

An Reabhloid

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THE REVOLUTION
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Workers pay the price of privatisation swindles



NCB

Grencore

Air lingus

Telecom

Land Deals

Irish Sugar

Make this the end for little Caesar!

Editorial section

**No to
the
Death
Squads!**

Triumph of the West?

In a special section we explain why revolutionary socialism is alive and well and still a threat to the capitalist world order



An Reabhloid

Journal of Peoples Democracy

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Make this the end for the little Caesars!

Charlie Haughey should go. His populist "Republicanism" has seen the most concerted collaboration with Britain since partition. Under his rule the 26 counties has seen a mass export of its youth and an intense austerity drive against workers. Against a background of mass poverty his friends have made themselves rich through a casual plunder of the public purse. Haughey's explanation is in essence a defence of sleaze and corruption - these things happen everywhere and the amounts concerned are small beer compared to the big time of the international money markets. He and his coalition government have lost all credibility and should lose all support.

Yet this crisis can't be solved by a simple change of government. All the capitalist parties are part of what Kevin Keating's article labels "a culture of corruption". Even when they try to distance themselves from the payoffs they all support a policy of privatisation which is simply the daylight robbery of resources which rightly belong to working people.

Resistance to these policies has greatly increased since the new scandals and the government reneging on the tiny pay

increases under the Programme for Economic and Social Progress [PESP]. Yet the fightbacks - notably by Bus Eireann and An Post workers - has run up against a roadblock. The block is a trade union leadership that sat quietly on public boards as money was siphoned off, defied the democratic wishes of their own members to support privatisation and is now sitting on its hands in the hope that the new struggles will be isolated and they can resume collaboration.

At the root of today's crisis is the failure of the experiment of partition in the South. An independent Irish capitalism has proved impossible. It's no accident that the semi-state bodies, founded to give a leg up to the capitalist class, are now being dismantled to enrich individuals without any pretence of a programme of regeneration based on the needs of Irish people.

As the struggle against this criminality goes on it will become more and more apparent that we need a new leadership - one dedicated to expropriating the wealth of a parasite class rather than collaborating with them.

Fight the Terror!

Anyone who has casually used the word terrorist should walk at night on the streets of Belfast and see the resurgence of real terror. An entire population is the target for random sectarian death squads openly organised by the UDA. The British plans for our defence centre on the opening of a small "anti-Loyalist" force manned by the RUC - a force that has devoted 100% of its resources over 20 years to the defeat of republicanism, routinely provides the killers with intelligence and cover and has not been above running its own death squads. If this doesn't work they hint that internment of republicans is the answer.

The churches and capitalist politicians solemnly defend this rubbish. The trade union bureaucracy hide in "Peace trains" and look for funding from the British government in order to more efficiently denounce republicanism. Years of capitulation in the workplace means that in the face of loyalist violence their con-

demnation tends to lose any political focus and deal with handwringing about the generality of "Sectarianism".

Despite the reemergence of the IPLO as what are essentially sectarian gangs, Nationalists in Belfast are not facing the generality of sectarianism. They are facing death squads operating in the shadow of the British state. The IPLO attacks, and the tendency for IRA operations to widen the target list to cover many civilians, demoralise the nationalist population rather than defending it. Armed groups can't out-terrorise the Loyalists and imperialists.

The only real defence is self defence. This means mobilising in the areas, organising politically to call for the withdrawal of British forces from nationalist areas, exposing the supporters of Britain as supporters of the murder policy and calling for national and international solidarity.

Trade Union Leaders: The silent accomplices

The resignation of Michael Smurfit from Telecom is further evidence of the casual corruption among Ireland's most prominent businessmen and their political cronies and the role of silent accomplices played by Trade union leaders. In Telecom Harold O'Sullivan, ICTU executive member and former leader of the Local Government and Public Services Union LPGSU [now called IMPACT] served as a member of the board. He is now acting chairman in Smurfit's absence. What was he doing when Telecom was buying the former Johnston, Mooney and O'Brien site at twice its market price against their own architectural advice on its suitability. Telecom's present headquarters is rented at £21 per square foot as against an average rent in the area of £12 per square foot. Predictably Smurfit and NCB own this building also.

Already there is a concerted effort at damage limitation by the government. The enquiry into Telecom is even more of a farce than the one into Greencore, with the Department of Post and Telegraphs effectively investigating itself. The new self-help process extends to the Goodman accountants. They had access to the files detailing the enquiry against them. Even when they were caught the president of the High court, Justice Hamilton, seemed to approve their actions.

Smurfit is being rehabilitated on the basis that the irregularities involved in Telecom involve sums of money which are chickenfeed to someone as immensely wealthy as himself. This is a nonsense argument. Smurfit didn't get rich by regarding money as chickenfeed and his position as chair of Telecom was of immense strategic

importance. Unfortunately Trade Union complicity with these criminals allows these sorts of explanations to stand unchallenged. The fact is that the real rip-off of Telecom has not yet occurred.

In 1988, when the government had been assuring the unions that privatisation was not contemplated, Smurfit's own bank Paribas and the Investment Bank of Ireland had been secretly carrying out a privatisation study on Telecom. It must be quite clear even to trade union leaders that Smurfit would be in for a



Union bosses Phil Flynn of IMPACT
and Bill Attley of SIPTU

major slice of the action when Telecom was privatised - his tracks well covered with a string of offshore companies. Unfortunately, as we have pointed out previously in *An Reabhloid*, the union leadership are now so complicit in the Government's privatisation and austerity programme through the PESP that they can do nothing bar keeping a low profile and hoping the storm will blow over.

This is a vain hope. These scandals are not aberrations but are symptomatic of the deep political and economic crisis afflicting the 26 counties. The social evils all around us - unemployment, emigration and widespread poverty are the direct product of capitalism's attempts to

restructure itself at the expense of the working class. The widespread corruption in political and financial circles is also due to the fact that every capitalist crisis leads to some breakdown in the 'normal' functions of capitalism, loss of confidence and a proliferation of speculative ventures and straightforward swindles. Capitalism will continue to fulfil its primary function - the accumulation of capital - whatever the circumstances and whatever the means available. However the government covers up or minimises the present accumulation of scandals the fact remains that around every corner there lie more banana skins waiting to be trodden on.

Kevin Keating

Join Peoples Democracy Now!

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INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

THE INTERNATIONAL ANALYTICAL MAGAZINE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL IS AVAILABLE FROM PEOPLES DEMOCRACY BRANCHES, PRICE £1-50

A culture of corruption

The biggest news story throughout September in Ireland has been the scandal revealed in "Greencore" the first major state company to be privatised by the 26 county government. The privatisation programme of the Dublin government is now in disarray as more and more corrupt practices by the company's board are revealed.

So far it is known that the Chief Executive of Greencore [formerly the Irish Sugar Company] Chris Comerford and four other executives were set to pocket profits of over £7 million from ripping off their own company. The most damaging and politically embarrassing factor for the government was that the swindle occurred when Irish Sugar was a wholly state owned company for which the had direct responsibility.

In 1988 the board of Irish Sugar directed by Comerford approved a loan of £1 million to four of the executives to buy out 49% of a company called Sugar Distributors for £1.7 million. The state through the Irish Sugar Company already owned 51% of the company since 1975 and it was the main marketing and distributing company for Irish Sugar products. Fifteen months later Irish Sugar bought off these same shares for £9.5 million.

