

# Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

## Dunne's strike: SOLIDARITY CAN WIN

AS THE Dunne's Stores strike heads towards its first anniversary there is a need to step up solidarity action if the workers are to win.

There is enormous sympathy among trade unionists for the 11 workers who have been picketing Dunne's in Henry Street in Dublin since last July. But sympathy is a passive thing. What's needed is positive solidarity action.

Arthur Scargill pointed towards the right path during his visit to Henry Street last month with his call for mass picketing. And a motion passed by the Labour Party conference in Cork put forward the same strategy for winning.

Proposed by the Clontarf West branch of the party, it called on the ICTU "to organise an effective boycott (of the Henry Street branch) and on all trade unionists to

refuse to handle any goods which are destined for this store. In particular, companies such as Murray Fuel Merchants which have consistently been used by management as strike breakers should be completely blacked".

This is the way forward. It is the *only* way enough pressure can be put on Dunne's management to make them back down.

The moral support of many liberally-minded people and organisations has helped greatly to highlight the issues involved. But moral condemnation cuts no ice with management which thinks only in terms of cash-flow and profit figures. Only industrial muscle can force Ben Dunne to concede. And the industrial muscle can only be supplied by other trade unionists taking solidarity action.

But quite clearly the

initiative for solidarity action *isn't* going to come from the ICTU or Labour Party leaderships. It took the ICTU *eight and a half months* to issue its first statement supporting the strike! And even then it didn't include a single practical idea for bringing the issue to a head.

### OUTRIGHT

And the Spring-Desmond-Quinn Labour leadership has an outright contempt both for conference decisions and for any proposal for industrial action.

At the same time, solidarity action won't happen spontaneously. It will have to be organised. And the best-placed people to organise it are the strikers' themselves, through their own union, IDATU.

IDATU should establish a

rank and file solidarity campaign drawing in all trade unionists willing to carry the argument—with leaflets, meetings, pickets etc—into the workplaces of those supplying and servicing Dunne's. The encouraging response to the Saturday afternoon mass pickets called by the Dublin Council of Trade Unions shows that this—while not easy—is perfectly possible.

Socialist Worker urges the strikers to consider this strategy urgently. We are willing to join with any others—other organisations, Labour Party members, unaffiliated trade unionists, anybody—who will work to build such a campaign and to make it effective.

The fundamental job is not to win sympathy for the 11 strikers. They already have that in massive proportion. The job is to turn *sympathy* into *solidarity*.

A move to launch such a campaign formally could put the conduct of the dispute into a higher gear and provide the momentum at last to break through the obdurate

intransigence of Ben Dunne and his fellow bosses and give the strikers—and all other workers—a decisive victory. Victory to the Dunne's strikers! For Solidarity action now!



(Above left) Funeral of one of the 20 blacks killed at Ulitenhage. (Above right) Botha's police can't beat down the rebellion alone—the regime has had to make major concessions.

**Support Dunnes  
Mass Picket  
2pm Henry St  
every Saturday**  
*Called by Dublin Council of Trade Unions*

**Has the left in Ireland got all the answers? p4-5**



# CRIME - ONLY THE HERALD HAS IT

"WHATEVER it is the Herald has it." That's the advertising slogan they use. And when it comes to half-truths, distortions and outright lies, they certainly live up to their claims.

Take for instance the "Herald's" recent fixation with the "crime wave". Day after day the paper gave the impression that Dublin is only a slightly safer city than Beirut. The journalists began to sound more and more like war correspondents, sending back reports from the front-line of the latest battle.

But the incredible thing is that all the indications are that the level of crime has actually fallen. In fact on April 2, Garda Commissioner Larry Wren announced to the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors in Tralee: "I am happy to be able to inform this conference that we had for the first time in many years a decrease of 2.6% in crime last year, as against figures for 1983."

As for the incidence of joyriding, all the evidence is that there has been no major increase in the number of cars stolen. Nor, despite claims to the contrary, has "law-and-order" broken down.

A recent Economic and Social Research Institute report shows that while "offences against property without violence" make up 60% of crime, "offences against the person" only 3%.

Burglaries and car thefts form the bulk of these "crimes against property", it's these that a lot of the fuss is made about. But, as the report points out, apart from an increase in those particular crimes, there is quite a low overall level of crime.

It's true that there was very little crime before 1965. But then there was very little of anything. For example, there were 170,000 cars registered in 1960. By 1984 there were 711,098 cars registered—almost four times as many. There were few car thefts in the sixties simply because there were few cars.

Similarly, there's an awful lot more to steal in houses these days—TVs, videos, stereos. And many working class housing estates, with high levels of unemployment, are side by side with quite well-off middle class estates. This too, is a change from the '50s and '60s where the "haves" lived in well-defined areas well away from the "have-nots".

What is becoming increasingly clear is that there is no "crime wave"—the whole thing has been hyped up by sections of the media. Incidents that normally scarcely get a mention at all, suddenly become front page news.

To be fair to the journalists at the "Evening Herald" they were not entirely to blame. Other newspapers had not been slow to jump on the "crime" bandwagon. And they were only following orders from above. According to Group News Editor Ray Doyle those orders came from "editorial executives at a very high level".

There are a number of reasons why these "editorial executives" might want to stir up hysteria in the way in which they did. The most obvious being that crime sells newspapers. But there is an even more sinister motive than this.

At the beginning of this year public confidence in the gardai had reached an all-time low. In the light of the Shercock case and the Kerry babies tribunal, an increasing number of people were coming to see the cops for the thugs they really are.



Crime has its roots in social conditions

Now this was a cause of concern for the bosses at the "Independent". Because they know the main function of the police is to defend the property and interests of their class. And if the credibility of the cops is being undermined then so is their ability to defend the privileges of the rich.

So from their point of

view the discovery of the "crime wave" could not have come at a better time. Suddenly there was "public pressure" for new laws and "longer sentences". The cops were portrayed as "our heroes" and everyone was urged to rally round them.

All of this undoubtedly made the bosses at the *Indo* very happy. But what it didn't

do was to explain the social causes of crime.

The vast majority of those involved in what is termed "crime" and particularly joyriding are young, jobless and poorly educated. In other words those who have suffered most under capitalism. Yet the intention of the Herald's crime campaign was not to get capitalism replaced with a more just and equitable system but rather to reinforce it by getting more powers for the police.

The newspaper bosses will claim that they were only reporting events as they happened. But what about all the crime which they don't report? The hundreds who die each year because of inadequate health services. Or the deaths of old people from hypothermia, because their pensions are so miserly that they cannot afford enough fuel to keep warm throughout the winter.

Then there is the mass unemployment, the slums and the grossly unequal distribution of wealth. All these are crimes, but the newspapers don't report them because they know that if they did the working class might come to the conclusion that it's time things were changed. —TONY RIGNEY.

## Are we neutral?

IF YOU managed to slip into that most hallowed of spots, the Dail Bar and, while sipping your drink, went round muttering the key word—"Neutrality", you'd be witness to a most amazing spectacle. Politicians of every size and colour, but generally large and redfaced, would run around proclaiming themselves defenders of that concept held most dearly in every Irish heart—Irish Neutrality.

