

Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

Tricksters and traitors

THE political establishments, North and South did not see in the New Year by ringing bells.

Instead, they were wringing their hands.

Democracy is under stress they wailed. Alienation and cynicism are growing on all sides. Church leaders and newspaper editorials begged the political bosses to give "leadership" in 1985, particularly to the young people.

SYSTEM

What worries all these supporters of the system we live under is the possibility that in 1985, more and more workers will begin to wise up.

In general terms, 1984 was a bad year for Capitalism in Ireland. The farcical Forum founded on the rock of Mrs Thatcher's out-and-out rejection of all its conclusions, leaving "moderate" nationalism up a constitutional creek.

Unable to sell out to the Brits - because the Brits wouldn't buy what they had to offer - Fitzgerald, Haughey and Hume have to turn now to face the still solid resistance of Republican-minded workers. If the Republicans themselves made little political advance over the period, neither did they seriously falter. They are no nearer winning - but as far away from defeat.

GLOOM

Economically every day deepened the gloom. As profit rates plunged, more and more factories went to the wall. And as the dole queues lengthened, the finances of the State - especially the

Southern State - fell deeper and deeper into debt. The result is that there isn't even hope of tax reform for those in work - much less the prospect of betterment for the thousands with no job.

BOSSSES

The one bright spot for the bosses is that so far resistance from the workers has been weak. There have been a few strikes against the virtual pay freeze which both the Brits in the North and the Coalition in the South have been trying to impose. There have been sit-ins against job-losses at Molins in Derry and Storage Technology in Dublin for example. But these have generally been inconclusive.

Central Bank workers have waged a struggle against the insulting offer of under 4% in the 4th round. As we go to press CIE bus workers are gearing up for their own pay battle. But, still the response from the trade union movement has been patchy and unco-ordinated.

WORKERS

This hasn't happened just because workers are unwilling to fight back. It has happened because those who lead the working class - the trade union bosses - haven't the stomach for any sort of fight. They are compromisers by nature - indeed, by profession. They throw in the towel even before the bell goes for the battle to begin.

With that sort of leadership, its small wonder the rank and file is reluctant to rush into the firing line. They tend instead to turn towards whatever seems most

readily available. Thus it's Fianna Fail and not a socialist alternative which reaps most of the benefit in the South. While in the North, Republicans separate off the struggle for wages and jobs from the struggle against the Brits and so can provide no class leadership for workers.

LEADERS

As a result, union bigwigs like Donal Nevin in the South and Terry Carlin in the North, can continue almost unchallenged, to wheel and deal with government ministers and refuse point blank to give backing to any group of workers that decides to take action.

What did the ICTU do for the the Molins workers or the ASTMS strikers at the Central Bank? Sweet Fanny Adams And - they'll never change.

RESISTANCE

The task this year is to build on the resistance which, despite all, workers still put up. Thousands of workers are willing to have a go at the boss class. But that fight won't develop if we leave it to the tricksters and traitors who dominate the workers movement.

The CRYING need is for revolutionary socialist leadership. Lets make 1985 the year when we begin to get it together.



NEVIN - Selling out..



HUME - Selling out..



WORKERS STRIKING BACK!

Was Connolly a Republican? - pages 4 and 5

West's beef with Gaddafi

MANY PEOPLE think that Ghaddafi of Libya is a lunatic.

Charlie Haughey, of course, likes him. Ghaddafi has, after all, given Haughey the chance of a great stroke with the beef deal. And Haughey likes people who help him win a few votes.

Certainly there are reasons why people wonder about Ghaddafi. He does seem at times to have a crazy willingness to take on even the most awesome forces on earth.

He sent his fighters up to tangle with the US Air Force in 1981. And his "liquidation" threats to Libyan exiles who are hostile to his regime have made him a hate figure among western rulers.

For many of the same reasons, some on the left see Libya as "another Cuba", even as a socialist country.

The truth is very different.

It is true that Ghaddafi has changed Libya. When the country became independent from Italy in 1951, 90 per cent of its people were illiterate.

The vast majority lived in abject poverty huddled around

the ports of Tripoli and Benghazi, away from the arid barrenness of the desert.

The country was ruled by the feudal King Idris, a backward despot friendly to the west. Not that the western powers paid much attention to Libya. It had little to offer.

Then in 1959, oil was discovered and NATO suddenly discovered that Libya was an important and valuable ally.

There now was the possibility of Libya breaking out of backwardness.

But this was unlikely to happen under the corrupt and indolent Idris.

Younger army officers, concentrated in the Benghazi military academy, looked with envy on Nasser's Egypt where there was talk of industrialising the country and getting shot of the corrupt cliques which controlled commerce.

In September '69 a group of officers led by Ghaddafi overthrew the monarchy. They set up "revolutionary committees", began by removing British and American

bases which dated from the Second World War and nationalised the oil.

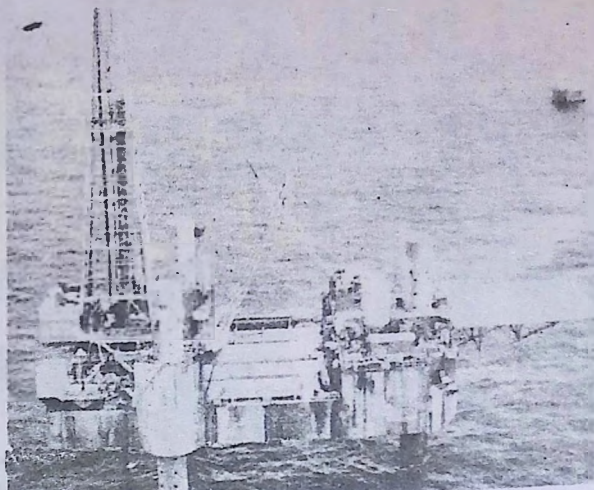
The oil crises of the '70s thus became a fabulous bonanza for Libya. Ghaddafi's "revolutionary command" found itself with wealth galore.

What he wanted to do with it was two-fold: to develop the country's industry and agriculture so that it would be dependent on no-one; and to bolster regimes like his own—Egypt, Syria, Sudan—in the Arab world.

Nothing very socialist about this. But for a while it seemed to work. However, then came the slump of the 80s and Libya was to discover how impossible it is for any country to cut itself off from the world market.

As demand for oil dropped and prices stopped rising L Libya's export earnings dropped from \$22 billion to \$10 billion a year.

Grandiose plans had to be scrapped and living standards were cut, which naturally gave rise to opposition.



To counter this, Ghaddafi set up "Peoples Committees" to strengthen the connection between the regime and the masses and opponents of the regime were killed or gaoled.

One result is that opposition has tended to blossom outside Libya, among the 50,000 mainly-student Libyans living in Europe and the U.S.

By now the socialist term-

inology has worn thin. If you take away the revolutionary rhetoric and the charisma of the man himself, Ghaddafi's Libya is as dependent on international big business as Ireland. And his "anti-imperialism" is seen as being no more than skin-deep.

Despite all, the Western oil companies continue to run the State-owned petroleum industry. Capitalist oil moguls like Armand Hammer of Occidental Oil enjoy a cosy relationship with the regime. The presence of massive British business interests also seems to bother Ghaddafi very little — despite his seeming support for the British miners and his professed support for Irish republicans.

His support for the miners certainly seems suspicious since there are no free trade unions allowed in his own country. In fact, a strike like that of the miners would be put down with even greater ferocity in Libya than that which Thatcher has showed in Britain.

