

Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism 30p

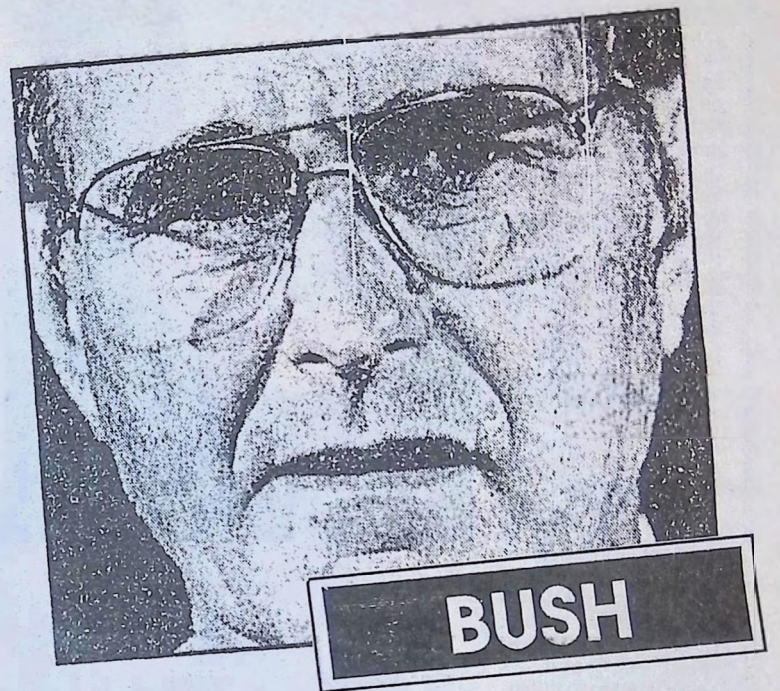
Inside:

Congo 1960

When the UN went in *Turn to page seven*

Stop Bush's war drive

NO REFUELLING AT SHANNON!



LAST MONTH the United Nations Security Council voted to give the Iraqis until January 15th to get out of Kuwait. Otherwise there'd be war.

Reuters news agency reported that US Secretary of State James Baker convinced China's Foreign Minister, Qian Qichen, to abstain on the resolution by offering to forget about the massacre in Tiananmen Square and promising trade concessions.

In return for voting in favour, African members of the Security Council were promised the support of the US for an African Secretary General next year.

The USSR was promised desperately-needed economic aid.

None of these regimes made its decision on the basis of any sort of moral or political principle. The Americans got their way by bribery, arm twisting and blackmail.

And on that basis the world may be plunged into appalling slaughter.

Almost immediately after the

vote, Bush offered talks to Saddam. This reflects his worry that the American people might not back the war.

The commander of the British forces in the Gulf has complained that the politicians are not preparing the population at home for the type of casualties the war would bring.

Vietnam War criminal Henry Kissinger has called for "military action so decisive that Iraq will no longer be a threat to its neighbours".

These people are clearly demanding a course of action that will involve hundreds

of thousands, possibly millions, of deaths. The journalist Robert Fisk has written of "the Americans alone... shipping home their dead at the rate of 1,000 corpses a day".

And it's obvious to everyone that the sole purpose is to defend Western control of the flow and price of oil.

IMPERIALIST

If and when it comes, it will be an imperialist war, conducted on behalf of multi-national capitalism, with working-class people on all sides doing the dying.

It's the obvious hypocrisy of this, the clear fact that profits and not principles are behind the death drive, which made it difficult for Bush to drum up war-fever at home.

More than 50 per

cent of the American people already disapprove of his Gulf policy. A *Newsweek* poll showed 70 per cent demanding more effort at finding a peaceful solution.

But while a war would be unpopular, bringing the troops home could sink Bush's political career.

The very size of the force assembled in the Gulf creates its own momentum towards war. To have organised the vast effort to put them in place, and then to pull them out, would be, according to the *New York Times*, "a terminal political disaster" for Bush.

And Western capitalism's aim—of bringing Saddam to heel, as a warning to others—still stands.

Every effort must be made to stop the

TURN TO PAGE TWO

EAMONN McCANN Strange responses

THERE'S BEEN a number of strange reactions to the presidential election in the South and the Tory leadership change in Britain. Some people who regard themselves as left-wing were actually disappointed by Mary Robinson's election!

The reasoning was that, although Mary Robinson was progressive on a whole series of issues, she was also pro-partition. In contrast, Brian Lenihan was sound on Articles Two and Three, if a reactionary in every other regard.

This argument is logical if you believe that partition is the central question in Irish politics, compared with which all other issues are either trivial—or essentially irrelevant until such time as partition is ended.

It's another way of saying that "Labour, women, gays and so forth must wait".

The people who advanced this argument know that while Fianna Fail might be "better" on partition than Mary Robinson, they are no more likely to do anything about it. Fianna Fail, after all, has a record of hanging Republicans, letting them die on hunger strike, sending the Special Branch to harass them and their families, etc., etc., etc.

It's a reasonable supposition that Mary Robinson, had she ever been in their position, wouldn't have been as viciously repressive.

She's been a consistent opponent of capital punishment throughout her political life, for example, and a supporter of prison reform. And she's at least as good as Lenihan on extradition.

We know that Lenihan is in favour of extraditing to Britain without a *prima facie* case being established, for example. We know that because he voted for it. The Republicans who voted for Lenihan were applauding the attitude which he struck, which is all Fianna Fail has ever done about its "republican ideals"—strike attitudes. They were endorsing dishonest rhetoric.

Something similar can be said about those who think of themselves as socialists who rather regretted that Thatcher was booted out of Downing Street.

STEAL

Some wanted Thatcher to stay because they reckoned her personal unpopularity would have made the next election safe for Labour. They fear that Major will be able to steal Labour's clothes and fatally wrong-foot Kinnock.

In fact, all this illustrates is what a weak-kneed right-wing bunch the present Labour leadership is. It's an argument for rejecting Kinnock's leadership, not regretting the end of Thatcher's.



Mary Robinson

There's also the contention that a Tory victory would be preferable anyway, because the Tories, unlike Labour, might "do something" about Ireland.

"Only the Tories have any balls on issues like this", it was recently explained in Derry. There are precedents which seem to justify this, Zimbabwe being the most obvious.

SURPRISED

Thatcher surprised many in 1979 when she speedily agreed the handover to Mugabe. But that agreement preserved everything essential in Zimbabwe which Thatcher represented.

Mugabe agreed that there would be no fundamental change in land ownership, which gave the white minority its vast privileges; that the assets of foreign (largely British) firms would be protected; that whites would have reserved seats in parliament; that the new State would not assist the armed struggle against apartheid, etc.

Thatcher wasn't interested in sentimental rhetoric about "our white kith and kin". She left all that to the backwoodsman and her back-benches, while she went ahead to deal with reality.

In that sense, the Tories do tend to have more "balls" than Labour.

The deal Thatcher did in Zimbabwe, by securing the interests she represented, trampled on the interests of most of the Zimbabwean people. Repression, misery and mass discontent has been the result.

By the same token, it's theoretically possible to imagine a deal whereby the Tories took Britain out of Ireland. But it is not possible to imagine such a deal being the best settlement for the Irish working class.

On the contrary, in such (theoretical) circumstances, it would be in the working class interest to push forward to overthrow those on "our" side who would accept such a deal.

To say that "The Tories would be better for Ireland" implies that "Ireland" has interests, not only separate from, but in conflict with the interests of the Irish working class.

People who think of themselves as radicals, even revolutionaries, and who then found themselves regretting the defeat of Lenihan and having mixed feelings about the downfall of Thatcher, should examine the political analysis which led them to these strange conclusions.

ICTU pushes for a new PNR

THE ICTU leaders have stepped up their manoeuvres to get a new central pay deal with the FF/PD government.

At the end of September they got the go-ahead to enter discussions with Bertie Ahern, Minister for Labour. Over one third of delegates, however, voted against. Many of those who spoke for a new deal called for a shorter term.

Yet one week after the vote, the ICTU leaders revealed that they were negotiating on the basis of a document, Part 1 of which was called 'Ireland's need for a long term strategy.' They also stated that they would discuss the possibility of a ten year deal!

Neither the document nor the

longer time period had even been mentioned at the ICTU conference.

A recent report from the National Economic and Social Council—on which Peter Cassells and Phil Flynn serve—is to provide a backdrop for the discussions on the new programme.

IMPOSED

Among the recommendations of this report are:

- That there be no increase in current public expenditure until 1993
- That VAT be imposed on food
- That state companies can be sold off
- That children's allowances and all social welfare payments can be taxed.

Union leaders such as Phil Flynn make great play of one demand of the NESC report. This is for a progressive property tax.

Socialists have no problem increasing taxes on property that is in excess of £60,000. But the present demand of Flynn is essentially for a return to domestic rates on ALL houses.

In a situation where 40 per cent of the working class pay more than the standard rate of tax—in order to make up for the fact that employers pay less than 2 per cent of the overall tax yield—we are opposed to extra tax burdens on working class people.

None of these items to which Cassells and Flynn put their name was reported to the

ICTU conference. Yet now they already form a significant element in the negotiations on a new PNR.

While the ICTU leaders play at being power brokers in government policies, one of their own surveys has revealed the true nature of the PNR.

A survey of 50 Irish companies has showed that their profits DOUBLED between 1987 and 1990. In the same period workers wages rose by just over 10 per cent.

The case against the new PNR couldn't be clearer. This makes the role of the Trade Unionists and Unemployed Against the Programme in organising resistance all the more important.

Build the fight back against the War drive



Part of a picket organised outside the US embassy in November against Bush's war plans

UNION FIGHT AGAINST NUN

ANTI-TRADE union activity is alive and well and living in a Catholic Church-controlled community centre in Derry

The job-club leader in the Carnhill Resource Centre was sacked at the end of November. Her crime—she joined a trade union!

Last April the Centre transformed itself into a limited company. Concerned about the implications of this, a small number of workers joined SIPTU. The centre refused to recognise the union.

The sacking came when the job-club leader refused to attend a meeting without a union rep present. She was physically and verbally abused by the managing director, a nun, Sister Anna.

Other workers have since revealed that they were asked at their interviews: "You're not one of those union people, are you?"

Derry Trades Council has backed the sacked worker and called on the city council to freeze its grant to the centre until the issue has been investigated.

The fight to win back the Carnhill job could be a rallying point in Derry for a real campaign to organise workers in the many centres and "schemes" where abuses are common and which act as agencies for social control rather than serving the local community.

Continued from page one

war breaking out. The SWM has been in the forefront of the effort to build the anti-war movement in Ireland—just as our comrades in the Socialist Workers Party have provided the backbone of the campaign in Britain.

We will work with anyone who opposes the war drive—while presenting our own argument against depending on the UN.

We argue, too, that if despite the anti-war

mood on both sides of the Atlantic, Bush does initiate slaughter to defend oil profits, then we should not be neutral.

We call for the US and its allies to Get Out of the Gulf!

