

No. 7

An Irish Socialist Review

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APRIL/MAY 1983

GRATTON

**WORKERS
AND THE
LAW**

PEOPLE'S MARCH '83



MAYDAY. That's the day the second, annual **PEOPLE'S MARCH FOR DECENT JOBS** arrives into Dublin. Traditionally the day of united working class demonstration, the participation of 50 unemployed marchers in the parade will bring real meaning to the unity of employed and unemployed workers — a unity that is needed now more than ever, as both wages and benefits are undergoing savage attack.

The May Day Parade will be the culmination of a week-long march bigger and longer than that of 1982. Starting in **CORK**, the marchers will travel to **DUBLIN** via **DUNGARVAN**, **WATERFORD**, **KILKENNY**, **CARLOW** and **NEWBRIDGE**. In each town there will be public meetings addressed by local trade unionists, visits to workers in the big factories and blanket leafletting of the doles and the general public.

The major themes of this year's march are:

- Opposition to all redundancies and closures. Defend the right to occupy — end the use of injunctions and repeal the Forcible Entry Act.

- A guaranteed living income for all unemployed men and women. No cuts in benefit, abolish the fee for job applications.

- A crash programme of investment in social services and useful public works. Reverse the cuts in public spending and fight for a 35

hour week.

Already support from trade unions and other organisations is coming in and it is hoped to beat the total of 63 organisations that supported

DUBLIN

NEWBRIDGE

CARLOW

and donated money to last year's march. The cost of the march this year has been estimated at close to £4,000.

Any *Gralton* readers, in sympathy with the aims and objectives of the march and who would wish to help, can do so by contacting:



WATERFORD

DUNGARVAN

YOUGHAL

CORK

PEOPLE'S MARCH COMMITTEE
c/o ATGWU,
112 Marlboro Street,
Dublin 1.

EDITORIAL STATEMENT

What kind of people are producing *Gralton*? What kind of people will read it? We think the answer to these two questions is the same: those interested in discussing the realities of Irish society and the methods of radically changing it; those who feel that no existing publication or organisation is at present providing a forum within which the experiences, victories and defeats of the past decade can be assessed and learned from.

We hope *Gralton* can become that forum. Our aim is to promote debate and discussion centering around a number of broad positions:

- * that capitalism is not a force for progress and has to be replaced by Socialism
- * that Socialism consists essentially of people controlling their own lives in the workplace and the community
- * that such a change of system goes far deeper than anything that can be achieved through parliamentary methods alone
- * that real change cannot be brought about through the actions of any small elite group, whether guerilla army or state bureaucracy, but requires the action of masses of people acting consciously together to establish their own power
- * that none of this change can be achieved solely in an Irish context

But *Gralton* will not be simply discussing ideas. We also aim to give practical support to the struggles and movements of the day by providing information, commentary and factual analysis of service to trade unionists, feminists, socialists, political and local activists — and by opening our columns to those actively involved even if we do not share their political viewpoint. We believe there is a close link between the experience of activity and the development of ideas and we shall always be seeking to strengthen it.

The Editorial Board of *Gralton* reflects who we believe to be our audience: individual socialists and activists in a wide variety of left-wing movements. Some of us are members of left organisations, more are not. Among us there are differences of tradition, political bias, interests — even some sharp disagreements on major political issues. But we all share a basic political approach and method: that of looking towards and participating in the struggles and movements of the working class and all the oppressed and exploited sections of society.

Believing that the successful mobilisation of people is itself a political gain contributing far more to real change than the mere existence of a political party, *Gralton* will be independent, broad-based and non-sectarian in all its coverage. Independent, because only freedom from the control or dominance of any organisation can produce the kind of open, self-questioning exploration and exchange of ideas that is necessary. And this is partly a recognition that none

of the existing groups contain the full answer themselves — although some individuals may consider certain organisations closer than most.

Gralton will not be handing down any firm “line” Our articles are the responsibility of the authors alone. We welcome articles from currents and organisations of the left by way of contribution to the debate, but we are not a “heavy theoretical journal” so they will have to be written in ordinary English and priority will be given to articles from whatever source which raise real questions or which provide useful information. Sexist terminology will be cut.

If *Gralton* is to succeed in its aim of providing a forum for debate, discussion and analysis then the widest possible number of people involved with the magazine the better. To facilitate this, the overall direction and control of the magazine is being vested in a body called Gralton Co-Operative Society Ltd., consisting of all individual readers who are in broad agreement with the aims of the magazine as outlined above and are committed enough to the project to take out a Supporters Subscription. The Editorial Board will be accountable to the group and in future will be elected from it. We hope as many readers as possible will identify with the magazine in this way — and by writing for it and selling it — and thereby help to make *Gralton* as relevant as possible to the advance of the left in Ireland.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Dermot Boucher • Paul Brennan • John Cane • Mary Cummins • Des Derwin • John Goodwillie • Nora Hamill • Jeff Kallen • Molly Kallen • Tom O'Connor • Brian Trench.

JIM GRALTON



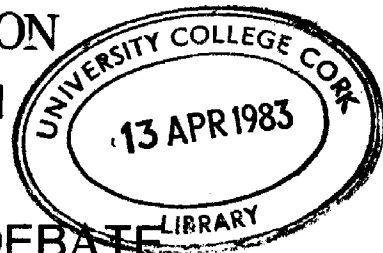
JIM GRALTON is the only person to have been deported from the 26 Counties for political activity. Gralton was not prosecuted for any criminal offence. His offence was to have helped give the poor, the landless and the unemployed of County Leitrim the confidence to fight for themselves.

In the early Thirties, Gralton devoted himself to establishing a social hall for the people of Gowel, Leitrim. For this heinous crime he was denounced from the pulpits and the hall was eventually burned down. Finally, in 1933, the De Valera government succeeded in deporting him — despite a vigorous campaign on his behalf waged by left wing trade unionists and republicans, unemployed activists and local supporters.

Gralton's name represents a challenge to established authority, a call for people to take their fate into their own hands and an imaginative application of socialist ideas in a difficult environment. For all that, and more, he deserves to be remembered. That's why this magazine is named after him.

Contents

AMENDMENT	4
FAIRVIEW	6
GRALTON	7
YOUTH	10
A.E.S.	12
SLP DEBATE	13
LAW v. UNIONS	16
NEUTRALITY	20
RYAN INTERVIEW	23
INDEX	26
FILM BOARD	28
CABLE T.V.	30
BOOK REVIEWS	32
LETTERS	34



WINNING HEARTS AND MINDS IN DUBLIN 4.

JOHN CANE visited the Dublin 4 Action Group of the Anti-Amendment Campaign to get some idea of how grass roots activists see the progress of the campaign.

It's early March and there's a definite lull in the Anti-Amendment Campaign. Fitz-Gerald and Co. are having second thoughts on the wording of the Amendment and the referendum has been put on the medium finger. Overall, this is, of course, a tremendous victory for the Anti-Amendment Campaign. Politicians are running scared. But on the ground, amongst the activists, it's a bit of a mixed blessing. Psyched-up for the final push, this delay is something of an anti-climax. A lull has developed. You can tell this by the fact that less than forty supporters turned up to the regular Monday night meeting of the Dublin 4 Action Group.

Only forty? Well, yes. Throughout February the numbers had been averaging 60-70, there are well over a hundred supporters on the books. For Dublin 4, forty is a real lull. There are other problems too. Every house in the whole Dublin South-East Constituency has been canvassed — where to now? Dublin South is the immediate answer, Nuala Fennell country. Then someone suggests Athlone. A Roadshow to Athlone! The mind boggles. Hordes of godless Dublin 4 trendies ravaging the heartland of Erin. Where will it all end?

In truth, there are precious few trendies in the Dublin 4 Action Group. Plenty of young people, feminists, anti-nukers. Some seasoned politicians, but not many. A fairly broad and ordinary collection really. From the flat and bed-sit lands of the capital mainly. It's the issue that's drawn them all together, it's not a social club.

Yet, there is something positive about how they organise themselves, something light years away from boring old political and union meetings. Newcomers are welcomed, brought into the

discussion. Meetings are only vaguely chaired, yet the business gets done. Infinite care is taken over deciding the precise non-hierarchical structure for a special discussion meeting the following week. Dublin 4 has created for itself a certain style, an identity which maybe extends beyond the immediate issue.

That identity was forged — almost of necessity — by the original group of a dozen or so Dublin 4 activists back in the bad old days of 1982. The days when, maybe a majority of, the punters in a pub just looked blank when you shoved the old leaflet at them. The days when, in order to get your opposition across, you first had to explain what the bleedin' Amendment was, even what a Constitution was. What sustained the small group of Dublin 4 activists was the undeniable fact that, amongst those willing to listen, the anti-amendment arguments won the day.

Things are very different now. Everyone has at least heard of the Amendment . . . and the Anti-Amendment Campaign. Pub collecting is a dream. "Support the Anti-Amendment Campaign." "No way". "Uh . . . I'm sorry, did you say Anti?" Reaches, deep, into pockets. It happens often enough. Often enough, indeed, along with canvassing returns, for Dublin 4 activists to be claiming an overwhelming No vote for their area. Optimism is a feature of the Dublin 4 Group, but it's well-founded.

But how typical is Dublin 4? Sociologically, it's not. Urban; largely white-collar workers; probably the largest concentration of non-nuclear family units in the country. If the Anti-Amendment cause was not winning here, we could all pack up and go home. But there's more to it than that. The lifestyle of many Dublin 4 residents

may dispose them towards taking a more liberal outlook on social issues, but this particular social issue is abortion. Abortion is a different ball-game. Deep-seated beliefs and prejudices have to be confronted. And, in this sense, Dublin 4 is not all that different to Athlone. The same arguments apply.

The Anti-Amendment Campaign lists five arguments against the Amendment. The Dublin 4 activists use them all. They are all valid, they all connect for some people. Yet, they are adamant that some of the arguments connect more readily, with more people, than others. So, naturally, they tend to highlight those. They feel that the success of the campaign in this area is partly due to using the "right" arguments on the doorsteps. They also feel that the National Campaign might learn a little from their own experience.

Basically, the Dublin 4 people find that the "This Amendment is sectarian" and the "This Amendment will cost a million pounds" arguments do not immediately grab people as life-and-death issues. Maybe for Protestants into financial rectitude, but for most they are not very relevant. What people want to know is exactly how it will effect them, if it is passed. The "This Amendment is a useless exercise" argument is relevant here, of course. The number of abstentions in the referendum is likely to be massive.

But, in terms of persuading people to actually oppose the Amendment, Dublin 4 get the most mileage out of the, officially, least-mentioned argument: "This Amendment allows no exceptions whatever the circumstances", together with the "This

Amendment will lead to attacks on current contraceptive facilities", which has come to the fore since the text of the Amendment was published.

Put simply, when it's explained that the Amendment means rape victims can't get an abortion if they want one, or that the IUD may well be banned, then a hell of a lot of people are more than willing to say No. These things directly affect their lives, or those of their daughters or friends, in a way that religious quibbling or worrying about the government wasting a few bob, do not.

The National Campaign has taken on board the contraceptive rights argument, but is still fighting shy of any pro-therapeutic abortion campaigning. When Dublin 4 proposed that the campaign highlight this issue, at a delegate conference in January, it was well defeated. They do, however, feel that the National Campaign will eventually come around to their view, through listening more closely to the grass roots and less to the letters column of the *Irish Times*. In the meantime, they stress the arguments that they know work in Dublin 4.

Most, though not all, of the original activists in Dublin 4 were fairly firm supporters of the *Womans' Right To Choose* position before the Amendment was even conceived (sic). More interestingly, there are a good few who have adopted this position as the campaign has progressed. For them, the logic has been relentless on doorstep after doorstep. Yet, there are also many in the Group who are anti-abortion to some degree or other. All are accommodated, with what seems relative ease, in a group that, *above all*, believes in allowing people to use whatever arguments they themselves believe in.

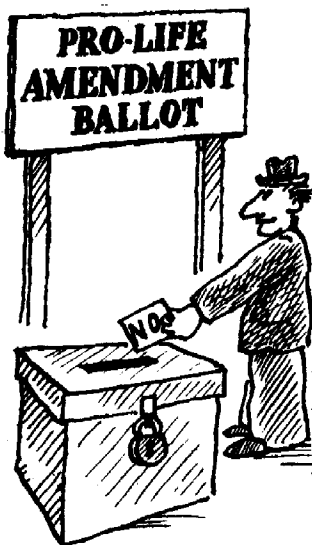
Inevitably, though still



informally, thoughts have begun to turn to the future of the campaign after the referendum — especially amongst some of the more experienced activists. Ideas being mulled over include some kind of pro-therapeutic abortion, or decriminalisation of the 1861 Act, campaign — a position that may become irresistible nationally, if a new Amendment text seeks to merely copperfasten that Act. If the referendum is lost, and realists concede it may well be, there is no doubt that any moves against the abortion referral agencies will be opposed by all activists — physically, if necessary. Such is the temper of the Dublin 4 group. Win, lose or draw, the campaign will continue in some shape or form.

Back in February, Father Fergal O'Connor, launching a Catholic booklet on abortion which somehow managed to avoid taking a position on the Amendment, had this to say: "The proposed anti-abortion referendum might prove to be counter-productive by accustoming public opinion, especially youth, to an acceptance of abortion." Indeed it might, father, indeed it might. Loretta and Julia have opened the door, the Dublin 4 Action Group, along with countless others, are already stepping through it.

Many thanks to Paula, Marese, Ursula, Marion, Derek, Mark and Brian of the Dublin 4 Action Group for most of the information and a lot of the ideas for this article. If you want to get involved with the Group, they hold regular meetings every Monday night at 8 p.m. at the Pembroke, Pembroke St. Or ring Mark on 726622 (days).



CONTACT YOUR LOCAL
ACTION GROUP NOW
OR THE ANTI-AMENDMENT
CAMPAIGN
P.O. BOX 1285, DUBLIN 7.
PHONE: 308636

MAYBE NEXT TIME

NORA HAMILL gives a personal view of the first ICTU Women's Conference held in February.

The ICTU Women's Conference was the first ever in Ireland of its kind. If only because of this, it is surely worthy of note. Though, judging by the amount of space allocated to reporting it in the papers, this view is obviously not shared by everybody. But then, it did happen to coincide with the canonisation of Charlie a few miles away at the RDS.

The Conference was attended by over 200 delegates, though not all of them were women. Why this was so, I'm not sure. Obviously, a decision in principle was taken not to exclude men altogether (Paddy Cardiff sat on the platform throughout, for example). I question, though, whether men should have been included among the actual delegates. It hardly needs stating that the participation of women in trade unions is low, and the further up the bureaucratic structure, the more this is the case. Surely, at a Conference designed to improve this situation, women only delegates would have made more sense?

This brings up the whole question of how the delegates were chosen. In my own union, the INTO, they were chosen by the Executive, which boasts only two women out of eighteen. At least those selected were all women — ones the Executive describe as "high profile" i.e., above the level of District Officer. We, the predominantly female membership, were told of the Conference and the names of those chosen to "represent" us at the same time. Some other unions which have a Women's Committee, just sent them along. The NUJ, though, did elect its delegates.

I do think it's crucial to a Conference of this sort how the delegates are chosen. If the point is to foster the participation of women, then hierarchical systems of selection must be out. As another observer remarked to me: "I keep hearing people talk on behalf of the grass roots. I want to hear the grass roots."

Such sentiments were also expressed in the Conference itself, together with a certain amount of criticism of the Conference format. Inez McCormack of NUPE, for example, complained that the first day's session had been, "conducted in a hierarchical, bureaucratic manner". There was a platform where the chair and other "important" people sat and there

was the main body of the Conference strung out down a long rectangle. Speakers came up to the microphone at the front. In other words, little different to any union Conference and just as non-conducive to the participation of the less experienced delegates.

Since it was the first of its kind, why not have tried something different? It may have helped make it less intimidating, and even less boring. The chair, jokingly, commented that "the boys make the rules and we have to stick by them". It was maybe less of a joke than was intended. Either there is a fear that, unless the structures are rigidly kept to, women will not be taken seriously by the male-dominated trade union movement. Or else, the women who organised the Conference, having fought their own way up through the movement, have become so used to the structures themselves, and able to manipulate them, and they no longer question their usefulness.

Finally, to the content of the Conference. Discussion was based on a report of the Executive Council and its activities in relation to women in 1982. In fact, it seemed to be more a policy document than an account of what had actually been done. In addition, there were forty resolutions submitted from the various unions. All, except one, were passed. The issues raised in

these resolutions were of great importance to the progress towards equality for women; equal pay; maternity benefits; equalizing part and full-time workers; elimination of age limits for job applications etc.

The ICTU statement on the Amendment was endorsed, divorce legislation agreed to be necessary, the "Minister of Women's Affairs" condemned for heel-dragging on both. All in all, very good decisions but little of a controversial nature. Unanimity was the order of the day. And then, it must always be remembered, this was only an *advisory* Conference, the motions passed going to the ICTU for their consideration.

Towards the end of the Conference, one woman made a point hitting the nail on the head. She said that all the motions were important aims but that no mention had been made of the need to fight to resist attacks on gains already made, adding that the position of women in time of recession was particularly vulnerable, even the right of married women to work being questioned. No-one took it up. Business went on. But surely this was an important issue. Since the report and motions created little controversy, could they not have been more quickly dealt with, put aside, and time given over to discussion devoted to ways and means of resisting the erosion of our present position? It was not to be.

At the end of the Conference, a delegate sang the revolutionary women's song, "Bread and Roses". If it's sentiments had been expressed more in the content of the Conference, it might have been a more useful exercise. Maybe next year...



Brenda Trimble, wife of a Ranks worker, addresses the conference.

Derek Speirs (Report)



The brutal and sadistic killing of Declan Flynn in Fairview Park has aroused much controversy and outrage, particularly as the gang who admitted to the killing, and many other attacks on gays, were given suspended sentences. Concern over Justice Gannon's decision, however, has focused on the law and order aspects rather than the broader issues involved.

