



Expose the British Assassins

The assassination attempt on Bernadette and Michael McAliskey has finally brought home the extent of the attacks on the anti-imperialist and minority population in the Six Counties and in particular the H Block/Armagh Committee. There can be no doubt there is plan to eliminate leading militants in the H Block/Armagh Campaign. Their shooting is the latest and most significant incident in the catalogue of horrors perpetrated by the British and their Loyalist allies.

There is strong evidence which points to British collusion in the shooting of Bernadette and Michael McAliskey. British troops of the parachute regiment staked out the house for three days. The regiment at present stationed in the area is the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders. The parachutists are from 50 miles away in Omagh. The Brits allowed the assassins to do their dirty work and only then arrested them. The assassins are UDA members. The RUC is calling them Red Hand Commandos in order to protect the UDA. The RUC and Brits provide intelligence for this Loyalist gang, and obviously know where they are to strike next. They left Bernadette defenceless by refusing to allow her to have a revolver. An enquiry would expose elements of British treachery and murderous intent.

The H Block/Armagh campaign has had to contend with vicious attempts to harass, intimidate and murder supporters of the political prisoners. The mass mobilisations all over Ireland shocked the British because they assumed that they had beaten the resistance out of us.

The only force strong enough to send the British government packing once and for all is the mass mobilisation of the Irish



people. Because Bernadette understood this simple truth and was convincing many more, she has been the victim of the assassin's

bullet.

John Hume and Gerry Fitt have been quick to denounce the assassins.

This is worthless since they denounce nearly everything that comes their way. Their role vis a vis the H Block/Armagh campaign was disgraceful and if anything, helped legitimise attacks on the committee. Hume said it was a "campaign run by paramilitaries", thus giving the impression that those on the committee should expect to get shot. They both attacked Bernadette. Every effort should be made to build the Dump Fitt campaign.

What of the Irish Government? Charles Haughey can sip tea with Margaret Thatcher but he appears unable to openly demand that the British call off their terror campaign. He did not openly support the demands of the H Block/Armagh prisoners despite the fact that the majority of the Irish people wished him to do so. What is he afraid of? Charles Haughey and Fianna Fail must bear a measure of responsibility for the terror unleashed against the Nationalist population and its leaders. Unless the Irish government, openly and without equivocation, calls on the British government to disarm and disband the RUC, the UDR and their allies in the other unofficial loyalist militias, they will stand condemned as cowards and cynics. Ultimately this is the only course which will save the lives they claim they wish to preserve.

Bernadette has shown the immediate way forward; continue to press the H Block/Armagh campaign to a successful conclusion; rely only on our own strength and force those who claim to speak in our name to do as we want. Whether they be in Fianna Fail, the SDLP or in the leadership of the Trade Union movement, they must be forced to act in our real interests.

We must ensure the long suffering prisoners are not forced into any corners. The ball is in our court, the responsibility is in our hands. All militants should remobilise in defence of the five demands, Bernadette's words must not be in vain.

Haughey and Hume aid British Imperialists

COLLABORATORS WILL ANSWER

The British Government and the news media in Ireland have tried to portray the ending of the H Block and Armagh hunger strikes as a defeat for the prisoners and their supporters. Despite the fact that major concessions on all five demands were promised, an attempt is being made to confuse the public and withhold the reforms. This is only to be expected. The British Government has to save face and try to regain the initiative against the anti-imperialist movement.

The fact that Britain feels compelled to act in this way undermines the overall success of the H Block-Armagh campaign. The largest and most sustained all-Ireland mobilisation of anti-imperialist sentiment, in the last decade was put on the streets. The struggle in the prisons smashed through the pretence of "criminalisation" and put before Irish and world opinion the reality of Britain's oppressive policies in the North.

The campaign has proved that widespread anti-imperialist support exists, that united action is possible and effective, and that a new and higher level of political awareness is emerging amongst the Irish people.

Britain's new campaign of deceit and vindictiveness against the prisoners is aimed at rolling back these gains. The major cause for concern amongst socialists and republicans is that this counter-offensive is having some success. The prisoners have not yet received the promised concessions, and within the anti-imperialist movement there is a degree of paralysis - even acceptance of Britain's propaganda that the whole campaign was a defeat.

The success of Britain's counter-offensive is not entirely fortuitous. It must be admitted that the H Block - Armagh campaign had a number of weaknesses which permitted Britain

room to manoeuvre. Fianna Fail and the SDLP worked behind the scenes to enable Britain to make concessions in such a way that they could easily be retracted. The H Block-Armagh campaign did not mount a sustained initiative to expose this duplicity.

But at the end of the day Haughey, Hume and O'Flaich et al were only able to cause confusion, not a defeat. A renewal of the H Block/Armagh campaign for the implementation of the concessions will call their bluff. Fianna Fail and the SDLP must answer for their role in perpetrating the sufferings of the political prisoners. Were they liars or simply dupes of the British Government? - that is the question. A hard hitting campaign by the National H Block/Armagh Committee will force them to answer in the coming weeks.

BRENDAN KELLY

H-Block/Armagh: Back to the Street

We are Not Intimidated

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Harrington brands Kemmy pro-Loyalist

ALD. JIM Kemmy was this week criticised for his "pro-British and pro-Loyalist politics" over his views on the H-Block issue.

prolong the war in the North by their support. Ald. Kemmy claimed that the H-Block campaign was part of the Provisional IRA's war effort in the North.

H-Block before the men begin to die," hit back at Ald. Kemmy. Joe Harrington, secretary of the Limerick Branch of People's Democracy (PD), one of the organisations supporting the national H-Block campaign, this week declared that Jim Kemmy's acceptance of Britain's insistence of dictating

Irishman was pathetic. He said Ald. Kemmy's claim that signing the petition to the British government would prolong the war was playing England's game. The violence issuing from the nationalist minority was the symptom - not the disease. The root cause of the strife in the Six Counties was Britain's insistence of dictating

Ireland's destiny. "People, like Jim Kemmy, who go along with Britain's attempt to hoodwink world opinion about the real cause of the violence are giving encouragement to Loyalist assassins - the single greatest cause of civilian deaths in the conflict," Mr. Harrington went on.

He claimed that Ald. Kemmy's politics on this issue had little support. "I believe," Mr. Harrington declared, "that hiding behind the facade of 'democracy for the Loyalist majority' will not obscure the brutal consequences his politics hold for the Nationalist minority and for the Irish nation."

In Limerick the debate goes public as PD exposes the socialist pretensions of the two-nationalists in the local press.

fact that he never made the National Question an issue in his election campaigns was borne out by the 80% positive response to the H-Block/Armagh petition in Garryowen - his own area. Obviously he receives support for reasons other than his "Cruise O'Brien" politics. These would be (a) his work on behalf of individual tenants over the years since his days in the Labour Party; (b) his radical image boosted by his connection with the setting up of the Limerick Family Planning Clinic and his (mostly) past tirades against churchmen and (c) his prominence in the local trade union movement. There is no evidence that he receives significant support on the basis of his anti-republicanism and there is every indication that it poses the single biggest obstacle to his new year's wish - "A seat in the Dail" (Limerick Chronicle Dec 30 '80).

CONTEMPT SHOWN TO ANTI-REPUBLICANS

One of the by-products of the most recent upsurge in the national struggle are what have become known as Pro-Imperialist "Socialists". They are best defined by the title taken by one variety of the crop - "Socialists against Nationalism". For them Connolly's oft quoted line - "The Irish working class remain the only incorruptible inheritors of the fight for Irish freedom" - holds no meaning. They refuse to accept that the struggle against British Imperialism is a class struggle - Irish working people against British capitalism and its gommeen allies. In fact they even go further and claim that the National Struggle is an obstacle to the "bread and butter", "cloth cap", uncomplicated "real class struggle". Support for Britain's efforts to criminalise the Irish struggle was an obvious and easy next step.

The outpourings of Gerry Fitt were a great boost to the anti-republican rantings of these groups and individuals. Yet, despite this, and having a sympathetic mass media at their

disposal, the H-Block/Armagh struggle has weakened the already marginal influence of Pro-Imperialist "socialists" in the workers' movement. At Trades Councils and Union Branches up and down the country, members of Sinn Fein - Workers Party (SFWP), BICO and assorted independents of a similar disposition, have experienced defeat after defeat when opposing resolutions of support for the prisoners. Their victories in this area were very few and far between.