Just how shallow his support of Republicanism is can be seen from the company he keeps. Charlie Haughey likes to play the "green card" too and pretend to support the oppressed nationalist population in the North. But it was Haughey who sat in the Taoiseach's office and let the hunger strikers die.

Like Ghaddafi, Haughey knows which side his bread is buttered on; that's why even after the hunger strike he did his best to soften Thatcher up with his fancy teapot.

Of course, Ghaddafi has to cover up the sharp contradictions between his "revolutionary" rhetoric and the reality of Libyan society. That's why anyone who points out the contradictions has to be "liquidated". That's why he gets such bad press.

Indeed, according to last year's February meeting of the "General People's Congress", "liquidation" of enemies of the regime is the responsibility of every citizen.

"Enemies of the regime" have always provided a useful political focus for rulers unable to live up to the socialism they proclaim.

In this respect, Libya isn't a crazy place at all. Libya is no different.

M HOLBOROW

Ranks' dough

THE DOUGH is still rising at RANKS. Last year it went up £7m to a tidy £51.1 million profit for the Ranks, Hovis McDougal Group. Of course, this doesn't guarantee job security to the workers who are actually creating this wealth.

On the contrary. They are entirely vulnerable to management decisions to close a mill or factory at the sniff of higher profits elsewhere. As we witnessed at the Phibsboro mill last year, the state is only too happy to put down any workers resistance and to close ranks with the bosses.

The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are getting fewer all the time.

DUNNES

VERSATILE things lines. Whether drawn across the middle of the earth or across the narrow minds of opportunists.

Ben Dunne's giveaway offer to the needy of Ethiopia is a perfect example of the level of exploitation the capitalist mind is not only capable of, but eager to engage in. This donation of 2,000 cotton dresses to combat the chill of the Ethiopian night is a £20,000 investment in window dressing.

His concern for the deprived in Africa doesn't extend down south beyond the line of the equator. In fact, it doesn't extend to his own shopfloor, where a genuine blow was struck on behalf of the

oppressed workers of South Africa. When a union member refused to handle South African goods, who was promptly sacked (or in Dunnes' lingo: "suspended indefinitely"). Of course, now that he has



cleared some storage space of those dresses, there is plenty of room for the next consignment of goods from South Africa.

AFRICA

STILL ON matters African. When the Anti-Apartheid Movement was set up in Britain in the early sixties, it was with the expressed aim of functioning as a support group for the African National Congress.

That the democratic leaders of the western world support the AAM is hardly surprising. It is consistent with the contradiction between the way they behave towards South Africa and the way they think they ought to be seen behaving towards it.

It is also consistent with the old adage by which our rulers seem to work, i.e. a freedom fighter is, by definition, someone fighting over 1,000 miles away.

If FitzGerald had refused to meet Thatcher on the grounds that she had entertained Botha, he might have

earned some credibility as an opposer of the apartheid regime.

But he did do the correct thing in resigning from the Irish AAM. He had no right to be in it in the first place. Not while he continues to denounce the IRA and engage in protracted political posturing to assure the electorate that he wouldn't touch Sinn Fein with a bargepole.

Denis Worrall, the South African ambassador in London posed a question that deserves an answer. He said: "Those who see and condemn what the IRA is doing in Northern Ireland should explain how such an attitude is consistent with support for the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement".

TESCO

NOEL BYRNE is worried. Noel is the manager of the much advertised Nutgrove Shopping Centre in the Dublin suburb of Rathfarnham. The cause of his anxiety is that "...groups of gurrriers who just want to hang around



for the day" will make his shining new shopping centre look untidy.

In defence of the shoppers allergy to punks and other such 'frightening' breeds, who are apt to make the Nutgrove shoppers nervous, Noel has banned unaccompanied teenagers from entering the complex. However, "it is not clear cut. Our security staff play it by ear". In other words, if the bouncer doesn't like the cut of you, forget it!

PROPERTY TAX

WHEN WORKERS occupy their factories or picket despite court injunctions, they tend to end up in jail.

But there is a different class of people who can break the laws with impunity. Take those who have property valued at over £65,000 and an income of over £22,000. They are supposed to be liable for Property Tax.

They should have sent back their tax returns by October 1984. But of the 37,000 concerned a full 80% refused to send back the tax returns, although legally obliged to.

The Property Tax was a mild mannered s.p. to the Labour Party. What the poor old Labour Party hadn't banked on was that the rich have no respect for parliamentary democracy when it affects their wealth.

THE WORKERS' SAXON FOE

SOME TIME ago the British Army placed an order for 497 AT 105 SAXON Armoured Personnel Carriers (APC) for use by the British Army in the United Kingdom.

The APC is an improved version of the AT104, which was designed 'primarily for internal security operations'. The new vehicle offers a much wider range of applications such as reconnaissance, command /radio and mortar carrier.

There can be no doubt that this vehicle will carry out 'the internal security operations' of its predecessor, even more efficiently. The British Ministry of Defence, of course claims that it would only be used to taxi troops from the U.K. to the BAOR, in time of war.

The military papers describe it as an 'internal security vehicle'. They say it has a 'protective screen on the side of the hull which swings forward to give protection to the troops while they dismount when under attack from a hostile crowd'. And that it is more adapted for anti-guerilla and Northern Ireland duties than that of genuine, central front attacks.

military experts, the SAXON would be well nigh useless in actual battle conditions. Thus its 'internal security' vocation seems assured. Its main standard armament is the Arwen 37V riot control weapon, for the firing of teargas, rubber bullets etc. Some optional extras (again according to the military magazines) include barricade remover, grenade launchers, hand operated searchlight, rotating/flashing beacons and siren, loud speakers and a front mounted winch -- some fancy taxi!

The vehicle is already being delivered to the 19th Infantry Brigade, Colchester, and delivery will be completed by next summer. The British Army is said to be looking for 1,000 of these vehicles.

The questions almost ask themselves. If the miners strike lasts long enough, could the SAXON be used against striking miners when the Tories try to move the coal stocks from the pit heads to the power stations early this year? Or is it basically just a long term strategy to deal with future industrial disputes and/or social unrest upheaval such as the Toxteth and Brixton riots?

YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED

According to most

ADAMS URGES HAUGHEY TO LEAD STRUGGLE!

IN recent years there has been a noticeable turn to the left in Sinn Fein. It has manifested itself not only in the language which Republicans use but also in their political activity.

Republicans now become involved in local and national campaigns-- not always directly related to the National Question.

They have been active in the Concerned Parents Movement, Community Action groups and Trade Unions. In Northern Ire-

land, they have endeavoured with some success to give their campaign a degree of popular support. All this is a long way from the early seventies when the Provos were correctly classed as right-wing.

There should be no underestimating this 'turn to the left' within Sinn Fein. It is real and reflects the increasingly working-class composition of the Republican Movement. But nevertheless, it has always faced certain limitations.

Last month, Gerry Adams gave a clear indication of the extent of those limitations. The venue was Castletown, Co. Wexford, the occasion, the annual commemoration of Liam Mellows. In a remarkable speech, Adams said that it was obvious that Charles Haughey was going to return to power, and he went on to call Fianna Fail to 'spearhead a united unambiguous and genuine demand for an end to British interference, and for the restoration of Irish National self-determination.'

This is the same Fianna Fail that 'stood idly by' as the hunger strikers died. The same Fianna Fail that has never been slow to collaborate with British Imperialism or to screw down Irish workers whenever it felt the necessity.

What makes Adams' speech all the more incredible is that he goes on to praise Mellows for being one of the first to recognise the 'class basis of the National Question'. It would be easy to discuss what the Sinn Fein President was saying as sheer hypocrisy. But Adams is being sincere when he talks about the 'class Basis of the National Question'. However his

problem is that he is imprisoned by the very nature of his own Republicanism.