The 1861 Act, which outlaws both abortion and homosexual activity between males, remains on our statute books. That this Victorian law has remained unchanged means that the homosexual male is technically a criminal in Ireland. The significance of this law's continuing existence did not seem particularly serious until fairly recently. However, the fact that a vigilante group could "take the law into its own hands" and carry out a series of attacks on gay men demonstrate the serious repercussions of allowing this law to remain in force.

Another aspect of the legal condemnation of homosexuality manifests itself in the attitude of the police to gays. This became patently obvious last year during the investigations following the murder of Charles Self. Hundreds of gay men were harassed by the police in a manner closer to a witch-hunt than a murder investigation. The rigorous police activity

demonstrated last year was not applied in following up reports of anti-gay attacks in Fairview Park. Had they acted as thoroughly, Declan Flynn might not have been killed.

The attitude shown by the police towards gays, in consciously ignoring reports of attacks in Fairview Park, is a matter of concern. So too are the implications of the outcome of the Declan Flynn trial. The leniency of the court's decision is less important than its implications. The fact that extraneous factors, in this case the victim's sexual orientation, were taken into account in the judge's interpretation of the case has aroused much public controversy and anxiety. The recent imprisonment of the Ranks workers highlights the inconsistency of the way the law is applied.

The blatant prejudice shown both by police and the court, indicates the deeply rooted institutional and social prejudice against gays in this country. The victory parade held by the vigilante group in Fairview, on the night of the court's decision, was a frightening demonstration of blatant prejudice and an indication that they will continue their attacks. It also gives others the licence to attack, and even kill, gays with virtual impunity.

This whole situation has caused

THE FAIRVIEW KILLING

The Dublin Gay Collective speak out.

fear and outrage in the gay community. The killing of Declan Flynn has compounded the hostility and prejudice towards us. We are not only exposed to social attacks, but live in increased danger of physical attack. It is essential that all institutional prejudice against gays be immediately changed in order to begin to redress the situation. The concern expressed by those in government about the judicial decisions will amount to nothing more than hypocrisy if they do not take immediate action to repeal the Victorian laws. Similarly all trade unions, political groupings and individuals should voice their protest and insist on the decriminalisation of homosexuality.

ment under the law contrasts sharply with crimes against property. For example, some years ago a judge allowed, as a "mitigating" factor, the fact that the murdered victim was a prostitute: in many rape cases an excuse is accepted that the woman contributed to the crime by not protesting enough or by being in a dark street by herself.

Thorough examination and radical change of our system of law relating to attacks on women and minorities is badly needed. Unless such changes are immediately instigated we will be forced to continue our existence as second class citizens and subjected to bias from the law and its enforcers.

The march, organised by the Dublin Gay Collective, from Liberty Hall to Fairview Park was to protest against the situation as it stands. The issue of gay rights and violence against women can no longer remain largely ignored. The threat represented by the trial of Declan Flynn's killers is only one example of gross inequity, but it must also be seen as the final straw.

The danger of an escalation of violence, by both gangs and individuals, will not be confined to the gay community alone. The incidence of violence against women, racial minorities and others is already a serious problem in this country. Such violence is based upon prejudice, and its treat-



Part of the thousand-strong Fairview march.

GRALTON ON THE RUN

**It's fifty years since the deportation of Jim Gralton.
It's one year since the founding of this magazine,
named after him. BRIAN TRENCH celebrates both
with the story of Jim Gralton's last days in Ireland.**

One of the very first acts of the new Minister for Justice, James Geoghegan, who took office 50 years ago, at the end of January 1933, was to sign a deportation order against James Gralton of Co. Leitrim. The order, made under the Aliens Act, was served on Gralton on 4th February, requiring him to leave the country by 4th March. In spite of the best efforts of Gralton's supporters to have the order withdrawn, or at least to have him given the chance of facing trial, the Fianna Fail government never once felt obliged to give any explanation as to why the order was necessary. It simply stated that Gralton was an "undesirable person" and his deportation was in the interests of "public welfare".

There was never even the vaguest suggestion that Gralton had been engaged in criminal activities. His deportation was, and remains, the only case of a person being kicked out of the 26 Counties for purely political reasons. At the time the order was made, Jim Gralton had lived a total of 2½ years out of the previous 25 in his native Leitrim. He had taken American citizenship during his years working in New York. Outside of Co. Leitrim and left-wing and republican circles, he was unknown. But for a brief period during the six months following the issuing of the deportation order, while Gralton remained on the run, he became a national figure.

Gralton's supporters, mainly twenty or so local people and the Revolutionary Workers' Groups – soon to become the Communist Party of Ireland – found it no easy task to mount a defence campaign. The political climate of the time was unfavourable. For the vast majority of people it was enough to know that Gralton was in some way connected with communism and the bishops' warnings against the Bolshevik menace and the newspaper images of "communist" riots in Europe and Latin America immediately came to mind.



Jim Gralton

But there was another political difficulty which hindered the campaign: the support given by the Labour Party, the IRA and the Revolutionary Workers' Groups to Fianna Fail in the January 1933 general election.

The effort that went into warning people of the evils of communism would give the impression that vast numbers were attracted to radical and revolutionary politics. This was far from the case. It was one of the peculiar twists of the time that Irish Communists had, by their statements of support for de Valera in 1932 and 1933 general elections, given his opponents an excuse for accusing Dev of being soft on Bolshevism. On 23rd January 1933, the day before the general election, the *Irish Times* ran a story about the communists' support for Fianna Fail and, not too far away, another which was headlined: *Bloodshed in Berlin. Communists Try To Stop Nazis*. On the day of the election, there were foreign stories headed: *Communist Leads Riot in Uruguay*

and *Communist Riots in Cologne*.

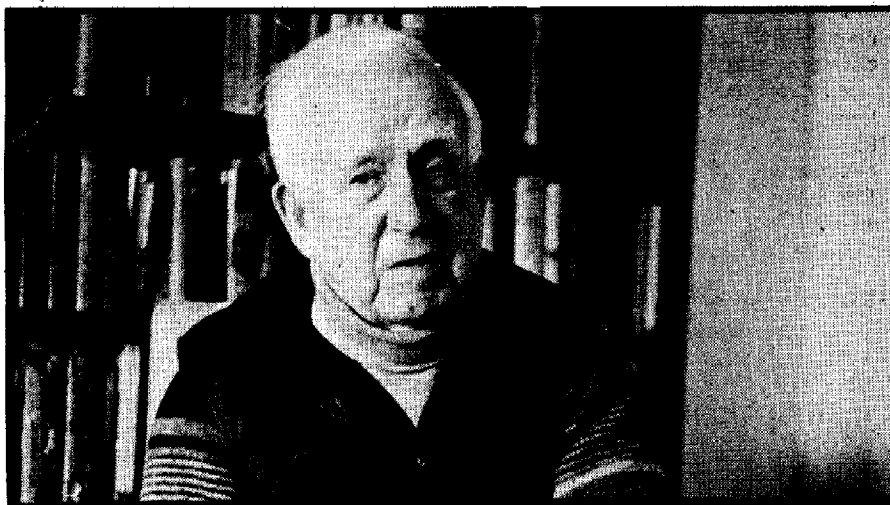
Dev had felt he had to respond to the charges from Cumann na nGaedheal and Centre Party candidates. Speaking in a final election rally in Carlow, he said: "Those who support our policy are doing the best thing to save the country from communism." Dev was to win the election, with an increased majority, but both left-wingers and right-wingers chose to ignore his warnings. A ballot paper found in a South Dublin polling booth had been inscribed: "Fianna Fail, communists in disguise. God bless Cosgrave."

SOCIAL UNREST

In the 7-seat constituency of Sligo-Leitrim, Fianna Fail took an additional seat and their candidate Ben Maguire topped the poll. The Gralton family had voted for the party. Indeed, Jim Gralton had briefly been a member of a south Leitrim cumann. That did nothing to reduce the paranoia about agitators and subversives. The election campaign had been frequently violent and social unrest was deepening.

A national railway strike had been going on since January and a couple of strike-breakers were killed when a train was sabotaged. Land struggles were fought with the aid of intimidation and physical threats. Land-owner David Barret was taken from his home on the Cavan-Leitrim border by four armed men and "warned". Cattle belonging to a Tipperary land-owner were shot dead. Throughout 1932 and 1933, a string of cases for arms possession and similar offences came before the courts.

For two years, since the IRA had tried a left turn with the abortive formation of Saor Eire as a political front, the church had been warning its flock repeatedly about the evils of communism. The Eucharistic Congress of 1932 gave a massive boost to a triumphalist church. When left-

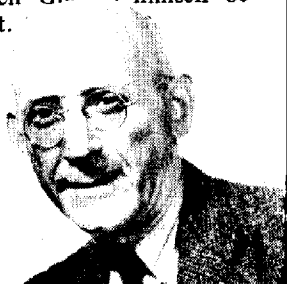


Peadar O'Donnell, eighty this year.

wingers set up the Irish Unemployment Workers' Movement, church loyalists responded by forming the Employed and Unemployed (Able-Bodied) Men's Association. They could soon report that they had received offers of jobs. Catholic Action branches were established in tandem with the Able-Bodied Men's Association which held "lantern lectures" on communism and unemployment.

Monsignor Quinn, Dean of Armagh, warned: "Those who become members of the Revolutionary Workers' Groups become Communists by that very act and cease to belong to the Catholic Church." Cardinal MacRory spoke to 500 children at a confirmation ceremony in Drogheda about the perils of communism. The Lenten Pastoral of Dr. Harty, Bishop of Cashel, included the phrase: "It behoves us to protect especially our unsuspecting youth from the dangerous propaganda that tries to clothe itself in the stolen garments of patriotism." Dr. Fogarty, Bishop of Killaloe, was appalled that "the agents of Bolshevism are now operating more or less openly."

In Co. Leitrim, the sermons were more direct and personal. The Gowel hall which Gralton had re-opened in 1932 as a social and political centre was denounced as "a den of vice . . . a breeding ground for communism." Gralton was described as the "the great anti-Christ". So, first the hall was attacked, being finally destroyed by a land mine on Christmas Eve 1932, and then Gralton himself became the target.



DEFENCE COMMITTEE

he *Irish Times* reported the serving of the deportation order on "an Irish-American named James Gralton" fairly coolly. The paper's local correspondent recalled that "Gralton was in Ireland during the pre-Truce troubles. He took a leading part several years ago in having ranches divided, and had a hall erected in which hundreds of agrarian disputes were decided by "arbitration courts" . . ."

The first public protests were made in Co. Leitrim as the victorious Fianna Fail candidates celebrated their election successes. A small group of Gralton supporters insisted on knowing whether Ben Maguire supported the order. "The deportation of a man propagating English ideas is desirable," he replied. "I stand for justice and good living in this country." Later, he quietened the hecklers and won long applause by proclaiming: "I belong to the Fianna Fail party and we base our policies on the encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII."

In Dublin, the Revolutionary Workers' Groups took the initiative in setting up the Gralton Defence Committee which included RWG sympathisers prominent in the National Union of Railwaymen, the WUI and the ITGWU, writers Frank O'Connor, Francis Stuart and Denis Johnston, as well as representatives of RWG-influenced groups like the League Against Imperialism, the Irish Unemployed Workers' Movement, the Connolly Fellowship and the Working Farmers' Movement. Resolutions of support were subsequently passed by a number of individual trade union, Labour Party and Fianna Fail branches.

On 22nd February, Peadar O'Donnell, editor of the IRA's paper, *An Phoblacht*, raised Gralton's case somewhat tentatively at an enormous rally

in College Green to welcome Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington back from a month in Armagh gaol, to which she had been sentenced for breaking an order excluding her from the Six Counties. According to the *Irish Press*, O'Donnell said "he felt he would be insincere if he did not refer to the deportation order that it had been threatened to serve on Mr Gralton in Co. Leitrim. Mr Gralton had fought in the Black and Tan war and led movements of small farmers and so earned the enmity of the ranchers . . . His neighbours had rallied around him and in Dublin the workers were coming to the rescue and he was not going to go."

A large number of workers did, indeed, turn up four days later to a meeting at the Rotunda but O'Donnell's slightly apologetic tone was an indication of some of the obstacles in the way of a more massive mobilisation.

The RWG's main representative at the Rotunda meeting, Sean Murray, declared that the Fianna Fail government had betrayed the "anti-imperialist vote" on which it was elected. When a speaker from the Irish Indian League said that "Mr de Valera and the Fianna Fail government were not standing for the tradition of complete independence that had been enshrined in Irish history by Wolfe Tone," he was interrupted and there were shouts of "Up de Valera!" A letter from Fianna Fail TD, Robert Briscoe (father of Ben, current member of the Dail), in which he said he was asking the Minister for Justice for further information, was read to the meeting. And Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington, who was in the chair, turned down a proposal that she should lead a delegation to de Valera on the issue.

Michael Price and Frank Ryan, who had been scheduled to speak at the rally on the IRA's behalf were not allowed to do so. A statement from the IRA carefully avoided any mention of the politics of the deportation: "This organisation has no hesitation in emphatically condemning the action taken by the 26-County government against Gralton and we propose to do what we can in helping to prevent this outrage from being consummated. The action about to be taken as well as being unjust is cruel and cowardly. If aliens are to be expelled from the 26 Counties a start should be made on those who have been plundering the people for centuries, rather than on a poor man struggling for an existence on a small holding."

Later that week, a delegate meeting of the Defence Committee took place at 44 Parnell Square (today the Sinn Fein headquarters). Letters were received from the IRA and Cumann na

mBan. Meetings were said to have been planned for Cork, Tipperary, Mayo and the 6 Counties. But the centre of the action moved the following weekend to Leitrim, where the Gardai would move to arrest Gralton when the order ran out. Peadar O'Donnell and Sean Murray headed for Carrick-on-Shannon on Saturday, 4th March, met Gralton's supporters that night and turned up at Drumsna church for the 9 o'clock mass the next morning

REACTION

he local priests moved into action.

According to the *Irish Times* correspondent, the parish priest, Fr. Cosgrave "exhorted the people not to listen to any speakers when they left the church and similar advice was tendered by his curate, Rev. Fr. Gilleran." When the crowd was leaving the church and O'Donnell got up on a tree stump to speak, "he was met with a fusillade of scraws, mud and stones" and the crowd rushed forwards. The priests and Gardai were reported to have restrained them.

The version of events told by participants in the Gralton campaign is rather different. They later recalled that Fr. Cosgrave had stood outside the church awaiting their arrival and, when they came, went straight to the head of the church to tell the congregation that "six or seven anti-God men, agents of anti-Christ" were outside. He later led the people out of the church across the road to the meeting place and told the meeting's chairman, Willie McCrann, that he would be "the next for Waterloo". McCrann was replaced by Packy Gralton, but when he started speaking, Cosgrave shouted: "Take them down, take them down." An old woman threw the first scraw.

A meeting planned for later that day was abandoned and O'Donnell and Murray made it back to Dublin in time for the official opening of the RWG's new headquarters, Connolly House in Great Strand Street. The next day, Madame MacBride (Maud Gonne, Sean MacBride's mother) addressed a meeting of the Prisoners' Defence League on the corner of Cathal Brugha Street and O'Connell Street. She proposed a resolution on Gralton's case, stating that "the



Minister has no right to deprive any man or woman of their rights of citizenship without a public trial."

Gralton had gone underground, being sheltered by small farmers in his home district. But the defence campaign petered out. In Dublin, the RWGs had more immediate worries. Their weekend meetings around O'Connell Street were being interrupted or attacked physically. On Sunday, 27th March, the speakers at a meeting on the corner of Cathal Brugha Street were chased down O'Connell Street. Two days later, Connolly House was set on fire by a crowd of 2,000 people led by a Catholic Action group. They sang "Faith Of Our Fathers", "Hail Glorious St. Patrick" and "God Bless Our Pope" as they drove out the 40 people attending a meeting and sacked the building.

Three weeks later, there were arrests at a number of the Easter Rising commemorations, but at others, for instance in Co. Leitrim, Fianna Fail and IRA representatives said their rosaries together. Sean O'Farrell, told



the Leitrim rally that the IRA was "not communist . . . not out against religion and God and everything else."

Jim Gralton appeared to have been forgotten by all but a few local supporters — and by Irish friends in New York. The defence campaign degenerated into farce as Leitrim health and county councils and Irish exile organisations exchanged views on the matter. The May meeting of the county council had a pile of correspondence from groups in New York which prompted the suggestion from Fianna Fail councillor, Andrew Mooney (Pascal's grandfather), "that in future all communist literature should be destroyed when it is received."

Councillor Mooney's devout wishes were granted later that month at a Board of Health meeting when a letter from the Irish Workers Republican Emancipation Alliance was solemnly set on fire by the board's chairman. "Red Document Set Ablaze" reported the *Leitrim Observer* excitedly. It was not, it should be said, the kind of letter designed to win hearts and minds. Straying far from the Gralton case, it stated: "Leitrim owes its present state of economic squalor and



betrayal of justice to the evasion of working class interests in favour of parasites . . . Leitrim as a county never produced a man or woman of intellectual mark or who ever did anything for humanity or Ireland."

The Gralton campaign made its last pitch at the July county council meeting at which a letter from the man himself was read out. His mother was present in the public gallery, as were some road workers who had a grievance of their own but who supported Gralton's plea for justice. Once again, Andrew Mooney had the day when following a discussion in which some Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fail councillors said they believed Gralton ought to be at least granted a trial, his proposal that the letter be ruled "out of order" was adopted.

A month later, the Gardai caught up with Gralton in the home of Frank Byrne in north Leitrim. Within 36 hours, he was on the liner, *Britannic*, at Cobh. Neither his mother nor his friends had another chance to see him. The third class ticket was bought with the money in his pocket.

Gralton told a correspondent for the *Leitrim Observer* on board the ship that he tried to get an interview with the Minister for Justice after he was served with the order in February. Having failed in that, he had set out to get as much publicity as possible. "My treatment comes ill at the hands of representatives of a people who have been crying against persecution for hundreds of years," he is reported to have said.

