

the worker

Paper of the Socialist Workers Movement

REPRESSION
The goon squad page 5

Fight the redundancies!

This is why we need a Rank and File Movement

TWICE in the last month the trade union leadership has proved its inability and unwillingness to lead the fight in Northern Ireland. That fight - against unemployment and sectarianism - can only be led by rank and file militants.

On April 27th 2,000 engineering workers demonstrated in Belfast and Antrim against the defence cuts. It was an impressive beginning. It was a chance for the trade unions to begin to mobilize workers to fight for jobs for all. Instead, well known trade union leaders and Communist Party members Andy Barr and Jimmy Graham shared the platform uncritically with loyalist leaders Craig and Paisley. In effect they gave credibility to these ultra-right wingers who support the system which causes redundancies. They refused to attack the politics of loyalism and British capitalism which have for so long oppressed the workers of Northern Ireland. All Barr and Graham offered was a demand that Callaghan visit Northern Ireland.

On Mayday, the northern committee of the ICTU held its traditional march in Belfast. 200 workers marched in the rain under the banner of a Campaign for a Better Life. At the end of the march 1,000 people listened to the main speaker, Harold Gunning from the ILO, call for government, employers and workers to cooperate! We wondered what it was all about. The government and the bosses are cutting jobs and social services and using the army against the workers, and he tells workers to cooperate! Gunning also said that unemployment was a psychological problem - meaning more or less that if we all

behaved ourselves up here and ended all the violence, we'd get jobs again.

It's clear once more that the trade union leadership is not going to give any lead. It is clear that they are not going to fight against British capitalism - the real source of unemployment, or the British Army - the real source of violence. The Confed has organised an Unemployed Action Committee. The ATGWU has called on the ICTU to launch a campaign against unemployment. But without strong rank and file pressure on the union leadership, they won't do a thing except pass motions and make statements.

Militant workers who want to fight for jobs must begin now to organise the rank and file - by organising shop stewards' committees, putting out factory bulletins, and holding meetings and rallies to publicise their struggles. It is through this kind of organising that we can begin to build the political movement of workers that will really struggle for a better life for all.

Ulsterisation?

THE BRITISH government continues its attempt to crack the nationalist population of Northern Ireland. Last month it came up with a new plan - Ulsterisation. The British Army withdrew from East Belfast and then from a block of flats in Lenadoon. Rumours travelled that the British Army were withdrawing from all of West Belfast. But isn't that what all the fighting is about - to get the troops out? Unfortunately, it's not all that easy. Because the BA is to be replaced by the RUC and the UDR.

communities is the regular police-man on the beat.

But it's too bad, Mr. Ree's, changing the name doesn't change what's happening here. If there is one thing the political struggle has won in the last six years, it is keeping the RUC out of the nationalist areas. There are no regular policemen in the North. There are only the armed, sectarian thugs of the RUC.

Control

The RUC is as dangerous and as sectarian now as it was in 1969. They are now getting new armoured vehicles and self-loading rifles. The same goes for the UDR. It was originally recruited to defend the border regions. Now it is being trained to control the streets of Belfast. Members of the UDR are almost

This is all part of Marilyn Ree's plan to end the political struggle in the North by calling it criminal. If the people are fighting for political aims, then you have political prisoners and you need the army. But if they are all 'common criminals' there's no need to give political status to prisoners and all we need in the

DEFEND POLITICAL STATUS

THE FIGHT to defend the right to political status has begun. On Saturday May the first groups of women blocked several major roads in West Belfast as the protest against the ending of political status. One of the protestors was knocked down by a peoples taxi driver.

Local committees led by relatives of political prisoners have been set up in several communities. There are now about twenty prisoners on remand from Belfast. Their cases will probably be decided in July or August. Then the government will attempt to send these prisoners to isolated cells, rather than to the republican units in the jails.

Much organising has yet to be done to support the coming fight. The local committees will have to organise meetings and rallies to explain the issue to the community and to mobilise the necessary support so that these prisoners will win recognition that their struggle is indeed political.



all from the loyalist community and they are now receiving new training to begin replacing the BA. In fact, one of the UDR who was shot recently, had just been dobbled from the BA specifically to



Dublin by-election



Halligan - trying to hack his way into the Dail via Dublin South-West.

THE DUBLIN South-west by-election will be a test of strengths and reputations not just in one small area but nationally too. The Labour Party, Aontach Eireann and Official Sinn Fein are emphasising that this is not just any tin-pot election by putting up nationally known leaders - like the supreme hack Brendan Halligan; the 1920's Fianna Failer, Kevin Boland; and the 1930's Fianna Failer, Tomas MacGiolla.

The Labour Party leadership who after all, had the job of delivering the working class movement, hand and foot, into Fine Gael's hands, cannot be feeling too cocky. But no matter how fed up workers may feel with the Gaeltacht, there is no reason to vote for Fianna Fail, who are simply putting forward a more orthodox version of the bosses' argument.

Official Sinn Fein are right in this at least, that there must be a protest vote against the 'three parties - one policy line-up'. But it's hardly the most radical form of protest to vote for Tom Gill and the policies his organisation are putting forward. Nowhere, no once, in the 'interview' which the Irish People published with their leader does he mention the particular interests of workers. References to the attacks on living standards, or the ways to resist attacks on jobs, are made in passing if they are made at all.

Join the UDR.

The army has been trying to sneak the RUC back into the area for a long time now. Outside the ghetto areas the peelers are able to walk around in pairs. Not so in Andytown. The only way they can deliver a summons is to come in with two army vehicles for protection. The army has been trying to gather middle class community support for bringing the RUC back in. Local businessmen would love to cooperate but the people are saying no.

No, the Officials have a grand plan for re-modelling the economy to take care of the interests of 'all the people'. And leaving it all firmly in the hands of state bureaucrats. State development of this, state control of that, without a mention as to what class controls the state. And though they would protest at the comparison, the truth is that the Irish Republican Socialist Party, (IRSP), has more or less the same answers to the economic crisis - and even less experience of working in the trade union movement for their answers.

The state has organised an attack on the IRSP in the past few months, (see page 5). Voting for them will be one way of making a protest against the rightwards drift. The Socialist Workers' Movement urges readers in Dublin South-West to use their vote to make such a protest - and vote land 2 for MacGiolla and Ni Chionnaithe in the order of your choice.

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As your wages are torn to pieces!

The bosses scream with delight!

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PAUSE

Cert X

"Will run for months". - Evening Press
 "Well...just two months, maybe". - Micheal O'Leary
 "They're queuing already" - Labour Exchange Weekly



The producers wish to thank the trade union leaders - without whom they would have been in BIG trouble.

A National Wage Agreement production in Exploitscope

Trades Council moving on unemployment?

WHEN THE Secretary got to telling Dublin Trades Council delegates that his wife had stood on a chair she shouldn't have stood on, and pulled a cupboard down on top of herself, the meeting was only beginning to fall apart. The May meeting of the Council had to consider the consequences of the previous month's decision to organise a "Work Not Dole" march - but it easily got diverted.

There was the Connolly Commemoration - the biggest event in the Trades Council calendar - to discuss, and one delegate wanted to know why the Rosary had been started at Arbour Hill before all those taking part in the parade had arrived. Another complained at the stuffiness of the room where the Commemoration dinner had been held - people had to keep leaving the room to...get a breath of fresh air.

too many full-time officials as delegates and particularly as Executive members, the Council can reflect what is going on at the rank and file of the trade union movement in Dublin, and give an active lead there.

