



# SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

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Paper of PEOPLES' DEMOCRACY



## CONGRESS SELL OUT??

Ever since the last National Wage Agreement came into effect workers have experienced a drastic decline in the purchasing power of the wage packet. The Research Department of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union estimated the fall in workers' purchasing power as high as 30%.

Next September negotiations on a new National Wage Agreement will begin. Trade union leaders are already making militant noises in anticipation of battle with the employers and the government. They are demanding full compensation for the past fall in wages and a sizeable percentage increase linked to the rate of inflation.

### UNION LEADERS

This is exactly what workers need as a minimum. But can the trade union leaders be trusted to fight for it? Before the last agreement the leaders of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions demanded all kinds of radical concessions: a 20% wage rise, an extra week's holidays and a 35 hour week - all to be implemented over a 12 month period. However, they settled for 18 month two phase package which gave only a 15% rise in the first phase and 7% in the second. No concessions were won on holidays and working hours.

The lesson from this is clear. The task of getting a decent wage deal cannot be left to the so-called 'leaders' of the trade union movement. This is all

the more obvious since the attitude of the employers has hardened over the past year. This time round the Federated Union of Employers is demanding a total wage freeze for six months after which only wage increases linked to productivity increases would be permitted.

### MOBILISED STRENGTH

It will take a lot more than polite bargaining at the Employer-Labour Conference to get the kind of realistic wage packet that will keep workers off the poverty line. The whole trade union movement must be mobilised to show its strength.

Despite all their militant talk the trade union top brass are not prepared to initiate mass action to back up their demands. Trade union activists will have to organise a movement based on the trades councils, trade union branches and shop floor committees which will ensure that the trade union leaders won't be able to sell out.

### MASS ACTION

The first demand of such a militant movement must be for trade union withdrawal from the Employer-Labour Conference and a rejection of National Wage Agreements as a framework for pay negotiations. In addition, the need for wage increases to be linked on a one-to-one basis with the rate of inflation must be considered. Unlike the trade union leaders, a movement of militant trade unions will have to be prepared to back up its demands with co-ordinated mass action - marches, rallies and strikes.

# Now More Than Ever Support the Prisoners



August the 9th, the tenth anniversary of the introduction of Internment, sees the continuing resistance of the minority against the sectarian Northern state. Ten years ago the resistance movement faced the threat of imprisonment without trial as a means of quelling the near insurrection in the 6 counties.

Today British imperialism has consolidated its repressive apparatus behind the Diplock Courts and the H Blocks and Armagh. Today the minority population is fighting to defend the legitimacy of the struggle. The anti-imperialist movement has begun to take the steps along the road to a mass movement.

We have to ensure that it is a movement which involves and is built on new layers in struggle today, the youth, the youth, the women and the workers

Since 1976, Peoples Democracy has argued for and involved itself in all the steps along that road through recognising the importance of the fight for Political Status.

The H Block campaign has laid the foundation for turning back the British offensive and building a mass movement which can go on to demolish all aspects of British imperialism in Ireland. But such a movement must be built on success and the H Block movement is facing grave dangers over the next few weeks.

### PRESSURE

The hunger strikers are under pressure to call off their protest. The Coalition, the media, some of the relatives and the Catholic hierarchy have all urged an end to the

to the H Block sacrifice. With so many of our prisoners dead and Thatcher still intransigent it is inevitable that the voices of despair and capitulation will be raised. Peoples Democracy would emphasise that the prisoners are the ones to come to the final decision - we will be guided by THEIR wishes. Mass sympathy still exists for the prisoners. With this solid foundation the National H Block Armagh Committee can still turn the situation around

The by election in Fermanagh/South Tyrone and the possibility of one in the South must be used to show that mass support still exists for the prisoners. Active supporters who are prepared to create uproar in Westminster and Leinster House should be put forward. They must be prepared to take their seats in order to use them as a platform for the prisoners' case and as a weapon against the hack politicians. Such candidates would be invaluable in building the H Block/Armagh movement around the country. The attacks on the campaign by the British Army and the RUC can be centrally linked into election work. In Fermanagh and South Tyrone a defence plan to keep the Brits and the RUC out of election areas must be drawn up as a part of the election campaign itself.

Secondly, the pressure on bourgeois nationalists must be turned into a direct challenge. No amount of pleas will break their decision to ride out the storm. The choice they have faced is to confront the Brits or stick the boot into the campaign. They have chosen the latter. That's the real meaning of FitzGerald's

attacks on the Provos.

We must increase - with the most fundamental weapon we can use independent mass political action by workers in support of the prisoners.

We can start this rolling with a propaganda offensive against the pro-imperialists in the labour and trade union movements - and also through the groundwork for a Southern By-election.

Secondly, the H-Block campaign must extend the scope of its influence by waging a systematic campaign in the mass organisations, such as the GAA.

### DEMOCRACY

Thirdly, in order to take these initiatives, effectively the H-Block/Armagh campaign must adopt a broader and more democratic structure. The committee must build up workplace delegations, integrate this work into the campaign and project actions such as a Blockade of Dublin Port.

These are the two essential elements to the campaign in the coming weeks.

Failure to point the campaign in the right direction will result in further despair and cynicism. The pressure, either to capitulate or fragment, is on.

We must stand firm.

We repeat - the Prisoners are the standard-bearers of the struggle. It is to them we should lend our ears, our voices and our actions.

## PLASTIC BULLETS SLAMMED

An International Tribunal meeting in Belfast has slammed the use of plastic bullets by the British Army and the RUC as murder and terror weapons.

Evidence of the murders of Julie Livingstone and Carol Anne Kelly by the Brits was cited. Other evidence of people losing their sight and undergoing brain damage was heard. This evidence of British terrorism is being publicised around the world and will be another nail in the coffin of the so-called 'Normalisation Policy' of Thatcher.

US Republican Party member Peter King said the bullets were "definitely lethal" and urged that they be outlawed. Patrick McCann of the Association for Legal Justice who organised the tribunal said that international jurists present were "dumb-



founded" when they heard witnesses testifying on the plastic bullet murders and maimings.

The Irish government and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions must now immediately demand the banning of plastic bullets and other repressive weapons. Socialists must be to the forefront in campaigning against these terror weapons.

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

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# Bottom Dog unites Limerick anti imperialists

Why are the struggles of workers in Ireland so seemingly isolated from one another? The Irish working class has, at various times in our history, shown itself extremely combative on economic issues and on the National Question. Yet these waves of militancy are isolated from each other either sectorally or in particular periods of history. The lack of a consistent anti-imperialist leadership in the unions has much to do with this lack of continuity.

In the following article JOE HARRINGTON, editor of the Limerick workers paper **BOTTOM DOG** and member of PD and the Limerick Trades Council, shows how socialists in Limerick are attempting to build an anti-imperialist tendency in the workers movement in the Munster area.

The Limerick General Strike of 1919 still remains the most large-scale of the more advanced forms of struggle undertaken by Irish workers. The Limerick Soviet, as it has become known, was a response to a British imposed curfew following the death of Bobby Byrne who had undertaken a hungerstrike for political status in Limerick Jail. For two glorious weeks the workers of Limerick, organised through their Trades Council, ran the city and administered to their own needs.

On the 2nd of June, 1981, the Limerick Council of Trade Unions rejected a motion of support for the H-Block prisoners.

This glaring contrast does not, as would first appear, reflect a massive loss of nationalist sentiment among Limerick workers nor does it correspond to a drop in their fighting spirit. A brief look at the record of workers' struggles of the past 10 years will amply confirm this.

Outside of work-related issues, the city of Limerick has seen massive mobilisations of working people — Bloody Sunday, anti-apartheid, H-Block. The biggest 26 county turn out on the day of Bobby Sands' funeral took place in Limerick. The national rent strike was solid in Limerick and thousands marched for tax reform.

On the industrial front, workers' struggles have been set against the decimation of home-grown (but not always home controlled) businesses and the proliferation of multinational subsidiaries. The early 70s saw many of the city's traditional industries close throwing a couple of thousand workers on the dole queue.

The most significant resistance to these events came from the 320 Danus workers who occupied their factory in Domic St. Initially their demands were for higher redundancy money but as an interview (in **The** with their shop steward showed, the workers soon began to discuss other ideas. The shop steward, John Cronin told the Plough: 'There has been talk of setting up a co-op but ... we are well aware of the problems that would arise if we were simply to go into production under the private enterprise system ... There is a way under nationalisation. If we got state assistance with the workers still in control then we could continue production ...'

The Danus occupation never achieved this high ideal but the mechanics and lessons of the struggle were not lost and later reappeared in practice during the Ferenka dispute.

## FERENKA

Ferenka, a subsidiary of the Dutch multi-national, Akzo, was the IDA's pride and joy. Employing 1,400 it was one of the largest industrial concerns in the 26 Counties. Its closure was heralded as the single



biggest job loss in the history of the state.

A demarcation problem was the initial reason for the dispute but it soon became apparent that the company was engaged in a determined bid to break the workers' organisation in the plant and to subdue their militancy. What was not clear initially was that the company had no intention of remaining in Ireland if they failed in this task. The viability of the plant depended on how much they could screw workers who already had to work very unsocial hours for below average wages.

The Ferenka case had 3 main peculiarities:

(1) The decision of the workers to change union — from the ITGWU to the MPGWI. This seems to have been decided more because of frustration with the question of service from the ITGWU than because of any proof that they would be any better looked after by the Marine Port. There were those in the Labour Movement in Limerick who excused their refusal to support the Ferenka workers on the grounds that union jumping was not the way to gain a better service. There is no doubt but that the Ferenka workers should have remained on and fought their case within the ITGWU (as they had been doing after a fashion) but when the mass of the workers joined the Marine Port the fact should have been accepted.

(2) Occupation. Unlike Danus, the Ferenka occupation was, from the start, aimed at saving the jobs but equally unlike Danus only a small minority of the workers took part. To overcome this weakness **Bottom Dog** supporters argued for the holding of a mass meeting of all Ferenka workers to take place in the plant. This meeting did eventually take place but only on the initiative of union officials, clergy and politicians and marked the end of the occupation — and any hope for saving the jobs.

(3) International solidarity. The occupying workers made determined efforts to win support from Akzo plant workers in Holland. A message from the Ferenka shop stewards was distributed to the Dutch workers through an Irish Solidarity committee there and concluded thus:

'As workers in the same multinational we appeal for your help in forcing Akzo/Enka to keep the factory open. Any pressure you could put on the company would be much appreciated. We feel confident that national boundaries and distance will prove to be no obstacle and that the links and contacts we will forge now will be ongoing and of benefit to all Akzo workers in the future. An injury to one is an injury to all.'

A member of the Dutch Solidarity Committee later wrote to the **Bottom Dog**: 'At first the Dutch union

seemed to be reacting positively, but last week we had an ITGWU delegate over here. They claim that a few hundred workers had left the Marine Port and GWU again last week ... the situation is very confused.'

The Ferenka experience, unique in many ways, will yet contribute much to future victories of Irish workers. (The full story of Ferenka is contained in a pamphlet of the same name produced by the **Bottom Dog**.)

## Insisting on Rights

Six months after Ferenka closed its doors, Jack Lynch officially declared open work on the biggest construction project ever undertaken in Ireland — the Alcan plant near Foynes. In his opening address Mr Lynch called on workers not to 'insist on rights'. The 4,000 workers now on the site have paid little heed to his plea. Not alone do they insist on their rights but they have been to the forefront in insisting on rights for the H-Block/Armagh prisoners. On numerous occasions Alcan workers have stopped work or have marched in support of the H-Block/Armagh prisoners.

Clearly, the contrast between the events of 1919 and the events in the Limerick Council of Trade Unions in 1981 does not reflect a drastic shift towards conservatism among Limerick workers. This becomes obvious when one remembers that the Limerick Soviet failed to reach its full potential due to the conservative nature of the leadership of the Irish Labour Movement which is exactly what cost Irish workers so many victories such as at Danus and Ferenka.

An alternative tendency to this leadership of the trade union has been developing around the paper the **Bottom Dog**. In a recent issue the basis on which the group around the paper has been operating was outlined:

'The **BD** is published by a group of socialists (Republican Socialists in the Irish context), the majority of whom are prominent members of their unions at local level ...

## Nationalism

'Socialists understand that the nationalism of the advanced capitalist countries is reactionary while, as in the case of Ireland, the nationalism of a country dominated by imperialism is progressive in that it pursues democratic tasks and rights. We oppose British economic, political and military domination of Ireland and we are for Irish unity. In the Irish situation, those like Jim Kemmy, who oppose the national struggle as a diversion fail to see the motivating force that a struggle for democratic rights and freedoms can have, especially one for national self-determination which, in the last analysis, can only be achieved by socialist methods. As James Connolly pointed out, the working class remains the only incorruptible inheritors of the fight for Irish freedom.

Our activity within the trade unions

and other working class organisations is determined by the foregoing.

## Unity

'We stand for working class unity and we believe that any division between unions and between those inside and outside the Irish Congress of Trade Unions can only benefit the employers. "Solidarity" in Poland shows what trade union unity can achieve. We are opposed to the two-tier picket rules which break down workers' solidarity.

We are for real 32 County trade union unity which is being threatened by the ICTU's policy in relation to the 6 Counties. The Northern Ireland Sub-Committee of ICTU, in its efforts to maintain working class unity as it sees it, has refused to organise 6 County workers against the Tories' attacks on their jobs and living standards because the majority of those affected are nationalists and to do so might alienate the Loyalists many of whom have been led to believe that Nationalists should not have jobs anyway.

Now, the re-organised Ulster Workers Council (UWC) is raising the call for an "Ulster TUC" directly linked to the British TUC. With unemployment beginning to seriously bite the Loyalist population for the first time since the '30s, the UWC is able to attack the ICTU for 'not doing enough to safeguard jobs in Northern Ireland.'

On the question of repression the Northern Committee has been equally "non-sectarian" even going so far as to attack the victims of sectarianism and British torture for daring to defend themselves. There is no middle road on the question of injustice and, in fact, the ICTU is guilty of sectarianism when it refuses to take as its starting point (for promoting unity) the needs of the most oppressed — the nationalists. Rather it tries to maintain an artificial and ultimately doomed, unity based on Loyalist prejudices.