On the quayside in New York, he was greeted by friends and comrades and he was soon back in the American political fray. The "Gralton Affair" was closed.

Two years later, the de Valera government took over the British wartime legislation under which Jim Gralton was kicked out. The 1935 Aliens Act gives the Minister for Justice the powers to "make provision for the exclusion or the deportation and exclusion of aliens from Saorstát Éireann." The only check on this power is that the order has to be laid before the Dail and Senate. If either of them votes to annul the order within 21 days the order is annulled. Gralton never even had that chance. Not one parliamentarian protested at his deportation.

YOUTHFUL ASPIRATIONS

One of the first acts of the new Coalition government last December was to transfer the Youth Affairs Section of the Department of Education to the Department of Labour. Though reported in the press this move was by and large unnoticed by the general public. However, it caused consternation amongst the national youth organisations which had been cultivating their relationship with the Department of Education and various Ministers for the last ten to fifteen years.

The complaint of the organisation was two fold: firstly that they were not consulted by the government and second that youth work is essentially an educational process and therefore more properly situated in the Department of Education. The way the decision was taken and the decision itself is some indication of how youth work and youth organisations are regarded by the government. Apart from some statements from the National Youth Council (NYC) there has been little or no

In 1974, John Bruton, then Junior Minister at the Department of Education, appointed a committee to look into the question of such a policy. This sat for four years and hastily produced a report just in time for the 1977 General Election. Jim Tunney replaced John Bruton. He instantly dismissed the Bruton Committee's findings and appointed his own committee under the chairmanship of Justice O'Sullivan. This committee sat for four years also and, yes, you guessed it, produced its report just in time for the 1981 General Election. Michael Keating replaced Jim Tunney and appointed another committee with a brief to report by the autumn of 1981. They slightly overran their time slot and this report became one of the casualties of the first 1982 General Election.

The three reports in general reflected the views of the country's major youth organisations, i.e., Foroige, (formerly Macra na Tuaithe) the National Federation of Youth Clubs, Catholic

large youth organisations.

There is no coherent set-up to deal with vital and immediate problems like glue-sniffing and certainly no analysis of how this is mixed up with problems of alienation and unemployment. There is no consensus on these issues because by and large traditional youth work doesn't see these as being in any way its concern, preferring to leave them to the regional health boards and similar bodies.

Though the definition of personal development is very high sounding on paper, in practice it has been very different. It is mostly concerned with adventure sports, training courses using simulation games or American group work techniques, or projects setting up businesses on a capitalist model or with structures aping those of the big agricultural co-ops. Fundamentally, personal development in youth work terms is a socialising technique. It is designed to give young people a sense of something radical happening to themselves or their

MARGARET HICKEY assesses the current state of youth work in Ireland and the role of the National Youth Council.

co-ordinated activity by the youth organisations to reverse the decision. Indeed, during this period the NYC has suffered from the defections of four of its constituent organisations, one of them being the Labour Party Youth Section.

REPORTS AND MORE REPORTS

Irish youth organisations have been highly mercenary in their relationship with various governments over the last 10-15 years. Over that period they have sought satisfaction over two major demands: an increase in the allocation of funds to youth organisations and the instigation of a government 'Youth Policy'. While the demand for more finance is legitimate enough since only slightly in excess of £1m is spent by the Government on youth services in the south compared with £3.5 m in the six counties, the demand for a youth policy is a bit more spurious. When examined closely this boils down to a demand for a policy in relation to youth organisations that are members of the National Youth Council, that is, large regional or national voluntary organisations with some "educational" objective. Since 1973 successive governments have been able to buy off the NYC and the other major youth organisations by appointing working parties on youth policy, all of which have come to nothing.

Youth Council, the Church of Ireland Youth Council and the Scouts, and their umbrella organisation, the National Youth Council. That view holds that youth work is essentially a voluntary activity carried out for the personal development of young people. Volunteerism is stressed and the term personal development is vaguely defined and can mean almost anything. It is mostly taken to mean providing young people with new and challenging opportunities that will broaden their horizons and stimulate them to be more thinking persons and to take responsibility for their own lives.

AVOIDING THE REAL PROBLEMS

The stress on volunteerism has been used by all governments over the period to avoid their responsibility to provide professional youth workers to tackle the more serious youth problems that afflict our society. For example, apart from medics or paramedics there are no youth workers working with drug abusers. Likewise, the only youth workers working with kids sleeping rough are provided by fringe youth groups outside the NYC such as Exchange House or Hope. There is only a handful of community youth workers in the whole country and these have generally been employed on the initiative of local community groups rather than any of the

effect on society while diverting their attention from any serious critique of society and its operation. Voluntary youth workers generally aren't required to question these matters either.

Much of this is reflected in the policy documents produced by the various government committees and the NYC over the years. Nowhere in any way of these documents is there any attempt to analyse even in capitalist terms the major problems affecting young people in our society. Thus youth organisations have had little of importance to say on such issues as unemployment and, with a few previously mentioned fringe exceptions, have remained uninvolved in such problems as drug abuse or homeless kids. Their response to these problems has been to become brokers for Department of Education or AnCO youth employment schemes. These have provided some jobs, mostly in construction, but have also provided subsidised labour for the building of halls etc. In the final analysis, despite the "personal development" advantages, those providing the schemes have had more lasting benefits from them than the young people participating in them. The schemes have also been aimed notoriously at traditional "male" jobs and, since girls have not been encouraged to apply, the result is that little or no work has been done with unemployed young

women.

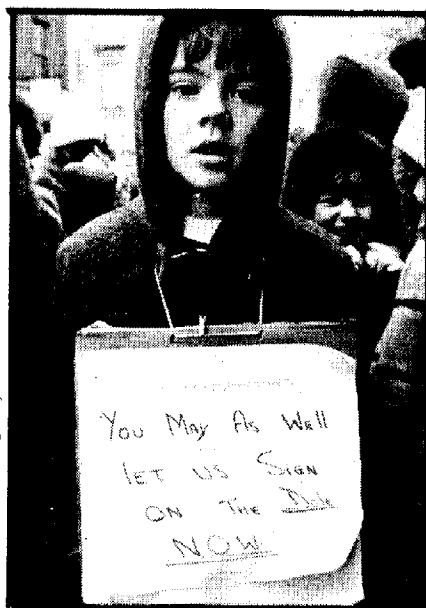
PROMOTING YOUTH . . . OR YOUTH ORGANISATIONS?

Over the last fifteen years the major achievement of Irish youth organisations has been their own growth and expansion in terms of their budgets and professional staff employed. It is generally agreed amongst youth organisations that only 20% of young people are members of a youth group and that this figure has remained static for a long time. Where this figure comes from I have failed to find out, so it may be larger or smaller. There seems to be no Irish research to justify the figure. However, it is fair to say that only a minority of young people are members of youth organisations. Thus youth groups and particularly the National Youth Council cannot be considered as representative of the youth of Ireland. Nonetheless, this should not prevent them from reflecting the issues and concerns affecting young people. This may have manifestly failed to do. A case in point is the National Youth Council.

In its early years the National Youth Council campaigned actively for changes in the law with regard to young offenders and for the closure of such places as Marlborough House and Daingean. As it achieved more government funding and involvement in so called Government 'policy making' it toned down its

Derek Speirs (Report)

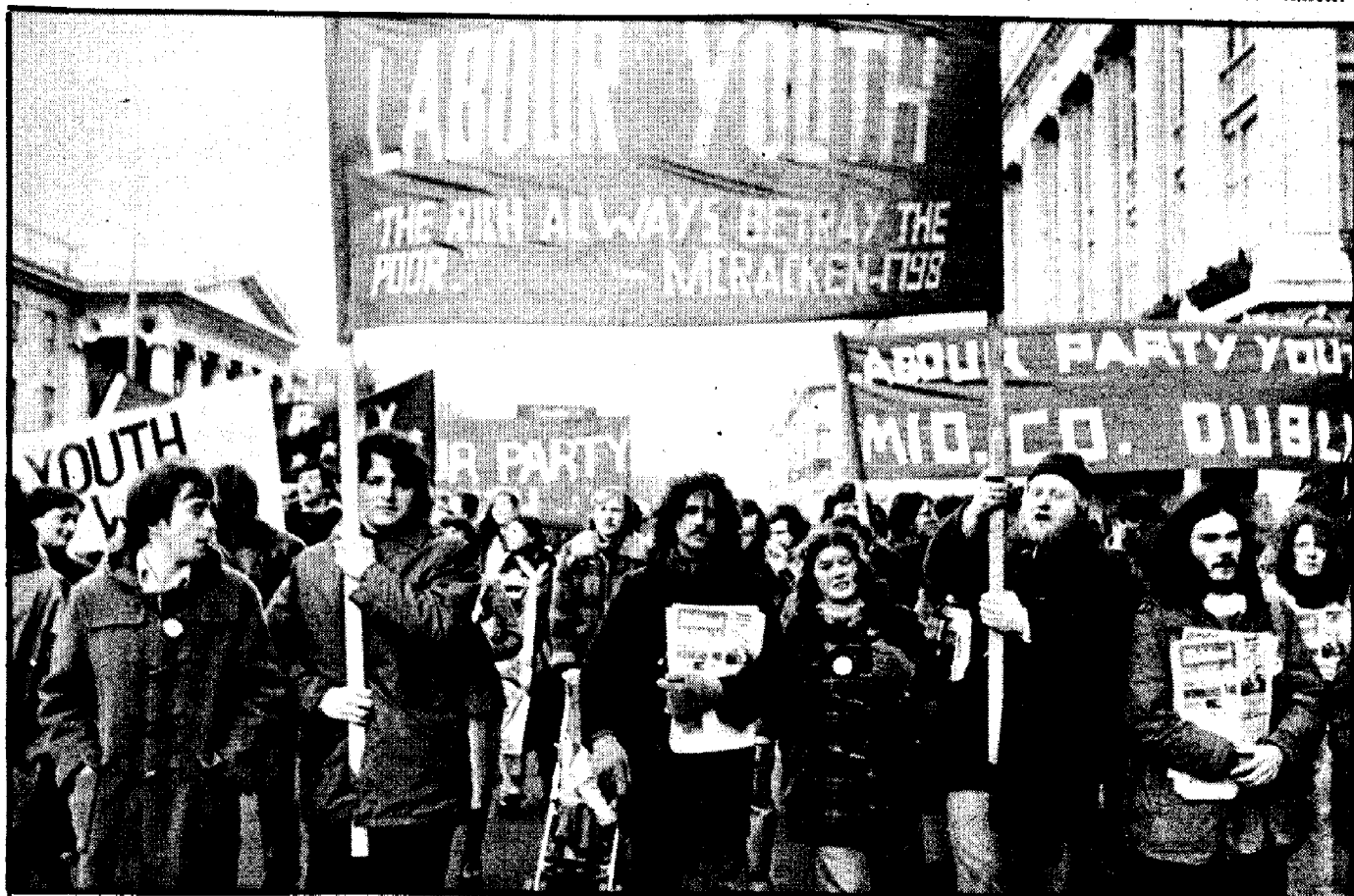
campaigning stance. At the same time it also became a vehicle for the major youth organisations to bring pressure on the Department of Education for their two concerns; more funding and a "Youth policy". Therefore anything that would upset the Department of Education was studiously avoided and anything that would please the Department encouraged and emphasised, e.g., volunteerism. The required policy was envisaged mainly as legitimising and giving official recognition to the NYC definition of youth work.



In fairness it must be said that the NYC has recently produced a report on youth employment. While the report contains good ideas it also reflects a good deal of current government policy, so in a sense it says nothing new. The criticism of the NYC by former Junior Minister Maire Geoghegan Quinn reflected more her distaste for the Fine Gael politics of NYC president Fergus O'Farrell than any serious divergence in policy or practice. The change in government has restored the balance again.

So will the change to the Department of Labour mean any significant change in the direction of youth work in Ireland. It remains to be seen. I don't think so but it could be a hopeful sign. There exists now for the first time in many years an opportunity for youth organisations to mobilise their energies and potential and become active on behalf of young people rather than on behalf of the youth organisations themselves.

It is unlikely that the major youth organisations will do this. However, it is possible that some of the more locally based youth groups will grasp this opportunity. Interesting new ideas in youth work are being developed, including the establishment in several places of workers co-operatives based on left-wing principles. Other youth organisations are showing their concern for the homeless or kids at risk. If these developments are supported and encouraged by the move to the Department of Labour, then maybe a small step forward will have been taken.



Labour youth: too militant for the NYC?

MATT MERRIGAN

Developing an alternative Economic Strategy

TALKING BACK

Alan Matthews, in *Graltion 6*, poses the political dilemma of British left social democracy in introducing an alternative strategy with teeth but hoping at the same time, not to alienate those powerful economic forces in a society whose property forms are essentially private, both in their personal and corporate manifestation. Such forces could frustrate the AES by destabilising the economy through outflows, multi-national blackmail, investment strikes and retaliatory action on British exports.

Some of the British AES assumptions on the impact of leaving the EEC, for example, are quite naive. It may be possible to re-negotiate their terms of membership but this could be extremely difficult given the ri-rá over their contribution to the Fund in recent years. A total withdrawal implies securing alternative markets for manufactured goods in the short term. No easy task when Commonwealth preference arrangements have disappeared after ten competitive years with other trading partners.

Public Sector reflation, job creation and economic growth flowing from the AES, are

designed to offset the economic "black hole" of monetarism. This will be supported by sections of the private sector who will tolerate some limited intervention by the State to restimulate a stagnant economy. The CBI in Britain are not adverse to this aspect of the AES, so long as it makes no further demand on costs and profitability by additional taxation.

However, like the CII and the FUE in Ireland, the CBI rejects the broad ideological thrust of the AES in the fields of planning; state monitoring of trade and capital transfers; company law reform; information disclosure; transfer of workshop power and a publicity financed industrial development as an alternative economic power centre to private enterprise.

The AES and the ICTU's recent document "The Real Way Forward" (see box) offers the Trade Union and Labour Movement in Ireland a programme to mobilise around on socio-economic issues. These demands are an alternative to the anti-social determinism of laissez-faire capitalism and its market forces and lead towards social and

industrial control of wealth creation and distribution.

However, this gets us back to my opening paragraph. Any AES of real significance requires a hospitable political climate in which to grow and develop into an instrument of radical economic and social change. Any substantial shift of resources, power or control away from private enterprise or ownership is bound to develop in turn a spirited and vehement political reaction — political, economic and financial — from bourgeois elements of a national and multi-national character.

A *sine qua non* of developing an AES is that you must have a mass organisation of working people, politically aware and conscious of historic tasks and capable of overcoming and defeating the forces of bourgeois reaction alluded to above. It is possible that the fragmented forces of the Irish left, inside and outside the Labour Party, together with the Trade Unions, could put together a political Congress or Alliance that would re-group around, and struggle for — as a minimum programme — the AES put forward by Alan Matthews and the ICTU.

One thing is clear. The right wing of the Labour Party will stand outside this development if only because the present union leadership displays a dreamlike inertia as the Coalition betrayal smashes into its political ranks and drives their members confused and demoralised into either the bourgeois populist party out of office, or into the ranks of the left sectarian groups, or even perhaps, as the crisis deepens, into an incipient fascist movement of the right!

Yet talk of disaffiliation from the Labour Party by some hitherto pillars of union support, which was unaccompanied by a movement for a new trade union political grouping committed to campaigning for a Socialist AES, could open the way for further political defeats of working people. Maybe the moment is overdue when the unions affiliated to the Labour Party should hold a convention of their political dues-paying members to consider the political options open, apart from affiliation to the Labour Party.

THE TEN POINTS OF THE ICTU'S "REAL WAY FORWARD"

- (1) The protection of workers' living standards and adequate payments for pensioners and others on social welfare in order to sustain home demand which is a basic requirement for the maintenance of jobs.
- (2) Economic planning both at national and at sectoral levels so as to co-ordinate the various policy instruments for the promotion of economic growth. An effective National Planning Board is an essential instrument for this purpose.
- (3) The expansion of existing public enterprises and the setting up of new commercially-viable ones. In this the National Enterprise Agency in conjunction with the Industrial Development Authority can play a critical role.
- (4) The maintenance, and where necessary, the extension of essential public and community services including the provision of adequate housing and infra-structural development, including gas distribution.
- (5) The use of our capital resources, not in speculative quick-profit ventures benefiting the few, but in the provision of jobs, the achievement of economic growth and the development of social infra-structure.
- (6) The re-orientation of industrial policy so as to maximise job creation in public and private enterprises geared to world markets and with an emphasis on import substitution. In particular, we must grasp the opportunity of harnessing technology to our industrial and job-creation needs. Innovation is the key to this.
- (7) The utilisation of our natural resources, including the land, so as to provide the raw materials for the expansion of the food-processing and timber industries, for example; and industries based on our mineral and gas deposits.
- (8) Increased resources to be provided for the marketing of high-quality products both in home and export markets and the serious marketing deficiencies of management overcome.
- (9) Worker participation at all levels in the enterprises in which they work. This must cover not only participation on company boards but also the development of participative structures as sub-board levels. To this end legislation to reform company law on information disclosure must be introduced without delay.
- (10) Full consultation with trade unions on major investment decisions and the involvement of the trade union movement in all facets of economic and social planning.

LESSONS OF HISTORY

THE SLP AND THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS

DES DERWIN, a leading ex-member of both the Socialist Labour Party and the Socialist Workers' Movement and presently on the Editorial Board of *Gralton*, continues the debate on the lessons of the SLP with a personal assessment of the possibilities for developing revolutionary politics today.