To put it simply, Republicans are organised to free a nation, not a class and in that objective they look for support from wherever they can get it, be that American policeman or the party of Irish Capitalism, Fianna Fail. That's why following Thatcher's rejection of the Forum report, Adams called on all Irish Nationalists to 'push forward in a unified approach to remove partition' and 'to build a Democratic Irish Society'. By 'Democratic Irish Society' he did not mean a Socialist one.

It's not enough, however, for socialists to criticise the Provos. At the moment, they are the only organisation holding out any hope for the oppressed Nationalist working class of Northern Ireland. That's why we must give them critical support and oppose all attempts by the ruling class to isolate them, while at the same time working to build the revolutionary socialist alternative. An alternative that sees workers as being central to the defeat of Imperialism and the triumph of Socialism.

TONY RIGNEY



Buy Irish--same old story

RECENTLY you may have encountered groups of middle class teenagers, calling themselves the "Young Irishers" and demanding that you buy Irish Goods. Or you may have noticed their green and white stickers stuck to every thing imaginable.

Just in case you haven't heard their argument goes something like this: if everybody in Ireland buys Irish, then Irish industry will sell more goods and as a result more jobs will be created.

Workers in the Third World where the difference between having a job and not having a job can be the difference between eating and not eating. That amounts to exporting misery.

The massive scale of unemployment here in Ireland and

in other countries is not because the people in those countries don't buy Irish, or British or French or whatever. It is because the capitalist system can no longer provide jobs for everyone and still give the boss class the profits to which they have become accustomed.

There is only one solution to the jobs crisis and that lies in the re-organisation of society on a socialist basis. Then there will be work for everyone and things will be produced because people need them and not because a small minority can make large profits out of their production.

LOGICAL

This may sound logical, so lets suppose it worked; sooner or later other countries would catch on. Germans would start buying only german goods, the French only french goods and Garret FitzGerald only british goods. Irish exports would dry up, wiping out whatever gains had been made, and we'd soon be back where we started - in a mess.

Anyway even if it did work it could only do so at the expense of workers in other countries. Maybe it would result in some german workers getting laid off or maybe even



Same old story -- launch of Buy Irish Campaign in December 1974

Crystal balls

JANUARY: Dail budget hikes prices of bread, butter, eggs, baby clothes, bus fares and corporation rents, closes 253 primary schools and introduces fee of £2.50 for asking a guard for what time it is. "Another step on road to Workers' Republic", declares Dick Spring. 1,000 people arrested in North on evidence from new super-grass, Jude S O'Scariott. Outrage in UK after policeman stubs toe on miners tooth. Barry Desmond promises new family planning bill "any day now".

FEBRUARY: Communique following Thatcher-Fitzgerald summit says talks "went like a house on fire". 17 flunkies die in blaze. Reagan announces US space mission to explore the other side of the moon. North's chief justice Lowry releases 13 of the 137 O'Scariott defendants who prove they hadn't been born at time of alleged offences. "This proves justice prevails", says Independent editorial.

MARCH: Dublin courts jail 93 for failing to pay guards for telling them the time. 17,000 Americans land on moon, begin trek around to other side. Barry Desmond pledges family planning bill "ready in a jiffy". Labour Party conference in "ferociously militant mood" votes to ditch Coalition "the very minute Dick Spring thinks fit". Following summit, civil servants reported working on scheme for giving Dublin Government "overlapping non-sovereign authority-style influence over certain indefinable aspects of life" in North. "A magnificent diplomatic achievement" says John Hume.

APRIL: Snap budget in South introduces £50 'signing on' fee for going on dole as means of reducing unemployment. "Imaginative and innovative socialist measure", says Spring. Dublin Foreign Minister Peter Barry expresses "fierce concern altogether" after 19 Belfast pensioners killed by plastic bullets following outbreak of singing at old folks Easter party. Arthur Scargill charged with high treason for calling Thatcher "a wicked old witch". Radical feminists call for death penalty on ground that "witch" rhymes with sexist term "bitch". "Moreover" writes leading feminist theoretician in Irish Times, "witches were oppressed women".

MAY: Garda leaders complain force "stretched to limit by arrests of non-paying time seekers. Barry Desmond guarantees family planning bill "in two shakes of a lambs tail". Dramatic 'Tribune' leak claims plans afoot to give Dublin "45% responsibility for maintenance of North's street lights". Fitzgerald counsels against raising hopes too high. 3,000 US space ships land on moon with JCBs, bulldozers, giant bales of green baize and an enormous snooker cue.

JUNE: Divorce introduced in South for any couple "not too happy with the way things are going". Catholic Hierarchy reported "dead chuffed". Deceased O'Scariott support refused bail; RUC claim "this man would never turn up for trial". Dublin Minister for Wimmen Nuala Fennell expresses "deep concern" about sexism on RTE political reporting. Charlie Haughey strokes £1,000 million frozen duck export deal with Borneo.

JULY: Feminist rally in London threatens to turn Scargill into frog. Barry Desmond schedules publication of family planning bill for "as soon as the ink dries". O'Scariott trial opens in Belfast, "biggest in history of the world". Charges include sinking of the Titanic, assassination of Czar Nicholas II, invention of the Nolan sisters and invasion of Afghanistan. Garda chiefs call for "stern measures" to deal with defaulting time-seekers. Hurricane Higgins reported missing.

AUGUST: Dublin government announces divorce details: tribunal hearing cases to comprise Bishop Kevin McNamara, Ms. Angela McNamara and Sir Oliver Flanagan. Surprise Thatcher-Fitzgerald summit confirms Dublin's 45% say in street lights, 38% in upkeep of public parks (excluding Windsor), 93% in upkeep of John Hume and the "right to express an opinion, more or less" on an undisclosed range of "non-problematic areas". "This is what Roger Casement was bringing the guns in to achieve" claims Dick Spring.

SEPTEMBER: New bill gives gardai right to arrest and kick about persons reasonably suspected of being about to ask for the time. Reagan announces "arms race will be over in a couple of months". Barry Desmond says family planning bill to be unveiled "as soon as I've finished this pint". O'Scariott claims on oath that Gerry Adams killed Cock Robin, the moon is made of green cheese, masturbation makes you go blind and that if you add up two and two you get nine, nine, nine.

OCTOBER: First divorce applicants sentenced to roast in hell. Hurricane Higgins still missing. Numbers signing dole in South down to 158,000. Signing-on fee upped to £150 (weekly). Seven die in garda stations during questioning on non-intent to pay time fees. Family planning bill to be published "this very minute" - Barry Desmond.

NOVEMBER: Reconvened New Ireland Forum declares August deal "a full and final settlement of the ancient conflict between these islands, the next person to open the mouth gets it between the eyes". Dole Queues halved in South. Scargill sentenced to be burned at the stake. All remaining 987 O'Scariott defendants convicted: "the man's a liar, a fraud and a lunatic but I liked the cut of his jib", says the Lord Chief Justice Lowry.

DECEMBER: In TV address Reagan announces that unless Soviet leadership agrees to do everything he says "the moon will zoom down from the sky and slam into Russia squashing the whole caboodle". Reveals that US forces have turned moon into ginormous snooker ball and that when he gives the word Hurricane Higgins, now stationed on a space platform hidden behind the moon, will send it shooting down with unerring accuracy. "I've snookered every Red on the negotiating table", he boasts. Not a single person signing dole in the South. 22 O'Scariott defendants released on appeal on ground that, contrary to O'Scariott's evidence, the moon is not made of green cheese. Release hailed by Dublin papers as "proof positive that the North is a great place altogether for getting justice". Provos get Justice Lowry. Divorce tribunal reports all applicants "possessed by devils". Barry Desmond gives "absolutely unequivocal and unqualified assurance" that family planning bill "will be published this Year". In surprise move, Dick Spring joins Fine Gael. Fine Gael joins John Hume. John Hume joins hands and suggests that the best thing they can all do now is say their prayers.

