

# Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

North and South, 1/2 million on the dole pay...

# THE PRICE OF PROFIT

AS DOLE queues grow even longer and workers' living standards fall still further, it becomes ever more obvious that the price of profit is just too high. With the economic crisis affecting every aspect of capitalism, the boss class is determined that the working class will continue to pay for a crisis which is not of our making.

We are paying the price of the bosses' profits through spiralling unemployment. Unemployment in the Six Counties in July 1986 was *five times* that of 1974—129,600 this year as opposed to 27,300 in 1974. Fifty-six per cent of unemployed men and 31 per cent of women have been out of work for a year or more. In the South, the latest official figures now show a quarter of a million workers on the dole.

Mass unemployment, and pay levels as low as many "Third World" countries, ensure that over two million people on this island live in what even the ruling class has to acknowledge as poverty. Overcrowding, housing unfit for human habitation, children suffering from vitamin deficiencies because of malnourishment and an inability to cope with mounting gas, electricity and rent arrears is the reality of life for more than half the Irish working class.

Such low standards of living and high levels of debt are the price of the bosses' profit. A quick glance at the earnings of some Irish bosses show their side of the deal: the Earl of Iveagh, for example, earned £343,000 in 1984 as a director of Guinness; in the same year, a director of the Intasan Travel Company earned £778,000 while the man who owns 57 varieties of companies, Tony O'Reilly, earns well over a million a year from his various jobs.

It is to line the pockets of parasites like these that working class people face the daily grind of unemployment or long hours of hard work for low pay. It is to allow them to drink champagne that working class kids have to drink watered milk.

But it doesn't have to be like this. The working class shouldn't, and doesn't have to pay for our rulers' crisis. We don't have to because the working class has the power to change society—to change it from one where we pay the too high price of the bosses' profits to a society where wealth is produced for people's needs and where those needs come before any thought of profit—in short, a socialist society.



Unemployment breeds poverty

photo: DEREK SPEIRS (Report)

**INSIDE: why the economy is banjaxed - pages 6&7**



# Ian Paisley's Nazi-NF sidekicks



DESPITE THE National Front's humiliating defeat by the left in 1984's loyalist approved demonstration in Coleraine, the NF are back in Northern Ireland; and once again they have been given their head by the Ulster Unionists.

Leading NF members David Kerr and John Field have appeared alongside Ian Paisley at demonstrations opposing the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Kerr is an active member of the Ulster Clubs and a former election agent for Independent Unionist, Nelson McCausland. He first contacted the NF in 1978, and later became involved in the distribution of the racist publication—"Ulster Sentinel".

The other fascist leader, John Field, now lives in Newtownabbey with Kerr's sister (whom he plans to marry in the local Orange hall). Field recently left the Civil Service to become a full-time "political soldier", and has for many years been the main link between the fascist parties in Britain and the UUF and UDA in the North.

Now Field prefers to concentrate on the "National Revolution" which he claims has just begun in Ulster.

In a recent issue of the "New Statesman", NF leader Nick Griffin explained why

they are putting so much energy into the North. "Our British Revolution will start in Ulster. We must look on the idea of an independent Ulster... as the first liberated zone of our future Britain... free from mass immigration and free from repressive race laws"—the repressive race laws he refers to are, of course the anti-racist laws, not the racist immigration control laws which socialists oppose.

The Front have recently stated that Sinn Fein and anyone who votes for them, are legitimate targets in their war against the Anglo-Irish agreement. It is also known that groups of hand-picked NF members are at present in the province for various kinds of "training"—mainly in intimidation, sectarian violence and hate-mongering.

Perhaps one of the most frightening aspects of the Front's new offensive is the revelation by David Osbourne, ex NF organiser, that he and other Neo-Nazi activists were granted permission by the RUC to carry legally held weapons.

Meanwhile the Ulster Clubs are still quite happy to welcome the fascists into their organisation and DUP deputy Peter Robinson, has openly refused to disassociate his party from the National Front.

## Students fight Fowler's cuts

STUDENTS FROM Queens University, Belfast and the University of Ulster staged one day strikes on 30th October and 12th November in an ongoing campaign against the latest government cuts in education, the health services and the social services.

Similar action is being taken by students in the South. QUB alone will have to endure financial cuts of £5.2 million over the next few years. The practical effects will be a loss of between 120 and 150 jobs for ASTMS union members; higher student/staff ratios; less books and periodicals in the library; the closure of whole departments and subject areas, and a definite move by Queen's towards technological subjects at the expense of the Arts, Languages and Humanities. In Belfast rents this year

have gone up to 10% (4% in university accommodation) as landlords try to recoup lost income due to the removal of the rated letting fees.

Heating and fuel costs have gone up and Norman Fowler has proposed to put an end to housing benefits and summer "income" dole. To cover all these grants have increased by only 2%.

The reduction of grants in real terms will have greatest effect on working class students who will not have the same financial backing as their middle or upper class counterparts.

Popular support needs to be mobilised if the students are to meet with any success.

As the QUB "Union News" states, "We must stop the government prioritising profits before people. Tax the rich, not education!"

—STEPHEN BLOOMER

## Fighting attacks in Ballymun

300 PEOPLE attended a meeting in Ballymun following rapes and attacks on women in the area. The meeting talked about violence against women in general and slammed the sensationalist trash coming from the bosses' press.

A suggestion that the NUJ should be approached with a view to doing something about it was made.

It is hard for anyone to feel absolutely safe in an area with no proper lighting or footpaths. When lifts aren't working, people are faced with climbing as many as 15 flights of stairs, sometimes in the dark.

There are over 300 vacant flats many of which

have been allowed to deteriorate by the Corpo. This creates a cold environment thus making a cry for help a problem.

If those in authority were in any way concerned about the recent rapes, they would have concentrated on these facts. Rather they choose to profit from it with sensational headlines.

It is therefore obvious that if people are to do something about the neglect of their area, they will have to rely on their own ability to organise and fight for proper services that work.

—MICK BERRY

## The racism of sport

WHEN ZOLA BUDD wanted to run for Britain, she was welcomed with open arms and given a British passport. Those of us who protested were told that we should not bring politics into sport and that the colour of her skin had nothing to do with the way she was treated.

The hypocrisy of that episode was shown up recently in relation to a new Derry City Football Club player.

Harris Cheue is another South African sportsperson who wants to get involved in more mainstream sport. Cheue, however, is black.

Because he is black, he was welcomed at Heathrow by British immigration officials who

subjected him to 28 hours intense interrogation,

The immigration officials knew that he was coming to the North to play for Derry but said he "didn't have the right papers". There's nothing new about this racist harassment of black Derry City players, whatever country they come from. Brazilian Nelson da Silva was last year grilled for four hours at Heathrow while another Brazilian, Carlos da Silva, who had hoped to join Derry City was given such a hostile reception by immigration officials at Heathrow that he changed his mind about wanting to come to Derry.

# Will the cops move against businessmen's strongman?

ON SATURDAY 25th October, two 15 year old youths, Paul Osborne of Forth Road and Alan Rooney of Bargey Road were standing near a bus stop outside the Wharf Tavern, a large Public House in the East Wall area.

It was shortly before 9.00 pm and the youths had only minutes previously finished a game of snooker in a nearby hall run specifically for local residents.

A silver Toyota Corolla Estate circling the area had come to the attention of the two young lads. Suddenly, the car drove up on the path, attempting to run them down. The boys ran. Two men jumped from the car, one wearing a balaclava and the other unrecognising his head with some sort of hood.

Alan Rooney was struck over the head with an iron bar and fell to the ground unconscious. The similarly clad figures then caught Paul Osborne, one holding him

while the other proceeded to smash his knees with a hammer. The car and its occupants immediately departed the scene. The boys were rushed to the Richmond Hospital and young Paul was to spend the next three weeks on crutches.

The next evening, a 'phone call was received by Paul's sister Sharon, from someone with an English accent, threatening various members of the family that they would be "severely dealt with".

### INNOCENT

The following Wednesday, an anonymous letter was received by the father of each of the two boys. In the letter to Mr. Rooney it was stated that a mistake had been made, that his son was innocent, but warning him to keep out of

"bad company". The anonymous letter addressed to Mr George Osborne, containing various spelling and grammatical mistakes, made allegations concerning stolen goods, threatened two more of his sons and demanded payment of £1,200. The assaults, threats, and other incidents were reported to Store Street, Garda Station.

The two assaulted youths, plus two other local lads, Paul O'Keefe and Anthony O'Callaghan, who witnessed the assaults, identified the driver of the car as a well known individual in the locality, who "hires out" various kinds of "guard-dogs" to local business premises, and some in the Ballybough area, for £70 weekly.

The individual concerned and some of his associates have been questioned by the Gardai, though he is known to boast of his "connections in the police". He claims to train dogs for the police.

At the present time all files

and records are with the Dublin Public Prosecutor, pending enquiries. With everything loaded against working class people, particularly those who are unemployed, it will be very interesting to see if there is in fact "one law for all".

### VIGILANTE

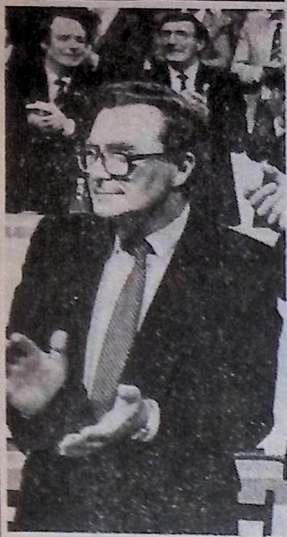
The individual in question, well-known locally as being engaged in the "security business", has uttered various "Mafia-style" contract threats against several local residents. As the self-appointed vigilante style "Charles Bronson" of the area, motivated by nothing except his own personal financial gain, the East Wall area, and society in general, would be better off without individuals of the calibre of our "security expert".

Osborne

Take this serious. If the stolen goods are not returned to the various premises plus £ 1200.00 for damages caused by your two sons namely Allen and John. They will be severely dealt with and England will not save them. The money may be given with this letter to any of the premises on East Road.

TAKE HEED





## DISASTER OR STRIKE?

THE SOUTHERN Minister for Defence, Paddy O'Toole, last month explained his lack of commitment to Irish neutrality by explaining that the Free State army couldn't defend the country if it had to and that everyone now regarded the army as no more than something to be called on in the event of a natural disaster or a strike.