The Socialist Labour Party was an experiment in organisation on the Irish Left. Whatever the motivations of those leaders who broke away from the Labour Party or of the groups that entered the new Party, the SLP for a time put far-left and, indeed, revolutionary politics on the stage in a way that none of its constituent elements could do before or since. It provided a shakey common platform for different organised strands on the non-Stalinist, not-outright reformist, non-republican left. It held out at least the possibility of wide-ranging unity-in-action. It organised many scattered individual socialists, many of whom remain scattered since the SLP's hey day. It reached groupings outside the main urban centres. It provided a focus and a presence through its size (relative to small groups) in the working class. It directed (albeit without a sense of direction) politics at the outside world instead of keeping them to the internal workings of a Labour Party.

Whatever it was *not* — the Revolutionary Party; a paragon of internal democracy; a classic centrist party; an efficient electoral machine; an "honest" Labour Party — the SLP was an *alternative political focus*. And one which — in whatever haphazard a way — presented to a large audience ideas and activities which were far to the left of what passed, and passes for, socialism among the Labour and trade union leadership and the so-called 'serious' left. In that sense the SLP, in the first half of its existence, brought new ideas and methods to many class-conscious workers. For example; a political opposition to central wage bargaining; a socialist — as opposed to a republican — demand for the withdrawal of British troops; a woman's right to choose. Strike intervention, community agitation, organisation within the unions, participation in the H-Block campaign, was all possible to do, *and to do as SLP*, for those who wanted to.

The failure of the SLP "experiment" in bringing together many elements, traditions and individuals on the far left

and thereby creating a viable vehicle for far left politics, should not be the signal for writing off further attempts. Not that we have either the time or the inclination for a series of sociological experiments until we find a way in which various elements on the left can live with each other. A marriage of dyed-in-the-wool reformists and revolutionaries is not in any case possible. Nor is it desirable. What we are talking about is not big name parliamentarians or the organised revolutionary left, but those large numbers in between who flocked into the SLP (and flocked out again), and those greater numbers again outside of active politics which the SLP could reach with its bulkier profile. The early SLP may have been rickety and vague, but at least it stuck up on the political horizon.

POINT OF REFERENCE

Those who were not completely soured by the experience, or who are not simply glad that the SLP's finitio has cleared the decks of a diversionary mess of pottage so they can proceed with their lonely construction of the Party from first principles, must surely have already given consideration to the following points.

ONE: The phenomenon of many politically conscious activists and left socialists remaining unalligned to any organisation and in many cases confining their activity to the broad-based, one-issue and limited-issue movements. A substantial proportion of these are among the fallout from the SLP.

TWO: The absence of any political focus on the far left where their activities can find political cohesion and direction. The revolutionary groups have not filled this vacuum because their size and, all too often, their dogmatism, triumphalism and substitutionism stand between them a wider following.

THREE: The evidence among this dispersal of a desire for coalescence and for open political discussion: the attraction of non-alligned people to 'Socialist Forum' events; the establishment of *Gralton* on a firm footing; the 'New Radicals'; the extraordinary attendance at the Benn meeting in Liberty Hall; the gathering of socialists of different strands and non in particular around the Bernadette McAlliskey election campaigns.

FOUR: The growth of self-consciousness and the desire for organisational cohesion among the open (non-Militant) left in the Labour Party; the currency of "anti-parliamentarian" and "anti-social democratic" ideas within it and aspirations towards agitational work with forces outside the Party (of. 'The Partisan'). While on SLP-type break from the Labour Party seems unlikely, it is important for the left to draw the better Labour-left activists into common work. By doing so we may not only help to sustain them against enormous rightward pressures (of the fate of Tony Benn and co.) but also balance their tendency to look towards the outside "serious" left for allies.

FIVE: The move of the rightward-travelling Workers' Party into the space



made by the decline of the Labour Party. The Workers' Party's absorption of socialists and of the vague allegiance of those workers seeking answers to the capitalist crisis and alternatives to the Fianna Fáil/Coalition seesaw. Its steady capture of ever more of the structures of the working class movement.

SIX: The general difficulty of building revolutionary socialist politics in Ireland due to the historical weakness of *any* socialist tradition and the domination of what revolutionary tradition there is by Republicanism. In this situation the temporary but boosting role of a centrist or left social-democratic development, or of a loose form of organisation encompassing many strands, should not be dismissed by the revolutionary left but may well be the route out of its isolation. The presence of relatively big and credible names, plus a decent number of people with real roots in the labour movement, is an independent, open grouping with some real commitment (or even paper commitment) to struggle-from-below, would be a catalyst for revolutionary politics.



ISOLATION OF THE FAR LEFT

There are *particular* difficulties for revolutionary and militant policies in the present economic crisis due to the ideological and organisational isolation of the far left at this point in time. For the tenure of the last three governments the austerity ideology of almost all bourgeois politicians, economic high priests and media pontificators has held almost unchallenged public sway. When Fianna Fáil's July offensive of last year was let loose the ICTU public sector negotiators freely acknowledged the "present economic situation" unchallenged by the 'serious' left represented on the negotiating team. The Left produced no initiative on the ground in response. The revolutionary left could muster only a number of small public meetings and one duplicated pamphlet.

The fall of the Fianna Fáil government ended the effective silence of the Workers' Party and produced alternative options of a sort from that quarter. The teachers' unions met the education cuts with concerted argument but only token action. This spring (*that* Spring notwithstanding) the severity and ineptitude of the Coalition's rolling budget, the government/FUE cold shoulder to Congress participation in a pay deal and the spectre of "uncontrollable" rank and file action, finally threw the trade union leaders into sharp *verbal* opposition.

There was now some ideological counter-action to the hairshirt politics, but even the Dublin Council of Trade Unions opted in January against actually mobilising workers into action.

On the one hand, therefore, the left faces a wave of 'monetarist' conditioning, overwhelming in its volume and unbroken — except lately — by countervailing voices from those labour and left leaders with enough clout to command some media attention. A chorus sung over mass unemployment redundancies and real wage and social spending cuts that have dampened workers confidence and combativity. On the other hand, the far left's organisational presence, from which a fight-back could be worked for, is at a particularly low level. Even the old collection of left shop stewards and trade unionists, going back to the 1972 Dublin Shop Stewards Committee, which could be revived every now and then (in every shrunk and paler forms), seems to have finally petered out. The Ranks jailing brought this organisational weakness home.

When the workers were first jailed, not only was there an absence of a focal body below the inactive official leadership to spur strike action, but even in the area open to the left, street protests, no one group had the strength to co-ordinate it. It was one week of prison and precedent before a co-ordinating body was set up. It was established by the left stewards and officials within the ATGWU, and until their initiative no-one else could umbrella the political groups and activists, the wives and the various trade unionists and workplaces. While this organisational thrust came from elements who had been a cornerstone of the old D.S.S.C., after the release of the jailed workers all scattered again. The Ranks movement was a "do or die" survival response. It may have been a foretaste of a future fight-back but it has left nothing permanent behind. Except, hopefully, the memory of solidarity producing victory.

Unless the April tax bites, or local bargaining on the new wage round or, at a longer shot, the mounting unemployment levels, produce a rise in the general level of resistance, the present environment is likely to continue.

The only avenue forward is, of course, to organise support for all the struggles that *do* occur and united front type work with people that can be mobilised on specific issues. But in these circumstances a wider perspective is needed. Firstly, whatever leadership can be forged for the class, against the current attacks upon it, must be brought together, even if it does not subscribe to a revolutionary platform. That's a minimum. Furthermore, limiting united action to separate and episodic single-issue campaigns and

struggles — important and all as these are — will, in the present political vacuum, condemn the 'revolutionary' initiators to their present lack of significant leverage within the class and produce no lasting development towards the construction of a mass revolutionary socialist organisation. There is a need for some *a priori* unity among socialists on a more generalised basis.



PRELIMINARY STEPS

There can never of course be another SLP as such. And should a replica be possible we would hardly want it. If history can only repeat itself as farce, the re-run would be some show. But for those prepared to view the SLP more as a tragedy, not as an inevitable flop, then a grouping along the general line (*very* general line) of the SLP is still a possible, maybe even necessary, step in the growth of left socialist politics here. That is, a broad-based and activist socialist grouping encompassing both the agreements and the differences among a spectrum of non-reformist, non-authoritarian, non-republican socialists that provides them with a voice, a forum and some means of organised intervention. Any new approach would have to be more modest and low-key, avoiding the raised expectations/disappointment effect of the early SLP days.

Taking the present state of the far left as our starting point, and taking the bitter taste still lingering from the SLP into account, a new organisation along the general lines of the SLP is not a realistic *next step*. The elements are too scattered. Any approach in the general direction of the establishment of a structured organisation would have to be modest and measured. Anything like a large, broad-based, organisation is beyond our grasp without preliminary steps and initiatives.

It is these shorter-term initiatives that require our immediate consideration. Somewhere between single-issue unity and a political party are socialist alliances based on agreement (and action around it) wider than one issue but not nearly as complete as party unity. And/or alliances based on an arena for constructive debate of differences. The "Socialist Forum" (ex-SLP, CP and Labour left basically) is one example of a sort. *Gralton* is another very loose one based on individuals. The "Socialist Forum" seems to have vanishedTM for the moment. Such a convergence may be too premature, or that particular attempt may be placed at the wrong point on the political map. It may well be that individuals who already

share some of the ideas I am putting forward (and please come forward) will have to get together and go ahead themselves and quietly set up small independent initiatives, hoping to bypass fruitless negotiations, sceptical reservations and 'theoretical' objections by simply presenting a useful fait accompli. That's how *Gralton* itself got started.

A regular independent forum for non-sectarian debate might be established, such as the "Gralton Forums". Other initiatives with a broadly similar effect might include a socialist centre or a socialist bookshop, or a broad-based socialist paper (perhaps in a particular locality). A 'socialist unity' election candidate (of which we have *some* experience) might serve both to help create some far left cohesion and to gather resources to present a left socialist candidate (and politics) to the electorate.

Some such initiatives might become the focus for unaligned socialists leading to a more active political alliance and maybe for agreement on certain immediate strategic aims. Some of the organised groups might get involved on the right terms. Then there is always the possibility that the experience of common activity for individuals and groups within a specific campaign, e.g., the Anti-Amendment Campaign, could lead to a

lasting alliance or convergence. "One goes on hoping", as Cardinal Conway once said.



A LEFT SOCIALIST PROCESS

Rather than elaborate an intricate string of stages between the here and now and the establishment of a mass socialist organisation in the struggles of workers and the oppressed, it might be simpler to envisage a left socialist PROCESS, of which a broad-based left socialist organisation *may* be a part.

The alternative to a process of organisation and growth of the far left along the lines I have sketched appears to be the growth and *development* of one or other of the existing organised far left groups and tendencies into an organisation of some hundreds strong. Make your own guess on that possibility. An unblinkered evaluation should at least consider the points about the Irish left which I have numbered above. "Not to respond to such phenomena is in effect to

resign oneself to a linear construction of the party through the recruitment of individuals, instead of preparing for the dialectical developments of the class struggle." That's not a paraphrase from the tired and shocking "fragmentists" but a direct quote from the French section of the Fourth International, transplanted from the original context but holding a general point.

The viability of any new left development and, even more so, its relevance to the growth of revolutionary politics, is built upon the premise of a certain rethink, re-assessment and maturity within the revolutionary left. A precondition is that sufficient revolutionaries (including some of the groups, although their participation seems daily more unlikely) take part in the process and projects in an open and wholehearted way, identifying with the initiatives and being identified with them as well as trying to win other hearts and minds (and not just the leadership!)

Revolutionaries must be patient this time instead of revolutionaries to other socialists, movements and the class. Revolutionaries themselves must solve that question or remain forever in small upstairs rooms. There is nothing fundamentally compromising about an approach as outlined above, although the dangers must be recognised.



Derek Speirs (Report)

The SLP marches . . . into the pages of Gralton.

LAW AND INDUSTRIAL ORDER

The use of the law against the Ranks workers was not the first time the State has intervened in industrial relations . . . and it won't be the last. DES DERWIN takes a brief look at the history of recent worker-state confrontations.

When four taxis pulled up at the gates of Mountjoy prison in the early hours of Saturday morning, 26th February, the scene was indeed heavy with "deja vu". In 1966, ESB workers were released from jail in a similar fleet of taxis. Those ESB taxis entered into Dublin working class folklore; a symbol of when the masters were humiliated. The Ranks taxis must have produced many a knowing smile that morning.

The years in between have seen a stream of interventions by the courts, the Gardai and the Army into industrial disputes. The law and the forces of the state have been used in strikes which, under "normal" industrial conflict, would involve only workers and bosses battling through industrial and economic methods. On top of this, the state has encroached into new and unprecedented (at least in recent times) terrains of action where workers rights might once have been assumed to prevail.

The Ranks jailing was the latest and most dramatic use of the law and the state machinery against workers. From an annual average of 4 injunctions per year from 1958 to 1968 the rate increased to 40 per year from 1965 to 1975. The following is a review of some of the major instances of state intervention in industrial disputes since the mid-seventies.

VIOLENT SKIRMISHES

In early 1977, striking construction workers at the ESB Poolbeg site were served with an injunction. They said in court they would continue picketing and go to jail if necessary. They continued, but were not jailed. Because the injunction was a civil action it was up to

the employer, the ESB, to go back to the court and get them jailed. The ESB did not do so, despite the open defiance of the injunction.

The **GOULDINGS** picket in 1977, which stopped the Tara Mines ore train, was enjoined. The workers told the media they would keep picketing and did so. Picketeer, Mick Rooney, was held to be in contempt of court and condemned

to jail. There was a stay of execution for 48 hours while the employers hoped he'd apologise to the court. He didn't and his sentence was quietly dropped when negotiations resumed. Nevertheless, on two nights in October Gardai hauled, punched, kicked and batoned the workers off the railway track. Tommy Grehan was kept in the Mater Hospital after the attack. The strike ended in November (they won) just as the deadline was running out for more committals to jail.

Nine **LIFFEY DOCKYARD** workers were charged under the Forcible Entry Act in 1978 in connection with the occupation of the dockyard. Six dockyard workers were originally charged with conspiracy, but these charges were soon dropped. An active campaign was built on the issue and Trades Councils and union branches throughout the country responded to the appeal for support.

On May Day '78, The Dublin Council of Trade Unions drew attention to the ease with which employers are granted court injunctions against picketers and the use of the Forcible Entry Act against workers in dispute. When the 1971 Forcible Entry and Occupation Bill was going through the Dáil, the then Minister for Justice, Des O'Malley, gave

assurances that it would not be used against workers involved in an industrial dispute.

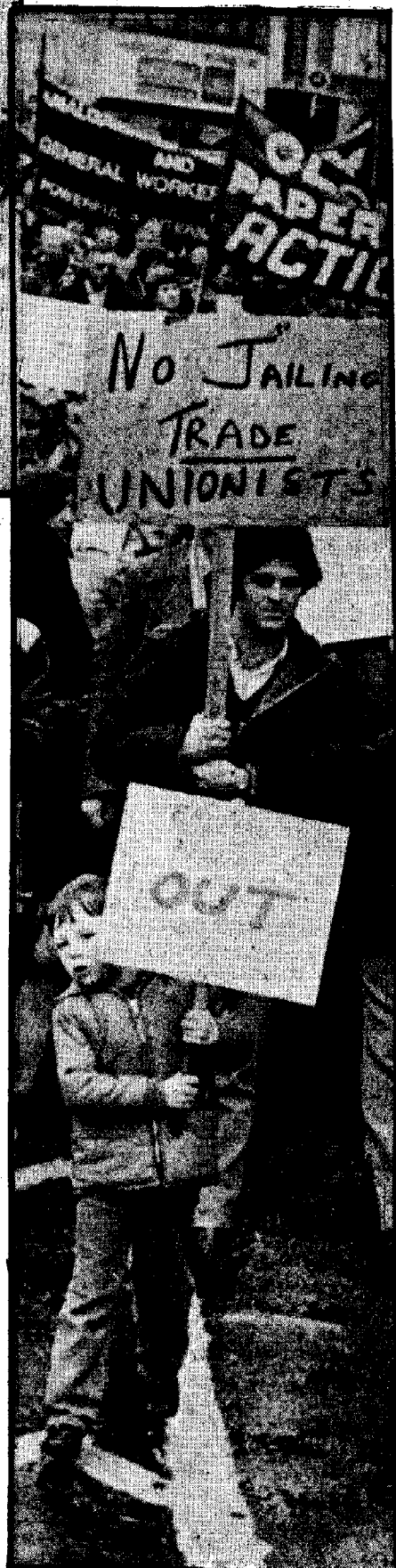
Two weeks before Waterford's great march of September 1978, against the redundancies at **WATERFORD PAPER MILLS**, the mill workers themselves held the first of their Friday afternoon demonstrations. The Gardai asked the Army to stand by, which they did — with three armoured personnel carriers!

Garda violence against picket lines was particularly marked during the 1979 **POSTWORKERS** strike. A large force of Gardai each day pushed back the strikers from the entrance to CIE Fastrack in Sherrif St., Dublin. After one heave, Martin Doyle, a postman, lay unconscious on the ground. Another picket, on the veterinary lab in Beaumont, against scab deliveries of samples, was banned by the High Court. On one amusing occasion a zealous Guard carried a scab through the picketers on his back. The Army transported Department of Education documents from Athlone, normally carried by the postal services.

Later the same year, the courts directed extraordinary limitations on the picketing of **McDONALDS**, the hamburger joint, in Dublin. Picketing was to stop at 10 p.m. and to be confined to specifically listed members only. Amazingly, the ITGWU complied, although some of the strikers didn't.

Charlie Haughey sent troops into the oil depots in autumn 1980 as the **OILWORKERS** strike began to bite and after they had introduced the flying picket into Ireland. The Army's arrival created a disturbing precedent. Here, it was occupying workplaces in a military-style exercise with **uniformed blacklegs**

Police and postmen: Sherriff St., 1979.



driving lorries normally driven by the oil-workers. This went beyond the regular role of the Army in bus strikes, which was confined to the use of their own trucks. Around the same time, the government introduced the Army into a **BUS** strike immediately it occurred, as a show of determination, rather than after a lengthy absence of public transport, which was the usual practice.