And if war does break out, we take the side of the Iraqis—not because we approve of Saddam Hussein but because despite Saddam Hussein the Iraqis would be on the anti-imperialist side in the conflict.

TREATED LIKE ANIMALS

NINE workers at Liffey Meats in Co Cavan were on strike in November for union recognition.

Workers at Liffey Meats receive under £200 a week for 70 hours. They are constantly verbally abused by managers who act like dictators.

Recently worker Angela Flood was sacked because

she failed to ask permission to go to the toilet.

Then, when women workers tried to meet in the women's toilet to discuss their grievances, a male manager kicked in the door.

As one worker said: "They kill animals in Liffey Meats and they treat us like animals".

WE THINK

NINETEEN-NINETY moved to a close amid another flurry of activity about a settlement in the North.

Northern Secretary Peter Brooke engaged in a last-ditch effort to rescue his plan for a new round of talks. The question of when the Dublin Government would join the discussions still proved a sticking point with the unionists.

There was another public exchange between Brooke and Sinn Fein leaders about what would be on offer if the IRA called off the armed struggle.

In the South, the election of Mary Robinson prompted the Workers' Party to put down a motion calling for the amendment of Articles Two and Three of the Constitution. The WP argument—backed by a sizeable section of establishment opinion—is that dropping the 'claim' on the North would lift the 'threat' Loyalists feel themselves under, deprive the IRA of any call on constitutional 'legitimacy' and generally help in the easing of tension.

It is necessary to spell out again the reality which renders all these 'initiatives' irrelevant to ending the conflict.

The war in the North hasn't raged for almost two decades because of politicians' failures to come up with a constitutional formula to reconcile Unionism and Nationalism. The war is rooted in the fact that a sizeable section of the Northern population can find neither material nor civil equality within the State.

Twenty years of reforms designed to provide a sense of equality have come to nothing.

This is the central fact of the Northern situation. No amount of moralising about violence—horrible as the continuing violence is—can alter it. Any more than it can be wished away by appeals for 'working class unity' based on turning a blind eye to the reasons for the *disunity*.

For as long as there is no constitutional remedy for *this* problem, there can be no constitutional remedy, full stop.

The Workers' Party plan for dropping Articles Two and Three is tapping into a feeling, particularly strong among the middle class, that the South should take its place among the nations of Europe, modernising the economy and getting rid of old-fashioned notions like a ban on divorce and restricted access to contraception—and, most of all, being 'sensible' and accepting its own boundaries.

IMPLICATIONS

The implication is that if second-class status is all the Catholics can achieve within the Northern State, they'll just have to buckle down and make the best of it.

The main motive—to strengthen and provide long-term stability for the Southern State—is particularly important at the moment. The Southern ruling class is well aware that its economy will face a fierce challenge as economic boundaries in Europe come down.

Sharper industrial competition will result in pressure on workers to 'tighten their belts', while the erosion of subsidies could spell disaster for whole sections of agriculture.

What the Southern capitalist State is going to need in the next period is discipline, stability, a well-focussed sense of 'national



purpose.

Instead, it has a ramshackle party-political situation which cannot provide single-party government and which doesn't reflect the economic needs of the nineties.

In this situation, the North is a dangerous distraction, disruptive of relations with Britain, and a continual, potential source of instability in the State itself.

Abolishing Articles Two and Three would symbolise an intention to be done with all that. The move has nothing to do with

the interests of the working class, North or South, but with the interests of the Southern capitalist State.

The SWM will continue in the new year to argue for a working

class response to the Northern crisis, which recognises that workers must oppose *both* Irish States, rather than merely seek the overthrow of one—or the consolidation of either.

The war in the North hasn't raged for almost two decades because of politicians' failures to come up with a constitutional formula to reconcile Unionism and Nationalism.



Derry 'boom' myth exploded

THE announcement in Derry of over a hundred redundancies in the construction section of Du Pont, of 30 in AUX, Coleraine, of eight job losses in Milanda bakery and signs of more redundancies to come in British Telecom and Ormo bakery have exposed the reality behind the "Derry is booming" hype of recent months.

The Industrial Development Board, backed vigorously by John Hume, has been pursuing a policy of "retail-led regeneration" of the area.

They believe that by making Derry a centre for shopping, tourism and services like bars and restaurants, more money can be brought into the area and local businesses can start to flourish again.

The reality is that unemployment in Derry is so high, and wages so low, that few working class people have money to spend in the new shops and bars.

People on the dole are having difficulty putting

food on the table, according to recent reports by Vincent de Paul.

A Derry Unemployed Workers' Group statement on the redundancies called for more well-paid public-sector jobs to reduce unemployment and

MILLIONS

poverty in Derry. The group noted that the job losses would take millions of pounds annually from the local economy and asked how, in a city where people couldn't put food on the table, could the present retailing strategy for bringing jobs hope to work?

What's really needed in

Derry is for workers whose jobs are being axed to fight the redundancies, occupy their workplace and demand that the bosses and shareholders, not the workers, pay for

the crisis in profitability.

There must be a push within local trade union and community groups for this strategy—as an alternative to the Hume/IDB con-job.

North fat cats

THE FAT cats in the North are getting even fatter!

As workers are forced to fight hard to win any wage rise at all, and in many cases have to struggle to save their jobs against the privatisers, word comes that the bosses' bank accounts are continuing to bulge.

A survey by PA Consultants has shown that company chairmen's salaries are up this year by 18 per

cent.

Group managers are picking up an extra 16.2 per cent, while chief accountants have had an average pay hike of 23 per cent!

And to top it all "bonus payments" for board directors will this year average £22,000.

Workers in the North should keep that in mind the next time we're told to tighten our belts, or accept cut-backs so as to remain "competitive" etc.



Jimmy Kelly, chief shop steward in Waterford Glass and Eamonn McCann, editor of "Socialist Worker" discuss the way forward at the very successful "Marxism in Ireland 91, Socialism into the Nineties" held in November. "Marxism" attracted nearly two hundred people to its lively discussions and several joined the SWM during the weekend.

CRISIS IN THE EAST CRISIS IN THE EAST CRISIS IN THE

The break-up of the Soviet Union

EASTERN EUROPE IN CHAOS

THE CRISIS in the Soviet Union is deepening by the day

The state is in danger of break-up as individual republics declare themselves independent and reject the authority of the central government.

The three Baltic states of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia, as well as Moldavia and Armenia, have already declared themselves independent. Georgia and the Ukraine are poised to follow.

Of the fifteen republics that constitute the USSR, thirteen have now proclaimed that their laws—not those of the USSR—will take precedence.

This follows the first free elections in sixty years to the republics' parliaments which swept nationalist parties to power. In Lithuania, for example, the nationalist movement, Sajudis, won 90 per cent of the seats to the Sejm.

Armenia and Azerbaijan are on the brink of war. In August, Azerbaijan erected a full-scale border with Armenia complete with customs posts and passport controls. Armenian paramilitaries frequently make armed raids across it.

In Moldavia, the Russian-speaking minority has itself declared UDI and proclaimed a new state, "Transnistria".

TURBULENCE

Underlying all this nationalist turbulence is the economic crisis. Perestroika was supposed to clear the way for economic reforms that would allow the liquidation of inefficient enterprises and the introduction of foreign capital and technology into a market economy.

However, as the scale of the chaos has become apparent argument has intensified about the pace at which this should happen.

On one hand USSR prime minister Ryzhkov argued that changing to market mechanisms required swingeing price increases in, for example, bread and meat before any benefits of the reforms could be expected. Gorbachev initially backed Ryzhkov.

But a wave of anger from Soviet workers forced Gorbachev to disown the Ryzhkov scheme. He has instead opted for an alternative drawn up by the economist Shatalin at the bidding of the Russian Federation

president Boris Yeltsin. Yeltsin has increased his popularity by pretending that the Shatalin scheme would allow a switch to the market without such price increases.

Both schemes aim to dismantle the old Stalinist method of running the economy based on Moscow issuing detailed commands to enterprises.

Both ignore the Western experience of booms, slumps, inflation and unemployment and assume that the market is the best possible way to run a modern economy.

Both foresee a massive privatisation of Soviet industry.

The difference is this: Ryzhkov says the state has to push through price rises and keep existing controls over the biggest enterprises. Only when that's done could extensive privatisation occur.

If the state relaxes control too quickly, he argues, the bosses of individual enterprises would take advantages of shortages to raise prices in an uncontrolled manner. Some would make huge profits driving others out of business.

He also wants a tight rein must be kept on the individual republics to prevent them setting up rival currencies and depriving the state of control over the money supply, running the risk of massive inflation.

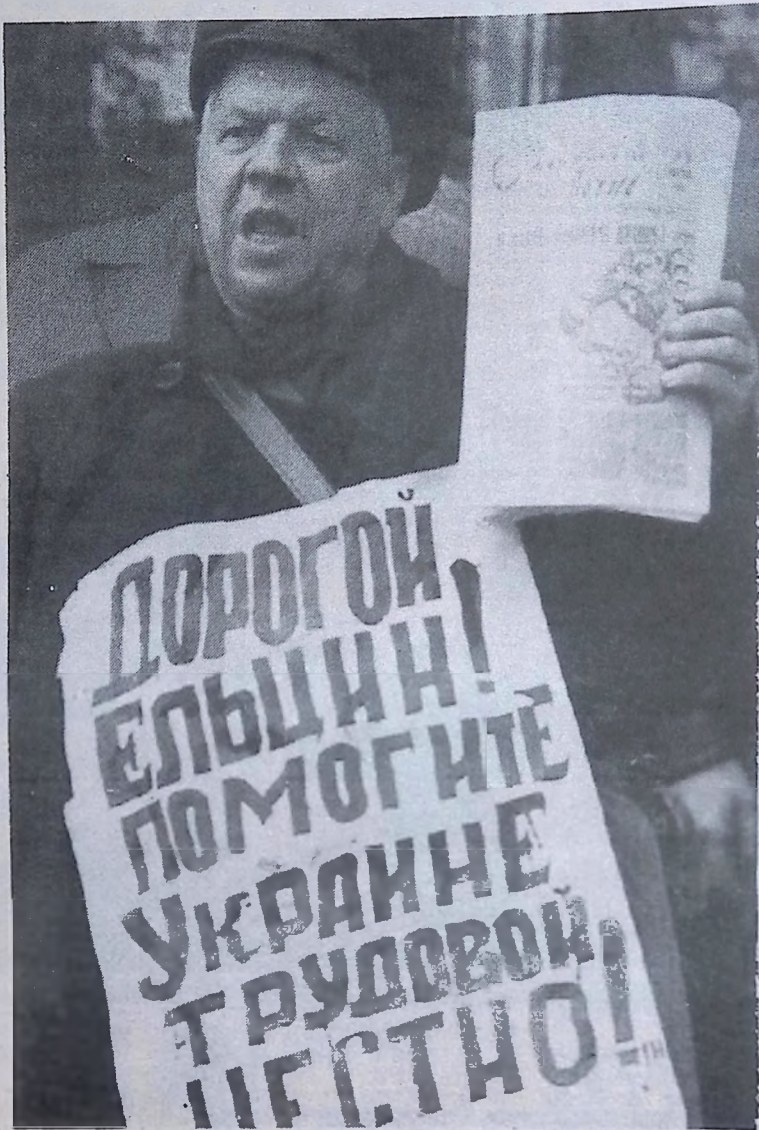
Shatalin's "500 day" scheme, by contrast, says the privatisations should go ahead immediately. This would not, he claims, mean price increases for basic goods.