The **BD** also stands for international workers unity. Irish workers have far more in common with workers on the other side of the globe than they have with the boss down the road. The multi-nationals divide workers by farming out production to many points around the globe. But this disunity of a workforce can be overcome. Multi-nationals have real fears of inter-subsidary worker link-up as it restricts their room to play workers off against one another. We believe that the Unions have the resources and should have the policy of establishing such links as early as possible.

## Democracy

The **BD** believes that the Trade Union Movement can be most effective when the will and the participation of its entire membership is brought into play. On paper most unions are pretty democratic but this does not absolve the leadership of responsibility for ensuring

the broadest possible involvement of members in union affairs. We are for the election of all union leaders who would be backed up, if necessary, by hired academics.

## Independence

We are for the complete independence of the Unions from the State and employer sponsored bodies. Trade unions should immediately withdraw from the Employer-Labour Conference, a body, whose main function is to police the workers. Further, the solution being put forward by various governments to the economic crisis all have one thing in common. They are all based on making the worker carry the can and, unfortunately, the present union leadership have tended to tinker with, rather than oppose, such schemes. Only the trade union movement is capable of drawing up a pro-worker economic plan and fighting for it.

Such a plan would include a 35 hour week to share work, programme of public works to build much needed houses, schools and hospitals, a sliding scale of wages and a national minimum wage to lift the low paid and unemployed out of poverty and the nationalisation, under workers' control of any firm threatening redundancies. This plan would be financed through the nationalisation of banks and insurance companies and all the financial institutions of imperialism. We believe that any alternative economic plan, if it was to be fundamentally different to the anti-worker type would have to take into consideration the effects of the imperialist imposed partition of Ireland.

The aim of the **BD** is to help build a strong grouping in the Trade Union Movement which will campaign within the Movement for these policies. While we explain and argue for all aspects of our policy as the need arises, we believe workers will only come to support such a socialist strategy in the Unions as a result of engaging in concrete struggles in which our policies are seen to be effective.

We believe that the Trade Union Movement can only benefit greatly by developing a progressive attitude to Irish nationalism, by taking a fighting stance on the question of low pay and unemployment and by more actively pursuing the question of women's equality. The forces unleashed by such a perspective would make trade unions an unstoppable power on the side of workers.

This article gives a very brief outline of **BD** policy. A discussion is being organised over the next couple of months among **BD** supporters with a view to formulating a more precise statement of our policy and also drawing up a programme of our immediate priorities.

## Conclusion

As can be seen in the example of the Limerick Soviet and in the examples of workers' militancy in Limerick over the past 10 years what has always been lacking has been a fighting response from the Trade Union leaders. In all cases the conservative and undemocratic nature of the Trade Union bureaucracy has held back rather than positively led the workers. The only way we will stop this process is by building an anti-imperialist left wing in the unions.

If you want to find out what is happening in the Limerick and Munster area you should subscribe to the **BOTTOM DOG**  
Write to: The Editor, **BOTTOM DOG**, 109 O'Malley Park, Southill Limerick for subscription rates.

# Ireland's Kemmy Britain's Jemmy



Jim Kemmy waves the white flag thinking it's red

"The Labour Party has declared itself to be a Socialist Party. It is not the task of Socialists to act as a buttress for a gerry built capitalist system. Can our policies survive a Coalition?"

As a Labour Party member, Jim Kemmy put his name to those words in 1970.

In 1981 he was elected to the Dail as an Independent Socialist for Limerick East. In one short month he has:

1. Helped to vote Garrett Fitzgerald into power and declaring: "That vote is given on condition that they will have a good and decent government who will respect the Irish people".
2. Voted in an anti-working class budget which incorporates wage restraint for public sector workers.
3. Demanded that a Fine Gael

Minister be appointed to the Limerick area -- for 'pragmatic reasons'.

4. Announced that Thatcher's policies were 'mistakes and pitfalls' rather than conscious attempts to beat back workers' wages and living standards.

5. Called for an end to the right of Irish people to unify the country and supported the barbaric British policies in H Block and Armagh.

6. Called on everyone, including banks, business men and farmers to 'share the burden and contribute to getting the economy back on the rails'.

The question is, do working people want any share of a 'burden' they had no hand in creating. And a supplementary question is, is Jim Kemmy a Fine Gael 'sleeper' or even a Margaret Thatcher 'sleeper'??

The statement reproduced here was issued by Peoples' Democracy to coincide with a public meeting held in Dublin by 'Socialists Against Nationalism' (SAN). The main speaker was Jim Kemmy TD. The attendance of about 100/120 was very pro-imperialist, including Brendan Halligan, the recently retired General Secretary of the Labour Party and Conor Cruise O'Brien's handpicked Dublin Correspondent for the British Observer, Dermot Mac Evoy.

The way the meeting was run left little scope for debate. After the 3 platform speakers took up 80 minutes there were questions, which took up little time, and replies, which took up a lot. When 'contributions' were allowed from the floor, there was only about twenty minutes left. Then there was a summary from the speakers!

Anti-imperialists in the audience effectively used the small opportunity allowed to them to nail the lies of SAN. Kemmy's theme was the need for Irish socialists to strike out in a new direction. John Meehan from PD asked what was 'new' about Kemmy's brand of socialism. Kemmy had made his agreement with Thatcher on the North very clear, going so far as to say that Long Kesh 'one of the most humane and liberal prisons in Europe'. He had not been so eloquent about his agreement with Thatcher-style economic policies, which he showed by voting for the recent Fine Gael budget. This was exactly the same sort of hypocrisy indulged in by the Labour Party for years.

Kemmy's reply was to protest against the use of a 'guilt by association' technique. Just because Thatcher said something was good didn't mean everyone else had to say it was bad! He said he 'suspected' that someone would try and bring up pro-Fine Gael voting record in the budget but thought this was consistent with 'defending workers' interests'. He was trapped by another questioner who highlighted Kemmy's view that there was a war

As Jim Kemmy TD for Limerick East speaks tonight, Wednesday July 29 in Dublin, attacking the fight for Irish Unity and British Withdrawal in this country, Kieran Doherty TD for Cavan-Monaghan lies dying in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh prison. Kemmy claims he is against Nationalism. In fact he and the organization sponsoring this meeting are against Irish nationalism. As far as Kemmy and co. are concerned a nod is as good as a wink for the British nationalism of Thatcher and Paisley.

This is supposed to be a new road for Irish socialism. It's nothing of the kind. It follows in the long tradition of reformist social democratic politics in Ireland. The Labour Party, an electoral and governmental appendage of the most pro-imperialist of the 2 major capitalist parties in the South of Ireland, Fine Gael, has by and large trod this path for 60 years and failed dismally for 60 years, especially among urban workers. The practice of the Labour Party is just as anti-Irish nationalist as Kemmy's; this new TD (Thatcher's Deputy) for Limerick East simply brings this practice into line with theory. It is important to see this clearly. Otherwise socialists won't see clearly why Thatcher's Deputy on the national question also supports savage attacks on workers' living standards, as Kemmy did recently by voting for the Bruton Fine Gael budget. So much for the 'radical ginger group' Kemmy talked of forming after the General Election! When it comes down to it, like all other opportunist politicians, Kemmy is more interested in holding on to his seat than defending workers' interests.

For its part Peoples' Democracy stands in the revolutionary tradition of James Connolly. The First World War split the workers' movement in two: revolutionary socialists whose aim was the overthrow of the capitalist state and the building of a workers' state, and reformists who believed that reforms of capitalism would satisfy the interests of workers. In Ireland revolutionary socialists face the task of overthrowing not one but two states. Both are pathetic failures at all levels: social, economic, and democratic.

To solve these problems means confronting imperialism, which is backed up by British military and economic might. To shy away from this means being a stooge for the likes of Fine Gael. Jim Kemmy's actions in the past few weeks speak a lot louder than his 'socialist' words.

ISSUED BY: PEOPLES' DEMOCRACY 38 CLANAWLEY ROAD, KILLESTER, DUBLIN 5.

in the North. If there was a war, weren't there armies? Yes, said Kemmy. Then, couldn't he see there were prisoners of war? No answer from Jim but howls of anti-Provo outrage at the humiliation of their hero from a section of the crowd.

The ultimate absurdity of SAN was brought out by Dermot MacEvoy, who 'as an old Southern loyalist' bemoaned President Hillary's refusal to attend the wedding of Prince Charles of England. The anti-imperialists present were well able to see the humour of

a heckler who commented 'Socialists for Monarchy'.

Socialists who go wrong on the national question cannot avoid selling out every other struggle and becoming a pink face for Fine Gael. Such spinelessness is typical of people who bow down in front of the imperialist enemy waving the white flag and thinking it's red. Anti-imperialist socialists should keep up the pressure against Kemmy and his ilk in order to ensure he gets the same treatment as Paddy Devlin and Gerry Fitt.

## Coalition Budget: Pay More, Get Less

By BRENDAN KELLY

When all the juggling with statistics is finished the simple truth about the Coalition's budget is that you pay more and get less.

But that is only a taste of things to come. The real significance of the budget is that it shows beyond doubt that the Coalition is firmly committed to a policy of making the poor pay for the economic crisis. Any worker who expects some relief in the 'real' budget next April is in for a shock.

Fine Gael's economic strategy is based on indirect taxation. Instead of taxing income through PAYE it is intended to increase taxation on goods bought mainly by workers for their day to day existence. Since workers with low wages naturally spend more of their income on such items they will end up paying more of their income on such items and will end up paying more taxes.

### Divide and Weaken

Increases in the cost of living will of course generate renewed demands for wage increases. But the Coalition hopes it will be able to defuse them. Their major hope is that they will be able to divide and weaken the workers' counter-offensive. Traditionally it has been the better paid workers -- the craftsmen and public sector workers who had either scarce skills of monopoly power - who have forced up the size of the wage packet.

Since the traditional 'wage-leaders' will be less affected by the change to indirect taxation it is expected that they will remain quiet and leave the

general mass of unskilled workers to their fate.

At the same time the Coalition intends to go on the offensive against the workers movement. Vague hints of this were evident in Bruton's budget speech. He spoke about involving those who are not represented at national wage negotiations but whose incomes are affected by their outcome. He had in mind mainly the 'farming community'. So in the next round of National Understanding talks the trade unions will be confronted not only by the Federated Union of Employers and the Government but also the Irish Farmers Association

and the Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association.

### Determined Offensive

In short the budget foreshadows the main elements of a determined offensive against the workers and their allies amongst the poor.

**First** there is the economic policy objective of 'soak the poor'. This is a straightforward recognition that the economic crisis is a crisis of capitalism and can only be solved at the expense of the workers.

**Secondly** there is a conscious strategy of divide and rule.



Are the unions going to unite workers against this coalition government?

**Thirdly** there is a concerted effort to unite all sections of the capitalist class to break the power of the trade union movement.

Workers will be able to defend themselves only if they clearly recognise what the Coalition is up to. There is one major flaw in the strategy which can become the ace card of the trade unions.

The government aims to pacify workers in the public service sector. But even if tax concessions do enhance the wages of these workers they will still have to worry about their jobs. The government has singled out the public services as a major economic burden on the economy which must be cut back. Some services will be threatened by return to private hands -- telecommunications and transport; others may be closed entirely -- NET and Irish Steel; staff in the civil service departments will be reduced.

### Public Service Alliance

Despite possible tax concessions, workers in the public sector will be fighting for their lives. The unity of the labour movement must be reinforced by a massive mobilisation to defend them. The creation of an alliance of trade unions in the public sector can be the first step in a fight back against the Coalition.

The unity of workers and their allies needs to be paired against the unity of the FUE, IFA, and ICMSA. In particular the trade unions should give every assistance to the small farmers to build their own representative organisation. This should be supplemented by adopting a programme of demands which would benefit workers and small farmers alike

## Labour Party

During the recent General Election campaign it became obvious that the Labour Party in Limerick had lost its cutting edge. Its election literature had the Starry Plough turned upside down. There are those who believe that Labour would not know the difference but the truth of the matter is that it is simply a confirmation of Labour turning the teachings of Connolly on their head. Participating in a Blueshirt Coalition, and support for British imperialism in the six counties is not what Connolly died for.

## Brit Gobshite

At an H Block/Armagh public meeting some months back Councillor Jack Bourke (FF) won fame and notoriety for stating the obvious -- that British soldiers in the 6 counties were 'legitimate targets'. Subsequently, Bourke was given the title of 'half gobshite of the year' by Hugh Leonard writing in the Sunday Independent. When the matter was mentioned at a recent city council meeting Cllr Bourke saw his chance. Springing. From his seat he said: 'I've been waiting to have a go at Mr Leonard'.

'Some years ago', he continued, 'Hugh Leonard said he would leave Ireland if Charlie Haughey ever became Taoiseach. Not only did this happen, but Mr Leonard throughout the last Taoiseach's period in office, remained in his 'tax free haven' in Ireland being paid for by 'gobshites' like me.'

The rioting began July 4th in Southall, a predominantly Asian suburb of London. A skinhead band was playing in a local pub and a couple of hundred fans arrived in special coaches. Racism is quite widespread among skinheads and many of the fans exhibited fascist symbols and began assaulting Asian shop keepers and passers by. The police made no attempt to prevent these attacks but they brought in heavy reinforcements to protect the skinheads when hundreds of Asian youth poured onto the streets in defence of their community. The confrontation which followed lasted till the early hours of the morning and demonstrated very clearly the determination of the Asians not to be cowed.

The next day in Toxteth area of Liverpool police arrested a black youth for stealing a motorbike. In fact he owned the bike. Youths standing by intervened to prevent his arrest and within minutes the area was swamped with cops. Fighting between police and youths lasted a couple of hours. Next day the cops arrived in full riot gear to put on a show of strength. Hundreds of white and black youth fought together to drive them out of the area. By the end of the week their example was being followed by youth across England.

### Rioting & Racism

Its 60 years ago since Britain last experienced a major outbreak of rioting. Interestingly enough it was Liverpool that erupted then also. Liverpool had in the early part of this century a very large Irish population. Prior to the First World War one Liverpool ward used to regularly return an Irish Home Rule MP. The Irish war of independence and the post world war economic crisis combined to radicalise the Irish workers in the Merseyside. This radicalisation in turn influenced other sections of the working class, and by 1920 Liverpool was, next to the Clydeside, the most explosive area in Britain. A localised general strike - even the police came out - led to large scale rioting and was only suppressed by the military occupation of the city.

