

PAPER OF THE SOCIALIST WORKERS MOVEMENT

Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

Public Sector workers -

UNITE and

FIGHT

PUBLIC SECTOR workers are being set up as scapegoats. That's the clear message behind the attempt to impose a 12-month pay pause. Other workers throughout private industry (and Aer Lingus) have already won an average of 8% in the 25th wage round.

In another twist of the screw, the Coalition is trying to rear up special pay increases that have already been awarded to 45,000 public servants. This includes teachers and other, smaller groups.

The hardliners in the Coalition see this as part of their strategy to win a return to government in 1986/7. Their attacks on public sector workers are designed to give them the free-way to offer tax cuts to PAYE workers generally. The daft idea of selling off the state forests should also provide an extra bit of cash. But the tax cuts would be an illusion. Between 1983 and 1984 income tax increased by 17%!

"FREE PRESS"

Over the coming months, the offensive against the public sector will be whipped up. The "free press" run by millionaires like Tony O'Reilly will discover greedy, lazy time-servers everywhere. The signal for the campaign of lies has already been given. The Lie Machine is already at work.

Lie Number 1: Public sector workers are paid too much!

This is a joke coming from politicians who can award themselves a 19% increase and can draw pensions while still at work. But the facts are clear. Irish workers generally are badly paid. In a survey of 18 countries, Ireland had the third lowest wage rate. And public sector workers are doing worse than most. In 1964 the average industrial worker got 64% of the wages of a clerical officer in the civil service. Today they will get 105% of the same wage. The reason is simple. Since

1980, public sector workers have been subject to 17 months of pay-freezes. The result is that the mass of civil servants are badly paid. One half of civil servants earn less than the average industrial wage. 16,000 of them took home less than £100 a week last year. Yet the "Irish Independent" paints a picture of well-paid mandarins when the reality is that the majority of civil servants are stuck in low paid boring jobs.

Lie Number 2: Public sector workers have a job for life!

You would think there is something wrong with the right to work. But public sector have got no privileges. You have only to look at the fantastic smear campaign done on Irish Steel workers who were dragged into accepting a miserable redundancy deal. Or Irish Shipping workers who learnt the news of their sacking while stranded in ports around the world. Or individuals like Eileen Flynn who were hounded out of their jobs because she was an unmarried mother. Now John Boland is preparing the way for wholesale sackings in the civil service. In his recent White Paper, he has decreed that clerical workers in the civil service can now be handed redundancy and lay-off notices! The higher grades will be exempted from this.

Lie Number 3: Any increase for the public sector must be paid for from the PAYE tax bill.

This is absolute nonsense. This country has the most pampered and subsidised rich in the world. Tax rates on profits at 15% are by far the lowest in Europe. It has recently been revealed that both Fianna Fail and Coalition ministers have been urging the rich to break even the mild tax laws on dividends. One Finance Minister told foreign shareholders that

the tax-laws on dividends are "largely inoperable". He could have been talking about any of the taxes on the wealthy. The Labour Party's initiative, the Property Tax brought in a mere £1 million in 1984. Why? Because the rich were allowed to make their own declarations on the value of their houses. The increases for the public sector would be paid many times over by implementing even the existing tax laws—not to talk of even squeezing the Irish rich.

Lie Number 4: Public sector pay makes for more unemployment.

This is the special worry of the Catholic bishops. Bishop Kavanagh has denounced teachers as guilty of "national sabotage" because they are keeping school leavers on the dole by their pay demands. He would be better off sticking to moving statues. In the period since 1980 when public servants were taking the worst pay cuts, recruitment to the public sector also fell dramatically. In 1981, 6,000 school leavers were taken on in the civil service. Four years later after devastating wage cuts, only 1,800 school

leavers were taken on. The more public sector workers forego wage increases, the more their union organisation is weakened—and it is that simple fact that has let the state get away with job cuts.

It is time for public sector

workers to fight. That can only be done by placing their faith in their own strength. If the industrial power of teachers, local authority workers, postal workers were brought together in a massive display of solidarity, the pay freeze would be broken.

But it is precisely this mobilisation that the union leaders fear to call into action lest it "get out of control". That is why they confine the action to one day token stoppages. The strike on October 15 can only be a start.



Public sector under attack - pages 4&5

Myth of the 'gay plague'

IF WE WERE to believe the newspapers, TV and radio, we'd get the impression that AIDS is the result of anything from "the wrath of God" to kissing or shaking hands with a sufferer.

In fact AIDS is a blood-carried disease. It can only be transmitted by infected blood from one person passing into the bloodstream of another.

The AIDS virus has not yet been proved to be present in either saliva or semen.

In the West it has, up to now, been most common in gay men. Ruptures are much more likely to occur during anal intercourse. But drug users and haemophiliacs are also high risk groups. With the exception of haemophiliacs, these people have very little sympathy from the general public.

Naturally the group most focussed on by the media are gays. It suits the right wing to publicise their plight as it scares many gays from being open about their sexual

preferences. By shouting about promiscuity among gays spreading the disease a fear and hatred of gays has developed which is even worse than the oppression that gays have put up with for centuries.

DETAINED

This hatred has been taken so far in Australia that AIDS victims are not allowed to be carried on two Australian airlines. In Britain, the Fire Brigade Union's safety office advised members against giving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to gays. Just last month in Britain a man suffering from AIDS was forcibly detained in hospital as if he had committed a crime!

But AIDS is not only a sexually transmitted disease. In Central Africa AIDS is found almost equally in men and women. One source of the disease has fairly reliably been identified as inoculation needles used on several

different people.

Here in Ireland, the Blood Transfusion Service seems to have had much to do with importing AIDS. Despite all the ads about "giving for living" etc., the Blood Service is in fact a profit-making organisation. It exports most of the blood which you and I give them free, gratis and for nothing.

Then they re-import what they need for use in this country. What we get back is as likely to be American, German or Japanese as Irish.

Thus the first Irish victim of AIDS was a haemophiliac whose life depended on blood transfusions.

PROTECT

It's been known since 1981 when the virus was first isolated that AIDS is transmitted through blood. But did our profit-making Blood Service do anything to protect Irish

patients? No. Not until it was too late and people had already contracted AIDS. They are now using a reliable screening test to ensure that all blood coming into the country is AIDS-free.

Scientists are searching for a cure and a vaccine to prevent AIDS becoming epidemic. But in the light of public hostility to gays and continuing health cuts in the US and Europe where the cure is most likely to be discovered, the cure may not be found as quickly as it could be.

This year the US government plans to spend 126.3 million dollars on AIDS research. This compares poorly with the 200 Billion dollars or so to be spent on defence.

There is nothing special about AIDS which should put it beyond the reach of medical science. But as long as AIDS is seen as "the gay plague", we are unlikely to see the necessary funds being invested in ending its spread.

—PAULA HINCHY

Cork 'black gold' profits

THERE are approximately 200 offshore workers on the union books in Cork 100% of whom are at this very moment unemployed. There are other pockets of unemployed in Fenit, Kerry, Foynes, Limerick, Galway, Dublin and Donegal.

Offshore work is notoriously seasonal with work for most averaging out at 3-4 months a year. The "great pay" takes on a new complexion when this average length of contract is explained. In 1985, many of the contracts only lasted five weeks.

The employers are resentful of the 100% unionisation and see it as a constant threat. In 1984, workers on the gas production platform went on strike against the dismissal of one worker. For the catering sub-contractors, Campbells, the strike was official, but the ITGWU argued that workers directly employed by Marathon should be allowed to pass the picket. They wanted the two-tier picket. Some passed, some didn't and now the complaints of one of the scabs at being "branched" are being investigated by the National Executive.

In addition, one of the scabs who passed the picket and scabbed has now been given a permanent job over the heads of the men who were on strike and was given an ITGWU ticket directly from Dublin rather than through the local Cork No. 3 Branch.

Also two men from the union lists were refused jobs on the exploration rigs this year and the union has agreed to send such "difficult cases" to arbitration.

FRUSTRATION

All of this has caused tremendous frustration among the rank and file who took action in August this year when they sat in and refused to work for 36 hours. Their protest was against the employers ignoring the list of qualified and experienced people. There was total unity among the men from Kerry, Limerick, Cork and Dublin in the sit in strike.

Meanwhile the ITGWU leadership are kow-towing to employers by demonstrating that they will enforce two-tier picketing in any dispute.

It is up to offshore workers now to ensure that there is even stronger shop-steward and rank and file organisation.

AT THE beginning of the 1970's Cork seemed a bright spark on the horizon of expanding capitalism.

Cork had a soon-to-be modernised Steel Plant, a modern ship-yard, a new fertiliser plant under construction, car assembly, oil refining and a major tyre manufacturing plant as well as many smaller industries.

