

W THE WORKER

Paper of the Socialist Workers Movement

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On Sept 7, We say:

STUFF THE AMENDMENT



AS THE voting day for the referendum on abortion gets closer, a lot of people will be confused by all the doctors and lawyers who will be wheeled on to give their 'expert' opinions.
But we don't really need these experts to see what are the real issues at stake. What it boils down to really is how important we think women are? Do we really think that a pregnant woman is only equal to a just-fertilised egg or that women should be allowed to die in order to save the child.
That's the very worst situation that the

amendment being passed could bring. But the amendment would also mean that the law on abortion would never be changed to allow for any exceptions... for example if a woman is pregnant as the result of rape.



And there's no doubt about it, but very few people would force a woman to go on with a pregnancy that was the result of such a horrible and brutal act. Certainly, you wouldn't be able to force

your own daughter or mother, wife or sister.
All this talk about keeping abortion out of Ireland means nothing anyway. We do already have abortion here. More than ten women leave Ireland every day to go to England for abortions. This really shows how hypocritical the so-called 'pro-life' people are; their 'solution' to the real problems that force many women to seek abortion is simply to sweep it under the carpet.
Anyone who is really pro-life would be worried about those who are already

born, would be fighting the savage cuts in the health and education services and in social welfare that are forcing down the standards of most workers, whether in a job or unemployed.
In fact, the amendment is part of that same attack on the working class as the cuts and growing unemployment. We can make a start in the resistance to that attack by voting NO on September 7th. But voting alone won't rid us of the threats to our rights. For that we have to build a movement that fights for women's rights and socialism.

The socialist case for abortion see pages 5 - 6

DARWIN - MORE THAN A THEORY

DARWIN'S theory of evolution has always been especially important for socialists. Since it was first published under the title "The Origins of the Species by Means of Natural Selection" in 1859, the book has had a revolutionary effect.



CHARLES DARWIN

Darwin's message was: "that the species are not immutable" That is, all the different kinds of plants and animals (including humans) alive today are the descendants of some few beings which developed over 500 million years ago.

Moreover, we can say that every living thing is either doomed to extinction or drastic change over time.

This profoundly revolutionary idea can be summed up as follows - nothing can stay as it is, everything changes.

Marx wrote that Darwin's work "serves me as a natural scientific basis for the class struggle in history" and wrote of it as the deathblow to all

supernatural or creationist views of the world.

Darwin's theory stirred up the most violent controversy. His opponents were not really interested in whether or not insects had evolved from birds or worms, and mammals from reptiles.

They had a gut reaction against the notion of perpetual change because of its social implications.

That is why today, when the Right Wing is trying to roll back decades of social progress, they also try to discredit evolution.

As one of their favorite Bible passages has it: "the that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which

is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun."

Not in nature, not in society, that is the message. Socialists are committed to the opposite position: to reason and to the scientific method; indeed to science as such, because the very possibility of a free and classless society depends on the methods of production made possible by the application of scientific advances.

We have no stake in any particular scientific theory. Whether Darwin's explanation of evolutionary change is right or wrong is a matter to be determined by research and experiment.

But we do have a vital stake in defending the provisional scientific picture of the world, and it is certainly provisional and is changing all the time as we understand more, against attack from mystics and reactionaries. - PAUL O'BRIEN

Introducing Quinnspost

BY THE time you read this, Jim Mitchell, Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, will have announced the date that the Post Office will be going semi-state.

30,000 people, about half the civil service, will be transferred to two semi-state bodies: An Bord Post and An Bord Telecom.

Most people see this as the first step to the eventual privatisation of the post and telecommunications industry - and for good reasons.

Two of our most successful home-grown capitalists, Michael Smurfit and Fergal Quinn, have been appointed as heads of the new semi-state boards.

They were appointed for one reason - to turn the two services into profit-making businesses and follow the road taken by British Telecom.

The semi-state boards are but the first step in hiving off the profitable areas of these services to the business world.

So why should the threat of privatisation frighten the workers?

It means the handing over of what is now a social service to all people both in the area of employment and services, to a small group of businessmen who will share the profits among themselves and ensure minimum returns to the workers.

Workers' livelihood, health and education is seen only in terms of the needs of the job. Business and the making of profit always comes first in private industry.

The majority of the unions in the Post Office are against going semi-state but despite much rhetoric at Annual Conferences, they have made only very feeble attempts to show their opposition to these moves.

If announcing publicly that you are opposed to going semi-state is all the organised opposition that the unions can muster, then there is no doubt that Michael Smurfit and Fergal Quinn will have an easy job on their hands.

They will approach this task as they have all the others. They will take simple decisions without any recognition of workers' needs, hopes or aspirations. They will be ruthless in their decisions about staffing and services. If there is no money to be made in a particular area, they will eliminate the staff and the service. Their past record leaves us in no doubt about the way they operate.

The fight for Civil Service status has been lost. But to ensure that no attempt at privatisation takes place in the future, workers must organise for the fight that is ahead and not be demoralised by this setback. Demoralisation will only lead to a free run for the likes of Smurfit and Quinn and all they represent.

But let us not be under any illusions about the fight to prevent any attempt at privatisation. It is not a fight to remain employed by this wonderful anti-working-class Coalition.

It is a straightforward fight against an attempt by the state to allow the service to be run for the purpose of lining even further the pockets of the rich of this country.

Spare a penny or smash the whole system

THOSE who dedicate themselves to the work of charity, do so because they see no alternative to the capitalist system. They will tell you it is a rotten system, but it's the only one we have so we may as well grin and bear it, and try to help those less fortunate than ourselves.

Capitalists support charities because it gives them an opportunity to show their kind face and prove to people that they are no always exploiting the masses. Aren't people who are in need entitled to something better than handouts?

No matter how large, organised, professional and world-wide these charities are, they are still in the business of handing out aid to "victims" of society.

If workers had not organised themselves into trade unions, these same charities would today be collecting on behalf of workers, victims of society.

The point is poverty and the neglect of the underprivileged, handicapped and old folk etc is caused by something.

Charities say there is nothing we can do about the cause of the suffering of sections of society not strong enough to fight for their rights, so we should concentrate our efforts on easing the effects of their deprivation.

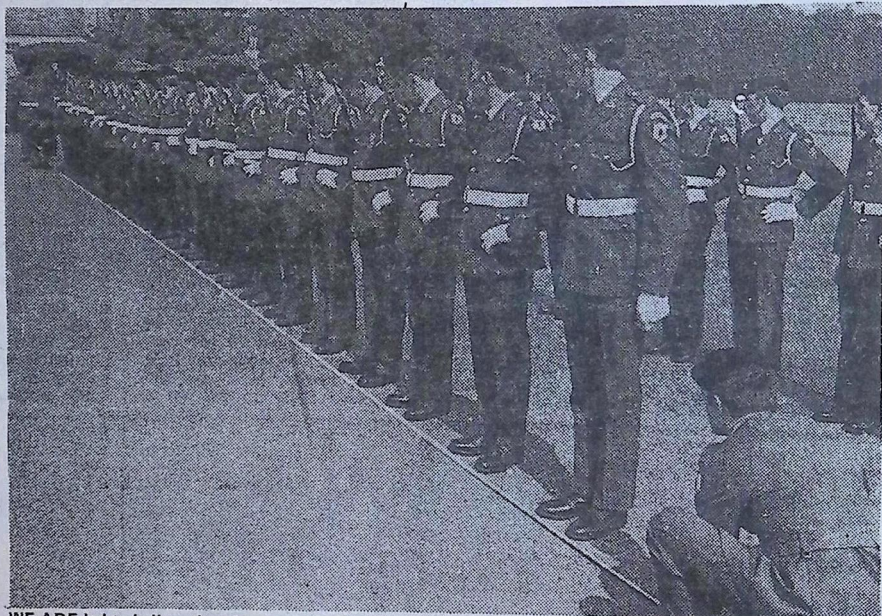
By doing so they consciously or unconsciously align themselves with that section of society - capitalists - who will continue to support charities but will do nothing to eradicate it by the redistribution of wealth which can only be brought about under socialism.

The only society that will eradicate poverty is a human society.

Capitalist society will never be human because it puts profits before people.

- CHARLIE NOWLAN

TOEING THE LINE



WE ARE led to believe that the physical forces of the state, the army and the police are there to protect the country and its people.

But when you see them in practise, you realise that their role is contrary to that of the theory. When workers go out on strike, they are harassed by the police to let scab labour through.

The army breaks strikes regularly, like the bus and oil strikes. These are only examples of how the ruling class will use the forces of the state to stop workers advancing their miserable conditions.

So who really is the army there to protect and who controls it? To answer this question you have to look at the structures of the army

to the elected government.