Perhaps the contempt with which workers in general view the pro-imperialist politics of these people was shown clearest in the events in Alcan on the Shannon, West of Limerick. There, over 400 workers struck for half a day on Dec 10 in support of the prisoners. One of the chief shop stewards on the Island refused to participate and made it clear that he wouldn't "lose a minute's pay for the f...ers and they could die" as far as he was concerned. A couple of days later the workers dismissed him as

their representative!

Being in the business of ignoring reality, Pro-Imperialist "Socialists" find it easy to claim wide support for their stance on the National Question. Any survey showing disapproval of the military campaign is taken as support for their view. Transitory "peace movements" are further confirmation of widespread acceptance of their politics. And when all else fails, parties like SFWP will point to their elected representatives as proof that their politics hold sway on the left. However, this claim does not stand up under the slightest scrutiny.

In this regard a case in point is Jim Kemmy, independent socialist, who was elected to the Limerick City Council about 9 years ago. Since then he has refused to seriously debate his pro-imperialist views on the National Struggle on the grounds that he has nothing to prove. He claims the vote he received shows support for his politics on this issue. However, the

As with Kemmy, there is little evidence that any other Pro-Imperialist "Socialists" owe whatever influence they have in the workers' movement to their anti-republican rantings. Likewise, in the future Pro-Imperialist "Socialists" will have little part to play in the formation of a socialist opposition in the Labour Movement. In the fight for the leadership of the movement such a socialist opposition tendency would have to develop a strategy which could be seen to offer a way forward for workers. It would have to enter into political combat with the present reformist leadership and argue for a more realistic strategy to protect workers' interests - one which would take into account the effects of British Imperialism in Ireland. Those who believe Britain plays a progressive role in Ireland will find it impossible to give a coherent answer to the questions raised by the developing class struggle.

JOE HARRINGTON

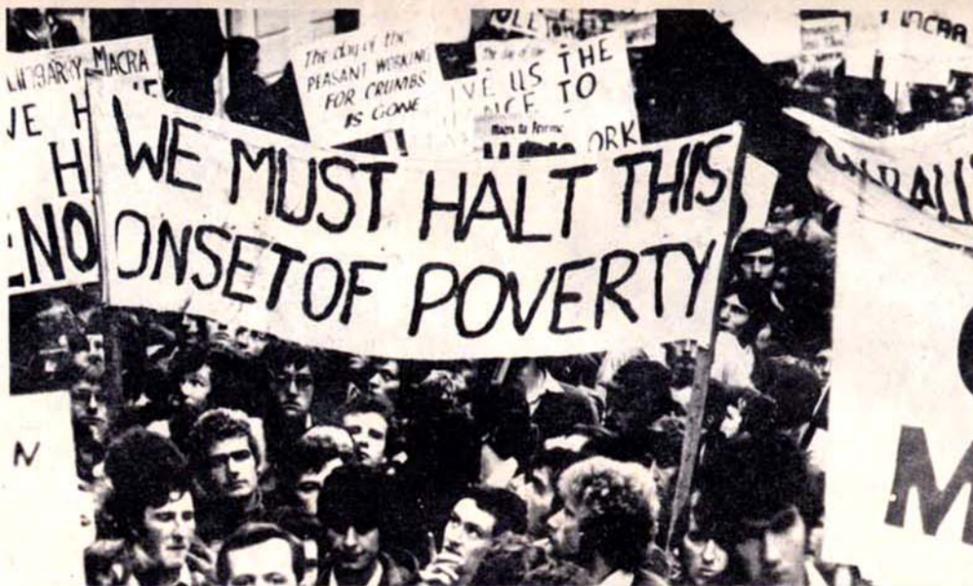
Agricultural Crises: Worker/Small Farmer Alliance?

An important feature of the 1974-15 recession was an agricultural crisis in '74 followed by a major boom in '75. The upturn helped cushion the effects of the recession and provided stimulus for a general economic recovery. During the 1979-180 recession, the decline in agriculture has been much more prolonged and its effects on the rest of the economy more severe.

With a decline of 45% in agricultural income over the past two years consumer spending has been severely hit with predictable consequences for employment. Unemployment will also follow from the decline in agricultural investment. Dairy farming - a high investment sector - is particularly badly hit, registering the lowest (and possibly negative) growth rates in a decade. Not surprisingly, the demand for machinery, building materials, cereals, fertilisers, antibiotics has gone down. As a result the farm building industry has experienced widespread layoffs; the agricultural machinery industry has been blitzed with long-established firms, Pearce of Wexford and Saville's of Santry, folding altogether; over half the grain and agricultural merchant firms in the country are in severe trouble. In addition, the agricultural processing industry (which employs a quarter of the industrial labour force) is being squeezed.

At the level of Ireland's relations to the international capitalist economy, even more serious problems are looming. Paradoxically, at a time when agricultural production is collapsing, exports are booming.

The extra sales are not coming from reproduction but from de-stocking - farmers are selling off the stock they should have kept for next year's production. Cow slaughtering is up by nearly a quarter; the beef cow herd is down by a third and calf heifers are down by 15%. It will take at least two years to get back up to the 1979 level of production and for next year, a major collapse in agricultural exports is inevitable. Ire-



land will find itself seriously indebted to other countries as a result. This will mean more foreign borrowing and/or further cuts in state expenditure. Either way it will be mainly the PAYE sector that will foot the bill.

The agricultural crisis clearly affects the interests of workers directly. Yet the trade union movement has no policy on the crisis. The stage has been left free for the big farming organisations whose proposals amount to solving the crisis at the expense of workers and small farmers - lower taxes, rates and wages combined with higher prices, subsidies and farm rationalisation. Such a package is contrary to workers' interests because they would be the ones to pay for it.

It is important for the trade union movement to advance its own programme to solve the agricultural crisis. The key to this is to break agriculture reliance on meat and dairy production. This form of farming has resulted in:

a) Widespread under-utilisation of land. Because cattle rearing is not possible on small holdings, about one third of Irish farms have experienced no growth over a prolonged

period of time.

b) Super exploitation of small farmers. Small farmers are restricted to the relatively unrewarding area of producing young cattle which are later fattened and sold by the big farmers. Working hand in glove with the big farmers, the government has systematically encouraged the over-production of young cattle to keep their prices down and thereby maximise the advantage to the big farmers.

c) Vast subsidies to agricultural incomes. About one third of income arising in agriculture comes from government subsidies. This is the price the Irish tax payer (ie the Irish worker) has to pay to maintain a backward agricultural system which benefits only the big farmers.

d) Restriction of the food processing industry. About a quarter of the manufacturing labour force is engaged in food processing. But the structure of agriculture severely limits the development of this sector of manufacture. Regular cycles of crisis (every 8-9 years - caused mainly by the government's and big farmers' encouragement of over-production of young cattle) precipitates regular shortages of inputs. This has deprived the food processing industry of the long-

term stability it needs for rapid and steady development. In addition, EEC regulations restrict the canning and processing of meat products.

e) Enslavement of the small farmers to the banks. The impoverished small farms can carry on production only by indebting themselves to financial institutions. Their interest repayments are normally much higher than those of industry because they can usually only afford short term loans.

The alternative to this system of agriculture must be based on a diversification of agricultural production and expansion of the domestic market. At the moment, 90% of agricultural land is under grass and 75% of agricultural output is exported directly. Greater emphasis must be placed on the development of tillage. Since Ireland is already a net importer of tillage products, a market already exists for this kind of farming. This market can be developed further by redirecting agricultural subsidies away from big farmers and nationalising the banks in order to:

- 1) develop co-operative small farming
- 2) turn the large farms into state-run farms under the control of the workers and their unions
- 3) develop the food processing industry
- 4) subsidise the price of food to workers.

To wage a realistic fight for such a programme - which is an indispensable element for the socialist reconstruction of the Irish economy - a class alliance between workers and small farmers is indispensable. The trade union movement must challenge the right of the big farming organisations (IFA and ICM/SA) to speak for all farmers. The unions must encourage the small farms to organise for themselves and must give every assistance to them. The interests of Irish workers depend on it.

