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Paper of PEOPLES' DEMOCRACY

United Ireland or United SELL-OUT

There is no doubt that the last two years of the H Block/Armagh struggle have opened up a whole new phase of the struggle for national liberation. The tremendous determination of the prisoners and the gains for the Campaign have pushed back the Brits' criminalisation policy.

The undemocratic nature of the Northern state has once again been illustrated to the world. The anti-imperialist movement, through united action and mass work, has gained ground.

But it would be wrong to say we have defeated the Brits' offensive. The five demands were not won.

We remain weak in relation to the bourgeois parties. Despite the dents we made in their political armour, especially through election victories, the SDLP, Fianna Fail and the Coalition are becoming increasingly involved in Britain's plans for the North - and getting away with it.

BLUESHIRT 'CRUSADE'

We have upped the stakes in the fight for Irish freedom. But our enemies, British imperialism and the gombeen 'nationalist' parties are calling the shots. Fitzgerald's 'Crusade' around the Constitution is the first step. What is at stake here is the whole issue of partition and Irish unity.

Fitzgerald is soon to meet Thatcher. He joins the Unionists in 'waiting' at Britain's table. And what is on offer is:

- * an Anglo/Irish Council (read possible re-integration with Britain)
- * a new Northern Ireland Assembly (more unionist rule)

BRITISH OFFENSIVE

We should be clear about what is happening now. These Talks represent a political offensive by Britain in alliance with the gombeen nationalists. It is an attempt to rescue the SDLP and strengthen the hands of the Coalition and to claw back the gains made by the campaign. It is above all, an attempt to carve out a political role for these forces and to push the anti-imperialist movement back into political defeat.

We must reject any settlements based on Partition by the Coalition or any returned Fianna Fail government. It will be our lack of direction that will increase the ground for political manoeuvre by these forces. The current bombing campaign in London is a case in point. It will only squander our gains and confuse and demoralise the southern workers who gave so much support to the hunger strikers.

There are steps we can take immediately to stand our ground; there are plans we can make for the coming months.

AGAINST PARTITION

Firstly we can defend our legitimacy and our political credibility by defending our campaign and our militants. The cases of the Belfast 34 and the Embassy 20 should be a rallying point for all anti-imperialists.

Mr Kemmy, is for the people of the constituency to decide - isn't that what elections are all about?

No votes for the people and no jobs either. What else could be concluded when Kemmy also voted to close the Tuam factory - on the spurious and obscure grounds of "finding alternative employment for the area".

But of course, Mr Kemmy doesn't believe in the people making their own decisions - otherwise he would have asked the Tuam Sugar workers how they feel about losing their jobs! (see article on Tuam Workers Fightback, page 2).



Unity around a broad anti-imperialist programme in defence of Irish unity and against partition should be a second priority. This would enable us to take our opponents head-on and prepare to challenge them in their fight for political power

through the coming elections North and South.

The anti-imperialist movement can take big steps forward - if it is willing and prepared to take the opportunities opening up.

EMBASSY 20, BELFAST 34:

DROP the CHARGES!

See page 6 for details

Fightback Against Employers

A wage norm of 6.5% has been proposed to workers in the 26 Counties by the Coalition Government's committee on "costs and competitiveness". The employers are continuing to demand a total wage freeze and already prices have risen by 20%. Clearly the battle is on to push down workers' standards of living in an attempt to deal with an economic crisis not of their making.

This is the scenario facing trade unionists as the ICTU sit around the conference table to discuss a to discuss the collapse of the 'National understanding'. In now say was over 'generous', workers received 15% in wage rises over 15 months while in the same period inflation pushed prices up by 26%. Real earning power had declined by 11%. The non-pay aspects of that agreement (on employment, maternity leave, working hours, taxation, social welfare, health, education, etc) were dropped before the ink had dried on the trade union signatures of the agreement.

In the face of the current economic recession, we have been told we must all pull together for the national interest. Meanwhile the 'national' interest is being decided by the Coalition cabinet. Their economic perspective has two major thrusts,

down public sector wages (thus giving 'example' to the private sector wages employers) and by preventing the creation of new employment in the public sector (the Gardaí have of course been an exception to this rule).

This will seriously increase unemployment since workers who retire or leave state employment will not be replaced. Also industry which depends on public spending for a lot of its income, will actually sack workers. For example the refusal of permission to build new schools and hospital wings not only adversely affects education and health but threatens the jobs of workers in the construction industry.

2) To cut workers living standards in order to improve Ireland's 'competitiveness'. This is an unobvious way of saying that unemployment is caused by workers winning wage claims thus forcing employers out of business. The crisis in Irish industry's competitiveness abroad has nothing to do with wage rates. Germany, Sweden and Britain all have higher standards of living than Ireland. The Irish crisis is one of undercapitalisation of industry, a direct result of British imperialist control of the Irish economy. The Irish bourgeoisie lacked the independence to build its own capital infrastructure. Instead they speculated unproductively on the London stock exchange or they invited in foreign multinationals whose sole interest was to boost their profits by high grant aid and low labour

Irish workers in the 26 counties are being asked to accept responsibility for this economic recession and as 'penance' to accept higher unemployment and lower living standards

Now that it has become evident that the FUE intends to resist real wage increases responsibility falls heavily on the shoulders of the trade union leaders to defend workers interests.

The ICTU should set about organising a real plan of campaign to meet the effects of the recession - a programme of industrial and independent political action to secure a realistic wage increase that includes an inflation index clause.

The ICTU originally set out to negotiate a 30% wage increase. They must now be forced to stick to the target. They must be compelled to give full backing to any union or group of workers who launch a fight against the employers and the recession.

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LESSONS OF THE HUNGER STRIKE

CPI LINE ON H BLOCK/ARMAGH

WOMEN IN THE SIX COUNTIES

REAGUN'S MISSILE MADNESS

Kemmy Against Democracy

There's nothing like killing two birds with one stone, or so Jim Kemmy would have us believe. For on one historic day, that much exposed (by the media) "defender of the working people" voted for increasing unemployment and against democracy.

When the Dail divided for the vote on moving the writ for the Cavan/Monaghan by-election, Kemmy voted against. His reason? Those who voted for Kieran Doherty were abstentionist - why should they have a representative now? That

TUAM; Support The Workers Struggle For Jobs

Eyewitness Report

"In no way is sugar beet an economic proposition if we look at it from a purely accountancy point of view . . . We are going to provide employment."

(Sean Lemass, Dail, 1933)

"There were other considerations that would compensate for any monetary loss in the production of the Sugar Beet Crop."

(Paddy Belton, FG, claiming credit for his forerunners as the party who introduced beet production).

"We come to open factories, not to close factories."

(FG election promise in Tuam)

A fact-finding delegation from Limerick's radical paper the Bottom Dog, recently visited Tuam and the town's sugar plant which is earmarked for closure next year. JOE HARRINGTON, a member of the delegation sent the following report to Socialist Republic.

If politicians' promises could be taken at face value then these statements would make Tuam Sugar factory one of the most secure employments in Ireland. Instead, Tuam depends for its survival on the Workers Action Committee set up by the Sugar Plant employees to coordinate the efforts being made to save the jobs.

The struggle of the workers to prevent the closure of their plant can only be described as desperate despite a lot of talk about providing alternative employment in the town. When we spoke to Vincent Gaffney, secretary, and Jimmy O'Meara, chairman of the Workers Action Committee, they made it clear that the workers placed no value on the undertakings being given to provide alternative industry.

Vincent Gaffney told us, "There are 600 unemployed in Tuam already



ABOVE: Joe Sherlock and Jim Kemmy on their way to Leinster House. Joe has been condemned by the workers for blaming their job loss on the farmers. Jim has voted to close the sugar factory and support unemployment.

who would be glad to avail of any alternative jobs. In fact, in the Tuam area there are 2,200 jobless while 10 advance factories have stood idle in rural Galway for the past two years."

VIABILITY

Amongst townspeople we also found a healthy suspicion of multi-nationals. One person made the comment, "We could let our sugar plant go for an IDA multi-national providing a couple of hundred jobs only to see it skip the country on the first midnight flight out of Knock."

The decision to close the Tuam plant came as a surprise to its workforce. Officially, economic viability was not the only consideration when setting up the Tuam factory and given the dependence of the whole community on the plant it seemed far-fetched to suggest that any government would

give it the chop. On top of this, Sugar Company employees were represented on the Board by four worker-directors elected by the workers from their own ranks.

When Michael O'Leary introduced "Workers Participation" into state-sponsored bodies during the last Coalition government many heralded it as a big step forward for workers. Yet, as far as the Tuam workers are concerned the worker-director experiment fell at its first hurdle. Bound up by rules, regulations and company secrecy, the worker-directors failed to alert those they were supposed to represent to the impending closure announcement. The Tuam workers have protested strongly to their worker-directors over this, pointing out that had they known of the closure plans they would have been able to lobby enough support on the Board to prevent the closure decision being taken.

The Workers Action Committee told us that they will fight to the bitter end to keep the factory open. They are drawing up plans aimed at increasing the beet acreage in the area, while, at the same time, not conceding that their plant has to be economically viable to justify its continued existence. They have been far from pleased with the hearing given to their case by the government. They described to us their experience in the "corridors of power" in unfamiliar and intimidating surroundings they put forward their point of view to a Taoiseach and Ministers who hadn't the manners to even listen politely, who seemed to think it beneath them to respond to the points raised and who were intent only on outlining their own solution - closure within a year.

This decision, the workers feel, will cut across their efforts to increase the beet acreage in the west as farmers will be reluctant to become involved in something which could be wrapped up in 12 months time.

