

Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

ONLY SOCIALISM CAN SMASH SECTARIANISM



THE LOYALIST backlash against the Anglo-Irish Agreement must be fought by all socialists. Although the deal offers nothing but repression and collaboration, what the loyalists want is nothing less than a return to Stormont.

Yet the campaign against the Hillsborough

Agreement is not in the interests of the Protestant workers who went on strike against it at the start of the month. The strike was, in fact, a waste of working class energy.

Over the last two years over 1,000 jobs have been lost in Harland & Wolff's - despite the fact that they have £200 million worth of work on their order books. Yet no action was taken to fight those job losses.

TRAGEDY

This is the tragedy of Protestant workers clinging to loyalism. By allying them with their bosses, instead of with other workers, their loyalism has condemned them to job losses, low wages and poor living conditions. Because while they do enjoy marginal privileges over their Catholic fellow-workers, these privileges are indeed marginal. And overall, workers in the North earn less and do not live as well as their counterparts in the South or in Britain.

For example, shipyard workers in the Six Counties earn only 85% of the wages which their fellow workers in the shipyards of the Tyne or Clydeside earn.

The quality of much of the housing in the North is substandard and living conditions for children in both Protestant and Catholic areas have been compared with the poorest regions of the South of Italy.

The Protestant working class of the Six Counties can see that the likes of Hume, Barry and Haughey have nothing to offer them. Republicanism with its promise of a 32 County version of the Free State first and socialism after, cannot break Protestant workers from loyalism.

SOCIALISM

Only socialism, with its vision of a 32 county workers republic free from the oppression and exploitation of capitalism and free from the shackles of the Churches, Catholic and Protestant, can entice Protestant workers to reject the ideology of their bosses and to unite with their Catholic fellow-workers in the fight for workers power.

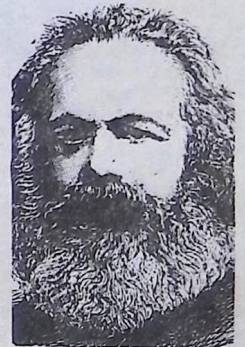
We're far from that unity today. But the experience of struggles in the past, as well as small examples like Abbey Meats today show us that it is possible.

Join us in the fight.

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No New Jobs For The North

THE BRITISH Tories are deliberately preventing the creation of new jobs in the North.

The excuse they are using is that paramilitaries are allegedly involved in some job-creation schemes—although not a single jot of evidence has been produced to back the allegations.

The Conway Street Mill Project (CSMP) in West Belfast is one scheme under attack. Established by a local development committee in the 90,000 square foot buildings of the old flax-spinning mills just off the Falls, it now houses a taxi company, a retail store, a garage, a glass engraving unit, a theatre group, a play school, the Irish-Language newspaper "La" and the Spring Hill House Project which organises classes in English, Irish, sociology and political discussions.

The committee fulfilled all the requirements for funding and has been received and been promised money from the NI Arts Council, the Education and Library Board, from other educational organisations and from central government through the various schemes such as the Industrial Development Board, the Local Enter-

prise Development Unit and ACE (Action Community Enterprise).

Now the NIO is operating a policy of delaying and refusing financial help. Groups already occupying space have been threatened with a cut-off of funds and others expressing an interest in the Mill have been told that no help will be forthcoming—although it is made clear this might change if they chose a different location!

Other groups threatened include the Shantallow Tenants' Association in Derry.

The basis for these attacks came in a Commons statement from Douglas Hurd (now British Home Secretary) in June last year in which he claimed that "some community groups... have sufficiently close links with paramilitary organisations to give rise to a grave risk that to give support... would have the effect of improving the standing of paramilitary groups".

The Department of Economic Development at the NIO has used this as a "justification" for a discriminatory policy aimed at strangling the efforts of self-help groups in Catholic areas. Thus a women's group

who has two ACE workers running a creche in the Mill had its contract terminated. And the Shantallow scheme in Derry where there were 11 workers involved, had its funds withdrawn.

No official reason is given for this job-destruction. The NIO simply relies on Hurd's Commons statement.

It is not "legally" required to produce evidence or even to say where it obtained its undisclosed evidence from. There is no procedure for appeal or for any redress of any kind.

West Belfast priest Des Wilson has hit out at the decisions as a "top-level British government decision to kill off a job creation scheme" and an action group involving a number of threatened projects was set up at a meeting in Derry last month. It will be contacting trades councils throughout the North seeking support for a fight-back.

A treacherous role in the whole affair has been played by the SDLP and the Workers' Party. SDLP councillor Brian Feeney has publicly attacked community centres in both West Belfast and Derry,



Conway street mill - Belfast

alleging paramilitary involvement and urging that funds be cut off. This has given credence to the wild rantings of Unionist MPs and provided the Tories with a convenient excuse to stop grants. The Workers' Party rag "The Northern People", has also printed the allegations.

Needless to say, neither Feeney nor the WP has offered any evidence whatsoever.

Those involved in the Projects—who now fear they have been "set-up" as possible targets for Loyalist gun-gangs—strenuously deny any connection with any political or paramilitary group.

VICKI VASS

Poland—Draft Platform of the Opposition

SINCE THE imposition of martial law in Poland in December 1981. Solidarnosc has been forced underground. Some of its supporters have drawn the conclusion that the state cannot be beaten and have sought an accommodation with the powers that be.

But others have been prompted by the defeat of the free trade union movement to harden their commitment and organise once again. These socialists have since the spring of last year come together as the Workers' Opposition.

PLATFORM

The "Draft Platform of the Workers' Opposition" has recently surfaced in the West and, despite its inadequacies, throws light on the arguments and discussions taking place among socialists in the underground movement and published in the illegal press.

The Workers' Opposition characterises the fight in Poland as a class struggle; "It is essentially a struggle between the working class, which is subjected to economic exploitation and deprived of all political or economic power, and the bureaucratic state power which is based on the Polish Communist Party as well as on the military and police machine and the economic and administrative apparatus. Only the working class has the capacity to overthrow the bureaucracy..."

Later in the Draft Platform the need for revolutionary struggle is proclaimed and the unity of interests between workers, East and West, against common enemies is championed.

And it is possible to hear an echo of James Connolly in this section: "Understanding the class character of social relations in Poland involves rejecting the nationalist imagery that reduces our fight to a struggle against the Soviet Union for independence. The basic dividing line in our nation is not a schematic opposition between patriots and traitors but one of

opposing interests among different social groups. That is why national independence, as an effect of the struggle of the working class for social liberation represents from the standpoint of the working class, the full achievement of the indispensable right to self-determination."

However, the weaknesses of the Workers' Opposition's ideas are serious. They fail to go all the way to recognising that Poland is a state capitalist society. Under the influence of the so-called Fourth International (a series of sects whose politics represent a degenerate caricature of the Trotskyist tradition—represented in this country by Peoples Democracy) who proclaim Poland and similar regimes to be some sort of workers' state, the Workers' Opposition don't see that the only way workers can take power in Poland is through a system of workers' councils usurping the power of the state and smashing it.

Instead they propose as the final aim of the movement: "the socialisation, outside of the state and in the framework of a system of workers self-management, of the means of production that are today statised."

TROUBLE

The trouble with this is that the socialisation of the means of production (workers' control) is not possible while the police and the army still exist.

The draft programme is long on tactics but short on political clarity. Poland's workers face a boss class—a state capitalist class. The only answer is for workers to smash that bosses' state and take power through workers councils. And a party dedicated to those principles must be built to argue for this perspective in the working class.

Despite the repression and difficulties, that remains the task. Whilst recognising that the Workers' Opposition have not arrived at this position, the birth of this left current is something we must heartily welcome.

—KEVIN WINGFIELD

Darndale Fights Back

"ONE of the biggest sources of income in this area is the social welfare cheque" says Noel Hodgins of the Darndale Unemployment centre. The figures back him up. An ANCO funded survey found that almost 40% of people in Darndale are on the dole. 57% of these have been out of work for 18 months or more.

The vast majority sign on in Gardiner Street in the city centre. That is almost ten miles away and £1-40 on the buses. Everytime you cash a social welfare cheque it will cost you 25p at the local shops and pubs.

Everywhere you turn, life brings petty harassments for those on the dole.

Yet it is not as if there is not work to be done. One look at Darndale would show that a massive re-development plan is needed for the area. The houses are packed together without front gardens. The laneways and alleyways are full of litter.

At the moment the Darndale Residents and Tenants association are demanding a plan to redesign the area. This crash programme of building work would take many unemployed Darndale building workers off the dole.

Politicians of all hues have "expressed their concern" for the situation in Darndale. Fergus O'Brien (FG) turned up to a recent meeting to discuss future plans for the area. Gemma Hussey has set up meetings to discuss future meetings with the local unemployed group. But they offer no hope to those on the dole except words. And they don't stretch the social

welfare cheque.

Darndale has had a history of resistance to the poverty forced on its people. In 1983 400 people turned up to a public meeting to protest at the withdrawal of Christmas double payments.

Nowadays, however, the unemployment group has adopted a far more moderate policy. Although it does not rule out marches and demon-

strations, it sees its main job in helping people to cope with the stress of the dole. It puts a lot of work into lobbying politicians. In some ways this has paid off. An unemployment centre has been set up—with three full time jobs—under the auspices of the Combat Poverty campaign.

The problem is you won't win the right to work this way. The dole queues are

lengthening in this country because Irish capitalism has run out of answers. What is needed in Darndale, and elsewhere, is a fighting militant unemployed organisation that organises protests, sit-downs and marches. It is only when the anger of the unemployed is linked up to the strength of the employed that we will be able to force the boss class to give us jobs.



WE THINK

Loyalist Strike

THE LOYALIST STRIKE ON Monday 3rd March was a thoroughly reactionary affair. Called by the bigots Molyneaux and Paisley, it was backed up by intimidation of UDA thugs. These thugs have previously organised death squads, not just against republicans but against Protestants who couldn't stomach some of their tactics. The strike did nothing to further the interests of workers — Catholic or Protestant.

Alan Wright of the Ulster Clubs said that they struck purely "for the defence of our faith and province from the encroachment of Peter Barry and the Anglo-Irish Agreement". No socialist wants the likes of Barry or the Southern ruling class wished on anybody — Northern protestants included. The Anglo-Irish Accord is designed to unite our rulers fully in their battle against republicanism. The price the Green Tories extracted from Thatcher was a say in the running of the Northern state. In return, they guaranteed to defend the border and Northern security forces.

The Loyalist strike was an attack on this agreement from the right. They want the increased repression the agreement promises — without Peter Barry's "meddling". Their real target is much more than the agree-

ment. It is the continued resistance of Northern Catholics to discrimination and bigotry. Their aims can be summed up in two words: protecting privilege.

