop publishing—we are under mandate from the students. If it means going to court, we'll go to court.

What about the other Dublin colleges? Trinity didn't publish the information in their handbook because they felt it would be asking for trouble after last year. UCD aren't either: they've got a policy against the right to information at the moment.

The National College of Art and Design (NCAD) will provide the information. Cathal Brugha St. are providing the information. They are in an extraordinary situation at the moment. It wasn't SPUC that moved on them, it was their Governing body! They told them that if they didn't stop providing the information that they would be kicked out.

There was rumours about expulsion, withdrawing grants etc. The Student Union executive felt that the only way for them, if they were prevented from providing the information which they were under mandate to

provide, was to resign. As it turned out they couldn't resign and the last I heard was they held an emergency meeting and revoked the referendum which had put them under mandate!

Of course, this throws all the other Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) colleges under the same threat. If they succeed in one college, then Kevin St., Bolton St., College of Marketing and Design and Rathmines—all of whom are providing information—are under threat as well.

Why do you think SPUC haven't moved?

Well at the moment, they seem to be concentrating their efforts more on magazines than on students' unions. *Cosmopolitan* have had to take out their page of abortion information and within the last month *She* have had to pull out their page as well.

### JUDGEMENT

We think that they will send student magazines that are publishing the information a copy of the judgement from last year and ask them to give an undertaking that they won't publish. We are surprised that at DCU we haven't received a letter like this by now, given that it is quite a few weeks since we published.

Why do you feel so strongly about this issue?

I first got involved last year when the students were taken to court. I feel very strongly that a woman has the right to control her own fertility. There are always going to be cases where contraception doesn't work, and there will always be some cases of unwanted pregnancy.

Some people will say they agree with abortion in cases of rape or incest but that's it. I don't feel that women should prove that they have undergone a certain trauma level before they are allowed to justify an abortion. I feel that if a woman feels that abortion is the only option for her, then you've no right to tell her "sorry love, you've no right to take that decision, we've just

For information on abortion:

Telephone 01 6794700

Donations to the Student Defence Fund should be sent to: SDF, TCD Students Union, House 6, TCD, Dublin 6

COP-OUT IN CORK

taken it for you, you're going on with this pregnancy". I don't believe anyone has the right to tell a woman that she is stuck with being an incubator for a child that she doesn't want.

How do you think you can extend the campaign of resistance to SPUC beyond the colleges?

Through groups like the Right to Information Campaign group, through leafletting campaigns, so that women know that there is somewhere they can turn to. The more we can get the numbers out, the more successful we are.

I think the trade unions are very important, be it through their union noticeboards or elsewhere. The Women's Information Network has just produced a new fact-pack giving details of abortion facilities in Britain, and we have sent this out to trade unions and women's groups all over the country.

You also work on the helpline. What sort of women phone?

Everybody from the student who is about 19-20, to sixteen year olds, to women who are married who don't want or can't afford another child, women who are separated, also women who have been raped. I talk to all sorts of women. And many from outside Dublin—Galway, Limerick, Cork, Wicklow. The University of Limerick has started giving out our number and since then we have been getting more and more calls from Limerick. It's also much more desperate for women in country areas.

It is also a class issue. The rich will never have the same problem. It's a problem which effects working class women. I have never had a woman on the phone to me who didn't have problems trying to get the money together. It's the working class who are turning to us because women who have money have their own ways round these problems.

University College Cork (UCC) Students Union are once again attempting to silence opposition to their despicable stance on abortion information.

On Societies Day, Socialist Worker Student Society (SWSS) was forced to close it's stall after refusing to remove a pamphlet on abortion produced by the Women's Information Network. Unfortunately, the decision of the Socialist Society to conform with the ban left SWSS isolated.

Subsequently, SWSS were suspended, and have been threatened with a ban for refusing to give an undertaking not to distribute abortion information in the future.

However, there has been disquiet about the decision. At a meeting of the Societies Guild, a motion condemning the action of the Guild Executive was only narrowly defeated - by just one vote.

As we go to press, SWSS are campaigning hard against suspension, in an attempt to force the issue to an Extraordinary General Meeting of all students.

MARNIE HOLBOROW

DOMINIC CARROLL

NORTH AND SOUTH, EAST AND WEST, NORTH AND SOUTH, EAST AND

# for abortion rights

NORTH  
FIGHT  
BACK  
AGAINST  
S.P.U.C.

FOR THE first time SPUC's annual conference in Belfast last month was picketed by protestors supporting a woman's right to choose.

The picket was organised on the initiative of members of the SWM. Women, men and children carrying banners

demanding 'End the Silence', 'Stop SPUC censorship', and 'Every Child a Wanted Child' gathered to attack SPUC's continuous assault on women's rights.

The protestors included members of the Northern Ireland Abortion Law Reform Association, the SWM, the Women's Centre for Advice and Information and other supporters of abortion rights.

Anna Eggert of NIALRA pointed out that over 1,500 women from the North go to Britain for abortions every year. She condemned SPUC's campaign, stating that it stigmatised and criminalised women who had abortions and threatened their right to choose whether they wanted to continue with their pregnancy.

The picket showed that it is possible to get

support for women's right to choose in the North. It is important because of too long SPUC and other right-wing organisations have been able to get their own way and dominate the discussion in the media and in working class communities. These organisations are very confident looking for new ways to attack women's rights.

At this recent conference SPUC discussed

plans to step up their campaign to outlaw all abortions (about 500 abortions are carried out in the North every year for medical reasons or because of handicap). They are also organising to stop the possibility of the new abortion drug, RU486, from being sold in Ireland.

Another organisation, Rescue, has set up a shopfront on the Falls Road. They have come here to organise groups from Ireland to take part

in their outrageous assaults on abortion clinics in Britain, further intimidating and causing distress for Irish women who travel to Britain for abortions.

Hopefully, the picket on the SPUC conference will be just the first step in bringing activists together to reinvigorate the campaign against SPUC and Rescue and to support Irish women's rights to choice on abortion.

JOAN MCKIERNAN

## Rights under threat in East Europe

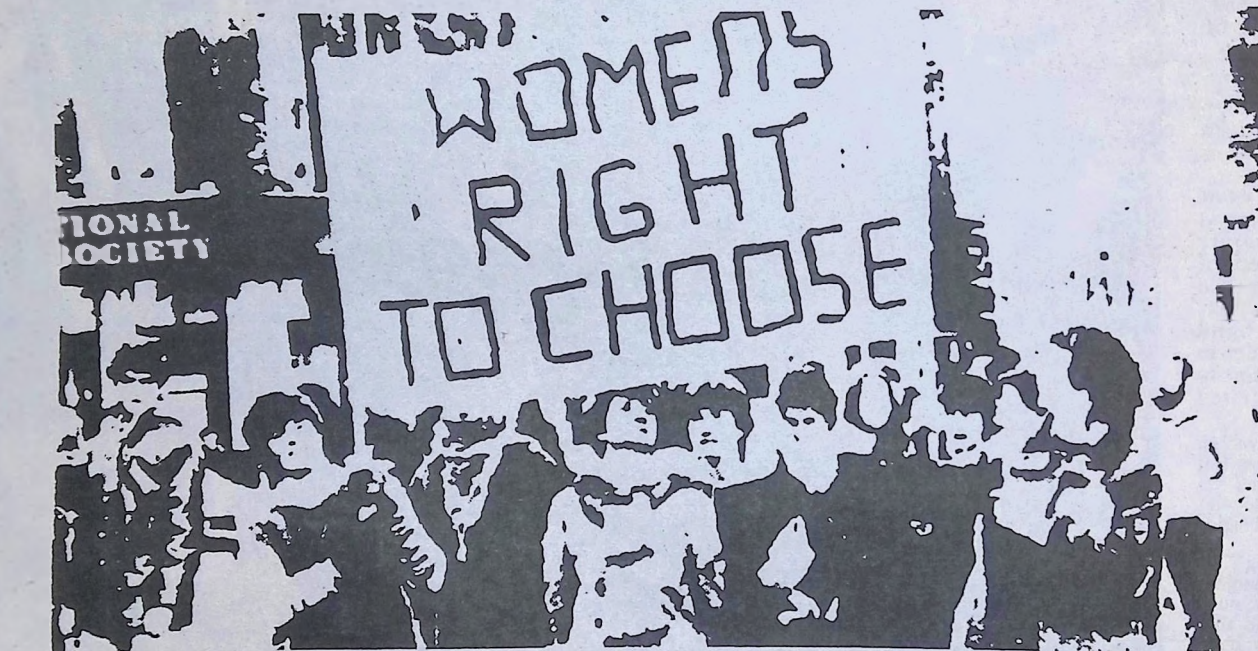
The legalisation of abortion in Romania following the overthrow of Ceausescu brought out the connection between a woman's right to choose and political freedom generally.