BRENDAN KELLY

POLISH WORKERS CHALLENGE BUREAUCRACY

Free Trade Unions Grow From Strength To Strength



Workers in Gdansk discussing strike news.



Polish trade union leader Lech Walesa speaking to workers in Gdansk.



Meeting of striking workers in Lublin.

The Soviet Union has begun to brandish its war machinery in an effort to divide the opposition movement in Poland and to press the Polish bureaucracy towards further repression but it has not succeeded in intimidating Polish workers.

The independent trade union movement, Solidarity, has continued to extend its roots among workers and now has a membership of over eight million out of a population of thirty five million. It has answered every attack made by the bureaucracy in order to maintain its stranglehold on Polish society.

But the leaders of Solidarity are giving themselves time to develop organizational strength and have called on workers to avoid strikes for the time being. They are determined to maintain the unity of the movement and to give the bureaucracy no pretext for attacking.

But the workers are far from having lost confidence in face of the threatened crackdown. On December 17 more than 500,000 gathered in Gdansk for a ceremony at the new monument commemorating the workers gunned down during the 1970 upsurge.

Farmers are also beginning to organize and an organization which claims to represent 500,000 farmers is discussing means of forcing the government to register them as an independent union. Poland is a highly agricultural country and its 3.5 million private farmers account for three quarters of its agricul-

tural production.

If the Soviet Union invades Poland it will be a serious setback to the interests of world revolution. Its chief effect will be to give the US government an opportunity to present itself as the 'defender of peace and democracy' and the excuse to increase its military expenditure.

Over the last year and a half, there has been a clear popular opposition to war moves by the US government from inside the US, euphemistically described by commentators as 'the Vietnam syndrome'. Intervention by the Soviet Union will allow Washington to say that war is inevitable and the picture of Soviet tanks rolling in to crush the Polish working class in the name of "protecting socialism" will disillusion workers around the world.

The reason given by the Kremlin and its allies to workers in the other 'communist' countries is that "counterrevolutionaries" are at work in Poland. However, as the bureaucratic castes well know, the workers are not demanding a return to capitalism in Poland. They want democratic rights and a voice in government decisions. The things they are fighting for is what socialism is all about.

If the Soviet Union decides to invade Poland, it will pay a high cost in international working class opinion and it will pay a high military cost as the Polish people are certain to put up a strong resistance. The anti-Stalinist unions have

taken deep root and the Polish are much more numerous and better prepared than the peoples of Hungary in 1956 or Czechoslovakia in 1968.

But despite the risks, the Kremlin is making moves to crush the resistance of Polish workers. It recognizes the risks posed to its privileged position by the democratic aspirations of the Polish people and the danger of them spreading to other worker states are greater than the damage to international public opinion and the military costs of an invasion.

This is why the bureaucracies in the workers' states cannot be characterized in the term, "red bourgeoisie". Unlike the real bourgeoisies in the capitalist countries, the power of the bureaucracies does not rest on real ownership and control of production. They cannot automatically hand on their power to their offspring and in a planned and nationalized economy, they play no necessary economic role. They are parasites. They disrupt the economy by their search for privileges, by corruption, by sheer incompetence and mismanagement, and, above all, by silencing the voice of the producing classes.

Because the bureaucracy plays a parasitic role, it is not necessary for the workers to change the economic structures in order to achieve power. The bureaucracy plays a political role in guarding its own existence and it has to do this by totalitarian methods because

freedom of discussion in a workers' state immediately raises the demand for a voice in decision making and questions the necessity of having a privileged, non-productive layer.

This is what has happened and is developing in Poland. The example of the Polish workers can easily spread to the rest of Eastern Europe and to the Soviet Union (especially in the Baltic States and the Ukraine). That is why Polish publications have been banned there and news of the Polish struggle has been very distorted.

The role of the Catholic Church has been often cited as an example of workers' conservatism but the Church has twice warned workers to step back from their struggles and has been ignored each time. In an atmosphere of repression, the Church was able to appear as a pro-democracy opposition force: but with the loosening up of politics after the mass strikes in 1980 it has had to step in and show its real face. Solidarity, and not the Catholic Church, has increasingly become the pole of attraction after all the anger and frustration which has built up after decades of totalitarian rule.

The struggle of the workers in Poland is a message to the workers of the world that collective ownership of the means of production is not inseparably bound up with totalitarian dictatorship. It has begun to show what workers' democracy would look like in action.

SARAH O'HARA

LETTER SAYS SLP FAILED H-BLOCK TEST

Dear Editor,
The struggle for political status has certainly been a watershed for some political groups on the left and for the Socialist Labour Party, perhaps more than others. When the SLP was formed 2 years ago and drew in various strata on the left, it was probably inevitable that widely differing views on many issues would manifest themselves within the party.

This became especially evident when the national question was on the agenda. Perspectives advanced by membership varied from a leaning towards the two-nations policy as put forward by pro imperialist groups like the British and Irish Communist Organisation to complete support for national re-unification. Indeed one of the planks of the policy that was eventually adopted on the northern crisis was support for the reintroduction of political status, removed by the British in 1976.

However party activity on the question was carried out by the "Tendencies", as the former Labour Party members, "liaison" of the left were conspicuous only by their absence. An indication of their real feelings was given by a liaison member's remark that he wouldn't be seen dead at a H Block demo. The

founding conference of the Nat./H Block/Armagh cttee. was attended by some SLP members of the Socialist Workers Tendency (by then the sole remaining tendency in the party) and their willingness to become involved strengthened party credibility within the campaign. After the Feb. 1980 conference however, the SWT and SLP parted company and resistance to the "liaison" line on the North was greatly weakened. Although policy was not amended, activity in the H Block campaign declined to almost zero with the exception of individuals like Matt Merrigan and even then it was as a trade union leader that he spoke from H Block platforms. Another disturbing aspect has been Noel Browne's pro-imperialist position on H-Block. This is especially serious given the high standing in which he is held by most sections of the left.

It is only in the last few months with the advent of the hunger strike and the resulting upsurge in mass action that the degeneration of the SLP has been revealed, the party now little more than a "liaison" rump and obviously intends to concentrate on safe electoral type politics. In the face of the biggest mass mobilisation since 'Bloody Sunday' and when prospects for a revitalised mass

movement were increasing, the SLP perspective was not to move from their present position of limited participation*. (doing nothing at all) It urged compromise with the Brits thereby placing themselves in the respectable company of Cardinal O'Fiach and C. J. Haughey. It pushed the absurd idea that the socialist movement cannot gain from supporting prisoners, but unlike the SLP the vast majority of socialists are not abandoning the prisoners and are placing themselves in the front line of the defence campaign. They are not withdrawing from the cttees. on the cop out of 'provo domination' but are fighting within the campaign for a socialist perspective. (the Wexford branch of the SLP withdrew from the local H Block/Armagh Action Group "until such time as it ceased to be dominated by the provos"!!!) Socialists are active participants, not passive spectators in the struggle and have not by default adopted a SFWP type position on an important aspect of the national liberation struggle.

D. Lynn,
Limerick reader.

We heartily agree with D. Lynn's letter and hope sincere members of the SLP will see the correctness of its analysis. The SLP will stand or fall on the basis of its under-

standing of the National Question. It is a lesson they seem unable to learn - Editor, Socialist Republic.

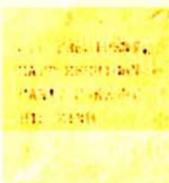
* Note: They SLP sent an instruction to its members to have only a "limited participation" in the H-Block/Armagh campaign.

SLP Party Pieces

From March 1979 Socialist Republic.



SLP CHAIRMAN
DON, DAVID
NEILGAN -
AGAINST ANY
ALLIANCE WITH
REPUBLICANS



Things don't change much in the SLP.

'Sinn Féin' 1971 - Hypocrisy Exposed

RELEASE IRISH PRISONERS FROM ENGLISH JAILS



Tomas Mac Giolla delivers the party line watched by Mairin de Burca, who needs no introduction.

SFWP and Fine Gael Unite Against the Prisoners

One of the most telling points that has been made by Bernadette Devlin/McAliskey about the Armagh - H Block political status dispute is that it has split Irish society down the middle, because it forces us all to examine just how seriously we want Irish unity and British withdrawal.

