

Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

Twenty years is too long

TROOPS OUT



NOW

TWENTY years after the arrival of British troops it's clear that their role has been to shore up an irreformable state, not to bring about a democratic solution.

Throughout the period of their presence, the British government would ideally have wanted reform. Indeed, in the autumn of '69 the Labour government envisaged a swift series of measures to eliminate discrimination and then military withdrawal.

This didn't happen because the machinery of the Northern state proved incapable of implementing reform. It turned out that the price of democracy would be the dismantling of the state and no British government has been willing to contemplate that—because to dismantle the state would be to destabilise the entire island and put the capitalist system itself in dire jeopardy.

Thus the British Army in the North holds together a state in which working class Catholics and Protestants are divided from one another, with the Catholics shouldering the bigger burden of misery.

Every index of deprivation shows that the relative position of Catholics is as bad now as it was when the troops came in. This is the reason tens of thousands of Catholic working class people support the Provos.

All the blether about "intimidation" from the right-wing press and the likes of the Workers' Party can't conceal this stark fact—that it's oppression which provides the basis for armed struggle.

Within this permanently distorted system the Protestant working class, too, loses out. Although marginally better off than their Catholic brothers and sisters, their wages and conditions are worse than those prevailing across the water. Some specific areas—the Lower Shankill, for example—are among the most deprived in these islands.

But the nature of the Northern state engenders politics based on community rather than class. Indeed, the state itself was devised precisely as an expression of one community identity. So the possibility of a fight-back on a class basis—even by relatively well-organised groups like the shipyard workers or at Shorts—is enormously weakened.

The feeling of being at one with the state, of necessarily being loyal to the state, has debilitated the Protestant section of the working class for generations.

Defence of the Northern state, or support for the forces physically defending it, is not in the interests of any section of the Irish working class.

Workers in the South should be in the vanguard of the campaign for Troops Out.

It's obvious that the ruling class in the South—notwithstanding occasional flurries of republican rhetoric—is totally in favour of the troops staying. The continued existence of their own decrepit state would be put in question by a British withdrawal.

And the Southern state, too, has armed itself with ever more repressive laws in its efforts to smash opposition to the Northern state: no-jury courts, state censorship, the Offences Against the State Act, etc—measures which can be and have been used against the working class movement and which certainly constitute a formidable barrier against the advance of the working class in the future.

Those like the Workers' Party and the Labour leadership who support these measures—because they support what has to be done to defend the "constitutional position"—are acquiescing in the re-arming of the capitalist state which they make such a to-do about opposing.

The SWM doesn't believe for a moment that "Brits Out" is an adequate policy on the North. We are not nationalists. Far from it.

But we do say that Brits Out is a necessary element in the socialist programme which alone can lead towards a solution in the working class interest.

INSIDE:

Twenty years of the British Army in the North - Turn to pages 6 & 7

Green TD sits on the fence

EVERY day brings fresh news of how capitalism is damaging the environment.

Conditions under which people live and work come low on the priorities in the rush for profits which threatens even the whole future of the planet.

Widespread anger and concern resulted in the election of Roger Garland for the Green Party in June's election.

So what are the Greens prepared to do about it or indeed any of the political issues they are confronted with.

For a start, Roger Garland would claim to be neither left-wing or right, but radical.

What this actually means becomes increasingly clear as the Greens are forced to leave the moral high ground and take a stand on day-to-day political issues.

Such as voting for Taoiseach.

In the event, the right voted for Haughey or Dukes, the left voted for Spring, but Garland preferred to sit on the fence.

Garland may not have supported Haughey but he certainly didn't oppose him.

It would seem logical that if you objected to what someone had done in power, you would attempt to thwart their efforts to regain it.

Not so. Garland's position actually made it easier for Haughey.

In a situation like that you have to side with the left—however critically—against the right.

On the question of extradition, his position is as right-wing as that of Haughey.

In an interview with the Irish Times, the Green's leader said he wanted to see the establishment of a prima facie case before people were extradited.

In other words, extradition is okay if they might be guilty.

This represents support for extradition and nothing else.

On the question of the North itself, the Greens call for the replacement of the British Army with a neutral peacekeeping force.

But no army is ever neutral. Nor can any state simply be reformed. It must be smashed decisively.

This is why any suggestion of a constitutional reform in Northern Ireland is nonsense.

The Greens support the idea of a "referendum" to decide the constitutional future of the region; to find "the least offensive option to the greatest number of people".

But the situation as it stands at the moment is the "least offensive" to the electoral majority.

That was what the Boundary Commission set up by the British state intended.

So being radical really means support the status quo, and it's tough luck for the downtrodden Catholic minority.

COMPLEX

Nor are the Greens opposed to the EEC as such, "just the Single European Act".

But the Single European Act was just a formality to legitimise what the EEC is anyway, the build-up of a military-industrial complex to compete with the USA and Japan.

It is no longer possible to say you accept the economic set up but not the military side of things.

The two have become inseparable.

For these reasons socialists should be very clear about what lies behind the Greens claim to offer a new radical solution to politics.

From what we have seen so far, there is nothing new or radical, but simply the same old middle class individualism, at the bottom of Green Party politics.

—CATHERINE CURRAN



Striking miners give Gorbachev a headache

Miners fight East and West

MINERS IN the US and the USSR have launched massive strikes.

In doing so they have exposed up the hypocrisy of their own rulers. Bush and Gorbachev show great concern for the rights of workers in other countries.

But the miners strikes have shown the horrific conditions workers have to face in both the East and West.

In the US miners are fighting against the Pittston Coal Group in southwest Virginia. The strike began on 5 April and the company is determined to break the Union of Mine Workers.

The Pittston Coal Group demanded new wage cuts and longer hours from the miners. They want to enforce Sunday working and cut spending on health and safety.

The vicious attitude of the company towards the miners health was explained by Linda Addair, a member of the women's support group, the Daughters of Mother Jones.

"My father", Linda said, "was hurt two years ago; his arm was shattered and half his face ripped off by a conveyor belt accident. They promised him health care for life, and then took away his medical card."

In the "land of the free", strikers have to face the full brunt of the powerful US state.

2,500 miners and their families and supporters have been arrested since the strike began. Many have been jailed.

HARASSED

The strikers are also harassed by Pitson's private police force, Vance International. Pickets now dress in camouflage to prevent identification by video cameras.

In the USSR, the strikes have shown the appalling conditions for miners in this "workers state".

Miners are not paid travelling time to get to the coal face. This can often mean travelling for up to 2 hours underground.

Although among one of the higher paid groups in the USSR, the miners see that there are few supplies

in the shops. One of the main demands of the Siberian and Ukrainian miners strikes was for sausages and fresh meat. There are also notorious shortages of simple things like toothpaste.

In Kuzbass, the miners raised the slogan "for clean air". The levels of pollution in the USSR are immense as the bureaucrats spend little of workers safety.

The strikes in the USSR have been the biggest since the crackdown by Stalin in the 1920s.

Significantly, the mines in the Vorkuta region where Stalin deported revolutionary socialists and other political prisoners, were closed by the strike.

The strikes have begun to wipe away the trendy image of Gorbachev. He threatened the miners with force if they did not concede. The stage is not set for the rise of independent unions and a massive workers upsurge against the state capitalist rulers of the East.

All of which shows the reality of the SWM slogan: Neither Washington nor Moscow, but International Socialism.

Workers Party TDs victimised

THE DECISION of the ITGWU executive to sack Workers Party TDs, Eamonn Gilmore and Pat Rabbitte is a disgrace.

The unions have traditionally campaigned for the right of workers to political representation.

But now the right wing Labour Party supporters in the ITGWU are using the election of the Workers Party TDs to the Dail to get rid of them.

They hope that the new unions SIPTU will be completely in the hands of the likes of Billy Attley and John Carroll.

Socialists everywhere should defend the



Workers Party against these attacks.

But they should realise that the matter can not be divorced from the overall lack of democracy in the unions. Tragically Workers party supporters have gone along with these practices in the past.

Rape: should the courts get tougher?

ON the night of September 7th and 8th 1987 a woman was severely beaten and sexually assaulted in Dublin by army sergeant Paul Downey.

When the case was brought to court in 1988, Downey pleaded guilty and was ordered to pay the woman £5,000 in compensation.

Any more severe punishment was rejected by the judge on the grounds that a prison record would ruin Downey's career.

The defence's case was built around the allegation that the woman was thought to be a prostitute.

Last month the case was up in court once again when Downey was ordered to complete the payments.

This is a typical example of how women are treated by the courts in cases of rape or sexual assault. The woman is the one put on trial. The victim's past history is often brought up in court, the implication being that if she was anything but a nun or virgin she was somehow asking to be raped. This kind of blatant sexism is prevalent throughout the judicial system. What can be done about it?

The most common solution given by the majority of the left is to give the courts greater power to crack down on rapists. This is not the answer. In order

to understand why, one must look at the nature of the judicial system and the role it plays within capitalist society.

The courts are not neutral bodies but are an integral part of the capitalist system. They exist to preserve the status quo, not fundamentally challenge it. Any attempt therefore to tackle the oppression of women by increasing the repressive apparatus of the state through the courts has always backfired.