However, developments in other countries of Eastern Europe have not been so straightforward or encouraging.

The liberal abortion laws in East Germany are under threat following reunification. Kohl and his Christian Democrats want rid of a law which allows abortion on demand in the early weeks of pregnancy. They tried to bring East in line with the West. But the outcry was too great.

Unable to reach agreement, the two parts will now keep separate laws for two years and women from the West will not be prosecuted for abortions carried out in the East.

In Poland, abortion is in the process of being outlawed. There, a 1956 law had provided for abortion on demand in the early stages of pregnancy. By a vote of 50 to 17, Poland's Senate has made abortion illegal and



punishable by five years in jail.

The new law still has to pass through the Sejm, or lower House. But there is little hope of it being defeated. Parliamentary elections are planned for early next year and the influence of the Catholic Church ensures that most Solidarity deputies are anti-abortion.

But, as in Ireland, official Catholic teaching and the reality of people's lives are very different. Recently, up to 600,000 abortions were performed in Poland annually, most on married women who felt they could not cope with a larger family. A study this year by the government-financed Public Opinion Research Centre, found that 45 percent of Poles were pro-choice and 40 percent anti-, with the rest somewhere in-between.

As in other countries of Eastern Europe—Czechoslovakia, the USSR, Bulgaria and Hungary—the easy availability of abortion in East Germany and Poland did not mean that women

had real choice about unplanned pregnancies. Many were forced to have abortions because of poverty, overcrowded housing, inadequate health care and the lack of childcare facilities.

For many women, abortion was the only form of birth control available because contraceptives are so hard to come by. So, in Russia most women have four or five abortions in their lifetime.

This is not a real right to choose. Women should have the choice to use safe and effective contraceptives. If contraceptives fall, or aren't used for some reason, women need the choice of having a free, safe abortion

or of continuing the pregnancy and having a child in decent circumstances—with proper housing, childcare facilities etc.

But all the indications are that most women in Eastern Europe will have to continue to rely on abortion. Contraceptives are still very scarce and often available only on the black market.

As austerity measures are imposed, childcare facilities are—like everywhere else—among the first to go. Yet, throughout Eastern Europe (except for Romania) there is talk of restricting abortion rights.

In Czechoslovakia, there is growing pressure from the Catholic Church and from political groups particularly in the Slovak region for a repeal of the country's 1987 abortion law which provides for free abortions in state

hospitals up to eight weeks of pregnancy.

Why is this happening? Why, amid all the talk of new freedoms, are women's freedoms being restricted?

In short, it's to serve the needs of the economic system as state capitalism is abandoned for integration into the free-enterprise world market.

The restructuring of the economies, the much-hailed move to the market, will mean millions of workers being thrown onto the dole queues. Already, Poland's "reforms" have made tens of thousands unemployed. Economists predict an unemployment level of over half a million if Polish economic plans are "successful".

The picture is the same all over. The prospect of real social unrest, of revolutions that go much further than those of 1989, hangs over the rulers of Poland, Czechoslovakia etc. And, in the East, as in the West, women are made into workers or mothers depending on what suits the system.

At the moment, nothing would suit capitalism better than to have the women of Eastern Europe back in the home, not in the dole queues, not on the streets demonstrating and not in the jobs which will be ever scarcer.

Gorbachev himself spelt this out in his book *Perestroika: New Thinking for our Country and the World*, published in 1987. He said:

"Women no longer have enough time to perform their everyday duties at home—housework, the upbringing of children and the creation of a good family atmosphere...many of our problems—in chil-

dren's and young people's behaviour, in our morals, culture and in production—are partially caused by the weakening of family ties...We are holding heated debates, in the press, in public organisations, at work and at home, put the question of what we should do to make it possible for women to return to their purely womanly mission."

But Ceausescu's Romania showed that making abortion illegal does not stop abortion or improve the lives of children. In Romania, women who had abortions were thrown in prison, subjected to degrading gynaecological examinations in public and risked maiming for life by botched backstreet abortions. Yet they continued to have abortions rather than provide another inmate for the wretched, overflowing orphanages.

In the short term, the changes in Eastern Europe offer women little more than unemployment, economic hardship and a return to the "family values" that lock women in the home.

But the working class of Eastern Europe is hundreds of millions strong. At the end of 1989 we saw the power they can have to bring down governments and force change.

Half of those workers are women. In the USSR, women make up 52 percent of the workforce.

Sooner or later, the workers will recover their confidence and start to fight back—to defend their jobs, their living and working conditions. There's no knowing where the fightback will start or on what issue. Some East European socialists say it might be in East Germany—in defence of abortion rights.

GORETTI HORGAN

**Abortion:**  
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# THE NEW P WORLD IM

**THE END** of the cold war means the beginning of world peace. That was the general belief just a few months ago. A series of summits and arms deals seemed to herald a new era of international goodwill. Armies all over Europe were packing up to go home and there was talk everywhere of a "peace dividend", as spending on weapons was cut back. Then Iraq invaded Kuwait and suddenly it was clear just how fragile the "peace" really was. Now there's nervousness again about the future. So what has happened?

Are the super-powers really disarming, and if so why? Is imperialism a thing of the past? Is the Gulf crisis the last spasm of the old way of doing things—or the shape of things to come?

In this article, *Mark Ferguson* examines the facts behind the propaganda and charts the likely course of future events.

**THE LIKELIHOOD** is that the post-Cold War world will be less stable than before—politically, economically and militarily. Economically, the world is more integrated than ever, with the production of some commodities—makes of car, electronic goods—spread across a number of countries and even continents. Deregulation is gradually eroding the importance of borders.

So there's more need than ever for the industrialised countries to coordinate policies and production.

However, the very same set of circumstances has encouraged the emergence of separate economic blocs. The rulers of individual countries, frightened of losing control over their "own" economies, band together with others in order to establish a big enough bloc to hold its own in an integrated world.

So the EC represents a coming together of national economies. But it's a coming together against the rest of the world, as the dispute with the US over agricultural subsidies shows.

Meanwhile, Japan, through its integration into the world economy, has become a major economic power in its own right. And this economic strength enables it to display a political and strategic independence which would have been unthinkable a few years ago.

Japan now has the third biggest arms budget in the world. Its rapidly growing economy has enabled it to increase military spending at five percent a year while keeping this steady at one percent of GNP.

The result was seen at the summit of major industrialised powers in Houston this year when Japan made it clear it would form closer economic links with China, but not with the USSR—the direct opposite of what the US was demanding.

## RUTHLESS

The reason was that Japan is at loggerheads with the USSR over Soviet occupation of a number of disputed islands north of Hokkaido. And it's now strong enough to assert its own particular interests.

The growing economic strength of Germany produces an even more complex situation.

In every phase of the process of reunification West Germany acted on its own. In November last year, Kohl announced a decision to go for unity as rapidly as possible without consulting any NATO ally. Then he caused consternation by refusing to give guarantees about the Polish border until unity was assured.