The end of 1980 saw a big establishment and media build-up for anti-strike legislation, to curb unofficial strikes in particular, in light of the Oil, Alcan and other strikes. In March 1981, the recommendations of the Commission on Industrial Relations, from which the ICTU had disassociated itself, were published, or rather leaked. The proposals amounted to a legal stranglehold on trade unionists. They included: removal of the 1906 Act's protection from unofficial strikes, from strikes concerning "individual rights and benefits" covered by labour laws, and from sympathetic strikes; mandatory referral to a new type of Labour Court and mandatory secret postal ballots; a code of practice governing procedures and organisation in the workplace; and emergency services during strikes.

JAILINGS BECOME REALITY

When **TALBOT** car-assemblers announced the redundancy of most of its remaining workforce, there was an official strike by the **ATGWU** in March 1981 and some workers occupied the Santry factory. On 25th March, Justice Costelloe granted the company an interim injunction against the "trespass". The workers came out and then agreed in court not to picket in groups of more than four. On 19th April,

management testified in court to intimidation by the picketers and all picketing was banned, which at this stage was Congress "All-Out" picketing. The picket continued, and on 23rd April the same justice ordered that eleven workers be committed to Mountjoy Prison. But Talbot and the court then backed off. The next day the eleven gave an undertaking that they would picket peacefully. They did not apologise for their contempt of court. But, on this undertaking, Justice Barrington said he would regard them as having purged their contempt. The committal order, and the ban on picketing, were lifted.

However, at the same hearing, Matt Merrigan, District Secretary of the **ATGWU**, was committed to prison for defying a court order, of April 10th, against a Congress blacking of Talbot goods, including imported cars. But a delegate meeting of stewards, including **ESB** workers and dockers, decided to strike if anyone went inside. The Dublin Trades Council planned a May Day strike by carworkers.

A lighter incident happened in a Unidare factory on the morning after Matt Merrigan's committal. Justice Barrington was due to visit the factory that day but, in fact, couldn't make it. When someone who looked like him walked into the cable factory, the workers began to walk out in protest. The **ATGWU** announced that if Talbot signed the committal order on its District Secretary, "all hell will break loose". He was never jailed.

But a Supreme Court ruling in relation to the blacking had dangerous implications for trade union rights, far beyond the immediate dispute. Industrial Relations experts, Prondzyaski and McCarthy, commented: "The



Supreme Court held that the embargo was an inducement to break commercial contracts. It is worth pointing out here that an inducement to break a contract of employment is given statutory immunity under section 3 of the Trades Dispute Act 1906; no such immunity extends to

inducements to break commercial contracts. Mr. Justice Hency himself called the Congress embargo, not an inducement to break, but an inducement to procure breaches of commercial contracts. It is difficult to conceive of any major strike which would not have the effect of making the performance of at least some commercial contracts impossible." They continued: "Disputes involving the concerted efforts of a number of unions, and in particular the all-out strike of the ICTU, may now be in doubt". Irish Times, 18th May 1981.

At least one union has refused to officially sanction sympathetic blacking while the Supreme Court ruling stands. Congress did not bring the case to a full trial, as is their right, and instead called on the government to clarify the law so as to restore trade union rights now under question. Three governments so far have preferred judges encroachments on, rather than new assertions of, traditional union rights.

Not long afterwards, on May 19th, the case of 38 workers from the ROSS SHIPYARD in New Ross, was before Mr. Justice O'Hanlon. They were

defying an injunction, previously given, restraining them from occupying the yard. Proceedings against the 38 had been adjourned once already and again, today, the Receiver wanted another adjournment. More back-offs. The judge wasn't too happy about this however. He was inclined to the view that the court itself should go ahead and imprison them to vindicate its authority, but he would refrain. Furthermore, he said the Gardai should act against the Ross workers anyway: "the case appears to fall squarely within the scope of the Forcible Entry and Occupation Act 1971, which was passed specifically to deal with the kind of unlawful conduct which was admitted to have taken place in New Ross. I am of the opinion these powers should be used by the Garda Síochána for the purpose for which they were intended." So much for Des O'Malley's "assurances."

Striking workers took over the AULT & WIBORG factory, in Dublin, on 4th November 1981. An injunction was served on six workers and the judge instructed the local Gardai to use the Forcible Entry Act if the men did not vacate the premises. Hearing that the Gardai were coming to get them, the men eventually came out. They were jailed on the 9th — the first time trade unionists had been jailed since 1966. Injunctions had now moved on to actual jailings. Nothing was done by the movement at large, or said by the union leaders, and the workers' action was completely broken. They were released several days later, only after giving assurances that they would not occupy or picket their factory. They also had to pay £300 damages to the company.

STEMMING THE TIDE

The High Court, last July, granted an injunction to KELLAND HOMES and others, restraining 15 members of the Irish National Union of Painters and Decorators from picketing five building sites. The picket was official and peaceful. No sit-ins or incidents were cited. The injunction was granted solely on the grounds that dispute procedures had not been followed. Bad enough, but it happened to be the employer that was acting contrary to a registered agreement. The workers were also restrained from inducing breaches of commercial contracts between the plaintiff companies, or between the plaintiffs and third parties. (See the Talbot ruling, above).

Norman Duff, a member of the union's executive committee, was imprisoned for failure to comply. Two days later, two more were jailed. When Justice Carroll asked Gerry Grainger,



Derek Speirs (Report)

before his jailing, what he intended to do, he replied: "Carry on picketing. If you release me now I will go straight back to Swords and carry on picketing."

The reaction of the trade union movement was in marked contrast to that in the Ranks case, not to mention Ault & Wiborg. There were immediate stoppages in building sites around the country. The ICTU issued a lengthy statement and the ICTU Construction Committee organised a demonstration for the weekend, supported by the Dublin Trades Council. On Friday 16th, the three trade unionists were free. Hectic high-level talks had secured a formula: the employers would drop the injunction and there would be a return to work with negotiations to settle the dispute. However, the workers, or at least their council, went "under the yoke" of purging their contempt, agreeing to use "agreed procedures" and declaring that picket would be withdrawn.

Injunctions flew during the year-long sit-in at **CLONDALKIN PAPER MILLS**: for the release of paper from Swiftbrook; against picketing Swiftbrook. At one hearing, the judge ruled that because the pickets were against imports they were breaking the 1906 Act. Echoes of Talbot again. Making an order directing six occupiers to vacate CPM, Justice

Carroll, on February 1st, sent notice of it to the Garda Commissioner and local gardai so they could carry out service of it under the Forcible Entry Act. Once again the Gardai were not as quick as a judge to move against workers: the court was told, two days later, that the Gardai had been served with the order and had intimated that they did not intend, of their own motion, to remove any people under the Forcible Entry Act. At the eleventh hour, the government stepped in and finally signed a contract to purchase the mills, thus avoiding the jailing of the six occupiers.

The details of the **RANKS** episode are well-known. Some points are worth noting. Firstly, the Ranks workers, in holding and threatening the perishable goods in the silos, were going outside the 1906 Act. The company claim this alone led them to seek the injunction. In such circumstances, liberal notions of "proper" industrial relations become irrelevant. The workers simply used what power they had to gain redundancy terms above the pauperising state levels, which the company refused to supplement despite written agreements. Secondly, they were not jailed under the Forcible Entry Act as widely believed. Thirdly, the victory over their jailors was complete. The release formula, though worked out over their heads, involved the workers in no

compromise. On 22nd February, special investigator, Ercus Stewart's report to the Minister said: "it appears that only the 14 men can obtain their release by giving an undertaking not to break High Court Orders and so purging their contempt." Four days and some sympathy strikes later, they were practically bundled out of Mountjoy Jail and went straight to re-occupy the mill as contemptuous as ever.

It may, however, be foolish for the trade union and labour movement to consider the Ranks victory as the end of the story. If occupations in response to factory closures multiply, then the jailing of the Ranks workers could signal an *increase* willingness by the state to intervene in industrial disputes. And in such circumstances, it must be remembered that it was the semi-spontaneous strike action of rank and file workers that secured the release of the Ranks workers, not the ICTU or the ITGWU or even the Dublin Trades Council. Spontaneous action is, however, a fragile thing. To prepare for Ranks to come, organisation at grass roots level is badly needed.

Recently, as evidenced by Kelland Homes, CPM and Ranks, attempts by the State to coerce trade unionists have been largely re-buffed. But, as this short history indicates, these are merely battles in a very long war. It's a war that the State shows every sign of escalating.



Solidarity at the gates of Ranks.

Derek Speirs (Report)

In *Gralton 3*, Austen Morgan began a series of articles on neutrality with an article entitled, "Neutrality, Irish Style". In *Gralton 4*, Manus O'Riordan followed this up with "A Well-balanced Foreign Policy?" Here, DALTUN O CEALLAIGH, Vice Chairman of the Irish Sovereignty Movement, picks up the debate.

NEUTRALITY: Past, Present and Future

The tradition of neutrality runs very deep in Ireland: from the time Wolfe Tone advocated the policy when there was an impending conflict between Britain and Spain in 1790, to the dropping of sanctions against Argentina in 1982. The main characteristic of this tradition has been an unwillingness to become involved in imperialist wars. Several reasons can be adduced for this: an elementary reluctance to serve as cannon fodder; the desirability of Ireland avoiding depredation by the contending parties; and the need to protect what political freedom the country had eventually restored.

Other characteristics may also be noted such as the objection to collaborating with Britain in the exploitation of the Third World and the wish to have good relations with all countries, while making an independent contribution to the development of world peace and amity — the stress sometimes being placed latterly on the international working class.

All these justifications have been given, at one time or another, for pursuing a course of neutrality. Not all of them, however, have been cited by individual advocates or particular governments on behalf of the policy. Choice and emphasis have differed, given the various political and social interests involved.

Like most traditions, therefore, this one has a variety of strands and how they are woven together depends on where a

person is situated on the ideological spectrum. This may puzzle and upset some people who are accustomed to intellectual idealism, but not those who are familiar with human reality.

The policy of neutrality in Ireland has been closely linked to that of national independence. Materially, it was deemed necessary to concentrate on reconstruction after secession from the British Empire. Politically, it was regarded as inconsistent with the liberation struggle to ally oneself with that Empire or any other. Partition did not generate, but reinforced this attitude, because it was further thought absurd to enter into military cooperation with a power which was still interfering in one's country.

For those who do not like the logic and sense of these connections such an outlook is usually sloganised in hostile fashion as "isolation" and "irrelevance", while for those sharing it, the appropriate terms would be self-reliance and emancipation.

THE RECORD OF NEUTRALITY

A number of practical manifestations of neutrality have occurred since the Irish State was founded in 1922.

The Free State joined the League of Nations in 1923 and became a very active participant, with De Valera, at one point,

serving as its President. In 1934, the State supported the entry of the atheistic Soviet Union, despite Western pressure; in the following year, it backed sanctions against Catholic Italy for coercing Abyssinia; and, from 1936 onwards, it observed a strict policy of non-intervention in the Spanish Civil War, thus denying support for clericalist Franco.

This involvement was set against the background of de Valera's belief that a small country should not only be neutral, but strive to protect itself through building a system of global security.

The earliest days of the State showed that it was not the client of any Great Power or oblivious of the wider world. Assertions to the contrary are unhistorical.

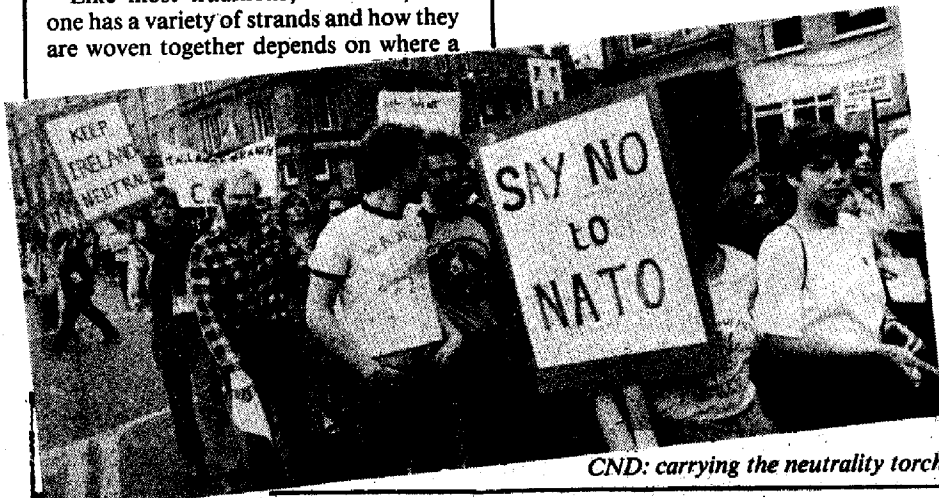
Of course, socialists would have desired an even more independent policy and one based on the advancement of the international proletariat. But to expect that of a national bourgeoisie is fanciful.

The Second World War provided the most vigorous test of Irish neutrality. Indeed, that period has acquired a particular symbolism because, as John A. Murphy has put it: "Neutrality in a world conflict is the ultimate exercise in national sovereignty".

Efforts have been made to downgrade the experience, by saying that the whole of Ireland could have been easily overrun by Britain and America and that they simply did not bother to do so, because it never became essential. But the success of armed neutrality was that it had to be *absolutely vital* before being attempted. Otherwise, the Twenty-Six Counties might have been invaded as casually as Norway was by the Germans.

At the close of war, de Valera tried to re-activate his strategy of neutrality allied to collective security. Alluding to the United Nations, he said: "I think we have a duty as a member of the world community to do our share in trying to bring about general conditions which will make for the maintenance of peace."

In the meantime, his successors in the



CND: carrying the neutrality torch.

Inter-Party Government turned down an invitation to join Britain in NATO because of partition. Since then, a sustained attempt has been made, by wavering supporters and frank opponents alike of neutrality, to make partition appear as the only reason for cleaving to this policy. However, we have already shown this to be false.

Later, in the Sixties, the Irish role in the United Nations was identified with opposition to nuclear weapons, general disarmament and hostility to apartheid in South Africa. When the Irish raised the question of Chinese membership at the UN, they did so against the wishes of the United States and despite the Irish-American Catholic wrath of Cardinal Spellman.

COMPLEX ATTITUDES

From the 1920s to the 60s, the Irish Government's approach to neutrality thus rested on three planks: abstention from military alliances; non-involvement with the architect of partition; and the search for collective security.

This did not mean being indifferent to or silent about world issues, according to a scheme of national and bourgeois democratic values which were rooted in a Christian culture.

Thus, insofar as there was a bias in Irish foreign policy, it was, and is, pro-Western in terms of the East-West axis. Attitudes are more complex, given our own colonial past, when it comes to the global North-South relationship — witness El Salvador.

There has been a constant tendency to confuse this bias with the degree of the

independence which the State was actually capable of and showed in its foreign policy, so leading to a sweeping dismissal of Irish neutrality to date rather than a mature and critical evaluation of it.

A rounded assessment would underline the positive features of the tradition in practice, at least seek their preservation and go on to promote their development, taking account of the opportunities and dangers that have emerged since the Fifties. In the process, there is a need for a coherent statement of neutrality philosophy, drawing on explicit moral and political argument as well as the trends of Government action, to which the widest number of people could adhere, while allowing for more advanced, but not contradictory, positions such as those of international socialism.

The opportunities which have arisen in the past thirty years have been mainly in the form of what are effectively sub-groupings of the United Nations, namely the Nonaligned Movement and the Group of Neutral States within the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). These overlap, but only partially, and, of course, Switzerland is unique in being outside the UN altogether.

The Irish State has kept its distance from structured arrangements for non-alignment and international security, not disdaining the idea of collectivity, but preferring the more flexible approach of the General Assembly of the UN and its other organs.

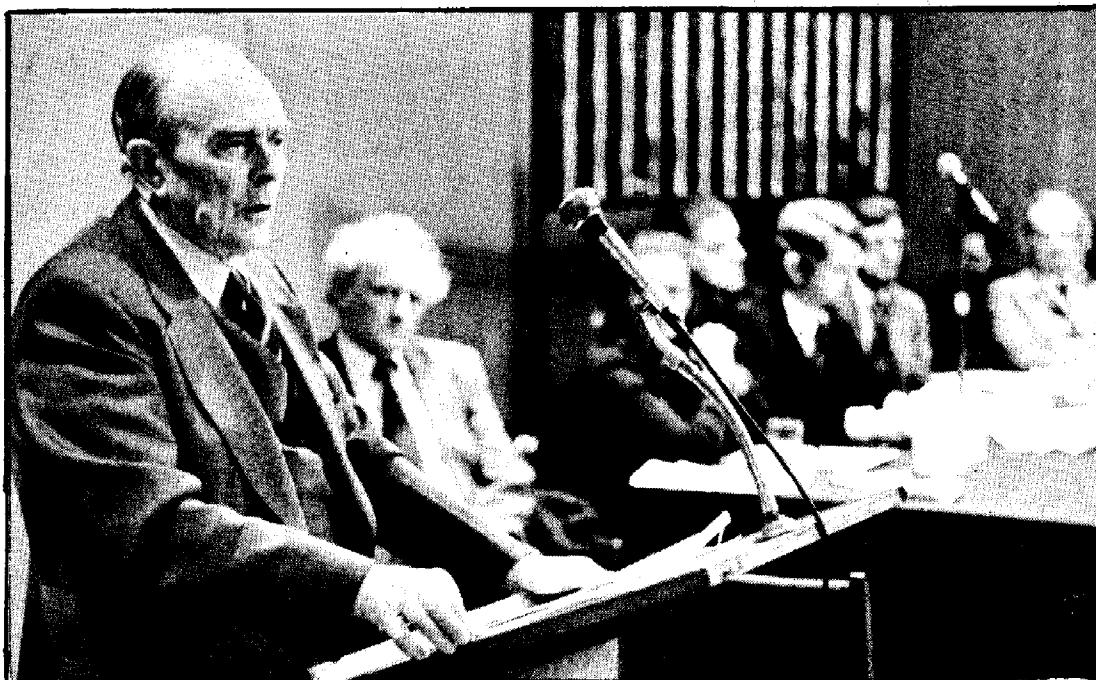
The chief danger to Irish neutrality, which has become apparent in this

period, has been the EEC, given its virtual identity with NATO in Europe and its related mechanisms for foreign policy coordination in a context of economic interdependence. Again, one has to be careful about facile exaggeration here, which would suggest that Irish neutrality is already six feet under, unless one attributes to it the properties of resurrection at the time of the Malvinas/Falklands crisis. However, adjusting the metaphor to its true proportions, the policy does appear to have one foot in the grave.