Even Fine Gael county councillors have voted for motions supporting the prisoners. As Frances O'Rourke has revealed in the Sunday Press an attempt by the party leader, the inept Garret Fitzgerald, to get his party to draw up a "black list" of Fianna Failers who supported pro-political prisoner motions

has fallen flat on its face. News became widespread about this when a Sligo FG Councillor revealed the details! Fine Gael is a product of the split in Ireland between those who accepted partition and the treaty in 1921, and the republicans who wished to complete the national revolution. It crushed the anti-treaty forces with the help of the British guns during the civil war. Although it still claims to favour Irish Unity it is really an agent of the British ruling class. However, as we can see from its disarray on the Armagh/H Block issue, it is not immune from the pressure of a rising anti-unionist movement.

RECENT REPUBLICAN SPLIT

A more recent product of the split in the anti-imperialist movement goes by the name of Sinn Féin - the Workers Party (SF-WP). It was born from the 1970 split of the Republican movement into Provisional and Official (subsequently SF-WP) wings. Unlike in the 1920's one of the split groups thought it was politically on the left. Whereas Fine Gael became immersed in the explicitly Fascist Blue-shirts (modelled after Hitler and Mussolini) in the 1930's, the SF-WP proclaimed itself socialist, and competed with the Communist Party of Ireland (CPI) in its international support of USSR bureaucracy.

FG/SF-WP SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

But today, when it comes to Armagh and H Block, the position of the party leadership of FG and SF-WP are pro-unionist, FG's internal difficulties on this are relatively well known. But what about SF-WP?

Well, they are in just as much trouble. One example comes from Fermanagh and Tyrone where elected representatives withdrew from the county councils in the support of the hunger strikers. They were members of the SDLP, the Irish Independent Party (IIP) and Frances Donnelly of SF-WP! Another comes from Killarney where several SF-WP members were active in setting up the local Armagh/H Block committee.

EXTREME PARANOIA

Seasoned SF-WP watchers are familiar with its' leaders extreme paranoia. The little Stalins of 30 Gardiner Place regularly refer to the split with the real Sinn Féin in 1970, or with the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) in 1974, in bizarre apolitical terms, they say things such as "we have removed the cancer" or refer to vipers and so on. This is hardly the language of an organisation confident in its own politics, or with much time for free and democratic debate.

Frances Donnelly and the Killarney members, and presumably others inside this trusted organisation need to understand this quickly. They should not assume it is just the hundreds and thousands of Irish supporters of the political prisoners who are the targets of the following lines taken from an editorial in the January 1981 SF-WP monthly Workers Life. "... The H Block hunger strike has been designed to close the era with a renewed crescendo of gunfire, killing and indiscriminate bombings... Discount those people who saw it as a humanitarian issue... those who orchestrated and positively supported the campaign were clearly aware that this was their road to a final solution. The final solution with its Hitlerian overtones was directed at the Protestant population of Northern Ireland,..."

"There is a cancer in our society which feeds on a diet of warped religion, an adoration of death, a voyeuristic pleasure in violence and an intellectual justification of slaughter" etc. etc. Only one more point need be made. Many of the people who in the 1920's set up the party now known as Fine Gael would have recoiled in horror from their action had they accurately foreseen their future.

SF-WP today has gone through at least as bad a decay in a shorter space of time. If it remains intact it can only go further downhill.

JOHN MEEHAN

'Everything changes - yet everything remains the same'. This sums up the results of attempts by the Northern Ireland Police Authority to gain some credibility recently. After almost universal condemnation and the resignation of several of its members because of its attitude to the torture in Castlereagh the Authority decided to investigate police brutality.

As a result, on the 22nd of December the first ever public enquiry into police brutality opened. The Gibson tribunal was asked to investigate the torture of Jim Rafferty, a 28 year old trade unionist from Cappagh, Co. Tyrone.

The mechanism for dealing with complaints against the RUC might be described as the 'wait-a-bit' mechanism. The minority has had to wait 12 years for a public enquiry. Jim Rafferty first complained in 1976. He had to wait while his complaint was investigated - by the RUC!

Then he had to wait while the Department of Public Prosecutions decided not to prosecute and wait again while the Police Authority deliberated and then again until the tribunal was convened. It only took four years! After all that, its a bit much to expect that anything would actually happen.

The medical evidence clearly established that Jim Rafferty had been tortured. The RUC replied by attempting to smear him as an IRA member and as responsible for every unsolved case in Fermanagh. When they were prevented from doing this, the 19 police witnesses walked out of the court and on their return refused to testify. The issue was referred to the High Court and by one of those coincidences so common in the North's courts the verdict was in favour of the police! The judge decided that the police authority had the power to organise public enquiries and to call the police to them but not the power to force them to testify!



RUC Torturers: Conspiracy of Silence Exposed

Mr Peter Gibson said in his summing up that it was difficult to believe that the RUC had ever had any intention of testifying. In fact, their behaviour is a carbon copy of the 'conspiracy of silence' that met attempts to investigate the RUC killing of Samuel Devenny in Derry in 1968. One final irony. The Police Authority has now received Gibson's report. Their 'off the record' view is that although the enquiry was public that doesn't mean that its conclusion was. The Gibson report is unlikely to see the light of day.

The RUC haven't changed and neither has the legal system that protects them. If their British masters were to succeed in their attempts to criminalise the prisoners then the RUC would be given complete mastery of the campaign of harassment and intimidation in the anti-unionist areas. This is the force Haughey is collaborating with when he makes deals with Thatcher - these are the gangsters that he is bringing to Dublin when he attempts to enforce the Common Law Jurisdiction Act.

JOHN NORTH

Dump Fitt Campaign

The 'Dump Fitt' campaign and petition launched by PD after his attack on the hunger strikers has generated a great deal of controversy. It has been labelled a diversion by Sinn Féin and has at the same time started a frantic censorship by the 'Irish News' - bastion of the Catholic business class in the North. This censorship, and the need to convince anti-imperialist militants to involve themselves in the campaign has generated some difficulty for us. However, even working at a low level, we have obtained 3,000 signatures in the West Belfast area and we hope to boost it to over 13,000.

Events since then have proved the importance of this work. The lack of response to Fitt's attack enabled Hume and the SDLP to hold firm and devote their time to pressuring the prisoners to end their protest, and to continue negotiations with the British. Haughey and Fianna Fail were actually able to meet Thatcher in the middle of the hunger strike and negotiate a new sell-out to imperialism. If we can successfully repudiate Fitt and turn him out of office it will be a shattering blow against imperialism and its native collaborators.

We need help to deliver this blow. Those in the West Belfast area can help by contacting us and arranging to canvass door-to-door. Militants in other areas can help by sending messages to Fitt either at his Antrim Road address or to the House of Commons calling on him to resign. Any public representatives who have expressed support for the prisoners should be asked to support the call. Copies should be sent to us at the Connolly Bookshop, Avoca Park, Andersonstown, Belfast. See also page 7.

HUNGER STRIKE LESSONS

Mass Action Method Proven Essential

Perhaps no struggle of the past ten years has produced more contradictory verdicts or general confusion than the ending of the hunger strike. Was it a defeat? A total victory? Stalemate? There is a limited test that we can apply. We can compare what the British are offering now with their position before the hunger strike was announced and with the five demands of the prisoners. If we apply this test, we can see that the British have made concessions but that the concessions do not amount to a full granting of the five demands or to full political status.

People's Democracy sees the British concessions as a limited victory because changes in the prison regime that they were willing to concede in the face of mass protests were not available in the previous four years of the campaign. We can only conclude that these concessions are a result of the mass pressure of the campaign. This is all the more remarkable when we consider the mass demonstrations of thirty and fifty thousand that were built in a short period of time. Also that concessions by Britain to the anti-imperialist movement have been few and far between in the period since 1973, when the last mass campaign was waged by the Political Hostages Release Committee.

However the victory is limited. Concessions made on prison clothing and association appear to fall short of the demands and it is not yet clear if they are enough to enable the prisoners to end the blanket and dirty protests. Also the British are able to deny that political status has been granted and are able to continue their attempts to convert the political problem of the North into a police operation to be solved by the RUC and UDR.

The struggle continues. The defence of the prisoners and of political status remains our task. We must regroup and consolidate on the gains we have made. We must examine the struggle and learn its lessons and by democratic debate develop a clear strategy for further united action that will lead to final victory.