COERCION

As promoted by Yeltsin, the Shatalin scheme has achieved a degree of popularity. It seems to avoid the immediate price increases offered by Ryzhkov. It also claims not to rely on the coercion of the individual republics.

As Gorbachev's chosen scheme, it looks set to be just as disastrous for the mass of people as Ryzhkov's would be.

The period of privatisation will be one of unbridled speculation with bigger price rises than at present for essential goods in short



Demonstrator in Kiev

supply.

Those who will buy up the enterprises will be those with money—the same state bureaucrats who presently control industry as well as the organised gangsters of the black market. A binge of buying up housing and factories at knock-down prices would be followed by speculation, hoarding, more shortages and further massive price hikes.

Shatalin's panacea of restricting the money-supply will work no better in the USSR than it has in the West or the Third World. Instead it will allow some of the large privatised firms to rise prices while others are driven out of business. It is estimated that today's six million unemployed in the USSR would be multiplied to 40 million or more as the rich get richer and average workers are driven to desperation.

It is in this context that we have to see the rise of

nationalism.

In 1917 the Bolshevik government of Lenin and Trotsky declared that every nationality had the right to self-determination.

However that right disappeared with the rise of Stalin. The regime of show trials and mass terror, brought the enslavement of the nationalities—half the population of the Soviet Union.

Local languages were suppressed, Russians put in charge of the republics' governments and a system of economic exploitation established which today sees Russia running a trade surplus with every one of the other 16 republics.

At the end of WW2 whole populations were forcibly transferred from one part of the country to another. Whole nations were judged "collectively guilty" of collaboration with Hitler and subject to

loss of all civil rights.

It is not surprising, then, that the present disintegration of the central Stalinist power in the Russian empire should bring old nationalisms to the surface.

Socialists support the right of oppressed nations to self-determination. The nations contained within the Russian empire are oppressed. We champion their right to independence.

Socialists in Russia must oppose the Russian chauvinism of demagogues like Yeltsin and "Unionists" like Gorbachev and support the rights of the nationalities.

It is only on this basis that socialists can ever hope to persuade masses of people among the oppressed nationalities to freely seek an alliance with workers from all across the USSR in order to build a genuine socialist society at last.

■ KEVIN WINGFIELD

THE CRISIS arising from the collapse of Stalinism isn't confined to the USSR.

Right across Eastern Europe there is chaos as the regimes which took over from the Stalinists find themselves unable to establish political stability.

Introducing "liberal democracy" and "the market" has not provided a solution to deep-seated economic and political problems.

In Poland Lech Walesa won the presidency—but the voting showed how far his support among workers has slipped.

His opponent in the run-off was expatriate millionaire Stanislaw Tynminski. Solidarity Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki had been humiliated and eliminated in the first round.

Workers had become embittered by the Solidarity government's short, sharp shock economic programme, introduced last January.

A rapid opening up to market forces had hit living standards hard and pushed unemployment up beyond a million.

Mazowiecki had borne the brunt of the blame.

But Walesa's "alternative" is an even more speedy dash for "the market". He boasted that he could attract foreign multi-nationals with this approach. As well, he played the nationalist card and even flirted with anti-Semitism to win support.

He will solve none of the problems of the Polish working class.

The real tragedy is that those who fought hardest against the old regime have been unwilling to mount an effective opposition to the Solidarity government.

At various times groups of the old Solidarity leadership have broken with Walesa and some have tried to rekindle the struggle at the grassroots.

But they still retain many of their confused ideas from the previous period and have found no consistent socialist position from which to oppose Walesa's increasingly right wing policies.

In Germany Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats won the December 1st election. The middle-class leaders of the New Forum, which emerged from the toppling of the Stalinists, had offered only "parliamentary democracy and the market" as an alternative.

They were totally opposed to the movement developing into a strike wave which would have put workers' power on the agenda.

Small wonder that Kohl was able to outbid them.

As in Poland, it was the failure of the Left which allowed the Right to make gains.

In Poland there have been a series of strikes which show that the workers' movement may be starting to recover.

In what was east Germany rail workers are on strike for wage increases which they insist must be paid for without any sackings. This is the first time workers have combined defence of wages with defence of jobs.

In Romania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia the austerity programmes have already provoked strikes and popular protests.

In Bulgaria at the end of November, vast protests—involving workers' action as well as a middle-class mobilisation—forced the resignation of Zhikov, the last of the old Warsaw Pact Stalinist leaders.

In such circumstances those who have a clear socialist alternative to the crisis, although they may be small in number, have a real chance of finding an echo among a minority of workers.

The alternative channel for discontent could be support for increasingly authoritarian central government combined with vicious ethnic rivalry.

SOUTH AFRICA:

What is at stake?

THE ICTU hosted a conference in Dublin last month on Trade Unions and Apartheid.

The message of the conference was that a negotiated settlement was not only possible but was the only way of bringing about change.

Speakers from the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) insisted that their members' power was not the main force for ending apartheid.

Instead, they weighed in behind the ANC leadership strategy of "peaceful negotiations", with sanctions maintaining pressure on the de Klerk regime to make concessions.

A speaker from the Garment Workers' Union argued that the opposition must not alienate Western opinion, in case this weakened support for sanctions.

Confrontation with capitalism in South Africa would push Western countries back into the arms of de Klerk, was the reasoning.

Anti Apartheid leader Kadar Asmal said the struggle was solely for "democratic rights"—not facing the question of why black workers should settle for "one person one vote" if that vote couldn't deliver jobs, decent houses, basic dignity.

Here we look at the current state of play in South Africa, as the ANC strives to implement its "realistic" strategy amid continuing violence and repression

CAN THE South African government maintain white rule?

Constitutional affairs minister Gerrit Viljoen spelt out the ruling National Party's plans for a "post apartheid society", which do not include one person one vote, just nine months after Nelson Mandela's release.

The government want to see two chambers of parliament. One would be elected by one person one vote and reflect the wishes of the black majority. Here the ANC, expected to be the strongest party, would seek to remove the racist legislation of apartheid.

But in addition there would be a second house where "groups", including "whites", and regions would have equal representation quite unrelated to their size in the population.

A vote by just one third of the second house could override the black majority.

The right of veto would cover so called "minority rights" which include a guarantee of the free enterprise system, "protection against socialism" and the right of whites to continue with their apartheid lifestyles and separate schools.

Negotiating

The scheme is a negotiating position which the National Party expects to be amended during talks. But it is also designed to soothe whites who fear their privileges will be abolished.

However the extreme right is still a consideration for de Klerk. Over 100,000 whites have resigned from the National Party since February.

There are claimed to be over 70 ultra right terrorist groups, some of which are behind the recent seven fold increase in bomb attacks on blacks.

Fighting apartheid

THE central problem is that the ANC has not attempted to encourage and organise the resistance.

The February reforms unleashed a heightened wave of struggle. Both inside the community and the workplace there was a new willingness and confidence to fight for immediate improvements and against the injustices of apartheid.

De Klerk has weathered this storm because the ANC has preferred negotiation to focusing the struggle.

The ANC used to demand the troops leave the townships before negotiations could begin. Now the ANC leadership accepts the troops can play a useful role.

Trade union leaders who share

the politics of the ANC and the Communist Party have come to similar conclusions.

For example, company security forces in the mines are dominated by the most reactionary whites—often members of fascist organisations like the AWB.

The response of union leaders has been to call for them to be replaced by the police, the same police who killed dozens of union members during the last major miners' strike.

The ANC's hesitation has been most costly in the war with Inkatha. Chief Buthelezi's organisation was fearful negotiations over the future would sideline his party.

Buthelezi's main strategy is to hack his way to the

bargaining table through a pile of bodies.

For example, the ANC has repeatedly opposed calls from non-Inkatha members to organise self-defence groups. Instead Mandela has called on the government to use its forces impartially.

Pressure from below is forcing the idea of self-defence units to be discussed, but far too late.

Union leaders who are members of the Communist Party have also missed opportunities to call strikes against the killings in the hostels.

In September the executive of the metal workers' union backed off from calling a strike against the employers—a strike which could have united black workers

to be a completely orderly process which does not endanger continued capitalist rule.

They are increasingly confident this tricky manoeuvre can be accomplished.

A signal of that confidence is the government's high handed treatment of the ANC.

One of the central concessions which the ANC was supposed to have extracted in return for the abandonment of the armed struggle was the release of political prisoners.

This has now been decreed, but in a wholly false manner. The ANC says there are 3,602 political

prisoners but the government believes there are fewer than a thousand.

Even worse a new clause was suddenly inserted in the declaration, without negotiation, which said releases would be dependent on the good behaviour of anti-apartheid individuals and organisations.

Moreover the state is poised to put on trial eight leading ANC activists accused of trying to topple the government by force.

These prosecutions breach all the government's undertakings to give indemnity to former ANC fighters and allow exiles to return.

and turned them towards their real enemies.

The carnage unleashed by Inkatha and the lack of response from the ANC has strengthened the government.

Yet the potential to fight back has never been greater.

Over 4,000 Barlow Rand workers have been on strike for seven weeks demanding an end to company "union busting".

There have been two and three day solidarity strikes by transport workers and chemical workers.

In the mines, at the time of writing, there are over 6,000 workers on strike. And there are strikes among farm workers, traditionally seen as one of the most difficult sections to organise.

Action by 1,500 workers at Blinkpan colliery forced bosses to scrap racial in buses and

changehouses.

At the great Harmony mine an 18 month campaign for union recognition was won after strikes.

In the townships there have been demonstrations involving tens of thousands of people over rent rises, corruption in the councils and electricity disconnections.

The only reason de Klerk can continue to look strong is because the ANC and, increasingly, the Communist Party regard all these struggles as an irrelevance or a hindrance.

But unless every strike and every demonstration is encouraged the best that will come from the negotiations is a settlement which addresses some of the legal inequalities of apartheid but leaves intact the powerlessness and poverty of black people.



Township youths fight back against Inkatha



Mary Robinson

DICK SPRING lost no time in announcing the lesson the Labour leadership draws from the election of Mary Robinson.

The Party would "move from the Left to the centre ground", he told a press conference in Dublin the week after the poll. Labour would "recognise the reality of a market economy and the need for efficiently-run state companies", he said.

Three working groups have been set up to carry out "a major review of policy...with particular attention being paid to economic and fiscal policy". The three groups are to report in time for the Party's annual conference in March or April. When asked whether this meant the Party would drop its anti-Coalition stance, Spring dodged the question.

Meanwhile, leading members of the Workers' Party have been even more open about moving to the Right. Speaking on RTE, Pat Rabbitte said the WP didn't rule out coalition. And Party leader de Rossa has declared that the WP now stands in the "broad social-democratic tradition".