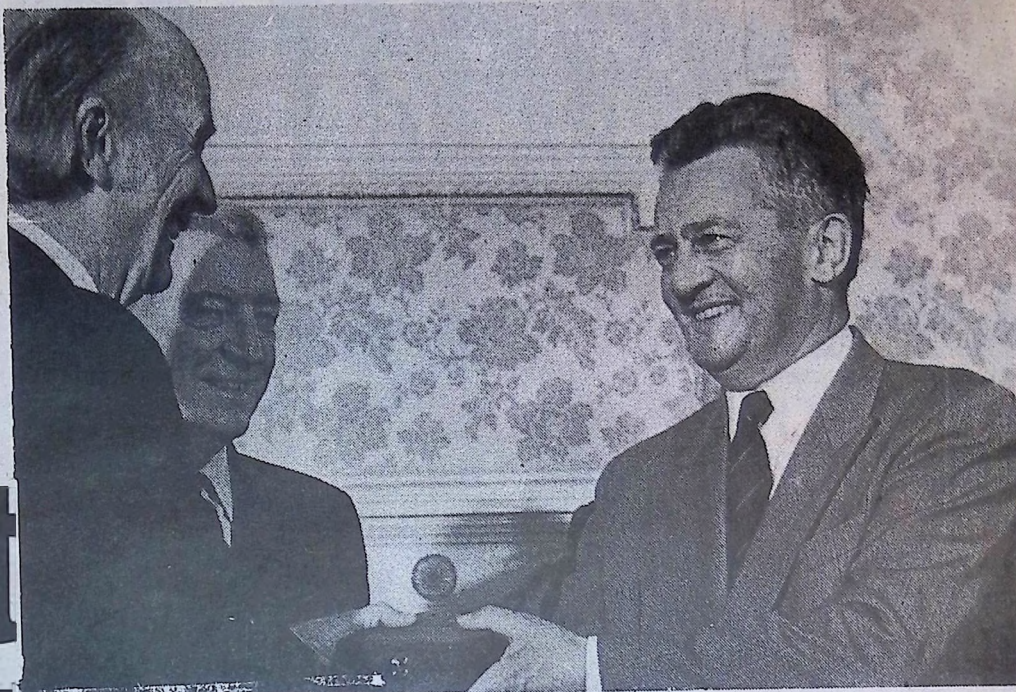
A good example of this is a law passed in Britain against kerb-crawling in 1985. It's original intention was to stop men harrasing women under the pretext of looking for prostitutes. But in practice the legislation was used as another means of harrasing the prostitutes themselves.

Secondly, calls for higher sentences play into the hands of the right-wing. The function of the state under capitalism is to oppress, keep in order, working class people. Giving that same

state greater power will inevitably mean the power will be used against the most exploited and oppressed sections of society. To call for heavier sentences always assumes that rape—itsself an act of violence—can be ended through the threat of violence. It shifts the blame for rape away from the social conditions that give rise to rape, and instead lays the blame solely on the individual.

WE THINK

Haughey's Coalition of the Right



SOUTHERN IRISH politics has entered a watershed with the formation of a Fianna Fail/Progressive Democrat Coalition.

A vague pro-worker sentiment has always hung about Fianna Fail.

Fianna Fail fought to establish the sovereignty of the 26 county state against the pressure of Britain.

Ever since the 1930s, they linked the fight for sovereignty to the need to industrialise and develop the South.

Workers saw Fianna Fail as an "expansionist" party. Fianna Fail themselves claimed to be working for "rising tide to lift all boats".

One result of this is that many of the meagre welfare provisions in the South—free education, free hospitalisation, increased social welfare payments—came in under Fianna Fail.

As a result Fianna Fail consistently won the votes of workers.

The illusions in Fianna Fail, however, have also been fostered by sections of the Left.

A strong tradition emerged of looking on Fianna Fail as the "progressive" section of the capitalist class.

They were supposed to be a populist party that could either tilt towards the working class or the rich.

It depended on who won their ear.

These views underlay the disgraceful agreement that the ICTU concluded with Fianna Fail in the Programme for National Recovery.

By collaborating with Fianna Fail in running down the public sector, they hoped to tilt Fianna Fail away from the openly Thatcherite politics represented by the Progressive Democrats.

The same argument underlay the call by the tiny but influential Communist party for

workers to give their second preference votes to Fianna Fail in 1987.

Yet when it came to aftermath of the recent general election Fianna Fail had not the slightest difficulty in establishing a coalition the "new right" in the Progressive Democrats.

Their programmes were identical.

The only delay was caused by the miserable haggling about the number of cabinet seat available to the Progressive Democrats.

The formation of a coalition of the rich opens further opportunities for the arrival of class politics in the South. During the election campaign itself a clear Left/Right divide emerged.

Despite Fine Gael's efforts to play the role of an opposition party, class politics will grow in the South.

The immediate beneficiaries will be the Labour Party and the Workers Party.

In the next period it is vital for revolutionary socialists to put the policies and record of these parties to the test.

The response of the Labour Party and the Workers Party to two events in the near future should be subject to close scrutiny.

First, in six months time there will be a special ICTU conference to decide the union's attitude towards the Programme for National Recovery.

INFLATION

The wage rises under this three year deal are already falling behind inflation.

The question is will the Left parties give a lead in throwing off this rotten deal.

Both the Labour Party and the Workers Party have countless trade union officials and activists in their ranks.

A clear call from De Rossa or Spring for the Left to unite in action to mount a campaign to break the Programme for

National Recovery could have a major impact.

Second, mid August sees the 20th anniversary of the British Army coming to Northern Ireland.

Both the Labour Party and the Workers Party have spent vast energies in denouncing the activities of the IRA.

But the question remains for all their supporters: do they favour the continued presence

of the British Army in this country? Do they see Thatcher's army as a neutral peacekeeping force?

Labour Party and Workers Party supporters who see a need to mount a campaign for the withdrawal of the British army—a campaign endorsed by every leading Left Labour figure in Britain itself—should be organising to take part in the National Demonstration on August 19th.

They should also be calling into question the attitude of their party leaders in supporting the repression inflicted by the British army.

Come of it, Nell ...

NELL McCafferty is becoming a warning to us all of what can happen to a—once militant—socialist who loses the head over radical feminism.

In her latest piece in *In Dublin* she first slags off RTE voice-over commentators, not for their boring blandness, but for being men.

Maybe she has a point here and RTE is being discriminatory against women in its staffing policies (apart from also being discriminatory against working class voice-overs, whether male or female).

But she goes on to sing the praises of Margaret



Nell McCafferty

Thatcher for putting down all the assembled French and other men celebrating the French Revolution, not because most of the politicians gathered in Paris were far from supporting liberty, equality and fraternity, but because they

were men, celebrating the Rights of Man.

"Good woman, Maggie," she says.

"Don't let the bastards get you down. As if they could."

She then says how Thatcher "gets up the noses of the male left in her country, commendably it seems, for example Denis Healy of the Labour Party.

What about the female left, whether reformist or revolutionary, or all the thousands and millions of other working class women whose noses she gets up? No mention is made of them.

She continues by slugging off the Irish Labour Party and Workers' Party, not on the fully justifiable grounds of the lousy opportunist re-

formism of its leaders, but because their TDs are nearly all men—all the time, as she says, becoming more and more enraged.

At last, however, "this savage breast was soothed by the sight of Mary Harney".

Right-wing she may be, says Nell, but she had the politicians falling into line like schoolboys behind her sensible suggestion for a coalition.

Harney to the rescue—it doesn't matter, it seems, what dreadful politics she may have as long as she's a woman.

What a swamp of confused and reactionary ideas for a brave fighter to have fallen into! Come off it, Nell.

INTERNATIONAL

Poland in crisis

by JOSH CLARKE

AFTER ALL the Round Table discussions, General Jaruzelski, the man who led the coup in 1981, remains in power.

Indeed, he remains on his own terms.

He will be with us for at least another six years.

He will have the power of veto over parliamentary legislation and the right to dissolve parliament and declare martial law.

In his speech before the newly elected parliament that contained all the new opposition members, he declared that he wasn't going to "flagellate" himself over the coup.

He continues to defend his actions then and even claims that they were completely of his own design and had nothing to do with pressure from the Russians.

How then could such an inveterate tyrant have agreed to Round Table talks at all, to the legalising of Solidarnosc and semi-free election? There are a number of reasons: Firstly, Poland remains in deep economic crisis.

The 39 billion dollar debt means that just to pay the interest payments, the Polish bureaucracy has to export much of what is produced with the result that there are massive shortages and inflation which is currently running at 100 per cent.

The latest panacea of the markets will mean further attacks on the working class as "uneconomic" plants are closed and jobs cut, and prices are allowed to rise to their "natural" levels.

Traditionally, price rises, especially on food, have been the spark for workers' resistance in Poland.

That is why Jaruzelski needs some way of incorporating the leadership of Solidarity into the system, to prevent a recurrence of the early Solidarity explosion.

And here we have another reason why the General was ready to talk; namely changes within the opposition since the coup.

In the years after the coup the majority of Solidarity's leadership and members drew the right wing conclusion that Solidarity should never threaten the political power of the bureaucracy again.

The ideas of middle class intellectuals came to dominate the political side of the movement.

They hoped to reform the state along Western lines and



Walesa and Bush - pro-market and anti-struggle

to introduce "economic reforms"—i.e. the market.

By the end of 1987 the idea of an "anti-crisis pact", a form of social contract, was dominant in the movement.

The union would keep a lid on workers' struggles in return for some political reforms.

The rightward drift of the leadership is symbolised by Lech Walesa himself.

He has become increasingly pro-American, pro-market, pro-Pope and most important of all anti-struggle.

He has become a virtual dictator within Solidarity, brooking no dissent, especially from the left.

The influence of the two super powers has been used towards the same ends in Poland—stability.

Gorbachev has encouraged the attempts of the Polish bureaucracy to build a broader base for themselves in society.

