

# Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism 35p



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## Birmingham 6 free at last but still...

# NO JUSTICE!



Birmingham Six with supporters after their release last month

THE Birmingham are free.

But there is still no justice. Not in Britain—nor in Ireland, North or South, either.

Irish people have borne the brunt of injustice in Britain—the Guildford Four, the Maguires, Danny McNamee, Judith Ward, etc, etc.

But there are others too. The Broadwater Farm Three, framed for the killing of a policeman in the Tottenham

riots in 1985. Miners brutalised and framed during their struggle in 1984-85, Poll tax protestors, perjured into jail after the Trafalgar Square demonstration.

### RAIL-ROADED

And all the thousands we never hear the names of, many of them black, all of them working-class, battered and rail-roaded by racist cops and corrupt courts.

Southern Ireland isn't much

better.

In the seventies the Garda "Heavy-Gang" battered suspects on a regular basis and perjured innocent people into prison. The Nicky Kelly case is the best known.

The Irish courts, right up to the Supreme Court, behaved exactly in the manner of their British counterparts.

The Irish media aped the cross-channel press in cases such as the garda killing of a bank robber at Athy last year.

None of this happens by accident.

It happens because the purpose of the law is to defend the unjust, divided society we live in. In this sense, the law *always* delivers injustice.

### SECTARIAN

Nationalists from the North particularly are targetted because resistance to sectarian oppression there threatens the stability of society on both sides of the Irish Sea.

Just as the miners' fight for jobs or black communities' resistance

threatens the set-up in Britain.

It's widely been commented in relation to the Six and the Guildford Four that they were helped by eventually having some members of the establishment on their side.

It is true that you can rectify a single injustice—usually after long years of suffering—with the backing of establishment individuals.

But to end injustice itself it's necessary to overthrow the capitalist set-up which the establishment—the ruling class—presides over.



# Condom rumpus exposes the cleverdicks of the Church

THE controversy about making condoms more easily available in the Twenty Six Counties has maintained the traditions surrounding Church-State debates.

There has been hypocrisy, duplicity, cowardice and a refusal to confront either reality or the Bishops head-on.

The World Health Organisation estimates that the number of people dying of AIDS in Ireland could reach 10,000 in the next ten years.

This has pushed some politicians to speak a little louder than you'd expect in favour of liberalisation.

## LIBERAL

But ever more liberal politicians and commentators refuse to take on the bishops over the real issue—the right of young people to enjoy sex with whomever wants to enjoy sex with them, without the fear of pregnancy or AIDS. When the bishops say that freer availability of condoms would result in more people having sex before marriage they're right. The main reason most young women don't go "all the way" is that they're afraid of getting pregnant.

And, unfortunately, many of them do get pregnant. Official figures indicate that, in 1989, there were over 2,000 babies born to unmarried teenagers; almost six hundred of those babies were born to mothers who were sixteen or younger.

## ALCOHOL

It's estimated that a further 600 pregnant Southern teenagers have abortions each year in Britain.

But while the argument has been focussing on age, it's really not the issue. Alcohol is not supposed to be sold to anyone under 18 but the easy availability

### Socialist Worker

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means that fifteen or sixteen year olds have little problem getting it.

If condoms were available in vending machines in most pubs and discos, as they are



Condoms on sale in Dublin's Virgin Megastore

in the North, then the age issue would be irrelevant.

The Bishops can rant and rave about morals and family values. But if the politicians were willing to take them on, they'd be like King Canute trying to hold the tide back.

## SURVEY

More and more Irish people are using some form of contraception. Indeed, a Contraception Action Programme survey carried out over ten years ago found that more than three quarters of married couples used contraceptives. That figure is much the same as Britain or the US.

Ireland's changing. Ireland has changed. More and more people are living in cities. Women are no longer willing—or financially able—to have seven or eight children and to not work outside the home.

Now, women expect a life outside the home. They're less willing to get married at seventeen because they're pregnant but they're also more likely to be having sex.

The law on contraception can't lag behind the reality of people's lives forever. But it will lag behind until the power of the Bishops is broken. And none of the Parties in the Dail have shown themselves willing to break that power.

■GORETTI HORGAN

# UN staff hit out at war role

**EVEN THE UN's fulltime staff are discovering it is not the peace organisation it's made out to be.**

Some 500 last week signed a petition: "We, the staff members of the secretariat, deeply grieved and concerned by the enormous tragedies befalling the world com-

munity which we are pledged to serve, appeal to all those responsible to lay down their weapons."

This includes the Coalition "United Nations" forces led by the US.

## Used

Lelei Lelaulu, editor of the UN's staff newspaper, says the organisation has been much praised re-

cently, "but that is bitter-sweet. After years of being vilified we are suddenly being patted on the head for doing something we oppose."

The staff newspaper complains the UN has been used, "especially by the permanent members of the Security Council", and that it lacks a will of its own.



# 20 million Africans face starvation

**TWENTY million people in Africa face death from starvation in 1991.**

The response of Western governments has been to almost totally ignore a holocaust long predicted by relief agencies. Fianna Fail, for example, actually cut aid to the Third World in 1990.

But why is such a holocaust happening? Present world stocks of grain are over 200 million tonnes, while Trocaire estimates that the worst-affected areas of Africa require just over three million tonnes to survive.

## EXPORTS

Droughts mean death only in nations too poor to purchase the world's vast food supplies.

Because of their colonial past many of the nations now experiencing famine are completely dependent on one or two commodities for export e.g. Ethiopia and coffee, or Sudan and cotton. Vast monocultures were established to

supply the parent coloniser, much to the detriment of native agriculture. After independence, their economies were left painfully vulnerable to price fluctuations in the world market or to slumps in general.

## SABOTAGE

A prime example is Mozambique, sabotaged by Western capitalism and South African-backed rebels, it fell into huge debt and the hands of the IMF. At the insistence of the IMF in the mid eighties it reverted to a 'free market' economy, resulting in the collapse of its economy and misery for its people. The end result? According to a Food and Agricultural Organisation report last December, half of its 18 million population face starvation this year.

Many relief agencies fear it is too late to stop a holocaust in Africa much worse than 1984. If we are to do more than revive the careers of rock stars, we must understand the real causes of famine. As Nigel Harris puts it in *Why half the*

*world goes hungry:*

"What means unemployment in one part of the world means famine in the poorest parts of the system. The waves of famines are not acts of God or nature, they are parts of the world business cycle; the boom and slump of world capital"

As our leaders shed tears for the African masses and call for charity we should remember that if we want to rid the world of famine, we must rid it first of those whose system causes famine.

■OWEN McCORMACK

## OUT NOW!

*Why Half of the World Goes Hungry*  
by Nigel Harris

£2.00 inc. postage from SW Books, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

# College sparks strike

**THIRTEEN electricians, members of the ETU, in University College Dublin, are out on a series of one-day strikes.**

The action is in protest at the college using contract workers for their jobs. UCD is refusing to replace electricians when they leave, hoping eventually to employ only contract labour.

Shop Steward Brian Turner told Socialist Worker that the dispute goes back to

last May when the college began using contract electricians. In November there was a two-day strike over the issue.

Telecom Eireann, An Post, Dublin Bus workers, taxi driver and most UCD workers including cleaners and plumbers, refused to cross picket lines.

Even the contract workers, whose use is the source of the dispute, refused to cross picket lines.

Messages of support and donations to: Brian Turner, AEU shop steward, c/o Electricians Block, Belfield, Dublin 4.

■UCD SWSS



W E T H I N K

# Vacuum on the Left

THE fact that there is a huge vacuum on the Left in Ireland has been obvious over the last few months.

The Labour Party under Dick Spring has swung decisively to the Right, dropping the Starry Plough symbol and ditching all commitment to radical policies. There has been no serious opposition to this trend from within Labour's ranks.

The Workers Party is in ideological and organisational chaos. It lost a number of its leading thinkers and is now trying to "reposition" itself in the crowded political centre.

In the North, groups trying to create a Labour Party, or to entice the British Labour Party into the area, have made no measurable headway.

The problem was plainly seen in the campaign against the Gulf War. No mainstream organisation on the Left made the simple demand for the withdrawal of Western forces.

The Labour Party leadership carried out no campaigning activity whatever.

The WP leadership not only refused to call for a Western withdrawal, but insisted on the expulsion from the Gulf Peace Committee of those who did argue



for a Troops Out position.

North and South, CND and trade union leaders likewise pursued a "moderate" line, involving themselves in passive, small-scale demonstrations.

Only the small revolutionary Left and a number of independents made any real effort to build a movement on an anti-imperialist basis. The Socialist Workers Movement was central to this, through the No to War in the Gulf Campaign. But we are well aware that our resources were totally inadequate to the task in hand.

The failure of the mainstream

Left on the Gulf is paralleled by their performance on the home front.

## DEAL

Individual Labour and WP members offered mild criticism of the latest national programme—the PESP—which ties the trade unions into new three-year deal with the Green Tory gangsters of the FF/PD Coalition. But the parties' official line was effectively

neutral. And none of the hundreds of union officials associated with the two parties helped mobilise a vote against the deal.

On the North, the "Brooke initiative" stutters to a close, while the war continues unabated and sectarian politics predominate. But instead of arguing for the working class of the island to take the lead in opposing the sectarian state, the major forces of the Left make a virtue of the fact that they don't disrupt the efforts of two right-wing governments to stitch up a new arrangement.

On all these issues and more

the failure of the Left parties can be traced to the same political root.

Since they believe in the reform of capitalism, rather than its overthrow, they can't make a clean break with openly-capitalist politics and openly-capitalist parties.

They boast, in a viciously divided society, that they are not divisive!

There is a clear need for a party of the Left which comes out openly against imperialism, whether in the Gulf or the North of Ireland; which has no illusions in the decrepit state-capitalist system in Eastern Europe, China, etc; which is fundamentally opposed to any consensus on the economy, and which backs all workers in struggle; which is aggressively for women's rights and gay liberation and for ending forthwith all Catholic Church control of education, health and areas of public and private life in the South; and which places the working class at the heart of all these struggles.

We believe there is a sizable number of people who share these aspirations with us but who hesitate to join a revolutionary socialist organisation, perhaps because it is so far outside the political mainstream.

But the lesson of the last few months is that it's only by organising outside the mainstream that there's any hope of building a genuine socialist party which will carry the struggles forward.

It's not enough to bemoan the vacuum on the Left. The point is to fill it.

## RVH workers fight 'opt-out'

HEALTH service unions at the Royal Victoria in Belfast are organising to oppose management proposals to "opt-out" of the NHS.