What are the lessons of the hunger strike campaign? First, we should look at the positive achievements of the campaign and of the work done by the Smash H-Block/Armagh Committee before the hunger strike began. The building of the National Committee ended the isolation of the campaign. It was isolated in the North and in the republican vanguard around the RAC's. The National Committee built the campaign in the 32 counties, won sympathy from the mass of the Irish people and mobilised support in the Trade Unions, Student and Youth movements, Women's movement, cultural and sporting groups and built a high level of international solidarity with the struggle.

It has built a broad-based unity that extends well beyond the mainly republican milieu that supported the RAC's and has begun the sort of delegate structure that would enable a genuine political debate to build a strategy for victory.

The campaign's strategy of organising local action around the focus of major demonstrations has built the most massive demonstrations since Bloody Sunday and introduced a whole new generation to the techniques and the power of united mass action.

But there are also lessons which show the weakness of the campaign. One lesson is the limits of the efforts of the prisoners themselves to win this struggle. Their heroic defiance is a necessary component of the campaign, but at the end of the day it is those outside the prison who have the power to win a vic-



tory. The hunger strike put an immense pressure on those active in the campaign. It helped cut away some of the old deadwood of political sectarianism and allowed the political groups to co-operate more freely and to integrate the structures of the Northern Relatives Action Committees into a national structure. It also brought to a fine focus the general public sympathy for the prisoners. What it could not do is shake the belief of the mass of the Irish people in their traditional leadership or provide a strategy for militants to achieve this.

At the founding conference of the national campaign, People's Democracy put forward what we believe is such a strategy. A central point was a continuing pressure on Fianna Fail and the SDLP to expose their inaction and betrayal of the prisoners. At the beginning of the hunger strike we proposed the slogan 'No talks with British torturers'. Many of our ideas were accepted as immediate tactics but they were never developed as a long term strategy. We were represented at every level in the campaign but found that the lack of formal delegate structures inhibited the political debate that would have clarified this.

The clearest example of this is the series of attacks that Gerry Fitt launched on the prisoners. Later Michael Alison, British Minister in charge of the North's prisons, cited this as the most important element in their resistance to political status. It gave courage to a thousand Gerry Fitts in Fianna Fail and the SDLP and enabled Haughey and Hume to provide a cover for British intransigence by a continuing facade of negotiation.

Yet the H-Block/Armagh campaign largely ignored Fitt's attacks and when PD launched a 'Dump Fitt' petition in Belfast it was supported

only by individual militants and was labelled a 'diversion' by Sinn Fein. Now the task of unseating Fitt has become more urgent than ever and we hope that the end of the hunger strike will enable the campaign to swing its weight behind the petition.

SOME WEAKNESSES

The same weaknesses apply to other areas of the campaign. The trade union day of action showed that a substantial minority of workers were willing to take industrial action even in the face of intimidation by management and domination by union leaders. Yet the work of building in this central area was left to the trade union subcommittees and the tasks of organising and lobbying workplaces was not taken up by the general campaign. The crucial tasks of organising a specifically working class element of the campaign and challenging the pro-imperialist union leadership.

In the other areas of struggle, students and youth, women, the cultural movement and organising international support the same pattern developed. New movements and new areas of struggle developed. Militants who became involved showed great activity and enthusiasm. But the central overall strategy for an all-out victory was not developed nor, as a result, were all these areas welded together into one campaign.

In the last days of the hunger strike one central question came to dominate the campaign - the question of force. It became evident to many anti-imperialists during the course of the campaign that no military solution to the question of political status existed. Military actions that were undertaken either did not affect the overall development of the campaign or, in some cases, actually damaged it. This in itself will generate considerable debate in the anti-imperialist movement. But it does not mean that

British imperialism can be swayed from its path by peaceful persuasion. How then can a movement like the H-Block/Armagh campaign develop such force.

MASS SELF DEFENCE

We in PD see the answer in building among the mass of the people in the six counties a willingness to engage in their own defence against imperialist attacks. Its not enough to bring militants onto the streets or to win mass sympathy. The sympathy and support must be hardened out. This is done by a vehement defence of what rights already exist - the right to demonstrate, to march to the doors of the British embassy and to demonstrate in the town and city centres of the North and by driving the lesson home when our rights are denied e.g. prominent individuals insisting on their arrest at police barricades.

To do this effectively we need to neutralise forces like the SDLP and Fianna Fail who attempt to confuse and demoralise the masses and we need to build an industrial army throughout the country that can hold the threat of massive industrial action over the heads of the British. In the North, we should aim for an increased harassment of British and RUC patrols in ghettos with the eventual aim of re-building the 'no-go' areas and forcing the British back.

In the last issue of Socialist Republic, which came out during the hunger strike, we listed such a strategy. These proposals were not idle suggestions. In our view, they were pre-conditions for a full victory, based on our understanding of the battle for political status as having an overwhelming importance for the whole future development of the Irish revolution.

The British picked this arena of struggle. They have invested four years of intense effort in it and resisted a great deal of pressure, both in Ireland and internationally. Their whole system of repression in the North is based upon defining anti-imperialist militants as criminals. To believe that they will give it up without facing the greater threat of a mass opposition from the Irish people is foolish.

We have defined the outcome of the hunger strike as a limited victory. The British concessions do exist but they fall short of the five demands and of political status. Our immediate task is to expand those gains so that the prisoners will be able to end the blanket and dirty protests and begin to organise within the prisons. If we do not succeed in doing this then limited victory will be transformed into defeat.

The immediate ending of protest action with the ending of the hunger strike was a grave error. In part, this was due to Sinn Fein's mistaken claims of a total victory and their ignoring of the structures of the national campaign. Sinn Fein held the press conference announcing the details of the hunger strike's end and did not even mention the H-Block/Armagh Committee.

More generally, however, the absence of protest action was a sign of a crisis in the campaign itself. It has organised the anti-imperialist vanguard, held massive demonstrations, and begun work in a whole series of new areas of work. This in itself was a great deal but it was not enough. The immediate advance of the struggle now depends on the adoption of a clear strategy which will challenge the betrayals of Hume and Haughey and build in the trade unions while at the same time developing within itself a fully democratic united front structure. That's our strategy for victory - Defence, Democracy and Workers' Action.

JOHN MACANULTY

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The Armagh women on protest for political status have made it clear that they are prepared to renew a hunger strike if the British government continues to renege on the commitments which were the basis for ending the hunger strike in December. They have also stated that they will continue on the no-wash protest until all the protesting prisoners have their basic requirements.

Activists who were mobilised before and during the hunger strike last year are being remobilised to ensure that the promised concessions are granted. A picket and delegation to Armagh prison is being organised by the ad hoc International Women's Day Co-ordinating Committee. Work is now under way to ensure that delegations of women from Europe and North America are a major part of the picket. Invitations are being sent to a number of internationally well-known women from various walks of life. It is also

hoped to precede the picket with a major meeting in Belfast and possibly a concert in Dublin on March 7.

International Women's Day (March 8th) must be a major event for the campaign. Over the past two years the Armagh prisoners have deservedly been the focus for this day in Ireland. International Women's Day is an occasion commemorated around the world by women struggling for their liberation.

In this country, the highest honour must be given to the Armagh prisoners who by their heroic struggle have placed themselves at the forefront of the anti-imperialist movement and by their actions brought the defeat of the system which oppresses all of us that much closer.

Armagh is the central issue for Irish women today and we call upon all feminists and anti-imperialist women to join in solidifying with them by coming to Armagh on March 8th. (Men are also welcome).



SPUC Attacks Right To Choose

The recent calls for the closure of the Dublin Well Woman Clinic and Irish Pregnancy Counselling Centre are part of a general campaign initiated by the Right to further restrict women's rights.

The Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child, based in Britain, has recently established an offshoot in Ireland. It called an anti-abortion demonstration after Christmas where these attacks were made. The people involved in SPUC care not so much about the rights of the unborn child, but with restricting the rights of women to control their own fertility. This was clearly shown in an interview with Loretto Browne (a spokesperson of SPUC) in the Irish Press when she said, among other things, that she didn't agree with "artificial" contraception. She doesn't support abortion even if the woman has been raped.