Many of the same elements which existed in the early 20s are present again today. The capitalist economic system is undergoing a deep economic crisis, and the Irish war of independence still rages. The descendants of the early Irish immigrants in the Merseyside are now however almost totally assimilated, and it is the blacks who form the most combative layer of the working class.

### New Black Movement

Young blacks have long been cynical about the British political system. Now they are carrying the added burden of the recession. Unemployment among black youth has increased at three times the rate amongst white youth. It is estimated that 60 per cent of black youth in the Liverpool area are jobless. The policies of the Tory government have not only heightened their rebelliousness, it has also led to the politicisation of large numbers of young blacks. Many have been influenced by the downfall of the left wing Manley government in Jamaica following a CIA inspired campaign of economic sabotage and terrorism. Militant blacks are conscious that social oppression is generalised in this society and that the ruling order uses racism to give poor whites the illusion that they have something to gain from the present set up. They are determined to confront the system which oppresses them and they are not prepared to sit back and wait for white workers to take the initiative. On the contrary they believe that by openly assaulting the oppressive forces in Britain they can act as a catalyst to draw broad forces into struggle. The events of last month have confirmed this perspective.

### Irish Connection

The anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland has had a big influence on the black youth of Britain. They view Ireland as a victim of colonial oppression just like Africa, India and the Caribbean. They have seen that the British army despite its might has proved incapable of defeating the nationalist population. On TV they can watch the youth of Derry and West Belfast challenge armed soldiers and policemen. They've been impressed. Some black militants suggest that the bombing campaign in Britain was a big mistake for the

# Powerful Blow to Thatcher Government British Youth Rebel Against Racism and Unemployment

The placid tranquility of British society has recently been ruptured by the appearance of black and white youth battling with British police. Scenes familiar to the streets of Belfast and Derry were re-enacted in Liverpool and London. What lies behind this new combativity among British youth? Here MAURICE COAKLEY, in the first of a 3 part series on the British state, gives some of the answers.



Republican movement, because it put at risk many innocent civilians, including black and Irish immigrants.

Most black militants, especially Caribbeans are contemptuous of the Labour Party leadership and they treat Tony Benn and the labour left with caution. Their attitude to the extra parliamentary left is more complex than is often supposed. They

hope that the organisations of the revolutionary left will ally with them in struggle. But they insist upon being approached as a serious autonomous movement, and they resent the left treating them as a recruiting ground.

As of yet the new black movement appears to have little formal structure, despite the apocalyptic hysteria of the British gutter press with its horror

stories of 4 hooded men appearing at every riot to conduct the show. Many black militants seem to place little emphasis on organisation and they stress the power of spontaneity.

### Tory Strategy

The appearance of black and white youth fighting side by side against the police has severely shaken the ruling class and has placed in jeopardy the Tory party's political strategy and the premiership of Margaret Thatcher. Thatcher's policy starts from a determination to reverse the decline of the British economy. The Tories believe that this can only be achieved by reducing the living standards of the working masses and increased investment returns on capital. To accomplish this goal the organisations of the working class must be broken up. Thatcher's strategy is two pronged. Unemployment has been allowed to rise so that employers have a huge pool of labour to choose from. This has created pressure to accept lower wages and has increased fear of getting sacked or being made redundant. As a consequence the employers have, in many cases, been able to erode the power of trade unions on the shop floor.

youth. British working class youth have a significant culture of their own centered around rock and reggae music which has been influenced by radical ideas and a mood of rebellion. The punk rock phenomenon and the response to Rock Against Racism both illustrated this. Even many skinheads were drawn into rioting alongside blacks. Their hatred of the police and the people behind them proved greater than the influence of racist ideas. Now that the British ruling class faces the haunting prospect that instead of being isolated scapegoats the blacks might become an inspiration to the rest of the working class; the vanguard.

Margaret Thatcher tells us that she can't understand how unemployment might lead to rioting. A lot of the unemployed never riot at all. She suspects that greed is the motivator of most rioters and is confident that by building up a battery of water cannons, CS gas, armoured cars and plastic bullets, civilised values can be maintained. Michael Foot and the Labour Party leaders appreciate that there's a time and a place for CS gas and plastic bullets. But they'd like also to see something done to reduce unemployment.

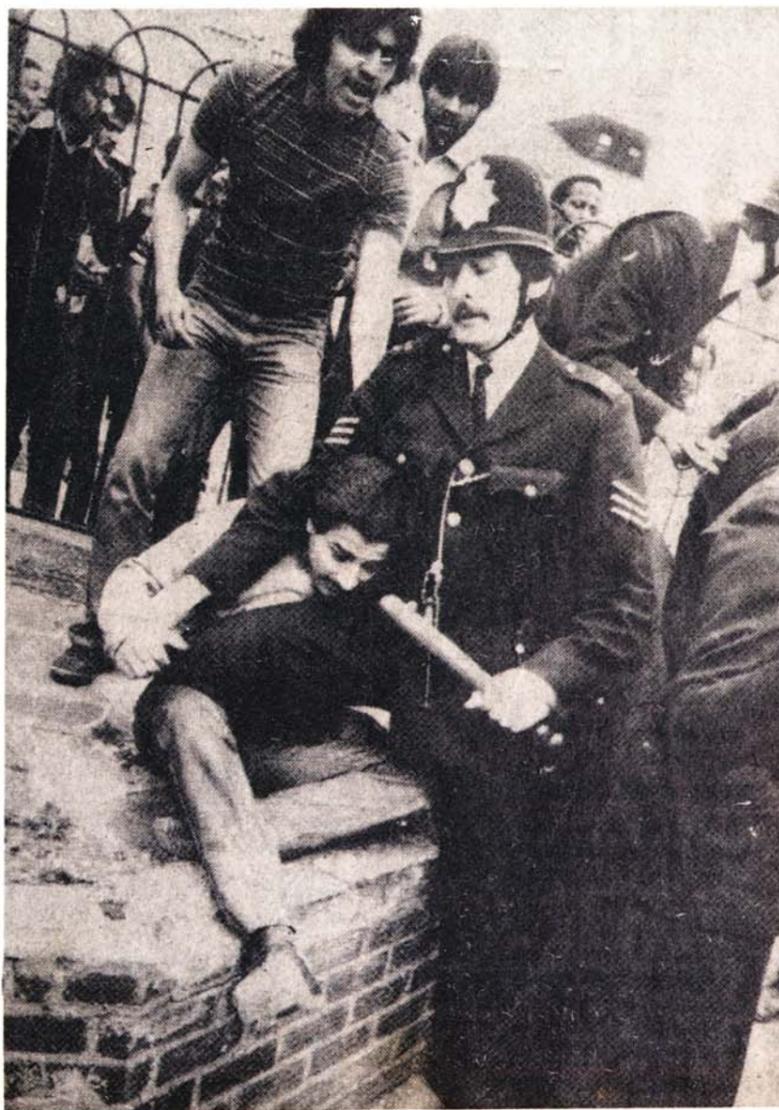
'Michael Foot and the Labour Party leaders appreciate that there's a time and a place for CS gas and plastic bullets.'

The Tories realise that in any society where mass unemployment exists, there is going to be a lot of social unrest. Their solution to this problem is to divide the working class internationally through racism, sexism and national chauvinism. Married women workers are being blamed for keeping men out of jobs. The capitalist gutter press reeks of a thinly veiled racism, when a crass campaign of hatred is whipped up against republicans and Irish people. Fascist organisations like the National Front and the British Movement are given protection by the police, and march through immigrant areas, while anyone protesting against these marches gets bludgeoned off the streets. Predictably enough, fascist attacks on blacks, Asians and on left wing bookshops or meeting places are treated with a peculiar tolerance. Recently an Irish woman worker who works in the International Marxist Group's bookshop suffered a fractured skull at the hands of fascist thugs.

Last month's riots have shattered this project. Instead of lining up with the police and the fascists thousands of white working class youth came out fighting shoulder to shoulder with the blacks. The ruling class has made a big mistake in assuming that racism is universal among white working class

### The Response of the Left

For the left, the youth revolt and the new black movement have been, and will continue to be, an important test. Tony Benn and most of the labour left have treaded carefully, unwilling to outrightly support or condemn the rioters. The revolutionary left organisations - the main ones being the Socialist Workers Party and the International Marxist Group (British section of the Fourth International) - have openly declared their support for the rebellious youth. The revolutionary left organisations which are predominantly white in composition have been active for a number of years combatting racism in the white working class and in mobilising against the fascists. They have tended to view the black community as one which must be defended rather than as one which may take the lead in battling the government. The revolutionary left has a major responsibility to build solidarity for the youth rebellion and the new black movement within the labour movement and to mobilise their support. Their organisational disunity hinders them in this. However there are signs that revolutionaries in Britain as in Ireland, are beginning to learn the importance of working together.



## Prisoners of Partition



### H-BLOCK/ARMAGH

PRISONERS OF PARTITION explains the background to the H Block/Armagh campaign. It is an analysis of why Peoples Democracy has been arguing that defence of the prisoners has been the most urgent task of the anti-imperialist movement for the past five years.

It costs 50p + (15p&p) and can be obtained from sellers of Socialist Republic or by writing to PD, Connolly Bookshop, Avoca Park, Andersonstown, Belfast 11.

# H-BLOCK: UNITY-DISCIPLINE-CLARITY

By John McAnulty

In the last issue of Socialist Republic we asked 'Can we break Thatcher?' It is quite evident that in the period since then that we have failed to do so. The prisoners have declared their determination to continue the struggle and we have been warned by campaign leaders Like Gerry Adams and Jim Gibney that we are now facing a period of 'Indefinite hunger-strike'. The great danger now is that the campaign will become demoralised and that militants will lose faith in what has been achieved already and in the ability of the campaign to move forward with a clear strategy for victory.

The campaign leadership has said that we must begin again, especially in the South, the patient work of explanation both to militants in the campaign and to the generally sympathetic mass of the Irish people and that especially we must work to broaden the campaign and to bring into action supporters of Fianna Fail, the Coalition and the SDLP.

We in Peoples Democracy agree with this. In fact it was our organisation that first agreed these as tasks for the campaign. However, we are very far from agreeing that they represent a strategy for victory.

The campaign has won many victories. It has built mass mobilisations of tens of thousands of Irish people. It has demonstrated in elections the mass sympathy of the Irish people and it has been responsible for massive pressure on the Irish Government and the main political parties. If it is to move forward now it must see the limitations of these forms of action, and understand the balance between imperialist and anti-imperialist forces that prevent victory for the hunger strikers.

One central element in this balance of forces is the role of the Irish Government and the major political

parties. PD must accept some criticism for confusion about this for not arguing more sharply and clearly at earlier points in the campaign. The simple point is that they are all pro Imperialist. They are the enemies both of the prisoners and the general struggle against British repression. This does not mean that pressure cannot be put on them. It was successful pressure by the campaign that made Garret FitzGerald move from all out attacks on the prisoners to announcing that a solution is his 'most urgent task' and which has forced all the major nationalist parties to point the finger at Britain and denounce her as responsible for the deaths. However, this does not mean that they can be relied on in a conflict with Britain and it was this mistake by the campaign that led to an absence of an overall strategy. While the British used the negotiations to confuse and demoralise the mass of the people.

PD has argued consistently that action by the mass of the Irish people is the only guarantee for victory in the campaign. Pressure on the capitalist parties is a way to challenge and expose them and win their supporters to action. The recent revolt against the GAA leadership is a good example of this.

The focus must move to the demands that the campaign has made on the nationalist parties and to exposing their hypocrisy and betrayal of the prisoners - the Irish Ambassador's attendance at the British royal wedding, the SDLP's refusal to withdraw from the councils. It should now set itself the task of implementing these demands: mass pickets of council meetings in the North, the blacking of British goods in the South and a campaign of mass pickets to prevent Irish Army movements to the border. The standing of activists from the campaign in Cavan-Monaghan and the possibility of Paddy Agnew resigning to force a contest in Louth would help to give the movement an increasingly insurrectionary character and give it power in the Dail, on the streets and in the factories to bring down any government committed to a policy of collaboration with imperialism.



Bernadette MacAliskey addressing the rally after the march in Dublin

All this will only be possible if the campaign gives a great deal more in the way of resources to challenging the trade union leadership and developing working class action. Workers groups and all the other political, sporting and cultural organisations must be represented at every level of the campaign. It is they who can really begin to hurt Britain's economic interest in Ireland. It is they who can cut off supplies to the Irish Army and it is they who can most effectively organise international support. They can speak directly to the new democratic forces organising in the rank-and-file of the British Labour party.

Recent actions by the Guards since

the Embassy battle show that the Irish Government intends to try to harrass and intimidate the movement. One important defence is to make the movement as broad as possible and workers representation will help to do this.

The horrifying and painful deaths of the prisoners can lead to demoralisation in the campaign. They can lead to despair and the belief that no further action is possible or to explosions of rage and frustration which would fragment the campaign. The only way to prevent this is for the present leadership of the campaign to adopt a clear and aggressive strategy, unify the militants around it at a

recall conference, and bring all the new structures that have been formed into a revitalised and broader movement.

The courage of the prisoners should encourage us all to the same courage and steadfastness. We should remember the many shocks and defeats that the campaign has inflicted on imperialism and that many of the international effects have not yet been fully felt by them. Each death has been a terrible blow for us, but it has also raised the stakes. Our unity, clarity and discipline can win the five demands, and in the process we will be preparing the gravestone of partition and continued imperialist rule in our country.

## REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT



By John North

As the deaths in the H Blocks continue the H Block Armagh Campaign is going through a period of crisis. It has accomplished a great deal but it is now evident that it has not been enough to break Thatcher. The leadership faces a major test. Can it hammer out a new strategy and unite the mass of the campaign around it at a time when the major parties, the Church and the Irish Government are going on the offensive to isolate and divide the campaign?

The leadership of the campaign is, of course, the Republican Movement; It is one of the ironies of history that the Republicans, who have for so many years been arguing against PD in a debate about 'Mass Action versus Militarism' should now find themselves at the head of a mass campaign based loosely on the PD model.

The fact that an organisation based on belief in the supremacy of military struggle should lead a mass campaign is, of course, a source of problems.

For most of the history of the H Block Armagh struggle the majority of Republican resources were diverted into the search for a military solution. It was only with the foundation of the National Smash H Block Armagh Committee that the Republican Movement as a whole moved behind the strategy of mass action; The failure of the first hungerstrike shook their confidence and since then there has been a certain amount of vacillation with a military and political campaign running simultaneously.