At the time of our presence the Tuam workers were awaiting the outcome of a Fianna Fail motion in the Dail. The motion called on the government "to take every step necessary to maintain sugar beet production . . . in Tuam."

In the long run, even if the motion had passed, Tuam jobs would still not be safe. Both the Coalition and Fianna Fail base themselves on a private enterprise system that puts profits before people. Despite all the crocodile tears shed by Fianna Fail it is obvious that MacSharry, the Agriculture Minister in the Fianna Fail government, knew that the closure was in the pipeline. Company records show this.

In the last analysis the fate of Tuam rests with the Trade union movement and the forces it can mobilise in support of the workers' plan. On one level, the fight to save Tuam can become a focus for a trade union campaign against unemployment and thereby begin to shift the role of trade unions in redundancy situations from one of helpless bystanders to active opponents of this "profits before people" policy.

On another level, the mounting

problems of the State's "most successful enterprise" highlights for the union movement, the obstacles lying in the path of industrialisation in Ireland. Clearly, Connolly's claim that, under capitalism, Irish industrialisation depends on us becoming "the blacklegs of Europe" still holds true. It is equally clear that Irish workers are not willing to accept this blackleg tag nor are they happy to remain victims of a backward economy. The only way out of this vicious circle is for the trade union movement to begin drawing up its own economic plan - and fight for it using troops steeled in the battle to save existing jobs. Such a plan would have to take into account the imperialist domination of Ireland - a domination acquiesced in by Irish capitalism and the major obstacle to industrialisation.

OPPORTUNITY

The workers of Tuam are fully aware of the significance the attempted closure of their plant holds for other workers. They were at pains to point out to us that if the government, any government, got away with pulling the plug on a long established enterprise like Tuam then this would open the way for even harsher general austerity measures affecting jobs and wages. The Trade Union Movement must, in its turn, grasp the significance and opportunity of Tuam.

The Tuam case raises many questions - workers' control versus workers' participation, the relationship between small farmers and workers, the role of natural resources in the quest for jobs, land and private property. And the imperialist domination of the Irish economy.

These are questions which will be dealt with in a pamphlet about Tuam being planned by a number of Limerick Trades Unionists grouped around the Bottom Dog paper. We would like to take this opportunity to ask readers of Socialist Republic who may have ideas, information or any contribution to make on the subject to send them to 109 O'Malley Park, Southill, Limerick, for our consideration.

The Hidden Face of the Fine Gael Tax Plan

The Coalition won office with the carrot of tax reform. Now that Garrett's crew has been in power three months, people are beginning to realise that behind the carrot has been the dreaded big stick.

Fine Gael presented the tax reform package as a progressive move to help the lower paid. In an RTE interview Fitzgerald summed it up as follows: "We are transferring from one tax system to another, one which takes relatively more from the better off people with high incomes and gives more money and leaves more purchasing power to the less well-off."

SAME STRATEGY - TWO VERSIONS

It takes a lot of hard neck to claim that indirect taxation on essential consumer goods is more 'progressive' than tax on income. It is universally accepted by economists that the opposite is true. Indirect taxation takes a higher share of workers' spending power because it is concentrated on essential consumer goods which workers spend a higher share of their income on. At the same time that Fitzgerald was lying through his teeth on RTE, John Bruton was letting the cat out of the bag in an 'Irish Times' interview. Asked if "indirect taxation would not fit the lower income groups", Bruton frankly admitted "I would accept the argument that there is this disadvantage to indirect taxation; that it tends to be regressive."

HOW IT WILL WORK

The reality can be seen in FG's specific proposals. For out the



Eileen Desmond of Labour - participating in the Fine Gael con trick

to 25% will cost at least £500m. That sum is about half of what is currently collected through indirect taxes. This means that the price of food, clothes, school books, entertainment etc will rise dramatically if income tax is replaced by indirect tax. On the other hand the lower paid who do not pay any income tax or who are only on the 25% rate will receive no concessions to help them meet the new price rises.

Various economists have estimated that Fine Gael's tax package will add 8% to the cost of living. That is the same as an 8% tax on every penny a worker spends without any tax-free allowances to cushion it. What a worker will lose through this is clearly considerably more than he or she will gain by a 10% income tax reduction, which by the way, only applies to that part of the wage packet not spent on dependents, mortgages, etc.

plans which has not received as much public attention as the problem of indirect taxation. This concerns the effect of the tax system on unemployment.

Unemployment has traditionally been viewed by employers and governments as a weapon for forcing down wages. Throughout Europe the use of unemployment in the fight to make workers pay for capitalism's crisis has made a dramatic comeback. Employers and politicians in Ireland are onto the same trick.

In the Irish context, unemployment is a blunt weapon. The area where it has the most effect is in skilled and semi-skilled employment. But the social welfare system, with pay-related benefits, cushions workers precisely in these areas. Unemployed workers can afford to hold out until they can get a suitable job with a reasonable wage. Wages and condi-

FG's strategy is designed to change this. The original blueprint for this strategy was drawn up in 1978 by Brendan Dowling, who is Fitzgerald's chief economic advisor. The basic plan was that the existing tax system would be abolished and replaced by a uniform 35% tax on all earned income without any allowances, deductions or other concessions. Anyone over 18 years and eligible for work (employed or not) would get a £13 a week payment. Parents would receive £3.75 weekly for each child under 18 while those outside the labour force (housewives and self-employed) would receive £10.70p a week.

The idea behind this plan is to put all unemployed workers, skilled or unskilled, on an unlivable income. An unemployed worker who presently gets £50 a week through a combination of unemployment benefit, redundancy pay and tax rebates, would get a grand sum of £13.

In the case of a married couple, they would get a total of £23.70. Even with five children the full family income would still only be £42.25. In short, all the gratuitous 'hand outs' are merely a way of chopping down security benefits.

It is now easy to see where FG's £9.60 a week for married women fits into this scheme. "It's not so much the money," says Sean O'Leary, FG's director of elections, "it is recognition of the place of this large group of women who up to now have felt themselves ignored." In reality it is no such thing. It is part of a vicious plan to crush the unemployed and turn them into cheap labour which can compete with the employed and reduce their wages.

One can only expect a grunt from a pig. But what about the three 'socialist' musketeers? Surely, if they have any concern for workers' interests they should be fighting tooth and nail against Fitzgerald's tax plans.

Instead we hear that they are going to support the Coalition government because of, as Joe Sherlock (SFWP) puts it, Fitzgerald's "genuine concern for tax reform". Their behaviour, in fact, is more reminiscent of the three blind mice.

They are supposed to be keeping Fitzgerald on the straight and narrow path of social reform by threatening him with a general election. The simple truth is, however, that Fitzgerald is keeping them in a conservative straightjacket by threatening THEM with a general election.

BRENDAN KELLY

The JOE McDONNELL MEMORIAL LIBRARY in West Belfast has appealed for donations of new and second hand Irish books (in English and Irish). The library is a cooperative initiative aimed at making a broad selection of Irish books available to young readers in West Belfast. Readers of Socialist Republic who can contribute books may send them c/o The Connolly Bookshop, Avoca Park, Andersonstown, Belfast and we will be pleased to pass them along.

Stop the UDA ASSASSINS NOW



ABOVE: Arms haul from UDA H.Q.
RIGHT: Councillor Larry Kennedy

By CHARLIE CONRON

In a year which has seen literally hundreds of sectarian attacks (many ending in death and mutilation on the Nationalist people of the Six Counties) by UDA murder gangs this month has seen a vicious escalation. Councillor Larry Kennedy was gunned down as he was leaving the Shamrock social club in the Ardoyne on the night of October the 5th, 1981.

Larry was well known for his fearless support of the H Block and Armagh prisoners and their fight for Political Status. In fact Larry and his comrades were the target of a Loyalist attack only weeks before his murder as he took part in a Seven Day Token Fast in support of the hunger strikers. He was also well known for his consistent efforts to enrich the life of the community in general.

This murder was quickly followed by another, that of Bobby Ewing who was gunned down as he sat watching the funeral of Larry Kennedy on television with his wife and children on the evening of October the 12th.

BRUTAL MURDER

And then by what can only be described as the most vicious in the recent spate of Loyalist killings, pensioner Mary

McKay was murdered as she lay in her bed beneath the blankets. The murder gang, having gained access to the house by forcing an entry, rushed up the stairs and burst in on their victim leaving her little chance of escape, a tactic frequently used by the Loyalist gangs.

These three murders are only the most recent in what is clearly a well orchestrated murder campaign intended to terrify the Catholic population. Although such attacks have taken place all over the Six Counties one of the areas hardest hit is the Ardoyne in Belfast. Attacks have taken place all round this Nationalist enclave. Attacks in Deerpark Road, Alliance Avenue, Berwick Road, Flax Street, Wheatfield and Mountainview have left six dead and many injured this year.

The people of the Ardoyne have turned their anger toward Unionist politicians, Protestant ministers and the media who have described the killings as "Tit for Tat" — a sick attempt to pass the onus for these murders on to their actual victims.

A survivor of a previous attack told us: "I believe this is an attempt to make these murders in some way legitimate and equate them with the execution of members of the British security forces. If these Loyalist assassins were killing IRA volunteers one could understand the 'tit for tat' claim, but this is clearly not the case and they should be seen for what they are: part and parcel of a deliberate anti-Catholic pogrom in this area."

A woman from the Ardoyne area who had lost her husband in a sectarian attack pointed out that North Belfast had borne the brunt of the Loyalist assassination campaign from 1969 to the present day. Hundreds of ordinary Catholics had been murdered, some in a most horrific manner.

"What amazes me" she said "is the attitude adopted by our own politicians and clergy to the killings. You would think that our fate in life was to be fatted for the kill and that we should expect our lot and not say a word about it.

