

Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

Here
are
the
real
terrorists!



Reagan terrorising democratically elected governments whose politics he dislikes. Thatcher willing to slaughter hundreds in the Falklands in order to save her political face, Unionists in the North wanting to shoot Sinn Féin Councillors. These people are the real terrorists.

TERRORISTS are causing turmoil. The State must equip itself with greater powers and take strong action against them in order to preserve democracy.

That's been the catch-cry of press and politicians in recent weeks as violent incidents have dominated the headlines.

In the North, the campaign to ostracise Sinn Féin has been stepped up with Loyalists of both "moderate" and extreme varieties calling for the party to be banned and even for its councillors to be assassinated.

In the South, the killing of Sergeant Morrissey in Co. Louth—apparently by "fringe" republican elements—has produced demands for the arming of the gardai both with more guns and with more power over the people.

In Britain the uncovering of an alleged IRA plan to bomb British holiday resorts

has triggered a massive propaganda campaign demanding uncritical support for the Thatcher government and its police and courts and denouncing anyone who challenges Thatcher's rule as a tacit supporter of "terrorism".

Meanwhile, the Beirut hostage crisis and the mid-air explosion which brought the Air India 747 down off the Irish coast have created an international clamour for governments to cooperate in introducing new restrictions on movement, automatic extradition between countries and retaliation against the communities from which the alleged "terrorists" came.

Even the Bradford and Brussels football tragedies have been eagerly seized on as justification for new laws and tougher policing.

The attitude of socialists to all this should be simple: We oppose *all* measures which would give the State more

power over the people. We oppose *all* demands for new police powers.

This is not because we believe that "terrorism" is the way forward. At the end of the day, armed action by clandestinely-organised groups—whether they be the IRA, the Sikh militias, the Shi'ites or the Palestinians—can never solve the problems of the communities in whose name the groups operate.

There are two simple, related reasons why we oppose "anti-terrorist" measures.

GUNPLAY

The first is that such measures ignore the fundamental reasons people turn to "terrorism". "Terrorism" does *not* arise from ruthless people who delight in violence deciding casually to indulge in gunplay and bombings. It arises from

desperation.

The Shi'ites, the Sikhs, the Palestinians and the Northern Catholics share one obvious thing in common: their communities are clearly oppressed and, equally clearly, they have no "democratic" way of ending this oppression.

Northern Catholics *can't* vote oppression out of existence within the Northern State. The State itself was constructed precisely to ensure their oppression. Any doubt about this general point should have been ended by the reaction of the Unionists to Sinn Féin councillors voted into office. Quite "moderate" Unionists have openly hinted that they should be shot.

To suggest in this situation to Catholics in the ghettos in Belfast and Derry that they should simply dump the armalites and confine themselves to the ballot box is an impertinence.

The same goes for Shi'ites, Sikhs, Palestinians and many other communities and national groups around the world who have no hope whatever of redress by "democratic" means.

For all such peoples, "tough anti-terrorist measures" simply means copper-fastening their oppression.

The second reason for standing firm against the "anti-terrorist" hysteria is that the States which seek these new powers are responsible for the oppression in the first place.

Thatcher, Reagan, Peres, Gandhi and the rest preside over a system which denies fundamental rights to minority groups and to whole peoples, and which is based on the exploitation of the working class everywhere. The reason they want new powers is to perpetuate this system.

They are not trying to "solve" the problem. They are the problem.

And while the Dublin Government is a very junior partner in this set-up, it is totally committed to its preservation and anxious to show that it, too, plays its full part in stamping out anything which threatens to destabilise

the set-up.

Where socialists disagree totally with the advocates of small-group armed action is that we see the way forward as mobilising the one class in our society which has the power to challenge and defeat the oppressive system—the working class.

And guerrilla activity, no matter how determined and heroic those involved might be, does not make this easier.

It makes it more difficult, both by providing the ruling class with excuses to give themselves more power against us, and also because clandestine armed action is, by its nature, carried on in isolation from the mass of the working class.

Yet it is only by the *active* involvement of workers that the present system can be ended.

That is why revolutionary socialists hammer away all the time at the necessity for involvement in the day-to-day struggles of workers—over wages, jobs, rents, redundancies etc. It is not that we want to opt out of struggles against oppression, sectarianism, racism and so forth.

On the contrary, it is that we want to gather together in fighting formation the only force in our society which can actually win over the oppressors—the working class.

Workers under Orange orders

WITH ALL the media attention focussed on Sinn Fein after last May's local government elections in the North, one other significant result managed to slip by without much coverage.

In the working class areas of East Belfast a number of hard line loyalists won seats. And in the most under-privileged Protestant area of all, the Shankill Road, George Seawright topped the poll.

As you may remember, Seawright shot to fame not so long ago when he suggested (as a solution to the Northern troubles) that all Catholics should be put in an incinerator and burnt. In order to understand why Protestant workers should want to vote for a man who would have felt very much at home in Nazi Germany, it is necessary to look at the roots of the problem.

When the Northern State was being formed its rulers found it useful to ensure that Protestant workers obtained certain privileges over their Catholic counterparts. In this way they managed to win the loyalty of the Protestant masses and to keep the working class divided. To this day Loyalist workers enjoy certain privileges in terms of access to jobs and housing. And whenever these have seemed in danger they have reacted swiftly. Witness the Ulster Workers Council strike in 1974.

SECURITY

In recent years growing unemployment and the increasing militancy of Catholic workers has undermined the Loyalist sense of security. And with no credible socialist

alternative on offer they have become easy prey for the sectarian arguments of the likes of Seawright.

This is made even more tragic by the fact that Protestant workers have a long and proud tradition as class fighters. In 1907 they united with Catholic workers in a mass strike in Belfast. The leaders of the strike, who came from both religions, issued a leaflet which contained the following passage:

"Not as Catholic or Protestant, Nationalist or Unionist but as Belfastmen and workers stand together and don't be misled by the employers' game of dividing Catholic and Protestant."

Again in 1932 during the unemployment campaign the workers were united in common struggle to such an extent that when the RUC



attacked the Falls Road, Protestants from the Shankill helped the Catholics drive them out.

For the next few months, the Northern press was full of warnings from the Stormont government to Protestants that to continue this unity with their Catholic fellow workers would almost certain-

ly lead to the annexation of the Six Counties by the Vatican, Dublin, Moscow or all three.

As had happened in 1907 there had been no effort by anyone involved to give political direction to the 1932 strike. Against all the odds, a few Protestant workers did draw political con-

clusions and at the 1934 Bodenstown Commemoration a contingent of workers from the Shankill arrived with a banner reading "Break the Link with Capitalism!"

But the group from the Shankill, like the Republican Congress group, were beaten up by Sean McBride's "pure republicans", who objected to their disruptive socialist slogans. They went back to Belfast and never appeared in Bodenstown again.

However they had shown that it is possible to win a minority of Protestants to the anti-imperialist struggle. Because although they may have been bought off by British capitalism, they were certainly bought cheaply.

In fact, their attachment to Loyalism has weakened their ability to fight on issues such as wages and conditions. As a result, their living standards are much lower than those of British workers.

IMPERIALISM

Eventually, the Protestant masses can be brought to see that it is in their own interests to fight imperialism. But the Republican Movement can never do this. Their belief that the Socialist struggle must wait until after the National one is solved, means that they have nothing to say to Protestant workers.

But a revolutionary socialist organisation which puts the argument that the struggle for socialism can't wait until after we get the Brits out, while at the same time defending those already engaged in the fight against imperialism, could begin to make an impact on a minority of the Protestant working class. We in the Socialist Workers Movement are attempting to build such an organisation.

Of course, we realise that talk alone will never break the vast mass of Protestants from Loyalism. It is necessary to prove the arguments in the course of the struggle. And that means carrying the fight into the factories and workplaces North and South. So that Protestant workers are left with a clear choice between continuing to cling on to their narrow privileges or joining their Catholic fellow-workers in the fight for socialism and National Liberation.

—ANTHONY RIGNEY

GARDA WATCH



IF YOU live south of the border, you've probably seen the TV ads telling us to get together with the police and set up a "Neighbourhood Watch". All the newspapers and politicians assure us they're just what we need. But what is the real role of the police? And what is the function of the Special Branch and the Army?

Whose side are they on? We are constantly told that the police are "protectors of the weak", "defenders of the common good" and so forth. But a glance at the actions of police anywhere shows this to be nonsense.

During the recent miners' strike the British government and ruling class knew that a political challenge threatened their little plans. So they launched a campaign of military-style police operations involving mass arrests, baton-

charges, cavalry-charges, placing pit villages under undeclared martial law, phone-tapping and ferrying scabs into work in armoured police vans. There wasn't anything unique in these events: much the same had happened under previous Tory and Labour governments. And similar events take place all over the world.

CONCRETE

During that strike, the police did not act "in the national interest". In fact, their actions were concrete proof that no such thing exists.

