

Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

EXTRADITION

Haughey hands them over

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AS WE went to press, Robert Russell was set to be handed over by the Haughey government to the RUC.

Having finished his sentence at Portlaoise Prison, he was escorted under armed guard to the border to be taken by RUC into custody.

Robert Russell was born in Belfast in 1958. In the early seventies he was imprisoned without trial under the internment policy of the time.

In 1980 he was sentenced by a no-jury Diplock Court to 20 years jail. He was involved in the "dirty-protest" in the H Blocks.

In September 1983 he was one of 38 republican prisoners who escaped in the mass prison break-out.

He was captured and imprisoned in the South and spent the next four years in Portlaoise fighting extradition proceedings.

Haughey's government, in making extradition routine, have effectively endorsed the system of "justice" in the North and in Britain. Central features of that system include:

- The use of no-jury Diplock Courts presided over by an Orange dominated judiciary:
- The regular use of forced confessions to convict:
- The rejection of the Birmingham Six appeal, after 14 years in prison, by the British courts:
- The refusal to bring charges against senior officers of the RUC implicated in the Stalker affair in conspiracy to murder:

● The release and re-instatement in the army of convicted murderer Private Ian Thain after less than three years.

Unfortunately the fight against extradition has been hampered by the idea, promoted by Sinn Fein, that the campaign should concentrate on persuading Fianna Fail to stop its extradition plans.

RESULTS

The results of this strategy were clear in the anti-extradition demonstration in Dublin on August 20th last month. After all the effort just ten people marched behind the "Fianna Fail against Extradition" banner. And because the question has hardly been

raised in the working class movement just one trade union banner was to be seen.

The Fianna Fail government has no serious argument with the British authorities. It serves the interests of the rich and powerful in the South. So it cuts social spending and collaborates in repressing Republicans. It is doing what any capitalist government would do.

That is why Socialist Worker says the fight against extradition is the same fight as that against Haughey's cuts in the South. That means building a working class' based fightback against capitalism North and South.

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Russian women oppressed—official

THE REVELATIONS about the realities of Soviet life are coming thick and fast as a result of the new "Glasnost".

A report from the magazine "Sotsialisticheskaya Industriya" reports from the Ivanovo industrial complex that women in the textile factories suffer deafness and birth defects in their children.

The report claims that "the buildings are ancient, there are no shower rooms, endless queues for lavatories. The machines are so noisy that

they exceed the legal maximum by dozens of times, hence the occupational disease of chronic hearing loss, which affects 80% of the women".

DAMAGED

The results are that the women's nervous system is damaged, leading to memory loss and insomnia. There are other more far-reaching results shown in birth defects of babies and later juvenile delinquency among children.

Women do not bother to go to the factory clinics because they know the

doctors are under orders to report a regular decrease in the number of industrial accidents and diseases.

The state-run trade unions (the only one allowed of course) do not inform the women that state benefits are available for those suffering from occupational ailments. The trade unions failed to support the women when they sought changes in the compulsory shift system.

The magazine Sotsialisticheskaya Industriya is an official organ of the Communist Party Central Committee and is designed to be the daily paper of industrial management with a circulation of 1.2 million.



LOW PAY 'TOO HIGH'

THE owners of clothing sweatshops are demanding the right to cut even further wage rates to clothing workers.

Last month the Confederation of Irish Industry's clothing trade division called on the Minister of Labour to remove the legal basis for the Statutory Minimum Wage for workers in shirtmaking, tailoring, women's clothing and millinery.

Most of the workers employed in these industries are women.

Clothing bosses say the minimum wage hampers competitiveness.

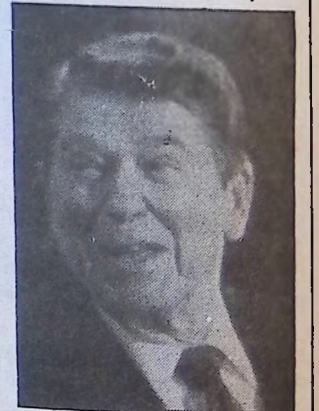
The legal minimum, which the bosses think too high, ranges from £95.22 to £103.99.

What they said:



"We want every enterprise in the country whether privately or publicly owned to make big profits, but where we differ from the rich is what is to be done with the profits".—Proinseas De Rossa, Workers Party leader.

"Women participating in sports is an insult to God"—General Zia, banning broadcasting of the Olympics from Pakistan, before going to the great race-track in the sky.



"Facts are stupid things"—Ronald Reagan

"The only hint of anything amiss was when someone remarked to me that the parish priest was absent"—David Norris on anti-gay attacks from Birr, Co Offaly.

THE United States in 1987 spent over \$275 billion on arms or 6.4 per cent of its gross national product, while Britain spent \$27 billion (4.9 per cent of GNP). These figures are reported by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

PROPERTY SWINDLE

WORKING CLASS taxpayers are again the victims of the latest property swindles.

The Supreme Court has decided that Dublin County Council must pay £2 million of their money to Messrs. Tom Brennan and Joe McGowan of George Development Ltd.

They were refused permission to build 600 private houses on agricultural land in Swords, Co. Dublin. The £2 million is compensation for the lads. Master bank-robbers—your trade is redundant! No need anymore to meticulously plan your next job, take risks, shoot people, land in jail etc., You're out of date, Capone, Dillinger, Great Train Robbers et al!

As the law stands for property developers, all you need to do is fill in the appropriate forms, shuffle same correctly, front to a county council of your choice and take them to court for refusing your permission to build houses. The bewigged gentlemen in the Supreme Court will look after you.

It seems that even the establishment wise owls were shocked by this one and there is a flurry to plead with Minister Flynn (him again?) to "amend the law", "plug the loopholes" etc.

Another fine mess for the Labour Party as well. They were in government three times whilst county councils caved in time after time to the property bandits, and said nothing.

Where will the £2 million be found to pay off the Brennans and McGowans? There is talk of further cuts by the County Council to find the money.

Over in Ballsbridge, the sale of the site of the Irish Hospitals Sweepstake created quite a stir amongst the property mob, when it sold for £6.6 million to speculators unknown.

In order to get in to bid for that plum, you had to produce bank drafts for £250,000 at the door. Keeps the riff-raff out, you see. That included Dr. Pat Lee, a Fine Gael city councillor who was refused entry at the door. Huff and puff all you like, Dr. Pat, you're only an apprentice in that league! So much for elected representatives.

The redundant Sweeps workers weren't even mentioned. They received an average £3,000 redundancy payment for forty years service and are still fighting for their rights.

JOXER



Squaddies fight for pay, union

SOLDIERS are demanding better pay and the right to join a trade union. That was the message of a meeting last month in Dundalk of army wives. They formed a National Army Spouses Association to fight alongside the men.

Defence forces exist to protect the interests of the rich. The use of soldiers to break the Firemen's, Corporation and Busworkers' strikes shows this. As does its collaboration with the British army on the border. The Army does not belong to the people—it is the weapon of the wealthy and powerful.

The demand for trade union rights is something these people detest. One newspaper editorial expressed their views: "Soldiers are not in the business of negotiating with their commanders and their commanders must never be in the business of negotiating with them".

The Fine Gael spokesman Mr Noonan (the other one) said: "The crisis is radicalising the Defence Forces in a manner which is not in the national interest".

A married private with six children and five years experience earns £165 per week (60 hours worked) and is forced to claim Family Welfare Supplement. A garda, in comparison, will

get £260 per week as well as overtime allowances.

A corporal gets £180 per week for 60 hours and his equivalent in the Gardai gets over £100 per week more.

Last month, Defence Minister Vincent Brady, visited the Curragh Camp. "I do not believe there is a major problem", he said, "soldiers would not be human if they did not raise the issue of pay and conditions with me".

Soldiers are living in barrack blocks built at the end of the last century. In some cases 14 are sharing one filthy toilet and two showers and no other bathroom facilities. There is a stench of urine and no privacy whatsoever.

Their families are in derelict terrace houses, damp, moss-covered roofs, grass growing in the gutters and no bathrooms or hot water.

Dampness is a serious health risk for wives and young children. The wives report that it is impossible to live on a soldiers' pay and the money lenders are doing heavy business.

Socialists support the right of soldiers to organise. The very existence of a union in the army would encourage soldiers to question their role as strike breakers and protectors of the rich.

Jobless to lose dole

BY THE time you read this paper, unemployment benefit and supplementary benefit for school leavers under the age of 18 in Britain and Northern Ireland will be scrapped.

These school leavers are now being forced to go on a Youth Training scheme for a measly £29.50 a week.

Their rotten system has forced a generation of young people on the dole, now they are conscripting young people to slave for £29.50 a week. What a bloody cheek they have.

You just have to listen to their television, their radio or look at their newspapers over the next few months to hear that unemployment figures

have gone down. You will constantly hear that the economy is getting better and stronger all the time. But this is the 21st time that the dole figures have been fiddled since the Tories came to power.

In 1985 the Tories tried to make YTP compulsory, but were forced to retreat after 250,000 school students came out on strike. The students then fought back and gave Thatcher and the Tories a taste of their own medicine.

AFFECTED

As always, it is the working class who are the ones affected. I'm sure the ruling class and those who will be

supporting this new repressive measure will not let their sons and daughters slave on the YTP. They have the money to make sure their up and coming yuppies are snugly looked after.

But there's no point just moaning and doing nothing about it. Already young working class people in the North are being forced on to slavery schemes with no union rights or job prospects.

Young people, north and south have two options. You can lie down and let them kick you in the teeth or stand up, organise and fight back. Young people in the North need to organise to unionise the YTPs, demand a decent living wage and proper jobs at the end of their training.

Stand up for your rights for a decent future and decent job prospects.



Thatcher slashes dole.

WE THINK

The lessons of extradition

WITH THE handing over of Robert Russell, extradition to Britain or Northern Ireland of Republicans on demand is now a routine part of the Irish legal system.

And it is something that every socialist must oppose.

But extradition is also just the latest example of the fundamental unity of purpose between Southern rulers and their counterparts in the North and in Britain. If we fail to learn the lesson of this and draw the necessary conclusions than we shall continue to suffer defeats like last month's.