"There is a vicious and anti-catholic murder campaign under way in the Ardoyne area and it is about time the clergy and politicians came out and said so, no matter who it offends."

SILENT TOO LONG

It was reported in the last issue of SOCIALIST REPUBLIC that an organisation called Silent Too Long had been formed. It is composed of relatives of the victims of Loyalist attacks.

The aims of the organisation are to campaign for the banning of the UDA, an organisation whose leaders have been caught with guns in their possession and allowed to walk away scot free. This fact also highlights the sectarian nature of the RUC and judicial system in the Six Counties.

Such groups as Silent Too Long are an effective way of combating Loyalist terrorism by exposing the sectarian nature of the state and its "security forces". This is helping to build a campaign for anti-unionist self defence and the proscription of the UDA.



Paisley, FitzGerald, Kemmy. One Notion: Two Nations!

The news that Jim Kemmy was forming his own party, the Democratic Socialist Party, comes as no surprise. The forces that will join him in this new venture are the Socialist Party and members of the British & Irish Communist Organisation, his old buddies from the pro-British 'Socialists Against Nationalism' group.

Besides their anti-Republicanism, these people also have the distinction of being loyal followers of Joe Stalin. The 'Socialist Party' also gives uncritical support to the deformed workers states in Eastern Europe. The following is a press statement put out by the Limerick branch of Peoples Democracy: (Incidentally why don't they take their pro-Paisleyism to its logical conclusion and simply call themselves the Democratic Unionist Party?)

The formation of Jim Kemmy's new Democratic Socialist Party, incorporating a wide range of Irish stalinists, will not answer any of the problems or questions facing Irish workers today. A party that turns its back on the just struggles of the Catholic population in the 6 Counties and which does not stress the need for

independent workers' action will inevitably find itself on the right-wing of Irish politics in the same way as Mr Kemmy has found himself voting for anti-worker measures in the Dail.

While the new party will make much play on the influence of the Catholic church in the 26 Counties it will continue to refuse to draw the necessary conclusion that the existence of two sectarian states in Ireland is a part of British imperialist strategy in Ireland and is a disaster for the working class. Cosy arrangements with 'liberals' (of dubious background especially where civil liberties are concerned), will not change the sectarian nature of the two states in Ireland. Only the ending of partition and the departure of the British can achieve this.

Mr Kemmy's politics are based on getting piecemeal reforms without posing a socialist alternative to the present system. The future of Irish workers will revolve around the fight for this alternative and will not depend on the 'liberals and young academics' that Jim Kemmy places so much faith on. In short, there is no room for another party that accepts British domination of Ireland.

By NIALL MEEHAN

Peoples Democracy has always said that the Acid Test for Irish socialists is how they respond to the National Question. For us the first task for the working class is the unification of the country and the ending of British economic and political control. Replacing Britain with a Workers and Small Farmers government is the only guarantee of real independence. This question is hotly debated on the left and there are a couple of other organisations on the left who would agree with our general proposition.

However when it comes to the point of deciding just how to begin the practical steps of eroding British control our paths diverge. The attitude of the Communist Party of Ireland, the oldest organisation of the Irish far left, towards the H Block/Armagh Campaign is a graphic example of our practical and strategic differences. This article contrasts the different roles played by PD and the CPI in relation to the prisoners.

First an outline of the role played by PD. For us the importance of the struggle to win the demands of the prisoners was recognised right from the start. When the British withdrew Political Status on March 1st 1976 PD immediately launched a petition in the catholic ghettos in Belfast protesting its removal and calling for anti Imperialist unity in the face of British attacks. The Relatives Action Committees were then formed to defend the prisoners and give their demands a basic hard core support on the outside. PD was unique in its understanding of the need for unity; and in the practical

Anti-Imperialist line put to the test Irish CP Miss the Boat

movement faced was the position of the Republican Movement who attempted to make support for their military campaign a precondition for all opposition to Britain.

From this initial step there have been many milestones on the road to the unity of the anti-Imperialist forces which PD either initiated or strongly supported. The most important ones were: the Coalisland Anti Repression Conference in late 1977; the Burntollet Commemoration march in January 1979; Bernadette MacAliskey's Euro Election campaign in June 1979; finally culminating in the Green Briar Conference in September 1979 where the National H Block/Armagh Committee was founded.

MASS ACTION

We saw our role to be that of persuading the Republican Movement, as the largest anti-Imperialist organisation, of the need for unity around agreed demands. We did this by going directly to the Nationalist population and launching successful initiatives. The Republican condemnation of these initiatives was plainly seen as sectarian by even the Provos most ardent supporters.

When the Provos did change their line in September '79 the way was open to launch a mass campaign. PD fully participated in this campaign at every level. We argued for the need to challenge Fianna Fail and the SDLP, for democracy within the campaign and the importance of workers' action. We were the first to propose the use of the election tactic by challenging and defeating Paddy Devlin and Gerry Fitt in the Six County Local Government

defeated the Republican Clubs who lost all representation on Belfast City Council. In the ensuing Southern General Election one of our two candidates came out on top of the Labour Party and got 1,500 votes compared to 252 for the CPI candidate.

CPI ROLE

The role of the CPI on the other hand, showed it totally bereft of ideas when it came to putting forward a strategy for winning back Political Status. The party's policy turned out to exist on paper only with no practical effect. None of the initiatives which led up to the setting up of the H Block/Armagh Committee were supported by the CPI.

In 1979 the party even went to the ultra-left extreme of calling for a boycott of the Euro Elections. In this they were at one with Sinn Fein. Yet when the H Block/Armagh Committee was set up the CPI refused to join by stating "The Committee is dominated by the Provos." The logic of this sectarian position is that the Republicans should not participate in a campaign to defend Republican prisoners! Whose prisoners are in Long Kesh anyway? They are certainly not members of the CPI. Incidentally John Hume gave the same reason for not supporting the Committee. Our view was and is that the the Committee should be supported by all those who support the Five Demands. The question of broadening the campaign should be seen in that context. The CPI position is pussyfooting abstentionism.

REFORMIST POSITIONS

The basically reformist positions of the CPI is at the base of its refusal to

advance' in the Six Counties is held back solely by the Provos military campaign. Their alternative, unfortunately, is exactly the same as that of the pro-Unionist Republican Clubs. They call on us to campaign instead for a "Devoluted Assembly" and a "Bill of Rights!" The practical effect of this policy is as follows:

(1) A return to Stormont under Loyalist control. A direct rejection of the biggest gain of the anti-Imperialist movement in 1972.

(2) An ineffectual law with the same practical effect as the RUC police complaints procedure.

The Six County Statelet is a byword for sectarianism. Any one who thinks democracy of any kind can be attained within its borders is deluding themselves and miseducating others. The CPI's reformism recognises this in a negative way by not raising any immediate demands which directly challenge Loyalist sectarianism.

Youth Oppose Party Line

The signs are not all bad. The Connolly Youth Movement — the CPI youth group — supports the H Block/Armagh Committee. This opposition to the line has led to a debate within the ranks. Those who support the anti-Imperialist position claim that the party is held back by Loyalist minority in the CP's Northern Area Committee (The CPI is divided into self-governing Area Committees which mimic Partition).

How has the CPI responded to this debate within its ranks? Not too well it seems. Members of the party have been 'disciplined' for participating in the campaign. The National Youth Officer has been expelled from the party National Executive.

Some members of the party think its line can be changed by the next Congress at Easter 1982. We shall wait and see.....Hopefully it will

The CPI perspective is usually combined with calls for Working Class Unity and support for the Northern Ireland Trade Union Committee's 'Better Life for All Campaign'. Unfortunately, or fortunately from our point of view, few people have ever heard of it since it was set up ten years ago.

ECONOMISM

This hopelessly useless form of economism would make Lenin turn in his Mausoleum. It ignores the centrality of politics and the National Question. Rather than raising the partitionist inspired slogan of 'Workers Unity' in the Six Counties we should be raising the slogan 'Unify the Irish Working Class' which directly challenges Partition and allows us to bring politics to the working class. Calling for bread and butter reforms in a purely Northern Ireland context is not a socialist strategy worthy of the name.

Our conclusion from this analysis is that PD got it more or less right in the H Block/Armagh Campaign and the CPI was left speechifying from the sidelines. As the short article on the debate within the CPI shows, there are those in party ranks who want to get the show back on the rails.

Nationalists suffer worst unemployment Campaign Against Losses

Full-time organiser for the National Union of Public Employees, Inez McCormack, has accused the Northern Ireland office of fiddling unemployment statistics in the Six Counties. McCormack blasted the British administration's claim that only 112,224 people were unemployed in October and revealed that the true figure was over 170,000. JOHN MCGEE reports on reaction to the NIO report:

The NUPE organiser challenged Northern Secretary of State, Jim Prior, to refute her allegations. "Some 60,000 people are not included in the Government's figures, either because they did not pay sufficient contributions while working to entitle them to unemployment benefit or because they are young people engaged on Government training schemes."

Peoples Democracy Councillor, John McNulty, commenting on the jobless figures said they provided further evidence of how nationalist workers, women and youth were being hit hardest by the rising unemployment. "Job loss is highest in the building and distributive trades where nationalist workers are disproportionately represented. Tory cutbacks in public spending are threatening a further job-loss of 6,000 jobs in the construction industry alone, most of which will be jobs of anti-unionist workers."

"The forgotten 60,000 in the official unemployment statistics are made up almost entirely of women workers entitled to unemployment benefit

and young workers being exploited as cheap labour on so-called Youth Opportunity Programmes."

Fergus O'Hare, Peoples Democracy Councillor for North Belfast, condemned the recent jobs creation strategy outlined by the new Secretary of State, Jim Prior, in the document 'A Framework for Action'. Councillor O'Hare labelled the document "a whitewash of Britain's responsibility for the chronically high level of unemployment in the Six Counties".