It was in the interests of the miners (and all other workers) that the strike be won. It was in the interests of British bosses and establish-

ment politicians that it be lost. With the help of the police and capitalist laws the strike was lost.

Our rulers need the police and the state because all present societies are made up of different classes with opposing interests. Every so often, gross inequalities between classes erupt into social upheaval—like the miners' strike. It is then the function of the cops and the army to protect their bosses and their system, while keeping the rest of us in our subservient position.

This does not just happen in the West. In Poland in 1981 General Jaruzelci and his cronies used the police to break the Solidarnosc Trade Union because Polish workers were threatening the existence of his class—the privileged state-bureaucrats. The Polish rulers used exactly the same

STARDUST

BEFORE the local elections, the victims and relatives of the Stardust tragedy and their supporters were treated to yet another dose of sympathy, solidarity and solemn promises by the politicians and would-be councillors of the area.

They promised action on the issue before, but compensating Butterly, the owner of the club, and giving planning permission for him to rebuild was hardly what the Stardust Relatives Action Group had in mind.

Recently, further planning application to increase the complex was approved by City Councillors and to help in stocking up the extension, Butterly is now looking for compensation for drink lost in the fire.

Meanwhile 200 of the victims' cases have still not been heard and the solicitor acting on their behalf has asked for a further £1,000 in legal costs.

Not surprisingly, the action group has decided that the only way to attract official attention is by taking to the streets. At a protest in the Dail recently they man-

tactics as the Tories.

In this country, too, the Gardai have played the same role. They were used to break the postal workers' strike a few years back and they ended the Rank' occupation by invading the premises and evicting the workers.

BUREAUCRATS

We're told by the media that the gardai are there to "protect us from criminals". The biggest irony of all is that in fact the gardai protect the biggest criminals of all; the profit-chasing bosses, bankers and state bureaucrats who control this country. The

aged to extract the incredible commitment that he'd "look into their case" from one Michael Noonan.

TDs aren't the only public figures to forget about the tragedy when convenient. Despite fire-prevention-fever following the Stardust, the Corpo have now decided that fire-prevention is no longer affordable. They have reneged on a 1984 staffing agreement to save money. Money being more important than lives.

VACANCIES

The FWUI say 35 vacancies now exist in addition to the necessary recruitment of 24 staff to enable training of those already serving. But the Corpo see no reason why the fire service shouldn't be included in the cuts list. Their interest in the area might just pick up if there was a fire-fighting conference on in some foreign part. As a matter of fact our belt-tightening Corpo officials would probably find the funds to attend such a conference en masse—in out interests, of course.

same gardai co-operate with the RUC and British Army in keeping the sectarian Northern state alive. They support both capitalism and British imperialism. The gardai should truthfully be called "protectors of the rich" and "defenders of the ruling class". The fact that they occasionally lock away rapists or muggers doesn't alter that central fact.

Police forces everywhere are simply puppets: ruling classes everywhere are the puppet-masters. We pay for the police; someone else pulls their strings. By "helping the gardai" we reduce ourselves to being the puppets of puppets.

—MARK LYNCH

LEBANON VICTIM OF IMPERIALISM

NOT FOR the first time, the Palestinians have suffered at the hands of those from whom they might have expected support. This time the terror comes from the Shi'ite Amal militia under the leadership of the latter-day diplomat Nabih Berri. This particular faction is armed and supported by the treacherous Assad in Syria.

On May 19 the refugee

camps at Sabra, Chatilla and Bourj al-Barajuch were attacked by waves of Amal fighters. People will remember the mass murder of Palestinians at the former two camps in 1982. Despite being besieged, without water or medical supplies, the defenders put up a brave resistance. Over the following few weeks almost 600 died and over 2,000 were wounded

in the fighting. Red Cross personnel were forcibly kept out of the camps for days on end. Horrific tales of callous murder were the order of the day. When the Amal militia overran the Gaza hospital, patients were dragged from beds and operating tables and brutally knifed and gunned to death.

Throughout the ongoing carnage the so-called allies of the Palestinians were conspicuous by their lack of activity. The Soviet Union—which verbally supports Yasser Arafat—expressed its "concern". Iran denounced the atrocities as a "conspiracy", but did nothing. The pro-Syrian Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine gave only token support to their fellow-Palestinians being butchered in the camps.

In the end, a Syrian-sponsored ceasefire was agreed on June 18. In return for a cessation of the onslaught, the besieged fighters had to surrender their arms. This is in accord with what both the Israelis and the Amal's Syrian backers desire: the complete destruction of Palestinian influence in the region. Syria is only too happy to co-exist peacefully with Israel, while the Shi'ites fear a recurrence of Israeli terror if Palestinian attacks against Israel continue.

SLAUGHTER

Meanwhile hundreds of thousands of Palestinians refugees are fair game for all.

As the slaughter continued near Beirut, Israel was completing its "withdrawal" from the Lebanon. In its place it left behind the South Lebanon Army which is occupying an 850 square km. area north of the Israeli border. This faction is in fact none other than the infamous Christian Militia, which under the leadership of Saad Haddad (now deceased) perpetrated the atrocities at Sabra and Chatilla in 1982. Their present function is to create a "buffer zone" between the Israeli border and the Unifil forces further north. Even the UN doesn't recognise this gang of thugs. They act as a surrogate for Israel in the region.

Just north of the SLA-controlled area lies the UNIFIL zone. There are now 740 Irish troops among the total force of 6,000. Their main role is to act as a "stabilising force". In attempting to stabilise the situation, the UNIFIL forces are tacitly accepting the present political arrangements in the region—for example, the existence of the SLA "buffer zone" and the continuing refugee status of the Palestinians will all be tolerated. The land grabbing tactics of Israel are thus legitimised.

We should demand the immediate withdrawal of the Irish troops in Lebanon. Their presence indicates the willingness—whatever about neutrality—of our rulers to participate in the imperialist domination of the middle east. —TOM O'DONOGHUE

HUACKING — WE SAY

THE AMERICAN hostages taken in the Beirut hi-jacking have been released and are safe and well.

But their release has not ended the hysteria. "Terrorism" is still loudly denounced.

Denounced by Israel which owes its existence to the ruthless, murderous terror visited upon Palestinians by Israel or its catspaws.

Denounced by Reagan who proposes to continue funding his "Contra" agents to attempt—by means of terror—to overthrow the democratically elected government in Nicaragua—because that government doesn't meet with the approval of US business interests.

Denounced by the entire western "community" of nations whose cheerful "democratic" institutions rest upon the court Injunction, the cop's baton or rubber bullet and if necessary on the nuclear destruction of the Planet.

Israel—in one of its latest acts of wanton barbarism—incarcerates 700 Shi'ites in an Israeli concentration camp for no other reason than that they are Arabs. The Shi'ites draw the conclusion—along with everyone else not blessed with God's precious gift of blindness—that none of this would have been possible without the consistent backing the US has afforded to Israel. They seize a US civilian aircraft and hold its passengers for the safe return of the 700.

Socialist Worker understands that these US civilians are receiving rather better treatment than those of Me Lai or Hiroshima.

We recognise that the warring mess that is now the Lebanon is the result of imperialist intervention and in particular the latest Israeli occupation. We recognise that a solution to the problems of the area depends upon the creation of a working class revolutionary movement in the region. We further recognise the reactionary role the Amal militia has taken up toward the Palestinians.

None of this induces us to take up the hypocritical chorus of condemnation of "terrorism" on behalf of the class of people whose actions and whose system is ultimately responsible for this situation—the US boss class.

WORLD VIEW

POLAND

THREE leading Solidarity activists were jailed in mid June for allegedly "inciting public unrest". They were arrested in February when police busted a secret meeting they were having with Lech Walesa to discuss a possible strike call in protest at price increases. The sentences varied from 2½ to 3½ years. All observers were banned from the trial which was characterised by frequent bouts of uproar. The accused continuously claimed that they were unable to testify freely. The defence lawyers levelled charges of intimidation at the judge and demanded his disqualification. Lech Walesa spoke out against the court's brutality, which he said "was unseen since the days of Stalin".

FRANCE

NEARLY 100 people were injured during clashes between police and workers at a factory near Paris in early June. The Swedish-owned SFK ball bearing factory was occupied in October 1983 after plans for its closure were announced. Late in May of this year the police moved in and ejected the militants. On June 5 over 200 of the workers marched on the factory, to be met by a cordon of riot police. The workers had come prepared with safety helmets and sticks. In the ensuing six hour melee, 64 cops and 34 strikers were injured. The plan to re-occupy was, however, thwarted. Since then talks have taken place between the unions and the management. Nearly half of the 600 jobs will now be saved.

BRAZIL

THE FIRST civilian government in 21 years has announced a massive programme of land reform. Seven million families are to be settled on land confiscated from the huge estates of the landowners. At the moment over ten million rural families are without land while over 1,000 million acres in private estates lie unused. In the north-east, one per cent. of the landowners own almost half the land. This situation has led to bloody conflict over the past few years. Last year 180 were killed in clashes between evicted peasants and gangs of gunmen hired by the landowners to force them out.