It's the patients who'll lose out if the hospital adopts "Trust status" under the Tory reform plans.

The first priority of the NHS is to look after people who are sick. The first priority of a trust hospital is to make a profit.

### PRICED

Each service the hospital provides will be priced and sold to the local health board. Operations or other treatments which are not very profitable will be left to NHS hospitals and patients may find themselves having to travel Ballymena or Derry for some treatments.

### UNITS

The issue has implications for all the Six Counties. The RVH contains many regional speciality units—eye, ear, nose and throat. Trust managers are unlikely to find many of these facilities profitable.

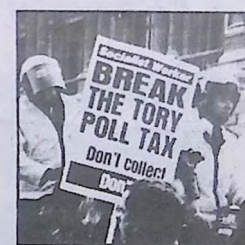
There is enormous opposition in the local community. But the campaign in Derry to keep Anderson House maternity unit open showed that a community campaign, no matter how well supported, is not enough.

Industrial action will have to be prepared for if management are to be shown that the workers won't allow their own wages and conditions and the health of their patients, to be put at risk.

SEAN McVEIGH

**BRAY SOCIALIST WORKERS READERS**  
IF YOU are interested in knowing more about the ideas you read in *Socialist Worker* why not come along to a discussion group being set up for those living in or near Bray?  
We intend to hold a short series of meetings for those interested in such topics as Bush's New World Order, Fascism, the Roots of Racism, Famine, Women's Liberation, The North, etc.  
This series will form a basic introduction to the politics of the Socialist Workers Movement. For further details write to PO Box 1648, James's St, Dublin 8 or telephone Lyn Friel on 874721

## Emigrants museum?



FOR decades in the past, Queenstown—now Cobh—in Cork, was the main stopping off point for Irish emigrants to the US. It is estimated that 3 million departed from there.

Now the good people of Cobh are building a heritage centre to commemorate the emigrants. And the Irish government and the EC are putting up £2 million.

We have no objection to a heritage centre. But maybe the Irish government should show a little more concern for the present emigrants.

## Cops blew it

THE POLICE made a series of elementary errors during last year's Trafalgar Square poll tax riot admits the Met's Deputy Assistant Commissioner in a report.

The police are determined it shouldn't happen again. The report suggests this could be done by banning demonstrations in London. It also calls for a new armoured uniform.

A second report due this week contradicts police claims that fighting was pre-planned by "left or anarchist groups".

The only preparations for violence came from the police. Police anger at their failure to intimidate the demonstration led to hundreds of protesters being fined and jailed on trumped up charges.

## ★ Quotes of the month

★ "I don't agree with the freely available

syndrome which is developing out of the Virgin store situation. In order to recognise the Court decision and the present legislation situation, there is need to bring about a new set of guidelines, a new availability structure." Liam Lawlor TD on Questions and Answers.

★ "It's a proud day for America and by God, we have kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all." George Bush.

★ "We fight Saddam, but not under

aegis of the United States; we also fight the Americans but not into the Saddam camp." Muaffah al-Rubai, leader of the Islamic Dawa party in Iraq.

★ "You having a nice day? We don't want

your sort around here with your dirty rumours. You have a big mouth. This is marshall law, boy. Fuck off!" US soldiers to journalist Robert Fisk in Kuwait when Fisk tried to stop Kuwaitis beating up

Palestinians.

★ "Ladies and gentlemen. For sixteen and a half year we've been used as political scapegoats for the people in there to hide. The police told us from the start that they knew we hadn't done it. They told us they didn't care who'd done it.

"They told us we were selected and that they were going to frame us, just to keep the people in there happy. That's what it's all about ... That's justice.

"I don't think the people in there have

got the intelligence nor honesty to spell the word, never mind dispense it." Paddy Hill of the Birmingham Six, on his release.

★ "Coalitions are about knowing who you represent and having sufficient strength to actually represent them." Pat Rabbitte, Workers Party TD in Making Sense, preparing the way for Coalition.

★ "I appeal to you not to adopt Bolshevik tactics." Gorbachev to Yeltsin who had urged support for striking miners.

### OFFICIAL

Recent official figures show that 206,000 people fled the South in the 1980s. That is 6 per cent of the population.

If they had stayed, unemployment would have been 30 per cent.

No wonder Fianna Fail voted down a bill to give Irish emigrants the vote.

The small trickle of emigrants who are returning today—because of the recession in Britain—should remember this and fight to overthrow this rotten potato republic.



# How Spring swung Labour to the Right

**T**HE Irish Labour Party meets in Killarney this month for its annual conference. The conference is set to endorse Dick Spring's proposals to abandon the Left for the "centre ground".

In January, Spring presented to the Administrative Council a blueprint for taking the party "from the left to the centre-ground", including 70 changes. The AC backed his proposals.

Out goes the "masculine, aggressive" symbol of the Starry Plough with its Citizen Army connections. In comes the red rose of the EC socialist group.

A new policy directorate is to be set up encompassing "authoritative experts" from outside the party to knock together "sensible, realistic" policies.

Spring believes the 9.5 per cent Labour vote at the last general election can be improved to 16 per cent by the election after next winning 26 seats and doubling local seats in the June elections.

"The objective is power," says Spring. "Adopting real power as an objective does not preclude the ultimate possibility of office even in coalition."

Even the party constitution is to be rejigged. All references to the nationalisation of the banks, democratic control and ownership of industry and a 32-county workers' republic are to be deleted and replaced with: "The wish of the Irish people is for an open and mixed economy providing individual choices and opportunities. We pledge ourselves to the development of the economy so that it is efficient, dynamic and capable of creating and sustaining wealth."

In place of outmoded talk of the working class, the accent is on "participatory democracy and the community".

Labour Party campaigning is, according to one party spokesperson to be: "Democratic-socialism sold in a fun way", meaning more of the fancy advertising that characterised the Robinson campaign.

The emphasis is to come off fund raising in the labour movement and a special unit is to be set up to raise half a million pounds from "the corporate sector" and other non-traditional areas.

Party HQ in Dublin's Gardiner Place is to be sold and prestigious offices are to be acquired in a more fashionable area south of the Liffey and close to Leinster House.

Spring now speaks of "The correct policies, the correct candidate, the correct image, the correct messages and adequate resources."

Even former left-wingers have been seduced by his sweet phrases. Emmet Stagg, who just three years ago was threatening to take the party leadership to court over a dispute over the method of electing a party leader, and was himself challenging Spring for leadership remarked:

"Dick Spring earned and now commands the respect of members of the Labour

Party ... his performance in the House and in the organisation has been positive." So impressed was Stagg that he withdrew his challenge last summer and allowed Spring to be returned unopposed in the leadership election.

All this is in stark contrast to the mood of a couple of years ago.

**I**n the months immediately following the collapse of the Fine

Gael-Labour coalition in 1987, it was widely believed that the Labour Party had swung decisively to the Left.

Dick Spring repudiated coalition; left-wingers like Emmet Stagg and Micheal D Higgins rose to positions of influence within the party.

At the 1987 Conference Spring was under pressure on the question of control of Parliamentary Labour Party by the membership. There was a demand for the leader

to be elected by the whole membership and not just the PLP. Eventually the Left won on this issue.

But it was not to last. First to feel the pinch was Militant who had been loudly proclaiming the mighty swing to the left. In early 1988 control of Labour Youth was wrested from Militant by the expedient of closing down branches and creating new ones. 21 new youth sections were approved by the Administrative Council, seven in Spring's fiefdom of Kerry North and nine in Emmet Stagg's Kildare. They lasted

long enough to vote Militant out of control of Labour Youth.

The following year's conference saw Emmet Stagg ousted from the position of vice-chairman to be replaced by right-winger Niamh Breathnach. At the same time a witch-hunt was begun against Militant which was to see all their leading figures expelled within a year.

In October of 1989 it was revealed that Dr Tony Ryan of Ryanair had not only donated money to Fianna Fail—he was rewarded with the transfer of route licences

from Aer Lingus—but, embarrassingly, also to Labour.

In the summer of 1990 the Left failed in its bid to postpone the election of party leader under the new rules. Emmet Stagg, the Left's heir apparent, abandoned his challenge "in view of the Presidential campaign" and Spring was elected unopposed for six years.

Dick Spring and Ruairi Quinn were given a free hand to manage the Robinson Presidential campaign. As soon as the cam-

paign was over Spring moved to switch the party further to the right. A November reshuffle saw the further eclipse of the Left and Spring's announcement of a Kinnock-style policy review.

This shift to the right is a response to three recent developments—events in Eastern Europe; the success of the Robinson presidential campaign; and the difficulties faced by Irish capitalism.

**T**HE collapse of Stalinism in Eastern Europe has been widely interpreted on the Left as demonstrating that "socialism" has failed, is obsolete and must be abandoned.

The "socialism" that is spoken about has nothing to do with the marxist idea that the mass of working class people can free themselves and all the oppressed by taking power and organising production for need not profit. That notion of socialism was never taken seriously by mainstream Labour leaders.

Instead, they mean state control of industry through nationalisation, state planning and the rest. Stalin's Russia was the extreme case where state direction of a fully nationalised economy did succeed in the thirties and forties in achieving above-average growth rates. This was in stark contrast to the depression-racked economies of the West.

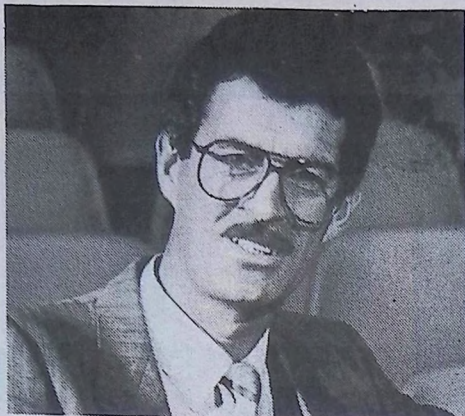
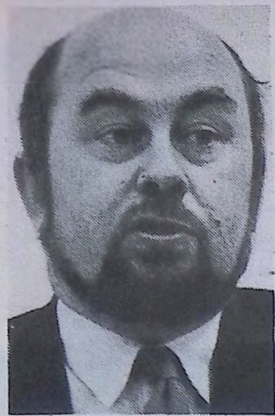
It was not necessary to believe that talk of slave labour camps and show trials was all lies—although a good few on the Left did so believe—to be impressed with what "rational planning"—as opposed to blind market forces—could achieve.