### NONSENSE

It's a load of nonsense. While it's true that the Irish ruling class have on occasions taken an independent position in international questions, it has never taken a position against its own interests. As a politician once coyly put it, "we are neutral but leaning towards the West". That slope was shown very clearly by the massive welcome given to Reagan in the Dail last summer. Similarly although the Republic is not in NATO, this has not stopped so-called security cooperation between the Southern and British governments.

While most people on the left would agree that Irish neutrality is a sham, many would still argue that it is something that should be fought for and defended. When you read about the ever-increasing powerful weapons of destruction it is difficult not to have some sympathy with this view. But it is mistaken in two very important aspects.

First, it is a view which assumes that all Irish people have the same interests—which is not true. Conflicts of interests exist between classes in Ireland as everywhere else. If in the future there was an attempt to smash a victorious workers revolution in some country,

the interests of Irish workers would be in defending it, whilst the ruling class, fearful of it spreading here, would be supporting the forces attempting to smash it.

Secondly it is a view which does not understand what causes war in the first place. Wars are not caused because the British don't like the Germans or the Russians the Americans; they are the result of the conflict of interests of different ruling classes over colonies, over access to markets etc. In short they are the product of class society and particularly of capitalism.

### REALITY

The First World War we were taught in school was due to the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo and the invasion of Belgium by Germany. The reality was that the war was caused by the fact that Germany in attempting to expand its own imperialist interests came up against the older imperialist powers of France and Britain.

Similarly the Second World War was always

presented as a fight of decency against Fascism. But when you read about the fascist sympathies of many of the British ruling class it becomes clear that it was a war in defence of ruling class interests and not against Fascism.

### SOCIALIST

The Socialist position on war is that the workers of any other country are our allies and their bosses our enemies. The task of workers during a war, as most clearly demonstrated during the Russian Revolution, is to smash its own ruling class and to spread the revolution.

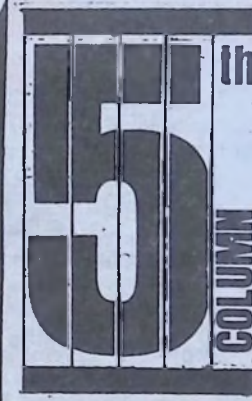
This is not to say we are not against joining NATO. We are, but we oppose joining NATO not from a position of neutrality but because we are against any alliance which attempts to strengthen links between the ruling classes of different countries.

Any other position ultimately leads to what was seen during the First World War—so-called socialist parties supporting their own national governments' war efforts.

—WILLIE CUMMING



Waiting for NATO



SUPERGRASS

Always open to new ideas, the US authorities are for the first time holding a supergrass implicated person for an extradition hearing.

The case of James Gerard Barr will come to trial this summer when his lawyers hope to discredit the whole supergrass system. Even if the court goes along with this defence, chances are that the US government will simply step in and abuse their own judicial system.

They are currently doing just that in trying to overturn a court refusal last September to extradite Belfast man, Joe Doherty. Their case rests mainly on the far-reaching implications of the McGlinchey judgement though they have also cited the observation of the secretary of State, George Shultz, "The Marxist Provisional IRA in Northern Ireland are ideological enemies of the United States".

### BIRTH CONTROL

To counter the argument for birth control the Family Solidarity Organisation have reached for that "well-known" conversation stopper, that the entire population of the world would fit into Co. Louth.

An article in "The Irish Catholic" proclaimed just that, though they concede "obviously that many people could only spend a short time in Co. Louth". Nevertheless faces around the depressed county must have lit up at the prospect. You certainly can't attract much more business than that.

Actually the whole thing was probably invented by his Lordship to give the peasants in Slane something to think about. What's a few thousand music fans when the neighbours are expecting the whole world to drop in any moment?

### LAW N' ORDER

There's nothing like an our get-together and a little indulgence in mutual admiration to forge a few links, especially in the case of the Gardai and the RUC who intend to put the links to good use around the wrists of subversives.

In an introductory address, Noonan extended particular welcome to the representatives from Northern Ireland who had suffered so much in their efforts to restore peace and law and order. Afterwards no doubt there was a great old rap about the subtleties of law and order restoration

### BLIND EYE

For the honour of parking your car for the day in the *Corpo's* new multi-story car park in Drury St., expect to pay £5.80. For the privilege of looking after someone else's car for the day, an attendant is paid £12.80. Less than some of the car owners make in an hour.

Union rates of £3.20 per hour have been won by workers in Irish Car Parks Ltd. However, Euro Car Park, the sub-contractors in Drury St.

pay a miserable £1.60 per hour to their workers.

Turning a blind eye the *Corpo* say they can do nothing until the contract is up. Meanwhile Euro Car Parks have a year to capitalise on the situation.



President Reagan

### BREADLINE

Ever eager to restore the old traditions that made America what it is today, Ronnie Reagan deserves much credit for the restoration of the New York breadline.

Practically closed 15 years ago for lack of demand, the Franciscan Friars' breadline service is as busy now as it was during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

### ENTERPRISE ZONE

"Come to Us" exclaim the iDA to all those with ideas about setting up a business.

Taking the invitation literally, a group of women set up shop in the recently completed iDA offices in Milton Terrace.

Things were running smoothly until the place was raided and the women and their clients hauled off by the Gardai.

In defence of the enterprise words of Mae West spring to mind, "It was a business doing pleasure".

—JEAN CROSS



# VIETNAM

**TEN YEARS ago a historic event took place. Saigon and Pnom Penh, the capitals respectively of South Vietnam and Cambodia, fell to Communist Party-led national liberation armies.**

**For Vietnam it was the culmination of a 35-year war of national independence, against French colonialists, Japanese invaders, and finally American imperialists.**

The heroism with which the Vietnamese guerillas took on the might of US imperialism inspired millions across the world. A huge international movement of solidarity sprang up, above all in the heart of the beast—the United States itself.

The fall of Saigon and Pnom Penh was therefore not just a victory for the Vietnamese and Cambodians themselves, but for socialists and anti-imperialists everywhere.

The sight of Washington's consul in Vietnam, Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, bundled into a helicopter clutching the Stars and Stripes as the liberation forces closed in on Saigon, summed it up. The mightiest power in history had been humbled by a tiny and impoverished nation.

It is a defeat from which US imperialism has still to recover. Ronald Reagan may call the Vietnam war a 'noble' one, but the fear of a similar debacle holds him back from committing US troops in Central America.

But if the end of the liberation wars in April 1975 marked a historic defeat for imperialism, the past ten years have not been happy ones for Indochina.

## 'Lesson'

Cambodia's fate is summed up by the images so powerfully conveyed by the film *The Killing Fields*—the capital cleared of its inhabitants, the entire country transformed into a vast labour camp dotted with the corpses of the two million who perished under the rule of the Cambodian Communist Party and its chief, Pol Pot.

This hideous tyranny was finally destroyed by the 1978-9 war between Cambodia and its 'socialist' neighbour, Vietnam. Pol Pot was replaced by the regime of Heng Samrin, itself heavily dependent on a Vietnamese occupying army 160,000-170,000 strong.

The Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia led in turn to a brief but bloody war between the Hanoi regime and China, Pol Pot's chief backer, in February 1979. After a string of recent Vietnamese successes against anti-government guerillas on Cambodia's border with Thailand, China once again threatened to teach Vietnam a 'lesson'.