Oil became a possibility for Cork and for Ireland when drilling began in the Celtic Sea in 1970. The first exploration off Cork was by the Global Marine Drilling Co, of Houston, Texas. The optimism about oil was not entirely misplaced; Marathon Oil and Gas Co. were rewarded with

ON Tuesday 10th September 1985 there was a crisis on the drilling rig Sedco 704 in Block 50 of the Celtic Sea. It started when an oil line fractured in the engine room. One of the engines starved of oil, overheated, seized and went on fire. The smoke quickly entered the living accommodation where men were sleeping and there was much coughing and minor panic. It was put out quickly by the crew themselves and a disaster was averted because there is nowhere to go except into the sea in an emergency.

The fire went unreported in any newspaper and will no doubt be recorded as a minor incident in the company's records. It does, however, highlight one of the many hazards that oil workers face and which the oil companies are constantly trying to play down. Even after the fire the company was still displaying a sign which read "No lost-time accidents for 23 days." When people do get injured they are encouraged by the company to stay on board and do light work rather than have a "lost-time accident".

a huge gas field off Kinsale Head in Block 48.

However, the rewards to workers who were recruited into the industry were not too great. The work on the Global Marine drill ship "Glomar North Sea" was hard, with 12 hour shifts and no payment for the compulsory two weeks off after a fortnights work. It was dirty and dangerous and the pay was little better than in the Construction industry from which most workers were drawn.

"It was a proper hell hole, the Glomar North Sea" says Pete who had previously worked on trawlers and on building sites and who in 1985 is still working in the offshore industry.

"There were no unions and we were treated like something out of the first century. As fellas were off the chopper on the helideck, this great big Texan would pick out a few and say "Hey you, you and you, get your asses back on shore" and that was for no other reason but to terrorise the few who were

left."

"We slept in a cabin with 15 other bunks, nowadays it would be 4 or 2 to a cabin. It was an ancient drill ship with great clanking engines right next to our bunks and there was a constant rattle of pipework. The American bosses slept forrard away from the engines and they ate separately from us in the galley. It was real segregation. The floor of the cabin was always covered in water and I remember well one night getting up to close a door that was banging and with the rolling and pitching the door slammed and cut the top clean off my finger. There was no medic on board like you have nowadays and I lay on my

bunk for three days until there was a supply ship to take me ashore by which time the finger was badly infected".

By the mid 1970's the offshore oil and gas industry was fully unionised mainly into the ITGWU. Pay improved and there was a greater stress laid on safety. The fight to keep it that way however is an ongoing problem. There have been many strikes, a particularly long one in 1984 when the Campbell Catering and Marathon decided to use the high unemployment situation to take on and challenge union organisation. The strike lasted five months and it resulted in a weakening of all of the unions involved.

I have worked as a roustabout on three rigs, "Dyvi Alpha", the Glomar Arctic 2 and the "Ali-Baba". Roustabouts work with the massive cranes in loading and unloading the supply boats and in keeping the drill floor supplied with drill pipe, drill bits, drill collars, casing pipe and stabilisers. In between breaks they are expected to

keep and maintain the rig in sparkling ship shape, greasing equipment, painting bulkheads and washing and scrubbing decks. Roughnecks work on the drill floor and are mainly concerned with putting drill pipes in and out of the hole being drilled. When rigs come in to Irish waters they employ by agreement with the unions all Irish roughnecks and roustabouts together with galley hands, laundrymen, seamen, radio-operators medics oilers and greasers.

They work twelve hour shifts seven days followed by seven twelve hour hour shifts on nights, then off for two weeks on a "field break".

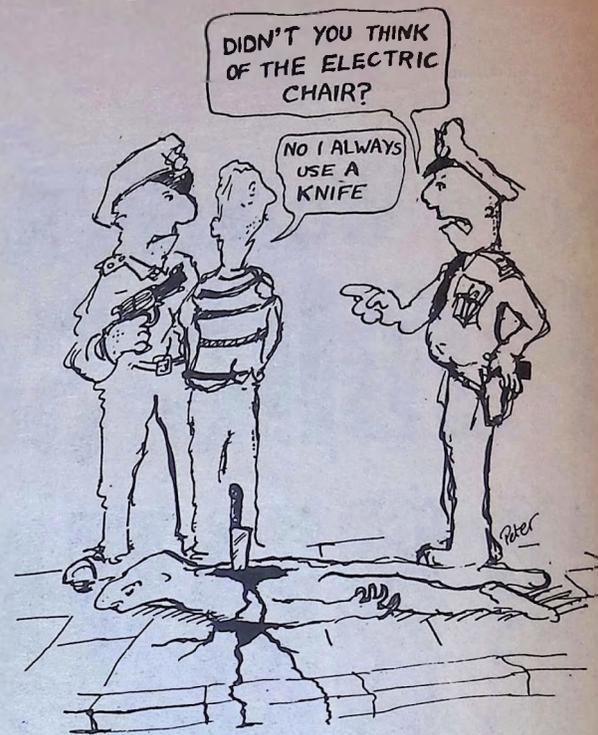
Even though the job has improved through unionisation the work remains tough dirty and dangerous. There are many hazards. The sea pitches and rolls and storms can blow up at any time. A storm sank the Glomar Sea of Java in the South China Sea in November 1983. All 70 crew were drowned. Drill holes certain poisonous gasses which despite all sorts of blow-out preventers and stop valves can seep into the rig. Two workers were killed when such gas exploded on board the Glomar Arctic 2 in the North Sea earlier this year. A construction fault in the Alexander Kielland caused the death of 120 workers in the Norwegian sector eight years ago.

The large number of moving parts and the necessity for the constant shifting of heavy loads in confined spaces are a threat to life and limb no matter what safety precautions are taken. One safety expert calculated that the chances of being killed working offshore in the North Sea was eleven times greater than the chances of being killed in an accident on a building site. In fact 106 people were killed in accidents in the British sector of the North Sea between 1970 and 1980. There have been three deaths in Irish Offshore accidents and many injuries.

The problem is to ensure that it will be used for the benefit of the mass of working people and not to blast still further the coffers of "the seven sisters" as the oil companies are known and the other multinational companies who have a stranglehold on the means of production worldwide.

—JIM BLAKE

FIFTH COLUMN



D.A. CHEATS THE CHAIR

THE SUNSHINE State, Florida, has the distinction of having the most inmates in its prison system on death row. The grand total of 226.

That shouldn't be surprising if you consider who some of the state prosecutors are.

One man, George Georgieff, who heads the state attorney general's criminal appeals division, says he supports the death penalty. Why? because it once stopped him murdering his wife!

He told an American publication *American Lawyer*, "I found myself choking her and I saw her eyes start to pop out. Suddenly off to the left or the right I saw the electric chair. It deterred me."

If you think he's bad, listen to Ray Marky, another lawyer in the attorney general's office: "Fifty years from now, they'll be able to perform brain operations on people to remove their anti-social behaviour patterns. Well, when we can do that, we've got it made."

If you're ever in the Sunshine State—be on your best behaviour and try not to get arrested!

ROME BACKS SOUTH AFRICA

THE HYPOCRISY of the Catholic Church knows no bounds. For centuries they told us that sex outside marriage was/is a sin. In those same centuries you could hardly throw a stone over the Vatican walls without hitting a "natural" child of one of the cardinals, if not of II Papa himself.

Similarly they now tell us that abortion is the greatest sin. But up to the last century, they ruled that it was alright up to the 40th day of pregnancy for a male foetus and to the 80th day for a female one. (The soul was thought to enter the body of a boy-child 40 days before those backward girl-children) The fact that medical science was not able to tell the sex of a foetus meant that abortion was only a venial sin up to 80 days—ie, nearly 12 weeks, but these days it suits them to say it's a mortal sin.

But their hypocrisy is perhaps best illustrated by their attitude to South Africa. Every other day the preying Pole weeps for the blacks of South Africa caught up in the vicious repression of Apartheid. Every day he exorts us to pray for them and to do everything (non-revolutionary) in our power to oppose the apartheid regime. But every day Vatican investments in S.A. help to prop up that same regime.

Between 1982 and 1984 alone, they lent £115 M to

South African firms. The Vatican claims that the loans were to private clients—in fact most of the money went to the South African Transport Services and the South African Post Telegraph and Telecommunications dept.—very private indeed! No doubt about it, the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church has not changed much with the years.

"PEACE LOVER"

RONALD REAGAN has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize! The "peace" prize has always been a bit of a laugh—it's gone in the past to people like Henry Kissinger (the man who "secretly" ordered Cambodia to be bombed off the face of the earth).

But even Kissinger seems angelic next to RayGun. We are, after all, talking about the man who has initiated the "Star Wars" arms race, the man whose administration is spending millions of dollars on war, who is behind the Israeli forces in Lebanon, and funds the Contras in Nicaragua as well as murderous right wing regimes throughout Central and Latin America.

Mr Jakob Sverdoup, a spokesperson for the Nobel Foundation commented: "We cannot say who nominated Mr Reagan or for what reason." Neither can we, Jakob, neither can we.