His attitude to the use of the army as strike-breakers reflects the casual way in which the ruling class can now bring in their military scabs.

In the last year alone, army scabs have been used against Dublin and Cork Corporation workers and in the Agricultural Inspectors strike.

None of these scabbing operations have brought more than a whimper of protest from the trade union movement. This lack of a militant response to the official use of scabs is undermining the power of the organised working class.

The union leadership is not about to do anything to stop this rot. It is up to rank and file workers themselves to organise now and stop any further attempts to use army scabs through mass pickets and the immediate spreading of any strike where the army is brought in.

## DUNNES CAUGHT CHANGING LABELS

DUNNES stores in Belfast and Derry were fined recently for selling South African oranges and grapefruit with labels claiming they were from Cyprus, Israel and the USA.

Obviously, the strike in the Henry Street branch in Dublin and the campaign to ban the sale of all South African goods has had some effect.

So far, this has only come to light in Derry and Belfast. But no doubt it's happening in many other stores and not just Dunnes, despite the voluntary agreement not to sell South African produce,

# WE THINK

## Anglo-Irish hazards

IN THE aftermath of the Anniversary of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, it is plain that the Agreement has so far failed.

For the nationalist working class, the deal has been all stick and no carrot. Far from cleaning up the RUC act, the Agreement has meant increased harassment and repression for Catholics. Strip-searching, supergrasses and plastic bullets continue to be used.

Far from diminishing, loyalist sectarianism has clearly increased. Hundreds of Catholic families have been intimidated or burnt out of their homes. Fierce intimidation has returned to workplaces like Shorts and the shipyard and there have been

fourteen sectarian murders.

Meanwhile the Inter-Governmental Conference has failed to come up with a single solid reform.

Fitzgerald, Hume, King and Barry clutch at any straw to claim the deal has brought major improvements in the lives of Northern Catholics. Unable to reform the Diplock Courts or to end discrimination, they herald the demolition of the Divis and Rossville flats—long fought for by the residents—as a major advance which would not have happened without the Accord.

Despite the realities of the situation, many working class people, North and South, believe the ruling class lies



that the deal has improved the lives of nationalist working class. There is a feeling that since Loyalists are kicking up such a fuss, there must be something in it. It is not difficult to see why. There has been no campaign of opposition to the Agreement which points to the source of the North's problems—British imperialism and the sectarian Northern state—and which attempts to mobilise the nationalist and southern

working class against the deal.

The "Northern Nationalists Conference" held in West Belfast on the 16th November (see page 12 for report) provided an opportunity to lay the basis for such a campaign.

It was plain at the Conference, however, that Sinn Fein is not interested in an active campaign or at least not at present. And without Sinn Fein's support, proposals for a campaign will be voted

down.

But an anti-imperialist campaign, based on working class action, against the Agreement is urgently needed.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement offers nothing to Northern Catholics. Nonetheless if the Accord collapses under the weight of Loyalist reaction, while the nationalist working class looks passively on, it would be a dangerous victory for the forces of sectarian bigotry.

# AIDS: the real scandal

ACQUIRED IMMUNE Deficiency Syndrome, Aids, seems to have no bounds to its destructive potential. But fighting the disease is possible. It depends on clearing away the bigotry that is compounding the problem.

That bigotry is all the worse in the Twenty-Six Counties where sex between men is still illegal. The result is that although nearly 500 people in the South have been shown to have been exposed to the virus, the Health Education Bureau has produced only one booklet on the subject.

That booklet was not any real use in stopping the spread of the disease since it refused to encourage the "safe sex" practices promoted by groups like Gay Health Action.

The AIDS virus was first isolated in 1981 but it took three years for health authorities North or South to make any real response. It was late 1985 before the DHSS started treating blood supplies to kill the virus. The Southern Dept. of Health left it as late to treat imported blood products. These measures came too late however for 99 of the 143 Irish haemophiliacs who contacted the virus through blood transfusions, one of whom has already died of AIDS.

To date ten Irish people have died of AIDS—seven in the South and three in the Six Counties. Yet many Health Boards in the Twenty-Six Counties have still not set up testing units which can find out whether antibodies are present in an individual's blood. Some large towns like Limerick and Waterford, have no facilities at all for dealing with AIDS.

When the Southern Health Minister, Barry Desmond and his Northern counterpart, Richard Needham met recently in Belfast as part of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, they made it clear that



A scene from the American film *Buddies* about coming to terms with AIDS

they put the blame for the spread of AIDS on gays and "promiscuity". This idea, which has great popularity in the media generally, is based on the stereotypical view of gays as an insignificant minority in Irish society. In fact, about ten percent of men are gay and it is estimated that about one third of adult men have had a homosexual relationship at some point in their lives.

The idea that the disease spreads because too many people and too many gays in particular, are having sex with too many people springs from the ruling class idea that sex should be confined to one faithful marriage—something to be endured, not enjoyed, its sole purpose to bring children into the world. This view puts sex beyond the pale, since it is in no way connected to reproduction. It must, according to right-wing

moralists, from the Pope to Ian Paisley, be unnatural. In fact, in every age, regardless of public morality, sex has been enjoyed, overtly or covertly, by as many people as have the opportunity. Humans have a capacity to enjoy sex way beyond what is required to reproduce the species. And in different societies homosexuality often had equal status with heterosexuality. So neither heterosexual nor homosexual promiscuity is in any way unnatural.

### SUFFERED

It's interesting to see that although lesbians are one group in society who are not at much risk from AIDS, they have suffered under the same reactionary attack

as gay men.

The message is beginning to get across now that AIDS is not confined to the gay community. But the idea that it is a "plague" that nothing can be done about still persists.

"Plagues" are nothing new. Millions were wiped out by epidemics in the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. Millions more died of influenza in the aftermath of the First World War. As one Dublin doctor said in a recent issue of *Magill* magazine, "Aids is not the new plague, it's the new syphilis. Syphilis was a major problem at the end of the last century, but it was not a massive problem".

And why have the drug companies not come up with a cure for the disease? As all too often in capitalist society, the reason is simply profit. At a recent

conference on AIDS, drug companies admitted that they had not taken AIDS seriously while it was regarded as a "minority" disease. Robert Nowinski of the US company Genetic Systems explained "Initially our consultants viewed this very conservatively and our investment bankers were caught in between. When the amount of infection showed up at an estimated one million, that's when the perception changed".

And the Wellcome company which has developed the drug AZT explained why they weren't worried that the drug only suppresses the symptoms of the disease, instead of curing it.

"In the drug world", said Wellcome's Dr. Barry, "treating large numbers of people for life means very big earnings".

GORETTI HORGAN



INTERNATIONAL

# The truth behind Jumbo bomb plot



More people died in this air raid on Beirut than in 15 years of PLO attacks in Israel

## SYRIA: what it's up to

**SYRIA is seen today as the most powerful state promoting Arab nationalism.**

President Assad has long claimed to support the Palestinians' struggle to win back their homeland and the cause of Arab independence from US and western European imperialism.

But beneath Assad's rhetoric lurks straightforward power-building in an extremely wealthy part of the world.

This is obvious from

Syria's operations in the Lebanon. It has twice taken control of the country following civil wars and invasions by Israeli forces.

### Attacked

On both occasions Palestinian forces in the Lebanon have been bloodily attacked and forced to flee. Only two years ago Assad tried to force a major split in the PLO and isolate its leader, Yasser Arafat.

Far from sending its forces in to support the Palestinians, Syria has used the strife in the Lebanon to carve out a power base.

At the same time it has, despite the stream of insults and accusations, been extremely careful not to start an all-out confrontation with Israel.

Such a war with Israel would be both costly and a diversion from the main aim—to become the most powerful Arab country.

OVER THE last few months the British and Irish media have been ranting and raving about the attempted bombing of an Israeli jumbo jet at Heathrow Airport in April last year.

When the man responsible for the plot was convicted we were again subjected to the usual horror stories about psychopathic, blood-thirsty terrorists willing to kill their pregnant girlfriends to wreak

havoc on the peace-loving nations of the western world.

This particular fit of outrage centred on a man called Nazal Hindawi who was instrumental in attempting to place a three-and-a-half pound bomb on board the El Al flight from London to Tel Aviv. But here the similarity with other attacks on Israeli civil aircraft end because Hindawi was allegedly working for the Syrian government and

had received, it was claimed, practical help from the Syrian embassy in London. It appears also that the British government's communications centre at GCHQ Cheltenham had intercepted telephone messages to the Syrian embassy warning them of the bomb plot two months before the incident at Heathrow.

Also Hindawi was no naive young Palestinian fighting for the restoration of Palestine.

He was a Jordanian allegedly working for the Syrian intelligence services and at one time even working for the Israeli secret service, Mossad.

### INCIDENTS

From the media coverage of this and other incidents relating to the Middle East it would appear that if it wasn't

for the PLO and other such organisations peace would return to the Middle East. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Recently an authoritative Israeli newspaper "Ha'aretz" estimated that in 15 years, from 1967 to 1982 the PLO killed 282 Israeli citizens—many fewer than the 3,000 killed in Israel's 10 minute bombing raid over Beirut in July 1982. This gives a good

indication of exactly where the violence comes from.

Despite the complications of the Hindawi affair what is clear is that it is not the Hindawi's of this world who are responsible for the situation in the Middle East.

The blame for the death and destruction in that part of the world lies with the terrorist state of Israel and its US backers.

SEAN McVEIGH

# Why Reagan lied about secret Iran arms deal



Reagan the liar.

WE GAVE arms to Iran, said Ronald Reagan, to try and win friends. It was, he added, pure coincidence that an American hostage was released hours after the shipment arrived.

These revelations that secret White House envoys have been rearming Iran, and the feeble "excuses" offered as explanation, have rocked the Reagan presidency.

But their significance is deeper. They are the perfect illustration of superpower hypocrisy, of how the most loudly trumpeted "principles" are junked overnight for crude expediency.

On his first day as President of the United States Ronald Reagan warned Iran, "our policy will be one of swift and effective retribution".

The retribution was to be for the overthrow of the American backed Shah and the seizure of hostages in the American embassy in the Iranian capital, Tehran.

Indeed, in the 1980

Presidential election, "Nuke Iran" badges often rested alongside "Vote Reagan" stickers on Republican lapels.

Reagan's abuse of Iran has continued unabated since he entered the White House. But the official rhetoric has always differed from reality.