He refused to have Lance missiles sited in West Germany and agreed a bi-lateral deal with the USSR on troop withdrawals, in return for



Gorbachev and Bush laughing at our expense

Gorbachev's agreement that a united Germany could be in NATO.

All this has forced the Western powers to reassess their relationship with Germany. It's forced the Americans to rethink their attitude to European integration. They want a united Germany locked securely into a West European alliance for fear of a too-close independent German relationship with the USSR.

On the other hand, an influential section of the British ruling class, for which Nicholas Ridley has spoken, is very wary of integration in case Germany totally dominates the new entity.

So no single power now has the capacity to impose its will on other parts of the world. The US is still much the biggest power, but in a situation where a number of powers try to control an unstable world between them, while simultaneously competing with one another.

This is hardly a recipe for a new era of world peace.

Indeed, given the fact that despite all the talk of arms reductions there is greater capacity of mass destruction in the world today than ever before in history, the outlook is desperately dangerous.

**THE USSR EMERGED** from WW2 as the third biggest economy in the world—after the US and Britain. Its power rested on its military and strategic position more than on economic strength.

From the end of the war until the 1960s the USSR economy grew steadily. During the fifties it bypassed Britain. In the seventies it reached the height of its strategic power, reaching out around the world, to Central America, Africa and Asia as well as Eastern Europe.

The politics of the globe became dominated by the political, economic and military struggle between the USSR and the US.

However, at no time did the USSR economy rise

about half the size of the US economy. This had enormous consequences for the super-power rivalry.

In order to match the Americans, tank for tank, plane for plane, missile for missile, the USSR had to devote twice the percentage of its resources to military spending as the US. And its Warsaw Pact allies were far less able to contribute to the cost than America's NATO partners.

Through the ever-escalating cost of military competition, the US was able to bring the USSR eventually to its knees—although it weakened itself to near-exhaustion in the process.

This is the background to Gorbachev's disarmament initiatives

since he won power in 1985. For the same reason, he has also tried to free the USSR from its commitments to Third World allies, mainly through cooperating with the US in "peace-plans" in southern Africa, Central America and the Gulf.

By the eighties the USSR economy—inefficient, corrupt and lop-sided because of the armaments expenditure—had lost the momentum for growth and begun to go into reverse. So as well as cutting back on military commitments Gorbachev needed to "restructure", which in turn called for a loosening of political control.

Thus, "perestroika" and

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# THE NEW PATTERN OF WORLD IMPERIALISM



WHEN THE WORLD was divided into two camps, each camp was able to "discipline" its own clients. Now that discipline has gone.

This has happened at a time of massively increased arms spending in the Third World. Third World military budgets quadrupled between 1960 and 1980 and has recently been rising at twice the rate of the developed countries.

THE SETTLEMENT which ended World War Two in coming to an end.

Out of the war, two super-powers emerged, strong enough to divide Europe between them. Of the two superpowers, the US was much the stronger.

In 1945 the US was producing half the world's coal, half the world's electricity, two thirds of the world's oil and more steel than the next two countries, the USSR and Britain, combined.

The US used this economic power to establish its international dominance.

It gave economic aid to help western Europe's recovery—the "Marshall Plan"—and demanded political subservience in return. Its military leadership of the West was formalised through the setting up of NATO.

As well, there was a series of pacts giving the US "rights" across the globe—the Rio Pact covering North and South America; the ANZUS Treaty involving the south western Pacific; the SEATO Treaty with the Philippines, Pakistan, and Thailand etc.

The US regarded its forces as the cops of the world, ready to intervene and impose its own law-and-order almost anywhere.

But within a relatively short time the US began to lose out in the race for growth. Its economy did continue to expand—but at a slower rate than many of its rivals.

Between 1955 and 1970 productive capacity in the US grew by 57 percent. But in western Europe the figure was 116 percent. In Japan it was more than 500 percent.

Between 1945 and 1980, the US share of world manufacturing output fell from more than half to less than a third. By the beginning of the eighties both Western Europe and Japan had passed it in car production.

Along with this relative economic decline, America began to lose its absolute military dominance. The defeat in Vietnam brought this home.

SEATO ceased to exist in 1977. The ANZUS alliance fell into disuse. And NATO allies no longer did the Pentagon's bidding without a murmur.

Only Thatcher's Britain accepted Cruise missiles without argument.

It was overwhelming economic power which provided the basis for American military might.

And economic decline brought an end to total military control.

This has resulted from dramatic changes in political structures and relationships.

The end of direct colonial rule brought indigenous ruling classes to power. Many of these had to arm themselves heavily to fill the space left by the departed colonial regime. They needed to be able to defend themselves against regional rivals and also to impose their rule on their "own" masses, who in many instances hadn't benefitted significantly from political independence.

As the joint dominance of the two super-powers faded, many of these regimes were willing and able to make and break alliances both with neighbours and with major powers as they squirmed and manoeuvred under the twin pressures of unrest at home and economic and political pressure internationally.

This is the background to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2nd.

Iraq is an independent state with a repressive nationalist regime and formidable military power. In the eighties, the West watched as it tried to take out its regional rival Iran and establish local supremacy. The US gave it crucial backing in the "tanker war".

But when it moved against Kuwait, a close and important ally, it went too far. The West prepared for war.

The US took the lead, showing that it is still the most powerful nation in the world—but not as overwhelmingly as before.

The US felt the need to win international backing for its action. Other considerations apart, with its economy on the verge of recession it literally couldn't afford to carry through the actions on its own.

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Imperialism is not a thing of the past. The new imperialism may be more complex and shifting, as different blocs of world capitalism watch one another warily, manoeuvre for position, and individually or collectively make decisions about when, where, how and in what combinations to intervene.

The threat of war and mass destruction has not been lifted. And the reasons for that haven't changed.

It's rooted in the rivalries between competing bands of capitalists, as they tear the world apart in their frenzy to claim a share of the spoils. The task of fighting to overthrow their rule remains as urgent as ever.

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"glasnost". The general idea—some of his Eastern European allies were ahead of him on it—was to open up to the world economy in the hope that the threat of competition would drive productivity up, and attract investment in.

The ruling classes of the East realised that old-style state capitalism couldn't keep up any more. They wanted some alternative method which would combine elements of the old system with greater integration into the multi-national system of the rest of the world.

However, the revolutions which erupted as soon as political control was loosened forced the pace of events, and threatened Gorbachev's empire with break-up.



the new world order?

JOHN M  
  
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AMERICAN imperialism sees itself playing for high stakes in the Gulf. Recent statements from Bush and secretary of state Baker depict the Gulf crisis as crucial in setting the terms for a new world order.

Their thinking goes roughly like this:

Provided we can knock out Saddam Hussein America will emerge as undisputed leader in a world in which our principal opponents, the USSR, have thrown in the towel and accepted Western values and free market economics.

This new order will be one of unprecedented international cooperation and prosperity in which the major powers, led by the USA, act in concert to preserve global law and order.

Providing an "intellectual" accompaniment to these hopes and speculations is Francis Fukuyama with his theory, "The End of History".

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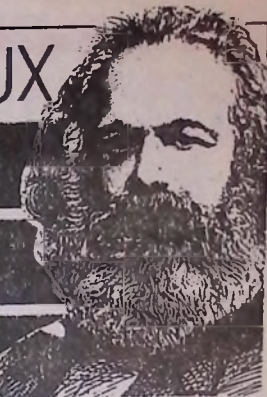
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JOHN MOLYNEUX



Teach yourself Marxism



## Limits to Bush's new dream

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THE LAST TIME a US president had a dream like Bush—Saigon, 1968

revolution. It was merely a matter of time before the rest of the world would follow.

This was almost immediately discredited by the Vietnam War, the black revolt and the other upheavals of the 60s.

That such illusions are nothing new is demonstrated by Shelley's marvellous little satirical poem "Ozymandias".

This tells of a powerful tyrant who had erected in his own honour a huge statue. On the pedestal was written: "My Name is Ozymandias, King of Kings—Look On My Works, Ye Mighty, And Despair!"