But soldiers are trained to obey generals, not politicians. If the generals choose to give orders to their soldiers which are at variance to the wishes of the elected government, the government can't countermand these orders. It can only try to persuade the generals to change their minds.

Because military affairs are invariably secret, it is very easy for generals to hide what they are doing from governments they don't like. But the generals in most cases find it convenient to go along with what governments suggest.

But when a government decides to change the run of things and affect the profits of big business, it is a different matter.

Allende, who was elected as a socialist president of Chile in 1972, tried to introduce reforms that would benefit the working class. He was assassinated and the generals used the army to overthrow the government and murder thousands of socialists and trade unionists.

Northern Ireland in 1974 provides a different case. When Right Wing sectarian Loyalists organised a general stoppage of industry, using barricades to stop people going to work, because of power-sharing, British ministers called on the British Army and the RUC to dismantle it.

The senior officers of the army and the RUC said it was inadvisable and refused to move. The power-sharing government was forced to resign. The views of the

senior officers proved more powerful than the British government.

To understand why the generals make their decisions, you have to look at their class background.

The majority of generals and senior officers have gone to the same schools as our politicians, they are related to the owners of big business. They belong to the same posh clubs, mix at the same social functions and more than likely share the same ideas.

So in reality, the army is there to defend capitalism and big business. The reformists in the Labour Party and Workers Party who argue that they can change things if they get elected should take a hard look at Chile.

Because the generals here will more than likely follow what the generals in Chile did rather than obey orders that would take economic power away from their friends in big business.

The state is structured to stop itself being reformed.

Only a revolution that can smash the state and replace it with a workers state is possible, as we have seen in Russia in 1917 when the rank-and-file in the army turned the guns on the generals, and supported the workers revolution.

But there are still lessons to learn, like in Poland when the rank-and-file police were on strike. If the workers from the factories had supported that strike, they could convince rank-and-file police and army to join them and support Solidarity.

Let us hope these lessons will be learned when the workers start to move, and revolution becomes possible. - PADDY CARROLL

Record set straight

Dear Friends, A couple of mistakes seem to have slipped into my article "1933-The Darkest Days" (Worker, May/June) during editing.

Almost at the end the article says: "By 1933 the KPD had begun to change direction. Thalheimer - its leader - wrote to the SPD asking for a meeting to discuss an immediate general strike."

First of all the KPD didn't direction but stuck to its doctrine of social-fascism.

Secondly, August Thalheimer wasn't the leader of the KPD but one of the leaders of the KPO (Communist Party Opposition). This group split from the KPD in 1928 over the ultra-left turn of the KPD in 1927. There was a consolidation of the Stalin-faction within the KPD and the founding of "Red Unions". The KPO still exists in Germany as the "Gruppe Arbeiterpolitik".

Thirdly August Thalheimer did not only invite the SPD to talk about a general strike. The KPO tried to unite the labour movement in Germany and that meant to invite the SPD, the unions and the KPD.

Wolfgang König, Wilsdorf, West Germany. Apologies for sloppy editing - ed.

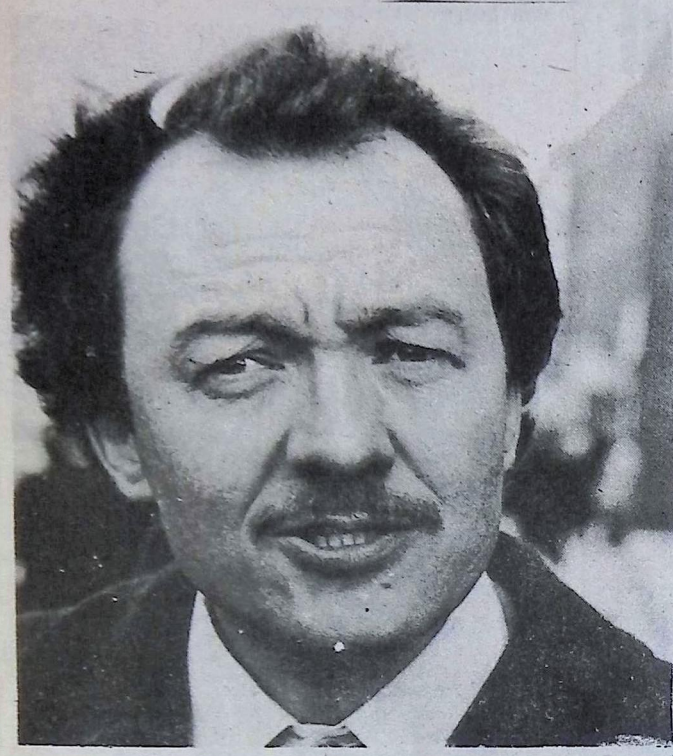
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Whatever happened to the British Labour Left?



Ken Livingstone and Tony Benn

ANOTHER four years of Maggie Thatcher. That should be enough to send a shudder down the spine of socialists on both sides of the Irish sea.

But how did she win such a landslide with three million unemployed?

What has happened to the great heroes of the Labour Left — Tony Benn and "Red" Ken Livingstone?

KIERAN ALLEN looks at some of the reasons why the Tories are riding high.

THE HOUSE of Commons may be packed with rabid Tories, but that does not indicate massive support for Thatcher. In the last election she actually dropped votes slightly and took 44% of the total poll. The real problem was the collapse of the Labour Party.

The British Labour Party has always promised to make life a little better for the working class. Yet every Labour Government left office by making life a little worse. The Tories quoted one dramatic fact during the election campaign: every Labour government left office with the dole queues longer than when they entered.

The policy of Labour has little to do with socialism. It takes its model from Milton Keynes rather than Karl Marx. Keynes accepted the Marxist view that capitalism, if left to its own devices, would continually slide between boom and slump. But he believed that he had found a solution. Namely, if money was pumped into an economy during a slump, workers could buy more, unemployment would drop, more workers could buy more and eventually the bosses would regain the confidence to invest. The process could be started by borrowing or even printing money.

Keynesianism could work up to a point while capitalism on a world scale was booming. But it cannot tackle the basic problem of a declining rate of profit. In a world slump it simply opens the way for a flood of imports and the flight of native capital to more profitable areas. In France, the policy of the Mitterand government has led to disaster.

Basing itself on such policies, the Labour Party could give no coherent answers to the crisis. The bumbling, long-windedness of Michael Foot was not just a personal failure — it reflected exactly the character of a party with a hopeless message. Labour promised to rid Britain of Cruise Missiles — but defended membership of NATO. Labour attacked Thatcher's bloodlust on the Falklands — but they themselves wholeheartedly supported the same war. Labour opposed the cuts in the health service — but in government Labour had implemented cuts. Labour's ties to the system contradicted their own windy rhetoric at every turn.

The Labour Party is only one side of the picture. The British working class has taken a hammering over the last few years. Take a simple example. In the late sixties the shop floor organisation in the car factories was powerful. Shop

stewards had won the principle of "mutuality" on issues such as piecework and the spread of the conveyor belt. Namely, that management could make no changes that had not been negotiated with the stewards.

Throughout British Leyland or Ford that no longer exists. Management has regained full control. Militant stewards such as Derek Robinson or Alan Thornett have been shoved out of the door. More stewards are operating as full-time convenors — representing the whole factory and subject to no-one.

Workers have suffered dramatic defeats in many industries.

The Labour party does not operate on the shop floor. It organises through campaigns geared to the ballot box. Elections are everything — working class struggle is of importance only as a supplement to the vote. The party was therefore not subject, or aware of the mood of defeat in the class.

Quite the reverse. Membership began to increase since 1975. Those that flocked to the party came from the many single-issue campaigns that were grinding to a halt — from women's, black and gay movements — and even from the Irish support groups. Unfortunately, they were also followed by sections of the erstwhile revolutionary left.

That coalition was the basis of the Benn bandwagon. Wonderful resolutions were passed inside the party. Reselection of MPs and other constitutional reforms were all meant to ensure that the next Labour government would be under rank and file control.

But Labour was moving right even before it got a whiff of government. Social Democratic parties set out to represent the class. When the class is not fighting, it must represent the conservative ideas that dominate. The Benn balloon crushed when the hot-house atmosphere of the Labour branch came into conflict with the outside world. The only contact was through the ballot box. The pressure for unity grew as the election drew nearer. In 1982 Benn refused to challenge for the deputy leadership. In 1983 Benn called for unity behind Foot and Healey.

CHILE FIGHTS

Ten years after the military coup in Chile, the workers are fighting back. Heading the revolt are the miners who produce the copper on which Chile's bankrupt economy depends. Their leader, Rodolfo Sequel was arrested and dragged from his bed by unidentified gunmen.

Tens of thousands have taken to the streets in the last three months. Riots have broken out in Santiago and other cities.