Naturally, the landowners have reacted badly to the proposals and have denounced it as "Marxist-Leninist inspired, leading to class warfare". Let's hope they are right.

NICARAGUA

THE REAGAN war machine has once again had its way, with the House of Representatives voting to grant 27 million dollars in "humanitarian" aid for the Contras. Hysteria was generated for the previous few weeks over the visit of Daniel Ortega to Eastern Europe. The Costa Rican Government then chipped in alleging that the Sandanistas had crossed the border and killed two of their Civil Guards. There is ample evidence to lay the blame for this incident at the feet of the Contras themselves, of which there are 2,000 in Costa Rica.

The Sandanistas have responded to the latest US move by lifting a self-imposed arms purchase embargo. They intend to acquire advanced fighter planes to boost their air defences. The Reagan administration has warned that this will provoke a direct military response. Ortega has aptly described the US Government as "murderers" and "terrorists".

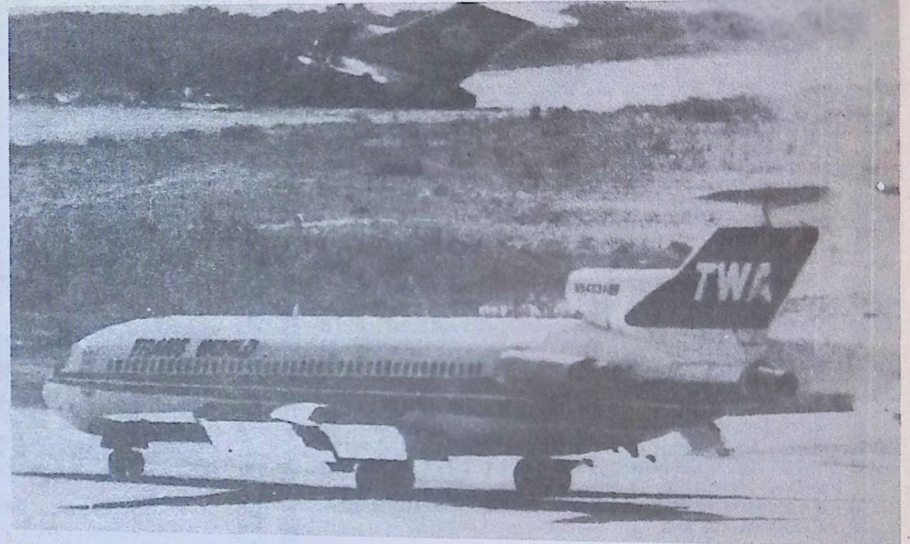
UNITED STATES

AFTER A six-year legal battle a jury has awarded damages of almost 400,000 dollars to three families after the Klu Klux Klan inspired massacre in North Carolina in 1979. In November '79 the Klan and some neo-Nazis marched through the city of Greensboro. A counter-demonstration organised by the Communist Workers Party confronted the Klan and the police who were protecting them. In full view of television cameras, the Klansmen and the police tore into the demonstrators—who were unarmed—with batons and guns. Five people were shot dead and eleven wounded. Despite the video evidence, two all-white juries in successive trials found the Klansmen and cops innocent of the deaths.

Early this year the families of the victims tried again and the latest award is the outcome of this. However, this "redress" is being contested by the fascists.

During the latest trial one of the Klansmen wore a tee-shirt bearing the words: "Eat lead, you lousy Red".

—TOM O'DONOGHUE



The hijacked TWA in Beirut

COUGH UP

ONE good reason for not paying TDs pensions while they still draw salaries out of all proportion to the work they like us to think they do is that it might provide some incentive for them to retire.

At present some of them get more in pensions per week than many PAYE workers do in wages. From the politicians' point of view the contributory pension scheme is working out fine, with workers "contributing" to pension funds for other sectors in addition to their own.

Last year they paid out the bulk of £264 million to finance pensions for farmers and the self-employed. And when the government re-warded the judiciary with pension rights after only five years' service and backdated the scheme to 1978, guess who they had in mind to foot the bill?

TOURISTS

ONE wonders where exactly Bord Failte do most of their foreign advertising, and exactly what type of visitor they are anxious to attract to our shores.

Denis Worrall, the South African ambassador in London recently spent six weeks in this part of the country before going North for an official visit.

The government are understandably reluctant to comment on the visit, saying that the protection he enjoyed is a matter to be taken up with the Gardai. Maybe Peter Barry really didn't know about the visit. Maybe Worrall just wandered into a Garda Station, announced himself, gave a few tips . . . and asked for protection.

CONTRARY

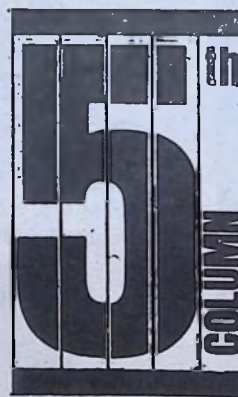
MEMBERS of the US House of Representatives are people of integrity dedicated to safeguarding worldwide democracy, eager to lift the burden of the oppressed and tireless in their efforts to spread the all-American concepts of truth and justice evenly across the globe.

(Hence the efforts of Ronald Reagan to flatten it.)

Such is their commitment to their noble quest that it took a visit to Moscow by Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega to get the House to support Reagan's plan to grant \$27 million to the Contras.

Commenting on a reversal of an earlier vote one Democrat displaying a high level of finesse and judgement explained: "I made a mistake. Daniel Ortega is swine. He is a Communist."

—JEAN CROSS



EXCHANGE

THE re-organisation at Bord Telecom seems to have worked wonders. However just occasionally things still do go wrong.

I dialled the speaking clock the other day. But after the usual delay I got a crossed line. Ronald Reagan talking to Margaret Thatcher it sounded like:

"So that's it, then," says Mr R, "My new Anglo-American initiative for resolving the Nicaraguan em-passe . . . more cultural and sporting links, that sort of thing. I'll suspend the ban on visitors to Nicaragua and you'll—"

"Yes" says Mrs T, "I'll arrange for Liverpool FC to play the Nicaraguan national team . . ."

What we stand for

The Socialist Workers Movement is a revolutionary socialist organisation that fights for a workers' republic and international socialism.

The system under which we live, capitalism, is based on production for profit—not for human need. It leads to poverty and war; racism and sexism. It is a system that can only be destroyed by the class which creates all the wealth—the working class.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

Capitalism cannot be patched up or reformed—it must be overthrown. That cannot be achieved through parliament as the Workers Party and the Labour Party argue. The real power in this society lies in the boardroom of big business. The structures of the present parliament, courts, army and police are designed to protect the interests of the ruling class against the workers. At most parliament can be used for propaganda against the system—it cannot be the instrument by which workers destroy the power of the rich.

We therefore stand for a workers' revolution which produces a different and more democratic society—one based on councils of delegates from workplaces and areas who are democratically elected answerable to assemblies 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.

AGAINST PARTITION

The six county Orange state is propped up by British imperialism. That state divides the working class by the guarantee of marginal privileges in housing and jobs to Loyalist workers. The struggle of Catholic workers to rid themselves of sectarianism and bigotry can only succeed by smashing that state.

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 differences of programme.

We stand for:

- The immediate withdrawal of the British Army
- The disbandment of the RUC and UOR
- No to extradition and collaboration on border security

Connolly wrote that partition would bring a carnival of reaction. He was absolutely right. Irish workers confront two reactionary states. The Southern ruling class have no longer any fundamental conflict of interest with imperialism. They have become junior players in the world capitalist system. Their state props up partition—despite their occasional nationalist rhetoric.

The 'national question' will only be solved in the course of mass working class struggle against both states. Republicanism, by limiting the struggle to nationalist goals, by appealing to all classes in Irish society, can never defeat imperialism. Only a revolutionary socialist organisation that fights openly for the Workers' Republic can unite sections of the working class who have nothing to gain from a bourgeois Eire Nua.

AGAINST ALL OPPRESSION

Revolutionaries oppose all form of oppression that divide and weaken the working class.

We are for real social, economic and political equality for women. We are for an end to discrimination against homosexuals. We stand for full separation of the church and state. We stand for secular control of the hospitals and the schools.

THE UNIONS

Today the trade union movement is dominated by a caste of bureaucrats whose principal aim is to make their compromise with the system. They have destroyed solidarity between workers by the two tier picket system. They have failed to lead any fight over tax, wage cuts and unemployment.

We stand for:

- 100 percent trade unionism
- A 35 hour week to reduce unemployment
- The election of all union officials, subject to recall
- Against redundancies. We say: occupy to demand nationalisation under workers' control
- Full independence of the unions from the state. No reliance on the Labour Courts or the arbitration schemes in the public sector

We fight for the building of a national rank and file movement that links together the best militants to provide an alternative leadership to the trade union bureaucrats.