A more serious problem lies in the class nature of the Republican Movement. Its lack of a clear socialist programme means that it has a very confused attitude to the bourgeois nationalist parties and is unable to directly challenge them. It is also unable to give the proper resources and importance to trade union work and building a real working class base for the campaign.

Peoples Democracy does not believe that these problems are insurmountable inside a united campaign. What does cause us serious concern is the current of political sectarianism in the Republican Movement. In the years when the mass movement was on the downturn the Republicans saw the armed campaign as the only hope for revolution and became defensive and distrustful of anyone outside their own movement. Now the mass movement is on the upturn but the old habits of suspicion and defensiveness remain.

We believe this is why the Republicans have moved to gain greater control of many committees in the South, especially Cork and Dublin and why they chose Owen Carron to stand in Fermanagh-South Tyrone under the traditional Republican abstentionist ticket. He is also standing under the direction of the prisoners rather than directly under the control of the H Block Armagh Committee.

The campaign is under attack both from the British and from Irish collaborators. One important aspect of its defence will be to make it as broad and representative as possible. A campaign which gives democratic representation to the political parties the action committees, the trade union and factory committees as well as cultural and sporting bodies, women and youth will be able to draw on a wealth of experience in formulating a strategy for victory; Its up to all the militants in the campaign to build such a movement.

## FERMANAGH:

### UNITED H-BLOCK CANDIDATE NEEDED.

By Hugh Flynn

There is only one question anti imperialists need to ask about the Fermanagh-South Tyrone by-election. How can it help us to win? The intervention of the SDLP and Alliance make it more difficult to repeat Bobby Sands' election victory. So also will the fact that there will be no DUP boycott this time. But in fact the campaign needs to do more than this. It needs to turn passive support into direct action.

There is only one candidate standing on the demands of the prisoners and that is Owen Carron. The SDLP are asking for support for a policy of inaction and betrayal of the prisoners. Owen Carron needs to get an even greater vote than Bobby Sands. He needs to expose and totally humiliate the SDLP. His election should serve as the focus for a new burst of action by the campaign to draw new forces in and to transform parts of Fermanagh into no go areas for the British.

This is an enormous task and we believe that some tactical mistakes have been made and should be

corrected. If Owen Carron is to succeed he must be a direct representative of the campaign. Saying that his campaign is being directed by the prisoners will only create suspicion and confusion. It is also a mistake to stand on the traditional abstentionist platform. Abstention as a principle is not part of the policy of the broad campaign and we believe that this should be reviewed.

This said, victory in this election will require a national mobilisation by the campaign. Owen Carron is standing as a representative of the vast number of Irish people who oppose Thatcher's intransigence and support the prisoners' demands. This must be demonstrated by building around him the broadest possible support. Representatives from every part of the country, from all the anti-imperialist parties and from cultural and trade union groups must be brought in to support the campaign, and this must be followed up by a massive campaign on the ground not just to collect votes but to win massive support for civil disobedience and a campaign of harassment of the British. The British ignored mass sympathy - they won't be able to ignore an active MP organising a mass movement.

# SOCIALISM AND NATIONALISM

## THE LEGACY OF CONNOLLY

By JOHN MAGEE

In this issue of SOCIALIST REPUBLIC we have given special attention to the battles of August '69 and the lessons for the H-Block campaign. It is also important however, to look at some of the more general lessons of the anti-imperialist struggle. The article below starting with an appreciation of the role of James Connolly explains why socialists support national independence and why working class leadership is necessary in the struggle against British rule.

"The Irish working class, as a class, can only hope to rise with Ireland. Equally true is it that Ireland cannot rise to freedom except upon the shoulders of a working class knowing its rights and daring to take them." James Connolly, October 1914  
THE IRISH WORKER

Pearse described Connolly as 'the guiding brain' of the 1916 rebellion and it is as a leader of the Easter Rising that Connolly is most widely remembered. However, to think of Connolly simply as a military expert is to forget the richness of the legacy which Connolly bequeathed to the working people of Ireland.

As the few lines quoted above eloquently show, it was the struggle for survival waged by the toilers of Ireland that led to Connolly being present in Dublin's G.P.O., for Connolly was first and foremost a socialist internationalist.

Of course, the identification of revolutionary socialism with the struggle for Irish self-determination goes back a very long time. The founders of the international communist movement, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels were not only active fighters in the defense campaigns for the Fenian prisoners, in the latter half of the 19th century but also canvassed support for Irish freedom within the socialist and democratic movements of that time. Both Marx and Engels believed that it was in the interests of British workers to support Irish freedom especially, because failure to do so would present a tremendous barrier to the emancipation of the British working class itself.

This internationalist stand of the early communists was on the wane however by the beginning of the 20th century and almost completely scuttled by the outbreak of the First World War when socialist parties in the combatant countries lined up behind their national ruling classes. Connolly along with the Russian revolutionaries Lenin and Trotsky, was amongst the minority of socialists who opposed the war and held firmly to the principle of international workers' solidarity.

### SOCIAL REVOLUTION

Therefore, when Connolly went into the G.P.O. that Easter Monday he knew that he would get little support from socialists elsewhere. Those who were enthusiastically defending the right of their 'own nation' to knock the living daylight out of the workers of other countries would have little sympathy for any fight on behalf of Irish freedom. Indeed, Lenin and Trotsky were almost alone in defending the right of Irish workers to take up arms against imperial Britain. Arguing against those who termed the Easter Rising "A putsch" and "a skirmish", Lenin wrote:

"To imagine that social revolution is conceivable without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe ... to imagine this means repudiating social revolution." (emphasis in original)

Lenin and Trotsky had no difficulty in grasping the connection between the Irish revolt and the international

struggle for socialism. What a contrast between this clear thinking and the confused twaddle of the fake socialists who slammed Connolly as a "convert to the madness of nationalism". The British Independent Labour Party pontificated its disapproval "of armed rebellion or any other form of militarism and war". These side-line commentators on the class struggle tut-tutted the same whether addressing the genocide of world imperialism or the struggle of a small oppressed nation against one of the major imperialist powers.

### LABOUR BETRAYAL

This sort of moralising is of course as familiar to Irish socialist republicans today as it would have been to Connolly and his comrades. The present leaders of the British Labour Party are just as keen to earn the laurels of the Empire, as Foot and Concannon have shown in relation to the hunger strikers.

This shameless collaboration with imperialism by those masquerading as socialists is not simply a foreign disease. Although Connolly probably did more to strengthen Irish trade unionism than any other individual, the Irish Trade Union Congress meeting shortly after his death refused to condemn his execution. Michael O'Leary, today's leader of the Irish Labour Party and the leaders of the ICTU, with their cowardly silence on

the deaths of ATGWU member Bobby Sands and his comrades, stand in the same tradition of compromise with imperialism and contempt for the genuine interests of Irish workers

### SOCIALIST PROGRAMME

The socialist programme of Peoples Democracy has been developed on the revolutionary struggles of Lenin, Trotsky and Connolly and stands in total opposition to the treachery of Michael Foot and Michael O'Leary.

Peoples Democracy fights to build a revolutionary workers' party which can lead the struggle for a 32 county socialist republic to victory. Alongside Connolly we understand that only the working class, organised independently, can secure national liberation through socialist revolution.

The struggle for Irish freedom is centuries old and has failed to achieve success not just because the British have superior military might but also because the national movement has repeatedly been strangled by its leadership. In general the leadership of the national movement remained in the hands of the men of property — while the actual fighting was deputised to the propertyless, the industrial and agricultural labourers. After the execution of the 1916 leaders, as nationalist agitation swamped the country, the native capitalists in the South joined the independence movement. Their contribution to the movement soon became clear as the IRA began to be used to repress land agitation in the War of Independence. The Partition Treaty of 1921 saw the native capitalists installed as junior partners of British imperialism in the exploitation of Ireland's economy and natural resources. The Free Staters tore up the 1916 Proclamation and

developed a regime distinguished by its repressive character: former comrades-in-arms executed, republican and workers' organisations outlawed internment without trial, shooting of hostages.

### FIANNA FAIL REPRESSION

The arrival in government of the allegedly republican Fianna Fail did not signal any shift from this reliance on repression; De Valera proved as eager to repress the IRA as the Blue-shirts, republicans continued to be imprisoned without trial and were forced to embark on fatal hunger strikes. The rising of the nationalist workers of the Northern ghettos in 1969 following the loyalist pogroms saw Fianna Fail declare it "would not stand idly by". When internment was introduced in the North, the Free Staters set up the Special Criminal Court where republicans were convicted and jailed on unsupported allegations by the gardai. Today, as

Britain murders republican hunger strikers in the H-Blocks the Coalition arms the gardai with CS gas and water cannon.

### CLASS POSITION

The whole history of capitalist involvement in the national struggle is no more than a testament to their betrayal of Ireland and their loyalty to the capitalist class. Connolly understood this well:

"No revolutionist can safely invite the cooperation of men or classes whose ideals are not theirs and who therefore, they may be compelled to fight at some future critical stage on the journey to freedom. To this category belong every section of the propertied class and every individual

of those classes who believes in the righteousness of his own class position." (emphasis in original)

The people of no property, the workers and small farmers who depend on their labour for existence have nothing in common with the capitalist class in Ireland, Britain or anywhere else. Their interest lies in the ending of exploitation and oppression and the building of a society in which the vast majority who create the wealth through their labour receive its fruits rather than the parasites of the capitalist class. It is precisely because the task of the working class is socialist revolution that it is capable of carrying through to the end the fight for national liberation.

### OWN DEMANDS

The best and most consistent republicans are socialists. The Irish working class will never give its wholehearted support to a movement that satisfies itself with the mere extension of a 26-counties type regime throughout the country, or asks workers to forget their own demands until 'national freedom' has been achieved. Such movements have never achieved political independence from imperialism and always result in the continued exploitation and oppression of Irish workers.

In building a revolutionary workers' party in Ireland Peoples Democracy forges links with socialists throughout the world, explaining the importance of the Irish struggle and gaining valuable lessons from struggles against imperialist rule elsewhere. Such links have immediate relevance in promoting international solidarity but they also have a deeper relevance. A socialist revolution in Ireland isolated from revolutionary socialism internationally would, assuming it was not defeated militarily, be economically suffocated by imperialism: cooperation within a world socialist economy is the only guarantee that imperialist domination in Ireland once defeated, remains defeated.

Due to other assignments, Gerry Foley was unable to write the article on the Irish anti-imperialist struggle. We hope to have the article in the next issue. Instead this article by JOHN MAGEE deals with the connection between the fight for socialism and the fight for national liberation.

## SFWP SUPPORTS 'SAVAGE ATTACK'

Joe Sherlock, Sinn Fein the Workers Party TD, described the Coalition budget as "a savage attack on the working man". Sound reason, therefore to vote against it. But no, Sherlock abstained. His explanation? He was afraid he might bring down Garret FitzGerald's government!

Sinn Fein the Workers Party is fearful of another general election. They know that Sherlock won his seat by a fluke — the absence of a genuine anti-imperialist alternative. In any new contest it is a certainty that he will be opposed by a real Republican Socialist candidate. So to hang on to the "spoils of office" the SFWP prefer to let a "savage attack" pass unimpeded through Leinster House.

### SFWP POLITICS

Sherlock's pitiful performance however is not just the usual short-sighted opportunism of the "Parish pump" politician. His cowardice flows from the very logic of the SFWP's programme. The essence of this programme is a denial of the relevance of the national question.

In 1977 the SFWP published its programme in detail. 'The Irish Industrial Revolution', as it was called, argued that the economic underdevelopment and political oppression of Ireland was not caused by British imperialist domination. Rather it was caused by a species named the "Irish bourgeoisie". This class was a lazy, degenerate lot who never did anything productive and squandered their capital on useless luxuries and the like. Eventually they found themselves with

a stagnant economy and had to call in "American monopoly capitalism". U.S. big business proved to be the saviour of the Irish economy ... and of the Irish working class.

### THE REALITY OF BRITISH DOMINATION

Most of this analysis is pure fantasy. From the beginning the Irish capitalist class existed to serve the interests of British imperialism. They supplied the British market with cheap raw agricultural products, food and drink. In addition they used their profits, not to reinvest in production, but to provide a source of ready cash for British financial institutions. When this British imposed neo-colonial system became chaotically stagnant Britain decided that its own interests would be best served by sharing the burden — and the spoils — with European and American imperialism.

American big business did not arrive in Ireland as a liberator but as a neo-colonial exploiter in partnership with Britain. It is true that in terms of investment sponsored by the Industrial Development Authority, U.S. multinationals are the biggest and most dynamic contributors. But at least a third of this investment is undertaken in conjunction with the British dominated banks. Moreover British capital still controls the Irish stock-exchange and the private company sector (which in Ireland is probably more important than the stock-exchange, including in its ranks such firms as Guinneses). On top of this about a quarter of new multi-national investment is owned by British companies.

The truth is that the recent phase of capitalist development in Ireland occurred essentially within the framework of Britain's imperialist hold.

Of course, just as there are tensions between big-farmer capitalists and industrialists there are also tensions between the native, British and international capitalists. But they always sink these differences in face of the common enemy — the Irish working class and its small farmer allies. Above all, American imperialism supports and encourages British policy in Ireland.

Since the SFWP have junked the concept of British imperialist domination and replaced by the fantasy of antagonism between the "Irish bourgeoisie" and "American monopoly capitalism" it is not strange to find that they have a warped idea of what "class struggle" is all about. Because the "Irish bourgeoisie", so the argument goes, have held back economic progress, they must be pushed aside. At this point in time only "progressive" multinationals are capable of doing this. So Irish workers must help to establish the victory of U.S. big business. When a healthy capitalism has been created by this route a sound basis for building socialism will exist. But not till then can there be any talk of abolishing capitalism or building socialism.

### REFORMISM

It is in the context of this "strategy" that the capitulation of Sherlock and the SFWP to the Fine Gael coalition can be understood. The SFWP categorically disavows the revolutionary

Republicanism of Connolly. The party programme of SFWP openly states: "We want the capitalist system to feed, clothe and shelter the working class to the utmost degree even under the present system". And the document proudly adds: "We intend to fight the next general election on the basis of a short term plan which we unashamedly describe as a reformist plan and we intend in Dail Eireann to implement that plan..."