THIEVES FALL OUT

The Irish public might never have found out about this scam except that Chris Comerford and the other executives fell out over dividing the loot. The 49% share had been bought by a company named "Gladebrook" whose ownership is hidden behind a string of at least 8 off-shore companies registered in Jersey. It was only

when Comerford went to the High Court in Dublin claiming against his former cronies' beneficial ownership of one of these companies that the scandal began to unravel. A week later Comerford was forced to resign over Greencore, but not before the board granted him a golden handshake in cash and pension rights worth over £2 million. A few days later company secretary Michael Tully went also.

A CULTURE OF CORRUPTION

For Irish workers Greencore is seen not as a glimpse of the unacceptable face of capitalism but as its only face. There has been a plethora of scandals in recent years and the general attitude to the enquiry into Greencore is one of cynicism.

Over a period there has been the collapse of the Larry Goodman group of beef exporting companies in which hundreds of millions of taxpayer's money has been lost in export insurance and other scams. The Gallagher group collapsed with a swindle of further millions of small investors savings. Both Gallagher and Goodman were prominently identified with the Fianna Fail party and Taoiseach Charlie Haughey. Comerford and his company chair Bernard Cahill wer supporters of Fine Gael. Fianna Fail ministers and deputies have been involved for years in county council planning decisions and land rezonings which have netted untold fortunes for private speculators. In fact Dublin County Council had no time for any other business during its last six year tenure because of planning and rezoning applications. In a month in which a roof top protest at Dublin's Mountjoy jail was brutally suppressed by a major mobilisation of State forces Irish

Rogues Gallery



Michael Smurfit



Chris Comerford



Larry Goodman

workers will not be holding their breath to see if the board of Greencore join the inmates in their squalid conditions.

The likelihood of the present enquiry netting the entire web of accomplices in the Greencore affair seem remote. To obtain disclosure of ownership of the offshore companies could require a court order in Jersey which can only be granted if criminal proceedings are underway. Given the government's involvement as being directly responsible for overseeing the Sugar company and Sugar distributors and that the consultants responsible for overseeing the flotation of Greencore found nothing amiss it would seem that dubious dealings with offshore companies are commonplace and that the whole affair came to light by chance and Comerford's greed.

THE TRADE UNIONS

The Unions have played a sorry role in the whole affair. There has been complete silence from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions [ICTU] - not surprising given that ICTU is locked into a 10 year joint economic programme [The Programme for Economic and Social Progress - PESP] with the government. One major justification given for this unholy alliance is a minimal pay deal which the government now wants to renege on. ICTU has also quietly dropped its policy of opposition to privatisation without a conference decision to do so. Another factor in their silence is Billy Atley [General Secretary of SIPTU and ICTU leader]. He is also a director of Greencore.

The one positive result of these scandals is that the working class, which has been reeling under a massive austerity offensive and the breakneck speed with which the public sector has been restructured to the demands of the International Monetary Fund and the European Community's single market plan, has lost its tolerance of crooked politicians and their business friends. In the June local government elections the two main bourgeois parties lost heavily to left and protest candidates. The political crisis is now so deep that it is unlikely that either party would come out of a general election able to form a stable government.

FURTHER BLOWS

The privatisation policy was dealt further blows when

it was revealed that the chairman of Telecom Eireann, Michael Smurfit, was involved in the sale of a site for the company's new headquarters. Telecom paid twice the value of the site to a company in which Smurfit was involved. Also involved in the sale, and in the companies which owned the site, were National City Brokers [NCB]. They have held the consultancies for all the previous privatisations and had been offered the contract for Telecom - the biggest and most profitable of them all. Both Smurfit and the leader of NCB have been forced to resign from public posts - a process helped by a number of categorical statements by Smurfit which turned out to be untrue. Further allegations have now emerged about NCB making details of privatisation information about an Air Lingus subsidiary available to Charlie Haughey's son and about the use of public money to improve land owned by the Taoiseach himself. Again, public money has

also developed land owned by the family of Fine Gael leader Bruton

Undoubtedly workers resisting privatisations and cutbacks will be encouraged in their struggles by all these revelations but the major problem is leadership. They will not get it from trade union leaders themselves involved in the whole sorry mess. The obvious focus should be the left and protest councillors with a direct mandate from the June elections.

So far they have been content to play the game - involving themselves in purely local issues and the traditional concerns of councillors. It is however their responsibility to lead regroupment and mobilisation of workers against the governments austerity programme and against the trade union leadership if necessary.

KEVIN KEATING

Local Government elections

Big parties potholed

Deepening a trend established since the mid 1980's, the Local Government Elections of June 27 1991 in the South of Ireland were a severe setback for the long-established big bourgeois parties, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael.

Fianna Fail got 37.8% of the vote, Fine Gael 26.6% and the Progressive Democrats - Fianna Fail's partners in government - got 4.9%.

If these figures were repeated in a General election the present Fianna Fail coalition would fall far short of a majority - they would be forced to bring Fine Gael into government with them, or the Progressive Democrats could be excluded from a FF/FG alliance.

There was a very large vote for independent or minor party candidates - 11.9% - and significant gains for the Labour party - 10.6%.

The Workers Party polled 3.7%, a slight drop. But the Dublin result was very bad news for them - their rival on the left, the Labour party, outpolled them by 14.5%

to 8.7%. The Green Party got 7.4% of the Dublin vote, but failed elsewhere with the exception of Cork City.

Sinn Fein polled 2.1%, a slight recovery compared with the June 1989 General election. However they dropped from 10 seats to 7, and their support is very regionalised - they have a small base in the Dublin Corporation area (4.7%) and in the border counties, but no real presence elsewhere.

Alienation

These figures illustrate a growing alienation from the traditional party structures among the voters. For the first time since 1943 something different from the alternative between a Fianna Fail government or a Fine Gael coalition is on the horizon.

This pattern was disrupted by the 1989 General election when Fianna Fail had to go into coalition with the tiny Progressive Democrats. That episode proved traumatic for FF members used to a monolithic hold on power, more especially since the PD's were a split from



FF, and actually competed in the 1989 General Election as junior partners in a pact with Fine Gael!

Spokespersons for the right wing parties claim that local elections traditionally produce a bigger vote for independent candidates, and predict that many people will "return to the fold" once a General election is held. Analysts not blinded by party loyalties dispute this. For example, writing in the Irish Times of July 1st Richard Sinnott of University College Dublin said;

"there is some evidence to suggest that independents are now more ideological, and where not ideological, are more alienated from the established party system". Reflecting this, successful independent or minor party candidates have in recent times **"been more of a feature of the urban political environment"**.

Protest

Analysis of the results bears out the points made by Sinnott. There are several examples. In Limerick Joe Harrington of our own organisation, Peoples Democracy, was elected on the first count, along with John Gilligan, an Independent Socialist, who topped the poll in a neighbouring ward. In both cases this was a reflection of massive protest against the Corporation's attempts to impose a water tax. Service charges were a major issue in all areas outside Dublin, where they had to be abolished in the 1980's due to the high levels of non-payment.