We fight for the formation of Right to Work committees that link the unemployed to the power of the trade union movement.

THE PARTY

To achieve socialism the most class conscious sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party. The SWM aims to build such a party around its activity in the working class movement. It stands in the tradition of Marx, Lenin, Trotsky and Connolly. We urge all those who agree with our policies to come in and join the SWM.

SOCIALIST WORKER is produced by the **SOCIALIST WORKERS MOVEMENT**. If you would like more information on our activities and policies, would like to become a member of the SWM or would like to take out a subscription to **SOCIALIST WORKER**—£3.50 for a year—clip this form and post to SWM, PO BOX 1648, Dublin 8

- I want to join; I want a subscription and enclose £3.50;
 I would like more information about the SWM

Name

Address

Can the bosses be beaten?

Socialist Worker always says that the only people who can change the world for the better are workers. Yet the workers' struggles seem to be at a low ebb just now. EAMONN McCANN examines the bosses' offensive and indicates the way forward.

THE FACTS THAT TELL IT ALL

THE decline in shop-floor militancy is clear from the official statistics.

In the seventies most strikes were unofficial. Although the National Wage Agreements virtually outlawed action to push wages up, workers were relatively self-confident and fired ahead anyway. Many claims for additional "productivity" rises or to restore differentials were won.

As late as 1980 the majority of strikes—61 percent—were

unofficial.

But as the recession began to bite deep and the bosses sought to protect their own profits by cutting into workers' wages, the union leaderships backed off. And with no organisation or alternative leadership at rank-and-file level, militancy melted away—not completely, of course, but enough to change the balance of forces.

More and more influence was concentrated into union

head offices, not on the shop floor. At the same time major unions lost members as a result of closures and pay-offs and leaders like John Carroll of the ITGWU became almost obsessed with the cash-flow from subs and the need to cut back expenditure and assert control over the membership.

MASSACRED

At the moment workers

would almost have to be massacred before the ITGWU's top brass would willingly make a strike official.

The result is that last year only 31 percent of strikes were shop-floor based or "unofficial". The number of work day accounted for by unofficial action tells the tale. In 1980 the figure was 184,500. In 1981 it was 131,000. 1982 saw another drop to 74,000. In 1983 it had



EMPLOYERS PUT THE BOOT IN

EVERYWHERE the bosses are putting the boot in on the trade unions.

Hardly anywhere are the unions fighting back.

The "class struggle" is seldom a stand-up fight any more. It's more like a mugging, with the workers, the victims, slinking away to lick their wounds when the dust-up is over.

The most recent example was at the Irish Press where management locked out the workers in an effort to force the print union to give up hard won conditions and sell jobs. When the printers didn't surrender quickly enough the de Valera family threatened to sack the entire workforce.

Faced with this offensive, the newspaper unions, far from standing together the better to fight back, spatted and bickered with one another about who should bear the brunt of the attack, with the journalists in particular demanding that the printers back down. There was no way the workers could win once the unions had taken up that position.

The Irish Press wasn't an isolated case.

- In Hanley's in Rooskey,

Roscommon, last year management threatened to close down if the workers didn't accept a cut in previously-negotiated bonuses. After some skirmishing, management won on all counts.

- In Hinson's in Sligo the bosses named four militant workers they wanted out and, again, threatened closure if they didn't get their way. With no fighting lead from the union officials, the workers caved in.

UNOFFICIAL

- In the CIE depot in Phibsborough in Dublin last year a bitter, divided dispute over a comparability claim ended in court proceedings. One well-known militant, a Communist Party member, was sacked for his part in the strike. And management got away with it.

- In Rowntree-Mackintosh in Inchicore around the same time an unofficial strike over wages ended with the workers being forced to sign pledges never to go on unofficial strike again. In addition, the bosses got the scalp of a leading militant who was forced to take redundancy.

- At Dublin docks DCH have demanded volunteers for the dole—otherwise they'll close the deep-sea section and put everyone on the dole.

The unions involved in these disputes included the ITGWU, the ATGWU, AGEMOU and the Marine Port. In every case there was some willingness among at least a minority of workers to put up a fight. But in no case did the union leaders support resistance. And this pattern, as every active trade unionist knows, has been repeated over and over again.

On the last wage round, the 24th, there wasn't a ballot in any major union on the miserly terms offered by the Federated Union of Employers—which involved a six-month wage

freeze, a single-figure rise to cover a period of at least 15 months and an "opt-out" clause for managements which chose to plead inability to pay. The union bosses simply accepted the terms and stamped hard on any "unofficial" protests.

In the public sector only the LGPSU initially rejected the terms. But, isolated and with a leadership which wasn't exactly pawing the ground with impatience for the fray, no real fight emerged.

Meanwhile, the one-for-three recruitment embargo has meant a gradual decline of the workforce without ceremony or negotiation of any kind.

The working class in this country is being kicked around at will by as ruthless and greedy a bunch of capitalist parasites as ever blighted the land.

Can anything be done? Or have workers no option but to keep their heads down, accept wage cuts, worsening of conditions and enforced redundancies?

BUREAUCRATIC

In the first place, it is necessary to know where a fight-back is *not* going to come from. The ICTU couldn't fight its way out of a paper bag. And

if it could it wouldn't bother. Its attitude to industrial struggles was perfectly summed up by chief bureaucrat Donal Nevin when, at an ICTU executive meeting in March, he *opposed* issuing a statement in support of the Dunnes workers—on the ground that it might compromise the ICTU if it was ever asked to intervene as mediator.

It didn't occur to Nevin that in theory anyway, it's not his job to act as a buffer between workers and bosses when they come to blows, but to weigh in on the workers' side. The ICTU sees itself—and it's right—as part of the establishment, with a special mandate for "defusing" disputes and devising compromises. It is totally committed to the present economic and political system and when that system is challenged it will automatically throw its weight *against* the

working class.

There is not a single case in recent years of the ICTU wholeheartedly backing a group of workers in struggle, calling for solidarity action, support on picket lines, etc. —*Not one.*

DISCOVERED

And in this it reflects the role of union leaders generally.

In union after union workers have discovered that their "leaders" are far more interested in "keeping the peace" than in defending jobs, wages and conditions. When they intervene in disputes it's to "solve" them, not to *win* them.

Small wonder, then, that many rank-and-file workers have become demoralised and begun to believe that there's no point plugging on trying to resist the bosses offensive.

HOW TO FIGHT BACK

A FIGHT-BACK obviously isn't going to be led by the union leaderships. It will have to come from the shop-floor.

It won't happen spontaneously. It will have to be organised. That means re-building rank-and-file organisations.

Those workers, largely isolated at the moment, who have the stomach for a fight will have to link up with the minority who are like-minded. Shop stewards committees should be created, at plant level, on an industry-wide basis, so as to provide the widest possible backing for any group of workers in trouble. This can mean direct solidarity action, blackings, taking up collections, providing back-up on picket lines. Anything which tends to weld workers together as *workers* is vitally important.

We must restore respect for picket lines. The two-tier system operated by the ICTU has "legitimised" crossing pickets by other unions or even

pickets by different sections of the same union.

The two-tier system should be resolutely opposed, and the best way to oppose it is to campaign for respect for *all* pickets placed by workers.

No redundancies should be accepted anywhere, full stop. If there isn't enough work for 40 hours' labour from each worker, the working week should be cut.

Similarly, where new technology allows full production with less labour, the working week should be cut. We have close on 300,000 people without jobs in the South. In that situation every *existing* job should be defended with full vigour. Nobody has the right to sell somebody's else's job, no matter how exalted their position in the trade union hierarchy.

And control of the unions must be taken away from the bureaucrats buried away in the head offices and given back to the membership. Every union official should be elected and

provision made for them to be un-elected if they fail to represent the members real interests.

They should be paid the average wage of the people they represent—which would give them the same economic interest as the members and cause them to think twice about negotiating sweet-heart deals which earn them reputations as "realists" and leave the rank-and-file in the lurch.

Rank and file

Every strike should be run by the strikers, not by full-timers who have no direct interest in the outcome. Rank-and-file strike committees should be elected and play a full part in all negotiations. No settlement should be made without full discussion and an open vote at a meeting of the workers in dispute.

Some of these measures and others on the same lines can be

undertaken directly by shop-floor militants without reference to the existing structures or conflict over the rule book. Other would require rule changes which will have to be fought for through the sections and branches. But the key to all of it is rank-and-file organisation, beginning with the organisation of the minority of militants who continue to exist in most workplaces.

The *possibility* of re-building for a fight-back certainly exists. Despite everything—aggressive bosses, weak unions, the cops and the courts—workers here and there *do* put up resistance. Dunnes Stores, Storage Technology, Prince o'Burren in Inchicore are current examples.

This is not to say that all we need is for workers generally to become more "bolshie" or for the militant minority among workers to get their act together. We must also recognise the *political* reasons for the retreat of recent years.