Our changed voting patterns at the UN on the kinds of issues quoted above and the willingness of some politicians to separate the neutrality issue from those of independence and partition, or do a trade-off on the latter, make the point. The Haughey-Thatcher Summit, in particular, had odours of neutrality-for-unity bartering which were not

MALVINAS
para los
PINGÜINOS!

FRENTE POPULAR
PINGÜINO



Sean MacBride speaking at a neutrality rally in 1980.

Derek Speirs (Report)

unpleasant to verbal republicans.

Nonetheless, the extent to which politicians must continually genuflect towards a policy to which they are in reality not committed, reveals their acceptance that the 1972 referendum did not provide a mandate for the abandonment of independence or neutrality, or surrendering the connection between the two, precisely because the same politicians were so successful in excluding these issues from the debate.

CHALLENGING THE EEC

In view of the link-up between Irish and EEC foreign policy since 1972, Dublin's position in not joining the Nonaligned Movement or Neutral Group in CSCE has become less a matter of disinclination and more one of impossibility. It would not, therefore, be realistic to review Irish attitudes to these groupings without also challenging the nature of our relationship with the EEC. Indeed, such a challenge is implied, albeit to a lesser degree, by any return to our pre-1972 stance of independent nonalignment.

Despite this, the suggestion has been put forward by Austen Morgan (see *Gralton 3*), that positive neutrality could be advanced by "standing firm within the EEC". The democratic potential of that body is hinted at by reference to the "European Parliament", a misnomer for congenial political impotence. Next, we are told that the EEC is under the "direction of European social democracy in partnership with the bourgeoisie". The reliability and current relevance of that comment are measurable by recalling that three out of four core states of the EEC — Britain, Italy and West Germany — are ruled by Conservative or Christian Democrat parties. But even taking the observation at its time of utterance, the ephemeral occupancies of Government by Labour or Social Democratic parties have not altered the fundamental nature of the Rome Treaties, which provide for 19th Century *Laissez-faire* economics at a multinational level and within a mystifying apparatus of bureaucratic control.

No explanation is offered as to why the other European neutrals are inimical to the EEC or as to how the antibodies to neutralism of foreign policy harmonisation and overlapping NATO membership are to be overcome. A blind faith is placed in the "social character of the emerging bloc", which lacks historical evidence and defies political analysis. In fact, the increasing centripetal tendencies of the EEC and threatened re-emergence of protectionism do not merit a mention.

Turning to the EEC and Ireland, it is prophesied that the Common Market "will continue to be socio-economically popular", several hundred thousand unemployed notwithstanding, and that it

will remain "a condition for further industrialisation", despite the wasteland of closed factories which surrounds us. The author has apparently not heard that the marketeers slogan of a decade ago, "Markets in Europe, Jobs at Home" has been stood on its head.

At bottom then, the misrepresentation of what neutrality we had and have and the implicit discounting of the potential of the Nonaligned Movement and European Group of Neutrals, has little



Daltun O Ceallaigh

Derek Speirs (Report)

more effect than keeping us in the EEC and defusing one of the most dangerous flashpoints for Brussels: neutralism (and anti-nuclearism) versus EEC membership.

THE MALVINAS — FALKLANDS CRISIS

As for the most recent dramatisation of the neutrality issue, the Malvinas/Falklands crisis, (alluded to by Manus O'Riordan in *Gralton 4*) this writer does not feel obliged to defend the sincerity and consistency of Fianna Fáil or the Workers Party, taken either separately or in combination. Suffice it to say that Charlie Haughey started with the wrong policy on sanctions and finished with the right one. An EEC (or Euro-NATO) move lining up its backers with one combatant in a war could not, by any stretch of the imagination, be reconciled with neutrality. That Haughey may have been motivated by pique about the outcome of the debate on one EEC budget and agricultural prices or indulging in demagoguery does not change this.

We should indeed be aware of when political leaders adopt correct policies for dubious reasons, so that we do not come to trust them. But, as long as they are in power, they are the only ones who can be pressured into taking up the proper stance.

In the case of Fianna Fáil and the Malvinas/Falklands episode, however, one should not underestimate how far the "demagoguery" was inspired by a perception, on the part of one of the most sensitive political machines in Western Europe, that genuine mass feeling was against sanctions because of the threat to neutrality and peace.

On the invasion itself, opinions seemed to differ among neutralists in Ireland. Some stressed the presence of a fascist junta in Buenos Aires, the united opposition of the island's population to Argentinian sovereignty and the dues arising from settlement. Others distinguished between the rights of a nation and the political complexion of a Government, noted the garrison appearance of the islanders and wondered what sense a British presence made in the South Atlantic off the Argentinian mainland if it was not an imperialist one.

In any event, to attribute to neutralists an inevitable pro-Argentinian or just an anti-British attitude is plain prejudice emanating from a Brit-bashers under the bed mentality.

TOWARDS POSITIVE NEUTRALITY

As for the years ahead, an active struggle is needed to prevent further erosion of our neutrality by the EEC. Moreover, an awareness should be encouraged of the need, not merely to return to pre-1972 independent nonalignment, but eventually to join up with the European Group of Neutrals and the Nonaligned Movement. More immediately, the link between nuclear disarmament and Irish neutrality should be cemented in people's minds through appreciation of the fact that the only truly neutral Ireland is a nuclear-free one. Both these principles should be enshrined in our Constitution and a very useful campaign could be organised to that end.

The neutral Ireland of the future would be one of self-interest and principle (the two are not incompatible), actively seeking, through her armed forces and foreign policies, to avoid annihilation and contribute to world peace. It would not be a mute Ireland in international affairs, but speak out consistently against military blocs and imperialism and for the economic and political freedom of nations and their people, as befits our own past.

It has been said that socialism does not necessarily imply neutrality. As an abstract statement, that is true. But in the specific historical and political circumstances in which we find ourselves, it is hard to conceive of an Irish socialist or progressive foreign policy being other than neutralist.

THE BRENDAN RYAN INTERVIEW

GRALTON: *You have recently introduced the Homeless Persons Bill into the Senate, could you tell us about it?*

RYAN: The Homeless Persons Bill is very much a reformist piece of legislation, yet it is an area of particular social need because in all our legislation on housing nobody has ever acknowledged the existence of people who are actually homeless. So a large part of the Bill defines the homeless. Obviously it includes those without homes, but also people who have to live in hostels and those in caravans without a permanent site. Secondly, it identifies who should take responsibility for the homeless. At the moment, the Health Boards and the Local Authorities can't agree on this. We do not see the homeless as being sick, so we feel that the Local Authority housing departments should be responsible.

Finally, the Bill identifies what must be done, trying to avoid bureaucratic pitfalls. For example, some Local Authorities choose to believe that a woman who leaves her home because of family violence is intentionally homeless and therefore is not entitled to rehousing. The Bill would not allow that to happen.

What sort of response have you got for the Bill?

I am hopeful that the Labour Party will adopt some or all of the Bill, but it is controversial with some right-wing politicians who are beginning to react against the whole

Brendan Ryan was recently elected to the Senate for a second term. Gralton spoke to him about his role as a politician, his campaign for the underprivileged and his views on socialism.

idea of State intervention in any area and are making rather vulgar noises about self-sufficiency, fostering sturdy independence and so on.

Are you worried about attacks on the welfare state?

Yes, politicians were great when they thought money was available. Then they encouraged Welfare State thinking because they thought they were votes to be got. Now they are showing their true colours. They don't really believe in the Welfare State because it interferes with the market economy.

Look at the recent Budget. The Government is cutting back the dole because they think it could be a disincentive to work. They think that giving a young single person an extra £3.15 is a disincentive. Yet an extra £2.07 is apparently not a disincentive. It's nonsense, all they are doing is saving money.

So how should the cuts be fought?

Basically, through the trade unions. Union members are showing signs of being fed up with the drop in living standards, the closure of factories, the tax increases and the welfare cuts. The union leaders must take note. I think that the trades councils in particular could play an important role because they are not so tightly controlled by the union leaders. However, there is a section of the trade union movement, particularly in the public sector, which doesn't see itself as having a common interest with



those who are the victims of unemployment. But at the rate things are going redundancies will take place in the public sector and then those unions will have to get involved.

One big problem is that the media have swallowed the argument about the need for cuts and restraint, so much so that they are not prepared to listen to rational argument from the other side . . .

Do you think there is a conspiracy to keep out some arguments?

No, not a conspiracy. But journalists, by and large, are far from being a self-critical profession. They tend to pick up the prejudices of the moment, unless they themselves hold strong ideological positions. There is also an element of laziness, because if they can't fit someone like myself into a category or a box, they don't know how to treat the information and so they just ignore it — like, for example, when I say that I don't believe that there is a shortage of money in the country.

In what sense do you see yourself as speaking for the homeless or the unemployed?

It would be very presumptuous of me to speak for anyone, so I try not to speak for them. I try to speak for myself and my view of their position; that is the view I have of what society is doing to them. I would like to be made redundant. I would like to see the poor and the

A VOICE

homeless speaking for themselves and being listened to.

How did you get into politics?

Years ago I joined the Labour Party, after 1969 when they showed some promise. I even supported Coalition in 1973, but Liam Cosgrave cured me of that. The famous Mansion House "Nuremburg" Ard Fheis — that really frightened me. It is interesting that when that particular Government went out of office, the number of people convicted of serious crimes on confessions virtually dwindled off to nothing. You can only draw one conclusion — that the Gardai were allowed to extract confessions from those in their custody. I was harassed by the Special Branch myself. It was a relief when that Government left office.

I left the Labour Party then, or rather I just stopped going to Party meetings. Later, I became involved with the Simon Community and back into politics via the Senate.

What motivates you politically?

My political motivation has a Christian base to it. A Roman Catholic basis, though I am somewhat less convinced since the Pope's performance in Nicaragua. I find it astonishing that in his whole Central American tour the only regime that he pointedly and identifiably criticised was the one that is doing something decent for the people of their country. I mean, saying that Christianity and Revolution were not compatible — of course they are compatible. The Pope's performance has shaken me.

Do you call yourself a socialist?

Yes, I always call myself a socialist — in that I believe the market economy cannot work and that it is fundamentally corrupting because it puts a kind of materialistic ethic before all else. The alternative should be a system where the ordinary people have control over the resources of the country.

Can that control be won by peaceful means?

As a Christian I would have to believe that no-one is beyond conversion though the facts are that it has never happened. I think that power will only be taken by the people who are the victims in this society, the working people. The real leaders in that struggle have to be the trade union movement, but at the moment the leadership of the union movement are not within a million miles of leading the struggle. I have always said that I regard myself as a non-violent revolutionary. I would have supported the struggle in Nicaragua, if I was there, but I would not have fought.

What's your position on the Amendment and women's rights in general?

You'll get nothing out of me on the Amendment until after I have spoken on it in the Senate. I do think the issue is a bit of a red herring. It has nothing to do with "life" in the sense that you could not describe the people who support the Amendment as "pro-life". That is abrogating to themselves the title which many others deserve better than themselves, for example, the people who work in Simon.

I supported, the right of women to equality in welfare services as far back as 1977. I don't say so much on the subject because I think that there are plenty of women around who can speak for themselves. I would describe myself as a "feminist" in all matters, except the right to choose on abortion.

What is your attitude to the Senate as an institution? Is it not inherently undemocratic?

The Senate is a good platform for access to the media. There are two things here: the need for fundamental change and immediate problems. There are people who are suffering right now and for whom life can be improved a little with relatively small expenditure. Of course, the Senate is undemocratic. But I have to balance that against what I believe to be the capacity of a Senator to influence public opinion, even the capacity to influence it in the direction of the fundamental change which I think is necessary.

Are you necessarily an individual or is there no political party which is worth joining?

Well, to start with, I am a member of an organisation, namely Simon. On top of that, I gave Simon a commitment that I would not drag them into a political party. If I wanted to take a party whip in the Senate I would resign my seat and then possibly fight a bye-election as a party member.

Secondly, there is no party or organisation that I would have a great regard for. I have a considerable regard for the Workers' Party and I have enormous regard for

THE CASE FOR A HOMELESS PERSONS ACT



SIMON COMMUNITY. 1983

FOR THE VOICELESS

Michael D. Higgins, Jim Kemmy too, though I disagree with him totally about the North. But they are all in different groups. If there was any sort of attempt at an alliance of the Left in this country I might find that I would have to get involved.

Not that a Left alliance is a solution to all problems. I mean, what happens when you elect a Parliamentary majority of the Left? — you get a massive flight of capital out of the country, the economy collapses and a reaction results which usually brings the Right to power with the next election. This is what happened in Chile.

But in Chile, an army coup brought down the Allende Government.

That's why I keep a very watchful eye on the army, though I don't believe the Irish Army would involve itself in politics. I think that it would be loyal to the elected Government (at this point Brendan visibly crosses his fingers). I'm more worried about the Gardai than the Army. I mean you do get the Guards involved in trying to influence political opinion. And much more insidiously, Jack Marín's remarks about subversive organisations penetrating the ranks of the disaffected are obviously an attempt to get a licence to harass people like those in unemployed action groups. And take Marín's comments last year about the campaign for homosexual law reform and the push for changes in the criminal law. The Gardai are definitely broadening their political approach.

Going back to what you were saying about the Left achieving victory in elections. Can such a victory be sustained in a capitalist society?

I don't think that socialist change can come about through Parliament alone. It will require a series of socialist programmes to control the means of production, distribution, the currency system and so on.

State control of the economy?

Of course, but what is State control? Do you mean a centralised, planned economy along lines of the Soviet model or something like what Solidarity were seeking in Poland, which was workers control with a fair amount of decentralization? I have always said that I see a central role for the State in the planning and development of productive forces, but not necessarily through a centralised bureaucracy. I would prefer to see the State as a holding company with each of the enterprises having a fair amount of local control — local workers control.

Finally, how do you see the future? Are you optimistic or pessimistic about Irish politics?

I suppose I'm more pessimistic. I am extremely worried about what might happen over the next four years. The present Government policies, or indeed the Fianna Fáil policies, will produce unemployment in the area of 250,000 within 12 to 18 months. That will produce high levels of crime in all the big cities. This in turn will produce a lobby for more repression, more Gardai and prisons. The criminal law changes which the Gardai would like to see would be along the lines of the British SUS laws. Who will they use them against? Not the Provisional IRA, but to pick up kids in working class areas suspected of stealing cars. And I fear a danger that, if things seem to be getting out of hand, pressure would mount to bring the Army onto the streets to back-up the Guards.

I am more pessimistic than optimistic because I think that we are an inherently right-wing country. We tend to opt for right-wing solutions to law and order problems. Unfortunately a right-wing solution to a supposed law and order problem might become the "solution" to all our problems. The tendency in the past has been for repressive legislation to be used way beyond its original objective. The use of new repressive laws will not stop at lifting kids for stealing cars.

A voice for the voiceless?: supporting the Peoples' March 1982.



Derek Speirs (Report)

Index to Gralton Nos 1-6

2:31-32 indicates Gralton no. 2, pages 31-32.
Book reviews less than a page long are not indexed.