In Dublin the strong vote gained by the Green Party and independents reflected anger at abuses of the

planning process by the outgoing County Council, and opposition to a proposed Eastern by-pass motorway. In the South County area, where Roger Garland holds the Green's only Dail seat, they significantly increased their vote. This is noteworthy because Mary Harney of the progressive democrats, and self-declared "Green" Government Minister, made a vicious "IRA baiting" attack on Garland after he disrupted Dail business in protest over the extradition of Dessie Ellis to Britain. At the same time, underlying the contradictions in the Green party's politics, Garland is also a member of the "New Consensus" group which regularly organises protests against Sinn Fein.

Also in Dublin Joe Higgins of "Militant", expelled from the Labour Party for his political views, topped the poll in the Mulhuddart district. Higgins was strongly identified with a joint campaign by local residents and the Irish Travellers movement against a County Council attempt to build a primitive "halting site" (in reality an enclosed overcrowded reservation).

Throughout the 26 counties there were other election victories reflecting discontent over various cutbacks: anti-pothole candidates in Cavan [CRAG - the Cavan Roads Action Group], an anti-junket campaigner in Longford, who was highlighting a trip by several local councillors to Budapest for a conference on Inner City Decline [Longford is a rural area with a few small towns], candidates opposed to hospital cutbacks were elected to Roscommon County Council

New Direction

There can be no denying the growing alienation of the electorate from established political parties. The signs of this were already apparent in the 1989 election and the 1990 election of Mary Robinson as President. The most important discussion is how deep it is, how long it is likely to last and what is the best way to relate to it.

For socialists who place the National Question at the top of their agenda this is the necessary starting point. It should be a major cause for concern that these developments have raced past the major anti-imperialist organisation of the left, Sinn Fein. It is one thing to lose ground since the mid 1980's when no other radical forces were doing any better. It is quite another when other forces on the left, or currents just seen as "agin the system", are making significant headway.

The direction that has to be taken is to seek forms of united action and debate. It is an error to dismiss these developments, either by saying nothing fundamental is changing, or by simply seeing these other forces as foes. For example, it would be the height of political sectarianism to denounce the rise of support for the Labour party in Dublin in areas where SF has been working very hard. Labour, at the moment, is set to translate this increased support into several Dail seats

in the greater Dublin area - it is political suicide to work against this on the grounds that SF's own prospects will then become even bleaker than they are already. Anyone tempted along this road could usefully take a look at the infamous "Third Period" tactics imposed on the Communist parties in the late 1920's by Stalin.

Rightward Lurch

Of course this does not mean expressing the slightest political confidence in the Labour Party leadership, even less in that of the Workers Party. It does mean recognising that Labour breaking its 17 year long disastrous Coalition with Fine Gael from 1970-87 was a healthy development, as was the position of opposition to any coalition with the right wing parties. The Labour leadership took this decision for reasons of self-preservation. If they had gone any lower than the point reached in 1987 - a 6.7% share of the national vote - they would have gone under. Since then they have experienced a significant revival in urban areas and, not surprisingly, different currents of opinion are emerging within the Party.

Launching a preemptive strike, the right wing party leadership successfully inserted a new clause was in the party constitution proscribing the "Militant" tendency. Following the purge the party leadership succeeded in getting a completely new constitution adopted, removing all reference to the aim of a the Workers Republic, nationalisation and most of the Connolly tradition.

Further evidence of the party leadership's right wing intentions can be seen in the way fights are starting to

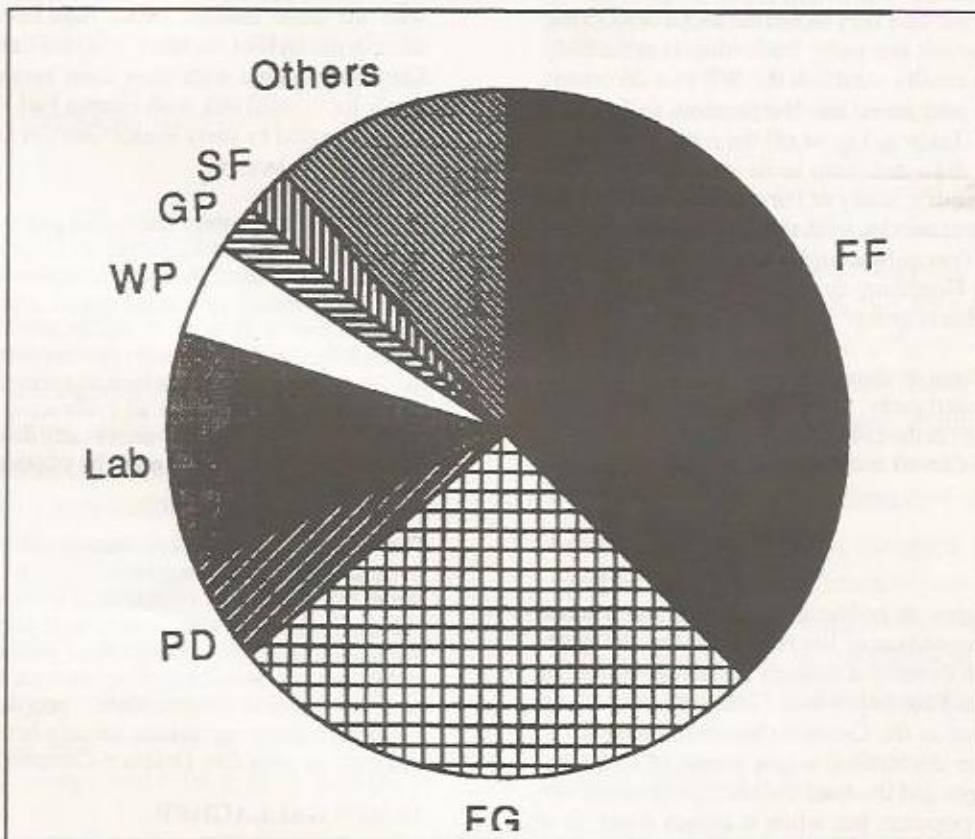
break out in areas where Dail seats have suddenly become a live possibility.

The best example is the Dublin Central constituency. Joe Costello has been working in this area for a number of years and is one of the very few Labour Left figures to take a stand against extradition. The area is represented in the Dail by Tony Gregory and on the Corporation by Christy Burke of Sinn Fein. The electoral arithmetic puts Costello in a position to gain a Dail seat. Now however elements in the party leadership are suggesting that Michael Conaghan instead, or as a running mate - by sheer coincidence Conaghan is a former member of Kemmy's Democratic Socialist Party [DSP], and a supporter of the "Two-Nations position. The alleged reason for suggesting Conaghan as a candidate is that part of his local authority district [the South inner city] is in the Dublin Central Dail constituency, and elements in the party leadership say this would favour him being the candidate

If electoral strategy was the only concern of the Labour leadership they would hardly have expelled Joe Higgins of "Militant" who, as stated earlier, topped the poll in his district. Neither would they have expelled Helen Corish, who voted against the new party constitution, and was easily elected in Wexford town as an independent.