Trade union full-time officials like the Labour Party, tend to be committed to the existing economic system. They see their job as bargaining for what they can get out of the system—not seeking to change the system fundamentally. The more left-wing among them will bargain harder and maybe use tougher tactics. But their perspective is still one of working *within* capitalism.

Thus, when the system is in trouble—as capitalism is throughout the world—the officials automatically take this into account and dismiss demands which conflict with the basic interests of the system as "unrealistic".

To overcome this it is necessary to build a revolutionary workers' party which bases itself squarely on the specific interests of workers and *against* the interests of capitalism.

This is the task which the Socialist Workers Movement has set itself.

would almost be massacred before the top brass would strike official.

The result is that only 31 percent of shop-floor based unofficial strikes are as good as official. The indicator as any of the strength and self-confidence of workers themselves.

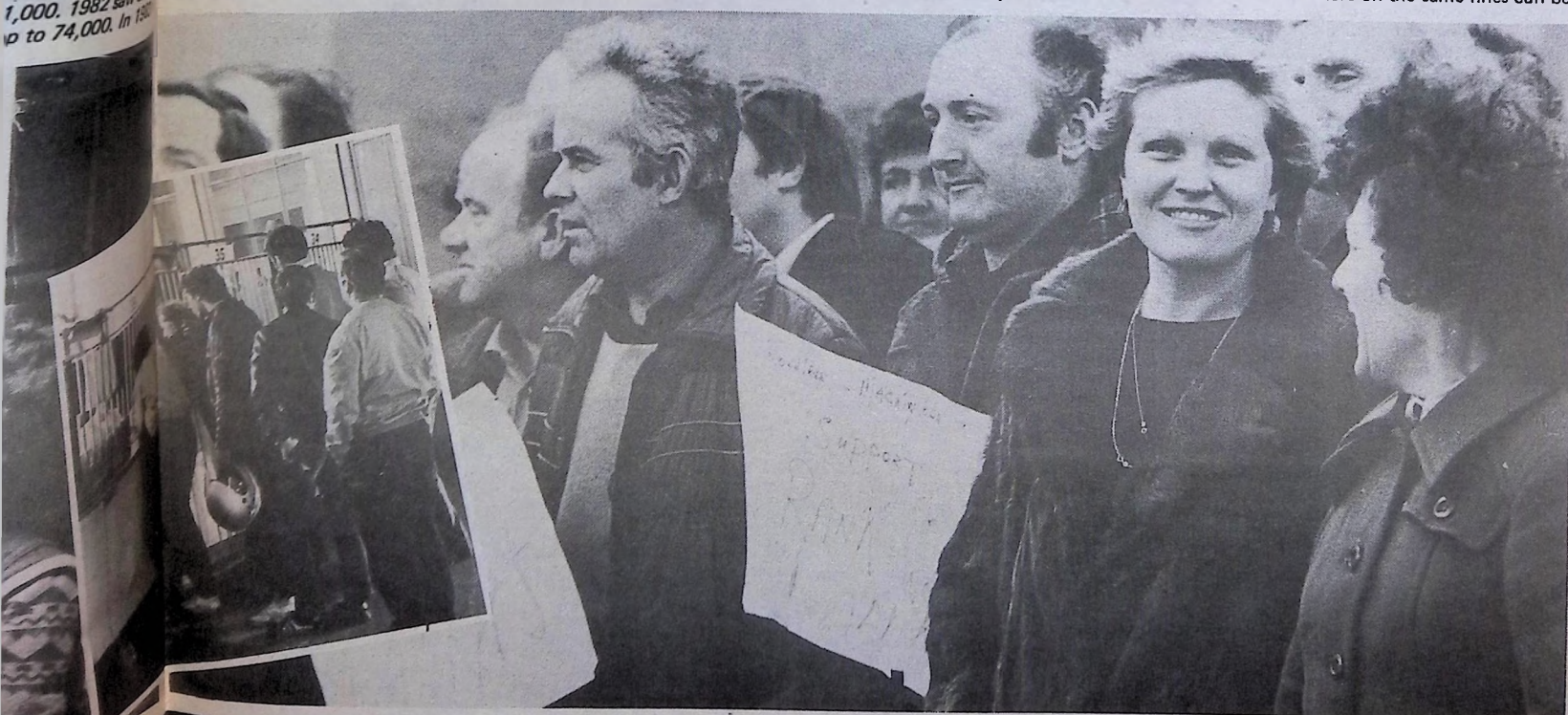
1980 the figure was 4,500. In 1981 it was 1,000. 1982 saw a drop to 74,000. In 1983

declined further to 58,000. And last year's total was down to 51,000.

Ideally, of course, all strikes should be official. The entire weight of the union should be thrown into the battle.

Nevertheless, the statistics for unofficial strikes are as good an indicator as any of the strength and self-confidence of workers themselves.

And, generally, that strength and self-confidence has clearly been ebbing away.



Pictures: Derek Spenser (Report)

Live Aid for Africa

THE WORLD'S top tennis players were hitting winners for Africa at Wimbledon.

So we gather from the press which gushed with enthusiasm at the formation of *Tennis Players for Africa*, a group of leading racquetiers who undertook to donate 5 percent of Wimbledon winnings to famine relief.

This generous gesture earned some of their number interviews on the box where they explained their deep personal concern at the plight of the starving millions.

LETTUCE

The 5 percent donation will mean that the winner of the men's title will give £6,500 of the £130,000 purse to the charity effort.

If every player joined in this generous gesture close on £100,000 will have been handed over from the total prize fund of £1,934,760.

The inspiration for it all stems, of course, from Bob Geldof's massively publicised Band Aid and Live Aid schemes. The 11 hour Live Aid spectacular broadcast on 11 July involved not only leading pop performers but "various political figures and other world celebrities speaking out against hunger". It is hoped to raise between ten and 25 million dollars.

Now it has to be admitted that ten to 25 million from Live Aid or even a hundred grand from Wimbledon is a whole lot of lettuce. Equally, it's clear that this largesse will not actually cost any of the philanthropists anything. A tax-allowable six and a half grand from McEnroe for example will mean as little to him as a half a pint of bitter to celebrate a darts victory would mean to the rest of us.

COVER

None of the personalities on Live Aid will be a penny out of pocket. They will be paid only "basic expenses"—although anyone who has ever run a benefit gig will know that the word "basic" here has a certain elasticity of meaning. On the other hand, the show had a potential cumulative audience of one billion people. None of the performers will fail to benefit from that exposure.

It sounds a perfect set-up. Aid agencies working in famine-stricken areas will receive substantial donations while nobody at all loses out.

Except that scams and schemes like this also have a significant influence on the way masses of people think about famine. The problem is not that there is a shortage of food or money, but that the food and money that exists in abundance are shared in a grotesquely unfair way.

Live Aid and Tennis Players for Africa convey the impression that what's needed is for people in the West to emulate their idols and be generous and warm-hearted, not to organise in an intelligent way radically to alter economic and political structures.

PROLONG

Thus it is possible for Bob Geldof in a "Hot Press" interview enthusiastically to back Thatcher and to foul-mouth Arthur Scargill as "power-crazy" last January because, alleged Geldof, the miners were motivated by a desire to change "the democratic system".

This "democratic system" is, of course, the system which has caused famine in the first place. To preserve the system is to perpetuate the gross inequality and mass hunger that goes with it.

The "non-political", charity-based approach of these events, fervently supported as they are by the entire establishment and its media, operate to prolong famine while very marginally alleviating the effects of a few particular famines along the way.

Given all that, and given the penchant of almost all those involved for self-glorification and ruthless attention to their own fabulously lucrative careers, we are entitled to view the proceedings with deep cynicism and a judicious degree of contempt.

—EAMONN McCANN

THI: Committee running the "Cork 800" celebrations has been aptly described in "Hot Press" by singer-songwriter Jimmy Crowley as "a pack of bourgeois bollixes". Another Corkman, swm member JIM BLAKE, marks the occasion with a different class of poetical offering...

I've lived in old Cork City
That's laid out on the Lee
I've laboured through the ages
I've struggled to be free

I'm Cha and Miah into one
I'm male and female too
I'm young I'm old I'm middle-aged
I may resemble you

Another side of Cork 800

I slaved on ancient city walls
In days of fine Prince John
When Normans paid one groat a day

To feed my family on
I lived and starved, was beaten
By the tyrant Burgomaster
When draining swamps and
hauling goods
I couldn't work much faster

I fought their glorious wars
for them
For William and King James
A Royalist, A Roundhead
I had no time for names

I never asked no questions
In the medieval city
Those Judges and those Bishops
Had no mercy or no pity

They merely wanted profit
For their high class way of life
For me it was the gallows
To start trouble or cause strife

Then came the mighty industries
Of leather, wool and cars
I made tyres, I made chemicals
I built ships and shaped steel bars

I made riches for new Princes
I helped THEM to shape
their lives

While I had to fight for wages
Just to live and to survive

And now we've got recession
The chances of work recedes
They tell me I must sacrifice
It's for the country's needs

I must be patriotic
For Cork's 800 celebration
By signing on the dole
I'm helping out the nation.