ARTS			
Arts: for the people, or by the people?	2:31-32	Ballots and bullets	5:4-5
Art and the conspiracies of choice	3:29-31	The state of the left	5:15-16
Arts for the people (letter)	3:34	Holding our own: the left	5:17-20
		Doorstepping for Tony	5:21-22
		What the right wants	5:21-22
		What the papers said	6:6
CENTRALLY PLANNED ECONOMIES		FOOD	
Forum two	3:4	Letters	5:34
Gralton forum (letter)	3:34	FOREIGN POLICY	
CHURCH		Neutrality, Irish style	3:10-13
A clash of opiates: youth services	2:8-9	A "well-balanced" foreign policy?	4:14-16
COMMODITIES		GARDA SÍOCHÁNA	
Stirring it up	2:7	The police and their power	1:7-9
COMMUNES		Release Nicky Kelly	6:7
Ralahine	2:29-30	GAYS	
COMMUNIST PARTIES		Gays step up the pace	3:7
Eurocommunism: a guide to the parliamentary roads	3:24-28	Gays right at work	4:6
COMMUNITY		GRALTON, JIM	
Inner City Festival	2:6	Why name a magazine after Jim Gralton?	1:36
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT		GRALTON: AN IRISH SOCIALIST REVIEW	
The backlash has arrived	2:12-14	Socialism — not worth pressing?	2:36
Where the Left stands	3:4	Calling the serious left (letter)	4:34
The Anti-Amendment Campaign progress report	3:5	GREAT BRITAIN	
Anti-amendment news	4:4	Developing an Alternative Economic Strategy	6:14-16
Anti-amendment music	4:5	HISTORY	
Anti-amendment news	5:6	Why name a magazine after Jim Gralton?	1:36
Anti-amendment views	5:7	Ralahine	2:29-30
Stop this farce! Vote no	6:36	The Roots of Partition	4:21-25
CORK		Class struggle days (Book Review)	
Anti-amendment news	4:4	HOUSING	
COURTS		Private tenants, public scandal	2:4-5
Diplocking them up	2:23-24	HUMOUR	
The politics of extradition	4:17-18	The day the revolution broke out	1:34
DÁIL		Unwinding the bandages	4:36
Gralton forum	2:36	INFORMATION	
The Gregory interview	6:25-28	How to find things out	6:17-20
DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST PARTY		JOYCE, JAMES	
Interview	2:21-22	Joyce's politics (Book Review)	3:32
DISABLED		KELLY, NICKY	
Disabled? Sorry, that was 1981	1:4	Release Nicky Kelly	6:7
DRUGS		LABOUR PARTY	
A clash of opiates: youth services		The fall and fall of Labour	1:15-16
DUBLIN		Labour: still worth it after all these years? Part 1	4:8-10
Inner City Festival	2:6	Labour: still worth it after all these years? Part 2	4:11-13
A clash of opiates: church-run organisations	2:8-9	A fear of the passions	4:29
Voices from Finglas (interview)	5:28-31	Politics in Waterford	5:11-14
		Death throes	6:4
ECOLOGY		LATIN AMERICA	
The Greens	6:21-24	Securing Latin America for Uncle Sam	2:25-28
ECONOMY		MEDIA	
Import controls for whom?	3:8-9	Socialism — not worth pressing?	2:36
Monetarist madness	5:8	Good out RTE Radio	4:7
Developing an Alternative Economic Strategy	6:14-16	Media bashing	5:9-10
EDUCATION		You can't even bloody well poster now	5:36
Cuts in the classroom	1:5-6	What the papers said: last election	6:5
Students: organising for defence	2:5	MUSIC	
Why socialists should not support university students	3:7	The politics of Moving Hearts	1:30-31
Students hit back (letter)	4:34	Anti-amendment music	4:5
Pregnant teachers under attack	5:8	NORTH	
Cuts in education	6:8-9	Diplocking them up	2:23-24
ELECTIONS		The roots of Partition	4:21-25
The numbers game: the left	1:10-12	Ballots and bullets	5:4-5
Interview	1:12-14		

PAY	
So far so bad: wage claims	1:4-5
Beating the embargo	4:5
POETRY	
The Shame	3:33
POLAND	
Poland in perspective	1:21-25
Solidarity forever (Book Review)	2:33
SINN FEIN	
Ballots and bullets	5:4-5
SOCIAL WELFARE	
Welfare discrimination	1:6
After the dole case	2:5
How to work the social welfare system	2:17-20
Levelling up or down?	6:6
SOCIALIST LABOUR PARTY	
The party's over	3:14-16
THE SLP	
	6:29-32
STRIKES	
How to go on strike	1:17-20
TAX	
Tax reform: the forgotten campaign	5:23-27
THEATRE	
Burn down the Abbey: the prospects for radical theatre	4:26-28
TRADE UNIONS	
Women in the unions	3:17-20
Class struggle days (Book Review)	4:30-31
Media bashing	5:9-10
TRAVELLERS	
Bigotry, tokenism and fighting back	3:21-23
UNEMPLOYED	
Hand me down my walking shoes	2:6
March for jobs: the first steps	3:36
Scroungers: opposition to unemployment	6:10-13
UNITED STATES	
The heart of the beast: why has socialism never really taken root in America?	4:19-20
WATERFORD	
Politics in Waterford	5:11-14
WESTERN EUROPE	
Women's rights in Europe	2:14-16
Eurocommunism: a guide to the parliamentary roads	3:24-28
The Greens	6:21-24
WOMEN	
Welfare discrimination	1:6
Full marx for feminism?	1:26-29
After the dole case	2:5
Women's rights in Europe	2:14-16
The women's room	3:6
Women in the unions	3:17-20
Pregnant teachers under attack	5:8
Levelling up or down?	6:6
WORKERS' PARTY	
Politics in Waterford	5:11-14
YOUTH	
A clash of opiates	2:8-11

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GRALTON Forum

It was a sense of prophetic irony that Gralton chose Trinity College as the venue for its Forum on the *Cuts in Education*, two weeks after the Budget. For it was to be in Trinity that the class nature of Irish education would be clearly seen a few weeks later, in the form of highly paid academics scabbing on striking porters and canteen staff, in order to keep the College open. During the strike, the atmosphere in the College was that of a mini-class war. The message was clear — education is the privilege of the well-to-do, and the working class only participates and benefits from education by accident.

The GRALTON FORUM concentrated on the class nature of education in this country and the speakers entertained a small, but enthusiastic, audience with their cutting analysis of the education system . . . or at least what's left of it.

Officer with USI, took up the story at third level and showed how barely 20% of working class children make it to the exclusive club of higher education. However, he argued strongly, socialists should not make the mistake of attacking the symptoms of an unequal educational system. The argument must be to maintain expenditure in third level education and to open up access to it for the working class. It was students and the trade unions who fought to open up access to higher education. Now that the system is in decline, we should not give up the fight. According to Alex, Government is playing a very clever game of claiming that there is only so much money available for education. They hope to divide the unions and parents in different sectors of education against each other.

Brendan Ryan, a Senator and member of TUI, completed the



Joe O'Toole, a member of the National Executive of the INTO, painted a depressing portrait of the education of the working class child, contrasted with the happier lot of the child of middle class parents. The working class child will usually find herself in an overcrowded classroom, in a rundown primary school with the minimum of facilities. Primary schools in middle class areas usually have smaller classes, specialist staff, extra facilities and other extras such as school trips. Yet, Joe said, the State disclaims responsibility for this uneven distribution. They claim that State funding for all primary schools is the same, but because State funding is not 100% of the costs, it is left to the parents to make up the gap. Middle class parents can afford not only to close the gap in costs, but to pay for all the extras as well.

Alex White, the Development

picture with a witty analysis of the craziness of Irish society. "Competitiveness" he said, "has become the first national slogan, the ultimate sacred cow. At every turn we hear employers and TDs bleating about the need to make Irish industry competitive — by which they mean, the need to cut real wages. Yet, Irish wage rates are only half the EEC average. In another contradiction, the TDs and employers declare on a daily basis their faith in the private sector's ability to create jobs. They constantly affirm that the public sector is inefficient. Yet the facts show that in the past few years, jobs have been created in the public sector almost as fast as the private sector loses jobs. The faith in the private sector is like fishing in a pond where no one has ever seen a fish being caught".

TOM O'CONNOR

SILVER SCREENS

Gralton takes a look at two new developments on the Irish media scene

MOLLY KALLEN
questions the
assumptions behind
the policy of the new
Irish Film Board.

The Irish Film Board (Bord Scannan na Héireann) was formed according to the Irish Film Board Act (1980). Its purpose: to promote, assist, and encourage the making of films in the State "by any means it considers appropriate." Though it is yet early to pass judgment, the very documents intended to bring a native film industry into existence would seem to contain significant obstructions to the implementation of such an ideal.

I will attempt here to clarify the ideological polarisations which frustrate the emergence of a native Irish film industry, with particular reference to the Film Board and its policies. Ultimately, the problems facing the Irish film industry, such as it is, must be seen in an ideological context, and not simply as the problems of art or economics alone.

UNHAPPY BEGINNINGS

In the first few months of BSÉ's existence, a conflict of interests began to emerge between the Association of Independent Producers (composed of people involved in film making) and the then-existing Film Board, which had not yet its full quota of appointees. The acrimony concluded in the resignation of John Boorman, who was seen by the AIP to have diverted the first available Film Board loan (£100,000) to the film *Angel*, which was produced by a company headed by himself.

The current Chief Executor of the BSÉ is Michael Algar, who is also Chairman of the Irish Film and TV Guild. His career has been largely in advertising. According to a BSÉ statement in 1982, Algar has "a sense of purpose . . . a pioneering spirit" and is a "voice of moderation in what can at times be a rather turbulent industry."

What has the Board accomplished since its disputational beginnings in 1980? *Angel* was the only film

to receive a loan from the Board in its first six months. This fact alerted AIP members to the danger that available funds could run right over their heads into the hands of international film interests, negating the claim of the Board to be developing an expression of national culture. The Board now meets approximately twice a month, and has a script assessment subcommittee for processing what it admits is a large backlog of applications, schemes, and scripts. By 1982, over 80 scripts had been submitted, and more continue to come in.

The Board's 1982 statement lists 16 feature films under "Investment Decisions," in addition to four documentaries and three small "development grants." Approximately £400,000 was spread out amongst these films, the largest grant being for £100,000. As of January, 1983, only one of the films is completed (*Outcasts* by Wynn Simmons), another is in the post-production stage, and five more are in the "hopeful" category, including one by Pat Murphy (maker of *Maeve*). The prognosis for the others is not encouraging.

COMMERCIAL CRITERIA

Board statements have described the criteria by which films are selected, pointing out that commercial viability is a major consideration, but admitting that many film projects "particularly at the developmental stage" are unlikely to meet the major criteria, for they have failed to find another financial partner (i.e., an investor) to make up the money required to complete the film. The BSÉ insists that the film maker find an investor for "at least half" of his or her film. But as £100,000 was BSÉ's largest financial commitment does the Board believe that a commercially viable film could be funded for twice that amount? Neil Jordan's *Angel* alone cost more than the BSÉ entire £400,000 allotment.

BSÉ firmly states that it will not finance more than

50% of a film's budget, but they are quite willing to admit that finding other consenting partners is the single biggest difficulty facing hopeful loan recipients. Ironically, Cyril Farrell, writing several years ago in an early edition of *Film Directions* argued that the Board should encourage an autonomous industry that is not forced to look abroad for finance, as had been done heretofore, with a great deal of the money for Irish experimental film coming from the BBC and the Arts Council of Britain. Available grants from the UK are now becoming severely curtailed due to current monetarist trends in that country and the necessity of home finances is thus increased.

One of the BSÉ's espoused principles is that "the private sector can only be mobilised into investment in independent film making if the government are prepared to spread the risk between the public and the private sector" in, what else, but "a benign tax situation." This statement is significant both for what it says and for the unstated ideology behind it. First, it contains an implicit admission that the Government cannot be expected to underwrite the creation of a native film industry in any significant way, placing a vaguely defined faith in private capital to provide the conditions necessary for the industry. The second argument complements the first: "a benign tax situation" in this context suggests that a film industry in Ireland is of interest only if it is advantageous to private capital.

The Board also admits that film makers do not have proper access to production, administration, or distribution skills. Rather, they say, film makers have been dedicated only to making film, 'dedication' being a well worn euphemism for work without pay. There is a definite contradiction between the financial security BSÉ imagines it can generate and the system of supply and demand that it is asking film makers to participate in if they wish to partake of government loans.

CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The conflict of interests should be evident to any socialists: an independent Irish film industry must be a culturally specific one, and is likely to revolve on an axis

of Ireland's social and political contradictions. Cultural autonomy (however relative), is not compatible with high capital finance at the international level, tax incentives to banks, international stars, and conventional modes of representation — all with the goal, quite simply, of private profit.

The act of independent film making alone will not assure liberation from dominating conventions, for the context of reception has many historical dictates that must be taken into account before the social efficacy of a film can be measured. Therein lies the necessity not only of available money for the creation of independent film, but for education of the public in learning to 'read' the language of film, which cannot be other than intrinsically ideological. Such education, hopefully, is one of the major functions of the Irish Film Institute.

It is simplistic, though tempting, to look for an obvious solution within the existing social structure: more taxation of wealth resulting in a larger allocation of public funds to the native film industry, and the clearly superior course of total finance for five or six films a year, rather than having 20 films half-completed for years and waiting for alternative subsidies. However, it is implicit in Film Board policy that full funding for independent film making will not be entertained, for the Board was created at least as much as an adjunct to native capitalism as to native cultural production.

It can only be erroneous to think in terms of "free" artistic production — of any type, for art, like any other form of production, is dependent upon an economic base, and the mode of production is not currently conducive to liberal financial outpourings, state or private. The conditions of production in Ireland are determined by existing materials, previously existing aesthetic codes and conventions, and, importantly in the Irish case, the residue of cultural imperialism.

If Ireland submits to conditions of monetarism currently so influential in the UK and the USA, this will become increasingly evident in the limitations on film production. The future of Ireland's aesthetic innovation lies in confronting the conditions that control the arts, those current conditions being so well illustrated in the policies of the BSE.

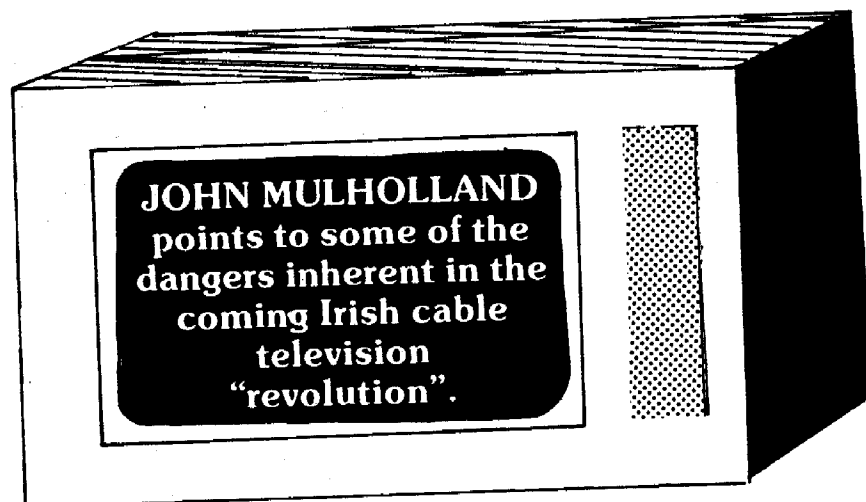


NATIVE



INDUSTRY

PROBLEMS OF PROMISCUITY



The discussion on cable TV in Ireland has been preoccupied with its potential for increasing television's promiscuity. Cable TV offers much leverage for those in the business of estimating the amount of stations it is likely to deliver to subscribers in the near future; tens? fifties? hundreds? Figures such as these tend to be hypnotic and hence people simply await the arrival of cable TV without knowing how or what is likely to be fed through the electronic tube.

The 'how' is simple. Cable TV refers to programming which is delivered to television sets through a tube (cable) and not by an aerial. At present, the type of cable in use can only carry four to six channels but a new type of cable (made from fibre optics) is likely to have an unlimited capacity for carrying television channels. It is this which is titillating cable operators since the number of channels is, to say the least, appetising.

Unfortunately, it has been this fixation on 'extent' rather than 'effects' which has characterised the debate to date. It is worth nothing that once cable TV becomes operational then a discussion on its "effects" will have come too late. Our embrace for cable TV is not only indecently hasty, it is also quite irresponsible since it ignores the likely implications of cable not only for Irish broadcasting, but also for Irish society.

HAVES AND HAVE NOTS

The probability that cable TV will prove 'socially divisive' is an issue which deserves exposure, yet is rarely expressed. Alistair Milne, the Director General of the BBC was one of the first to recognise the possibility of cable TV creating a schism in society between those who have and those who have not. This scheme may develop for two reasons. Firstly, cable operators will not be willing to cable areas which are deemed to be uneconomical. This will arise in sparsely populated areas where the low level

of subscribers would not be seen to merit the cost of cabling. It is likely that the franchises for towns and cities will be jealously fought over whilst people in rural areas look on and justifiably question the ethics involved.

But the divisions which cable might create are accentuated by the fact that not all of those who could be cabled will be able to afford to subscribe. For the growing number of people whose luxuries come in the form of rather modest trappings, subscriptions to cable systems are likely to be forcibly irrelevant. The talk of this new picturesque revolution would almost have deluded one into thinking that it was something which everyone could attain. Not so. The government could, however, take steps to ensure that its potential for divisiveness is at least reduced, if not eliminated, by stipulating that cable operators who are given plum franchises must undertake to cable an area which would otherwise be neglected and ignored.

That a situation could be allowed to develop where certain people would be denied access to programming would seemingly negate the notion that broadcasting is transmitted through a 'public' medium. This might not be surprising since the motivation and stimulus which underwrite cable are not compatible with the notion of complying with a 'public' service philosophy in broadcasting. Cable is big business and hence the criteria of big business will apply. These criteria are alien to the idea of accommodating to a public service since they aspire to the wants of the market place, not the needs of the people.

PUBLIC V. PROFIT

In the new era of broadcasting, the place of community or local involvement is decidedly peripheral. If the experience in Britain is to be heeded then the likelihood is that cable operators will not be forced to provide for

particular community programming. The Hunt report on cable TV (commissioned by the British Government) 'presumes' community involvement in cable, even 'expects' cable operators to assist community interests. Yet, in reality, the cable operators will be seeking a return on their investment and are unlikely to provide educational or community programming. To do so would be in the interest of the public — not profit. There is a credibility gap — a large one — between what is socially desirable and what is commercially profitable.

In Britain those who have already expressed an interest in cable have not done so through any feeling of philanthropy. Their interest is fuelled by the thought of cable TV being (as Lord Thompson said of commercial television) "a licence to print money". This may sound crude — it is crude — but it is also understandable when one realises the excessive profits which commercial television companies have made in Britain.

That such motivations will become apparent in cable TV is hardly in doubt but the use to which the excess profits will be put, certainly is. Will they be funnelled back into programming in order to improve quality or will they be creamed off into other business enterprises? A glance at what has happened in similar cases is enlightening, particularly with regard to commercial television in Britain. In that instance, the wealth which was accumulated was not used as a means of improving the quality of programming, but rather as a means of establishing other business enterprises. In this way entrepreneurs diversified their business interests, often into areas quite remote from broadcasting. Thus, Granada Television is involved in book publishing, bingo halls, motorway services, music publishing, cinemas, property and TV rentals.