### NIGHTMARE

The Americans imposed an economic boycott of Iran in January 1981 and cajoled western European governments to join in. But, according to "Time" magazine, "Within a week 300 US and west European companies offered to sell Iran arms and banned goods".

For Reagan though, the issue was simple. Back in 1983 he first coined the phrase, repeated so often since, "state sponsored terrorism". The state he had in mind was Iran.

Three years later something

has changed—and it's not the regime in Iran. The Gulf War, the nightmare conflict which began when Iraq, with a nod and a wink from Washington, invaded Iran six years ago, may soon be over.

Back in 1983, "Time" magazine could quote top US State Department officials as saying "We don't give a damn as long as Iran-Iraq carnage does not affect our allies or the balance of power".

Neither did European NATO governments mind, nor the Russian government. They were all backing Iraq diplomatically and with weapons.

But, not to miss out on a lucrative market, they sold, through proxies, weapons to Iran too. The US channelled its weapons via Israel, the Russians via Vietnam.

Half a million dead and 220,000 million dollars later, the American authorities are having second thoughts.

This week the authoritative

"Wall Street Journal" quoted a senior administration official as saying that analysts were predicting an Iranian victory.

"The fix was in to hedge our bets and deal with the Ayatollah," the official explained. "They were afraid Iraq would lose, and if the Iranians were going to be on the winning side, we should be positioned".

Being "positioned" first meant whipping up millions of Americans into a frenzy of hatred against Iran and anything Arab. Now it means arming people you previously called murderers.

British Prime Minister Thatcher has chimed in supporting Reagan: "I believe implicitly in the President's total integrity on the subject" she says.

These are the people with the brass neck to hypocritically condemn the PLO and the IRA. The attitudes struck in public by Reagan and his friends stand revealed as self-serving humbug.



## OUR HISTORY

# The myth of Eastern Bloc "socialism" shattered!

By  
Robert Bollard

IN A GLORIOUS leap our people fought the Rakosist regime. They conquered freedom and independence for our country. We can say with assurance that those who prepared this rising were from our ranks.

It was communists, writers, journalists, students, the youth of the Petofi circle and, by the thousands, workers, peasants, old militants unjustly imprisoned, who fought against the despotism of Rakosi and against political banditry.

We are proud of you, who took your proper place in the armed uprising.

These words in praise of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 are one of the most curious monuments to hypocrisy in the history of working class revolt.

For they came from the mouth of Janos Kadar, the puppet of the Russians who drowned that revolution in blood and who was made in turn the head of the state Russian tanks had bulldozed back to normality.

He still rules today.

Yet the words are also coming from the mouth of someone who had every motive to prove the opposite, stunning proof that the Hungarian Revolution was a genuine workers' uprising.

It was a workers' revolution after the grand pattern of Russia 1917 or Spain 1936, a workers' revolution that proved once and for all that Hungary, and all the other so-called "socialist" countries of the Eastern Bloc, have nothing to do with socialism.

Throughout the Eastern Europe the mid 1950s were years of turmoil and uncertainty.

The death of Stalin in 1953 had helped fuel new hope of liberalisation, of an end to police terror, fierce repression, and a rigidly enforced austerity.

The ruling bureaucracy responded unevenly to the pressures for reform, fighting among themselves over how far to go and how quickly, granting reforms and then taking them back.

In Hungary the Rakosi government had proved more resistant to the demand for reforms than most in the Eastern Bloc. But by 1956 the pressure for reform was growing stronger.

Rakosi was removed from office only to be replaced by his henchman Gero.

A dissident circle of young communists, the Petofi Circle, held meetings that sometimes attracted thousands of mainly middle class people to protest at the behaviour of the regime.

On 22 October student meetings were held calling for a demonstration in the capital, Budapest, the following day.

The demonstration was to be held in "solidarity with our Polish brothers" referring to the workers who were on trial in Poland at the time for their part in riots at Poznan earlier in the year.

Such a demonstration was unheard of. According to one observer, "A certain restlessness reigned throughout the capital, whose walls, trees and hoardings were covered with the students placards which passersby discussed passionately".

The march was banned by the government, but nevertheless 100,000 turned out.

It was enormous. It was also peaceful and as respectable as it is possible for an illegal march to be. Certainly none of the participants turned out in the expectation of starting a revolution.

The main demand was simply for the replacement of the hard-line Gero with Imre Nagy, a communist leader with a more liberal reputation.

As the day went on the march swelled with more working class elements and the demands became more extreme. Some demonstrators began to demand, "out with the Russians!" and "Death to Rakosi!".

The radio news that afternoon attacked the march, infuriating a section of the crowd who marched on the radio station demanding a right of reply.

Another section demolished the huge statue of Stalin in the City Park. All that was left of him were a pair of giant stone boots.

Then something happened which set light to this mass tinder of discontent. One of the hated AVH security police, guarding the radio station, fired a machine gun into the crowd.

A few workers fell dead. But the rest fought back with stones, petrol bombs and the odd gun.

The demonstration contained a representative slice of the population of Budapest. It included many ordinary police and soldiers.

A truck load of soldiers appeared outside the radio station. Their weapons were distributed to the workers and put to immediate use. Before long the fighting had spread throughout the city.

## INSURGENTS

By a thousand ways the workers began to obtain guns. Barricades were thrown up. Civilian police and soldiers handed over their weapons to the workers.

Army tanks appeared flying Hungarian flags on the side of the insurgents.

Within days the situation was transformed. Nagy was added to the government and Gero was replaced by the "reformer" Kadar.

But as Russian tanks appeared in the city the people fought on. In fact the revolution deepened with a general strike in Budapest and as the movement began to spread to the provinces, a Yugoslav reporter described the situation: "Thousands of people have obtained arms by disarming soldiers and militia men.

"Some of these soldiers and militia men have been fraternising with the embittered and dissatisfied masses. . . .

# HUNGARY 1956

According to eye-witness reports the authorities are paralysed, unable to stop the bloody events."

By 26 October however a new element emerged. Into the vacuum left by the collapse of the state authority stepped new bodies of order, workers' councils, based on the workplaces. This revolution, against a supposedly "Leninist" dictatorship began to take on the classic form described by Lenin in his pamphlet "The State and Revolution", with democratic workers' councils counterposed to the crumbling power of the ruling elite.

As the official radio in Budapest reported on 27 October: "Workers' councils have been formed in numerous factories. . . Workers councils have been formed in the Duma Shoe factory, in the cotton spinning mill, in the Goldberger textile factory, in the Tancsics leather factory. . ."

And the list went on. The workers were beginning to seize control of events. Only the Russian tanks held them back from total victory.

Peter Fryer, a correspondent for the "Daily Worker", the paper of the British Communist Party, issued this report that the party back home refused to print.

"Of course as in every revolution "from below" there was too much talking, arguing, bickering, coming and going, froth, excitement, agitation, ferment.

"That is one side of the picture. The other is the emergence to leading positions of ordinary men, women and youths, whom the AVH domination had submerged. The revolution thrust them forward, aroused their civic pride and latent genius for organisation, set them at work to build democracy out of the ruins of bureaucracy."

On October 31 Russian tanks were withdrawn from the cities of Hungary. The next day Kadar announced over the radio that "In their glorious uprising our people have shaken off the Rakosi regime."

But the regime and its Russian overlords were merely regrouping. Propoganda against the "fascist counter-revolution" continued throughout the Eastern Bloc. Battle-weary and demoralised Russian troops were replaced with fresh troops.

On Sunday 4 November the inhabitants of Budapest, woke to the sound of artillery fire. Russian tanks poured into the city and within hours occupied all strategic points.

The Hungarian people fought back with rifles, pistols, the occasional machine gun, but overwhelmingly with petrol



The battle on the street was backed up with a mighty general strike.

bombs.

The centre of resistance was the great industrial complexes. The battle on the streets was backed up with a mighty general strike.

In the town of Csepel, posters answered the lies of the Moscow press: "The forty thousand aristocrats and fascists of the Csepel works strike on!"

The Russians did not dare risk contaminating their troops through contact with the revolutionary workers, so they relied almost solely on tanks.

Buildings harbouring resistance were shelled to rubble. Whole working class districts were destroyed in this way, with the same barbarity that has always been shown by ruling classes when they launch a counter-revolution.

Twenty thousand died in this

onslaught, but the workers fought on. In the working class districts resistance continued for a full week.

As one by one the radio stations fell, desperate pleas for help were sent to the outside world. But the western powers showed clearly whose side they were on.

US President Eisenhower assured the Kremlin, "We have never urged nor argued for any kind of armed revolt. . . the US does not now and never has advocated armed rebellion by an unarmed people."

Resistance on the streets was crushed. But it proved harder to conquer the working class.

The workers' councils continued to challenge the government. Twice, once in November and once in December, the regime was faced with

general strikes.

But as long as the regime militarily dominated the streets, all the councils could do was play for time.

They had no perspective of taking the offensive, and so, after a year of gradually diminishing resistance, the councils dissolved themselves on November 25 1957.

As long as the revolution was confined to Hungary the Russians could contain and eventually crush it. The Stalinist monolith of Eastern Europe will finally crumble only when resistance is no longer confined to one country.

This didn't happen in Hungary in 1956. Nevertheless, the workers of Hungary achieved a great deal.

They shattered the myth of Eastern Bloc "socialism" and in doing so they gave a glimpse of what real socialism is — workers' power.



# What has gone wrong with the Irish economy?

"A nation of begrudgers and hypocrites" is how Fine Gael Minister, Austin Deasy has described us. The political establishment has come up with a new explanation of our economic ills—the Irish working class themselves. They are too 'greedy', too 'short-sighted' and most of all 'begrudging to those who make profits'. It is, apparently these attitudes that has caused the likes of Ambrose McInerneys, the building boss, to shift his investments to Saudi Arabia or Spain; In this article, Kieran Allen looks at what's gone wrong in the Southern economy and shows where the real blame lies.

*Just how serious are the problems facing Southern Irish capitalists? Are they just bluffing to get us to accept lower wages?*

Socialists should not underestimate the problems. From a working class standpoint, the crisis in the system has meant savage attacks. Unemployment has shot up from a total of 7% of the workforce to today's figure of 12%. The total numbers at work has actually gone down by 46,000. And this does not even take into account the figures for emigration. Thousands of young Irish men and women are descending on London and New York with useless bits of paper called ANCO courses. It does no more than fit them up for a job on a building site or the kitchens of big restaurants.