One day when men and women
As workers and as one
Unite with all their forces
We'll free the world of scum

We'll banish all those profits
Have Production just for need
And paint the earth
a bright new hue
THEN workers will be freed

NEWS FROM SWM



photo: JOHN O'BEIRNE

Members of the Waterford Branch of the Socialist Workers Movement handing over a cheque to Dunnes strikers, the proceeds of a benefit social organised by SWM.

MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

The Socialist Workers Movement is a revolutionary socialist organisation with members in Dublin, Belfast, Waterford, Cork, Galway, Dungarvan and Portlaoise.

Its meetings are open to those who support the politics of this paper.

DUBLIN CITY CENTRE meets every Thursday

DUBLIN SOUTH meets every Tuesday
For venue: phone 716932 or write to National Office

WATERFORD meets every Monday. For details see local sellers or write National office.

GALWAY meets every Tuesday in Seaport House, New Docks (beside Harbour Bar) at 8pm.

CORK meets every Thursday Phone 932828 for details.

DUNDALK meets every second Wednesday. Details: phone 36868

For details of meetings in Belfast, Portlaoise, Dungarvan contact paper sellers or write to National Office: PO Box 1648 Dublin 8.

DUNDALK

DUNDALK BRANCH of SWM recently organised a very successful social for Dunnes which raised £270. Tickets were distributed to shop stewards beforehand and sold around the factories. The Waterford branch of SWM had organised a similar social on the same basis on May Day and raised £200.

What it proves is that there exists massive support for the Dunnes workers, provided that it is organised.

LIBERTIES

THE SOUTH Dublin branch of SWM has run into trouble with the local clergy in the Liberties area. It had booked the Parish Hall in Meath Street for a Public meeting with Eamonn McCann speaking on "Cah the Provos Win". Two days before the meeting the parish priest, Fr Kelly posted up a proclamation on the door of the hall to announce that the meeting

would not take place. He later claimed that there was no record of the booking. It wouldn't be the first time that the clergy told a pack of lies. They have used their control over halls in working class areas to stifle political discussion.

Unfortunately for Fr Kelly, the meeting went ahead in Thomas House with 30 people in attendance and an excellent discussion.

OUT NOW

TWO NEW pamphlets from the SWM deserve a read. "Where we Stand" gives our position on the unions, women's liberation, the class nature of Russia and the national question. It costs 60p.

"Why we need a Revolution in Ireland" is a basic straightforward introduction to the mess of Irish capitalism and what can be done about it.

Send £1 to our national address and you will get a copy of both.

LET'S UNITE

STRANGE GOINGS on in Ballyfermot. On Wednesday 28th May, the SWM had scheduled a public meeting in Ballyfermot Community Centre on the Dunnes strike. We were beaten to it. The youthful enthusiasts of Labour Youth had also booked the hall for a meeting on Dunnes in the Ballyfermot Community Centre. No point being sectarian. The SWM members agreed to turn up to the Labour Youth meeting and make their point from the floor.

30 people came to the meeting, half were SWM. A very good discussion took place on how to win and all were agreed that a Ballyfermot support group should be set up. As organisers of the meeting, the Labour Youth agreed to circulate the sheets for names and addresses and contact everyone.

A great example of the left working together, you might think. Not so. Labour Youth have still to call a meeting of the support group. It seems that it was more important to do a bit of canvassing for the Labour Party in the Local elections. And anyway, it has now decided that it doesn't like working with "ultra left sects on the fringes of the labour movement".

It seems that the revolutionary Trotskyists of Labour Youth are more at home in canvassing for the pro-coalition right wing of their party than in working with left wingers outside the party. It is the contorted logic of a REAL sect.

Storage Technology finally closes

STORAGE TECHNOLOGY, the American owned computer firm in Finglas, has finally closed. But the treachery of the union officials and the cunning of its liquidator, John Donnelly, should be remembered by every militant.

Storage Tech was set up with IDA money. It's parent company declared it bankrupt over 9 months ago. A liquidator was appointed and the workers immediately occupied. But the union officials of the FWUI persuaded the workers to return the factory into the hands of the liquidator. He promised full consultation regarding redundancies. He also gave them to understand that there was a new buyer for the firm in the pipeline.

Then just before Christmas, the liquidator—Donnelly, of Ranks Flour Mills occupation fame—announced that the company was, after all, to be wound up and the plant closed. The workers again occupied. Within 24 hours there was an agreement that there would be no redundancies and no lay offs and that work would resume in January. The workers came out of occupation but guarded the factory all over the holiday—lest anything be removed.

They knew the £9million worth of assets was a powerful bargaining weapon. The factory did re-open, but it appears its re-opening and operation since then, has been purely a tactical manoeuvre on the part of the

liquidator. No new buyer was found. The air of uncertainty, its absence of real work to do in the place, rumour and counter rumour all served to demoralise the work force. Some took voluntary redundancy and left.

Meantime, there was another twist to the tale. One of the former managers of Storage Tech—Canton—left to set up "his own"

This was before Xmas, and part of the deal was that he employ the ideally skilled and available workers from the threatened Storage Tech. The workers would retain all union rights etc. In fact Canton engaged on this, and took on only the

most passive workers. The idea being to ride roughshod over the union and the previous agreement.

But at Storage Tech, Donnelly the liquidator proved himself a clever and devious agent of the bosses rule. Having let the workers at Storage Tech "stew in their own juice", since Christmas, he waited till he felt demoralisation had sufficiently set in, and then started with a tactic of divide and rule.

Firstly last month, he announced he wanted 60 voluntary redundancies. The carrot was a week's pay on top of the statutory redundancy. Only 10 people volunteered, so the offer was withdrawn. Then he announced at a meeting the final closure of Storage Tech—set for the following Friday. This time he offered what amounts to 6 weeks pay on top of the statutory

payment, if all the workers walk away and didn't give him any hassle, like another occupation.

Throughout this dispute, the liquidator—Donnelly was backed up by the official union machine.

It was the full time officials who on each occasion urged climb-down and compromise. In the end, it was the full-timer, O'Neill who pushed the "offer they could not refuse" like a used car salesman. Fourteen workers walked out of that meeting, their argument being—quite rightly, that no one has the right to vote an other worker out of a job.

But the salesman style of cutting up of the workforce wasn't finished. Again the union official, Paddy Trahey plus the IDA set up a meeting between the 14 and Dahlstrom Ltd. There Canton offered them five and a half weeks pay for every year

worked provided they relinquished all claims to jobs in Dahlstrom. The union officials pushed it desperately and it was accepted. Canton got a non-union, trouble free factory for the hand-out.

The fate of Storage Technology should be remembered when every other group of workers has to fight redundancies. Liquidators like Donnelly have not built a huge reservoir of experience on how to deal with militant workers.

If we are ever to beat them, we need to do two things: First, always keep the liquidator out. Their aim in taking control of the factory is to demoralise any resistance to redundancy.

Second, never trust the union officials even when they are supporting you—always organise independently.

—MARY SMITH



WATERFORD DOCKS:

Agreement needed

THE recent working of a German fertiliser ship *Mark L* in the Deep Sea section of the Waterford Port has brought all the old antagonisms and bitterness, which dogged the 4-year-old dock dispute, to the surface again.

On Wednesday 22 May 1985 a gang of ATGWU dockers unloaded the ship, thus breaking an official picket on that section of the dock by members of the MPGWW who had paralysed that section of the port for the past four years.

The background and implications of this "negative strike" totally justify this unusual action by the ATGWU dockers. To understand and get some perspective we must look at the reasons behind the strike.

In October/November 1981 four casual dockers—all with long service, 10-17 years—placed a picket on the North Wharf in response to that section's refusal to issue them with union cards and in protest at that section working in gangs below strength.

The section's practise consisted of 18 men working as three gangs instead of the usual 30 men, but at the same time collecting 30 men's wages, which they divided between themselves.

The ATGWU sided with the four casuals, issued them with union cards and demanded that the section bring up the gangs to the full strength of 30 men—that is three gangs of ten and discontinue other malpractices, for example, the right to dictate who works on the docks and to unload all cargoes.

The 18 men in the deep-sea section argued unsuccessfully against the ATGWU's position for some months, then joined the MPGWW in order to get cover to continue as before.

A circular issued by the ATGWU informed its members of this defection and its motives, also of the fact that the MPGWW had entered into dispute with the ATGWU and Clyde Shipping, with who the

ATGWU was signatory union to all agreements in the Waterford Port.

Further, its members were not to be intimidated by claims of an "official MPGWW strike", as the strike was directed against the ATGWU, and should not be kept from normal work as they, the ATGWU, were not in dispute.