Workers Party Problems

These developments around the Labour Party have started to isolate the Workers Party. Over the last decade the WP have grown at the expense of the Labour



party. Since the end of the Labour coalition with Fine Gael the WP have found the going a lot more difficult - they are indistinguishable from Labour on most issues and are well to the right of Labour left figures such as Michael D Higgins. In addition their internal regime is still very Stalinist. The party leadership hastily dropped all friendly references to the East European regimes in the wake of their collapse without any open sign of internal resistance, but party members have been educated for years that these were socialist societies. Some demoralisation was inevitable. They also suffered some very embarrassing defections - most notably Eamonn Smullen, Jimmy Brick and Eoghan Harris. These people all wanted to take the WP even further to the right - Eoghan Harris until recently was the Fine Gael leader's media adviser! They revealed some very unsavoury facts about the WP's internal regime - most dramatically when Jimmy Brick publicly resigned during a live TV broadcast of the party's annual conference. The impression was created, rightly, that this party does not tolerate dissent from any quarter.

At this year's conference there was an open clash between the Six county apparatus, which fought successfully for some old Stalinist dogmas and even engaged in a bit of "republican" rhetoric, and the leadership. There is also evidence that the WP's "fund-raising" arm, the Official IRA, is getting out of control. For years this organisation has been tolerated, if not actively encouraged, by the state on both sides of the border. Elements within it have recently got involved in operations which even the state authorities, admirers of the WP's pro-unionist political views, could not ignore. The party leadership has routinely dismissed evidence pointing in this direction for years, but new Official IRA operations keep happening. This makes it very hard for the 26 county leadership, intent on recruiting people on a very moderate social democratic basis. As a result the party leadership is apparently planning to formally establish the WP as a 26 county organisation, and leave the Northerners to fend for themselves. This won't stave off the party's problems - it will only draw attention to its internal contradictions. For example, many of the older leadership who did have very close ties with the official IRA, like ex party leader Tomas MacGiolla and former "Chief of Staff" Cathal Goulding, sympathised politically with the Eoghan Harris group!

Another big loser in these elections was Fine Gael - it is now a lopsided party, fairly strong in the rural areas but sinking fast in the cities. Under its new leader John Bruton it has carved itself a much sharper right wing image.

Strategy

Behind the story of political instability, and a more uncertain composition of the next Dail, lies the question of how to develop a strategy against government policies beyond the ballot box. This will become an important issue in the Council chambers because the government is threatening a new round of cutbacks. Service charges and the road-building programme are extremely unpopular, but when it comes down to it

Central government has sweeping powers which can override local authority resistance. The Eastern Bypass in Dublin, for example, is a direct result of pressure by employers organisations who want one long motorway along the East coast of Ireland, from Larne in the North to Rosslare in the South, as "preparation for the open competition inaugurated by the European commission's 1992 programme. As part and parcel of this policy it was deliberately decided to pay less attention to other parts of the country - for example Cavan. New legislation will soon establish a National Roads Authority, an unelected body, which will take many of their few remaining powers away from the local authorities

Mere election results will not change the government's repressive economic and social policies. However they indicate very clearly that the deeper the cuts go more and more damage is being done to the traditional party structures. It is a situation where the clearest possible stand has to be taken on the left against any governmental alliance with the ruling class parties - FF, FG and the PDs.

"New" Politics

One of the ironies of the present situation is that the Labour leadership is trying to smuggle its old pro coalition policy in the back door under the general rubric of "New Politics". There is no objection in principle to Coalition with the bourgeois parties - it is suggested that coalition might be an option if Labour was the biggest single party. The WP is also dipping its toes in this dirty water, sometimes suggesting a preference for Fine Gael because it is more openly anti-nationalist than Fianna Fail. Labour personalities occasionally suggest some kind of deal with Fianna Fail on the grounds that Haughey's style is to negotiate with the trade unions, rather than openly humiliate them in the style of the last Fine Gael/Labour coalition. Sinn Fein dabble with their own version when they imply they could talk with Fianna Fail - such a course was suggested by party leader Gerry Adams before the last general election.

The issue of how unity can be forged is crucial, if the current political developments are to go beyond formal parliamentarianism. A clear distinction has to be made with single issues, or related issues, where unity of all sorts of forces is both possible and desirable - an example being the campaign against the amendment to the 26 county constitution banning abortion. There can be no room at all for this all-embracing unity when it comes to forming a government - any deals on this level by the bourgeois parties must be opposed in principle by the left.

There has to be an effort to commit elected representatives to support for struggles - otherwise the crisis will throw up all sorts of opportunist groupings and individuals limited to what exists at present. It will be interesting to see how the crisis of political legitimacy is affected by a possible referendum on articles 2 and 3 of the 26 county constitution - people interested in supporting these articles are already behind the preparation of an effective Defence Campaign.

JAMES GALLAGHER.

A VINDICATION OF STRUGGLE

In the June Local Government elections Peoples Democracy Councillor Joe Harrington scored a stunning victory in Limerick City when he was relected on the first count with 905 first preference votes. The result was a tribute to his selflessness and campaigning work on behalf of the working people of Limerick.

VINDICATION

But Joe's election doesn't just represent a success for a hardworking community activist. It's also a vindication of the campaigning policies of many years, building self activity and democratic organisation in the working class and the community. Joe's socialist ideas were reflected in the anti-water tax campaign. He was one of the central leaders of this movement and his election victory reflects a successful electoral intervention by that campaign.

COMMITMENT

In fact, eight candidates overall who had pledged opposition to the water tax were elected - local candidates of the Labour and Workers Parties, independent Socialist John Gilligan and Joe himself. Jim Kemmy, formally of the Democratic Socialist Party and now on the right of the Labour Party, was elected on a commitment to fight the service charge. He is now mayor.

These elections, plus the strong local campaign, are a heavy blow against the local charge, but they usher in a new period of

struggle. The water tax was widely unpopular because it represented a double taxation of working people - ensuring that they and not the rich would pay the debt that Irish capitalism had run up with imperialism. Now the Fianna Fail coalition that has enforced it is planning even further cutbacks.

RESPONSIBILITY

Any abolition of the charge would be accompanied by calls for redundancies and cuts in social provision to ensure that working people are the ones to suffer in the austerity. The campaign will face new challenges and the councillors elected on an anti-water tax program will face a heavy responsibility if they are to live up to all the implications of the poll results.

There is one much broader implication of Joe Harrington's victory. As in other parts of the 26 counties the radicalisation of voters bypassed Sinn Fein and the Labour and Workers Parties benefited. Nationally the leaderships of these movements talk big about opposition to cutbacks but practice a "new realist" collaboration with the bosses. Both are marked by anti-republicanism and abandonment of Connolly's heritage. Joe's re-election shows that revolutionary socialists can win electoral battles and broad class struggle movements can be built. In the process he has put forward a policy that links capitalism's cuts and the British occupation in the North in one consistent program of socialist anti-imperialism.

PAT CONNOLLY.

An Reabhloid special

After the Coup

In a special report **John North** looks at events in the USSR and their significance for workers everywhere

Why did the attempted coup in the USSR take place and why did it fail? It wasn't because the organisers were drunken fools or amateurs. A number were involved in the crackdown on Solidarnosc in Poland which went with clockwork precision, fragmented the mass struggle there, and drove it underground.

In fact the dynamics of the coup explain a great deal about the situation in the USSR and the prospect of future struggle.

As explained elsewhere, the Gorbachev project was to save the bureaucracy by reforming it. Its fragmentation and inertia prevented the development of a clear plan and working class opposition slowed and blunted its implementation. Gorbachev was forced by the depth of the crisis into increasingly violent zig-zags between the different sectors of the bureaucracy.