No section of "respectable" Southern opinion has any serious disagreement with the rulers in Britain or the North. The partition of Ireland and the inherently sectarian nature of the Northern state is not the source of any thorough-going dispute between the rulers of the South and Britain.

Both accept these things as being rather unfortunate, but unavoidable facts of life. Both are determined that, a few rhetorical speeches notwithstanding, nothing will be permitted to happen which might cast a shadow over a perfectly amicable working partnership to manage capitalism in these islands.

And both are prepared to use all the coercive weapons in their

considerable armoury to defeat those whose opposition to this reactionary state of affairs threatens capitalist stability.

That is why Robert Russell was extradited. That is why Haughey's nationalist opposition posturing turned so quickly and so completely into open collaboration with Britain.

Everybody knows that the RUC is rotten from top to bottom; that it protects sectarian murderers and shoot-to-kill assassins within its ranks; that Dominic McGlinchey was subjected to interrogation after his handing over in flagrant disregard of the terms of his extradition.

CHARADE

Everybody knows that the system of "justice" in the North is a charade with forced confessions a commonplace; that the Northern judiciary is dominated by Orange bigots; that calls by the Southern government through the Anglo-Irish Agreement for the mildest reforms to the Diplock Courts have been brushed aside with contempt.

And everybody knows that the Birmingham Six were fitted up; that prosecution evidence was effectively discredited and yet the British Courts, for reasons of state, confirmed the conviction.

All these things are perfectly well known in Haughey's cabinet;

on the bench of the Supreme Court and throughout the cumanns of Fianna Fail. They are also known to be completely beside the point.

And that point is that to ensure the stability of capitalism in the South every co-operation must be extended to Britain in suppressing militant opposition to the sectarian Six County state. If that means collaborating in human rights abuses, co-operating in the perversion of the course of justice and turning a blind eye to administrative murder—and it does mean all of those things—that is the price that must be paid.

For Haughey and Fianna Fail, no less than Fine Gael, are completely level-headed representatives of the Southern boss class. Their reason for existence is to implement the interests of that class through Leinster House and the state machine. If they ever once lost the confidence of those bosses, their position as a government would be made untenable.

For example, having said that cuts hurt the poor, sick and elderly in their election propaganda, Southern capitalism demands more such cuts. So Fiann Fail in government sets about cutting with an enthusiasm scarcely equalled by Thatcher. The price is paid by those deprived of hospital facilities, or education opportunities or jobs. Regrettably the poor, sick and elderly must be sacrificed on the altar of Southern capitalism.

Fianna Fail and the Southern capitalist class, look with fear at events in the Six Counties. Were the mass of working class people, North and South, to inflict a bloody-nose on British imperialism, who is to say where it would all end? Having seen off discrimination the brutish sectarianism of the RUC and the British army, why would they settle for poverty, cuts, exploitation and joblessness at the hands of the Southern ruling class?

Southern bosses might prefer the British to temper repression with more reform. But reform or no reform, they understand they

must hang with the British or hang separately. That is why they must collaborate—and there are virtually no circumstances in which they will not.

And Fiann Fail's rank and file, devoid of any political ideology except perhaps a vague sentimental patriotism, are entirely dependant on the rich and powerful of Fianna Fail to organise their politics. They are merely a shadow of "the Boss". The U-turn over cuts occasioned no substantial outcry from the grass roots.

Sinn Fein looks at the question from an altogether different angle. For Republicans the central issue is a dispute between the Irish and the English—a conflict of nations. For them it is possible to construct an alliance of all classes of Irish men and women to expel imperialism and re-unify Ireland.

Naturally they see conflict between classes of Irishmen and women as secondary to the central task of uniting all against the British. The collaboration of Haughey and Co. is seen as a lapse of nationalism that pressure from the ranks of Fianna Fail can overcome.

PROTEST

Their advice to the anti-extradition campaign has therefore been to concentrate on persuading Fianna Failers to pressurise Haughey to reconsider. In line with this approach there was no mass mobilisation of protest on the Fiann Fail Ard Fheis.

There has been sycophantic greeting of the occasional Fianna Failer who has consented to appear on an anti-extradition platform.

There has been a refusal to link up the fight against extradition with the fight against Haughey's cuts.

By going soft on Fianna Fail it was hoped that its bedrock nationalism would be aroused and its grass roots would revolt at Haughey's collaboration.



Haughey collaborates.

There was no revolt, no cumann split; no serious number of Fianna Failers broke ranks. After a year of wasted effort the campaign is faced with extradition as a routine part of state policy, made routine by the same Fianna Fail in which the Republicans had invested so many illusions.

On the question of extradition, just as on all aspects of fighting the Northern state, there is another road. It means recognising the unconditionally reactionary nature of the Southern ruling class and its parties.

It requires building a movement that can begin to organise the victims of Fianna Fail simultaneously against British imperialism in the North and Southern capitalism.

It is the road of working class politics and not pan-nationalism. It is the road of the Socialist Workers Movement.

NICTU:

Carlin's silence

TERRY CARLIN, Northern Ireland officer of the ICTU, was impressively quick off the mark with his condemnation of the Provos last month following the IRA killing of two men who had been working in an RUC barracks in Fermanagh. He was on every news programme the same night denouncing the assassination of workers.

This would be all very well if Carlin showed the slightest consistency in his condemnations. But he hadn't a word to say about any of the other killings last month where the victims had no connection with the security forces. But the hypocrisy and the reactionary politics of Carlin and NICTU are self-evident.

The SWM disagrees totally with the IRA killing workers associated with the security forces. It is brutalising and politically useless.

Organising to convince workers that it is not in their interest as workers to service the forces of the Northern State is the way forward. But that requires politics which puts class at the centre of the anti-

imperialist struggle—which isn't the way Republicanism see it.

In the anti-imperialist struggle, of course, Carlin is on the other side.



Trade unions silent on repression

Taking the boat

SIX hundred people a week are leaving Ireland in an attempt to find work abroad.

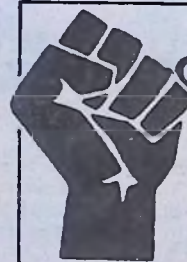
108,000 have left over the past three years according to official government figures.

Many of those emigrating are young and face an uncertain future alone in cities

like London.

Southern official unemployment figures of 242,183 exclude 16-18 year olds and those on schemes. If these were included the figure would be 300,000.

The government saves £1 million every week on welfare benefits because of emigration.



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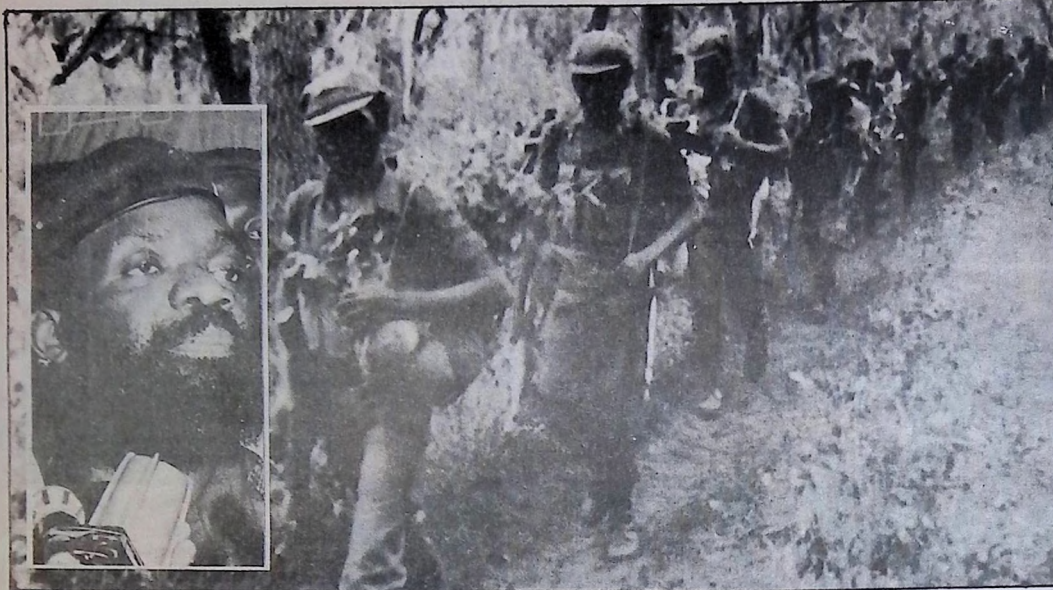
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INTERNATIONAL



South African backed rebels on the march—inset UNITA boss Savimbi.

SA carve up of Namibia

by BRIAN HANLEY

ANGOLA, South Africa, Cuba and the United States have announced an agreement to end the 13 year old war in Angola. It has been hailed as a breakthrough for peace in the region. It is nothing of the sort.

The deal involves the withdrawal of Cubans from Angola and South African forces from Namibia. Elections are also to be held in Namibia which South Africa has seized as a colony.

South African forces were supposed to begin their pull out from mid August but there are already signs that this is not being complied with.

There has been no promises given about what type of elections are to be held in Namibia. The Botha regime has drawn up plans for a separate white chamber that could veto legislation which jeopardised "minority rights".

Neither has South Africa been required to stop backing the UNITA forces led by Jonas Savimbi. UNITA are a gang of right wing murderous thugs who are Angola's Contras. They have been armed to the hilt by South Africa and the United States.

RENEGE

The Namibian liberation movement, SWAPO have claimed that South Africa only agreed to the deal because its troops were trapped by Cuban and Angolan forces. Having secured the safety of these troops, they will renege on the agreement.

The main aim of the South African regime is to rid Angola of Cuban troops so that nothing will stop them launching terrorist expeditions into the region. South Africa hopes to pressurise the Angolan regime to expel the ANC from its bases and push their infiltration routes further away



SWAPO supporters.

from South Africa.

With bases a thousand miles north of South Africa, the ANC guerrilla strategy would be in severe difficulties.

Some of these developments are behind a decided shift to the right in the ANC. A report in their London based newsletter *Front File* has revealed details of their proposed constitution of a post apartheid state. All references to nationalisation have been dropped. Instead there is a commitment to a "mixed economy" where the rights of the "private sector" are guaranteed as long as they co-operate with the state. A report in the *Irish Times* put it accurately when it claimed that "the organisation was anxious to woo Western businessmen and at the same time maintain its support among radicals in South Africa".