Bush has put pressure on those in Solidarity prepared to listen to him to exercise constraint.

During his visit to Poland, Bush was lavish in his praise for the General and is believed to have tried to sway Walesa in favour of the General's candidacy, something Walesa eventually accepted.

The general election results created a major crisis for the ruling party.

Their candidates failed to

win any seats where they ran against opposition candidates and hardly any even where they didn't have to!

Several leading intellectuals in Solidarity, including Jacek Kuron and Adam Michnik, have argued that Solidarity should propose its own government but leave the presidency as well as control of the army and foreign affairs in hands of the party.

These people have been arguing for some time that with the rise of Gorbachev in Russia, the old confrontational tactics of Solidarity are misplaced and that what is required is an alliance between the opposition and the reformers in the party.

Walesa rejected this plan, not because he was opposed to collaboration but because he understood that a Solidarity government would have to impose "unpopular but necessary" measures in order to save the Polish economy, something which would almost surely destroy Walesa's support among rank and file Solidarity members.

So in the end he sat back and supported Jaruzelski for president and made it clear that Solidarity would be the loyal opposition.

That is why the Polish rulers welcome Walesa's nationalism because for him "national reconciliation" means the workers making sacrifices in the "national

interest" and the bureaucracy saying thank you.

If Walesa were successful it would mean increasing demoralisation among the membership of the union as they were forced to sit back and watch their conditions deteriorate.

Just such a mood of apathy would be what old style conservative hacks would feed on in their efforts to oust the reformers.

Fortunately there has always been a counter tendency to Walesa's collaboration.

The biggest step in the development of this left wing opposition to Walesa within Solidarity was the founding of the Polish Socialist Party (Democratic Revolution), in 1987.

The party argues for the end of control of industry by the bureaucracy and for workers' control instead.

On the question of the state it says:

"We are aware that achieving these goals can involve open conflict with the power apparatus and judicial system of the Polish Peoples republic ... the right of self defence is a natural right of workers."

There is a real basis for the growth of such a party. It is provided by the continuing level of workers' militancy in Poland.

The defeat of Solidarity in the coup was never a crushing

as that in Chile in 1973 when thousands were butchered.

The Polish bureaucracy simply didn't have the base in the middle class that Pinochet did.

Solidarity was thrown back, but it wasn't destroyed, with the result that the bureaucracy hasn't been able to make the sorts of attacks that would be necessary to restore the health of their economy.

Indeed 1988 saw two major waves of struggle based around younger groups of workers less affected by the defeat of 1981.

In the second wave in August, striking Silesian miners inspired workers in Szczecin, Gdansk and Stalowa Wola to take action.

A central demand was the relegalisation of Solidarity.

This militancy, more than anything else, explains the urgency behind the round table talks and shows the real way forward in Poland.

The regime was terrified that repression wouldn't be enough and so like any other ruling class sought to make a deal with the leaders of the movement who were only too ready to compromise.

It took a long time to convince the workers to call off their action, during which Walesa had the uncomfortable and unusual (for him) experience of being booed and heckled by angry groups of workers.

The PSP(DR) was heavily

involved in those disputes as well as the campaigns to have Solidarity legalised, which when it came caused much more excitement among ordinary people than the elections.

In struggle there is no question about the new party's commitment to the working class.

But their practise is not matched by their ideas, which often accept some of the arguments about the market and the blessings of parliamentary democracy.

Nevertheless the fact that at least one group of people was giving out leaflets during Thatcher's visit to Poland pointing out the hypocrisy of her claiming to defend workers' rights in Poland while she was denying them in Britain, ought to be a source of comfort to all socialists.

The increasing reliance of Poland's rulers on the tacit support of union leaders rather than open repression creates new opportunities and

dangers for Polish socialists.

On the one hand it opens a large gap in which workers can argue openly about the way forward and revolutionaries can argue for genuine revolutionary socialism based on democratic workers' councils.

On the other hand it makes all the more urgent the creation of an open political alternative to those same union leaders.

OUR HISTORY

THE FAMILY of Anastasio Somoza had ruled Nicaragua for forty five years.

His dictatorship was corrupt and murderously brutal.

His regime was overthrown by a mass movement led by the Frente Sandinista (FSLN).

It took eighteen months of mass insurrection, strikes, land occupations and military attacks to bring down the regime.

The fifty thousand people who died in the process testify both to the brutality of Somoza's National Guard and to the heroism and sacrifice of the Sandinista-led opposition.

The blow to US imperialism which the Sandinista victory represented was welcomed by socialists throughout the world.

But the initial response from the US was quite ambiguous.

Relations between the Carter administration and Somoza had been difficult.

Like Panama's Noriega today, Somoza had refused to play by the 'rules'.

His regime's murder of US citizens and its open corruption on a huge scale put a strain on relations with the US, which began to look for a more 'respectable' government for Nicaragua.

In February 1979, Carter cut all military aid to Somoza and so helped weaken the regime.

On 17th July 1979 Somoza fled the country.

A coalition government led by the FSLN but also including "respectable" figures, who represented the Nicaraguan capitalist class, took control of the country.

Carter immediately tried to influence the new government.

He extended diplomatic recognition and granted it economic aid saying:

"We have a good relationship with the new government."

"We hope to better it."

"We are supplying some minimum humanitarian aid to the Nicaraguan people who have suffered so much"

In an attempt to promote the position of the right-wing within the coalition, Carter arranged an aid package of 60,000 tons of grain and \$75 million in aid.

Ronald Reagan's inauguration to the American presidency in 1981 brought a change in US foreign policy and attempts at influencing and incorporating the Nicaraguan government were ditched.

Instead, the US tried to isolate and strangle the new regime. Starting the Contra's terrorist war was central to this strategy as was the economic boycott.

Both put the Sandinista regime under a severe strain.

Despite this, gains were made in the early years of the revolution.

Health care was made available as of right and diseases like polio, a consistent killer, were eliminated.

Every child got a place in school, and by the fifth anniversary of the revolution illiteracy had been reduced to less than 3 percent of the population.

But the threat from the US overshadowed every advance as the Contras engaged in a bloody campaign attacking villages, farms, schools and hospitals.

JULY 19th saw the tenth anniversary of the overthrow of Somoza in Nicaragua. SEAN McVEIGH looks at the problems which the Nicaraguan Revolution faced, at the politics of the Sandinista government and at the prospects for socialism in Central America ten years on.



Revolution under siege

The Contras lost the military conflict.

But they did succeed in putting the Sandinistas under sufficient pressure to sign the Arias "peace" plan.

This called for ceasefires in Nicaragua and Guatemala.

It called for amnesties, a halt to outside aid for the guerrillas and 'a climate of greater democracy'.

ECONOMY

It's central aim is to take revolution off the agenda in Central America.

It is clear then that much of what happens in Nicaragua is being dictated by outside factors.

But the course of the revolution has principally been shaped by the politics of the Sandinistas.

The FSLN has always said that it was not about building a workers' state in Nicaragua.

It has always sought only the right to build an independent state with a mixed economy free from imperialist intervention.

This is confirmed by the constitution of November 1986 which upholds the rights of private property and pledges the country to a mixed economy.

Protecting the rights of capitalists is a reflection of the Sandinista desire to maintain "national unity" and an alliance with the "patriotic bourgeois".

Today private capital accounts for two thirds of the economy and generates 60 per cent of the country's wealth.

The private sector is the main employer, employing four out of five workers.

The Sandinista economy is no different to that of other Latin American countries like Mexico and the Dominican Republic.

The state sector in Nicaragua is smaller than it was in Allende's Chile, Peron's Argentina or Peru under General Valasco.

In fact, the Sandinistas are anxious to ensure the integration of Nicaragua into the world economy.

When President Daniel Ortega addressed a meeting of businessmen on a visit to the

United States he was quick to assure them that "the development model that Nicaragua peacefully proposes will not threaten the national interests of the United States".

Ten years after the revolution, the Nicaraguan economy is in deep crisis with hyper-inflation, a shortage of foreign exchange and a huge national debt.

There are severe shortages in consumer goods and even in basic necessities like food and fuel.

DISTORTING

In a population of just over three million more than 70,000 people leave the country each year in search of work.

Of course it is the case that the war against the Contras has had a massive distorting effect on the economy.

By 1986 half the national budget was spent on defence.

The economic and physical blockade of the country ensured a permanent shortage of basic goods, machinery and medicines.

At the same time it ensured that export earnings were cut.

But it is also the case that it is Nicaragua's workers who have paid the highest price for the war. Between 1980 and 1983 the real value of wages fell by over 30 percent.

Welfare programmes were frozen as the government used what little money it had for investment in the export sector—this meant subsidies for private business.

Repeated states of emergency removed the right to strike.

In 1985 the government introduced the first of a series of austerity programmes which cut out all food subsidies and devalued the currency.

In January of this year, the latest package of austerity measures nearly halved public spending and made 35,000 public employees redundant.

Before deciding on the measures, the Sandinistas met the representatives of private business to get their "advice on how to revive the economy".

The advice was clearly accepted.

Ortega announced that there would be no more nationalisation of private property and government officials said that some state-run businesses would be handed back to the private sector.

The suffering and removal of political rights produced by the war were not spread equally.

The middle class and capitalist class survived comfortably despite the mounting misery of Nicaragua's workers.

Business organisations were and are allowed to operate under fewer restrictions than the trade unions, while open supporters of the "good old days of Somoza" like the Archbishop of Managua could operate freely.

But the behaviour of the Sandinista government cannot be blamed entirely on the war.

Immediately after the revolution—when there was not war—they made it clear that their revolution was nationalist, not socialist.