Now where did you hear that before?! You guessed it, from the Irish Labour Party. And where is the Irish Labour Party today? Right again — in Coalition with Garret FitzGerald and the other staunch defenders of capitalism. And it is clear that after only a few brief weeks in Leinster House Mr Sherlock & Co are heading in the same direction. Unfortunately for the SFWP there is room for only one reformist Labour Party in Irish politics. They will probably have to try to hang on to their usurped "Republican" credentials if they are to retain any kind of mass support. But fewer and fewer people are fooled by this manoeuvre. The dustbin of history awaits the SFWP.

Throughout the sad history of the SFWP there is at least one lesson socialists can learn. It is that you cannot abandon the national struggle without abandoning the class struggle. As Connolly said: "The cause of Ireland is the cause of Labour. The cause of Labour is the cause of Ireland".

His words could not be more relevant.

On 12 August 1969, after a year of blocking and batoning Civil Rights marches throughout the North of Ireland, the Royal Ulster Constabulary escorted an Apprentice Boys parade celebrating 300 years of sectarian tyranny through the centre of Derry. The result was the Battle of Bogside, with half the RUC trying to smash their way into the Derry ghetto to take their revenge on the Croppies who had refused to lie down.

On 13 August the two Peoples Democracy members on the executive of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association took the lead in getting NICRA to call a series of simultaneous demonstrations in solidarity with the people of Derry. The determination of the Bogside defenders and then the other protests — the riots — were too much for the RUC. At that time it was only 3,000-strong (today it has 8,000 members)

The RUC were beaten. Next day, 14 August, they were pulled out and the British troops were on the streets of Derry. As far as the withdrawal of the hated police was concerned it was a tactical victory for the people of Derry which brought them much-needed relief.

The Unionist government at Stormont in Belfast took a bitter revenge. Pressured by Paisley at a midnight meeting, Chichester-Clark, the Prime Minister, mobilised the paramilitary and exclusively Protestant B Specials and issued armoured cars to the RUC in Belfast. That night the armoured cars roared up and down the Catholic Falls Road machine-gunning Divis Flats, while the B Specials and Loyalist mobs surged down the side streets from the Shankill Road, burning out Catholic families.

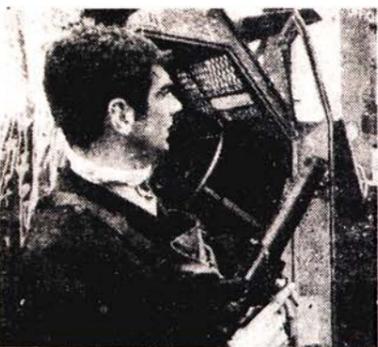
The people of the Falls were virtually defenceless but the following day — calling on folk memory and traditions of previous generations — barricades were built at every street corner and the roads were blocked the way they had been against the police cage-cars in the 1920s and 1932. Free Belfast was born.

**BAYONETS**

The vows were made that there would not be another night like 14 August on the Falls. If the RUC and Specials tried to come in again they would have to fight every inch of the way. The result would have been civil war. Already there had been riots in Dublin with crowds demanding guns for the North.

On 15 August the RUC was withdrawn from the Falls and replaced by the British Army. A day later they were in the Catholic Ardoyne district of Belfast. Few noted at that time that as the British troops took up their positions on the Falls their bayonets were pointed at the Catholic ghettos, not at their attackers.

Behind the barricades the traditional leaders — the Church, the politicians, and the businessmen — were discarded. The people turned to the Republicans and the militant wing of the Civil Rights movement. The Republicans set up a Defence Committee and on the afternoon of 15 August representatives of PD and the Defence Committee worked out a set of four demands to be met before the barricades came down. These were: disband the B Specials; disarm the RUC; abolish the Special Powers Act; suspend the Stormont government.



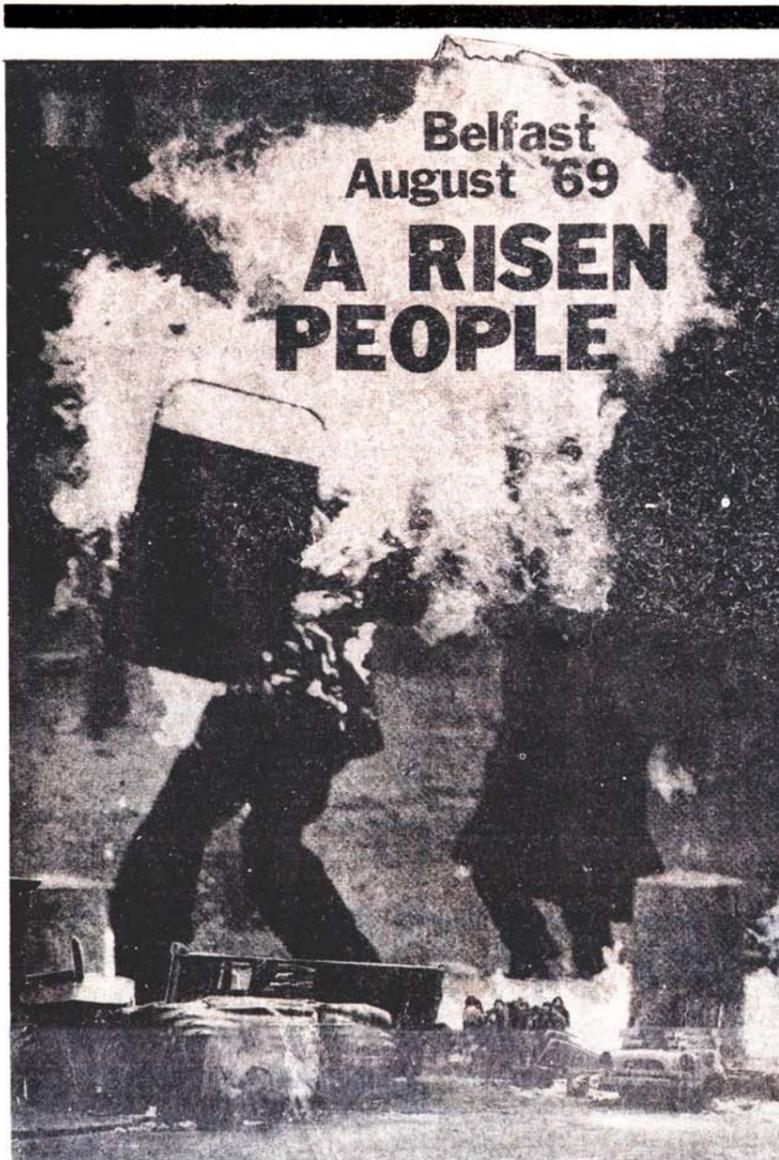
MEMBER OF THE DEFEATED RUC DEFENCE COMMITTEES

That night PD members set up a pirate radio as the voice of the Defence Committee and the people behind the barricades. The next day more PD members were running off the first copies of a bulletin outlining the demands.

Despite the bloodshed — eight people killed (two of them Protestants, six

Once more the barricades have gone up in the streets of Belfast and Derry. Once more thousands demonstrated the unquenchable spirit of resistance which twelve years of British military occupation has been unable to defeat.

MICHAEL FARRELL here recalls what it was like in August 1969 and tells the inside story of how the Catholic ghettos of Belfast barricaded themselves off for a month, keeping out both the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the British Army.



Catholics); not to mention 1,500 Catholic families driven out over a couple of months - morale behind the barricades was high. The RUC and the military kept out and the people knew instinctively that they'd struck a major blow at the Orange state. The barricades were strengthened and rotas organised to guard them in every area.

There was a high level of mass involvement. The pirate radio, now Radio Free Belfast, moved to a permanent base in Leeson Street on the heart of the Falls and got a new transmitter which could be heard all over the city. It broadcast requests and political comments all day long. The duplicated bulletins had become **Citizen Press**, a daily newsheet with a circulation of 10,000 inside the barricades.

**CITIZEN PRESS**

The **Citizen Press** and above all the radio played a vital role behind the barricades. In the first days they raised the morale of the beleaguered people. They answered the lying propaganda of the Unionist regime with none of the qualifications and euphemisms of the liberal bourgeois press.

The anti-Unionist people realised that at last they had tools of their own which would tell their side of the story and that they could give their answers direct and plain to Chichester-Clark, Paisley and Callaghan. And the world's press would hear it because they all listened to Radio Free Belfast.

After the first few days the radio and the paper served another function. They raised the consciousness of the people. The mass audience in the ghettos heard about the connection between Unionism and big business, about the economic reasons for Britain's intervention the North, and the real reason why Jack Lynch, Prime Minister of the South of Ireland, had stood idly by — the fact that the Southern economy was totally dominated by British

economic imperialism.

However crudely explained (for we were not Marxists then), the political message of the radio and the paper for the months that the barricades lasted did a lot to lay the ideological foundation for the decade of struggle which was to come.

**BARRICADES BULLETIN**

PD ran the radio and did most of the work on the **Citizen Press** until late September. We also produced a printed paper, **Barricades Bulletin**, which was circulated in the rest of the North, the South and even in Britain. We set up a poster workshop producing powerful propaganda posters like 'The Mad Major' (Chichester-Clark) and 'Malone Road Fiddles while Falls Road Burns' (Malone Road being the home of Belfast's upper class). And all the time we repeated the message, 'the barricades stay till our demands are met'.



Brit Freeland and RUC head Peacock announce disarming of B Specials

It was an exciting time. The people of the ghettos were getting their first taste of political freedom since the yoke of the Northern state had been clamped on their necks in 1921.

**BATTLE OF THE FALLS**

No-one behind the barricades, not even PD, demanded the immediate withdrawal of the British troops — though we at least warned that when their masters ordered it their guns would be turned on the ghettos, as they were a year later in the Battle of the Falls, July 1970. But those were the days when women gave the soldiers tea and Jimmy Sullivan, a Republican leader, met the British commanders and escorted the new head of the RUC round the Falls.

That showed how low the level of political consciousness still was. There were other mistakes — of which one of the most serious concerned democracy. The (Republican) Defence Committee wouldn't hold elections for a council to run the free areas, or hold mass meetings to discuss policy.

**POLITICIANS AND CLERGY**

They had no confidence in the people and were afraid that they would elect the old politicians or the nominees of the clergy. But the Defence Committee had no democratic mandate, and under pressure they co-opted precisely the people they had wanted to keep out — the politicians, Father Padraig Murphy, and Tom Conaty, an ambitious and right-wing Catholic businessman.

Eventually such people controlled the Central Defence Committee. And because there were no mass meetings to discuss the demands, the CDC began to water them down and to negotiate deals with the British government.

Spontaneous outbursts of popular feeling, as when Bishop Philbin was chased out of Albert Street for trying to get the barricades down, delayed the sell-out. But they couldn't prevent it. By the end of September most of the barricades were down, although only the head of the RUC had been changed — the Special Powers Act was still there and, most important, so was the Stormont parliament. It was to take another two and a half years and a lot of bloodshed before Stormont was overturned.

**DEMOCRACY**

The PD members were unhappy about the lack of democracy but we didn't fight it hard enough, partly because we were still a student-based group with few real roots in the area. Eventually our position in running the propaganda for the area became impossible.

This happened in two ways. Party whips arrived from the Sinn Fein headquarters in Dublin (this was before Sinn Fein split into its provisional and Official wings) to enforce the party line. They explained to the local Republican leaders that they should never have agreed to the demand to suspend Stormont since — according to these people who were later to lead the Officials — it was a democratic Irish Assembly.

Then they complained about the politics of the radio and paper. Comparisons between the attack on the Falls and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia would have to stop; so would calls for democracy behind the barricades. Reluctantly the local Republicans toed the line. A censor was appointed to the radio and an entire issue of **Citizen Press** was recalled and burnt. There were no democratic structures to which we could appeal.

Secondly, while the radio and paper supposedly voiced the policies of the Defence Committee, these changed from day to day as the right wing strengthened their positions and continued their secret negotiations with the military and the British government. Again we didn't fight as hard as we should — but by then there was no structure through which we could have carried the struggle to the people.

**UNFREE CITIZEN**

At the end of September, we withdrew from running the **Citizen Press** and the radio, although the latter had been rendered ineffective anyway by high powered jamming equipment brought in by the British. On 3 October we produced the first issue of a new, uncensored paper of our own, **Free Citizen** (later to become **Unfree Citizen** after internment, and now **Socialist Republic**). By then the barricades

had come down

Free Belfast ended with only a whimper, but its significance was great. It gave the people of the ghettos their first real experience of their power and of self-organisation. For a few weeks they had held the British Army and the RUC at bay, organised to defend their own streets and areas, and generated their own media to voice their aspirations and demands.

**1905 SOVIET**

Free Belfast should have some of the significance for Ireland that the Paris Commune and the 1905 Soviet had for the Bolsheviks in Russia. The way forward was pointed, the type of organisation which was required for a successful revolution was shown. Free Belfast showed the remarkable power of the masses united and organising themselves.

**INTERNMENT**

It was the rising of the mass of Catholic population that brought about the introduction of internment. When public and international opinion had castigated internment on the basis that no pretence of justice could be pleaded when there was no trial, the Diplock Commission was set up and it reported in early 1972. A form of trial was introduced through trial by one judge and not by the defendant's peers. Rules of evidence were changed to allow conviction purely on the evidence of a statement and statements obtained under duress and involving brutality by interrogators now became not only acceptable but commonplace. The Castlereagh conveyor belt system provided as effective a form of repression as internment but without the controversial overtones implied in the internment system. The form has changed but not the content. Despite the special nature of the arrest and trial procedures for political offenders the British government has adopted as a central strategy of criminalising those in the vanguard of the political struggle. If these are defeated, they reckon, the rest will be only a mopping up operation to defeat the rebellious Fenians. But the reaction to the hunger strikers deaths has not been as quiet as the British government expected. 90,000 people attended the funeral of Bobby Sands and the campaign has seen an H-Block MP and two H Block TDs elected.



THE BRITS MOVE IN WHERE RUC FEAR TO TREAD

Once again the repressive solution to the struggle for civil and democratic rights and reforms has raised the whole question of the undemocratic foundations of the northern state itself, and has caused the beginnings of a breach in the criminal bipartisan support by the British Labour Party for Tory policies in Ireland. Similarly the election campaigns have caused traumas for all 3 bourgeois parties in the south who have paid electorally for their silence on the H Block issue. The lesson of 12 years of the British army, 10 years of internment followed by other repression is that the nationalist community cannot be defeated by oppressive measures. Only when partition is brought down by the force of mass mobilisation can the foundations be laid for a just equitable and peaceful Ireland.