The ANC strategy rests on a combination of a guerrilla struggle and negotiations with white liberal businessmen to bring down the Botha regime. In the next period it will need to shift to the right to

maintain this two pronged approach.

The South African government is determined to deny the ANC bases for operation in the frontline states.

SABOTAGING

It means to reduce these states to dependencies by sabotaging their ports and their economies. The refusal of the Western powers to implement sanctions have helped in this. Despite their rhetoric the nationalist regimes in the frontline states are having to comply with the South African demands.

The strength to break the South African regime lies in the organised power of the black working class inside the country. Despite the State of Emergency they have been able to mount general strikes, boycotts and stay aways. Now more than ever it is vital that the socialist forces in South Africa build their strategies on this tremendous working class resistance.

Does power lie in parliament?

RECENT SURVEYS and reports have indicated high levels of cynicism about Dail Eireann.

However, illusions in the possibility of democracy through parliamentary means are still strong.

On the face of it, it would seem sufficient to change the characters in parliament—good guys for bad—more Tony Gregorys, less Albert Reynolds types. Indeed many who claim to be socialists, those on the "left"—in the Workers Party, left Labour, and Sinn Fein, all see bringing about change in Irish society in this way. The arguments put forward are fundamentally the same: vote for us, we get elected into office and undertake a programme of state control that favours workers, not bosses—but can it work?

Revolutionary socialists argue that it can't. Why? Because in fact real power in society lies not in the chambers of parliament but in the boardrooms of big business. Any parliament serves to administer the system in the interests of one small section of society, the capitalist class—those who own or control industry, finance etc. And this is so, no matter how left-wing or well meaning the elected government of the day.

Take for instance Alan Dukes. Nothing very radical there, but in 1983 he introduced a mild piece of legislation to close a loophole in the taxation of government bonds. It would have meant big speculators having to pay more in tax on their interest from these bonds. Within hours of Duke's announcement, a champagne breakfast was held in Jurys Hotel for the investors to discuss the issue. When the stock-market opened £800 million was removed from government bonds. Dukes immediately made concessions.

Or look at the more recent events surrounding the closure of Barringtons hospital in Limerick. Rarely was a cause more popular. Even the local Fianna Fail hypocrites who introduced the cuts, like Sile De Valera, were on the 20,000 strong demonstration against the closure. Under such public pressure the issue was brought to the Dail and the resulting vote was to keep Barringtons open. Yet the hospital closed—why?

Because the big bosses of Irish industry, the Smurfitts, the Tony O'Reillys etc., need to maintain their credit rating with international banking. That means paying their debts to continue to stand in good stead. Their debts are called the "national debt", so what's now called "our" national debt repayments come before the needs of working people, needs like hospitals when we're sick. Faced with the choice of serving the bosses' interests or those of the workers, the Dail opts for the bosses. If it doesn't, it is simply ignored.

Indeed the entire Fianna Fail election manifesto makes a sick joke of the notion that a government will respond to the "will of the people".

"Health cuts hurt the old, the sick and the handicapped" proclaimed their election posters. Another featured a giant passport, with the promise that FF would offer more than simply emigration as a solution to the dole. They were elected on these promises, yet with haste that was positively indecent, they slashed public spending, closing schools and hospitals, and another 70,000 have taken the boat.

Does all this mean then that parliamentary means can never achieve anything? No it doesn't, but it's important to remember that when it does deliver reforms, it is as a result of pressure from below, and the general state of the

capitalist system as a whole.

In the early 80s in this country Irish capitalism experienced a short lived boom based on government borrowing. Of course the bosses got the lion's share, but there was some left in government coffers.

Nurses struck for higher pay, had a sympathetic response from other workers. There was a need and a demand for an expansion in the health service. New hospitals were built and the health service improved.

Today the situation is quite different. The crisis in capitalism worldwide has brought deepening recession, and yesterday's reforms are being clawed back. Workers' militancy is dampened down. Parliaments and the bosses that serve, ride rough shod over the interests of the working class, and get away with it.

All this can lead to the conclusion drawn by some, that the use of parliaments must be completely rejected by socialists. This would also be a mistake.

We must understand that as long as workers accept capitalism it will look to parliamentary representatives who claim to further its interests. It is necessary to undercut these illusions. For that reason it would be wrong to reject the use of parliament as a tactic. This is very different from seeing it as a way of bringing about socialism. It is rather to see it as a means of making useful propaganda, as a "dung hill to stand on", as Lenin put it, in order to address those workers who look to it to show up parliament's limitations.

The Bolshevik party led the successful workers' revolution of 1917 in Russia. But for years beforehand they were a small organisation. They maintained their organisation through years of depression and deep reaction. In 1912 they had 6 members elected to the Duma—the Russian Parliament—a corrupt, rotten, gerrymandered sham. They made it perfectly clear when they stood for this body that they believed real change could never come about because of it, but despite it, through workers activity outside of it. They used the Duma to call for support for strikes, to highlight police brutality, to encourage workers to despise their bosses.

STRIKERS

The tactic is still a valid one. A socialist in today's Dail would call for scrapping the National Plan, would urge fights against the cuts through workers action, would demand support for strikers, an end to extradition and repression of republicans.

The ruling class continues to rule through a mixture of force and fraud. The force is there for all to see—the police, army, prisons, to be used as required, for strike breaking waging war.

Parliaments, whether you call them Dail or Dumas, are a major part of the fraud. The pretence is because you've got a vote you've got democracy, some "say" in how the country is run. And how much easier to side-track workers' anger into elections and parliamentary politics than to have to cope with it through the dodgy method of naked force.

As long as workers lack confidence in their own organisations, in their own ability to win reforms by fighting for them, parliament will be one of the most important weapons in the bosses' armoury.

What was true of Russia in 1912 is true today. Socialists should use elections and parliaments as forums for raising the ideas of revolutionary socialism. These ideas will help a workers' revolution sweep away the bosses and bury the "dung heaps", and usher in the start of real democracy through workers' power

Shorts, Harland and Wolff, Electricity:

Thatcher's sell off spells jobs disaster

by LINDA MOORE

THATCHER'S privatisation crusade which has been sweeping British industry now threatens to deal a triple blow to the Belfast working class. With more than 115,000 people already on the dole, the last thing Northern workers need is yet more job losses but these look certain if Tory plans to sell off what is left of Short's aerospace company, Harland and Wolff shipbuilders and the Northern Ireland Electricity Service go ahead.

ICTU vice-chairman, Pat McCartan, has estimated that over 3,000 workers can expect to be laid off if Shorts is "rationalised" following a sale, while about 1,500 jobs would go at the shipyard. Similar redundancies are predicted at the Electricity Service as it attempts to push profits higher to make the Company more attractive to private investors.

Front-runner to buy Harland and Wolff is Ravi Tikkoo, a multi-millionaire well known for his vicious anti-trade union views and practices. Tikkoo hopes to build a luxury £260 million cruise liner, the "Ultimate Dream", at the yard subsidised by the state to the tune of £100 million. However, he has made it clear that he is a shipowner with no real interest in becoming a shipbuilder and so it is probable that having built his liner he will move to fresh pastures to exploit a different section of the world's working class—meaning the possible closure of the yard in the 1990s. In the 1940s the shipyard employed over 30,000 workers—now there are only 3,700 and future seems uncertain.

Harland and Wolff has always been considered a "special case" by both the government and the Unionists because of the traditionally powerful Protestant representation at the yard. "Jobs for the boys" were always considered to be part and parcel of the marginal privileges needed to secure the allegiance of Protestant workers to their Unionist bosses.

But with the level of decline in the shipbuilding industry generally it looks as though Thatcher is keen to get rid of this millstone round her neck.

Shorts has become something of a dirty word for both nationalists and socialists in recent years. With its notorious levels of discrimination and the rampant sectarianism and bigotry of large sections of its workforce, many Catholics are tempted to say "serves them right" when hearing about job losses there. Over the past few years Shorts has been best known for the repeated and failed attempts by management to curb the more overt signs of sectarianism among the workforce, (such as the displaying of loyalist emblems and union jacks on the shop floor), in an attempt to win orders from those American companies demanding evidence of fair employment practices before buying from the company.

The Electricity Service could hardly be called an equal opportunity employer either. A FEA report of 1982 showed that the engineering section, working mainly



Prosperous Lagan valley in the forties.

in the power stations was less than 10% Catholic overall. The report concluded, "it would be wrong to conclude that Roman Catholics have been finding advancement easier in recent years".

MACBRIDE

Socialists are, of course, absolutely and unequivocally opposed to any form of discrimination or oppression. The sectarianism, both in employment practices and within the workforces themselves, in all three industries must be fought (although we would argue that this is best done by rank-and-file trade union activity and not by relying either on management

sanctions or the type of liberal legislation promoted by the MacBride principles).

Nonetheless, it would be a mistake for anyone to see the proposed privatisations and subsequent redundancies as anything other than a terrible blow to the Northern working class, both Catholic and Protestant. Sinn Fein have in An Phoblacht quite rightly condemned the sell offs.

Rightly, they point out that the privatisations will bring no benefit to nationalists and that increased unemployment will make it even harder for Catholics to get any of the few jobs still available. Sinn Fein would like to see Thatcher get a

kick in the teeth over the privatisation plans. However, because they see no place for Protestant workers in the fight for socialism until after the border is removed, republicans fail to recognise that a defeat for the workers (mostly Protestant) in this instance will be a defeat for the whole working class movement.

DEPENDENCE

An Phoblacht argues that the long-term answer to the present economic crisis in the North is to end the dependence on the failing British economy. But any capitalist united Ireland would be facing exactly the same world recession

Haughey's problems in the 26 counties aren't simply the result of the British presence in the North. Workers in any capitalist Ireland would still be exploited, and many would still find themselves on the dole. Sinn Fein's solution therefore has nothing to offer those Protestant workers who now find themselves headed for the scrapheap.

Despite the marginal privileges given to them in return for their loyalty to Unionism, workers in all of the threatened industries have been prepared to take on their bosses in the past. (Shorts workers took part in a massive strike in wartime Belfast in the 1940s—one of the most militant pieces of action against the government during the war).