What does Mandela's ANC stand for?

SOCIALISTS inside and outside South Africa must welcome the recent intensification of the struggle there. They must also offer full support against the regime's repression to those forces fighting Apartheid—whatever our differences.

Foremost among those forces is the African National Congress. It is the main force in the black resistance and heavily influences the oppositional United Democratic Front.

Since 1960 the ANC has been banned, its leaders either imprisoned—like Nelson Mandela—or exiled.

The ANC has existed since 1912, but during the great black struggles of the forties, under the influence of the South African Communist Party, it changed its orientation from that of a moderate pressure group of chiefs and middle class blacks to one of radical direct action.

This change of course was the work of the ANC Youth League, founded in 1943, and drawing its support from militant black intellectuals.

Among the League's leading members were Anton Lembede, Nelson Mandela, Robert Sobekwe, Oliver Tambo and Walter Sisulu.

A variety of methods were used by the ANC—boycotts, pass-book burnings, civil disobedience and "stay-aways". They all involved mobilising the entire African community across class lines—businessmen and professionals as well as workers and peasants.

From 1961, with the banning of the ANC and the smashing of resistance at Sharpeville, the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto weSizwe, began a campaign of armed struggle, concentrating on sabotage of government property.

Ben Turok, a member of Umkhonto weSizwe, later wrote: "The sabotage campaign failed on the main count—it did not raise the level of action of the masses themselves. Although it seems that the masses supported and even welcomed the resort to force, they could find no way of joining in and expressing their support. They were left on the threshold, frustrated bystanders of a battle being waged on their behalf."

What explains the ANC's reliance on these methods? The ANC views the struggle

in South Africa as essentially a national struggle. All classes of blacks—and even progressive whites—can be united around a campaign to overthrow Apartheid and institute majority rule. The struggle is therefore not a fight for black workers' power and socialism, but for a democratic, multi-racial capitalist South Africa.

Socialists within the ANC, like the South African Communist Party, who support this strategy—indeed have often been the architects of it—believe that after the "democratic" stage of the struggle has been accomplished, then the struggle for socialism can begin. Until that happy day, the emergence of class divisions and struggle within the anti-Apartheid camp is something to be guarded against as a divisive weakening of the all-class alliance.

Regular readers of Socialist Worker will notice the similarity of the broad strategies of the ANC and Sinn Fein. And will not be surprised that our criticisms run parallel.

Marxists hold that the only class available for revolution in the modern world is the working class.

STRUGGLE

Those among the oppressed who are themselves exploiters—as the black business classes are—have an objective interest in limiting the struggle. They are inevitably in conflict with the property-less oppressed who have nothing to lose and no interest in defending the property of the black bourgeoisie. The black bosses fear an all-out struggle that raises the black masses to their feet threatening to overthrow not only white racist rule but also the conditions which allow black exploitation.

The black petty-bourgeoisie, urban intellectuals, lawyers and professionals, feel their oppression most acutely. They regard themselves, the most educated and rational of the black nation, as being unfairly excluded from their rightful place in society—leading the country, staffing the civil service, etc. They regard the black masses with a mixture of sympathy and contempt, victims for whom they will do something, "their" people. It is this class, the embodiment of nationalism, which, with its



Zola Zenbe from SACTU (South African Congress of Trade Unions) joins the Dunnes picket line in Dublin last October

well-developed sense of mission, has come to power in the emergent black states of Africa. In their attempt to create independent state capitalist regimes, they have proved themselves no less talented at exploiting and oppressing the black masses, than their white predecessors.

The mobilisation of the black masses for these people is a lever by which to extract concessions from the regime to speed them on their way to power.

Only black workers have an objective interest in smashing Apartheid and its parent, capitalism and waging an uncompromising fight to revolutionise society. Any movement that attempts to unify all these divergent elements must end up trimming its demands to that acceptable to those with most to lose: the middle class and bourgeois blacks. It will fail to put at the centre of its strategy the organising of the power of the black working class for its self-emancipation instead seeking

to subordinate it to those with something to lose.

If Apartheid is to be smashed and the mass of blacks are to be the beneficiaries of this, nothing short of socialist revolution will do. That requires the organising, developing the political independence and clarity of the black working class.

DIVERGENT

The ANC is incapable of this. Since 1912 it has been a force working for the democratisation of South Africa—at times militant, at others moderate. The divergent class interests it comprises makes it virtually impossible that it could be won to a clear working class position. The recent confirmation by its Conference of the expulsion of the Marxist Workers Tendency (socialists aligned with Irish Militant) only underlines this fact. It is at root a nationalist organisation.

Revolutionaries in South Africa have one central and

urgent task: the fusion of the industrial strength of the black unions with the political militancy of the township revolts—under the perspective of the conquering of state power. That will require armed conflict and civil war. But it will require no less the creation of a black working class party of revolution that can overcome the hegemony of ANC

nationalism among the fighting masses and lead them on to workers power.

Events are moving quickly in South Africa. The longer socialists cling to a strategy of reforming the ANC from within, the longer will that central task be postponed and the greater the risks of catastrophic defeat.

—KEVIN WINGFIELD

GOLDMINE STRIKE LOST OPPORTUNITY

THE SUSPENSION of last month's strike of gold miners was a great set back and lost opportunity.

The strike action was aimed against Gencor, Consolidated Goldfields and Anglovaal—the mining houses which had failed to match the improved 22% wage offer given by Anglo-American and its associates.

After 48 hours only 10,000 of the original 28,000 strikers were still out. The miners union then suspended the strike to pursue a legal case through the courts to prevent the mineowners sacking the strikers.

What went wrong?

Police intimidation cannot be reckoned the root cause of the strikes failure because although at least one striker was killed, and strikers were fired on with live ammunition, not to mention tear gas, rubber bullets and whips, 70,000 miners had faced even worse repression, including ten deaths and hundreds of injuries, in an strike last year—held because the workers had not heard of the last minute settlement between the mineowners and the union.

The Anglo miners should have been called out from the first alongside their brother in the other mining houses. In spite of the Anglo pay offer, there are no shortage of grievances. In the first six months of this year 100,000 miners were involved in sporadic strike action over food, hostels and bullying supervisors. Mine safety is also a major issue.

The strike was a draw. The mineowners failed to smash the union and most miners have received rises of 22%—

well above the rate of inflation.

The major weakness of the strike was that only a minority of the NUM's membership was called out. Over 80% of the unions members work at the Anglo-American mines. It's improved offer induced the union leadership to settle—in spite of the fact that a majority of miners had still indicated a willingness to strike.

Among the non-Anglo-American mines union organisation is much poorer and over the last year or so there have been a number of unsuccessful strikes, demoralising the workers.

But the whole episode underlines a worrying lack of leadership among the black working class. In a situation where politics is forcing itself to the surface, the miners' leaders were prepared to split their forces and call only a fraction of their membership out because of a marginally improved wage offer. Now is obviously not the time to divide politics from economics.

At the same time, the ANC leadership is negotiating with South African bosses, including those of Anglo-American, and by all accounts softening their line on a future black state taking over large sections of industry.

Nowhere from the ANC has there been any attempt to intervene in workers struggles, generalise and politicise them.

The absence of a party within the black working class linking up the industrial struggle with the political and pointing towards the necessity of workers' power—that missing leadership remains the weak link in the South African revolution.

Support SA struggle

THE STRIKE in Dunnes Stores of Henry Street, Dublin has now entered its 15th month. The Dunnes Stores strikers are a shining example to workers everywhere of what we can all do to fight apartheid.

Anyone who opposes the violence of apartheid supports the calls for economic sanctions against the S. African regime. Yet when we see the tokenism of the EEC governments, of Reagan and of our own government in relation to such sanctions, it's difficult to see what difference they will make.

Ian Smith's racist Rhodesian regime survived SIXTEEN years of harsh economic sanctions between 1964 when it broke with Britain and 1980 when the regime was overthrown by the ZAPU/ZANU guerrillas and the state of Zimbabwe was established.

Given its massive economic resources, and the unwillingness of international capitalism to entirely risk the super-profits available in South Africa, the country could probably ignore the disapproval of other governments and the cosmetic sanctions which have been imposed.

Take the situation in the 26 Counties. The Dublin government has been pushing the EEC to wards sanctions. It has been instrumental in having the agreement drawn up

with the supermarkets not to use South African goods where others are available. Yet it will not even mention the De Beers factory in Shannon. De Beers import industrial diamonds which are mined by black, virtually slave labour in S. Africa. The diamonds are processed in Shannon and most are re-exported. The profits which De Beers make on these diamonds are TAX-FREE under the government Export Profit Tax Relief scheme, set up to attract multinationals to the South. This scheme exempts companies from having to pay tax on profits derived from exported goods.