However, discussion at the Council is a bit "parliamentary", or else too much concerned with small-scale bureaucratic and organisational issues. Resolutions are often very general, so delegates can go on about "changing the system" without committing themselves or others to any action. The ITGWU resolution for an anti-unemployment march caused more confusion than it need have done, because it did not specify a date, a time, or whether it should involve a work-stoppage or not.

Time-wasting

Then there was the 50 foot gap between the marchers and the band, and the fact that the two bands were not in step with one another. And complaints about being notified on Monday for the events taking place on Sunday.

In another part of the agenda, "Pa" Dunne, chairman of No. 14 Branch, ITGWU, got us all down to basics with a spirited attack on one of the parties to the dispute between the Mechanics' Union (AGEMOU) and Dublin County Council. He was attacking the union, not the employer, and announced that he had intended to propose the expulsion of AGEMOU because they did not stick to rules about 7 days notice of intent to take industrial action.

As Charlie Mooney, General Secretary of AGEMOU, patiently pointed out, employers don't always give unions seven days, or even seven hours, to prepare their response to arbitrary decisions.

None of this carry-on would be frustrating if it wasn't obviously wasting the potential of the Trades Council. Although there are still

So, practical suggestions about how resolutions should be implemented are simply "noted". And the Executive can forget them all if it wants to.

More life has been breathed back into the Dublin Trades Council recently, but successive National Wage Agreements have taken away from it the central function it should have: organising solidarity with workers in dispute.

The campaign against unemployment, of which the 17th June march is a part, should dust out some cobwebs and bring together workers from different unions and factories who want to fight the employers' attacks. Anything which starts a move in that direction can't be bad.

BBB

CRIMINAL WASTE

EARLY THIS year a man in the Cabra area of Dublin was selling four-stone bags of carrots for 30 pence. He was able to do this because he had got them for nothing. A food-processing plant in the area was making room in their stores and they hired him to haul the carrots to a dump. Waste.

On a bigger and more horrific scale, in 1970 the Canadian government offered farmers over £39 million to destroy most of that year's wheat crop - in order to keep prices up. Waste.

We are all familiar with the EEC butter mountain, the wine lake etc, etc. At a time when the ruling class are telling us they cannot afford to pay us or employ us, vast fortunes are being wasted and squandered. Let's just run through part of the list.

Firstly, waste is not just accidental. It is built into the method of production and the class division of capitalist society. A survey of the US economy for 1970 concluded that 61% of total output was waste. In Britain a total of over 73 million pounds was spent on the military between 1948 and 1974.

In the Irish defence forces there are 15,800, plus 8,500 Gardai who produce nothing except protection for capitalism and imperialism.

Capitalist competition leads to vast sums being spent on advertising, winning and dining prospective customers and waste of machinery when the big fish forces the little fish out of business. The scramble for profit and turnover produces "built-in obsolescence" - by which they mean that goods are deliberately designed to last only a short time, so that you'll have to keep on buying.

The class division of society needs vast amounts to be maintained. In the factories some supervisors do little apart from watch work being done (keeping an eye on the lower classes). The bosses part with money for Work Study departments to think up better ways of robbing workers. They don't part with money so easily for providing safer working conditions.

An army of professors, priests, journalists, social workers and public relations officers are employed to support, perpetuate and provide propaganda for the class divisions of society. Whole sectors of the economy - like security firms, banks and certain parts of the insurance business - exist merely to protect and account the wealth of the rich.

Dublin Corporation is to spend £16,000 restoring the Lord Mayor's Coach. At the same time the Corporation is discussing cuts in the house maintenance department. Our leaky roofs will have to wait while the Lord Mayor's is being repaired. Some Dublin Councilors are off on a nice trip to Russia - with £1500 in their pockets, courtesy of the Dublin ratepayer. These are examples of relatively small waste.

On a larger scale there is speculation and money-lending. For every £5 that you pay in tax, £1 goes in interest to international bankers. Interest is money for nothing but the money doesn't come from nowhere. The wealth in this society is created by the workers. And a large proportion of what we produce is wasted in supporting a class of parasites. Last year Allied Irish Banks and the Bank of Ireland, between them, creamed off

Thinking About Capitalism

by Mary Burns

£48 million from the surplus produced by workers.

Speculation in land or building means that something bought for, say £1,000, is sold for £1,500 without any value being added to it. Money gained from productive activity is lost in paying the speculators their pound of flesh. And the drones that flock around the Stock Exchange are merely licenced wastemakers.

In a period of crisis capitalism increases the waste it causes. 90% of Irish factories at present are working beneath full capacity. Side by side with unemployment, bad housing, shortages,

Capitalism's greatest waste is in human lives and talents. Wars between rival powers over markets and territories have produced two devastating world wars and countless smaller conflicts. The skills of millions are wasted on the dole queues. The talent of the working class for organising production from within - not as wasteful exploiters from without - is stifled. Why make suggestions, why improve work methods when THEY benefit? Why cooperate in the advance of technology when it means causing unemployment?

Capitalism results in individual firms having their own researchers and inventors as well as duplicating production. All this resulting in an insane multiplication of research into identical products. And some of the products of that research - even medical advances - are shelved until a more profitable method of producing them is found.

Only the seizure of the means of producing the necessities of life from private hands and the building of a socialist planned economy can end the criminal waste we see all around us. Until then they will spend our money on prestige office-blocks and marble banking halls.

LEFT UNITY, HOW ARE YOU?

IT IS NOW four months since three leftwing groups launched the "Left Alternative" with a good deal of noise and pomp. The Communist Party, Official Sinn Fein and Liason of the Left put up their star speakers in the Mansion House and packed in 500 people to hear them talk again of the need for unity.

Waves of applause broke out each time the word was mentioned. There were hoots and laughter for the "ivory Tower" people who don't descend to put their case to the people. Since then, however, the Left Alternative have themselves retreated to the ivory towers.

They have held only two further meetings, one in UCD and the other in TCD. They have published a short analysis of the IDA which isn't even published as a pamphlet for public sale.

But, more than that, they have stood absolutely still on their invitations to other groups to join them in preparing a united radical answer to the economic crisis. You may have read in our April issue that we wrote to Matt Merrigan taking up his "unity" call and suggesting a basis for cooperation between the Socialist Workers Movement and the three groups in the Left Alternative. He replied in March that the letter was "under consideration". As far as we know, they are still considering it.

In THE WORKER and in our pamphlet on the economic crisis, "Now Fight Back", we have stressed the areas for co-operation between socialists and trade union militants of all political hues. We repeat that we are in favour of widest unity to end wage restraint, and make real advances in the wages struggle, to halt redundancies and step up the fight for jobs.

But we would like to know: What happened the Left Alternative's great plans for unity?

'Spare a few coppers, sir?'



OUR ACE photographer, Scoop McCracken, snapped this shot of our very own president, Mr. O'Dolly. Being president of Ireland these days is a hard 'out station, with the price of caviare what it is.

Anyone wishing to help this unfortunate layabout should send their donations to THE WORKER. We'll see he doesn't get them.

We'll put the money to a far more useful purpose. To produce a workers' paper which reports the struggle of our own class - a paper to use in those struggles.

THE WORKER has been produced by the SWM since 1972. It is produced by workers - for workers. And your 7 pence goes back into producing it for the first of each month.