Yet those privileges are marginal in every sense. They have not raised the living standards of Protestant workers to the equivalent of, for example, the white workers of South Africa. They share the rotten pay and rotten that their Catholic counterparts. Indeed loyalism has always put Protestant workers at the mercy of their bosses' plans.

In times past, loyalist ideas and patriotic fervour led thousands to their deaths in the Somme in the cause of a bosses' Empire. At the same time, the Orange bosses in Shorts were busily manufacturing guns for the Kaiser.

Today, those same loyalist ideas break down unity between workers and so lead to working conditions that compare badly with those of their British counterparts. Even in the heartland of the strike, the skilled workers of Harland and Wolff receive only 85% of the wages earned in the shipyards of Tyneside and Glasgow. Just like the poor whites in the USA, their reactionary and semi-racist ideas are turned back on themselves

as they prevent them organising properly as workers.

Loyalism can be smashed but not by the pathetic efforts of the ICTU. Terry Carlin of the Northern committee said he was against the strike because he opposed all "political strikes which damaged the economy". He was saying nothing different to the bosses in the CBI. It was in line with the general ICTU approach of "keeping politics off the shop floor". In other words, keeping quiet about discrimination and bigotry.

The refusal of Northern Catholics to lie down is a major factor in helping to smash loyalism. Their struggle has meant that the prospect of a return to Stormont recedes further into the dim past. Their determination has cut through the myths of loyalist supremacy. That is why every socialist should support that fight without qualification. In practice that means standing by the organisation currently leading the struggle — Sinn Fein — whatever our profound differences with its politics.

But it is also crucial that Protestant workers are offered an alternative that allows them to organise against the hardline loyalists. The only alternative will be a struggle for a 32 County workers republic. Every fight of Southern workers against their own bosses, every struggle

against the bishops, every step taken to fight for a socialist Ireland — is an invitation to Protestant workers to relinquish the defence of marginal privileges and join a struggle that benefits all workers. The republican perspective of first winning a united capitalist Ireland offers nothing to them.

Over the next month of so, socialists should be organising to defy any repeat of the loyalist strike. The

1974 strike proved that there can be no reliance on the British army or RUC for protection. It comes down to the self organisation of those workers — Protestant and Catholic — who are prepared to defy the bigots.

In the longer run, it is crucial that Protestant workers see the alternative of a strong marxist party that puts workers' interests first and has nothing to do with kow-towing to bigotry or capitalism.



NO NUKES



DICK SPRING AND Charlie Haughey can call as loudly as they like for the closure of the leaky Sellafield nuclear processing plant. Garrett Fitzgerald, being more in touch with the realities of life for his ruling class partners in Britain can "express his concern" about the radioactivity which the plant leaks across the Irish sea.

COUNTRY

But no amount of complaints from this country or indeed from Britain itself, will close the plant. Year after year, there have been British government inquiries into safety at Sellafield. Each time there have been bland assurances that changes have been made. Yet the leaks keep happening.

Five years ago the Health & Safety Executive published a damning report of administrative incompetence and decay of the site.

British Nuclear Fuels, the company which runs the plant, promised to put it right — they

took the massive step forward of changing the plant's name from Windscale to Sellafield!

Time and time again, we're told that the Sellafield plant is vital to the nuclear power industry in Britain. In fact, Sellafield is central to the British bomb industry. It is the source of all the plutonium which forms the core of every British nuclear weapon and of some of the plutonium in American nuclear weapons too.

The plant separates out radioactive plutonium from spent nuclear fuel rods that have been burnt in nuclear reactors. It's working overtime to provide enough of this plutonium for the massive expansion in Britain's nuclear weapons through the Trident submarine programme.

CHANGE

And that's why nothing will really change. As long as the plant retains its military links, with it will go secrecy and deceit. And the workers at Sellafield, the communities

around the plant and those of us in Ireland who live in the path of its radioactive leaks will continue to pay a high price so the British government can maintain this secrecy.

It's not just the risk of the holocaust, it's the spate of cancers around Sellafield, the Downe's Syndrome children being born in the Dundalk area and the dangers of radioactive waste that will remain — for centuries.

LINESMEN

ESB MANAGEMENT in Cork were not satisfied with starving the 180 linesmen back to work after 22 weeks on strike.

Despite a written promise of "no victimisation", four workers have been suspended for incidents which occurred during the strike. If these suspensions aren't fought, there is the danger that they could become sackings.

The leadership of the ATGWU disgraced itself completely during the strike. They helped the ESB to smother the strikers. It is up to every ESB worker and every ATGWU member to stand up to the union leaders now. Pressure must be put on the so-called left winger Matt Merrigan and on the ATGWU bureaucracy to ensure that they will not collaborate even further with the ESB in allowing them to victimise the workers.

PRISON OFFICER
Self-Tuition Course
KILROY'S COLLEGE
Cambridge Rd., Dublin 4
01-689562 (24 hrs.)

If you thought times were hard on the dole, then answer this ad and you'll learn just how much harder life is as a screw! Self Tuition courses include: beating up prisoners strip searching and lots of other even more exciting prospects. Our advice - stay on the dole!

The Big Match

AFTER A few years in the doldrums, football is front page news again.

The world cup is due to be played in June. Then we will get three weeks of nothing but football on the TV. At home, the arrival of Derry City in the League of Ireland has given the kiss of life to senior football which had appeared to be on its last legs. Derry have an average home gate of around 10,000, a figure many English soccer clubs would be glad of.

Despite this, professional soccer in these islands is in decline. Attendances have halved in the last twenty years. Many clubs in England and Scotland face bankruptcy; it is unlikely that Wolves or Swansea, both first division clubs a few years ago, will last out the season.

The ten or fifteen rich clubs in both England and Scotland are proposing a super league to cream off the profits that successful teams can earn. The other hundred clubs will be reduced to the poor relations. Without the money from TV and advertising which is spread over all the league clubs at the moment, many will disappear.

It's not, as the media would have us believe, the violence on the terraces that is causing the decline in paying customers. The violence is merely a reflection of the violence of unemployment and deprivation that exists in this society.

Football was the only mass entertainment that working class people could afford and identify with. This is no longer the case, the prosperity of the 60s and 70s have meant that there are more options open to people on how to spend their leisure time and money.

This prosperity has also affected football. The players who used to earn just about the average industrial wage became superstars with earnings to match. Football became another commodity to be packaged and sold just like any other. The sense of identity which people had with their



local club was gone. Whether their team won or lost on a Saturday was no longer quite as important.

Side by side with this decline in spectators was an explosion in junior schoolboy and women's soccer. More people are playing than ever before. This is where the sport's future lie. Soccer is a simple game, all you need is an open space and a ball. That's where

the game started, then they built a wall around the open space and charged you to watch what you previously did for free.

So next Saturday or Sunday when the big match is on tele, head for the local park where the REAL game is played and man, woman or child, don't forget your boots. You're sure to get a game.

—PAUL O'BRIEN

DOCTORS WAITING ROOM



INTERNATIONAL

The tyrant topples

FERDINAND MARCOS once commanded one of the most brutal and repressive state machines in the world. This week his once formidable power has been brought crashing down.

A million people came onto the streets of Manila to confront his columns of troops and tanks. Even the Americans have deserted him.

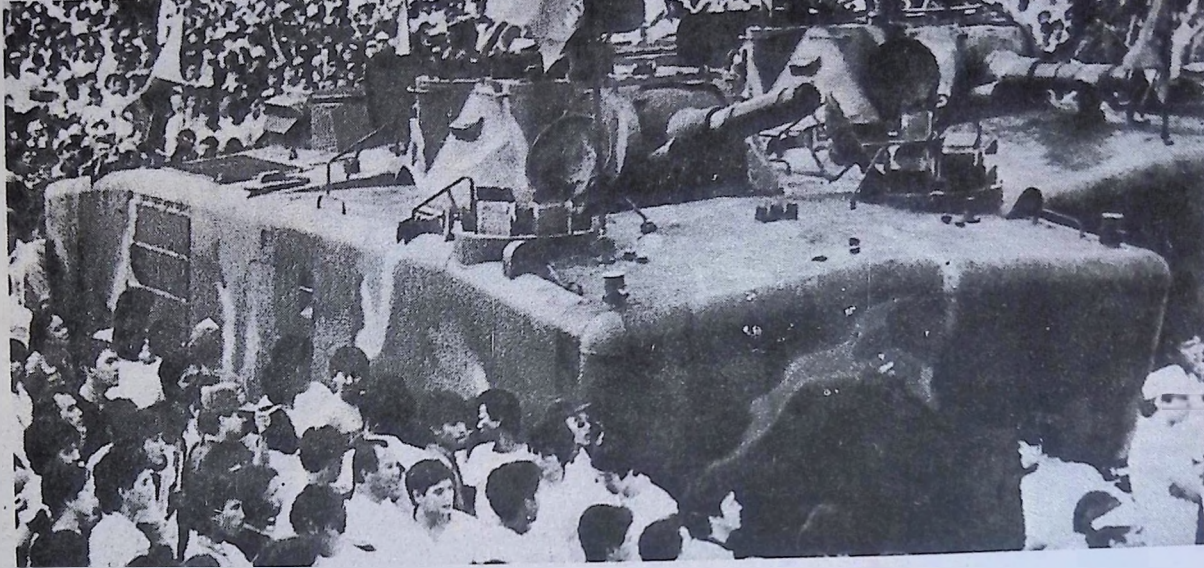
His once loyal boot boys in the military are deserting him like rats from a sinking ship.

Marcos has been forced to leave. But what lay behind his downfall? Does the future hold any promise for a country where 60 percent of the population live in dire poverty?

FOR OVER 20 years Marcos has ruled the Philippines with an iron fist.

A puppet for the Americans, Marcos has been faithful to only one thing—the lining of his and his friends' pockets with the profits of misery and death.

In 1969 Marcos was 're-elected' president after he spent millions of dollars to win support and crushed political dissent.



The tyrants' nightmare: troops sent to crush the rising get out of their tanks and fraternise

The country was plunged into chaos. Inflation soared, the Peso lost 60 percent in value and there were chronic food shortages.

Workers and students took to the streets—many under the banner of the recently formed Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines.

Strikes and demonstrations were to follow in opposition to Marcos's abortive attempt at

'reform' through the Constitutional Convention.

Fighting increased on the streets, every demonstration ended with deaths. And in the countryside the army had to deal with the National People's Army, the military wing of the CCP.

The main opposition to Marcos's Nacionalista Party, the Liberal Party, won seats in local elections and was becoming

a threat to Marcos's fake democratic rule.

In September 1972, Marcos declared martial law to 'save the Republic and to reform it'. It was his attempt to curtail the massive opposition that was brewing around him. Martial law destroyed, legally, any political dissent, any strikes, freedom of speech, press and the right of assembly and put all power in the hands of Marcos.

Thirty thousand people were arrested and Marcos himself admitted to holding 50,000 political prisoners in his 100 detention camps in 1975.