The rise of Baltic nationalism led to an alliance between Gorbachev and the hardliners around a policy of military repression. The Liberals left the communist party in protest at the turn to reaction. The repression failed and Gorbachev did another U-turn. Negotiations with the Liberals and the new all-union treaty were the result.

The hardline coup leaders were members of the "Military-Industrial complex" - the Army, KGB and that section of the industrial bureaucracy in charge of weapons production. They had most to lose from the new treaty and the eve of its signing forces their "split" from Gorbachev.

Their major problem was that no section of the bureaucracy believed any longer that the command economy can survive. The coup statement did not mention socialism and expressed no real program. Their agenda was seen as the "Pinochet option" - capitalist restoration under an armed Junta who would suppress all democratic rights and

For a revival of Internationalism

Earlier this year, well before the dramatic events surrounding the Coup in the USSR, the Fourth International, of which Peoples Democracy is the Irish section, held its World Congress in Europe. From that congress came a ringing call for a revival of socialist internationalism. This internationalism, itself one of the casualties of Stalinist betrayal, is even more necessary following the decay of Stalinism and the proclamations of capitalist triumph.

The appeal sets out a number of tasks:

- *The need for an ability to mobilise against imperialist interventions such as the Gulf war.
- *The obligation of solidarity with the oppressed
- *The need to fight against backward prejudices of racism and sectarianism within the working class.
- *Combating the increasing capitalist organisation at the international level
- *Fighting for a Socialist alternative to bureaucratic plan and capitalist market based on human needs

For reasons of space we are unable to print the full document, but copies are available from the contact addresses in the journal

preserve the top bureaucrats.

The depth of the crisis had destroyed the hardliner's confidence in their own ideology. They were not able to unite or organise effectively in its absence. They got no support from the working class and the presence of an active resistance led to a steady defection of key figures.

Soviet workers were a major component of the resistance and the failure of the coup gave the confidence for mass mobilisations. This mobilisation and growing militancy are the overwhelmingly positive gains following the failure of the coup.

This analysis gives us some indication of the dangers ahead. The Communist party's grip has been broken but

the USSR is still run by bureaucrats, chiefly distinguishable by the date of their leaving the party. None of the major issues have been resolved and the "Pinochet option" remains a real danger. A number of "Nationalist" leaders are already involved in building a state of siege in their own republics while enriching themselves through the introduction of privatisation and "free market" reforms.

Workers have mobilised, but they need an alternative to the false counter-position of market and bureaucratic plan - the possibility of production for their own needs and under their own control.

International solidarity has an important role to play in developing that consciousness both in the USSR and in the capitalist economies of the West.

The role of the bureaucracy

Leon Trotsky saw the Stalinist bureaucracy as a counter-revolutionary force, balancing between the working class and imperialism. It could not be reformed, and in crisis would move further to the right. Gorbachev, who came from the bureaucracy itself, set himself this impossible task of reform. In the process he proved Trotsky right. No call, no inspiration, no zig or zag of policy could wake them to anything but a dull defence of their privileges. Every advance of democracy showed the hatred felt by the working class for these parasites. Those, like Yeltsin, who broke away from the Communist party did so to launch projects for capitalist restoration. Gorbachev, unable to adapt to the full restoration of capital, unwilling to support the alternative of worker's democracy and power, need only a push for his claims of supreme power to evaporate.

The theory of "Socialism in One Country", advanced by Stalin as the main theoretical justification for building bureaucratic rule, argued that the USSR could isolate itself from the political and economic currents in a world dominated by imperialism. The international socialist movement was crushed to provide him with a diplomatic shield. A vast apparatus of repression, an immense bureaucracy, were linked to a command economy controlling every aspect of

Soviet life.

By the time of Stalin's death the system was creaking into crisis. Shoddy goods were produced at enormous cost, Labour productivity fell further and further behind the West and indebtedness grew. Khrushchev, Stalin's successor, condemned his crimes but didn't dare go public and appeal to the workers. He was himself purged.

The period of "Stagnation" followed. Soviet production faltered and began to fall. The crisis was accelerated by the US led arms race. Corruption grew throughout the bureaucracy and rigid repression kept political challenge at bay.

In desperation the bureaucracy turned to Gorbachev, Glasnost was to win public support for reform and perestroika to bring in limited market reform under the control of the bureaucrats. Gorbachev ruled out worker's control and took detailed steps to prevent it from being an option. In the end his project failed. Democracy showed the vast unpopularity of Stalinism and the coup its failure and decay as a political project. There is no middle way between workers power and capitalism. The fall of the Stalinist nightmare makes this clear while removing a suffocating weight from the backs of soviet workers.

Why we opposed the coup

Many Communist Party members and supporters in the West either secretly or openly supported the coup by hardliners in the USSR, and are appalled at the events following its collapse. Their reaction is based on a fundamental mistake - what Trotsky called the relationship of things rather than the relationship of people.

REMNANT

If the Soviet union had represented the shining light of working-class revolution then its fall would indeed be an overwhelming tragedy. It was nothing of the sort. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was the remnant of a glorious revolution strangled by imperialism. In defeat the remnant held on to a number of the gains of the revolution but was deformed by bureaucratic rule and by an evil ideology that collaborated with imperialism and acted as a block

on the further development of workers power. There are dangers, but nothing in the recent developments in the USSR has yet removed any of the gains of working people and, by unleashing the Soviet proletariat and allowing the possibility of links with workers around the world, has actually improved the medium and long term potential for revolutionary change on a world scale.

In this the Russian experience is actually returning to its roots. The Bolshevik leaders saw their revolution as the first blow in a world-wide struggle for power.

“The existence of the Soviet Republic side by side with imperialist states for a long time is unthinkable. One or the other must triumph in the end” - Lenin



Events confirmed this internationalist policy. The imperialists armed "White" counter-revolutionary forces and sent in their own armies to crush the revolution. Massive repression was unleashed against solidarity movements, against incipient revolutions (a series of risings in Germany were drowned in blood) and against the revolutionary movement of workers across the globe - the 3rd International. The USSR was isolated and its working class decimated.

STALIN

Out of the ruins rose Stalin. He united the state forces and the growing bureaucracy around his theory of "Socialism in one country". To many this idea seemed like common sense. In practice it meant:

* The crushing of all democracy

"The organisation of the party takes the place of the party itself; the central committee takes the place of the organisation; and finally, the dictator takes the place of the central committee" - Trotsky

[Trotsky first wrote this as a criticism of Leninism. He later came to support the party and rose to leadership in an organisation with a throughgoing internal democracy, only to see his words come tragically true with the rise of Stalin as the revolution's gravedigger]

* The elevation of brutality, dictatorship, starvation and poverty to the status of "socialist society".

* The destruction of the Comintern and the reduction of its constituent parties to diplomatic pawns of Soviet foreign policy.