But monthly isn't enough. The building of a workers' organisation which can challenge the bosses' attacks and ultimately the bosses' system - is a task which must go hand in hand with the building of a workers paper.

A regular paper, reporting struggles in the factories, in the unions, on the estates - gathering the ideas and experiences of workers in struggle here and abroad - is essential. Help to build THE WORKER, to improve it and to bring it out more frequently.

Take out a subscription and/or send a donation to:
 THE WORKER, 1st Floor,
 24 Talbot Street, Dublin 1.



American farmers slaughtering calves in protest at low prices

From The Shop Floor: reports from Waterford Glass, TV Rentals, Cinemas, Unidare

THE FIGHT FOR EQUAL PAY

EQUAL PAY is a dead issue. Everyone agrees with it. The union leaders, the EEC and even the government...eh...in principle, though, not in practice. There's even a law which says it has to be paid. And Equal Pay Commissioners to enforce it. Male commissioners get paid more than females!

Workers are rapidly finding out that law or no law we've got to fight for equal pay — just like we have to fight for everything else. And the successful fights are those which go right through the smokescreen of laws, evaluation schemes etc, set up to blind us. Only our own strength can win.

The raising of expectations by the Equal Pay Act leads workers to look for equality now. And to hell with the moans about how "the country can't afford it". We don't want it from "the country" — we want it from the bosses!

in Waterford Glass

THE PRESSURE is being put on the bosses in Waterford Glass where over 300 women are now demanding equal pay.

This indeed shows a tremendous change of attitude of both the women and the men in the factory. When the



A face made for having the smile wiped off it. Paddy McGrath, big cheese in Waterford Glass. But big cheeses were made to be eaten!

issue of equal pay was first raised there was very little enthusiasm shown by the workers. We had been conditioned into believing the lies and the propaganda of the bosses, who were at all times putting forward the argument that equal pay would put the company in jeopardy. Such a ridiculous statement to make, especially when they are at present enjoying a rise in profits of 60% after tax.

We make that money for them. Those profits are created by us, men and women workers. The point was recently underlined when a job description exercise carried out by the shop stewards showed just how valuable the women's work was.

Excuses are no longer acceptable. We see equal pay as a basic human right and we're fighting together to get it implemented. This is one demand that won't be allowed to gather dust on the management's table.

by Ann Hoare
ATGWU Shop Steward,
Waterford Glass

in TV Rentals

THE SETTLEMENT in the TV rental strike which lasted four weeks fell short of the unions' demands, but was certainly no disgrace. 250 women workers, and some young men, have received a £3 increase and will get a further £2 in September and in June of next year, in order to close the gap between them and the higher paid. The number of grades in the trade has been reduced from 9 to 4.

The strike began when 42 employees of ITV — mostly women — were sacked for seeking to negotiate equal conditions with men for Saturday work. Immediately 240 other members of Tass — technicians included — stopped work in protest over the dismissals, and in support of all the original demands of women workers in the TV rental companies. These demands were for equal pay, equal conditions and equal opportunities.

There is still some way to go to full equal pay, but it's clear that the gains that have been made could not have been won through the Labour Court or through equal pay legislation. This was a victory for the traditional methods of free collective bargaining.

VICTORY

On top of the progress towards equal pay the women workers also won a concession on Saturday working. They are now receiving a £2 allowance for it, and will have one Saturday off in four. From next January this will be one in three.

The strike was relatively short and the workers have held their strength. With this victory under their belts they can push for further improvements later. This is a low-paid industry and there is some way to go to change that. The strikers in Irish Vision, RTV Rentals and Irish TV Rentals have shown they can do it.

by Geraldine O'Riordan



in Dublin Cinemas

THREE YEARS ago we got together a demand for equal pay in the Ambassador Cinema in Dublin.

It was signed by the vast majority of the staff, men and women, and sent to our ITGWU No7 Branch Committee. We also sent a copy to our Group Secretary, Eddie Browne.

A few weeks ago, while making his traditional 30 minute speech to our branch AGM, Eddie mourned the "fact" that not the slightest move towards equal pay had been made in the cinema business. When he was reminded of our demand he had nothing to say. When one of our usherettes asked about

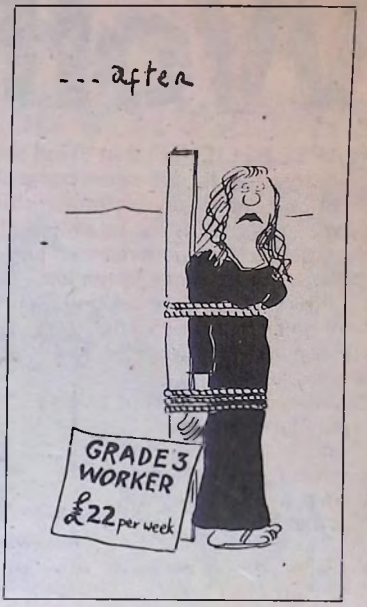
the demand — about a year after we put it in — she was told "We're... eh...looking into it".

Three years of "looking into it". And now that Eddie raised the matter our section committee are beginning to think it's time we moved. And how are we moving? Well, that depends.

Our committee decided that our prime task this year would be to get equal pay for our members. But the officials are determined to go through a "job evaluation" exercise — though they admit this will take up to two years.

If we're serious about equal pay — and some of us are very serious — it will mean following the lead of the TV rental strikers and saying, "To hell with job evaluation, shove your lousy Equal Pay Act, the Labour Court AND the Wage Agreement. It will mean mobilising our members to use our strength to take equal pay — they won't give it.

by Gene Kerrigan
Section Committee



Labour Court no answer

WHILE THE women workers in the TV rental trade and in the Shelbourne Hotel have pushed forward through strike action, those women whose equal pay claims have gone to the Labour Court have made little or no progress.

The Court recently considered a claim in several parts made by the ITGWU on behalf of workers in Slane Manufacturing Co. in Co. Meath. One part was a demand for equal pay in a section of this textile factory where men and women are doing the same work.

Neither the employers (part of the big Courtauld's group) nor the Court officers denied that the women's work was the same as the men's. But the company simply said they couldn't afford to pay. Full stop. End of story.

They can afford to build massive new factories, but not to give women equal pay — there's no "return" on that.

And that's exactly why equal pay has to be FOUGHT FOR — to squeeze some of the profits out of the bosses. The case of Malone Oil Products (distributors of Shell) shows up the same problems. The ITGWU's four-part claim which went to the Labour Court recently included a demand for equal pay for five women clerical workers.

The company took its lead from the example of others: "In accordance with the much publicised current difficulty of employers in coping with the problem of equal pay, this firm is not in a position, economically, to concede this claim."

The only answer is to put them "in a position, industrially, where they cannot afford NOT to concede this claim."

by Brian Trench

Introducing! THE WORKER job evaluation scheme

TRADE UNIONISTS seeking to push their branch or section on the equal pay issue will usually find the union officials diverting the move into one of those notorious Job Evaluation schemes.

This results in a long, drawn out process in which jobs are artificially graded in order to determine if the women are doing "work of equal value". This bosses' trick is designed to PREVENT equal pay rather than achieve it. It also removes all initiative from the rank and file workers and places it in the hands of the bosses and union officials who — as ever — work out their own compromises.

In order to short-circuit this, we present THE WORKER Job Evaluation Scheme which was put forward by one of our members at his union committee. It determines work of equal value in three days.

1st DAY: Workers meet to discuss the Scheme and ensure solidarity.