We should remember that this massive increase in unemployment and emigration happened at the same time as wages have been cut back.

Economists reckon that real wages fell by 15% over the last five years. They used to tell us that every wage increase priced someone out of a job. In fact all that has happened is that every time we accept a 'sacrifice', they come back for more. And still it

doesn't get the system to move.

There is a crisis in business confidence. Capitalists no longer believe that they can make the same rate of profit from manufacturing as before. This particularly affects native Irish industrialists. Figures show that profit margins have dropped from an average rate of 9% in 1978 to 2.4% in 1982. It now pays the rich to leave their money in government bonds, and assorted finance houses where they are guaranteed a high interest rate.

The only problem is that these high interest rates are based on nothing in the long run. There has been no massive increase in production to justify this type of parasitic profits. So the rich are increasingly nervous and ready to switch their money about in all sorts of speculation.

## SPECULATION

We saw an example of this recently when a grand total of £1½ billion left Ireland. There were a number of reasons for it. Some was straight speculation in currency. Some was an attempt to wrench more concessions from the government by pushing up interest rates further and removing the DIRT tax. It was partly successful in achieving its aim. But the most important reason was a nervousness about the Irish economy. The level of public debt was reaching the level where they no longer felt that the state could re-pay them for the government bonds they bought.

*Why does the 26 Counties have such a huge debt? Where has all the money gone?*

You have to go back to the 70s for the explanation. In 1973, this country joined the EEC. We were the only low wage economy inside the EEC tariff walls. Once the bait of low taxes on profits were added, Ireland became a staging post for American companies to export their goods in the EEC. In the majority of cases, Ireland was simply the final stage of an assembly that

began in America or Puerto Rico or wherever. But our rulers also wanted to revive native Irish capitalism by grafting it on to these multi-nationals and moving it away from a direct dependence on British markets and capital.

To do that they had to "stimulate the economy"—create openings for native capital by pumping in state money. Much was used to develop the basic infrastructure to service the multi-nationals.

But there was also a series of grants and tax breaks given to native industry. They, in fact, got proportionately far more in state hand-outs than the multi-nationals.

What began as modest steps by the state to borrow in order to get Irish capitalism moving in the early seventies, turned into a flood in the late seventies. In 1978/79 as the story of Irish capitalism—with the highest growth rate in Europe—began to falter, the government began to borrow in order to sustain it. The gamble was that the debt could be paid off once the world economy picked up and Irish goods were sold at a profit.

Fianna Fail are now painted as demons for embarking on this policy. But on a world scale there was nothing unusual in what they were doing. Countries as far apart as Poland, Mexico, Turkey and Brazil were all doing exactly the same thing to make the breakthrough into the world economy. They all believed that their State's borrowing would be paid back, with a profit, once the world economy picked up. Haughey was acting no differently to the so-called "Communist" regime of Poland or the generals of Brazil.

Capitalism, however, has a way of twisting fate back on its own supporters. The fact that so many underdeveloped countries were borrowing meant that there was a scarcity of credit and money. As a result interest rates were pushed up (Reagan's huge arms spending programme also contributed considerably to the problem). Because interest rates went up, it

became more costly to get manufacturing moving again and more easy to leave vast sums of capital in the hot houses of the big speculators and banks. Result: the expected boom never materialised. The recession dragged on leaving Ireland and other countries with a mountain of debt.

Today the scale of the South's public debt is staggering. Last year it stood at £18,481,600,000. Each year every single penny in PAYE tax goes to pay off the interest alone. Per head of the population, Ireland now has the fourth largest debt in the world.

*One of the problems is that the debt keeps rising. Why can't they begin paying it off?*

This Coalition made a great noise about tackling the level of debt. To do that they started a programme of cut-backs in health and education. Many of these cuts are in future building programmes so their effects will only be seen in years to come. But after all this, they have still managed to push up the level of debt to new records. It now stands at 8% of GNP.

## DEVALUED

There are two reasons for this. Firstly, they now have to pay a huge interest bill. This has shot up by 26% since 1982. On top of all that much of it has to be paid back in dollars, yens and Swiss francs so that it ends up costing even more after the Irish punt is devalued. The result is that they now have to borrow just to pay back the interest!

The second reason has to do with the general stagnation of the economy. The numbers out of work mean less taxes for the government and more social welfare, which has increased by 21% since 1982. As the crisis gets deeper, they are going to start making attacks on this area that they haven't dared to touch so far. Hussey's introduction of "pass laws" for the unemployed and the removal of the Christmas bonus are the first steps.

*So what solution do the establishment economists have?*

There is none. And they know it. This year's budget is threatening to bring more massive cut-backs in the order of £350 million. But it would take four of these budgets in a row to get borrowing down to an "acceptable level". That could only mean throwing thousands more on the dole, pushing the unemployed near to starvation, and going back to the 50s. Even then, you have to ask what is the "acceptable level" of borrowing. They reckon that about £1000 million a year will be needed. This will be used to pay off the interests on the old debt!

It is absolutely crazy. The international bankers and the parasites at home lend the money knowing that it will never be fully paid back. It guarantees them fantastic interest over long periods.

It is the same world over. Africa now owes the world banks a massive £500 billion. This debt has driven whole countries into famine. The startling fact is that for all the money Live Aid raised, it came nowhere near paying off Ethiopia's interest in one year to the world bankers.

And when the starving of Africa or, for that matter, workers in Ireland, sacrifice to pay off the interest, what happens? The bankers simply use the money to make further loans to fund Reagan's crazy arms race. And that in turn pushes up interest rates further.

It is a simple choice. Either whole sections of the world go nearer to famine or the bankers do without their profits. However no capitalist government will refuse to pay up. Some of the more radical nationalist regimes in Latin America (though significantly not the Sandinistas) have huffed and puffed about not paying, but in the end it is only a negotiation for the time scale for paying. They dare not cut their connections with the world's credit system. It will take a workers' revolution to say: "Cancel the debts".

*The Progressive Democrats + sections of Fianna Fail and Fi Gael now talk about there not being a "climate of investment to help Irish businessmen. The argue that taxes are too high a initiative is stifled.*

This is nonsense. We have the most pampered business class in Western Europe. The tax on profits—the Corporation Prof Tax—stands at 10%. In reality works out at far less than that when the economists get to work. This is by far the lowest in Europe.

But they are also paying less tax than they were five years ago. In 1980 Corporation tax represented 4.4% of all taxes gathered in the State. In 1985, this has fallen to 3.4%. This is to mention the straight hand-out from the IDA and others. In 1985 an academic study showed the total subsidies to industry was £745 million. This was more than the budget deficit for that year.

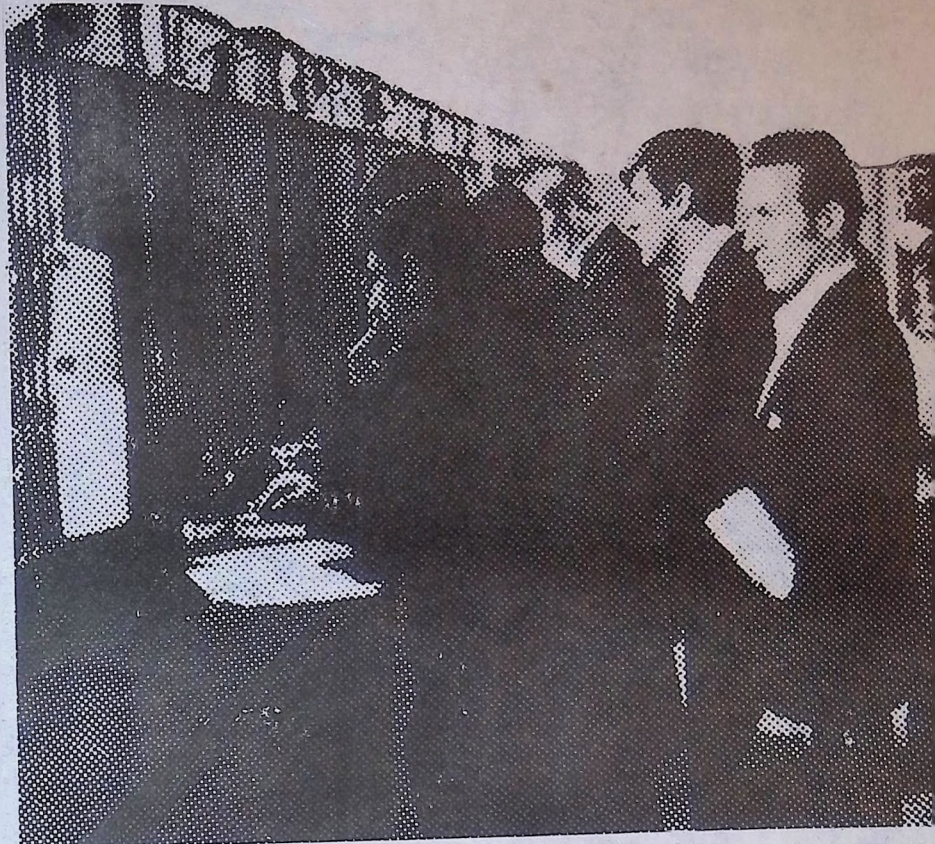
But there is however a grain of truth in the arguments of the Right. But it only shows up even more their own greed.

Historically Irish capitalism has been fantastically weak. There are still only 282 native Irish-owned companies employing more than 100 people. But this is only the tip of the iceberg. Native Irish capitalism relies very heavily on the State. A survey showed that of native Irish companies only 12% of the capital was raised from shareholders, 32% came from IDA grants and the remaining 56% was made up in debts, much of which was guaranteed by the state.

What we see here is a market reluctance to sink their capital into manufacturing. Thus, on the Irish stock exchange deals in government investment funds amounted to 61% of all turnover. The major pension and insurance funds prefer to sink their money into property speculation or government bonds. This is not because they are more "lazy" or lacking in the "Protestant ethic" or whatever. It has to do with the puny underdeveloped nature of Irish capitalism. So when the Right talk about the climate no



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Firstly, the recession in world capitalism has continued for a decade and a half. Any upturn is likely to be short and temporary.

Second, the level of debt still lies as a burden on any possible recovery. Third, the unique combination of circumstances that existed in the 70s will be difficult to repeat. Then Ireland was the only economy inside the EEC tariff walls with low labour costs. But now there is Spain, Portugal, Greece and Turkey to come. So the competition between them will be fierce and the multi-nationals will play one off against the other.