When it's remembered that the WP spent years denouncing the Labour Party for entering coalitions, and using the term "social democrat" as an insult against Labour, it becomes clear how dramatic the shift rightwards has become.

From an electoral point of view, the thinking of the two main Left parties is obvious enough.

Mary Robinson took just under forty per cent of the first preference vote—more than double the combined Labour and WP totals in any recent election. And she won the Presidency on the basis of then gaining the lion's share of Fine Gael transfers. So the Left leaders reckon that the best way forward is to repeat the exercise.

This means putting forward no sharp or "divisive" ideas, but concentrating instead on image, on packaging and presentation, on trying to articulate a "mood". It means saying or doing nothing which might

alienate any pocket of potential support.

It means steering well clear of *struggle* and, most especially, making no mention of *class*.

Indeed one of the central ideas of the "new politics" is that class is an old-fashioned notion.

Although Dick Spring and Proinsias de Rossa say that they can adopt this line and still remain socialist, the truth is that they are abandoning any semblance of socialism in the scramble to reach the "middle ground" where they believe new votes are to be found.

All this has been done in a dishonest and undemocratic manner. Spring's announcement of Labour's change of course was not based on any conference decision, or even on a vote at the Party's administrative council. He obviously believes that in the afterglow of the Robinson election nobody is going to challenge him from within.

He's probably right. After all, the transfer deal with Austin Currie was, at the very least, against the spirit of Labour's anti-Coalition policy. But not a single member of the parliamentary party or of the administrative council publicly dissented.

COMMENT

Similarly, there wasn't a single negative comment on his press conference announcement that Labour would in future be a Party of the Centre rather than of the Left.

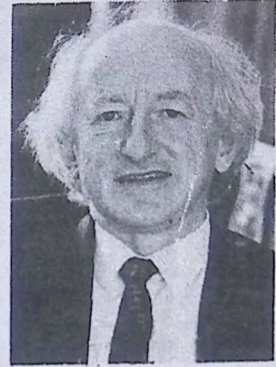
Emmet Stagg, Michael D. Higgins, etc., etc.—not one of them even suggested that maybe there should have been a debate on Spring's perspective before it was proclaimed as party policy.

Spring isn't suggesting that Labour might win voters who are at present in the Centre over to the Left. He's saying openly that it's Labour which will shift over.

Pat Rabbitte was saying the same thing when he remarked on "Today Tonight" that "we have fifteen per cent of the vote between us (Labour and the WP)...Maybe we should admit that it's we who are wrong, not the other eighty-five per cent".

Again there has been no hint of dissent from inside the WP either.

Where are they leading?



SCRAMBLING FOR THE CENTRE

Spring and de Rossa have a very simple argument to justify their move to the Right. They say this is the way to win votes.

Those who regard themselves as being on the Left of Labour and the WP, and who feel disturbed at the new "line" have a difficulty about responding to this argument. That is, from a purely electoral point of view, Spring and de Rossa are right.

Quite simply, it's hard to argue in the present circumstances that Labour, for example, would do better at the polls by fighting on clear class policies. The Labour Party is primarily an electoral machine. Its reason for existence is to try to have candidates returned in local and Leinster house elections. Anything which will achieve that will more or less automatically be viewed by many Labour activists in a positive light.

Many Party members who have slogged away for years and who didn't see winning elections as the be-all and end-all of politics are nevertheless attracted by the prospect which Spring holds out of "real" advances.

Reading the Robinson result, the possibility oc-

curred to them of Labour at last becoming a major party, as opposed to a minor party. Specifically, they see the possibility of Labour replacing Fine Gael as the main alternative to Fianna Fail.

This is a very enticing prospect to activists who regard the electoral process as the central arena of politics. After all, the "purer" politics of past times never delivered an electoral success to celebrate like Mary Robinson's.

So Spring's probably justified in his confidence that he can transform—"modernise", in his own phrase—the past without serious resistance.

ELECTABILITY

Already, Ruairi Quinn has been in touch with party branches telling them that they should select candidates not on the basis of their politics, but on their "electability". They should *look and sound* the part. He was probably only half-joking when he told one interviewer that all future Labour candidates will wear dark suits, white shirts and ties.

Image, acceptability, matching the mood of the moment...these are the things that are going to count in Labour's electoral thinking in the future. Fighting the capitalist class will have nothing to do

UNDERLYING THE LEFT'S drift into the centre is the down-turn in working-class struggle.

Industry minister Dessie O'Malley was able to boast recently that "we have one of the most responsible trade union movements in Europe".

By which he meant one of the most docile—as far as the union leaderships are concerned anyway.

There have been few clear-cut victories for workers in recent years. The main struggles have tended to be defensive, as workers resisted attacks by employers on staffing levels, wages and conditions.

The most obvious examples are Waterford Glass, Gateaux and the Irish Press. The disputes had different backgrounds, and different outcomes. But they were alike in that they were sparked by management aggression, not workers' efforts to push forward.

Of course, advances have been made, too. But the general picture has been of our side very

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much on the defensive.

This is in contrast to the situation in the sixties, say, when an influx of foreign investment spurred a period of growth and workers were relatively self-confident. In two successive years the 26 Counties had the highest number of strikes-per-head of all countries covered by the International Labour Organisation statistics.

This was reflected in the bullish attitude of Labour at the time, which voted by a large majority against coalition with any right-wing party.

"The seventies will be socialist" was the main slogan in the 1969 general election.

Such a slogan would be unthinkable by Labour leaders now.

Right up to the mid-eighties working class remained strong and confident. In the years 1975-'84, we had the third-highest number of strikes per head in Europe.

In the seventies, too, there was a substantial shop-stewards movement involving up to a thousand rank-and-file representatives. Some shop stewards' meetings in Dublin drew more than 300 stewards.

This was independent of the official union machinery, outside

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Economists complained about this phenomenon of 'wage drift' but with profits and investment high and the working class feeling strong there was little could be done about it.

Any socialist who refuses to face the fact that things are very different now is refusing to accept reality.

This doesn't mean that we have reached rock bottom. Far from it. The working class movement is relatively intact. The bosses aren't having a walk-over anywhere.

Trade union membership has declined from its early-seventies high of fifty percent plus. But at forty-four percent it's still high by international standards. And the general calmness which has prevailed on the industrial front is a little deceptive.

For example although the impression has been around that the last PNR was generally accepted, members of the ITGWU, as it was then, accepted it only by a fifty-three to forty-seven percent majority.

And there is still a layer of militants ready and willing to mount a counter-offensive against the bosses and their government. The anti-PNR campaign, Trade Unionists and Unemployed Against the Programme, is much the most important expression of this.

And it is here, rather than in the Labour Party or the Workers Party, that socialists can find real reason for hope in the future.

We have to be realistic. TUUAP is NOT a mass rank-and-file movement, nor has it

any immediate potential to become one. It can, however, act as a focus for all those who understand that the PNR is a con. The SWM will continue to throw its energies into TUUAP so as to maximise the NO vote.

And in the process of doing that we will continue to argue for the necessity to build a revolutionary socialist party outside Labour and the Workers Party.

The support of Labour and WP leaders for the PNR is at the heart of their Rightward-moving politics, of their enthusiasm for 'classless' ideas, 'mainstream European social democracy' etc. etc.

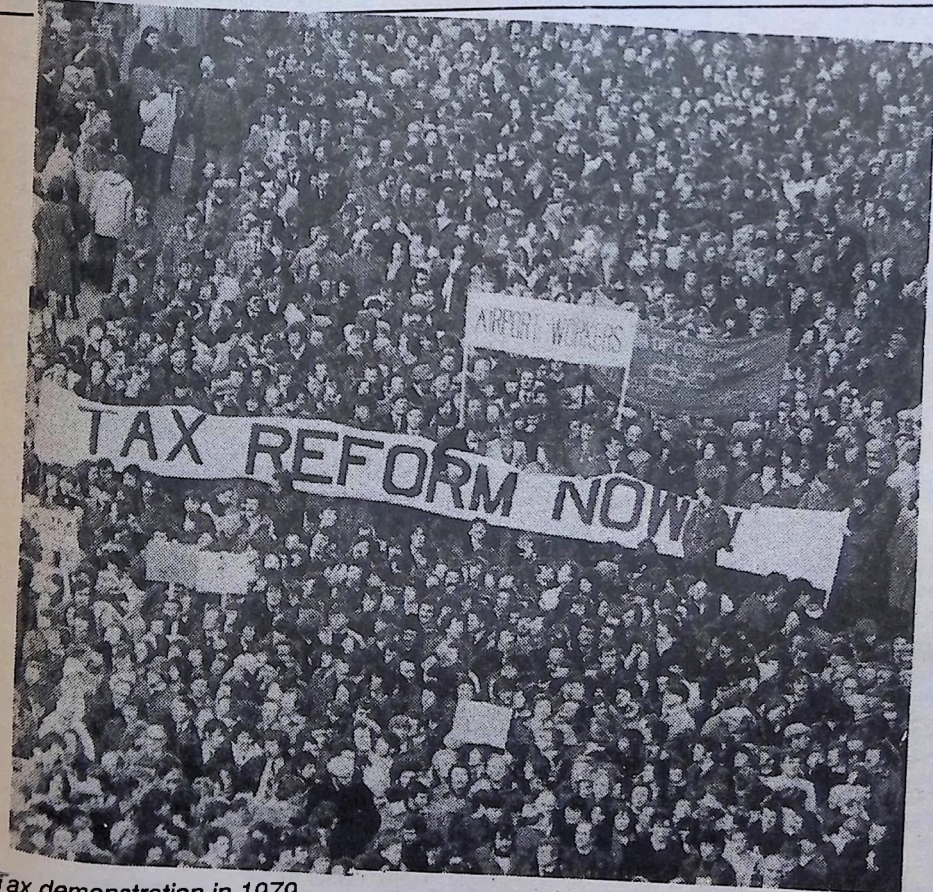
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Within the unions, as every activist knows, Labour and WP officials are a hundred percent for a new deal and contemptuous of anybody who argues for the working class to stand and fight its corner.

All this marks a significant realignment in Southern politics. It isn't a temporary deviation on the part of Labour and the WP, brought on suddenly by post-presidential euphoria. It's the way things are going to be for the foreseeable future.

It will not be possible to integrate working class struggle into Labour or WP politics. Those who persist in trying to, because they cannot bring themselves to 'make the break' will be wasting their energy and setting themselves and others up for inevitable disillusionment.



Tax demonstration in 1979.

But neither the Labour Party or the Workers Party are leading such action today

Congo 1960

When went in

by CHARLIE KIMBER

WHAT happens when the United Nations intervenes in a crisis involving the world's great powers?

In the central African country of the Congo in 1960 the UN intervened with a mandate to defend democracy against colonialism.

It seemed the right force for the job. At the end of the Second World War the signatories to the UN Charter committed themselves to the "political, social and economic advancements of their colonial subjects".

Such sentiments had no effect on the Belgian government's plans for the Congo. It ruled the richest colony in Africa with no concessions to democracy or self-government.