"The British strategy amounts to opening up the North's economy to further exploitation by the multinationals who have already contributed so much to the depressing unemployment levels in both parts of partitioned Ireland. Even so, the British insensitivity to the North's jobless is highlighted by the fact that although the administration states that at least 10,000 jobs a year should be created it then goes on to blandly announce that it will settle for the promotion of 3,000 jobs a year. With 170,000 on the dole this rate of job creation would take over 50 years to make a real impact on the jobless queues."

The Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions said it was "frankly horrified" at the leaping unemployment. NICTU is launching a campaign over the next three months leading up to a major conference on youth unemployment in January. The campaign will include a motorcade protest to Stormont, rock concerts and street theatre. Welcome as this belated activity is, it still falls far short of a serious challenge to rising unem-

ployment. Over the last few years the NICTU has wasted effort at wooing the North's Westminster MPs including unionists like Enoch Powell who have been staunch defenders of Thatcher's monetarist policies. This latest campaign fits into the same mould of seeking to mobilise public opinion to simply embarrass the British government.

Important as public opinion may be, it is NOT the weapon to put a halt to the redundancies or force the creation of lasting employment. What IS needed is a campaign of industrial action which faces up to the political obstacles which block the way to full employment. Such a campaign needs to go beyond the anti-Thatcher rhetoric which has become so popular amongst the North's trade union leaders.

While Thatcher's policies have contributed heavily to present unemployment levels, mass unemployment has been a feature of life in the Six Counties SINCE the Northern Ireland state was established. Real opposition to policies which seek to make workers pay the price for the capitalist crisis can only be built by challenging the sectarianism which divides the workers of the North. That means challenging the sectarian Northern state itself.

A campaign by the trade union movement which started by tackling the legacy of discrimination which guarantees the heaviest unemployment in nationalist areas would not only challenge the illusions which loyalist workers have in Britain, but would open the road to uniting workers throughout the whole of the 32 Counties.

Lessons of the Hunger Strike

The ending of the hunger strike marks the ending of the prison struggle as the central and immediate issue for the mass movement. Whether it remains an issue at all depends on the British. The mass campaign has forced concessions from them. They can either honour their promises to the relatives and the prisoners or they can leave the prison issue to remain as a festering sore in Irish politics. Whichever they decide, the whole struggle has opened up wider issues around the whole question of partition. The H Block/Armagh movement should act as a base for a new united front to consolidate the gains that have been made and organise a defence against further British offensives.

Elections and the H-Block Cam

It has been said that the Long Kesh hunger strike has changed the face of Irish politics and certainly bourgeois politicians North and South are now lamenting the explosive growth of anti-imperialist sentiment throughout Ireland. One element of Irish politics that has definitely changed has been the political consciousness of many anti-imperialists.

The different tactics for advancing the anti-imperialist movement have been argued, tried and tested in real situation of the H Block/Armagh campaign. This can be seen at its clearest in the debate on electoral strategy which has probably generated the most intense debates within the H Block movement, both North and South of the border. It has at times, seemed to threaten to split some H Block/Armagh committees, including the National H Block/Armagh Committee.

There is no doubt that elections played the major role during the hunger strike in both mobilising and demonstrating the widespread support for the hunger strikers. The election of Bobby Sands to Westminster was the most damaging blow to the British. It served both to aid the mass mobilisation on the streets and to undermine the SDLP and the nationalist establishment. Bobby Sands' election was the first of a series of electoral victories that in fact were the most clear cut victories of the whole H Block/Armagh struggle.

CHANGE OF POSITION

The participation of Republicans and the Republican movement in these elections has marked a change in their political tactics from the position they held only a year ago. Republicans, throughout the 60 year history of Partition, have adopted an abstentionist attitude towards both Stormont and the Dail, based on the idea that both governments have no legitimate right to exist. This, however, did not preclude Republicans from contesting elections and on several occasions they suc-

cessfully won seats in the Northern and Southern parliaments. The most recent example, prior to the hunger strike, was the election of two prisoners to Westminster and four Sinn Fein TDs to Leinster House during the IRA '56-62 military campaign.

In the current phase of the struggle the position changed from abstentionism to one of complete boycott of elections and even indifference to electoral issues. Initially, during the Civil Rights period, Peoples Democracy and Civil Rights activists used elections to some effect, the most striking example being the election of Bernadette Devlin to Westminster in 1969. In the coming years, as the struggle deepened, and especially after internment and the fall of Stormont, both Peoples Democracy and the Republicans took a position that to participate in elections would be to give credibility to Britain's attempts to restore its institutions in the North and would help undermine the anti-imperialist movement.

BOYCOTT

Given the intensity of the struggle at the time and the still strong popular street resistance this seemed correct. However in the first elections after the fall of Stormont, the elections to the power-sharing assembly in June 1973, with PD and the Provisionals calling for a boycott, the SDLP stood, gaining 19 seats and 159,000 votes. It was clear that the mass of anti-unionists were not so alienated from the state to refuse to participate in its elections. In the next few years the boycott position was maintained and the SDLP were given a clear run in all elections gaining important weapons



used to attack and subvert the anti-imperialist struggle.

Several years ago Peoples Democracy revised its position on elections,

the struggle had undergone it was of primary importance to rebuild the mass movement and take the leadership of the mass of people away from the SDLP. Consequently during the

organised a 'Vote H not X' campaign in West Belfast thinking it was better do something in the election than nothing at all. Both the Relatives Action Committee and Sinn Fein ignored the election. Gerry Fitt was again elected unopposed on the nationalist side.

In June 1979 PD supported Bernadette McAisley who stood as an anti-H Block candidate in the European Parliamentary elections. She was chosen at a mass meeting of anti-unionists in Coalisland at which the only opposition to her came from Sinn Fein members present. During the election, Sinn Fein who, claiming to represent the Provisional Government 'ordered' Bernadette not to stand, organised an active and vociferous boycott directed only against Bernadette, which created great confusion. Bernadette nevertheless obtained over 34,000 first preference votes and succeeded in raising the H Block issue in the election where otherwise it would have been ignored.

REVERSE BOYCOTT DECISION

With the beginning of the second hunger strike this year and the approach of the Northern Local Government Elections, PD argued strongly within the H Block committees that the most effective way of demonstrating support for the prisoners and challenging the SDLP was for anti-H Block candidates to stand in as many constituencies as possible. There was strong opposition to this from the Republican Movement and the IRSP in the committees. The Republicans said that "as a principle" they could not participate in British elections. Into the middle of this debate, however, came the news that Bobby Sands was nominated for Fermanagh/South Tyrone. It was a totally

The prisoners have struggled for five years against the British criminalisation policy. They have endured horrendous brutality, the blanket protest, the no-wash protest, and finally two hunger strikes lasting for an entire year. In the process, ten young Republican militants have died a slow and agonising death on hunger strike. They have gained the right to wear their own clothes, limited concessions on association and remission and an ambiguous statement about reform of prison work.

BRITISH PUSHED BACK

If this falls short of the five demands and total victory it also falls far short of defeat. The regime that the British tried to impose five years ago would have meant the total breaking and humiliation of the prisoners. Victory would effectively have amounted to a British declaration that the prisoners were political prisoners, with all that that implies. What the prisoners have succeeded in doing is forcing back an attempt to force prison garb on them – an historic struggle for generations of militants – and in the process forcing a prison regime in which they could at least survive without being crushed and broken.

GAINS FOR THE STRUGGLE

However one result of the struggle has been that the hunger strike is not available as a weapon for the prisoners for the foreseeable future. This, plus the fact that they now have their own clothes, means that even if the British refuse to settle prison protest CAN only continue at a much lower level. At the same time, the mass struggle outside the prison has won important victories which it must now consolidate.

FACE OF POLITICS CHANGED

The fact is that the political situation in Ireland has changed utterly during the period of the hunger strike. The H Block/Armagh campaign existed as a defensive movement, defending

both the prisoners and the legitimacy of anti-imperialist politics. The British 'held the line' against that movement but in the process they sparked off massive resentment and hatred of their rule and laid the ground for significant victories. The movement now has the twin tasks of CONSOLIDATING those victories and PREPARING for the inevitable counter offensive by Britain and its allies in Ireland.

What were the gains of the campaign? **FIRSTLY** there was the very existence of a broad unity of anti-imperialists after a long period of fragmentation and retreat. **SECONDLY**, the fact that that united movement was, for the first time ever in the present struggle, able to build itself on a truly all-Ireland basis. It was a movement able to mobilise massive numbers of people, win the broad sympathy of the mass of the Irish people, and build international solidarity on a level never seen before.

KEY VICTORIES

There were two victories in the campaign that stand out above all else. The whole series of electoral victories which began with the election of Bobby Sands has seriously eroded the base of collaborationist parties like the SDLP and Fianna Fail. Also the work of the trade union sub-committees has established a layer of politicised workers on whose development the future strength of revolutionary forces will increasingly depend.

IMPEDIMENTS

But the movement has had its weaknesses too. Workers' action never became a central priority of the whole campaign, and the campaign's attitude to elections was marked by confusion and hesitation which weakened the extent of its successes. The early insistence on prisoner candidates ONLY, meant that a chance to cripple the SDLP in the local elections in the North was

thrown away. This limited both the interventions in the Southern general election AND the possibilities for mobilisation after it. When the principle of putting forward active candidates was accepted the task of building a united electoral front around the major issues outside of H Block/Armagh that candidates would have to deal with – was not even attempted by the main anti-imperialist organisations.