In 1981, under massive internal and external pressure, martial law was lifted and Marcos 'won' another sham election.

JULIE WATERSON

A glimpse of a better world

THE AMERICANS wanted Marcos re-elected in the hope that it would defuse the opposition movement. It didn't.

This week we had a glimpse of the nightmare that haunts bosses, generals and rulers the world over. Troops sent to crush the popular opposition embraced the crowd.

Ordinary people who have felt their power on the streets could win over the allegiance of large sections of the disgruntled army. Workers and soldiers could tour the estates and the factories debating, arguing and organising.

What is heartening for socialists the world over is to see the embryo of a worker's power that can get rid not just of Marcos, but Aquino, the Americans and ultimately every single one of the bosses and bureaucrats who run and ruin their lives.

No place for serious Socialists

THE witch-hunt against Militant in the British Labour Party is the surest sign yet that there isn't an ounce of socialism in Kinnock's leadership.

The Militant leaders of Labour in Liverpool have been set up for expulsion on the basis of ridiculous allegations of "corruption" and malpractice".

Even if everything alleged against Derek Hatton and his associates was true—which it isn't—the Labour leadership would have no moral or political right to kick up a fuss about it.

When there was *real* corruption in Labour at local government level in Britain, nothing whatever was done about it.

In the North East of England in the 60s for example—when local Labour leaders were involved in defrauding rate-payers of hundreds of thousands of pounds and when a number of them were actually jailed—there was no talk of a purge.

That was because the leading crooks like T. Dan Smith and Andy Cunningham were on the *right* of the party. It is because Hatton, Mulhern and the other Liverpool Militants are on the *Left* that they have been stitched up by a phoney "enquiry".

But one of Militant's problems is that it plays straight into the hands of the Right. It does this by accepting the basic logic of the Kinnock-Hattersley position. They accept that the absolute

priority is to elect another Labour government and that everything must be subjected to this aim.

Thus Derek Hatton is reduced to arguing repeatedly on television that Kinnock has got his electoral arithmetic wrong, that Militant's policies are popular with the British electorate and that Kinnock is needlessly alienating voters by driving Militant out.

This simply isn't true. All the evidence—from public opinion polls to union elections to the lack of solidarity with workers in struggle, such as the Wapping print workers—suggests that the working class in Britain is generally passive, in many

cases demoralised and in no mood to follow a hard-left lead. Serious socialists have to recognise reality and there is no point denying these plain facts. Indeed, if the facts aren't faced up to there's no possibility of changing them.

The most obvious reason Militant stumbles into this position is that if you are totally committed to a party which exists to win votes you *have* to argue that the policies you are urging on the party will indeed attract voters' support. The Labour Party will listen to no other argument.

At another level Militant's argument stems from its view of the way the ideas of working

class people are formed and the way they change. Its theoretical journal, *Militant International Review*, argues consistently that the working class will move *inevitably* towards the Left as the crisis in capitalism deepens. Indeed it argues that the move towards the Left "will spread to the broader masses of the working class, young people, women, the unemployed or even sections of the middle class repelled by Thatcherite barbarism".

And since Militant also believes that the decline in the fortunes of capitalism is "irreversible", the advance of Left-wing ideas which they predict is "inevitable". So all

you have to do is to snuggle deep into the Labour Party and wait for the inevitable left-wing move which will carry you and your ideas to victory.

The alternative, Marxist view—expressed by the Socialist Workers Party in Britain and by the SWM in Ireland—is that while the long-term decline of capitalism *is* inevitable, there is no crystal ball which we can look into to forecast how, when and at what rate this will happen. Just as important, it is *not* inevitable that workers, under pressure of the crisis, will move automatically towards the Left and drag parties like Labour leftwards with them.

It is when workers are in *struggle* that their ideas change, that they are open to revolutionary socialist politics. It doesn't happen automatically as a result of economic conditions. Thus the SWP in Liverpool argued for a strategy based on industrial action, particularly by council workers, as opposed to the Militant line which was to centre the anti-Tory fight in the council chamber.

The result was to be seen last September. When the Tories moved in to crush Liverpool Council's resistance to the cuts, the Militant-led Labour group had nowhere to turn. The workers—used for two years as a sort of auxiliary regiment to be called in when the councillors needed them—didn't respond massively enough to repel the Thatcher-

ite attack. And indeed little serious effort was made by the local Labour leaders to produce a massive response: their instinctive response was to seek support from the Labour Party nationally rather than from the working class of Merseyside who, according to Militant's own theories and predictions should have been champing at the bit for action.

Abandoned and isolated the Council collapsed, leaving the way open for Kinnock and Hattersley to move in, damning Militant for the defeat and eagerly seizing the chance to organise the expulsion of Hatton and others as electoral liabilities.

Despite everything, Militant is confidently predicting that they will defeat the expulsion moves, that the party rank and file will revolt and force Kinnock to back off. This is pure pie-in-the-sky. It is a refusal to face reality.

The reality is that there is no place for serious socialists inside the Labour Party, that the task of serious socialists is urgently to build a viable, revolutionary alternative to the electoralist politics on which Labour is based.

And this lesson is as relevant to Ireland as to Britain today.

—EAMONN McCANN



Little effort made to get support from Liverpool workers

Haiti: the first black revolution

THE FALL of 'Baby Doc' Duvalier has focused attention on Haiti, a country which under him and his father became a byword for tyranny, corruption and poverty.

Yet once Haiti was famed for something else—as the one place in the world where black slaves had succeeded in rising up against their white masters and freeing themselves.

CHRIS HARMAN tells the story of this tragic island.

In the 1700s Haiti, then the French possession of Saint-Domingue, was the greatest colony in the world and anything but poor. It produced more sugar than all the English colonies in the Caribbean put together.

It provided twice as many imports for France as any other country. Its overall trade was at least as great as that of the fledgling USA. It was a vital source of wealth for both the decaying aristocracy and the rising bourgeoisie in France.

The basis of this wealth was an ever expanding system of slavery. In the 1760s ten to fifteen thousand people a year were kidnapped in Africa and shipped to Saint Domingue; by 1787 the figure had risen to 40,000. In 1791 there were half a million slaves in the colony, two thirds straight from Africa, as against only 40,000 whites.

People who had been born free in Africa could only be broken to the remorseless toil of the sugar plantations by the most barbaric of punishments. Whipping was routine. If that was not enough to subdue them, it would be reinforced by mutilation of ears, noses or genitals, by the pouring of hot wax onto arms or shoulders, by roasting alive recalcitrant slaves on fires or filling them with gunpowder and blowing them up.

As slavery grew to be an increasingly profitable business, it was backed up by an increasingly severe racist ideology which denied citizenship rights to free blacks and to mulattoes—the descendants of white fathers and black mothers—even though some of these had accumulated considerable fortunes, owned slave plantations of their own and could mix freely with the ruling classes of mainland France.

But the bitter suffering of the slaves and the milder complaints of the mulattoes seemed condemned to impotence. The slaves came from different parts of Africa. They spoke mutually unintelligible languages, and so seemed incapable of ever organising a successful rising.

Some slaves seemed to identify totally with their masters, falling over themselves to meet their every wish, imitating their manners and adopting their religion. Others gave the appearance of complete resignation to their lot. Yet how superficial such appearances were was proved the moment successful rebellion became an option.

Any ruling class is beset by its own internal contradictions. The very speed at which its wealth grows can encourage these. This was certainly true in this so wealthy colony.

An 1821 painting of Toussaint L'Ouverture receiving the surrender of the British forces in 1798



The colony's government was in the hands of the French royal government, not of the big slave owners themselves, and they bitterly resented this.

In 1789 the bourgeoisie in mainland France launched upon its bitter battle to seize power from the aristocracy and the monarchy.

Such massive disturbances at the heart of the French empire could not fail to shake its richest colony.

The unity of the white rulers was shattered. The big slaveowners raised the banner of revolt against the royalist governor. The small slaveowners organised against the big slave owners. The wealthy mulattoes in turn rose to demand recognition as part of the ruling elite, however much this might offend racist sensibilities.

The sight of their rulers at each other's throats was the inspiration that the mass of slaves needed. They rose in armed revolt against the plant-



Papa and Baby Doc: they continued the tyranny



Saint Domingue in the 1790s

ation owners throughout the north of the colony.

As the best history of the rising, by CLR James, tells:

'They were seeking their salvation in the most obvious way, the destruction of what they knew was the cause of their sufferings. They knew that as long as the plantations stood their lot would be to labour on them until they dropped. From their masters they had known rape, torture, degradation, and, at the slightest provocation, death. They returned in kind.'

Blind destruction alone never leads to the victory of any revolution. The whites were able to hold on to the towns, to execute the first leader of the revolt, Boukman, and to prepare counter measures.

However, any oppressed class always contains many, many people capable of giving sagacious and courageous leadership to their fellows when the occasion arises. Individuals began to emerge that the other slaves would follow—Jean Francois, Biassou, Dessalines, Christophe and,

above all, Toussaint L'Ouverture. They created disciplined armed bands, the beginning of a revolutionary army, out of the spontaneous upsurge of mass revolt.

It took a long and bitter struggle for the slave army to conquer its foes.

At one point it seemed on the verge of defeat; in desperation its leaders agreed to fight on the side of the Spanish royalists who controlled the western part of the island.

But then it was given a further boost by the upsurge of the masses in France itself. In 1793 an insurrection in Paris gave power to the most revolutionary section of the French bourgeoisie. And in a moment of revolutionary enthusiasm this declared an end to slavery.

The declaration combined a genuine feeling for freedom with a very clever calculation: the revolt of slaves throughout the Caribbean would do incalculable damage to the main enemy of revolutionary France, Britain.

The army of ex-slaves, with Toussaint in command, became an army of the French republic. In reality, however, this meant that Toussaint and his comrades ruled the colony.

Their rule did not go unchallenged. The slave owners fought a desperate rearguard battle, the Mulattoes wavered between the two sides, and the British government saw an opportunity for establishing a new and a profitable slave-based colony of its own.

The British prime minister Pitt quickly dropped his old hostility to the slave trade and sent tens of thousands of troops to seize Saint Domingue. He thought the black army would fall apart with the first shots. It was one of the most disastrous miscalculations in British military history.

The black army fought with the enthusiasm and bravery known only to those who know their own freedom is at stake. The British lost more troops than in Wellington's famous campaign in the Iberian peninsula ten years later, and were forced into abject surrender.

Toussaint and his generals now ruled the whole island. His rule was successful by the standards of his time. White officers gladly served under him and former slave owners fawned on him.

This was to amaze 'civilised' white ruling classes. After all, they justified seizing control of vast tracts of the world by claiming that blacks were incapable of doing anything other than the crudest sorts of manual labour. Toussaint in power proved how wrong they were. This ex-slave was as good a general, a governor and a diplomat as any they had produced.

Yet Toussaint did face two major problems.