We will only succeed if we learn the most important lesson of Free Belfast: to put our faith in the masses. Imperialism will never be defeated by self-appointed leaderships answerable to no one or by secret negotiations, but only by the will of the people.

# Programme to Unify the Womens Movement

By SUE JACKSON

Today the Irish womens movement is at the crossroads. 1979 saw the movement begin to develop on a national scale. New organisations and campaigns developed, debate and discussion around the politics of feminism deepened and attempts were made to set up a national feminist federation. 32 county united activity around important questions such as women political prisoners in Armagh, Violence Against Women, the contraception and abortion campaigns began to develop.

Yet now, two years later, the movement is fragmented and divided. It has almost disappeared from national politics. There have been few if any national meetings or newsletters and there is no national womens magazine.

Women have retreated from united activity and discussion into the safety of their own politics and the womens movement is now racked by divisions between anti-imperialist and republican women, feminists and social democrats. These political divisions, a reflection of the political divisions of the Irish working class created by partition, make it impossible for the womens movement to grow and develop. At every major development in the class and anti-imperialist struggle these political divisions reassert themselves inside the feminist movement. Fragile unity that has been built up around important issues (such as Violence against Women, Armagh, contraception) is lost. This has been the pattern for Irish feminists since the inception of the hunger strike campaign.

Yet this disunity takes place in a

period in which struggles of working class women have developed apace. Women have been active in the trades union movement, in the student movement, in operating advice centres, in fighting for better housing and welfare facilities. And these trends are bound to continue as the economic and social crisis which is forcing thousands onto the dole will hit women hardest and force them into struggle to defend their already impoverished standard of living.

Feminists must recognise the implications of this for their movement. With working class women being thrown into struggle, with thousands being drawn into the anti-imperialist movement, it is essential that feminists build the 32 county independent womens movement into a national political force.

Peoples Democracy believes that the unity of the womens movement is of fundamental importance — we cannot achieve progress on any of the issues facing women while we are divided and fragmented. In fact, the experience of feminists over the last 10 years has been that this tendency of the movement to fragment is a recurring one and this is not the first

time we have been faced with this situation. How do we explain this?

By recognising that divisions in the womens movement are not only because of political differences, but primarily because of the weakness of the Irish feminist current. This current, working in a situation of extreme difficulty — partition — faces huge obstacles to winning the demands of womens liberation. This underlines the importance of uniting the feminist movement.

But we cannot unite around action alone. The nature of the difficulties facing Irish women demands that we find political unity around the demands of womens liberation. That is why PD has drawn up a 'Programme for Womens Liberation in Ireland' which takes up all aspects of Irish womens oppression — not just one particular campaign.

Only by uniting around such a programme will women develop the political coherence and confidence necessary to sustain the problems of building an Irish womens movement. Only such a programme allows for unity by all currents of Irish women around their common oppression. This will go some way to overcome the tendency to fragment and divide in the face of these very real difficulties.

PD will be organising discussions and meetings around these points and invites all women to sponsor a conference to take place in September/October 1981 around this programme and the need to unite Irish women in the fight against their oppression.



## PROGRAMME FOR WOMENS LIBERATION IN IRELAND

- (1) For a 32 county independent womens movement.
- (2) Remove the Church's veto on state policy — democratic rights for all women:
  - de-criminalisation of abortion
  - access to free safe and legal contraception
  - the removal of all constitutional and legal impediments to the right to divorce.
- (3) For the right of all women to work; for equal pay, against low pay.
- (4) For the right to nursery facilities funded by the state.
- (5) Against violence against women; organise against rape, domestic violence. State funding for rape crisis, womens aid and womens centres.
- (6) Active support for the struggles of working class women in community and social issues — housing, rents, health and welfare cutbacks.
- (7) For the right of men and women to determine their own sexual orientation — for the right of gays to live free from harassment by the state.
- (8) The oppressive conditions suffered by Irish women, 'the slave of the slave' have been maintained and deepened by partition and imperialist domination.
  - for an end to partition
  - for an end to imperialist presence in Ireland.

# HOW COALITION DECEIVES WOMEN

For the first time election promises by the political parties reflected the importance of women's issues and the pressure which the women's movement could bring to bear on votes. The politicians, whether they liked it or not, were forced to have policies on women. Issues such as equal employment, childrearing, divorce, family planning, Social Welfare inequalities, and even abortion were raised through pressure from women's groups, and got a brief but public airing. Even the most backward politicians recognised that they must publicly make some stand on women's issues.

Echoing this pressure, female representation in the Dail has also risen, giving potential to a hitherto lacking women's voice in that great seat of male supremacy. Unlike previous election campaigns, where women were exhorted to vote for any female candidate simply because she was a woman, women's groups examined the candidates' actual commitment to women's issues.

But after the political mouthings and somersaults, what actually are we left with? In reality a sordid coalition deal between a bourgeois Fine Gael and an all but defunct Labour Party.

Election promises not intended to be taken too seriously, are being quietly shelved. The special attention to women's issues promised by Fine Gael has become so much brouhaha. The all too familiar 'wait until later ladies' rings out again.

One of the major carrots in the 'women deserve better' Fine Gael campaign was the £9.60 wages for housework promise. Even Fianna Fail was forced to react to the glossy ads which showed a dutiful housewife ironing her old man's shirt. And it is this image of the housewife, in her place, ironing, which is re-establishing itself into Coalition thinking. Any



Seeing as the Labour Party has already welched on divorce what hope for socialism?

promises relating to work outside the home have been given very short shrift indeed.

The £9.60 so eagerly awaited and so expensively advertised, has been deferred, we are now told; probably this will be indefinitely. Even the general tax reforms which would have affected groups such as single parents and widows have been put off. The subject of divorce was shelved early on in Labour's sell-out for a place in the Dail.

And the old chestnut of family planning: we are told that 'the service will be overhauled' — whatever that means. Like many other coalition policies it is left sufficiently vague as to mean anything.

So what is the reality for women?

In essence the majority of promises and election fireworks which surrounded women's issues has fizzled out. As far as women are concerned the coalition government would seem to echo good old Charlie's philosophy of "an Irish solution to an Irish problem" — close your eyes boys and hope the woman's thing will go away.

The fact that women have an increased representation in the Dail may not amount to a great deal either. We must remember that those elected are first and foremost members of conservative parties and may be towed into line without too much trouble. Some in fact could not wait to get into the Dail before they compromised their previously stated positions on particular issues. It is debatable just how many of the women elected because of their supposed commitment to women's

issues will continue to represent these votes.

Whilst this government will probably not last very long it should not obscure the fact that bread and butter attacks are at present being made on working class people. What is blatantly obvious is that women, far from making gains, will be the particular victims in the cutbacks in the standard of living. Working class women having none of the privileges of their more wealthy sisters, may have a very bleak future under this coalition government.

### The kitchen sink

The monetarist response of the government to mounting unemployment and increasing deprivation shows that they hold no solution to the growing capitalist crisis. Their response is an attack on the working class and this means increasing cutbacks and rising prices.

In such a situation women's issues will be put well and truly to the bottom of the list. The traditional glorification of the role of women in the family should also be expected; this, incidentally re-emerges throughout all the crises of capitalism. All those fine policies espoused, concerning women's role outside the home, have already bitten the dust. The Labour party programme would make particularly ironic reading for women now, if they had a sense of the absurd. No creche facilities, no equality of employment, no job training and so on. Quite the reverse; with increasing unemployment, women will soon be hearing the cry: 'jobs for the men; women - back to the home!'

It is precisely at this point, when we are being told again to tighten our belts that women must organise a strong and united fightback. It is imperative that any illusions which the women's movement has in liberalism, be broken. Capitalism has no answers. The immediate task for the women's movement must be to re-organise, re-structure, and campaign around those promises which have been broken. And it is not sufficient to ask; we must, rather, demand — Demand — to make sure that women's issues cannot be shelved. Demand — that all the things the Labour Party mumbled about in obscurity, but jettisoned in government, be put back at the top of the agenda.

The election has provided some important lessons for the women's movement; it has shown that women are capable of exerting pressure on the politicians; and, like it or not, women's issues were a significant part of the election campaign. Equally, it has shown the willingness with which the coalition is ready to dump those same issues. We must recognize that no single advance for women has, in the past, or will, in the future, come willingly from a government which is based on capitalist principles. Victories will only be won by consistent and well-organised outside pressure. It is up to us all to make sure that Garret's election words: 'women deserve better' become a reality — not by any faith in a shaky coalition, but rather by strength and unity in ourselves.

GLEN SPRAY

# FEMINIST ANTI-IMPERIALISM A DOUBLE-SIDED TASK



by Anne Speed

The last national activity which brought together anti-imperialist women and feminists occurred last March. International Women's Day became a focal point for self-organisation and solidarity with the Armagh women prisoners. In both Dublin and Belfast marches were organised and conferences held which between them attracted several hundred women activists. International feminist delegations also turned up.

But since then little or nothing has happened. The Armagh women are no longer considered central (it is true they are not on Hunger Strike) and work on united activity among women on the five demands rapidly subsided. It has now ceased altogether. The lack of an immediate focus has thrown some anti-imperialist women off balance - indicating their basic lack of clarity on how to answer the needs of the prisoners campaign and build an anti-imperialist-feminist current. A new group has emerged (mainly involving the IRSP) 'Irish Socialist Women in Struggle' which PD believes is in danger of making sectarian mistakes.

The building of an anti-imperialist feminist current in the broad diversely structured women's movement and the anti-imperialist movement is a double sided task. But some think it is a straightforward question of raising an awareness of women's oppression

into the anti-imperialist movement. Initiatives are organised solely within anti-imperialist organisations and the H Block/Armagh Campaign itself. Thus the setting up of I.S.W.S. is calculated to address itself in the main, to these layers of women. And even then, the appending of 'Socialist' may stand as an obstacle to large numbers of Republican women.

There is a real danger in this approach. We have seen some of the results. Without real and ongoing involvement in the broad women's movement (in spite of its pro-imperialist weakness) on the issues that concern women we run the risk of being sucked in to alleviate the immediate needs of the moment. Pressure to accommodate to the backwardness of the Republican movement becomes intensified.

This is precisely what happened to Women Against Imperialism in Belfast. Because of this very critical situation around the Hunger Strikes, the self-organisation of women was swamped and downgraded. With Armagh no longer immediately central, links with the sympathetic feminist layers were broken. Many of these women did get involved in the general campaign but only in a marginal way.

Of course problems like this are inevitable - but we must begin to overcome them. To start with we must first understand the importance and dynamic of the women's movement. The fight against the restrictions on women is a challenge to capitalist

society. Secondly we must fight for the recognition of this fact among anti-imperialist activists. We cannot go round the broad women's movement, we must go into it and build links with those women struggling in the Northern ghettos, in the workplaces, inside campaigns and organisations.

As we spell out in another article, this process can begin by elaborating a clear anti-imperialist programme for women's liberation. By doing this, we can clearly assess what our priorities are and avoid subordinating the overall needs of women to short-term crises.

Irish Socialist Women in Struggle have called a conference for October - which could begin the building of such a current if certain tasks were carried out.

PD believes that this conference should be based around the kind of programme we suggest. It should be clearly aimed at bringing the two experiences of anti-imperialism and feminism together. The Conference should therefore be built in an open and democratic way - with a broad organising body open to all those women who are interested. I.S.W.S. actively seek this broad participation.

If this conference is built outside this framework, its appeal will be reduced and it will fall far short of taking up the real opportunities that exist. Opportunities that pose the task of building the independent struggles of women as a part of the fight against British Imperialism.

# GAY RIGHTS AND NATIONAL RIGHTS

Following on from our report of the banning of a Gay Society in University College, Cork in Vol 4 No. 2 of Socialist Republic we have had requests from readers to explain the nature of the struggle for personal freedom. Readers of Socialist Republic will be aware of our view that the struggle for women's liberation is part of the struggle for national liberation. We have consistently argued that feminists should recognise that the domination of women by men in this society and the denial of democratic rights to women is part of a broader domination of the Irish people by British imperialism.

In this article MARTIN Mac An GHOILL shows how this also applies to the persecution of Gay people. Any denial of the rights of Gay people is an attack on a section of the Irish people. No Irish person can justifiably support it.

On a world scale the last fifteen years have been dominated by two great struggles - the struggle of oppressed people to overthrow the exploitation of imperialism and the struggle of women for full control over their own lives. In Ireland too, these two interconnected struggles have fired the imagination of youth and begun a debate which will outlive the end of Capitalism. That debate is centred around the various ways in which people can live and the relationships they have with others. Are we to continue the exploitative and oppressive personal relationships established as the norm under capitalism, or will be forced to change our whole system of social and sexual relations as the foundations of the new society are laid?

For a very long time socialists and other progressives ignored this aspect of the struggle for liberation. As part of and affected by male dominated society they chose only to see an economic exploitation of women. They therefore ignored the revolutionary potential of the struggle for personal and social freedom and assumed that equal pay was the be-all and the end-all of women's liberation. There is no doubt that this failure to understand male domination has an objective basis particularly in Ireland, where all freedom of expression eventually hits the stone wall of the Catholic Church. The Famine (Britain's neutron bomb of the 19th century), broke the back of Irish militancy and resistance for a whole generation. The only social organisation to survive intact was the Catholic Church, which quickly moved to establish control over all aspects of Irish society, including the personal relationships between people. Partition entrenched this position and along with the Protestant churches in the 6 Counties ensured that a blanket morality existed which persecuted and excommunicated all those who had different ideas about achieving personal happiness and fulfillment.

It wasn't until the world-wide rebellinn of youth in the 1960s that any real challenge was made to the forced heterosexuality encouraged by the churches. In this context women and young people demanded as of right control of their own bodies and lives. Gay people too, felt the confidence to break with the traditional stereotype of male/female couples and asserted their right to choose their own lifestyle.