*What are the multi-nationals up to at the moment. Why are they moving vast sums out of the Irish economy?*

In reality, the profits the multi-nationals are taking out has been exaggerated. The reality is that they use Ireland as a "tax laundry". In the accountancy books, the Irish subsidiaries of American multi-nationals appear to make great profits. This is achieved by "transfer-pricing"—goods are sold cheaply from the American parent to the Irish subsidiary and so on. Prices are fixed so that the profits appear to

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It does not matter which government is in power. The fact is that they must embark on a vicious programme of attacks on working class conditions. Haughey will play the populist game until the moment he comes to power. He promises the rich an end to the miserable DIRT tax. He promises the big farmers that there will be no land tax. And he manages to combine all this with promises to the working class.

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"cold, monetarist approach" will be left behind.

But there is one thing that is absolutely sure, whichever government is in power. Public sector workers will be under tremendous attack. They will be held up as scapegoats for the national debt. It should be remembered that it was Haughey's government which tore up the second phase of the already agreed National Understanding in 1981. Every saving that is made, will be at their expense. That is the balancing act that Haughey will try.

Of course if the public sector comes under further attack, this will also affect the wages and expectations of workers in private industry. That has been the experience in countries such as Belgium, Norway, Sweden recently where there have been gigantic battles to defend the wages of public sector workers. In Ireland, the public sector also includes the best organised sections of the class.

That is why the statements of the union leaders are so scandalous when you consider what is in store. Billy Attlee has called for a five year agreement with the government to trade off wage restraint for a "say in the economy". It is no wonder that the Irish Times business correspondent, Ken O'Brien could write:

*"The trade union leadership has shown a growing sense of commitment, not just to their own members but also to the broader national good".*

Even on the left, the union leaders are not prepared for the battles ahead. David Begg of the PTWU is set to lead a major fight for a living wage for postal workers. But the strategy he is currently proposing is for a series of selective stoppages. It is as if the failure of the teachers campaign never happened. The lesson there was that all-out was needed.

*Finally, what is the socialist answer to the economic mess?*

There are two approaches that

we reject entirely. The Labour Party and Workers Party attempt to make proposals for how the system can be got to work again. They argue for a little more borrowing, more reliance on the public sector, more state control over private industry. In reality, they are only tampering with the problem. The experience of these proposals in Greece, Spain and France where there have been "socialist" governments has been a disaster

### WITHDRAW

The other approach has been from Sinn Fein. Here we get a bit of left nationalist rhetoric as the solution. Withdraw from the EEC, develop our native resources, import controls.

But any attempt to withdraw from the EEC without a full assault on capitalism is unworkable.

Native Irish capitalism is fantastically weak—it has always been propped up by the state. An attempt to develop a state-capitalist economy outside the rest of the world is doomed to failure. DeValera's attempt in the 30s had to be given up. A more radical version holds out little promise. The experience of recent nationalist revolutions in Nicaragua or Angola has in fact been a turn away from the state capitalist model and back to old style private enterprise.

The problems of the Irish economy arise from the relationship of an underdeveloped form of native capital with the rest of the world economy. They cannot be put down to the manoeuvres of British imperialism or even the EEC bureaucracy. The crisis in Ireland is deep and profound because it is one of the weaker links in the world capitalist chain.

More than any other country, Irish socialists have to be internationalists. We work for a workers' revolution here. We know that an armed detachment of workers will do far more to stop the £1½ billion leaving the country than any act of parliament or any set of

exchange controls. We know that only a workers' revolution will cancel the debts to the international banking system. Inside the country, it will seize the wealth bottled up by the Irish rich and put it to productive use.

But, it is also vital that a revolution made here spreads. Anyone who works for the multi-nationals can tell you that.

That is not a pipe-dream. Ireland is now firmly a part of one world economy. The same crisis that would drive a section of the world's working class towards revolution will affect all others.

The real utopians are those who hide behind the old stalinist talk of "national sovereignty" or "national economic development". It is no longer possible. The international development of capitalism has forced an internationalist outlook on socialists too.

## TWO PAMPHLETS FROM SWM

**WHY WE NEED A REVOLUTION IN IRELAND** explains the necessity of revolutionary socialist politics and introduces the politics of SWM.

**FOUR QUESTIONS OF REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM** takes up a detailed argument on women, the National Question, Trade Unions and why Russia isn't socialist.

60p each or £1.20 (post free) for both from: SWM, PO BOX 1648, D 8;





ANALYSIS

# No talk of socialism



THE SINN Féin Ard Fheis last month marked the latest stage of the development of the party towards the Left. But it also showed up the limits on how far the leftward move can go.

The tone and content of the debates, particularly those on abstentionism and abortion, made it clear that the Republican Movement—in terms of its composition, the views of its membership and the general thrust of its policies it is now committed to—is a party of the Left. Only political illiterates and hopeless sectarians can deny any longer that Sinn Féin is part, and a very big part, of the broad, left, progressive movement in Ireland. It is therefore necessary that Marxists take up and analyse the arguments voiced at the Ard Fheis with due seriousness and respect.

The decision, by 429 votes to 161, to end the abstentionist policy towards Leinster House was significant, and welcome.

REJECTION

The rejection of the mystical, idealistic reverence for the "First Dail" and the decision to begin to grapple with the realities of day-to-day life in the Free State in the 1980s, represented, for the Left Republicans, a turn towards the actual problems of the working class and a turn away from an abstract conception of "Ireland" and "the Irish people" which made Republicanism a poetical, irrelevance—if an occasionally violent one—in Irish politics. for decades.

Speaker after speaker explained and illustrated the way in which the Republican Movement had been unable to gather support in the South because the policies it was

putting forward meant nothing to most of the people whose support was being sought.

Belfast Councillor Alex Maskey gave a graphic description of a hopeless effort to organise enthusiasm for Mairead Farrell's candidacy in Cork in the last general election. Ms Farrell at the time was OC of the Republican prisoners in Armagh. Clearly that didn't connect with the consciousness of Cork workers who had immediate, practical problems of their own. Redundancies and threatened redundancies in Ford, Verholme and Dunlop were some he might have mentioned.

PRINCIPLE

Against this, the passionate plea of Ruairi O Bradaigh and others that abstentionism was "a fundamental principle... inalienable immutable and absolute" rang hollow.

However, throughout the debate the intense concentration on the question of abstentionism obscured a far more important matter—the actual politics of the Movement in or out of Leinster House.

All speakers in favour of the change operated on the assumption that abstentionism had been the key reason for the failure of the Movement to establish a solid base of support in the 26 Counties.

As far as electoral politics is concerned this is obviously true. For good or ill, the overwhelming majority of the people in the South have come to accept Leinster House as the legitimate parliament of the State. The Republican refusal to accept this fact has seemed so unrealistic as to be almost irrational and has consigned them to the fringe.

There is every likelihood that Sinn Féin candidates

promising to enter Leinster House will attract more votes than candidates in the past who pledged to steer clear of the institution altogether.

But that's hardly the end of the matter. The Republican Movement proclaims as its ultimate objective not winning seats, or even an overall majority, in Leinster House, but the achievement of a free, socialist Ireland. How exactly entering Leinster House will speed that process was not convincingly explained.

Ending abstentionism will win Sinn Féin more support at the polls. But in what way will it help mobilise workers in the South in the fight for a socialist Ireland?

To put it another way: what was it about abstentionism which prevented Sinn Féin giving a lead to, and establishing credibility with, workers in Cork who were under attack by multi-national firms? What is it about ending abstentionism which will enable Sinn Féin now to give such a lead? This question was not asked during the debate, much less answered. And for a very good reason.

When the Republicans leadership talks about building support in the South it means building support for the campaign to get the Brits out and unite the country. Gerry Adams and Danny Morrison have both made it clear in interviews and speeches over the past year that they do not believe in class politics can come onto the agenda until after national unity is achieved.

MARXISTS

Marxists see it very differently. We argue that national unity cannot be achieved except on the basis of clear, class politics. We say this because the capitalist class in the 26 Counties is locked into an alliance with British and international capitalism and must therefore be overthrown in the course of defeating British imperialism and achieving national unity. Thus the only force in the South which can be mobilised in support of the struggle in the North is the working class—and it can only be mobilised on the basis of its own interests as a class.

Viewed like this, the fight against the bosses in the South is not marginal to the struggle in the North. On the contrary,

it is absolutely central to it.

Many socialists within the Republican Movement accept some at least of this argument but claim—now that the "Old Guard" is gone—that the Movement will continue to shift leftwards and towards accepting this general perspective. This is to ignore the crucial role of the armed struggle which is, of course, entirely directed against the British presence in the North and which the Republican leadership has reiterated will not be directed against the South.

The leadership—contrary to the hopeful musings of bourgeois press commentators—has no intention of winding down the armed struggle. And of necessity, the direction of that struggle will continue to dictate in large measure what the political perspective will be.

Moreover, those who think of themselves as the "hard left" within Sinn Féin, greatly overestimate their own influence when they claim, or hint, that they will eventually shift the Movement into a Marxist position. It is much more likely that it is they who will shift.

ABORTION

The abortion debate was a case in point. The end result was the deletion from the party's programme of a commitment to "a woman's right to choose". The phrase had been "slipped in" the previous year at the tail-end of the Ard Fheis and clearly didn't represent the majority view of the party. Nonetheless, there it was, and those who do believe in the right to choose had a clear duty to defend it. They didn't. Nobody argued unequivocally that abortion is a right or proclaimed that in socialist Ireland which Republicans envisage abortion could be available on demand.

Among those who failed to make this point was Ms Jacinta Deignan, the party's woman's officer for Dublin. Before joining Sinn Féin, Ms Deignan was a founder member and fiery campaigner for the Right to Choose Campaign. But in her present position not only can she not argue for the right to choose in an interview with "The Irish Times" (November 7) she publicly defended the removal of the phrase from

party policy, and expressed opposition to "abortion as a means of birth control".

Far from being able to campaign for the right to choose from within Sinn Féin, she has been lost to the right to choose cause by virtue of her Sinn Féin position.

The same is and will continue to be true for others who consider themselves revolutionary socialists and who imagine that they can consistently pursue revolutionary socialist politics through the Republican Movement.

