

AN RHEABHLOID

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IRELAND-
PLUNDERED BY THE EEC

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SINN FEIN CHALLENGE-
DANNY MORRISON SPEAKS

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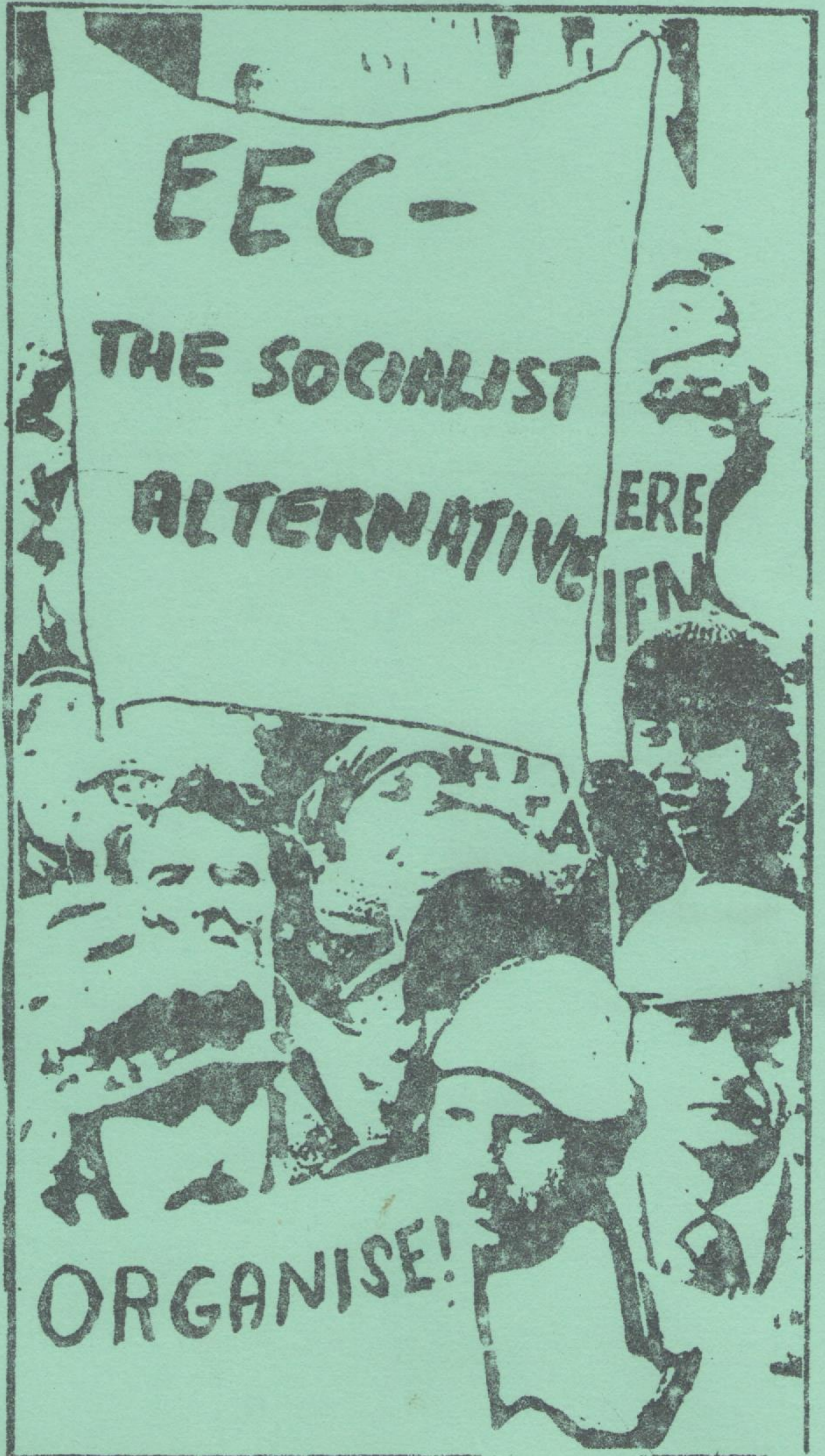
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ARMING THE
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AN RHEABHLOID

This is the first issue of AN RHEABHLOID (The Revolution), a new journal sponsored by Peoples Democracy. The aim of the new journal is to promote the politics of revolutionary marxism and to explain their relevance not just to understanding events in Ireland but to the big issues and developments worldwide.

While AN RHEABHLOID will primarily be a vehicle for the positions of Peoples Democracy and the Fourth International as a whole, it will not be a closed journal. Our pages will be open to debate and comment to reflect the great breadth of the revolutionary, anti-imperialist and workers' movement in Ireland.

In particular, our pages will be open to the readers of AN RHEABHLOID for their views on the class struggle and feedback on the journal. We are confident of a long and lively future!

AN RHEABHLOID
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AN RHEABHLOID

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Send for: AN RHEABHLOID, 8, Avoca Park, Belfast, 11, Ireland.

STATEMENT FROM THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

The second elections for the European parliament will be held in June 1984. The first were in 1979. Although the European parliament is only a consultative assembly without any real powers, these elections will not fail to have an impact on the political scene.

The parties that directly represent the bosses want to make these elections into a plebescite in favour of the anti-labour and warmongering policies that they support, a plebescite in favour of austerity and installing the intermediate-range missiles. In Britain, they are represented by Margaret Thatcher; in France by Jacques Chirac; in West Germany by Helmut Kohl; in Belgium by the Martens-Gol duo; in the Netherlands by Lubbers; in Italy by the Christian Democrats; and in Denmark by the bourgeois coalition in power.

As for the reformist parties of Francois Mitterand, Bettino Craxi and George Papandreu in power in France, Italy and Greece, they are also applying the line of austerity and stepping up the arms race. But they are doing it in a bit more moderate style, and are politically on the defensive, unable to put up any sort of credible alternative against the capitalist offensive.

NO TO THE EEC, INSTRUMENT OF THE BANKS AND TRUSTS

The EEC is a Europe of the bosses. The Common Market was not set up for the benefit of the workers but to bolster the power of the European trusts and multinationals. The EEC institutions act against the interests of the workers. The European Commission is coordinating the attacks on steelworkers throughout Europe. It is promoting an

austerity policy in all the member countries.

Voices are now being raised in favour of equipping this Europe of the bosses with a European army. Such a force would be just as dangerous for peace and the future of humanity as the army of American imperialism or the national armies of the European imperialist powers.

The Fourth International appeals to the workers of Europe to put no faith in capitalist integration of this region. European capitalism is no more progressive than that of the United States. In line with this fact, we support the campaign of our comrades in the Spanish state and in Portugal against the entry of their countries into the Common Market. We are sympathetic to the campaign of the British Labour left and the Greek left for the withdrawal of Greece and Britain from the EEC.

However, falling back on the capitalist sovereign national state scarcely offers any better deal for the workers in the member countries of the Common Market. This would in fact only provide a justification for still harsher austerity policies under the pretext of defending national industry against foreign competition.

Against the two mirages of capitalist integration and bourgeois national sovereignty, the Fourth International calls for a struggle for a Socialist United States of Europe, a common fight, a common solidarity, and a common socialist objective for the workers of all countries.

AUSTERITY DOES NOT CREATE JOBS

With the support of all the existing governments, the bosses in

the ten member countries of the Common Market, as well as those in Spain and Portugal, have been able to direct very wide-ranging attacks on workers, recipients of social benefits, women, immigrants, and youth. In defence of their austerity policies, the governments have invoked the demands of international competition. But the same argument has been used in every country, leading to an unceasing downward spiral in buying power and social benefits.

It is sufficient for one country to lower labour costs, and a neighbouring country will justify an ever sharper cut in the name of the national interest, that is, in fact, of class collaboration, to the sole benefit of the bosses. Indeed it is false to claim that austerity creates jobs. Since this policy started to be applied in Europe, unemployment has more than tripled, going from 4 million to 17 million. And no variants of this policy of reconversion will halt the drain of jobs. To the contrary, the experts of the bourgeois institutions themselves predict that in a few years the number of jobless in West Europe will reach 18 million.

FOR EUROPEAN-WIDE ACTION: FOR THE 35-HOUR WEEK NOW, WITHOUT LOSS OF PAY

A different sort of economic policy, with different priorities, is perfectly possible. But it would have to be based not on the rationale of capital, of competition and profit, but on the logic of labour, of solidarity among the exploited. Priority has to be given to full employment and meeting the basic material needs of the masses.

At the time of the first European elections in June 1979, the Fourth

International call said: 'Almost forty million of us are organised in unions. If this power is mobilised, it can win the 35-hour workweek with no cut in pay, new hiring to make up for lost work-time, and workers control over the rates of work to prevent a speedup.'

This call reflected a real need, since today the West German metal workers union IG Metall has launched a vast campaign of action, including strike, for the 35-hour week. Many unions in other countries have come out in support of this. The time has come to organise, alongside the West German metal workers, a West European-wide campaign of all categories of workers for the immediate introduction of the 35-hour week. It is now or never.

Participation by revolutionary forces in the elections to the European parliament to be held in June has been made difficult by numerous legal and financial barriers. Nonetheless, the sections of the Fourth International in the countries concerned will take the occasion to wage a campaign against austerity, the missiles and against anti-labour policies. We publish below the call adopted jointly by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and the European sections directly concerned by the Common Market question.

In France, the financial hurdle for running candidates was very high. Just publishing the official material for a European election campaign costs 5 million francs (about £400,000). This money is reimbursed only to slates that get over 5% of the vote. Nonetheless, the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire French section of the Fourth International, is waging a campaign that will culminate in a rally against austerity and the capitalist united Europe on May 26 and 27 at La Bourget near Paris.

In Britain, revolutionary Marxists are calling for a vote for Labour candidates, supporting the call of the left wing of the Labour Party for withdrawal from the EEC and for opposition to the missiles and austerity.

In Belgium, the Parti Ouvrier Socialiste—Socialistische Arbeiders Partij has gathered the 1,000 signatures in each province needed to run a slate. The Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire of Luxembourg has also met the requirements. Thus, both these organisations will be directly involved in the election campaign.