2nd DAY: All the men stop working. Production stops, the company loses money.

3rd DAY: All the women stop working. Production stops, the company loses money.

CONCLUSION: Scheme demonstrates that men and women are essential parts of the same process, their work equally necessary to the bosses' profits, and that the artificial line drawn between workers is a device for depriving them and ensuring cheap labour.

Come to think of it, the whole thing is so obvious that it doesn't have to be carried out at all. It would save even more time if both men and women stopped working on the 2nd day until equal pay is won.

Now why didn't the union leaders think of that? You figure it out.

UNIDARE

DEVELOPMENTS in the Unidare plant in Dublin show how the building of a solid rank and file movement on the site is needed more urgently than ever.

The joint Works Council (where all the unions on the site meet) proposed a mass meeting in the car-park in order to get management off their backsides to deal with a staff-status claim — put in over a year ago.

The effect of the mass meeting

would have been tremendous, getting workers together to get decent information and to put some teeth into the claim. But the fact that it would have had an effect on the union officialdom too — putting the ordinary members on the stage of events — resulted in the meeting being sabotaged. The ITGWU No.14 Branch head shop steward decided off his own bat that that the general workers' section would not attend the meeting.

When the steward refused to meet the members on the job to explain his decision there was a one hour stoppage in Anodising and a threatened march

up the site to force a meeting. Then, when four shop stewards called for a special meeting of the section committee this too didn't happen.

There are a number of lessons to be drawn from this particular clash between the rank and file and officialdom.

(1) Direct action from the workers — who are who ARE the union — is needed when our representatives make decisions above our heads.

(2) The appeal to "higher authority" and the dropping of the march up the site gained very little. A protest was made but the meeting on the job was never held. The march would have informed all of Unidare about what was going on — better than any word of mouth or pen.

As a follow-up, No. 2 and 14

Branches of the ITGWU have withdrawn from the Joint Works Council. This can only be interpreted as a move by the ITGWU to remove themselves from association with the more militant Joint Works Council and the ITGWU stewards mustn't let themselves be duped into breaking up the one form of inter-union link there is in Unidare however much it is inadequate.

If the JWC in fact collapses, the stewards who want action in Unidare should form a Unidare Works Committee open to all stewards and representatives on the site, from all unions, answerable to the ordinary members and reporting back through a monthly paper.

FROM THE SHOP FLOOR

Reports from these shop-floor struggles written by, or from information supplied by, workers involved in the fight.

What's happening in your workplace or union? Send us a report.

More industrial reports on page 7.

Wolfe Tone: a fresh look at the roots of republicanism

PEARSE BELIEVED that "God speaks to Ireland through Tone." Modern republicans do not go quite that far, though some come close. There are scarcely enough Sundays in June anymore to accommodate all the factions wishing to hold commemorative rallies round his grave at Bodens-town. And such is the fervour of the occasion that few who gather will consider the possibility that ideas which were relevant and radical at the end of the eighteenth century might not, perhaps, be adequate in the last quarter of the twentieth.

Irish republicans are unique in this regard. French revolutionaries today do not quote Robespierre as holy writ. American revolutionaries acknowledge their debt to Jefferson, but do not annually rededicate themselves to his ideas. English revolutionaries have progressed beyond Thomas Paine.

by
**Eamonn
McCann**



Liam Mellows speaks at the grave of Wolfe Tone, 1922. Today, when everyone from Fianna Fail to the Communist Party goes to Bodens-town to lay claim to the heritage of Tone, it's worthwhile going back to look at the roots of that heritage.

Yet in Ireland revolutionaries — or to be more exact, republicans; almost all of whom see themselves as revolutionaries — annually proclaim that the blueprint for a future free Ireland is to be found in the thoughts and writings of Wolfe Tone. They could not plausibly do this if what Tone actually represented was widely known and understood.

Tone represented the develop-ing class of manufacturers and professional men — mostly Presbyterians — who, towards the end of the eighteenth century were beginning to realise that to ensure economic and political progress, they would have to break the political power of the Protestant Ascendancy.

Democracy

The Ascendancy, 450,000 strong, held five sixths of the landed property and almost all the political influence in the country. The Presbyterians were twice as numerous. And there were three million Catholics. Upon them "there was no injustice, no disgrace, no disqualification, moral political or religious, civil or military, that was not heaped."

Tone argued that the way to deal with the stultifying power of the Ascendancy was through political reform which would create a national democracy: and that such reform, to be meaningful, would have to involve the emancipation of the Catholics. He was telling the middle class Presbyterians that they would have to help free the Catholics, not out of attachment to some abstract notion of justice BUT BECAUSE IT WAS IN THEIR OWN INTEREST.

"If on the other hand we think reform too dear...if we withhold the sacred cup of liberty from our Catholic brother and repel him from the communion of our natural rights, let us at least be consistent and cease to murmur at the oppression of the govern-ment which grinds us...Let English influence meet and check our rising commerce at every turn." It was a political and economic — not a moral and religious argument.

Tone, it should be noted, made a very clear distinction between the Catholic people — on whose behalf it was politically necessary to fight — and the Catholic religion, which he held in proper and hearty contempt.

"I have a strong objection to letting priests into the business at all", he snapped at Delacroix, when the French leader suggested he allow a Capuchin friar to accompany him on an expedition from France to Ireland.

Once, when bored in Rouen, he attended mass and wondered afterwards, reasonably enough, "how people can listen to such abominable nonsense."

He anticipated that one welcome side-effect of Catholic emancipation would be a weakening of the Church's hold on the people. "Every liberal extension of property or franchise will tend to diminish (the power of the Pope). Persecution will keep alive

the foolish bigotry and superstition of any sect."

ALL THIS will seem to many a rather cynical interpretation of Tone's motive for supporting the Catholics — the common assumption being that it was on account of Tone being a very wonderful human being. Doubters should consider the revealing fact — revealing about both about Tone and about the milieu in which he moved — that it was not until he was twenty eight and after he had published his "Argument on Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland" that Tone ever MET a catholic: an omission which seemed not to perturb him greatly, or at all.

Moreover, the Catholics whom he then met were not from the mass of the people but from the tiny, Dublin based, English speaking Catholic middle class, members of the General Committee, to many of whose "sumptuous dinners" Tone, something of a celebrity after the success of his pamphlet, was now invited.

There is no evidence that Tone ever broke breath to a Catholic "Man of no property" in his life. Certainly, they figure in his writings as something of an abstraction. "As no change could make their political situation worse", he told the French Directory, I reckoned on their support to a certainty."

It is necessary to stress the point because Tone's advocacy of the case for the Catholics is often — and often deliberately — misunderstood. The fact that he urged the Catholics and others to come together is used — in Irish Times editorials for example — as evidence that he was an early Irish ecumenist: at any rate an essentially moderate man, perhaps driven to extremes that were in it in the 1790s. But who, were he alive in the 1970s, would be likely to apply for membership of the Alliance Party.

Catholic sectarians, on the other hand, argue from the fact that Tone not only "came over" to "our side" but numbered himself thereafter with the more extreme faction. That he was, in effect, an honorary Catholic militant. Which, of course, fits neatly into the analysis of PROTESTANT sectarians who can thereby dub him a "traitor to his own people" whose politics can safely be rejected sight unseen.

Men of no property

All such ideas are nonsense. Tone's attitude to Catholics was entirely in line with the radical orthodoxy of the day — seeing their emancipation not as an end in itself but as a "means of advancing the general good." And by the "general good" Tone meant conditions which would enable "our rising commerce" to develop into a viable capitalist system within an independent country.