MARKETS

De Beers came to Shannon when Ireland joined the EEC. In Shannon they get tax free profits, probably the lowest labour costs in Europe PLUS easy access to EEC markets from a country which is an EEC member. The super profits they make on the backs of black S. African workers are reinforced by the profits they make on white Irish workers. But the Irish ruling class would never dare challenge the presence of the likes of De Beers in Ireland or in Europe. To do so

would put them clearly on the side of S. African workers against their white ruling class. And that they would never do. So they stick to more cosmetic sanctions.

So are sanctions any use at all? The answer is both not really and very definitely. The sanctions imposed by governments have been shown to be not really of much use. But the sanctions which are forced by workers' independent struggles are VERY worthwhile and strike a blow at the heart of S. African capitalism which is behind apartheid.

It is in this regard that the Dunnes strike, despite its ups and downs, has been very successful.

Since Mary Manning first refused to handle S. African goods and was supported by her fellow workers, the idea of taking such action has been planned in the minds of other workers. That the bosses recognised this fact is shown by the fact that most other Supermarkets stopped stocking S. African goods soon after the strike started. They didn't want another Henry St. Dunnes on their hands.

Now workers in the Post Office and Bord Telecom are seriously discussing the blacking of post to S. Africa and of telephones to that country. Last month, the outdoor Branch of the Post Office Workers'

Union voted to black post to South Africa. But neither their own union executive nor the IDATU leadership have rushed to welcome this possibility.

It is hoped that the POWU workers will go ahead with their action anyway. THIS is the kind of action which would really make the S. African regime feel the pinch. It would affect every aspect of S. African capitalism. De Beers would be unable to contact their Head Office; nor would Rothmans. The distributors of Outspan and Del Monte products would be unable to get information about deliveries.

And besides the chaos it would cause to S. African interests abroad, it would serve as an example to black workers in S. Africa.

It would be a fair indication of the power of workers' independent action. And, as the above article on the ANC makes clear, what's needed in S. Africa is for black workers to take matters into their own hands rather than depending on the intellectuals, lawyers and clergy to lead them.

MARCH TO DUNNES

SAT. 26th OCTOBER 2.30pm

From: Dept. of Foreign Affairs
Stephen's Green, Dublin

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 nationalization 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, PO BOX 1648, Dublin 8

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

Name

Address

Cut it! Cut it! Cut it!

Roars "health" Minister Desmond

"IN NOVEMBER we will find ourselves without funds to provide services", the chief executive of the South Eastern Health Board told its members in August.

Like the other seven health boards in the 26 Counties, the South Eastern has been cutting its services to the bone under pressure from minister Barry Desmond. But it is still being pushed to cut even deeper into its services.

The chairman of the Eastern Health Board, John Sweeney, said recently that the medical card scheme in the area is likely to collapse before the end of the year. This would mean the end of free prescriptions and visits to the doctor for thousands of those hardest hit by the recession.

It's the same picture in every area. The cuts in health spending which the right wing businessmen in Fine Gael are insisting on—and lickspittle Labourites are accepting—spell disaster for working class patients.

Desmond has used his powers under Section 31 of the 1970 Health Act to set strict limits on what the Health Boards can spend. Each of the boards is short of between £3 million and £6 million for this year. The outlook for next year is even worse.

And all over the country the results have been devastating.

The first things to be hit were mundane items like crockery, beds, bed-linen, kitchen equipment etc. Right across the board the standard

of care in hospitals has been falling.

Ambulances are not being serviced regularly and are not being replaced when their useful life has ended.

Doctors who go sick or on holiday are not being replaced with locums. The orthopaedic ward at Cork Regional recently closed for a month when the consultant went on holiday and there was no money to hire a temporary replacement. For the same reason 124 beds at Galway Regional and another 178 in the local Merlin Park were closed for six weeks during the summer.

At St. Vincent's in Dublin, 90 beds have been taken prematurely out of service. In the North Western area, 90 beds in Sligo and 60 in

Letterkenny have been closed "temporarily" and many hospital departments are now closed to all except emergency cases.

In the Mid-West 100 beds have been closed since July in Limerick Regional, all plans for new units have been cancelled and both the Limerick kidney unit and the Ennis maternity unit are shut.

In the South West, only half of the Tralee General is operating and there is an acute shortage of kitchen equipment.

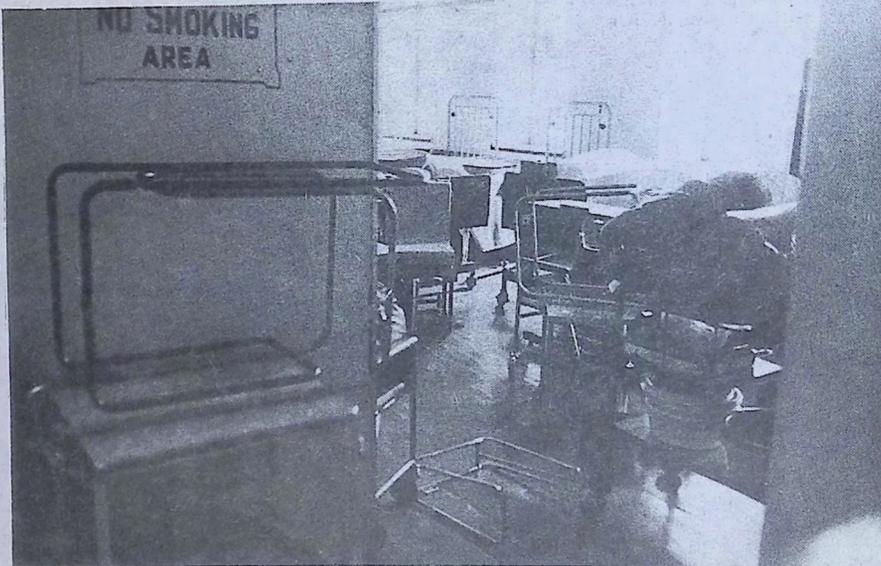
We could fill the rest of this page with example after example.

As always, the most vulnerable are hardest hit. Paediatric services for children have been devastated everywhere. The elderly and the mentally handicapped have been forgotten. An assessment centre for the elderly in Waterford stands empty. A new facility for the mentally handicapped in Templeogue in Dublin is only 50% operative despite the desperate pleadings of medical staff.

Hospitals in ancient poor-law buildings—St. Mary's in Drogheda, the geriatric hospital in Clonakilty, for example—have neither been replaced or adequately maintained. Doctors complain that they are actual health hazards.

At the same time many training and refresher courses have been abandoned. Few Health Boards any longer

The photo on the left is of a ward in Dr. Steeven's Hospital, Dublin closed by the cuts.



Private parasites

THE SLASHING of the Health Service hasn't, of course, affected the rich. As always, they are well-insulated from the effects of the crisis.

Waiting lists for public hospital beds are years long for working class people but the rich are able to jump right to the top of the queue. While wards in public hospitals are closing due to cuts in spending, millions of pounds are being spent building private hospitals.

In Dublin alone there are now going to be four multi-million pound private hospitals—the Mater private clinic, the Blackrock clinic, the hospital being built on the grounds of Beaumont Hospital and one near James Hospital. When Desmond first became Minister for Health he banned the building of private hospitals in the grounds of public hospitals. But as in other areas, he soon collapsed under pressure from those who would profit from the new hospitals.

The greatest scandal in

relation to turning sickness into a profit-making concern must surely be the Blackrock Private Hospital. This luxury, five-storey, eight-sided building cost £6 million. The building was financed by the consultant doctors who are going to use the clinic and who have bought the 37 consulting suites in the building. But it was financed through a scheme by which the money eventually comes from the taxpayers' pocket.

100% finance was provided for consultants who wanted to buy one of the luxury suites at £100,000-£140,000 each. The finance would be over 25 years and the deal was such that a £100,000 loan would cost less than £20 a day—less than what one patient would pay in fees for a ten minute visit.

These very low repayments are, of course, nothing like what you and I would have to pay if we wanted a £100,000 mortgage. That's because the consultants weren't getting mortgages, but pension funds.

The finance company, Standard Chartered Bank, required that they take out a pension fund which would be four times the size of the original loan at the end of the repayment period. In other words, if a consultant got £100,000 over 25 years s/he would have to pay a monthly pension premium big enough to give a pension fund of £400,000 at the end of 25 years. Then the consultant would take a tax-free lump sum of 25% of the pension fund, ie £100,000 and use it to repay the loan.

Meanwhile all the repayments are interest only and so allowed for tax purposes. Consultants earn huge fees. Last year the average consultant received £17,000 from VHI patients alone. When you add public hospital patients and private non-VHI patients to that, you get a very healthy average. So most of them are paying 65p in the £ income tax—or were until this scheme was dreamed up. Now

these doctors are receiving tax relief on:

*interest repayments;
*the pension premium;
*the life insurance (which pays of the money borrowed in case of death).

And both the growth of the pension fund and the lump sum taken from the pension fund after 25 years are tax-free.