Now, with the passing of time, all that remains are: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone," while, "Near them on the sand, half sunk, a shattered visage lies," monuments to the arrogance of power and the mortality of empires.

There is every reason to expect not only that Bush's current dream of American power will eventually meet the same fate but that it won't even get off the ground.

Marxists reject on principle the notion of a prolonged period of harmony and stability under capitalism.

In the first place the intense dynamism of the system and the inevitable unevenness of the process undermines the stability of all its regimes and any particular balance of power.

The relative economic, political and military strength of nation states rises and falls at a far faster rate under capitalism than any previous system.

In the second place there are the internal contradictions of the capitalist economy—the tendency for the rate of profit to fall, the pressure towards overproduction or inflation, the oscillation between boom and slump.

All of these can produce a sudden eruption of economic crisis, shattering the solidity of any regime.

In the third place there is the inevitability of anti-imperialist revolt by the oppressed nationalities.

Finally, and most important of all, there is the continuing class struggle which operates within national boundaries and cuts across them.

All these factors would work to destabilise the projected American led world order, adding to the already severe decline of the US economy.

The American ruling class is hoping to use the Gulf crisis to aid its ailing economy. But it's much more likely that the "new" American Empire, like so many empires in the past, will find itself overextended in relation to its basic economic strength.

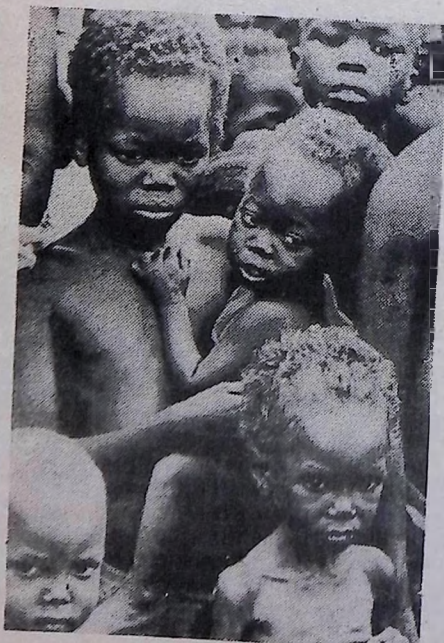
### Power

Of course such empires can survive for a period. There is never an automatic correspondence between economic and political power.

Nevertheless, politics does rest on economics and a deepening imbalance between the two cannot be sustained for long. The role of world policeman is likely to prove a millstone around America's neck leading to external and internal collapse.

At any rate the world situation will be anything but prosperous, harmonious and peaceful.

All this, however, is based on America achieving a fairly swift and conclusive victory in the Gulf. If they fail in this or even have to pay a very high price for it, US imperialism will enter a severe crisis which will offer opportunities for the oppressed and exploited worldwide.



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# Saddam Hussein: Neither Hitler nor Nasser

IS Saddam Hussein "the new Hitler"?

Or is he "the new Nasser", as millions in the Arab world see him?

Nasser was the Egyptian leader who toppled the corrupt king Farouk in the early fifties, threw British troops out of his country, nationalised the Suez Canal and survived a joint invasion by Britain, France and Israel.

The comparison with Hitler is completely misplaced. Saddam Hussein *does* use torture and murder. But so do many of the US-backed regimes of Latin America, the French-backed regimes of central Africa and the British-backed regimes of the Arabian peninsula.

Germany in the 1930s was the world's second industrial power and the most populous state in Western Europe, but had been weakened by defeat in the first world war.

Its ruling class turned to Hitler because he offered them a double prospect—first to smash the powerful working class movement by mobilising against it every barbarous instinct of the middle classes, and, second, to extend the country's frontiers until it would be the world's greatest superpower.

Iraq, by contrast, is a minor industrial power, with a population of only 14 million (a third the size of Egypt or of Iran).

Saddam's Ba'ath Party has used murder and torture to destroy working class organisations. But Saddam Hussein cannot aspire to dominate the world or even the whole of the Middle East. The most he could achieve by military expansion would be to increase his control over the Gulf's oil supplies.

This would hardly make him all-powerful, since his only interest in controlling the oil is to be able to sell it, and he could not do that unless he struck deals with Western companies to buy it.

## THREATENS

It is not the world he threatens. At most he offers a limited challenge to oil sheiks and oil companies and to Western companies whose profitability depends on cheap oil.

But if Saddam is not the new Hitler, neither is he a "new Nasser", a modern anti-imperialist hero.

Nasser himself only fought imperialism spasmodically. He repeatedly did deals with it, as in 1969-70 when he allowed the Jordanian government to attack the Palestinians.

Saddam has never seriously fought imperialism, although his Ba'ath party was founded in the 1940s by intellectuals who argued for Arab unity in the face of division into rival countries brought about by Western colonial powers.

The early Ba'athists built their organisation by recruiting a section of the middle class in Syria and Iraq. These people were excluded from power by the regimes set up by the colonialists, but were very privileged compared to the mass of workers and peasants.

This class wanted to get rid of the old governments. But it did not want mass revolution from below which might threaten it itself. So it looked to conspiracies among middle class army officers to win power.

In the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s the key role in the anti-imperialist movement in Iraq was played by precisely the mass working class agitation which the middle class feared.



Saddam Hussein will not fight consistently against imperialism

The British-appointed Iraqi monarchy was overthrown in 1958 by a group of officers led by Karim Qasim. A wave of mass struggle followed in which the Communist Party played a major role. The Western media were horrified, treating Qasim like a Communist stooge—although in fact he was jailing Communists.

The Ba'athists sought to build their support by spearheading right wing resistance both to the Qasim government and the left.

Saddam Hussein first made a name for himself in 1959 when he attempted to assassinate Qasim. Four years later the Ba'athists, working with right wing officers, overthrew Qasim. A bloodbath followed, as the Ba'athist National Guard attacked working class areas and murdered thousands of working class militants.

The extent of the Ba'ath regime's "anti-imperialist" credentials can be measured by the fact that the CIA provided assistance with the coup and Western oil companies offered the new government the co-operation they had refused its predecessor!

Once they had government power, the main aim of the middle class activists of the party was to make careers for themselves in the existing state machine.

So—despite the pan-Arabist rhetoric—when in the 1960s the Ba'athists got control of both Syria and Iraq, it did not lead to unity between the two countries, but to a bitter split into two rival Ba'ath parties, each regarding the other as a more dangerous enemy than the Western powers or Israel.

This led Saddam Hussein to organise the assassination of PLO leaders in 1980 because the PLO at the time was allied to Syria. More recently it led him to arm the Christian fascist general Aoun in Beirut, because he fought Syrian in-

fluence until his defeat and exile to France last month.

Saddam's promise to fight Zionism was just as hollow. When war broke out between the Arab states and Israel in 1973, only two divisions of the Iraqi army played any part at all, and they did no serious fighting. The rest of the Iraqi army was meanwhile engaged in a war against the quarter of Iraq's population that is Kurdish.

## ASSAULT

There were 15,000 Iraqi troops in Jordan in 1970. They took no action in defence of the Palestinians when King Hussein launched his bloody "Black September" assault slaughtering several thousand PLO activists.

The history of the party after taking power is a history of bitter internal conflicts over privileged positions in the Iraqi state machine. The winners physically wiped out their opponents, just as they wiped out militant workers or Kurds who opposed them. Typical was Saddam's 1979 purge in which he executed a third of the party's command council.

Totalitarianism allowed a few to hold their positions at the top and turned the rest of the party into a mechanism for servicing their rule. For the few the rewards were great. They ran the country's nationalised industries, as well as the state, and established profitable relationships with private and foreign contractors.

The Ba'athist party, in opposition a party of middle class Arab nationalism, in power became the party linking Iraqi state and private capitalism. In 1980 Saddam Hussein saw a way to strengthen his own position by doing a great favour to imperialism and its client states in the Arabian peninsula.