First, the revolution in France itself was in retreat from 1794 onwards and the business interests associated with the old slave trade were reasserting themselves.

Second, the wealth of Saint Domingue itself depended on the plantation system. Toussaint invited back many of the old landowners to get the plantations going again, with the ex-slaves working under them as contract labourers.

Many of the blacks saw this as only

marginally better than outright slavery, but when they rebelled, backed by one of the black generals, Toussaint himself suppressed the revolt.

Like so many Third World leaders since, he had got hold of political power without the economic resources to bring complete liberation, and so ended up attacking his own supporters.

Yet the old plantation owners were all the time looking to the counter-revolution in France to bring counter-revolution to the colony too.

Their chance came in 1802. The new ruler of France, Napoleon, sent his brother-in-law, General Leclerc, to take control of the island with secret instructions to restore slavery.

The French succeeded in seizing Toussaint and deporting him to France, where he died in jail. But they did not succeed in reimposing slavery.

Dessalines took command of the black forces and raised the plantation workers throughout the island in revolt. Leclerc's army was destroyed just as the British had been. The black insurgents could defend their country against either of the world's major powers.

Yet the problem that had beset Toussaint beset his successors as well. The plantation system was incompatible with the aspiration for freedom of the black masses.

And so Dessalines massacred all the white plantation owners and divided their land up among blacks and mulattoes. He was encouraged along this path by British and American agents who believed they would benefit by increased hostility to the black government from France.

But without the plantations there was no longer any way of producing the massive amounts of sugar and other export crops that made the colony prosper.

Not that the peasants were to be left to enjoy the fruits of the subsistence farming that replaced the plantations. The black rulers tried to emulate the European rulers of their time—Dessalines proclaimed himself emperor, Christophe after him was crowned king.

Christophe subjected tens of thousands to forced labour to build a royal fortress. The new black and mulatto ruling class took control of the best land for itself, forcing the mass of peasants on to marginal land which could only be cultivated by cutting down the forests and eroding the soil.

Politics came to be dominated by the intrigues of rival black and mulatto parties, each concerned with feathering the nests of its supporters from the proceeds from taxation.

Finally, the young black state agreed in the 1820s to pay compensation for French owned property. This was the beginning of a vicious circle of debt which endured a century later, providing the US with an excuse to occupy the country militarily from 1915 to 1939.

Haiti's slave revolt was the first great blow struck for black liberation. But it was struck at a time when the capitalism which had created slavery and racism was still relatively young and vigorous. This system entrapped the new black state and prevented the development of anything more than token freedom for the mass of ex-slaves. That is why their descendants today still live in a society where the direst poverty exists next to the most ostentatious wealth. And that is why the likes of the Duvaliers could flourish for so long.

RULING CLASS

Panic Stations

THERE hasn't been a stable government in the 26 Counties for more than five years. This has made the political establishment very nervous. And that nervousness is one of the main reasons for the emergence of Dessie O'Malley's Progressive Democrats.

Since early 1981 — when Fianna Fail had a secure majority — governments in Leinster House have staggered from crisis to crisis with no guarantee that any of them was going to survive more than a few more months.

Fianna Fail lost office in June 1981. The Coalition which took over lasted only until the following February, then fell after Bruton's budget which put VAT on kids' clothes and shoes. Haughey came back for eight months, then he too fell after a series of disasters.

COALITION

In December 1982 the present Coalition came in.

Thus the period prior to the arrival of the Coalition was one of political chaos which deeply alarmed the bankers and big business elements, who hanker after "stability" above all other things. Not only were governments rising and falling like yo-yos, two of the three major parties — Fianna Fail and Labour — were experiencing serious internal turmoil.

Three separate heaves against Haughey kept passions within Fianna Fail at boiling point, while Labour agonised continually about Coalition and went through three leaders — Cluskey, O'Leary, Spring — in two years.

DEAL

Thus when FitzGerald and Spring stitched up a deal after the November election just over three years ago, capitalism in the 26 Counties breathed a deep sigh of relief. At last there was a government which looked like it might run its full five-year term. And it was going to take five years at least to bring in the changes which Fine Gael's big-money backers wanted implemented.

But while the Coalition has lasted (so far), in many ways it has proved a sore disappointment to its capitalist supporters.

The most obvious example has to do with the budget deficit. Fine Gael ran in the last election promising to stop all "wasteful" public spending and to eliminate the budget deficit in four years.

And cuts in public spending were to be massive enough to allow for cuts in taxation at the same time.

Four years later taxation is literally higher than ever — despite the tinkering with the tax-bands in last month's budget. A single person on average industrial earnings will pay 65.5%

tax on every extra pound earned.

But although the government has more money coming in, it hasn't been able to control state spending as it would have wished. And as a result the budget deficit has just kept growing.

This failure has caused considerable concern in financial circles. After all, the main reason the monied elements had become disillusioned with Fianna Fail under Haughey was precisely that he was deemed "irresponsible" with State finances. But if the only alternative government on offer was equally unable to get to grips with the problem, where were they to turn?

REVENUE

The attempt to raise revenue with the imposition of water rates two years ago illustrates the dilemma. If tenants throughout the state had paid up their water rates quietly, they would have raised only £25 million in a year — hardly a significant contribution to cutting a deficit of more than a thousand million. But politically the Coalition wasn't able to deliver even on that. The opposition to water rates was out of all proportion to the book-keeping significance of the issue.

Tough-minded monetarists in the banks and the boardrooms began to despair of the Coalition. And they traced the blame for this situation to the "weakness" of FitzGerald and the presence in Government of the Labour Party.

In terms of the way it has served working class interests, the Labour Party in office has been a disgrace. The hospital closures have merely been the latest of its betrayals. But even so, from the capitalist point of view, Labour has been an increasingly irritating obstacle to plans for "getting the economy right". Because while Labour has always been willing to sell the working class out, it can't afford to sell out to such an extent that it destroys its own credibility entirely. It has to put up *some* fight.

EXAMPLE

For example, when in 1983 Alan Dukes announced that the budget deficit would have to be cut forthwith to £500 million, Dick Spring, knowing that this would involve massive attacks on health and social welfare spending, publicly dissented and FitzGerald — frightened that his government might fall apart — forced Dukes to climb down.

In other words the *political* interests of the Coalition were in contradiction to the *economic* strategy which the capitalist class wanted pursued. (It wasn't, of course, a make-or-break issue for capitalism. If it had been, they'd have ridden rough-shod over Labour if necessary. And in such

a situation it likely wouldn't have been necessary: when it's make-or-break for capitalism, Labour's own commitment to the system inevitably puts it on the side of the bosses against its "own" working class support.

Nevertheless, the inability of the Coalition to implement outright Thatcherite monetarism angered and exasperated the ruling, capitalist class.)

It is for this reason that many of them have begun to turn to O'Malley and the Progressive Democrats.

The big-business magazine "Business and Finance" put it clearly last month: "The Progressive Democrats deserve a welcome if only because they are now the only political party explicitly dedicated to reducing the role of the State in the economy".

DETAIL

In an interview with "Magill" last month O'Malley himself spelled it out in some detail. He wants a programme of "privatisation". He explicitly mentioned the telephone service, Dublin city buses, RTE and some local authority services as operations which might wholly or partly be suitable for selling off to private business interests. He advocated "tough" decisions on economic issues "despite the predictable howls of protests from the trade unions". (The four PD members were the only opposition deputies to vote against the teachers last month.)

MUSIC

All this is music to the ears of the many inside Fine Gael — like John Kelly and John Bruton — who have been impatient with the "wetness" of FitzGerald and the "whinging" of Labour for a long time. The talk around Leinster House and in the columns of right-wing commentators is of a Fine Gael-PD coalition after the next election to produce at long last a stable right-wing government willing and able to put the boot into the working class.

The emergence of the PD is a reflection of a steady drift towards the right among middle and upper classes who yearn for "stability" and who believe that the working class will have to be crushed in order to ensure that it doesn't endanger this stability by resisting the vicious measures the monetarists want taken.

REPORT
COMPILED BY
EAMONN MCCANN



NORTH THE SAME

THE areas where the British Tories—with the connivance of the SDLP and the Workers Party—are destroying jobs are among the most deprived in these islands.

Overall unemployment in the North now stands at 122 000. And while Protestant working class areas have been hard hit in recent times, the situation for Catholics is much worse again.

The most recent reliable estimate of Catholic male unemployment is 38-40 percent. For Protestant men it is 18-20 percent. Nineteen percent of Catholic women and 12 percent of Protestant women are also unemployed. (Figures from "Fortnight", December '85).

The Child Poverty Action Group, in a study of areas in Belfast and Derry, likened some of them to Calabria in Southern Italy—normally regarded as the poorest area in the EEC. They found extensive health problems related to bad housing, unemployment, clothing shortages, inadequate diet and the most ineffective social security system in the UK.

It is in such areas that local people, often out of sheer desperation, have come together to try and help themselves—recognising that no official agency was going to take the initiative. Self-help schemes are not an ultimate answer to unemployment and deprivation in the North, which is caused by capitalism and aggravated by the sectarian set-up.

But the very fact of working class people in the Falls or Shantallow getting themselves organised is seen as threatening to the status quo. That, and not paramilitary involvement, is what lies behind the efforts to thwart them. If there was any evidence of Provo involvement (and that is what is implied) the Brits—or the SDLP or the Stickies—would have produced it by now.

The trade union movement in the North must give its full support to those fighting against these latest attacks on the working class communities which have borne the brunt of repression and sectarian exploitation for the inception of the Northern State.

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CLASS CRISIS



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Right-wing drift

A BIG element in the Free State ruling class likes to put itself forward as "liberal" and "progressive", particularly in relation to issues such as divorce and contraception.

In fact this "liberalism" is directly in line with their right-wing attitudes on economic issues. Above all else, "our" capitalists want to become a "proper" ruling class, on a par with its counterparts in other EEC countries. It wants a modern, efficient, profitable, industrial economy where workers know their place (at the bottom).

IMAGE

And the thrusting, dynamic image that goes with that involves ditching "old-fashioned" ideas and attitudes. They can't be part of the Brussels or Strasbourg establishment while clinging to the moral values of the west of Ireland in the 30s.

Thus people like O'Malley, Fitzgerald and some members of Fianna Fail such as David Andrews are as right-wing as Maggie Thatcher when it comes to dealing with the working class,

and at the same time associate themselves with slightly "radical" causes such as calling for a referendum on divorce. The same goes for newspapers like "The Irish Times" and the "Sunday Tribune".

PROBLEM

However, these people have a problem. They recognise that the single most influential organisation in the 26 Counties is the Catholic Church, and the Catholic Church happens to hold that the moral values of rural Ireland in the 30s are eternal. Politically, none of them wants to be in a head-on full collision with the Church.