What we stand for

The Socialist Workers Movement is a revolutionary workers' organisation which aims to organise the working class in the struggle for power and for the overthrow of the existing social order.

The system under which we live, capitalism, is based on production for profit and not for human need. It is a system that leads to poverty and war, racial and sexual oppression.

Only the working class can destroy capitalism and build a socialist society based on workers' control of production.

Our political action to prepare the working class for that is based on the following principles:

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

There is no parliamentary road to socialism as the left in the Dail believe. The system cannot be changed by piecemeal reform. The state machinery—the courts, parliament, the police and army—are used to maintain the dominance of the ruling class. The real power lies in the boardrooms of big business.

We stand for a workers' revolution which produces a different and more democratic society—one based on councils of delegates from workplaces and localities who are democratically elected and subject to recall at any time.

NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW

That kind of socialism does not exist anywhere today. Workers have no control over countries like Russia, China or Poland. They are exploited by a state capitalist class. A workers' revolution is required in those countries too.

A SOCIALIST ANSWER TO THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The six county Orange State is propped up by British imperialism. By bribing loyalist workers in the past with privileges in, for example, housing and jobs, Protestant workers have come to see their interests as being served by the British-backed Unionist boss class. This divides the working class and delivers a section of the workers as allies of imperialism. The Northern state is sectarian in essence and must be smashed.

The slow task of building working class unity against imperialism must be begun. However imperialism must be fought in the here and now and we support all forces engaged in that struggle regardless of our difference of programme.

We stand for: Immediate withdrawal of the British Army. Political Status now. The disbandment of the RUC and the UDR.

In the South, the bosses are junior partners with other European and American bosses in world capitalism. The main enemy is the boss at home. Nationalism or a united capitalist Ireland offers nothing to workers. The only republic worth fighting for is a workers' republic.

WOMEN'S LIBERATION

We believe that only through socialism can women achieve full emancipation and that their struggle is part of the whole class struggle for socialism.

FOR A RANK AND FILE MOVEMENT

The main area of political action for socialists is the mass organisation of the working class, particularly the trade unions. We fight for the independence of the unions from state interference, democratic control of all union affairs and the election of all union officials.

We oppose all anti-union legislation and all forms of national wage understandings and wage restraint. We oppose all redundancies. We say: Occupy to demand nationalisation under workers' control. Fight for a 35 hour week. We support the building of a rank and file movement which draws together militant trade unionists to oppose the class collaboration of the union leaders.

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS PARTY

The SWM is a democratic centralist organisation open to all those who accept its principles and objectives. The struggle for a workers' republic in Ireland is inseparable from the international struggle. The SWM fights to build a mass party of the working class as part of a revolutionary international of working class parties.

SOCIALIST WORKER is produced by the SOCIALIST WORKERS MOVEMENT. If you would like more information on our activities and policies, would like to become a member of the SWM or would like to take out a subscription to SOCIALIST WORKER - £3.50 for a year - clip this form and post to SWM, 41 Herberton Park, Rialto, Dublin 8.

I want to join: I want a subscription and enclose £3.50:

I would like more information about the SWM

Name.....

Address.....

JAMES CONNOLLY THE ROAD TO 1916

Revolutionary socialism was born in Ireland in 1896 when James Connolly and seven other workers formed the Irish Socialist Republican Party.

The major question the tiny party faced was its attitude to the fight for Irish independence. The basis of their policy was summed up in one sentence Connolly wrote: "The Irish working class must emancipate itself, and in emancipating itself it must, perforce, free its country."

The party's paper 'The Workers Republic' poured

scorn on the notion of a "union of classes" to fight for independence. In a pamphlet written in 1897, Connolly argued that an attempt to establish a capitalist republic would "depend on us becoming the worst blacklegs of Europe".

Twenty years after the ISRP was founded, Connolly was one of the leaders of the 1916 rebellion. The state that arose from the ashes of 1916 was the one that Connolly predicted - based on cheap labour and emigration. Many socialists today blame only the miserable union leaders that succeeded Connolly for the disastrous consequences

of 1916. But the roots of the disaster must be sought in the ambiguities of Connolly's own thought.

Connolly was active in a period when the movement for Irish independence switched from the rural areas to the cities. The Land Acts of the 1890s bought off a significant layer of Irish peasants to the dream of becoming small farmers.

The newly revived republican organisations that now grew up were based in the cities around Conradh na Gaeilge, Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Brotherhood. They mainly organised lower middle class intellectuals. But

this new movement with its demand for protectionism was one that Connolly never came to grips with.

Connolly concentrated on attacking the constitutional nationalists of the Home Rule Party. His aim was to destroy their influence in order to make way for a working class leadership of the nationalist movement. But with the emergence of Sinn Fein Connolly's neat identification of the "cause of Ireland and the cause of Labour" was no longer so obvious. For now there was a new class in the making and it was determined to put its stamp on a new Ireland.



NATIONAL EXECUTIVE, IRISH TRADE UNION CONGRESS AND LABOUR PARTY, 1914.

Standing: JAMES CONNOLLY, WILLIAM O'BRIEN, M. J. EGAN, THOMAS CASSIDY, W. E. HILL AND RICHARD O'CARROLL

Sitting: THOMAS MACPARTLIN, D. R. CAMPBELL, P. T. DALY, JAMES LARKIN AND M. J. O'LEHANE.

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CONNOLLY

JAMES CONNOLLY left behind a legacy of doubt and debate when he was executed as a rebel in 1916. His involvement in the Rising has helped to cloud over his actual politics and made it easy for him to be placed on a pedestal of patriotic nationalism by those eager to dwell on his involvement with republicanism and ready to turn a blind eye to his socialist aspirations.

In this examination of the aftermath of 1913, Kieran Allen looks beyond the smoke-screens that have been thrown up around Connolly and pinpoints the reasoning that led a revolutionary socialist to spearhead a nationalist rebellion.

In 1909 Connolly wrote an article on how socialists should respond to Sinn Fein. He wrote:

"It teaches Irish people to rely on themselves alone...so far, so good. That is the part of Sinn Fein I heartily agree with."

He warned that the economic policies of Sinn Fein could produce a 'friction' with socialists and prevent an alliance. Nonetheless, he endorsed the policy of protectionism to the extent that he called on workers to block imports.

What Connolly missed was a clear class analysis of the new republican movement. That was by no means easy at the time. Few socialists were organising in colonial countries. Even fewer understood how a middle-class led independence carried with it the promise, not of workers control, of socialism, but of a re-organisation of native capitalism.

Missing a class analysis of the new republican organisations, Connolly was led to the belief that they could be pressurised to the left. He looked for the "good parts" as against the "bad parts" of their programme, failing to realise that it is the nature of republicanism to unite, rather than divide, classes.

But political positions are best seen by how they translate into political practice. In 1913, Sinn Fein took a nakedly pro-boss position. While individual republicans supported the strike, the IRB as an organisation refused to back the strikers. It was, for the moment, clear that an alliance between marxists and republicans would not help the working class movement.

The defeat of 1913 was to bring a new turn in Connolly's thought. Throughout his life, Connolly was a syndicalist. That is, he saw socialism coming about through a general strike; the workers would lock out the bosses, take possession of the industries and declare the abolition of the capitalist system.

