

Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism 35p

Inside:

PUBLIC SECTOR:

How the Union leaders sold out

Turn to page 3

We can't live on promises

Fianna Fail love to make promises. But they are always promises that they can break.

Bertie Ahern has promised public sector workers that he will pay their full pay increases in 1994. Tragically, the union leaders believed him.

He promises that the recession will be over then and that there will be plenty of money in the kitty.

But would you believe a Fianna Fail promise?

In 1987, the party got elected to government on the slogan of promising to reverse the cuts that hurt the old, the sick and the handicapped.

As soon as they got elected they made matters worse. They slashed spending on

health so much that patients were being treated in corridors.

Fianna Fail also promised to abolish water rates. But on the local councils their councillors voted to keep the service charges.

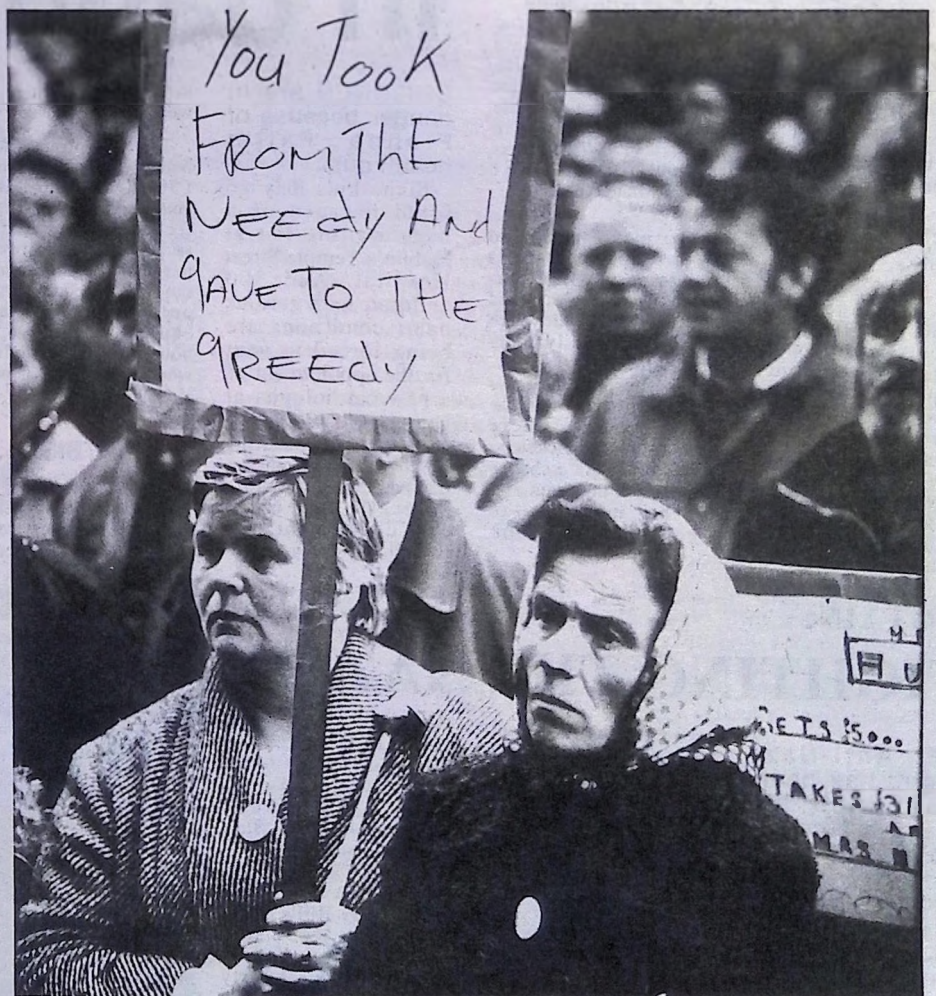
When Fianna Fail sat down with the union leaders to draw up the Programme for Economic and Social Progress they said they would reduce the pupil teacher ratio in our schools.

Now they say that they have no money for this.

Fianna Fail have plenty of money when it comes to helping out their rich friends.

Pino Harris and Dermot Desmond have made a fortune by being friends with FF.

The only time that FF keep their promises is when it will help the fat cats out.



KICK FIANNA FAIL OUT!

SECTION 23 RENT SCAM

PROPERTY developers are being given huge handouts by the state to purchase property in certain areas and then rent them out to tenants.

Section 23 of the 1981 Finance Act has helped investors to build or buy thousands of brand new apartments or houses. They can then claim tax relief for the cost of building the houses or flat complexes.

You might think that the benefits would be passed on to the tenant in the form of lower rent. But the *Irish Times* reports rents of £80 per week per person and a director of Tudor Homes says, "I suppose you would have to describe the tenants as yuppies."

Contrast this with the assistance given to those in real need of housing.

Local authority house building is at a virtual standstill. From the mid-80s, when an average of 5,500 houses were built each year, the figure is now 400 a year. For the 4,377 applications on Dublin Corporation's waiting list last year there were 25 houses built.

Homelessness is on the increase, with emigrants being forced to return to Ireland because of the recession in Britain and the US, with nowhere to live. The National Campaign for the Homeless estimates that upwards of five thousand adults and seven hundred young people are homeless at any one time.

The insulting response to the housing crisis from Fianna Fail in their glossy "Plan for Social Housing" is to encourage people to own their homes rather than rely on the state to provide for them. Meanwhile, the property developers can rest assured that the state will continue to generously provide for them.

DERRY: SPUC SCUPPERED

ON 17 December SPUC held a public meeting in Derry to organise opposition to the setting up a Brook Centre in Belfast. Robert Whelan from Family and Youth Concern in London was flown in specially for the meeting.

The local branch of SWM, with the Campaign for Information and Choice, organised a picket of the meeting. The picket was very successful, with more people outside than were going into the meeting.

When we saw ten to twelve young women going in, the picket voted to go into the meeting to put the arguments in

favour of young people's right to sex education and choice on birth control.

The arguments coming from the platform were disgraceful. Single parents were blamed for everything from juvenile crime to the war in Yugoslavia. There was much talk of "illegitimate children".

The picketers argued against this poisonous filth, causing SPUC Secretary Kathleen McQuaid to admit that they are against all family planning clinics.

By the end of the meeting, most of the young people there agreed with the picketers. SPUC never got a chance to carry out the main aim of the meeting—to organise anti-Brook activity in Derry.

BRITAIN: FIGHTING THE NAZIS

THE Anti-Nazi League has been relaunched in Britain. It aims to stop the growth of the fascist British National Party.

In the late 1970s the ANL took on the National Front which at one stage got 100,000 votes in Britain. It mobilised thousands in counter-demonstrations to demoralise and finally smash the NF.

Today, economic crisis has given a boost to the extreme right in Europe.

In France, Le Pen's Front Nationale has fifteen percent of the vote. In Germany the Republican Party and other right-wing groups are growing.

ATTACKS

The threat in Britain is not yet as severe, but racist attacks have increased. The BNP has had several demonstrations and needs to be taken on.

The new ANL is sponsored by various television, sport and arts personalities. They include comedians Dawn

CLASS IN THE CLASSROOM

EDUCATION is a class system. A recent study showed how it is easier for better-off kids to get to university.

More than half the students who entered University College Cork in 1989 had extra tuition in one or more subjects. Many students aiming for university spent up to £700 on "grinds" and

extra tuition.

Less than thirty percent of the 1989 UCC entrants had followed the "normal route"—the basic five-year cycle. Students from wealthier families followed a "seven-year route" backed up by extra tuition.

Last year an ESRI study of school leavers found that over ninety percent of students with poor qualifications came from deprived working class homes. In half of these cases the father was

unemployed.

Overcrowded classes mainly occur in working class areas. In many cases, special teachers are forced to teach ordinary classes due to lack of staff.

"Reducing the pupil-teacher ratio" was one of the "non-pay" elements of the PESP. Fianna Fail's failure to provide more teachers goes hand in hand with the attack on teachers' pay.

DAVE McDONAGH



FIFTH COLUMN

ALBERT PAYS LOW WAGES



BOSSES' DOOM AND GLOOM

BOSSES are promising no swift end to unemployment. A recent survey found that one-third of top Irish companies expect to shed jobs in 1992.

Forty percent will keep the same number of workers and just 25 percent expect to take on more staff.

The next time Fianna Fail claim that they are solving the jobs crisis remember that their rich pals have no plans to do so.

N.Y. GAYS TAKE ON BIGOTS

BIGOTS are again trying to stop Irish gays and lesbians from marching in New York's St Patrick's Day parade.

Last year the Ancient Order of Hibernians stopped the Irish Lesbian and Gay Organisation from having their own banner on the march. This year the AOH is unseated by the Emerald Society of the New York Police Department, who passed a motion to keep the gay group out of the parade.

In the 1990 parade the group marched as individuals but were booed for forty blocks and showed with beer.

Since then some of the group have been victimised. One building worker was ostracised and hounded out by other workers led by his boss.

A teacher, Brendan Fay, was sacked by a Catholic high school. Some gays and lesbians have had to return to Ireland because of attacks.

But the group has some support and plans to take action—possible a counter-parade—if the bigots stop them from marching again.

HEALTH CUTS: Kids' lives in danger

CHILDREN are in danger because of Fianna Fail's health cuts.

Some kids may go blind because of a huge waiting list at Dublin's Temple Street Hospital. And 300 children with serious heart conditions are being forced to wait for the appointment of a new cardiologist at Crumlin Hospital.

Children are waiting for six to nine months for treatment at Temple Street. The head of the eye department, Dr

Bowell, says they should be treated within six weeks.

The department's budget for 1992 is only £500,000. Facilities amount to a room twenty feet long and ten feet wide, where up to twelve patients are seen at a time. Basic equipment is out of date and new equipment has to be bought through charity work. The department is also understaffed.

AT RISK
Babies with congenital cataracts are most at risk. They must be operated on

between six weeks and three months of birth.

The waiting list for heart treatment at Crumlin Hospital is putting three hundred kids at risk—two hundred need urgent attention. The heart surgery unit treats children from all over the country but cannot function properly until a new cardiologist is employed.

Meanwhile over a thousand adults are waiting for heart by-pass operations in Dublin's Mater Hospital. New facilities are still "being considered".

DAVE McDONAGH



Ernie Roberts and Paul Holborow, ANL

"NO SEX PLEASE" - DAVERN

THE new Education Minister Noel Davern is less than enthusiastic about sex education in primary schools.

"My initial reaction is that I should hate to see the innocence of children taken away by bringing heavy matters to bear on them," he said.

What's next? A ban on telling anyone under twelve that there's no Santa Claus?