No wonder that many inspired by

Indochina's liberation wars are now disillusioned. The slaughter in Cambodia, the wars between 'socialist' states—do these not show that any attempt by people collectively to change the world must end in tyranny and bloodshed?

To understand why the answer to this question is 'No' we must appreciate three things in particular. First, we are talking about extremely poor and backward countries.

Vietnam, with a population of nearly 60 million, has an annual national income of \$180 per head. Cambodia's national income in the early 1970s was a mere \$70 per head.

These countries' poverty would make it very difficult for any government radically to improve their people's situation without large-scale outside assistance.

Secondly, Western imperialism bears an enormous responsibility for the fate of Indochina since liberation.

*'The US...dropped 7.5 million tons of bombs on Indochina, three and a half times the total tonnage of bombs dropped by the allies during the Second World War'*

Nearly a century of French colonial rule left the region with hardly any industry and most of the population impoverished peasants.

To this condition was then added the devastation of war. At the height of US involvement in Indochina, there were some 600,000 American troops in South Vietnam, backed up by enormous air power.

To prop up their puppet regimes in South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, the US occupying forces dropped 7.5 million tons of bombs on Indochina, three and a half times the total tonnage of bombs dropped by the Allies during the Second World War.

The effect was starkest in Cambodia, dragged into the war when invaded by American and South Vietnamese troops in April 1970. Particularly after US ground troops had been withdrawn from Indochina in 1973, President Richard Nixon and his adviser Henry Kissinger relied on large-scale bombing to defeat the Khmer Rouge guerillas led by Pol Pot.

The Cambodian countryside was devastated. Rice production collapsed. Cambodia, once self-sufficient in food, now became heavily dependent on American-supplied grain.

Saigon and Pnom Penh swelled to enormous proportions as refugees from the bombings flocked in. The urban economies enjoyed a huge, artificial boom,

made possible by the demands of the US war machine. An army of parasites—spies, prostitutes, dope-pushers, smugglers—sprang up in the Americans' wake.

Any regime which inherited such problems would have had to grapple with enormous difficulties. The Vietnamese have suffered in addition from the unblinking hatred of successive US administrations, who have not forgiven their humiliation.

US and Chinese hostility to Vietnam has meant that the United Nations continue to recognise the Pol Pot regime as the lawful rulers of Cambodia. Peking and ASEAN, the coalition of pro-Western states in South-East Asia, sustain a 'front' of Cambodian groups opposed to the Heng Samrin government in which the dominant military and political force is Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge.

But the flagrant hypocrisy of Western governments which denounce 'Communist tyranny' and then support the worst of the lot should not obscure the third factor in Indochina's sufferings—the politics of the liberation movements themselves.

## Narrow

Communism began to take roots in Indochina in the 1920s and 1930s, under the inspiration of the Russian revolution of 1917 and the Chinese revolution of 1925-7. Its aim was a revolution which would sweep away, not only colonialism and imperialism, but also capitalism and class exploitation.

In the course of the 1930s, however, the politics of Indochinese Communism began to narrow down to national liberation, rather than socialist revolution. As Ho Chi Minh, founder of the Indochinese CP, put it: 'Nothing is more important than liberty and independence.'

The CP was dissolved into the Viet Minh, a broad popular front of all classes for national independence. In the aftermath of the Second World War, Ho pursued a deal with the French, executing revolutionary socialists who opposed these policies.

When the French spurned his attempts at a compromise, the Viet Minh launched a guerilla war culminating in the great victory of Dien Bien Phu in 1953. Victory in the field was, however, almost lost at the negotiating table: under pressure from Russia and China, Vietnam was partitioned between Communist-ruled North, and US-controlled South.

## Terrorising

When the struggle resumed in 1960, with the formation of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (NLF), the aim was the same: a broad, but CP-controlled alliance to achieve 'a peaceful, neutral and prosperous economy'.

The Khmer Rouge's objectives were similar. Both Vietnamese and Cambodian Communists accepted Stalin's doctrine of 'socialism in one country'.

This strategy carried with it the seeds of disaster. First, the aim was to create distinct Vietnamese and Cambodian nation-states—with inbuilt differences dating back to pre-colonial times.

As the different CPs sought to stir up, or create, a national consciousness by appealing to the glorious past they encouraged chauvinism and racism. This was especially true of the Khmer Rouge, who denounced the Vietnamese as despoilers of the Khmer state.

Secondly, 'socialism in one country' was impossible, above all in impoverished, war-shattered Indochina. Pol Pot's 'democratic Kampuchea' proved this beyond doubt.

The cities were cleared and



A shot down US pilot is captured and taken prisoner by a Vietnamese soldier

agriculture collectivised in order to mobilise the resources needed to create 'a developed industrial country with great strength for national defence'.

Given Cambodia's backwardness, this could be achieved only by terrorising the peasantry and giving privileges to the party activists supervising them. The result was an extreme form of state capitalism, in which the old ruling class was destroyed only to be replaced by a tiny group (the Cambodian CP had only 1,000 activists in 1975) enjoying absolute power.

The rulers of a now reunified Vietnam pursued a much more cautious course. The assets of 30,000 private traders were nationalised in March 1978, partly for racist reasons—many of them were Chinese.

However, the Vietnamese government sought to woo foreign capital. *The Economist* commented that Vietnam 'offered the most capitalist incentives for foreign investment ever promulgated by a socialist country'.

Vietnamese premier Pham Van Dong toured the ASEAN states in late 1978. He even offered to help Malaysia and Thailand to combat CP guerillas whose leaders had been trained originally in Hanoi.

Increasing military pressure from Cambodia, egged on by Peking, forced the Vietnamese to retaliate, and finally to occupy the country. The result was Vietnam's effective

diplomatic and economic isolation from the rest of Asia, and growing dependence upon Russia.

The burden of maintaining 1.3 million men in arms—the third biggest army in the world—in Cambodia and on the Chinese border has forced Vietnam to lean heavily on Moscow for financial help.

This burden has meant that Vietnam has still to become self-sufficient in food. A hidden 'black economy' has sprung up in defiance of state controls. Vietnam's \$6 billion foreign debt undermines its attempts to establish closer economic links with the West.

## Politics

The fate of Indochina illustrates starkly the impossibility of 'socialism in one country'. The hold of imperialism cannot be broken by carving out separate national patches. Carried to extremes this leads to the horrors of Cambodia under Pol Pot and the fratricidal wars which have dogged Indochina since 1975.

Capitalism is a world system whose resources can be used to build socialism only once it has been shattered by international revolution. The struggle in Indochina before liberation is still an inspiration to those who desire such a revolution. What has happened since 1975 is a warning of what to avoid.



The aftermath of when US soldiers cold-bloodedly massacred the men, women and children of My Lai village



# 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 UDR
- 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 form 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.

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

- I want to join;  I want a subscription and enclose £3.50;  
 I would like more information about the SWM

Name .....

Address .....

# Has the Irish left got

Many people are driven to conclude from the experience of unemployment and crisis that a better world must be possible. Many place their faith in what they see as the left wing alternatives offered by both the Labour Party or the Workers Party. We examine the politics of the established "Left" in Ireland.



## WP turns left?

THE Workers Party appeared to make a significant and welcome turn to the Left at its annual conference last month.