They were terrified of the impact

of the revolution in Iran on their own people. Saddam sought to relieve them of this fear, and to extend the power of Iraqi capitalism and the Ba'ath party, by launching a war against Iran.

For eight years he was able to virtually forget the cost of the war, as the sheikdoms financed him, the great powers armed him and all the Arab regimes, except Syria and Libya, united to declare him an Arab hero.

But the end of the war brought back all his old problems with a vengeance. With the threat from the Iranian Revolution removed, the oil states no longer saw any reason to finance Saddam Hussein, and his economy was suddenly threatened by its massive war debts.

Saddam moved into Kuwait not to fight imperialism or to help the Arab people, but to get control of oil—the means to pay back the debts he had incurred waging a war in alliance with imperialism.

Despite himself, Saddam brought the wrath of the Western powers down on his head and plunged the Middle East into crisis that could lead to revolution as well as war.

This was not the action of a "new Hitler". But neither was it the action of someone out to lead an anti-imperialist struggle.

## POWERFUL

Socialists cannot be neutral about a war between Iraq and the USA. Bush stands at the head of the most powerful world imperialist state. Behind Bush stands the United Nations—dominated by the great powers—determined to guarantee oil profits.

If Bush wins it will assert its "right" to decide arrangements not only in the Middle East, but in Latin America and beyond.

If Saddam wins, the worst that can be said is that Kuwait's reactionary Emir is repaced by Saddam.

But that would not be the real significance of a US defeat. It would demonstrate that US imperialism is not invincible. That lesson would not be lost on the mass of Arabs, throughout the Middle East, deprived of any share of the oil wealth by US client regimes serving the interests of the giant oil companies.

The message would be heard also by the impoverished millions in the shanty towns of Latin America.

If it comes to war, socialists have, therefore, to support Iraq against the US regardless of the nature of Saddam's regime. But precisely because Saddam is not a genuine anti-imperialist, but a bully who force of circumstance has pitted against the US, socialists have to also point out that he will not lead a consistent and determined fight against imperialism. Rather, he will seek some compromise—whether the Western powers will allow any compromise is another question.

The only way to mobilise the most effective struggle against the US is to conduct a revolutionary war. This means an end to the repression of workers and oppositionists; arming the whole population; offering the Kurds their freedom; removing the parasitic class of Ba'ath cronies living in luxury while the masses tighten their belts.

Since the beginning of the Gulf emergency, masses have taken to the streets throughout the cities of the Middle East against US involvement in the area. Out of this mass of exploited and oppressed the political force to smash US imperialism, Zionism, Saddam, Mubarak and the sheiks can emerge. The starting point is to stand with them against the US war drive and its apologists.

STEVE GREEN

# British Army killings in North 'deliberate policy'

## - Amnesty International

by JOAN MCKIERAN

"I WAS in the front seat looking out. I saw nothing in front of the car, no lights, no jeeps, no one standing in the road with a light or anything like that."

"Then the shooting started. I ducked down. Then the shooting got really bad, really a whole lot of shots being fired at the car."

Sixteen year old Markievicz was lucky. She was able to walk away.

Her friends, Martin Peake and Karen Reilly, were murdered last month making a total of ten joyriders who have been killed in West Belfast since 1980.

As in previous incidents the RUC claimed that the teenagers had "failed to stop at a road block". People are rightly sceptical of British army and police stories about roadblocks.

Five of the people killed in the incidents investigated by John Stalker were said to have burst through checkpoints—but Stalker's inquiries revealed the roadblocks were fictitious.

And, as in previous incidents, the army and police stories that they had shouted a warning before shooting were denied by Markievicz Gorman and other eyewitnesses.

These death, like the killing of three men robbing a bookies in West Belfast last January and the recent Desi Grew and Martin McCaughey killings in Armagh in an SAS-type undercover operation are reminders that in the North, the British army and police know they can kill whom they choose without fear of punishment.

A report published by Amnesty International in 1988 dealt with 49 killings carried out by the army and police between 1982 and 1988. Of the 49 cases, the vast majority killed were Catholics. In 19 incidents, the people were unarmed. In most of the cases where arms were found, there was little or no evidence that the arms had been fired or were near the victims when the shootings occurred.

The shooting of Grew and McCaughey, points to a continuation of the shoot to kill policy. The Gibraltar killings, the 1982 incidents investigated by Stalker, and the killings of Charles Breslin and Michael and David Devine in Strabane in 1985 are the most publicised of many such incidents.

Even a moderate body such as Amnesty International says that "some of the killings by the security forces may have resulted from a deliberate policy at some official level to eliminate, or permit elimination of, rather than



Left: John Stalker and Right: Thatcher

to arrest individuals whom they identified as members of armed opposition groups".

John Stalker very carefully concluded that, though he did not find evidence of a shoot-to-kill policy in the sense of written instruction, "There was a clear understanding on the part of the men whose job it was to pull the trigger that that was what was expected of them".

Few people have ever been prosecuted for these murders. Only one British soldier, Private Ian Thain, who shot dead a West Belfast teenager, was prosecuted for murder while on duty. He was sentenced to life imprisonment but was released after just two years and is now back on active duty.

Another soldier, David Holden, shot Aidan McAnespie after he passed through a permanent army border checkpoint on his way to a Gaelic football match near Aghnacloy in 1988.

Though McAnespie had been constantly threatened by the soldiers, Holden's story that his finger slipped on the trigger was accepted. He was charged with manslaughter and remanded into military custody, but the charge was later dropped.

In the cases investigated by John Stalker, policemen were charged, but acquitted of murder.

Many police and soldiers have escaped prosecution because of a controversial judicial decision in 1975 when a British soldier was acquitted of murdering an innocent civilian, Patrick McElhone, who ran away from him during a search on his farm in Co. Tyrone.

The House of Lords ruled that the soldier had reasonable grounds for believing McElhone to be a terrorist and for fearing imminent danger to himself or

others since, if McElhone had escaped, he "was likely sooner or later to participate in acts of violence".

This decision gave the British army and police the go-ahead to shoot-to-kill.

Given the rarity of prosecutions, there have been increased demands for public or judicial inquiries and greater use of coroners' inquests. But the role of the judiciary in these cases and the experience of inquests show the futility of this.

The first attempt to use coroners' inquests to get at the truth was made by the Breslin and Devine families in Strabane. The proceedings, which lasted for 17 days, were a farce.

First juries in the North cannot make a finding of unlawful killing as they can elsewhere. In the Strabane inquest the coroner told the jury that it was not their role to apportion blame but simply to state who died and when, where and how.

### RULING

In the Strabane inquest the jury found "that the three men had died of multiple gunshot wounds to the head and trunk in a field at 4.55am"—nothing more than the bare facts which were already evident.

As a result of another House of Lords ruling, the soldiers or police who do these killings are not required even to attend the inquests. The SAS soldiers who shot Breslin and the Devine brothers didn't attend the Strabane inquest. Their written statements on the incident were accepted by the court.

The Strabane inquest exposed other aspects of how corrupt the courts are. The families' legal representatives were denied access to official documents before the inquest began. And any faint hope of fair play was undermined by the fact that the RUC actually picks the jury for inquests!

Records of inquests show soldiers and police regularly changing their stories and presenting contradictory evidence. The records also show the lack of any proper investigation by the police into these deaths, and regular abuse of evidence that might be used by the victims' families.

For instance, the RUC destroyed the clothing worn by Charles Breslin and the Devine brothers, thereby preventing forensic re-examination of the clothing by the families' representatives.

Experiences like these, plus the Gibraltar inquest, the regular court decisions supporting the police and army, and the failure of bodies like Amnesty International to get judicial reforms raises very fundamental questions about the role of the courts.

In the North, the law is clearly used to condone the killing of innocent people, of anybody who is even suspected of fighting back. But that aspect of the law is not peculiar to Ireland.

In every society, working class people and oppressed minorities who fight back against injustice can't expect a fair deal from the law. In Britain, the reluctance to free the Birmingham Six points to the unwillingness of the courts to expose the corruption of the state they represent.