However, the past decade has seen defeat after defeat for the working class in both Belfast and the North as a whole. Most of the major industries within the Six Counties have either been run down or closed—making the security business the only growth employer.

The workers have little confidence and the danger is that they will rely on their trade union officials to negotiate on their behalf or to lobby politicians instead of depending on themselves to fight off the privatisation threats. Local trade union officials have already been to see Tom King, Secretary of State, to discuss the proposed sell-offs with him. King later praised them for their "constructive and positive approach to economic issues".

It would be a disastrous course of action for workers in the industries to look to these officials who have presided over so many job losses in the past, or to their traditional Unionist politicians.

They should remember that successive Unionist regimes actually refused to recognise trade unions right up to the 1950s.

A broad co-ordinating committee is being set up to spearhead the defence campaign. The problem is that the only strategy being pursued by this committee is one of lobbying MPs Church leaders and other establishment figures.

The only way to fight the Tories is through united industrial action by the rank-and-file in all three industries and to look for solidarity to workers (both Catholic and Protestant) in other industries. After all, workers in the electricity industry in the North showed very dramatically—if in, to put it mildly, unfortunate circumstances—that they do have the power to stop a British government in its tracks. When they pulled the plug in 1974 the lights went out on the "power-sharing" Executive.

They could do the same thing now to stop privatisation and preserve their jobs. And acting jointly with the shipyard and aircraft workers, they could mount a powerful challenge to the Tories' plans to turn the North into an even bleaker wasteland. And such action would surely draw support from other, including Catholic, workers who are bearing the brunt of the Thatcherite assault.

Only revolutionary socialist politics lead on to that strategy. Until Protestant workers realise that their natural ally is their fellow Catholic worker and not their Unionist boss, politician or trade union official, then they will continue to be betrayed.

US gloats over defeat of Iran

THE IRAN-IRAQ war has ended. Two million workers and peasants have been slaughtered. £200 billion—half the value of both countries oil earnings—has been squandered.

The rulers of both countries have built up immense debts which will be paid for by the poverty of their peoples for years to come.

Socialists everywhere will welcome the end of the carnage and slaughter. But tragically, the manner in which the war has ended has also brought about a strengthening of US imperialism, in a region which supplies over 60% of the West's oil. Their policy of sending in a huge naval presence, of shooting down an Iranian civilian aircraft has been acknowledged as a key factor in imposing peace on Iran.

The New York Times expressed the new confidence of America's rulers like this: "Iran's decision to end the war represents a major success for American policy. The US presence in the Gulf shored up Iraq's war at sea and the Gulf's state's resistance. The Reagan's administration's policy now appears vindicated".

Robert McFarlane, the former security advisor to Reagan who tried to set up the Contragate deal wrote: *Ultimately it was the US commitment that brought a first generation revolutionary leader to the negotiating table. We ought to remember how we did it for we may have to do it again*".

The policy of the US in the area has undergone a number of twists. Originally it fuelled the war in order to weaken both Iran and Iraq. Its main ally in the region, Israel saw Iraq's Arab nationalism as the main threat. The conservative Gulf states led by Saudi Arabia saw the spread of Islamic fundamentalism as a danger to their rule. The prospect of both regimes logging it out offered the best prospect. In the words of an Israeli general, "We wished for a thousand year war".

For the first six years of the war, the weapon merchants of the world were encouraged to make vast profits from the slaughter. Credits, arms, diplomatic links were openly extended to Iraq. But even as late as 1986 a more covert channelling of resources was available to Iran. Iran received 1,500 Tom missiles, spare parts for US built Hawk air defence missiles and even US intelligence reports on Iraqi positions. The Contragate affair represented an attempt by the US to re-open links with the moderates in the Iranian regime.

CAPTURE

The capture of the Fao peninsula by Iran in 1986—at a huge cost in casualties—changed all that. The prospect of an Iranian victory demanded US intervention to tilt the balance the other way.

The US war ship, The Stark was hit by an Iraqi missile, but it was used as a pretext to send an immense naval force to the Gulf. A number of co-ordinated measures between the US, the Gulf States and Iraq were then put into operation. They included:

US bombing of Iranian military installations which wiped out a third of the Iranian navy.

An OPEC decision to force down oil prices and to impose a quota on Iran (from which Iraq was exempt).

A stepping up of the US embargo on arms to Iran only.

A black out on information on Iraq's use of chemical weapons.

By July of this year these co-ordinated



Iranian soldiers slaughtered in their trenches

measures had changed the course of the war. Khomeini, in his own words was "forced to drink poison" and agree to a ceasefire. The "radicals" in his Revolutionary Guards were pulled into line behind the more moderate policy of Rafsanjani.

The success of US policy in the area is a victory for reaction throughout the world. This can be seen in a number of ways.

First, the US presence in the Gulf will remain. For forty years, the US has kept an average of three warships in the region to ensure the robbery of oil. It has now built this up massively and shows no sign of withdrawing. The US deputy Defence secretary, Taft refused three times to give a commitment to withdraw at a recent press conference.

Second, Reagan will use the success of his Gulf policy to help overcome the "Vietnam" syndrome that has been an obstacle to US intervention overseas. The Reagan programme demands that the US be acknowledged as the world's cop.

Third, the US has shown how quickly it can tame the anti-imperialist rhetoric of a first generation nationalist regime. Khomeini may continue to talk of the great Satan, but from now he will play by Satan's rules.

During the war his prime minister Khomeini had assured the Gulf states "we

do not want to export armed revolution to any country". Now the regime is forced to woo the likes of Thatcher to get a re-entry ticket into world politics.

Fourth, the US has re-inserted itself into the Arab world.

Ten years ago it could only get Egypt to stand with it during its Camp David schemes to isolate the Palestinians. But the leader of the "rejectionist front" then, Iraq, has pawned itself to US imperialism to win the war. This will lead to an ever greater gap between the pro-Palestinian rhetoric and the reality of collusion with the US and Israel.

All of this throws into sharp relief the policy which socialists had to raise as soon as the US intervened in the war. The question is by no means academic. The weakness of the USSR and the decline of Stalinism means that many nationalist movements in the next period will fight under a banner that makes no pretence at socialism or left nationalism. In many cases they will even raise religious slogans.

SOCIALIST WORKER has consistently argued that in any conflict between the US and Iran, socialists had to take the same side as Khomeini. Despite his reactionary politics, the US should not be allowed to re-impose the dominance it had during the Shah's reign. It is also

clear that a US sponsored invasion by Iraq should also have been resisted for the same reasons.

There are two main arguments raised against taking the side of Khomeini against US imperialism.

The first is raised by many left-wingers in the West. It claims that Khomeini does not hold "anti-imperialist" politics in the way that, say, the Sandinista's do. While the Sandinistas sponsor progressive causes, Khomeini stands for reaction. As a result there is enthusiastic support to fight US aggression against Nicaragua among the Western left, but the same cannot be said when it comes to Iran or even Libya's Gaddafi.

This is a very dangerous argument. All nationalist movements combine progressive and reactionary elements. The oppression and poverty produced by imperialism guarantees this. Thus, the origins of many of these movements are to be found in a cultural search for a romantic past or an identification with religious symbols.

Socialists do not withhold support for movements fighting imperialism until they have first embraced a progressive outlook. The US is no more fighting Khomeini because of his reactionary views of women than the British executed

Padraigh Pearse because of his quaint religious mysticism. They fight them because they regard them as a threat to their interests, whatever their views.

Socialists therefore should not make the particular programme of nationalists the criterion on whether to support them. Rather they should support all nationalist movements that aim to expel the political and economic dominance of imperialism.

It was precisely for these reasons that revolutionary socialists all over the world supported the Irish independence struggle led by two appalling conservatives: Eamonn DeValera and Arthur Griffiths. For the same reasons the revolutionary left supported the right of the early Provisional IRA to fight British imperialism despite their anti-communist rhetoric then.

The second argument about not supporting Khomeini against US imperialism comes from many on the Iranian left itself. Reacting against their past mistakes, they have come to characterise Iran today as a "sub-imperialism". They therefore argue that both Khomeini and the US are imperialists and neither camp should be supported. In one case however, in the Mujahadeen, this has even led them to aligning with Iraq, and indirectly with the US as the less evil imperialism.

NEO-COLONIES

No serious analysis can argue that Iran (or Iraq) are neo-colonies. Indeed if the term "sub-imperialism" simply means a tendency towards regional dominance, then it has some uses. But the mistake the Iranian left make is to equate Khomeini's expansionist aims with the US. The US is the dominant world power that has provided the military hardware for the robbery of the Middle East.

Pretending that an underdeveloped country like Iran can be treated as "imperialist" in the same sense is ludicrous.

Supporting nationalist forces in their fight with imperialism in no sense implies an endorsement of their politics.

Khomeini was forced into a fight with imperialism, and was able to mobilise the population of Iran behind him. But his nationalist politics, like that of all other liberation forces, could not lead to a decisive victory.

Khomeini will argue today that the intervention of US military power caused his defeat. This is only partially true. The weapons of the US and its presence in the Gulf were decisive for tilting the balance against Khomeini. But weapons and the military power of imperialism were not in themselves sufficient.

Reports from Iran indicate a huge collapse in morale in the run up to the ceasefire. An Independent Muslim paper quoted Rafsanjani as saying that "the regime would have been hanged in the public square" if they had not ended the war. Strikes were developing against conscription. Corruption had reached into the highest levels of the Revolutionary Guards.

DEFEAT

The speed and decisiveness of Khomeini's defeat was in direct proportion to the brutality with which he crushed the Iranian revolution. The Shah had been overthrown by the working class who had begun to build councils or "Shoras". Khomeini smashed them and re-imposed a police spy network in the factories using the agents of the former secret police, the SAVAK. Women in their thousands had fought the Shah only to be rewarded with unprecedented oppression and denigration. Nationalities such as the Kurds had looked forward to a new freedom only to be suppressed again. Having crushed the revolution, Khomeini's Iran could not serve as a beacon light in the fight against imperialism.

Moreover, Khomeini's regime could offer nothing that might encourage Iraqi workers to rise up against their government's sell-out to US imperialism. Instead the more he crushed the revolution, the more he took on the previous expansionist aims of past Iranian regimes.