That Tone aimed at a capitalist Ireland will come as a surprise to those who have been led to imagine that he was, in spirit at least, a socialist. This view of Tone is based on a studied misunderstanding of a remark he made about "the men of no property."

It is a measure of republican mind-lessness that the point has to be made at all: in this context Official Republican mindlessness for the most part. Because despite the Officials' wind and blether about "men of no property," Tone was a revolutionary FOR capitalism: he opposed the British crown and the aristocracy precisely because they stood in the way of an independent capitalist development of Ireland. No other reason.

It could not have been otherwise. That essentially is what the bourgeois revolution is all about. Still, even WITHIN bourgeois revolutionary movement of the time, Tone and the United Irishmen did not stand with the more progressive elements. When seeking help from France, Tone turned to the ruling Directory, not to radical elements like Babeuf. And at all times Tone-like every other prominent United Irishman, ignored the fine working class movement emerging in Dublin and Belfast in the 1790s.

It would be meaningless and pompous, comically so, to blame Tone for this. He was a product of the time he lived in and the class he came from. And viewed in that light he was a heroic figure. It does his memory no service to attribute to him ideas and aims which he never embraced — which, indeed, given the circumstances of his life, it would have been well-nigh impossible for him even to have imagined.

Tone's reference to the "men of no property" was by way of WARNING to others that if they did not take the lead in the struggle for national independence, the lower orders would. And it was an appeal to them not to let that happen. Tone did NOT want the men of no property to take over. He was quite explicit about that.

The "men of no property" were the teeming, impoverished rural masses. ON THEIR OWN they had no potential for power — unlike the working class today. One of the reasons Tone urged the French to send a formidable force was that such would be necessary to impress, and therefore to have a chance to secure the support of, "those men of some property whose assistance was so essential in framing a government in Ireland."

He argued, not that the overthrow of the gentry would be a good thing in itself, but that it would have to be done because the gentry were too stupid or cowardly or both to join the struggle. "The United Irishmen...wish to break the connection with England...AN OBJECT IN WHICH SURELY THE MEN OF PROPERTY ARE MOST INTERESTED. Yet the very sound of independence seems to have terrified them out of all sense, spirit or honesty....They should have been the first to support this great object: the people would have supported them. It could hardly be clearer.

A few months before his final, fatal return to Ireland from France he was at pains to deny any suggestion that he desired radical, social reform. "But it will be said the United Irishmen extend their view farther: they now go to a distribution of property and an agrarian law. I know not whether they do or no. I am sure in June 1795 when I was forced to leave the country, they entertained no such ideas."

Relics

Tone was a great man: possibly the greatest single influence in the shaping of modern Irish thought. Any Irish socialist who does the bidding of the ruling class commentators and 'rejects Tone' has rejected half his own heritage. And anyone who treats his ideas like Holy Relics, rubbing them on reality in the hope of some magic transformation, is mistreating his memory.

Socialists should see Tone in the context of his time — and understand the limitation of his ideas in the context of our own. Merely to rattle his bones once a year is surely to diminish the man.

SWM

Public meetings

The North:

a socialist answer

Eamonn McCann

Waterford Tues 22 June
ATGWU Hall Keizer St.

Galway Wed 23 June
Coachman's Hotel.

Dublin Thurs 24 June
ATGWU Hall, Marlboro St.

Limerick Sat 26 June
Mechanic's Institute, Hartstrong St.

PLUS: SWM speakers

All meetings start at 8pm

MEET THE GOON SQUAD — "WE AREN'T TORTURERS. WE NEVER USE INSTRUMENTS."

THE NEXT time you go to a union meeting keep an eye out for a little white Renault van, licence number 8053ZL. It's a Special Branch car, and it's been seen outside several meetings of trade unionists over the past few months. Meetings of republicans and socialists have also received increased attention from the political police. The IRSP meeting outside the GPO to protest about the torture of their members attracted almost as much police as public attention.

Personal "attention" to republicans and socialists has also been stepped up. And many have bruises to prove it. The Sunday Independent (May 2nd) reported the existence of a squad of police heavies whose special duty is the beating of confessions out of suspects. One of these thugs gave the Independent an interview in which he frankly admitted that his job is to provide evidence of guilt even when that evidence didn't exist. His own judgement and that of his superiors is enough to get someone jailed for years.

"We know they are guilty. We also know that evidence must be produced in court and often that evidence just isn't there.....our job is to find out the truth. There is one way many of these people stand. There's no use treating with kid gloves.

We aren't torturers. We never use instruments.....we are ordinary people who happen to be Guards and happen to take our job seriously.

Yes we are given special payment. We get overtime for what we do. Yes, we are willing to work around the clock. Yes, we do believe in what we are doing. This is an elite group.....unless we are ordered to stop our methods of interrogation we will continue with the way we have worked successfully up to now

by Gene Kerrigan



This is the public face of "our" police force. But what happens in the basement of a police station is another matter. That there is a specially assigned, specially paid squad of "goons" to extract "confessions" is an undenied and undeniable fact.

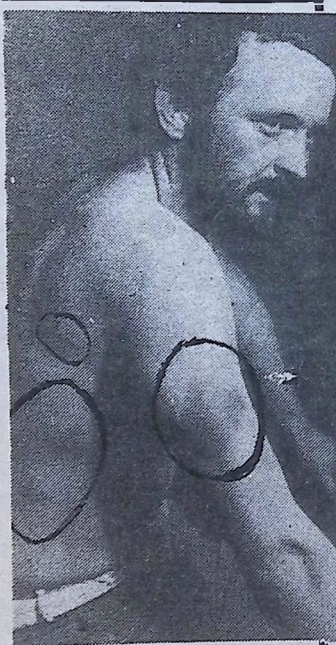
This budding Gestapo is garrisoned in various police stations around Dublin. Victims are brought from one police station to another so as to prevent relatives and lawyers intervening. Obviously these animals love their work but that's not the main issue. What is important is that their

psychological deformity is a deliberately used tool in the hands of the state. They are just one more cog in the machinery of repression which the government has been building. When capitalism is in crisis it will go to any lengths to protect itself. Ideally the working class would just stay quiet. But unfortunately for them we tend to throw up organisations to resist the measures which the ruling class

must take to solve its crisis. These organisations are the target of the repression. The depth of the crisis determines how far the repression will go. Occasionally, as in Chile, it becomes necessary to crush every organisation which could possibly resist. That's when they go beyond the "extremists" and start shooting shop stewards. Fascism is not just around the

corner as some would make out. The ruling class have a lot more rabbits to pull out of their top hats. But if workers are not to pay drastically for the crisis of capitalism the mounting repression must be fought. That is a job for all organisations of the working class.

This man was 'helping police with enquiries' and he has the bruises to prove it



OVER a period of four days in April about 40 people were arrested by the Special Branch. Most of them are members of the IRSP. One was hospitalised following the treatment they got, others bear the marks of Special Branch hospitality.

The treatment was followed by four statements implicating six of those people in a robbery. Some of those arrested — under Section 30 of the Offences Against The State Act — were held for 48 hours, released and then arrested for another forty eight. In theory they could keep doing this for as long as was necessary to get a "statement".

Some of the prisoners were denied sleep or food. Fifteen of them were physically beaten. The, by now familiar, treatment included beating on the head, arms and stomach with rubber batons, punches, being lifted off the ground by the ears. At least six people are receiving medical treatment as a result.