Socialism became identified with state direction. How left-wing you were depended on how far down the road of state direction you were prepared to travel. Reformist social-

*Labour's Barry Desmond, as Minister for Health, pioneered the health cuts with hospital closures and the introduction of charges. Ironically, this allowed Haughey to assume a Left face in the 1987 election when FF's posters proclaimed: 'Cuts hurt the poor, the sick and the elderly'.*







Clockwise from top: Quinn, Spring, Stagg and Robinson

ists saw their job as winning parliamentary office, nationalising strategic industrial sectors, managing capitalism and handing down reforms to a grateful populace.

Naturally, when it was discovered that the economies of the East were not going from strength to strength but rather going to hell on a bike, and that their inhabitants were clamoring for the supposed joys of the market, the gilt rather wore off the gingerbread.

This provoked a crisis in the Left which was reflected in the spectacular defection last year of Eoghan Harris, former speech-writer to Workers Party leader Proinsias De Rossa, declaring "socialism is as popular as AIDS".

The truth is that nationalisation does not equal socialism. An Post and CIE simultaneously manage to deliver lousy services and subject their workers to low pay and poor working conditions. This is because they are operated by a capitalist state for the benefit of a capitalist economy.

Even so, it would be a mistake to underestimate the retreat that Labour's abandonment of nationalisation represents. It is an explicit declaration that Labour has no intention of challenging the power of entrenched capitalist interests, that the right of the Smurfits, Goodmans and the rest to unfettered control of industry is sacrosanct.

Alongside this swing to the right on policy is a retreat on the question of class. Dick Spring is credited with having master-minded the campaign of Mary Robinson. And the success of that campaign is interpreted by Labour Party gurus and media commentators as evidence that "old-fashioned, cloth-cap" notions of Labour championing working class interests must be replaced by a "rainbow-alliance" of liberal interest groups.

Robinson's campaign was fought on a vacuous "image" basis. In place of Robinson's previous statements of support for women's rights were substituted cleverly designed posters and media photo-opportunities.

Eoghan Harris, who handled her media presentation, openly admitted that he sought to present, through the clothes she wore and the images that were produced, a model of a woman that female voters would like to be and men would like to be seen out with. Great care was taken to ensure that no old people were in camera range when she was

photographed lest the young image be tarnished with "unattractive" associations.

Spring, along with the ad-men, drew the conclusion that her poll victory showed the burgeoning constituency of "Dublin 4s" all over the country.

Spring immediately launched an organisational drive to canvas "solid candidates who can attract cross-party support" and sought to distance the party from "traditional trade union officials".

Disagreement over the direction of the party during the last few years has been presented in the media as a dispute between the "modernisers" and the "traditionalists". But this is to mistake its real significance. Those who speak in reverent tones of the Labour Party's glorious past idealise its history.

**A**LTHOUGH founded by Larkin at an ITUC conference in 1914 to represent the interests "of the entire working class", the Labour Party failed to put forward the independent voice of the working class during the war of independence. After the Treaty it became Cumann na nGael's "loyal opposition" in Leinster House.

When its seven seats held the balance of power after the 1932 election it supported De Valera's first Fianna Fail government through an unofficial arrangement. In the inter-party coalition government after the "Emergency" Labour ministers were central in betraying Dr Noel Browne's Mother and Child Scheme under Church pressure.

Labour has participated in five Coalition governments with Fine Gael, most notoriously in the 1980s when its ministers agreed the closure of Irish Shipping, swinging cuts in public spending and the abolishing of food subsidies.

Barry Desmond, as Minister for Health, pioneered the health cuts with hospital closures and the introduction of charges. Ironically this allowed Haughey to assume a left face in the 1987 election when his posters proclaimed: "Cuts hurt the



poor, the sick and the elderly".

Nonetheless, Labour attracts its support on the basis of a vague notion of class. The links with the trade union movement establish in the minds of many workers the correct aspiration to fight for the interests of workers not just over trade union issues, but in the national arena.

The enlarged vote for the Left most dramatically demonstrated in Mary Robinson's victory—the first time Fianna Fail have been defeated in a Presidential election—shows that many working class people are prepared to abandon FF's threadbare, populist nationalism and begin to see themselves not as classless Irish men and women, but workers with interests hostile to the class Haughey represents.

Spring's moves to the right represent the continued willingness of reformist leaders to retreat before the needs of the capitalist class, to opportunistically adapt themselves to "public opinion" and to prove themselves trustworthy in the eyes of respectable, bourgeois, opinion.

It seems that these efforts have already borne fruit. It was made known last summer during the Goodman scandal that leading bankers were prepared to come to Spring with inside

information, rather than Dukes or Bruton, because they trusted him to use the information "wisely".

*Socialist Worker* will continue to call for a vote for the Left parties because we would far rather see workers vote for parties which base themselves, in however an inadequate way, on the working class than for openly capitalist parties like Fianna Fail. But we will continue to point out the inability of reformist leaders to deliver on even the forshortened liberal agenda now being touted.

Capitalism in Ireland can only deliver poverty, inadequate housing and under-funded health services, low pay and sectarianism. After years of battering on the trade union front, many workers in anger at the conservative parties, instinctively reach out for Labourist answers. At precisely this time the Leinster House Left parties abandon the ground of class for that of liberalism.

In this vacuum, the opportunities for a vigorous left current to arise have seldom been greater. Genuine socialists in the Labour and Workers Parties should consider whether their efforts would be better spent building an openly socialist, working class, revolutionary party. This is what the Socialist Workers Movement stands for.

■ KEVIN WINGFIELD

# 1916: The power of example?

IF THE the IRB was able to change the course of Irish history by the 1916 rebellion, why can't a small armed group do the same today? The 1916 rebellion seems to provide the best supporting evidence for the power of tiny, brave minorities.

The argument has a superficial attraction. Historically, the Irish working class movement has been weak as a political force. In the last decade, it has faced defeat after defeat. In this situation, desperation, if nothing else, can lead some to look to the armed struggle as the best way forward.

Marxists refer to this as the problem of 'substitutionism'. In the absence of a mass movement, small groups pit themselves against the state. By their own bravery or by provoking the state into repression, they hope that the mass of people can be stirred out of their apathy. In Ireland, the 1916 rebellion is held up as a precedent.

There is a number of things wrong with this argument. First, it is quite simply factually wrong to claim that the rebellion and the subsequent executions alone transformed the situation.

The rebellion was by no means as isolated as is often made out. The hard line unionist, Bonaparte Wyse wrote at the time that 'the sympathies of the ordinary Irish are with Sinn Fein. What transformed these sympathies into a mass movement was the prospect of conscription.

In late 1915, the British government considered introducing conscription into Ireland but backed off when police reports indicated that 'many Redmondites would be in agreement' with a rising if they went ahead.

When conscription was finally introduced in April 1918 it led to a general strike and mass protests which created the mood whereby Sinn Fein swept the elections in December 1918 to win a majority for declaring Ireland independent.

The impact of the First World War and the general crisis in imperialism thus laid the basis for a shift in political allegiance—just as it did in other countries when millions began to look to revolutionary socialism.

Second, what 1916 does show is that the politics of nationalism and the armed struggle inevitably allows the bourgeois to come out on top—even if they initially oppose the movement.

In the aftermath of 1916, the Irish rich denounced the rebellion as a Larkinite plot. In Galway, for example leading businessmen formed themselves into a 'committee of public safety' to protect themselves against the rebels.

But none of this stopped them taking the leadership of the nationalist movement when the Irish free state was set up. The rich deserted the Home Rule party and flocked into Sinn Fein from 1918 on.

They ensured that the republican movement opposed land seizures and strikes. Their representatives ensured that all radical references in the Democratic Programme of the First Dail to workers control were removed.

In truth, Griffith's policies—not Connolly's—won out in the nationalist movement. This despite the fact that Connolly gave his life in 1916—while Griffith took a walk in the hills of Wicklow while the rising was going on.

## BRAVERY

Working class militants can show intense bravery in an armed fight against the state but unless their class is organised and fighting the old elite can use all the levers of power to get back in the saddle.

This applies not just to Ireland. Socialism cannot be handed down to workers. It has to be fought for by workers themselves. When a guerrilla army seizes power, no matter how radical its rhetoric, it can only lead to a new form of class rule. The experience of Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique shows that all too clearly.

Third, it might be argued from this that while socialism cannot be achieved by guerrilla action, it could be the case that 1916 could be repeated in that the actions of the Provos today could eventually bring about an all-class alliance to fight for a 32 county Ireland.

This, is a complete fantasy. Between the end of the 19th century and 1922, the Irish bourgeoisie vacillated between the desire for independence and the need to stay linked

to the Empire. Home Rule was seen as a compromise which would allow them to begin local accumulation of capital while still staying linked to the markets of the Empire.

The rebellion, the war, the crisis of imperialism convinced them to go for independence. In other words, they were open to being pushed by the republican movement at the time because—as subsequent history proved—they could do better out of an independent Ireland.

Today the situation is completely different. The Irish rich now have their independent state which is tied in closely with European ruling class. They are quite simply not, as Gerry Adams so touchingly put it, oppressed by neo-colonial structures 'which curb and contest Irish economic interests'.

Ask Larry Goodman. What more could a state do for its businessmen than the Irish state did for Goodman when it re-called the Dail and passed a special law to save him from bankruptcy. If that is being oppressed by neo-colonial structure, then let's have more of it would say the Federation of Irish Employers.

## PROSPECT

The Irish countryside—which was a base for a guerrilla army during the war of independence—is also in decline. There is quite simply no prospect of the Provos becoming the focus of hopes for a land settlement as successful guerrilla groups in other countries have done.

In this situation, the armed struggles today is in Adams words 'armed propaganda'—and usually bad propaganda at that. It can appeal to no class base throughout Ireland and instead offers only the prospect of 'keeping the issue on the agenda'.

Today, therefore the best way of taking up Connolly's fighting spirit is by breaking from the substitutionist fantasy and beginning the task of building a mass revolutionary party.



Liberty Hall, 1916



# CONNOLLY

## and 1916

The 75th anniversary of Easter 1916 has thrown up arguments about the implications for today of what the Rising represented. The role of James Connolly, the most able Marxist in Britain or Ireland at the time, has been the focus for particularly sharp debate. Here **KIERAN ALLEN**, author of the recently published book *'The Politics of James Connolly'*, looks at the reasons for Connolly's involvement in a Republican-led rebellion.

**T**he First World War gave the word 'catastrophe' a new meaning.

In August 1914, 20 million armed men confronted each other in Europe. During the battle of the Somme, 20,000 British soldiers were killed in one day.