He threw tens of thousands into a battle to take the Shatt al Arrat waterway, a long standing territorial claim of past Iran rulers. He whipped up the most vile anti-Arab racism to mobilise his war efforts. There was not a mention of the need for Iran and Iraqi workers to unite against their common enemy, US imperialism.

Today, the Iranian regime in particular will face new problems as the masses begin to ask themselves where has Khomeini's policies led them in their fight with imperialism. Those "Islamic socialists" in the Mujahadeen who took the side of the Iraqi dictator may cherish militaristic ambitions but they have nothing to say. Only those who refused to cede the struggle against imperialism to Khomeini and stood by the traditions of the revolution can gain.

—KIERAN ALLEN

MARXIST CLASSICS

TROTSKY'S theory of Permanent Revolution provides answers to two common criticisms of Marx: that he didn't foresee a socialist revolution in backward Russia, and the one there was, didn't work.

The theory was a reaction to the "marxism" of the 2nd International, the main centre of marxist ideas and parties till the Russian revolution. That "marxism", as formulated by ultra-"orthodox" theorists such as Kautsky, Plekhanov and Labriola, distorted Marx's ideas by holding onto outdated formulas while ignoring Marx's method as a tool for studying new phenomena, new circumstances.

This was most obvious in the case of Russia. All Russian marxists rightly believed that the idea of a peasant socialism based on the Mir or village community was utopian. As marxists, they saw that urban industrialisation was both desirable and inevitable. However, they disagreed on the socio-political structures that should accompany this development.

SOLUTION

Plekhanov and the Mensheviks had a simple solution. Marx said that society would have to pass from feudalism through capitalism before it would be ripe for socialism. So the next stage in the history of Russia would be a democratic revolution which would create the conditions for full capitalist development.

The French Revolution of 1789 was lifted out of 18th century France and applied to 20th century Russia. The revolution would be led by Russian capitalists who would tear down Tsarism and lead to the creation of a modern parliamentary republic. The role of the working class was to support this revolution and be careful not to frighten the bourgeoisie into the hands of reaction by trying to turn the anti-Tsarist revolution in an anti-capitalist direction.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks rejected this analysis, as they opposed the crude deterministic marxism that gradually came to predominate generally in the International. In particular, Lenin fought the reduction of all politics to economics which robbed marxism of its spirit by making the conscious efforts of individuals and classes irrelevant.

BACKWARDNESS

Lenin agreed that the backwardness of Russia made a capitalist stage of development inevitable and hence that the only possible revolution in Russia was a bourgeois one. He disagreed, though, with the contention that there was only one model for bourgeois revolution, namely 1789. Times had changed. The Russian autocracy had made its own moves towards capitalist development with the help of foreign capital. There were two alternatives. This development might continue—a sort of revolution of the economy from above—and Russia would get some sort of industrial base.

But the Tsarist state would not be smashed nor the land given to the peasants.

The other option was that workers and peasants would push the bourgeoisie out of the way politically and make the bourgeois revolution without the bourgeoisie. Without

Trotsky's Permanent Revolution



Trotsky, like Lenin, fought crude marxism.

them because the well-oiled Russian capitalists had little to gain from an attack on Tsarism and everything to lose.

Whereas Plekhanov saw history as the smooth, inevitable unfolding of economic systems, Lenin saw that there were alternatives which were resolved by the conscious efforts of humans themselves. Lenin's alternative was a bourgeois revolution made by the workers and peasants.

Trotsky, like Lenin, fought the crude marxism of the orthodoxy within the International. From a different angle however. Whereas Lenin emphasised the relative independence of politics from economics, Trotsky criticised what he saw as a misunderstanding of Marx's scientific method.

PRACTICE

Trotsky didn't just attack orthodoxy for ignoring empirical facts, such as the existence of a substantial Russian bourgeoisie, the counter-revolutionary role of that class in the 1905 revolution etc. He

also attacked them (and Lenin) for not properly applying the marxist model to the world. The world was not one single humanity advancing in a uniform fashion in one direction—it consisted of different nation states at different stages of development which influenced each others' development.

INEVITABLE

This was the theory of "combined and uneven development", which is at the heart of Permanent Revolution.

In the case of Russia, the fact that advanced capitalist powers already existed elsewhere meant that capital was available to "graft" elements of an advanced capitalist economy onto a backward feudal country, without the need for a bourgeois revolution in the state. Indeed the Tsarist state was the instrument that directed the foreign investment.

One by-product of this "imported" capitalism was an advanced proletariat in a still predominantly peasant country with a feudal state, a situation unforeseen by Marx.

The existence of this working class meant that for the first time the struggle against feudalism could be led by the proletariat and not by an emerging bourgeoisie. In Russia the bourgeoisie had already emerged and had no interest in fighting the state that created it.

Against the Bolsheviks, Trotsky argued that an equal alliance between the workers and peasants was impossible, since all history showed that the disorganised nature of the peasantry meant that they always followed one of the urban classes. Only the workers had an interest in giving a fighting leadership, so it was they that the workers would follow.

But they would follow a socialist and not a bourgeois revolution as Lenin had thought. The proletariat could not lead the attack on the Tsarist state while "led" by the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie in the factories.

Thus, Trotsky was capable of predicting a socialist revolution in backward Russia without surrendering Marx's basic ideas.

To those who pointed out that Russia was too backward a country

in which to build socialism, Trotsky replied yes, but the world isn't. Orthodoxy only looked at nations one at a time and not together as a world system. The industrialised West had given Russia her peculiar features and a revolution in the West could support her socialist revolution. Revolution would have to be permanent in two senses—stopping neither at anti-Tsarism nor the borders of Russia.

It did stop at the borders of Russia, though not without a fight (in Germany, Italy and Britain and even Ireland). This paved the way for Stalin allowing us to explain the degeneration of the first marxist revolution without surrendering marxist theory.

Trotsky had the best explanation of the Russian revolution prior to its beginning but he was a general without an army—he had no army to put his brilliant analysis into practice. Lenin, the master of political strategy, had such a party in the Bolsheviks, but with the wrong theory of the coming revolution. During 1917, the two things came together as Trotsky joined the Bolsheviks and Lenin adopted Trotsky's view of the possibility of socialist revolution. The result was the October revolution.

Trotsky generalised the theory of permanent revolution after the experience of the failed Chinese revolution (1925-27). That experience confirmed the theory in a negative sense, just as the Russian Revolution had done positively. The application by the Stalinised CP of a cruder version of Lenin's pre-1917 position on bourgeois revolutions led to disaster.

For a start, Stalin did something Lenin would never have done—he surrendered the political independence of the Chinese workers by forcing the CP to enter the bourgeois nationalist party of Chiang Kai-shek, the Kuomintang (KMT).

Secondly, Russia was forgotten and China was said to require a capitalist stage. The revolution would have to be bourgeois and the workers would have to restrain themselves. The result? There was no revolution and China remained dominated by landlords and imperialists as Chiang put his own class's comfort before a serious fight with feudalism and imperialism, despite Stalin counting him as a progressive bourgeois and making him an honorary member of the Comintern.

CONNECT

If Trotsky had not been shoved out of the Soviet leadership before the Chinese revolution and the Chinese CP had assimilated the practice of Lenin, things could have ended differently.

Yet in Ireland today most left-wing groups accept the need for another stage to the Irish revolution before socialism will be possible.

Republicans argue that the national revolution must be completed first, while the Workers' Party believes that there must first be a massive industrialisation of the Irish economy.

Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, the success of its application in Russia and the many revolutions which failed because of Stalin's "stages" theory, points the way forward to those who want a socialist revolution in Ireland.

It remains today to connect the theory of permanent revolution, as practised by Bolshevism in 1917, with a new Bolshevik party, capable of recreating October.

—JOSH CLARKE

OUR HISTORY



Avuncular Stalin. He had the little girl's father shot shortly after as "an enemy of the people".

Stalin's bloody climb to power

THE RUSSIAN Revolution was accomplished by Russian workers and peasants but conditions in Russia were far from ideal for the building of socialism.

The economy was backward and could not produce enough to satisfy the mass of people. So the weak workers' state relied on workers in other more advanced countries to spread the revolution to more promising territory.

But revolutions in Germany and elsewhere failed. Western capitalist countries sent fourteen

armies to crush the Russian Revolution. They did not succeed but Russia emerged from the Civil War in a worse state than before, with its working class decimated.

ISOLATION

The Revolution had succeeded because of the leadership of the Bolshevik Party. They were now left to pick up the pieces.

The 1920s saw Russia's isolation increase and its economic problems continue. Prospects for international revolution receded.

In this situation the party bureaucracy developed the theory

of "Socialism in One Country". This meant the crushing of workers' rights in the process of headlong mass industrialisation.

The Birth of Stalinism by Michael Reimann gives the clearest account yet of Stalin's rise to power. Using documents only recently released in Germany, Reimann shows that Stalinism was a "pragmatic" response to a deep economic and political crisis.

The economic crisis was the outcome of the New Economic Policy. The NEP was the Bolsheviks' attempt in 1921 to revitalise the economy after the Civil War. The Bolsheviks still had a perspective of international revolution but saw that for their survival temporary "capitalist" measures were needed in the meantime.

A freer market allowed industry and agriculture to recover from the war. An economic upturn helped to raise living standards.

However, agriculture remained weak, industrial output was still low and unemployment was high in the cities.

The balance between light and heavy industry was uneven—a lack of heavy industry led to a situation where: "The volume of new construction remained inadequate. The number of new or rebuilt factories was small. The overwhelming majority of enterprises were housed in old buildings using worn out equipment that desperately needed replacement".

There was a western embargo on trade with Russia to try to starve it of new technology.

Also, the lack of heavy industry meant that Russia's military defences were weak.

Crisis erupted in 1927. At first it was a "crisis in foreign relations".

Stalin and Bukharin had an alliance with Chiang Kai-Shek's Kuomintang movement in China. But when the Kuomintang came to power in April 1927 it butchered thousands of workers and communists. Chiang made it clear that he wanted a nationalist, and not a socialist revolution.

Russia's isolation increased further when Britain severed diplomatic links. Britain was Russia's main trading partner but it also had interests in China. The Bolsheviks' support for Chinese communists threatened these interests, so Britain broke with Russia.