How is Gay Liberation linked to National Liberation? On one level it is obvious that anything which loosens the control of one group over another must expand whatever democratic rights already exist. Thus gay people who are brought into the struggle for the democratic right to choose who they will live with push forward the struggle for all democratic rights and give self-determination a concrete expression. On a deeper level gays contribute to the struggle for national liberation by challenging the very foundations of the two reactionary states. Partition is the mechanism whereby much of the social and democratic legislation wrested from the British state by the British working class was denied to the Irish people. In refusing to accept an imposed sexuality and moral code the struggle for gay liberation exposes the nature of partition and the forces defending it.

But gays are not the only ones to suffer. Nor are they the only ones to fight back. For the past twelve years the Irish people have waged a war of national liberation against British imperialism, first through open resistance and latterly through massive mobilisations in defence of the political prisoners. Gays must now take up a debate with the forces leading that resistance to show where the demands of gay people figure in the programme of the Irish revolution. Equally those sympathetic to the struggle of gay people within the national liberation struggle must show that the demands of gay people can never be achieved except in a deformed way, while partition and the two reactionary states exist. It is a debate which can only be mutually beneficial.



By JACINTA DEIGNAN

The most dynamic force behind the present H-Block/Armagh campaign has been that of youth. But youth have yet to be organised as a separate body which will show the real strength of youth in the campaign. Serious attempts have been made by the various youth committees around the country to do this.

Although the NHBA/Committee has recognised the vital role youth play they have done very little to prioritise this or give support and back up to the youth committees that already exist. Because the NHBA/

Committee has not taken a stronger position on youth, youth themselves are less confident to organise autonomous activities.

### DUBLIN YOUTH

The Dublin Youth Committee attempted to do this with a certain amount of success, by organising a march to RTE protesting about the coverage of the royal wedding. The march attracted about 400 young people. This march could have been a good starting point in broadening the base of youth involvement with groups like Comhaltas Ceoilteoiri Eireann, Ogras, Connolly Youth Movement participating. We need to make a real effort at involving these groups and also youth involved

in action groups if the youth campaign is to go forward. We need the back up and support of the NHBA/Committee to organise a National Youth Conference in the near future.

Working class youth are ready to actively back the prisoners. They are looking for a political framework within which they can harness this energy and their anger. The NHBA Committee would be doing a grave disservice to both the prisoners and the anti-imperialist movement as a whole if they failed to utilise their energy. A broad democratic mobilisation of youth now will bear rich dividends in the years to come.

# "SHE COULD SEE THE REVOLUTION ITSELF"



Nora Connolly O'Brien, daughter of James Connolly, died recently. Throughout her long life she remained true to her father's ideal of a 32 county Worker's Republic. She is most recently remembered for her defence of the hunger strikers and her support for their five just demands. Below we publish a tribute to her in the form of an interview with Raynor Lysaght, historian and member of Peoples Democracy.

## What were the political ideas of Nora Connolly O'Brien?

One of the conversations I remember having with her was when she asked me was I a 'Connolly Socialist' or a 'Lenin Socialist'. Her differentiation of this is the key to her successes and her weaknesses politically. She was the only consistent follower of her father to survive. She inherited from him his socialism, his recognition of the key role of the National Question in the Irish socialist revolution; but also his belief that the workers could be expected to make the national and socialist revolutions through their spontaneous consciousness. In her life she worked as hard as anyone since her father's death to achieve his aims yet she did so in keeping loyal to the limitations that had helped destroy him and that handicapped and prevented the realisation of his dream in the revolutionary conditions after 1916.

## You mean she didn't understand the importance of a revolutionary party for continuity in the struggle?

Yes. Unlike her brother Roddy she never accepted the need for a vanguard revolutionary party of the Bolshevik model. It must be added that Roddy's subsequent career could only have justified her initial refusal. Her own career reached its nadir when she became the left cover for Fianna Fail in the Seanad from 1951 to 1954 and from 1957 to 1969. This was widely seen at the time as betrayal. In fact it was consistent with her whole political philosophy. Seeking the independent unstimulated action of the people and failing to find it she had to rely on herself and could just as well work as a Fianna Fail nominated

senator as in a completely isolated position outside any party. Certainly as a senator she never stooped to Roddy's depths as when he brought the name of Connolly to support the most repressive government since the Emergency.

## Was her isolation the almost inevitable consequence of the sell-out of the national question by the Labour Party?

Before she entered the Seanad her belief in the spontaneity of the workers had caused her to reject the organisational Bolshevism of her brother, Roddy, the revolutionary syndicalism of Jim Larkin and the reformism of William O'Brien and Thomas Foran. For years after the crushing defeat of the anti-imperialists in the Civil War she was an isolated figure but re-entered organised politics with the Republican Congress in the early 1930s. Here she found herself in a loose alliance with her brother in their demand for a Worker's Republic as distinct from the popular front manoeuvres of Gilmore and O'Donnell. However, she and Roddy allied with them against the demand for a new party by Michael Price. When she was defeated on this in the Republican Congress she joined the Irish Labour Party which, for a brief period, seemed both loose enough and radical enough for her. In 1940 William Norton capitulated to the bishops and removed the Worker's Republic from the party's aims. She and her husband left the party. Roddy remained to become a coalitionist TD and later chairman of the Labour Party in its most pro-imperialist phase.

## What of her later political career?

By 1951, after the betrayals of the Labour Party, there seemed nowhere to go but Fianna Fail, particularly with the Republican Movement in a militarist and anti political period. But she never actually joined the party. In 1969 Jack Lynch decided that he could no longer allow his senate to include anyone who was not a 100% Fianna Fail hack. Nora had opposed his party's line on trade union restrictions and on gerrymandering. She had to go and it seemed like the end of her career.

## But she hadn't given up the fight?

She certainly hadn't. The last twelve years of her life were probably her finest. Despite crippling arthritis and steadily failing eyesight she travelled Ireland and the world giving her name and her support to the revived anti-imperialist movement. In this she did as much, and probably more, than many so-called anti-imperialists half her age. Yet she continued to do it alone. She remained as she always had been, an independent anti-imperialist working by herself for the working class revolution. She remained distrustful of building anything through the medium of which the revolution could be lead to victory. Nonetheless, unlike many who could see the need for such a weapon, she could see the revolution itself. It is unlikely that we will see anyone to follow her as she followed her father. But it must be understood in what way we who come after her must differ from her. Isolated and, yes, heroic interventions for the revolution can achieve much. Only a party can bring victory. But equally, a party must be as revolutionary as were James Connolly and his daughter Nora.

# CUBA'S 20 YEAR FIGHT AGAINST IMPERIALISM

Review of Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution by Joe Hansen.

The year 1960 was a special one in the history of humankind. It witnessed the setting up of the first workers' state in the Western hemisphere - revolutionary Cuba was born. In the two decades that followed this historic event Cuba has acted as a source of inspiration to millions of oppressed people struggling for liberation in many diverse parts of the world. Since then there have been many successful wars of National Liberation: Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique and in Central America itself, Nicaragua and Grenada have overturned centuries of oppression and their revolutions stand now where Cuba stood at the beginning of the 1960s. Again in Central America, El Salvador is waging a protracted war against imperialist rule. Indeed Latin America has not been the same since the coming to power of the 26th July Movement over two decades ago.

Today, Cuba remains an 'acid test' for revolutionaries worldwide. The methods of the Cuban revolution posed a whole series of questions for Marxists. This was particularly so in the case of revolutionaries in the U.S.. For them the question of Cuba was from the beginning much more than a theoretical problem. With the main imperialist power just a mere 90 miles away from the infant workers state the role of revolutionaries in the U.S. was of primary importance. Joe Hansen has compiled a series of invaluable documents in his book 'The Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution'. As a leading member of Socialist Workers Party, U.S. supporters of the Fourth International, he went to Cuba in the early stages of the revolution to report firsthand on the situation there for the U.S. Trotskyist paper 'The Militant'.

The book contains a detailed background to the long history of imperialist domination in Cuba, from Spanish domination to U.S. occupation, outlining the various puppet regimes that acted as caretakers for U.S. imperialist rule. The extent of imperialist penetration of the economy is underlined graphically with statistics which show how Cuba was a poverty stricken country, whose assets were heartlessly extracted while the native population were left unemployed or paid totally inadequate wages, undernourished and illiterate.

## STALINIST ROLE

There are articles which analyse the role of the Communist Party in the decades leading up to the revolution (at one time Communist Party Ministers served in the U.S. sponsored dictator Batista's Cabinet) and in the immediate aftermath of the success of 'El Ejercito Rebelde' (The Rebel Army). In this connection, a lot of attention is given to the international role of Stalinism in this period. The latter's line of 'peaceful co-existence' placed in immediate jeopardy any revolution which was threatening to cause a disturbance in Stalinism's accord with the imperialist powers. Spain and Germany in the 30s and Vietnam in the 60s are cited as significant examples when the weakness of both 'socialism in one country' and 'peaceful co-existence' contributed to the rise of European fascism in the first case and the delay in the victory of the Vietnamese revolution in the second.

The most important part of the book however concentrates on the nature of the Cuban state and economy, the Castro leadership, the role of armed struggle and the place of Permanent Revolution in the Cuban situation. On the latter, the book argues that the Castro leadership set out to overthrow Batista and all he represented in foreign domination. However, having achieved this, it felt it necessary to abolish cap-



Fidel Castro talking to women's brigades members

italist property relations, gradually confiscate imperialist property, carry out radical agrarian reform with all its ramifications. So Cuba moved from being a backward imperialist dominated country to being the first workers' state in the Western world.

## INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

This process however raised a whole number of questions; the role of the Party, can armed insurrection achieve socialism, the role of the urban masses etc. Answers to these questions are dealt with in detail

There is also great emphasis on the

sectarian attitudes towards Cuba of various currents claiming to be Trotskyist: notably the Posadas current in Latin America and the Socialist Labour League in Britain. The relationship between Cuba and the workers' states, its role in international solidarity and specifically whether or not it can act independently of the U.S.S.R. are covered in detail.

## SUPPORT

The one point which is strikingly clear from the book is that the comrades of the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S. saw it as their revolutionary duty to

defend the Cuban revolution; their activity in the 'Fair Play for Cuba Committee' which sought to answer slanders and distortions against revolutionary Cuba in the U.S.A. is illustrative of their role. From a position of unconditional support for the overthrow of imperialism the S.W.P. sought to critically analyse the unfolding revolution. This book is a compilation of articles and documents, written from such a standpoint, provides a solid background of facts and historical analysis of the dynamics of the Cuban Revolution.

By PAT O'CONNOR

# Iran: A Study For Irish Socialists

## capitalism resists workers' growing independence

Irish republican socialists will recognize all too readily that when a country rises to throw off centuries of imperialist rule, the entire repressive baggage of colonialism can rarely be thrown out in just one great upsurge. A whole range of conflicting attitudes and forces are thrown up by such an upsurge, because a country does not emerge from oppression completely unscathed.

The Iranian people, after a century of struggle against colonial and imperialist domination, overthrew the Shah and his hated regime, beginning a process of weakening the grip of world imperialism's preying aggressively upon their country.

But Iran's process of revolution has many twists and turns to steer through: socialist revolution is not guaranteed, despite the extensive mobilization of Young Socialists among high schools and student groups; despite the programme of Reconstruction, originated by students; despite the extraordinary leap of millions of Iranian women from deepest oppression into the front line of the uprising; despite the workers' Shoras, or committees, and the mass mobilizations with the peasants to defend Iran against Iraqi invasion.

### Son of a Dog

When Abol Hassan Bani-Sadr was elected President of Iran eighteen months ago, with over 80% of the vote, he was described by the constitution as 'next to the leader, the highest authority in the country'. He is now ousted, and denounced as the 'son of a dog'.

In the mid-fifties, after the CIA had ensured the overthrow of Iran's National Front Government, Bani-Sadr had allied himself with radical, socialistic Islam. During his exile to Paris, (after imprisonment for taking part in the 1963 failed revolt against the Pahlavi dynasty) he studied at the Sorbonne and tried to reconcile his perspective of Marxist economics with the heritage of traditional Islam, but his 'socialism' was always limited.

### Repressive Measures

However it was the support of the Mullahs and Islamic fundamentalists that gave him the Ministry of Finance immediately after the revolution. Thus, while he did nationalise banks and insurance companies, his fall from power was inevitable when Khomeini withdrew his support, because he did not have a strong enough base of support from the Iranian masses. After all, although he won some working-class support for his concentration upon repelling the Iraqi invasion and for his advocacy of concessions to minority nationalities in Iran, he had on the other hand earlier called for the dissolution of factory Shoras, (factory workers committees)

and given support to a number of repressive measures, such as the attacks on university students and leftists.

Bani-Sadr had attempted the impossible: to proceed with a programme of self-determination without confronting the key question - which class would rule? He tried to balance the different forces that emerged with the Iranian revolution: Islamic fundamentalism, Marxist ideology, an army elite and sectarian organisations still unable to form united anti-imperialist fronts.

In fact Bani-Sadr did not respond to the tremendous expectations that had developed among the workers, the urban poor, peasant population and women, because he became caught by the split in the Iranian government between the liberal wing and the clergy-led Islamic Republican Party, (I.R.P.)

Basically the Iranian government is a weak, capitalist administration trying to establish a stable capitalist state; to accomplish this it needs to curb a working-class that has started to rely more and more on its own strength and organization. The split in Iran's government is a division of attitude over how to contain the independent organizations of workers and peasants.

### War Torn Economy

For nine months the Iranian masses have taken their own initiatives to mobilise to defeat the Iraqi invasion, but as that war has dragged on, the country's economic problems have become more acute - food shortage, housing and low wage crises, while the capitalists continue to hoard resources in the midst of a war-torn economy.

Thus workers' discontent at their government's inability to solve these problems, and the ignoring of workers' demands for arming of the population against the invasion by Iraq has resulted in a determination by IRP to curb the strength of the masses.

In the face of widespread criticism and questioning, the IRP campaigned to make Bani-Sadr the scapegoat - repression has markedly increased since his fall from power.

A revolutionary socialist perspective would show that the anti-imperialist aspirations of all the forces in Iran



Iranian soldiers. The war situation dominates Iranian life.

can only be fulfilled by maximising the power and organisation of the working class (i.e. on all fronts - a workers' and peasants' plan to reconstruct the economy; arming the masses to defeat invasion; increased workers control and liberation of women to maximise the process of self-determination). Thus the inability of the capitalist rulers in Iran to conceive of any stability, other than their illusions in a capitalist bourgeois state, is the central hurdle in the march towards self-determination and the destruction of imperialist intervention - therefore, as capitalism requires the subjection of the masses, repressive action is the result.