Moreover, it is on the Catholic Church that they have consistently relied to keep the masses in line. They have always been able to call on the Church to denounce "communists" and preach against "subversives" and to provide an educational system turning out "god-fearing" citizens who will "respect their betters".

At one level they see the Church as an obstacle to their efforts to liberalise and

Europeanise" Ireland. But at another level they know that they still need the Church.

So they play a delicate game, trying to manoeuvre "liberal" legislation onto the statute book and at the same time trying to stay in the same camp as the Church. The dispute within and between Fianna Fail and Fine Gael with regard to marital breakdown and family planning are basically disputes about tactics: about how far they can go, and how fast, without alienating the

Church altogether.

O'Malley, Harney and their associates obviously feel that it is possible to go faster than either Fine Gael or Fianna Fail and still not come a cropper with the hierarchy.

Except in the case of a few eccentrics like Oliver Flanagan and Alice Glenn and a few genuine bigots like Padraig Flynn, there is not a question of fundamental principle involved for any of them, only questions of survival.

Nicaragua:

REVOLUTION UNDER SIEGE

by Mike Gonzales

Judge by the reaction of the US, and the Nicaraguan revolution is a Marxist threat on a par with Joe Stalin. According to its supporters, it is a socialist revolution 'of a new type'. Beneath these highly-coloured reactions, what is really happening in Nicaragua? Has mass involvement in the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship been translated into mass democracy? What are the political effects of the US blockade and military threat?



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MARXISM MADE EASY IS THE WORKING CLASS FINISHED

ACCORDING to Marx, the overthrow of capitalism by the working class will lead to the creation of a classless society.

Put this forward in any workplace or among any group of working class people, and you can be sure of meeting with a sceptical response. "There always has to be someone at the top... you'll never get complete equality... there will always be the leaders and the led". These will be the typical replies.

It is easy to see why people think this way. Not only is it a constant theme in all capitalist propaganda, but it also seems to fit our experience. After all we encounter inequality in every part of life from the cradle to the grave and from history—as we are taught it in schools—it seems it has always been this way.

So why should Marxists think that things could ever be different? To answer this we have to begin by looking at the basis of class divisions in society.

Firstly, it is not the case that social inequality is based on the physical or intellectual inequalities that exist between people. If it were a matter of physical strength then gladiator slaves would have been more powerful than Roman emperors, and miners would be better off than stockbrokers.

If it were a matter of intelligence then Einstein would have been richer than Rockefeller, and Reagan would be on or more correctly below the poverty line.

The rich are not rich because they are cleverer or stronger than the poor, but because of their property, above all their possession of the means of production (the land, factories, machinery, computers, etc which are the tools necessary to produce anything.) Owning the "means" enables them to increase their wealth at the expense of those who lack such tools.

Secondly it is not true that class divisions are inherent in human nature. On the contrary, for thousands of years people lived in groups or societies that were not divided into classes, and the remnants of such societies still survive in parts of the world today for example among the Indians living in the Amazon jungle.

Indeed this had to be the case at a time when each individual could only produce enough to keep themselves alive and there was no surplus available to support a privileged class.

The emergence of classes, therefore

dates from the period in history when production increased to the point where there was a small surplus over and above the bare subsistence, but where the general standard of living was too low for this surplus to be collectively and freely set aside. Instead it required a small ruling class to extract the surplus from the labour of the majority.

Again the key to this was possession of the means of production, and this in turn required the development of the state (ie special armed bodies) to protect the property of the few and to enforce the exploitation of the many.

Capitalism today is the ultimate development of this original decision. It is ruled by a tiny group of people who control enormous multi-national firms, exploit huge numbers of workers, and thus generate a vast surplus.

The production of labour is now so high and the wealth created so great, that the potential exists to give everyone on the planet a decent life. This means there is no longer any necessity for a privileged class with a repressive state to forcibly extract a surplus from the workforce.

Instead it is now possible for the people who actually produce the wealth to democratically control its distribution and at the same time freely to set aside what is needed for the advancement of society.

Of course this can't happen in a society based on profit, competition and exploitation. To realise this potential for classless society the working class will first have to take economic and political power out of the hands of the capitalist class.

Moreover in doing so they will have to create alternative structures of control which both establish workers power and prevent the reemergence of a privileged class. This means placing industry under democratically elected factory committees.

It means creating a state of workers councils elected from workplaces with delegates who can be recalled at any time. It means electing all state officials and paying them the average workers wage. It means involving the whole working class in running society and in breaking down the system where a few people give orders and everyone else carries them out.

—EAMONN LEWSLEY Cork SWM



ANALYSIS

Why Marx Matters Today!

THE working class is finished. They're just not interested in revolution. We have to look for other ways of bringing about socialism." These are arguments that Marxists hear all the time. Yet today we still stand by the very basic idea of marxism that only the working class can overthrow capitalism and build a new, free society which puts the needs of the many before profits for the few.

While much has changed since Marx's time, the central role of the working class in building socialism remains. We say this not from some kind of sentimental attachment to Marx's ideas, but because now more than ever the working class is the only class which has both the ability to overthrow the capitalist system and an objective interest in doing it.

MANIFESTO

Marx began the *Communist Manifesto* with the statement "the history of all previously existing societies has been the history of class struggle." At each stage in the development of society there has been an oppressed class whose labour created the wealth, and a ruling class who controlled the wealth. And, as Marx pointed out, the workers have rarely accepted their lot without fighting back. There were slave uprisings in Ancient Rome and Greece, peasants' uprisings in medieval Europe and great civil wars and revolutions in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The arrival of industrial capitalism drastically changed the way in which goods were produced. As capitalism developed the means (or tools) of production, these tools — from land to machinery — were gradually taken away from the worker who produced the goods. Even the smallest farmer usually owns at least some tools and animals with which to work her/his land. But the modern industrial worker owns only his/her ability to work. The means of production, the factories, offices, tools, are held by another class — the capitalists.

This change in how goods are produced brought with it a fundamental change in the potential for overthrowing the system by which the minority class oppresses the majority. Because capitalism doesn't just concentrate wealth in the

GORETTI HORGAN

hands of a tiny ruling class, it also forces workers to come together and to cooperate every day at work. Each person on an assembly line has to do her/his bit if the next is to be able to do their's. Each typist types his/her part of a report before someone else takes it for photocopying or to be bound. Nurses must cooperate with each other and with orderlies and assistants if patients are to get proper care. You can dig potatoes on your own, you can't build motor cars that way.

WORKERS

It is in bringing workers together like this and forcing them to think and act collectively that capitalism has, as Marx pointed out, created its own "gravedigger" — the working class.

As capitalism develops, the struggle against it takes on an ever more collective form. For the first time there is a majority oppressed class which not only rebels against class society but can organise itself, electing and controlling its own forms of government, so as to change society in its own interests.

ARGUMENT

"But", the argument goes, "that was fine a hundred years ago. Today there are very few working class people left. Most people work in offices, schools and hospitals, not in factories." It's true that many workers today do not describe themselves as working class. Yet in Marxist terms, many of those who describe themselves as middle class are in fact working class. We define workers as anyone who sells their labour power, exercise no control over the means of production and exercise no authority over other workers. This Marxist definition clearly includes most clerical jobs, teachers and nurses. The working class white and blue collar, is still easily in the majority.

So why doesn't this majority class just use its collective power and take over? Over one hundred years ago Marx explained that it's because the ideas of the ruling class which dominate in society. And the

ideas of the ruling class are the ideas that we see and hear every day in the newspapers, on TV and radio. One of the ideas we learn from a very early age is that workers can only follow orders, that we're not able to run things for ourselves.

CHALLENGE

But there is one point at which workers challenge this idea — when the collective power that runs factories, offices, railways, hospitals, schools is used to stop them. This fact is very important. Lenin actually said that every strike, however limited its goal, carries within it the embryo of socialism.

After all what is socialism? With all the frills removed, it is people collectively running society. Instead of being the prisoners of chaotic capitalist competition which throws millions on the dole queues all over the world, of the mad rush for profit at any cost even if that leaves millions starving, socialism is working together for the common good. Our tremendous cooperative power would be controlled, not by a ruling class in search of ever greater profits, but democratically and for the fulfillment of human needs.

This doesn't mean that strikers set out with consciously socialist goals in mind — far from it usually. But collective action is the only way to win a strike, so the logic of workers' position under capitalism — collective action in production, collective action in struggle — takes us unwittingly in a socialist direction.

ACTION

And this experience of collective action changes peoples' ideas. The 70,000 teachers who packed into Croke Park in December are a good example. Most teachers would not have seen themselves as workers or have contemplated militant action. But the taste of collective power which they experienced has given them the confidence to take on the government.

And this collective power has been seen over and over again since Marx's time — in Russia in 1917, in Spain in 1936, in Budapest in 1956, in Portugal in 1974, in Poland in 1980. The power that Marx recognised and organised is still there — stronger than ever. That's why Marx still matters!



The young Marx



The power of the working class is still there

MARX TOUR DETAILS

WATERFORD:	Monday 10th March, 8pm	Venue: To be announced
CORK:	Tuesday 11th March, 8pm	Venue: Clock Tavern
DUBLIN:	Wednesday 12th March, 8pm	Venue: CIE Hall, Marlborough St.
BELFAST:	Thursday 13th March, 8pm	Conway Mills, Falls Road.
KILKENNY:	Friday 14th March, 8pm	Venue: To be announced

NEWS FROM SWM / LETTERS

LETTERS

Write to PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

SINN FEIN'S SUCCESS

IN REPLY to the letter from Kieran McCarthy (SW Feb) I would like to make a few points.

Firstly, he says that "part of Sinn Fein's success is their involvement in community work". It is certainly true that the Republican Movement has committed itself to the problems of working class people, both North and South. But unfortunately its involvement is based largely on the operation of "clinics". And although SF "clinics" operate out of genuine concern for the oppressed they cannot possibly substitute for the power of workers organised at the point of production.

Secondly, this strategy of attempting to substitute for workers' self-activity is also part and parcel of the Armed Struggle. And while being clearly on the side of the IRA in that struggle we continue to criticise it as a tactic. A major criticism is that guerilla tactics are carried out in such a clandestine way as to isolate the movement from the masses

whom they attempt to liberate.

In the Phillipines, for instance, the National Peoples Army have fought a guerilla war against Marcos for years. Yet when the regime was overthrown last month the NPA was nowhere to be seen. It was working class people, organised on the streets who succeeded in splitting the army.

The task for socialists, rather than fighting in the mountains all those years, was to organise among the working class, building a revolutionary party rooted in the work-place and based on the idea that only workers' power can end oppression. Such a party could have steered the working class beyond replacing the Marcos regime with the "moderate" Aquino and towards genuine liberation.

Socialists, like Kieran McCarthy, who want to fight imperialism in Ireland should learn the lessons of such struggles.

DAVE McDONAGH
Dublin

THE WORKING CLASS

Last month's letter from the Cork Republican Socialist really showed up much of the confusion seen among left-wing republicans.