The Congolese had no votes, no rights to own land or travel freely. Virtual slave labour was common.

In 1960 only 136 Congolese completed secondary education out of a population of 14 million.

Riots

This brutal rule was shattered by rebellion in 1959. As other imperial powers conceded independence to their colonies, Congolese nationalists attempted to organise their own movements against Belgian rule.

When the government banned public meetings riots broke out in the capital, Leopoldville. In the repression that followed 50 Africans were killed.

The resistance shook Belgium to the core. Large demonstrations demanded, "Not one soldier for the Congo".

This and the prospect of an unwinnable war stampeded the government towards reform plans.

The Belgians encouraged conservative black groups who would guarantee the profits and assets of Belgian and British companies.

But the MNC, led by Patrice Lumumba, demanded immediate independence for the whole of the Congo.

The MNC emerged as the biggest party after the Belgian sponsored elections, despite ballot rigging aimed against it. All Belgium's plans of installing a government which would continue the situation much as before were threatened.

Immediate steps were taken to destabilise Lumumba. The Belgian Army commander lectured his officers, "Before independence=after independence" he wrote on a blackboard.

The Americans also quickly became involved.



MOBUTU: a Western with UN's

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The clinching reason this perspective will be accepted by Labour is that Trade Union bureaucrats are passionately in favour of it. The entire enterprise depends on the maintenance of "industrial peace".

This is what Spring meant when he spoke of "recognising the reality of a market economy and the need for efficiently-run State companies".

This involves accepting the priorities of the present economic system—the capitalist system—rather than fighting against the system at the head of those who are exploited by it. Even the State sector, Spring is conceding, must be competitive.

Labour is offering to manage capitalism, not oppose it.

This has always been implicit in Labour's commitment to the political system—to electoral politics. But it's now being spelled out clearly and explicitly. Labour has never been a party of working class struggle—despite the myth-making of Left activists within it.

Now it's openly repudiating the very idea of struggle.

And much the same goes, of course, for the workers' Party.

Within the Unions, both Labour and WP officials express their "new" perspective by backing the PNR, talking even of a ten-year deal with the bosses and the bosses' government, and trying to damp down and discourage any spark of rank and file resistance.

Congo 1960

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by CHARLIE KIMBER



MOBUTU: installed as a Western puppet with UN's help

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The Americans also quickly became involved.

Eisenhower's blessing. "Planning for the Congo would not necessarily rule out consideration of any particular kind of activity which might contribute to getting rid of Lumumba."

The United Nations forces, together with the US, fastened on one of Lumumba's subordinates, Joseph Mobutu, to act as a Western puppet.

Two months after the Congo achieved independence Mobutu took power in a coup which succeeded only because of the encouragement and connivance of UN officials. The forces called in to protect Lumumba from the great powers now drove him from office at the request of the greatest power.

Lumumba left his UN guard and tried to rejoin his supporters, but was captured and thrown into jail.

The Western powers continued to fear Lumumba's return to power. At the beginning of 1961 he was murdered by Katangese officials and Belgian mercenaries.

His murder provoked wide protest inside the Congo. Thousands of people were massacred by the rival armies.

The US government feared that among the confusion another nationalist movement like Lumumba's would emerge. The new US president, Kennedy, informed the other Western governments they would have to accept his solution of a single country supporting US interests rather than a divided nation with parts aligned to Belgium or Britain.

Atrocities

Once the Western powers were agreed, UN forces carried out their wishes.

The UN force, having played the role the US had demanded, was phased out. When Lumumba's former supporters launched another rebellion, the US mobilised transport planes, trucks and combat aircraft to defeat them.

The Belgians provided hundreds of army officers. The shock troops were recruited from Rhodesian and South African mercenaries.

This army carried out terrible repression and committed numerous atrocities. The UN never stirred.

Finally in 1965 the US backed a further coup, led once again by Mobutu. He has ruled to this day as the US's staunchest ally.

He would never have come to power without the intervention of UN troops. They carried out the wishes of imperialism while claiming to be an independent peaceforce.

They would play no other role in the Gulf today.

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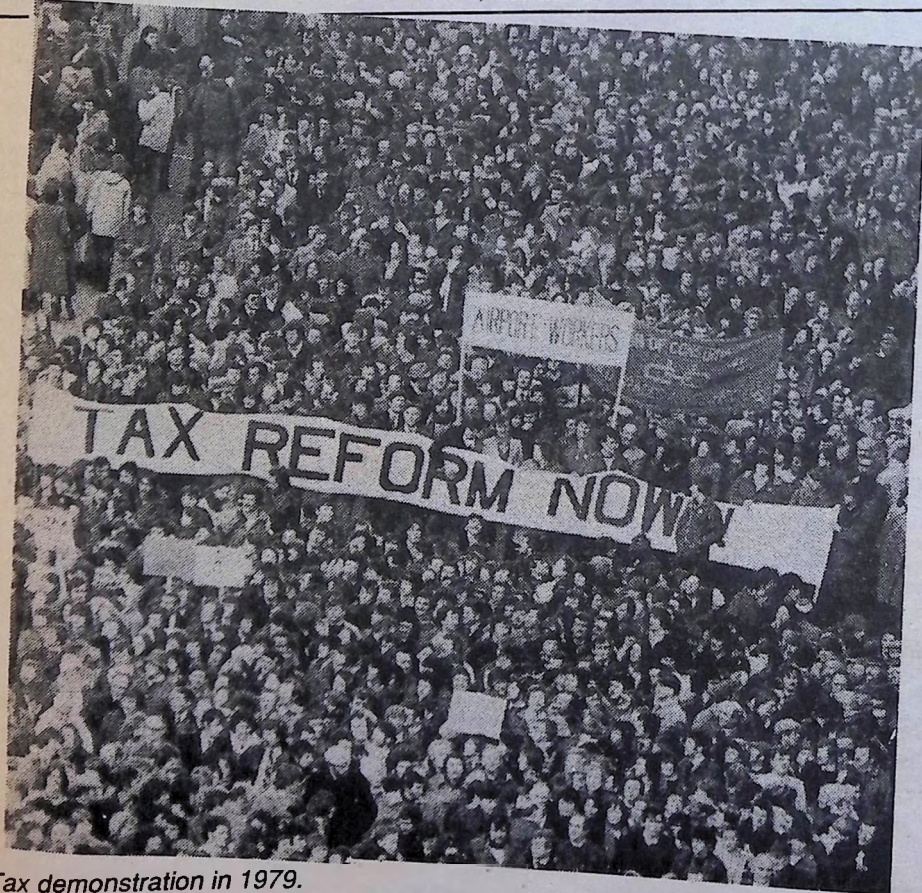
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ANALYSIS

Women's rights after Mary Robinson

MANY FEMINISTS and others have argued that the election of Mary Robinson marked a significant advance for women in the South.

Here, GORETTI HORGAN examines the reality of working class women's lives and argues that it will require much more than a woman President to make a real difference.

"It's a great day for mna na hEireann, the women of Ireland!" said Mary Robinson on her election to the Presidency of the Twenty Six Counties.

And it was a great day for the women of Ireland. For the first time the reality of our role was recognised.

Women in Ireland are less and less like the stereotyped repressed mother sublimating her sexuality in family rosaries. Increasingly, Irish women are more like their British and European counterparts in their attitudes and experience.

WORKFORCE

Today, women make up 32 percent of the workforce in the South of Ireland, compared to the EC average of 40 percent. More Irish women are working outside the home than ever before. Women expect to stay on at work after marriage—at least until they have children—and many want to return to work once the children are at school.

INCREASE

This trend has led to a 40 percent increase in the numbers of women in the workforce between 1971 and 1987, while the number of married women in paid work has grown by 300 percent!

Attitudes to birth control, and to the general teachings of the catholic Church on sexual matters, have changed considerably too. Most Irish couples will now use "artificial" contraceptives at some stage of their marriage. Fewer and fewer couples go to the altar virgins. And, as the Gay Byrne Show letters' bag demonstrates, extra-marital are not an uncommon occurrence even in rural Ireland.

Despite the result of the

1986 divorce referendum, many Irish marriages end in separation. In 1986 there were an estimated 70,000 couples whose marriages had broken down. The figures of single-parent families back this up, with almost 100,000 in the South in 1988. The knowledge that marriage isn't necessarily for life has led yet more women to insist on maintaining a job after marriage.

SECURITY

But while many women in Ireland *aspire* to having a different role in society, the ideas that dominate still say that a woman's place is in the home. The Constitution, since 1983, says that her life is only of equal value to that of a fertilised egg, embryo or foetus.

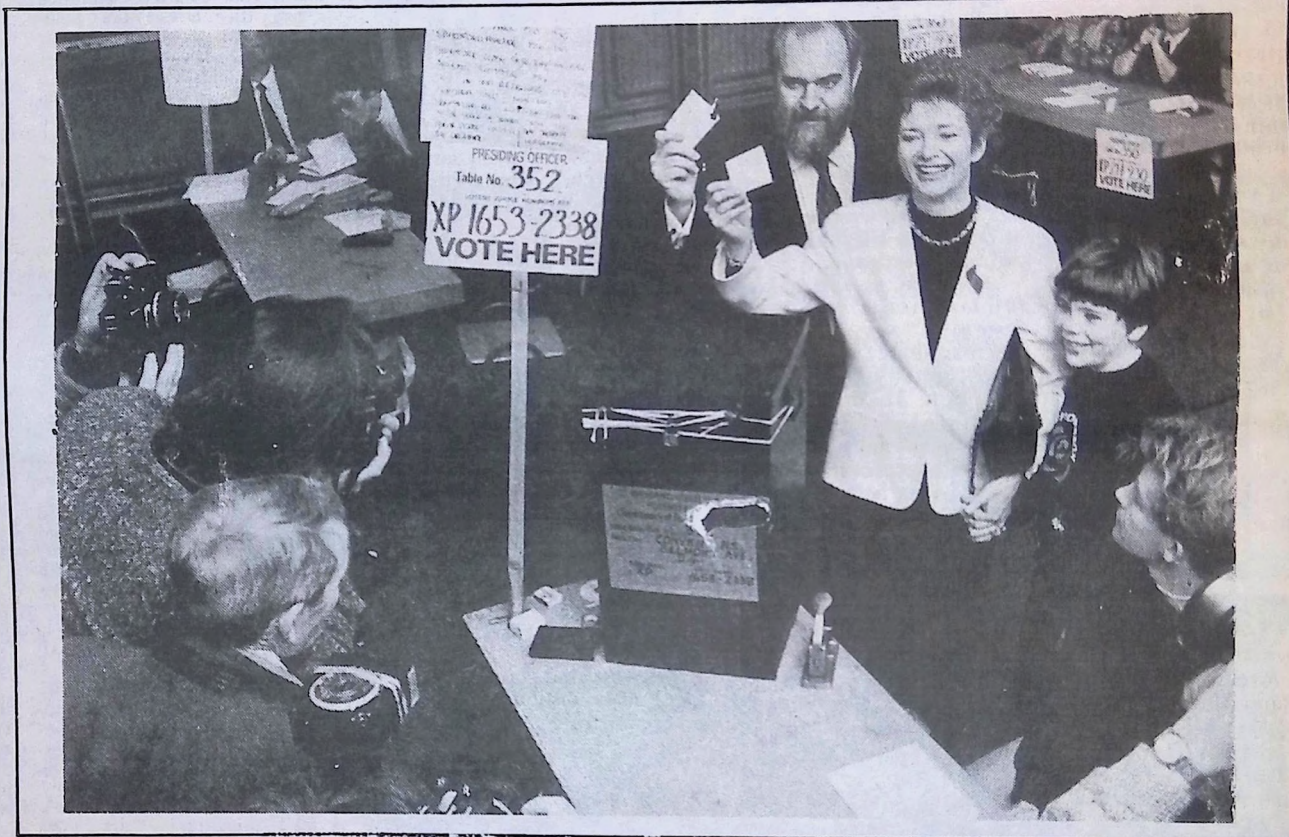
Ireland is one of the most difficult places in the developed world for a woman to combine motherhood with a job outside the home. Childcare facilities are almost non-existent. Only nine percent of all under-sixes in the South are in a service other than school, and most of these are in private, and very expensive, play-schools.