—EAMONN McCANN

## Leaders let down Corpo workers

THE CORK Corporation strikers had the will to win. It was the fact that the trade union leaderships had no stomach for a fight which brought an end to the dispute after eight weeks on terms substantially lower than the original demand.

The 600 ITGWU workers came out for parity in allowances with the Dublin Corpo. This would have meant around £25 a week in meal and travel payments. The settlement was on the basis of a £500 lump sum, a tax-free loan of £200 and an allowance of £5.65 a week.

The lump sum and loan were welcome, particularly in the run-up to Christmas after two months on the picket line. But the settlement on the allowance leaves the Cork men still far behind Dublin.

The strike was remarkably solid and enjoyed widespread support throughout the city, where the slogan "Same work, same pay" evoked an immediate response.

However the delay in applying the all-out dragged the dispute on. The lack of militant, official opposition to the threat posed by Army scabs eased the pressure on management.

In fact, the strike was seven weeks old before union leaders finally agreed to impose the all-out. That was on October 22. One month later the strike ended.

The all-out strike never materialised following the intervention of the Employer-Labour Conference in the person of Basil Chubb.

The workers would have been in a far stronger

position if the all-out had been in operation while negotiations proceeded.

Meanwhile, the LPGSU wavered at a crucial juncture threatening to oppose the all-out because the strikers had rejected a derisory £4 offer. General Secretary Phil Flynn declared after a meeting with his members that they'd accept the all-out—but only for a fortnight.

"We will not be used as picket fodder" he declared.

The Cork "Evening Echo" (November 15th) quoted Flynn as saying that if the ITGWU workers didn't move towards a settlement quickly, his union might consider leaving Congress rather than respect the all-out picket.

This disgraceful remark was obviously music to the ears of management. Flynn pointed out that the strike should have been spread to ITGWU members in other local authorities. This was a fair point, but in his case it was used as an excuse for inactivity.

With their own leaders wavering and hesitant and other union leaders clearly reluctant to urge solidarity the strikers finally voted 418-117 to go back. Among those urging them to call off the action at the final meeting on November 20th were local officials, Joe Callaghan (Labour), Phil Flynn (Sinn Féin) and Des Geraghty (Workers' Party).

Once again the fighting spirit of the rank and file was held back and then wasted by a compromising leadership. The need for a fighting, rank and file leadership has never been more obvious.

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# SWM meetings and activities

**Belfast:**

Monday 1st December: **History and Traditions of the SWM**  
 Monday 8th December: **Workshop on Communist Manifesto**  
 Wednesday 17th December: **The Revolutionary Paper**  
 Monday 22nd December: **Is Santa a Marxist? followed by Xmas Social**  
 Monday 5th January: **Workshop on Communist Manifesto**  
 For details: Contact SWM National Address.

**Derry:**

**Day-School on Marxism**

Saturday 13th December.  
 Sessions on:

How Marxism Works  
 Unemployment and the Crisis

"The North—The Socialist Answer"

Derry branch meets every second Monday

Monday 1st December: **Women and the struggle for Socialism**

Monday 15th December: **South Africa**

For details SWM., 24, Westland Ave, Derry ph 264767

**Dublin:**

Thursday 4th December: **Their Democracy and Ours**

Thursday 11th December: **Public Meeting (see box)**

Thursday 18th December: **Rosa Luxemburg**

**Public Meeting**

Which way for the Irish Left

Speaker: Kieran Allen

CIE Hall (behind Clery's)

11th December 8pm

**Xmas Social**

Folk and Blues Night

Moran's Pub (near Halfpenny Bridge)

Friday 19th December

**Cork:**

Cork Branch meets every Thursday in the Clock Tavern

Thursday 4th December: **Understanding History**

Thursday 11th December: **What is the Class Struggle**

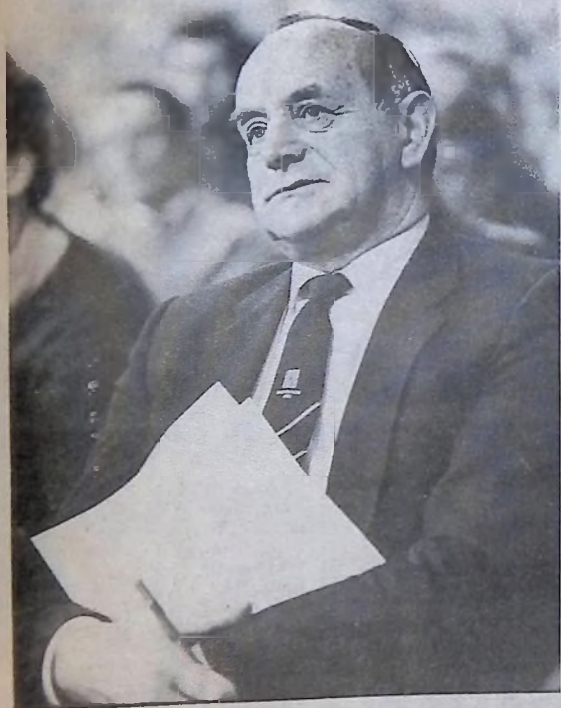
Thursday 18th December: **Art and Socialism**

Friday 19th December: **Xmas Social in the Clock Tavern**

For details on Waterford, Dundalk, Kilkenny, Dungarvan and Portlaoise write to: SWM, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8.



## Campaign can do without him



Fianna Fail's McCarton McCormack

SWM MEMBERS objected to the presence of a Fianna Fail "observer" at last month's conference in Belfast to launch a movement against the phoney Anglo-Irish Agreement. (see back page).

Belfast Branch member Sean McVeigh called for the Fianna Fail—a Mr. McCarton McCormack—to be removed from the conference. "He is a representative of the Free State ruling class who have nothing to offer this campaign", Sean told the meeting.

However it was explained from the platform that a general invitation had been issued to observers and that McCormack would therefore be allowed to stay, but would not have speaking rights.

A speaker from the Peoples Democracy suggested that the FF man should have speaking rights, so that he could be questioned on what Fianna Fail intended to do about the Agreement if it won the forthcoming election.

Although no vote was taken on the question there was considerable support for the SWM position expressed later in the proceedings that the campaign, once launched, should reject any Fianna Fail involvement.

The platform accepted without a vote a suggestion from SWM member Vicky Wass that the committee, when considering co-options, should exclude Fianna Fail, the SDLP and the Catholic hierarchy.

## 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 these 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 UDR
- 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.



I would like more details about the Socialist Workers Movement

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## REVIEWS

# SOCIALIST WORKER REVIEWS AN IMPORTANT NEW BOOK ON EUROPEAN SOCIALIST PARTIES Bailing out the system



Pictures: JOHN STURROCK (Network)

Ian Birchall, *Bailing out the system*, Bookmarx, £6.50 from SWM, PO Box 1648 Dublin 8

IN HIS new book, "Bailing out the system", Ian Birchall traces the development of reformist politics since the end of the Second World War. He deals mainly with the European Social Democratic parties and Labour parties.

Very little is said on Ireland. Given the fact, however, that the Irish Labour Party has never had the support of even a large minority of workers in this country, his omission is understandable. Fianna Fail still command more support at the ballot-box from the Southern working class. The fact that the Irish Labour Party has never taken a stand on the existence of the Orange State has intensified its collapse into a rump.

Reformism in Ireland has developed somewhat differently than in say Britain or France. On top of the classic reformists such as Michael D Higgins on the left and John Carroll or Desmond on the right, a strand of reformism has developed out of militant republicanism.

The Workers Party mixture of republicanism and Stalinism, and the swing towards left-social democratic politics by the leadership of Sinn Fein are

cases in point.

Reformism as an ideology however has one central idea which is to be found in every country. The front cover of Ian Birchall's book sums it up.

It shows the sick tiger of capitalism in bed about to die, and on its last gasp. The doctor beside the tiger is reaching for the medicine bag which is marked "social democracy".

The term "social-democracy" was at one time used by all Marxists. The Bolsheviks of Russia originated as a faction in the Russian Social Democratic Workers party. But by 1914 the main European parties supported their "own" capitalist class in their war efforts. In 1919, shortly after the Russian revolution a new international was founded calling itself Communist. Communists dropped the term Social Democrat, but with the rise of Stalin the Communist International itself was to move further to the right. In 1945 Joe Stalin was to drop the International as a sop to the allied powers.

After the second world war, international capitalism needed reformists to secure the acquiescence of workers.

Social democrats since then have either been in

government or in Coalition in Britain, Norway, Ireland, Austria, Belgium, France, Spain, Luxemburg, West Germany, Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Italy.

After the second world war, the European working class were in no mood for a return to the hungry thirties. In Germany, advancing armies found local committees running factories while the owners had deserted. Union councils moved to liberate concentration camps. In France the new government had little control, as workers control developed in many areas and 11,000 collaborators were shot. In Italy as Germany fell to the Allies workers revolted in the industrial areas of Milan and Turin. Over 20,000 fascists were shot and workers councils on the style of the 1920s were emerging. In Greece, the British General Ronald Scobie bombed the working class areas as the British fought KKE—the Greek Communist Party and the Communist-led resistance movement, EAM/ELAS.

## RECONSTRUCT

The ruling classes of Europe had two objectives after Germany's fall: to halt

any workers' revolt and to reconstruct western capitalism with some state intervention. The social democratic parties were ideally suited to these tasks. They were committed to state intervention; they had working class support and strong trade union links which were to enable them to win co-operation in industry. In the late forties nearly every country in Europe had reformist participation in government.

In most cases the social democrats co-operated with other forces, in particular, Communists and Christian Democrats. The Communist ministers, however, were mainly concerned with policing Stalin's gains after the end of the war.

The major argument against revolutionaries, then and now, is that some gains have been made by reformist socialism. But this is to ignore the way capitalism works.

In Britain, in the most rigorous capitalist terms, both the core industry and the railways were ripe for nationalisation. The ruling class, by and large, were happy with the outcome. The stock exchange boomed and the pattern of management was

not broken. Within a year of coal nationalisation, half the Yorkshire miners were on strike over increased workloads.

## INTERVENTION

In Italy, a socialist and christian democrat coalition took over an important economic legacy from the fascist period. Mussolini had organised a controlling stock interest in substantial parts of the economy. The fact that the new government could take them over showed that there is nothing particularly socialist about state intervention.