After the victory of the FSLN in July 1979, factories and farms were occupied by workers and peasants.

But much of this property belonged to the 'patriotic bourgeois'.

As far as the Sandinistas were concerned the "violation" of this property put "national unity" and the support of "patriotic" capitalists at risk.

The situation 'worsened' (in Sandinista eyes) when trade unions became involved in the occupations and their number increased.

In late 1979, a Sandinista court ruled that all confiscated property not belonging to the Somoza family should be returned to its "rightful owners".

The Ministry of Labour then outlawed further occupations.

In 1980 striking workers demanding wage increases were supported by organisations to the left of the FSLN—like the Communist Party and Workers' Front.

The leadership of these organisations were arrested and their newspapers closed.

New laws were introduced making strikes and occupations punishable by imprisonment.

The tragedy is that there was an alternative strategy.

A strategy based not on nationalism but on revolutionary socialism.

Such a marxist strategy would reject the capitalists and rich landlords of Central America, not the struggling workers and peasants.

It's not pie in the sky. The Sandinista revolution had a massive impact on the politics of Latin America.

A wave of militancy swept through most of Central America.

In El Salvador, revolution seemed imminent in early 1980—just six months after Somoza had been overthrown.

But the nationalist politics of the Sandinistas ensured that they distanced themselves from the events in El Salvador.

In doing so, they sealed the fate of their own revolution—because spreading the revolution was always the only hope of survival for revolutionary Nicaragua.

By signing the Arias plan last year, they have agreed to abide by the rules of the international ruling class.

Meanwhile the economics of Nicaragua's survival, the scarcity, the poverty and the way workers are forced to pay the price, will last long after the Contras fade away.



THERE'S been an argument raging for twenty years now about why the British troops came onto the streets of the North.

On the one hand it's said that they were sent to protect the Catholic minority, under attack by supporters of the Northern state.

On the other, it's claimed that their task was to back up the forces of the Northern state and to suppress Catholics who were demanding civil rights.

The reason this argument has never been resolved is that, up to a point, both sides are right.

The troops were sent in to shore up the Northern state. In order to do that they first had to stop the threatened massacre of Catholics, particularly in Belfast.

After that, however, it fairly

quickly became clear that Catholics *couldn't* get a fair deal within the Northern state. In holding the state together, therefore, the British troops in effect were ensuring that Catholic second-class citizenship continued.

By August 1969 the civil rights campaign which had erupted the previous autumn had shaken the Northern state to its foundations. And it had sent a tremour through the Southern state as well.

The instability had increased steadily over the months. In April the "liberal" Unionist Premier Terence O'Neill had resigned. Celebration bonfires were lit on the Shankill Road and Ian Paisley held a "Thanksgiving Service".

O'Neill had been under pressure to concede some of the civil rights demands, but the Paisleyites had warned that they'd topple him if any concessions were made.

And the Paisleyites had strong support inside the

Unionist Party itself. William Craig led a far-Right faction on the back benches, and cabinet ministers including Chichester-Clarke and Brian Faulkner had been trying to balance between the different groups.

When Chichester-Clarke beat Faulkner by one vote to replace O'Neill as premier, Paisley said that he'd support him "for as long as he doesn't stray from the principles of traditional Unionism".

The civil rights movement was split. "Loyalists" led by Hume and Currie said that Chichester-Clarke should be "given a chance", while radicals such as Bernadette Devlin argued that the only hope of change was by keeping up the pressure.

Between April and August 1969 there was a series of civil rights demonstrations and marches, with the "moderates" dithering about which ones to support.

At the same time there was a non-stop succession of Orange marches and

20 YEARS OF THE

Why we say

TROOPS

Paisleyite rallies demanding with growing stridency that the civil rights activities be put down.

As the Orange marching season got into full swing in July there were increasingly violent clashes, many associated with Orange processions through Catholic areas. In a number of instances, the RUC baton-charged Catholics to clear a path for the Orange demonstrations.

In one such baton-charge, in Dungiven on July 13th, 66-year-old Francie McCloskey was killed—the first person to die in the current Troubles. In the first fortnight of August there was nightly violence in Belfast, usually taking the form of clashes between Catholic and Protestant youths with the RUC intervening on the Protestant side.

All this had repercussions in the South. Northern nationalist leaders, including Eddie MacAteer and Gerry Fitt, appealed publicly to Taoiseach Jack Lynch to put pressure on the British government to intervene and force the RUC to behave impartially.

This was the build-up to the 15,000-strong Apprentice Boys march through Derry on August 12th.

When clashes began between marchers and young Catholics the RUC reacted predictably and baton-charged the Catholics into the Bogside.

They were followed into the area by scores of marchers, many still wearing their collarettes, who smashed windows, beat up residents and shouted insults and threats.

The result was a pitched battle which lasted for 48 hours.

The events in Derry, shown widely on television, had a dramatic effect. In Dungannon, Coalisland, Newry, Strabane and Dungiven, RUC stations were attacked by Catholics outraged by the RUC/Loyalist assault on the Bogside.

Meanwhile, in north and west Belfast, Catholic enclaves came under attack by Loyalists.

Jack Lynch made a TV broadcast from Dublin saying that the Stormont government was evidently no longer in control of events and that

Catholic areas were in great danger.

He said that his government "could not stand by" and allow a slaughter, and announced that he had asked the British government to request the United Nations to send in a "peace-keeping" force.

In the meantime, the Southern army would set up "field hospitals" along the border.

The same evening—August 13th—Chichester-Clarke also broadcast, announcing that the B Specials were being mobilised.

The following morning 8,500 B Specials were ordered to report for duty.

Fighting continued all day in Derry. By late afternoon the RUC had been beaten out of the Bogside and into the centre of the town. A large force of Specials gathered behind the RUC lines. With the RUC literally on the run, it seemed that the Specials were to be thrown into the fray.

It was at this point that a company of the Prince of Wales Own Regiment marched into the city centre and threw a barricade across the main entrance to the Bogside. The RUC and Specials were pulled back out of sight.

ENCROACH

The arrival of the soldiers clearly marked the physical defeat of the RUC in the "Battle of the Bogside". To this extent their arrival was welcomed. They made no immediate effort to encroach into the Bogside.

At the same time it wasn't clear what their long-term intentions were, and it wasn't in the nationalist tradition to welcome British soldiers.

An instant bulletin produced by local socialists summed up the reaction: "This is a great defeat for the RUC. It is not yet clear whether it is a victory for us."

That evening the Specials who had been deployed in Armagh shot a man called John Gallagher dead.

In Belfast particularly, the arrival of the British troops in Derry was seen clearly as a defeat for the RUC. Enraged, both Loyalists and the RUC launched the most determined attacks since the thirties on

Catholic areas. Four Catholic men and a nine-year-old boy, Patrick Rooney, were killed.

Catholic houses were burned down in Conway Street and Brookfield Street. Loyalist civilians carrying pistols openly associated with the RUC. Browning machine guns mounted on Shorland armoured cars were used by the RUC against Catholic streets.

The following afternoon, the 15th, British troops were deployed in Belfast, and set about the construction of a "peace-line". They were welcomed in Catholic areas as protection against the RUC and Loyalist mobs.

On the same evening there was large-scale rioting in Dublin as protestors converged on the British embassy.

It subsequently emerged that Lynch's cabinet was in a state of near panic, one cabinet minister, Kevin Boland, arguing for a cross-border incursion so as to "internationalise" the issue, others expressing fears that a full-scale massacre of Catholics in the North would produce such anger in the South as to destabilise the Southern state.

Five days after the troops arrived, on August 19th, Chichester-Clarke was summoned to Downing Street by British Labour Premier Harold Wilson. They issued a seven-point "Joint Declaration".

Eight days later Home Secretary James Callaghan arrived in the North and met twice with the Unionist government at Stormont. These meetings produced a 14-point "Joint Communique".

The two documents set out formally what the role and purpose of the British troops was. Two things were made clear.

First, the troops would defend the Northern state. The Joint Declaration put it bluntly: "The border is not an issue."

Second, "equality of treatment and freedom from discrimination" were to be guaranteed to all.

The problem was to be that these two aims were contradictory.

It proved impossible to deliver equality within the state.

THE BRITISH ARMY IN THE NORTH

TROOPS OUT

Would there be a 'bloodbath'?

THE most persistent argument made against withdrawing the British troops is that there'd be a bloodbath if they left.

The argument is commonly advanced by people who want to portray the conflict as being between "extremists on both sides", with the British troops in the middle representing reason.

The conflict, of course, is far deeper-rooted than that, in the colonial history of the country and in the inherently undemocratic nature of the Northern state.

However, the argument is also sometimes advanced by people who have no illusions about what the British Army stands for, and no love for the Six County state, but who genuinely fear that the terrible tragedy of Beirut would be re-enacted in Belfast if the British troops were pulled out.

The first point that needs to be made is that sectarianism is the product of, and is continually reinforced by, the British occupation.

At the end of the day, whatever their reservations and qualms, the British underpin and defend the sectarian RUC and UDR. The troops exist to assist the civil power in the North. And that power is the irreformably sectarian Orange statelet.

For so long as the troops remain, the sectarian structures of the Northern state and institutionalised discrimination against Catholics which reproduces the Paisley poison is guaranteed.

The removal of British sovereignty and the withdrawal of troops would not automatically make "Protestants come to their senses".

It is necessary to look at the circumstances which would force the withdrawal and the effect that would have on the ideas of masses of Protestants.

Many fear that if the British simply went and the North was incorporated into the Free State, inplacable Protestant resistance would result in a fight with the Catholics as first target.