Chile was held up as a model economy for free enterprise in the mid-seventies. The boom was fuelled by a massive rise in imports. The availability of luxury goods increased the social base of

support for Pinochet among the middle classes. 'We thought that an economic miracle was happening' because we could afford French cheeses' said one housewife. However under the surface the country was accumulating massive debts. By 1981 the bubble burst, Pinochet was forced to nationalise the banks in January of this year.

The bitterness of the disappointed middle classes has connected up with a rising workers movement. As a result, the opposition to Pinochet presently displays the character of an all-class alliance. The Christian Democratic Party which supported the coup, has been rehabilitated. The Americans are therefore opening the option

of a fall back to a Christian Democrat /Army government if Pinochet falls.

The Chilean experience is tremendously important for the revolutionary movement across the world. The junta came to power because of the failure of the attempt to win socialism through parliament. Allende and the Popular Front government preferred to appease the generals rather than overthrow the ruling class. It was a strategy that led to disaster.

Now however the working class are back on the stage. No matter the level of defeat, of repression, the class that is 'the gravedigger of capitalism' can never be enslaved.

In the next issue of The Worker we carry a special

feature on the 10th anniversary of the Chilean coup on September 11th 1973. The SWM will also be hosting a speaking tour in September by a Chilean revolutionary on the lessons from the past and the need for solidarity today.

THE SWM are organising a series of meetings on Chile for the tenth anniversary of the coup there. The meetings will be held in Dublin, Waterford, Cork, Dundalk and Belfast between the 12th and 16th September.



Copper Workers protesting in Santiago

Must we resist?

"When the British eventually leave India they must leave as friends." So said Gandhi according to the film biography of his life by peace-loving RAF enthusiast Richard Attenborough. But I expect it was true enough.

Leaving the cinema, one was in no doubt that most people came away spiritually uplifted for the evening by the politics of peace and love. One wonders if that feeling would have lasted until next morning if we'd been watching it in West Belfast with the possibility that the

RUC or the British Army might give your front door a friendly heave during the night.

Anyway, I write not to throw salt on the immortal memory of one of the most pacifist demagogues of this century but simply to say why we do not accept that you can change the world or even your little bit of it on the basis of the moral superiority of your aims or its self-righteous purity of your methods.

Gandhi did not change the face of India, nor did he kick out the British. The British ruling class gave up India able to rest easy in their beds that

their interests were securely protected by the new Indian ruling class they had left behind them.

The creeping pacifism that is becoming very much part of the ideological currency of groups like CND will not stop the bomb.

On July 8 they penned us into a corral outside the American Embassy to quietly express our moral indignation at U.S. militarism.

On July 16 they asked us to link arms across Dublin for peace. Unlucky for you if you were the ones shaking the hands of Russian and American Ambassadors.

But worse than that they built nothing that at the end of the day could stop the bomb.

Peace rallies in Moscow and

New York don't take one war-head out of the arsenals. Only the mass movement of the organised working class seizing control of society both East and West can do that.

And it is worth saying that no socialist believes that that can come about without at some stage taking up arms. Not as a substitute for the activity of the working class and not by some small para-military organisation expounding left rhetoric.

Workers will take up arms because every historical example from the Paris Commune to Chile of even modest movement towards workers power has been met by bloody reaction from our rulers.

Power is NOT relinquished without a fight.

What we stand for

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

The system under which we live, capitalism, is based on production for profit and not for human need. It is a system that leads to poverty and war, racial and sexual oppression.

Only the working class can destroy capitalism 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

There is no parliamentary road to socialism as the left in the U.K. believe. The system cannot be changed by piecemeal-reform. The state machinery—the courts, parliament, the police and army—are used to maintain the dominance of the ruling class. The real power lies in the boardrooms of big business.

We stand for a workers revolution which produces a different and more democratic society—one based on councils of delegates from workplaces and localities who are democratically elected and subject to recall at any time.

NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW

That kind of socialism does not exist anywhere today. Workers have no control over countries like Russia, China or Poland. They are exploited by a state capitalist class. A workers revolution is required in those countries too.

A SOCIALIST ANSWER TO THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The six county Orange State is propped up by British Imperialism. By bribing loyalist workers in the past with privileges in, for example, housing and jobs, Protestant workers have come to see their interests as being served by the British-backed Unionist boss class. This divides the working class and delivers a section of the workers as allies of Imperialism. The Northern state is sectarian in essence and must be smashed.

The slow task of building working class unity against Imperialism must be begun.

However Imperialism must be fought in the here and now and we support all forces engaged in that struggle regardless of our difference of programme.

We stand for: Immediate withdrawal of the British Army. Political Status Now.

The Disbandment of the RUC and the UDR.

In the South, the bosses are junior partners with other European and American bosses in world capitalism. The main enemy is the boss at home. Nationalism or a united capitalist Ireland offers nothing to workers. The only republic worth fighting for is a workers republic.

WOMEN'S LIBERATION

We believe that only through socialism can women achieve full emancipation and that their struggle is part of the whole class struggle for socialism.

FOR A RANK AND FILE MOVEMENT

The main area of political action for socialists is the mass organisation of the working class, particularly the trade unions. We fight for the independence of the unions from state interference, democratic control of all union affairs and the election of all union officials.

We oppose all anti-union legislation and all forms of national wage understandings and wage restraint. We oppose all redundancies. We say: Occupy to demand Nationalisation under workers control. Fight for a 35 hour week. We support the building of a rank and file movement which draws together militant trade unionists to oppose the class collaboration of the union leaders.

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS PARTY

The SWM is a democratic centralist organisation open to all those who accept its principles and objectives. The struggle for a workers republic in Ireland is inseparable from the international struggle. The SWM fights to build a mass party of the working class as part of a revolutionary international of working class parties.

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CLASS AND THE

Church opposed women's rights

THE CHURCH hierarchy "is the final arbiter of right and wrong even in political matters." That was the late lamented Bishop of Cork Dr. Lucey speaking in 1950. They meant it. Ever since the establishment of the Free State, the Bishops have tried to mold the law to suit the rich. They have shown a vicious hatred of women's rights and freer sexuality. If this referendum is about anything else, it is about telling them that we want them off our backs.

In the 1920s, the Bishops launched a campaign against moral depravity. They had lost much of their influence by supporting the Treatyites during the Civil War and now sour to regain it. By moral depravity they principally meant dancing. The Archbishop of Tuam claimed that:

"Old Irish dances have been discarded for foreign importations which are themselves not so much rhythm as low sensuality. The actual hours of sleep are next turned into hours of debasing pleasure."

Bishop Doherty suggested that if girls are not in "at the hours appointed, lay the lash upon their back." Brian McMahon, the Kerry writer, recalls seeing wooden road side dance platforms burnt by the curates. The result of the Bishops' campaign was the Public Dance Halls Act of 1935 which required licences from a District Judge before a dance could be organised

In the twenties and thirties a string of laws followed like rosary beads to assert Catholic Power. Films were censored from 1923; information supporting the use of contraception was banned in 1924. Funnily enough, they didn't bother to ban the sale of contraceptives until 1935. The culmination of the lot was the constitution of 1937.

Drawn up in consultation with various Catholic groups, it asserted the right to private property as a "natural right", it banned divorce, and recognised the "special position of the Holy Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church. This constitution for all the nation—North and South—was dedicated to the Holy Trinity. It is this same constitution which SPUC and Bishops want to amend today to make it even more appropriate for "a Catholic Nation".

The thirties also saw a strong flirtation with Fascism. The Church organised support for Franco. They advocated "vocational organisations" where workers and bosses would co-operate—rather than class-based organisations like trade unions. They set up

organisations like the Irish Christian Front which led the attack on the headquarters of the Communist Party.

In 1937, the weak-kneed Labour Party decided that a little verbal left wing rhetoric would do no harm. They stated that their aim was "a Workers Republic." All hell broke loose. The INTO and the Bishops went on the attack. The Labour Party collapsed and stated that it worked for "a Republican form of Government."

The fanatical anti-communism led the Jesuits to set up the Catholic Workers College in 1948. It still operates today. The "Catholic Standard" mounted a campaign to accuse the Labour Party and the unions of being infiltrated by "Communists". Their campaign led to a split in the unions in 1950s. In 1948, Archbishop McQuaid appealed on Radio Eireann for funds to keep the Communists out of power in Italy.

However, it was on the Mother and Child Scheme of 1951 that the Church distinguished itself. Noel Browne, the then Minister of Health was no radical. He stated that he was always prepared to obey the hierarchy. But he was influenced by the emergence of the National Health Service in Britain. He introduced a scheme for free, non means-tested health care for Mothers and Children up to the age of 16. The scheme would be mainly administered through the dispensary system.