Snatching defeat from jaws of victory

Has Fianna Fail got away with it again? In January, thousands of public sector workers stood ready to take strike action against the attacks on their pay. Even the police and prison officers were about to join the strikes. But while the protests were building up, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions was preparing a sell-out. Their aim was to use the anger to get back into a social partnership with the Fianna Fail/Progressive Democrat government.

The union leaders called off the strike on January 28 for little more than a Fianna Fail promise. Ahern said he will make good the pay cuts to public sector workers by 1994. Only minor concessions were made on public pay in 1992.

But Ahern can easily make these promises. He probably won't be in government in 1994. The chances of any government

honouring these promises are virtually nil.

The Irish government is committed to reducing government borrowing to 2% of GNP in the coming years in order to join the European Monetary Union. They will have no intention of paying out back pay to public sector workers.

Ahern saved his government £100 million in public sector wage increases. The same amount was handed out to Larry Goodman in an export credit scheme.

WEALTHY

There is no problem finding money for Fianna Fail's wealthy friends. But the kitty is empty when it comes to public sector workers.

The anger that built up over the PESP pay increases is part of the new mood developing among Irish workers. Recent opinion polls show that 80% of people have no confidence in politicians. 76% believe that the recent spate of scandals were 'part and parcel of the system'

Many commentators now talk about a tremendous cynicism in Irish society. But they presume that the mass of workers will always be apathetic.

But this 'apathy' is double edged. It can easily turn into a massive show of anger. In the run up to the protest strike on January 28 a new sense of life

was beginning to return to the unions. In the banks (see page 11) thousands of workers turned up to meetings on low pay and voted for strike action.

The new mood is by no means confident. Many workers accept the union leaders arguments about limited strikes. But a new minority of militants is emerging.

So far the union leaders have managed to de-mobilise that anger. But they may not get away with it too easily. In the coming month, union meetings and ballots will be held on the issue. Socialists should be to the fore in pointing out that Flynn, Attley and O Dowd are tied to capitalism and THAT is why they sell out.



As killings rise...

More troops

No solution

'I want more policemen and I want more troops and the sooner I get them, the better,' said RUC Chief Hugh Annesley after the killing of seven building workers by the IRA in January.

In the wake of the killings, 500 more British troops were flown in. 30,000 troops, police and UDR personnel are now operating in Northern Ireland.

But instead of doing anything

to lessen the violence, they only serve to increase it.

The violence is the rotten fruit of British rule. For decades the Northern state condemned thousands to a life of poverty because of their religion.

Its first security forces were recruited directly from Orange Halls. As a result to live in West Belfast or the Bogside today is to face a life of harassment and insults.

It is this which drives people to join the IRA. No amount of moral humbug about 'fanaticism' or hypocrisy can hide that fact.

point to no way of winning. Increasingly its methods become counterproductive.

This is most obvious in the case of the Cookstown killings. The British army will not be driven out of Ireland by the IRA depriving them of access to building supplies and Labour. If that were the case, they would have left the Falklands long ago.

Nor can the workers movement be forced through terror to isolate the security forces.

The IRA believes that it alone is the 'cutting edge' in the fight against the British army. All its tactics are now subordinated to military considerations. This is why it takes no account of the effect of killing seven Protestant building workers.

SUBVENTION

Today the Northern state would not exist without being propped up by Britain. The annual subvention from Westminster has risen from £100 million in 1972 to £2 billion today.

The presence of the troops is a guarantee that the British ruling class will back this state no matter how reluctantly they may feel about it. Until they are removed the cycle of violence will go on.

The tragedy of the North is that the politics and methods of republicanism offer no way forward for doing this. Republicanism is a vehicle for the anger of a minority but it can

A socialist strategy would attempt to develop a mass movement to fight against the presence of the British army. That can be done. In 1989, on the 20th anniversary of the troops going in to the North 13,000 people took to the streets of Dublin to protest.

But to build on that hostility to the troops and turn it into an active anger would demand a set of politics which showed why it was in every workers direct interest to fight against the British army. The nationalist politics of Sinn Fein and the IRA have no way of doing this. Increasingly they lead to a dead end.



ONE YEAR AFTER THE WAR ...

BUSH'S GULF LIES

A YEAR ago Bush unleashed the Gulf war. The horror of war was covered up by talk of "collateral damage". After it finished, Bush

promised a new world order. Here GER TUOHY and VICTORIA KAVANAGH look at the lies behind the US propaganda machine.

A recently published report by Middle East Watch exposes the lie that the US-led allied forces only targeted military installations in air raids carried out on Iraq.

The report charges allied commanders with violating the Geneva Convention by making civilians the targets of attacks and by using starvation as a means of warfare.

Iraq's electricity system was destroyed along with food, agriculture and water facilities, resulting in starvation and malnutrition.

The destruction of

Iraq's infrastructure has devastated the economy, with real wages dropping to among the lowest in the world. The present rationing system provides just one-third of a family's needs for one month. Meat, eggs and poultry are no longer available on the government ration as farmers are forced to sell their livestock to earn an income. High inflation means that food stuffs sold on the open market are beyond the reach of most Iraqis.

According to Oxfam, Iraq faces famine if the UN-imposed trade embargo continues.

KUWAIT: NOT SO FREE

WAR was supposed to "free" Kuwait.

Parliamentary elections in Kuwait are now set to take place in October of this year. They are the first elections since 1986 when the Emir dissolved parliament for accusing his family of not paying their telephone or electricity bills for ten years!

The parliament will be no more than a sham. The Emir appoints all members of the cabinet. Only 63,000 Kuwaitis are eligible to vote in the elections, all of them men over 21 and drawn from the ranks of families able to trace their Kuwaiti



US soldiers on parade to celebrate Gulf 'victory'

origins back to 1920.

Kuwait has a population of just under two million. Kuwaiti citizens make up a third of this number and only 17 percent of the workforce. More than 80 percent of these work in highly paid jobs in the public sector.

The rest of the population are immigrants drawn mainly from poor Asian and Arab nations. The "liberation" of Kuwait has brought more repression and hardship to immigrant workers, who are mainly employed as manual labourers and domestic servants.

Unions are still illegal. Foreigners have no right to own property or stay in the country without work, and can be deported at the whim of Kuwaiti officials.

Palestinians have

been singled out by the Emir, who has set about slashing their numbers. From 400,000 before the war, Palestinians in Kuwait now number 150,000.

SACKINGS

With few exceptions Palestinians working in the public sector have been sacked. Hundreds of Palestinians have been physically deported into Iraq against their will, against the Geneva Convention.

KURDS: Terror goes on

and against the terms of the cease fire agreement.

Bush's so-called new world order and liberation of Kuwait have meant the freedom of the Emir to reimpose censorship and to torture his political opponents.

Try telling the woman who was sentenced to six months' hard labour followed by deportation for accusing her employer of sexual assault that the Gulf war was fought to rid the world of a tyrant.

WE were told that the Gulf war was fought in "defence of democracy and the rights of small nations".

The Kurds, with their own culture and history, have lived in the same area for centuries and are one of the few clearly identifiable nations in the Middle East, long oppressed by countries that occupy their territories.

But when the Kurds took seriously Bush's call to rise up against the Iraqi regime the US government then cynically washed their hands of them. The resulting horrors could be seen on television for weeks. Kurdish refugees fleeing Iraq were mowed down by Saddam's planes; others who managed to reach the freezing, bare mountains of Northern Iraq died in their thousands from hypothermia and starvation.

When the West was eventually embarrassed into sending aid it was so meagre that the head of a medical relief agency denounced it as "useless and dangerous... a TV

spectacle designed to manipulate people into thinking something was being done". People were killed by indiscriminate drops of heavy crates of supplies. Total UN relief amounted to just £33 million compared to the £1.1 million per minute spent on fighting the war.

The "safe havens" set up for the Kurds in Northern Iraq proved to be nothing more than a string of concentration camps described as "a cross between Ethiopia and the Somme" by the deputy director of Oxfam.

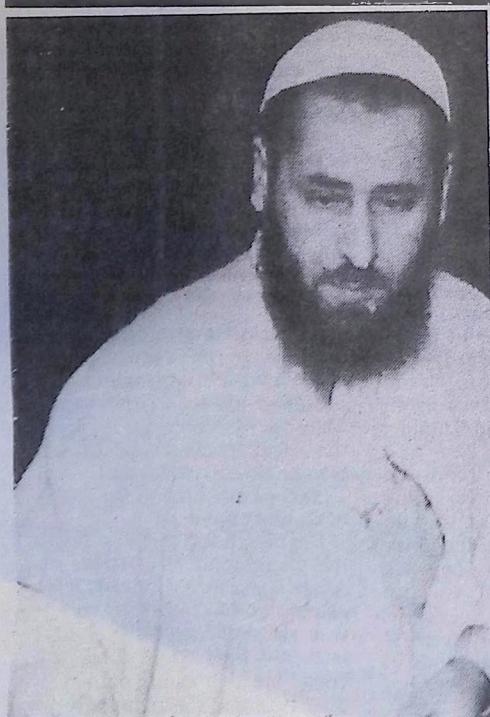
The responsibility for all this unimaginable human suffering lies with the West. In the past the West has backed governments of Turkey, Iraq and the Shah of Iran when the persecuted and gassed the Kurds.

BOMBED

Last October, Kurds on the Turkey-Iraq border were bombed by Turkish warplanes. Three thousand crack Turkish troops and helicopters backed the attack. Napalm was dropped on fields and houses and the response from the West was silence, not surprising as Turkey is the key US ally in the region.

Kurds are still under attack from Iraqi forces, forcing over 200,000 to flee to try to survive a second winter on the mountains being squeezed from both sides.

The brutal genocide of the Kurds has been the awful reality of Bush's new world order.



FIS Leader, Mohamed Said

ALGERIA: RULERS FALTER

ALGERIA'S ruling National Liberation Front (FLN) is trying to hold on to power despite mass opposition. The army staged a coup after Islamic fundamentalists won the first round of elections in December.

Thirty years ago the FLN led the fight to rid Algeria of French imperialism. The Islamic Salvation Front (FIS)

threatens their rule because of increasing bitterness against the FLN.

The regime aimed to build up an independent Algerian economy but has failed. Now urban unemployment is over thirty percent. Food shortages and rampant inflation have added fuel to the fire.

In the summer of 1988 there was a wave of strikes and food riots. One newspaper at the time described the capital, Algiers, as being "sacked by a vast, ragged army of dispossessed, desperate and hungry young people". The army shot hundreds of people and

the regime promised reforms to try to stabilise the situation.