The healthy aspect of syndicalism was its emphasis on working class activity at the point of production. This marked it off from the reformist tradition which looked to parliament as the focus for change.

But syndicalism had two fundamental weaknesses. Firstly it believed that capitalism could be overthrown by industrial means alone - i.e. through a general strike. Secondly it had no analysis of the need to fight for revolutionary ideas in the working class through organising a minority of the most revolutionary workers in a party.

Instead it believed that workers came spontaneously to revolutionary consciousness once they were properly organised in trade unions.

The defeat in 1913 led Connolly to look beyond pure and simple industrial organisation. But his emphasis remained on working class organisation rather than political ideas.

Now he turned from industrial organisation to the military field. He organised the minority of the most determined fighters not into a party that could fight for political leadership of the class - but into a military body, the Irish Citizen Army.

A party trains its members to argue against competing political ideas and to remember the bitter lessons learnt from struggle. An army, like the Irish Citizen Army, trains its members in military techniques.

The vast majority of workers defeated in 1913 had temporarily lost confidence in their own strength and saw little point to a workers army.

Those who were concerned with the fight for independence were not offered a party that put a clear working class perspective as had the ISRP in 1896. Instead they were offered a choice of armies. Many of the workers who had fought in 1913 joined the Irish Volunteers. No political alternative had been built to it and it was, after all, the best equipped.

For a period the activists of the Irish Citizen Army maintained their class hostility to the republican organisations. But the outbreak of war - and the despair of revolutionaries at the collapse of the socialist movement internationally - brought a new blurring between the two organisations.

Connolly's position on the war was that of a socialist and



CROWDS AT THE ARRIVAL OF FOOD SHIP IN 1913

anti-imperialist. He was determined not to sink into despair and passivity. But what was to be done?

In August 1914, he argued that if European workers were to strike against the war, Irish workers should follow their glorious example. But he also added that if there was an invading German army, it should be supported.

Connolly was, in fact, looking both ways at once. His syndicalist traditions which looked to perfecting trade union organisation rather than winning the battle of ideas inside the working class movement meant that he had a very inadequate analysis of why the socialist movement had collapsed internationally. Similarly in Ireland he could only attack the enlistment of tens of thousands of Irish workers for the Empire in moral terms.

Nevertheless throughout 1914 - 1916 he maintained a class opposition to the war effort - despite his isolation and the weakness in his own

political traditions. Commenting on the May Day March of 1915 which had, in the traditional style, passed a number of resolutions, he wrote:

"They asked the government to re-build the slums but there was more spent on the Continent than would re-build all Ireland. All governments were doing this and would continue to do it until the workers took the world into their own hands - and ran it for the benefit of those alone who do the world's work - the workers."

But the world's working class was not moving. Connolly was forced back onto looking for the best possible protest against imperialism in a world that seemed to be dominated by the struggles of nations rather than classes. Increasingly during the war his paper, *The Workers Republic*, in addition to its marvelous anti-war propaganda printed absolute drivel on the wonders of German industry.

In Ireland itself Connolly was determined on insurrec-

tion. But with a passive working class and no party of his own, he was forced to turn to the republicans. He campaigned publicly for insurrection, even going as far as denouncing the cowardice of the leaders of the IRB for their failure to act.

When they finally decided to move the price Connolly paid for the acceptance of his advice was the surrender of his political independence. The leaders of the ITGWU led a rebellion where the majority of workers watched passively

Lenin in writing on the 1916 rebellion defended it against those who wanted to dismiss it as a mere putsch:

"The centuries old Irish national movement having passed through various stages and combinations of class interest...manifested itself in street fighting conducted by a section of the urban petty bourgeois and a section of workers."

The characterisation was absolutely correct. The rebellion had to be defended - and still does against all

sorts of trendies - as a blow against imperialism. But the tragedy of 1916 was that the politics which dominated the revolt were those of the urban middle class who were eventually to pave the way for the revival of Irish capitalism.

They had to lead because Connolly had not built a party that sought to challenge their leadership of the independence movement; a party that understood the causes of the defeats Irish workers had suffered; a party that knew how to wait for the eventual revival of working class confidence and how to lead workers against imperialism and capitalism.

And that revival did come. By 1918, the same Dublin workers who had been prepared to enlist in the British army at the beginning of the war were now fighting against conscription. The ITGWU had grown from 5,000 to 40,000. In the War of Independence that followed, it was the working class that spearheaded the revolt with strikes in support of the hunger strikers in Mountjoy and the refusal to transport arms for the Black and Tans. There were even soviets set up in some parts of the country.

The problem was that although the working class made up the backbone of the struggle, they were led by the politics of a different class. All the ambiguities that stemmed from Connolly were multiplied by a cowardly leadership of the ITGWU that stood aside for Sinn Fein.

The lesson for today is clear. We stand on the shoulder of Connolly when it comes to the foundations for revolutionary socialism in Ireland. But we also need to learn from his mistakes in the class nature of republicanism. Above all we need to build an independent revolutionary workers party that can do more than sit on the sidelines and advise republicans on how to act.



1914.
O'CONNOR
ANE.

NEWS FROM THE SWM

MEETINGS

Good news for the population of BALLYFERMOT. As part of a series of talks on "James Connolly, Republican or Socialist?" a public meeting on this topic will be held in the area on

Wednesday 23rd January
Speaker will be Kieran Allen
Venue: phone 716932 for details

If you don't live in Ballyfermot don't despair. A similar public meeting will take place in the city centre.

Thursday 31st January
Speaker will be Kieran Allen
Venue: to be announced

Being the highly efficient bunch that we are, we have also embarked on a series of lunchtime meetings in the colleges.

subject: Students and the the struggle for Socialism

speaker: Eamonn McCann
venues: Bolton St - 16th January
UCD - 17th January

and on the same subject, there will be speaker: Joe Duffy
venue: Kevin Street - 17th January
Trinity - 22nd January

Not to be out-done by the goings-on in Dublin, the comrades in Galway have organised the following meetings:

subject: Revolutionary Socialism
venue: Galway Regional Technical College
speaker: Eamonn McCann
date: Monday, 4th February

Also in Galway, that night 4th February

subject: Revolutionary Road to Socialism
speaker: Eamonn McCann
venue: Currans Hotel, 8p.m.

The Socialist Workers Movement holds regular meetings on Thursday evenings at 8pm. For details: phone 716932

FRED BYRNES

IT IS STILL hard to comprehend what happened in Cambodia in the 1970s. This small, poor country was first cynically dragged into the Indochina war by Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, and then devastated by American B52 bombers.

The country's liberation by the Khmer Rouge guerrillas in April 1975 proved to be a false dawn. Cambodia was turned into a vast labour camp ruled by the sinister and ruthless Angkar organisation headed by Pol Pot.

Perhaps as many as two million Cambodians died, out of a total population of seven million, before Pol Pot was overthrown by an invading army from neighbouring Vietnam.

All these facts are faithfully, and very powerfully conveyed in *The Killing Fields*, the latest film from the stable of David Puttnam, producer of *Chariots of Fire* and *Local Hero*.

The film tells the true story of Sydney Schanberg, a *New York Times* journalist, and his Cambodian assistant Dith Pran.

Schanberg, scenting yet another good story, insisted on remaining in the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh, after the Khmer Rouge takeover

WHAT HAPPENED IN CAMBODIA?

Pran stayed with him, and saved his life, only to disappear into the Angkar's death machine, despite Schanberg's efforts to get him out.

It is a moving story.