But perhaps the central weakness of the campaign lies in its structure. It never developed a real democratic united front structure which recognised the role of political parties and built a broad delegate structure within the leadership. For this reason it was largely dominated by the largest grouping – the Republican movement – and was never able to convincingly demonstrate a political independence. It was no accident that the weaknesses of the campaign mark the political limits of the more conservative and traditional elements of the Republican leadership.

BRAKE ON THE CAMPAIGN

In fact the Republican right acted as a brake on the campaign throughout the whole struggle. Their fear that a broad movement might challenge them delayed the formation of the H Block/Armagh movement for three years. Their insistence on traditional military forms of struggle cut across the development of mass politics at significant points in the campaign. (ie on the death of Francis Hughes, Belfast militants were instructed to clear the streets and let 'the boys' do their job – the people were left with no role!) The traditionalist insistence first on a boycott and then on abstention in elections is justified with all sorts of revolutionary rhetoric. This disguises their historic links with the bourgeois nationalist forces that can and do act as a bulwark against the Irish revolution – the Blaneys of this world. So in the Southern general election, Republican canvassers asked if they could 'borrow' Fianna Fail votes instead of trying to break Southern workers completely away from that party and more recently Ruairi O'Bradaigh was able to suggest that they would 'give' Cavan/Monaghan to a Fianna Fail candidate.

LEFT PROVOS LEARN FROM MASS ACTION

However the hunger strike campaign was also marked by the political maturity of a new Republican left committed to mass united action as

a key weapon of struggle. It was they who argued and struggled inside the Republican movement to build the H Block/Armagh campaign, opened it up to all who would support the five demands and who, after an initial hesitation, recognised the value of election campaigns and used them to further the movement. However the hunger strike also showed that these elements are in the minority, and the experience of mass political action has still to be absorbed by a whole generation of young Republican militants. The outcome of the ongoing debate in the Republican movement will help determine the ability of the Republican movement to relate to major opportunities opening up. Bombing London may help to consolidate the hold of the present leadership, and distract attention from this discussion. But every bombing campaign in England to date has FAILED to advance the Irish revolution and has in fact led to political disaster. It alienates the southern working class and entrenches reaction in Britain, which gives a free hand to more British repression in the ghettos.

The discussion about future united action isn't an abstract debate. The struggle against imperialism goes on – on the base of the successes and failures of this campaign. There MUST be an anti-imperialist candidate in Cavan/Monaghan, otherwise we will suffer a massive credibility setback because we refused to fight against Fianna Fail and the Coalition. Sinn Fein is the largest party and possibly the only anti-imperialist organisation in the constituency, and the temptation must be there to 'go it alone'. This would be wrong. Cavan/Monaghan is first and last a LOCAL BATTLE IN A NATIONAL STRUGGLE and any candidate should be seen to be supported by the whole anti-imperialist movement nationally. Also the greatest support will be mobilised by a broad anti-imperialist programme rather than specific support for the Sinn Fein programme.

What united demands should we now put forward? They should enable us not only to fight elections but to mobilise and organise on the streets and in the factories. Because we didn't win an all out victory for the prisoners, our movement remains on the defensive and that means the British and their allies will choose the terrain of battle. If we look at the situation around us we should be able to see the areas in which the British are moving to claw back

ground they lost during the H Block/Armagh campaign.

BUILD THE STRUGGLE

The main bones of such a programme are immediately apparent:

- * Garrett's blueshirt 'crusade' to change the southern constitution is an attack on the whole concept of opposition to partition. We should fight back and demand **Brits Out!** and a **United Ireland Now**.
- * The RUC still have the killer plastic bullets in their armoury – a fight against these is simple self defence.
- * The British and the Southern governments are vindictive pursuing H.Block demonstrators – 34 in Belfast who tried to demonstrate in the city centre and a more serious case in Dublin where there is an attempt to jail people who attended the embassy march. We should call and organise for the defence of democratic rights North and South.
- * The Trade Union leadership acted as a barrier to organising workers in defence of the prisoners. We should continue our attempts to organise workers and oppose the trade union leadership's 'Better Life for All' claptrap and their economic collaboration with imperialism.

LESSONS OF THE PAST TEN YEARS

Of all the united front organisations of the past, only one, the Northern Resistance Movement, achieved its central demand. It brought down Stormont – but it was unable to move on to a United Ireland. All the others, however, served an absolutely essential role in defending and developing the struggle and it's worth noting that even now, ten years afterwards, that single all-out victory has still not been reversed by Britain. If the H Block/Armagh movement had completely won the 5 simple demands of the prisoners it would have brought the British and Irish governments to their knees in the process. Even the limited victories that were achieved have badly shaken imperialism. We should learn the lesson.

Ireland is not a country of reform. We make immense sacrifices for small returns, but even these limited victories are a deadly threat to British rule. If we can consolidate these victories and regroup then we will truly be in a strong position to challenge the quislings of the Irish capitalist class and their British masters.

JOHN MacANULTY

ampaign

In the event the National H Block/Armagh Committee did not contest the elections and the only opposition to the SDLP and Republican Clubs came from PD and the IRSP (who had changed their position) and independent anti-H Block candidates, the majority of whom were elected on substantial votes. PD's Fergus O'Hare annihilated Gerry Fitt who was transformed overnight into a has been. It must be said that the failure to contest the elections was a basic and fundamental mistake as it once more gave the SDLP virtually a clear run and they maintained their number of councillors. Before the election Hume met Thatcher to discuss the hunger strike in a pretence of concern but after the election threat was removed the SDLP felt able to move towards outright hostility to the prisoners. The election of a large number of anti-H Block councillors would have been a great step forward for the struggle and could have forced the SDLP off the councils.

The Southern General Election was a new opportunity for an electoral intervention. There was a split on the National H Block/Armagh Committee with the Republican prisoner = abstentionist line winning by the narrowest of margins. PD

argued that non-prisoner candidates should stand in several seats. Other committees around the country, most notably Cork, wanted non-prisoner candidates who could actively challenge Fianna Fail's republican credentials. PD with little resources stood Vincent Doherty, a member of the NHBAC, and PD, and stood Joe Harrington in Limerick East, both candidates did well getting 1,500 and 800 votes respectively.

The Southern elections provided an opportunity to advance the campaign but the election of two abstentionist prisoner candidates meant that they had no effect whatsoever in post-election events whereas non-abstentionist candidates could have caused a governmental stalemate. Similarly a non abstentionist candidate for the coming Cavan/Monaghan by-election would transform electoral tactics from a transitory protest to active opposition to all three collaborationist parties.

Future elections will be of major importance for anti-imperialists and will provide one of the best means of gaining political leadership of the Irish working class provided that participation is seen as part of an overall strategy to build a mass working class based resistance. To adopt a boycott position is to abstain from the fight for leadership with the bourgeois parties and to adopt an abstentionist position is merely elevating a possible tactic into a self-defeating principle and ignoring the possibilities for developing the political struggle.

And now, from the party which gave you the Treaty, the boundary settlement, the Blueshirts and the Heavy Gang, we have "the Great Constitutional Debate" or "How the North was lost". **ROSE O'MAHONY** gives her thumbs down verdict.

The new moves by the coalition government to remove articles 2 and 3 of the constitution represent a blatant attempt to deny the right of the Irish nation to self-determination and is a clear signal to the catholic minority in the 6 counties that this government intends to do all in its power to legitimise Unionist rule in the North.

Two things were noticeable in Fitzgerald's remarks on that now infamous radio interview on RTE. On the one hand his servile and supportive attitude towards Unionists ("If I were a Northern Protestant I would not want to live in a sectarian state like the South") and on the other his hatred of the anti-imperialist movement. His nearly hysterical reaction to the suggestion that he might meet Owen Carron MP left us in no doubt as to who he sees as the real enemy to be crushed.

DIVORCE

His concern to "secularise" the South is a smokescreen for his real aim. Fitzgerald refused to resign or even register protest at Liam Cosgrave's refusal to vote for the Cooney contraception bill in 1974. His solution to the problems of marital breakdown now is to set up a joint working party in the Dail. In other words, despite his great "crusade" he will not propose a referendum on divorce without

BLUESHIRT CRUSADE TO FORGET THE NORTH

There is no possibility that Fine Gael will take on the Catholic Church and fight it. Throughout history, Cumann na nGaedhlael (the forerunner of FG) has been first to accept legislative suggestions from the hierarchy, whether in the 20s on censorship and the outlawing of forms of public dance, and the banning of divorce; in the 30s on contraception; or in the 50s when Noel Browne's move towards a state health service was quashed by the bishops. John A Costello, the Fine Gael leader of the time said he was proud as a legislator to accept the Catholic hierarchy's view of the Bill.

OPPRESSED UNIONISTS

Garrett would like us to believe that he is different, that he cares about the rights of minorities throughout the country. But the attitude of his party was shown most succinctly by Gemma Hussey on another radio programme when she stated that "the most threatened and oppressed group in Ireland today are the Protestants in Northern Ireland".

But the only 'threat' hanging over Northern Unionism is the 'threat' of the anti-imperialist movement to de-partition this country and destroy the sectarian state on which unionist privilege is based.

The Labour Party was as usual, on Fine Gael's coattails seconding the resolution in the senate. They raised some hackneyed points about 'pressurising' Unionists and decried the territorial claims to a United Ireland. Jim Kemmy TD has gone one better when he said the aspiration of the Irish people to unity and self-determination was an 'imperialist' claim.

UNIONIST REACTION

The reaction of loyalist opinion has been interesting. This 'threatened species', from the Official Unionists to the DUP welcomed the call for the dropping of Articles 2 and 3 but asserted that this would in no way influence their view on the South, that they simply did not wish to be included in a United Ireland.