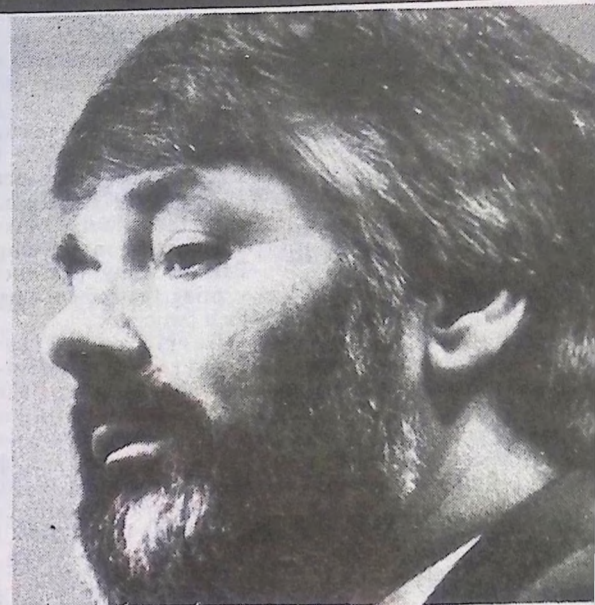
The FIS have built on the mass anger, but are themselves reactionary. They want to force women to wear the veil and are against mixed education.

This has led many in the West—even leftwingers—to denounce the FIS as "fascists" and to back the FLN. This is a mistake, because it ignores the anger against the regime.

The FLN and army must be overthrown. The best way to do that is to put across a socialist alternative to the fundamentalists.

The FIS do not have unwavering support. After the election a demo of 300,000—many of them women—opposed the FIS. A basis exists for building an alternative to both the failed nationalists and the fundamentalists.

Open letter to Workers Party supporters



THE Workers Party is facing a period of crisis. The media are currently devoting large amounts of time and space to speculation on an impending split at the party's conference in March. Whatever about the likelihood of such a split, there is clearly a serious argument inside the WP about the future direction of the party.

At the heart of the argument is the crucial question for every socialist in Ireland: How do we build an alternative to the scandal-ridden economic system we live under?

The majority of the Workers Party TDs are determined to take the party down an open social democratic road. This will make it indistinguishable from the Labour Party. It will also mean ditching any talk of "class struggle".

What this means in practice has already been shown in the ESB strike last year. During that strike, the Workers Party TDs in the Dail joined in an all-party statement to attack the strike.

This retreat from class struggle is a tragedy. In the past Workers Party members have played a major role in campaigns such as the tax campaign in pushing class politics to the fore. Without a clear organised socialist presence in the unions, right-wing Labour supporters such as Billy Attley and Peter Cassells will have a field day.

The experience in Western Europe in the last decade shows why there is a desperate need to build an alternative to social democratic labour parties. In the 1980s labour party-style governments have been in power in Spain, France and Australia. Rather than bringing about improvements in the lives of working people, these governments instituted austerity measures. In Australia, the Labour Party abolished the dole. In France, the betrayals of the Socialist Party have created fertile ground for the growth of the fascist National Front.

COALITION

In the next few years we are also likely to see a return of the Irish Labour Party to a coalition-type government. The *Labour Left* supporters inside the party have warned that the party leadership is "keeping its options open". The return of Labour to coalition would be a disaster for Irish workers. But it would be a catastrophe if there is not a clear socialist party in existence willing to challenge this on the basis of an open espousal of class politics.

The present drift of the Workers Party leadership means the party will not fill this role. There is already media speculation that the WP could in future be part of such a coalition. Workers

Party TD Pat Rabbitte has already stated that he is not opposed to coalition in principle. This is the practical outcome of the new turn to social democracy.

At the centre of the debate now occurring inside the Workers Party is a confusion over the marxist tradition.

MARXIST

Proinsias de Rossa has claimed that the Workers Party "has never been a marxist party". He went on to say: "Marx died over a hundred years ago and a lot of things have changed in the world in the meantime. It didn't exactly work out the way he thought it might" (*Irish Times*, 4 January 1992).

This open break from marxism is a new departure. Genuine socialists do not hold Marx up as a god. His analysis is not a set of dogmas. But Marx remains fundamentally correct in his prediction that capitalism is prone to economic crisis; that the working class is an exploited class and has to be at the centre of any socialist strategy; that the state in capitalism can not be transformed but has to be smashed.

The charge that Marx is out of date is often made by those who hold his ideas responsible for what happened in the former USSR. This is precisely the

mistake the Workers Party has made in the past. For years the party held up the USSR and the Eastern Bloc as "socialist countries". Ironically, it was de Rossa himself who defended the East German regime when it was under attack by demonstrators.

This identification of marxism with Eastern Europe has led to a profound disillusionment. (As an extreme example, it led the former Workers Party theoretician Eoin Harris to renounce socialism and become a supporter of Fine Gael.) Now it is leading many other leaders of the party to embrace social democracy.

USSR

But there was, and is, an alternative socialist view of Russia: an analysis using marxism to show that the USSR was a country based on exploitation of workers and on the oppression of national minorities. It was an economy geared to military competition with the West. In brief, it was a form of state capitalism.

The arguments of the "traditionalists" led by Sean Garland hold no water precisely because they continue to identify socialism with the former USSR. They see socialism as being based on state ownership and state control, rather than on workers' democracy. Their defence of "class struggle politics" rings hollow when it has been regimes like that in North Korea which have done most to suppress workers' rights.

For years the traditionalists distorted "democratic

centralism" to stifle debate and discussion in the party. In conjunction with this, they isolated the party from debate with other left-wingers by branding organisations like the Socialist Workers Movement as "ultra-left terrorists". The bankruptcy of their politics is shown by the collapse of their favoured regimes.

The "traditionalists" and the "modernists" share one thing in common: the party policy on the North. This policy has led the party to support the presence of the British army in Ireland. By denouncing those who oppose their presence as "fascists", the WP has sometimes gone along with support for censorship and attacks on democratic rights. Reviewing this policy must also become part of a re-think.

Over the next period the Socialist Workers Movement is concerned to debate and talk with supporters of the Workers Party who want an alternative to social democracy and old-style stalinism. We realise that such a debate will not be easy.

But there is much that those who support class struggle politics have in common. We want to see opposition to the union leaders who are selling out the public sector workers. We want a real alternative to the Labour Party. We want to see a party that fully supports every working class struggle.

To get that sort of organisation we need to discuss politics. The SWM invites all those interested in discussing the relevance of marxism and class struggle politics today to get in touch with us.

Yours fraternally,
Socialist Worker

UP to the late 1960s the people of the Bogside had a long tradition of being peaceful and very patient. Mass unemployment has been more or less a way of life for generations as areas like the Bogside and Creggan, like the Falls in Belfast, bore the brunt of religious bigotry and discrimination.

The Bogside normally voted for the moderate politicians of the Nationalist Party. Despite massive unemployment and deep poverty, there was no violence. The only police station in the Bogside was closed during the sixties for lack of business.

The only challenge to the moderate nationalists came not from Republicanism but from the local Labour Party, which supported the Northern state. Republicanism was not simply marginalised in Derry in the sixties, it had almost disappeared. At the 1967 Easter Commemoration fewer than fifty people turned out to honour the Republican dead.

But the impatience of a new generation, and hints of reform from "liberal" Unionists under Terence O'Neill, gave rise to the civil rights movement of the late 60s. The civil rights movement was about reform of the Northern state, not rejection of it. So the Republican presence in the early civil rights movement was tiny—the politics of republicanism just didn't fit what civil rights was about.

What changed all that was the way the Unionist government and its police forces responded to the civil rights movement. On 4 January 1969 police, many drunk and singing sectarian songs, invaded the Bogside at two o'clock in the morning, smashing up houses and people. After that, the area was barricaded and Free Derry was born.

OPPOSITION

In April 1969 police pursuing civil rights demonstrators broke into a house in William Street and battered a father of six, Sammy Devenney, unconscious in his own kitchen. He died from his injuries some weeks later.

After that, the RUC met with opposition every time they entered the area. Riots became regular. On 12 August the police, accompanied by loyalists who had been on a march through the city centre, invaded the area in force and met with mass resistance. Fighting continued for 48 hours. The entire community was involved. By the afternoon of the 14th the police had been fought to a standstill. The British army came onto the streets.

While the people of the Bogside had defended themselves against the RUC they now opted again for peace. There were no attacks on the soldiers. "Barricade Bulletins" produced within the areas "forbade" such attacks. But soon the British army was openly acting on behalf of a Stormont regime.

On 8 July 1971 soldiers shot dead Seamus Cusack and Desmond Beattie near Free Derry Corner. The following Sunday about 5,000 people—one

hundred times the size of the 1967 Easter Commemoration—attended a Republican meeting at Free Derry Corner.

As the noise of the internment operation wakened the Bogside at four o'clock in the morning of 9 August 1971, people poured onto the streets. Mass dawn demonstrations swamped the British army presence, preventing them from completing their swoop.

Barricades were built higher. The IRA began to operate openly to defend the barricaded areas. It was this practical consideration—the need to prevent British soldiers carrying local people off to internment camps—which gave the IRA its new credibility in Free Derry streets.

With the introduction of internment, all marches had been banned. By the end of January 1972, the ban had been broken by a number of anti-internment marches. The march in Derry on 30 January was similarly called by the Civil Rights Association to protest against continued internment without trial.