Joffe tells it well, and Haing S Ngor and Sam Waterson play the main characters superbly.

But there's something false about it. What happened in Cambodia is too big and terrible and complex a story to be reduced to the criss-crossing of two individual lives.

What matters is to explain why it happened.

Was it inevitable? Will any revolution end up with an Angkar tyrannising over a starving populace?

The answer to these questions lies in a unique combination of circumstances—the application of Stalin's strategy of 'socialism in one country' to a very backward rural society devastated by Nixon's



More complex than this

bombing campaign. The Khmer Rouge had waged a long and bitter peasant war, often in the teeth of opposition even from their fellow Communists in neighbouring Vietnam.

Virulent

The experience left Pol Pot and his colleagues virulent national-

ists, intent on proving that they could build 'socialism' in Cambodia in complete isolation from the outside world. The result could only be terror and famine on a colossal scale.

In the absence of this explanation we are left with Schanberg and Pran embracing in a Thai refugee camp, while John Lennon sings 'Imagine' in the

background. All 'tis forgiven, and we can go home happy.

The result is a brave film, that in the end cops out, surrendering to Hollywood sentimentality. Perhaps one day someone will make a film that makes sense of Indochina, but it will be a very different one from *The Killing Fields*.

UNCIVIL WARS IN WALES

MINERS have always been in the front line of the struggle of the working class against capitalism, as the present miners strike in Great Britain testifies. What inspiration and inner fire drove over 150 men from the valleys of South Wales, to leave their families and friends for Spain in the 1930's, there to fight in the International Brigades against Fascism and in the defence of the Spanish Republic? Most of them were miners, many of whom had been black-listed for their militancy against the pit bosses, more than half were Communists and scores of them had been fined or imprisoned in the struggles against unemployment, evictions, company unionism, Mosley Fascism and the use of police and troops in industrial disputes. How little things have changed almost 50 years on.

ANSWER

Therein lies the answer to the question. These men had not gone to fight in a foreign war: they merely travelled to a hotter, more intensive area of the same battlefield. The struggle of the working class is international, it should know no frontiers, only classes.

The history of the South Wales mining communities is a history of militancy. It reads like an unending series of battles, one of the illus-

trations in the book of why the Welsh working class did its internationalist duty with such determination and enthusiasm was a leaflet published by the South Wales Miners Federation in 1936, and which received wide diffusion. The leaflet pointed to the parallels between Bedwas Colliery,

then a notorious centre of company unionism, and Nazi Germany: no free trade unionism, no free speech, no security of employment, no welfare organization, victimisation and intimidation of militant workers and their families by the hiring thugs of the

South Wales Miners' Federation. TO THE BEDWAS COLLIERY WORKMEN.

Look at this - - and this.

In Germany Now.

- NO FREE TRADE UNION
- NO FREE SPEECH
- NO SECURITY OF EMPLOYMENT
- NO TRADE UNION BALANCE SHEET
- STATE APPOINTMENT OF WORKMEN'S REPRESENTATIVES
- INTIMIDATION
- VICTIMISATION
- PERSECUTION OF JEWS
- NO FREE WORKMEN'S INSTITUTE
- NO WELFARE ORGANISATION
- COMPULSORY DEDUCTIONS OF STATE UNION CONTRIBUTIONS FROM WAGES.
- CONCENTRATION CAMPS
- A SPY IN EVERY STREET.

In Bedwas Now.

- NO FREE TRADE UNION
- NO FREE SPEECH.
- 24 HOURS NOTICE
- NO TRADE UNION BALANCE SHEET
- COMPANY APPOINTMENT OF WORKMEN'S REPRESENTATIVES
- INTIMIDATION
- VICTIMISATION
- PERSECUTION OF WELSHMEN
- NO FREE WORKMEN'S INSTITUTE.
- NO DEDUCTIONS FOR WELFARE.
- COMPULSORY DEDUCTIONS OF COMPANY UNION CONTRIBUTIONS.
- BLACKLEG BARRACKS.
- A SPY ON EVERY CONVEYOR.

The Patriot, the political organ of a Die-Hard group of Tories, regards both 'Fascism' and the 'Non-Pols.' with equal favour. It regards 'Wind-bags' and the Miners' Federation with equal hatred.

Do the Owners of the Bedwas Colliery realise that they are nourishing a viper that will bite the hand that feeds it?

Do you workmen of Bedwas realise that you are being compelled to support the Industrial counterpart of Hitler and Mussolini?

BE READY FOR THE CALL TO FREEDOM.

For the South Wales Miners' Federation, THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

bosses and the State. State appointment (in Germany) and Company appointment (at Bedwas) of workers representatives, persecution of Jews (in Germany) and Welshmen (at Bedwas), a spy in every street over there - and a spy on every conveyor belt at the colliery.

BOOK

This book, by Hywel Francis is very inspirational and informative, teaching us the lessons and experiences of the Welsh working class, written from a class standpoint: it illustrates and upholds proletarian internationalism and it relates in a lively fashion with the wry and ironic Welsh humour of Francis 'a magnificent era of workers self-organisation and agitation, of class struggle'. Moreover, the book testifies to the vital contribution made by Marxist political education to the attempted construction of a bold, broad, self confident working-class culture. Through the campaign against the Means Test and the Spanish Aid Committees, it shows how the population can be united around a militant working-class movement and its Socialist vanguard. The necessity of a revolutionary party, based on Marxist-Leninist ideology, rooted firmly in the working class, is a cardinal lesson of the book. The Socialist Workers Movement offers these possibilities. Join It.

Miners Against Facism; Wales and the Spanish civil war. Hywel Francis Lawrence and Wishart £4.95 stg.

JOE O'BRUADAIR

Marxism made easy

MANY WORKERS think that Marx wrote only for intellectuals, and mostly know only the name of his famous book 'Das Kapital'.

This is true to a certain extent but the books he wrote have been translated into some very simple pamphlets. *How Marxism Works* is the very basic introduction to socialism and to arguments about the everyday problems that workers come up against.

Marx always said that the working class created all the wealth, whether it be in the factory, schools or shops. Without the workers, bosses wouldn't make any profit. So the system cannot run smoothly if workers unite in their fight for better working conditions, more staff or higher wages.

PAMPHLET

This pamphlet explains how the capitalist system creates slumps and booms, 'thereby leaving a "third world" on our door step. Yet it is up to the workers in the "advanced" countries to give as much as they can from their miserly wages to help the starving millions.

It is such an easy argument to condemn socialism and communism. The church does it, your boss does it and all the political parties in government do it. They won't benefit from socialism — only workers will. That is why we have to read and understand what Marx meant when he said "the emancipation of the working class is the act of the working class".

Marx wrote over a hundred years ago but his analysis of how the system works, who gains from workers misery and who the working class can change things will always be with us. That is until workers worldwide unite as one army and overthrow the capitalist system and all the evil that goes with it.

Last year more factories closed down in the 26 counties than in any period since the state was founded. Unemployment has reached massive proportions. Everybody agrees that this is an awful state of affairs but not everyone will agree with how you change it. Why?

If you say to the bosses or to their political representatives in the DAil that the only way unemployment can be solved is by workers collectively controlling and running the factories, offices, schools and hospitals, you'd be called insane.


Yet they cannot get themselves out of this situation. Marx said all this one hundred years ago. He explained it all and he has the solution to workers winning their freedom.

But you don't have to read *Das Kapital* in German to read Marx's ideas. *How Marxism Works* explains them all so simply that anyone can read and understand it.