The war had been in the offing for a number of years. In 1912, during the Balkans crisis, the Second International—which organised socialist parties at the time—called major demonstrations against war. It warned that in the event of war it would 'rouse the masses to hasten the downfall of capitalist rule'.

The promise when war came was never kept. The growing influence of right-wing ideas meant that socialists joined their 'own' governments and became rabid jingoists.

James Connolly was among a handful of socialists who held to a revolutionary position. He was shocked at the collapse all around him. As a member of the Socialist Party of Ireland in Belfast he called for protests against the war. Most of the other party members—including the future leader of the Labour Party, Tom Johnson—voted Connolly down because they supported the Allied war effort.

Connolly's internationalism was

profound. He wrote, 'To me the socialist of another country is a fellow patriot as the capitalist of my own is a natural enemy'.

He saw capitalism as the cause of war. He argued that 'war is a relic of barbarism only possible because we are governed by a ruling class with barbaric ideas.'

The only way to end wars was through socialist revolution. He wrote 'the signal of war ought to have been the signal of rebellion... when the bugle sounded the first note for actual war, their notes should have been taken as the tocsin for social revolution'.

In this view Connolly stood head and shoulders over many other socialists who began to oppose the war. Some such as the British Labour leader, Keir Hardie and the 'pope' of international socialism, Karl Kautsky called for peace conferences and simultaneous protests in the belligerent countries.

Only Connolly, along with a small number of other revolutionaries, grasped that war had to be turned into a revolution against your own rulers. As he put it 'socialist have only one enemy—the capitalist class of the world, those of their own country at the head of the list.'

**B**ut how was Connolly to prepare the ground for revolution.

The Irish Transport and General Workers Union which had fought so

bravely in 1913 was on its knees and had barely 5,000 members. The Socialist Party of Ireland had virtually collapsed.

The only organisation that Connolly could look to was the Irish Citizen Army which numbered 300 members and was completely overshadowed as a military organisation by the Irish volunteers. The key weakness in Connolly's politics now came to the fore.

Throughout most of his life Connolly was a revolutionary syndicalist. This meant that he saw building of militant trade unions as the key to socialism. The political organisation was only a 'propagandist agency'. Increasingly, he came to believe that the party had to be a 'broad church' combining reformist and revolutionary elements.

The crisis in August 1914 showed such an organisation was useless. Tragically, Connolly had failed to build a solid revolutionary organisation at the time when it was most favourable—during the mass working class upsurge from 1911-1913.

Now he was facing into a war, correctly calling for revolution, but without the necessary vehicle that could agitate for it. His only option, as he saw it, was an ever closer relationship with Irish republicanism.

Connolly had always over-estimated the tendency of Irish republicanism to move to the left. He had argued that as Ireland had a form of primitive communism before the conquest, those who sought to undo the conquest were in some sense duty bound to re-establish a form of socialism.

But now the pressure to form an ever closer bond with republicanism grew more intense. It was Connolly who began the public agitation for insurrection with the conscription crisis in December 1915. But lacking any substantial forces of his own he was forced to call on the republican leadership to act—by arguing in republican terms.

He held up the Fenian Manchester Martyrs as a marvellous example of minority action where they had fought alone 'in a hostile city, surrounded by a hostile population'. He praised the breath of nationalist unity at the funeral of the right wing Fenian O Donovan Rossa as 'bringing a mission of divine uplifting' at a 'moment of national agony'.

These were undoubtedly concessions to the republican outlook. But they arose from Connolly's intense desire to press for revolution.

Connolly came to believe that if conscription was introduced the defeated workers of 1913 would be pulled into an unholy bond with the British empire that would outlast the war. Moreover, he felt that conscription could only be opposed by the armed action of the few.

All of this led Connolly to accept the republican plans for the insurrection in 1916. In January 1916, he 'disappeared' for three days. At the end of it he agreed to a plan whereby the IRB—the underground republican brotherhood—would bring about a rising through the manipulation of the Irish Volunteer structure. Connolly's Citizen Army were to join in—on republican terms.

**T**he Rising began on 24 April and ended on 29 April.

1,300 insurgents took part including 152 from the Citizen Army. 318 civilians lost their lives as the British authorities bombarded the centre of Dublin to rubble.

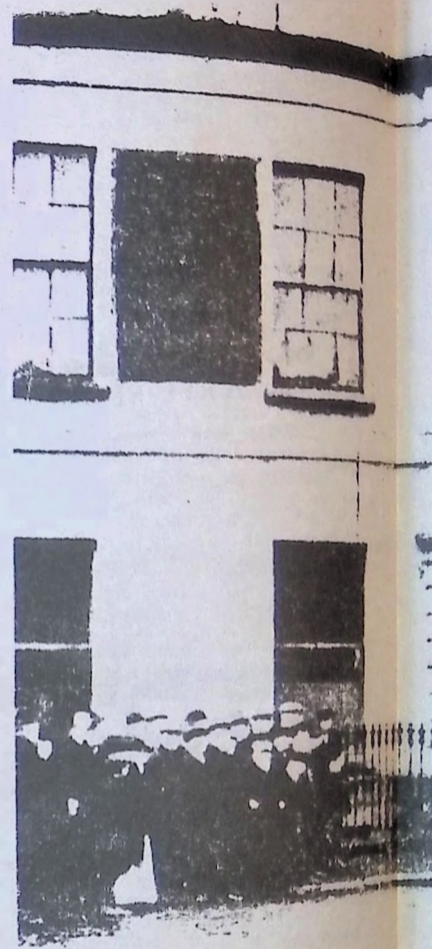
In purely military terms it was a far less impressive affair than had been hoped for. This has led to the great myth that the leaders of the 1916 rebellion were engaged upon a 'blood sacrifice' to shed their lives for Ireland.

In reality the Rising was a serious anti-colonial revolt. The original plans included the mobilisation of 16,000 Irish Volunteers and the landing of 20,000 rifles from the *Aud*. The insurgents drew up a plan for retreat to the countryside and rudimentary plans for a provisional government. These are hardly the actions of those intent on a blood sacrifice.

The Rising went wrong because of the simple flaw in republican tactics. Against Connolly's advice, the IRB hoped to manoeuvre the titular commander of the Irish Volunteers, Eoin McNeill into leading the Rising. But McNeill was determined to maintain the Irish Volunteers as a pressure group until after the war to extract a better Home Rule deal.

Once he learnt of the IRB plans, he worked zealously to scuttle them. By Easter Sunday the British authorities were drawing up plans for the arrest of the major conspirators.

In this situation Connolly and Pearse had the simple choice of facing the



tender mercy of British justice or going ahead with the Rising. They chose the latter.

After the Rising, the British authorities passed 92 death sentences—most of which were commuted. But as the last of the executions were drawing to a close, William Martin Murphy of the *Irish Independent* began a clear campaign to have Connolly's head. His paper argued that if Connolly was treated 'with too great a leniency, they would take it as an indication of weakness on the part of the government.'

The Irish boss class finally took their revenge on their major revolutionary opponent.

**J**ames Connolly was denounced by the reformist left for taking part in the 1916 rising.

The paper of the Independent Labour Party in Britain—to which he contributed regularly—wrote that 'in no way do we approve of armed rebellion any more than any other form of militarism or war'.

The small revolutionary left, however, did not equate the rising with the brutality of imperialism. At the time, Lenin was engaged in

**OUT NOW!**

**The Politics of James Connolly**

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EAMONN MCCANN

# Who fears to speak

**MAINSTREAM nationalist politicians of all parties have been decidedly shifty about marking the 1916 anniversary.**

Des O'Malley argued for a "commemoration" but against a "celebration", saying that while the leaders of the Rising were "heroes" they should not be held up as "examples".

Fine Gael's John Bruton wanted a "major official commemoration"—to include those who died fighting in the British army in World War One as well as those who died fighting against the British army in Ireland.

Fianna Fail organised a number of formal ceremonies in Dublin and elsewhere but kept a safe distance from anything which smacked of street demonstrations.

In the North, the SDLP dithered and hesitated from one area to the next.

Labour and the Workers Party have been, if anything, even more uneasy about the whole affair. The WP, in considerable ideological disarray over other matters anyway, seemingly has no line at all on the question.

## APPROACH

Labour includes people like Barry Desmond and Jim Kemmy who are effectively two-nationalist in their approach, and also those like Michael D Higgins and Joe Costello who are actually members, along with Gerry Adams, of the unofficial "Reclaim the Spirit of Easter Week" group.

There is an obvious dishonesty and inconsistency involved in all this. With the exception of the Kemmy "wing" of Labour, all of these parties and politicians claim to stand in the tradition of 1916.

Indeed each of them has been known to claim that they, and they alone, are the rightful inheritors of the 1916 legacy.

In some circles, the dishonesty has been put down to the fact that the parties involved lacked the

backbone to stand up Britain today—and are therefore uneasy about giving wholehearted backing to anything which marks a rebellion against the British, even 75 years ago—particularly in the context of armed activity against British forces continuing to this day.

And that's a fair enough analysis as far as it goes. The problem with it is that it doesn't explain why O'Malley, Haughey, Hume, etc behave in this way, apart from the suggestion that they are opportunist politicians who are out to defend the status quo now that they personally have reached the top.

But in fact it's only by looking at the class these individuals represent that we can understand the way they dogged and weaved over this issue.

## DISPUTE

Southern Irish capitalism no longer has any real dispute with British capitalism. That's the nub of it.

For a period after political independence Irish capitalists and those elements who aspired to become capitalists, had an interest in standing up to Britain. This was most marked in the thirties during De Valera's "Economic War".

Put simply, the issue was Southern capitalism's need for state protection against British competition. This meant that there was toleration, even encouragement, for anti-British rhetoric and symbols, and honour paid to those who had fought against Britain.

The only limitation on this—and it was a big one—was that the interests of the Southern state should

not be compromised. Any time that happened, the Dublin government, whether Fianna Fail or otherwise, resorted without compunction to the most vicious repression.

Even as late as 1966, the fiftieth anniversary, "official" Ireland was able to organise a massive state-wide celebration of Easter, with RTE and the national press joining in wholeheartedly.

## CHANGES

But by then the changes were already underway which would make the attitudes expressed at that time redundant—from the ruling class's point of view.