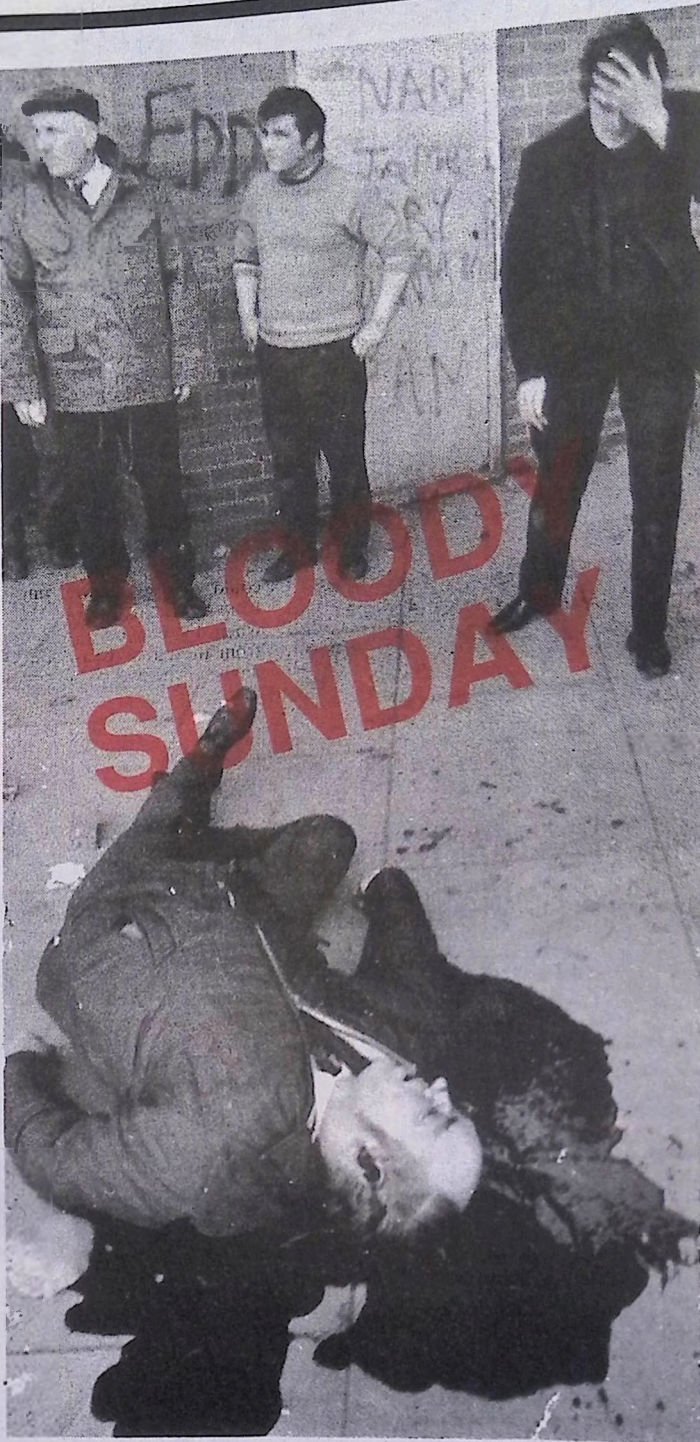
THE PARAS OPEN FIRE

THE anti-internment march was, in keeping with tradition, almost an hour late leaving Creggan. About 5,000 people set off. It was a lovely bright winter's day, with a kind of crisp cold that made marching a pleasure.

The route of the demonstration had been changed. The British army had blocked off the route to the city centre and march organisers agreed to hold the meeting at Free Derry Corner in order to avoid trouble.

The parade was about 10,000 strong by the time it reached the Bogside Inn, in the heart of Free Derry, at around 3.25 pm. "What do you think of the turnout?" people asked, with the delighted answer obvious from the grin on their face.

The march was thickly packed and filled the street wall-to-wall



as it shuffled up Westland Street, full of banter and crack and light-hearted repartee, but buoyed up now too, by a sense of solidarity and strength.

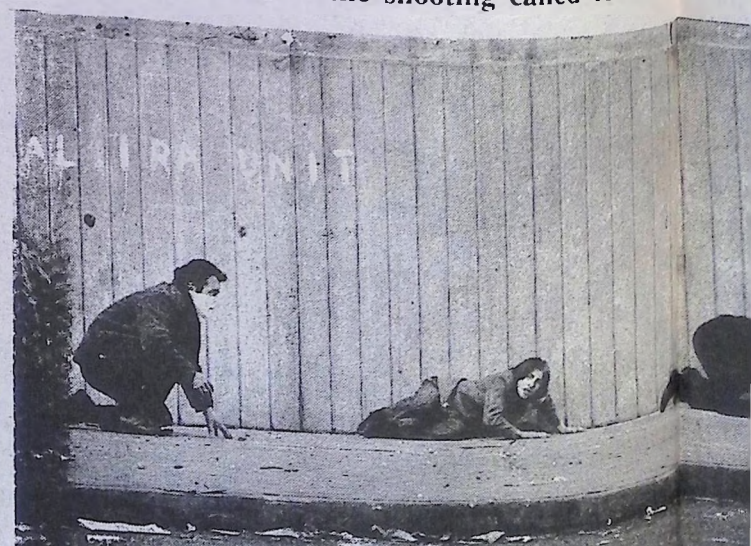
There was a bit of a riot at the British army barricade at William Street, as the bulk of the march turned into Rossville Street. The marchers threw stones and bottles, the soldiers responded with rubber bullets and then brought water cannon

which hosed the crowd at high pressure to dampen the rioters' combativity.

In the middle of this chaos, the British fired their first shots, hitting John Johnston and Damien Donaghy. No one was sure quite what had happened, but the meeting was about to begin at Free Derry Corner. Assured that the men were only injured, the crowd drifted towards the meeting. Most took it for granted that



Bloody Sunday barricade at William St



Paras fire on marchers

M

Twenty years ago The British army shot dead thirteen people in Derry. Now Eamonn McCann has written a new book on the subject, BLOODY SUNDAY IN DERRY, with Maureen Sheils and Bridie Hannigan. SOCIALIST WORKER looks at what happened on that day.

whatever the exact details would eventually turn out to be, the violence was now over.

"Ah well, another wee Derry riot ended..." a local journalist commented as she headed for Free Derry Corner. As the drift up along Rossville Street continued to gather momentum towards the meeting, people said sagely to one another that it could have been worse, all things considered. It seemed obvious at this point that the march could be marked down as a significant triumph for the pro-civil rights, anti-internment side.

Then, in an instant, with no warning or preliminary indication, there was an inrush of terror as the Paras erupted into Rossville Street and slaughter began.

ANGER IN THE SOUTH

IN the days after Bloody Sunday Free Derry was swamped with sympathy. Bouquets of condolence showered in from all over the world.

A discussion held in Creggan just hours after the shooting called for a

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MURDER in Derry

ty years ago The army shot dead people in Derry. Eamonn McCann written a new book subject, BLOODY SUNDAY IN DERRY, with Maureen Sheils and Bridie Hannigan. SOCIALIST WORKER what happened lay.

the exact details would turn out to be, as now over. I, another wee Derry local journalist, as she headed for Corner. As the drift of the street gathered momentum, people said one another that it had been worse, all things at the march could be seen as a significant event in the pro-civil rights movement. At side. In instant, with preliminary inrush of Paras erupted into a riot and slaughter.

ER IN SOUTH

after Bloody Sunday Derry was with sympathy. condolence from all over. A demonstration held in hours after called for a

general strike throughout Ireland until after the funerals to protest against the killings and against the British army presence.

The call did not go unanswered. Derry came to a virtual standstill for three days, until after the funerals. All of the city's shirt factories closed, as well as most other industries and shops. The entire Catholic school system shut down. Catholic workers in other parts of the North struck, some for a day, some for three days. In a number of places Protestant workers joined Catholics in token stoppages: overwhelmingly, however, and inevitably, the protest stoppages were by Catholics, and in workplaces where Catholics were in a majority.

All over Southern Ireland economic activity seized up. In Dublin on each of the two days after Bloody Sunday, tens of thousands marched from workplaces, schools and colleges to the British Embassy. The local executives of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, the Workers' Union of Ireland, the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' Union, the Irish Graphical Society, the National Electrical and Engineering Trade Union and the Dublin Council of Trade Unions all issued calls for stoppages and protest.

It was the same in Cork, where 10,000 marched each day, bringing factories, docks, schools and commerce to a standstill, and where the Council of Trade Unions urged the ICTU to launch a campaign for a British withdrawal from Ireland. Five thousand answered a call from shop stewards in Dundalk and left work to converge on Market Square. Ten thousand rallied in Waterford, 8,000 in Limerick, 6,000 in Galway, plus thousands on each of the two days in Monaghan, Letterkenny, Tralee, Kildare, Athlone, Drogheda, Wexford, Sligo...

everywhere. No British airbase was permitted to land at Dublin, Shannon or Cork airports for the duration.

On Wednesday, the day of the funerals, Ireland was consumed with rage and sorrow. There were strikes and marches everywhere (and attacks on installations which could be plausibly represented as symbols of Britain—shipping offices, branches of British-owned chain stores and the like). Newspaper reports claimed that all businesses, shops, transport systems and schools in the state had closed. In Dublin, on a day of bitter cold and driving rain, more than 100,000 people, maybe many more—"the biggest demonstration the Republic has seen in a generation" said the *Irish Times*—made it into the city centre despite a complete absence of public transport to join a Trades Council march to the British Embassy in Merrion Square.

WITHDRAWAL

The crowd carried thirteen coffins, hundreds of black flags and a forest of placards demanding British withdrawal. At Merrion Square Union Jacks and an effigy of a pig were burned, and stones and bottles flung in a ceaseless fusillade against the building. Eventually, resort was made to petrol bombs, gardai abandoned half-hearted attempts at restraint, and the embassy was burned down.

The strike in Southern Ireland on the day of the funerals was the most widespread industrial action in the history of the state and, proportionately, one of the biggest political strikes anywhere, ever. At least ninety percent of the state's entire workforce stopped work for the day or for part of the day. The reason it isn't remembered like this is that once the government of Jack Lynch became aware of the momentum building up for strike action, on the afternoon of 31 January, it moved swiftly to

"support" the stoppage—in the guise of "a day of national mourning".

The rulers of the South had had long practice in handling the Northern issue, adjusting their reactions and their rhetoric to relate to the feelings of the mass of the people, always ensuring that the Southern state wasn't endangered. The immediate mass reaction to Bloody Sunday made it necessary for Lynch to give voice to sentiment against Britain, while making arrangements to contain and divert, and if necessary to suppress, too-vigorous expression of the same sentiment.

On the day after the killings, coincidentally, the Chief of Staff of the Irish Army, Major General T. L. O'Carroll, gave a press conference at which he assured journalists that "the force is well-equipped to deal with internal security".

On the day after the burning of the British Embassy Lynch addressed the *Dail*. After he expressed sorrow for the dead and bereaved of Derry and rejected the British Army version of events, Lynch went on: "I want to reassure those of our people who may understandably be apprehensive or have become concerned at some of yesterday's events: the institutions of this state will be upheld without fear or favour. The laws will continue to be enforced. Those who seek to usurp the functions of government will meet with no toleration."

Fianna Fail's annual Ard Fheis took place a fortnight later, over the weekend of 18-20 February. By this time emotions, like the wreckage of the embassy, had cooled. The government party had a perfect platform to give its considered response to the slaughter and its aftermath. Given Fianna Fail's claims to being "the Republican Party", and given the faith which many Republicans, even today, have in its "grass-roots", you might have expected outrage at the Ard Fheis.

Instead, Lynch's keynote address was described by political correspondent Michael McNerney as "remarkable for its absence of attacks on Britain or the Unionists (and) for its appeal for an end to emotional reaction".