The history of authorised killings in the North show that the courts and the entire legal process are only there to sustain their own authority and the legitimacy of the system they represent. Demands for legal inquiries and for legal reforms are mainly of use to Church groups and political parties like the SDLP.

When people are outraged by the atrocities of the police and the army, these groups would much prefer that we called for a "judicial inquiry", rather than fight to overthrow the whole system that the judges and the courts are seeking to maintain.

## What we stand for

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

### FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM

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

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

### NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW

This kind of socialism does not exist anywhere today. Workers do not have control in Russia, China, Cuba etc. Instead, power is held by a state-capitalist class. A workers' revolution is needed in these countries too.

We are against NATO and the Warsaw Pact and all weapons of mass destruction. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination.

### FOR AN END TO PARTITION

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

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

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

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

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

### FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION

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

### FOR A FIGHT IN THE UNIONS

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

### FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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

# Join us!

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

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## REVIEWS

# Teenage Mutant Racist Turtles

"The last thing I need is Japanese emigrants and this feud".

Is *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* a harmless piece of child fiction with a certain appeal to adolescent adults? A dig under the surface and the *Turtles* reveals itself as racist and reactionary.

A crime wave is sweeping New York, with a large gang called "The Foot Clan" among the culprits. The Foot uses unloved and rejected teenage boys to do its dirty work.

It has a cadre of balaclavated ninja fighters and is run by a ninja Master, The Shredder. He is dressed to look super-human with a robot voice and robes but still retains a Japanese accent and ninja appearance.

Led by this Japanese migrant, the Foot represents the systematized corruption of the city's rejected children. The scene from the mouldering basement of the Foots' abode shows the boys being taught ninja skills to be admitted to the ranks of the Clan's faceless warriors.

The Foot feeds from the cracks in American society. The heroine, a TV reporter called April O'Neill, makes the link when she finds that her boss's son joins the Foots when his middle-class father stops communicating with him.

On the other side the *Turtles* are identified with America. They have broad American accents, use American street talk and eat lots of pizza. Even the *Turtles*' mentor Splinter, who is also a migrant, is seen more as an "American-Japanese". Although he is still a ninja master, he eats pizza with his boys. They are held together by their love for each other and by the struggle against evil.

The link between the Foot, Japan and cruelty is firmly made and an equally heavy hand is used to identify the *Turtles* with decency and American family values.



THE TURTLES: another dose of anti-Japanese racism dressed up as old-fashioned American values.

The villains have heavy Japanese accents that seem to come through even in grunts and screams, darker complexions and aggressive face masks that accent facial features. You are constantly reminded of the link between their nationality and the cruel acts they carry out.

April, when faced with an abduction in a deserted train station says, "What, haven't I kept up my Sony payments?"

After Splinter is kidnapped by the Foot, he materialises in the *Turtles*' midst to lecture them about love and devotion.

He tells them they have found the greatest gift, their bond as a family unit and love for each other. They return to the city and take on the Foot.

Naturally, our morally fortified heroes stomp on The Foot.

When the misguided youth of the city see their once proud

and powerful master defeated, the boys denounce their crimes and go off home to Mom and Pop.

The message in the film is simple. Japanese people who don't accept "American values", are a threat to American society, a threat to what is central to capitalism's most powerful country, the family.

This evil force has the ability to pervert the minds of the young and turn them into faceless gang members. And the cure for mindless violence and alienation? You guessed it: back to the bosom of the family.

Socialists reject these ideas. Migrants are not a threat to society. Crimes, gang warfare, anti-social behavior is symptomatic of a society that is alienated and poverty-ridden. It is not something specific to migrants nor is it imported when they move

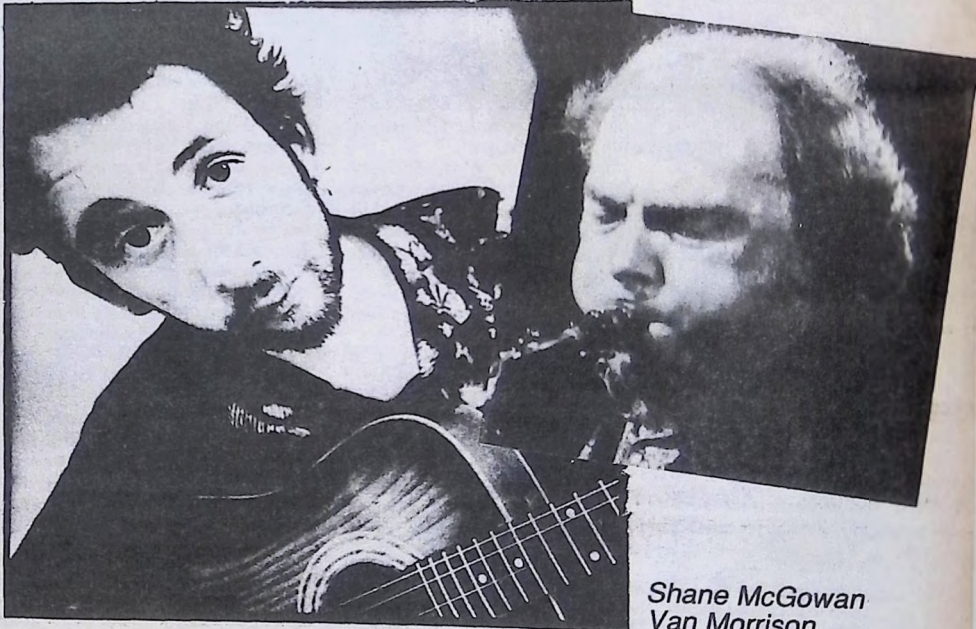
from one country to another.

The social breakdown that the movie highlights comes from within American society, not outside it. The movie makes no explanation for youth homelessness or family breakdown, blaming it instead on individual family members and the influence of non-Western migrants.

As a result, the solution is an appeal for parents to care for their children, otherwise the kids will turn to the gangs for support. Reality for many homeless children is quite different. Society offers little hope or alternatives.

*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* paints Japanese as cruel, corrupt opportunists, profiting from the mistakes of middle class American families. It is the Americans that are made out as victims.

The movie is not just a simple amusing story. Criticism of its violent influence on children pales into insignificance when compared to its fundamentally racist message. A wolf in sheep's clothing.



Shane McGowan  
Van Morrison

## South Bank stumbles on Irish rock

THE SOUTH Bank Show Special on Irish music last month (ITV) was well-hyped in advance. Anyone with any interest in music knew two weeks before the event that Sinéad O'Connor would say that Ireland had had a 'shitty time'. We also knew that Bono would say that you couldn't understand the IRA unless you understood the way Irish people worshipped land.

Quite what that particular statement has to do with the

reality of Irish life in the 1990s—where most people, including most IRA supporters, live in cities, we never found out.

We never found out because that incomprehensible statement and Sinéad O'Connor's more sensible aside were the only times that any mention was made in the programme of Ireland's British problem.

Nothing about the rebel/folk tradition in Irish music, nothing

about the revival of traditional music today in the nationalist ghettos of the North, not even a passing nod to the political content of so much of Irish music.

This wasn't an accidental oversight. We know this because Christy Moore appeared in the programme. And who is more identified with the Irish political song than the bold Christy? But did we get a verse of 'On the Blanket', a chorus from 'Give the

Wicklow Boy his Freedom' or a few bars of 'Unfinished Revolution'?

Not at all. What we heard as an example of Christy's art was his undoubtedly witty, but very slight, 'Delirious Tremens'.

### PLANXTY

In the programme, both Christy Moore and Donal Lunny spoke about their early days of bringing together traditional Irish and rock

music. We saw and heard Planxty playing a very traditional sounding Raggle Taggle Gypsy.

But there wasn't even a mention of the band who achieved the finest synthesis yet of Irish and rock music—Moving Hearts. One can only conclude that Moving Hearts weren't covered because so much of their music moved minds as well as hearts—and feet.