The external crisis led to an internal crisis. Discontent with the leadership over the foreign policy setbacks led to a growth in support for the Left Opposition.

The opposition "had grown, in the preceding years, in proportion to the concentration of power in Stalin's hands after Lenin's death in 1924".

In 1927 "oppositional" activity was spreading like a river in flood. The opposition organised mass meetings of industrial workers . . . at a chemical plant in Moscow shouts were heard: 'Down with Stalin's dictatorship! Down with the Politburo!'

This activity occurred when workers were expressing anger at food shortages, price rises, the pressure for speed-up in factories and rising unemployment.

REPRESSION

Eventually the leadership adopted a policy of repression. It prevented the opposition from putting its views at meetings, victimised opposition workers, expelled leaders, including Trotsky, and lifted the rule which prevented police action against party members.

Another tactic which was to prove crucial was the scapegoating of technicians and other experts. Reimann describes the situation in the mines of the Donets Basin in late 1927: "Labour disputes and wildcat strikes broke out again and again. Great bitterness was expressed against the administration of the mines, the engineers and the technicians".

The GPU (Police) could not control the disputes and decided to exploit the workers' dissatisfaction with the experts. They "uncovered"

a "counterrevolutionary group" involved in "wrecking activities".

The "Shakhty Case", as it was called, led to the first show-trial. Twelve men "confessed" to "wrecking activities". German engineers were implicated in the case.

The Shakhty Case allowed Stalin to concentrate a great deal of workers' anger against local technicians. This eventually allowed the bureaucracy to "rise above" Russian society.

The other consequence of the case was that it further isolated Russia. Germany was indignant over the scapegoating of German engineers. The German government discontinued economic talks with Russia. France also distanced itself from the regime.

Stalin, who had shortly before been for concessions to the West, now saw that events were pushing in the direction of a self-contained "autarchic" economy.

Revolutionary ideals were gradually replaced by "economic pragmatism".

Stalin feared the threat of war and saw the need to build up heavy industry. This meant reducing the output of goods to the countryside in return for grain. Ultimately the GPU was sent into the country in March 1928 to seize grain from the peasantry.

"Pragmatism" also required defeating the moderates, like Bukharin, who believed in developing Russian industry at a "snail's pace" while allowing a decent standard of living to the mass of people. The moderates were eventually won over or eliminated. Stalin's trump card was that he had a solution—however brutal—while the moderates had none.

In order to drive Russia forward Stalin ditched socialism and transformed the country into today's State Capitalist regime. The result was to provide a major ideological weapon for Western capitalism by allowing socialism to be identified with autocracy.

In detailing how this came about, Reimann's book—despite minor political shortcomings—is of tremendous value.

—DAVE McDONAGH

BOOKS FROM SWM

JUNE '36

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by Jacques Danos and Marcel Gibelin

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LETTERS

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Russia: Who is in charge

Dear Socialist Worker
Should socialists support Gorbachev's reforms?

Patrick Burns, in last month's SW concludes that they should. Why? Because despite its faults at least industry is nationalised in Russia, with no unemployment and sure isn't Gorbachev rectifying those "blemishes" from Stalin's era anyway, so Russia must be socialist and Gorbachev must be wonderful!

For Marxists however, the criteria for a socialist society isn't whether the state controls industry but rather, who controls the state—are the workers in power?

In Russia's case unlike 1917, it is not the workers who are in power but the state bureaucracy who play the same role inside Russia as the various capitalist classes do in the West.

Russian workers are denied control over the means of production, they have to sell their labour power to survive and every aspect of Russian economy is subordinated to the process of competition between East and West so that the Russian rulers are not overtaken by their rivals. The main form this competition takes is through armaments expenditure.

However, it carries a price. In Russia that price is the consumption of up to 17% of GNP on the armed forces (versus 6% for the US) which places a disproportionately heavy burden on the Russian economy.

Gorbachev's perestroika is an attempt to ease this burden by streamlining the Russian economy. He talks about eliminating state subsidies and

exposing sections of the industry to "market forces". If the price is workers to be laid off then so be it.

To carry this through, however, he has had to by pass those sections of the bureaucracy which have deep roots in control over the process of production itself and exercise political power at local level.

"Glasnost" is his attempt to do this by seeking allies outside the bureaucracy amongst intellectuals and workers and mobilising support for perestroika. The price he and his supporters in the bureaucracy are willing to pay is more freedom to express opinions and grievances and organise meetings and demos.

However while socialists welcome any reforms which allow workers greater freedom,

we don't have any illusions in them Gorbachev is no more than a different face of the Russian bureaucracy. He might have major disagreements with sections within that bureaucracy but ultimately his interest lies with them. If workers start opposing perestroika and calling for real glasnost, for example, more control in the factories and national self-determination. He will have hesitation in attempting to smash them.

Gorbachev might criticise some of the "excesses" of Stalin but he and his ilk will never criticise the bureaucratic state capitalist system Stalin created because they are the benefactors of that system today.

—ANNE MURRAY
BELFAST

What we stand for

The Socialist Workers Movement is a marxist organisation fighting for a workers' republic in Ireland and for socialism internationally.

FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM

We begin from the proposition that what determines the nature of any society is the system by which its wealth is produced. In the system we live under, capitalism, production is geared to profit, not to human need. Among its inevitable features are poverty, war, racism and sexism. Capitalism cannot be destroyed and these evils thus eradicated by piecemeal reform. It can only be destroyed by revolutionary action by the class which creates all the wealth, the working class.

The machinery of the capitalist state—parliament, courts, army, police etc—is designed to protect the interests of the ruling capitalist class, not to regulate society in a neutral fashion. At most, parliament can be used, sometimes, to make propaganda against capitalism. It cannot be used to smash capitalism. Only a workers' revolution can do that and establish a truly democratic society in which workers hold power directly through delegates elected from workplaces and areas and are re-callable and replaceable at any time by those who elect them.

NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW

This kind of socialism does not exist anywhere today. Workers do not have control in Russia, China, Cuba etc. Instead, power is held by a state-capitalist class. A workers' revolution is needed in these countries too.

We are against NATO and the Warsaw Pact and all weapons of mass destruction. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination.

FOR AN END TO PARTITION

The Northern State was created by British imperialism in its own interests. Sectarianism and bigotry were built into it and will continue to exist for as long as the state exists.

The marginal privileges given to Protestant workers are just that: marginal. It is in the immediate interest of Protestant as well as Catholic workers to fight against their exploitation. It is in the interest of all Northern workers to unite against the state and aim at socialism in Ireland.

We support all forces struggling against imperialism and the Northern state, regardless of differences we may have with them.

The interests of the Southern ruling class are no longer in fundamental conflict with those of imperialism. Southern capitalism is a junior player in the world capitalist system. The Southern state too, props up partition, despite occasional nationalist rhetoric. The "national question" can be solved only by mass working class struggle against both states. Republicanism, by limiting the immediate struggle to the achievement of "national unity", and by appealing for all-class alliances in pursuit of this goal, can never lead the working class towards the defeat of imperialism.

FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION

We oppose all forms of oppression which divide and weaken the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women. We fight for free contraception, abortion on demand and the right to divorce. We oppose all discrimination against gays and lesbians. We stand for secular control of hospitals and schools. We fight for the complete separation of church and state.

FOR A FIGHT IN THE UNIONS

Trade unions exist to protect workers' interests under capitalism. The role of trade union leaders is to negotiate with bosses over workers' position within capitalism. To destroy capitalism, we need a rank and file movement in the unions separate from the leaderships and fighting for workers' interests regardless of the needs of capitalism.

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To destroy capitalism and achieve socialism the most class conscious sections of the working class must be organised in a revolutionary party. The SWM aims to build such a party through spreading its ideas and through its activity in the working class movement.

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A weekend of political discussion and debate organised by the Socialist Workers Movement

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REVIEWS

The Meek and the Militant

The Meek and the Militant is a Marxist analysis of the development of different religions. It is also a study of the role they have played in maintaining, or on occasion, fighting against class and society.

Karl Marx called religion the "opium of the people". He meant that historically religion has acted as a bulwark in maintaining class society, provided an ideological justification for the exploitation of the mass of the population. The existing social order was ordained by God and by abiding by its laws one would be rewarded in a life hereafter.

The Meek and the Militant—Religion and Power across the World. PAUL N. SIEGAL

But Marx also wrote that: Religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress and the protest against real distress. And so it is that under certain historical conditions, religious beliefs have been an embodiment of the discontent of the masses—an ideology of revolt and revolution.

Christianity, for example, began as the revolutionary doctrine of the ancient Jewish proletariat against Roman oppression. Christian beliefs spread throughout the Greco-Roman world. But the sacking of Jerusalem in 70 AD dashed

the national hopes of the Jews. That basis for revolt was lost. Christianity accommodated itself to Rome.

By the middle ages the Catholic Church was the single largest landowner in feudal Europe. The various religious heresies at that time were a reaction of the oppressed to the feudal system.

The book is divided into four different sections. The first section on the origins of religion and the development of materialist thought refutes a belief in God. It's probably the best argument for atheism I have ever read.

The second section traces Judaism, Catholicism and Protestantism from their origins

to the present day. Included are an analysis of the decline of religious belief in Western Europe, the growth of the religious Right in the US and the development of Zionism.

The third section looks at the development of the major Eastern religions—Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam—in the same manner. The section on the Muslim religion and the growth of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East is especially good.

The final section of the book, entitled "Religion and the Struggle for Socialism" looks at the attitude revolutionaries should take to religion and religious belief.

Marxists demand a complete separation of Church and state. As far as the state should be concerned, religion is a private matter. Marxists wage an ideological struggle against belief in God but this is subordinated to the concrete requirements of the class struggle.

In practice, that means revolutionaries are willing to work alongside religious believers for common political objectives. For example, a strike of workers organised by a Christian Trade Union would be fully supported by revolutionaries. Because we understand that most workers will only break from religious ideas in the course of a wider struggle against capitalism.

Atheism is not a requirement for membership of a revolutionary party. We welcome religious workers and, on rare occasions, even Priests into the ranks.