Des Geraghty signalled the change with a vigorous attack on the trade union leadership and a call on the party to "turn to the rank-and-file".

This is an entirely new line for a party which for more than a decade has been y slandering as "ultra-lefts" anybody who opposed the sell-outs by the ICTU and the bosses of the big unions.

The Workers Party line throughout this period has been to give entirely uncritical backing to the union bureaucrats, to try to win positions within the bureaucracy for themselves and to denounce any attempt—most significantly in the ITGWU—to build up militant rank-and-file organisation.

If Geraghty was speaking for the party leadership, the Workers Party has now abandoned this line.

And the "left turn" seemed to be confirmed by party president Tomas MacGiolla's address in which he declared that, while the WP will continue to work within the existing institutions of the state, it will not consider itself bound by the rules of these institutions.

MacGiolla didn't spell out what rules he meant, but presumably he had in mind something more significant than defying instructions not to walk on the grass. At any rate, it was, again, a clear change for a party which has been almost obsessively determined to emphasise its commitment to "constitutional" methods.

It will take time to clarify how genuine the WP shift is and how far it will go. It was already clear that its previous approach hadn't led to the gains the party had confidently hoped to make a few years back. Its recruitment rate is now more

or less static and it has been outflanked on the left by independents like Gregory, by Sinn Fein in some areas and even by sections of the Labour Party. So there are straightforward opportunist reasons for a manoeuvre towards a more radical image.

At the same time it is tugged to the Left by its own rank-and-file who, recruited to a "marxist" and "revolutionary" party, have, confusingly, found themselves having to defend moderate reformist positions put forward by the leadership on law-and-order, economic policy and so on.

And it is important to note, too, the limits of the Left turn. The WP is *still* calling for the "reform" of the RUC and promising not to confront imperialism in the North. There is no sign of a change on that front.

## HYSTERIA

Moreover, despite MacGiolla's pledge to disregard the "rules" the WP remains wedded to the existing machinery of the State. It mounted no serious challenge to the Criminal Justice Bill or to the recent hysteria demanding increased powers for the gardai, for example.

Socialists should,



Tomas MacGiolla

nevertheless, welcome the apparent change. Translated into action it would mean WP activists throwing their weight behind rank-and-file initiatives on wages and solidarity action, instead of following forever behind the "official leaderships".

The basic reformist politics of the WP will still act as a massive drawback. In the last analysis the party's reformism is not compatible with vigorous rank-and-file militancy. And party members will eventually have to face up to the implication of that contradiction.



Tony Gregory



# Not all the answers

IRISH SOCIETY is in deep crisis. One fifth of its workers are on the dole. In the South, the national debt is so high it gobbles up the PAYE tax entirely. But despite the crisis, the socialist parties haven't grown. Today it is the ideas of the right that dominate—particularly on law and order. Why is this?

Much of it has to do with what the left actually says. The alternative offered by both the Labour Party and the Workers Party is the expansion of the state sector. This avenue is parliament; the means are peaceful and legal. The Workers Party once claimed that workers would still need "years of wage restraint" after electing a socialist government. The reason: to pay legal compensation to the bosses who were nationalised.

The trouble with this sort of nonsense is that not only does it not set the world on fire—it doesn't even work.

Mitterand's policies in France prove just that. His government was committed to large scale nationalisation—though respecting the bosses' laws.

The problem was that although Mitterand controlled the parliament, the bosses still held the boardrooms and the purse strings. They refused to respond to his reflation programme by investing. Unemployment soared. Millions of francs were moved to Swiss Banks. Mitterand was forced to backpedal. Today the only beneficiaries are the fascist party of Le Pen that commands 10% of the vote.

Or look at Poland. There state capitalism proved that



Conor Cruise O'Brien

it could not repeat the industrial success of Stalin's Russia in the 1930s. Stalin closed off the country's economic frontiers and mobilised the resources of the state towards heavy industry. Today the pressure for economic growth led Poland into opening up to world trade in order to gain access to technology. With it came a lending programme from the Western banks. The result was that Poland was affected by the crisis as much as Brazil or indeed Ireland.

In both cases there was an attempt to expand the state sector in relatively developed economies. They proved failures. In Ireland the state capitalist road would demand even greater sacrifices from the working class. The weakness of the economy means that any attempt to move forward gradually would collapse even sooner before the pressure of the bosses. The truth is that the reformist left have little to offer by way of solutions to

the crisis.

There is also another reason for the failure of the left to grow. Both the Labour Party and the Workers Party have proved vicious enemies of the struggle against the Orange state. Both have supported a policy of repression. When parties of the "left" cannot even support a campaign to fight the frame up of Nicky Kelly, because it had a vaguely republican tinge, then you know how far the rot has sunk in. Today, they support Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act; the Special Criminal Courts and the blacklisting of Sinn Fein members.

## SECURITY

The failure to take a stand on the national question is not accidental. Reformists see the state machine as the vehicle for socialist advance. When that state is under threat, they rush to defend it. It should be remembered that Labour's first jump into Coalition came in the wake of the Gun Running Trial of Haughey and Blaney. The former left Labourite, Conor Cruise O'Brien has argued that it was the threat to "the security of the state" that led to the hauling down of the red flag and the rush into the arms of Fine Gael.

But underlying all this is the actual state of the working class movement. The last five years have been a period of defeat. The tax campaign was halted by the sell-outs of the ICTU. Ever since the post-office strike in 1979, public sector workers

have been taking a hammering. On the shop floor management are riding high. The wave of resistance to redundancies that followed the Clondalkin Paper Mills has been broken. The H Block campaign failed through its own illusions in respectable nationalists.

These defeats are significant. The mass of workers come to socialist ideas through experience. But now the experience has been all the other way round. Struggles end in defeats. The experience confirms the strength of the bosses rather than workers' own power. Right wing ideas feed on this passivity. That is why the media has found it easy to whip up the law and order hysteria.

Despite all this, there is a minority who are prepared to fight and who are open to socialist ideas. The problem is that as society shifts to the right temporarily, many in this minority are pulled with



Joe Costello

# Is Labour lost?

THE LABOUR Party has now been two and a half years in Government. But while the rich are as rich as ever, the working class has made no advance at all. Indeed, a majority of workers are worse off after 30 months of Labour in office.

What, then, is the point of socialists staying in the Labour Party? Despite the left-wing rhetoric of some delegates at the recent Party conference, there is not the slightest sign that things are going to change.

Look at the facts.

The joint programme for Government promised "fundamental reform of the taxation and social welfare system with redistributive effects". It hasn't happened. This year total capital taxation will contribute £33.5 million to the Exchequer.

## MANIFESTO

Yet Labour's 1982 manifesto explicitly sought "increased taxation on capital and wealth to yield £200 million a year"! The Party hasn't even come close to delivering. And while the super-rich get away with derisory £33.5 million, PAYE workers will be forced to cough up a massive £2,294 million!

Meanwhile the Wealth Tax abolished by Fianna Fail, has not been re-introduced. Capital Gains Tax has been rendered almost meaningless by indexation and exemptions. Inheritance Tax has been abolished between spouses. This year's Finance Bill changes enables the super-rich to insure against their children having to pay tax on inheritance!