### Executions

Since the June bombing of Tehran's headquarters of the Islamic Republican Party there have been more than 150 executions and 1,000 arrests in Iran. It is regarded by Iranians as extremely likely that ever-hovering U.S. imperialism directly or indirectly played its part in this bombing, yet the capitalist government of Iran is making use of the attack to try to intimidate the Iranian working class. Young men and women belonging to leftist groups are the main victims of execution. Hundreds of workers were also arrested in factories throughout Iran in the first week of July. The offices of Revolutionary Workers' Party, (the Iranian supporters of the Fourth International) were ransacked and socialists injured.

Right-wing gangs have kidnapped and interrogated left activists. Two women, anti-imperialist activists from the HKE, were arrested at work in the Ray-O-Vac battery factory; the lives of these women, Faranak Zahraie and Monavar Shir Ali, are in danger; they are currently in Evin Prison, where many of the executions have been carried out. The women have been falsely accused of starting a strike in their factory, although there has never been a strike at Ray-O-Vac. Both women are pregnant.

Iran has expressed its recognition of the Irish struggle, as a heroic struggle against imperialism; the street adjoining their British Embassy was renamed Bobby Sands street. As a country claiming commitment to the overthrow of imperialism, Iran is sensitive to the responses from other countries in similar positions.

## RELEASE IRANIAN SOCIALISTS

Supporters of the Iranian revolution are urgently requested to send telegrams calling for the release of two women members of the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE) and an end to all executions of revolutionary youth in Iran. Faranak Zahraie and Monavar Shir Ali - two workers at the Ray-O-Vac battery factory in Teheran - were arrested on July the 4th and taken to Evin prison.

They have been falsely accused of starting a strike in the factory and with being members of a Maoist political group. Both were active in the factory's military training and

first aid instruction for the fight against the Iraqi invasion.

Activists in the H Block/Armagh Campaign are being approached to send protest telegrams. Already PD councillors, Fergus O'Hare and John McAnulty have sent telegrams together with Bernadette McAliskey.

Telegrams should be sent to: Prime Minister Rajai, Majlis Building, Teheran, Iran. Send copies to Kargar, Box 43/174, Post area 14, Teheran, Iran and Jomhuri-e-Eslami, Saadi Jonubi Street, Teheran, Iran.

# POLAND: THE KREMLIN ONSLAUGHT

The Kremlin is terrified of the mobilisation of the Polish working class



At the recent Polish Party Congress, the inroads of workers democracy began to be felt, in the first ever contested election to the post of party general secretary, and in the replacement of a large majority of the Politbureau by new delegates after years of automatic re-election.

The fearful attitude of the Soviet Union towards these moves has been reflected in the cool welcome Pravda has given to the re-election of Stanislaw Kania as First Secretary of the Party, despite his commitment to holding the mass movement of workers under the Party's control. Certainly the Soviet Union must be somewhat relieved that Mr Kania maintained his leadership and that some of the more revolutionary left wing militants did not get elected to the Politbureau, but they are by no means confident of Kania's ability to hold the mass movement for democracy in check.

Kania's programme does not challenge the fundamental bases of bureaucratic rule in Poland. He does not call for a separation of the functions of the party and the state - at present the party nominates members to all the key posts in the state. Nor will Kania sanction real democratisation of the party - recallability of officials, the organisation of tendencies or rank and file 'horizontal' structures.

Kania supports the 'renewal' movement in the short term while working in the long-term to restore the authority of the party over all aspects of social and

political life, particularly over Solidarity. A major part of this approach is to try to divide Solidarity by the daily attacks on its 'irresponsible elements'.

### Case

In the last month attempts have been made to step up censorship of Solidarity's national and local publications. In the first such case the editor of the Solidarity Bulletin in Pila has been summoned by the prosecutor for infringement of the 1946 censorship law.

In Poznan a new hardline forum has emerged claiming 400 members. It has appealed for radical editors and others allegedly spreading 'anti-communist' ideas to be purged. The group has also complained that the Katowice forum, which received the explicit backing of the Soviet bureaucrats on its brief appearance last month, was harshly treated and 'misunderstood'.

The Soviet leaders are desperate to shore up support within the ranks of the Polish Communist Party. They are terrified of the destabilising effects of the turnover of cadre at every level of the party.

Some 50 per cent of local party cadre

have been replaced and in the regional party congresses as many as 90 per cent of the old party leaders have been turfed out of office. In Suwalki province in north east Poland the entire party leadership was removed in elections. Equally serious is the loss of some 100,000 working class members from the party since last August.

The source of the crisis inside the Communist Party and the worries of the Soviet leaders is the continuing existence and growing strength of the independent union movement Solidarity.

One important new development is the growth of 'popular universities' linked to Solidarity. They offer courses and discussions round three themes: problems of workers' rights raised in the building of Solidarity; cultural and artistic debate outside the normally heavily-censored channels; and discussion on general political, historical and scientific questions outside the Stalinist framework.

These universities receive wide-ranging support: more than a thousand attended a debate on the economic crisis in Torun and in Wroclaw there are regularly between 100-300 people, mainly workers, at their twice weekly sessions.

Solidarity itself is approaching its first national congress at the end of August. Regional conferences have been held in preparation where Solidarity's draft programme and statutes has been discussed.

**THE PEOPLES DEMOCRACY bases itself on the following points:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

a mass base, combining its economic strength and its strength of numbers.

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

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

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

# THE COALITION AND BLUESHIRTISM

By JAMES GALLAGHER

The last Fine Gael/Labour coalition government, which held office from February 1973 to June 1977, will long be remembered as the most openly pro-British administration to hold office in the South of Ireland since the 1920s. Its policy of 'saying or doing nothing which might offend the Northern Unionists' was complemented with a dangerous growth in the power and activity of the Secret Police, widespread attacks on the democratic rights of republicans, and a growing security offensive by the British in the North. Towards the end of its reign its leaders began to believe their own propaganda and went over the top. Cooney crowed of his 'victory' over the Portlaoise hunger-strikers, Cruise O'Brien promised a new coalition would abolish Articles 2 and 3 of the constitution, and Cosgrave, at the Fine Gael Ard-Fheis leading up to the June 1977 General Election made an infamous attack on 'blow-ins' who had fairly successfully opposed the attempt to introduce seven day detention and a state of emergency. This explicit pro-British stance was too much for the voters to stomach. Fianna Fail scored a massive victory.

The question anti-imperialists and socialists must ask now about the new Garrett Fitzgerald-led coalition is whether we are in for a repeat performance. On the evidence so far there are a number of disturbing signs about the government's intentions. A particularly chilling appointment was the nomination of Patrick Cooney as Minister for Telecommunications, which leaves him directly in charge of censorship on radio and television. Cooney lost his seat in the 1977 rout of the last coalition and often makes a point of saying this was nothing to do with political objections to his anti-republican activities. Cooney described the strong showing of H-Block hunger strike martyr Martin Hurson (over 5,000 votes) in his own Longford-Westmeath constituency as 'disappointingly high'.

When Fitzgerald was challenged about this appointment at a press conference he commented that no one should worry



Coalition Blueshirts in action at British Embassy

since the Fitzgerald credentials for liberalism were so impressive.

We soon had a practical test when the Gardai, to say the least, 'seriously overreacted' by assaulting anyone (demonstrator or not) within their reach after H-Block protestors tried to march on the British Embassy in Dublin. Several journalists were attacked and Gardai continued attacking people until well after the march was over. Several examples were given of Gardai assaults on people already injured or lying on the ground. They even went to the GPO, two and a half miles away from the embassy, smashed up the stalls outside dealing with H-Block and beat up the people holding a vigil. Despite this, the government stood by the obviously false claims of the Garda Press Office.

This means that the Gardai have been told that they can do as they like as far as the 'liberal' Dr Fitzgerald is concerned.

Lastly we have the evidence of how Fitzgerald has approached the hunger strike itself. He has used the slightest excuse to try and openly line up with Thatcher. After the British had to face condemnation even from the moderate Irish Commission for Justice and Peace (ICJP), a sub-committee of the Catholic hierarchy, Fitzgerald joined their call on the British to directly negotiate with the

hunger strikers. However, when the British made the patently fake move of sending in civil servants from the Northern Ireland Office in the early hours of one morning, who only repeated some public statements of Atkins, Fitzgerald's office issued a statement that the British had met the demand for negotiations! This soon rebounded. Thatcher used Fitzgerald's comments in a reply to Edward Kennedy and other Irish American politicians (the Four Horsemen) to defend herself against their charge of 'inflexibility'. Fitzgerald, realising that this could do him no good at all, complained of his views being 'misrepresented'.

This Fine Gael/Labour government has shown itself already as a more willing collaborator than its Fianna Fail predecessor. However, it is faced with a stronger anti-imperialist movement, which has a far better understanding than in 1977 of the need for mass mobilisations against it. The anti-imperialists are far less isolated politically as well. The effects of this are clear: Fitzgerald wriggling from side to side trying to beat the anti-imperialist movement but unable to fully identify with Thatcher's ruthless policies for fear of putting his fragile government out on a limb. We must keep the pressure up, through keeping the mass movement alive. Without that, we will be sitting ducks for this government's attacks.

## FUND DRIVE

We intend to make SOCIALIST REPUBLIC the indispensable tool of anti-imperialists in this country. Whether you are a member of a H Block Armagh committee, another anti-imperialist political party, a worker struggling against the pro-imperialist policies of the trade union leadership or a woman or youth fighting for control of your own life we want to aid your political work by patient explanation and agitation. If you don't come into any of the above categories maybe reading SOCIALIST REPUBLIC will make you want to become one of them.

At a time of crisis of British rule in Ireland we must be in a position to take advantage of that crisis. If we are to bring the anti-imperialist movement from a position of defence of our democratic rights and the rights of our prisoners to one of being on the offensive against Britain and its Irish collaborators we need not only the will to succeed, but also a political strategy that will guarantee victory. Peoples Democracy, through its activities and through the pages of SOCIALIST REPUBLIC will aid this process by giving an explanation of the stage we are at today and our ideas for the way forward.

As MICHAEL FARRELL explains in his article: "Belfast, August '69" (p.7), PD has always seen the explanation of our ideas to the masses as an indispensable tool in the fight for democracy, socialism and National Liberation. From the days of Citizen Press in 1969 to Free Citizen and The Plough and the old Socialist Republic of the Movement For A Socialist Republic to the present SOCIALIST REPUBLIC of the new Peoples Democracy our essential aim has been the same: to win newer and broader forces to the struggle.

As readers can see we have introduced significant technical improvements to this issue of SOCIALIST REPUBLIC. Our ability to bring in these improvements is due to increased sales of the paper and, more importantly, to the donations you, our readers have been sending in to our paper fund. Unfortunately our costs are still rising and we are forced to raise our price to 15p from now on (20p outside Ireland).

You can help us keep our costs down by contributing to our paper fund in any way you can. Our subscription service is available to those who are unable to get the paper regularly on the streets or in the shops.

Send all donations to:  
SOCIALIST REPUBLIC  
38 Clanawley Road, Killester,  
Dublin 5.

## Fergus O'Hare Tours US

Peoples Democracy Councillor Fergus O'Hare has just returned from a two-week speaking tour of the United States. The tour was organised by the New York H Block/Armagh committee and covered cities and towns in the north east of the country.

Cllr O'Hare addressed a large number of meetings of activists and supporters of the H-Block struggle and as a result a number of new H-Block support groups have been formed to carry on the work of building support for the prisoners. In addition he addressed councillors and aldermen in several cities on the H-Block situation. He met with Councillors in Pittsburgh City Hall, addressed a packed meeting of the city council in Burlington Vermont, received a standing ovation and was presented with an official citation from the Massachusetts State Assembly.

Cllr O'Hare also used the opportunity to explain and seek support for the Irish cause among other ethnic groups in the U.S. He met with leaders of the American Indians. As a result, several Indian chiefs will be coming to Ireland to visit the prisoners and to address a public rally. Similarly, discussions were held with people involved in the American black movement.

### LABOUR MOVEMENT

Discussions were held between Cllr O'Hare and many of those involved in Irish support work, including leaders of Noroid, the Irish National

Caucus, and the Irish American Labour Coalition. The latter group is a newly formed organisation which represents many of the largest Trade Unions in the U.S. It was formed with the intention of involving the U.S. labour movement in the Irish solidarity campaign. The urgency of the H-Block situation and the vital importance of the American labour movement taking effective action against Britain in terms of boycotting British goods was emphasised by Cllr O'Hare.

### IMPERIALISM

Cllr O'Hare also spoke with representatives of the American Socialist Workers Party and other left-wing groups and impressed upon them the importance of the Irish struggle in the overall battle against imperialism.

Overall the tour was a major success in terms of helping spread the truth about the H-Block struggle. Also in terms of assessing the situation in the Irish support movement in the U.S.. Basically the position is that there is very widespread sympathy and interest in the situation in Ireland, not only among Irish Americans, but right across all layers of American society. The potential for building a massive support campaign is there. Problems exist in terms of disunity among various groups. Steps must be taken immediately to build a united outward looking campaign which can mobilise the massive sympathy that exists into a powerful crusade of support for the prisoners.

## RUC LIARS

In the last issue of Socialist Republic we reported on the arrest of 34 militants, including PD, IRSP and British Labour Party councillors, for attempting to hold a meeting at Belfast City Hall. The case has now been put back for trial to October.

The arrests followed an earlier rally by Belfast H-Block Committee which had been broken up by an RUC baton charge. This case came to trial on July 9th.

The RUC case was that the officer in charge had used his experience and judgment to assess the situation and because he believed that there might be a breach of the peace he had decided to break up the rally.

This in itself is a pretty ridiculous argument. What was to follow was even more ludicrous. Under cross-

examination, the officer contradicted all this and admitted that he had been ordered to break up the rally at a 'briefing' meeting earlier that morning. The argument about 'judgement' of the situation had collapsed and reality of RUC sectarianism exposed.

However, the collapse of the RUC case and the fact that the chief witness was caught lying did not bother the magistrate. He went on to find all but one of the defendants guilty.

Yet again we see the plight of the prisoners reflected in the irreformable sectarianism of the 6-county state. That is why the Belfast 34 defence committee has decided on a militant policy of continuing to support the demonstrations and bringing international observers to the trial.

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