It is perfectly plain that the British have no intention of simply leaving. And the Southern rulers have no desire to press for incorporation of the Six Counties within their state.

If the sectarian state is to be smashed and the British are to withdraw it will only be the result of a mass struggle.

COMMUNITIES

Such a struggle could hardly leave Ireland, North and South, unchanged. Nor could it leave the parties and communities shaped, or mis-shaped, pretty much as they are at present.

It is possible for political activists to reshape things in the course of forcing a British withdrawal.

The Southern working class holds the key to this process.

For the reasons outlined elsewhere in this article, revolutionary socialists argue that the campaign for Brits Out must involve the mobilisation of the Southern working class against the capitalist Southern state.

Viewed in this perspective, the united Ireland which would be on offer in the aftermath of a British withdrawal would not be an extension of the Free State over the whole island but a different order of society altogether.

This order of society wouldn't beckon to "the Protestants" to come in, but to the Northern working class, in reasonable expectation that the Protestant section of the Northern working class would consider it preferable to the alternative of sectarian chaos.

At the very least this would minimise the level of sectarian violence which would attend the creation of a united Ireland.

None of this is to say that the removal of British troops must wait until these conditions are in place. Whenever they leave, in whatever circumstances, the SWM won't be urging them to delay.

But we do say strongly that the perspective we outline here is the best hope we have, and the best answer to the "bloodbath theory".

THE arrival of British troops was a vital factor in ensuring the stability of the Southern state.

The temporary respite which the troops brought to Catholics in Belfast dampened down the turmoil in Dublin.

Lynch was now able to concentrate on diplomacy and desist from his dangerous half-hints about direct action.

Foreign Affairs minister Patrick Hillery was despatched to the UN in New York where he again raised the question of a "peace-keeping force".

His first statement on arrival was that he thought it "rather unlikely" that the UN would agree.

Rarely has a politician indicated so clearly that he wasn't serious about what he was suggesting.

Back home, on August 19th, only six days after Lynch's "We can't stand (idly)" speech, he felt confident enough to turn on his own "internal" enemies.

He condemned "the wanton destruction of property and looting and the



lawless behaviour of a small minority which has taken place in Dublin and elsewhere in recent days".

Referring to talk of IRA involvement in the North, he was forthright. His government would not tolerate "usurpation of their power by any group whatsoever".

Lynch couldn't have taken that tough line if the British troops hadn't appeared.

This pattern has repeated itself ever since.

Some development in the North—internment, Bloody Sunday, the hunger strike, for example—triggers an upsurge of nationalist emotion in the South strong enough to create worry about the stability of the state.

The Southern government makes—or threatens to make—a diplomatic gesture.

But—although British brutality and stupidity has created stresses and strains—never has "security co-operation" been abandoned.

The Southern government needs stability in the North as much as the British government does.

In view of this, the repeated attempts to recruit the parties which form Dublin governments into a "pan-nationalist" alliance against the presence of British troops is political stupidity of the highest order.

Any campaign in the South for the removal of British troops will inevitably come into confrontation with the forces of the Southern state.

The campaign can only be carried forward, therefore, if it is based on those elements whose interests aren't served by the preservation of the state.

That is to say, the campaign in the South for Troops Out must be based on the working class and aimed against the ruling, capitalist class.

The converse is just as true. Southern workers will never be able to take on and defeat the Free State capitalist system which exploits them if they line up with their "own" capitalist class in relation to the North.

It is only in the context of the struggle for socialism that the "national question" can be solved.

Why the British stay

WHAT is Britain's interest in staying on in the North?

Profits are no longer extracted from the North's economy. On the contrary, the North is a drain on the British exchequer.

The North no longer has any real strategic significance.

These were the traditional explanations of Britain's interest in "maintaining the link", and they no longer hold.

Nevertheless it's still possible to identify solid reasons for Britain's determination to stay put.

The most obvious is that for the British ruling class to pull out would be to

acknowledge defeat by "terrorism". British capitalism—indeed capitalism generally—has an enormous political interest in avoiding such a development.

Among Britain's more fundamental objectives in Ireland are: preservation of capitalist property relations; the retention of the whole island within, generally speaking, the western sphere of interest; and, to the extent that it's possible, political stability.

In theory there's no reason these objectives couldn't be accomplished without a British presence. In practice, however, it's not possible.

Over the past twenty years the best minds of the British ruling class,

whether on their own or together with their equivalents from the South, have been utterly unable to devise a means of securing these objectives other than by brute force.

Given its inherent irreformability, holding the Northern state together has required repeated resort to repression.

Britain, and the capitalist system generally, would risk losing Ireland altogether if the troops were pulled out.

In the end, that's the main reason they resolutely refuse to leave.

And it's the fundamental reason, too, that socialists should be in the vanguard of the struggle to get them out.

ANALYSIS

Do socialists defend Western democracy?

by KIERAN ALLEN

THE GIGANTIC parade in Paris to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution was led by hundreds of Chinese students.

It was a symbolic gesture on the part of the French government, an attempt to suggest that the West had much to offer by example to those fighting for democracy in China.

At the root of this idea is a powerful argument that has surfaced in recent months.

One of the leading right wing ideologues in the US, Henry Kissinger has claimed that there is a "natural fit" between a market economy and political democracy.

According to this view the Chinese explosion occurred because there was a "mismatch" between the massive growth of the private enterprise in China and the Stalinist state.

In Poland, sections of Solidarity are using the same argument to justify reaching an accommodation with General Jaruzelski. They claim that the emergence of a parliament in Poland completely outstrips the "natural" backwardness of the economy.

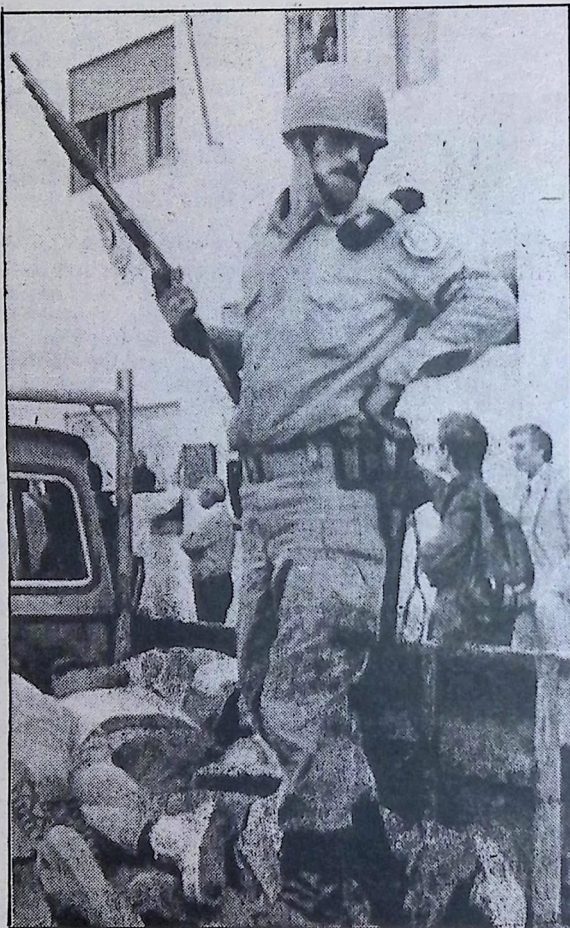
Before further gains can be made more privatisation and free market conditions must be pushed through. As the Communist Party shares the same goal it is necessary to work alongside them to avoid a "China syndrome".

The view that capitalism produces democracy rests on a simple argument.

The existence of a market leads to many different companies competing. These in turn disperse power throughout the system so that no grouping can centralise control in its hand. The experience of the individual in choosing between different commodities leads to a desire to choose between political alternatives.

Moreover, the free market also provides a check on the power of the state. Provided the state only deals with politics and keeps out of "civil society" there is always a natural check against totalitarianism.

The most cursory look at the world today will show why this argument is thoroughly false.



Argentina and El Salvador: democracy?

Private capitalism dominates the globe—and yet democratic rights are non-existent for most of the world's population.

Kenya, to pick a country almost at random, is one the African states most praised by the West because of its support for unbridled free enterprise. Thatcher claimed recently that its president, Arap Moy, had a fine record on human rights.

Yet this is a country where police permission has to be given when more than five people wish to assemble together. Tens of thousands are imprisoned for opposing Moy. Left parties are absolutely banned.

In the "Newly Industrialising Countries" a very limited form of democracy has emerged where opposition to the dictators threatened to spill over into revolution. In these cases the parliamentary structures barely hide a vast

repressive apparatus.

In South Korea, for example, the military bureaucratic apparatus still has 600,000 military personnel under its command. The Korean CIA has been called a "supreme state agency" because of the manner in which it reaches into almost every area of society. The type of democracy that Korean capitalism will tolerate does not extend to the right to form free trade unions.

But it not simply the underdeveloped world that disproves the natural tendency of capitalism to foster democracy.

The richest country in the world, the US, has one of the lowest standards of democracy. Surveys show that those who vote do so out of duty rather than in any belief that elections will bring change.

In 1970, only 23 per cent of under-30s participated in mid



term elections. In 1976 27 per cent of those with an income below 10,000 dollars never voted. American politics are dominated by the Political Action Committees—small middle class activist pressure

VIABILITY

groups candidates rely on for funds.

There is nothing odd about this. Capitalism has never relied on democracy or on any particular form of government for its viability.

Historically its representatives have raised the cry of "Liberty" against feudal rulers. But the "Liberty" they had in mind was freedom from arbitrary state interference and freedom to make profits.