## UNEMPLOYMENT

It's the rich who've got the gravy since Labour entered government. Unemployment has rocketed. Labour's only response has been the row over the National Development Agency. But even if Labour Ministers win this dust-up hands down, the impact will be a long time in coming and then can have only marginal effect. Crucially the NDA will not challenge the power of the private sector: it will be tied to the private sector through joint operations and the requirement that the developments it backs makes a profit. That is, it will act as a State-funded capitalist institution, nothing more, nothing less.

Labour has not even stood up against the repressive measures being used to handle working class

discontent arising from continuing deprivation. Where was Labour's socialist voice when Spike Island was being spruced up to hold working class kids that the capitalist media had become hysterical about? Or against the Criminal Justice Bill—which Fine Gael "liberals" fought harder than Labour TDs.

And we could go on and on.

This dismal record arises not primarily from the dishonesty of Labour leaders, but from the very nature of Labour "Labourism", which sees the winning of Dail seats as synonymous with the struggle for socialism.

In order to win seats—this is clear even from the local government election campaign, the party has to be "united". And that *always* means the Left holding back on the fight for socialist ideas—witness the unanimous AC decision to postpone discussion of Coalition!

The wrangles and side-swiping at Labour involvement in Coalition that came from Militant members at the Party Conference in Cork presented no real challenge to the right-wing leadership. They were confident in the knowledge that any decision making on Coalition had

n. The agency to run for cover" will become a hallmark of many sections of the left.

There are already a number of clear signs of this. The left inside the Labour Party has accepted a truce on Coalition—with even Militant voting for a commission to "examine" the issue. And despite the fact that the Labour Party has now declined to 5% of the vote, independent socialists such as Joe Costello, one time chairman of the Criminal Justice Bill campaign, are joining to stand as Local election candidates.

All of these retreats will no doubt be justified on the tactical grounds that we live in a conservative country; that revolutionary socialist politics will never win an audience here.

It is rubbish. The experience of Irish history has proved that revolutionary socialism can win a mass audience at the high point of the struggle. Take a few examples:

In 1918 50,000 people marched in Dublin to support the Bolshevik revolution. Such was the pressure from the ground that even the miserable Labour Party had to offer verbal support to the revolution.

In 1932 the tiny Revolutionary Workers Groups were able to mobilise thousands of Catholic and Protestant workers in Belfast during the riots against unemployment.

In 1969 when the Civil Rights Movement took off, revolutionary socialists were more centrally involved in the organisation than the republicans.

Revolutionary socialists have often won an audience at the high points of struggle. The problem was that they never built an organisation in the periods of defeat. When the first Communist Party was established in Ireland with less than 50 members, it

immediately thought of itself as being about to be catapulted into the leadership of the workers' movement. But the tendency to look for short cuts only led to concessions to reformist and republican ideas. The failure to build a clear revolutionary party owes much to Connolly, who argued that reformists and revolutionaries could co-exist in the one "broad church".

The fact is that although revolutionaries can win a mass audience at the height of struggle that is not the time to start building a party. That job has to begin long before. Today an organisation such as the Socialist Workers Movement sets itself the task of recruiting in ones and twos. The politics it stands for—socialism based on working class self activity, opposition to the parliamentary road; against the all-class illusions of republicanism—are difficult at the moment. But even now there are opportunities for agitation as the Reagan Reception Campaign and the Thatcher Out demo proved. And it is through clear politics and a commitment to struggle that the basis of a revolutionary party is laid.

## STRUGGLE

The tide will turn. The crisis facing both Irish states is getting deeper. The workers' movement has been defeated, but not smashed. The struggle against the Orange state can still destabilise the whole island.

Revolutionaries do not gaze into crystal balls—but they know that there are major struggles ahead. Struggles that will involve thousands of workers and will once again open up a mass audience for revolutionary ideas.

—KIERAN ALLEN

Dick Spring



Barry Desmond

already been put off to 1986, when the electorate will kick them out of government anyway.

And even in Britain, where the Labour Party has been in government on its own, the record shows that socialists can't transform the Labour Party. The Labour Party transforms socialists—into "realists" who accept the present system and operate within it.

But if we are seriously interested not in winning seats but in winning socialism we must base the struggle on workers' self-activity and fight to build an openly Marxist Party, which is the alternative offered by the Socialist Workers Movement.



REVIEWS

# The real causes of drug abuse



Dublin's Ballymun flats

ANYONE who read the "Daily Mirror" on Tuesday 24th February would have been angered by the story of a 17 year old English girl who was dying of heroin addiction.

Most people's reaction may have been simply to blame the pushers. Yet the woman concerned could have survived—if she'd been able to afford the £18,000 treatment which would have cured her. But despite all the money available for nuclear weapons, this £18,000 wasn't available. As far as drugs are concerned, the finger should be pointed at the real criminals in society.

Instead of doing that, this book reads like a fast-moving "cops and robbers" story. The police are seen as heroes who, if only they were given a little more power, would smash the drugs racket and defend the whole community from the "criminals".

But the Gardai are not there to defend "the whole community". Their main role is to protect the ruling class. As a result, any extra powers which the cops are given—e.g. the Criminal Justice Act—will ultimately be used against anybody who poses a threat to the ruling class.

For workers it is an utter contradiction to call for extra police powers because these only serve to strengthen the system which keeps workers oppressed.

People turn to drugs like

heroin to escape the ordeal of living in deprivation. The book devotes some space to describing places like St. Theresa's Gardens and Hardwick St. flats in Dublin where the drugs problem is clearly linked to huge unemployment. As the book says of young people in Ballymun "they are all living in a dishevelled stony-grey wasteland for whom drugs is a way out".

All left-wing organisations recognise deprivation as being the root cause of the drugs problem. But reformists like the Workers' Party (one of the book's authors is a member) fail to make the connections

when it comes to arguing against the right-wing pro-cop line. Reformists unfortunately see the cops as being neutral in the class struggle.

The Socialist Workers Movement recognises the need for a complete break with reformism. We argue for the building of a workers' party along clear revolutionary lines. Any movement against drug addiction must be based on revolutionary politics which recognises the basic cause and must not drift into calling for more cops.

"Smack" deals in detail with the well-known Dunne family who benefit from the misery of hundreds of addicts. Unfortunately it fails to point the finger at the likes of the

other Dunne family who benefit from the misery of their low-paid workers. "Bronco" Dunne merely latched onto the misery of the system created by his name-sake, Ben.

Ben Dunne and his class are the real enemy: it's their rotten society which pushes young working class people into using drugs. The drug problem may get better or worse but it will only be solved when this rotten system is smashed.

—DAVID McDONAGH

"Smack" by Padraig Yeats and Sean Flynn, Gill and McMillan.

## Forster's India loses all trace of politics

E. M. FORSTER'S book *Passage to India* was published in 1924. He had written it after befriending an Indian Syed Ross Masood, to whom the book is dedicated. Although many people regarded it as a political novel Forster always claimed "it was about something wider than politics, about the search of the human race for a more lasting home . . .".

Nevertheless it's political insights into the conflict between the British and the Indian people opened many people's eyes to the nature of British imperialism.

The film is disappointing because it does not portray any of these elements. The British are predictably snobbish, racist and stupid. The Indians, mostly middle class are generally excitable, ingratiating and comic.