So the money which has been put into the hospital was, for the most part, money which would otherwise have gone to the tax-man and through the Department of Finance to Education or Social Welfare—or even to the Health Service.

One of the most obscene aspects of these private hospitals is that, in them, the rich provide for themselves and their cronies the most up to date medical technology available. This technology is not, of course, available in public hospitals to the mass of the population.

Working class people are more likely to get sick—more likely to suffer from the slow, painful diseases caused by working conditions in so many jobs—emphesema, asbestosis,

TEACHERS: THE WAY TO WIN

TEACHERS are now in the forefront of the government's pay battle. An award of 10% granted under a lengthy arbitration is to be quashed by the government. A resolution of the Dail is required to stop the award.

The union leaders have displayed a solid united front between the three unions - ASTI, INTO and TUI. They have announced a campaign of one day stoppages throughout the different regions beginning on November 6th.

But they are also pinning their hopes on an extensive lobbying of the TDs. They aim to appeal to the "professional" status of ordinary teachers to convince them that they are more likely to be listened to than other workers.

Its an illusion. TDs won't be convinced to accept the award by "quiet persuasion". A display of determined industrial militancy would do far more to persuade the politicians.

One day stoppages merely display anger. By themselves they won't force the Coalition to back off.

All out industrial action is required to win. But there should be no under-estimating the difficulty of winning teachers to all out action. In unions like the INTO, teachers have not been on strike for 40 years. But socialists in the unions must begin raising the issue now.

Wanted: All-out in public sector

by Kieran Allen

THE UNION leaders have put on a great display of verbal militancy on the public sector wage freeze. Speaking to Post Office workers, the new "left" general secretary, David Begg called for maximum solidarity between the unions. John Carroll of the ITGWU announced a campaign of public protests and called to heel any Labour TD who voted for the pay embargo.

The LGPSU have gone one step further and taken a mandate from their members for extensive industrial action against the freeze. Even the normally moderate teachers' unions have displayed a united front on the issue and called their members out on one-day stoppages.

This militancy is to be welcomed—but past experience demonstrates that it cannot be relied upon. The fact is that the same union leaders have presided over the assaults on the public sector in the past—and sounded the retreat. The debacle in 1981 is the prime example.

The Fianna Fail government simply tore up the second phase of the 23rd wage round. The ICTU Public Sector Committee announced an extensive plan of national and regional stoppages. But after secret talks between Haughey and the union leaders, the strikes were called off.

The last pay round showed the same virtues of "modera-

tion". The union leaders showed a great haste to accept the miserable 6% on offer—before tax and mortgage increases saw it eaten away. In some unions—such as INTO—they did not even put it to a ballot.

APATHY

It has precisely been this cowardice that has given the government the invitation to come back for more. Anytime the union leaders blame the "apathy" of the rank-and-file, they should be reminded who created the conditions for that apathy.

This time round the union leaders are caught on a cleft stick. The very system on which their existence depends, is under attack. The Conciliation and Arbitration system was established in 1949 by the Labour Party Minister, William Norton—who was also general secretary of the Post Office Workers Union. It has been an ideal instrument for the union bureaucrats. Wage increases can be granted without involving the rank and file in struggle. Everything depends on the "negotiating skills" of the official who delivers to a passive membership.

The crisis in the public sector finances has forced the

Coalition to attack the very system that guaranteed "industrial harmony" for forty years. To defend their own interests, the ICTU leaders have been forced to call a bureaucratic mass strike. The key to their strategy is that they hope they token gestures will call the government's bluff. Their ideal is the campaign last year where their demand for the appointment of an arbitrator was conceded without even a stoppage. The stress of the one-day stoppages will be on lobbying the politicians with a display of what the union leaders can deliver.

COWARDICE

But even here, some of the union leaders are showing sterling cowardice. The FWUI has refused to call out its semi-strike members in the hope that they can still get around the pay freeze. The CPSA has chosen to ballot their members on the one-day stoppage—and haven't even campaigned for a Yes vote. In everything they do the union leaders move cautiously with one eye to their own sectional interest.

MASS STRIKE

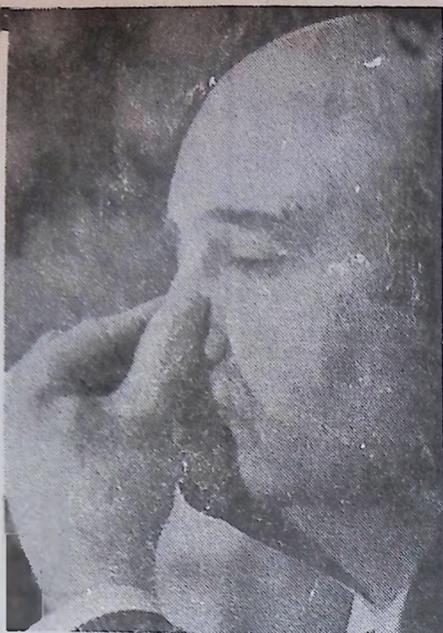
Nevertheless, despite the limited horizons of the union leaders, there is not an unbridgeable gulf between the type of bureaucratic strike called for October 15 and a genuine mass strike against the pay freeze that relies on the enthusiasm and determination of the rank and file to win. The case of Denmark shows how strike action can be transformed. The key lies in the arguments and activities of the hundreds of militants throughout the public sector. Central to these are the following:

***No reliance on politicians:** The teachers would be better off sending delegations to other workers for solidarity rather than organising their members to chase up the TDs.

***Solidarity with all those in struggle:** Every group of workers who take up the gauntlet must be supported. Organise the collections, get speakers to your workplace. Send delegations onto the teachers' stoppage on November 6. Where possible get stoppages in their support.

***Escalate the action—All Out strike the only way to win:** The game of bluff between the union leaders and the Coalition won't last. Sooner or later the issue of a *determined* rather than *token* struggle will arise. One-day strikes never won anything. The tax campaign was the prime example. It is only through escalating the action to the level of all-out strike that we can win. Militants have to begin the argument now.

Sally Desmond thumbing his nose at the working class



sanction staff going on psychology or speech therapy training courses, for example. There's no money for the courses and no money to bring in the replacements for the staff.

Throughout the country, patients being discharged from hospitals are no longer being given transport home.

All this is being done by a Government which cheerfully admits that £600 million disappeared last year into a "black hole"—"black hole" being a euphemism for the bank accounts of rotten-rich multinational capitalists—and which taxes the PAYE sector to the hilt but allows big business and the ranchers to get off virtually scot-free.

Resistance to these attacks on the rights of working class patients has been almost non-existent. The unions organised in the health service have produced no strategy whatsoever for a fightback. Yet it is only the health service workers who are in a position to fight back.

A campaign of industrial action to defeat any new

threatened cut and for restoration of services could attract massive support from many thousands of workers. But, as is the case with the public sector pay freeze, the union bosses back away from a real challenge to government strategy.

The small groups of militant workers who do exist within the health service must themselves take the initiative and begin arguing and organising now for outright resistance to the cuts.

If a lead is given in any one area it could spark off militancy elsewhere, given the widespread deep anger at the savagery of Desmond's attacks. And the lead will have to come from the rank-and-file, from below, because it certainly is not going to come from the top.

bronchitis, rheumatism, etc. Workers suffering from such diseases have produced the wealth which allows the parasite class to equip their own hospitals with computer systems and laboratory complexes which allow them to do immediate X-rays and tests on their patients and have the results flashed on the doctor's personal computer screen within minutes. Most working class people needing "tests" have to wait months, sometimes years.

Similarly, the operating theatres in these hospitals are equipped with the most up to date equipment. There are no waiting lists for even the most delicate and difficult operations. Surgeons intend to carry out open-heart surgery and even transplants for those who have the money to buy longer lives.

It is of course obscene that the rich should be able to buy better health care and longer lives than workers. But it is just one more obscenity in the system that brings us war, famine and unnecessary disease. It is a system that can, and must be smashed.



Danish workers march on the parliament that was imposing a wage freeze for the public sector. This massive strike in April of this year is a powerful example to Irish workers. It began with the token one day stoppage called by the union leaders. Initially there was little enthusiasm. But when the union leaders backed down after a government order banning strikes, the rank and file took the lead. Hundreds of shop stewards in Copenhagen, Aarhus, Randers and other towns called an unofficial mass general strike. Delegations of pickets were sent from job to job to call workers out. The enthusiasm and militancy terrified the union leaders. Unfortunately, the advent of Easter broke the momentum and allowed the bureaucrats to re-gain control. For three brief days, Danish workers taught us all how to fight.

Ireland after Britain - what SF say

A FEW months ago, the letters page of An Phoblacht contained a debate between supporters of Sinn Fein and of the Socialist Workers Movement about the nature of Sinn Fein politics. Most of the letters in support of Sinn Fein claimed that it was a socialist organisation and that the aim of the republican movement is socialist revolution. Marx and Lenin were quoted (generally out of context) to excuse the nationalist politics which dominate this "socialist" party.