Instead of challenging the ruse head on, Fianna Fail is heard to mutter about "views in keeping with the beliefs of the majority of our people". By defending Catholic inspired legislation they have attempted to perpetuate the myth that Nationalist = Catholic.

The only way in which Ireland's law can be truly secularised is in the context of a united Ireland free from the imperialist link. It is clear from the latest 'parliamentary parleys' that any serious moves in that direction can only come from the anti-imperialist people throughout the country mobilised to win their aims without kow-towing to either Unionist reaction or the Catholic hierarchy.



FERGUS O'HARE

JOHN MacANULTY

ALL HAIL THE 'LIBERAL' NORTH

With all this talk about changing the Southern Constitution, liberalising the State in the 26 Counties, making it more acceptable to the Northern majority, and improving the position of women, etc., you would think that the North was a haven of equality and democratic rights for women! Despite the fact that in general, protestant churches are more 'liberal' than catholicism on questions concerning women, the actual situation of women in the North as regards, divorce, abortion, the right to work, nursery and social facilities is much more similar to that of women in the South of Ireland itself, than to the position of women in England.

GAY LIBERATION

Nothing could illustrate better the medieval and backward attitude of the churches in the North to the question of human rights and sexuality than the question of gay liberation. It is ILLEGAL to be a male homosexual in the North of Ireland (unlike England and Wales, but like the South and Scotland). Gays have been subjected to a severe campaign of harassment and intimidation by the RUC, to a gang of 'queer-bashers' who have resorted to murder and gone scot-free, and to the 'Rev' Ian's 'Save Ulster from Sodomy' campaign. Perhaps Garrett Fitzgerald and Fine Gael could explain how they intend to persuade this medieval hangover of an ideology which has the full backing of the Orange State and the British Government, to accept the terrible evil that gay people in pursuit of their human rights are supposed to represent.

The decision of the European Court of Human Rights to support the claim made by the Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association (that the illegality of homosexuality in the North contradicted the human rights of gays) is a tremendous step forward in exposing the reality of the so-called 'liberal' North.

THE MYTH OF THE LIBERAL NORTH

This liberal facade is in fact nothing but a well exploited myth, created by those such as Fine Gael, who would try to find yet another way of convincing the Southern working class that imperialism is progressive. And it has a lot more to do with Fitzgerald's 'crusade' to fool the Southern workers into an alliance with Britain than it has to do with women's rights or the Northern majority. For, the reality of the Northern majority and women's rights is that, since the inception of the Northern State, the British government has given the protestants, and in particular the fundamentalist Presbyterian church, a free hand to shape laws in the North.

This abject capitulation to one of the most restrictive and backward strands of protestantism has affected every area of women's lives in the North, thus:

1967 Abortion Act: in England, has not been extended to the North due to the objections of the Free Presbyterians. Abortion is illegal in the North, UNLIKE England and Wales, LIKE the South.

Homosexuality: the law legalising male homosexuality in England was never extended to the North due to the objections of Free Presbyterianism. Thus it is illegal, UNLIKE England and Wales, LIKE the South.

Divorce Reform: was never extended to the North due to the objections of Free Presbyterianism. Divorce, while not illegal, was extremely difficult to obtain, involv-



recent changes under direct rule, fought for by sections of the women's movement). This was UNLIKE England and more LIKE the South.

Nursery facilities: State-provided nursery facilities for working women are non-existent in the North, thus making it more difficult for the growing numbers of mothers who go out to work. Those nurseries that do exist (3 in Belfast), are attached to workplaces. This is UNLIKE England and similar to the child-care situation in the South.

BREAK THE CHURCH/STATE LINK FOR A SECULAR, SOCIALIST IRELAND

The harsh reality of British government intervention in the North has been to create a Northern clerical state in which the churches have a well-established VETO over important areas of women's rights, gay rights and human rights. (Paisley is still fighting a rear guard action to get playgrounds locked on Sunday — the day of 'rest' — How liberal can you get??)

At the Workers Research Bulletin on the Churches in the North of Ireland says: "Ireland North and South is one of the most religious countries in the world — perhaps the most Christian country in the western Christian world. And not only is it religious, but its own peculiar forms of Catholicism and Protestantism are among the most insular, fundamentalist and reactionary in existence."

Thus a key task of revolutionaries and socialists is to confront the legacy of imperialism's use of the churches to divide and rule — divide men from women. What sort of 'free Ireland' will women enjoy if there is no relaxation of the churches' hold on the State? It is an issue not of modern 'liberalism' vs. the Irish tradition, but of the fight for democratic rights vs. the reactionary alliance between the church hierarchies and British imperialism.

For feminists and anti-imperialists, serious about the fight for women's liberation, the only answer lies in an independent women's movement whose main task is the fight to break the Church/State link and to get the demand accepted by anti-imperialists. For feminists to ignore this and to hang around the pro-imperialist parties such as Fine Gael, hoping for a few liberal crumbs to be dropped from the pro-partitionist table, would be to cut themselves off from the most progressive forces in Irish society fighting for fundamental changes — the anti-imperialists. It would be to condemn the fight for women's rights to be caught in the vice-like grip of that most ancient and reactionary of alliances — that between British imperialism and the Churches.

At the end of the day the only way of improving the appalling conditions of Irish women, North and South, is to build an independent movement of women, with significant support among workers and anti-imperialists, that will raise to the fore the demands of women's liberation:

BREAK THE CHURCH/STATE LINK!

EQUAL RIGHTS FOR IRISH



Members of the Divorce Action Group at a press conference

Divorce: Political Issue or Football?

Since the artificial division of the country into 6 and 26 county states the basic democratic rights of the minority and women have been denied. This is not accidental but a direct result of partition. On both sides of the border artificial 'majorities' have been created based either on political persuasion or religious affiliation. Integration of Church and State has been a hallmark feature of the two parts of this island. The progress of social legislation has been hampered or impeded by the combined vested interests of the political backwoodsmen and clergy.

It is this very fact that makes the current debate on the Irish Constitution so important. All of a sudden the right to divorce, which has strenuously been avoided by Fine Gael and Fianna Fail, and ignored

by the Irish Labour Party during the General Election — becomes a 'central' issue!

But is this because we have at last pricked the consciences or threatened the political future of the TDs on this issue? Not at all — the Coalition suggests they are willing to debate divorce if the Irish people accept partition. It's the old carrot and stick tactic. These are parties which for years have sat on top of this issue — in fact many of those TD's opposed divorce when out on the recent general election campaign trail.

The whole discussion is being posed as the necessary reform of the backward South to appease the progressive North.

firstly that the right to divorce will be used as a political football by both teams. No guarantees have been given by the 76 'liberals' like Senator Gemma Hussey, that any fundamental changes on democratic rights will be made. In fact judging on the recent past, when the issue gets 'hot', ie when the clergy and right wing start to object, these 'liberals' run for cover.

The only real guarantor of democratic rights on the whole of the island is independent political action by the working class and especially women — political action that recognises the obstacles of partition and the political decay in the major parties, both unionist and bourgeois nationalist, on both sides of the border.

What does all this tell us? Well,

ANNE SPEED

Release Marion Clegg

News has recently come from Armagh Prison that Marion Clegg, one of the protesting prisoners, has contracted tuberculosis, and has been moved to the prison hospital.

TB is a disease which is directly attributable to poor living conditions, in particular inadequate nutrition, dampness, overcrowding and lack of fresh air. It points out, in yet another tragic example, the appalling conditions to which the political

prisoners have been subjected.

The National H Block/Armagh Committee has demanded that Marion be immediately transferred to an outside hospital. Past experience has shown how necessary this is. The Price Sisters, and Pauline McLaughlin were 'treated' by the prison medical staff, and under this 'care' deteriorated so badly that even the vindictive British government was forced to release them when each was on the brink of death.

Once again, the need for an independent medical enquiry into conditions at Armagh has been dramatically highlighted. This, and the demand for Marion Clegg's release to an outside hospital should be taken up by the anti-imperialist and women's movements and support should be sought, particularly within the health-care unions and medical professions.

Release Marian Clegg Now...
RUTH TAILLON

Belfast 34, Embassy 20: DROP THE CHARGES!

The National H Block/Armagh Committee has taken an important step forward in deciding that the defence of the 'Embassy 20' and the 'Belfast 34' should be a central focus for those who support the prisoners.

The 'Embassy 20' are 20 young men who have been charged under the Offences Against the State Act for their participation in the July 18th march to the British Embassy. The case of the Belfast 34 arises out of the 34 arrests on June 27 as Cllrs. Fergus O'Hare and John McAuliffe attempted to address a meeting outside Belfast City Hall. The RUC moved in and broke up the rally.

The centre of Belfast has been used by all political and cultural groups, including Paisley's DUP. Everyone, in fact, except those who support the political prisoners in Long Kesh and Armagh. On Aug. 8th, nine others were also arrested during a second attempt to hold a protest rally there.

We are now seeing in practice the extension and intensification of the

The Free State rulers need to discredit those who put forward republican and socialist ideas in order to discredit the ideas themselves — and the political activity of those who hold them.

Fitzgerald & Co's long term strategy for this island is becoming increasingly clear. The Constitutional 'Crusade' and the attack on the activities of the anti-imperialist movement (the Embassy 20 and daily harassment of activists) are part and parcel of an overall plan. He aims to consolidate partition and undermine the developing anti-imperialist movement BEFORE it develops into a serious challenge to the capitalists' plans for this island.