The story is about two English women who come out to India to stay with the son of one of the women, Mrs Moore. He is the City Magistrate and the prospective husband of the other woman, Miss Quested. They are repelled by the racist attitudes of the son Ronnie and his British friends, the local officials, who spend their lives lordling it over the Indians, drinking at the Club, playing polo and doing plays—in fact living out their lives as though they were still in suburban England.

The visitors are determined to see something of the "real" India and to meet the natives.

### RAPE

A young doctor, Aziz, is introduced to them and a picnic is arranged in the Marabar Caves. The story centres on the incident in the cave and the arrest of Dr Aziz for attempted rape.

Although David Lean has produced scenes of great style and beauty and the acting is all that it should be, the film is reduced to a 'pot-boiler' avoiding the mystery and underlying mysticism. There is no attempt to come to terms with the real feeling for India that pervades the book and

more importantly, no sense in which Indians are seen as participating in any kind of serious struggle against the British. Individuals are pitted against them in an emotional, even love-hate, struggle so that we can never understand how, for instance, the riots after Mohurram and the demonstrations in support of Dr Aziz have come about. (Actually the students and the city sweepers went on strike.)

In the current pursuit of nostalgic India and the good old days of the British Raj, it seems a pity that even a novel like Forster's has to be emasculated. He was no revolutionary, but all through the book are covert references to various acts of brutality and oppression against the Indians, and he was absolutely on the Indian side in their fight for independence.

The film is too long and should have ended after the trial scene, but I would definitely say that although the politics are not the essence of the book, it's ironic humour and the atmosphere Forster creates make it well worth a read.

—BARBARA WILSON



Alec Guinness darkened up as Indian priest

## What about Russia?

THE OCTOBER Revolution in 1917 in Russia brought to power the first workers' government (with the exception of the short-lived Paris Commune) in history. The leaders of the Revolution—notably Lenin—referred repeatedly to the necessity—on pain of extinction of the new Soviet democracy—to spread the revolution internationally. The revolutionary wave across Europe was beaten back and by the end of the twenties Stalinist reaction was in full swing.

Workers democracy was progressively eliminated; independent trade union organisation and expression of dissent was crushed. In short a monolithic Party of dictatorship became all powerful and workers were subjugated to the drive to build up industry and hold down living standards for the masses. This coincided with an increasingly reactionary role adopted by the Russian-dominated Communist International which by the mid-thirties was directed towards alliance for Russia with French and British imperialism and abandonment of working class interests to curry favour with suitable bourgeois allies. Grotesque show-trials of old Bolsheviks and the exile of Trotsky completed the picture.

Within the world working class movement apologists for Stalinism drowned out the tiny forces of Trotsky's followers who still proclaimed revolutionary socialism. These were bad times for Marxism.

Fascism stalked Europe, unemployment and bosses' offensives smashed workers fighting organisations. The small number of Trotskyists who struggled—against the stream—to defend the authentic traditions of Communism and Bolshevism had to give some account of what had gone wrong in Russia.

In a series of articles and books (including "The Revolution Betrayed" and "Stalin", widely available today and worth a read) Trotsky developed a line of reasoning that was—in spite of his greatness—to seriously disorientate his followers. He said that the essential gains of 1917 had not been lost, that the nationalised economy of Russia meant it was still a "workers state".

However the Stalinist reaction threatened at any moment to re-introduce capitalism. The Stalinists represented a "bureaucratic outgrowth" on the face of the workers state that had usurped power and whose domination of the world communist movement had transformed it into a counter-revolutionary force. Trotsky coined the unhappy term "degenerated workers state" to describe this situation and sought to assemble the forces to proclaim a new "Fourth International" to replace the corrupt Communist International.

### CONTRADICTION

A "workers state" no matter how degenerated, without workers democracy was, of course, a contradiction in terms. And it represented a serious departure from Marx's definition of socialism being the self-emancipation of the working class which was the very kernel of the authentic Bolshevik tradition. With the end of the war in 1945, Trotsky, murdered on Stalin's orders in 1940 and a proliferation of Stalinist

Russian look-alikes across Eastern Europe imposed by the Red Army, it was obviously necessary to re-open the question.

The great majority of Trotsky's followers could not abandon old formulas and the disintegration and descent of the Fourth International into a series of warring sects, incapable of applying the precepts of revolutionary Marxism to a changing world, was as depressing as it was inevitable.

### COMPETITION

Tony Cliff's book "State Capitalism in Russia" has its origins in the arguments in the Trotskyist movement in the late 40s. His central argument was simple: Russia had ceased to be a workers state since the time in the late twenties when the last vestiges of workers' democracy was smashed. The Stalinist bureaucracy is a ruling class—like its counterparts in the west—ruthlessly exploiting workers to build industry in order to face world competition—especially military competition. There is no longer anything "progressive" about Russia: socialists have no business "defending" it. Indeed its relations with eastern Europe are imperialist—witness Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968 and more recently Poland. Bureaucratic State Capitalism was the term Cliff used to point to the differences with, but essential similarity to capitalism in the West.

Cliff's analysis became the starting point for the rebuilding of a political tendency dedicated to the self-emancipation of the working class—represented in Ireland by the SWM.

"State Capitalism in Russia" is now available at the special low price of £1.50. It has lost none of its relevance and remains indispensable reading for a new generation of revolutionary socialists.

—KEVIN WINGFIELD

### SPECIAL OFFER

#### STATE CAPITALISM IN RUSSIA

by TONY CLIFF

PRICE £1.50 + 50p p+p

From SWM,  
41 Herberton Park,  
Kialto, Dublin 8.



THE week after Easter saw the annual round of teachers' conferences. The National School teachers (INTO) were off to Waterford, while the Secondary teachers split between Cork (TUI) and Killarney (ASTI). In all, over a thousand delegates attended — all on full expenses.

Eileen Flynn's case figured at all three. A TUI motion urging financial assistance for her Defence Campaign was roundly defeated.

However, consciences were soothed by a commitment to support union members who might find themselves in such a position.

A similar line was adopted by INTO. As most people know, Eileen Flynn was not a union member. However this will not stop her case being used as a precedent against union members. The possibility of industrial action to defend the personal life of any teachers, union member or not, was not contemplated by any union.

The union closest to the case, the ASTI, barely mentioned it. The President, Harry Collins, in his address claimed that teachers were entitled to hold "political views" and have a "private life". "But", he continued, "a teacher is not entitled to undermine the value system of individual pupils or the declared ethos of the school." One can see a huddle of nuns in New Ross nodding in agreement.

At all conferences, the union bureaucrats manifested themselves at every turn. At the TUI gig, the Executive Committee (controlled by an unpleasant man called Jim Dorney) succeeded in burying an important motion on part time teachers. The motion urged the granting of full union membership to such teachers. This, it is hoped, will strengthen the struggle to improve their scandalous working conditions.

**SICK DAYS**

Part-timers get no pay during holidays or sick days and can be fired at an hour's notice. However, under the guiding hand of Dorney, the motion was declared low priority and placed well down the list. In the end it wasn't taken due to lack of time. A similar fate awaited a motion on teachers' salaries.

**LETTER**

**Sligo youth organise!**

A chara, Since the introduction of the Criminal Justice Act on March 1, the youth of Sligo have suffered a campaign of harassment and brutal beatings at the hands of the gardai. Their only crimes being the way that they dress and being unemployed. Many youths cannot show their face in the town at night or they will be arrested and beaten simply because the guards don't like them.