Unity

Following the beatings the IRSP held a meeting at the GPO in Dublin. Some of those arrested told of their treatment and the Chairman of the IRSP, Seamus Costello, made an appeal for unity of the left against repression.

This came as a surprise to some of us. The IRSP has been repeatedly invited since its inception to join in united work against repression. They have repeatedly declined to do so.

The failure of republicans, who bear the brunt of the repression, to involve wider sections of the working class movement in the fight against repression only facilitates further harassment.

Until there is a concerted working class attack on repression people will continue, like Gerry Roache in the picture above, to be brought in to "help police with enquiries" — and they'll have the bruises to prove it.

Harrassing the unemployed

NAVAN IS getting itself a bad name. You may remember our report of the three SWM members who were harassed by police while giving out leaflets there some months ago, and who were later arrested and held for twenty four hours under the Offences Against The State Act. Well, it's happened again, this time to two members of the Unemployed Workers Association.

One of the men, John Clarke, told us what happened.

Two of us, Norman McGrath and myself, arrived in Navan at 10.25am, May 8th, on Unemployed Workers Association business. We made some enquiries at the Labour Exchange, then went for a cup of coffee. When we came out we were asked for identification by a uniformed policeman. Then a detective arrived and wanted to arrest us. We protested and he opened his coat and showed us his gun.

GUN

When Norman said he wanted to lock his motor-bike first the detective pushed the gun into his back and said "Get into that fucking car, you cunt, or I'll give it to you right here on the spot."

He also threatened to "wipe the smirk" off his face when he got him back to the cells.

Section 30 of the Offences Against The State Act was quoted.

We were taken back to Navan police station and our jackets and shoes were forcibly removed. We were put in a cell and left there for six hours. Then we were taken out to be finger-printed and then taken back to the cell.

Thirty minutes later we were taken out to the back yard and photographed. Then back to the cell again.

Some time later I was questioned for a half hour and Norman for an hour and a half. After many requests I was allowed to make a phone call at 7.45pm. At about 9.30 we were released.

Two notebooks and a diary were kept by the police and up to this time — May 9th — they have not been returned. No rights regarding the Offences Against the State Act were read to us.

John Clarke is demanding his notebooks back. All trade unionists should contact their representatives, union committees etc. to get them to add their voice to his demand and their protest against the police action.

And is Navan going to be a closed town for working class activity, thanks to the police? It will be, unless the trade union movement takes a hand in the situation. The Navan Trades Council should organise a meeting on unemployment in the town and demand an end to police harassment.

This incident shows again how any increased power given to the state — supposedly for use against "subversives" — will be used against trade unionists and unemployed workers. It shows once again the need for united working class activity on repression — drawing in the trade unions who are formally opposed to repressive legislation.

TOO MANY trade unionists believe that repressive laws directed against republicans would never be used against them.

The experience shows exactly the opposite — and the case of John Clarke and Norman McGrath, detained for handing out leaflets is not isolated. The series of repressive laws passed in the last few years strengthen the state apparatus, weaken the resistance to military and political repression in the North, and create an atmosphere in which people are afraid to "get their noses dirty". Those laws are:

- *the Forcible Entry Act
- *the Offences Against the State (Amendment) Act
- *the Prisons Act, 1972 (which made military detention possible)
- *the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Act

In demanding an end to repressive legislation, we are demanding that each one of these be wiped off the statute book. And that would only be a beginning.

WHAT WE THINK

CAPITALISM IS a violent system, and uses violence to defend itself. Witness the shootings, beatings, and imprisonment of republicans, the use of the police and army to break strikes, the harassment of the unemployed.

The Provisionals, as the largest anti-imperialist force, have so far been the main focus of repression. But their nationalist traditions and elitist methods have isolated them and prevented them from building the mass working class movement which alone can fight repression.

But a defeat for the Provos, and the consequent strengthening of the state machine, would make the smashing of all other resistance to capitalism's repression that much easier. In a time of economic crisis the "anti-terrorist" laws will be increasingly used against socialists and trade unionists. The need for a united resistance against repression becomes daily more urgent.

The Provos remain elitist. They have elevated the hunger strike from a tactic to a principle and can do little more than provide big funerals for their crushed members. And now they are being deprived of even this pathetic comfort.

The Officials move steadily to the right, opposing repression as liberals rather than anti-imperialists, while the IRSP talk of unity but have so far refused to take any part in united action against repression.

The more principled (or squeamish) liberals will protest and set up their watch-dog committees, but they too will come into the firing line should they prove too big an embarrassment.

So far the union's response has been muted for fear of being identified with extremists. But the unions, where the workers are organised, are nevertheless the key to the fight back.

We call on all socialist and republican organisations to join the building of a united campaign with the emphasis on the trade unions as a means of involving wider sections of the working class.

Communists compromise in Italy

by
JOHN GOODWILLIE

THE BLOOD of St. Januarius has failed to liquify in Naples Cathedral. If there hadn't been an earthquake afterwards, it would have helped to convince Italian Catholics that Italy stands in mortal danger from the Communists.

The Italian elections reflect a serious disagreement about what strategy capitalism should use to keep its control over the Italian working class. A corrupt bureaucracy fouls up reforms. A large semi-State sector, designed to be a dynamic force in the economy (as Official Sinn Féin want for Ireland), plays a parasitical role. Differences in the standard of living between the North and South of Italy increase. And yet the general economic outlook has signs of hope for many capitalists, despite waves of strikes and industrial militancy since 1968.



No, after you! Berluiguer, leader of the Italian Communist Party, and De Martino, of the Socialist Party, both eager for the 'historic compromise' with capitalism.

Split

Faced with a rising Communist Party vote, the Christian Democrats, who have sat in all 38 Italian governments since the War, are split on how to deal with the situation. The right wing hold out firmly against any deal with the Communists and cling to their traditional links with the Catholic Church. To their right, the neo-fascists have been stirring up the situation with plots and acts of violence.

Many Christian Democratic workers have moved to the left, and the majority of the Catholic trade union have ended their affiliation with the Church. The Communist Party wants a "historic compromise" which would mean a coalition government of Communists, Christian Democrats, and the smaller parties in between: Socialists, Social Democrats, and Republicans. To obtain this it has been soft-peddling on issues like abortion, taking a less anti-Church stand than those smaller parties. The Communist Party insists that the next government must have an overwhelming majority. It does not want the Church in the camp of the opposition.

And what would a "historic compromise" government do? It would carry out a programme of reforms within capitalism. It would use the Communist Party's massive base in the working class and the trade unions to put through an austerity programme, involving cutting workers' standards of living and devoting resources to investment to get capitalist firms booming once more.

American imperialism does not look kindly on the possibility of Communist ministers in a NATO government, even if they are taking the road of class collaboration. And yet, large sections of the working class might think that, with

Communists in the government, they could expect easier treatment from their bosses, that they could expect pay rises whatever was written in the government's austerity programme. The Communist Party might find its followers forcing the pace.

The results of the election will be watched closely in France and in Spain, where the Communists want to follow the same road.

Two groups of the left of the Communist party have formed an alliance to put forward a revolutionary alternative to the "historic compromise". Avanguardia Operaia has achieved deep roots in the working class movement in Italy, assisting in the formation of groups of rank and file militants throughout northern Italy, and participating in squatters' movements and movements against rent and fare increases.