The Meek and the Militant should be read by all revolutionaries.
EVE MORRISON

Reefer and the Model



The film becomes a part of what it sets out to expose.

"REEFER and the Model" is based around four main characters. Reefer is a hard cynical "republican aristocrat" who has ceased IRA activity. Together with his friends

Spider and Badger he runs a ramshackle trawler business.

While driving his mother home, Reefer picks up a woman hitchhiker. She is Teresa (the Model), an ex-junkie ex-prostitute who has returned from London pregnant. She and Reefer become lovers and she goes to live on the trawler.

The characters tell the story by simply being themselves which allows the film to touch on many aspects of society. (drugs, sex, homosexuality, etc) without lapsing into moralism.

LUNATICS

However the thing which is most unnecessary and disappointing about "Reefer and the Model" is the completely reactionary way which the film deals with republicans. The two IRA men joined up because it was a good way to get a "screw" or because, as Spider says he "enjoyed blowing things up". In a film which supposedly attempts to deal realistically with Irish society, this is a complete contradiction, portraying the two republicans as either lunatics or criminals.

It means that the film becomes a part of what it sets out to expose i.e. the refusal of Southern society to deal realistically with the "problems" of its own making. It's this which mars what is otherwise a good film. It is on occasion very humorous and on the whole very enjoyable. If it hadn't tended to reaction on the republican issue it could have been excellent.

—BARBARA BERGIN



Cork: A City in Crisis

In Cork the 1860s had seen wages falling, unemployment growing, living costs creeping upwards and social unrest growing apace. Paradoxically, labour militancy was uncommonly rare during the period. Most of the more militant elements of the working class channelled their energies almost exclusively towards the advancement of the national cause. However, the disintegration of the IRB following the failure of the rising of 1867 saw many of the militants redirect their attention back to local labour issues.

The tailors' strike in the Summer of 1879 was the spark that set alight the greatest class upsurge experienced in Ireland until then.

The strike issues were wages and the introduction of sewing machines into the shops. Scabs were ferried in from England and Germany to break the strike, but this failed and only served to fuel mass support for the tailors.

For five consecutive nights, beginning on the evening of Wednesday 22nd June, the working class of Cork wage undisguised war on the forces of the Crown. When the fighting ended The Irishman gave the opinion that "the city of Cork has earned for itself the distinction, whether creditable or otherwise, of having originated and sustained with astonishing vigour and determination the greatest trade riot which probably ever

occurred in this country". It went on to say that the conflict had "assumed the form and tactics of regular warfare, in which the Cork populace showed considerable military skill and intelligence"

The first evidence of militancy amongst general labourers came on Wednesday at the Cork-Bandon Railway, when porters struck for a wage increase. At Beamish and Crawford's Brewery on the same day employees of a contractor working in the plant went on strike. A few of the more militant amongst them attacked their foreman and attempted to throw him into machinery which was still running.

On Thursday morning porters engaged in unloading coal for the Cork Steamship Company, demanded a 20 percent increase and when this was refused went on strike. Also on Thursday timber yard workers struck

On Friday action on the railway was spread briefly when porters at the Passage Railway struck for a wage of 15s a week. The bosses granted the increase the same day. This easy victory helped the movement to gain momentum. On Saturday the Butler Weighhouse porters struck and they were joined by gardeners, by the flour mill workers, by more dockers and by the remainder employed in the timber yards.

Workers at the Douglas Flax Mills

were the first to move on Monday morning; they withdrew their labour and marched on the hub of the city. From their various workplaces groups converged on two points, Patrick's Bridge and Anglese Bridge. Flying pickets were formed and detailed to fan out and bring the remaining workers into the net of revolt.

These pickets proceeded from workplace to workplace where their ultimatum was issued to both boss and worker alike: 15/- a week minimum or strike. Sometimes the labourers were asked to join the strike even if the wage increase had been granted. But coercion was rarely necessary as even the most conservative workers were transformed into aggressive zealots by the new found solidarity.

MOVEMENT

Many struck although their demand had been fully met and even the offer of a further raise did not always get them back to work so exhilarated were they at being part of a mass movement careering from success to success.

Before long all the general labourers were out, apart from those that had won increases. They were quickly followed by the women and juvenile factory hands. The women first struck at Booth and Fox, demanding a wage increase

Cork: A City in Crisis. A History of Labour Conflict and Social Misery, 1870-1872. Sean Daly, Vol One Tower books of Cork 1978.

from 5/- to 6/-, and on refusal marched on Patrick St. The women's flying pickets brought out the female workforce in all the city centre printing works, biscuit and clothes factories and many shops.

All the time the state too was active. Police reinforcements continued to pour into the city; additional infantry and cavalry units arrived from Dublin and the Court House was on indefinite overtime.

By the following week the strike wave waned as a number of the larger disputes were settled. The Press reported, "the excitement of the striking mania appears to have altogether subsided . . . the terms of employees have been in all cases agreed to". By the weekend many more firms had followed suit.

The strike wave was immensely successful. It took on the bosses and wrung important concessions from them and for the first time in Cork unskilled workers combined together to form their own organisations. Unfortunately many of them only survived the general strike by a few years.

Cork: A City in Crisis gives us a lucid blow by blow account of a period in our history, which our "betters" would rather leave unknown.

If you can't beg, borrow, buy or half inch it, be practical and get it at your local library now.

—EAMONN LEWSLEY

INDUSTRIAL NEWS



TOM Garry, President of the FWUI and John Carroll welcome Hillery to 1913 Commemoration pageant. 100 protestors turned up to show their disgust at the invitations given to the modern day descendents of William Martin Murphy. They included strikers from the Irish Printed Circuits who are fighting for the right to join a union, the Anti-Extradition Campaign and the Socialist Workers Movement.

James Larkin in his paper the Irish Worker summed up the lesson of 1913 like this: The most significant fact has been the direct connection and agreement existing between the Murphy and Jacob type, the professional politician and the clergy. Each of these sections have most brutally and unashamedly stated that they are opposed to any improvement in the condition of the common people.

It was a lesson long ago forgotten by the present day leaders of the ITGWU and the FWUI.

IPC strike in sixth month

THE STRIKE at Irish Printed Circuits in Walkinstown is entering its sixth month. The dispute over unfair dismissal and union recognition has become a bitter struggle between Clear, a particularly bloody-minded boss, and 12 young people who have braved hardship and intimidation on the picket line as well as the indifference of much of the trade union leaders.

Recent events at Liberty Hall demonstrated the scandalous hypocrisy of the bureaucrats. A commemoration of the 1913 Dublin Lock-out was being held inside, sponsored by the ITGWU and FWUI. Who were the guests of honour?

You might expect the IPC

strikers to be, the only group of Dublin workers fighting at the minute. You'd be wrong. It was the top representatives of the boss class that were invited; CJ Haughey, Hillery, Briscoe and Albert Reynolds whose one time election agent O Hanlon locked out his workers.

But if the bureaucrats weren't bad enough, only two weeks before, the strikers were physically attacked by management lackeys in the middle of the night. A caravan used by the pickets for shelter had been removed under court injunction. Four pickets replaced the caravan, and stayed in it overnight to prevent it being taken again.

At about 3 in the morning there was an attack on the caravan using a fork lift truck.

The sides were holed, and the windows smashed with cinder blocks. The pickets

were lucky to escape without injury, but their caravan was wrecked and dumped on waste ground. A file is with the DPP but so far no action has been taken against the thugs.

The strike has had the support of other workers. Collections have been made and generous donations particularly from the firemen, themselves recently in dispute have been essential in maintaining the strike. More important still is the backing promised, especially from Aer Lingus workers. Most of production is for export. The strikers have recently been encouraged by news that despite management claims to the contrary, production is being hit. Shoddy work produced by unskilled labour is being returned by customers, and profits as well as long term prospects are being affected.

The courage and tenacity of these strikers deserves the support and active solidarity of every trades unionist.

Visit the picket line, do a workplace collection, send messages of support c/o MSF 38, Lower Leeson St. Dublin.

Rebuilding in Waterford Glass

WORKERS OF Waterford Glass have often set the headlines for militancy. They spearheaded strike action against the PAYE tax system, they struck during the H Block crisis. They came out in support of jailed water rates protestors in the town. They were the backbone of a one day strike against police brutality during a strike at Dawn Meats.

One year ago they were hit by a Company offensive. Globe Investments and the other major holdings which own the factory demanded 750 redundancies and eventually got them.

Here Socialist Worker talks to Jimmy Kelly, the ATGWU Convenor of the Glass factory. SW. Rumours in the press indicate that Waterford Glass may be taken over by Tony O Reilly and the Fitzwilton group. How do you see this take over bid?

JK. Fitzwilton has recently won the backing of some very rich investors and look as if it is on the takeover trail. So the rumours may very well be correct. It also appears that the local management may be supporting such a takeover.

What will it mean for the workers? In one way it is just another employer. But it may also be the opportunity for attacks on workers' conditions. Despite all the turmoil we have held on to agreements which protect our pensions scheme, disability scheme, sickness scheme as well as official breaks all bonus systems and the complete wage structure is intact. Fitzwilton and O Reilly might have a different attitude to these and might try further changes in work practices.

The Company won the battle on redundancies and this must have been a blow to the Stewards organisation in the factory. How deep has the attack gone? What sort of changes have happened on issues such as piece rate negotiations and demands for

more flexibility?

JK. Concessions have been made to the Company but the basic union structures remain strong. Just to take the two issues you mention. The piece rates still have to be agreed with the union reps. We still offer a price and the management have to bargain on it.

FLEXIBILITY

This has been wiped out in many factories in England but we have managed to retain it. The Company have tried to change this. When the new diamond wheel cutting equipment came in the Company said that the piece rates should be set by independent arbitration but this has not been accepted by the Shop Stewards. On flexibility, they have won some concessions between the Cutters and the semi-skilled workers. But those that are shifted will still get the average rate for their own job.

It is now one year since the redundancy crisis. One part of your strategy was to call in consultants to argue with management's figures. Socialist Worker criticised this tactic as one that would dampen militancy and force you to argue on management's terms. Looking back on it now, how do you regard this strategy?