The Bishops attacked it on two basic grounds. They claimed that medical care for mothers could include advice on contraception. Noel Browne was prepared to concede to them on that. But the Bishops went further. They were against the whole idea of a public health service. They argued that the state by providing such a service was taking responsibility away from parents; they openly supported the doctors who were against it on grounds of financial greed. Instead of a public health service, the Church advocated "more maternity benefits and tax relief for larger families."

On every matter, small and large, the power of the Church could be felt. Take the simple matter of the Sunday pint. In rural areas it was only available to "travelers". The Church wanted to keep it that way. When the publicans wanted the laws liberalised, they came up against Father Mathew Union of Total Abstinence Priests—the FMUTAP. The same FMUTAP demanded to know were the publicans

CARTOON BY JAKKI McKENNA



going to accept the Bishops' ruling or not. In 1947 the publicans union committed hari-kari and spoke out against Sunday opening. Even on the simple matter of adoption, the Church moved to create a little more misery. A move to legalise adoption was delayed until 1953. The reason was the Protestants might be able to adopt young "illegitimate" Catholic babies. When the law was introduced it specified that the adopting parents had to have the same religion as the "illegitimate" mother.

The mothers themselves suffered a worse fate. It is useful to remember just how skin deep in the Church runs commitment to the "unmarried mother." In the fifties there was no counselling or "caring institutions". Unmarried mothers were sent to the Magdalen Laundries to work as unpaid slaves for the religious orders.

Throughout its history the Church hierarchy has been open in its support for the wealthy. It has promulgated a special hatred for women's rights almost as a compensation for the poverty that it has supported. It has always had a different interest to its flock.

Out now!

'A New World for Women—the Socialist Case for Abortion.' Published by the Socialist Workers Movement, 20p+20p post from: SWM 41 Herberton Park, Rialto, Dublin 8.

Abor

PEOPLE often wonder what we mean when we say that we mean when we say that free abortion on demand is a class issue. Surely, they say, it's a matter of personal conscience, a private decision of the woman. Of course, for the individual woman, it's too. But if that were all it then there would be no opposition to abortion from church or state.

Abortion is a class issue because it raises that crucial political question: 'Who decides, who controls?' We have seen a great change in recent years in attitudes to women and women's rights. Increased sexual freedom, greater participation in life outside the home, more education, better standards of living—all these have meant that women want to be able to control their lives.

But if women are to control their lives, decide what job to do, where and how to live, they must be able to decide if and when to have children. This means easy access to legal and safe contraception free on the health service and, when contraception fails, free abortion on demand.

No woman takes abortion lightly. But given the choice

CLASS AND THE POLITIC

Church opposed women's rights

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Bishop Doherty suggested that if girls are not in "at the hours appointed, lay the lash upon their back." Brian McMahon, the Kerry writer, recalls seeing wooden road side dance platforms burnt by the curates. The result of the Bishops' campaign was the Public Dance Halls Act of 1935 which required licences from a District Judge before a dance could be organised

In the twenties and thirties a string of laws followed like rosary beads to assert Catholic Power. Films were censored from 1923; information supporting the use of contraception was banned in 1924. Funnily enough, they didn't bother to ban the sale of contraceptives until 1935. The culmination of the lot was the constitution of 1937.

Drawn up in consultation with various Catholic groups, it asserted the right to private property as a "natural right", it banned divorce, and recognised the "special position of the Holy Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church. This constitution for all the nation - North and South - was dedicated to the Holy Trinity. It is this same constitution which SPUC and Bishops want to amend today to make it even more appropriate for "a Catholic Nation".

The thirties also saw a strong flirtation with Fascism. The Church organised support for Franco. They advocated "vocational organisations" where workers and bosses would co-operate - rather than class-based organisations like trade unions. They set up

organisations like the Irish Christian Front which led the attack on the headquarters of the Communist Party.

In 1937, the weak-kneed Labour Party decided that a little verbal left wing rhetoric would do no harm. They stated that their aim was "a Workers Republic." All hell broke loose. The INTO and the Bishops went on the attack. The Labour Party collapsed and stated that it worked for "a Republican form of Government."

The fanatical anti-communism led the Jesuits to set up the Catholic Workers College in 1948. It still operates today. The "Catholic Standard" mounted a campaign to accuse the Labour Party and the unions of being infiltrated by "Communists". Their campaign led to a split in the unions in 1950s. In 1948, Archbishop McQuaid appealed on Radio Eireann for funds to keep the Communists out of power in Italy.

However, it was on the Mother and Child Scheme of 1951 that the Church distinguished itself. Noel Browne, the then Minister of Health was no radical. He stated that he was always prepared to obey the hierarchy. But he was influenced by the emergence of the National Health Service in Britain. He introduced a scheme for free, non means-tested health care for Mothers and Children up to the age of 16. The scheme would be mainly administered through the dispensary system.

The Bishops attacked it on two basic grounds. They claimed that medical care for mothers could include advice on contraception. Noel Browne was prepared to concede to them on that. But the Bishops went further. They were against the whole idea of a public health service. They argued that the state by providing such a service was taking responsibility away from parents; they openly supported the doctors who were against it on grounds of financial greed. Instead of a public health service, the Church advocated "more maternity benefits and tax relief for larger families."

On every matter, small and large, the power of the Church could be felt. Take the simple matter of the Sunday pint. In rural areas it was only available to "travelers". The Church wanted to keep it that way. When the publicans wanted the laws liberalised, they came up against Father Mathew Union of Total Abstaining Priests - the FMUTAP. The same FMUTAP demanded to know were the publicans

CARTOON BY JAKKI McKENNA



going to accept the Bishops' ruling or not. In 1947 the publicans union committed hari-kari and spoke out against Sunday opening. Even on the simple matter of adoption, the Church moved to create a little more misery. A move to legalise adoption was delayed until 1953. The reason was the Protestants might be able to adopt young "illegitimate" Catholic babies. When the law was introduced it specified that the adopting parents had to have the same religion as the "illegitimate" mother.

The mothers themselves suffered a worse fate. It is useful to remember just how skin deep in the Church runs commitment to the "unmarried mother." In the fifties there was no counselling or "caring institutions". Unmarried mothers were sent to the Magdalen Laundries to work as unpaid skivies for the religious orders.

Throughout its history the Church hierarchy has been open in its support for the wealthy. It has promulgated a special hatred for women's rights almost as a compensation for the poverty that it has supported. It has always had a different interest to its flock.

Out now!

'A New World for Women - the Socialist Case for Abortion.' Published by the Socialist Workers Movement, 20p+20p post from: SWM 41 Herberton Park, Rialto, Dublin 8.

Abortion - a class

PEOPLE often wonder what we mean when we say that free abortion on demand is a class issue. Surely, they say, it's a matter of personal conscience, a private decision for the woman. Of course, for the individual woman, it's that too. But if that were all it is, then there would be no opposition to abortion from church or state.

Abortion is a class issue because it raises that crucial political question: 'Who decides, who controls?' We've had a great change in recent years in attitudes to women and women's rights. Increased sexual freedom, greater participation in life outside the home, more education, better standards of living - all these have meant that women want to be able to control their lives.

But if women are to control their lives, decide what job to do, where and how to live, they must be able to decide if and when to have children. This means easy access to legal and safe contraception free on the health service and, when contraception fails, free abortion on demand.

No woman takes abortion lightly. But given the choice

between bearing an unwanted child and abortion, many women choose abortion. Women are never happy to have to make such decisions. But they make them because it is their lives they are trying to control. And control of fertility is crucial to the emancipation of women. It smashes the idea that women are just breeding machines, with no life outside the family, and raises the question of a woman's right to work.

And the questions of contraception and abortion are very much tied in with women's right to work. During the 60s and 70s when capitalism was booming and unemployment was low, women were encouraged to go out to work. Now with capitalism in deep crisis, we are hearing again that old refrain 'a woman's place is in the home'. Any hope of getting free nursery facilities and pre-school play groups is gone. The possibility of winning decent contraceptive facilities and free, legal abortion here is rapidly fading as women are being forced out of the workforce and back into the home. If, however, contraception and abortion were freely available it would

be a lot more difficult to deny women the right to work. The other way in which we can clearly see that abortion is a class issue is when it comes down to straight cash. Before it was possible for Irish women to get abortions easily in England, they had to get illegal ones here in Ireland.

They came in two varieties - safe but expensive or dangerous but cheap: the richer you were, the more you could pay, the better the treatment. Rich women went to private nursing homes while working class women had to rely on the local midwife and were in danger of bleeding to death.

Money still provides an escape route. Women with money can slip off to England for an abortion with very little hassle. Working class women have to face the panic of days, or even weeks, of getting £200-£300 together fast enough to go to England for an abortion. But then, the boss class who keep abortion illegal here don't know, or care, about the problems, the lives or the needs of working class women.