Those who call themselves republican socialists are part of a movement which, as Kieran McCarthy admitted, accepts and in fact seeks support from the capitalist class. Yet they can see that only the working class can bring about a 32 county workers republic. The big problem is that most of them think that a united Ireland must come first and socialism later.

But as the centre spread in last month's Socialist Worker explained, the

Northern State must be smashed. And only the working class has the interest and the ability to smash it. In fact, then, just as it is not possible to have a Socialist Ireland which is not united neither is it possible to have a united Ireland which is not Socialist.

And if we are to have a 32 county socialist Ireland, we must throw away the cross-class politics of republicanism and look only to the working class to bring it about.

LIZ BYRNE.
Lucan.

NEW KILKENNY BRANCH

KILKENNY is the latest town with an SWM branch.

After a very successful public meeting on the Anglo Irish Agreement, a branch was set up in the town. It will be selling Socialist Worker on a regular basis.

On Friday 14 March it organises its second meeting on the politics of Karl Marx. It is one more step to bringing the banner of revolutionary socialism to every town in Ireland.

BELFAST DAY SCHOOL

On APRIL 12th, the SWM is organising a major day-school in Belfast for those interested in its politics in Belfast.

The day school takes place in the Conway Mills, Falls Rd starting at 11pm.

There will be sessions on the Trotskyist tradition; the legacy of the 1916 rebellion, and Marxist economics. All those interested in building a strong Marxist organisation in Belfast should get along.

Marx meetings

IN MARCH the SWM is organising a speaking tour in 5 towns on the politics of Karl Marx.

The speaker is Alan Gibbons from Liverpool SWP. Alan is a long standing member and author of a pamphlet on "Why the Russian Revolution was lost".

The meetings will explain the vital relevance of Marxist politics today. (see page 8, Why Marx Matters).

BOOK LIST

IT IS not often you come across left-wing books in this country.

The major booksellers such as Easons refuse to stock any revolutionary or republican books.

SWM aims to fill this gap by a mail order supply of left literature.

Our best-sellers include: "Why Ireland needs a Revolution" (60p). "South Africa, the Road to Revolution" (£1). For a full list of books and pamphlets available, write to SW Books, c/o Box 1648, Dublin 8.

Norah Carlin
Women and the struggle for Socialism

available from SWM, Box 1648, Dublin 8 price: £1.25 post free.

Now available

...a new pamphlet on South Africa by Alex Callinicos which looks not just at the apartheid system and how it fits into the world economic order but asks: Can apartheid be removed peacefully? If revolution is inevitable, what force will make it?

SOUTH AFRICA: THE ROAD TO REVOLUTION
ALEX CALLINICOS

Available at 85p post free from SWM, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

WHAT WE STAND FOR

The Socialist Workers Movement is a revolutionary socialist organisation that fights for a workers' republic and international socialism.

The system under which we live, capitalism, is based on production for profit—not for human need. It leads to poverty and war; racism and sexism. It is a system that can only be destroyed by the class which creates all the wealth—the working class.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

Capitalism cannot be patched up or reformed—it must be overthrown. That cannot be achieved through parliament as the Workers Party and the Labour Party argue. The real power in this society lies in the boardroom of big business. The structures of the present parliament, courts, army and police are designed to protect the interests of the ruling class against the workers. At most parliament can be used for propaganda against the system—it cannot be the instrument by which workers destroy the power of the rich.

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

NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW

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

AGAINST PARTITION

The six county Orange state is propped up by British imperialism. That state divides the working class by the guarantee of marginal privileges in housing and jobs to Loyalist workers. The struggle of Catholic workers to rid themselves of sectarianism and bigotry can only succeed by smashing that state.

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

We stand for:

- The immediate withdrawal of the British Army
- The disbandment of the RUC and ODR
- No to extradition and collaboration on border security

Connolly wrote that partition would bring a carnival of reaction. He was absolutely right. Irish workers confront two reactionary states. The Southern ruling class have no longer any fundamental conflict of interest with imperialism. They have become junior players in the world capitalist system. Their state props up partition—despite their occasional nationalist rhetoric.

The 'national question' will only be solved in the course of mass working class struggle against both states. Republicanism, by limiting the struggle to nationalist goals, by appealing to all classes in Irish society, can never defeat imperialism. Only a revolutionary socialist organisation that fights openly for the Workers' Republic can unite sections of the working class who have nothing to gain from a bourgeois Eire Nua.

AGAINST ALL OPPRESSION

Revolutionaries oppose all forms of oppression that divide and weaken the working class. We are for real social, economic and political equality for women.

We are for an end to discrimination against homosexuals. We stand for full separation of the church and state. We stand for secular control of the hospitals and the schools.

THE UNIONS

Today the trade union movement is dominated by a caste of bureaucrats whose principal aim is to make their compromise with the system. They have destroyed solidarity between workers by the two tier picket system. They have failed to lead any fight over tax, wage cuts and unemployment.

We stand for:

- 100 percent trade unionism
- A 35 hour week to reduce unemployment
- The election of all union officials, subject to recall
- Against redundancies. We say: occupy to demand nationalisation under workers' control
- Full independence of the unions from the state. No reliance on the Labour Courts or the arbitration schemes in the public sector

We fight for the building of a national rank and file movement that links together the best militants to provide an alternative leadership to the trade union bureaucrats.

We fight for the formation of Right to Work committees that link the unemployed to the power of the trade union movement.

THE PARTY

To achieve socialism the most class conscious sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party. The SWM aims to build such a party around its activity in the working class movement. It stands in the tradition of Marx, Lenin, Trotsky and Connolly. We urge all those who agree with our policies to come in and join the SWM.

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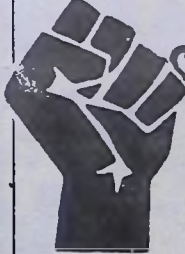
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REVIEWS

Ten years on

IT WAS A LITTLE over ten years ago that the Sex Pistols played their first gig. "Big Deal" I hear you say, "doesn't time fly" etc., etc. So what is all the fuss - weren't they just another pop band, another one hit - three chord wonder?

Of course the music was not startlingly new. It had all been done in the 60s by Californian Garage bands. Neither did it seem such a big deal that a band should spit and swear on prime time T.V. but seen in the context of the then current youth culture, it was a fantastically exciting step.

When seen in terms of today's popular music it was even more extraordinary. Today's pop stars don't have anything remotely resembling the wit and audacity of the punks of '76. Nowadays they smile and shake hands with the royals and moan about not appearing on the New Year's Honours list; and play ridiculous little songs with all the energy and excitement of a wet teabag. It takes a cringe at the music of today to appreciate the cultural importance of what happened ten years ago.

Punk very quickly became a purely working class thing. Sure enough those who instigated the movement, such as Malcolm MacLaren, were art-

school drop-outs and ageing hippies, but those who made it move were the discarded products of a selfish, careless, consumer society. To break from the norm and to defiantly refuse to conform were always the signs of a rebel. Unfortunately, these good intentions started to disappear very quickly when punk became just a cult, a fashion. When Marks & Spencers started stocking Bondage trousers, that was it!

With all that raw energy not in use when the guitars were not plugged in, it became necessary that a positive vehicle for that energy had to arise from what was desperately heading for nihilism and despair. The then current political situation decided what direction this vehicle would take. Enoch Powell's ranting and raving and the general fraying of the right wing led to an increasingly hostile and vicious situation. Racist attacks on immigrants and the Asian communities in Britain were tending to suggest that Fascism was the voice of the new youth.

Rock Against Racism and the Anti-Nazi League were organised by the Socialist Workers Party, the SWP's sister organisation in Britain, to throw that theory out the window. A

voice of outrage at the growth of Fascism and the onward march of the National Front, came at last into prominence. Hundreds of thousands of young and not so young, black and white, attended massive free rock concerts and demonstrated in an attempt mainly to combat racism among the young and to draw them away from the N.F. It, rightly, exploited the punk movement and grew along with it. Once the rise of fascism was stopped and the NF smashed, the movement gradually withered away - it had done its job.

All this serves to show that the rebellion in Punk was not confined to swearing on television, vomiting in Airports and writing on the back of leather jackets. With Rock against Racism and the Anti Nazi League, the anger against the "system" was positively directed. But why should we look back at '76 and not forward to '96? Primarily because nothing has happened since then in terms of youth creating their own culture

rather than depending on imported, manufactured and ready made "crazes".

Punk was a do-it-yourself culture. People got out and formed bands and made their own clothes and printed their own magazines to write about what they cared about. They wrote and sang about the issues that involved them. The music prior to '76 had been glam-rock and manufactured pop such as the Bay City Rollers, which was all about getting out and having a good time and trying to forget you're on the dole and the wreck the world is in. Punk said the things that youth were saying privately - and said it loud and aggressively. This is not to advocate living in the past, but rather to learn and appreciate a time when "Teenager" meant a little more than rock and roller.

Maybe such a time is returning in a small way. The growth of "Red Wedge", "Artists against Apartheid" and the left(ish) political leaning of many young bands is certainly encouraging.

It would be nice to think that many involved in the punk movement have gone to wider stretching political movements like the SWM or SWP. Punk is a starting point for beginning rebellion and refusing to

conform. But Punk alone, we all know, has very little power to change anything other than people's perceptions of what youth is capable of. It would also be nice to think that at the very least, many are still refusing to accept and conform to the status quo.

When the Sex Pistols rose to prominence nobody knew how important and relevant that gob in the eye of conceptions of the norm would be. Punk has been important as a focussing point for society's drop-outs and, as I have said, a stepping stone for true involvement in trying to change the rotten system we live under. But it is only through the political activity of the mass of the working class that things can eventually be permanently changed.

But until that time, it is worthwhile looking back on your mementoes of '76, maybe play those albums again. For Punk was important to young people at the time and continues to be so for this decade's would-be rebels. Let's hope it doesn't take another drastic cultural upheaval to waken people up from the rut and become involved in the issues that really matter.

- GARRETT KEOGH



THE KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN

IMAGINATION is something revolutionaries are supposed to lack and vice versa, people interested in culture are supposed to lack the revolutionary spirit. This would seem to be the starting point of the film "Kiss of the Spider Woman".

The film opens in the cell of a jail in Brazil where two unlikely inmates are placed together. Molino (William Hurt) and Valentino (Raul Julia). Molino is a homosexual (an "old queen" as he describes himself) imprisoned for nine years for his sexual involvement with a nine year old; Valentino is a journalist whose sympathies with the "Movement" (its nature is not outlined) led him to being arrested and apparently interned without trial.

The plot unfolds as the two "men"—or man and woman, as Molina considers himself to be a woman—attempt to come to terms with their confinement Valentino by pacing impatiently up and down the cell and Molino by indulging in his fantasy by recounting scenes from a Nazi propaganda film where he identifies with the heroine.