In Italy, like France, there are very high legal and financial barriers to running an independent slate. For example, it is necessary to collect the signatures of 30,000 supporters in each of the five election districts. And then these signatures have to be 'validated' in front of a notary, which costs a lot of money.

In view of the workers struggles that are being waged now against the austerity decrees of the government presided over by the Socialist Bettino Craxi and the mobilisations against the installation of the missiles at the Comiso site, the European elections will assume a major national dimension in this country.

For this reason, since the Socialist Party is in the government and the Communist Party is riding on the workers mobilisations, the Lega Comunista Rivoluzionaria, Italian section of the Fourth International, has decided to call for a working class vote for the Democrazia Proletaria and the CP slates under the slogan: 'Strengthen the left opposition to the Craxi Government and the Christian Democrats.'

Thus, the Lega Comunista Rivoluzionaria will campaign against the missiles and austerity, for left unity in the struggle against the government. Nonetheless, it will modify its electoral call if the CP's role in the workers mobilisations turns into open betrayal.

In Denmark, you need to get 60,000 signatures to run a slate. So, the Socialistisk Arbeiderparti (SAP) has begun discussion with the Left Socialist Party (VS) for an electoral accord on the basis of a manifesto against unemployment, for the 35 hour week and for supporting the struggles for this demand, for a European wide strike against the missiles and for

Danish withdrawal from the EEC. If these negotiations are unsuccessful, the SAP will propose common actions with the VS in the framework of the campaign.

APPEAL OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL FOR THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

Now is the time also for all members of parliament who claim to represent the working class to introduce simultaneously in the national parliaments and the European parliament, bills that would reduce the legal workweek to 35 hours. Now is the time for the West European unions to call on the American and Japanese unions to join in this campaign. This is the only effective way to stop the drain of jobs, to avert the divisive and demoralising effects of massive structural unemployment on the workers movement, to force international capitalism to pay the bill for the crisis for which it alone is responsible.

ACT NOW AGAINST EUROMISSILES

The governments of capitalist Europe are cutting social spending. But they are coming up with more and more money to finance arms spending, to finance their imperialist military interventions in the Malvinas, Lebanon, Chad and Ireland. They apply the rules of profitability and return to spending on education and health, but no government assesses the return from its military spending.

The working masses of Europe are more and more rejecting this insane arms race, which threatens sooner or later to reduce our continent to radioactive ashes. The demonstrations against the installation of the missiles brought out unprecedented numbers of people — millions in West Germany, more than a million in Britain and Italy, more than half a million in the Netherlands, and 400,000 in Belgium. In Britain, the Greenham Common women are continuing their struggle against the NATO base.

This mass opposition to the missiles is clearly oriented in the direction of anti-imperialism

and unilateral disarmament. This dynamic must be stimulated, reinforced and generalised by specific action proposals more and more coordinated on the international level.

Among the proposals that could be made, two are particularly opportune. One is the call for a referendum against installing the Euro-missiles on the territory of each country or keeping them there. The other is for the unions to organise a general strike on a West European scale, against the presence of the missiles.

FOR AN ANTI-CAPITALIST ALTERNATIVE, FOR THE UNITED SOCIALIST STATES OF EUROPE

The workers movement must organise its opposition to the Europe of the bosses, of the trusts and the multinationals, to the Europe of austerity and greater militarisation. It must do this on an international scale. The trades union movement has not yet managed to do this, either in the case of the steel workers fighting for jobs, or in the case of the struggle for the 35-hour week.

In recent months, there have been big workers struggles, such as the public workers strikes in Belgium and the Netherlands, the exemplary mobilisation of the Italian workers in defence of the sliding scale, the miners strike in Britain, the Spanish workers resistance to austerity, and the strike of the Talbot-Poissy plant in France. But in all these cases

the fighting spirit of the workers has run up against divisions among the traditional leaderships of the workers movement, their refusal to organise the struggle and to support an anti-capitalist alternative, their capitulation to so-called international constraints and constraints of competition, that is their capitulation to the rules of the capitalist game.

Neither in France, nor Spain, nor Italy, nor Sweden, nor Greece, nor Portugal, nor only yesterday in Germany, have the big Social Democratic and Communist parties in government fought back against the attacks on the workers who are struggling against austerity and NATO's ultra-militarist policy. The reason is that these parties and trades union leaderships refuse to attack the roots of the evil.

In order to throttle the effects of the crisis, it is necessary to break the power of the banks and the financial combines by nationalising them definitively under workers control. The goal must be to put in power workers governments backed up by the workers mobilised and organised in their workplaces and neighbourhoods. This means aiming for the expropriation of big capital and reorganisation of the economy based on democratic planning by the workers.

This struggle is linked to the fight against the bureaucracy in the Eastern block countries, which is reflected in the growth of an independent peace movement.

(And it is necessary to declare our solidarity with this movement against the repression to which it has been subjected). This struggle will open up the way for a Socialist United States of Europe, the only real alternative to the divided Europe of today, prey to parallel crises of capitalism in the West and of bureaucratic rule in the East.

A Socialist United States of Europe will not only offer an effective solution for the working masses of this continent. It will also offer a powerful assistance to the super-exploited peoples of the Third world in their struggle to free themselves from the morass of poverty in which imperialism and capitalism has trapped them. A socialist breakthrough in Europe, would offer hope to all of humanity for a way out of the deepening shadows of hunger, unemployment, dictatorship and war, a road to progress and an assured future.

Forward to active solidarity for all workers in Europe fighting for their class objectives!

Forward toward worldwide solidarity for all exploited and oppressed, in particular those in Central America, the Near East and Southern Africa, who are the target of direct imperialist action!

Forward to the world Socialist Revolution!

United Secretariat of the Fourth International!

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IRELAND-POOR RELATION OF THE E.E.C.

In May 1972 a referendum in Southern Ireland resoundingly endorsed a proposal to join the EEC. If recent opinion polls are anything to go by, then that initial euphoria has completely evaporated. The Irish population is now reputedly amongst the most discontented of any member state of the EEC.

The reason is not hard to see. The general living standards in the South are 30% below the EEC average. Irish workers, who put in the longest working hours (apart from Greece), are the lowest paid workers in the community. And the small farmers who earn less still than workers are even worse off.

It is not simply low living standards which cause resentment but the ever increasing disparities in wealth and income distribution. A mere 5% of the population owns three quarters of the private wealth while 10% of the population takes home a quarter of the national income. Grinding poverty stands in contrast everywhere to the sumptuous living of a tiny elite.

This picture becomes more revealing when put in the context of a relative worsening of Ireland's position vis-a-vis other European countries since EEC membership. The widening gap can be judged roughly by the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) index which fell a further 4% behind the EEC average between 1971-79. This trend points to the fact that EEC membership has in fact exacerbated the economic contradictions left by Britain's previous imperialist exploitation.

HERITAGE OF THE PAST

The Irish economy was moulded largely to agricultural production under British rule. Moreover, agricultural activity was geared almost totally towards supplying the British market with cheap meat and dairy

products. This kind of extensive farming implied the need for agrarian reform along the lines of large scale enterprises. But the piecemeal reforms imposed by Britain and the resistance of the mass of small farmers resulted in a hybrid system - a minority of small farms in a sea of small, mainly unviable farms.

Ireland's subsequent economic development was profoundly debilitated by this inherited nature of agricultural production and structural deformities of land tenure:

- 1) Extensive farming did not require a great deal of investment. Big farm capitalists were conservative. Profits were deposited in the banks rather than put to further productive use.
- 2) The profitability of extensive farmers depended on access to the British market. The capitalist farmers were ardent free traders. This had two consequences. Tariff protection was not available to infant Irish industry. Side by side with free trade went free mobility of capital. The banks invested the accumulating agricultural profits in safe British Govt. securities. Irish industry was exposed to the full blast of developed British industry and starved of capital. Indigenous industrial development was consequently very limited.
- 3) The land tenure system created a hierarchical division of labour within agriculture whereby the small farmer was constrained to the arduous and meagre end of production (i.e. breeding and rearing) while the capitalist farmers monopolised the speedy and lucrative end (fattening and exporting). Under these conditions the cyclical crises of Irish agriculture tended to be more sudden and deeper. They also tended to fall more firmly on the small farmers.
- 4) Extensive farming also implied the necessity to minimise the direct cost of land (and property) ownership. This dictated the need for an environment of

minimal taxation. State involvement in industry was initially restricted and when the level of taxation did begin to rise, its burden was shifted disproportionately onto an already impoverished population. Social needs became heavily dependent on private institutions (mainly religious) and politics took on a distinct clientelist colour.

The Irish economy in the first half of this century was dominated by an elite capitalist farming sector which led off small, semi-capitalist farming and depended on British markets; a prosperous (if unadventurous) financial sector integrated with the British capital market and with no investment in industry; a merchant sector also dependent on Britain; a small sector of industry consisting of diminutive enterprises catering for the domestic consumer market; and a small sector of exporting industries, based on food/drink, which was largely foreign-owned or controlled.

This state of affairs led to repeated periods of stagnation culminating in a profound malaise during the 1950s. The alternative possibility of growth was to adopt a strategy of more comprehensive integration with international imperialism. This became all the more urgent in the 1950s because the possibility of Britain joining the EEC was mooted. In 1961 a decision to seek membership of the EEC was readily supported by the two major bourgeois parties, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael.

EEC membership was sold to the Irish electorate on a number of economic grounds. It was argued that the contradictions of agriculture would be painlessly eased by substantially higher and stable prices; foreign capital would pour in and create a spin-off effect which would lead to a sound industrial base under native control; living standards would increase enormously and the creation of a comprehensive social welfare system would be possible. This was the promise of final de-colonization. Ireland would at last 'take its place among the nations of the world'.

EEC membership did indeed stimulate the Irish economy to some extent. But it could not overcome the forces of chaos which repeatedly created economic torpor and social blight.

AGRICULTURE - ARTIFICIAL GROWTH

Within the agricultural sector, entry into the EEC gave rise to historically unprecedented levels of investment and output plus some dramatic windfalls in

income. Yet behind this apparent success story lies a grim tale.

Initially price rises (up to 300%) sent Irish farmers into a flurry of modernisation and expansion. But given that the EEC is almost self-sufficient in beef and has a surplus of dairy products - which together constitute 68% of Irish agricultural output - the impact of the original price incentives was bound to be short lived. From the mid-1970s prices began to level out.