With the outbreak of the Cold War the European Right were eager to rule again. The crushing of East German and Hungarian workers in the fifties established Stalinist tyranny by means of the jackboot. It was not, of course, Socialism or Communism, but the ruling class of Russia that crushed these revolts. Nevertheless, it gave social democracy a respectable image in the minds of millions of workers.

The year 1968 was a

turning point in post war history. The USA looked certain for defeat in Vietnam. France saw an explosive general strike involving ten million workers with student support. Russia invaded Czechoslovakia and the monolithic Communist Movement split in two. To a minority of socialists in Europe new ideas began to make sense. Reformism had failed to deliver any type of workers' control or socialism. Russia was just as bad as the United States, as the invasion of Czechoslovakia had shown.

Really when all is said and done, surely socialism is about workers liberating themselves and taking control of society. Real socialism used not to mean some halfwit in parliament passing a bill, but workers challenging the ruling class. It seemed that these were new ideas at the time, but they were, in fact, very old ones. Marx, Lenin, Trotsky and many others had said it many years before.

Birchall's book shows Reformism to be a dangerous illusion. If you agree with his conclusion, you must agree that an alternative needs to be built. Why not come in and help us do just that.

—DERMOT BYRNE

# Books to get you through Christmas

WE ARE being assaulted from all sides, in shops, on television and in the papers with the message that Christmas is coming. So getting in on the act Socialist Worker have drawn up a short list of recommended books which you could give as presents or which will certainly help you fill the time between those Christmas films on the telly which you have seen twenty times already.

Required reading for any socialist is Trotsky's "History of the Russian Revolution" (Pluto). Written after the defeat of the revolution and the rise of Stalin this book well kills the lies that the revolution was the work of a small elitist clique and that the seeds of Stalinism were sown during that period. At over 1000 pages it is not an easy read but



Leon Trotsky

once you get into it you might even give a miss to some of those Christmas films.

1986 is the fiftieth anniversary of another major political event—the Spanish

Civil War. Because of the number of writers and poets who volunteered to fight in Spain, and who wrote about it afterwards, the war has often been portrayed as the last great cause. Through interviews with some of the participants, anarchists, socialists, communists and even fascists, Ronald Fraser in "Blood of Spain" (Penguin), shows that the war, far from being some romantic adventure, was in fact a class war—a war against Capitalism. The book describes very well the early days of that revolution—the land occupations, the workers' collectives—and the reasons for its defeat.

Very few writers today write about current political events. Andre Brink, a South African, is a notable exception. His heroes

are almost always white, middle-class and liberal who although opposed to Apartheid have



managed to exist quite well under that system. Some event, a love affair, a friend's death suddenly throws them up against the reality of apartheid. His novels, all of which are recommended, give a good, if limited, glimpse of life in South Africa.

There is a popular view of Marxists as rather dour duffle-coated characters forever talking about hegemony and dialectics and the like. Although there are one or two who answer to this description, generally nothing could be further from the truth.

So for pure escapism we recommend Raymond Chandler and his detective hero Philip Marlowe, Volume 1 contains "The Big Sleep", "Lady in the Lake" and "The Little Sister" which should keep you going for

a few days. And if you do have to justify your reading to one of the dour characters mentioned above you can always say that they portray the rottenness of American capitalism with its twisted people, bent judges and crooked cops—That should shut him or her up.

And so back to the Russian Revolution. The Bolshevik Party played a fundamental role in that revolution. Tony Cliff's biography "Lenin: Building the Party" (Bookmarks) describes how that party was built under conditions far more difficult than we experience today. He makes the point that such a revolutionary workers party is necessary if we are to abolish capitalism and build a Socialist society,

—WILLIE CUMMING



**AN POST,  
TELECOM  
LOW PAY  
SCANDAL  
OFFICIAL**

by DAVE McDONAGH  
(PTWU)

THE POSTAL and Telecommunications Workers Union (PTWU) recently issued a report on its members pay.

This report was based on a survey taken within the Union and was published by the Oxford based Trade Union Research Unit (TURU).

The average pay of respondents to the survey was £186.63 per week. This is a good deal short of the average industrial wage and nowhere near the figure quoted by An Post during this year's pay negotiations.

The average take-home pay of respondents was £129.47 per week while 39.1% took home less than £120 per week. One quarter of Telecom respondents had to survive on less than £100 per week.

Most of the respondents were married and more than half had children. Many had to work regular overtime to make up a decent pay packet and those outside Dublin were worse off due to a lack of overtime. Less than two-fifths of the respondents were able to afford a holiday this year.

The TURU report was part of the PTWU's "Campaign for a Living Wage". The Union held nine regional meetings with the final meeting in Liberty Hall, Dublin, attracting over 2,000 members.

A motion was passed which called for a special conference to decide on industrial action if AnPost failed to come up with decent increases within "a reasonable time".

Since then there have been no new moves on pay but there have been three local disputes in AnPost.

PTWU members in Galway struck when a postman was sacked for refusing to operate an overloaded duty involving deliveries to the local Corporation offices.

The strike ended when AnPost made new arrangements with City Hall and the postman was reinstated. Neither this strike nor a shorter strike in Drogheda were made official.

The PTWU Executive, and General Secretary David Begg, showed a reluctance to get involved in these disputes. They could in fact have used the militancy displayed here as an example of what is needed to win decent pay increases. But as usual even left officials like Begg are tied to a bureaucratic machine which will only begin to move forward when the rank-and-file members apply pressure from below.

Workers who are willing to fight for better pay should point to the efforts of the Galway and Dundalk workers as an indication of the way forward.

A national campaign of industrial action on pay can only get under way when the minority of militants are allowed to give a lead to the more passive majority.

# ITGWU PAYE campaign: Little leadership given

THE IRISH TRANSPORT and General Workers Union has called a special delegate conference to consider what tactics it should adopt in the fight for a better deal for PAYE workers.

The conference is to consider the result of a ballot of its members, in which five options were given. These ranged from the executive continuing its policy of lobbying the government to the staging of a week long strike at the time of the budget.

At the time of writing the full results are not available but the early counts seem to show a large majority in favour of option one—the executive to lobby the government to lower PAYE taxes. In other words do nothing.

The tax campaign goes back to 1979 when there was a series of one day strikes and mass demonstrations. When these failed to achieve anything, the Waterford Glass workers tried to get a campaign off the ground on

the basis of withholding tax from the payroll. It got no support from the Trade Union leaders and did not spread beyond a small group of workplaces.

Since then there has been no effective campaign at all. The more cynical among us may believe that the ballot was a manoeuvre to end the campaign. The executive gave no lead on which option to choose thus effectively giving way to the most conservative elements in the Union. In areas where branches did campaign such as in Navan and some areas of Cork, a majority voted in favour of the one week strike thereby going against the national trend.

## STRENGTHEN

No doubt this defeat will strengthen the hand of the trade union leadership who can claim that the membership are conservative and don't want to do anything, not just on Tax but on other



Tax protests last time round

issues as well.

It is true that this reflects the level of confidence in most workplaces. Most workers feel that if they cannot stop job losses or win wage increases then its almost impossible to defeat the government on the tax issue.

This does not mean that the situation is hopeless.

Confidence can be rebuilt in the workplaces and leadership can be given to those who are unsure of the way forward. That means taking up the minor issues that always arise and building up the strength

and organisation on the shopfloor.

Unfortunately the conference on November 28th will not do anything to help. The job of building rank and file confidence remains to be done.

—PAUL O'BRIEN (ITGWU)

## Jobs gap widens

**DISCRIMINATION AGAINST Catholic workers is alive and well in the Six Counties.**

That's the message from two recent studies into employment patterns there.

A Fair Employment Agency investigation has shown the appalling record of Building Societies when it comes to employing Catholics. The nine largest Societies employ 691 workers but only 118 are Catholics (and only 17 of these hold senior positions.)

This is in line with the rest of the financial sector, insurance companies and banks, all with less than 20% Catholic workforces—despite the fact that Catholics make up 39% of the population.

The same sectarian discrimination is demonstrated in a survey published by Fortnight magazine which shows that Catholic academics at Queen's University in Belfast are outnumbered four-to-one by their Protestant counterparts.

Although there are now more Catholic students at Queens, the gap between Protestant and Catholic academics is wider than it was in 1968. Then, academics from Great Britain made up more than half of the full-time staff. Only 8% of academics were Irish Catholic and 29% Irish Protestant.

Now that many of the non-Irish staff have left, the Catholic percentage has only moved up to 10%. The situation is worst in the law and medicine departments where Catholic academics comprise 6% and 9%

respectively.

The findings of this report make a mockery of the much-vaunted claim that academic life is neutral and above matters like religion and politics. It can be no accident that Catholics are so heavily discriminated against in this way. The Fair Employment Agency is to investigate the situation but this comes at a time when Queens are faced with a £5 million cut in their budget which will lead to 250 job losses, possibly as early as January.

It is clear that the Fair Employment Act, introduced

in 1976 to make it unlawful for employers to discriminate on the grounds of religion or politics, has failed to root out discrimination.

At a time of increasing unemployment the situation is unlikely to improve. The way to fight this discrimination is in the workplace and through the unions—not by relying on progressive laws and court cases.

Workers must demand more jobs for both Catholics and Protestants and not just the reslicing of an already much too small cake.

—LINDA MOORE

## Solidarity needed in hotel strike

OVER 100 workers at Dublin's Shelbourne Hotel are still on strike fighting the multi-national Trust House Forte group over pay.

The Shelbourne pickets have forced management to close the Function Room—usually an important source of revenue at this time of year.

### DELIVERIES

Normal deliveries of mail and supplies have been stopped. But hired transport is bringing in scab supplies direct from wholesalers.

Most organised hotels in the Dublin area—including the International Airport Hotel another THF subsidiary—are

operating a levy.

The ITGWU Dublin No 4 Branch leadership is counselling moderation and restraint. This is clearly a mistake. THF has a vicious anti-trade union history.

A few years ago strikes broke out in Oxford, Sheffield and Birmingham over the sacking of shop stewards and other trade union members in THF's operations in Britain. The British Transport and General Workers Union had its lorry drivers black THF's string of motorway cafes. But national blacking was refused by the union leadership. This defeat was followed by that of

## WELFARE CUTS: ANGER MOUNTS

20,000 FAMILIES in the 26 Counties stand to suffer swingeing cuts in their social welfare benefits as a result of the government's so-called "equality" changes in social security.