And when it comes down to it, it's obvious why they

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POLITICS OF ABORTION



Compiled by Goretta Horgan and Marnie Holborow

Abortion - a class issue

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And when it comes down to it, it's obvious why they

don't care. Free contraception and abortion on demand the ability of women to control their bodies - goes against the interests of the boss class.

Because if women were to

win the fight for control over their bodies, the next thing you know they, and the whole of the working class, would be extending that struggle to control over all aspects of their lives.

Nurses say No to Amendment

MAGGIE BLAKE has been involved in forming Nurses Against the Amendment in Cork. She spoke to The Worker about why she is fighting this referendum.

The 'pro-life' campaign held a press conference in Cork recently and presented a petition claiming to have 760 nurses signatures in support of the amendment. In fact, half were not nurses at all - but general hospital workers. The Southern Health Board has allowed them the facilities to gather their petition.

We decided to do something about it. You must understand that it is very difficult for student nurses and temporary nurses to stand up and oppose the referendum

in church run hospitals. But a few of us leafleted the hospitals and advertised a public meeting.

We know we can win support. Nurses know that this absurd referendum will endanger medical practice. But they have to be encouraged to stand up and say so.

Also, some of us older nurses worked in England before the 1967 Act legalised abortion. We saw the effects of backstreet abortions. You know, many people feel that if abortion is illegal it doesn't exist. It's simply not true. Women turn to backstreet abortion. Many died from infections. And that happened in Ireland too. Now we just export our abortions.

What happens after Sept 7?

The Amendment move is just the last piece in the bleak picture already confronting Irish women.

Outlawed divorce, unavailable contraception and no child care facilities is a picture that pushes women into motherhood and makes them individually responsible for it.

That's at least how the ruling Irish orders would like it to be. Schools, churches and hospitals try to make sure that it is. But, despite their efforts, the picture is not half as uniform as they would like. In spite of everything contraception is far more widely used than the law allows.

In spite of everything ten Irish women go to England every day for abortions.

In spite of everything young working class women are demanding the right to a job and when they have one, organising themselves into unions and fighting for better wages.

And in spite of everything, a good section of the votes on September 7 will vote "No".

All these facts are part of a general change that has taken place in Ireland, and quite dramatically among working class women. After the beginning of the expansion of jobs in Ireland in the sixties, working class women have begun to be in a position to refuse the exclusive home role of mother and have looked to the right to a job and have begun to see themselves as workers.

The right wing and the ruling class have attempted to stop that trend with the abortion amendment. The supporters of that move - it should not be forgotten now - were not only Oliver J Flanagan or Alice Glenn. They were also Fitzgerald and Nuala Fennell who now, with such principle, oppose the amendment.

Those fighting this referendum have to be particularly hard on those Fine Gael liberals. They say they are anti-abortion and anti-amendment. Yet they are also the cowardly hypocrites who are responsible for opening the door to SPUC.

Fine Gael liberals may pretend a concern for women's rights. Yet the cuts they are now pushing through make women more responsible for individually looking after kids, for nursing the sick at home. The attacks on the social services do as much to worsen the position of women as the amendment itself. The Anti-Amendment Campaign should not be used to refurbish the tarnished image of Fitzgerald.

For socialists, the fight against the referendum is part of the battle of ideas inside the working class movement itself.

IT WAS Karl Marx that said that the way workers voted was a gauge to their political maturity. And in many ways it is the same for the approaching amendment vote.

If the amendment is resoundingly won, the majority of voters - the working class - have agreed to the Church controlling their ideas. Clearly a "Yes" vote would be the gauge of a divided working class - between men and women - and a very demoralised one.

If on the other hand, there is a high "No" vote, Irish workers will have squarely told the Church and Politician where to get off and given confidence to the struggle for women's rights. It would be a major political victory.

However, the vote is only one - indeed small - part of the overall picture. The pro-Amendment lobby has a good deal of the ruling ideas and institutions on its side, and they could hardly be swept aside by a mere referendum.

Equally, the idea that proclaims a woman's status to be the same as a fertilised egg, is not just an opinion that several people happen to hold. Rather it is part of the ruling ideas that, in various ways, underpin the system as we know it. Here, it divides people by saying that women are inferior, or "equal to the unborn", and, by this division props up the order in society - capitalism.

Voting alone won't rid us of these ideas. It is only the struggle together of men and women workers that will rid us of the myth of the inferior status of women. So the fight against the amendment is only part of that fight against the ruling order. It will not stop on polling day whatever the result. It goes on wherever women fight back against the ruling ideas of them. In KC Confectionary shops fifteen women struck for a living wage and the right to be in a union. For those of us opposing the amendment, they are an example of what fighting women's oppression is. For on the picket line, defying their boss and claiming their right to work not for pin money but for "Wages", they are flying in the face of the "inferior women" that the pro-amenders want to label them.

And it will be the KC strikers and others that will lead consistently the struggle against women's oppression.

BOOKS THAT CHANGED MY MIND

Labour in Irish History

JAMES CONNOLLY steeped himself in the writings of Karl Marx and as an active socialist campaigner adapted those ideas to the Irish situation.

Connolly rode the crest of a wave of Irish Nationalist upsurge and felt compelled to explain the reasons for its strength in socialist terms. Thus he produced "Labour in Irish History".

It is very much a book of its time, examining all the popular ideas on the different stages of Irish history. And so he looks at the Peasant Rebellions, The United Irishmen, Robert Emmet, the Young Irelanders and Daniel O'Connell with a view to countering all the bourgeois nationalist hog-wash then current in interpreting those events movements and personalities.

However, Connolly himself states in Chapter xvi that "this book does not aspire to be a history of labour in Ireland, it is rather a record of Labour in Irish History."

He succeeds, however, in proving that history is not some disjointed series of events, but instead a history of class struggle disguised as all sorts of other things.

In Ireland, the class struggle operated through a whole nation that was oppressed. The value of "Labour in Irish History" is that it shows that there was not simply an 800 year war between the Irish nation and England. There was rather, different classes in that nation who were more willing to fight than others.

Connolly argued: "the shifting of economic and political forces which accompanies the development of the system of capitalist society leads inevitably to the increasing conservation of the non-working class element and to the revolutionary vigour and power of the working class."

He then arrived at the central argument of the book: "Only the Irish working class remain as the incorruptible inheritors of the fight for freedom in Ireland."

Connolly's class analysis of Irish history is shown in his treatment of the Irish Volunteers. A volunteer army founded to back up the demands of Grattan's Parliament, they had elected aristocrats as officers who did not want anything more than the granting of Free Trade to help Irish business along. When the Volunteers went further and demanded popular representation in parliament, that was too much. They were condemned by Grattan himself in the Irish Parliament in College Green as "an armed rabble".

Connolly points out that the volunteers were incredibly powerful when they hung "free trade or else!" on their canon, but on the prompting of officers threw away the opportunity to demand an Irish Republic. "The volunteers surrendered without a blow" Connolly says. The aristocrats needed the protection of the English garrison. They wanted free trade—but they wanted more the bayonets of the British Army in their protection.

At the end Connolly concluded: "the whole age-long fight of the Irish people against the oppressors resolves itself in the last analysis into a fight for mastery of the means of life, the sources of production."

His last sentence is "that the pressure of a common exploitation can make enthusiastic rebels out of a Protestant working class, earnest champions of civil and religious liberty out of Catholics and out of both a united social democracy. —JIM BLAKE.



KEVIN KELLEY is an American journalist currently working for the New York Guardian who has gone to great lengths to assemble a well-researched, speedy narrative of the struggle to end British rule in Ireland.

The current struggle is well documented as is the historical details, especially the 1916-22 period.

Before we comment on his conclusions, it must be stressed that Kelley is a journalist who knows his history. There are, however, plenty of good journalists about. What is missing right from the very first chapter is any real class analysis of Irish history or indeed the present situation in the North.

There are of course two ways of viewing history. The school-teacher in the main teaches bourgeois history. That is to say lots and lots of facts but with no sound material reason why events take place.

"The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggle" said Marx. We have to strip away the "surface facts" and get right down to what the major classes in society were fighting for and for what reason. If we do not we are left with millions of "facts of history" remaining useless to any real understanding.

Kevin Kelley's book on Ireland and the IRA suffers greatly from a view of history which is strongly rooted in the bourgeois tradition. Great men and secret organisations make history not the struggle of classes who battle for social, economic and political control.

Kelley sees the struggle to "get the Brits out" as one long struggle by the Irish people for 700 years. As he says at the beginning of the book, he makes no apologies for this — he is partisan to the Republican cause.