This set-back was compounded by a negative turn in the input-output price ratio. Despite a reduction in the use of inputs, this deteriorating ration took significant bites out of farm profits.

After the initial hectic expansion, a new phase of crisis set in. For the past decade, as a whole, farm income in real terms has remained at the pre-entry level. Growth rates have tapered off and since 1978 have declined to an historic low. The nature of land tenure has remained the same and the variation in farm size has hardly changed at all. The composition of output and the division of labour between various groups of farms has stayed virtually as before. What has happened, however, is that the contradictions of agriculture have sharpened without any fundamental change in the structure of production. Insofar as the potential for such change did emerge, it has tended towards wholesale disintegration rather than any long-term solution.

To get the full story it is necessary to penetrate beneath the surface veneer of success. During the period of EEC membership the artificial support system of European agricultural policy has intensified a number of distortions in Irish farming which are concealed by statistical averages.

INCOME

INCOME. Agricultural income has been static in real terms over the past years. But within this context there have been striking changes. The two cattle crises of 1974 and '78 played a major role in levelling out the overall returns to farmers. However the EEC intervention support for beef ensured that the burden of these disasters would fall disproportionately on the breeders and rearers of cattle. The big capitalist farmers were able to sell their beef at guaranteed prices through EEC intervention while at the same time refusing to purchase any more cattle for fattening. The bottom fell out of the market therefore only for the medium and

small farmers. This left them overstocked with all the obvious consequences for the viability of their farms.

Today over half the income from agriculture accrues to one-fifth of the farmers. The fact that the average farm income is below the average industrial wage (one of the lowest in the EEC) gives an idea of the penury in which 80% of Irish farmers live.

GROWTH: Output fell dramatically to around 1% per annum after 1970. The main feature of this trough was a huge reduction in the national cattle herd which fell by several hundred thousand, back to its 1970 level. Parallel with this, there has been a shift by big farmers into dairying, having a greater concentration of cattle on small farms. Indeed, an increasing number of small farms produce nothing but cattle. The decline of the beef sector therefore means that the number of farms producing absolutely nothing is bound to grow.

LAND TENURE. Land continues to be as immobile as ever despite a rapid fall in prices which in the mid-1970s were the highest in Europe. Over the past decade the average size of holdings have increased by only 2 acres. The effects of EEC membership have intensified this problem.

On the one hand a high level of debt servicing and general uncertainty makes the big farmers reluctant to purchase. To meet this situation they are turning (albeit marginally) to a more intensive use of land rather than augmenting their holding. The problem of debt is the most immediate and fundamental cause of this. Farm indebtedness rose from 15% of total indebtedness in 1970 to a record 30% in 1980. Farm indebtedness represented 40% of farmers' annual income in 1970 and had increased to 120% by 1980. This debt is spread across the whole farming population but is concentrated in the medium and big farmers.

Many medium and small farmers, on the other hand, are gravitating towards family subsistence farming. They are prepared to accept an income far inferior to the average wage. Changes in market prices for products or land do not exert substantial pressure on them to leave farming. Some 50% of farms, on one third of the land farmed, contribute nothing to growth of new output. The bulk of growth is produced by 20% of farmers. The 30% of borderline cases are particularly threatened by current EEC trends. There is a real possibility that 8% of farmers could end up in the subsistence part-time category.

This will, under conditions of family ownership of farms, intensify rather than ease the immobility of land.

Combined with this, the division of labour between big and small farmers is roughly defined on a regional basis. The consolidation of small and medium farms into viable enterprises would have to take place through a differentiation among small and medium farmers themselves. The deep depression in which these groups have languished, virtually rules out such a struggle. The structural contradictions involved in the division of labour and the nature of landholding is likely to remain unchanged for some considerable time.

FOOL'S GOLD FROM MULTINATIONALS

The implications of the situation in agriculture will be enormous for the Irish economy as a whole. At the economic level agriculture employs directly or indirectly 30% of the national labour force, accounts for up to 45% of output in the goods sector, and represents 50% of net exports. At the social level, nearly half the population lives in rural areas and it is there that a considerable section of Ireland's poor is located.

Irish industry, particularly manufacturing, is supposedly one of the big success stories of EEC membership. During the 1970s manufacturing output grew at a rate of 4% per annum compared with the 1/2% EEC average. But this growth exhibited a number of defects and has caused more problems than it has solved.

Manufacturing has undoubtedly increased its weight within the economy. But much of the growth is superficial. Away and by far the most dynamic component of this sector has been the foreign multi-nationals. Throughout the 1970s Southern Ireland easily attracted more foreign firms (relative to population size) compared with other EEC countries. These firms now employ over a third of the manufacturing workforce and account for 70% of exports. Indeed the significant growth of manufactured exports during the 1970s was almost exclusively generated by the overseas multinationals.

Nonetheless, this performance still does not give much hope for long-term development. The performance of the multinationals in Ireland is strikingly similar to that in other so called 'developing' (i.e. neo-colonial) countries:

— linkages with the rest of the economy are extremely low — only 16% of their

inputs are purchased locally. In some branches, such as chemicals, only 3% of raw materials are purchased in Ireland.

— They are generally low skilled assembly operations and for the most part low-pay industries. Their value-added content is extremely low.

— They are generally small plants with restricted potential for employment — an average of 100 jobs per plant.

In addition to this very weak spin-off effect, the multinationals actually create barriers to growth:

— They supply only a third of the capital needed to set-up. Thus, they are in competition with local industry for the rest.

— 90% of their profits are tax-free — causing a multi-million hole in tax revenue.

— The free trade environment which they dictate has caused a precipitous decline in the traditional industries. A quarter of the jobs which existed in indigenous industry in 1973 have now disappeared. Since this sector produces mainly for the domestic market the result is not only a decline in net job creation but also increased imports.

— These companies make huge profits. The US companies, according to the US Department of Commerce achieve a return of 30%, which is well above the performances in any other EEC country where the average is 13%. Reinvestment was initially high (70%). In the last few years this has changed drastically. In 1983 over IRE1,000 million (about half the balance of payments deficit) in unspecified outflows occurred. It is believed by economists that IRE300 million of this was repatriated as multinational profits.

These aspects of the multinationals makes it clear that a strategy of relying on foreign investment can make no headway in grappling with the macroeconomic problems which beset the Irish economy. Irish industry still has the lowest level of productivity in the EEC; there has been no net increase in manufacturing employment over 10 years; despite the fact that manufacturing greatly increased its factor share of GNP and exports, a structural balance of payments deficit (attenuated for the moment by a fall in imports caused by a general decrease in consumption) still exists. The latter problem is one of the major medium-term constraints to economic growth and it is ironic that the multinationals which dominate exports are a main contributor to it. Certainly in the short term, with the purchase of

plant and material from capital snapped up in Ireland (two thirds of setting up capital) and Importers of large initial stocks, they contribute heavily to the payments deficit. This is probably true in the long term as well, given a steady departure rate and the constantly high proportion of new companies in this sector.

HUGE BORROWING

As for the rest of the manufacturing sector — indigenous companies — it contributes relatively to economic growth and is dependent largely on the domestic market. The only other significant sector of industry is building and construction. It usually employs 10% of the labour force and contributes output at around 20% of the GDP. Since this sector depends heavily on developments in industry and agriculture and on the level of consumer and government spending, it is hardly surprising that it is going through the worst crisis in forty years. At the moment nearly half the workforce is unemployed. With over one million square feet of office space and three million square feet of factory space lying idle and with a thriving market in second-hand housing there is little hope of an early revival.

The most sobering aspect of the situation in industry is that a full reckoning with the results of reliance on foreign investment has still to be faced. A contraction of multinational operations is now underway. Most of the foreign owned plants in Ireland are subsidiaries of companies at the bottom end of the multinational spectrum (only a handful of the 800 firms figure in 'Fortune's' top 500). At the best of times these firms had a redundancy rate of 30% over ten years. Now the rigours of recession and the general climate of depression is taking an even greater toll. A recent survey indicated that a quarter of Irish based foreign firms are already considering relocating elsewhere. On top of this Ireland's share of outside investment coming to Europe has declined steadily over the past few years.

This process is likely to accelerate in the future. The long-term decline in the economies and labour costs of some of the advanced European countries — notably Britain — plus accession of Greece and Portugal to the EEC will stiffen competition for the location of multinational subsidiaries. Ireland long ago reached the bottom line in the package of grants and concessions it can offer. The creation of 80,000 multinational jobs has cost the Irish exchequer IRE6,000 million. There is no more scope for increasing the bidding.

Under the lengthening shadow of this impasse a major debate on reorientating industrial strategy is in progress. The consensus emerging from this debate is in favour of turning Ireland into a base for the provision of international services. The latest ten year plan of the Industrial Development Authority (the government's chief 'job creating agency') foresees no more than 10,000 manufacturing jobs being created over the next decade. The development of luxurious medicare facilities and banking enclaves is being canvassed as a way of generating wealth to create services-type jobs. The dream of industrialisation is being buried unceremoniously. The so-called 'Telesis Report', which initiated the debate on new strategy, commented that previous economic policy had turned Ireland into a 'small export haven'. For the Irish bourgeoisie the logical progression is to turn Ireland into a playground for the international jet set.

The way in which economic contradictions under conditions of EEC membership have sharpened is well illustrated in the dramatic growth of a crisis in public finances. Much of the controversy over government expenditure has focussed on current spending. The reason is obvious enough. The current budget has been rising steadily — from 30% of the GNP (Gross National Product) in the early 1970s to 40% in the 1980s. At the same time the current budget deficit has risen from zero in 1970 to 8% of the GNP by 1980.

However, at the same time Ireland has experienced a phenomenal growth in capital formation. In the 1980s it averaged 20% of the GNP and after EEC membership, it rose to over 30%. This growth has been motored by government expenditure. Throughout the past decade the public capital programme doubled its share of national capital formation and by the 1980s stood at 50% of the total.

Since the capital programme is financed largely through borrowing, the level of national debt has increased accordingly. It has risen from 68% of the GNP in the early 1970s to almost 100% of the GNP today. The fiscal logic behind this was the assumption that an increase in productivity would eventually produce a compensating flow of revenue.