CHILDREN

Only children who are at risk of abuse are entitled to a state-funded nursery place. There is no official registration of child-minding facilities, charges are uncontrolled and are well beyond the budgets of women on average (i.e. low) wages.

In 1987, almost four out of five working women were employed in service jobs—shop assistants, bar staff, teachers, nurses, cleaners, clerical workers etc. Those in industry work mainly in textiles, clothing and footwear.

Robinson's election reflects the major changes that have taken place in Irish society



Firms in these areas tend to allow women to work part-time. More than three quarters of part-time workers in the South are women, most of them married. Part-time work is less well-paid than full-time and often under-the-counter, unregistered work. Part-time workers don't very often qualify for sick pay, maternity leave, holidays etc; they can be dismissed easier than full-time workers.

Women in industry now earn only about 60 percent of the average male weekly wage. This is down on the 1970s when women in industry were earning 68 percent of the average. Again part of the reason for this has to do with the time women are able to give to paid employment.

AVERAGE

For, while the average weekly wage of women in industry is only 60 percent of men's, the hourly wage

is 68 percent than of men. Women in full-time jobs work an average of 38 hours a week, while the average man works a 47 hour week. Women can't work overtime so easily, or go on training courses outside of normal working hours, so promotion is more difficult to achieve.

CHOOSE

While not making it easy for women to choose to be mothers, the state in the South makes it difficult for them to avoid becoming mothers.

Contraception is expensive and easily available only in the bigger cities. Not only is it illegal to have an abortion, but it is illegal to give anyone information about how to get a legal abortion in Britain. And getting the two to three hundred pounds together for an abortion in England makes an unwanted pregnancy more of a nightmare than it need be.

When a woman decides she's had enough children and wants herself or her partner sterilised, it can't be done on the health service. Although vasectomy or a female sterilisation are perfectly legal, the Catholic-dominated ethics committees of publicly-funded hospitals won't permit them.

So what difference will Mary Robinson's presidency make to the hundreds of thousands of working class women who face the problems of low pay and poverty, lack of childcare, no contraception on the health service, no abortion under any circumstances etc? Eoghan Harris (ex-Workers' Party guru) said that Mary Robinson doesn't need to do anything, that just by her being President the position of women in the South will improve.

That's nonsense. Mary Robinson's election will enhance the status of women in professional and managerial jobs. If there

can be a woman president, then why not women judges, or managing directors.

But time and again, experience has shown that the only way the lives of the mass of women can be improved is through those women themselves starting to fight back.

The only way women can improve their way and working conditions, or hope to find a job if they're unemployed, is to oppose a new Programme for National Recovery—which will keep all wages down and which, the last Programme showed, does nothing to bring down unemployment.

FIGHT

If the fight for the right to free contraception and abortion is to have any hope, the fight to make information about abortion freely available must be

taken up. But Mary Robinson has pledged to stay within the law when openly flouting the law is clearly the way to fight this censorship.

Even if the law were changed, contraception, abortion and sterilisation are hardly likely to be made free on a health service that is at present letting people die for lack of vital operations. So, a fight to make such services available means a fight against the health cuts and against the consensus about the need for 'fiscal rectitude' and low public spending.

For women in Ireland to have any meaningful advance towards liberation, lots of money will have to be spent—on creches and after-school schemes, on the health and education services, on bringing the wages of all low-paid workers up to a decent, living wage. The day a start is made towards all this—that—till be a great day for the women of Ireland.

THE end-of-year programmes and supplements have been dominated by the downfall in 1990 of Prime Minister Thatcher.

But none of them has highlighted the most important factor in bringing her down—the British working class.

Instead, many commentators have mentioned the hammering of the working class into submission as her main "achievement".

This begs the question, why then did the Tories get rid of her? At all times, hammering the working class is the Tories' main objective. If she succeeded in doing this, why did the Tories dump her?

True, Thatcher will be remembered for leading her class to victory in a number of important battles against important sections of workers. The defeat of the steel workers in 1980, the miners in 1984-'85, the print workers in '85-'86, come readily to mind.

And the three separate packages of anti-union laws went through to strengthen the hand of the bosses

But it is important to remember, too, that Thatcher didn't win any of her battles easily. While the miners' strike was a defeat for our side, for example, it was a far longer-drawn-out and much more bitterly-fought battle than Thatcher had ever envisaged.

COAL

They spent three billion on policing and billions more on importing coal. They desperately paid off groups of other workers in order to prevent the bush-fire spread of industrial action.

And the political legacy was bitterness and hatred of the Tories and their police and courts by millions who had supported the miners.

It wasn't quite the walk-over suggested in some accounts.

But more important than the course of individual struggles was how the working class movement as a whole came through the Thatcher years.

When Thatcher came into office, the most influential British ruling class publication, the *Economist*, spelled out what she had to do.

There'd have to be cuts in real wages of 20 per cent, it argued, if British capitalism was to become competitive against Japan, Germany, the US, etc.

At the same time, the "dependency culture" would have to be smashed. In the new brash world of razor-edged competition, people would have to fend for themselves. Deep cuts in health, education and welfare spending were planned, to force people out

of reliance on the public sector and back on their own resources.

Insofar as "Thatcherism" had a meaning, this was it.

Central to it all was the need to destroy workers' confidence in their ability to resist: If Thatcher couldn't achieve that, none of the other aims would even have been on the agenda.

The main weapons in the attempt to break workers' confidence were mass unemployment and the anti-union laws.

Policies were unleashed which drove the British economy into the sharpest recession since the 1930s. Manufacturing output



dropped by 17 percent between 1979 and 1983 as companies went bust or slashed back production.

Fitter, leaner, more ruthless companies would survive, went the theory. AND the working class would be reduced to abject passivity.

Unemployment, just over a million when she came into office, was to peak at around 4 million in 1986.

The cuts in welfare came on stream in 1981 with the first full-blooded "Thatcherite" budget—introduced by the simpering "moderate" Geoffrey Howe, it should be remembered.

Then, one after another, the main groups of workers were taken on. Thatcher was blessed by the behaviour of the union leaders, who yelped and whinged but never tried to mobilise united mass action to turn back the Tory attacks.

LEADERS

Union leaders were joined by all manner of Left "intellectuals", especially members of the British Communist Party around the mis-named magazine "Marxism Today" in reacting to the offensive not by encouraging and organising counter-attack but by developing theories which "explained" why workers couldn't win.

Some went even further and claimed that the working class didn't really exist any more, that "class struggle" was a thing of the past.

Looking back on it now it becomes clear what a lily-livered lot these "New Realists" are. Because the fact is Thatcher didn't win.

Trade union organisation across most of British in-

dustry is basically intact. None of the top ten exporting industries are fully organised. Wages have not been screwed down by 20 percent. In fact, wages have risen, and continue to rise, faster than the rate of inflation.

No significant increase in productivity has been screwed out of the workers either. The attacks on the "dependency culture", on the nhs, the education service, on welfare, have been serious, certainly, and damage has been inflicted. But the institutions are still solid. They have not been destroyed.

The attacks on the NHS proved so unpopular that Tory MPs panicked, forced a change of health minister and last year had some of the cuts restored. Nurses, ambulance drivers and ancillary workers attracted massive public support for their pay dispute and squeezed far more out of the Tories than they'd planned for.

Public outrage forced the Tories to back off in October and increase Child Benefit not by a lot, but the retreat was significant nonetheless—

REALIST

Even the battles that were lost and which the "realists" now look back on as having been futile, battles like the miners' strike and the printers' desperate fight to save their jobs from Murdoch, these too played a part in wearing down the resolve of Mrs Thatcher and the guttersnipes around her.

In the background in all those retrospective accounts of her years there is the unmistakeable noise of working men and women

defending themselves and their jobs, their communities and their class.

Every battle, even those which were lost, left its residue of resentment against everything she stood for.

And in the end it wasn't "men in suits" who came for her, it was the Poll Tax protestors.

The three soundalikes who stood for the succession vied with one another to distance themselves from the Poll Tax, lie that they'd always been against it, promise a "fundamental revision". It clearly was the issue uppermost in the minds of rattled Tory MPs.

OBVIOUS

Why? Not because the Poll Tax is unfair, and transfers money from the poor to the rich. That's blindingly obvious. It's because of resistance to the Poll Tax, defiance of it, riot against it.

Had there not been mass resistance, had workers simply accepted the tax the way they were expected to after eleven years of Thatcherism, there would have been no alarm inside the Tory party, no factionalism and leadership challenge.

If workers generally had been cowed down, unwilling to fight for wage increases, hesitant about mobilising against hospital closures, ready to accept benefit cuts meekly, etc, then Margaret Thatcher would still be in office.

She's out because British working class men and women, battered and bruised as they were, nonetheless weren't broken. They deserve a medal.

What we stand for



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

FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM

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

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

NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW

This kind of socialism does not exist anywhere today. Workers do not have control in Russia, China, Cuba etc. Instead, power is held by a state-capitalist class. A workers' revolution is needed in these countries too.

We are against NATO and the Warsaw Pact and all weapons of mass destruction. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination.

FOR AN END TO PARTITION

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

The marginal privileges given to Protestant workers are just that: marginal. It is in the immediate interest of Protestant as well as Catholic workers to fight against their exploitation. It is in the interest of all Northern workers to unite against the state and aim at socialism in Ireland.

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

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

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

FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION

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

FOR A FIGHT IN THE UNIONS

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

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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

Join us!

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



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REVIEWS

DISUNITED KINGDOM

Scotland's National Question—the Socialist Answer, by Chris Bambery, Bookmarks £1.50

JIM SILLARS', Scottish National Party (SNP), bye election victory in 1988 was a clear indication that Scottish Nationalism was, and is, alive and kicking.

He won the seat with a majority of 3,500 overturning a Labour majority of 19,500.