JK. You have to remember the background. There had been a lot of talk in the months before. The Company said they were drawing up a business plan. We thought they wanted changes in work practices. There was a big shock when they announced the number of jobs they wanted to cut.

There was a need for a calming exercise that would explain what was happening to the membership. We decided to look at alternatives to cutting the workforce and to make some concessions but on our terms. That is why the consultants were called in.

I think the unions have a real difficulty in dealing with a voluntary redundancy package.



Jimmy Kelly addresses Waterford workers.

How do you stop people queuing up to take the Company's offer?

There are problems but if the Unions take a militant fighting stance they can cut back the numbers volunteering.

DEMORALISATION

The problem in the public sector today is that the unions have done nothing and thousands are taking the redundancy deal through demoralisation or because they haven't seen the union putting up a fight.

JK. I can accept that point of view and I am not arguing against your strategy. But there is a dilemma. If we had gone to the

gate when the redundancy plan was first announced we could have built up a fighting spirit and so won the middle ground away from taking the redundancies.

That is the positive aspect to that strategy. But there could also have been another outcome. The Company had built up stocks and had budgetted for chaos. A long strike could have led to disorganisation with those wanting redundancies clamouring behind you. The Company could then have used that weakness to demand their conditions for a return to work. That would have meant much greater changes in work practices than they got. The work practices that were agreed by the union cost the Company £7 m in payments and buy-outs.

The Shop Stewards took a principled line on redundancies.

We produced a booklet showing the real hardship it would bring workers. We argued that jobs did not belong to individuals and should not be sold. We refused to negotiate on the redundancy payments saying it was a matter for the individual and the company.

SACRIFICES

We also had a mandate for strike action in the event of any compulsory redundancy.

But in all these things workers on the shop floor look at the balance sheet whether you like it or not. When they see zero profits they accept the need for sacrifices.

But does not that argue for a clear socialist presence in the factory carrying open propaganda against the logic of capitalism arguing that

their system is in a mess and that the shareholders should pay.

JK. You have scope for this around different issues. We did argue that the shareholders had been making profits over the years and that it was their turn to sacrifice. We showed how the profits made from the Glass workers had been used to expand the Company. We said that the fall off in profits were temporary. But at the moment workers see themselves as part of a capitalist system and there are things we have to accept whether we like it or not. The trap to be avoided in all this is that the situation is not to be used by union representatives as an excuse for doing nothing no matter what the employers do to exploit the situation. The members should always be given the choice and the necessary leadership.

Finally, what do you think is the political direction that left wing stewards should be taking?

JK. The huge gulf that has opened between the employed and unemployed needs to be tackled. The unemployed are cut off from the organised structures. No real links exist. Unemployed dockers in Waterford who did stay with the Union put a picket on Waterford Docks and were jailed for it. The right to picket is apparently not even extended to the unemployed.

Links also need to be forged between individual workplaces at shop steward level rather than us all falling into the "look after your own job" syndrome.

Supportive action for any group of workers in dispute yields benefits for all and sends a clear message to the employers' organisations that the movement is alive and not just satisfied with mere recognition of whatever union happens to organise the workplace.

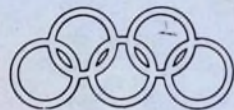
As regards the overall political situation, that is always difficult. The politics of the SWM make a lot more sense for workers wanting to affect real change. But those politics need to be based on a bigger organisation to attract militant stewards. Hopefully that can develop in the years ahead.

Socialist Worker

Olympics 1988

EAMONN McCANN

FLAMMING LIES



THIS MONTH, all eyes will be on South Korea as the Olympic Games are held in its capital city of Seoul.

When the former military dictator of South Korea, General Chun Doo Hwan, agreed four years ago to host the games, the huge, ultra-modern facilities constructed for the Olympics were to be a symbol of Korea's new found economic power and political stability.

As the games open, the situation is very different for South Korea's rulers. Last summer a rebellion of workers and students forced the military to relinquish power and, in the ensuing industrial struggle, led to the large-scale unionisation of many of

Korea's largest corporations. These struggles still flare up from time to time.

In recent months, the student movement has concentrated its demands on expelling the 42,000 US troops from the country and re-unification with North Korea.

Instead of the Olympics being a symbol of stability, South Korea's new "democratic" rulers fear that the Olympics could become a rallying point for the victims of the Korean "miracle"—the workers, the students and the political prisoners.

South Korea has gone through a dramatic economic transformation over the last twenty years from a very underdeveloped, largely rural society to a highly industrialised predominantly urban country. It has emerged as a

serious competitor to the US, Western Europe and Japan in manufactured goods—steel, cars and shipbuilding. Such large conglomerates as Hyundai, Gold Star and Daewoo are the symbols of the "new" Korea on the international scene.

Korea's "miracle", however has been carried out under a series of brutally repressive military regimes. An important ingredient in the country's economic development has been the ruthless repression of any democratic or working class opposition, the imposition of the longest working week in the world (averaging 57 hours) low wages and break-neck working conditions.

These conditions have produced three great waves of revolt—in 1980, the "Hot Summer" of 1987 and the

present wave of revolt which began in January 1988.

Between January and June of this year, 860 strikes broke out, involving some of the largest conglomerates in the country. Production was stopped or delayed at the three top car manufacturers, Daewoo, Kia Motors and Hyundai. Strikes have also occurred at shipyards, machine tool companies and car parts suppliers.

The most dramatic struggles have taken place at Hyundai's various companies, who have firmly resisted unionisation. At one Hyundai plant, strikers held eleven executives from the company hostage until their wage demands were agreed to.

Hyundai motors was closed during a four-day occupation over wage demands and at one

SMASH

point over 20,000 strikers occupied the plant's grounds. In early June alone, over 91 strikes were in progress across Korea.

The most important development in recent months has been the repeated attempts by South Korean students literally to smash the border between North and South Korea. On June 10th, 10,000 Korean students tried to meet a handful of North Korean students at the village of Panmunjom in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) that separates the North from the South.

The march was violently dispersed by 60,000 S.Korean riot police using clubs, tear gas and water cannon. Among the students' demands were the expulsion of the 40,000 troops US troops in S. Korea, joint North-South hosting of the Olympics and reunification of the country.

On a number of occasions during August, students from the South tried again to link up with Northern students. Each time they were battered back by riot police.

As the start of the Games approaches, dozens of industrial conflicts continue across South Korea, while the student movement continues to plan demonstrations against the government and the US military.

—GORETTI HORGAN

IF JOHN Treacy strikes gold in the marathon in Seoul there'll be an explosion of delight all over Ireland and no doubt most socialists will join with everyone else in the celebrations.

But socialists must also recognise that nobody will be more delighted at an Irish gold than Charlie Haughey, and this should make us pause and think. For Haughey an Irish triumph would setup a re-run of the Stephen Roche and European soccer side welcome homes—occasions which are uniquely marvellous for encouraging the illusion that we are all one big happy family rejoicing in our Irishness.

This is one of the most pernicious aspects of modern sport—the way it diverts attention away from the real divisions in society and can foster a spurious mushy feeling of oneness between the exploiters and the exploited.

To many, this will seem a typically Marxist kill-joy attitude. Sport is generally propagated in our society as something clean, innocent and noble, and the Olympic Games are projected as the prime example of these fine qualities.

The propaganda about the "Olympic ideal" and about how the "spirit of the games" transcends national and racial barriers is pure nonsense.

Sordid commercialism and narrow nationalism are the key-notes in Seoul.

The athletes themselves are not immune to this. Amateurism is, of course, now a complete joke among the leading competitors. The main benefit of winning a gold is not a medal to show your grandchildren but the fact that you can bump your appearance fee up by a few hundred percent and negotiate lucrative endorsements on the strength of it. Increasingly, whole national teams are sponsored by big businesses. Allied Irish Banks, for example, are the "official sponsors" of the Irish squad.

The games themselves are controlled by giant multinational corporations. General Motors, At&T, MacDonalds, Coca Cola and IBM. All have a share of the overall action at Seoul.

In addition individual sport will have individual sponsors. Major South Korean capitalist outfits have grabbed the biggest slice of this particular pie.

The aquatic events being hosted by Samsung, the country's second biggest conglomerate, car manufacturers Daewoo are sponsoring equestrian competitions and so on.

And vast sums are being paid by Levi Jeans, Kodak Cameras, Ford cars, Phillips Television etc. etc. for advertising hoardings which will be seen by hundreds of millions of TV viewers. As far as the big companies are concerned, the athletes are only performing in order to attract an audience to look at the hoardings. To these interests, the athletes literally get in the way.

The Olympics encourages the worst type of reactionary nationalism. With flags, national anthems and hysteria whipped up—notable by low-level tabloid papers—people all over the world are encouraged to identify totally with "our" side and to hate success going to others.

It is occasionally argued that while all this is true, it represents a betrayal of what the Olympics are really about. In fact, it does nothing of the sort. The Olympics have *always* been a thoroughly nasty business.

Take the touching ritual of the Olympic torch being carried in relays from Greece to light the inspirational Olympic Flame. The charming belief is widely disseminated that this is an ancient ceremony shrouded in the mists of classical antiquity. In fact, it's a vulgar piece of ham propaganda devised by the Nazis for the 1936 Olympics, so as to dramatise an alleged connection between the sturdy Aryan race of Hitlerite fantasy and the glories of ancient civilisation.

Whatever about glorious civilisations it should be noted that the ancient games themselves were vicious unsavoury affairs. They took place somewhat irregularly between 776 BC and 260BC and in essence were a ritual reenactment of, and preparation for war. The javelin competition is of course a spear throwing competition. The ancient games also featured different races in various types of armour, war chariot racing, unarmed combat ("wrestling") etc. etc. Killing opponents was permitted. Top athletes were sponsored by rich individuals who had their names inscribed on the competitors tunic.

The fifty percent of the Greek population who were slaves, and the fifty percent of the free population who were women were banned from participating. Indeed, women were banned from attending.

Violence, bigotry, sexism, racism and class distinction have been in there from the beginning.

There is nothing wrong with watching and enjoying the Olympic Games on television. We might as well. But it's fair to say that come the revolution working class people won't have as much need of heroes to identify with since our own lives will be far longer.

In the meantime, as we watch we should be aware of the way powerful interests are trying to divert and manipulate our minds for their own benefit.