In fact, public capital spending has risen faster than current expenditure. Furthermore, within the aggregate of capital spending the share going to manufacturing rose most rapidly. In sum, the aim of successive governments was to force march the pace of industrial development so as to sustain adequate expenditure on current services, etc.

It is precisely the failure of industrial strategy and not excessive growth of current outlays which is at the root of the disorders in public finances. Current spending increases were not exorbitant by EEC standards were necessary simply to prevent a worsening of already bad conditions. For example, social welfare was the fastest growing component of current spending but in the last five years some 40% of this growth was caused by an increase of recipients, due to higher unemployment and falling incomes. The high level of expenditure on health reflects a costly and inefficient service with too many small and outdated hospitals (50% of health spending goes on hospitals). This situation is maintained largely at the behest of conservative pressure groups such as local bourgeois interests, religious orders and professionals.

Although the level of Irish public spending looks satisfactory compared to general EEC standards, it is far from adequate relative to the needs of the Irish people, Southern Ireland has:

- The greatest proportion of poor in the EEC — a quarter of the population lives below the poverty line, which is defined as two thirds of the average income (which is, in turn, only two thirds of the EEC average).

- One of the highest ratios of pupils to teachers and one of the lowest levels of expenditure on education.

- Amongst the lowest use of such items as household electricity, private cars, telephones, televisions, etc.

- One of the fastest growing populations and highest dependency ratios (over 40% of the population is either under the age of 14 years or over the age of 65 years).

- One of the highest rates of unemployment — at 19% it is greater than the entire manufacturing workforce.

The social situation in Ireland has not improved at all since EEC membership. A survey this year revealed that Ireland as a whole is the most disadvantaged country in the EEC and is only a hairsbreadth ahead of regional blackspots such as Sardinia.

The failure of industrial strategy means that there is no economic dynamic which can pull the nation out of this social backwater in which it is now floundering. On the contrary, the crisis of public finances will aggravate the situation still further.

The staggering size of the national debt has produced two new problems: foreign indebtedness and punitive taxation.

As government borrowing increased, the liquidity of the financial sector seriously decreased, interest rates rose and credit became scarce. The private sector was in danger of grinding to a halt. Governments of the day then turned to international financial institutions. Suddenly, public foreign borrowing rose from practically nothing before EEC membership to over 40% of the GDP at present. Along with this, the servicing of foreign debt has grown to a dangerous level of 6.7% of the GDP. This level of external borrowing and debt servicing (equal to about two thirds of external reserves) could, if uncorrected, lead to a decline of confidence by Ireland's trade partners and consequent disruption of the whole economy.

Apart from borrowing, the only other source of finance available is tax revenues. Since EEC membership the level of taxation has risen steadily.

At the beginning of the 1970s Ireland's tax level was lower than any of the existing EEC countries. Since then, taxes have risen from 27% of the GNP to 41% presently.

Within this overall rise, a consistent shifting of sections of society has occurred. Income tax (87% of which is paid from wages) has almost doubled since the early 1970s to 14% of the GDP today and indirect taxes on consumer goods increased in the same period from 10% to 18%. Thus, nearly four fifths of taxes fall mainly on the workers and the poor.

The overall level of taxation, given the relative underdevelopment of Ireland, is punitively high and the share borne by workers and their allies almost unbearable. The latitude for extracting more revenue

by means of taxation is, therefore, negligible.

With excessive foreign borrowing and excessive taxation, government fiscal policy is caught between two grinding stones. Any attempt to significantly reduce external debt would cause a spiralling deflation — deflation, erosion of tax base and external reserves and further deflation. As against this, to increase or even maintain the existing level of taxation would risk serious political unrest and damage Ireland's credit rating thereby activating the balance of payments constraint inherent in the foreign debt. The result would be equally deflationary.

The only way out is through a programme of massive cuts. There is a solid consensus between the two major bourgeois parties and the Labour Party on this. But the type of deflation such a programme would necessitate, added to the social and economic crisis which already exists, has its own dangers.

Apart from the obvious economic dangers, there is a highly organised and combative working class to contend with — over 50% of Irish workers are unionised. What the workers lack most is a political awareness of their own strength. A full-scale attempt to dismantle state involvement in the economy would undoubtedly lead to a questioning of the delicate political consensus on which the state rests. That kind of fermentation in workers' consciousness is already apparent in the governmental instability which emerged from the last three general elections and in three massively supported national work stoppages against the tax system in 1979, 1980 and 1981. (4) None of the politicians want to cut too deeply, too quickly. None wants to be the first to feel the full might of the workers' anger. So on top of economic instability, there is a growing political instability.

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THE E.E.C. AND THE NORTH

When the British Labour Government held a referendum on continued membership of the E.E.C. in 1975 only a narrow majority of people in the Six Counties voted in favour. Since then, as in the 28 Counties the E.E.C. has severely declined in popularity. Widespread scepticism has continually greeted news about additional money flowing into the North from the E.E.C. Much more obvious has been the ongoing and unchecked decline of the North's economy and the massive increase in unemployment. A study of the figures behind this popular view shows it to be fully justified.

ADDITIONAL?

Northern Ireland makes an annual payment to the E.E.C. through taxes collected by the British Exchequer. In 1981-82 this amounted to nearly £59m and in recent years has been rising. Money received from the E.E.C. including guaranteed payments to farmers amounted to £91m. This left a balance of £32m which may be regarded as additional funds from the E.E.C. - a very meagre amount indeed.

The word 'may' is used advisably because in fact it is pretty impossible to prove that significant extra funds actually are given. The real amount of additional funding may well be far below the suggested figure of £32m. This all concerns the concept of 'additionality'. In other words, is the money from the E.E.C. additional to money from the British Exchequer or is it used as a replacement? In the end it is a question of whether you trust (and after all how could you not) the word of the British Government who assure us that the extra benefits are truly coming to us. This is because 'additionality' is interpreted in a rather particular way. The E.E.C. funds are

described as additional because it reduces Britain's net contribution to the E.E.C. therefore allowing a higher level of public expenditure than would otherwise have been the case. That this higher level of expenditure is actually carried out, and in Northern Ireland, has not been proved by the British Government. Let's look at the various ways in which the E.E.C. directly affects the North!

THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

The European Regional Development Fund is the main instrument of EEC support for job creation and preservation. The fund works through existing British Govt. structures and can be divided into two categories - help for infrastructure projects and specific industrial projects.

Assistance for infrastructural development can amount to 70% of the funds resources and the level of grant can be up to 50% of total investment expenditure for projects of particular importance. In fact although over 70% of projects have received some sort of help this amounted to only just over 13% of total investment undertaken. Such controversial projects as Kilroot power station and the new Foyle bridge have received particular assistance.

The second area of involvement is providing funding for specific industrial and service sector projects. For such a project to receive ERDF money it must already be in receipt of grants from the Industrial Development Board (IDB) or Local Enterprise Development Unit (LEDU). These projects do not apply directly for aid but have to be chosen by the Department of Development, which favours selecting large scale enterprises. Unfortunately big business has not been up to it

recently and more small LEDU aided projects have had to be included.

Over the last 10 years an average of 2000 to 3000 jobs have been aided each year. This refers to aid not for new jobs but includes help to keep existing jobs. For example in 1982 ERDF money helped promote 998 new jobs and maintain 1017 existing jobs. This however is probably an overestimate of the ERDF's impact. What must be assumed is that firm's investment was higher because of IOB/ERDF grants than that the IDB and LEDU money was released for more projects because of ERDF assistance. In other words the problem of additionality is raised once again.

This figure is misleading in another respect for although half of the new jobs promoted by the IDB were assisted by the ERDF, and a smaller proportion of those maintained, it should be remembered that this total of 2000 to 3000 jobs were also in receipt of local grants from the IDB. In fact although ERDF aid can amount to 20% of investment costs in 1981 for example it amounted to only just over 11%. Only a proportion of these jobs were created or maintained by the ERDF.

CRITICISMS

Other criticisms can be made of the impact and working of the fund. First it has a bias towards capital grants which may be counterproductive. Capital may be used to replace labour rather than to employ more and there is evidence that this is exactly what has happened. Secondly grants have attracted foreign firms which have a tendency to close down their branch plants in places such as the North when there is a

recession. A list of some of the prominent recipients of grants gives some indication of the deficiencies of the fund; it includes Courtaulds, De Lorean and Lear Fan.

These criticisms are valid not only for the ERDF but for the IDB as well. The whole strategy of the British government to promote jobs has been an abysmal failure. Unemployment in the North is over 120,000 and the gap between it and Britain has widened. This is especially true of the manufacturing sector. While in Britain manufacturing employment is 18% of employment it is only 11% in the North. Services by comparison, occupy 46% compared to 36% in Britain. This shows the dependence of the North's economy on the public sector. Manufacturing employment has declined by over 36% or by 60,000 jobs since 1975. Nor can a case easily be made that IDB/ERDF grants slowed down this decline. In fact, grant assisted employment has itself declined from 71,400 (or 42.5% of manufacturing jobs) to 44,800 (or 42%). IDB/ERDF assisted employment has therefore been falling faster. Future forecasts indicate a further widening of the gap between the North and Britain. The total in employment is predicted to decrease a further 6 1/2% for the whole economy and nearly 20% for the manufacturing sector.

If we look at the aim of the ERDF which states the Fund is 'intended to correct the principal regional imbalances within the Community', we can see it to have been a failure. Indeed, the same forces which create these imbalances (unrestricted capital accumulation and competition) are those which the EEC was set up particularly to promote within its area. That the gap between rich and poor should widen was entirely predictable.

THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

The second major instrument of EEC intervention is the European Social Fund whose declared aim is to improve employment opportunities and facilitate the geographical and occupational mobility of workers in the member states. Indeed, Northern

Ireland is designated an area of 'absolute priority' and receives a greater per capita contribution than any other area except Greenland. In 1981-1982 a total of £25 million was received which compares with an overall budget in the North of £108 million. Only £2.6 million of this sum went to the private sector and again it only operates alongside government grants. The lions share of the Funds money was devoted to the public sector. So what exactly was it used for?

Some 55% was devoted to training programmes for young people under 25 years of age and 37 1/2% to general training schemes. Thus, most of it was given over to the youth training programme. This scheme is rightly notorious as a Tory ploy to hide the real unemployment figures among young people and has been criticised on many grounds:

Most of those who go on a YTP course will still be unemployed when it is finished.