Due to this continual harassment, the victimised youths, along with other concerned youths, have formed a "Youth against Oppression" Committee and on Saturday April 6, a protest public meeting was held in O'Connell St., Sligo.

Approximately 300 people mainly youths, attended to

**TEACHERS' CONFERENCES**

**All talk — where's the action?**

The Executive of the INTO attempted to ban all special meetings within individual branches, unless permission was given from above. Wisely, the delegates treated this with the contempt it deserved and sent it packing. This is the same Executive which accepted the latest Government pay offer without even balloting its

own members.

In another such incident, the Cork branch of the TUI sought sanction for industrial action in support of a teacher fired for "incompetence". (People forget sometimes that teachers can be fired.) The ubiquitous Dorney railed against this demand. Again gladly, the members knew better and the go-ahead was

given.

The INTO succeeded in sneaking a motion past an obviously slumbering Executive, urging strike action on class sizes. There can be over 40 children in a Primary School classroom. Before the heads woke up, the motion was passed and action due to start in January '86.

Overall, there was a lot of idle chatter, useless debate and brouhaha at all conferences. The perennial teaching problems such as discipline, class sizes, Government cuts, etc were dealt with at length with little or no action being organised.

Probably the only event of real significance was a

meeting held during the INTO conference in Waterford, under a Broad Left banner. Sixty people attended and further meetings are in the pipeline. Hopefully the other unions will take up the initiative. The teachers' unions are not noted for radical thought or action. It's time to be moving.

— TOM O'DONOGHUE

**DENMARK**

**Mass strike!**

THE BRITISH miners had just returned to work, defeated. For many it seemed that the working class had lost its power.

Then in Denmark, a country which does not have a great tradition of industrial militancy, the working class showed that it was very much alive and well and fighting. One of the biggest mass strikes to hit any country in the last 15 years spread through the country paralysing industry, transport and schools.

The extent of the strike took everyone by surprise. The Danish Prime Minister Schlüter is a right wing monetarist who is very much at home with the policies of Reagan and Thatcher.

The LO (the Danish ICTU) has worked hand in glove with successive governments to bind workers to long term national contracts, doing its best to forbid strikes once the contracts are in force.

Every few years the union leaders made threatening noises—but settled before any action took place. This year, the bosses refused to compromise and the union leaders were forced to call their members out.

They had expected the government to come up with a compromise that would allow them to call the strike off. Instead a special session of parliament was convened to pass a law making the strike illegal. There was a bitter and angry reaction throughout the working class.

In a country with a population the same size as that of the 32-Counties more than a hundred thousand workers surrounded the parliament to try to prevent the vote on the law.

All over Denmark mass pickets lead to walk-outs in defiance of the law. Hundreds of thousands marched on the streets. Shop stewards meetings were so big that people were turned away at the doors.

A demonstration in Copenhagen expected to attract 20,000 workers, attracted 125,000. At the peak of the strike there were nearly a quarter of a million out on strike in Copenhagen alone. Even small towns were gripped by the strike. In Randers, with a population of 60,000—about the same size as Limerick or Derry—flying pickets stopped most industry.

**ENGINEERING**

On the Monday before Easter most of the engineering factories came out in Randers. All the paper mills, the brewery, the local paper, the rope factory and lots of small workplaces stopped.

Although the officials tried to curtail the action, picketing continued. A picketing committee was set up and on the Tuesday the building workers picketed out the postal workers.

The rope factory, which had voted to return, came out again when picketed by nursery workers. The main lorry depot was stopped by pickets. The police arrived but went away again. Rumour had it that they voted 52 to 12 not to intervene.

All this activity was illegal and unofficial. The union officials quickly tried to regain control. By halfway through the week after Easter they were beginning to reassert their authority. A shop steward in Aarhus who is a member of IS (the SWM sister organisation in Denmark) addressed a meeting of the cross-union strike committee (comprising 700 stewards in a town of 250,000). He argued for a vote to continue and extend the strike. The officials reacted by insisting that, since the meeting was unofficial, no vote could be taken.

It was left to quite small groups of socialists to argue for extending the action. They lost the argument and the general strike came to an end.

But it has meant that much higher wage settlements are on the cards in both the public and private sectors. And the unions, which are hemmed in by laws which make virtually all strikes illegal, have been greatly strengthened.

At its high-point, the general strike in Denmark was a glimpse of the way the revolution will look. But it was also a graphic lesson in the need to organise independently of the trade union officials. —GORETTI HORGAN



Danish riot police attack demonstrators outside parliament

**HSJB STRIKES**

WORKERS at the Hospitals Joint Services Board returned to work in early May after almost two months strike action.

The origins of the dispute go back to 1982. Up to that workers at the Board worked an average of two-and-a-half hours overtime each day. Some had worked these hours for a period of nine years and had come to see it as part of their earnings from the job.

In compensation for the loss of overtime, members of the ITGWU No. 15 Branch put in a claim for a lump-sum payment. This had already been conceded to the craftsmen. They demanded payments ranging from £1000 to £300 depending on length of service.

The workers originally came out on unofficial strike. However on the advice of their union and the ICTU they referred the matter to the Labour Court. But in an unprecedented move the Court awarded the workers nothing. This only reflected its pro-boss bias.

The management of the Hospitals Joint Services Board then withdrew any offer on the claim and attempted to enforce the Labour Courts recommendation. The workers balloted on strike action and won official backing from their union.

However on April 29, management at the HJSB issued an ultimatum threatening to close the laundry. Most of the union officials caved in under the pressure. One such official was "left" union leader of the LGPSU, Phil Flynn, who called on the strikers to return to work.

The workers were forced to accept a year long "no strike" clause. In return management undertook to respect all agreements. It has also been agreed that the Irish Productivity Centre examine the running of the laundry.

Management may now try to use the no-strike agreement to victimise the militants. That is what the unions have to be on their guard for.

**LIBERTIES PUBLIC MEETING**  
**THE NORTH — CAN THE PROVOS WIN?**  
Speaker: **EAMONN McCANN**  
Wednesday May 29, 8pm, Meath St. Parish Centre

**NEWS FROM SWM**



The Socialist Workers Movement is a revolutionary socialist organisation with members in Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Waterford, Galway, Dundalk, Dun Garvan and Portlaoise. Its meetings are open to those who support the politics of this paper.

**Dublin Northside meets every Wednesday:**

- Wednesday 15th: Why do workers scab;
- Wednesday 22nd: Women's liberation and socialism;
- Wednesday 29th: The Politics of rack n' roll.

**Dublin Southside: meets every Tuesday:**

- Tuesday 14th: Palestine, the Fight against Zionism;
- Tuesday 21st: Socialists and the Irish language;
- Tuesday 28th: The Communist Manifesto

**Dublin City Centre: meets every Thursday:**

- Thursday 16th: Is Russia socialist?;
- Thursday 23rd: Why is there a crisis?;
- Thursday 30th: Who was Rosa Luxemburg?

For details of all Dublin meetings phone 716932 or write to the national address below.

**Waterford: meets every Monday:**

Saturday 25th: Day School on the Politics of the SWM: sessions on: the unions; republicanism; womens liberation; the revolutionary party/ speakers: Eamonn McCann; Goretti Horgan and Paul O'Brien.