SPUC base their opposition to abortion on the right to life of the "unborn child". However, this "concern with life" is not consistent with other views held by members of the organisation. For example, a leading member of SPUC in Britain, the Marchioness of Salisbury, has extensive financial and property interests in Rhodesia and South Africa, where indiscriminate murders of black people are increasingly common. This is hardly consistent with their concept of an absolute right to life.

What about the life of the unwillingly pregnant woman? Surely this is more important than the potential life of the foetus. In a country where a single pregnant woman is faced with the threat of losing her job, low social welfare payments, no creche facilities and social ostracism, it is highly hypocritical of these people to talk about 'concern for human life' when they ignore the quality of life which Ireland offers to pregnant women and mothers.

An estimated 40,000 Irish women have travelled to England for abortions since the passing of the 1967 Abortion Act. In the eyes of the law here they are all criminals. The existence of the pregnancy counselling centres is the first step towards decriminalising abortion. Any attempt to close them down would be a major setback for all women in the 26 counties.

The situation for women in the North has a lot in common with women in the South. Although superficially they have more liberal laws, the 1967 act has never been fully extended throughout the 6 counties. For example women who have been raped, women with 13 children and women with medical conditions have been refused abortions.

As we have seen groups like SPUC are reactionary in other areas besides abortion. They create an atmosphere where attacks can be made on gains women have won over the past 10 years.

The reactionaries see abortion as the weakest link in the chain of aspects of women's control of their own fertility. If they are allowed to successfully restrict the already limited ability of Irish women to have safe abortions, they will quickly move into other areas of fertility control. The first of which will be contraception. This is why defence of the clinics is absolutely vital.
JACINTA DEIGNAN



WHY FEMINISTS SHOULD CONFRONT IMPERIALISM

During the last round of the H Block /Armagh campaign, the many women active in political life, in trade unions, and feminists were made aware of the case of the Armagh women. The facts of the barbaric and savage treatment meted out to these political prisoners were brought into many meetings and activities where women were present. Into every campaign, and every women's group, from those on college campus to the major women's organisations North and South, the news of Armagh was spreading.

Many women knew little of the truth, of the sexist and degrading treatment Armagh women suffer daily, of their protest for the five demands, of the case and treatment of Pauline McLaughlin. Many were genuinely shocked and sympathetic. They responded to the challenge from anti-imperialists, that Irish feminists could not ignore the sexist abuse of women political prisoners, nor fail to defend the right of women who having participated (on their terms) in the political struggle had become prisoners of British imperialism.

But as in every other layer and section of Irish society the issue drew a dividing line. A line between those who fundamentally understood the situation to be a result of British imperialism's interference in Ireland who linked the repression of women inside the prison walls to that of women who outside the prison, suffer massive social and economic deprivation and repression, and who clearly saw the culprit for these conditions as being British Imperialism.

There are those, however, who have turned their backs on Irish women who must surely rank as among the most oppressed. Within the feminist current, some argued against support for the Armagh women on any grounds whatsoever.

Their "liberal" concern for 'prison reform' went out the window when it came to Republican or Provo. women. Others who supported the demand for

Pauline McLoughlin's release but refused to support the five demands are illogical and obviously prejudiced against Republicanism. Pauline's case is and will be typical of what happens and will happen to young women militants who from the ghettos of the six counties, become incarcerated as "criminals" in Armagh at the whim of the British.

Others again, agued for prison reform - But against the five demands and the campaign. Their "liberalism" couldnt stretch as far as defending the rights of women who for political reasons call themselves 'political prisoners'. What all these currents among feminists have in common is a basic refusal to accept the right of the Nationalist and Catholic community to defend themselves against repression. The rejection of this responsibility as feminists to defend oppressed women and a capitulation to imperialist propaganda that those who resist oppression are "criminals".

Active women and feminists thus divided on the national question and the old dictum that "history repeats itself" was very evident. As in the past, there are women who identify and become part of the movement against the British presence in Ireland and there are women who argue that it either has little relevance or while being aware of Imperialist domination, refuse to ally with those who fight it in practice.

Of course there are the old fears, and they are well grounded in Irish history. Fears that the interests and rights of women have been ignored or subdued by "larger" issues. Feminists rightfully recognise this for the mistake that it is, but in rejecting such betrayal, they fall into a trap of another kind, they throw the proverbial "baby out with the bath water". In dismissing the leadership of the anti-imperialist movement they suffer a loss of nerve. They cop out on fighting for a place and an identity, and take the easier and slower road of sidestepping the struggle itself. Such a road leads nowhere but up

a cul-de-sac. On the whole island basic social and economic needs of working people and women are subverted to suit the economic interests of the ruling class. In the 32 counties, those interests of the native bourgeoisie and British Imperialism are linked together - all decisions on fundamental political and economic change are taken with the "stability" of both states in mind and not the needs of the mass of Irish women.

In the six counties, Britain has cow-towed to the Loyalist and Unionist backwoods men. Not even the most basic democratic rights on abortion and homosexuality have been extended to the North under British rule. South of the border, successive Governments have adopted restrictive formulae on tax, contraception, equal pay and divorce. In order to maintain a weakened open economy and hold the balance between Church influence and social pressure, the democratic rights of women have been subverted and denied.

Such a political balance exists in Ireland fundamentally because of partition. Put simply, there would not be the absolute majorities that now exist for the church and their inevitable political power and social influence.

Socialists have long recognised that women will not be liberated until the material conditions are created for real choice and human freedom. Such conditions will not exist until working people control all material resources at the disposal of human society. Many feminists have come to recognise this also. In Ireland, this takes a particular form, much of our resources remain not only in the hands of the ruling class, but in the hands of Britain. To ignore this fact and it's implications is to prolong the suffering and oppression of women and to relegate to the far distant future any hope of women's liberation.
ANNE SPEED

Press Hypocrisy on Trial

Women in Yorkshire may go out at night in safety for, the press and police agree, the Yorkshire Ripper has been caught.

But what has been ignored by the press, police and by those who are now crying out for capital punishment for a man who has not yet been tried, is the background of violence against women in society generally. The more common forms of violence, from wife battering to pornography have been ignored and indeed sections of the press have gone as far as to "blame" the wife and mother of the arrested man for "what went wrong".

In this society, it is 'alright' for a husband to rape his wife, and even children (like Noreen Winchester) have been severely punished for killing a father who brutalised and raped them. On the other hand, the publishers of pornography, feeding as they do on the sadistic aspects of conditioning of men, are wined and dined as respectable businessmen.

The real context in which rape takes place is ignored. Where women are powerless, second class citizens with no reality apart from their relationship to a man, then sexual violence against them is bound

to occur. The real solution to rape is intrinsically bound up with the ending of women's oppression. The answer is not, as police would have us believe, to stay in at night or only venture out "accompanied". The real answer must be the full integration of women into society and the workforce as equal citizens. In the meantime, demonstrations of women to reclaim the night are a useful means of demonstrating that sexual violence and the fear of rape will not turn the clock back. Women will continue to advance their struggle for freedom and independence, without curfews.
ROSE O'MAHONY

AS SELF ORGANISATION OF THE MASSES CONTINUES NICARAGUAN CAPITALISTS ISOLATED



If the eighteen months since the overthrow of US backed dictator Anastasio Somoza from his comfortable perch in Nicaraguan capital, Managua, have seen major gains for Nicaraguan working people and peasants, then it's clear that these gains have not been to the liking of a certain sector of the Nicaraguan population - the rich - the bourgeoisie, at whose expense these gains have been made. Accordingly the native capitalists, having found themselves in conflict with the Sandinista National Liberation Front, who lead the fight against the Somozaist tyranny and who are supported by the vast majority of the workers and peasants, have moved into outright opposition to the FSLN, the FSLN led Government of National Reconciliation, and especially the mass organisations of workers, peasants, women and youth.

Those sectors of the bourgeoisie which opposed Somoza tended to use plots and attempted coups as a means of struggle, some of them try to oppose the FSLN by the same methods in collusion with members of Somoza's old National Guard in exile in Honduras. Already there have been several murders of young Sandinistas who were involved in the recently completed literacy campaign, carried out by infiltrators from Honduras.

The anti-Somoza capitalists are organised politically in the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN) led by Alfonso Robelo; their business interests are represented by the superior council of private enterprise (COSEP) and both of these bodies are represented on Council of State, a body which serves in advisory capacity to the Government of National Reconstruction. The MDN, COSEP and two trade union groups associated with them are in a minority on the council, and have even less support in the country at large.