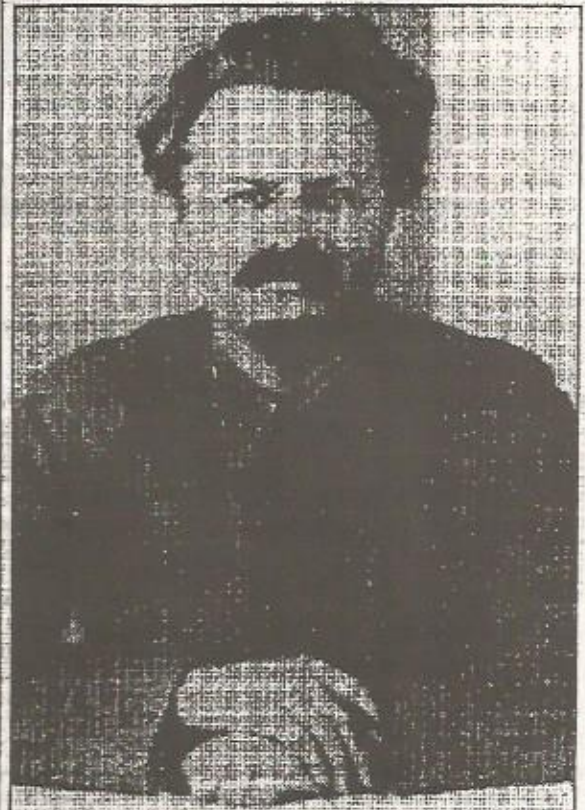
* Impotence in face of the rise of Fascism

* The development of 'Blocs' - an historic 'compromise' with imperialism which justified the USSR in betraying genuine revolutions in the west and the third world while imposing a caricature of its own system on Eastern Europe

* A precondition of all of the above was the liquidation of all the genuine Bolshevik revolutionaries, starting with the left opposition led by Trotsky

"Communists have become bureaucrats. If anything will destroy us, it is this" - Lenin

For decades the Stalinist bureaucracy has lived in uneasy balance between the working class and imperialism. A parasitic growth, it repressed working class protest ruthlessly. At the same time it had to oppose capitalist restoration which would also have swept it away. The command economy wasted and blunted productive forces



Leon Trotsky

while the bureaucracy was riddled with inertia. They held back reform to the last and, when their own reform proved impossible, they lacked any alternative but the tanks.

WORKERS OPPOSITION

However, precisely because of the nature of bureaucratic rule in the Soviet Union, it did not return to the capitalist fold following the decline of revolutionary forces. It remains a non-capitalist country with a strong working class. The decline of Gorbachev, the failure of his many schemes, rested in the end on working-class opposition to privatisation schemes.

There are many dangers. The crisis in the bureaucracy was forced not by the working class but by successful economic and military offensives by imperialism. The opposition, led by Boris Yeltsin, is committed to a program of capitalist restoration. No major force of the left has emerged in a position of leadership. Yet the overwhelming fact is that the workers are free, they are on the move and they are gaining confidence in their own power.

Triumph of the West?

There's no doubt at all about the immediate gains that the imperialist powers have made from the crisis in the Soviet Union. The USSR has vanished from the map as a world power. The US stands forth supreme as the sole superpower on the world stage. Above all there is the proclamation of the final political supremacy of Capitalism.

Are we seeing what one US analyst called "the end of History"? and what George Bush defined as a new imperialist world order? Is the future a long dark night of the soul, while reaction rules triumphant and socialism struggles for survival?

CHAMPIONS OF DEMOCRACY?

Peoples Democracy rejects this doomsday scenario. The role of the West before the coup and since is hardly the triumphant picture of the masters of the world directing events. Gorbachev's pleas to the G7 meeting for help were rejected. He returned to the USSR in derision with his pockets empty - a tempting target for the hardliners. During the coup the protests of Western leaders were muted. They kept their powder dry and were obviously willing to do business with the coup leaders. Even now, with the Communist party decisively defeated, there has been little change of tack. British foreign secretary Hurd has advanced the suggestion that the West should demand the disbandment of the Red Army and then discuss the release of some petty cash. So much for the "champions of democracy" - the new "friends of the Soviet Union"!

CRISIS

This political weakness is based on an underlying economic weakness of imperialism. The economic crisis has laid waste the poorest countries in the world and forced a flow of capital to the rich countries while uncounted numbers die. Now it has intersected the crisis of the Stalinist bureaucracy and is moving with gathering momentum to the imperialist heartlands, bringing

recession and mass unemployment. Alongside the recession goes a growing fragmentation of the imperialist powers, forced apart by economic rivalry and no longer held together by their joint fear of the USSR.

NO TO CAPITALIST ROAD

Capitalist restoration in the USSR would cost hundreds of billions of dollars. Without this the West risks a social upheaval by Soviet workers who reject the restoration and seek workers power. Where is this money to come from? Certainly not from the Group of Seven leaders - they offer membership of the IMF and World Bank. Both institutions are linked with supra-austerity policies in Africa, Asia, Latin America - and have had their hand in the present austerity offensive in Ireland. At the moment they are successfully alienating Polish workers who are facing the full rigours of the Capitalist road.

There is everything to play for. The collapse of Stalinism has released the productive capacity of Soviet workers and linked them again to the world working class without the mask of the bureaucracy. Political revolution for workers power is an underlying dynamic to the situation. The West lacks the unity, understanding and capacity to oversee a capitalist restoration. The outcome of this struggle will not be decided within any national boundaries but will be truly international in scope. That's why the tasks of solidarity are so vitally important.

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Brooke Talks Farce:

Building an alternative

A star comedy turn was provided at the Tory party conference in October by Britain's Supremo in the North, Peter Brooke. His impression of a world-weary idealist searching for dialogue among the lost Irish tribes had the party faithful rolling in the isles. But then they don't have to count the cost in Irish blood.

The high farce of the "Brooke talks" and Brooke's inexhaustible ability to label black as white should not mask reality. The collapse of the ramshackle "dialogue" that it had taken Britain 18 months of unremitting pressure to force together is a major setback for British interests. Today the British are simply marking time. There will be no new major initiative while a general election is pending in Britain and while the Dublin establishment are buried under a mountain of scandal. It should be clear that not only do British imperialism and Irish capitalism have no answer to the political crisis in Ireland - they are not even able to pose the questions. At the same Tory conference Foreign secretary Hurd made this perfectly plain - the agenda was not Irish unity but how best to maintain partition.

STRATEGIC PROBLEM

More immediately the British are faced with a major strategic problem - how to deal with the decaying and fragmented Unionist movement that became clearly identified during the talks process as the major obstacle to any form of settlement.

The whole farce opened on April 30th with bilateral meetings between the British and each of the parties. It was the usual mixture;

* Diplomacy - "Perfidious Albion" told different sets of lies to each group to keep them at the table.

* Irrelevancy - Political questions were ignored in favour of rows about Venue, chairing and standing orders.

* Secrecy - The substantive issues were kept out of the public gaze.

Yet the political necessity for these talks had grown out of

Britain's last major piece of diplomacy in Ireland, the Hillsborough accord. This agreement with the Dublin Government had won the open political support of bourgeois Nationalism for the continuation of partition. In return the British had agreed the appearance of consultation through regular meetings of an Anglo-Irish ministerial conference and the creation of a Belfast secretariat drawn from the British and Irish civil services. The bigotry of Unionism meant that its representatives were not consulted about the deal, but the British hoped that the carrot of a devolved Unionist administration would eventually win their support.