The defence of the 'Embassy 20' and the 'Belfast 34' are not simply rear-guard actions in the wake of the hunger strike and the campaign for the 5 demands. Like the campaign for the 5 demands itself, organising around these cases provides an opportunity to raise the broader questions of the anti-imperialist struggle, and to illustrate the inherent undemocratic nature of both



The political framework for the defence laid down by the National H Block/Armagh Committee — defence of the right to demonstrate, no victimisation, against the criminalisation policy North and South, drop the charges — provides a solid basis for building a substantial campaign. To effectively provide a political defence of these activists however, requires that sections of the anti-imperialist movement wholeheartedly commit their energies to the defence

Polish Rulers Prepare Showdown

The Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party recently set the authorities on a collision course with the Polish workers. There is a strong possibility that of a major confrontation with Solidarity in the short term.

DAVY JONES, of Socialist Challenge, reports.

Under pressure from the Kremlin the party called for:

- * a temporary suspension of the right to strike.
- * renegotiation of the Gdansk strike agreements.
- * postponement of the demobbing of army conscripts in case of a state of emergency.

And for the first time the party has a general for its leader. Wojciek Jaruzelski, who was elected Prime Minister in February, became party chief to replace Stanislaw Kania, whose weakness against Solidarity had enraged the Kremlin leaders.

At the same time 11 central committee members resigned from Solidarity to protest against its allegedly 'anti-socialist' development.

The bureaucrats are preparing the ground for a confrontation with the Polish workers. In that context, hard-liner Stefan Olszowski is likely to be brought in as the next prime minister.

He has called for a combination of repression and the creation of a 'broad' government of national salvation comprised of the army, church, party and Solidarity 'moderates' to whip the Polish workers into line.

The Polish authorities fear the development of a challenge to their rule



Solidarity rally in Gdansk.

over the working class. Since the foundation of Solidarity as an independent union, the bureaucrats' monopoly of political power has been under increasing threat.

Solidarity's first national congress called for free elections, an end to censorship, and the development of workers' self-management in the factories and enterprises.

Already the majority of the major plants have organised workers' councils which have begun to co-

ordinate on a regional basis. It is the development of an alternative workers' power that frightens the bureaucrats, and which means that a showdown between the two powers is inevitable.

Socialists should be alert to the dangers facing the Polish workers. They are not fighting for the restoration of capitalism or for a Catholic state. They are fighting for workers' power and socialist democracy. They deserve our support.



Nuclear Madness

Since Reagan came to power in the U.S., masses of people in Europe have taken to the streets in protest against the location of nuclear weapons in their countries.

The anti-nuke movement and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament have between them mobilised hundreds of thousands of people in the last few weeks: 100,000 in London, 100,000 in Brussels and some 50,000 in Paris (without the support of the French Socialist Party).

In the debate now going on in these countries, many people feel that they could, by virtual U.S. control of these weapons, be drawn into

America's war. The idea of fighting a 'theatre' nuclear war is now a familiar piece of U.S. 'defence' thinking.

'America's floating aircraft carrier' is a slogan carried on many British CND demonstrations. Or, as a militant marching in the contingent of the International Marxist Group in London put it, "Uncle Sam doesn't just expect you to put up with his bases, his bombs and his spy stations. In the line of duty you may have to die for him!"

Socialist Republic will in the next issue carry extensive coverage of the rise of CND in Europe and the issues at stake.

PEOPLES DEMOCRACY exists to help lead the fight for a 32-county socialist republic. If you are interested in joining P.D. write to either of the addresses below:

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Avoca Park, Andersonstown,
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38 Clanawley Road, Killester,
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SOCIALIST REPUBLIC, 38 Clanawley Road, Killester, Dublin 5.

Greek Result Worries Imperialists

The Greek workers certainly had something to celebrate. In 1967 the army generals came to power and democracy was only restored in 1974. Since that time the conservative New Democracy party has been in office with a humping parliamentary majority.

NATO

But one thing is certain: NATO military bosses won't be rejoicing at PASOK's victory. Because part of Papandreou's election campaign was his promise to withdraw from NATO's military wing and to kick out the U.S. military bases, just as the NATO bosses thought they had 'sorted out' the Mediterranean countries with the Turkish military coup!

Papandreou's programme included other anti-capitalist measures which won't be to the liking of the imperialists. He has promised a referendum on withdrawal from the EEC and the nationalisation of certain important economic sectors — pharmaceuticals, banking, shipbuilding and cement.

He has also promised to lower the voting age from 20 to 18, and to carry out a decentralisation of governmental administration, similar to that promised by Mitterrand in France.

FRANCE

The victory of the left in the Greek elections follows swiftly on the heels of the French Socialists' election success. Both Socialist Parties swept in to office after years of conservative rule on the basis of a widespread desire for radical change and policies.

The workers of Europe have tried the politics of the conservative parties over the past five years and found them wanting. Increasingly they are looking to the mass workers' parties for a reformist alternative. And in the process they are being

ReaGuns High Livin' Nancy: Let Them Eat Bombs

By GREG DUFF

STOP THE MISSILES



The decision of U.S. President Reagan to spend 180 billion U.S. dollars on developing the MX missiles and B1 bombers comes at a time when 30 million Americans depending on social security are facing savage cuts in the system that they depend on for their existence.

In the biggest rally since the great anti-Vietnam war rallies of the 1960s, over 250,000 people under the leadership of the U.S. trade unions, marched in Washington on September 19th to demonstrate their discontent with Reagan's economic policies. These policies include reductions in Federal aid for health, education, job training programmes, legal services for the poor and Federal assistance to help low income people to buy fuel.

In sharp contrast to all these excessive cuts is Reagan's increased expenditure on such worthy pro-

race and his administration's increased support to the murdering El Salvador junta.

BIG SPENDERS

Even the International Herald Tribune of August 17th under the heading "Reaganites' Administration of Austerity is Conspicuously Rich in Big Spenders" the glaring contrast between what Reagan preaches and the life style that his administration has is pointed out. "In Ronald Reagan's Washington many Republicans go to parties six nights a week. They ride about town in chauffeured limousines and live in the most expensive sections of town with vacation homes in California."

The U.S. defence secretary Mr Casper Weinberger who has been busy recently selling President Reagan's nuclear strategy to America's NATO allies lives in a 715,000 dollar house with a private swimming pool bigger than the public

Others have more than one house. Treasury Secretary Reagan has homes in Virginia, New Jersey and Florida. Lee Annenberg, the chief of protocol, and her husband Walter, have a suite at the Watergate hotel which they share with a maid and a butler; a mansion on Philadelphia's Main Line, a chalet in Sun Valley, Idaho; and a 250 acre desert estate in Palm Springs, California.

Meanwhile back on the ranch Nancy Reagan is keeping her side up when she went to that rich unemployed chap's wedding in Britain. She arrived with her own manicurist, hairdresser, nurse plus a host of other lackeys as well as hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of jewellery and about 20 dresses including eight ball gowns.

PENTHOUSE

Now we know where our own Penthouse O'Leary got his ideas from. While cuts in the public sector and wage restraint are the order of the day the Reagans, Thatchers and their mickey mouse shadows like O'Leary all over the world are having a ball!

The priorities of the international working class are not neutron bombs or MX missiles with their 10 nuclear warheads capable of hitting multiple targets. The world already possesses nuclear weapons with a combined destructive capacity more than one million times that of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. The struggle by the American working class is similar to the struggle by the Irish working class. Their fight is for the necessities of life — housing, employment, education, health. The ruling class will always follow in the shadow of its British and U.S. masters whose policies and lifestyles



ABOVE: PASOK leader, papandreou

Thousands of Greek workers and youth have taken to the streets to celebrate the victory of Andreas Papandreou's Socialist Movement (PASOK) in the general election.

PASOK took some 47 per cent of the vote compared to 36 per cent for premier George Rallis' New Democracy Party.

SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

Paper of PEOPLES' DEMOCRACY

THE PEOPLES DEMOCRACY bases itself on the following points:

We agree that the central political question for the Irish people is the political, economic and military domination of Ireland by imperialism and that the central task for the Irish revolution is the solution of the national question through the ending of Partition and achievement of political and economic independence.

We are united in our rejection of the claim that any lasting solution to the oppression of the Irish people can be found within a 6 county framework, and in our rejection of any 'right' of the Loyalist minority to continue Partition.

As Marxists we believe that the capitalist state must be smashed and replaced by a workers' state and

that only the organised working class can provide the motive force for doing this.

We believe that a crucial area of capitalist oppression is women, and this is especially so in Ireland, given the history of clerical power here. Women are oppressed as a sex and even a successful revolution will not automatically guarantee the elimination of this oppression. For this reason, we unconditionally support the right of women to organise independently to fight for their emancipation.

As Marxists, we believe that the working class has the ability to successfully challenge and defeat imperialism. It produces the wealth of society without being able to control or distribute it. It is potentially stronger than any other class because of its ability to organise on a mass base, combining its economic

strength and its strength of numbers.

We accept that workers have the right to defend themselves against imperialism. However, we do not accept the ideology of militarism—the belief that armed groups can substitute themselves for the masses and win freedom for them.

We believe in the building of an organised and experienced leadership, in a Marxist Party based on the Leninist theory of party organisation: the central feature of which is democratic centralism.

The organisation is internationalist. It commits itself to holding an organised discussion with representatives of the Fourth International on the question of affiliation to the Fourth International. Members of the organisation may hold individual membership of the Fourth International.

Britain's Allies In The Unions

We print here a contribution from a trade union militant in the FWUI. He lists his experiences in trying to raise the H Block hunger strike within the union. Much of what he has written underlines the undemocratic nature of the trade union structures, but more importantly it emphasises the need for anti-imperialists to organise inside and build a political influence among organised workers.

Many union militants are probably wondering why the trade union movement as a whole did not actively support the five demands of the prisoners in the H Blocks and Armagh.