A married man whose wife is working or herself drawing benefit stands to lose the adult dependent allowance—up to £40 a week. In addition, such a claimant would also lose half of the £7 to £13 child dependent allowance for each child.

The government's decision to "soften" the blow by awarding a £10 "cushion" payment to men whose wives are also on social welfare and permit them to try their luck for help with Community Welfare Officers has already run into trouble. The Health Boards have not been involved in this decision and are not, as yet, operating these "cushioning" schemes.

Any socialist must support equality of treatment for men and women in matters of social welfare. The uprating of women's entitlements is long

overdue. But this measure does not propose to level up benefits. On the contrary it will result in more poverty and misery among working class families. It is equality of poverty.

Opposition is already mounting. Last month, for example, a spontaneous protest outside Dublin's Ballymun dole office attracted 20 angry demonstrators. A member of the staff of the Labour Exchange joined the protest in solidarity with the claimants. She told Socialist Worker: "I am completely opposed to these cuts, I have to tell people that their dole is to be cut and take their frustration and anger".

An initiative was taken at the protest—supported by SWM members—to organise a public meeting in the area to campaign against cuts.

Such a campaign must organise militant demonstrations and seek the support of social welfare and other trade unionists whose interests are the same as unemployed workers.

a strike at London's Metropole Hotel for a £50 minimum wage following the TGWU refusal to make it official and consequent demoralisation of the strikers. Again at THF's Grosvenor House Hotel, the union official told striking chambermaids to mount "an invisible picket".

### REDUNDANCY

At the Shelbourne in 1983, management were able to impose a vicious redundancy package and a poor pay deal

after a 3-month strike which ITGWU officials refused to support.

In spite of official discouragement, Shelbourne strikers must pursue militant tactics if they are to win against the might of THF. The Airport Hotel levy is a good start, as is the blacking of mail and supplies. But strikers must take the initiative and fight for stronger solidarity action, organise delegates to other hotels and regular meetings of the strikers with militant picketing. That is the only road to victory.



# Socialist Worker

**A NEW MOVEMENT** launched in Belfast last month holds out the possibility of a mass campaign to expose the hollowness of the promises made under the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

More than three hundred people from all over the North crammed into the meeting room at the Conway Mills and, at the end of five hours debate, chaired by Bernadette McAliskey, elected a nine-person committee to lay the groundwork for a possible campaign in the future. However, significant differences emerged as to the type of campaign which is needed.

The majority of those present—particularly members of Sinn Fein—argued that the immediate priority is information-gathering and propaganda to ram home the fact that, for the Catholic minority in the North, little has changed as a result of the Agreement. Others, including the Socialist Workers' Movement, argued for an active campaign in Catholic working class areas to draw as many people possible into activity against the harassment and the denial of equal rights which has continued and even increased during the first year of the Agreement.

## PAISLEY

The conference took place the day after the Loyalist rally at Belfast City Hall where up to a quarter of a million people heard Paisley and Molyneux pledge continued resistance to the Agreement from the Right.

The coincidence of the two meetings, and the massive disparity in the sizes of them, highlighted the paradox of the reaction to the Agreement. While the Loyalist leaders argue that the Agreement



Gerry Adams addressing the conference

amounts to a massive concession to Catholics and is the first step on the road to a united Ireland, the actual experience of Northern Catholics has been totally to the contrary.

*This apparent paradox has created great confusion. There is a widespread feeling both North and South that if Loyalist bigots are so fired-up against the Agreement there must be something significant in it for the minority. That feeling as been at the bottom of the passivity in Catholic working class areas over the past year which the Sinn Fein attitude reflects.*

One definite achievement of the Conway Mill meeting was to shatter this notion that a meaningful process of reform is under way or in prospect.

A series of papers on a wide range of subjects was presented to the conference—on harassment, discrimination

in employment, plastic bullets, strip-searching, the Diplock courts, super-grasses, house-raids etc. etc..

Bill Roulston of the University of Ulster illustrated the continuing grotesque disadvantage of Catholics in both the private and public sectors of industry.

Barrister Ellis McDermott dealt with the administration of law and with the fact that, although hundreds of years have been served in prison as a result of supergrass perjurers and Diplock courts, the British insist that supergrass "evidence", when available, will continue to be used and that there will be no tinkering with the Diplock system.

## HARASSMENT

Ivan Barr, Sinn Fein councillor in Strabane, detailed the campaign of harassment and intimidation

mounted in the North West by the RUC and British Army.

Lawyer Oliver Kearney gave an outline of the "MacBride Principles"—which he freely admitted were timid and moderate proposals—and the efforts of the Dublin Government to lobby against them in the US.

(The "MacBride Principles" lay down that investment and orders should only go to firms which undertake to give Catholics fair play.)

Other speakers dealt with the refusal of the British to budge an inch on strip-searching, plastic bullets or indeed on any aspect of repression.

Three resolutions were put before the Conference—one from the ad-hoc committee which had organised the gathering, one from the Peoples' Democracy and one from the Socialist Workers' Movement.

Both the PD and SWM motions called for *action*, while the committee's pressed for a more passive approach—the gathering and dissemination of relevant information and the re-call of the Conference within months to consider the situation again.

The PD resolution advocated an active campaign and put forward a united Ireland as the central, mobilising goal. The SWM resolution also called for action but differed significantly in emphasis in that it stressed the need for specifically working-class activity and mentioned the August strike by DHSS workers against a Loyalist threat to Catholics working in the Lisburn dole as an example of the type of activity which could be built on and extended.

Moving the SWM resolution Eamonn McCann emphasised that despite weakness and contradictions in the DHSS strike, it did show that it was possible in specific instances for Catholic and Protestant workers to take action together against sectarian intimidation.

The most significant intervention came from Joe Austin of Sinn Fein who supported the committee resolution and cautioned that "We must walk before we can run". He argued that, since many nationalists continued to put faith in the Agreement, they would have to be educated into the realities of the situation before a call for action could be issued with any hope of success.

The next few months will be a vital, testing time for all anti-imperialists in the North. The Loyalists have been enraged not by anything the Agreement had achieved but by its very existence, and by the symbolic voice apparently given to Catholics by the Dublin presence in the Inter-Governmental Conference.

They will therefore

interpret any "reform", however meaningless in practice, as evidence of a step along the road to a united Ireland. But both unable and unwilling to contemplate an all-out confrontation with Britain, and with their boycott campaign faltering and occasionally collapsing into farce, the Loyalist frustration will inevitably be expressed in increased open terror directed against Catholics.

*This opens up the possibility of the Catholic working class (these things rarely touch middle-class areas or individuals) being subjected to increasing terror and state harassment—over an Agreement from which they derive no meaningful benefit anyway.*

*It is vital in this situation that there be mass involvement in whatever movement emerges from the Belfast meeting, and that working class areas be politically prepared for whatever might come.*

Over the next few weeks the SWM will be pressing for the convening of area meetings across the North to discuss not just the Agreement and its effects, but how to move forward on the areas of grievance which the Agreement is supposed to deal with but which it clearly cannot.

## UNITED-FRONT

The SWM will argue for a united-front campaign against all aspects of discrimination and repression, and for an approach based on a recognition of the class realities involved; that the campaign should be carried into the unions and trades councils, demanding official backing for industrial action against sectarian threats to workers and for militant trade union opposition to the sectarian recruitment policies of major firms and parts of the public service.

At the heart of the SWM case is the argument that only the working class can take on and defeat the sectarian State in the North on a basis which holds out hope of undercutting sectarianism itself and drawing in Protestant workers. Limited and narrow as the DHSS workers' action in August was, it did show that even in the present circumstances it is not pie-in-the-sky to talk about workers' solidarity in the North.

This doesn't mean waiting for Protestant workers to "come round". It does mean building an active campaign now on the only basis to which they can ever "come round" and which is also the only basis which can keep us free from the embrace of ruling class nationalists. Such people only embrace the anti-imperialist cause in order to crush it to death.

# ICTU DUCKS SECTARIANISM

THE SPECIAL conference against sectarianism called by the Northern Committee of the ICTU on October 25th last managed to pull off the amazing feat of not actually dealing with sectarianism. Instead speaker after speaker, most of them union officials, spoke of the horrors of violence and intimidation without ever identifying the roots of sectarianism in the Six Counties.

Only Inez McCormack of NUPE and Roger Geary of ASTMS came anywhere close to reality when they spoke about "discrimination" and the trade union movement's dreadful record in fighting it. Not even they, however, were willing to say that it is Catholics who are

discriminated against and that loyalists, including the loyalism of many trade unionists, is at fault.

## RECORD

The record of the trade union movement in fighting sectarianism and discrimination has been a disgrace. For example, the unions have never waged a consistent, active, determined campaign against the vicious sectarianism which has kept Catholics out of major industry. It is shameful that it was mainly pressure from American big business, and not from the working class movement at home, which even forced a paper commitment to fair play in Shorts.

This failure can be traced to the unions' reluctance to recognise the sectarian nature of the Six County state. It is not possible to be "against sectarianism" without confronting the sectarian machinery of the northern state. But because such a stance would draw a hostile response from Loyalist workers, the unions have ducked the issue. In the name of "workers unity" the root cause of division has been left untouched.

The parameters of the campaign launched at the Conference make the same mistake. Refusing to differentiate between, on the one hand, straight-forwardly sectarian UDA/UVF attacks on individuals because they are Catholics, and, on the other hand, IRA attacks on

individuals because they are servicing the security forces—is a cop out. As is the fact that no mention whatever was made of the violence of the security forces.

## SINN FEIN

Since the whole conference was manipulated to allow only speakers approved by the platform, no one got to speak who wanted to question the basis of the campaign. Unfortunately the absence of leading Sinn Fein trade unionists, whose positions on trade councils would have ensured that they could not be silenced, left the way clear for the NICTU leadership to duck the real issues.

Moreover, the campaign

launched at the conference is not based on solid class principles. It should say "fight your boss, not your fellow worker!" Instead, a representative of the CBI—the British bosses' organisation—was welcomed onto the platform to offer support for the campaign. Similarly, since all Churches are by their nature sectarian, it was odd to see so many dog collars at a conference against sectarianism.

Instead of linking up with churches and bosses' organisations, the campaign should be linked to a determined, rank and file movement against the low wage, high unemployment economy, which the bosses have been able to get away with precisely because the working class has been divided.

—GORETTI HORGAN