There is of course nothing wrong with being partisan and firmly anti-imperialist. What does

In defence of politics

by KEVIN WINGFIELD

IT WASN'T so long ago that Western intellectuals proclaimed the "end of ideology." All the classes of society could live together in relative harmony; class struggle was a thing of the past. These ideas found an echo in the "non-political" trade unionism of workers. It was thought to be possible to secure an amelioration of workers living conditions — a better share of abundance — by striking a better bargain with the employers. Workers in most parts of the developed world were very important people — demand outstripped supply — and they could, on the basis of sectional organisation, make gains often with no more than the threat of a strike.

What made these ideas and actions plausible? Unquestionably it was the unprecedented long post war boom. Nearly three decades of sustained rapid expansion of world economy was sufficient to raise the promise of accommodating nearly everybody's aspirations. Of course the process was uneven. And with the eating grew the appetite. American city blacks were more aware of their poverty amid the abundance of U.S. consumerism. Women could raise their eyes above a horizon of domestic drudgery. Gays expected an "end of ideology" to mean an "end of prurient prejudice. The politics of the "movements" was born. It seemed every group was refining and defining its own particular claims — as against everyone else's — on the rich coffers of capitalism. The idea of class took a battering and business unionism seemed OK while business was good.

In Ireland the effects of the boom were slow to appear. It was not until the sixties that the Southern economy really began to share in the world expansion with the consequent eclipse of De Valera's schoolmaster vision of frugal self-sufficiency. In the North, lapping waves of aspiration exploded into civil rights agitation in the late sixties of which the Republicans were the residual legatees.

Classless history for the classroom

'The Long War' by Kevin Kelley, published by Brandon Press

become frustrating is the lack of any real class analysis of Irish history and why Republicanism and other nationalist methods of struggle have failed to achieve the objective. The majority of the contents of the book could be found on any library shelf although the book is very well researched.

His conclusions on the struggle against imperialism in the six counties brings us no nearer to understanding the struggle. Because Kelley sees the Irish nation as one nation struggling against the London government, he concludes that the best there is around at present is the Republican Movement.

He therefore differs fundamentally from Marxists. In fact he simply uses the Labour Party and the Workers Party to prove the

correctness of the Provos struggle and their methods. No anti-imperialist or socialist organisation could ally themselves with these reformists. At the same time, however, we do not fall into the Kelley nationalist trap.

To begin with, the H Block Campaign was not lost because the front was not broad enough. It was rather the reverse. The nationalist element in the struggle wanted every respectable priest and politician on the bandwagon. Marxists argued that only workers' action could win the struggle.

The Protestant working class do not simply suffer from a "settler psychology" as Kelley maintains. Nor can we write them off as neo-fascist. If Kelley thinks that imperialism can be broken in the North without class struggle and

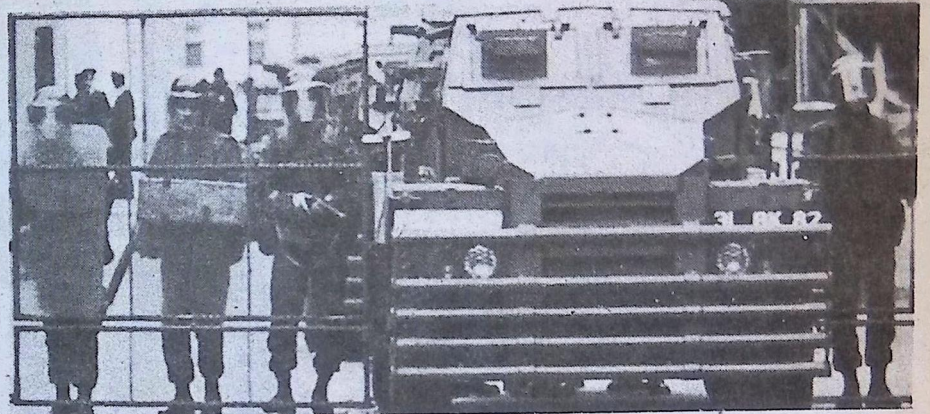
without socialist methods, he is wrong.

Capitalism in Ireland must be challenged if the stalemate in the North is to be broken. The Protestant workers have no interest in a united capitalist Ireland and socialists have no wish to bring them into one.

The only way in the long term that the struggle can be brought forward is for those who think like Kelley to understand that nationalist demands and quotes from Padraig Pearse are not enough.

Workers need to see the struggle in the North not in nationalist terms but as part of their day to day struggle against the Green bosses who have long ago got their freedom.

by DERMOT BYRNE



Class faces class. The system cannot provide any stable reforms just by prodding it. Everywhere the bosses turn on workers. If even just what workers have, they are to hold — then the system must go.

The fragmentation of opposition we noted above, the refusal to be "political", the self-reliant sectionalisms of the past now represent the obstacles to workers regrouping for a fight-back. In short, in order to win the revolt must be conscious. Conscious of the class nature of society and conscious of the class nature of any serious opposition. Conscious of the need to build a class-wide socialist opposition — in a word a Socialist Workers Movement.

How timely then that Alex Callinicos of the British Socialist Workers Party should have written

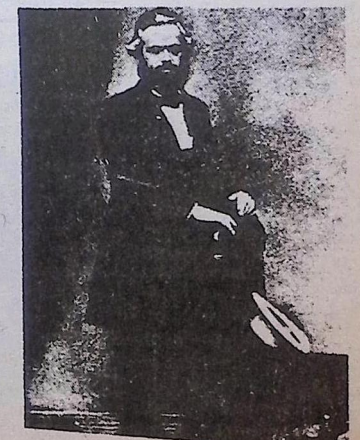
an excellent introduction to the revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx.* In 200-odd readable pages, he examines and explains Marx's contribution to our understanding of history, capitalism and class struggle. "Difficult" topics like Marx's philosophy and economics are not evaded but handled lucidly for those who are prepared to apply some effort. And through it all Marx's emphasis on workers' power illuminates what in the hands of academics is dry as dust but to a revolutionary is green and growing.

If anything I have said above has rung a bell, then buy and read this book.

*The Revolutionary Ideas of Karl Marx by Alex Callinicos, published by Bookmarks at £3.95 (U.K.)

The revolutionary ideas of

MARX



Alex Callinicos

Alex Callinicos' — a member of the British Socialist Workers Party — has just published this book setting the important revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx.

Available at £4.35 (plus 60p p&p) from Socialist Workers Movement, 41, Herberton Pl, Rialto, Dublin 8.

INDUSTRIAL NEWS

KC girls win!

by JAMES McELLINEY
THE RECENT success achieved by the workers of KC Confectionary in their dispute with the management has been very heartening.

It was a classic case of solidarity between the workers and the general public. This solidarity utterly demoralised the management and they had no option but to cave-in.

The victory has lessons for many other workers, the most important being that despite the recession and the consequent boost of confidence employers feel over workers, struggles can still be won with the right commitment and solidarity.

I talked to a shop steward who was involved in the strike and she told me what a bitter struggle it was:

"The girls in the Wexford St. branch were being harassed so we decided to call a one-day strike on the issue of union recognition." Management had refused to recognise the union up to this time — the ATGWU. (The ITGWU had refused the girls admission to their union.)

On June 4 the one-day strike went ahead, and although the shop remained open — staffed by the non-union members — the picket was a great success.

Members of the Socialist Workers Movement joined the picket and she told me they helped a lot: "Many of the girls had never been on a strike before and were not too sure how to deal with it, so the SWM presence was a real confidence-booster."

This development annoyed the management no-end, and when the girls returned to work on Monday, they found themselves locked-out while the shop still remained open.

The pickets were resumed and constant police intimidation followed. She told me they came "three or four times" until union representative Des Bonass, who happened to be on the picket line, had a word with them.

Intimidation came from the management also. "They put curly powder in the ventilation system, so it would blow out at the strikers outside the door." They also put notices in the window claiming that the picketers were from "rent-a-picket". She said the strikers had to make their own placards to counteract this.

"The general public," she told me, "were great, they wished us luck and we thought if this keeps up, we'll win." There was great support too from other workers, among them CIE, making collections, and generally giving the women every encouragement.

At the end of the week, the shop closed. The management said they would negotiate only if the strikers went back. The shop steward told me that this was just not on, as management would forget about negotiations as soon as they went back. However, on the following Wednesday negotiations took place and the management climbed down. The girls were given a five pound wage rise, with more to follow, the union got recognition, and a wage scale was introduced.

She told me: "the strikers were all pleased with the outcome," and that "it was worth all the effort." Certainly, the courage of these girls is not to be doubted.

The success in the dispute underlines the argument that when workers feel isolated and unsupported, their morale quickly dies, but as in this case, where solidarity support and a will to win was shown, the management crumbled.

Public sector SWINDLE!

Agreement has finally been reached on the public sector pay deal. The union leaders say it is the best possible deal going. "An eight per cent increase is excessive but realistic" says John Boland, the Public Service Minister.