The fact that the organised trade union movement stood on the sidelines was not because there was a lack of substantial support at grassroots level. This support was demonstrated repeatedly during the hunger strike. There were closures and walk-outs in all parts of the country as the campaign for the five demands gained momentum. Despite scant coverage in the media of incidents of industrial action and biased suggestions that what support existed was either emotional or misguided, many trade unionists continued to join the campaign on the streets and work within their individual unions.

INSIDE THE BRANCHES

If support on the streets was at times more dramatic and spectacular, the campaign within the unions was no less energetic. And energetic it had to be. Readers who are familiar with trade union bureaucracy will appreciate how difficult it is to achieve any substantial change in an organisation which is highly centralised and conservative.

However, it would be an over-simplification of the problem to suggest that the only reason why the trade union movement failed to come out in support of the prisoners was its inherent rigidity and its conservative mentality.

SFWP BUILD OBSTACLES

In the case of the H Block/Armagh campaign there were very powerful forces within the trade union movement itself which resisted the moves to support the prisoners.

These elements, SFWP and their political co-thinkers, acting on an individual and group basis, exploited every opportunity and used every trick in the book to prevent pressure coming up from rank and file workers.



An interesting feature of their strategy was that while they tried to block initiatives they chose not to run the risk to come out themselves and openly support the repressive British policy which had incarcerated the prisoners.

Consumed as they were with their own desire to appear anti-nationalist and anti-republican, they saw in the struggle of the prisoners a major threat to their credibility as a so-called radical force — an image which was shattered for many as they denounced the prisoners as 'criminals' and 'thugs'.

RANK & FILE FIGHT BACKS

Trade unionists who supported the anti-imperialist struggle had to confront these elements. Motions on the H Block/Armagh issue were usually attacked on the basis that the issue was not really something which trade unions should be associated with as it could be divisive to the trade union movement. For a time this argument had a certain credibility, particularly for those who were not keenly aware of the fundamental issues that were at stake. On this basis motions were lost or not discussed. This tactic of distancing could not go on forever and as people became more and more aware of what was happening it lost its legitimacy and its initial appeal.

Those opposed to discussion now began to change their tactics. They attempted to discredit the prisoners' campaign and Thatcherite arguments that 'criminals are criminals' began to emerge.

PRISONERS' CASE WINS SUPPORT

When this argument lost its credibility and the prisoners were seen as having a 'special' case, there was another change in tactics. The proposers of motions in support of the prisoners now came under attack within their own sections and branches before they they could have their voices heard at executive level where here again we faced similarly motivated resistance.

EXPERIENCE TEACHES POLITICAL LESSONS

We are now only too familiar with the tactics which were used against the campaign. But we learned to recognise the undemocratic manoeuvres and combat them quite effectively. This contributed in no small way to both the campaign and our own political education.

It was sometimes suggested that the purpose of the motion was to gain publicity and that the proposer had 'ulterior' motives in putting the motion. Many a motion was lost on this count.

As the prisoners struggle reached crisis point, it became clear that the issue was anti-imperialism, and any socialist worthy of the name now clearly knew where they stood.

In some disarray the socialist 'establishment' — the Labour Party, the reformists, SFWP, the two-nationalists et al, turned to their union rule books.

While displaying remarkable adeptness at raising points of order, having motions ruled out of order, and generally blocking discussion they also displayed a unity of purpose which exposed the identity of their politics as mere variations on an imperialist theme.

Those who supported the prisoners campaign had varying degrees of success within their individual unions. Some were overawed by the authority of the establishment and accepted the 'advice' to remain 'respectable' and not 'divide' the movement. Some of these who fought the 'respectability' tag, fell foul of the 'discrediting' tactic.

Despite this, remarkable successes were achieved.

While the trade union movement did not formally unite behind the struggle of the prisoners in the H Blocks and Armagh, substantial numbers of trade unionists did. In so doing they stated quite clearly that they intended to see the working class of this country united by defeating imperialism, not by appeasing it.

PEOPLES DEMOCRACY has taken a big step forward in opening a new central office in Dublin. There are plans afoot to develop the resources available.

The key aspects of our plans are the provision of:

* A Book Service, stocking a wide range of socialist and anti-imperialist literature not generally available in commercial bookshops;

* A Library, with a broad selection of works on history, economics and politics;

* A Public Meeting Room, where discussions, forums and socialist education classes can be held.

Plans for these projects are already underway. We have an initial stock of material for the Book Service, a selection of over 1,000 titles plus files of numerous papers for the Library. In addition we will soon have finalised details for the launching of a James Connolly Society which will organise forums addressed by prominent members of the national and international revolutionary movement.

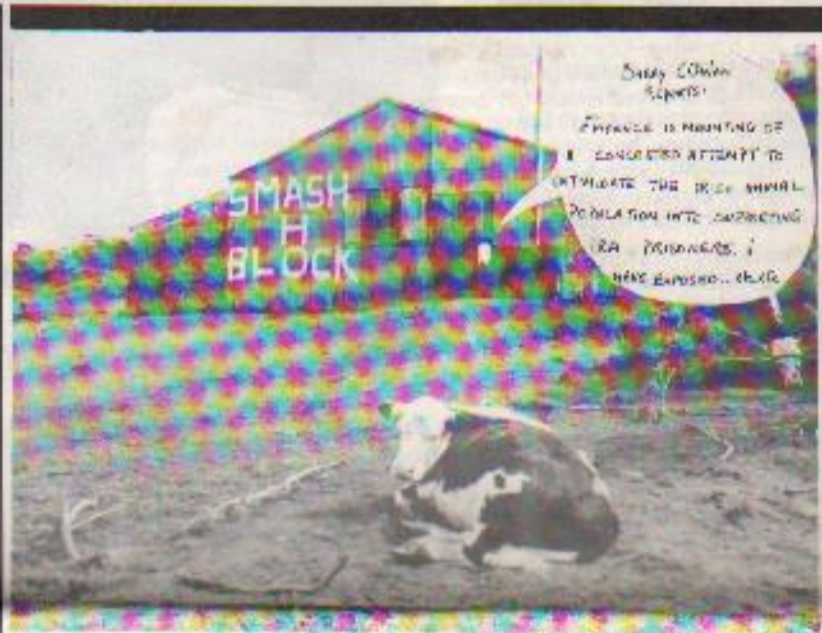
We hope to bring these plans to fruition by January.

The financial outlay will be substantial. Already we have met the purchase of the lease (£600) and initial reconstruction costs (£1,000) of our new headquarters largely from contributions from our own members. This, plus outstanding debts from the Belfast and Dublin North Central election campaigns means that we must look to our friends and supporters to help us finance the next phase of development.

We aim to raise £3,000 by the New Year. A quarter of this has been pledged by our own members. A further quarter has been pledged by our sister organisations in other countries. The remaining £1,500 we ask our friends to help us with.

There are a number of ways in which YOU can help:

PD looks forward to your support for this project. Donations may be sent to us c/o 38 Clanawley Rd., Killester, Dublin 5, or Giroed directly into the Plough Bookservice No. 2 Account, no. 34704751, Bank of Ireland, O'Connell Bridge Branch, Dublin. In the meantime, if you have any suggestions please contact us at the above address or ring 744924.



On October 21st, at Liberty Hall a group of journalists met to discuss ways to improve Northern coverage.

The meeting was hard-hitting in pointing to the lies and distortions common in the press and radio and television during the course of the H Block hunger strike. The Irish Independent won the prize for its coverage on the day of Bobby Sands' death. "Sands Dead" screamed the headline, "Others must die for his action". Inside the article read, "In a way Sands is lucky, for him it is all over." RTE's "Today Tonight" was slammed for its adherence to the line of Sinn Fein the Workers Party, and journalists pointed out that if SFWP had a line opposed to state repression and Partition they would never be allowed this total control. Another journalist pointed to a 'scoop' story, she had got, an exclusive interview with a released prisoner

who had spoken to Bobby Sands only days before his death. Despite its newsworthiness, this story was suppressed, and never printed.

It was decided to press for the establishment of codes to govern the reporting of events in the 6 counties to do away with the "Gun happy terrorists" type coverage. A monitoring committee involving the NUJ and other unions in the field of journalism and broadcasting is to be set up to monitor reporting, and attempted victimisation of journalists who try to give an alternative view from that of the status quo. Further meetings are to be held and a critical look at what Vincent Browne called 'piscatory' rather than investigatory journalism in other fields (such as women's rights, property, strike coverage, etc.) will be taken.

ROSE O'MAHONEY

Mayor gets Marching Order

A few months back, there was much talk of vandalism in the Southill area of Limerick. Chronic unemployment was expressing itself in anti-social behaviour. Various repressive, solutions were offered — a Garda station for the area, bringing back the birch, vigilante groups, etc.

While not pretending to offer a solution that overcomes all the consequences of high unemployment, the Southill Community decided that a more humane approach was what was needed. It called a special Public Meeting to discuss the problem and made particular efforts to ensure that the very young people being slated as 'vandals' would attend.

At this meeting, the young people raised, as a major issue, the question of Garda harassment. After a long discussion, a youth action committee was set up. This committee

subsequently took as its main project the renovation of the local Community Hall. £3000 was raised and backed by £3000 from Limerick Corporation, the committee turned the Hall into a virtual palace open 7 nights a week for the youth of the area.

When the job was complete the local press were invited along to see the results and take the appropriate photographs. Always one for being in the right place at the right time, Mayor Tommy Allen, (a resident of the area) came along to be in the pictures. Unfortunately for him, the youth were intent on ensuring that no one grabbed the credit for their efforts, and, in no uncertain fashion, told him where to go.

Ironically, Tommy Allen had, in his early days, helped to build the Community Hall but, all the same, it is heartening to see young people refusing to allow themselves to become the building blocks of a politician's career. Well done Southill Youth!