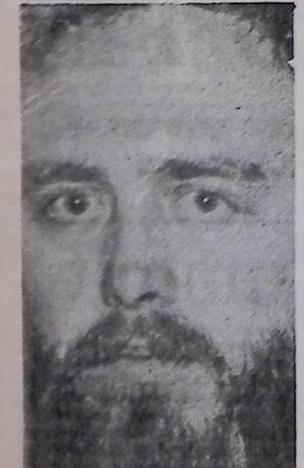
The publication of Ireland after Britain should end that debate. In this book, leaders of the Republican Left including Gerry Adams and Danny Morrison set out clearly and unambiguously what it is that republicans are fighting for.

Ireland after Britain is a collection of interviews intended to continue the debate started in the British Labour Party when the GLC invited Gerry Adams to London and when Ken Livingstone visited Belfast.

For all his political weaknesses and sell-outs, Ken Livingstone is probably the best British politician when it comes to condemning British imperialism in this country. He admits the disgraceful record of the British Labour Party on Ireland and dismisses those who refuse to support the anti-imperialist struggle because it is not socialist.

"We would have laughed at people who said to us during the Algerian War that it was a pity that the people struggling for freedom in Algeria were quite nationalistic. We would have laughed at anyone who said that about the people fighting to liberate Vietnam"

The problem with Livingstone, as with many Left Republicans, is that he thinks that Sinn Fein's radical nationalism is, in fact, socialism.



Danny Morrison

"I have not heard a single sentiment from the people I've met in Sinn Fein that should not come from a genuinely socialist party". And herein lies

And herein lies the rub. Because SF is not a socialist organisation. Socialist Worker says this regularly and annoys the republican left by doing so.

In Ireland after Britain, Gerry Adams without realising it backs Socialist Worker's analysis. What is at issue for republicans he says, is "which is the best way to move the British government to concede national freedom?" Partition explains Adams, is "an obstruction, a distortion, and an obstacle to progress towards any sort of class politics along the lines of Left and Right".

And once partition goes, what then? Left republicans like to tell us that the struggle will continue until socialism has been won. Adams however, is less certain: I presume that if partition goes as part of a British withdrawal, then regardless of what sort of institutions are left, there will be a coming together of people who have the same class interests over the whole of Ireland. In just the same way as De Valera's government was able to change some of the things that were insulting to them, so a strongly working-class-based nationalist movement or government would be able to claw back some of the things whose loss remains most insulting to their class".

Socialist revolution is not on the cards but a right-wing backlash may be. The best we can hope for is 32 County version of the Left-Right political situation in places like Britain, France, Germany. Not a pleasant prospect.

Danny Morrison is more optimistic. "It wouldn't be worth all the sacrifices of struggle", he says "if at the conclusion you did not succeed in winning a free society". Absolutely right, Danny. Just what we always say. But how does comrade Morrison define a "free society"?

"I would like to see workers' control of what they are producing and their having a major say in what is done with it"

A major say? Surely workers' control of production implies us having absolute say in what is done with the wealth we produce? But no says Morrison. "I also think that the government has to have a say in it too." Ah then, the workers aren't the government. We are to have some control of production but are to be governed from above by some group or party which will know what is good for us whether we agree or not.



Gerry Adams

As Morrison puts it: "If the government is properly representative of a revolution then it will have an overview of the national interest which might look different from how it would in a particular locality. That sounds slightly Stalinist, but it isn't really."

It is actually. In a workers' republic, how could "the government" have a different view to the workers? True an individual workers' council or tenants' organisation might be overruled by the view of the majority of workers' organisations. But there can be no such thing as a workers' state where there is separation of workers' institutions and institutions of the state. That is a Stalinist lie.

A central principle of socialist democracy is accountability—that the people who make decisions should be accountable to those who are affected by them. And while Morrison is right to say you can't have blueprints for the future, this principle of workers' democracy is one which must be a vital ingredient of socialism.

"The government" then, in a workers' republic would be made up of workers' representatives, elected from the workplaces, etc and subject to immediate recall—that is, to being "unelected" at any time if they fail to represent the interests of the people, or council, or co-operative which elected them. That kind of workers democracy would ensure that our class interests would always be represented by "the government". And if they weren't, "the government" would be immediately replaced.

Morrison is quite explicit though, that this kind of workers' revolution is NOT what Sinn Fein is about: "We are not out to set up a communist or marxist dictatorship in Ireland. The only people who say that are the American government when they are trying to deprive us of financial support from the United States. We are absolutely and totally in favour of political pluralism."

This is definitely something which the ruling class will be glad to hear. Political pluralism to them means power to the minority who steal the wealth produced by the working class.

This doesn't mean that marxists are against political pluralism. It just depends on the context. Political pluralism among the working class in a workers' state is absolutely necessary and to be encouraged but marxists don't recognise the right of those who have oppressed and exploited workers for centuries to try to

BILLY BRAGG'S SOCIALISM

"I don't want to change the world, I'm not looking for a New England"

So sang Billy Bragg with the Kirsty Mc Coll hit at the SFX Hall in Dublin at the end of September. And it soon became obvious that he's NOT looking to change the world.

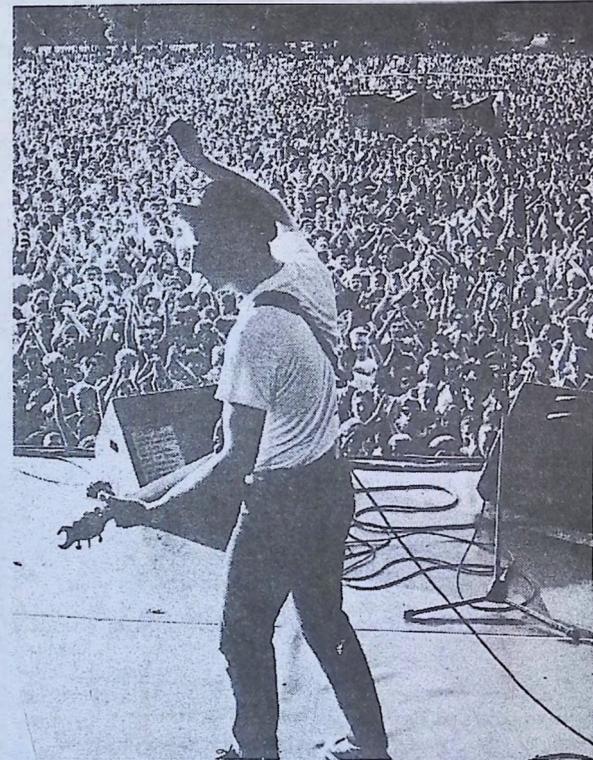
Billy Bragg is known for his political songs. He made a name for himself during the British miners' strike as someone who supports workers' struggles. Someone who is on the side of the oppressed against the oppressor. Many of those who had come to hear him in the SFX were there because of his left-wing politics.

Sadly Bragg proved unable to break with the British ruling class when it comes to support for the armed struggle

in the North. He had the cheek to compare Thatcher's imperialist war in the Falklands to the anti-imperialist war in which the IRA are engaged.

When SWM members shouted protests at this comparison Bragg replied "no matter what you say mate, anyone killing someone else is barbarism".

This attitude shows a fatal weakness in Bragg's Labour Party politics. He and most of those who supported him by trying to silence the SWM



Billy Bragg at one of the many benefit gigs he has played

re-impose their ideas of minority mis-rule. Their class interests are in direct opposition to those of the working class and as such will have to be suppressed in a workers' state, just as ours are now under capitalism.

It is this kind of suppression that marxists refer to when we talk about the need for a "dictatorship of the proletariat" immediately after the revolution. As long as the former ruling class are capable of re-asserting their rule, then the working class will have to act as a collective dictatorship to protect our newly-won rights until international working class revolution guarantees that capitalism has been smashed once and for all.

Few organisations have their politics mis-represented as much as Sinn Fein does. For that reason I would recommend anyone who is interested in republicanism to read Ireland after Britain. In it you will find spelt out exactly what Sinn Fein are about—the setting up of an independent 32 County state where things would be somewhat better for most and perhaps much better for the nationalist community of the Six Counties. Nonetheless, a state where workers are not in power and where capitalists would still exploit and oppress. A country where the fight for real freedom would have to start all over again.

Ireland after Britain, ed. Martin Collins, Pluto with Labour and Ireland, £3.95 stg.

hecklers would almost certainly support the struggles of workers in Central and Latin America, in the Philippines or South Africa. They might not like it, but they would not condemn acts of violence such as the bombing to death of collaborators by black South Africans. Yet they condemn any and every act of violence to which the IRA are forced by the violence and repression of the British state. To them the definition of a freedom fighter is someone fighting at least 5,000 miles away.