Chris Bambery in his new pamphlet, *Scotland's National Question—the Socialist Answer*, looks at the reasons for the rise in nationalist sentiment but also, importantly, examines the question of whether Scotland is in fact an oppressed.

Unlike the Irish Act of Union almost a hundred years later, the Scottish Act of Union in 1707 was freely entered into by the Scottish ruling class.

Access to markets in England and in the growing British empire were crucial for the development of capitalism in Scotland.

Bambery argues: "Scots capitalists pioneered Britain's spectacular industrial revolution. The industrialisation of

Scotland centred on the tobacco trade before the American Revolution, cotton after it, iron in the 1820s, ship building in the 1860s and steel in the 1880s."

Glasgow in 1885 accounted for 45 per cent of world output of Siemens steel: the Clyde alone accounted for 70 per cent of UK ship building.

EMPIRE

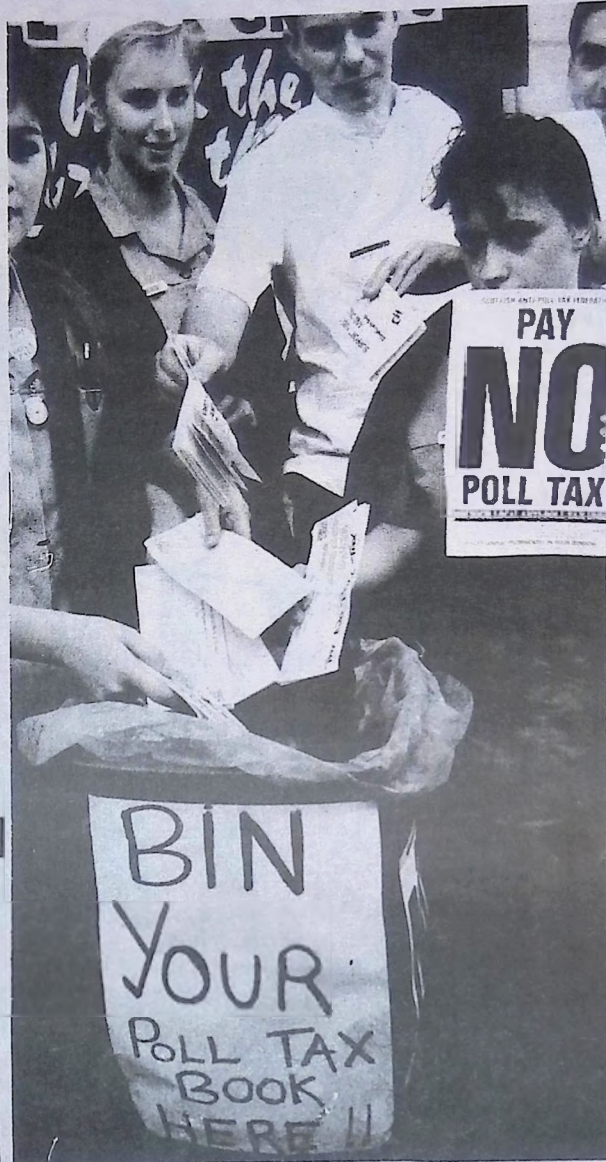
It was Scottish regiments that helped conquer the empire and Scottish administrators that ran it. None of this adds up to a picture of an oppressed nation, nor even as some have argued, of a "junior partner".

Things changed dramatically after the first world war. With the empire disintegrating, British capitalism went into decline. Scotland, as one of the most important industrial areas, was badly hit—but so too were other old industrial areas, such as the north of England.

Scottish economic decline was a direct result of imperial decline—Scottish Nationalism was the response.

More recently, ten years of Tory rule, and the failure of Labour to offer any real resistance, have encouraged a re-growth of

Nurses in Edinburgh burning their poll tax forms



nationalist sentiment.

The hated Poll Tax was introduced in Scotland a year before England and Wales. Thatcher's attempted restructuring of British industry has led to huge job losses in traditional industries—there is now only one working coal pit left in the whole of Scotland.

The sense of grievance is added to by the fact that there are only ten Tory MPs in Scotland as opposed to 50 Labour. However with Labour's response of, "Obey the Tory laws, Pay the Poll Tax and wait for the elec-

tion of a Labour Government", it should come as no surprise that the SNP have been able to make gains at Labour's expense.

ATTITUDE

So what should be the attitude of socialists? We have no interest in defending the integrity of the British imperialist state. We are for stressing the interests in working class unity against the common enemy—a unity which has been demonstrated in fact

in every great struggle from the Chartists to the Miners' Strike.

But as Bambery puts it: "A happy union depends on the existence of the right of divorce. Nationalist tensions can be removed by guaranteeing the right to separation. Our support for that right is not based on love of Scotland. We champion a Scottish Assembly only in the sense that it can become a means of confrontation with Thatcher and the British state—something which the SNP wishes to avoid."

■ WILLIE CUMMING

Something to Bragg about

"Rejoice, Rejoice"

THESE WERE the words Billy Bragg used to greet his Belfast audience as he strode on to the stage of the Ulster Hall. In his hand he waved a copy of that night's "Belfast Telegraph". The two-word headline said it all, "Thatcher Out"

From the start, Bragg made it clear that with Thatcher's resignation, this was a night for celebration. "Anyone who has turned up for the non-political songs of Billy Bragg on this of all nights is going to be disappointed", he declared, before launching into the classic "A New England".

For the next hour Bragg gave a mixture of the old and the new interwoven with humorous jibes at the establishment and the demise of Margaret Thatcher. All of which certainly hit the right chord with the audience. At one point he had the crowd singing along with "We're making the world safe for capitalism"—an attack on the potential Gulf War.

he managed to steer clear of mentioning the Troubles.

Nevertheless his personal manifesto does have elements that every socialist would agree with. His support for gay rights promoted through a new song "Trust" was one example. Another is his condemnation of the Gulf War—even if it is from a neutralist standpoint. Third was his confrontational approach to fascists in the audience who were giving the Nazi salute. Typically, Bragg showed how isolated they were by getting the rest of the audience to make the anti-fascist salute.

To round off the evening, Bragg was joined on stage by local raver Andy White in singing an oldie from the Beat which is rapidly becoming outdated. "Stand down, Margaret, stand down please", they boomed along with everybody else present.

There could be no better night to see Billy Bragg than on this occasion. He might jibe that the revolution is "only a T-shirt away" but he does help to keep the torch flame flickering.

■ Mark Hewitt, Belfast



People you could meet in Fianna Fail

Film: *Good Fellas*, Directed by Martin Scorsese

MOVIES about gangsters are the stock-in-trade of the American film industry. Sometimes romanticised and often little more than racist caricature, the Italian mafioso has become an instantly recognisable figure in the cinema.

Historically, the mafia in the US was a product of prohibition. The ban on alcohol introduced in 1909 was widely ignored.

Bootlegging was a lucrative and highly competitive business.

By the time prohibition was repealed in 1933, a huge network of organised crime had emerged. The Mafia moved into gambling, racketeering and, eventually, drug dealing.

Martin Scorsese's new film *Good Fellas* is based on the life of Mafia supergrass,

Henry Hill. It is fast-paced, disturbing look at the world of three small-time gangster.

ACCOUNT

It is more an account of what it is actually like to be a criminal than an exploration of social or political issues.

It draws no conclusions and its

characters remain unrepentant to the end. But the film works quite well on this level.

The police and the penal system are rightly shown to be as much a part of a corrupt system as the bad guys.

Scorsese is obviously more than a little enticed by the lives led by Henry Hill and his cronies but he doesn't romanticise them either.

In fact, what is striking about how these men operate is how closely they resemble small businessmen. Some of them would fit easily enough in Fianna Fail.

The film stars Ray Liotta, Robert De Niro and Joe Pesci. Don't miss it.

■ EVE MORRISON

OUT NOW!

The Politics of James Connolly

KIERAN ALLEN

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Danger of 'numbers' game in travellers' campaign

AT THE end of November three local residents from Mulhuddart were jailed for breaching an injunction preventing them interfering with the building of a major site for travellers.

The jailings brought to head an issue that has been simmering in the area for some time. *Socialist Worker* opposes the use of state repression against these workers. But there are also problems with the nature of the protest in Mulhuddart.

Irish travellers face a life of real hardship. A recent report on The Health Status of Travellers found that:

■ Three times more traveller infants below the age of one died than in the rest of the population.

■ The life expectancy of traveller women was 55 compared to 76 for the rest of the population.

Hundreds of traveller families live on the side of roads. Right wing politicians, especially in Fianna Fail, have often whipped up anti-traveller sentiment in order to get votes.

In 1984, the Dublin County Council discussed a plan to build halting sites for groups of ten families around the county. Two thirds of Ireland's 22,000 travellers live in the Dublin area.

The FF councillors stirred up a barrage of hate against travellers and demanded that there be only five families be permitted on each halting site. Throughout these debates on Dublin Council the travellers were presented as a "problem" that had to be shared out evenly across Dublin.

FF pushed through their plan for five family sites. But in the past four years only three of these have been built. All the time, FF councillors mouthed or about the "problem not being dumped on our area."

RESULT

The result is now an appalling problem of traveller accommodation. Between 80 to 100 families are to be found living in fields and at the side of the roads in areas like Clondalkin.

Faced with this mounting crisis, the Dublin County manager decided on a bureaucratic solution. It was proposed to build two huge sites in Mulhuddart and Clondalkin to house up to 80 families each. There was no doubt that these would be shanty towns. Plans for these sites included no separate toilets, no public lighting, few skips, no janitors.

The local community in Mulhuddart objected, as did many of the travellers themselves. A protest developed in the area



which called for unity between travellers and the local community. After several marches and protest Dublin County Council backed down and stated that the halting site in Mulhuddart would house 30 families.

The local protests, however, continued. One of the main demands became "Not 30 but 10 family halting sites." While the organisers continued to insist on unity with the travellers, the fact that the campaign focussed on the need to set a quota on the number of travellers—set at the magic number 10—opened the ways to grave dangers. Sadly, the *Militant* organisation has been at the forefront of the demand for "not 30 but 10".

There are a number of reasons why this demand is wrong. First, it plays straight into the hands of the right who have traditionally raised the cry about "no dumping of social problems in OUR area."

In the Drumcondra area of Dublin, for example, there is a campaign under way against the building of a hostel for homeless boys which would be under the direction of Fr McVerry. The objectors point out that there is already one such hostel in the area and they do not want any more "dumping of the problem on them".

number—at the centre of a campaign, real unity between travellers and local communities can be built.

NAVAN SHOWS THE DANGERS

IN NAVAN, in County Meath, a major local controversy has developed on the housing of travellers. The manner in which openly right wing forces have taken over the Navan Combined Residents Associations on the traveller issues shows the dangers faced by those who do not take a clear pro-traveller stance.

There are approximately 100 travelling families in Meath. Twenty-two houses have been provided for them so far, all in Navan. But the problem of finding accommodation has been exacerbated by the fact that Meath County Council only planned to build a total of 31 dwellings in 1990.