Think of Moving Hearts and you think of 'No Time for Love',

'Open Up Those Gates' or 'Hiroshima, Nagasaki'. Even their non-political songs were fairly political. The only way the programme was able to deal with the band was to ignore it.

The other glaring omission was, of course, Thin Lizzy. Horslips and Planxty may have made Irish rock popular but Phil Lynott and Thin Lizzy brought it to the international mainstream with 'Whisky in the Jar'. Again, not even a mention.

We expect a South Bank Show Special to be complete, informative and of the highest level. Instead

we got a superficial fifty minutes full of glaring omissions. And we can't even blame outsiders for not understanding Irish music. The programme was produced by an Irish company owned by Bob Geldof and Uítan Guilfoyle.

While it might be possible to blame the vacuum between Bob Geldof's ears for the injustices done to the Irish music scene, Guilfoyle doesn't have the same intelligence problems. They knew what they were doing and what they weren't. Their sins of omission were clearly committed with full knowledge and full consent.

GORETTI HORGAN

## INDUSTRIAL

THE Waterford Crystal management are on the offensive again.

This time they are again looking for a new "Plan" to make the Wedgewood company more profitable.

Paddy Galvin, the key figure in management, has a great love for "Plans". When he worked at Guinness, he pushed through two "Plans" that brought hundreds of redundancies.

Management now want to introduce a major redundancy programme.

They also demand the right to "source" out production of cut glass to the German firm, Nachtman in Weiden, Germany.

This glass will be machine cut—but will be sold under the Waterford Glass brand name. Waterford Glass has traditionally earned its reputation as a hand-cut crystal. By means of this dangerous

gamble, management hope to push up profits.

The demand for these new changes comes only months after the glass workers made major concessions on the last survival plan. Then the working day was increased, the retirement age was pushed up and bonuses were cut.

Now, however, Tony O'Reilly and his US financial backers Morgan Stanley want even greater sacrifices. They know that a full

## WATERFORD GLASS: Bosses back on the offensive

blown world recession is around the corner and they are determined to cut costs as quickly as possible.

### SENSITIVITY

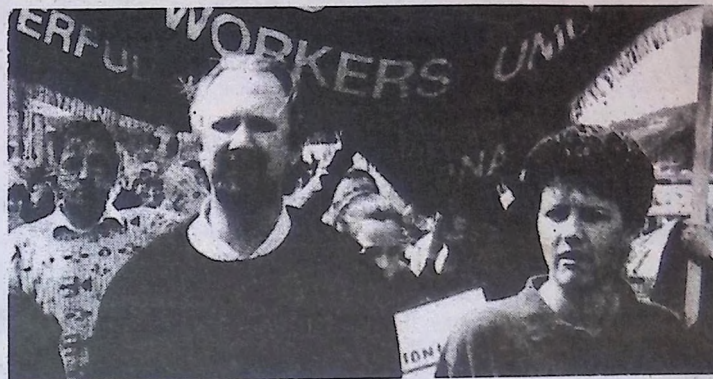
Management's sensitivity on introducing machine cut crystal was shown last month when a number of workers put on tee-shirts warning customers not to be conned. Management came down very heavy, demanding that they not be worn.

The union committee in the Glass factory

have taken a strong position against the new plan. They are refusing to co-operate in its introduction until the company gives two guarantees. First, they want a guarantee of no redundancies.

Second, they want any new line in glass production to be opened at the Waterford factories. They are determined that management do not get away with breaking up their industrial power.

In the meantime, the Glass workers have again come under attack from Martin Cullen, the PD Senator.



Waterford Glass workers earlier this year

He has demanded to know why the Glass workers have such a militant reputation. Why can't they behave like sensible trade

unionists like SIPTU leader, Billy Attley who co-operate with employers and the government? Martin deserves an

answer. The glass workers know what trade unionism is about. Billy Attley has forgotten long ago.

## INDUSTRIAL NOTEBOOK

# W.P. trade union 'bosses' riddle

WHATEVER is the Workers' Party up to?

At the end of October, Pat Rabbitte launched a blistering attack in the Dail on Larry Goodman.

He charged that Goodman had bought himself influence in Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, the Irish Farmers Association—and, surprisingly, the trade unions.

Rabbitte recalled the time when he was a union official with the old ITGWU. There was a visit to Liberty Hall of Larry Goodman. Goodman was just then tearing apart union organisation in the meat industry by sacking workers and re-hiring them as contract workers.

According to Rabbitte the "trade union bosses" at Liberty Hall welcomed Goodman even though he was attacking union organisation. "The financial considerations" of "running the superstructure of Liberty Hall" meant that they felt "constrained" in their response to Goodman.

Quite right too. This is a point that *Socialist Worker* has been making for some time. The trade union bureaucracy arise out of the workers' movement, but develop an apparatus (and no small set of privileges). This becomes the key priority to defend. As Pat puts it, "the superstructure" of Liberty Hall becomes more important than the members' living standards.

Now if this insight of Rabbitte is correct, then a very obvious question arises. Should socialists trust the same mandarins of Liberty Hall with control over your wage packet for ten years? That is in fact the proposal the ICTU gurus around Cassells, Attlee, and Flynn have pulled out of their back pocket when they met Haughey to set up a new Programme for National Recovery. They want a ten year deal where wages are restrained while they play at being

"social partners".

Pat should have a little chat to the editor of the Workers Party's new re-vamped *Irish People* about all this. The *Irish People* was a pleasant little weekly sheet that highlighted local stories in the hope of building an electoral base. But what with all this talk of being proper social democrats, the WP membership have shown a distinct lack of interest in going out selling the paper. Paid sales of the paper plummeted. The result is a re-launched monthly *Irish People*.

If the first issue is anything to go by, then we can expect that the *Irish People* will act as the mouthpiece for the very "union bosses" that Pat was so anxious to attack. The lead article this month is on the Programme for National Recovery.

The last PNR, it claims, was "a relatively good bargain". It provided a "temporary shield for our trade unions during a particularly difficult period".

Someone has obviously been very far away for the last few years. Workers at Gateaux, Waterford Crystal, the Irish Press did not have much of a "shield" when their bosses came howling after them for increased productivity.

### EXPANSION

These are, however, minor quibbles. The main point is that the IRISH PEOPLE makes it that the ICTU brought about a "significant expansion of our collective bargaining position" in the PNR by raising matters connected with the "social wage" for negotiation. These are the issues "with the potential to mobilise more and more people in a mass movement".

This, we presume refers to the terribly old fashioned practice of workers devising their own wage claim and fighting for it by militant action.



Billy Attley of SIPTU

Because of these major achievements in the great forward march of labour, the WP will oppose attempts to "revert to a primitive form of localised competitive trade unionism".

The WP case is pure nonsense. Amongst the items that the *Irish People* claims was added to the collective bargaining agenda was the protection of public sector jobs. In fact, 25,000 jobs were lost in the public sector under the PNR.

The latest effort to privatise Irish Sugar shows that the FF/PD government now knows that the ICTU is a of paper tiger. They can combine a privatisation programme with the PNR because they know there will be no fight from the ICTU on the issue.

Two of the biggest components of the "social wage" are the

education and health services. If our friends in the *Irish People* are correct, then these should be issues which the PNR could mobilise broad coalitions around.

In reality, class sizes in primary schools have been forced up. Spending on secondary schools have reached an appalling low. Overcrowding is becoming a major problem in third level. But far from "mobilising" on the issue, the union leaders have called for acceptance.

### HEALTH

In the health sector, the leading architect of the PNR, Philip Flynn, the General Secretary of LGPSU, the union organising the crucial hospital clerical grades, worked all out to demobilise opposition to the

£10 charge for hospital visits in order to seal his agreement with Fianna Fail on the PNR.

The truth is that it is impossible to trade off workers' acceptance of low wage rises for gains in any other area of society.