Observing the reactions of the grass-root delegates, the columnist John Healy wrote: "By far the most significant thing however—and one with far-reaching consequences—was the absolute absence of any feeling that the men of the North and the soil of the North belong to the moral community of Fianna Fail... Sitting there listening to the speeches you got the feeling that the North is nothing more than a functional historic claim: a thing so long reduced to standard cliché, like our 'fourth green field', that it isn't real any more."

THE thirteen men killed on Bloody Sunday were innocent. Attempts by the British propaganda machine to smear them as gunmen, nail bombers or petrol bombers have all been disproven.

It was claimed, for example, that Gerard Donaghy had had four nail bombs in his pockets when his body arrived at the hospital morgue—two bombs in his denim jacket and two in his jeans. Gerard was wearing the kind of tight Wrangler jeans and jacket popular in the early 70s. He could hardly fit a hanky into the pockets, still less four nail bombs (which are the size of a can of Coke).

A BBC documentary made for the thirtieth anniversary has finally proved what the people of the Bogside knew all along: that Gerard Donaghy was no more carrying nail bombs than was Edward (now Bishop) Daly.

So why were the innocent dead smeared in this way? Why was the grief of their mothers, wives, brothers, sons made all the worse by false accusation?

MASSACRE

The reason was that the British government was determined to cover up the massacre. Two days after the killing Heath announced the appointment of the Lord Chief Justice, Widgery, to conduct an inquiry. There was not much faith in him in Derry.

Widgery arrived at Coleraine for the hearings in a British army helicopter, accompanied by counsel for the British army. Throughout the hearings, Widgery and the British army legal team shared accommodation at the British army base at Ballykelly.

People in Derry didn't want to give evidence to the Widgery Tribunal. They didn't believe

that someone with his background would tell the truth about the killings. But the priests, the lawyers, and the constitutional politicians all urged people to attend. Six hundred eye witness statements were given to Widgery. But he called only a handful of local

people. And then he treated their evidence with contempt.

The people of Derry weren't waiting for the Widgery Report in order to find out the truth. They had seen the cold-blooded murders. They waited to find out whether he would tell the truth.

What he found out when the report was published in April was that Widgery had whitewashed the Paras. He said that some of the dead were blameless and that some of the Para shooting had "bordered on the reckless". But he claimed that others of the dead had been gunmen or bombers and that, "in general", the Paras had been justified in what they'd done.

The Lord Chief Justice had backed murder. Whether or not the killings were officially sanctioned in advance by the British Cabinet, they were certainly sanctioned in retrospect. These were official state killings by Britain.

The only option left to the people who had started out peacefully in the civil rights movement was to fight back against the state, against the British presence. For many people, that meant supporting the armed struggle of the IRA.

In the days following Bloody Sunday, hundreds of young men and women queued in Derry to join the IRA—whether it was the Officials or the Provos didn't matter too much. All over Ireland, North and South, normally mild-mannered people were filled with rage and the determination to end the British presence. Even John Hume said "It's a united Ireland now, or nothing".

Time and again, this paper has argued that the armed struggle is going nowhere. Indeed, we see the armed struggle as presenting an obstacle to the development of the kind of mass movement which is needed if we are to get rid of British imperialism.

But, as BLOODY SUNDAY IN DERRY makes clear, the armed struggle is not an irrational response of mindless thugs. It was seen as the only option to many people after Bloody Sunday. The challenge to socialists is to show that their is a better way of fighting.



Murder on Bloody Sunday

Book of the month:

BLOODY SUNDAY IN DERRY - WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?

by Eamonn McCann, Maureen Sheils & Bridie Hannigan
£6 inc. postage from S.W. Books, P.O. Box 1648, D.8

Public sector union leaders called off a national stoppage due for January 28th. Their sell-out of their members must be resisted. Here MARK LYNCH looks at why union leaders sometimes call mass strike and why they are terrified of carrying through the action.

MASS strikes called by union leaders are always supposed to be short, tightly-controlled affairs. They are intended simply to strengthen the hand of union negotiators while allowing workers to "let off steam". Rank and file involvement in building support and picketing is discouraged. Strikers are advised to remain passive, orderly and strictly "non-political".

These bureaucratic mass strikes first emerged in Europe early this century, with the growth of big industrial unions dominated by a new layer of full-time union officials at the top. Such strikes were new—earlier ones had tended to be organised by rank and file workers with a high level of militancy quickly giving them a strongly political content.

The German socialist Rosa Luxemburg described the enormous potential these strikes had for radicalising large groups of workers. She recounted how, in Russia, such struggles "for the first time awoke class feeling and class consciousness in millions upon millions". Mass economic struggles became broader battles against tsarism, for democracy. Workers began to ask what right the employers had to rule their very lives.

However from 1905, when she wrote these words, to the present day, strikes dominated by the union bureaucracy have been the norm. Even these strikes, though, have the potential to break out of their official straightjacket.

SYMBOLIC

One important example took place in Denmark in 1985. Leaders of the private sector unions called their members out on strike. At first there was little enthusiasm for what was seen as a "symbolic" stoppage. One factory worker described how "most felt there was no point in going on strike".

Yet just a week later, the very same workers themselves organised a massive general strike which was both unofficial and illegal. Out of a population the same size as Ireland's, one million people were on strike. Moving beyond the immediate issue of wages, the main slogan of the strikers became "Kick the Government Out!"

So how did this change come about? The Danish TUC had first called the strikes when wage negotiations reached deadlock. The government refused to intervene. So union

leaders threatened a one-week strike of private sector workers to be followed by a separate one in the public sector. By the chosen Monday no deal had emerged so the strike began with almost 100 percent support but no real enthusiasm.

Then on Tuesday night the government announced that it would intervene—with a vengeance. Schluter announced that he was rushing a law through parliament to impose a tiny legally-binding wage rise. Any further strikes were declared to be illegal. Overnight, the mood of strikers changed. By Wednesday morning, they knew they would have to fight.

national trade union leaders declared total surrender. The most leftwing union leader, Hansen, made the announcement: "We have made our protest. Now we must return to work and establish normal working conditions." His only advice to strikers was "remember where to place your cross at the next election".

Here two points become clear. First, that the false divide between political and economic activity had to be constantly kept in place. Second, the harsh reality that trade union officials do not have the same priorities and

This is proven by what happened next in Denmark. Over that weekend, radio and TV broadcast regular appeals to get back to work from the top union bureaucrats and their allies, the leaders of the Danish Labour and Communist Parties. Despite this, on Monday morning thousands of unofficial workplace meetings took place up and down the country. Workers voted overwhelmingly to continue what they now saw as their strike. The bureaucratic mass strike had grown into a general strike organised by the rank and file.

Dustmen picketed the bus depots and stopped public

work on Wednesday so as to qualify for Easter holiday pay. The strikes could then continue afterwards. To back up their arguments, some unions stopped paying out strike pay.

The proposal split strikers right down the middle. Many saw it as straightforward and reasonable. More militant strikers argued rightly that postponing the strike would be disastrous.

But they were unable to stop the drift back to work by the majority, though many thousands held out. Then came the final blow. Instead of resuming the strike, officials announced a single "Day of Action" after which individual unions would try to restart negotiations at a local level. In the midst of an all-embracing common fight the old divisions between different sections of the workforce had been forgotten. Now they were quickly rebuilt in order to end it.

Such divisions are a feature of every capitalist society. Workers are parcelled up into private and public sector, skilled and semi-skilled, white and blue collar. These splits work to the advantage of employers and governments who—instead of facing the working class as a united entity—only have to tackle "their" section of it.

In turn, the union bureaucracy has built its union structures on top of this sectional jigsaw puzzle. Only when all the pieces suddenly fuse together in the heat of a common struggle is the full picture revealed. Workers see themselves for the first time as part of a wider class with shared interests and the same enemy.

ROLE

The sorry end to this and many other strikes reveals just what was missing: political organisation. There was no political organisation ready to pull the militants together to resist such cynical manoeuvres, no network of activists encouraging strikers to keep control in their own hands. Workers wanted to bring the government down—but there was no one to tell them how to go about it.

Only revolutionary socialists could have filled this role. At moments like this, victory could only lie in taking the struggle beyond the question of pay to the question of power. While revolution may not have been on the cards, at the very least the experience of mass struggle would have meant the political awakening of thousands of people.

The events in Denmark are in no way unique. Similar events took place in Greece in 1990, France in 1987 and Poland in 1980.

The mass strike, by uniting the economic struggles for reforms and wider political struggle, breaks down the boundaries between economics and politics in workers' own heads. So a strike launched to attack only the effects of exploitation may end by revealing its real causes to millions for the first time.

Why Union Leaders fear the MASS STRIKE

Strikers batter the door of Danish Parliament 1985



First, an unofficial mass meeting of shop stewards organised a blockade of parliament to stop MPs getting in. As they battled police in the streets, news of the events went out on radio. One laundry worker recalled how "everyone started to cheer. It was marvellous!"

Dustmen—who were not due out on strike for another week—started an unofficial strike. By Friday thousands of other public sector workers had walked out and were picketing other workplaces to spread the action.

Official protests planned for Friday afternoon turned into mass demonstrations in every town and city, with 125,000 people in the streets of Copenhagen. By now, those marching wanted more than a pay rise. The slogan on everyone's lips was "Down with Schluter!" The economic strike had become a political one.

But this was the last day of the official strike and the next day, Saturday, legislation banning strikes would become law. It was the moment of truth—and the truth was shocking. The

interests as rank and file members. The role of union officials is to negotiate, to bargain with government and employers.

This might seem obvious enough, but it places them in a contradictory position. They themselves are neither workers nor employers and they must operate by trying to keep a foot in both camps.

On the one hand, they rely on workers to give them bargaining power, but on the other they need employers and governments to negotiate with them—or they simply have no role in society.

They rightly see the "industrial relations process" of deal-making behind closed doors as their very reason for existence.

They are compelled then to ditch any principle or promise made to their members if it will get them back to the negotiating table and re-establish "normal" relations with the bosses' side. Since they see strikes as an interruption of the bargaining process, the trade union bureaucracy acts as a conservative social force.

transport. Within hours, flying pickets had closed all Denmark's newspapers, docks and airports. Almost all factories, offices and major shops closed. Local radio stations were used to direct picketing and organise demonstrations.

Even the police were caught up in the mood. At a meeting in Randers, a motion to join the strike was defeated by just ten votes.

One hospital worker summed up this sudden change: "We really thought we could get rid of the government. There was this excitement, this fever of talk and hope. It gripped everyone."

Schluter's government looked on, horrified but powerless. However, a plan to end the strike was being formulated. Not by them, but by the equally horrified union leaders whose instructions had been ignored so dramatically. They now feared a victory more than they feared defeat. If workers could bring down a government without them, what use were they?