On November 9 and 12 these organ-

isations launched what was virtually a declaration of war on the FSLN, the FSLN led government and the mass organisations of workers and peasants. The MDN had planned to stage a big rally at Nandaime, a town about thirty miles south of Managua. The reactionary newspaper "La Prensa" had built up publicity for the rally, billing it as a start of a big political drive against the FSLN. In the meantime, Sandinista security forces found out that counter-revolutionary attacks had been planned to coincide with the rally. The FSLN asked MDN leader Robelo to call off the rally, but when he refused, they had no choice but to ban the rally. On November 9 as it turned out, at least one of the expected attacks did take place on the border with Honduras. An attacker and a member of the Sandinista Peoples Army (EPS) were killed in a shoot-out. The attacker was wearing the type of uniform worn by Somoza's National Guard and presently by the Honduran Army.

A week later (November 17) the vice-president of COSEP and owner of a big coffee plantation, Jorge Salazar was killed in a gun battle with state security forces who were coming to arrest him after one of his party had opened fire. Salazar was suspected of plotting with ex-members of Somoza's National Guard and had been found to have spent about 50,000 dollars in the course of such plots. Six M-16 rifles were found in Salazar's cars with two magazines for each rifle.

These events were answered by a huge rally that took place on November 19 in Managua attended by 100,000 people who came to show support for the FSLN. The workers and peasants have consistently replied to the capitalists through mass mobilisations like this one and this has been central to their success so far. Ever since the overthrow of Somoza on July 19, 1979, the Sandinista Defence Committees (CDS's) which grew up during the fight against Somoza, have been consistently strengthened. They have increasingly taken on governmental responsibilities, particularly in the fields of municipal

government, health care and, of course, education.

This has also been the way that trade unions have developed. Before July 1979, only 7.5% of the workforce was organised in trade unions, whereas today about 80% of the workforce is organised. The majority (82.2%) of these workers belong to the Sandinista Workers' Federation (CST) and recently the many union federations in Nicaragua have begun to move towards unity - only one union, one of the two pro-MDN unions has reacted unfavourably to the idea.

The new unions have grown up in the struggle to improve the living conditions of the people after the devastation of the country caused by Somoza's scorched earth policy during the war. In this situation many capitalists refused to invest at home and instead exported their assets. This decapitalisation was answered by factory occupations and by the workers running the factories themselves. Indeed the tendency to workers' control has been evident especially in nationalised industry, where production councils and committees and assemblies for the reactivation of the economy have been set up. Outside the nationalised industries, workers are demanding a greater say in running factories. In many cases they have won the right of access to the company's books, to have safety committees etc. This is important because of the catastrophic state of the economy. For this reason the FSLN have appealed for self-discipline from workers. They have been very frank and stated that economic recovery will not be complete until after 1985. The relationship between trade unions and the FSLN is good and has improved recently. The FSLN and the unions have learned to discuss problems and difficulties frankly.

Greater organisation has also been evident in the countryside. The rural workers association (ATC) organises agricultural labourers. A big push to extend this organisation and to establish co-operatives has been made. A rent ceiling on

land used for wheat or cotton has been instituted and land occupations during the Revolution by poor peasants have been formalised. The National Institute for Agrarian Reform has threatened nationalisation on any landlord who lets land lie fallow.

The organisation of youth and women has proceeded apace. The association of Nicaraguan Women (AMNLAE) and the July 19 Sandinista youth (JS-19) grew up during the fight against Somoza, and young people were very prominent during the struggle and insurrection. Recently, thousands of members of the JS-19 spent several months in the country-side taking part in the massive literacy campaign which brought down the illiteracy rate from 50% to 12%, the second lowest in Latin America. Today a million people from a population of 2.6 million are involved in the literacy campaign and the education system, including 300,000 graduates of the literacy campaign.

One of the biggest and most necessary gains of the revolution has been the establishment of the Sandinista Peoples' Militias. The Sandinista Defence Committees have been important in the establishment of those militias. This development is profoundly democratic and has increased the self-confidence of the people enormously. The participation and control of the mass organisations by the Nicaraguan workers and peasants is one aspect of a profoundly democratic society. It is recognised in Nicaragua that democracy is more than casting your vote every five years.

The mass organisations and the FSLN - led government's commitment to improving the living standards of the oppressed are what really worry the Nicaraguan Capitalists and that's why people like Jorge Salazar are busy contacting members of Somoza's National Guard. They are also hoping that the murderous military/christian democratic junta in El Salvador will be able to defeat the struggles of the Salvadoran workers and peasants because they know that victory for the revolutionary struggle and the forces, the Revolutionary Democratic Front, (which have the support of the Sandinistas) would immeasurably strengthen the Nicaraguan revolution. Meanwhile Ronald Reagan some of whose advisors advocate a military coup in Nicaragua, waits in the wings....

The courage of the revolutionary fighters in El Salvador and Nicaragua, the gains made by the workers and oppressed in Nicaragua and the unflagging internationalist solidarity of the Cuban workers' state are all an inspiration to all fights against imperialism, capitalism and injustice. In Central America today we can truly say that the spark has become a flame.

Ciaran MacNamidhe

Irish News Stance Repudiated

An open letter to the editor of the Irish News, Belfast.

Dear editor,
On Tuesday the 2nd of December we submitted into your paper an advert announcing the opening of a "Dump Fitt" campaign, with the aim of forcing Fitt's resignation and repudiating his attack on the Republican prisoners. The advert did not appear and we were later informed that you were refusing to print it following legal advice about the possible libellous nature of part of the advert (including the words 'Dump Fitt!').

On Monday the 8th December we submitted a further advert. In order to ensure its publication we removed anything that might have offended your sensibilities, leaving simply a petition calling on Fitt to resign. You again refused to publish it and you again referred to legal advice. However, you were not able to refer to any specific wording - it was the simple fact of the resignation call itself that you objected to. You were able to look into the future and assure us that "legal advice"

would prevent you from publishing any advertisement associated with this campaign. I'm afraid therefore that we have no option but to reject your excuses about legal advice and give the proper name to your actions - the political censorship of our campaign. Its on this ground that we have decided lodge a complaint against your paper with the press council.

You did however suggest to us that you might also be protected by editorial prerogative, the right to exclude from the paper anything you dislike as editor. Under what circumstances would a paper be justified in banning criticism of a local M.P.? Obviously only if the paper was a party political paper supporting that M.P. This seems to be the case. What Gerry Fitt says openly is what the reactionary clerical and middle class elements behind the 'Irish News' are saying privately and they are prepared to go to considerable lengths to protect their own. However, many 'Irish News' readers are under the impression that its columns are open to all types of anti-unionist opinion as well as the

staple diet of British propaganda. You should make it clear that this is not the case and openly publish your support for Fitt's views rather than advance those views through censorship and suppression of opposing views.

All this proves to us the value of the 'Dump Fitt' campaign. We set out to repudiate him and prevent the British using him as a weapon against the prisoners. We are determined to continue with this work although the obstacles you are placing to publicising the campaign means that the campaign will run beyond the December 20th deadline we originally set. Now we have evidence from the Irish News that there are other Gerry Fitt's. At least as a result of our campaign they will no longer be able to work in the shadows but will have to face the light of day. We are sure that your actions in defence of Fitt will earn you the contempt you so richly deserve from the anti-unionist population.

Signed: J. McNulty
National Committee of Peoples Democracy

FUND DRIVE

Contributions to: 38 Clanawley Road, Killester, Dublin 5.

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Continued from page 8 during the H-Block/Armagh campaign and NIO authorities for banning the student march on December 3rd in Belfast.

A well-attended fringe meeting on the importance of the H-Block/Armagh campaign and the support for a student conference on repression in Trinity College, Dublin for February 14th at the congress showed the potential for building an All-Ireland anti-imperialist student movement. The defeat of the class collaborationist policies and anti-democratic politics of SF-WP has opened up new ground which anti-imperialists can build on.

SEAN MARMION



SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

Paper of PEOPLES' DEMOCRACY

THE PEOPLES DEMOCRACY bases itself on the following points:

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

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

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

king class can provide the motive force for doing this.

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

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

its strength of numbers.