The scheme has been used to reduce employers labour costs. When it was first mooted only £15 a week was going to be paid! Trades union pressure raised this to £25 but this is still totally inadequate. Unlike the Youth Training Scheme in Britain, there is no provision for increasing this amount and the Department of Economic Development has even stopped projects which have tried to pay more.

Conditions in the YTP scheme are appalling and health and safety regulations are often ignored.

Even the EEC itself recognizes that young women are discriminated against by the YTP.

The YTP is used to de-skill the overall workforce and is used as a weapon by employers against the rest of the workforce.

Young people have already given their answer to the British Government's and the EEC's policy of 'helping' them. Unimpressed by the name change

from YOP to YTP only 60% of places had been taken by October last year, despite attempts to penalise those who refuse.

AGRICULTURE

Considering that three-quarters of the EEC's budget expenditure is on agriculture, it should come as no surprise that it has a great influence on the North's farming. This has particular effect because of the North's relatively greater dependence on agriculture than Britain. It employs proportionally 3 times more people than in Britain and this total has remained relatively stable over the last 10 years. This contrasts with the experience in the 26 counties which has seen a sharp fall in agricultural employment. The situation is broadly similar when we examine agriculture's contribution to Gross Domestic Product. In 1981 it amounted to 6.1% in the North; a small drop from 7.2% in 1973. In Britain over the same period, it fell from 3.1% to 2.3% and in the 26 counties a more dramatic fall occurred from 18.9% to 11.4%.

Agriculture in the North is also distinguished from that in Britain by a number of other features. Farm sizes are small - on average about 26 hectares as opposed to 47 in Britain. Because the climate limits the range of products which can be produced competitively grass and grass based products predominate. The need to import cereal foodstuffs has hit the pig and poultry industries.

EEC intervention is through the European Agricultural Guarantee and Guidance Fund (FEOGA). The Guidance Fund is the only identifiable item since the guarantee expenditure goes through the British Government and also covers England, Scotland and Wales. This item only covers 5% of FEOGA expenditure and since joining has spent nearly £31 million in the North. The declared purpose of this Fund is to improve agricultural structures. In this it has totally failed. 52% of all full-time farms are classified as 'smaller farms' and this rises to 75% if part-time farmers are

included. This figure has remained almost unchanged in 10 years of membership.

More controversial has been the operation of the Guarantee section which supports markets and prices. It has been estimated that in 1983 the North received about £43 million in guarantee payments. Under the EEC a marked shift has taken place in the output of the North's agriculture stimulated by EEC membership. Meat based products have risen from 46% of output to 65% while cereal based products have declined from 35% to 21%. This is why the super levy is such a disaster for the North's farmers. A 'surplus' of milk production now affects the community and a super-levy has been introduced to cutback output. This means a levy equal to 75% of the target price for milk would be paid on extra production which would be determined by the output level in 1981.

Compared to Britain the North will be particularly hit because since 1981 milk production has increased by 17% and in Britain by only 10%. It will mean a fall in output of around 10% despite the 65,000 tonnes increase in the North's share of Britain's quota. It will cost the North's farmers between £20 million and £30 million. Among the 9,000 dairy farmers the small and vulnerable will suffer the most. The jobs of many workers in the processing industries are also threatened. The North possesses proportionally more than Britain. Combined with the reduction in the variable beef premium, it will mean 6 out of 10 farmers will suffer from the effects of the EEC's latest decisions.

OVERALL

Much publicity has surrounded the 'Integrated operations' scheme for which Belfast has the dubious distinction of being selected along with Naples. The scheme however has been subject to long delays and controversy over whether there is really any extra money involved. This question also overshadows

the Belfast Urban Renewal Plan in which £60 million has been promised over 3 years for housebuilding. There again has not been much proof from the British government that the money is 'additional'.

This concept is important to any evaluation of the EEC's effect on the economy of the North but insofar as it has had force it has only intensified the economic problems which face the North. The fundamental effect of the EEC has been to intensify the North's dependence on foreign and multinational capital while putting further obstacles in the way of any more progressive policy. Its 'social' fund has only promoted the exploitation of youth as a solution to unemployment, and it has proved dangerous to the North's agriculture and its small farmers. With Britain's non-participation in The European Monetary System even in economic terms the EEC has not reduced the significance of the border.

POLITICS

It is around the question of the Border that the EEC has provided most controversy in the North. Ian Paisley has described membership of the EEC in the following terms; 'A Roman Catholic dominated Europe is the sworn enemy of Protestant Ulster and Ulster people need to face that fact. But despite that opposition and early promises and illusions that joining the EEC would lead to a United Ireland, the real role of the EEC is becoming clearer. In fact, the recent Haagerup report has spelled it out. This should have come as not surprise. In 1981 the European Parliament passed a resolution which 'strongly opposed all forms of violence and expressed its determination to condemn acts of terrorism .. and recognised that the European Community [had] no competence to make proposals for changes in the constitution of Northern Ireland'.

The Haagerup Report, which was welcomed by the SDLP repeated these points and also went on to

call for increased security co-operation between London and Dublin. The report claimed that the withdrawal of British troops would only lead to a deterioration in the situation and supported the setting up of some sort of power sharing. The general character of the report can be gauged from the fact that the British Tories leader in the European Parliament congratulated Haagerup, though feeling bound to abstain on the vote because it might have infringed British jurisdiction.

Now John Hume is again seeking EEC support for the latest initiatives of the Irish bourgeoisie and middle class to hold back the anti-imperialist struggle and make a deal with British imperialism. He wants the EEC to provide 'political and financial support' for this deal and there is no reason to believe that the EEC would not support such if the British agreed to it. Of course, European imperialism, as with the British, might seek its own price for such support such as the dissolution of the 26 counties neutrality into NATO or some European Defence Pact.

The experience of the last 10 years simply confirms what socialists like ourselves have been saying for a long time - only the working class can achieve the democratic unity of the country. An Imperialist institution like the EEC will not get in the way of Britain but will see its interests best served by helping Britain make the whole of Ireland free for European multinational exploitation.

ALTERNATIVE

Thus, no progress - political or economic - can be made in the framework of the EEC. A bureaucracy in Brussels dominated by big business cannot be allowed to make major decisions which affect everyone - decisions which benefit only their business interests. This is why all the major 'nationalist' capitalist parties support the EEC and collaborate with British imperialism in trying to defeat the workers and anti-imperialist struggles.

In the EEC elections and beyond, these struggles need a political programme that can lead to a solution of the economic and political crisis which is in the interests of the Irish working class. Such a programme means:

□□1. The creation of a 32 county Constituent Assembly which rejects partition. This is the real alternative to the Stormont Assembly and any Forum scheme for 'joint authority' which leaves major powers in the hands of Britain and the rest in the hands of Irish capitalism.

□□2. Removal of the border and a national plan of development which would eliminate unemployment and create an economy which meets the needs of Irish workers and is controlled by them.

□□3. Withdrawal from the EEC.

□□4. Nationalisation of the banks and large industry to ensure the implementation of the national plan and an end to the exploitation of Irish workers.

□□5. Nationalisation of large

farms and state help to small farmers so that all those exploited can form an alliance against imperialism.

Once such a programme is carried out we would be in a position to call for unity between Ireland and Britain - a unity of the Irish and British workers in complete equality and freedom. Not only this - the Irish working class will then demand what the EEC only gives hypocritical lip-service to at the moment - the unity of Europe. That is why the overall alternative to the EEC is the Socialist United States of Europe.

SINN FEIN'S ELECTION CAMPAIGN

DANNY MORRISON SPEAKS

JOE CARTER of Peoples Democracy speaks to Danny Morrison about the aims of the Sinn Fein campaign in the European election. Sinn Fein are fighting for the Northern seat and in the four constituencies in the 26 Counties.

JC: Why has Sinn Fein decided to contest the EEC elections?

DM: Sinn Fein over the last three years has adopted an electoral strategy as one of the central planks of the struggle. This came about basically from the mass movement behind the hunger strikes and the need to develop an alternative to the constitutional, collaborationist SDLP.

Our intervention in electoral politics has cornered the British nationally and internationally and shown that there is a popular war of liberation going on against the British imperialist presence. So, it would have been to give up that strategy had we not decided to contest these elections, just as we

had contested the June 1983 election to the British parliament at Westminster and the election to the Assembly in 1982. It is part of our ongoing strategy.

JC: How does Sinn Fein view the EEC and Ireland's membership of it?

DM: Membership of the EEC has been disastrous for Ireland North and South, particularly for agriculture. There were initial benefits but they soon disappeared. The EEC is now geared to large farmers. Small farmers are its victims - there are attempts to drive them off the land, particularly in the South. In the North small farmers have to some extent been protected against the full effects. In the South where there is dairy farming they are going to be particularly hit by the superlevy - the decision to curb milk output.

The EEC also opens up Ireland North and south to multi-nationals and exploitation of the people. Take for example even

housing, there is talk of the money been thrown in here, but when you study where its going to, its just being gobbled up by the British Govt. They are supposed to match the amount of money and they do not. What is needed is a huge injection of resources to end the scandal of the housing situation. The people of Ireland has the worst housing in Western Europe.

We consider there to be extreme dangers associated with membership of the EEC. Hand in hand with membership goes an orientation to a military alliance. The EEC at this point in time is almost interchangeable with NATO - the Western alliance. As our policy is for an independent Ireland, a sovereign Ireland, a non-aligned Ireland, an anti-nuclear Ireland, we see the dangers of EEC membership - the gradual moves towards a general Western security policy which we believe is dangerous. That's why we are opposed to EEC membership and we will be contesting the elections on an anti-imperialist

platform, opposing the military nature of the EEC.

JC: What does Sinn Fein see as the central issues in the election?

DM: In the North the EEC elections will be a referendum within the Nationalist community on the national question. It will not be fought on the issues that will dominate in England, France or a large extent in the 26 counties, although we will be raising the national question there. In the South, where probably some economic and political matters will be the issues, we hope to turn it around to the Brits and the National question.

JC: What kind of campaign will Sinn Fein be fighting in the North and in the South?