The ATGWU argued that as the only union which had always organised workers in the port which it intended to continue doing, another union would weaken its collective strength and its workers would, soon or later, be affected if another group of dockers were allowed to work short-handed and operate malpractices.

In late '83 however, it offered a compromise and way out of the deadlock by offering a two-for-one situation in the deep sea section: two gangs of MPGWW dockers ie 20 men and one gang of ATGWU dockers, ie ten men. With an assurance of *no* non-union practices.

UNEMPLOYMENT

This offer was rejected out of hand by the MPGWW. After four years of dispute with the deep sea section closed, with the acute level of unemployment in the city and the prospect of over 100 jobs—Clyde having negotiated contracts for Waterford port, ie Frozen beef, timber and paper—the ATGWU decided it was time to open the port with or without the MPGWW.

A further important reason for action was that it had been brought to the attention of the ATGWU that a new company had built a private jetty to unload ships at Billberry without union labour, employing just five men—this being the kind of non-union jetties which have sprung up all over England and helped defeat the miners' strike.

The ATGWU were determined not to let this happen. After much debate it was decided to work a fertiliser ship

MILITANTS INSIDE a number of unions have begun to form "Broad Left" groups recently.

The unions include the Postal and Telecommunications Workers Union, the CPSSU, the Local government and Public Services Union and the Irish National Teachers' Organisation. In Dublin Corporation, the LAW group links militants from a number of unions together. These Broad Lefts have succeeded in pulling a good few delegates to fringe meetings at the annual conferences. In the INTO a Broad Left bulletin has been issued.

The formation of the Broad Lefts is to be welcomed. The trade union leaders are now in full retreat before the bosses offensive. They insist on procedures, on respect for the pro-employer Labour Court, on obeying the two tier picket—when the bosses have taken their gloves off. The results have been numerous defeats. The most recent was at the Dungarvan Co-op. There the official, Tony Mansfield, broke the solidarity between craft and general workers by persuading the general workers to pass pickets they had previously respected.

The Broad Left groups can offer a challenge to these cowards. But they have to do so in a way that breaks with a rotten tradition of the left organising in the unions—that of the Workers Party. The WP is obsessed with winning positions at any costs—particularly full time positions. It has instructed its members to hide all trace of their politics, if that is necessary to win them office. As a result, it accepted the need for wage agreements in the '90s; denounced the oil drivers as "ultra left" when the army was breaking their strike; and has consistently supported the two-tier picket system.

Their "infiltration" style

The Broad Left

of organising has yielded some results. A quarter to a third of ITGWU officials are now openly sympathetic to the WP. In a number of white collar unions, the WP official is now making an appearance, usually under the guise of the "research officer". But this style of organising has nothing to do with building in the rank and file for a fight. It justifies the most disgraceful and cynical manoeuvring. By keeping their politics in the closet, the WP can never help to build the strong socialist presence that is necessary for the tough struggles ahead.

ORGANISE

The strongest feature of the new Broad Left groups is that they organise openly. Everyone knows what they stand for; everyone knows their policies. That means no matter how small they start they also have the possibility of growing. But if they are to be successful they need to avoid a number of dangers. The experience in Britain is instructive here.

The British Broad Left organisations originally developed in the engineering union the AUEW in the 60s. But they quickly established themselves as simply vote-getting machines for left candidates for the union leadership. In a number of unions they succeed in winning a left majority. The AUEW itself once had a Broad Left majority, under Hugh (now Lord) Scanlon. More recently, the Civil Service union, the Post Office engineers and the National Union of Rail workers have all had a left leadership.

Unfortunately, they failed to fight when the time came. The left led Civil Service

union refused to defy the Tory law on strike ballots. The Post Office Engineers failed to fight the court injunction on industrial action when they were fighting against privatisation. When the miners were on strike, the lefts in the other unions preferred to wrest a few extra crumbs from the Tories for their own members, rather than campaign for industrial action alongside the miners.

Why these failures? There are two reasons. First, the Broad Lefts believed that a left leadership can substitute for a fighting membership. They thought that by winning elections on a "fighting left programme", they could galvanise the membership from the top. They did not start out from the organisation on the shop floor and the building of real traditions of solidarity.

SELL-OUTS

Second, the Broad Lefts had no understanding of the role of the trade union bureaucracy. All sections of the union bureaucracy—whether left or right officials—are forced into sell-outs. For that reason any left organisation in the union has to build on a tradition of being able to defy the union leaders. Instead of this tradition, the Broad Lefts in Britain argued that the sell-outs would end when there was a strong enough left at the top. It was a recipe for transforming the Broad Lefts into vote-getting machines.

These mistakes must be avoided in Ireland. The key is where the Broad Lefts are orientated. If they think that it is enough to issue a "programme" and launch a

bulletin—they will end up becoming pressure groups on the union machine. If however they look to organising the workplace and gearing themselves to building solidarity with struggles they can succeed in building a genuine rank and file leadership. The Dunnes Stores strike provides them with a great opportunity to take the second road. Every Broad Left group should be organising socials, collections and visits from the Dunnes workers. By doing so they help to re-build a tradition of struggle in their own union.

The Broad Left groups cannot duck the political issues that concern union members either. In the LGPSU, the union official Phil Flynn was recently being witch hunted by Paddy Cooney who called on members to depose him because of his connections with Sinn Fein. Members of the Workers Party and the DSP did their best to oblige. Unfortunately, members of Militant, who have subsequently initiated the Broad Left in the LGPSU shilly shalled. They made wonderful speeches about the need to elect the union official and put them on "the average members wage". But they also failed to stand full square behind Phil Flynn when he was attacked by the Minister for Defence! You cannot build a Broad Left organisation in the LGPSU which may have to attack the compromises of Phil Flynn if you don't know where you stand when he is under attack from the right wing.

It is through looking to the workplace, fighting for solidarity with struggles and through principled politics that the Broad Left groups can go forward.

—KEIRAN ALLEN

REPORTS

Waterford: L&N

100 workers in the L and N supermarket chain in Waterford and Dungarvan have been on strike for the past two months.

The company have introduced new technology and have been selecting workers for redundancy. The workers insist that the company negotiate an agreement for the new technology and any redundancies must be on a last-in, first-out basis.

In spite of the fact that the strike has total support in Waterford where hardly anyone is passing the picket on the giant Hypermarket and that two other stores are closed altogether, L and N are refusing to negotiate a new technology agreement.

It seems likely that L & N, possibly with the covert support of rival supermarket chains, are digging in to prevent the workers achieving a quick, confidence-boosting victory and so limit the power of the shop workers union IDATU in the area.

The strikers have a lot of support in the area. A fund-raising social at the end of June attracted a large attendance and there are some collections coming in from workplaces.

However the union full-timer is refusing to sanction the sort of action that could be key in winning. He has refused to call for mass picketing. But worse still, he has refused to call for picketing

of the L & N warehouse, which is still shifting goods to other L & N stores in New Ross, Wexford and the rest of the south-east. The fact that the warehouse is organised by the ITGWU must not be allowed to be used as an excuse for holding back.

Despite massive support after two months there is the danger of morale collapsing and a compromise settlement being agreed unless pickets are mounted on the warehouse.

Inchicore: Refrigeration workers face dirty tricks

THE DIRTY tricks department of the employers class has reared its ugly head again throughout the ongoing strike at Prince O'Brien Refrigeration workers in Inchicore. This concern is owned by an unpleasant family by the name of Glynn.

On the 25th March an official strike was called when an attempt was made to replace a senior skilled workers by an unskilled young man. Since then a constant picket has been maintained at the plant.

Along the way, the strikers discovered that another Glynn family concern, (Industrial Doors, Walkinstown) was being used to undermine the strike, and promptly placed pickets on this establishment. However, the Glynn's obtained a court injunction against this secondary picketing.

Meanwhile at Inchicore the strikers have been subjected to

wholesale abuse and intimidation. Insults have been hurled out of car windows, vehicles have been driven at high speed at the picketers, and scabs have been taken into the plant in the boots of the bosses' cars.

In one incident, a youngster standing by was dragged along the road by a truck driving through the factory gate. To top it all, the management are now looking for five redundancies. The strikers correctly see this as an attempt to remove the militants.

Only by solidarity action with other workers can this dispute be won. Collections must be organised among fellow union members, (ATGWU and IWU) in other factories. Various parts necessary for the manufacture of the cold rooms are imported from England. Attempts must be made by the unions to black these at the docks. Contact should be made with the factories in England supplying these parts, with the aim of having them blacked that end.

Only by such action can the long-running strike be successful.

Dungarvan: Co-op strike too close to home for officials.

EARLY LAST month ETU electricians in Dungarvan Co-op went on unofficial strike over a productivity claim. The general workers, ATGWU members came out in support.

Their solidarity action was

opposed by both their shop steward, Johnny Organ and Tony Mansfield, the union official.