Naples Saint's Blood Resists Liquefaction

NAPLES May 5 (Reuters) — Hundreds of Roman Catholics again yesterday packed the cathedral here praying for a recurrence of the Miracle of Saint Januarius, which should have taken place Saturday.

For the fourth day, the city's archbishop, Corrado Cardinal Ucci, led the faithful in prayers to the 4th-century saint to perform the miracle of liquefying two phials of his dried blood. People say the saint is angry because Naples elected a Communist mayor.

From the International Herald Tribune, 6 May

WHAT WE STAND FOR

Socialist Workers Movement

THE SOCIALIST Workers' Movement is a revolutionary workers' organisation which aims to organise the working class in the struggle for power and for the overthrow of the existing social order.

Capitalism produces war and poverty, racial and sexual oppression. It is based on the exploitation of those who produce the wealth. It is geared to profit and not to human need. It wastes resources — above all, human resources. It is driven into ever-deeper crises.

Only the working class can destroy it and build a socialist society based on workers' control of production. Our political action to prepare the working class for that is based on the following principles:

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM: Capitalism cannot be changed by piece-meal reform. Increasingly it is unable to bring in even those small reforms which some sections of the ruling class think necessary. We support all struggles of workers against capitalism, seeking to co-ordinate them and direct them towards a fight for workers' power.

CAPITALIST STATE MUST BE SMASHED: The state machinery — courts, parliament, police, army — is used to maintain the domination of the ruling class. Working class revolution produces a different kind of state — one based on councils of delegates from work-places and localities who are democratically elected and subject to recall at any time.

SOCIALIST ANSWER TO THE NATIONAL QUESTION: Imperialism dominates the country, props up the Northern state and keeps the working class divided. But the problem can only be resolved in the working class's struggle for power. Only a united working class can defeat imperialism and capitalism, leading the fight to end repression, to force withdrawal of the British Army and against every aspect of the bosses' system.

NO SOCIALISM IN ISOLATION: Capitalism is an international system and can only be overthrown by the working class internationally. Socialism in a single country cannot survive. We work for solidarity with workers in other countries and support the struggles of oppressed peoples against imperialism. Along with revolutionary organisations elsewhere we aim to build an international of working class parties.

RUSSIA AND CHINA NO MODEL: The attempts of the Russian working class to build socialism were halted by the failure of their revolution to spread. The Stalinist rulers established a new type of society based on exploitation and oppression. Russia, the countries of Eastern Europe, China and Cuba are not socialist or "communist" — the workers are not in control. We oppose these regimes as we oppose Western capitalism.



The main area of political action for socialists is in the mass organisations of the working class, particularly the trade unions. We fight to make them independent of all ruling class influence and any state interference and to make them effective organs of struggle for the workers.

In the trade unions, we fight for the right to organise free of restrictions, and against all laws and agreements limiting the right to take industrial action. We fight for democratic control of union affairs and the election of officials.

We oppose all forms of wage control and wage restraint; we oppose unemployment, compulsory and voluntary redundancy, and closures. We fight for shorter hours, five day's work or five days' pay, and demand the nationalisation without compensation and under workers control of companies which cannot guarantee job security.

We fight for a national minimum wage of £45 per week, for equal pay for women, and for the adult rate from 18 years of age. We oppose attempts to lower living standards by cuts in social services, health and education.

FOR A RANK AND FILE MOVEMENT which draws together militant trade unionists willing to oppose the class collaboration of the union leaders.

FOR FULL EQUALITY FOR WOMEN which can only be won if women themselves are organised to fight for their demands and if that struggle is part of the fight for workers' power.

FOR SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE in order to break the hold of reactionary ideas on workers, and remove a principal obstacle to women's equality. We support the demands for contraception and abortion to be made available on request.

FOR DEFENCE OF ANTI-IMPERIALISTS who face the full force of state repression. We fight for the abolition of repressive laws and for the withdrawal of the British Army. We support the self-defence on working class areas against military and sectarian attack. We fight to build a united front of working class and anti-imperialist organisations for those aims.

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS' PARTY which can draw the most advanced, class-conscious workers together to fight for the political leadership of the working class. A revolutionary socialist leadership based in the working class can have a decisive influence especially in periods of upheaval.

The Socialist Workers Movement is working to build such a party. It is a democratic centralist organisation open to all those who accept these principles and objectives, who agree to work in one of its units, and recognise its discipline. We urge those who want to fight for the socialist, working class answer to the mess that is capitalism to join us.

Portugal: opportunities still to be seized

THERE IS LITTLE chance that last month's elections in Portugal will put the lid on the political and social upheaval in that country. Parliamentary elections very rarely have a decisive effect on class struggle, anyway — but particularly not class struggle of the depth and vigour which has been seen in Portugal.

The attention which the press in Ireland and Britain has given to the elections and their aftermath has been focussed on the right-wing parties and their manoeuvres for a government. They have chosen to ignore the wave of strikes which came before the elections — through February, March and April.

There have been disputes in hospitals, in large multi-nationals, in small locally-

owned firms, among shop-workers in the North and miners in the South. Engineering workers and building workers have held national stoppages. And since the elections, the struggles have gone on.

The elections themselves brought few surprises — and certainly have not brought stable government. The Communist Party and smaller left-wing groups increased their vote — but so, too, did the right-wing parties, PPD and CDS.

All are now looking to the Presidential elections of 27th June to provide a more decisive result. Unhappily, the PRP (Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat, one of whose representatives the Socialist Workers Movement brought to Ireland recently) is trying to compensate for its failure to stand at the general elections by launching a campaign to run Otelo de Carvalho for President.

Carvalho is at the centre of those people against whom repression of the military Left was directed — he has been imprisoned and "busted" from general to major. It is important to defend him and the other military radicals, but his own political position has been unsteady, at least, and he is in no way accountable to the workers' movement.

And that movement is still alive and kicking. The parliamentary elections have shown no advance for the right-wing parties in the main working class areas. Around Lisbon and in the industrial belt south of the river Tagus, the left parties increased their vote or held their support.

The revolutionary groups are still weak, however. And the Communist Party continues to look both ways at once. It manoeuvres to get closer to power, attacks the strikes of service workers as "serving the plans of reaction" and still manages to present itself as THE militant workers' party.

In the country areas where the land workers are most militant and where they have held on to estates taken from the old landlords, the Communist Party has a firm grip.

The revolutionary organisations will not be a credible alternative unless they fight to win support in the current workers' struggles. The opportunities are still there — "capitalist normality" has still not returned to Portugal.

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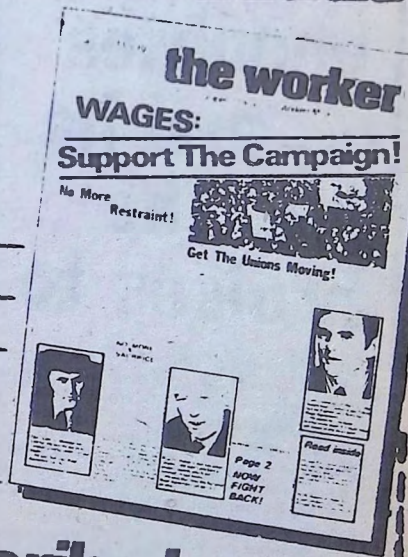
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The 'liberals'

by
Fred Burns

IT'S LIKE the Batman and Robin show. Cruise O'Brien and Garret Fitzgerald slugging it out with the nasty old bishops. They call it 'The Great Debate', but if you look closely at it you'll see a fascinating example of our politicians trying to keep their balance as the economic crisis puts much more than the pound at risk.