Bragg's attitude was pretty much that of the Militant tendency. He doesn't need to have a position on the war in the North. All he wants is unity of the working class against the bosses. But we don't live in an abstract, perfect world. In the real world we have to make choices.

Bragg sang a song about the miners' strike called "Which side are you on". This song made it clear that you could be on the side of the miners or on Thatcher's side, there was no in-between. The same goes for the war in the North. Either you're on Thatcher's side or on the side of the Provos. There is no in-between.

The politics of the Provos may be, and are, lousy. But our political criticisms of republicanism don't give us the luxury of sitting on the fence. It is not possible to be a socialist and not be clearly and unambiguously on the side of the Provos against British imperialism and its Orange henchmen.

Bragg may sing good songs about the power of workers in common struggle and he's absolutely right about the need for unity among workers. But its imperialism that divides workers in the North, not the Provos. In refusing to face up to this, the politics of Bragg and the Militant can never challenge the sectarianism of loyalist workers and so can never lead workers in the Six Counties to socialism.



SWM

PUBLIC MEETINGS

PORTLAOISE: 'Why the Third World is starving' Speaker: Tom O'Donoghue. Weds Oct 9th Henderson's Hotel

DUBLIN: 'The Pay Freeze - which way for the Public Sector Unions?' Speaker: Eamonn McCann. Tues. 15th October. CIE Hall, Marlboro Street (Behind Clerys)

SOUTH AFRICAN SPEAKING TOUR OCTOBER 27 - 31

The SWM is organising a national speaking tour on South Africa. The meetings will be held in the colleges and in towns. The main speaker is Bruce George. Bruce is a South African exile who was forced to flee his country after the Soweto riots. He has experienced first hand the brutality and viciousness of the South African system. He is fully up to date on the political situation facing the black working class. Since coming to Britain he joined the Socialist Workers Party. We urge our readers to make a special effort to get to these meetings to hear the revolutionary socialist case on South Africa.

BELFAST: Monday 28th October, Queens University.

DUBLIN: Tuesday 29th Oct. CIE HALL, Marlboro Street

WATERFORD: Weds 30th Oct. Venue to be announced

CORK: Thursday 31st Oct. Connolly Hall, Ladds Quay

REGULAR MEETINGS

DUBLIN SOUTH: Meets every Tuesday, Kilbride's pub, Thomas St.

DUBLIN CENTRAL: Meets every Thursday, details phone 971036

WATERFORD: meets every Monday, details local paper seller

GALWAY: meets Tuesday, details local paper seller

DUNDALK: meets every second Wednesday, details phone 36868

CORK: meets every Thursday; details phone 932828

For further details or information on meetings in Belfast, Portlaoise or Dungarvan - contact local paper seller or write to the national address:

SWM P O BOX 1648, DUBLIN 8.



College cleaners going strong

AGAINST all the odds, the striking cleaners at UCD are holding firm. And support for them is growing.

They are now in with a real chance of beating the intransigent UCD management and scoring a significant victory for all part-time workers and for rank and file union organisation.

The 23 women have been on the picket line since July 31st when they were declared redundant by Contract Cleaners Ltd. In a cost-cutting exercise UCD had given the contract for the Arts and Library buildings to a different firm which is doing the work in three hours rather than four a day. The drop in hours would have meant a wage cut for the women, even if they had been offered jobs by the new firm. In addition they'd have fallen out of the PRSI system and lost all entitlements.

SCABS

When they refused to go along with this, scab labour was brought in.

The women are members of the No. 11 Branch of the ITGWU. The union made their strike official - but only when they agreed to end a week-long

sit in at the college premises. Since then, the determined militancy of the women has shaken UCD management - as well as the top leadership of the ITGWU which, if it had been left to itself, would have thrown in the towel long ago.

ALL-OUT

Initially, the ITGWU officials made a complete botch of applying for an all-out picket. It got the all-out, not for UCD but for the offices of Contract Cleaners Ltd five miles away. Four weeks were allowed to elapse before the all-out was placed as officials dithered and dallied. And it was then withdrawn within a week when the FWUI proved unable or unwilling to instruct its members at CCL to respect the picket!

However, the women were winning support from other workers at the college. Building workers on a campus site came out on a one-day unofficial stoppage on 2nd Sept. after shop steward Marie Lenihan addressed a canteen meeting.

This provided the momentum for a one-day general stoppage at the college a fortnight later which was 90% effective.

And all unionised cleaners - mainly FWUI members have agreed to come out on unlimited stoppage from 7th October.

The constant pressure from the women has prevented the union bureaucracy from backsliding into defeat. The women have been on the picket line every morning from 5 a.m. and have been involved in confrontations with the scabs and their garda escorts. They have established links with shop stewards in the college and have constantly argued their case directly to other workers. It is this which has sustained the strike.

JOSTLING

The militancy of the women has not been matched by the Liberty Hall establishment.

One example: on 23 Sept. there was a mild bout of jostling between the pickets and scabs. No blows were struck or damage done. But two days later the ITGWU issued a written statement to the women warning that official backing would be withdrawn if there was any further "violence" and warning them not even to attack the scabs verbally!



PHOTO: Derek Speirs (Report)

Striking cleaners at UCD

This from the union of Connolly and Larkin add the lock-out of 1913!

However, as long as the women are united and determined the union will find it difficult to ditch them. And as other workers continue to back them, the important issues at the heart of the dispute are coming to the fore.

REPRESENTATION

These include not only the rights of all part-time workers to statutory entitlements and the rights of women workers in particular to proper union representation. The strike also

raises the whole question of privatisation in the public sector.

PRIVATISATION

A victory for the UCD women would give a great boost to all workers fighting cost-cutting privatisation schemes. It would give heart to thousands of part-time women workers who are frequently a forgotten section of the working class.

The experience of the last two months shows that their best hope of victory lies in their own efforts and organisation, in meeting together to

discuss not just picketing rotas but to decide what needs to be done, pushing the union all the time and taking their own initiative when needs be.

PROSPECT

The stoppage by the other cleaners at a time when the college is going back into top gear for the new term opens up the prospect of forcing UCD management to back down and renegotiate its cleaning contracts at union rates of pay and acceptable conditions.

And with all 23 women strikers back in jobs at the college.

Cork ESB men step up strike

THE Unofficial strike of ATGWU members in Cork is continuing and has escalated in the past few weeks.

The strike began because of ESB management's refusal to abide by a 1975 agreement whereby management was to refer any change of job definition or working conditions to an agreed procedure.

In the past two or three years, ESB management all over the country have been trying to breach this agreement. Workers in Tralee, Drogheda and Dublin have been disciplined for refusing to obey management's instructions where the agreement has not been adhered to. In Cork, the workers were given notice of the ESB's intention to breach the agreement. Two years ago when Morley took over as manager, he said quite openly that he would not be bound by it.

However, he didn't realise that he was dealing with workers who stand by trade union principles and do not take other workers' jobs. When he ordered two linesmen to do drivers' jobs, they refused and were sacked. The men received no support from their union and their fellow workers came out unofficially in solidarity. The strikers had few illusions that they might get support; the local official, they told *Socialist Worker* "is a right rat".

The strike has become very bitter. Some of the supervisors have scabbed on the strikers, doing linesmen's jobs and reconnecting houses which

were affected by an accidental cutting of power lines. The strikers immediately put pickets on the scabs' homes, thereby earning themselves the condemnation of the *Cork Examiner and Evening Echo*. But say the strikers "we have no sympathy with scabs and besides its stopping them doing our work". And picketing the scabs' homes has proved most successful in ensuring that there are no repeats.

One of the areas blacked out by the strike was Douglas. The local papers carried on a war of words against the strikers supposedly on behalf of the residents. An SWM member whose home was blacked out organised a letter of support for the strikers, putting the blame where it belongs - on the management. The letter was signed by several local residents whose homes were with out electricity; it was sent to the papers. Not surprisingly, it never appeared.

In early September attempts were made to spread the strike to the Marina and Aghada generating stations. These attempts failed, mainly because of union interference. If the strikers are to win, they will have to back to Aghada and the Marina, talk to meetings of the workers in those plants and argue with them for solidarity action. Only when the Marina and Aghada stop producing electricity will the strike really start to be felt. Then it will be possible to show the strike as the national issue it really is and the ESB bosses will be forced to climb down. — Cork SWM

PORTLAOISE SWM OPENS DOLE SALE

PORTLAOISE SWM - In addition to our regular pub sale of *Socialist Worker*, we have recently begun a paper sale at the dole office, selling 29 papers in our first attempt. We have widely distributed a leaflet attacking the calls for wider police powers, in response to a proposal that a "neighbourhood Watch" be

established in the town.

A public meeting on the topic of "law and order" is being planned for early November.

We are also holding a public meeting on the Politics of Famine with Tom O'Donoghue on October 9th. in Hendersons Hotel at 8pm.