Their method of regaining control was simple. They argued that everyone should return to

The Future of Socialism:

Belfast

7th - 8th Feb
Queens University

The Socialist Workers Movement is holding a conference on 'Socialism into the 90s' in Belfast on February 7th and 8th. The conference is open to all those who are interested in socialist ideas.

The Conference begins in Queen's University on Friday night with Eamonn McCann speaking on the Future of Socialism.

Saturday morning starts

at 10.45 with Mike Gonzalez speaking on Latin America. Mike has written a book on Nicaragua: What Went Wrong.

AIDS

After lunch on Saturday there is a meeting with Margaret Keenan speaking on the Politics of AIDS.

Other meetings on Saturday include: Pornography and Censorship; In Defence of Lenin; the Rise of Fascism in Europe.

Goretti Horgan from the Derry SWM will also be speaking on Northern Politics in a cul de sac.

Throughout the weekend there will be plenty of discussion about where should socialists in Northern Ireland be looking to. The crisis of ideas that now exists on the left makes this conference vitally important.

Admission to the conference costs £2 for waged and £1 for unwaged. For further details write to SWM, P.O. Box 1648 Dublin 8

What we stand for

The Socialist Workers Movement is a marxist organisation fighting for a workers' republic in Ireland and for socialism internationally.

FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM

We begin from the proposition that what determines the nature of any society is the system by which its wealth is produced. In the system we live under, capitalism, production is geared to profit, not to human need. Among its inevitable features are poverty, war, racism and sexism. Capitalism cannot be destroyed and these evils thus eradicated by piecemeal reform. It can only be destroyed by revolutionary action by the class which creates all the wealth, the working class.

The machinery of the capitalist state -- parliament, courts, army, police etc -- is designed to protect the interests of the ruling capitalist class, not to regulate society in a neutral fashion. At most, parliament can be used sometimes, to make propaganda against capitalism. It cannot be used to smash capitalism. Only a workers' revolution can do that and establish a truly democratic society in which workers hold power directly through delegates elected from workplaces and areas and are re-callable and replaceable at any time by those who elect them.

NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW

This kind of socialism does not exist anywhere today. Workers do not have control in Russia, China, Cuba etc. Instead, power is held by a state-capitalist class. A workers' revolution is needed in these countries too. We are against NATO and the Warsaw Pact and all weapons of mass destruction. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination.

FOR AN END TO PARTITION

The Northern State was created by British imperialism in its own interests. Sectarianism and bigotry were built into it and will continue to exist for as long as the state exists.

Catholic workers in the North are systematically discriminated against by the state, but Protestant workers derive no benefit from this. It is in the immediate interest of Protestant as well as Catholic workers to fight against their exploitation. It is in the interest of all Northern workers to unite against the state and aim at socialism in Ireland.

We support all forces struggling against imperialism and the Northern state, regardless of differences we may have with them.

The interests of the Southern ruling class are no longer in fundamental conflict with those of imperialism. Southern capitalism is a junior player in the world capitalist system. The Southern state too, props up partition, despite occasional nationalist rhetoric.

The "national question" can be solved only by mass working class struggle against both states. Republicanism, by limiting the immediate struggle to the achievement of "national unity", and by appealing for all-class alliances in pursuit of this goal, can never lead the working class towards the defeat of imperialism.

FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION

We oppose all forms of oppression which divide and weaken the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women. We fight for free contraception, abortion on demand and the right to divorce. We oppose all discrimination against gays and lesbians. We stand for secular control of hospitals and schools. We fight for the complete separation of church and state.

FOR A FIGHT IN THE UNIONS

Trade unions exist to protect workers' interests under capitalism. The role of trade union leaders is to negotiate with bosses over workers' position within capitalism. To destroy capitalism, we need a rank and file movement in the unions separate from the leaderships and fighting for workers' interests regardless of the needs of capitalism.

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To destroy capitalism and achieve socialism the most class conscious sections of the working class must be organised in a revolutionary party. The SWM aims to build such a party through spreading its ideas and through its activity in the working class movement.

AFTER THE USSR:

Civil War or Workers' Power?

THE end of the USSR, we are told, represents the failure of the "socialist experiment" of 1917, and the only way to organise society is through the market. But the "free market" countries are themselves wracked by recession. Is socialism really finished or can it

offer an alternative to mass unemployment and poverty?

In fact the "socialist experiment" in Russia ended over sixty years ago when Stalin drowned the revolution in blood. All the gains of 1917, the democracy of workers' councils, women's rights, national independence, were lost and those who resisted were

executed.

The regime that Stalin installed had nothing to do with socialism. The bureaucracy, a new ruling class, used the state to build a huge industrial machine capable of competing with the military might of the West. In doing so they copied the methods of capitalism—exploitation of the working class and the development of heavy industry at the expense of human needs.

The USSR, like the

pre-revolutionary czarist regime, was a prison house of nations. The Baltic republics, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, as well as Moldavia, were annexed in 1939. In 1944 whole nationalities, the Chechens, Crimean, Tartars and Karachi were deported thousands of miles east.

Socialists should not be mourning the end of socialism, but celebrating the collapse of the Russian empire.

But what will follow? While glasnost allowed the people to vent their anger, Gorbachev did nothing to solve its causes. Instead the crisis has deepened dramatically.

The people of the former Soviet Union are facing a terrible winter of shortages of food and other basic goods. In some cities there is not enough oil or coal to provide power and heat, in others there is no petrol for transport.

MARKET

The only answer the republican leaders can offer is to speed up the moves to the market. But "private enterprise" led to the collapse of industrial production, unemployment of over two million and a 37 percent fall in real wages in just two years. No wonder 57 percent of the population didn't even bother to vote in the recent elections.

The various leaders in the new "Commonwealth of Independent States" are already falling out over economic reform and control of the armed forces. In order to deflect popular anger they are stoking the fires of nationalism and if that doesn't work they will turn to the military. After all, the born-again democrats that rule the three largest republics—Yeltsin of Russia, Kravchuk of the Ukraine and Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan—all rose to prominence through the Communist Party.

YUGOSLAVIA

The threat of a Yugoslav-style civil war was shown by the bitter fighting in Georgia. Zviad Gamsakhurdia, a former dissident, was elected president of Georgia last May. But within months he had muzzled the

press and arrested his opponents. The rebels who overthrew him, at the cost of an estimated three hundred lives, are backed by the national guard and the Mkhedrion militia.

The army reflects all the problems of a society in crisis. One major described the "hopelessness and bitterness" felt by soldiers who have been hit by housing shortages and pay delays, while the officer corps is resentful of their loss of prestige.

The army officers and the old bureaucrats are now preparing a new coup. They hope to use the resentment against Yeltsin to secure full protection for their privileges. They look to South Korea as an example of how the military can direct a successful market economy.

What Yeltsin and the army officers fear above all is the resistance of workers to their plans. For Gorbachev the miners' strike of 1989 was "the worst ordeal to befall our country in all four years of restructuring". And another miners' strike in March this year followed by a general strike in Byelorussia was enough to push back the immediate threat of a coup.

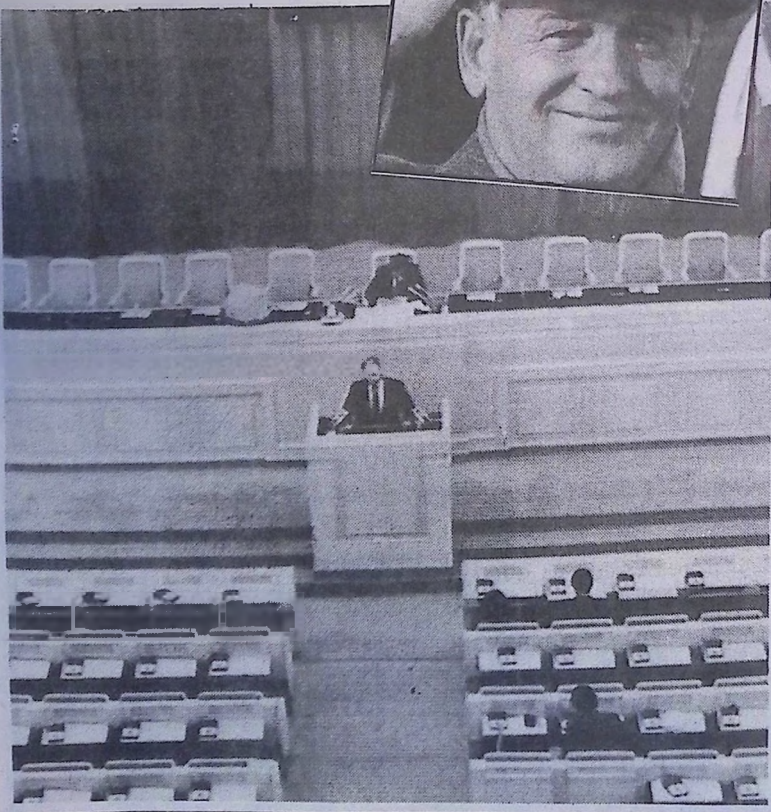
POLITICS

But politics are crucial. Some workers are influenced by ideas that share ownership are a solution. But the chaos in Russia can only be answered by workers control over the whole economy. This means workers checking the accounts of the banks to see who is hoarding. It means eliminating the waste spent on nuclear weapons.

A period where workers went into struggle to compensate for the prices rises could lay the basis for the re-emergence of this type of politics. It won't be easy. The legacy of Stalinism has crushed many traditions.

But the alternative is a Yugoslavia writ large. The programme of both Yeltsin and his military opponents increasingly relies on Russian nationalism. They have nothing left to hide the misery their system has wrecked on their peoples.

The empty chamber of Supreme Soviet in Moscow



Join us!

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

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REVOLUTIONARY EVOLUTIONIST

DARWIN—REVOLUTIONARY THINKER
by Adrian Desmond and James Moore

CHARLES Darwin, like Marx and Engels, was one of the nineteenth century's greatest revolutionary thinkers. In a new book, perhaps the most far-reaching biography of Charles Darwin this century, Adrian Desmond and James Moore explain the enigma of Darwin.

His theory of evolution was the first fully materialist explanation of the natural world, which struck a major blow against the prevalent religious outlook.

Darwin was profoundly disturbed by the implications of his ideas. He delayed for twenty-one years before publishing in 1859 his book, *The Origin of Species*, in which he outlined his theory of evolution. Darwin only published his work when it looked as if he might be pipped at the post by a fellow naturalist, Alfred Wallace.

England at the time was torn by riots, and the defence of the wealthy against these threats to their interests included extreme intellectual reaction. They needed a static view of the world that justified society's savagery and their comfortable position in it. Evolution was attacked as a treasonous and blasphemous attack on society and religion.