They championed a fight against serfdom but only to make way for the "free" labourer who was not tied to a particular lord and was therefore dependent on the capitalist labour market.

Capitalism granted the vote originally to property holding males. Universal suffrage was forced on capitalism by the struggles of the working class.

In Britain, for example, the Chartists terrified the rich with huge working class demonstrations for the vote and were put down after a near insurrection in 1848.

Later in the 1860s, when the Trade Union Manhood Suffrage Association began a campaign of mass meetings which threatened to lead to a re-run of Chartist-type agitation, the ruling class conceded.

Women had to fight still further to win their rights. Significantly, the rich never

allowed one of the key demands of the Chartists: for annual parliaments.

The vote was granted in Britain under condition of imperialist expansion. But the model of parliamentary democracy contained a number of positive lessons for capitalists elsewhere.

Under the impact of universal suffrage the nature of parliament itself changed. Previously they had been genuine platforms for debate between different sections of the propertied class.

After the entry of the mass of workers, control of the state machine passed gradually away from parliament, first into the hands of a bureaucratic apparatus and, more indirectly, to big business.

The masses could vote—but the issue posed for debate was fixed by the priorities of capital. Thus, elections today are increasingly fought on a narrow economic programmes dictated by rival strategies for capitalism.

Bourgeois democracy is a very stunted form of democracy. It rests on two central requirements.

First, apathy and disinterest are encouraged among the mass of people. In the vocabulary of the Right, there is nothing more hated than an "activist" ie someone who insists on being political outside of elections times. The aim of bourgeois democracy is to make politics the preserve of a licensed few.

Second, the scope of democracy can never be extended to affect people's ordinary lives. It is confined to electing your government.

Elsewhere, a form of dictatorship prevails: in the workplace, the boss has absolute authority; in schools,

the parish priest has the last word; in the legal system, justice is dispensed by unelected judges drawn exclusively from the upper class. On no account can democracy question the power of capital.

For example in Dublin recently, a number of building companies made a fortune by claiming that they were cheated by the planning laws. Despite the fact that the councillors voted not to pay over "compensation" to these sharks, an unelected manager decided to comply with the decision of an unelected judge.

Thus, even where democracy exists in a limited number of capitalist countries it is confined to giving the population a choice over which figureheads will rule them. The power to enforce "compensation" for capital or to order police to attack picket lines is still outside the control of the mass of people.

Socialist who oppose Western democracy, do so because they favour a higher form of workers' democracy.

PREJUDICE

Despite the fantastic attacks on "Leninism" waged by both the Right and the social democrats, the flowering of that type of democracy was seen in the early years after the Russian revolution.

Lenin summed up the aim of Soviet democracy when he wrote that

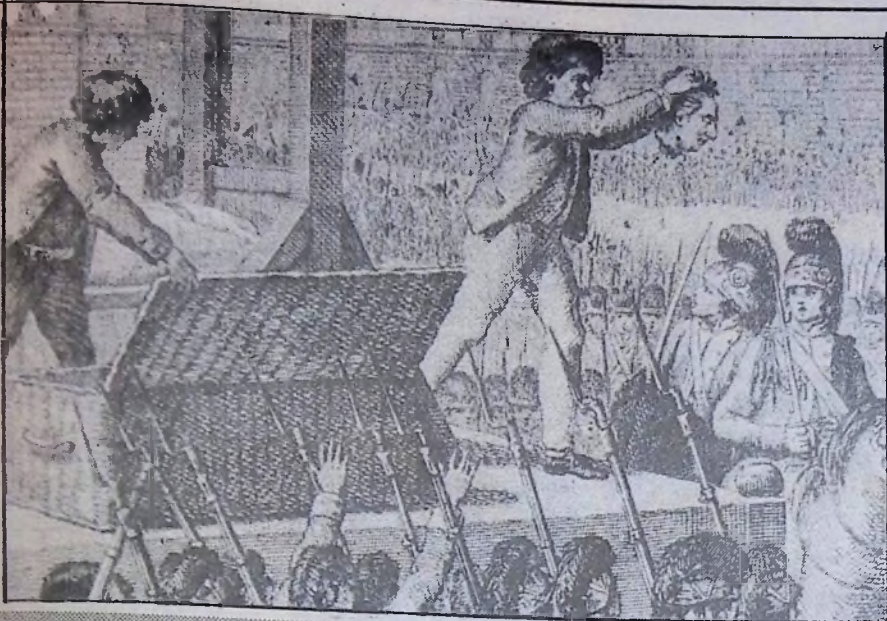
"At all costs we must break the old, absurd, savage, despicable prejudice that only the so called 'upper classes' ... are capable of administering the state. Every rank and file worker and peasant who can read and write, who can judge people and has practical experience is capable of organisational work".

Workers were drawn into political activity through the soviets (workers' councils) composed of delegates from their workplaces who could be immediately recalled.

That tradition was buried by Stalin. Today the heirs of his rule are experimenting with some of the forms of parliamentary democracy.

Like the private capitalist rulers of the West, the state capitalist rulers of the East are learning that this fig leaf form of democracy can offer them greater protection than naked repression.

E A M O N N M C C A N N



OFF WITH THEIR HEADS

THE celebration of the bi-centenary of the French Revolution last month caused some of our home-grown reactionaries no end of distress.

In the *Irish Times*, for example, columnist Kevin Myers became positively incoherent as he railed against "one of the most lamentable and unrewarding episodes in European history, from which has resulted a full caravanserai of evil goods almost too numerous to name, with very few beneficial ones".

(When columnists like Kevin resort to words like "caravanserai" you know they're having difficulty conveying the full extent of their emotional derangement.)

The main burden of Kevin's complaint was that the forces of the revolution had ransacked churches and monasteries and ended the influence of the clergy throughout France. This, he ranted, amounted to "a barbarism quite the equal of that perpetrated by Henry VIII with the dissolution of the

(English) monasteries".

Meanwhile, over at Ireland's other "quality" paper, the *Sunday Tribune*, editor Vincent Browne was showing off the fact that he has just read a book on post-structuralism. Or perhaps it was a review of a book on post-structuralism.

At any rate, Vincent was giving out yards about the bad language used by the French revolutionaries. He was struck by the way in which "language contributed greatly to the excesses of that period". The shrillness of the revolutionary rhetoric had apparently "conditioned people to the use and acceptance of murderous violence in real life".

WRATH

Now it goes without saying that neither Kevin nor Vincent chose to denounce the French Revolution because they feel strongly about things that happened back then. After all, it's over and done with, and it's surely idle to wish for the recapitulation of a king.

No, what Kevin and Vincent feel strongly about is the idea of revolution *now*.

Revolution, bourgeois commentators become desperately worried that the celebrations might confer a certain legitimacy on the notion of revolution. This is the main reason some were markedly ambivalent about Mitterrand's jamboree in Paris.

It became imperative for them to suggest that, actually, the Revolution hadn't really been necessary at all. The absolute monarchy, the feudal system, the ruthless terrorism of the Church through the Inquisition... all this had been in the process of withering, gently away, sighing its last as it welcomed in a new world of bourgeois democracy.

If Robespierre, Marat and the Jacobins had joined in the, er, constitutional process, they'd have achieved all that they'd been aiming at.

It's extremely important for bourgeois commentators to lay this line on the masses, because otherwise they'd have to confront the dreaded truth: that *their* society, the bourgeois democracy they advance as the ideal arrangement, itself came into being as a result of violent revolution.

It didn't just "happen". It isn't that society is arranged in this way "naturally". On the contrary, it was a mass movement of discontented people, led by a clear-minded and tightly-organised party in the Jacobins, which, by *smashing* the old order, ushered in a new era which acknowledged the right to vote, the right to be free from arbitrary arrest, the right to equality before the law and so forth, and which denied the idea of the "divine right of kings" and the rest of the outmoded feudal shibboleths.

The very idea of the nation state comes from the French Revolution.

Within the nation states in the intervening years there has developed the *working class*, which now has the potential to accomplish its own revolution. *That* is what caused such a flutter in bourgeois hearts last month. *That's* why it's so vital to them to write the necessity for revolution out of history.

That's why some of them spent the week of the bi-centenary trundling up and down the columns of newspapers with a caravanserai of codology.

Indeed Kevin meaningfully ended his column with an out-of-context quote from Napoleon. "A revolution, whatever people say, is one of the greatest disasters which divine wrath can visit upon a people."

And Vincent earnestly urged socialists today to be extra careful about the way they throw around dangerous words. "This insight should be marked particularly by the 'left' here whose regular use of violent rhetoric—for instance, most objectionable institutions and policies are consigned to be 'smashed'—could have unintended consequences in real life."

It is not without interest that both Myers and Browne were quite the revolutionaries themselves in their younger days. In a sense they are atoning for past political "sins" in denouncing the French Revolution now.

And it's also possible that their youthful flirtations with ideas of fundamental change make them more sensitive than other conservative commentators to the revolutionary possibilities of today. Maybe they're better able to sense the danger.

As the 200th anniversary focuses new attention on the

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.