How Marxism Works by Chris Harman is available from the SWM. 41 Herberton Park, Rialto, Dublin 8. Price £1.50 incl. p+p

CAROL MERRIMAN

TELECOM EIREANN



ing in the National Concert Hall union members accepted the deal by a large majority.

Billy Lynch's performance was typical of his breed of union official. His job depends on bargaining with management and any attempt at militant action poses a threat to this. But simply replacing him with a left wing official is not

THE recent dispute in Telecom Eireann provided another example of union officials dampening militancy in order to defend their bargaining role.

Over 200 clerical workers were suspended when they refused to move to the new Gaiety Centre in South King Street. But, Billy Lynch, General Secretary of the Civil & Public Services Staff

Action right down the line

Union (CPSSU) failed to call an all-out strike and the members moved to the new building on a compromise deal.

When the new Bord Telecom took over in January 1984, CPSSU members were guaranteed no worsening in the conditions they had as civil servants in the Department of Post and Telegraphs. But management refused to discuss the issue of disturbance money when the time came to move to the Gaiety Building. The Telecom Accounts branch of the union voted to black the building until they were guaranteed disturbance money and a subsidised canteen.

In December, over 200 workers were due to move from the G P O, Frederick Court and College House. The majority stayed put and were

suspended. Officials responded with an overtime ban and a work to rule.

The villain of the piece was Tom Byrnes, the ex U S marine who is Chief Executive of Telecom. Byrnes has the reputation of being a union-smasher and this dispute showed why. After the first suspensions occurred, CPSSU officials put forward a deal to management. If suspensions were lifted without victimisations the disturbance claim would go to arbitration and the members would move to the Gaiety Centre. Only minutes after receiving the proposal, Byrnes rejected it. A week later, the Bord put forward their own proposal,

practically identical to the one they had rejected. They also agreed to 'meaningful discussion' on canteen facilities. After a hurried meet-

enough. Militants must argue for workers to take the initiative instead of relying solely on the officials.

An emphasis must also be placed on building the rank and file in the union. This means taking on the smallest issues that crop up in the day to day situation. These must be linked with the broader issues and members kept up to date and given regular opportunities to discuss what their officials are up to.

With larger issues looming in Telecom Eireann and the government planning further cuts in the public service as a whole, unions like the CPSSU are clearly in the firing line. The task of building a strong rank and file must begin - one which will reject the collaboration of the officials and the boot-boy tactics of the people like Tom Byrnes.



Dunnes fight on!

TWO MONTHS ago, *Socialist Worker* carried an article attacking "left-wing" union officials. It referred in particular to John Mitchell, General Secretary of the Irish Distributive and Administrative Trade Union (IDATU) and to his handling of the Dunnes anti-apartheid strike.

As far as the Dunnes strikers were concerned, it went down like a lead balloon. Some of them even thought we were anti-union.

Last month, we ran an article explaining the difference between being against the union bureaucrats and against trade unions which, of course, we support as workers' defence organisations.

We have carried and will continue to carry these articles because we believe that the Dunnes strike can be won.

It could have been won long ago and the strikers could have gone back to work

victorious. Back to a shopfloor where the ban on South African goods is solidly maintained by the workforce and imposed by the workers on the management.

The power to achieve such a victory is there. It has been there since the strike began, but as yet victory has not been won.

We argue that this is largely due to the failure of the IDATU officials whose consistency in side-stepping and and shying away from the type of tactics that could win the strike has been matched only by their complacency in allowing the strike to linger on and on without any coherent direction.

The aim of the union leadership should not be to maintain the strike - but to win it. The way to win is by action:

* Spread the strike by visiting other Dunnes shops and getting the arguments across

to other Dunnes workers. * Point out that the fight is about more than S. African goods, it is also to defend the union against Ben Dunne's attacks.

* Achieve solidarity action in blacking of services and supplies - like the strikers achieved by their own action in approaching Dock workers.

In short, just about everything the IDATU leadership has failed to organise. This emphasises the shortfalls of "militant" union officials. While they may sometimes support a political struggle, they are unable to deliver the type of militant leadership that can win.

Only in recognising these shortfalls and by-passing them by rank and file organisation, will workers win out against the bosses.

JEAN CROSS

TROUBLE IN STORE AT TECHNOLOGY

ALTHOUGH they have been promised that their jobs are secure, the future looks very uncertain for the workers in Storage Technology.

The American parent company's financial difficulties have been threatening loss of jobs since last year. During 1984, over-production of computer frames and components in their Puerto Rico plant led to these parts being shipped to Finglas plant and subsequently many workers were threatened with job loss due to the abundance of parts. But now management want to close the Finglas plant for good.

Lies

Management's attitude to workers has always been one of contempt. On 6th November last, replying to rumours that there was to be a 3-day week introduced or the factory would be closed, management issued letters assuring the workers that there was no truth in the rumours. Yet, only 3 days later a Provisional Liquidator was appointed. The workers, with no guarantee of wages or their future decided to occupy.

On the 14th November, the Unions met the Liquidator and guarantees were given that the unions would be consulted regarding redundancies etc, and also that

there were potential buyers in the pipeline, for the factory. The workers decided to return to work and end the occupation.

Stepped up

Then, on the 17th of December, the liquidator recommended that the company be wound up. Immediately, the workers re-occupied. Within 24 hours, it was agreed that there would be no redundancies or lay-offs. Payment of wages was guaranteed and the factory was to re-open as normal on the 2nd January. The workers returned to work once more.

But, having no confidence in management, the workers guarded the £9 million assets in the factory, over the Xmas period, to ensure that nothing was removed.

Deals

Storage Technology has had over £6 million in grants from the I.D.A., has not paid any tax for the first five years in Ireland and also received extra money from the I.D.A. to train workers in an Improvement Training Programme. These handouts ensure that workers continue to pay huge amounts of tax; that social and health services are cut to bits and that social welfare dependants have to live on peanuts.

Morale is high among the workers in Storage Technology. They realise they are fighting not only for their jobs but also that they are challenging

the right of the Government, through the I.D.A. to hand out millions of pounds of taxpayers money to American and other Multi-Nationals who can bugger off when the grants run out and then leave the workers high and dry. This is a very important strike for those very reasons and every trade unionist and socialist should be active in their support for the workers in Storage Technology.

P CARROLL

MICRO-FIGHT IN GALWAY

INFORMATION Sources Ltd. suspended work for the third time on 12th December 1984. The 55 remaining workers believe this to be the final closure but, technically, the factory is not closed down. They have not been given notice or holiday money and they and former workers are owed £80,000 in back pay since April '84.

Phonsie Kelly opened ISL in September '82 with a £1,000,000 IDA grant. It employed 110 workers who produced synopses on microfiche of bestselling American magazines. This data was intended for distribution to American libraries and universities but so far business has been very poor.

In March '84 the workers were told that the IDA had cut off funding and that the factory would close down the

next day. A militant minority in the union (the FWUI) called for occupation but were silenced. Instead, the majority staged a 'work-in' without pay for a fortnight. This was to impress possible foreign investors.

While the shop steward opposed the "work-in", he was over-ruled by the union executive. The workers were mainly university graduates and felt the work was "appropriate" work for the aspiring middle class. There was also a high worker-management presence in the form of an "editor" for each eight "abstractor".

No investor showed up and in April ISL re-opened with Foir Teoranta funding. Work was soon reduced to a three day week and was again "suspended" in September.

By then half of the workers

including most of the militants had left in disillusionment. Many of them have gone into dead-end AnCO courses or emigrated. They were not replaced.