As one of Darwin's biographers explained, "In virtually every branch of knowledge, repressive methods were used. Lectures were proscribed, publications hampered, professorships denied. Scholars and scientists learned the lesson and responded to the pressures on them."

REPRESSION

The Origin of Species arose out of Darwin's period as a naturalist on the navy ship, the Beagle, in 1831. It was a five-year voyage of discovery, but it was only afterwards, in 1838, that—using the empirical evidence of his studies during the voyage—that he developed his theory of evolution.

"In October 1938," he wrote, "I happened to read for amusement malthus on population, and being well prepared to appreciate the struggle for existence which everywhere goes on from long continued observation of animals and plants, it at once struck me that under these circumstances favourable variations would tend to be preserved and unfavourable ones to be destroyed. The result of this would be the formation of new species."

So what was his theory, and what was so threatening about it?

There were simple propositions and an inescapable conclusion. First, that organisms vary. Second, that these variations are inherited, at least in part, by offspring. Third, that organisms produce more offspring than can possibly survive. Darwin concluded that since not all survive, only those best adapted to their environment will survive to breed. Species will thus be modified as a result of this competition for survival and by changes in the environment.

This theory does away with religious ideas of God and design in the universe. All nature's changes are the result of purely material factors. New species are created while others become extinct in a purposeless process.

Marx and Engels understood the revolutionary content of Darwin's ideas. Marx wrote to Engels: "Although it is written in the crude English style, this is a book that contains the basis in natural history for our view. It serves me as a natural scientific basis for the class struggle in history."

But although Darwin's theory was deeply subversive of religion, it could also be misapplied.

THEORY MISAPPLIED

The concept of "the survival of the fittest" applied to human society provided the ruling class with a far more effective ideology than religion.

In America John D. Rockefeller had a simple explanation for his success and a simple excuse for the vicious exploitation of workers in his companies: "The growth of large business is merely the survival of the fittest. It is merely the working out of a law of nature."

Social Darwinism has had a fundamental impact on working class life through education and IQ tests. Today it is reasserting itself through sociobiology, which claims that natural selection is the key to understanding areas of human behaviour.

Desmond and Moore have written a magnificent book, if at times the detail appears to overwhelm the facts, and at over eight hundred pages it is not a short read. They place Darwin in the context of Victorian science, religion and society, with England tottering towards revolution as the background of the book.

But the real strength of *Darwin—Revolutionary Thinker* is that it strips away the distortions of Darwin's ideas that have occurred over the last 130 years and present him as the gentle revolutionary that he was.

Strategies for the future

by SAM ASHMAN

SOUTH AFRICA is heading for a political settlement.

The resistance of the black majority to the daily brutality of apartheid and the recognition by the ruling National Party that it cannot simply repress this resistance have forced the regime to the negotiating table.

But what kind of settlement will it be?

Will it be one that gives South Africa's black majority real control over the future of their country?

What kind of role can we expect from the African National Congress in government? Where does this leave the struggle for socialism in South Africa?

These questions are addressed in an excellent new book edited by Alex Callinicos, *Between Apartheid and Capitalism: Conversations with South African Socialists*.

It gives anyone interested in the fight against apartheid the chance to hear the views and arguments of leading figures on the South African left in their own words.

Among the participants



WORKERS' STRUGGLE is the key

are Moses Mayekiso, of the metal workers' union and South African Communist Party, Neville Alexander, of the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action, and Karl von Holdt, editor of *South African Labour Bulletin*.

The book, though, is far more than simply a series of interviews. It is a set of

discussions between Alex and the interviewees about the role of the left in post-apartheid South Africa.

"Building socialism is not the immediate goal of the ANC," Joe Slovo of the South African Communist Party said last year.

"The economy of South Africa the day after the ANC flag flies over the

Union Buildings in Pretoria will be exactly the same as the day before."

This view is reflected in the general thinking of much of the anti-apartheid movement.

The dominant idea is that the way to improve living standards for the majority is for the labour movement to seek to boost the competitiveness of a post-apartheid economy.

The way to achieve this goal, the argument runs, is a social contract between the unions, an ANC government and big business.

This argument is eloquently expressed by Karl Von Holdt and it reflects the growing practice of many South African unions.

The mine workers' union, for instance, recently accepted a pay rise below inflation because of the crisis in the mining industry.

Alex draws a comparison between South Africa today and Western Europe in the mid-1970s, when militant workers' struggle gave way to retreat from shopfloor struggle and social contract style deals with governments and business.

He points to the disastrous consequences this had in Italy, Spain and in Britain under the last Labour government.

It is a strategy that strengthens the state, the bosses and union leaders and would undermine the power and organisation of South Africa's rank and file workers—precisely the force that has compelled the regime to retreat.

South African socialists and trade unionists, Alex argues with those he talks to, must take no responsibility for the management or restructuring of capitalism.

Instead, he argues, they should build on the movement from below with its rank and file democracy. "It is through the preservation, strengthening and expansion of these forms that workers can develop their ability to take control of society and run it along radically different lines."

The issues in this book are urgent in the case of the South African left, but they apply worldwide to all of us.

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FISHER OF MEN

TERRY Gilliam first came to fame as a member of the anarchic British comedy team, Monty Python's Flying Circus. That heritage is evident in his latest film, *The Fisher King*.

The story revolves around two characters. The first, played by Jeff Bridges, is an arrogant disc jockey on a radio phone-in show. When one of his callers professes his love for a yuppie, Bridges dissuades him, saying "these people must be destroyed". That night, Bridges turns on the news, only to learn that the caller has run amok in a yuppie wine bar with a shotgun.

Horried and guilt-ridden, Bridges quits his job and hits the bottle. Years later, we find him on one of his escapist drinking bouts, about to be burnt alive by two rich kids who have mistaken him for one of the homeless people that are "lowering the tone" of their neighbourhood.

Enter Robin Williams as a totally whacky Sir

Perry, Knight of the Round Table and defender of people in big trouble. The analogy with Monty Python's *The Holy Grail* is obvious: it is extended as Williams enlists Bridges in a quest to retrieve the Holy Grail from the bookshelf of a New York millionaire. Williams is obviously as mad as a hatter, but despite himself Bridges cannot disentangle himself and even comes to like Williams and his loony pals.

Eventually he starts believing that if he helps Williams to win the woman he loves, then his own life will get back on the rails. So he enlists the help of his girlfriend, the owner of a seedy video shop, and the four of them go for a hilarious Chinese meal which ends up with Williams playing ice hockey with a dumpling. However, when Williams discovers that his wife died at the hands of Bridges' shotgun-toting caller, he goes over the edge of insanity.

Pursued by the Red Knight of his nightmare hallucinations, he ends up being stabbed by the

same rich kids we encountered earlier. As he lies in a coma it is up to Bridges to retrieve Williams' sanity by stealing the Holy Grail.

In the course of this film we come to love the central characters despite their more obnoxious flaws, especially Bridges' arrogance and total selfishness. Williams' performance is brilliant. Although he may end up being typecast as a nutter—from Mork and Mindy via *Good Morning Vietnam* to *The Fisher King*—he plays the part of Sir Perry to perfection.

Gilliam's talent for the surreal does not jar at all with the "straight" plot, as the context of madness makes it seem very real.

The Fisher King pulls no punches in dealing with issues that Bush's America would prefer to ignore: the plight of the homeless, the appalling treatment of mental patients, and the inhuman indifference of those who have made it in the rat race. Indeed, the only sympathetic characters are the so-called "losers"

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OVERCROWDING CRISIS

THE Irish third-level education system is in crisis.

In the tech sector an ongoing row about the withholding of European Social Fund grants has already brought thousands of students onto the streets.

In the universities conditions for students have gone from bad to worse. UCD last term was rocked by the resignation of Professor Sheehy, head of the psychology department. Sheehy, hugely popular among students, stepped down in protest at a staff:student ratio of 1:96, insufficient funding and a dwindling supply of library books. Following his resignation, students packed meetings to demand new staff, extra funding, and a reduction in first-year student numbers.

In TCD huge sums have been allocated to the "Trinity 400" celebrations. Lecture

halls and libraries are overflowing. Yet the only new building work carried out has been to renovate the home of the Book of Kells. Soon, quipped one student, "our course textbooks will be almost as rare as the Book of Kells!"

ACTION

The spring term must see action in all third-level colleges. Already, the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) has organised a national overcrowding campaign. Thousands of RTC students have marched to demand an end to the cuts which have made their lives a misery. University students must follow their lead.

UCD students are led by a right-wing union executive headed by Denis Murphy, a leading member of "Life", SPUC's sister organisation. Last term he helped the college authorities to damp down anger over

underfunding, ensuring that student demands were only partially met.

QUEUES

There will be no reduction in numbers of first year students entering UCD this year, but many more of them will fail their first year exams and be forced onto the dole or the plane to America. In TCD, the students' union has failed to campaign on the issue of overcrowding. Meanwhile first year students have spent more time learning to queue than whatever it is they are studying.

In all colleges students need to build for action on overcrowding. In the Dublin colleges the Socialist Worker Student Society will be organising to help build campaigns on this issue.

Meetings must be held in order to provide a focus for the anger many students feel. At these meetings, SWSS will be demanding that

students take action to clearly pin blame on college authorities for failing to put students' interests at the top of their agenda, but we will also be showing that ineffective students' unions have not helped students.

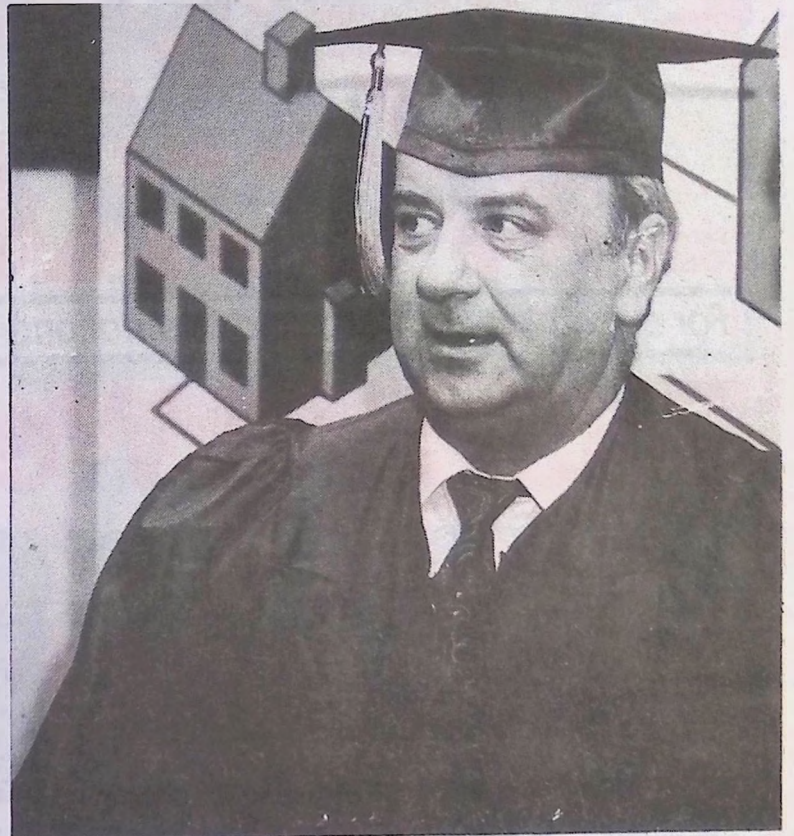
We believe that alternative leadership is necessary, which will make students' conditions the basis of a campaigning policy. To that end, SWSS is putting up two candidates for election to students' unions in Dublin.