DM: In the South there are many restrictions on us. There is a lack of access to the state radio and television networks which has a 'spillover' effect to the rest of the media. There have been attempts to make political lepers of Sinn Fein.

We are also handicapped in terms of underdevelopment. We are a very small organisation engaged in a very big election. However in the North where Sinn Fein is much stronger than in the rest of the country, there will be a campaign where we believe we can win. So what we hope to do is to produce a political veto to match the IRA's military veto on the British attempt to stabilise their rule and the Dublin Govt's collaboration with them.

Once we command majority support within our community in

the North there will be two developments. Firstly the British Govt. is going to have to change its policy. Since the Sunningdale 'power-sharing' agreement in 1974 the British Govt. has continued to insist - though this insistence has been whittled down over the years - that any devolution of power to a local Assembly must command cross-community support. Once we command majority support within the Nationalist community we will demand not power sharing, not an internal settlement, nor a reformed Six county state, but a united Ireland with the Brits out and an end to the Loyalist veto.

The Brits are going to have to change their policy and either face up to reality or give much greater support to the Loyalists and their call for devolution which would mean total support for a sectarian state which would have its ramifications on relations with the South.

For the Southern Govt. itself, once the SDLP could no longer claim to be the majority representatives of the nationalist people in the North, then that would be their anchormen in the North gone. The Southern parties have formulated their policies around the SDLP, and once it is in a minority position they will have to deal realistically with us. Sinn Fein's victory will have a dramatic effect on the overall political situation with regard to the national question.

JC: How does Sinn Fein hope to advance in the South through these elections?

DM: We don't expect to win any seats but it is the experience we are looking for. We are flying our flag and hoping to get an injection of new members. Basically, you have to crawl before you can run. Also, we believe that when the total vote is counted we will be the third largest party in Ireland. We will have more first preference votes than the Labour party.

JC: What is the significance of Sinn Fein's decision to take seats in the European parliament if elected?

DM: We realise it would have been political suicide to contest the elections on an abstentionist ticket. Also the EEC does not have the same relationship with us as the British occupation or Leinster House. The European parliament is sufficiently distant from the question of Irish sovereignty for us to go in and take our seats. What we would hope to do is to use the EEC platform as an international lobbying point. We believe that someone in Europe could lobby sympathetic political parties, the international labour movement and embarrass the Brits and expose their violence in Ireland.

JC: How will you measure success in the elections?

DM: Success will be measured in two ways. First there is the vote in the 26 counties to see if we have made many inroads. In the North it will be measured in comparison with our June vote - 103,000 at its minimum, taking the seat at maximum. It will be a seat on which we hope to build and strengthen our organisation.

FIGHTING BACK - THE P.D. VIEW

Working people have nothing to hope for and nothing to defend in the EEC. The Common Market is a capitalist institution set up to unite the ruling classes of Europe and coordinate their attacks on working people. It is the Europe of the multinational corporations and the banks, the Europe which exploits the colonial world, the Europe allied militarily with US imperialism and a partner in its crimes against humanity.

Peoples Democracy is internationalist and anti-capitalist. Ours is the Europe of the French steel workers and the British miners striking to defend jobs, of the Greenham Common women and the millions who have mobilised against nuclear missiles, of the Polish Solidarnosc, the Europe which mourned Bobby Sands and his comrades hunger strikers as their own. As the Irish Section of the Fourth International the worldwide revolutionary organisation, Peoples Democracy campaigns in these European elections with the banner of internationalist solidarity **WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!** and the call for socialist revolution to create the Socialist United States of Europe.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE EEC

When Ireland joined the EEC in 1973 the Irish people were promised prosperity for all. Instead membership of the EEC has thrown open the economy to the plunder of the multinationals and the destruction of indigenous industry.

The capitalist parties Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, also pledged that the EEC would hasten the day of Irish unity and end the domination of British imperialism. But the EEC has proved a faithful ally

to Britain's war against the nationalist people of the 6 Counties. Membership has also undermined the efforts of Irish people to resist embroilment in the imperialist military alliance NATO. Both the Coalition parties and Fianna Fail have indicated their commitment to what Charles Haughey euphemistically termed 'the defence of Europe'.

None of the promises made by the capitalist parties have been delivered on. Instead there has been a steady growth in unemployment, poverty and repression. The EEC has nothing else to offer. Working people should press for immediate withdrawal from the EEC!

AN ALTERNATIVE TO MEMBERSHIP

the capitalist parties tell us that whatever the problems of the EEC, Ireland has no choice but to remain within it. This is a lie! The European countries outside of the EEC have been able to negotiate trading agreements with the EEC without entry. There is no reason why Ireland could not adopt the same approach. More importantly an Ireland free of the chains of EEC membership would be in a position to establish new relations based on equality with the countries of the 'Third World' and with COMECON - the economic federation of the workers' states of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Such agreements would stimulate mutual trade and allow us to take into account the international distribution of natural and social resources to produce the world's necessities in the most efficient and cheapest fashion, thus ensuring the smoothest and most rapid growth of the living standards of all of humanity.

FOR THE SOCIALIST UNITED STATES OF EUROPE!

Of course this alternative would demand a break with the interests of the capitalist class. Working people in Ireland would have to turn the promise of the 1916 proclamation, that the ownership of Ireland would be vested in the Irish people, into a reality. It would mean the building of socialism in Ireland as an equal partner in a European-wide planned socialist economy which could ensure the even development of production without the irrational regional inequalities and immense human suffering that European capitalism has scattered throughout the continent.

FOR A UNITED INDEPENDENT IRELAND!

To open the road to a socialist Ireland requires the total defeat of imperialist domination of this island and the overcoming of the divisions imposed by imperialism on working people. That's why socialists are enthusiastic opponents of British rule in the North and why we reject the so-called 'New Ireland Forum'. The Forum report makes it clear that the capitalist parties and their allies in the worker's movement are prepared to make any sordid deal with British imperialism in order to maintain the institutions of partition - a main bulwark against the rise of worker's revolution in Ireland. This is the reason why Sinn Fein was excluded from the Forum and why it will be excluded from any Constitutional Conference.

Against the phoney nationalism of the Forum Peoples Democracy fights for:

- Immediate withdrawal of the British Army.
- Abolition of all repressive laws.
- Amnesty for all freedom fighters.
- All-Ireland elections to an All-Ireland parliament.
- A Government of workers and small farmers who will break all links with imperialism and build alliances with the working people and oppressed masses of the world.

A WORKERS PLAN TO BEAT THE CRISIS!

The June 14 elections to the European Parliament take place amidst a brutal anti-working class offensive in the EEC countries. The capitalist class is trying to make working people pay the costs of the economic crisis of their bankrupt system. To achieve this, governments and employers have united to force through factory closures, cuts in wages and social benefits and evictions of small farmers from their land; they have created massive unemployment and driven tens of millions of working people into poverty. At the same time these governments have mounted a big offensive against trade union and democratic rights in order to carry through their austerity policies. The elections are aimed to give legitimacy to these attacks on working people and their organisations, to rubber stamp the austerity policies, the siting of US nuclear missiles, the repression.

While the capitalist class is uniting and co-ordinating its attacks on working people, the workers movement in the EEC countries remains divided. The leaders of the movement carry out class collaborationist policies, seeking to find common ground with the ruling class in their own countries instead of committing themselves to developing a

united response by the European working class to fight for common objectives in all the countries.

It is the failure of the present leadership of the workers movement to press for such united action, to co-ordinate on an international level the struggles of working people that has left Ford workers in Cork, Ranks workers in Dublin and Limerick, De Lorean workers in Belfast to fight alone. It is this failure which allows multinational bosses to play off workers in one country against their sisters and brothers elsewhere.

The decision of 50 miner's unions in Paris on May 20th to give full support to the British NUM shows that international co-ordination of workers struggles is no pipedream. There are 40 million trade unionists in the EEC and if mobilised this force could impose a workers plan to beat the crisis and defeat the capitalist austerity policies.

Such a plan could be drawn up through convening a European Congress of Labour with broad representation of factory delegates and the rank and file. A battle strategy could be developed to win the demands which are already widely supported in the international workers movement:

- A 35 hour working week with no loss of pay.
- A massive programme of useful public works.
- Protection of wages from the ravages of inflation with automatic increases with rises in the cost of living.
- Opening the books of multi-nationals who threaten redundancies and the nationalisation under workers control of firms threatening closure.

In these elections Peoples Democracy will provide a voice in

the interests of working people; a voice for trade unionists battling to defend jobs and living standards, for women struggling for equality, for youth fighting for a future. We will be arguing the need for working people to organise independently of the capitalist state and its political parties. We will be explaining the need for a mass anti-imperialist workers party that can unite all those fighting exploitation and oppression.

Peoples Democracy is a small party of revolutionary marxists. We have very little resources. We don't have the means to stand candidates in these elections. In this situation we have decided to call for the election of Sinn Fein candidates in all constituencies and to participate in its campaign.

Political sectarians in the socialist movement will oppose this. They will argue that Sinn Fein is not a workers party and that their programme in the election falls short of that argued by Peoples Democracy. To do this is to miss the whole potential of the political movement of republican militants. Sinn Fein is a revolutionary organisation, and only those willing to support the development of the national revolution in Ireland can hope for a hearing when they argue for its extension to a workers revolution.

We have decided to call for a vote for Sinn Fein as the clearest way in which working people can record their opposition to the capitalist EEC, to the austerity policies of the ruling class. A massive vote for Sinn Fein is the best way in which working people can let the Forum parties know that the national rights of the Irish people are not for sale! The election of Sinn Fein candidates will send a message to the workers of Europe that working people in Ireland reject the Europe of the bosses, for the Europe in struggle!

THE FORUM SELL-OUT

A reading of the other sections of this journal should convince militants that the effects of EEC membership are to increase the exploitation of Ireland by the major capitalist powers. It should be evident that a policy of collaboration with imperialism is a conscious strategy of Irish capitalism which predates membership of the EEC and that this has meant a steady erosion of the limited political independence gained in the 26 counties by the war of independence. It may not be quite so evident that the recent report of the new Ireland Forum represents a climax to that strategy. In fact it represents a final retreat by Irish capitalism from even token leadership of the struggle for unity and national independence.