After another workless month, news came that an American consortium was re-investigating the company and it paid wages for a three day week up to December 12th. There is some doubt as to why it closed this time. Workers had been told that a competitor company with which ISL had dealings, have just launched an almost identical product. So a section of the consortium is threatening to take an injunction 'for industrial espionage'. The less naive wonder if such a consortium ever existed.

Dick Spring agreed to meet the workers on the 15th of

December and promised to 'do something' about more Foir Teo money. The workers who agreed to be interviewed for *Socialist Worker*, say that they have been cheated, not just by the boss but by the IDA, which seems to have no public accountability, and also by their union official, John Flannery, who should have known and told them when the IDA money ran out. He has now found himself more suitable employment in the personnel department of Lydon House, about the meanest and most anti-union employers in Galway.

The pity is that there was a potentially militant minority in ISL but they learned, too late, that they should have gone ahead and occupied the factory at the first closure.

KATHLEEN O'DRISCOLL

Socialist Worker

CHURCH MILITANT FOR CAPITALISM



Archbishop Brown of Galway and John Charles McQuaid of Dublin — their style is on the way back?

The Catholic Church in Ireland is involved in politics up to its eyebrows.

In Southern Ireland and among nationalists in the North it is now the main supplier of right-wing ideas and the most determined opponent of anything radical or progressive. It is viciously hostile to socialism.

Over the past couple of years, the Catholic Church has become more and more open about this political role. For example, the Sunday before Christmas Cardinal O'Fiach was interviewed at length on RTE radio.

He wasn't talking about religion. Nobody asked him about the Virgin Birth, the biblical basis of the ban on women priests, or the chances of bringing back the Latin mass. Religion didn't come into it at all.

Instead O'Fiach was asked about the Chequers summit, super-grasses, how well Sir John Hermon has been doing as chief constable of the RUC, whether Thatcher has a good grasp of Irish politics, the effects of unemployment on young people and so on.

This is now par for the course and not just in relation to the North. Drug abuse in Dublin inner city, the effects of the budget, the Criminal Justice Act . . . the first person quoted in the media about such issues is as likely to be a priest as a politician.

Now why is this? Why the change from the 60s and early 70s when the Church seemed to be retreating back into its own area of operation, when liberals were telling us that the time when people would take their politics from Rome was long gone in Ireland

— and when the bishops seemed to be agreeing with this liberal line? By the mid-70s the former Dublin arch-bishop, John Charles McQuaid, appeared a nostalgic figure of fun.

Not so funny now, with Bishop McNamara at the helm in the pro-Cathedral.

What has happened is that capitalism now needs the Catholic Church more than it thought it was going to ever again. Twenty years ago the common assumption was that Irish society would continue to become more prosperous, more urbanised, more influenced by "European" events and ideas, more "liberal" in its outlook. And that this would involve a comfortable loosening of the old constraints in the South and, in the North, a gradual fading of the old sectarian antagonisms.

A few backwoodsmen (and women) apart, the Church, too, seemed to accept the inevitability of all this and was even slightly shame-faced about the crude way it had put the clerical boot in in the 20s and 30s.

But the key to this entire development was *continuing prosperity*. It was all based on the notion that capitalism in Ireland would continue to expand and, as it expanded, provide a better life for all and fit ever more snugly and securely into European capitalism. Thus, so the theory went, there would be relatively little discontent and certainly no mortal threat to the system itself.

They couldn't have been wrong.

Far from western capitalism entering an era of permanent expansion, it plunged into the deepest crisis since the 30s. The effects on Ireland have been obvious in the North, the expectations created by all the optimism of the 60s came up against the fact that

the political set up in the North is incapable of even modest reform — plus the fact that the developing economic crisis made *economic* reform impossible whether or not the bosses in the North were willing to contemplate it.

In the South, unemployment began to climb again from the mid-70s and this brought with it all sorts of social problems. At the same time, pressure mounted from the ruling class to hold down wages and to cut back public spending. Discontent grew.

CRISIS

In both areas there was what might be called a crisis of authority. It was particularly and dramatically marked among Northern catholic workers, but also apparent in, for example, inner-city Dublin and Cork. More and more young people, feeling themselves oppressed and with no hope of a prosperous life, were telling anyone who tried to boss them around to get stuffed. And quite right too.

That's where the Church has been well placed to do capitalism a turn. If there's one thing the Catholic Church is good at it's exercising authority. Declaring in tones of dogmatic certainty what is right and what is wrong. Encouraging discipline. Respect. Obedience.

And they've been going at it with a will.

In working class Catholic areas of the North, for example, it is the Church more than the SDLP which competes

with the Provos for the allegiance of the community. The SDLP simply don't have the committed personnel in such areas to match the Provos' efforts at community organisation. The Church has stepped in, running youth groups, creches, even women's "consciousness-raising" meetings. And priests are now available in any Catholic area to handle complaints about being hassled by the Brits and so on.

And to complete the picture the Church is openly trying to give direct political leadership. In Belfast, Bishop Cathal Daly speaks regularly about the need for a change of security policy here, a reaffirmation of economic policy there, more money for this or that project and so on. During the Euro election in June last year, he was quite explicit in his advice to Catholics not to vote Sinn Fein. The Church thus has its "constituency activists" on the ground, and leaders hammering out the political line at the top. Just like any other political organisation.

STATUS QUO

Its main role is to deflect and defeat any organisation or line of thinking which threatens the status quo, to deliver over its "own" people to the system neatly parcelled up and untainted by any "alien" revolutionary notions.

In exchange, the Church enjoys massive Government patronage and support. For

example, two years ago Daly negotiated continued funding for Belfast's two Catholic teacher training colleges — in defiance of the unanimous opinion of educationalists and despite a government report which could find no justification whatever for their continued existence. It was a pay-off from the Tories for services rendered.

The point is that the Catholic Hierarchy and the British Government are in cahoots to defend the capitalist system. Some Catholic big-wigs — they could even include the Cardinal — might be emotionally opposed to the Brits. But, emotionally, intellectually and doctrinally, they are even more opposed to anything which smells of "revolution".

As in the North, so in the South. Bishops are now forever drivelling on about the effects of unemployment, the likely impact of the Criminal Justice Act and so forth. And there has emerged a new breed of "radical" clergyperson who seems licenced to thrill with all manner of revolutionary-sounding pronouncements. There isn't a march trails up and down O'Connell Street these days without the statutory contingent of priests in multi and nuns in militant mood.

In the dicey situation which confronts it, the Catholic Church, which doesn't miss a trick, is establishing some much-needed street credibility.

And it uses whatever credibility it gains to divert the minds of masses of people

away from the revolutionary road to socialism and towards the Church itself. Meanwhile, as in the North, the top Church bosses — McNamara in Dublin, Murphy in Cork, Casey in Galway — instruct the faithful in the need for ever-greater "discipline" respect for "traditional values" and the rest of that guff.

They are far better placed than any Dail politician to make this pitch. If FitzGerald, Haughey or Spring demanded more "discipline" from the unemployed they'd be laughed out of it. But when the Bishops put the frighteners on the parents to put the frighteners on their children, it sometimes actually works.

And faced as they are, North and South, with widespread "alienation" and a deepening possibility of mass revolt, the ruling class needs the Church to take on this role more urgently than at any time in a couple of decades.

That's the real role of the Catholic Church in Ireland, although this is something which various shades of opportunists refuse to face up to. One way to tell a phoney "socialist" is their eagerness to make common cause with the left-sounding faction of the Church in order to avoid facing up squarely to what the Church really is: a vital ideological bulwark of capitalism and, from the socialist point of view, a fundamentally evil institution.

EAMONN McCANN



Church and State meet when the Bishops made their submission to the "New Ireland Forum".