In UCD the candidate is Paul Murphy, and Orla Costello is running in TCD.

For a fighting chance against even more cuts and overcrowding, students should vote for candidates with a record of fighting hard on these issues.

If better conditions for students are to be won, this will be a step in the right direction.

■ KEN MULKEARN TCD
SWSS



FF Education Minister, Davern, acts the dunce

Service charges: FIGHT GOES ON

SINCE the mid-1980s Fianna Fail have cut back on funds for local government. Local councils responded by introducing "service charges" for water supplies and refuse collection. But throughout the country workers have resisted this "double tax".

In 1991 anti-service charge candidates were elected to many councils. The issue has now come to a head as three councils—Cork, Limerick and Waterford—were threatened with dissolution, only to be

saved at the last minute.

In Waterford the anti-service charge campaign linked up community organisations with the trade union movement. The message of the campaign was "Don't Pay" and to date sixty percent of people haven't paid.

RESISTANCE

When the council had to cut off people's water supply they met with mass resistance. In one case, an outside contractor was surrounded by several hundred people and had to be rescued by the police.

When people were brought before the courts for not paying there were

big pickets. In the background there was the threat of industrial action if people were jailed. Nobody found guilty by the courts has been pursued by the council.

It was this type of mass campaign that forced the Waterford council to finally vote to abolish the charge. But there are still dangers ahead. The council could now introduce cutbacks to "compensate" and balance the books. These have to be resisted and a full amnesty has to be won for those who resisted this tax.

In Limerick the campaign was strong, but not as big as in Waterford. There were not the same links established between the community organisations and the unions. Outside contractors not

only turned off the water but sometimes stuffed the pipes with foam. The anti-service charge campaign, however, had its own reconnection team who turned the water back on.

Now the newly elected Limerick council have voted to abolish service charges. They voted to double the commercial rate on business premises—something socialists would support.

But the left on the council also voted for "small cutbacks". City Manager Flan O'Neill is now using this resolution to push through cuts. The Carnegie Free Library has had to impose a £4 registration fee and borrowers over twelve years of age will have to pay 20p for each book borrowed.

The manager is also looking for arrears from non-payers of service charges. Some of these go back several years.

£100,000 has also been cut from contributions to 25 local organisations in some of the poorest areas of Limerick.

The cuts and the demands for arrears must be fully resisted.

BANKS VOTE FOR ACTION

THE country's bank workers voted by a large majority to take industrial action, beginning on 20 January. The result of the ballot was a surprise given that the executive of the workers' union, the IBOA, had made no recommendation on the ballot.

The main issue involved is the fact that bank workers have not had a pay rise since 1989. As the IBOA is not in the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, it was not a signatory to either the PNR or the PESP. However, the banks are in the bosses' organisation, the FUE, which has implemented both these programmes.

The last increase in pay, in 1989, was a mere two percent. At the same time, management awarded themselves a 24 percent increase. Now the workers are looking for a six percent rise to make up the difference between the terms of the PNR and what they actually got.

In addition, workers are bitter over the steady decline in their conditions over the last three years. Voluntary redundancies were sought and low-paid workers brought in

instead. In fact, the starting wage in the Bank of Ireland is a mere £7,600 (only half the average industrial wage). New entrants generally earn only 40 percent of the pay of workers made redundant.

The IBOA called union meetings in Dublin, Kilkenny and Waterford. These were so big that the Dublin meeting had to be moved from the Mansion House to the Point Depot, where over four thousand members turned up to express their anger.

The union executive is now committed to limited industrial action, but only because it was forced on them by the members.



Ciaran Ryan, IBOA

Although bank workers are not known for their militancy, a significant minority of union members wanted to extend the action. At the time of going to press, it was not clear exactly what form of action would be taken.

■ KIERAN GLENNON

DOCKERS RETURN TO WORK

DUBLIN dockers returned to work in January after a strike over manning levels. Their bosses, Dublin Cargo Handling, wanted eleven men to operate a crane but the dockers wanted twelve.

The dockers' union, MPGWU, refused to support the strike, which remained unofficial. The strikers did not place pickets

and did not push for solidarity from other port workers.

The weakness of the strike allowed Dublin Cargo Handling to divert ships to other ports and force the strikers back to work.

CONDITIONS

Dockers now face new attacks on conditions. Dublin Cargo Handling wants to bring in shift work and reduce the number of permanent

staff to forty.

Union organisation needs to be strengthened. The old sectional divisions which hampered solidarity need to be broken down. It is in the interests of all port workers to unite against future attacks.



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20 years on...
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East and West, workers are..

Victims of the market

U.S.A.

ONE in six Americans live in poverty, according to the Census Bureau. Washington, the nation's capital, has an infant mortality rate comparable with third world Jamaica. Last year there were a record 23,700 murders in the US.

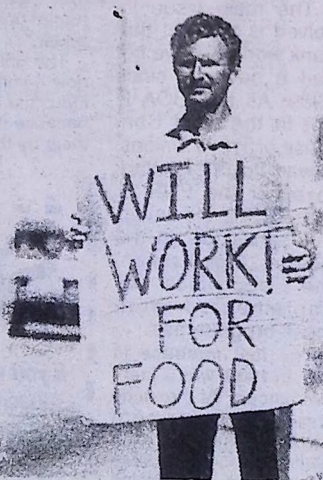
These appalling statistics give the lie to the myth that only the "free market" can meet people's needs. If the system fails so abysmally in the world's richest country, what chance is there for Africa or Latin America?

In some areas the American recession is beginning to look like the 1930s. Detroit, once the centre of the world's motor industry, has been transformed into a living nightmare. The destitute roam the streets with signs that say "I will work for food". There are 50,000 homeless in the city.

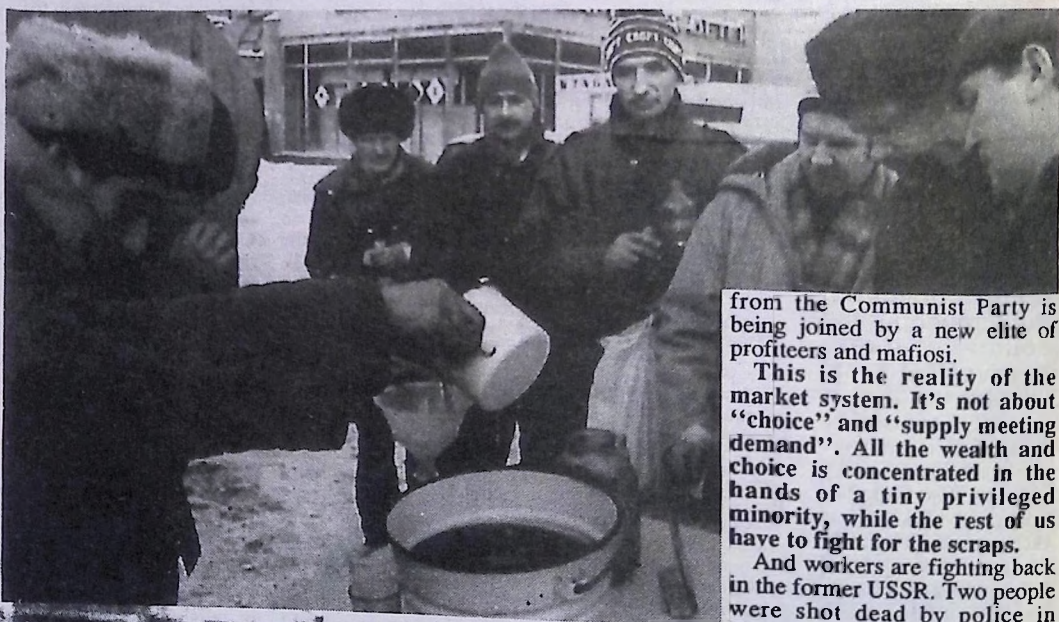
New Hampshire, with a population of one million, has lost 50,000 jobs in three years. The number qualifying for food stamps has trebled in the last

twelve months.

In an attempt to revive his falling popularity in time for this year's presidential election, George Bush is evoking the spirit of "desert storm". The priorities of the system could not be clearer. Billions of dollars were spent on the slaughter in Iraq, but there's no money to feed the poor. Labour bureau figures show that of eight million unemployed in the US, only 2.8 million are receiving benefits.



RUSSIA



from the Communist Party is being joined by a new elite of profiteers and mafiosi.

This is the reality of the market system. It's not about "choice" and "supply meeting demand". All the wealth and choice is concentrated in the hands of a tiny privileged minority, while the rest of us have to fight for the scraps.

And workers are fighting back in the former USSR. Two people were shot dead by police in Tashkent as thousands protested against soaring prices. The class struggle looks set to escalate with more demonstrations and strikes planned.

The alternative to all this suffering is socialism. Not the fake socialism of the USSR, a society as class-ridden as any in the West. But socialism from below, a form of society based on the strength and organisational ability of workers, glimpsed in the Russian miners' strikes of 1989 and 1991 or last year's general strike in Byelorussia.

As the famous Polish revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg put it, the choice is between socialism or barbarism.

taste of the "shock treatment", massive price rises imposed by Boris Yeltsin's Russian government.

The price of bread rocketed from 0.60 roubles a loaf to 1.82, butter from 10 to 45 roubles a kilo and milk from 0.65 to 2 roubles a litre. The average worker's wage is only 350 roubles a month.

But the price rises failed to produce an increase in the supply of goods, and where it did the prices were way beyond the means of the vast majority. At the same time the old elite

"HOW can I afford to buy anything at all?" asked a pensioner on two hundred roubles a month. "I can hardly even afford to buy bread now," said another. They had just had their first