POTENTIAL DANGERS

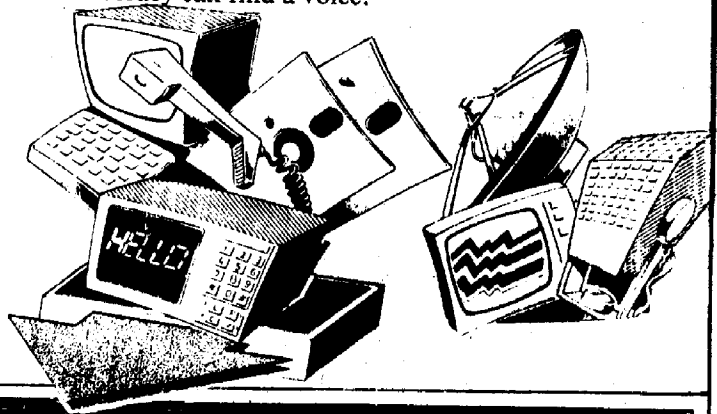
These are but a few questions and though others exist such as the ownership of cable systems, the type of regulations etc., all of these converge eventually on the possible dismemberment of public service broadcasting. The danger is more acute in Ireland than elsewhere since RTE is already dependent on advertising for 60% of its

revenue. With the onset of cable it will be vying not alone for audiences but also for advertising and hence the pressure to broadcast programmes of a 'popular' nature will be inexorable. There is little doubt that the onset of cable will imperil the concept of broadcasting in the public interest. One major cable operator in Britain has already stated that cable has nothing to do with public service — perhaps that is why he got involved.

The consequences of such a happening would be to reduce the accessibility and accountability of those in central government. It would make it more difficult to flush out local public officials and get them to explain and answer for their administrative actions and inactions. It would lead to a further erosion in exposure to, and interest in, community politics.

The potential of cable is not in doubt — only the direction in which that potential will be realised. That direction is not likely to be in the interest of the public; as much through the activities of business as through a complete lack of policy development prior to cable's arrival. There will be no point, nor justification, in bemoaning the passing of public service broadcasting in years to come, unless the likely effects of cable are expressed lucidly and forcibly at this stage.

The danger that this will not, in fact, occur, already exists and in the absence of a clear policy the opportunities and potential for exploiting such a vacuum are tipped heavily in favour of large co-ordinated business interests. If we are serious about local democracy then we need to take seriously the means whereby that democracy can find a voice.



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Books

BULLETS

THE LONGEST WAR. Kevin Kelley. Brandon. £6.95.

Mr. Kelley is, he tells us, a North American radical journalist who, despite an Irish surname, has no direct connection with Ireland. His book briefly covers the pre-1916 period in Irish history and deals in more depth with events since then, up to 1982, with particular attention, as the title implies, to the development of the IRA.

It reads rather like a high-grade political primer. The author is quite honest about this. In the preface he tells us that he wrote the book firstly to correct some myriad misconceptions among British and North American people about the war in Northern Ireland. Though, according to Mr. Kelley, the Irish, especially in the North, require no such antidotes to media and government misinformation, he suggests that his book may serve as something of a refresher course.

Mr. Kelley writes in a rather zippy, journalistic style reflected in such sub-headings as: "Blood in the

Maiden City"; "The Provos prepare for Battle" and "The Pope and the Provos". The book is jammed full of quotes from everybody. Here's one nice example. According to the *Protestant Telegraph* in 1968, the Sinn Féin oath ran as follows: "These Protestant robbers and brutes, these unbelievers of our faith will be driven like the swine they are into the sea by force, the knife or by poison cup until we of the Catholic faith and avowed supporters of all Sinn Féin's actions and principles, clear these heretics from our land . . . until the Pope is complete ruler of the whole world." Perish the thought!

I gained the impression from this book that Mr. Kelley sees the Protestant workers as suffering an identity crisis, feeling neither Irish or truly British; the Orange organisations as neo-fascist; and the Provos as a brave bunch of lads who make a lot of mistakes but always learn by them and, if they happen to kneecap the wrong man, always admit it and apologise to him and the family.

In all, I find Mr. Kelley's analysis rather simplistic but the book is saved by an impressive amount of well-used research. I don't really object to the bias in favour of the Provos, as it is quite open. It does, after all, make a change from so-called "objective" histories.

NICK PLUMMER

....BYGONES

FALLS MEMORIES. Gerry Adams. Brandon.

This is a short history of the area "wedged between the Grosvenor, the Falls and the Durham Street", where Gerry Adams grew up. It begins about 500 B.C. and brings us up to 1964. The first few chapters tell the story of the area through the times of the O'Neills, the plantations, the penal days, the industrial revolution. The second half of the book is based on his own and older people's memories of more recent years.

It is very much a folk history, dealing with local traditions, institutions and stories. It is full of the type of anecdotes that makes a history alive and there is no shortage of quotations, street songs and ballads. A chapter on the unions quotes from the Chief City Medical Officer's report of 1909: "Premature births were found to be most prevalent among women who worked in the mills and factories. . . Many of the women appear to be utterly unable for such work owing to the want of sufficient nourishment and suitable clothing and through stress of circumstances being compelled to work to the date of confinement . . ." A story is told about the building of a fort in the Whitestock area by the British Army. The British blamed high winds for the fact that it kept falling down but the locals knew that it was the fairies, who once had their own fort there.

It is an area with many historic associations and the names of Henry Joy McCracken, Tone, Larkin and Connolly come up and stories of the Fenians, the I.R.B., and the I.R.A. are related. But attention is also given to the churches, the schools, housing, street games, local characters and more.

An old man remembers the Twenties: "We were beaten but not defeated . . . so they gave no quarter . . . oppressed by the Northern Government and deserted by Dublin. Nowadays the crowd in Dublin thinks Ireland stops at Dundalk."

"The Thirties opened with the Outdoor Relief riots and closed with internment, prison ships, mass unemployment and a World War." The story is repeated time and again from 1790 to the present; bad living conditions, working class unity, carefully fostered sectarianism, repression. The last chapters are about Gerry Adams' own childhood: bunking into the cinema, street gangs, mountain walks, wakes and working in a bar in the Shankill Road where "politics were seldom discussed."

The text is interspersed with drawings by Michael McKernon. It is well worth reading if only to bring to life an area about which a lot is heard and little known. It is written with a real affection for a place which is falling to the developer "the likes of which will never be seen again."

JOHN HAMILL



COMPLETELY DEGENERATE

DEGENERATED REVOLUTION. Workers Power & Irish Workers Group. £3.00.

Judging by the recent exchange between the Workers' Party and the CPI over the former's "accidental" support for Solidarity during the last election, it would seem that debates about the nature of the so-called Socialist states will have some currency in Ireland. On the left at least, if not perhaps with the populace at large. Some may, therefore, welcome the publication of a new book on the subject, especially as it is co-authored by our very own Irish Workers' Group.

The IWG is a small group of Trotskyists who "parted company" with the Socialist Workers' Movement back in 1975. They co-authored this book — more a big pamphlet, but meaty and well-produced — with their sister group in Britain, Workers' Power, relatively, an even smaller Trotskyist group. In fact, the book seems to have been totally written by the British comrades but as it makes no direct reference to either country, it hardly matters.

Old friends of the IWG may well be surprised to see them described as "Trotskyist". But that now appears to be the case. Having left the SWM as state cappers, they are now completely degenerate. To the, fortunately, uninitiated in Trotskyist terminology, this is not a term of abuse but a description of a certain political position in relation to Eastern Europe. To know more, read the book. It abounds in phrases like "degenerate from birth", "Bureaucratic deformities", and even worse horrors that would rival a SPUC slide show. It's left to the Renegade Hansen to briefly lighten the proceedings when he describes Cuba as neither a degenerate or a deformed workers state but, "indeed, it was a pretty good-looking one."

In essence, this book is another shot in an old age series of polemics conducted purely within the trotskyist movement, or more accurately, movements. The aim is, by minutely analysing every twist and turn of trotskyist politics on the vexed question of Stalinism to prove that your own brand is the true inherit of the master. To be honest, I've no idea whether or not the IWG have succeeded, the maze

of trotskyist politics is simply too complicated for an old bureaucratic collectivist like me to follow. (It's Kampuchea that always defeats me. I always have this terrible urge to say fuck the lot of them).

This book, then, is primarily for Fourth International freaks but, it must be admitted, that along the way it is packed with very well-researched and detailed info on the economic and political development of Russia, Eastern Europe, China etc. It's well presented with some lovely old pics and you couldn't help picking up something useful.

But what a pity, that all this effort has been put into such an esoteric project. Give me the *Collected Class Struggle* any day. Who wants denunciations of unknown, foreign Trots, when we can get it about our very own. Healy, Speed, Allen and Co?

JOHN CANE

KIDDIE POWER

FIRST RIGHTS. FLAC. £1.00.

It's not easy being young these days. Bad enough that there's no jobs available when you finish school, but now they are cutting back on school expenditures and the dole. Kids seem to be getting into more and more trouble with the law, with drugs everywhere you turn. Maybe it's just that there are a lot more children around — especially when you realise that in the eyes of the law, you are a child until you're 21.

Until you are 21 your parents have a major say in whether you can live with someone, get married, get a bank loan, a hire purchase agreement and so on. Worse still, the law can say that you are a criminal, even if you're only 7 years old.

All the more reason to have information available that answers all, or nearly all, of the questions about young people and the law. This booklet does just that. It is set out in various sections on the home, school, relationships, work etc. Most of it is presented in a simple question and answer style, purely matter of fact, with no discussion.

It is aimed primarily at young people themselves but also at those who work with them, like social workers, teachers etc. While the

latter will definitely find it useful (and reasonable value), I fear that teenagers may be reluctant to pay for what is a badly designed, unattractive production. Also, the structure is somewhat confusing, with all the source lists, and even the table of contents, at the back of the pamphlet. The cross references and headings also leave a lot to be desired.

Finally, the style of presenting information in a simple factual manner, with no comment or discussion, only serves to treat the reader as a passive individual who only takes action when she/he has a problem. The single page which raises questions about the fairness of the system offers no guidance or solutions. The end result is that the booklet offers no encouragement to young people to become active in self-help groups or political organisations, which should have been a natural follow-on from the earlier part of the booklet.

In summary: useful content, poor design. I wonder if the State would provide it to all teenagers for free?

TOM O'CONNOR

FIERY FORMS

KINDLING. Mary Dorcey.

The American poet Adrienne Rich has pointed out that "in a world where language and naming are power, silence is oppression, is violence". For Mary Dorcey woman is a "rebel word", and reading each of her poems is like taking part in a "Reclaim the Night" march through the dark and forbidden streets of sexual mythology. These poems blaze out against the "vicious bigotry" of misogyny which confronts women on the streets, in shops, on buses, in pubs — wherever, in fact, they go.

Dorcey, refusing to lower or close her eyes, is adept at reading the eyes of others. She sees fear in those of "the lads", a "civilian militia to enforce female servility", and "blunt resentment" in those of the male trade unionist trying to enforce "eyes in step" order among the laughing, loitering, colourful women on a May-Day march:

"Remembering no doubt
the dignity of his past
When men made politics
and women made tea"

Night Protest carries its torch for the women in Armagh gaol, exposing "the little things that cripple" in the appalling conditions of their imprisonment. *Rope* is a brave exploration of the thoughts of a woman driven over the precipice and into a mental hospital. In *Photographs* a woman rescues from the greedy eyes of boys the "broken bits of flesh" of women, aware that to the so-called "normal eye" they are "only pictures". Exploited and abused in pornography they are, after all, only women.

But if women are alienated from a "vision of power and pride that struts in uniform to 'military hymns'", we have our own vision to sustain us. The struggle for liberation from the colonisation of our minds and bodies is a celebration of strength as well as an expression of vulnerability, and breaking with convention can be the breaking of bonds. Apart from the nakedness enforced by predatory strangers, there is nakedness lovingly chosen. The power of speech and the healing of wounds are achieved in Dorcey's poems through solidarity with and closeness to a community of women — mothers, lovers, sisters.

In this sense all her poems are love poems. As a lesbian and feminist, she writes of "loves not spoken of in well-curtained drawing rooms", in rhythms which dramatise the hesitant but sure transitions of feeling, the turning points between trust and betrayal, sensual tenderness and shattering jealousy, attraction and rejection. She has a passionate control over her themes which makes for poetry which is often striking and memorable.

Kindling is a fine and warming contribution to a female tradition in which, to quote Adrienne Rich again, "survival takes naked and fiery forms."

SUSAN MCKAY



Letters

Dear Gralton,

Once more the sickening spectre of trendy provoism rears its ugly head. I'm referring of course to the "Ballots and Bullets" article by Joan Kelly in your December/January issue.

In your editorial statement you stress: "The Editorial Board of Gralton reflects who we believe to be our audience: individual socialists and activists in a wide variety of left-wing movements". Strange then that the above article should read like a recruitment leaflet condoning FASCIST thuggery and not a coherent analysis of the Assembly Election results.

Just what exactly this dangerous piece of nonsense was meant to convey is puzzling. Throughout the article there is the constant use of that cosy little word "Nationalist". "The fact that 35% of the *nationalists*" . . . "there were few alternatives for nationalists" . . . "leaders of the nationalist people". Yet at the end of the article we get this: "The fact (sic) can now be taken into the communities and workplaces to help people organise to struggle against all the horrors we experience under this rotten system of capitalism". Presumably the Protestant working class are excluded from all of this and only NATIONALIST communities and NATIONALIST workplaces should organise to struggle.

Listen. On June 6th 1972, the provos bombed Wellworths store in Dungannon which resulted in Protestant and Catholic trade unionists being thrown out of work. Until that time Wellworths were continually being embarrassed by a militant union committee composed of Catholic and Protestant members of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers. Wellworths were not slow to seize this chance to smash the union. On the 24th of that same month, Wellworths re-opened at a temporary premises in Dungannon.

None of the original militants which included Protestant and Catholic were re-employed. Instead the new staff appeared to have been recruited from a recommended Orange work list. The *real* advantage however in Wellworth's eyes was the fact that the new employees were not union militants. This is just one case of many.

At this point it would be appropriate to examine the Provisionals' so-called "economic war of resistance" throughout the seventies. This is hardly an irrelevant digression because facts are what's needed and not flowery phraseology of the kind Joan Kelly indulges in. Just what did the Provos achieve in economic terms?

Firstly, many one decrepit buildings (hotels etc.) were bombed allowing the owners to build new luxury ones on the Government compensation which the workers paid for by having their wages depressed. Secondly, the bombing forced the price of property in Belfast in particular to drop to rock bottom, thus allowing the long term speculators to buy up cheaply. So much for the economic war of resistance!

Again, throughout the article we find quite liberal use of the term "military struggle" and the "anti-imperialist movement." More of these convenient clichés that pseudo-Republicans are so fond of. The genuine left in Ireland are fully aware of the events which led up to the split in the Republican movement and the subsequent emergence of the Provisional Alliance in late 1969. As the leadership of the movement was rejecting an offer by the Fianna Fáil Government to engage in a militaristic campaign in the North, the Provisional leadership (including that great socialist Gerry Adams) eagerly took the money and the task. The task was to smash the movement created by the Civil Rights' Association which was putting pressure on both the Dublin and British Governments.

It is also interesting to note that the chairman of the Board of Governors of the "Irish National Caucus" (who no matter what Provo supporters may say have very close connections with "Noraid" their fund raising organisation in N. America) is the Hon. John M. (Jack to his friends) Keane, National President of the

Ancient Order of Hibernians in America. In 1975 the Hon. Keane set forth his perspective in a particularly frank manner in a public statement read before a Congressional "Pre-Hearings Forum" in New York. This unofficial forum, presided over by Congressman Lester Wolff of New York, had long been heralded by the National Caucus and by the New York *Irish People* (organ of the Provos in New York). The 'bould Jack set forth three reasons why the U.S. Government should support the Provisionals in Ireland.

- 1). To assure U.S. access to the great oil wealth recently discovered in Ireland's coastal waters;
- 2) To assure U.S. access to actual and potential Navy bases in Ireland, strategically situated with respect to the crucial North Atlantic sea lanes; and
- 3) To prevent "communism" from gaining influence in Ireland.

These are facts which perhaps Joan Kelly would care to refute. If not I suggest she ceases her foolish posturing and gets down to some serious political writing.

Yours etc.

F. O'Farrell
104 McKee Avenue,
Finglas,
Dublin 11.

Dear Gralton,

Congratulations on your continuing range of interesting material. Some points, however, which might be amplified in future features on the lines of "How to find things out" in No. 6.

I think you do ICTU a disservice in not referring to Trade Union Information. The National Social Service Council's Relate is also a useful guide to the social security network.

More particularly since you refer to Equality Officer Recommendations, the Employment Equality Agency's Annual Report (freely available on request) provides a breakdown on all cases by subject and a commentary on significant rulings. It also lists publications and services provided by the Agency. We intend, for instance, to publish a comprehensive "Digest of Statistics of Women in the Labour Force" prepared for the Agency by John Blackwell.

Yours etc.

Paul Cullen
Chief Officer
Employment Equality Agency
36 Upper Mount Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Gralton,

Is Tony Gregory so embarrassed by his own (for so long) inexplicable silence on the proposed Constitutional Amendment, that he feels obliged to deny the major role played by Jim Kemmy in the Anti-Amendment Campaign? In *Gralton* 6, Gregory is rather loathe, to say the least, in giving Kemmy credit for taking the strong and courageous stand he has on the issue.

Even during the General Elections, while Gregory was running for cover on the question, Jim Kemmy was making it clear what his position was in regards to the Amendment — not only in the election literature of the Democratic Socialist Party and in the DSP party political broadcast, but by also marching in the Anti-Amendment rally four days before polling day (incidentally, he was the only TD on that march).

In comparison, Tony Gregory, who somehow managed to have a policy on the Israeli invasion of the Lebanon, was noticeably unprepared for a long time, to take a stand on the Divorce and Amendment questions here in Ireland.

It would appear from the same interview in *Gralton*, that Gregory doesn't believe that the insidious campaign waged against Kemmy by the combined forces of reaction in Limerick (and I include the Labour Party), was responsible for unseating him. If Gregory really believes that, (and it's difficult to ascertain what exactly he is saying as so many qualifications surround his remarks), then he must be the only one in Ireland who does!

Yours etc,

Bill McCamley,
10 Glasanoan Park,
Finglas East,
Dublin 11.

GRALTON.

c/o 25 Mountain View Court,
Harold's Cross,
Dublin 6

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