—WILLIE PHELAN

Cutbacks to blame for Corpo trench death

A CORPORATION worker was killed last month when the sides of a cutting caved in on top of him at a sewerage job in Hatch St. The man was a general operative (G.O.)

Normally the sides of these cuttings are shored up with planks by carpenters to prevent the cutting from collapsing. But for the last couple of years because of cutbacks which involved a ban on recruitment management have been pressurising G.O.s to the shoring up themselves, as only four carpenters are employed in the entire Waterworks Dept.

The death of this man is due entirely to those cutbacks. The G.O.s are still being instructed to do this work but are now refusing. One of their unions, the FWUI has issued circulars since the death instructing their members to refuse to carry out an unsafe instruction and to state why when doing so. The union has promised its support to anyone victimised following a refusal of such an instruction.

The craft unions met with management on 30th Sept. to discuss

the setting up of a safety seminar and they also demanded that protective clothing be provided on jobs where they are required. Craft union members have been instructed not to carry out those jobs until they are provided with the necessary clothing.

The man who died left a wife and four children. Hopefully they will get substantial compensation as the work of shoring up was not that of a G.O. and as the FWUI imply in their circular that the cutting in Hatch was unsafe. But money is small compensation to a family which has lost a father.

This death must be laid directly at the door of the Corporation bosses. And it should lead to a push by the unions to demand an immediate end to the embargo on recruitment. While safety seminars and protective clothing are necessary and welcome, workers' lives will continue to be endangered by the cuts until we start to fight back.

CHARLIE NOLAN

Glass workers miss out on boom profits

— by Waterford SWM

WATERFORD Glass has turned in record profits. The half yearly profit figures show a bumper 28% increase on the last year. The shareholders are delighted with themselves. They each got an interim 11% higher dividend. But the rich and lazy cannot be easily satisfied. One shareholder complained that their dividend should have been even higher.

The workers at the firm have not fared so well. This year they have to make do with a 7% increase. That is before the full whack of PAYE tax that glass workers know all about. The figure is significant. It is just below the current rate for the 25th wage round. But this is a factory that is extremely profitable and where bosses and shareholders are falling over themselves in glee.

LUMBERED

Worse still, the Glass workers are lumbered with a three year deal which will only give them 8% for each of the next two years. Meanwhile Panmur Gordon, the company brokers have predicted a further record profit of £18 million this year. This is bound to increase for the period of the three year wage deal. Since Globe Investments bought the company for a mere £17 million, its value

has risen to £27 million.

Looked at from this viewpoint the three year deal is a disaster for the workers. At the time it seemed to offer relatively high wage increases for the unions. But it has tied their hands behind their backs. Now the wage increases look and are, miserly beside the huge company profits. In the meantime job losses at the factory are continuing. New technology continues to creep in without compensation or guarantees on job losses. Workers now have to work harder to maintain their standard of living.

REPUDIATE

The shop stewards at Waterford Glass should not be afraid to repudiate this 3 year deal. Clearly the company is gaining most from it. But to throw over the deal would mean setting out on a different strategy from that which the shop stewards have operated for the last few years.

It would mean taking the issue to the shop floor, section by section and winning the arguments for militancy. The huge profits at Waterford Glass should give an impetus to militancy and shop floor organisation. It's up to the shop stewards to make sure that happens.

Socialist Worker

Anglo-Irish talks:

The gun that fires twelve plastic bullets every minute

AS THE Campaign against the use of Plastic Bullets will tell you, there have been more than 43,000 plastic bullets fired in the North since 1975—killing at least 12 people. There can only be more deaths resulting from the invention of the Arwen 37—a gun developed with the advice of army and police experts at a Royal Ordnance factory to Ministry of Defence specification. Plastic bullets are fired at 170 miles per hour, are made from solid PVC and weigh three and three quarter ounces—about the same as a cricket ball.

Under law they are only meant to be fired at the lower part of the body from at least 20 metres.

All 12 deaths have been from head or chest injuries. Some from a plastic bullet fired only yards away.

Many more have been scarred and maimed. Injuries include skull fractures, fractured jaw and limbs, blinding, damage to internal organs, brain damage and wounds that need over 40 stitches.

The Arwen 37 is capable of firing 12 rounds a minute. It can also deliver CS gas canisters—four at a time.

Its introduction to the streets of the Six Counties is just another part of the armoury of repression which the nationalist community have to face.

STOP STRIP SEARCH

STRIP-SEARCHES started in Armagh in 1982. To date over 2,000 women have endured this violation of their bodies.

Thatcher's answer to the thousands of petitions handed to her is "Security". In fact, women appearing in court make a twenty minute outing from the prison, they are under escort, which is supported by an RUC armed guard and the woman does not come into any physical contact with anyone.

That woman will be strip searched before and after leaving her cell, which means standing naked in front of 6-15 prison staff. She is searched inside and outside. If she refuses the search, she will be beaten and forcibly stripped and searched.

No woman is excused from these "necessary routines"—pregnant women have been strip-searched and after giving birth, mothers and their babies have been searched.

Strip-searching has been condemned by people such as Tony Benn, Arthur Scargill and Fianna Fail TDs and church leaders, but this is only moral condemnation. Such support cannot win this issue.

Make up your mind time for FitzGerald

IT'S MAKE or break time for the Anglo-Irish talks.

The series of leaks over the summer has made the shape of the deal which Thatcher is offering FitzGerald very clear. The Coalition will have to decide very soon whether to accept it or not.

Thatcher has stood firm by her "out, out, out" attitude to the three options put forward by the New Ireland Forum. The Dublin government is to be given no real say in how the North is run. At best, it will be given a "consultative" role, which means that it will be allowed to express its opinions and the Brits will be free to ignore them.

The internal "reforms" which are on offer hardly amount to reforms at all. The demand that the sectarian UDR be abolished has been rejected out of hand. Instead, the Brits have offered that the RUC will train UDR men how to be more courteous to Catholics at road-blocks and are apparently considering allowing the RUC complaints committee to investigate allegations against the UDR. This is a bit like Hitler telling the Jews that the Gestapo would investigate complaints of anti-semitism against the SS.

TRICOLOUR

At the same time it seems that concessions are to be made to the Catholics' "national identity". This appears to mean that Irish-language street names will be permitted, it will no longer be an automatic crime to display the tricolour, there might be more money for Irish-language schools and classes and some formal recognition of the GAA, etc.

There will be no determined

effort to root out discrimination against Catholics in jobs, although some reports have it that the Fair Employment Agency might be beefed up with increased staff and a bigger budget.

In effect, the sectarian structure of the Northern state is to be left untouched while a few cosmetic measures give the appearance of Catholics getting a better deal.

COLLABORATION

In exchange for this, the Dublin government would be expected to increase collaboration on security, cracking down harder on Republicans and cooperating much more closely with the RUC and the British Army in border areas. And Free State judges might be expected to involve themselves with Northern judges in a combined offensive against "subversion".

None of this is a recipe for "peace" because it doesn't begin to deal with the causes of violence. The violence is rooted in the structures of the Northern state and these cannot be fundamentally altered while the Northern state continues to exist. Sectarianism is the irreformable essence of the Northern state.

The only force which can defeat sectarianism is the working class. The class represented by the Coalition and Fianna Fail cannot do it because they cannot break with Britain. Through the EEC, the banking system and what Connolly called "the innumerable golden threads" which link them together, the capitalists of Ireland and Britain are part of the same



system. And within this set-up, the Irish ruling class is very much the junior partner. FitzGerald could no more take on Thatcher than a branch manager of a Heinz bean factory could take on Tony O'Reilly. When Thatcher tells

him that there's to be no fundamental change in the North, that's that.

It follows from this as night follows day that class politics are the only answer. The notion that you can get rid of the Brits and end the Northern

state without at the same time getting rid of capitalism is a dangerous fantasy. It is De Valeraism all over again.

Republicans who don't face up squarely to that—and the Sinn Fein leadership certainly hasn't—will pay dearly for it.

SUPPORT

Those of us who were around during the H Block campaign will remember how ten political prisoners died on hunger strike, no moral support could have or did save these prisoners.

There are three campaigns now that are trying to fight the results of imperialism in the North: Strip-searching, Rubber bullets and Supergrasses. None can be won by calling on bourgeois politicians North or South.

Strip-searching is a political issue. Men and women, North and South—for example in Portlaoise—are being strip-searched every day. The fact that it is women in Armagh should not make it simply a feminist issue. For example, we do not campaign for an end to Loyalist women prisoners being strip-searched.

We call for an end to strip-searches of anti-imperialist prisoners and for rank-and-file trade union committees geared to involving the working class North and South.

We have wasted enough time on bourgeois politicians and Church leaders in the struggle against imperialism.

—CAROL MERRIMAN

PUBLIC MEETINGS

"South Africa: The Road to Revolution"

Belfast, Dublin. Waterford, Cork

Details: see page 6