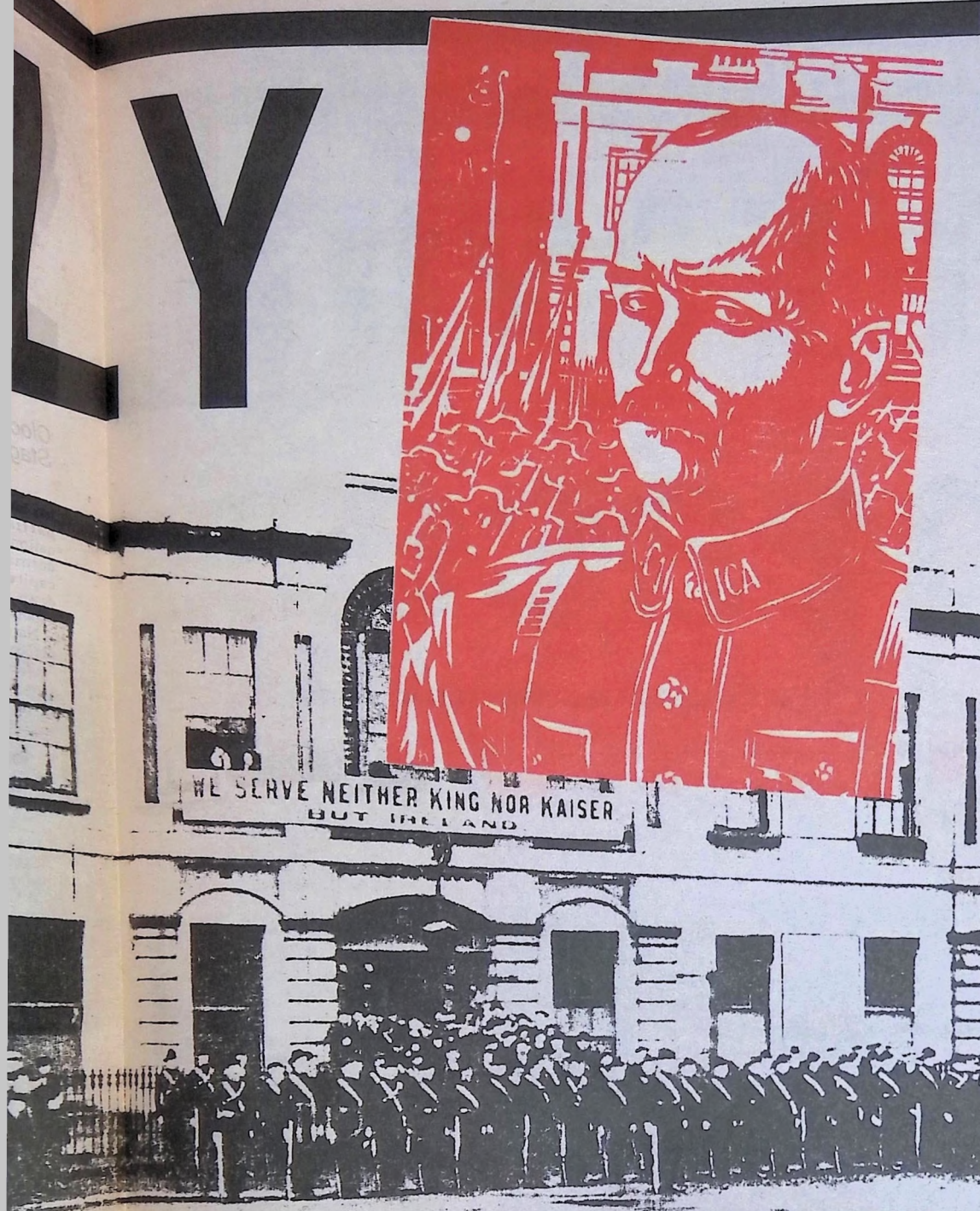
The integration of the Southern economy into the wider capitalist world was well under way. The Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement, for example, had been signed the previous year, 1965—Neil Blaney signed for the Irish side.

Southern Ireland was beginning to take its place amongst the capitalist nations of the world. As far as Southern capitalism was concerned, there was no need any longer for anti-colonial rhetoric or serious remembrance of the State's violent origins.

Slowly but steadily, the old attitudes were discarded. Rebel songs and the symbols of Easter became an embarrassment—after the eruption in the North a dangerous embarrassment.

In essence it is this—the changing interests of the capitalist class—which explains the difference between the attitude of establishment politicians in 1966 and the attitude now.

This not just an academic point. Its importance lies in the fact that only a movement which ranges itself against capitalism can seriously take on those elements who now want to renege on 1916. Those who want to "reclaim the spirit of 1916", but are not willing to take an openly anti-capitalist stance, are living in romantic dream world.



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a polemic with others in the Bolshevik party who argued that the demands for national self determination had become meaningless. He took the 1916 rebellion as confirmation of imperialism would produce revolts of small nations which would act as a spur to the international working class.

Defending the 1916 rebellion as an anti-colonial revolt he wrote that, "to imagine that social revolution is conceivable without revolts of small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without revolutionary outbursts by a section of the petty bourgeoisie with all its prejudices without a movement ... against national oppression ... to imagine all this is to repudiate social revolution."

That remains the position of socialists in Ireland today. We defend the 1916 rebellion against all those who wish to belittle it as a 'blood sacrifice'. The only blood sacrifice at the time was occurring in the battlefields of WWI.

We reject any attempt by John Gibbon and others to honour both the 1916 insurgents and those who fought in the Somme and Flanders on the basis of some spurious liberalism. Those who fell in those horrible battle fields were duped by the same type of jingoism that we saw during the Gulf conflict.

We mourn the loss of their young lives—but there is nothing in their actions that can be equated with the likes of Connolly and Pearse who took

on the might of the British Empire to win freedom from war and national oppression.

But while defending the 1916 Rising we also understand that it was a nationalist revolt. Mistakenly, some on the left have taken Lenin's defence of the 1916 rising as an approval for the tactics of Connolly. In fact, neither Connolly nor the Citizen Army are mentioned in Lenin's article and the presumption throughout is that he was defending a rising led by the 'petty bourgeoisie with all its prejudices'.

Revolutionaries today, therefore, do not object to the fact that Connolly fought alongside the republicans—but rather to the manner in which an independent working class presence was sacrificed to the republicans.

Connolly issued no independent propaganda outling a distinct socialist message. The Proclamation which he signed contained the vaguest of aspirations. There was no call to the ITGWU to act—even though he was the General Secretary.

Why is this relevant? Simply because all struggles fought on a nationalist basis leads to victory for a new ruling class. It was the De Valeras and the Griffiths and their class who were the ultimate winners from the national struggle—not Connolly.

This did not have to be the case. After 1918, the workers movement revived. Against Connolly's prediction the introduction of conscription led to a mass working class upsurge. The ITGWU grew from 5,000 to 40,000 and

then to 120,000 in 1923. 10,000 workers marched in Dublin to celebrate the Russian revolution.

The working class made up the backbone of the fight for independence. A general strike won the release of prisoners from Mountjoy. A transport strike halted supplies to the Black and Tans. In Limerick, workers proclaimed a soviet to oppose military rule.

Simultaneously, workers advanced their own class demands. Small 'soviets' were set up in creameries in North Munster. In Leitrim, the mines were occupied. Landless labourers took over the big estates. As one Sinn Fein writer put it 'the socialistic enthusiasm which ran over Ireland during 1919 puzzled many ... nowhere was the Bolshevik revolution more sympathetically saluted'.

The problem was that there was no socialist leadership to this great upsurge of activity. Instead Connolly's own concessions to republicanism were magnified a hundred fold by the ITGWU leadership who accepted De Valera's message that 'Labour must wait'.

The best way to honour Connolly today is not to turn him into an icon and venerate him. Because we are fighting for the same ideals as Connolly—the establishment of an Irish Workers Republic and international socialism—we have to examine his record critically.

The best tribute we can give is to build a revolutionary party today which will ensure that Labour will never again wait.



*The U.S. has won the military war but ...*

# It can't win the peace

## WHY DID the United States win the war?

THE US economy is 45 times the size of Iraq's. Its military power is equally dominant.

These simple facts explain why Iraq never had any chance of winning in straightforward warfare.

They explain why the war was a one sided slaughter.

Iraq bought weapons with its oil money but didn't even have the industrial capacity to make its own artillery shell casings.

## BUT HAVEN'T small countries beaten the US in the past. What about the Vietnam War?

THE enormous gap in industrial and military might was decisive only because of the kind of war that Saddam Hussein fought.

In Vietnam there was an even bigger gap between the power of the US and the National Liberation Front. But the Vietnamese fought a people's war, not a conventional war.

It was still a difficult fight and the Vietnamese suffered terrible casualties. But the National Liberation Front could rely on the support of the overwhelming majority of the population.

It could attack US troops and then disappear back into the villages. No matter how much military might the US unleashed it couldn't break the resistance by millions of Vietnamese people.

Saddam's corrupt and oppressive regime could never enjoy such support. The dejected lines of deserters from his army proved the point.

The military weakness of Saddam's regime was rooted in its social structure.

## BUT IN Vietnam the US was opposed by the North Vietnamese state and the Russians. In the Gulf the whole world supported the US. Isn't this really why it won?

THE US's ability to whip up an international coalition, especially the way it made the USSR toe the line, helped it enormously in the Gulf.

But the Coalition was always fragile. Bush always feared the Arab regimes like Egypt and Syria would desert him.

Saddam Hussein, however, never had any real political strategy to crack the Coalition apart.

He always relied on dealing and manoeuvring with the rulers of the Arab regimes.



MILITARY SUCCESS for the US, but where will it lead?

He never worked for revolt against kings and dictators of the region and their overthrow by the poor.

Saddam Hussein's efforts to weaken the Coalition were half hearted. He belatedly talked of helping the Palestinians and fired a few ineffective Scuds at Israel. But he had sent his army to Kuwait, not the West Bank and Gaza.

He could have opened a real second front by pushing for the overthrow of King Hussein's corrupt rule in Jordan. If Hussein had been overthrown, Israel would have invaded Jordan and the Coalition would have fallen apart.

Instead Saddam Hussein talked of the King as "my brother".

In Morocco the King sent troops to support the US while millions of his subjects demonstrated against the war.

Saddam Hussein could not call on the mass of Arabs and north Africans to overthrow their leaders because his regime is, in essence, no different to those who lined up with the US.

His treatment of Iraq's Kurds showed it clearly.

He could have granted the Kurds their long standing demand for independence. This act alone would have caused a massive internal crisis for one of the US's key allies, Turkey, with its own

huge Kurdish population.

Instead Saddam put the defence of the Iraqi capitalist state above anything and continued to oppress the Kurds.

A revolutionary strategy, such as fighting a people's war, would have made a US victory incomparably harder to achieve. It could have cracked the Coalition apart and even defeated the US entirely.