The film develops as the two prisoners gradually find an emotional level on which they can communicate. This leads to a sexual encounter between the two and the final parting kiss which at this stage almost has the undertone of

a Judas kiss as Molino had secured his release by working in league with the prison director to obtain information about the Movement from Valentino. This ambiguity continues right to the end of the film and the irony of the story is that no matter what Molino does, whether he contacts the movement or not, it will mean death for Valentino, either through torture or rotting in jail, and for Molino either suffering, as the one person he has ever loved remains in prison or death, which turns out to be the case.

This tragedy could be sentimental but turns out to be a major indictment of a political

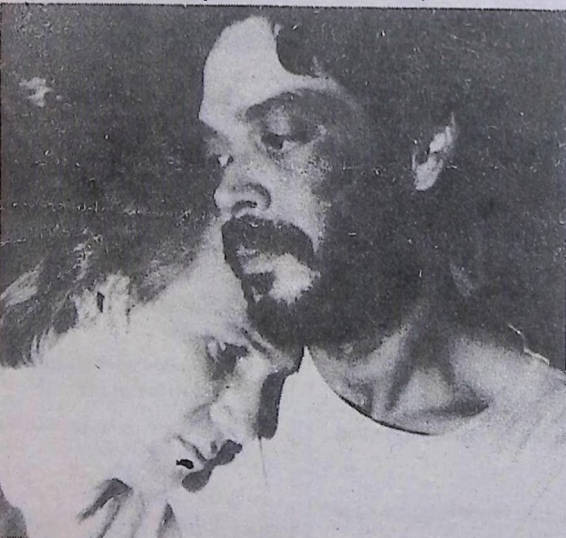
system based on oppression and exploitation and the film's success lies in the subtlety of its plot which gets this message across without having to indulge in political discussions.

Socialism is not mentioned in the film, but implied in the story is the humanitarian basis on which all socialism rests.

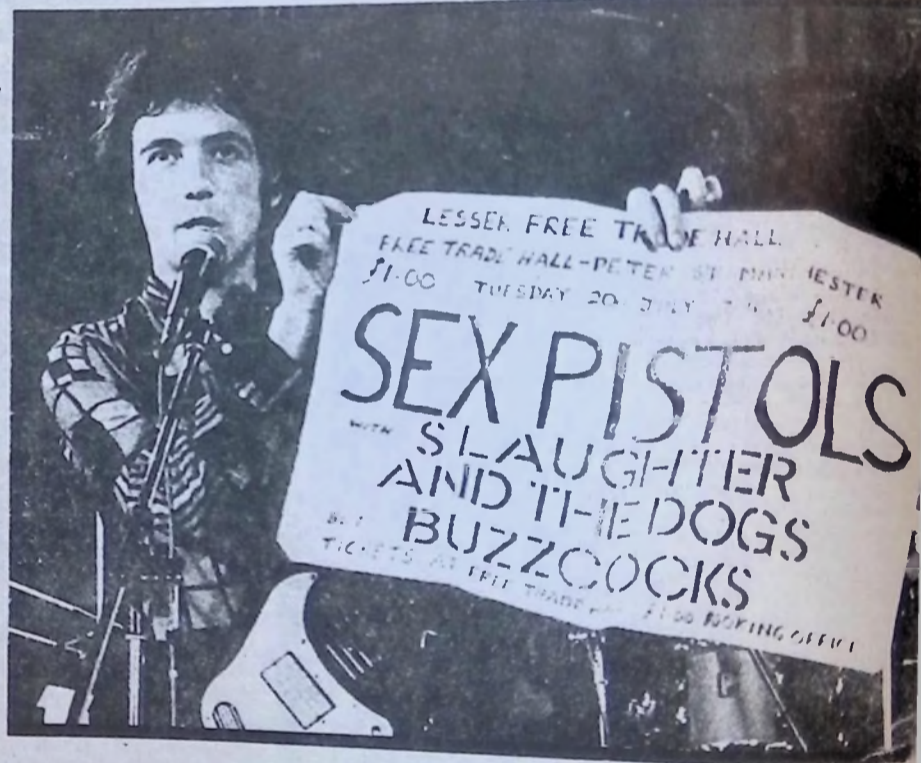
Hurt's performance as Molino is the highlight of the film, and his convincing portrayal of this part must be seen as one of the major attempts within popular culture to make homosexuality acceptable.

This is definitely one of the best films to be made in a long time and not to be missed.

-JOE O'BYRNE



Valentin consoles Molina



NOVELS

BASEBALL BLUES

by JULIE WATERSON

RILEY KOVACHS, the private detective who's 'soft on Trotsky', is posed his third challenge in *Frisco Blues*.

It is post-war San Francisco, there are strikes, there's baseball, there's racism and there's an unsolved murder.

Gordon DeMarco races you through the twists and politics of 1947 America in a style reminiscent of both Hammett and Chandler.

Hammett and Chandler openly challenged the prevailing ideas of justice and liberty, showing the corruption and deceit of the ruling

class and their friends in high places, from politicians to the police force and the courts.

DeMarco is more overtly political. His constant jibes at Stalinism are more than funny and Riley Kovachs always manages a visit to a picket line, meeting or rally.

In *Frisco Blues* Kovachs is confronted with nasty, brutal racism. The blacks who fought in the war, and who suffered racism as soldiers, were told

of—and some expected—a different society, one where they would be treated equally with whites.

The colour bar had been broken in baseball—but not the racism. It is a young hopeful for a major league who falls to his death in the local shipyard. Kovachs is out to find the truth.

On the way there he's witty, he's political and it's a good read. After you've finished *Frisco Blues* go out and get *Canvas Prison* and *October Heat*.

■ *Frisco Blues*, Gordon DeMarco, Pluto, £2.25.

INDUSTRIAL NEWS

Warning : Government Can Damage Your Health

IT'S arguable that the most disadvantaged section of our society is the mentally ill. Yet it is psychiatric patients that will bear the brunt of Barry Desmond's latest round of cuts. Socialist Worker spoke to Michael M.Carthy, staff nurse in St. Brendans Hospital, Dublin and an active member of his union, the Psychiatric Nurses Association.

S.W. : The announcement of eight hospital closures by the health minister, has rightly been greeted with anger and dismay. Can you give us some idea of what that will mean for those directly involved?

M.McM: Well for the minister it is a cost cutting exercise. The closures include an infants hospital, an isolation hospital, Sir Patrick Dunnes in Dublin and the district hospital in Roscrea. But in my own field, the two psychiatric hospitals in Carlow and Castlereagh have 500 to 600 between them. There's about the same number of jobs involved which include medical, maintenance and ancillary staff.

Barry Desmond reckons that half the psychiatric patients can be discharged into community care. The other half—for instance those in St. Dymphna's in Carlow—the ones from north Carlow can go to St. Loman's in Palmerstown, and those from south Carlow can go to Ilkenny. But both St. Lomans and Kilkenny are full.

COMMUNITY

S.W. : The notion of care being provided in the community rather than big impersonal institutions is usually seen as a progressive thing. In a way couldn't the minister be seen to be acting correctly in encouraging care?

McM: That's fine if the facilities for care in the community already exist, or if there's a gradual emptying of the hospitals into a programme of community care that is gradually being expanded to accommodate the patients. But Barry Desmond, without any prior discussion with those involved, announced in the Dail that those hospitals would get money for a further six months and after that, they close. The pieces will have to be picked up somehow, and that's that.

To look after people properly in the community needs not just more community nurses or welfare officers but a whole series of things like half-way houses, sheltered work-shops, supervised hostels. At the moment the health board in Dublin is setting out of court claims brought against them because of attacks on inmates by other inmates in unsupervised hostels. Obviously it's cheaper that way than to employ a supervisory staff.

And the problems get greater all the time. For every

mental patient there is a whole family affected. For our catchment area in St. Brendans, we would like to see at least seven "crisis intervention centres", places where someone in the family who is ill or at risk, can go and give the rest of those at home a break. Unemployment and the social conditions that go with it breed mental illness, depression, para-suicides etc. No such facilities exist or are planned, for those on Barry Desmond's hit list. Facilities that do exist are minimal, there really is nowhere for the patients to go.

S.W. : Do you think the unions are doing an adequate job in organising a fightback?

McM: In the nursing side of things alone there are three unions, the ITGWU, FWUI and PNA. There was a picket of



the Dail organised when the closures were announced, about 60 people were there, but the only actual placards there were PNA. Obviously not enough is being done to harness the anger felt and organise a show of militancy.

Last year there was an attempt to close my hospital, St. Brendans's, or rather reduce it from 1,000 beds to 150. There was a massive angry picket of the next health board meeting, about 500 people were there. The plan was cancelled. I believe were it not for a show of strength and militancy, it would have been St. Brendans's, instead of St. Dymphna's and St. Patrick's.

Abbey Meats fight

IN NOVEMBER '85 270 workers were dismissed from Abbey Meat Packers, Whiteabbey, outside Belfast.

Dismissed not because they asked management for a wage increase but dismissed because they had the nerve to ask management to settle three grievances outstanding from 1983. Management manipulated wages and refused to honour two agreements signed in 1983.

Catholics and Protestants stood strong side by side on the picket line totally ignoring religion or political beliefs. For them it was simply a case of each person was working class fighting for the right to work. Picket lines were set up north and south of the border, the factory was taken over by the workers who staged a sit-in protest for 12 days defying two court orders to leave the premises served on them by the high courts.

Twelve workers were arrested while occupying the

head office in Leeson Street Dublin and taken to the Four Courts in Dublin by the Gardaí. There the judge told them if dare try to disrupt or stop the premises they would serve a two week prison sentence in Mountjoy Jail.

OFFICIALS

All work involved in the dispute was done by the workers with no help at all from the union officials. The union officials were only interested in collecting money for the hardship fund or getting their photograph taken for the newspapers.

After six weeks of talks between union and management, management gave in and agreed to settle the three grievances but stated that the workers would have to start back in stages as over the last few weeks Abbey Meats had not only lost £¼ million but

lost all credibility by not being able to supply customers with their orders and it would take time to build orders up again.

The situation at present is that the factory will not be at full production until July '86.