But public sector workers will be getting nowhere near 8 per cent. They are being offered a six month pay pause and increase in two phases. From September they will receive a 4.75% and from February 1984 they will receive an additional 3.25% increase.

The union leaders and the government simply add the two figures together and claim an eight per cent increase. But wages will not have gone up by 8% over a year. The 15 month agreement, the pay pause and the phasing of the increase must all be taken into account. On a yearly basis, the increase in pay works out at less than five per cent.

The same applies to the trend-setting ESB deal. Headlines blazed to the effect that the nasty greedy ESB workers had come out on top again with a ten per cent deal. The smaller print, however, stated that on a yearly basis the wage bill of the ESB would increase by five per cent.

The phasing of increases has been a general trend of the 23rd round. It is a carry-over from the days of the National Wage Agreement. So too has been the tendency towards the longer 15-month agreement. Both these features work against the unions and allow management to claim artificially high settlements.

The deal for the public sector will be a massive defeat if accepted. It is way below the inflation rate. Yet confidence throughout the public sector has been shattered. Last year's acceptance by the ICTU of the government's right to tear up and defer an agreed pay deal has shaken the faith of members in the bureaucratic union structures.

The real weakness of public sector trade unionism is the total lack of workplace organisation. The smallest issues go into the procedural meet-grinder and end up at "Conciliation and Arbitration".

If militancy is to be rebuilt two things are required. The socialist arguments against sacrifice, against responsibility for the bosses' crisis must be put loud and clear.

And the task of building on the workplaces rather than in the committee rooms must begin



Clondalkin men to expose welch

ANGRY former Clondalkin Paper Mill employees have begun a campaign of civil disruption to highlight the breaking by the Fitzgerald government of its commitment to re-open the Mills.

Already 200 workers and their families blocked the Naas Road dual carriageway as the first step in a series of actions to bring the Paper Mills issue back into the mind of the public.

This action was followed up by further traffic interruptions including Dublin City Centre.

These moves came as a result of a meeting between Bruton, Minister for Industry and Energy and the ICTU and Action Committee members on June 22. At that meeting the unions and workers' representatives were told that the government would not re-open the Paper Mills as a state

or semi-state body. It would only re-open if taken over by private interests such as the Canadian company currently negotiating with the IDA. This was a complete betrayal of the commitments given on February 8, when the coalition government undertook to purchase the plant and honour the reopening schedule laid down by the Department of Industry under the previous Fianna Fail government.

It must be remembered that the decision to purchase was forced on the Cabinet by the threat of a general strike in the Dublin area. Six action committee members were due for commitment to prison and had been promised full support by the Dublin Council of Trade Unions.

Faced with the possible collapse of the Coalition, the Fine Gael-dominated government agreed to take over the commitments of the previous government.

Last month, Bruton told Congress leaders that they only agreed to buy the mill—not to re-open it!

Since then Congress has called for a meeting with Fitzgerald and urged the workforce not to do anything which might frighten away the Canadians or give the government an excuse not to meet Congress.

The response from the action Committee members has been to give the ICTU time to tackle Fitzgerald, but to achieve maximum publicity for this plight by non-trade-union activities.

Should Fitzgerald confirm Bruton's decision they will be seeking through their individual trade unions and Congress, the blocking of paper by public service employees until such time as the state-owned paper mill is back in production.

Gerry Courtney, Chairperson of the action committee said:

"We have to get the support of the trade union movement. The February 8 agreement was with the leadership representing the entire trade union movement under the umbrella of the Congress. If it is reneged on and the ICTU and the various trade union leaders don't bring the full power of the movement into operation, then there is no future for trade unions in this country."

Paul Billings, Secretary, told the "Worker": "We have done nearly all we can as a group of trade unionists. It looks now as if we will be needing the support of the entire labour movement and the local community to pull us through. Without that support, we can't defeat a government and that is what we are faced with."

— JOHN BYRNE.

CLERY'S Union boss' letter of shame

WORKERS at Clery's stores have been on strike since June 25 looking for better conditions, grading and wages. The strike has its roots in the dissatisfaction which the workers had with the Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks (IUDWC) over the service and conditions of work which the IUDWC had negotiated.

Over 80 per cent of the workers at Clery's joined the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU) and served a claim to bring their wages and conditions up to a decent standard.

Clery's management did every thing in their power to resist by absolutely refusing to recognise the ITGWU. Clery's and all the other department stores have had a very cosy relationship with the IUDWC over the years, wages are below the industrial average and there has not been any industrial action by IUDWC members for over twenty years.

The IUDWC leadership have been happy with this course of events, but in the last few years, the members—despairing of ever changing things—have left in large numbers to join unions that will give them better service.

With members and income falling, the executive—in order to save their own position—has a choice: either give a better service or bring in someone with a good record to save the union.

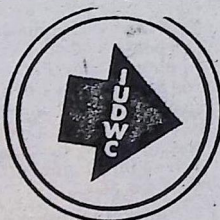
John Mitchell was recruited as the new General Secretary at a reputed salary of £29,000 a year, which makes him one of the highest paid union officials in the country. And that in a union where some of their members bring home less than £40 a week. Mitchell had a good record in the ASTMS and the ESBOA, two white collar unions. He was also involved in the Irish Philipinos Society and the Friends of Palestine Society and was someone who was prepared to support and speak on left-wing platforms.

His role in the Clery's dispute has been absolutely reactionary. He has attempted to block the transfer of Clery's workers to the ITGWU. But, still worse is his

instruction to IUDWC members "not to co-operate in any way with the dispute" and offer to bring them into membership of the IUDWC anyone who is prepared to scab on the strike.

These instructions were sent to everyone in Clery's on a joint management/union staff notice. The IUDWC are working with management to break the strike.

The point has to be made that it is not just John Mitchell that is subject to the types of pressures that force trade union leaders to act against the interests of their members. All trade union officials who are not accountable to their members can act in this way. The issue is not whether John Mitchell is a good official or not, but to begin to fight to make sure that the trade unions are under the control and direction of the ordinary members.



JOHN P. MITCHELL
General Secretary

IRISH UNION OF DISTRIBUTIVE WORKERS & CLERKS
Cavendish House, Cavendish Row, Dublin 1.

All I.U.D.W & C. members are instructed to work normally if the store remains open. They are further instructed not to co-operate in any way with the dispute.

The I.U.D.W. & C. will extend its protection to all staff members who complete application forms before the commencement of the dispute.

Yours fraternally,
John P. Mitchell
John P. Mitchell,
General Secretary.

Part of a letter sent by John Mitchell to Clery's workers

Tel. 746321/2/3

THE WORKER

Paper of the Socialist Workers Movement

Tories Belfast headache

The Tories may have won the British general election with a landslide, but one area stands out as a very black spot. In Northern Ireland a significant minority of the Catholic population have voted for Sinn Fein—the political wing of the IRA.

They did so despite the repeated warnings from the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. They did so in a manner that left the British media with no explanation of this strange aberration in a Western European democracy.

They cannot claim that the emotional aftermath of the hunger strike led otherwise moderate people to take leave of their senses. The issues in the election were elegantly simple—a choice between the constitutional nationalism of the SDLP or the armed struggle of the IRA.

A few figures will bear out the extent of the Provos' achievement. Last year in the Assembly election they polled 35 percent of the nationalist vote compared to the SDLP's 65 percent. This time they set a target of 90,000 votes. They surpassed their target by 13,000 and got 43 percent of the nationalist vote, to the SDLP's 57 percent.

The Catholic population constitute one third of Northern Ireland's population. The SDLP polled 18½ percent of the total vote. The Provos received 13½ percent. In the mid-seventies the SDLP were getting 25 percent of the total vote. The decline of the SDLP can clearly be seen from such figures.

The vote for the Provos was won without any diminution of the armed struggle. The shooting of soldiers and the bombing of RUC barracks continued right up to polling day. It would be difficult to point to other examples of guerrilla armies who have managed so successfully to combine the 'ballot paper and the Armalite'.

Why do the mass of ordinary Catholics disregard all advice from the Pope downwards and vote for 'the men of violence'? The answer is relatively simple.

The Northern state is and always was a prison of sectarianism and unemployment. It is totally unreformable and moreover everyone is aware of that fact.

The deaths of the hunger strikers brought that home in a direct and vivid way. The whole of the Catholic community demanded

their release. The British strategy of isolating republican militants by labelling them criminals has totally backfired as had every British attempt to reform or impose a solution on the North. Yet there was not the slightest concession from Thatcher. It became clear that it wasn't just the Provos who were being criminalised but the whole nationalist population.

Something else had developed during the hunger strike. Ever since the SDLP's emergence from the civil rights movement in the early seventies, the British ruling class looked to it as the power broker inside the Catholic community.