SURFACE

The traveller issue came to the surface when residents of the local Woodview estate objected to Meath County Council installing water and toilet facilities for 44 caravan dwellers who had parked at the entrance to their estate. They argued that there was already a 12-house traveller scheme on the estate and that the new facilities would encourage more travellers to their

area and would thus "create a ghetto".

At first the Woodview residents and the local travellers got together and discussed the matter.

The residents also called together a meeting of all residents associations in Navan. This meeting was to lay the basis for the formation of the Navan Combined Residents Association.

Five hundred people turned to discuss the issues. But it soon became clear that because the focus of the discussion was on limiting the number of travellers in Navan, the middle class, right-wing elements were able to make a bid for control.

The local Progressive Democrat candidate, Pat Andrews, demanded that "they pour cow shit over them". Colm Hilliard from Fianna Fail demanded that travellers "be forced to fill in forms concerning their movements between counties".

LEAFLET

A leaflet issued after the meeting complained that travellers got priority on the housing list. It demanded that there be no other halting sites in Navan until other towns in Meath had their "fair share".

It claimed that "Our town has been turned into a cess-pit ... where people's gardens and school grounds are used as toilets".

A protest march was organised on the theme "Navan has done its fair share". The main demand was that "Navan should not become the travellers capital of Ireland".

Appalled by these developments, the local Woodview residents pulled out of NCRA. The original secretary of NCRA resigned in protest against the take-over by right wing elements.

But in many ways the damage had been done. Relationships between travellers and the local community were poisoned.

The tragedy was those who fell for the numbers argument, the argument that "the problem has to be spread" created the ground for a right-wing backlash.

CPSU Low pay fight

THOUSANDS of Civil Service workers in the South have balloted for industrial action on low pay.

The workers involved are members of the Civil and Public Services Union (CPSU) and make up the clerical grades in the Civil Service.

A low pay campaign had already been launched by the union. At the end of October, typists took action in pursuit of a standard allowance for operating word processors.

The Department of Finance put the boot in by taking over 400 typists off the payroll and preventing union dues from being deducted at source. The typists' dispute was called off when it was agreed to fix an early date for an arbitration hearing on the claim.

An improved word processor allowance cannot be ruled out but the full claim could have been won if the action had been escalated. The fact that the CPSU leadership chose arbitration rather than escalation is symptomatic of major weaknesses in the campaign.

First, the campaign does not involve an all-out drive to break out of the low pay trap. Instead of fighting for a decent flat-rate increase, the leadership is tinkering with the problem.

The claims lodged include:

■ amalgamation of Clerical Officer and Clerical Assistant grades and the abolition of the lowest paid grades;

■ extra increments for Clerical Officers; parity with Clerical Officers in Local Government;

■ a basic word processor allowance of £27.32 per week.

The second weakness involves the type of action proposed.

Strike action has been ruled out unless a separate ballot takes place. Selective overtime bans and various forms of work-to-rule are proposed instead.

Such action is a step forward as long as there is a plan to escalate to full-scale action. But the purpose of the action in this case is to secure, not a victory, but better terms for negotiation. The quick move to arbitration on the typists' dispute proves this.

The CPSU leadership intends to keep tight control over the rank and file. It was made clear that the Executive Committee will direct any dispute that takes place: "It will decide what actions take place, at what times, in what departments/ sections of departments", a recent circular warned.

The Executive has imposed a levy of £5 per week from each member to back up any industrial action. Unless all-out action is taken, members will begin to feel that their money is being wasted. And any action must be aimed at securing claims, not arbitration hearings.

Also, a genuine low pay campaign cannot go hand in hand with a new Programme for National Recovery. The existing PNR has been defended by CPSU leader John O'Dowd, even though it has held down wages.

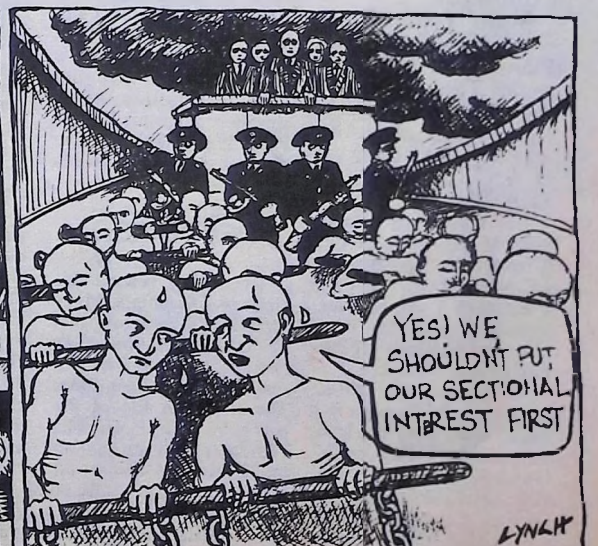
When the ballot on "PNR Mark2" takes place in the new year, CPSU members should vote "No" and step up the campaign.

CAMPAIGN

When a campaign calls for a quota on the number of traveller families, it is not surprising that NO travellers participate on marches and protests outside the courts.

The way forward in Mulhuddart and other areas is for the local working class community to join travellers in demanding better facilities in halting sites. They should be fully serviced with proper amenities for caravans. There should be a full back up service in local schools for traveller children.

By putting these issues—not a limit on



Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism 30p



Some of the 250,000 students who marched in Paris last month

EXTRADITION: Ellis case shows need for new thinking

EXTRADITION will continue to be a major issue in Irish politics through 1991 and beyond. Proceedings are pending against a number of men, some in Portlaoise, some on bail. The next group of cases will test whether the "political exception" applies at all under the 1987 Act.

From the situation a decade ago, when extradition for political offences was almost impossible, we are steadily moving towards a "conveyor-belt" system of automatic of handing-over.

Here KIERAN ALLEN argues that in the aftermath of the Ellis extradition, the campaign should at last turn away from the "grass roots of Fianna Fail", and from the idea of a pan-nationalist alliance, and direct its campaigning instead towards the working class.

ON THE 37th day of his hunger strike Des Ellis was extradited to Britain to face a conspiracy charge of causing explosions.

Many republicans were surprised that Fianna Fail would go so far. The headline of *An Phoblacht/Republican News* after the event screamed H A U G H E Y ' S SHAME.

But this is to totally misread the nature of FF. Throughout their history FF have shown that they could take a tougher line against republicans than even the Unionist regime in Northern Ireland.

Throughout the 1970s, Southern Irish governments often gave the lead on repression. They established the Special Criminal Court before the Diplock Courts in Northern Ireland; they banned

republicans from the airwaves more than ten years before the British; until recently they even barred those convicted by the Special Criminal Court from jobs in the public sector.

The campaign to save Des Ellis began quite late but eventually started to draw major numbers onto the streets.

The central thrust of the campaign was set towards winning over the FF grassroots. A special FF against extradition group was established. FF members were given leading roles in charring meetings and in speaking on public platforms in the hope of attracting other FFers towards the campaign. The campaign stressed the positive aspects of the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act—simply because the FF Ard Fheis had called for it to be used as an alternative to extradition.

RECOGNISE

The theory behind this strategy was simple. Many republicans recognise that FF is corrupt—but they believe the party has to rest on a republican base. The rank and file of the party, they think, genuinely seek an end to partition but are hoodwinked by their leadership.

The Ellis case proves



how wrong this analysis is. Thousands of FFers from rural areas packed into meetings in Athlone and Castlebar to wave madly for Brian Lenihan. Yet only 50 turned out to a "FF against extradition" meeting.

In truth, FF is a classic right wing party that rests on the lower middle class. For these people politics is a question mainly of who controls the avenues to state graft.

GRASSROOTS

Looking for support from the FF grassroots drove the campaign to the right. At a major public meeting in Finglas, Richard Greene, the leading figure in "FF against extradition" claimed that "we should be telling Brian Lenihan that the way to stop the Robinson woman is to take up the Dessie Ellis issue."

On the night Des Ellis was extradited, anger exploded on the streets of Dublin with 1,000 people turned up for a protest. Many demanded to march to the Dail but the Sinn Fein organisers insisted on going to the hallowed shrine of Irish nationalism, the Garden of Remembrance.

The desire for unity with the right wing grassroots of FF demands

a toning down of militancy. It also means that little serious attempt is made to direct the campaign towards the organised working class. A small glimpse of the possibilities there came when a number of socialists in the IDATU union managed to persuade the Dublin Trades Council to

call a public protest on the Ellis case.

This came too close to the end of the Ellis case. And indeed, there was no guarantee that workers had yet developed the confidence to take up the particular case. But it showed a very different direction to the continual

pandering to the Lenihan loving FF grassroots.

The extradition of Des Ellis is a major defeat. The only way anything can be rescued is if those involved in the fight now turn completely against the pan-nationalist strategy that has dominated the struggle over the last five years.

QUB backs Ellis

FOR THE first time since the 1981 hunger strikes, the issue of repression galvanised a large number of students at Queen's, Belfast.

Hundreds attended meetings organised by Students Against Repression to discuss the Dessie Ellis case. However the campaign suffered from the same weaknesses as nationally. There was a reluctance to build a campaign based on students' activity.

Members of the Socialist Workers' Student Society argued for an activity-based strategy. There were a number of white-line pickets and lecture disruptions, but SWSS members were unable to win the argu-

ment for occupation of the university's Administration Building.

The SAR group instead enlisted students to write letters to Dublin justice minister Ray Burke, to pass Student Union resolutions and undertake token hunger strikes.

RALLYING

Four hundred students did write to Ray Burke—but we should have had 400 in occupation. This would have served as a rallying call not only to other students, North and South, but to a wider audience in Belfast itself.

The unwillingness of students to accept the argument for occupation

isn't completely down to the more passive strategy of the SAR group. The situation has also to be seen in the context of twenty years of the armed struggle being the main tactic against the repression that goes with the Northern State.

The armed struggle tactic emphasises the activity of the few and the passivity of the many and this has had an inevitable long-term effect. People see themselves as supporters, not as the main participants in struggle.

It's impossible to understand the failure to generate mass activity in support of Dessie Ellis—not just at Queen's—without taking the effect of the armed struggle tactic into account.

Student anger rising

THE RECENT occupation of the Department of Education in Dublin called by USI was a sign of mounting anger in the colleges over deteriorating conditions and lack of housing.

Some 50 students occupied, supported by 400 students who demonstrated outside.

The fact that such numbers can be brought onto the streets at short notice is encouraging for anyone attempting to build a fight against classroom overcrowding and cuts in the colleges.

However, USI's action was organised secretly, with support being built just by word of mouth.

Although colleges such as Trinity, Bolton Street and Rathmines were represented, UCD, Dublin's biggest college was not.

Actions called by USI throughout the country were promising but again, sporadic.

If USI is to really take on the problems students face a mass campaign must be organised.

Secret stunts, although at times useful, are no replacement for a well-built national focus of action such as a country-wide demonstration in Dublin.

Actions by French students, where hundreds of thousands have been involved, show the way forward for students.

Socialist Worker Student Societies (SWSS) argue that a mobilisation is possible in Ireland but only if USI do the work on the ground.

Trinity/UCD SWSS