What's on: SWM meetings and activities

■ Belfast Branch

✧ Meets every Monday at 7.30 pm in the Ulster People's College, 30 Adelaide Park, Belfast (between Lisburn Road and Malone Road, opposite Queens Elms Halls of Residence)

■ Bray Branch

✧ Meets every second Tuesday at 8.00 pm in Hibernian Inn, Marine

Terrace

■ Cork Branch

✧ Meets every Tuesday at 8 pm in the Anchor Inn, George's Quay

■ Derry Branch

✧ Meets every Tuesday at 8.00 pm in Dungloe Bar, Waterloo Street

■ Dundalk Branch

✧ Meets every second Tuesday at 8.00 pm in ATGWU, Francis Street

■ Dublin Branch

✧ Meets every Wednesday at 8 pm in the Bachelor Inn, O'Connell Bridge

■ Kilkenny Branch

✧ Meets every Tuesday in the Club House Hotel

■ For more details of regular branch meetings in BRAY, DERRY, DUBLIN, DUNDALK, DUNGARVON, GALWAY, KILKENNY, PORTLAOISE 6 WATERFORD contact: SWM, PO Box 1648, James's St, Dublin 8

Join us!

If you would like to join the SWM or want more details, complete and send to:

SWM PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

Please send me more details of SWM

I want to join the SWM

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....



REVIEWS



A good innings

CLR James, the West Indian writer, socialist and sportsman died last month aged 88. PAUL O'BRIEN assesses his life

CLR JAMES was born in Trinidad and moved to Britain in 1932, where he became involved in socialist politics and worked as a cricket correspondent for the Guardian.

He moved to the USA where he was influenced by the ideas of Trotsky and became a leading member of the American Socialist Workers Party.

Later in life he broke with the revolutionary socialist tradition as his politics moved towards Black nationalism.

But it is as a writer that he will be remembered.

And in particular his book on cricket *Beyond a Boundary* and his masterpiece, *The Black Jacobins*.

Beyond a Boundary is not just about cricket but how class, politics and racism are built into the nature of the cricketing world.

Cricket is essentially an upper class game, only those with plenty of money can afford the leisure to play a game that lasts five days.

But in the West Indies and to some extent in the North of England it is mainly a working class sport.

What CLR James shows so wonderfully, because he is such a good storyteller, is the significance of this class conflict in cricket and in West Indian cricket in particular.

But CLR James will be best remembered for his book *The Black Jacobins*.

At a time when a deluge of books are being produced about the French revolution, most of them trying to show how unnecessary it all was, because even today, they are afraid of the ideas of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, how wonderful it is to have a book like *The Black Jacobins*.

He writes about the people who are hidden from history—the black slaves of the French colony of San Domingo (now Haiti) who inspired by the ideas of the French

revolution, rose up and seized the island declaring all people free.

But the French bourgeoisie, despite the ideals of their own revolution, were not prepared to see the jewel in the crown of the colonial empire go free.

They invaded San Domingo sending the largest expeditionary force ever marshalled, only to be defeated by the slave army under their leader Toussaint L'Ouverture.

Interestingly enough, the leader of the French was General Humbert who later turned up at Killala Bay in Mayo to assist Wolfe Tone and the Irish revolution of 1798.

The slave revolt terrified the rest of the imperial powers.

They were afraid it would inspire similar revolts in their own colonies, so they decided to put down the slave revolt. First the Spanish and then the British invaded, but were defeated.

Toussaint L'Ouverture and his slave army had in turn defeated the greatest powers in the world.

And yet few have heard of Toussaint L'Ouverture or the slave revolt.

The history books tell us that Lord Wilberforce, an English aristocrat led the campaign that forced the British House of Commons to abolish slavery.

What they never say is, that unable to defeat the slaves in San Domingo and so afraid of the revolt spreading to their other colonies, they abolished slavery rather than risk defeat.

The Black Jacobins is a book about ordinary people inspired by great ideas, throwing up the organisation, and inspiration to overcome the greatest of odds.

CLR James tells the story with great imagination and excitement. But at the same time maintaining the highest standards of scholarship.

If there is one history that I would recommend then this is it.

THERE have been two major biographies of Leon Trotsky—Isaac Deutscher's trilogy and Trotsky's own "Attempt at an Autobiography", *My Life*.

They are both magnificent works. So why should Tony Cliff want to add a third?

In introducing Volume One, Cliff answers this question. Both previous biographies contain important weaknesses.

Deutscher offers a fatalistic view of the Russian Revolution. here, Stalin's rise is inevitable and both Trotsky and Lenin were wrong to put their faith in an international revolution which would overcome Russia's backwardness.

Cliff describes *My Life* as "a document in the faction fight with Stalin". Stalin tried to portray Trotsky as an enemy of Lenin and exaggerated the differences that existed between the two. Trotsky responded by playing down these differences.

Cliff defends Trotsky as an uncompromising revolutionary. But he also explores the areas where Trotsky and Lenin differed. Only by being clear and honest about Trotsky's strengths and weaknesses can we use his ideas as a guide to action.

The two main disagreements between Trotsky and Lenin were over the nature of the revolution and the nature of the revolutionary party.

At the turn of this century no one believed that a workers' revolution was possible in Russia. The country was dominated by absolute monarchy and the working class was tiny.

Russian socialists thought that a bourgeois revolution would have to take place before socialism was possible. This would establish capitalism, create enough wealth to make socialism possible and create a working class which would

eventually fight for socialism.

However the two factions of Russian Social Democracy differed over what classes would lead the bourgeois revolution.

The Menshevik faction put its faith in the liberal bourgeoisie. Like the bourgeoisie in France in 1789 they hoped that they would overthrow autocracy and create a democratic republic.

The Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, argued that the bourgeoisie would not fight Tsarism to the finish. The simple reason was that Russian capitalists, despite being held back by Tsarism, were more afraid of workers than they were of the Tsar.

CHALLENGED

This became clear during the 1905 revolution. When workers struck for a constituent assembly their bosses stood back. In many factories the workers were on full pay during the strike. But when they struck for the eight-hour day and challenged the bosses' interests, the bosses clamped down on the strike.

The Bolsheviks held that only the workers and peasants would fight against Tsarism. A "dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" would then preside over capitalist development.

Trotsky's position was unique. He agreed with Lenin that the bourgeois liberals would not fight. But he argued—as Marx had—that the peasantry could not play an independent revolutionary role. Unlike workers who are organised together in factories, the peasant's outlook is local, particular and individual.

In all great political upheavals peasants follow one of the urban classes—either the bourgeoisie or the workers.

His conclusion was that the working class would take the lead in a fight against Tsarist autocracy. By championing democratic demands—including for instance land reform—it could win the support of the more numerous peasantry.

Towards October

Dave McDonagh review Tony Cliff's new biography of Trotsky

The victorious workers would smash Tsarist absolutism and establish a democratic state.

But it would not stop there. Workers would seek to put into practice socialist measures and would be forced to look to the working class of the advanced countries for assistance.

Spreading the revolution to the advanced countries would become the political priority. Revolutions in the advanced countries would come to Russia's aid and help to compensate for its backwardness. This was the theory of permanent revolution.

The difference between Bolshevism and Menshevism over this question was reflected in the way they organised.

The Bolsheviks wanted workers to take power. They saw that most of the time only a minority of workers were open to revolutionary ideas. The party needed to organise this minority and keep together a core of revolutionaries during the worst periods of reaction.

After 1905 there was a terrible period of reaction. Working class organisation was decimated and the Russian Left was almost wiped out.

CLANDESTINE

During this time the Bolsheviks recruited only the most uncompromising revolutionaries. They operated in a highly centralised, clandestine fashion. Only by doing this could they maintain the core of the party that was to lead workers in 1917.

The Mensheviks did not lead the masses but trailed behind them.

When the two factions split in 1903, Trotsky went with the Mensheviks and did not join the Bolsheviks until 1917.

He split with Lenin over the question of the party.

At the 1903 Congress of Russian Social Democrats, Lenin was consistent in the demand for a concentrated party that only included the best fighters.

At first Trotsky defended party centralism, describing it as "the organised distrust of the party for all its sections, that is, control over all local, district, national and other organisations". For this speech Trotsky was given the nickname of "Lenin's cudgel".

However Trotsky, unlike Lenin, was for a broad-based party. He saw Lenin's concept of a "vanguard" party as an attempt to "dictate to workers".

When the Mensheviks moved to the Right, Trotsky moved away from them. Tragically it was not until 1917 that he joined the Bolsheviks.

He saw no difference between the two factions over the nature of the revolution. Both saw the outcome as a bourgeois revolution.

Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution was proved correct in 1917. The workers did not stop at supporting the capitalist Provisional Government. In October they overthrew it.

Yet despite being wrong about how far the revolution would go, the Bolsheviks were able to lead it. They corrected their mistake only after violent arguments with Lenin, who was the first to recognise that Trotsky was right.

The Bolsheviks were superior to the Mensheviks in that they recognised the workers' ability to take power. Tragically Trotsky did not recognise this until 1917.

The Bolsheviks were unclear about how far workers would go when they took over but were clear that workers would take over. They therefore organised to lead workers.

Trotsky, in acknowledging his mistake, made a brilliant summing up of the importance of the Bolshevik Party:

"Without the Bolshevik Party the October Revolution could not have been carried through or consolidated. Thus the only truly revolutionary work was the work that helped this party take shape and grow stronger."

Trotsky Vol. 1 1879—1917, Towards October by Tony Cliff Bookmarks £6.95 plus £1.50 postage from SWM Books, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

FILM OF THE MONTH

Do the right thing

THERE are two ways an overtly political film can go once it's released.

The most common fate of such a film is a week-long stay in a few arty cinemas before disappearing completely.

The other possibility is that the film will strike a chord in people, catch the mood of the times and cause political uproar.

Spike Lee's new film *Do The Right Thing* has done the latter with a vengeance.

The film is an exploration of racism and how to fight it.

There has been no shortage of anti-racist films over the last few years.