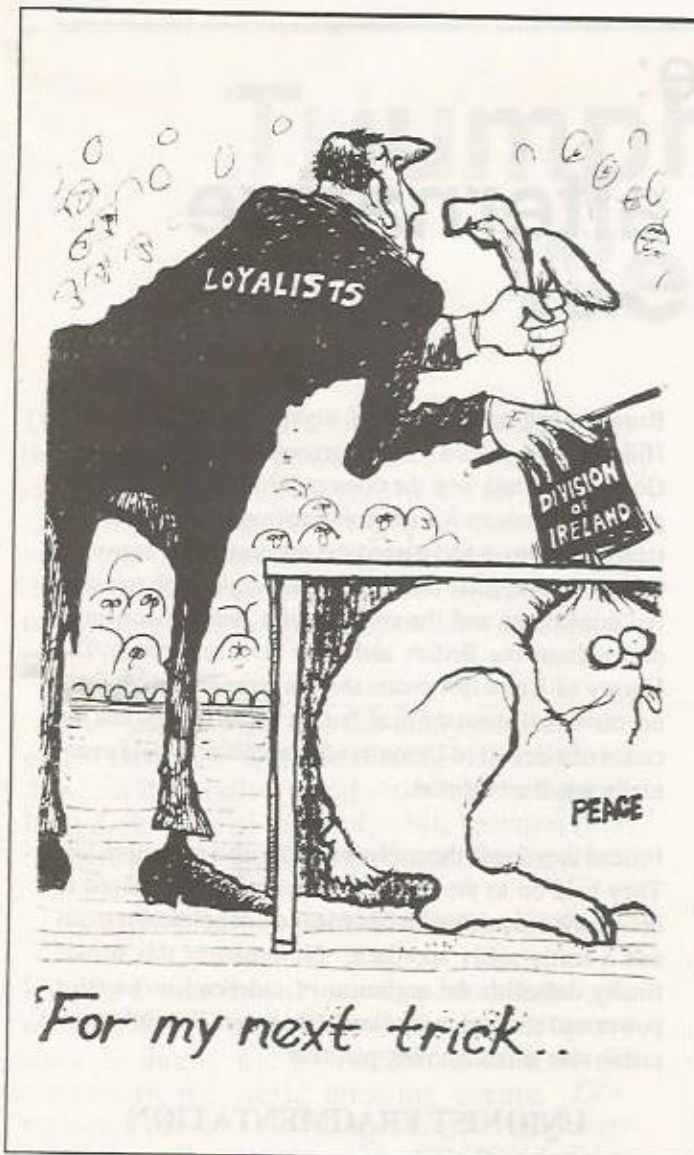
Instead they found themselves faced with a mass uprising. They held on to the outline of the deal and managed to defuse the unionists with combination of political retreats and a softly-softly approach. Nevertheless this helped finally demolish the argument of independent Loyalist power and showed more clearly than ever Britain's leadership role in maintaining partition.

UNIONIST FRAGMENTATION

But Britain was left with a major problem. The bigotry and sectarianism of Unionism was such that, instead of being drawn into the political negotiations, they increasingly fragmented. This was not in Britain's interests. It needs Unionism as the mass base for its military occupation of the North. Having put Unionism gently in its place, the British now needed to hold up the decaying monolith. The Brooke talks were meant to achieve this, with the "bone" of a 10-week break in the Anglo-Irish conference meetings to draw the Unionists in.

The bourgeois Nationalist parties were willing to cooperate. Dublin needs political stability and imperialist support in the face of growing economic crisis and increasing austerity drives against southern workers. In the North the SDLP along with the Catholic church have become the funnel for a great deal of public funds and are enmeshed in a network of sleaze, kickbacks and clientelism.

There were two areas in which Unionist concessions would have made it possible for Nationalism to collaborate in the building of a new Stormont. One was the basis of the Sunningdale settlement - power-sharing with the SDLP -



but the Unionists had staged a mass revolt the last time this was on offer and it wasn't even on the agenda now. The other, even slighter, concession was for an all-Ireland talk shop which would effectively have no meaning but could be sold to SDLP and Fianna Fail supporters a step towards a United Ireland. There were no concessions here either. The Unionists had nothing to offer and the talks were guaranteed to end in farce.

Perhaps the most telling incident of all was the proposal that Lord Carrington, top Tory, imperialist warmonger and former head of NATO, should chair the talks. The unionists denounced this arch-reactionary as a traitor [interestingly enough on the grounds of his "betrayal" of White settlers in Zimbabwe - a clear indication of how Unionism sees itself]. On the other hand the Irish bourgeoisie thought this imperialist fossil a perfect choice!

NEED FOR AN ALTERNATIVE

Despite the farce there is some basis for Brooke's optimism and his attempts during the Summer to re-launch the

talks.

*The talks were built on the Hillsborough accord. It remains in place, the first British political initiative in 20 years to survive.

*The Nationalists have made massive concessions; Support for the RUC and UDR, support for "shoot to kill" operations, suggestions that articles 2 and 3 of the Irish constitution be abolished, proposals from the Right for the reintroduction of internment.

*The total absence of a Republican alternative. They correctly pointed out that their exclusion from the talks showed that the central questions were not going to be addressed, but have no policy to offer other than the militarist conception of the "long war"

* Partly as a result of this the talks had a great deal of popular support - people wanted them to succeed, tho' they didn't have to count the cost that any settlement supported by the British and Unionists would have involved.

In the Brooke talks the British had a free hand. Never in the past has there been less sign of mass resistance, less of a political challenge or more apparent public support. Yet they failed. They failed because, although they have demobilised the mass struggle in the North, they have not destroyed the mass sentiment against British rule which still exists. It's this resistance which has fragmented Unionism and which prevents bourgeois nationalism from going further and giving the full-blooded support for partition that would cement a deal.

Normally this would pose a major threat to imperialism, and the opportunity to pose such a threat is still there, but the British remain relatively unscathed by the collapse of the talks.

The absence of any visible alternative to British rule represents both a block to any advance by anti-imperialists and a danger to the whole movement. That alternative exists in the call for a workers republic, in the call for independent organisation and action by the working class, in unyielding opposition to British imperialism, Unionist bigotry and Nationalist oppression of the working class, in linking up with all the oppressed sections of the Irish people and building a class struggle alternative. The teflon-like survival of Brooke despite the farce of his talks and his continued attempts to impose a solution are a graphic illustration of Lenin's dictum that there is no final crisis for capitalism. Action by the working class is essential for its defeat.

JOHN NORTH.

BIGOTS UNITE AGAINST SEX EDUCATION

An interesting if unsurprising feature of Northern Irish society over the past 20 years is the unity of Catholic and Protestant bigots on matters sexual. This unity surfaces every time there is a suggestion that people in Ireland should have the opportunity to be as informed about sexuality as the people of every other EEC member country. And it matters not what the intensity of sectarian conflict may be on other issues. Nothing is allowed to get in the way of the blessed crusade to keep the populace ignorant.

So while Catholics are gunned down on a daily basis by Loyalist murder squads, the Catholic hierarchy and Ian Paisley's Free[sic] Presbyterians are mounting a campaign against the opening of a Brooke Advisory Clinic in Belfast, by the local Health and Social Services Board.