Basically O'Brien and Fitzgerald are saying that, in order to meet the new needs and aspirations which have arisen from the higher living standards of the Sixties, we need some changes in the Catholic set-up of the state. We must introduce contraception, consider divorce, and forget about abortion. And on a more long-term basis the courageous liberals believe that the middle class should be allowed finance their own multi-denominational schools.

One thing that has come out is the total bankruptcy of the arch-Catholic point of view. Bishop Lucey spelt it out when he claimed that we must have Rome rule because the majority of the population happen to profess that particular faith. Newman's defence against O'Brien is to denounce him as a 'self-confessed agnostic'.

But for socialists the Great Debate is pretty much a farce. The so-called liberals preside over the most repressive government in Western Europe. They are Law and Order men who defend every single attack on democratic rights. They have



'Batman' O'Brien

brought in the Special Criminal Courts and censorship on the television. They have stood over police beatings and banned the right to march.

Scared

Yet O'Brien and Fitzgerald do attempt to relate to the aspirations of their middle-class supporters who turn out the vote. Right through the Sixties when wages and living conditions kept going up, the use of contraception increased enormously. In order to get in on the boom and to acquire the luxuries, people began to plan their families. Because of this the direct hold that the Church had over many peoples lives was loosened. That is not to say that

religion, as a private system of beliefs was significantly weakened. But the political base was created for a certain number of limited reforms in the area of morality.

So why is it that these meagre reforms, limited as they are even from a capitalist viewpoint, have not been introduced?

Basically because the ruling class in this country are scared. They have suffered some shocks over the last few years. They have lost the confidence to bring in even minor reforms which in the long run would not significantly weaken their rule. With the increasing instability -- due to the revolt of the nationalist population in the North coinciding with the economic recession -- the ruling class do not dare press ahead with significant

changes.

Legalising contraception and divorce would mean weakening the hold of the Catholic Church. But that means weakening the key institution that justifies respect for law and order and which provides the ideological bandwagon for the Peace (We Surrender) Movement.

Pushing ahead with these reforms would also mean creating splits within the ruling class. And with their present lack of confidence in their ability to completely control the situation, and because much of their rule depends on repression a anyway, such splits are dangerous.

So O'Brien and Fitzgerald make moral speeches to remind the liberal middle class that they have some friends in government. But they have not the slightest intention of grasping the nettle. Just look at what they are saying about education... Anybody that was serious about weakening the power of the church would be calling for public ownership of the schools and their secularisation. But O'Brien and Fitzgerald simply encourage their local middle class residents associations to set up multi-denominational schools, while the vast majority of the population will continue to have their early year dominated by priests and nuns.

And the bishops are right about one thing. The preservation of the Catholic State depends on having the schools 'permeated with the correct religious atmosphere'.

Revolutionaries have long ago learnt that liberals will never really fight, even for 'their' reforms. Only by campaigning in the working class movement for the rights to contraception, divorce and abortion, will these demands be won. Dismantling the Catholic state in this country will only take place with a successful revolution. That is why, instead of congratulating right wing liberals like Fitzgerald, (as did the United Irishman), we believe that only the working class will bring any real change towards a decent society.



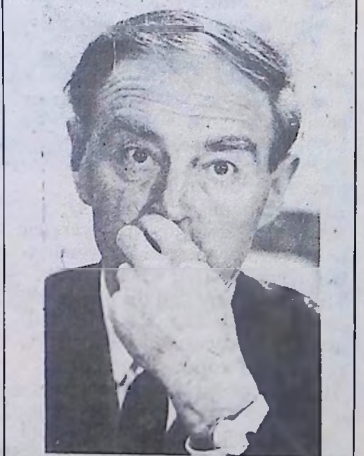
"What goes up and never comes down?"



"I dunno. WHAT goes up and never comes down?"



"Prices!"



"Shurrup, yis eajits! Yer not in the Irish Times now - this is THE WORKER - and dam lower classes are looking at yis.

Damn subversives! Look at the way they treat the poor President on page 2. And as for page 3.....

And did yis see what's in next month's issue.....huh?"

IN BRIEF

CROWN CONTROL: Some new developments have emerged since the end of the victorious strike. For one thing, one of the managers has decided that his career would be better served by moving on. Far more serious however, has been the failure of the workers to enforce the implementation of the labour court findings in regard to shopfloor representation and grievance procedures. At the moment --- four months after the strike --- no shop stewards are recognised by management.. The situation is chaotic. Important issues such as the oft-demanded ban on overtime are being forgotten. As long as the workers allow this situation to continue only the scabs and managers will be happy.

THREE out of four sections in the Draper Eireann plant in Limerick struck early in May when management insisted on one man operating two machines. A short time before they had suspended a man for two days for refusing to take on this increased work.

The bosses say there will be no redundancy involved but a job will in fact be lost on one of the machines. The men think management are deliberately trying to provoke a strike.

The union -- ITGWU -- did not make the strike official. A union work study of the two machines was due to be published the following Sunday but still management pushed through the one-man operation.

VECTA: You begin to wonder what sort of a deal Sean Meade made on the closure of Vecta International. One girl who wrote in for a tax rebate was told that she hadn't paid any tax while she had been working there. Many of the girls accepted the closure on the basis of the redundancy money --- but there has been no sign of that either. Many believed that they were guaranteed jobs when the new company, Bluebell opened. But one thing is sure---Bluebell will be cutting down on staff and they will have a free hand

to take who they like. But, then again, no-one is very surprised at Meade's sell-outs, though in this case he had it very, very easy

LIMERICK: Last month at APC, the contractors on the building of the ESB power station in Tarbard, laid-off sixty construction workers. Those who stayed behind are now working like hell -- up to nine o'clock at night -- to get the job finished.

GALWAY CORPORATION: The people who go on so much about wasting the rate-payers' money, do not often make any protest about the dinners and banquets that are thrown by the corporation. But when it comes to repairs on working class houses --- well that's a different matter. The managers of Galway corporation have decided to further cut down on the number of staff in the maintenance and repairs section. Four men have been transferred from there to different sections. That can only mean one thing; further delays to wait for repairs. Tenants associations must join with corporation workers in taking this up.

One very simple step would be to make sure that the next time there is a delegation going from your area to make complaints to the corporation, meet the corporation

workers as well. The corporation managers only fob us off. But the workers come from the same class that needs the repairs and maintenance.

WATERFORD: "Whatever happened to Women's Year?" was the title of a meeting in Waterford at which Neil McCafferty spoke, last month. Over ninety people attended.

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A FIRE on a Galway refuse dump brought into play the Army's talents as scab fire-fighters. Opportunity knocked for the boys in green when 9 of Galway's full-time firemen went on strike in support of a claim for improved payments for Sundays, Bank Holidays and night work. The claim would give parity with the Limerick firemen, a parity which was agreed in May 1972. The government holds that the NWA cancels out all their previous obligations. So much for agreements! Meanwhile the Labour Court is putting the official spanner in the works by refusing to rule.

Galway trade unionists should not allow this claim to be filed away with the many others of a similar nature. Solidarity action must be started now



Next month

Reviews of the two new important books on the Northern struggle, by Micheal Farrell and Geoff Bell. Shop-floor and trade union reports etc etc etc etc etc