Cry Freedom, For Queen and Country and *Mississippi Burning* have all been critical and box office successes without disturbing the establishment one iota.

So why is *Do The Right Thing* causing such a commotion?

Racist attacks have been on the rise over the last few years in the US.

From the lynching at Howard Beach in 1986, to the murder of Michael Steward by white police to the rape of Tawana Brawley—all show that US society is becoming increasingly polarised.

Spike Lee is an open advocate of black radical

politics and the audience for such ideas in black America is growing.

The film looks at the racial tensions that arise between the blacks, Koreans, Puerto Ricans and Italians sharing the same neighborhood in New York City.

It's summertime, and tension rises with the temperature.

Sal, the Italian owner of a pizzeria with a mostly black clientele, refuses to put pictures of black heroes on the wall.

The Korean family who own a greengrocers are continually hassled. But it's the murder of a

young black man by a white policeman that unites the different minorities and causes a full-scale riot.

The question that Spike Lee poses at the end of the film with a quote from both Martin Luther King and

Malcolm X is this: Is the use of violence justified in fighting oppression? If so, is it right to call it violence, or is self-defence more accurate?

Not surprisingly, the film has caused uproar in America.

Lee has been accused of being racist and of trying to stir up racial tensions in New York City over the summer.

The reality of the situation is that Spike Lee's open advocacy of blacks (and other minorities) getting together and fighting back against racism has given the US establishment a fright.

I say more power to him. Do the right thing and go and see the film!

—EVE MORRISON

INDUSTRIAL

ICTU vote fight boost

RESISTANCE to trade union collaboration with Fianna Fail over the Programme for National Recovery got a boost last month.

A majority of delegates at the Annual Conference of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions in Bundoran voted for a Special Delegate Conference to consider withdrawing from the Programme for National Recovery.

The government's failure to deliver on key aspects of the National Plan, particularly job creation, has angered many trade unionists.

Wage increases under the terms of the plan have cut workers' living standards.

One in three people now lives below the poverty line and emigration is running at 40,000 a year.

Yet business is booming at the Irish stock exchange.

Recent company reports show a massive increase in profits.

But this healthier financial climate for the rich has not provided an increase in the numbers at work in manufacturing.

Speaker after speaker at the conference condemned the "national recovery" plan but the leadership of the trade union movement is determined to continue in cahoots with the government.

Phil Flynn, LGPSU general secretary, a prominent Sinn Fein member, defended the plan.

As a member of a supposedly left-wing organisation his support of the plan that has brought tax benefits to the rich and lower living standards to workers is a scandal.

The ICTU strategy on low pay and poverty set out at the conference is confined within the limits set by the national plan.

The continuing scandal of low pay is matched by the union leaders' failure to lead a fight for jobs and wages.



Fianna Fail grins when Plan was signed

Any real campaign to end low pay would mean:

- Breaking from the Programme for National Recovery
- Unionising the sweatshops
- Strike action to demand flat rate increases.

But the trade union leadership don't want to discuss the possibility of action.

Motions condemning the plan were arbitrarily ruled out of order by the standing orders committee without any constitutional reason.

"Controversial" motions on discrimination in Northern Ireland, the National Plan and the International Fund for Ireland were ruled out of order.

These motions should have been debated and voted on in a democratic manner.

In a further blow to trade union democracy it was decided to have conference every two years instead of annually.

The only bright spot in an otherwise depressing week of talk and no action was the decision to hold the Special Delegate Conference within six months to discuss withdrawal from the National Recovery Plan.

This gives socialists a chance to raise the issue in the workplaces, the branches and trades councils.

Motions calling on National Executives of the affiliated trade unions to vote for an end to the agreement with the government should be proposed at all union meetings.

We have an opportunity over the next few months to mobilise support in the sections and branches.

It is crucial that all socialists and trade unionists begin that task now.



Nurses show the way

ST JAMES'S hospital in Dublin is at crisis point because of cutbacks in health funding. It is being made to cater for a hugely increased number of patients since the closure of other major Dublin hospitals, as part of the "Plan for National Recovery".

Nursing staff have decided enough is enough. They are grossly overworked, underpaid, and conditions in the hospital are putting patients' health and lives at risk.

To highlight this situation nurses came out on one-day strike on Wednesday, while making sure that emergency cover would still be provided.

Management have said they will guarantee locum nursing cover for the accident and emergency unit, which is most under pressure; to review staffing problems in depth; and to make a number of temporary staff permanent. But the unions are pressing for immediate extra staffing to safe levels and improvements in services for patients.

On their own, the nurses can't win. Their one-day strike is an important step forward in the fight to defend the hospital services. There is a need for other workers to get involved through industrial action. As an immediate objective, socialists in the trade unions should be campaigning to withdraw from the National Plan.

Tyre workers fight attack

DESPITE heavy pressure from the ITGWU, IDA, Labour Court and the company itself, workers at the Semperit tyre plant in Ballyfermot have rejected the most recent terms surrounding the introduction of new working conditions.

Already the company have blackmailed the workers into accepting the conditions themselves. The new four shifts a day, seven day week system marks a radical departure from the existing three shifts a day, five day week and will involve a major disruption of workers' social and domestic lives.

CONTENT

Not content with that, management have been threatening the workforce with cancellation of a £25 million expansion plan—management's side of a 1986 agreement over productivity—and threatening in the long term to close the plant down if the workers don't accept the new terms. Despite the threats, however, workers have rejected the 6.5 per cent increase on shift premiums and two extra days' holidays on offer from the company and are determined to win an 11.25 per cent increase and three extra days' holidays. At a mass meeting following the most recent Labour Court recommendation, before workers took holidays, there was much anger at the company and union and in a secret ballot the company's latest proposal was rejected by 262 to 132 votes.

This present dispute is an extension on the 1986 agreement which laid down productivity targets which have been met by the workers. However, despite the fact that productivity has risen by 25 per cent since 1987, the workers have received nothing in return except the prospect of working longer shifts.

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Haughey and O'Malley form a

COALITION OF THE RICH



THE OLD enemies are reunited.

O'Malley had described Haughey as a man not fit to be in politics. And Haughey had personally moved the expulsion of O'Malley from Fianna Fail.

But last month's announcement of a coalition Fianna Fail/Progressive Democrat government saw the two rivals exchanging compliments and warmly shaking hands.

Behind the personal relationship of the two men something of much greater significance was demonstrated however.

Three and half years ago the PDs split from FF in order to create a modern, yuppy, monetarist, explicitly right wing party.

It was part of the rhetoric that this would break the mould of Southern politics by decisively turning away from the "irresponsible" populism of Haughey's Fianna Fail.

Haughey had gambled in earlier years that continued investment in the semi-state sector would lift Ireland out of the recession of the early eighties.

SLUMPED

It did no such thing. Instead, as the economy slumped, government debt increased alarmingly.

More and more of the South's capitalists began to panic and back the "Thatcherite" policies of O'Malley and Co.

While the Fine Gael/

Labour Coalition pioneered cutbacks in public spending and health cuts, Fianna Fail—still trying to pass itself off as a party "of the people"—complained that such cuts "hurt the old the poor, sick and elderly."

In government, Fianna Fail began slashing public spending with the zeal of converts and effectively dissolved all substantial disagreement between the parties of the right.

The public sector could not dig the South out of capitalist crisis. The only solution was to make the mass of working class people pay for the crisis through closed hospital facilities, unemployment, poverty and emigration.

The ease with which Fianna Fail has concluded this agreement with the

openly right wing PDs demonstrates once again that Fianna Fail is a thoroughly bourgeois party dedicated to serving the interests of the Irish boss class.

Such opposition as appeared from Fianna Fail's grass roots had more to do with injured pride and petty rivalries than with any disagreement of principle.

The agreed "Programme for Government, 1989-93"—the official basis of the coalition—gives a clue to FF-PD policy between the lines of bland officialese:

The emphasis continues to be on reduction of public spending to pay back the bankers and rich who profit from the state debt.

Overcrowding will continue in school classrooms; the public sector will remain understaffed and the health service underfunded.

A vague aspiration is mentioned to reduce tax rates although pride of place is given to promoting a single, reduced higher tax rate—which will principally benefit the rich.

Semi-state industries must be "viable and profitable"

—which means higher fares and charges. Bus transport is to be "liberalised" to provide "greater competition and increased flexibility"—in other words privatisation is on the agenda.

The coalition has made much of a promised £15 million (to be found within existing budgetary limits) for an "urgent action programme" to reduce hospital waiting lists and provide emergency cover in Dublin.

GOODMAN

Apart from the fact that this sum is a quarter of the EC grant payable to Larry Goodman this year and just five times Fianna Fail's election expenses, it represents just one and a half per cent of the £1,100 million health service budget this year and will not begin to make up for the savage health cuts of recent years.

There can be no doubt that the regime of cuts, unemployment, inadequate social welfare and emigration that Haughey has refined over the last couple of years is to be

extended under the new right wing coalition.

Yet despite the anti working class nature of the new government's programme the trade union leaders continue to collaborate.

Peter Cassells, general secretary of the ICTU, immediately wrote to Haughey requesting a meeting on implementation of the Programme for National Recovery.

The election demonstrated that thousands of working class people reject the attacks on their living standards.

Because the trade union leaders have failed to give any kind of lead there has been little organised resistance. Strike days are the lowest for 27 years.

The defence of the basic conditions of the mass of people in Ireland can only be achieved if resistance is developed within the trade union movement.

A start would be made by the trade union leaders repudiating the National Plan and giving a fighting lead against Haughey's bosses' government.

INSIDE:

Why we say British troops out of the North: pages 6 and 7