## BUT NOW that the US has won, won't it be impossible for anyone to beat it again?

NO. BUSH may think he has beaten what US politicians call the Vietnam syndrome and restored the US to the kind of domination it had, in most of the world in the 1950s.

He hasn't. Vietnam was a turning point for the US not just because the US lost the war.

It came at the end of after 25 years of world boom. For most of that period the US had been the overwhelming economic and military power in the world.

It had up to half the world's industrial production.

The Gulf War came at the end of 20 years of recession and stagnation, broken only by a seven year boom which left the US the world's biggest debtor.

During that period the US economic domination has been decisively undermined by countries like Japan and Germany.

The US now accounts for under a third of world industrial production. Its output is still massive, but the decline has been sharp.

At the end of last year the US was knocked out of the world's top five machine tool producers—by Switzerland.

Victory in the Gulf won't turn the clock back.

Of course the US has something its economic rivals don't—a huge military machine.

Bush will certainly try to use it to ensure the US dominates his "New World Order". But he also knows the US had to run round the world with the cap to raise the cash to finance the Gulf War.

Looking ahead, Bush and his generals know the global economic crisis makes conflicts like that between Iraq and Kuwait more likely, and next time the

US might face a more effective opponent than Saddam Hussein.

They know the economic crisis will destabilise the dictators the US supports, making them prey to revolt from below.

We could soon see the US having to wage struggles against forces with much greater popular support than Saddam Hussein.

## WILL THE war solve Bush's economic problems at home?

THE SLUMP wasn't caused by the Gulf crisis and it won't be overcome by the end of the war.

The US and British economies were already entering a steep recession when the Iraqi army went into Kuwait last August. The recession has since got deeper.

The US bosses' magazine *Business Week* says, "If you want to know why American consumers and businesses are in such a funk these days, don't look to the Mideast. Look at consumer incomes and corporate profits here in the US."

The Gulf War will increase pressure in the US for more arms spending. But it was precisely this which helped undermine US economic domination over the last 40 years and push up the US debt during the 1980s.

US capitalism is caught in a contradiction. It can't do without military spending, otherwise it will be pushed out of vital areas like the Middle East.

Equally it can't keep arms spending at current levels without the risk of losing its markets to competitors who invest more in industry.

One military victory can't overcome these problems.

## WHY DOES Bush look so confident, then?

THE US won an important victory in the Gulf. Bush has reason to celebrate—but the celebrations will soon turn sour.

Remember back just 12 months to the promise of a "peace dividend", a reduction in arms spending after the East European revolutions and the end of the old Cold War?

That has vanished. Instead the US arms industry and the military want to celebrate their victory with new weapons systems.

Their British counterparts want the same, while in the USSR the generals are already demanding resources to match the Western technology displayed in the Gulf.

Remember back just 12 months to Bush's promise of a new era of peace and prosperity? It has already brought the worst war and the worst slump in half a century.

Bush's smile is unlikely to last.



## What's on: SWM meetings and activities

The Socialist Workers Movement is a growing organisation with branches around the country which meet regularly. Those who are interested in the politics of the SWM are invited to attend these meetings. The meetings begin with a political discussion with plenty of time for questions.

**BELFAST BRANCH**  
Meets every Monday at 7.30 pm in Queen's University Students Union

**BRAY BRANCH**  
Meets every second Tuesday at 8 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 pm in Dungloe Bar, Waterloo Street

**DUBLIN BRANCH**  
Meets every Wednesday at 8 pm in the Bachelor Inn, O'Connell Bridge

For more details of regular meetings in **NAVAN, DUNDALK, DUNGARVAN, GALWAY, KILKENNY, PORTLAOISE AND WATERFORD** contact:  
SWM, P.O. Box 1648, Dublin 8 or SWM, P.O. Box 418, Tomb Street, Belfast BT9 5PU.

## 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.

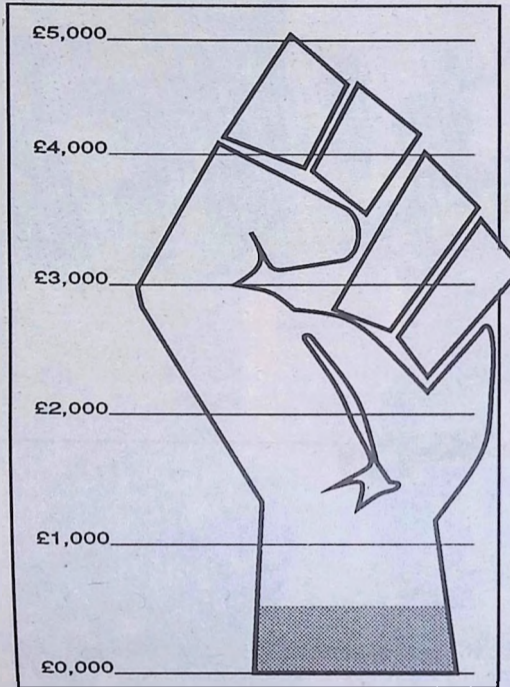
### FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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.

## Socialist Workers

### £5,000 appeal

OVER the last few months the Socialist Workers Movement used its meagre resources to provide the anti-war movement with tens of thousands of leaflets and posters. We gave the lead too in opposing Le Pen's fascist conference in Dublin. We immediately printed a



## SWM's Annual Conference

The Socialist Workers Movement holds its annual conference this month. Our members and supporters gather to discuss the experience of the last year and to plan the way forward for the next.

From all around Ireland, the problems of building a revolutionary party are discussed. It is a time when we swap experiences and

compare notes.

This year our conference promises to be the biggest ever. And one of the themes of the conference will be the international situation after the Gulf War and the collapse of Stalinism.

But developments in the Unions, Colleges and Women's Rights will also be brought to the fore, as well as the fight against the state sectarianism in the

thousand posters and organised demonstrations against the Nazis.

We took the initiative also in organising a fund-raising social for the River Valley strikers at the end of March. And we have made the call for a red-flag contingent on the Reclaim the Spirit of 1916 march in Dublin so as to clearly establish a socialist presence on the commemoration.

From the campaign against toxic waste incineration in Derry to the fight against disaffiliation in Trinity College, our members have been to the fore.

Taking these initiatives has left us in debt. And looking to the future, to provide the sort of coverage that reflects the growing SWM, *Socialist Worker* must replace worn-out equipment.

Within a fortnight of launching our appeal, £567.38 had been received. This is a magnificent effort. But we cannot rest on our laurels.

Please rush your donations to *Socialist Worker Appeal*, PO Box 1648, James's Street, Dublin 8

## Socialists after the Gulf War



AT its conference in Dublin last month, the No to War in the Gulf Campaign took stock of the situation following the military victory of the US forces.

Facing the reality of a greatly reduced level of activity, the conference decided that the campaign would mainly have a propagandist rather than a mobilising function in the immediate future.

However, a seven-person elected committee was mandated to call public demonstrations in the event of the situation changing. It was recommended that local action groups should try to organise public meetings to examine the result of the war and assess the lessons of the campaign.

Already in Cork, a meeting attended by over 70 people has been held. Speakers were Senator Brendan Ryan and Fuad, an Iraqi exile living in Cork.

Anti-war activists now need to look beyond the immediate issues of the war to the causes of war, famine, imperialism etc.

Our socialist arguments on the war were proved correct in practice:

■ The slaughter demonstrates that Western imperialists in defence of

their interests will stop at no barbarity;

■ With the Al Sabah family's return to Kuwait, it is clear that the war was not for democracy;

■ Israel's domination of the region has been strengthened;

■ The United Nations has been clearly shown to be the puppet of the super-powers.

It was by sharpening our ideas that we were the first Left organisation to see the need to build an anti-war movement. From last September, we threw all our resources into building the widest possible opposition to the US imperialist war aims.

The No to War in the Gulf Campaign, the only open, democratic, active movement against the war was initiated and largely built by the Socialist Workers Movement and individual activists.

The situation today in the Gulf can only presage new and yet more murderous wars in the future. While continuing to expose the barbarism of Bush's new world order, it is necessary to build for the future crises that lie ahead.

We invite all those who have worked with us over the last few months to come to our meetings and consider joining with us in building a genuine socialist party in Ireland.

Against War and Recession:  
**Rally for Socialism**  
with  
**Eamonn McCann and Alex Callinicos**

Dublin Institute of Adult Education  
Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1  
Friday 19th April, 8.00pm  
★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

**Socialist Workers Movement Annual Conference**

April 20th and 21st  
Dublin Institute of Adult Education  
Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1  
All SWM supporters welcome

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

# Join us!

If you would like to join the SWM or want more details, complete and send to:  
SWM PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

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# Why socialists welcome the break-up of the Soviet Union

THE Soviet Union is in a mess. The society which has been run by the Kremlin for so long is coming apart at the seams.

And nowhere more so than in the area of the nationalities which make up the supposedly happy family of "Soviet Republics".

In a headlong rush to end decades of Russian domination and Communist Party dictatorship, each of the Republics is fighting to end Kremlin rule.

Every single union republic has issued a declaration of sovereignty, declaring that their laws supersede those of the Kremlin.

This has led Gorbachev to complain of a "War of Laws", where nobody knows exactly what is legal and what is not.

Gorbachev's response has been to fall back on the only forces of cohesion, ie the military, the KGB, the defence industry, the Communist Party apparatus itself, and even the Russian Orthodox Church.

Glasnost and perestroika are now pushed into the background as Gorbachev throws all his weight behind saving the USSR, which he says is a "sacred task".

He and his bureaucratic allies face an uphill battle. Armenia, Georgia, and the three Baltic states have all declared outright independence.

In Moldavia the Popular Front seeks unity with Romania, and ethnic Turks seek independence.

## PROMISES

In Georgia the non-Communist president promises full independence within five years. Uzbekistan is fighting for control of its cotton exports.

In Kazakhstan, the local parliament has banned the Soviet military's nuclear tests.

Many in the Western Left regard these movements for national independence with disdain. They see the rise of nationalism as the single greatest threat to the working class in the Soviet Union.

But there are several problems with this response.

First, it ignores the dom-

inant nationalism, Russian nationalism, that has been fostered by the central authorities since Stalin's rise. Those who believe that the Kremlin presides over some form of workers' state, with a progressive role in history, are playing right into the hands of the Stalinists who speak of the civilising role of the Russian people and culture over its more "primitive" neighbours.

Russian socialists should fight these blatantly racist attitudes which are still used by the conservative layers of the Party—and increasingly that includes Gorbachev himself—to tie Russian workers to the system.