In return for various concessions, the SDLP was in a position to call for an end to militancy. Thus, during the period of the power-sharing régime the SDLP managed to get the mass rent and rate strike called off and in fact opened the way for the Payments of Debts Act. However during the hunger strike the SDLP was in no position to deliver any moderation.

Bourgeois parties, particularly those that function in an oppressed ghetto, need a set of open institutions wherein they can parade their bargaining skills. Without such in-



Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams

stitutions they wither at the roots. Their leaders no longer peer out from the news media with statements. They lose confidence in their own ability. That is what happened to the SDLP.

Having proved next to useless for the British ruling class during the hunger strike, they have since been pushed out to the political wilderness. Thatcher and Prior made no concessions to them when it came to establishing an Assembly in the North. This in turn left them without a base to bargain from. The constitutional nationalism of the SDLP is being eroded because the British ruling class no longer see their use and because the mass of nationalists have become increasingly militant.

The significance of the election is that it shows the possibility of the long term decline of the SDLP. It offers the prospect that in the coming years the British state will directly be facing the Provos without any intermediaries. Paradoxically, the British ruling class are not half as worried by such a scenario as are their Southern Irish counterparts.

The electoral success has sent shock waves throughout the British and Irish establishment. That is a good reason why socialists in both countries should also celebrate. But neither should we be under any illusions. The manner in which Sinn Fein campaigned showed how superficial the 'left turn' in the organisation has been in recent years.

The campaign stressed that the key issue was whether Sinn Fein or the SDLP should provide the leadership of 'the nationalist people'. Not surprisingly, there was little appeal to the Protestant working class. But neither was there the slightest mention of what even nationalist workers should be

fighting for. The campaign offered no strategy on how to fight unemployment—currently running at over 50 percent in areas like West Belfast. It was a straightforward nationalist campaign directed to all classes in that community.

Sinn Fein set out to win support beyond those who agreed with the armed struggle. Instead of concrete policies which could connect up, it offered as its trump card its advice centres.

One of the three central slogans of the campaign was 'for an active constituency service'. It argued that its advice centres were run 'by full time voluntary workers rather than the old careerist politicians'. Quite simply that Sinn Fein provided the better social work service, that they could do more for the people—not just through the armed struggle but also through operating the conventional political system.

There is nothing surprising in all this. Republicans have always stressed that the activities of the few could substitute for the passivity of the many. That substitutionism has simply been extended into the electoral sphere. The invitation was to vote for new 'principled leadership' that could do the job. There was therefore no need to spell out the strategy whereby the Assembly could be opposed and unemployment fought.

There is a problem in all this for Sinn Fein. Electoral victories have developed a momentum of their own. They have now the same propaganda effect as a successful military operation. There will be plenty of opportunities to pull off further coups—in the European election, in the local council elections, and in the elections in the South.

New victories will be seen as further morale boosters. But there are limits to the achievements, just as there are limits to the armed struggle itself. Thatcher may have got a headache, as the Sinn Fein posters suggested, because Gerry Adams got the seat in West Belfast, but it will not force her to withdraw a single soldier from the North.

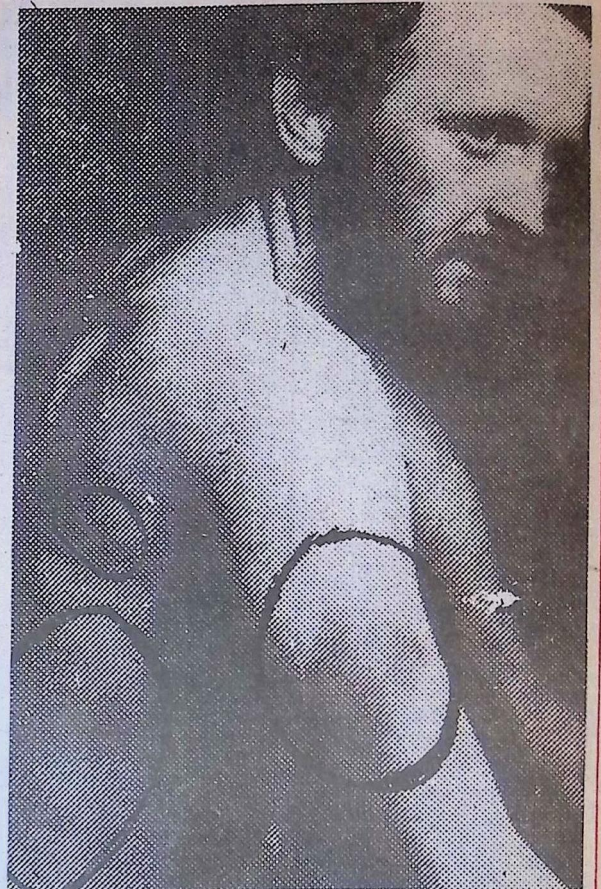
The troops won't be pulled out because the nationalist community passively vote for Sinn Fein. It needs a 32-county workers' movement to force her and her troops out. And that is the area which Sinn Fein and the whole republican tradition cannot address. As the victories at the polls accumulate and still the troops remain, then the old argument of the Armalite or the ballot box will rage inside Sinn Fein.

Socialists in Ireland have to be clearer now on the nature of republicanism because of its relative success. Unfortunately, such clarity has not always come easy. The dominant notion in recent years has been that the increased political sophistication in Sinn Fein has represented a turn left. The task of socialists was to encourage further left developments until the movement was transformed.

Republicanism cannot be transformed because it is an all-class alliance. It can tack to a mild left position to extend the base of support for the armed struggle. It can even sympathise with the growing struggles of workers. But it can never offer concrete leadership to those struggles. And it is precisely because it cannot that it will veer between an emphasis on the ballot or the Armalite.

Socialists in Ireland have to organise and build independently of the republican movement. They have to argue openly their differences with that movement, rather than simply offer it advice from the sidelines.

Fit-up!



Gerry Roche in 1976

THIS IS Gerry Roche in 1976. The bruises are the work of the heavy gang—a specialised torture unit that operated inside the Gardaí. Gerry had been arrested for 48 hours. The police were trying to pin a confession on him for taking part in the mail train robbery for which Nicky Kelly and Osgur Breathnach were later to be falsely imprisoned. Gerry Roche was beaten on the arms and shoulders with batons. But he refused to confess.

Today the police have finally got Gerry Roche. He was imprisoned for 21 months for taking part in the British Embassy demonstration on H Block in 1981. One of the Superintendents stated: "this man has been known to me for eleven years."

Gerry Roche, Harry Flynn and Patrick Keogh — both leading members of the IRSP — have all been sentenced for taking part in that demonstration. None was actually arrested at the demonstration. The police evidence was based on photographs. Photographic evidence is easily open to manipulation. A picture of someone holding a banner pole can easily be transformed into an impression of "wielding a weapon."

Gerry Roche had a key witness in his defence. A barrister, Jim Heron, stated that Roche was at no time acting in a violent manner. He evidence was simply dismissed by a juryless court that accepts police evidence as gospel.

The Embassy 20 case, as it has come to be known, is nothing other than a show trial. Defendants who have pleaded guilty have been told to crawl by donating to the Garda Benevolent Fund. The whole point of the exercise is to whitewash the most vicious example of a garda riot ever seen in the history of the Free State.

Journalists who were on the H Block march to the British Embassy were shocked at what they saw. This is how Cian O hEigeartaigh described

what he saw in the "Sunday Tribune":

"I saw several young people struck to the ground for no apparent reason. Several people who shouted to the Gardaí were pursued and struck or threatened. I saw a young girl who was supporting two heavily blooded young men shoved to the ground by the Gardaí. The Garda turned and said 'Go back to Northern Ireland, where you belong, you bastards.'"

Writing in the same paper, Darach McDonald:

"One Garda shouted: 'No quarter' as he charged through fleeing crowds towards a group of press men. Gardaí with numbers removed batoned fleeing women and elderly people. One man being hauled away with a badly gashed head was struck several times by Gardaí swearing oaths."

That was the reality of the march that has since been buried in a welter of media silence. There was no investigative reports after the likes of Gerry Roche was imprisoned. The line was simple: Roche is an active subversive, the police protect our order, let him stew!

The Special Criminal Court has proved itself once again to be a kangaroo court. The same judge that sentenced Gerry Roche put down Nicky Kelly. It is a court that has removed all the fig leaves of bourgeois justice. It is simply a conveyor belt for dumping subversives in prison on the slightest pretext.

The tragedy of the Embassy 20 case was that there was no visible defence campaign. The state got away with little opposition and has now in practice established the official myth about the events on July 18. Yet it is also true that there will never be the slightest advance in this country until the likes of such cases are taken up by militant trade unionists. The time has well come to build such a political force in the work places that carries the argument about the Special Criminal Court.