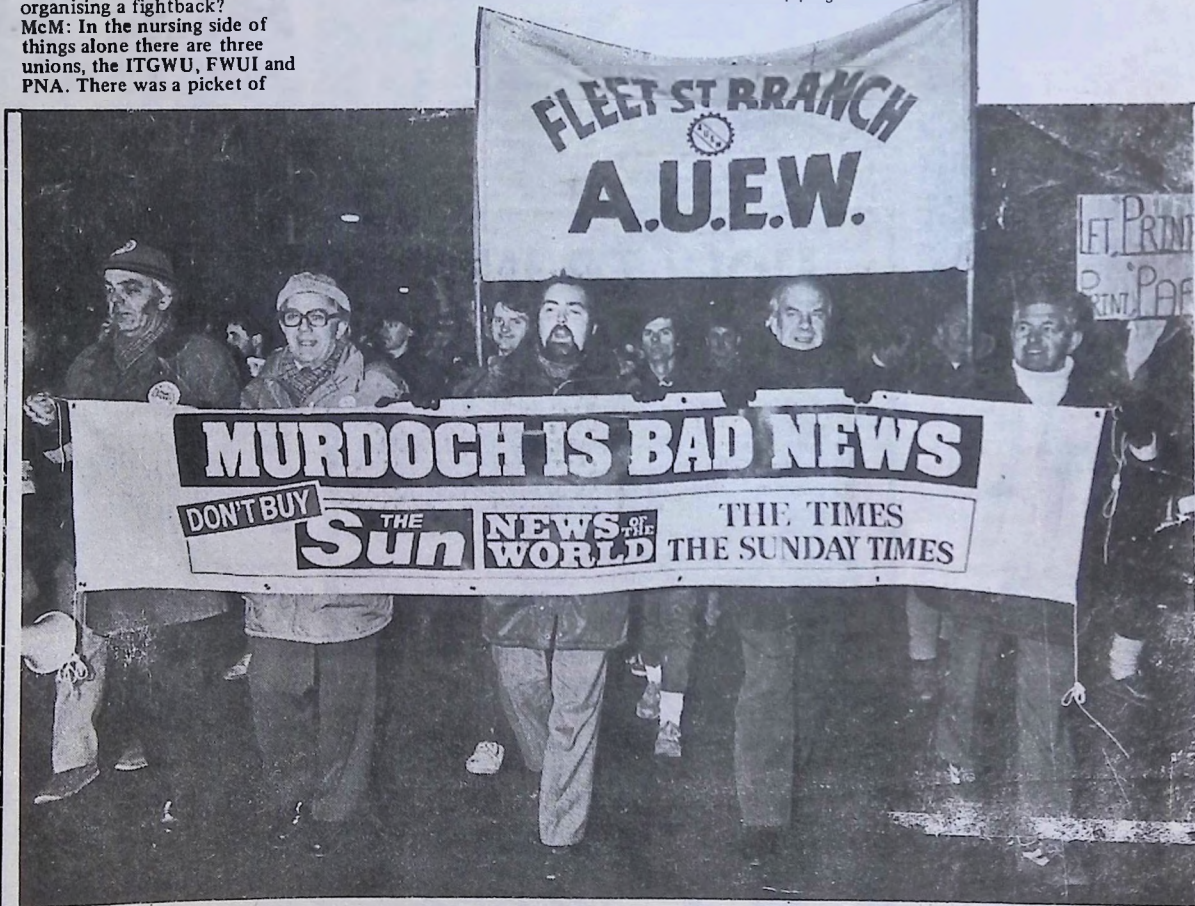
During our dispute one manager was quoted to have said, "We thought by dismissing the workforce they would have come crawling back in one week with their tails between their legs begging management to forgive them and forget about the three grievances, thus destroying the union".

UNITY

The strength and unity of the workers is, and was 100% so it seems that as management couldn't break the union they are trying to break the morale of the workers by making them join the dole queues hoping that in the future the workers will not dare try to disrupt or stop the multi-million profit making beef industry owned by Agra Meats.

Hopefully in July the workers will return to work with their heads high and with the same dignity and strength they had when they were dismissed.

—EAMONN COOKE



With the print unions on the rack in Britain, every newspaper boss in these islands is out to copy Murdoch.

Mirror owner Robert Maxwell forced NGA and Sogat print workers at his Glasgow plant to give in to his demands to print 160,000 copies a day of a colour, Irish edition. He sacked 400 of them and they immediately collapsed and, without any real fight, they agreed to do the extra work, without more jobs or more money.

Workers in the Irish Press however, stood firm against management in refusing to scab. Despite being offered a two year contract, and an extra 40 jobs, the Irish Press work-

ers refused to print the Irish editions of the Sun and News of The World. As Bernard O'Rourke of the Dublin Print Trades Group said 'We would never countenance strike breaking under any circumstances'.

Unfortunately, the British leaders of Sogat and the NGA, unlike the Irish Press workers, do not see the need for printworkers to stand together against the printowners.

The job of each and every newspaper worker is at stake. Yet still their officials maintain the nonsense that production of Murdoch's rivals must not be hit.

Their main aim is to ensure that no other publisher souts the unions out of the new high-

tech printing plants. To prevent that, they are prepared to sign away everything their members have won in the past on jobs, wages and conditions—everything but the check-off of union dues.

BOYCOTT

The leaders only push for a "public relations campaign" and for a consumer boycott of the Sun and Times. Action has been limited to blacking Murdoch's titles at wholesalers and to blacking the printing of Murdoch's Times Supplements - neither of which is biting.

Astonishingly, Yorkshire miners are being told they are

not welcome on the Wapping Picket Line while Sogat officials have told Trades Councils in Britain not to organise delegations to Wapping.

Any mass picketing there has been at Wapping has been due solely to rank and file pressure to stop the scab papers.

Sogat and the NGA have 30,000 members in Fleet St. None have been asked to picket, let alone take action themselves.

Print workers in Ireland must demand that their union leaders stop this crass stupidity, build real mass pickets at Wapping and call for strike action against all Fleet St. papers to defend the unions.

SEMPERIT

WORKERS IN THE Semperit factory in Ballyfermot have rejected the election of shop stewards on a factory basis and have instead opted to elect shop stewards on an area basis.

This is a good move by the workers as it will make the shop stewards more accountable to their members. Proper representation and accountability will be essential in the coming months as the Company tries to introduce a "rationalisation" plan in which they will want to include redundancies.

PERMANENT REVOLUTION



by Tony Cliff

A re-examination of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution in the light of the revolutions in China, Cuba and other Third World countries.

Available at 85pence post free from SWM, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8.

Socialist Worker

Teachers: step up the action



Compiled by:-
KIERAN ALLEN

"TEACHERS IN Class warfare" screamed the Evening Herald recently. It led off a story that was part of a vicious media campaign against striking teachers.

The press have developed a concern about the "disruption of children's education". But they ran no campaign:

*When the money for the free books scheme was frozen over the years.

*When grants for school equipment was withheld.

*When the pupil-teacher ratio at 35-1 remains the highest in Europe.

The press campaign is pure hypocrisy. Its only purpose is to draw a smokescreen over the real issues in the teachers' strike.

Teachers today receive little

more than the average wage—after 6-8 years work. The figures of £20,000 a year income, are extremely rare and confined to head teachers.

Since 1981, their wages like many more throughout the public sector have fallen through pay freeze and wage restraint. They recently submitted a pay claim for parity. It went to arbitration when even the upper class, Senior Counsel, Hugh Geoghan conceded that they deserved a 10% rise. The Coalition have now tried to put its full payment until 1988.

The same government accepted and paid in full an arbitration award made to school inspectors.

The teachers' strike is important for every worker in

the public sector. The government is trying to eventually outlaw special claims. If it can beat the teachers it will have taken a major step towards this.

Already its demand for an 18 month pay freeze in B&I is a sign of the direction in which

it is heading. A victory for the teachers would inspire confidence throughout the public sector.

That is why every militant should be inviting a speaker from the teachers unions to put their case.

ALL-OUT

The teachers' unions have reluctantly embarked on a policy of strike action.

They stalled the action after the Christmas holidays and called off the stoppage until after the Dail vote in February. Once Paddy Cooney was appointed Minister of Education, they postponed strike action a further week and agreed to do the oral exams for the leaving cert.

They have now put clear limits on the scale of strike action. In the case of ASTI and TUI, their ballot on strike action specified that it would only be for 3 days. The INTO were marginally better in getting an open ended commitment to strike action as the "executive saw necessary". But they have limited the action to 6,000 teachers taking 9 days of strike before Easter.

Teachers Rally, Croke Park
Photo: Derek Speirs

This "moderate" policy will not work. In Britain, teachers took limited action for almost 2 years. They ended up accepting an offer they previously rejected—a 6.9% increase in return for productivity concessions.

The limited action will not work in Ireland either. This government is set on confrontation with the public sector. Limited action only encourages it to wear down the teachers.

Limited strike action may eventually lead to division between those on strike and those passively sitting at home paying out a levy.

It also makes it impossible to build any real solidarity with the teachers. If teachers are not on full strike themselves then you cannot ask other workers to support them.

On the week after Easter, the teachers' unions hold their Congresses. It will be the crucial point in the strike. Failure to escalate entering the last term will lead to certain defeat.

There are two crucial points all socialists in the teachers' unions should be arguing for:

A full boycott on the exams. The argument that it will alienate "public opinion" is nonsense. It is militancy and determination that win strikes not public opinion.

Escalate to all out action. All-out strike is the only sure way to win. If every school in the country was closed, the governments would be brought to its knees. The union leaders have consistently opposed this and so confused a membership not used to any industrial action. As a first step to all-out action, the strong areas—particularly in Dublin—should be brought all out.

HOW TO WIN

THE LIMITED strike action can become a step towards greater militancy if:

- all members are involved in picket duty.
- mass pickets on Dept of Education and government offices.
- public demonstrations are organised to build support for the teachers.
- solidarity committees are set up in every branch on strike to send teachers around to other unions. Militants should also send in emergency resolutions to the Easter Congresses calling for: a complete boycott of the exams. Take out the strong areas on full scale strike. Escalate to all-out action.

CARYSFORT - Keep it open

FOLLOWING the announcement of the closure of 8 hospitals by Barry Desmond, the closure of Carysfort College was seen as a bit of a joke. People were saying "Maybe they'll close down the Dail next, due to lack of finance". Unfortunately, the joke was a sick joke. This closure is yet another cutback in the long list of oppressive measures that this government has been using to try and "balance the books".

Carysfort College is a teacher training college for primary school level. It caters for up to 1,000 students. The government maintain that there is no need for these teachers. Yet 70% of National School pupils are in classes of over 30.

The closure of Carysfort is another slap in the face for teachers, who are already fighting for the implementation of the pay award which the Government refuse to pay.

Teachers will be doubly hit. This closure indicates that there is no immediate plan to

reduce the pupil-teacher ratio in schools. These large classes, which can sometimes be up to 50 pupils, are making an already demanding job even more demanding. Both the teachers and pupils suffer under these circumstances.

The closure of Carysfort will also mean job losses. It will mean several hundred more people on the dole queue. The workers out in Carysfort should not accept this decision without a fight. Alongside the students in the college, they should demand their right to keep their jobs and to keep the college open under state, not church control. At the moment, one of the problems is that Carysfort is run by Catholics for Catholics.

There is an urgent need for smaller classes, where children can be educated fully in a happy, stress-free environment. Hence more teachers will be needed.

So Carysfort *must* be kept open, but as a secular, state-run training school.

—CREA RYDER



Cuba, Castro and Socialism

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