Last year, both of these went around calling for support for the striking British miners. But like many other right-wing union officials around the country they seemed to think that strike solidarity with workers in another country is a good thing, it shouldn't be practised too near to home. So this year Mansfield told a meeting of the general workers that it wasn't their fight and they shouldn't get involved.

In spite of this the workers did come out in support and joined the ETU picket. The big "ranch" farmers in the area organised delivering milk to the Co-op. The pickets showed their contempt for scabs in the traditional manner—rocks, stones, sand, anything they could lay their hands on was thrown.

The lorries were driven by the farmers themselves especially to strike break. This scabbing came to a head on Tuesday 11th June when one of the lorry drivers decided to confront the pickets on the front gate to divert their attention while other scabs were driving out the back gate.

Matthew Horgan, a well-known slave driver who has kids working for as little as 80p an hour for a twelve hour day drove his lorry straight into the pickets and three of them were taken to hospital.

All the farmers involved were major share-holders in the Co-op and acting like any bosses would if they could get away with it. There was no outcry about "picket line violence" when they ran down 3 strikers. But then there has always been one law for workers and one for the bosses.

—DUNGARVAN SWM

at the deep sea section in an attempt to bring the dissident dockers to negotiate and find a settlement. If they refused and placed pickets, these would be passed as they were the negative use of the picket,

the traditional weapon of trade unionists.

For us socialists, disputes between workers, as opposed to worker versus boss are always sad. As socialists we always encourage maximum

unity between workers. It seems to us, however, that the only winners in this fratricidal dispute are at the end of the day the employers—witness already the employers' demands to reduce gangs

and cut wage levels before full resumption of work.

We call on both sides to conclude an agreement, which ensure proper manning levels and proper trade union practices in the future.

Socialist Worker

On the basis of recent declines, the LP can sweep away its hopes for the future

After a local election

Who will replace Labour?

THE RECENT local elections in the South showed one thing clearly: the Irish Labour Party is in terminal decline. A brief look at the figures shows this. In 1968, the Labour Party won 18% of the vote on the basis of left wing rhetoric. The party leaders took fright at the hornets nest that their own rhetoric stirred up. They steered the party towards coalition throughout the 70s

and 80s. They have paid dearly. Today their vote stands at a mere 7.8%.

DECLINE

But the decline is even more dramatic in Dublin. In 1968, the party won almost 30% of the vote. Now less than one in ten voters support it in the city. In a number of predominantly working class constituencies

it takes third place to Sinn Fein and the Workers Party. In Cabra and Finglas, the heart of the Dublin working class, it won less than 5% of the vote.

The decline of the Labour Party is important for all socialists. Every capitalist society has to find some mechanism for negotiating with the working class. And although class consciousness was smothered in this country

from the thirties with the rise of Fianna Fail, there was still almost a quarter of the working class prepared to identify with Labour.

EMIGRATION

In the 40s and 50s, that party bore all the hallmarks of defeat and emigration. It rivalled the bitter anti-communism of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael and was miser-

able even in reformist terms. But it was still the mechanism by which the defeated trade union movement looked to negotiate with the system.

The decline of Labour represents a threat to the stability of the whole system in the longer term. It immediately raises the question of which party to the left of Labour can replace it. The weakening of the organised basis of reformism, the chal-

lenge to it from parties which pretend to be more left will open up a period of instability in working class politics that will also create an audience for more revolutionary ideas. That is why some strange individuals are beginning to bemoan the fall of Labour. Thus, the liberal Sunday Tribune is now very worried that the cause of socialism might fall into more "sinister and violent hands" if Labour disappears.

Who will replace Labour?

The question is wide open. Just look at some of the electoral results from around the country. In Limerick the DSP and even PD made gains; in Sligo the Connolly Youth member Declan Bree topped the poll; in Galway the Workers Party came from nowhere to trounce the left trendy, Michael D Higgins. The fact is that anyone who stands for the defence of working class interests stands a chance.

There is no political sentiment in the working class generally that distinguishes the very different politics of the left parties. Unfortunately, it is still a question of which candidates have a record of community service. That in turn reflects the mood of defeat in the working class.

But what of the main contenders—Sinn Fein and the Workers Party? Each one has a major difficulty in building themselves as mass parties.

First, Sinn Fein. The victories of Sinn Fein in this election were pre-dominantly in the rural areas—around Monaghan and Leitrim. It was the openly right wing elements in the party that fared the best. This in turn means that the left wingers will feel more inclined not to break with them. But this only adds to the problem for Sinn Fein—and there is no solution to it for republicans.

DISILLUSIONMENT

Namely, it cannot pick up on disillusionment with Labour as long as it is not organised along class lines. It can win pockets of support in Dublin but it cannot offer a mass alternative without class politics.

The Workers Party pretend to be based on class lines. That is why it did extremely well in Dublin and the provincial towns, where Sinn Fein did badly. But the party is based on lies. It wins votes by the softest brand of populism—but internally it is organised as a neo-Stalinist party. It is a trick that works in a period of defeat when the party does not have to confront major issues before a mass audience. But it can never build an alternative.

Revolutionaries look on election results only as a rough barometer to the state of consciousness in the working class. Almost every election since the 1980s has pointed to the same trend—the decline of Labour and the inability of Sinn Fein or the Workers Party to replace it. Those who do not hold a stages view of how the Irish working class will develop, have no reason for pessimism.

On the contrary, we know that in a period of struggle the absence of a mass reformist republican party will create opportunities for revolutionary politics. But those politics will be tested on the factory floor and on the picket lines—rather than the ballot box.

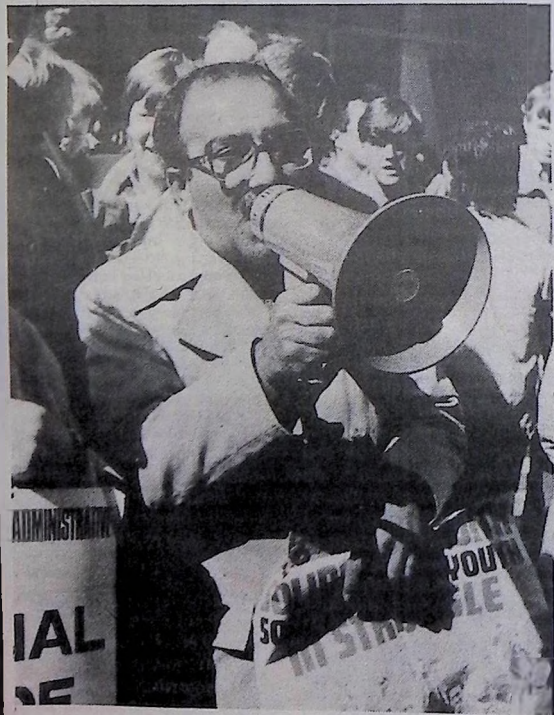
Which is why it is so important to begin the building of the revolutionary Marxist alternative, that is open and independent, so that it can challenge the reformists and the republicans in the years ahead.

—KIERAN ALLEN



ONE YEAR ON STRIKE

Support the Dunnes Workers
Leaflet/Picket Friday 19th July 7-9pm
Dunnes Crumlin Shopping Centre
Organised Dublin South SWM



Kader Asmal of Irish Anti-Apartheid

Dunnes out a year

THIS month, the strikers from Dunnes Stores Henry Street Dublin store are visiting South Africa with Church and Trade Union leaders from that country.

The struggle of these eleven workers who—in accordance with their union's policy—refused to handle South African goods and who are now fighting for their jobs has been recognised and applauded by opponents of racism from far and wide.

This month also marks the date one year ago—19 July 1984—when their strike began.

These two facts put together mark a poignant irony: that in its year's duration this strike, that has lifted eleven shop workers to the rank of international celebrities, has been unable to shut down one branch of a supermarket chain, has been unable to win re-instatement for workers implementing official union policy.

Socialist Worker has said before that the reason for this is that the sympathy of respectable public opinion does not win disputes—only the power of workers' in action can do that. The power of sympathetic action is worth more than all the good Bishop Tutu's benedictions and John Hume's windy rhetoric.

SOLIDARITY

And it must be sadly recorded that NO real attempt to spread the strike, black the suppliers and harness the support of workers' solidarity has been made by those with the power to make it happen.

We call—again—for a rank-and-file campaign to build the sort of support that can win this strike. We pledge ourselves to work alongside any others that share that determination. The IDATU

should make the call—or recognise its union policy as empty resolution mongering.

There is no point waiting for ICTU to wake up—their's is the sleep of the dead.

In the absence of a vigorous campaign from IDATU—and there has been none so far—the strikers should make the call.

Supporters of Socialist Worker and the SWM have organised benefit socials in Waterford, Dundalk, Cork and Dublin for the strikers, organised workplace collections where this has been possible. But we recognise this is a drop in the ocean.

To make an impact all those prepared to create a rank-and-file support campaign must be mobilised.

We don't want the Dunnes strikers to be martyrs on the altar of white liberal conscience. We want them to be the people that fought industrially a political fight—and won!