If the unions on the shop floor have to fight with two hands tied behind their back, why should FF or any other right wing party make concessions to the ICTU who, to put it mildly, are only "mouths"?

Why should a political system that hands out £1,186,200,000 each year in tax relief to "industry" take any of that money off the employers for the benefit of workers' "social wage" if the unions are incapable of defending their own members' jobs?

Our friends in the *Irish People* in their anxiety to desert the class struggle, forget these simple points.

# Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism 30p

## Trade Union Appeal to save Dessie Ellis

THE following is the text of a trade union resolution/petition against the extradition of Dessie Ellis. Raise this in your union branch, shop stewards committee, etc.

We, the undersigned, call on the trade union movement to take up the case of Dessie Ellis, the Finglas Dublin man presently on hunger strike in Portlaoise Prison in protest against his possible extradition to Britain on conspiracy charges.

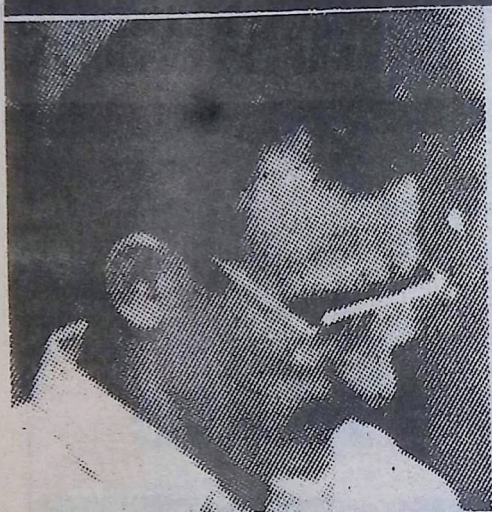
A long series of cases has made it plain that Irish people cannot be confident of fair play from the British courts in politically related cases. The Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four and the Maguire family case are the best-known of these.

Statements from very senior members of the British legal establishment have underlined the fact that the attitudes which gave rise to these cases are by no means gone. The use of conspiracy charges also heightens fears about his chances of justice if extradited.

The trade union movement in Ireland and elsewhere has always been in the forefront of resistance to injustice in society.

We therefore urge the ICTU nationally, and Trades Councils and union branches locally, to add their voice to those protesting against the proposed extradition of Dessie Ellis and to initiate what action they can to bring this viewpoint home to the Irish authorities.

## FIGHT EXTRADITION!



Dessie Ellis

DES ELLIS's hunger strike against his extradition to Britain is now entering a critical phase.

Des Ellis is the first person to be tried under the new Extradition Act of 1987. He is charged with conspiracy to cause explosions in Britain sometime during a 34 month period between 1982 and 1983.

His sister, Martha, told a 1,500, demonstration in Dublin in October about the frame up involved in this charge. "Dessie was in prison for 20 months of this 34 month charge. After being released he had to sign a regular bail bond in the Finglas garda station. They are charging Dessie with conspiracy because they know conspiracy is impossible to disprove".

The British police have always resorted to conspiracy charges when they have no evidence for their case. In the early 1970s, they jailed two British building workers in Shrewsbury for "conspiracy to cause violence on a picket line." More recently, they have jailed the Guildford 4 on conspiracy charges.

Several Labour Party TDs and many branches of trade unions have, quite rightly, condemned the frame-ups of the Birmingham 6. Dick Spring has even spoken at Birmingham 6 meetings and called for pressure to bring about their release.

But there has been a deadly silence from these quarters on the Des Ellis case. The leader of the Workers Party, Proinsias De Rossa, has

gone further. Confronted outside a church in Finglas—his home constituency—by members of the local anti-extradition campaign, De Rossa declared he fully supported extradition and therefore opposed the Des Ellis campaign.

In taking this stance, De Rossa is not only attacking Des Ellis as an individual he is also lining up full square behind police harassment in Finglas. Support in the local area for Ellis is strong. Many have signed petitions. Thousands have donated to the campaign. But there is also a fear about identifying publicly with the campaign.

### BRANCH

The reason is simple. The Special Branch are making it known that anyone who goes near the campaign can expect a visit. De Rossa knows full well this is going on but he has not said a word. So do many others throughout the trade unions. But the poison of De Rossa and Spring are injecting into the labour movement is encouraging a silence where working class people can be intimidated by a gombeen style KGB.

John, from Ballymun,

# DON'T LET ELLIS DIE!

told Socialist Worker of his experience

"I went along to a public meeting in the ATGWU hall in Dublin to hear about the Dessie Ellis case. I am not a republican—but I knew Dessie personally. A week after the meeting, I was visited at seven o'clock in the morning by two Special Branch officers. They were very polite. But they made it clear that I was in dangerous waters. I couldn't believe it".

Mary from Finglas tells

a similar story.

"I was out campaigning during the last hunger strike in 1981. Because of this, they came and visited my husband who is not politically active. They turned up at his workplace making sure that his employer knew full well what was going on. They tried to tell him that his little wife should be staying at home. He was having none of it".

The lesson from Eastern Europe is that people can get the confidence to ridicule and see off this

intimidation. In the next few weeks in Finglas it is crucial that this is done.

There must be well organised local events that draws out hundreds. There needs to be a sharp turn to the area where the working class is at its strongest—on the shop floor.

### GROUP

Visits by the anti-extradition group to local

Finglas factories have already yielded positive results. Many shop stewards reported a good feeling among their members about the injustice of extraditing someone to face a system of justice that sent the Birmingham 6 down for 16 years.

This feeling now needs organisation and co-ordination. The formation of a local shop stewards committee to back Des Ellis must now become a priority.

## FIANNA FAIL'S BLOODY RECORD:

THE National Anti-Extradition Campaign has set as its priority the lobbying of Fianna Fail councillors and the "grassroots" of the party on the Ellis case.

They believe that enough pressure can be applied through the FF grassroots to push Haughey into putting Des Ellis on trial in the South under the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act.

The record of FF shows that this is a futile strategy. Every time FF carried through brutal measures against republicans—the grassroots stayed overwhelmingly loyal to the party.

1934: Fianna Fail re-enact the Public Safety Act of the old Cumman na nGael government. De Valera's biographers describe it as "the most rigorous public safety statute in Ireland's

long history of coercion". Republicans and anti-fascists arrested and tried under Military Tribunals.

1939: Fianna Fail introduce the Offences Against the State Act. The republican parade to Bodenstown is banned and met by gardai with batons.

1940: Fianna Fail introduce Emergency Powers Act and begin interning republicans. Republican prisoners go on hunger strike to demand political status. De Valera declares "Prisoners should not be allowed to dictate the conditions under which they are kept in detention". On April 16, Tony D'Arcy dies on hunger strike. On April 19, Jack McNeela dies on hunger strike.

1940-45: During "the Emergency" the Fianna Fail Cabinet executes six republicans. 500 are interned without trial.

Regular beatings and solitary confinement were ordered in the Curragh. 1946: Sean McCaughey begins a hunger and thirst strike to demand the release of republicans from internment. In the North, the Stormont regime releases David Fleming who has been on hunger strike. In the South, FF Justice Minister, Gerry Boland, refuses the slightest concession. McCaughey dies after an agonising 31 days.

1957: Sean McBride brings down the Coalition government because of their repressive measures against Irish republicans. FF return to power and introduce internment. The FF cabinet includes Neil Blaney. In his book on the IRA, Boyer Bell makes the point that many IRA members believed "that

because their goals were those of the Irish nation their means would be tolerated by the "puppet" government in Leinster House". Most served two years in the Curragh.

The 'old' FF tradition is one of bloody suppression of republicans. And despite the hunger strikes, executions, prison beatings the grassroots of the party stayed loyal. There has never been the smallest of split from FF on the issue of repression. FF leaders and Ministers for Justice have never been deflected from attacking republicans through the pressure of their own rank and file.

Any expectation that FF will act any differently today is mistaken. The only force that will save Des Ellis's life is the organised power of the working class.