And the only consistent way to fight Russian chauvinism is to argue, as Lenin did, for the right of the oppressed nations to self-determination, up to including the right to full political secession.

Second, to have a negative reaction to anti-Kremlin national struggles is to ignore the material basis for the anti-Kremlin feeling—the continuing economic and political oppression of non-Russians.

## OUTLOOK

For example, the Kremlin has treated Uzbek cotton with the same imperialist outlook that marked Britain's response to Indian textiles. Uzbekistan's environment has been systematically damaged by the Russian-imposition of cotton as the only crop cultivated in the area. The over-use of irrigation and fertilisers has left large areas of land poisoned and led to the disastrous shrinking of the Aral Sea.

Uzbekistan has been deliberately kept as a raw material supplier, not allowed to develop a textile industry of its own. More than 85 per cent of the Republic's cotton is spun and woven elsewhere. And most importantly, the price paid by the central authorities for their cotton is ludicrously low compared to world market prices.

The arguments in favour of Russia as a workers' state are disappearing fast. A society where miners have to strike just to get soap to clean themselves can hardly be described as some form of socialism.

One of the remaining arguments is that at least the Stalinist system developed backward Tsarist society in a modern, industrial country. But then if development equals socialism, the strides made by Japan after the Meiji restoration—which saw Japan develop from feudal society into a modern economic power in the same period as Stalin's Russia—would make Japan a workers' state!

But apart from this, the forced development of Rus-



Supporters of Boris Yeltsin demonstrate in Leningrad

sian state-capitalism involved not just massive sacrifices for the working class but also, in classic capitalist form, the systematic under-development of the Kremlin's colonies.

Support for these national struggles does not mean being uncritical of their leaders. Most importantly, they can't be trusted to carry through the struggle for independence against the Kremlin. The political representatives of the local bureaucrats and the emerging entrepreneurs are constantly looking over their shoulders to make sure the mass movement isn't "get-

ting out of hand".

They want to negotiate with Gorbachev, not lead the working class against him.

For that reason, socialists in these national struggles must fight against nationalist illusions in the home-grown rulers in the every Republic.

This is especially true in the the Russian Republic where Yeltsin, despite his fighting talk against Gorbachev, is doing his best to prevent the Communist Party losing complete control. He has suggested there should be a new "umbrella" democratic party formed, but insists he

wouldn't join it!

Yeltsin declares support for the striking miners in the Donetsk and Kuzbass basins who are calling for Gorbachev's resignation, but assures foreign reporters there will never be a civil war in the USSR because "There are no antagonistic contradictions between social groups ... between people and army." and "the army as a whole will never turn against the people ...". The injection of some class politics into this situation is needed before the army and Gorbachev prove Yeltsin wrong.

■ JOSH CLARKE

## REVIEW

# Vanilla Ice is uncool

great he is, as well as trying to convince us he really is from the ghetto.

Not that it matters, but it does seem a little suspicious that he appears so desperate to persuade us of the fact. His neurotic preoccupation with this matter reached "To the Extreme" on a recent TV appearance where he took off his trousers to show the audience the stab wounds on his leg. (Pity they didn't aim a bit higher!)

Listening to Mr. Ice's musical output, it's difficult to imagine how he achieved such astounding popularity, even managing to outsell Michael

Jackson. However, taken in a wider context, we might explain it by looking at the uncanny similarities that exist between Vanilla Ice and the US itself.

Much as the US has taken a dangerous idea like democracy and watered it down into a form palatable to the interests of Western capitalism, (most recently with George Bush's endeavours in the Gulf), so too Vanilla Ice, or rather the political and commercial interests he embodies, have appropriated the medium of rap.

Taking it from its origins as an



THE GANGSTER film is a contradictory affair. It tends to glorify and romanticise murdering scumbags for one.

The Italian-American community has yet to overcome the racist mobster stereotype created largely by the cinema.

Still, despite these ideological objections, I found myself queuing for 45 minutes in the rain to see Godfather 3. Why?

Because Francis Ford Coppola's trilogy of Godfather films are classics. The first two films were complex and enthralling examples of cinema as medium at its best.

Godfather 3 is almost, but not quite, as good as the first two. It is still excellent, but Coppola made the film to save himself from financial bankruptcy rather than because a third Godfather film was needed.

So Godfather 3 is a bit like the final episode of a television mini-series that you watch to find out what happens to all the characters but doesn't add much to the overall story.



would still get the thumbs down. His album "To the Extreme" is, in fact, "extremely" repetitive and uninspired, lacking both the originality or ingenuity of rap bands such as Grand Master Flash, or the forcefulness of those like Afrika Bambaata or black nationalist group Public Enemy.

Like his counterpart Arnold Schwarzenegger in Hollywood, Vanilla Ice's success is the product of a massive hype campaign by a cynical and greedy music industry, not to mention the proof, if such a thing were needed, that this industry is in the business of wholesale production of bourgeois ideology: Hard, White and, of course Male!

Having said that, the film is a cut above almost any of the other films coming out of Hollywood these days.

The story draws heavily on the mystery surrounding the death of Pope John Paul I. Coppola interprets his death as a murder to protect criminal elements in a very corrupt Vatican bank.

This aspect of the film adds depth to the story in the same way as the scenes from the Cuban revolution enriched part two.

## SURVIVE

Al Pacino, Diane Keaton, various Coppola in-laws and those of the cast who manage to survive being shot in parts one and two are present.

Andy Garcia and Coppola's daughter are the new additions. Garcia is excellent, Sophia Coppola isn't—which is unfortunate because she has a pivotal role.

All in all it's one of the best films in town. Don't miss it.

■ EVE MORRISON



State Capitalism in Russia

by Tony Cliff

£6.50 from SW Books

■ RICHARD BOYD BARRETT



# An Post on the rampage

DURING February, the workers in An Post received a slim green document outlining the company's viability plan.

The plan is due to commence in May 1991 but the impact on company performance is not expected to be felt until at least 1993.

However the impact on jobs, conditions and pay will be felt immediately.

An Post's message is simple. The company is in danger of insolvency and the workers must pay the price. The main problem is seen as "staff costs"; therefore 1,500 jobs must go.

Even the 1987 "Partnership for Progress" plan come under attack. That plan was supposed to improve productivity but it is now blamed for increasing "staff costs".

Also to blame are "bad industrial relations" i.e. shop stewards defending their members.

The well organised Sheriff Street sorting office is to be split into

## What the plan means

### JOBS

A minimum of 1,500 jobs to go, including at least 960 postpersons and sorters.

### CONDITIONS

Existing productivity agreements to be torn up.  
Employees to be completely mobile between locations, districts and regions.  
Promotion on "merit", not on seniority.

### WORK PRACTICES

Complete flexibility between and within grades.  
Part-time and temporary workers to cover for vacancies and absences.  
Employees to perform to "measured output rates".  
Acceptance of new technology.  
Certain work to be contracted out e.g. T.V. licence collection, rural mail collection and cleaning work.  
Post Office opening hours to suit "customer demand".

### PAY

Recent 6% arbitration award to be postponed "until company is viable".  
Future pay increases to depend on company's "capacity to fund".

three parts. Overtime will be cut and part-time workers employed. The main sorting area will be moved to the outskirts of Dublin and automated sorting introduced at the

expense of jobs.

"Industrial peace" is demanded i.e. unions must accept changes without a whimper. Already the company has pulled out of the relatively tame con-

ciliation and arbitration scheme.

The media has focussed on the closure of 559 sub-post offices. But as well as this, almost half of the 50 head post offices will be downgraded and 25 out of 44 company post offices will become sub-post offices.

This means a reduction in post office clerk posts. It also means that offices where full conditions apply will now be operated on a "semi-franchise" basis. Sub post-masters are paid on a "fee per item" basis while their employees are on shop workers' wages.

The plan for roadside mail boxes will apply to both rural and urban areas. Deliveries will be reduced to one per day in all areas.

Priority will be given to business customers. They will be given early morning collection facilities at post offices.

If this plan doesn't restore "viability" worse attacks will follow. An Post is asking its workers to accept "continuous change each and every year".

Yet the money exists to save jobs and services. Governments have failed to make promised investments in An Post yet have bailed out Larry Goodman. The European Commission has money available to maintain postal services in disadvantaged regions—this

## ★ A RECENT Irish Times article

explored the technique of An Post boss John Hynes. According to the Times: "He is a Commandant in the F.C.A. and admits to being an F.C.A. 'fanatic' since he was 14 1/2 years old. He respects the Army's approach to organisation, seeing it as a good example of 'how managers manage and continued delivery is achieved'". Surely this man is the son of Norman Schwarzkopf!

has not been sought.

The plan gives the lie to economists and union leaders who put forward "commercialisation" as an alternative to privatisation.

An Post is a commercial state company. These attacks are almost as bad as what could be expected if the company were sold.

In fact, if management get away with the viability plan, privatisation will be a walkover. That is why An Post unions must mobilise without delay to defend hard-won gains.

DAVE McDONAGH

# RIVER VALLEY FIGHT BACK



**A STRIKE at River Valley Products in Dublin seems set to become a test case for the position of part-time workers in the South.**

In January, fifteen part-time workers were sacked under a 're-organisation' plan at the packaging plant in Glasnevin. Most of the workers had been employed for two years.

Under present law, part-time workers are entitled to social welfare and legal protection from unfair dismissal if they work 18 hours a week. The workers at River Valley worked seventeen and a half hours. It is by no means unusual for part-time workers to be deliberately employed just under the eighteen hours.

The fifteen workers were still employed when their jobs were advertised in a local FAS office. Five young men answered the ad. The young men were paid £1.50 an hour for full-time work—whereas the part-time workers had been paid £2.75 an hour. Both wage levels are pitiful. It is obvious that the employers are cutting the wage bill by exploiting both the part-time workers and the five new workers.

What does this incident say

about FAS? Is there a minimum rate below which FAS will refuse to cooperate with employers?

Of the 15 workers involved in the River Valley incident 11 have remained on strike. The management have used scare tactics to intimidate them.

River Valley products assemble hair accessories which are sold under brand names of Skallewags, Final Touch, Jeepers and Kids Bliz which are sold widely in chemists, supermarkets and some department stores. At the moment Roches Stores, and a few chemists, are boycotting River Valley products.

Like 70 per cent of all part-time workers, the strikers at River Valley are women. As legislation reducing the number of hours to qualify part-timers for legal protection from 18 to 8 is introduced, many more companies will adopt similar tactics to avoid giving their workers any rights.

River Valley may be the first of many similar struggles. Any of their products being used in hair salons should be blacked by hairdressers, as well as their other goods being boycotted by the public.