GROWING CONCERN

The Board's invitation reflected growing concern amongst health professionals at the rising incidence of teenage pregnancies and the basic factual ignorance that many young people displayed about how their bodies function. It was recognised that these same young people were the last to seek advice from their family doctors or the statutory agencies and it was hoped that an independent voluntary agency guaranteeing confidentiality would be able to reach these young people.

The religious approach to sex education in Ireland is to deny sex exists or to surround it with a fog of nonsense.

A recent survey of teenage schoolchildren in County Cork gave a disturbing insight into what children are taught. The teenagers told how they had been told by a priest that a girl could become pregnant by sitting on a boy's knee. It also revealed that 70% of the 14 and 15 year olds interviewed knew a young girl in their class who had become pregnant.

Another survey published in 1990 into the attitudes of Irish women who seek abortion for unwanted pregnancies revealed that the main reason that those women chose to have an abortion was their "fear and shame" of having a child outside marriage. The survey also showed that young Irish women who became pregnant outside marriage had almost no discussion with their parents about their pregnancy and that they felt alone and isolated in having to cope with the situation.

MUCH LESS THAN INFORMATION

The "progressive" wing of the church, if such be possible, of course admits the need for sex education but only as a preparation for marriage. The coordinator of the Marriage and Family ministry in the Catholic diocese of Down and Connor, which cover the greater Belfast area, claims that "sex education" should be more properly called "education for love" and is "much more than information or facts". He wants sex education "within the framework of the Christian vision of human life and sexuality"!

It is this same "vision" which seeks to terrorise Irish women, which energetically mobilised all the dregs of Irish society to prohibit divorce in the 26 counties, to outlaw not just a women's right to choose but the "information or facts" that would allow women to make an informed choice.

A campaign has been set up by socialists and feminists to support the Health Board's invitation to the Brooke advisory service. Resolutions are being put to trade union branches and community groups urging support for this initiative. Letters supporting the Health Board's decision to invite the opening of the Brooke clinic should be sent to;

Dr. Gabriel Scally
Director of Public Health
Eastern Health and Social Services Board
Linenhall St.
Belfast 1.

JOHN MAGEE.

RIGHT-WING SETBACK

In the 26 counties the earlier victory of SPUC in forcing a ban on abortion information has run into trouble despite a formal legal victory at the European court. The court found that students did not have an automatic right to provide abortion information, but the judgement left so many legal loopholes that a ban is now impractical. A major setback for the right, the judgement also shows the limits of European reformism and the importance of direct action by the student movement.

Abortion information

British Pregnancy Advisory Service London 031 222 0985

Liverpool 035 222 0985

Dublin Women's Information Network Dublin 797 700

Review Review Review Review

An Camcheachta/The Starry Plough;

War by other means?

In his introduction to the new Republican theoretical magazine "An Camcheachta/The Starry Plough" Gerry Adams says; "every struggle needs its forum for discussion and debate". Unfortunately his introduction ends with a poem which, while unobjectionable in itself, indicates the limits placed on theory and open discussion by the republican movement. The main thrust is that the movement is "doing the business" and those who are not part of it have no right to criticise.

It's this position of republicanism that has led to their isolation and ghettoisation and the new journal, like the introduction shows little sign of breaking from it. Socialism is restricted to a few Connolly quotes on the cover. The articles - on the Brooke talks, counterinsurgency and community politics all demonstrate that the republican movement have turned Clausewitz's famous dictum that war is the continuation of politics by

other means on its head - for the contributors politics is war by other means. Thus the republican struggle is analysed using the same terms as those employed by British counter-insurgency "experts" while at the same time claiming to have resisted British definitions.

The real struggle is the military struggle and the real revolutionaries the IRA in arms. The mass of the population is important only as a "sea" in which the revolutionaries move and the political battle essentially one of "hearts and minds" for sympathy and support. There is no conception of working people themselves organising and playing an active role in their own liberation, no mention or sign of understanding of class struggle.

One result of this is shown in Una Gillespie's article - all major political questions are pushed into the future when the British go. The left/right division will occur after a United Ireland. Today the struggle against the border subsumes everything else. As Marxists we disagree fundamentally with this position. The British presence does not stand above class struggle but is a major element in that struggle. The conscious action of a majority of the Irish working class is necessary both to defeat imperialism and native capitalism. For Una the question of developing from today's struggles a socialist program that will make this possible is simply not posed.

The articles have been well researched and there are many interesting points, but over the journal as a whole hangs a dreary timelessness. The general points could have been made ten or even twenty years ago.

In conversation republican militants often show an openness and a willingness to debate. Many see themselves as socialists or marxists and it is often difficult to see why this doesn't lead to greater changes in the movement. This journal, the fruit of twenty years of closed debate in a framework which prevents many questions being posed, let alone answered, helps to resolve this question.

JOE CARTER.

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Review Review Review Review

Disappointing - but not surprising

Maurice Goldring is a leading Irish expert among French, indeed West European, Stalinites. He has a rather different position to that inherited by the CPI from Desmond Greaves; it is closer to that of the Workers Party, which published his *Faith of our Fathers*. Yet he does more than put French dressing on the findings of such "red professors" as Bew, Hazelkorn and Patterson. He can recognise and record accurately the Stickies helplessness in Belfast. His new book represents a distinct analysis within the battered tradition of Stalinism.

In Ireland this tradition has its common denominator in the belief that unity and workers power [in itself, for Stalinites, "Socialism"] can be achieved by peaceful political manoeuvres to produce, as a first stage, a democratised six county state [the old "Bill of Rights" gimmick] open to merge freely with the twenty-six county republic. There Greaves and his illegitimate Sticky child part company, with the latter believing that Irish "Socialism" might be won within the two still separate states.

Goldring tries to strike a medium between the two. He avoids the more extreme Sticky positions, such as Henry Patterson's desire for British Labour to run parliamentary candidates in the North of Ireland. He does not ignore the awkward fact that six county Catholics have only two fifths of the Protestants job opportunities, criticising Gregory Campbell's apologia. Yet he hints that the Protestants are a distinct nation and presents Irish unity as being just a simplification, comparing it to "Croppies Lie Down".

At the last, he can only offer hopes. He has done a lot of work on his subject, but it is on

top of him rather than vice versa.

So it is not really surprising that Goldring's most definite stand is to ask [p. 11]

"Who is to decide that [sectarian] militancy is not an expression of class consciousness?" and [p. 134] **"Why should class consciousness not sometimes take a reactionary form?"**

It does not occur to him that such forms can belong naturally only to **sectors** of the working class, dividing it against itself and weakening its potential to achieve power. Socialists are forced to choose between such sectoralism and the consciousness of the oppressed - a consciousness more likely to advance unity. Sectoral anti-Catholicism in Belfast does not advance struggle any more than sectoral Catholicism in the twenty-six counties.

In this way, despite many shrewd insights and new bits of information, Maurice Goldring does not give an accurate overview of Belfast or even of its Protestant majority. For an overview of the latter, it is best to look towards what Goldring patronisingly describes as one of the relatively few books written from the left. Geoff Bell's "The Protestants of Ulster", despite flaws, gets to the heart of the subject in a way to which Goldring can only aspire.

D. R. O'CONNOR LYSAGHT

BELFAST: FROM LOYALTY TO REBELLION - MAURICE GOLDRING, LAWRENCE AND WISHART, LONDON £7.99 sterling

Disappointing but not surprising

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