Details on meetings from National Address or paper sellers.

**Cork: meets every Thursday/details phone 932828.**

**PUBLIC MEETING: WORLD CRISIS—THE SOCIALIST SOLUTION/Speaker Paul O'Brien/Tuesday 30th, Connolly Hall, 8pm.**

**Dundalk: meets every second Wednesday/details phone 36868**

**Galway: meets every second Tuesday/details phone Kathleen, 24682.**

For details of meetings in Belfast, Portlaoise, Dun-Garvan contact paper sellers or write to National Office: 41 Herberton Park Rialto Dublin 8.

\*Forthcoming Drogheda Public Meeting: "Why You Should be a Socialist/speaker EAMONN McCANN — watch out for posters."



# Socialist Worker

## THE NORTH'S LOCAL GOV'T ELECTIONS

# Vote Sinn Fein but build a socialist alternative

**SINN FEIN is fighting against enormous odds in the local elections in the North on May 15th.**

Of the five "major" parties in the field (the DUP, the OUP, Alliance, the SDLP and themselves) only Sinn Fein is completely without support from any element in the media. Every single newspaper local, national and British, urges its readers to reject Sinn Fein.

A very high percentage of the North's pulpits have been turned into political platforms for the duration, the standard message being that a vote for Sinn Fein is immoral, if not downright sinful.

All the other parties have had the support of some section of medium and big business. Sinn Fein will have nil support from such elements.

What that shows is that Sinn Fein is seen as a threat to the establishment: indeed as the only immediate threat to the establishment in the field.

The reason is obvious. Every other party is willing in some way or other to facilitate the re-establishment of stability within the North. Only Sinn Fein stands squarely for the dismantling of the sectarian set-up entirely. On that ground alone, Sinn Fein should have the support of all socialists at the polls.

As we go to press Republican leaders are predicting about 35 seats out of the 566 positions available. All that they win will be in solidly working-class Catholic

areas. The problem is whether Sinn Fein can lead this sizable section of the anti-imperialist working-class on towards a united socialist Ireland.

The Socialist Workers' Movement doesn't believe that it can. Not because the Republican Movement lacks the commitment or genuine determination to defeat imperialism in Ireland (but because the basic philosophy of Republicanism is incapable of carrying out this task.

The widely reported disagreements within Republican ranks about future strategy only cloud the real issues. The simple-minded division between "hawks" and "doves", between advocates of the armalite and backers of the ballot box, are as far as the "analysts" in the Tory press can take the matter. Their only concern, anyway, is to sew dissension and if they can, to damage the Republicans in the public mind.

### CLASS

But the long-standing Republican disagreements are about means, not ends. They are about how to get the Brits out and bring back a united Ireland. They are *not* about the class nature of the united Ireland which would emerge, nor about which class the Republican movement should base itself on as it struggles to achieve this end.

It is absolutely fundamental to Republican philosophy that the main thing which divides people is nationality, and that all "Irish nationalists" have

something in common which is more important than the things which divide them. This is the basis for the statements from some Republican leaders suggesting that they would consider a pact with the SDLP. It was spelled out most clearly by Gerry Adams in his famous exchange on BBC radio with John Hume when he invited the SDLP leader to talk about "pan-nationalist interests": which means the interests of nationalists of all classes.

### LOGGERHEADS

That particular conception of politics is *not* disputed by the elements which are allegedly at loggerheads with Adams about future strategy. They too believe that Republicanism can and does represent the best interests of all nationalists. They may well want to put a different emphasis on the way they go about it, but the task they are going about is the *same* task. And that's not disputed by either side.

Socialists see it very differently. We argue that *only* the working class has a real interest in smashing the Northern State and moving forward towards a united Ireland free of British rule.

That every other class has a direct interest in *maintaining* the connection with Britain.

After all they do well out of it. And that it is therefore necessary for anti-imperialists to base themselves now on the working class and, far from seeking alliances, electoral or otherwise, with the represent-



*Sinn Fein candidates in North's election leave Belfast City Hall after banding in their nomination papers.*

atives of other classes, to oppose them day in and day out on a class basis. Not just because they sell out on the national question—which they do and have done—but on account of the *reasons* they sell out.

They don't sell out because they were born with an insufficient number of patriotic genes. They sell out because it's not in the economic interest of their class to do anything else. And that is the connection which Republicanism—which puts "national feeling" at the centre of politics—cannot make.

It is this which renders Republicanism incapable of finally defeating British imperialism in Ireland, and which makes it necessary to build a revolutionary-socialist working-class party.

But in the meantime at least the Republicans are fighting imperialism, in their own various ways. The fact that we don't believe they can ever complete the task doesn't entitle socialist to cop out and refuse to take their side when they are standing virtually alone in the North against the massed ranks of lay and clerical reactionaries, the armed might of imperialism and the hack liars of the bourgeois press.

We take our stand with them, while disagreeing profoundly with their political approach to the struggle and trying to build a Marxist party independently of them.

## Israel's trail of destruction

THE ISRAELI'S army's withdrawal from the Lebanon... has left a trail of death and destruction in its wake. Its result of their "iron fist" policy which crushes with brutal ferocity any past or potential resistance. Since they invaded in June '82, Israel has spent more than \$3 billion on its occupation there. Despite massive US aid the cost is too great for the shaky Israeli economy. This—and the bitterness at home caused by over 650 Israeli deaths since the occupation began—is the reason for their withdrawal.

But it is something of a phoney withdrawal, because although in name the Israelis are pulling out, they leave behind the South Lebanon Army (SLA). This is composed of Lebanese collaborators and is armed by Israel—it is effectively part of the Israeli army and will leave Israel in control of a large part of South Lebanon.

Israel has also pressed the UN to place its own forces in a "buffer zone" further north, thereby strengthening their base for future military manoeuvres. This is how Irish soldiers, as part of the UN troops, are being used to back up what is basically "land-grabbing" on the part of Israel.

And it is land-grabbing of the most brutal kind, at which the Zionist state of

COMING SOON!

Two new pamphlets from the Socialist Workers' Movement.

An introduction to the politics of the SWM and Where we stand, WATCH THIS SPACE!

Israel has become expert. It was the Zionists—Jews determined to establish a Jewish state in Palestine—who armed and financed by US in 1947, drove 750,000 Arabs off the land they'd lived in for centuries, and established the State of Israel in Palestine. They did it by extermination and terror—the same methods used by the Nazis. (In fact the Nazi persecution of the Jews is often used as an excuse for their persecution of the Arabs!)

Palestinian and Arab resistance continued, and Lebanon, a neighbouring Arab country to which many Palestinians had fled, was seen as a threat to Israel. Lebanese society itself had many sectarian divisions, arising from the fact that it was artificially cobbled together in '47 by the US and Britain.

The Israeli occupation in June '82 concentrated on exploiting these divisions by arming different and opposing factions—the idea being to divide and rule. And now that they've got their fingers burnt, they're pulling out—sort of. The SLA remain, and the UN, and the Irish troops. All serving to back up Israeli aggression and expansionism.

Herzog, the Israeli premier will visit Ireland sometime in June. A public meeting has been called for May 15th to organise a demonstration in protest against his visit and Israeli policy. Be there.