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

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

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

SFWP OUT!

The election of Brendan Dorris as President and Joe Duffy as Education Officer of the Union of Students in Ireland, coupled with the defeat of Jimmy Collins (a supporter of Sinn Fein - the Workers' Party) is a major defeat for the politics of Sinn Fein - the Workers' Party who has bureaucratically controlled USI for the past decade.

Despite the fact that the long-awaited defeat of SF-WP was not paralleled with a recognition of the need for a mass campaigning union capable of defending student interests, the victory of Dorris and Duffy should be seen as a gain for the anti-imperialist movement.

Congress voted to support all future activities of the H-Block/Armagh campaign to force the British government to implement their promises to the prisoners, which they have reneged on, and called on all those people, particularly Hume, Haughey, O'Fiach, who called on the prisoners to come off their hunger strike to now pressurise the British government into conceding the prisoners' demands. Congress also condemned the activities of the Special Branch in the South

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CASE REVEALS FBI BURGLARY, PROVOCATION, BOMB THREATS. U.S. SOCIALISTS EXPOSE GOVERNMENT

In 1973, the Socialist Workers' Party and the Young Socialist Alliance (US supporters of the Fourth International) brought a case against the US Government. This case is concerned about the US Government's programme of harassment, spying and disruption of socialists and supporters of democratic rights in the USA. After attempts by the US Government to delay and disrupt the hearings it is finally coming to trial on March 16th 1981. It is being hailed as the first great civil liberties battle of the 1980's in the US.

So far, the seven long and arduous years of hearings have achieved the following:

- It has forced the government to turn over more than 200,000 pages of documents on the infamous COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Programme) disruption operation and on massive illegal programmes against the Black, labour, women's, antiwar and socialist movements in the US. These files reveal that the US government's bag of dirty tricks included burglary, bugging, getting people fired from jobs, and even bomb threats and physical violence.

- It has fought for full exposure of the dirty work of thousands of government informers. These spies were instrumental in the FBI's most

underhanded work, like the campaign to defame Dr. Martin Luther King, and physical violence against civil rights workers, often instigated and carried out by FBI informers. In 1978, then Attorney General Griffin Bell was held in contempt of court for refusing to comply with a court order to turn over the files of 18 informers against the SWP and USA (the contempt citation was later lifted).

The upcoming trial will establish that these crimes continue to this day. Two recent developments in the suit clearly illustrate this:

The SWP is included on a list of 668 "proscribed" and "questionable" organizations, maintained by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The list is used to harass and intimidate non citizen members of the SWP and USA. Two members - Marian Bustin, a 26 year old coalminer who was born in Scotland, and Hector Marroquin, a political refugee from Mexico - are currently facing the threat of deportation. The INS blacklist, like all such lists, is also aimed at the right of free association of all people in the USA, citizen and non citizen.

The government admitted that an investigation of the YSA and SWP is being carried out today under the name "Foreign Counterintell-



MARIAN BUSTIN

Marian Bustin, a twenty-six-year-old coal miner, is fighting attempts by the U.S. government to deport her because of her membership in the U.S. Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA).

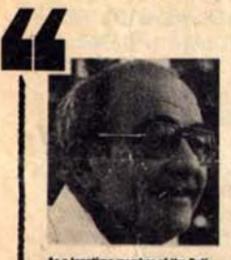
igence Investigation". The court assertion that the investigation of the SWP and YSA ended four years ago is shown to be a lie. The name of the file was simply changed from "domestic security" to "Foreign Counterintelligence", and the spying went on as before.

At the trial, the government will attempt to defend its 40-year investigation of the SWP, which has never turned up any evidence of criminal activity. Already they have announced their plans to call former FBI Director Clarence Kelley and former Attorney General Edward Levi as witnesses.

On the side of democratic rights, the socialists' lawyers will put the victims on the stand to testify about the burglaries of their homes, the mail tampering and phone bugging and about the jobs they lost because of FBI dirty tricks. They will also question ex-informers and burglars and are demanding a judgement that this activity was illegal, and an injunction against further disruption.

The case has received massive publicity both in America and Europe and has attracted support from a large number of groups and individuals concerned with civil rights. The way in which the SWP has used the case has proved to be a model of how to expose the tricks and unlawful activity of the capitalist rulers of the USA. Due to the nature of US law it is easier to compel the government to hand over to the victims all evidence relating to illegal activity on the part of the state. That socialists should use the opportunities provided by such laws is proved by the SWP case. It has aroused the anger of large sections of the US population and has shown the real nature of the "democratic" USA. Socialist Republic will be following the case as it develops and will cover it in forthcoming issues.

JOHN O'LEARY



As a longtime member of the Political Rights Defense Fund and a staunch supporter in its fight for constitutional rights... I look forward to the trial in the Socialist Workers Party lawsuit as the culmination of a long struggle for justice against governmental abuses. Ed Asner

There is every indication that the dirty tricks of COINTELPRO have never been and are not at present inhibited by the law of the land... (The Socialist Workers Party) is fighting back with persistence and dignity. The legal battle presently under way is, we believe, being fought on behalf of every unscrupulous conscience in America. Daniel and Philip Berrigan



Considering the results of the 1980 election, this suit takes on added importance... A satisfactory resolution of the SWP lawsuit will provide a vital legal safeguard... and God, do we need it... against intrusions on our civil liberties by a new generation of spies, provocateurs, and plumpers. Jules Feiffer



When the Socialist Workers Party lawsuit goes to court, the result will be one of the most important trials in American history for revealing the machinations of the government in investigating dissident domestic groups. Henry Foster

I reaffirm my support of the actions of the Political Rights Defense Fund in seeking to defend the civil liberties of all Americans. Henry Foster



It is imperative that the illegal activities of the federal government against dissenters be redressed to insure the very security of the constitutional rights of all. For this reason we must support the lawsuit against the United States government's activities with regard to the Socialist Workers Party. Congressman Ron Dellums

...the American Indian Movement is encouraging and supporting the lawsuit brought by the Socialist Workers Party against the FBI. In the plaintiffs' defense of their human and Constitutional rights they are in fact defending all peoples. Washburn-India Anashina Kaiten (Vernon Bellecourt)

GROWING OPPOSITION TO RTE CENSORSHIP

On Monday Jan 19th Albert Reynolds Minister for Posts and Telegraphs re-ratified the controversial Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act. The section re-introduced during the period of hysterical anti-nationalism by Conor Cruise O'Brien, has recently caused embarrassment for RTE in its effect of censoring two British historical series in order to comply with the act.

The ludicrous situation, so often noticeable in RTE's news bulletins, will now mean that viewers in multi-channel areas may view two sides of the historical debate about Irish history on BBC and UTV, while RTE viewers will be treated to a "laundered" version.

In the final programme the BBC/RTE series "Ireland; A Television History" narrated by Robert Kee, four interviews contravene section 31. They are with Danny Morrison, Joe Cahill, Billy McKee and Proinsias McAirt, all members of Provisional Sinn Fein. Even the BBC programme

makers involved felt the story of modern Irish history could not be written without the inclusion of these interviews, despite the problems it might cause for RTE and the Irish Government.

The other series made by Thames Television "The Troubles" will be including a film on Joe Cahill speaking at a press conference in Belfast at the time of the introduction of internment in 1971. RTE has approved the last two programmes of the series, but has stated that the Cahill film will have to be censored for Irish viewers.

Opposition to this censorship is growing. Civil Libertarians, Trade Unionists and, latterly workers in RTE itself are beginning to demand the repeal of the section.

It should be noted that the section itself states that where the minister for Posts & Telegraphs believes that any material "would be likely to promote, or incite to crime, or

would tend to undermine the authority of the state", he may prevent its broadcast. Under this, members of provisional Sinn Fein are banned from the airwaves even if they are being interviewed solely as local councillors on local issues.

The real political reason why the Government and RTE drop their pretence of political balance in the case of the anti-imperialist militants is because they understand the resonance which Irish Republicanism has, in its demand for the withdrawal of British Troops and an end to partition. They want all discussion of Ireland's political future to take place in the collaborationist atmosphere of parlour chats between Haughey and Thatcher. The repeal of section 31 of the Broadcasting Act would be a major advance for the Irish working class, for it would allow them, from considering in full the alternatives open, to decide who has their best political interests at heart.

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