The debates of the Forum gave plenty of warning that this would be the outcome. It excluded Sinn Fein, the major organisation actually fighting for Irish unity. It brushed the Northern minority and the consistent denial of their rights under the carpet. It invited Unionist and Loyalist flacks to Dublin and treated with grave consideration their denunciations of Irish unity and ignored reports by its own secretariat on the disastrous economic consequences of partition. In favour of the economic impressionism of Sir Charles Carter, head of the Northern Ireland Economic Council, who came the Dublin to tell the Forum 'Irish unity simply won't work'. (The fact that Sir Charles is unable to get 'Northern Ireland' to work as an economic entity does not appear to effect his qualifications as an expert).

The heavy stress on the unitary state in the report has caused some confusion but Garret Fitzgerald was a pains to dispel this within hours of the reports publication. It became obvious that this was a 'dream topping' representing vague hopes and aspirations which would help to

confuse public opinion and retain mass support for the National parties. In practice Irish capitalists were to join with Britain in acceptance of the Unionist vote and support for sectarian reaction in the North. Press leaks give Fitzgerald's 'hidden agenda'. Unity meant united repression, united laws and united exploitation of workers North and South.

FIANNA FAIL SPLIT

Karl Marx said that 'History repeats itself, the second time as farce'. Haughey's act as De Valera to the Forum's Treaty and his insistence on a unitary state might convince some that a section of Irish capitalism holds firm to the call for national unity. In fact the division is much smaller. Fianna Fail believe that they must hold to the rhetoric of unity if they are to retain their mass base. In fact this insistence on a unitary state is new-found. Haughey is on record as promoting other options and his record of collaboration is equally as bad as Fine Gaels.

More importantly the practical aspects of the Forum report have been with us for some time; Refusal of democratic rights to Sinn Fein, security collaboration, extradition and a new 'Criminal Justice' bill which copies all the worst aspects of repressive legislation in the North (including the Informer system) and deals a death-blow to democratic rights. Fianna Fail have either kept silent about these measures or enthusiastically supported them.

BRITISH CONTEMPT

The Unionists have greeted the report with abuse and the British (Criticised in the report for 'crisis management' but not targeted as the prime cause of the Northern violence) with contempt

They appear to be considering minimal concessions (such as an Anglo-Irish talking shop) in return for firm support for partition and the effective extension of the British security system throughout all 32 counties. They are also interested in seeing how close they can push the South to membership of NATO. However historically they have not been to grant even minimal concessions and the security of their base amongst the Unionists remains paramount.

Further negotiations carry great risks, especially for the Irish capitalists, and the fact that their unity around the forum report has proved to be a sham will further weaken them. No-one can doubt that a new level of political capitulation to Britain at a time when Irish capitalism is trying to force major cutbacks in the standard of living of the Irish working class will lead to massive confrontation and social convulsion.

LEADERSHIP

The final outcome of this battle will depend on the leadership and political consciousness that anti-imperialists and socialists are able to provide. Immediately this means being able to provide a political alternative to the Forum. We in Peoples Democracy believe that the call for a Constituent Assembly should be the main element of such an alternative.

This presents an immediate series of tasks; the unifying of all the democratic, anti-imperialist forces in Ireland, gaining mass support for these forces, bringing together a Constituent Assembly and launching a campaign of mass action to push out the British and bring down the partitionist assemblies in both parts of Ireland.

The best groundwork for such a programme would be substantial victories for Sinn Fein in the European elections. But it would be only a groundwork. Sinn Fein have not presented an alternative political strategy to the Forum, have effectively opposed united action and have yet to link their electoralist strategy to a strategy of mass action. However victories in the election would fuel the leftward drift and increase the pressure for mass action.

SOCIALIST ROLE

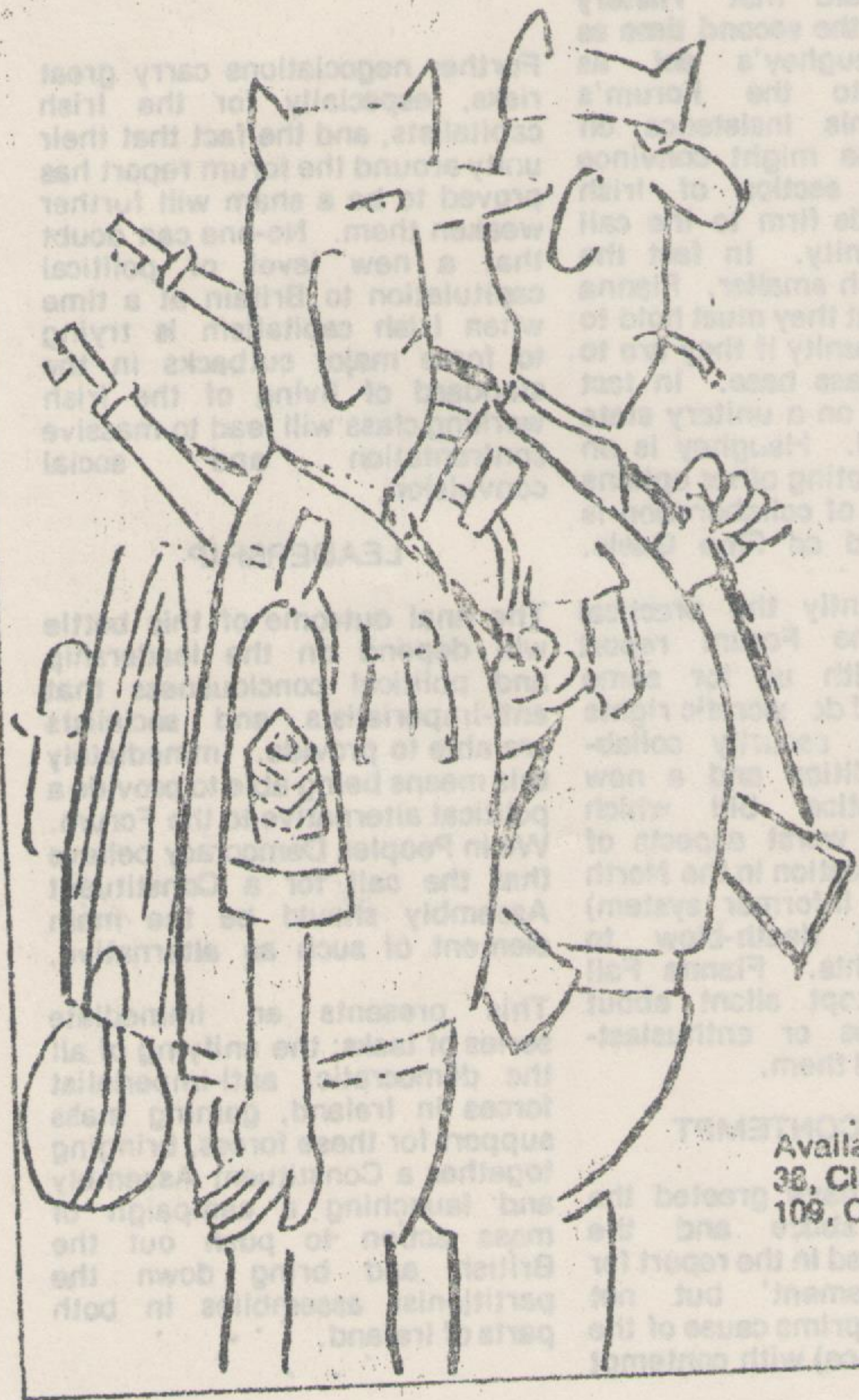
Socialist have a specific role to play. A Constituent Assembly would be largely an alliance of petty-bourgeois and working-class forces and to succeed would require the independent,

organised power of the working class. The task of socialists is to unify the political and economic struggles of the class and in the process create a real independent anti-imperialist party of the working class.

British imperialism and Irish capitalism are determined to launch decisive attacks against Irish workers. But the attacks smack of desperation after 15 years in which they have been unable to crush the aspiration for unity and national independence. They themselves are caught in the crisis to such an extent that Irish capitalists are unable to present a common front nor is Britain easily able to offer even formal concessions to ease their task.

The anti-imperialist movement has to swing into action itself and fight for a Constituent Assembly. The Irish people remain unbowed and are increasingly moving towards the anti-imperialist movement. The Republican movement has begun a remarkable political evolution but revolutionary socialist movements like Peoples Democracy, because of their programme, can play a pivotal role by fighting for unity and mass action and working with other sections of the working-class movement to bring together the strands of the mass revolutionary party. These are not tasks for the next 10 or 20 years. They are tasks for today!

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BOOK REVIEWS

ARMING THE PROTESTANTS

Arming the Protestants: The Formation of the Ulster Special Constabulary and the Royal Ulster Constabulary 1920-27
Michael Farrell, Pluto Press
(London), 1983. £7.95

This book is essential reading for anyone who wants to know about the nature of Northern Ireland. Michael Farrell has produced a detailed and closely argued work. A careful reading will be rewarded with a greater understanding of the background to today's situation.

Since its publication there have been many attempts to refute the work but none of the critics have succeeded. The attempts vary from niggling and inaccurate objections (Roman Fanning) or simple reassertions of the myths that the book debunks (P Woodward).

The reason for these attacks is quite simple. 'Arming the Protestants' completely refutes the 'two-nations' philosophy which serves as the justification for many British and 23-County policies on the North. It shows that Northern Ireland was not created as a result of a unionist 'nationalism' opposed to that of the majority. It is true that like the Nationalist movement, unionism was an all-class alliance. Unlike it, this alliance was employed to reinforce the status quo against even the possibility of revolution. The state that came from it was dominated by counter-revolutionary interests. More importantly none of this was spontaneous. Although the unionists sometimes acted on their own initiative, it was always within a context of British encouragement and support.

Significantly for the politics of today, when attacks on the democratic rights of Sinn Fein are justified by the IRA's violence, Michael Farrell shows graphically how the unionists were willing to use violence at every step. The British role was to collaborate in the formation of loyalist terror groups, then to change the law to legitimise that violence and finally to integrate the terror groups into the state apparatus.

Another strong argument against those who call for 'self-determination' for unionists was the role of the state in preserving an artificial class alliance. After partition sectarianism became more and more deeply ingrained in industry and administration. The Specials not only provided an extra source of income but the public demonstration of Protestant armed supremacy and their exemption from legal restraints. The British quietly provided the money for all this, even when the Specials were used to threaten armed rebellion over the boundary commission report.