Donations and messages of support to the picket line, Glasnevin Industrial Estate, Dublin

# Waterford Crystal

by WATERFORD SWM

**WORKERS at Waterford Crystal are this month bearing the brunt of short time working which, according to management, will continue for the remainder of 1991.**

The short time means a level of week on, week off working in the Wedge Cutting section and up to 18 weeks short time in the remainder of the industry.

At the end of February there was a dispute in the blowing section involving 400 workers who took action following the suspension of two blowers. The blowers

stopped for 2 hours each day for 3 days in protest at the suspensions.

Their stoppage was the culmination of anger in the section as a result of losses in blowers wages due to the

implementation of specific flexibility arrangements but also the effects of losses due to management's new interpretation of long standing custom and practice related to average earnings.

### ATTACKS

The severe financial impact of short time working in the Wedge Cutting section since the strike ended last July is coming to a head with workers being threatened with repossession of their houses due to non-payment of

arrears on mortgages with building societies and banks.

The strength of the 2,500 workers in the industry should be brought to bear through pickets and occupations of these institutions if they continue to threaten evictions.

The issue of union structures and new terms and conditions relating to disciplinary procedures has been outstanding since the strike ended.

The most divisive aspect of this issue is the company's demand for a plant based structure which would divide the Waterford part of the industry into 3

plants and have a separate plant structure at the Dunganran factory.

All the issues facing the Waterford Crystal workers require unity of purpose which brings all sections together. Only through all the sections having as their common goal the maintenance of the unity will they be able to deal with the agenda for the remainder of 1991.

That agenda can contain issues ranging from defence of union structures to the defence of members from evictions from their houses and all the sectional matters that arise on a day to day basis.

# Industrial Notebook

by PAUL O'BRIEN

## Industrial Relations Act

THE 1990 Industrial Relations Act was introduced in the South with hardly a word from the trade union movement.

Indeed, so busy was the ICTU in negotiating a new Programme with the Haughey government that practically no debate took place about the implications for workers.

The 1990 Act is the first major reform of Irish trade union and industrial relations law since 1906.

The law defines what a strike is, and even worse, what industrial action is, and has laid down exactly how you can undertake it.

The new Act has changed the law decisively in favour of the employers in three key areas.

■ **SECRET BALLOTS:** The balloting provisions are almost identical to the anti-union legislation introduced in the UK by the Thatcher government.

Under Section 14, a union must hold a secret ballot prior to any strike or other form of industrial action. The union must also take reasonable steps to ensure that

every member be given the opportunity to vote without interference from or constraint imposed by the union or its members.

On the surface this may sound grand, but the experience in Britain shows that one person can tie up the union and any proposed action in the Courts for months on end. It applies to union officials and members who might make an unguarded comment which could be construed by colleagues as "interference or constraint".

The law also states that seven day's notice of any action will have to be given if they are to avoid an injunction being taken against them.

Workers derive much of their power from the ability to strike quickly and effectively. The new restrictions will blunt the effect of the strike weapon to the point where it will be impossible to go on strike effectively and stay within the law.

■ **PICKETING:** There is not much point in having the right to strike without the right to picket effectively. Section 11 introduces a number of restrictions on the

right to picket.

Under these provisions you may only picket:

1. the place where your employer works or carries on his business;
2. the place where another employer who has directly assisted yours to frustrate the industrial action carries on his business.

This effectively means no secondary picketing, no blacking of goods and no solidarity action from other workers.

The High Court recently granted an injunction to River Valley Products against SIPTU restraining the union from blacking Riverside products in the shops which sold them.

Without blacking it will be almost impossible to win the strike. Workers will have to go outside the law if they are to be effective in strikes such as River Valley.

■ **DISPUTES INVOLVING ONE INDIVIDUAL:** Section 9 of the Act provides that no industrial action involving one worker can take place unless exhaustive procedures have been followed.

As these procedures can take six months to exhaust it reduces

the chances of members taking action after such a lapse of time.

This is an open invitation to employers to victimise activists in the workplace. It hits at the heart of trade unionism that "an injury to one is an injury to all".

River Valley is the first of what is sure to be a long line of legal cases under the act. The workers there have called on the ICTU to demand its repeal.

All workers should oppose the act and a campaign against it should begin in all unions and branches right away.

■ **Details of the Bill are available in a pamphlet published by the Workers Party: "Bertie's Bill", price £1.**

## 1990 strikes

THERE were 51 strikes in the South during 1990, more than double that of 1989. Only ten lasted more than five days. The total of strike days "lost" was 203,723.

Three strikes—Waterford Crystal, Barlo Radiators and Gateaux—accounted for 84 per cent of the 1990 strike days.

## P.E.S.P. hidden agenda

ONE of the least known aspects of the new national programme, the PESP, affects public sector workers who have been traditionally linked to marker grades in the private sector.

The Department of Finance is claiming that standard grade claims under conciliation and arbitration, as provided for in the PESP, cannot rely exclusively on previously established links with marker grades in the private sector has opted for a productivity claim.

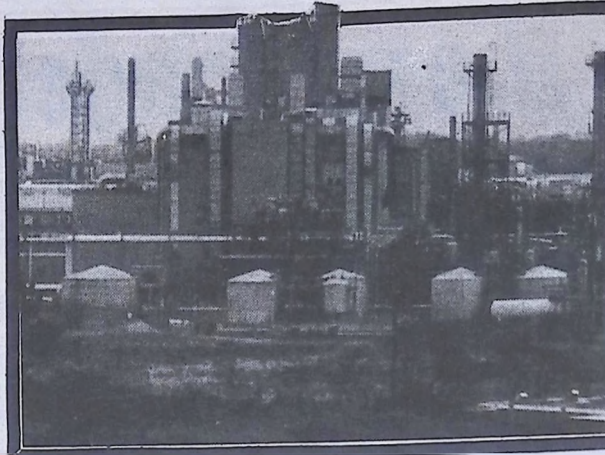
If the private sector pursue productivity claims or negotiate the extra 3 per cent that is available in year two of the programme on the basis of self-financing deals or changes in work practices, the public sector workers will be unable to make a claim for comparability.

Ultimately it will destroy the long-established pay linkages in the public sector and represents the hidden agenda of the public service pay agreement in the PESP.



# Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism 35p



## DERRY: Fight toxic waste plant

DESPITE the disappointing turn-out, there was a good atmosphere among the 1,200-1,500 people who attended the anti-toxic rally in Guildhall Square, Derry on 16th March.

The turn-out was disappointing only because the organisers expected the biggest crowd since the civil rights days. There's virtually unanimous opposition in the North West to the proposal for a toxic waste incinerator at the local Du Pont plant.

As more information emerges, people have become even more concerned. The effects of the ash dust on the food chain and thereby on young children especially is alarming.

Peter McKee, Du Pont's general manager, has said that if the incinerator doesn't go ahead, the future of all 1,650 jobs at the plant would be in danger. This is blackmail, the choice doesn't have to be between jobs or people's health.

### PROBLEM

The chemical industry could be almost completely cleaned up using technology that already exists. The only problem is that it would greatly reduce profits.

This threat from Du Pont illustrates the need to focus the campaign more clearly on the Du Pont workforce.

The message at the rally that this campaign is about "the community" taking control of our own environment is important but utopian unless the workers in Du Pont are willing to face up to the company's threats and refuse to allow the incinerator to be built.

Only they have the direct power to do this.

■ HILARY MORTON

# James Connolly

## 1916- 1991



IT IS 75 years since James Connolly was executed by the British for his part in the Rising.

Since then, his politics have either been hidden or distorted beyond recognition.

This has been true of the Rising as a whole. But it is more true of Connolly than of anyone else among the leaders.

Because, of them all, Connolly was much the most dangerous.

The *Irish Independent* had Connolly in mind when it referred to "the

worst of the worst of the ring-leaders".

### CONTEMPT

Connolly was a Marxist, not a nationalist. He wasn't out for an Ireland merely free of British rule but for an Ireland free of capitalism.

He had contempt for those who argued that class politics would have to wait until all-Ireland political independence was achieved. That aspect of his politics is glossed over by even the most militant nationalists today.

Equally, he had scorn for those who fancied themselves as socialists

but refused to face up to the realities of imperialism—for fear of "dividing the movement".

Connolly didn't see the 1916 Rising remotely as a "blood sacrifice", but as a determined act of anti-colonial revolt, against the horrendous slaughter of the capitalist World War.

### POTENTIAL

He did, in his last years, greatly overestimate any potential for socialist thinking to develop within Republicanism. If we can see further into these matters today than he could then it is because we can sit on

his giant's shoulders.

The way to honour his memory is not to make him an icon to be venerated but to take him as an example to be emulated.

To remember that his life was devoted not to any abstract idea of "Ireland" but to the working class alone.

And to remember as well his life-or-death

truth that the working class, to free itself, must perforce take the lead in the struggle against all the oppressions of the class-divided capitalist world.

(See pages six and seven for Kieran Allen, author of "The Politics of James Connolly", on "Connolly and 1916").

### DUBLIN:

## Trinity College pulls out of USI

STUDENTS at Trinity College, Dublin have voted to disaffiliate from the Union of Students in Ireland (USI).

The vote—almost two to one for disaffiliation—represents a major set-back for USI and for students nationally.

Disaffiliation is a major plank of the right-wing in

colleges nationally. Right-wingers opposed to USI's policies on abortion information, lesbian and gay rights, extradition

### CREATE

and progressive issues in general, hope to create a "non-political", ie right-wing, federation of student unions.

Besides TCD, a number of other colleges, including

Maynooth, Waterford RTC and Limerick University have also disaffiliated.

The right wing were successful because they were able to capitalise on USI's almost complete lack of presence as a national union.

Because USI has failed to mobilise students on issues like overcrowding and cutbacks, many students feel USI is irrelevant and costly. Tapping into this mood, the right wing has attacked the very idea of a national union.

But students need a

national union if they are to defend themselves from government cutbacks. Instead of this the Right want to see "apolitical" unions merely running a shop and a bar.

### ATTACKS

In order to fight these attacks students must also fight within USI for a serious, campaigning strategy that can mobilise students and win.

In both TCD and UCD,

right-wing candidates won the presidential elections. However, these people will have no answer to the problems students will be facing in the coming year.

In TCD Socialist Worker Student Society candidate Ken Mulkearn polled over 800 votes under the slogan of a fighting students union. Socialist can play a leading role in mobilising students against both the cutbacks and the inability of the right to do anything about them in future.

■ TCD SOCIALIST WORKER STUDENTS SOCIETY