A pattern developed of a jockeying for position between the British imperialists, the unionist capitalists and their plebian loyalist wing. Each got something: the British a secure base from which they could oversee and if necessary destabilise the South. The Ulster bosses a subservient workforce and the loyalist plebs an unstated contract which promised that, no matter how poor their conditions, the Nationalists would always be more impoverished.

One striking element of the book is the total absence of any attempt to conciliate the Nationalist minority. Indeed the most often

quoted example of conciliation—the offer of one third of the places in the RUC to the minority — is shown to have been a pragmatic decision based partly on economics (it saved on pensions for mainly catholic RIC men) and strategic (the need for experience and local knowledge.)

Of course there are weaknesses. The chosen limits of the work exclude major aspects of the social background. The increasing economic need for the B Specials allowance as a subsidy for low wages is only hinted at. More generally, analysis of the pogroms against catholics in the shipyards should mention that they occurred just in time to abort a campaign for a minimum weekly wage of £5. The book could be easier to follow. The sheer mass of detail appears to suggest that different policies or different decisions by individuals might have changed the pattern. Eventually the evidence uncovers the class forces acting to maintain the situation, but the process takes time.

None of this alters the fact that the book is a real work of original scholarship that presents an unanswerable case against partition. But this is not the only theme in the book. 'Arming the Protestants' also goes into considerable detail about the response of the Southern capitalists.

To some extent it rescues the reputation of Collins, and shows that he was genuinely opposed to partition. But it also shows that he never fully understood the extent of the deal with Britain that the Treaty represented. It must be a major embarrassment to today's blueshirts to have it proved that they armed, financed and organised the IRA in the North. They were not long however in clearing up this contradiction and a new pattern emerged.

This pattern was one of capitulation to imperialism, ruthless oppression of the Southern working class and Republicans and

public denunciation of unionism linked to a private willingness to negotiate and to underwrite elements of the Northern reaction. In the period following the Forum Report, 'Arming the Protestants' should be a weapon in the struggle and it should be closely studied by anti-imperialist militants.

* * * * *

The British in Ireland: a suitable case for withdrawal
Geoffrey Bell. Pluto Press, (London), 1984, £2.95.

This small volume is the latest in Pluto Press' 'Arguments for Socialism' series. It is directed at a very specific audience — British socialists — and tackles the major excuses which the British left have offered for abstaining, evading, ignoring, or opposing the movement for Irish national liberation. Geoff Bell's credentials for the job are solid. An Irish socialist who has lived in England for many years, Bell has maintained a consistent involvement in the Irish solidarity movement. Now active in the British Labour Party, Bell's latest challenge to the British Labour movement is well aimed.

The book is based on the premise that the 'Irish question' is a critical one for British socialists — not just in terms of their responsibilities to their Irish sisters and brothers, but in regard to the healthy development of the labour movement in Britain itself. Bell states sharply that today, as in the days of Marx, the Chartists, and the Levellers, "the fight for internationalism begins with Ireland." Not only is support for unconditional and complete British withdrawal an act of genuine solidarity with the Irish working class, it would also concretely advance the interests of the British labour movement.

For example, Northern Ireland would no longer provide a training ground for security methods which could eventually be used against the British working class.

Referring to the Malvinas War, he says "what was displayed so

clearly in that period was just how deep are the roots of national chauvinism in the British working class. The strength of this prejudice makes socialism hard to imagine in Britain". "... internationalism cannot be an occasional luxury ..."

Bell tackles the reticence of the British left to deal with the 'Irish problem' by approaching it as 'the problem of the British left'. Although there has always been a minority current in the British Labour Party which has taken a firm and principled stand for Irish freedom, "the general mood both at leadership level and in the rank and file was one of indifference."

Bell outlines the currents of discussion which developed and shaped the orientation of the left since the beginning of the Civil Rights movement: the Communist Party's 'revolution by stages' theory; the 'two-nations' theory; the calls for a Northern Ireland Labour Party; the 'Better Life for All' campaign. None of these formulas has stood up to the realities of Irish politics.

In 1981, the British Labour Party issued its first detailed statement on Ireland in over 60 years, indicating, says Bell, that "Northern Ireland had at last come in from the outer limits of British socialism and penetrated the consciousness of the Labour Party itself".

Bell believes that this debate needs to be informed by the lessons of Irish history and particularly those that centre around the Home Rule crisis. At this time parliamentary majorities were ignored and the British ruling class reverted back to reliance on its army and other forces of its state. A salutary lesson for socialists everywhere who rely on parliament as a road to progress.

Underlying his argument that this is not just an historical irrelevancy, Bell then refers to more recent examples of democratic norms being expediently dispensed with as British rule in the North of Ireland has been challenged since 1969.

Bell credits the Republican Movement with having learnt these

lessons above all others. He lays the responsibility for the present armed conflict firmly at Britain's door, an unequivocally and unconditionally defends the right of the IRA to use whatever means they see fit to win their liberation.

This is a principled position and the fundamental issue for the solidarity movement in the oppressor nation. However, while putting the Republican Movement's case, Bell seems to be unwilling to differentiate himself from the more militaristic premises of Republicanism. He appears to dismiss the effectiveness of electoral and other political tactics in favour of military ones: "The Provisionals could hardly be blamed for concluding that if they wanted to influence the British, election successes were nothing compared to the power which came from the barrel of a gun." "The harsh truth is that violence from the Irish has evoked a response from the British, whereas peaceful methods of protest tend to be greeted with indifference." We in Peoples Democracy would argue that the recent electoral successes of Sinn Fein have advanced the struggle more than the IRA's military campaign.

He goes on to examine the relationship between Irish socialists and the national struggle, and here Bell makes a critical distinction,

"To say that there has always been a democratic and internationalist strand within Irish Republicanism does not necessarily make it socialist. What it does is allow a socialist element to exist within it, and potentially, to dominate it."

He acknowledges that there are contradictions within the Republican Movement, specifically the contradiction between an expressed desire for mass participatory politics and the secret conspiratorial nature of the IRA, but makes "a plea ... (the British left) not (to judge) the Provisionals on the basis of its own tactics, strategy or obsessions."

He confronts the spectre of the 'bloodbath theory' and perhaps his most telling point which

shows up the weakness of loyalism is the question that in the event of a British withdrawal, what POLITICAL aim would a backlash have?

While Geoffrey Bell makes a compelling case for a united Ireland, and for British socialists to play an active part in bringing it about, not all his arguments are unassailable. While he refutes any notion that Britain's motives in Ireland are honourable, he discounts any economic motivation as a factor for continued

involvement. British interests in Ireland are reduced to strategic ones, and the fear of an 'Irish Cuba'.

It is a book which raises some questions which might not be answered in quite the same way by socialists in Ireland. Overall, however, it puts the cause of a United Socialist Ireland to those who share a responsibility to fight for it, the British labour movement. And it is welcome for that contribution.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A POVERTY OF PHILOSOPHY

Ireland and the European Communities, 10 Years of Membership. Edited by David Coombes Macmillan, £20.00

Despite its price (£20), this book is a valuable handbook for opponents of imperialism who want to research the EEC and a tribute to the considerable research work and statistical analysis by the Irish academics who contributed to the series of articles. It is also a monument to the dominance of imperialist ideology in academic circles and their failure to present a serious political analysis of Ireland's relationship with the EEC. In spite of this the book shows graphically the immense damage that membership has done to the Irish people and the lack of an alternative strategy among the Irish capitalist parties.

The absence of political analysis sometimes leads to laughable results. The editor in his introduction sees one important issue being Ireland as a small country in association with big countries. The nearest that we come to a political analysis is in the article 'Economic consequences of EEC membership for Ireland' (Alan Matthews) when a 'structuralist' ie right-wing model of the EEC is contrasted with a 'core-periphery' ie vaguely left-wing, model.

INDUSTRY

Given this overall political weakness the main value of the book is in the individual areas of research covered by each article. Immediately a further glaring weakness becomes evident. Industrial development—the main argument put forward for membership — is not covered. A prime area of secrecy — the exact level of penetration and control exercised by multinational firms and their effect on the Irish economy — is blandly ignored. Only Matthews' article and 'Regional and Social policies' (Jean Hart and Brigid Laffan) deal with this issue in very general terms. They both show a continual decline in native industry, a continued dependence on the British market and a tendency for native investors to invest outside Ireland. Multinational capital has done nothing to meet the unemployment crisis and is becoming more and more unstable. Massive profits to both native and multinational capitalists are at the cost of Ireland's economic future,

AGRICULTURE

A similar story is seen when you manage to translate the rather difficult language of Fox and Kearney in 'The Impact of

the Common Agricultural Policy'. Massive profits have been made yet this has not led to any improvement of the industry. Instead the small farmer is put under increasing pressure and the working class face increased food prices.

INDEPENDENCE

Through all the essays runs a real preoccupation which reflects the debate inside Southern capitalism. Membership of the EEC meant a real surrender of national sovereignty. From their position of weakness Irish capitalists hoped that membership would enable them to perform a sort of ju-jitsu and become less dependent on Britain. Membership would erode partition and in a European parliament Ireland would find a greater independence. In fact the EEC remains a ramshackle collection of nation-states bound together to ensure the survival of capitalism and where the stronger nations prey upon the weaker. Partition has not been eroded and now, through the Forum report and the Haagerup report, we see both Irish capitalism and European bureaucracy desperately trying to preserve it. More generally Irish cooperation on European security has eroded all but the bare scraps of neutrality and even led to a weakening of a traditional policy of anti-colonialism. NATO membership is delayed only by the capitalists' inability to sell it to the Irish people. However it is clear from the book that the capitulation of Irish capitalism to imperialism does not date from entry into the EEC but back to the Anglo-Irish Free Trade agreement and beyond.

The academics draw a graphic picture of collapse but are unable to offer any solution. This is hardly surprising in a book about 'Ireland' that deals only with the 26 Counties. However the book remains a valuable research tool. Try and get it from your public library or if you are rich buy it from our bookshop. At the end of the day perhaps its most valuable contribution will be an analysis of public opinion showing growing hostility to the EEC, especially among the young.