

# Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

Twenty years after the North erupts...



# Why the bloodshed continues

**AFTER TWENTY** years, people are sickened by the continuing violence in the North. Many have given up hope of a solution being found to the problem.

A solution is possible. But first we need to look behind the headlines to why the violence occurs.

The usual explanation is that a few "mindless thugs" are intent on carrying out murder for its own sake.

We are told there are two groups of thugs—Republicans and Loyalists. The Republicans started the Troubles while Loyalists merely respond to IRA provocation.

Meanwhile the British army, backed by the RUC, and the Gardaí, are there to "keep the peace".

The IRA, we are told, are

only supported by a minority. Yet Sinn Féin receives one third of the Catholic vote in the North, mostly from workers.

The continued discrimination against these Catholic workers is the ever-present source of the conflict.

Northern Ireland was created in 1921 on the basis of discrimination.

Governments and employers have, ever since, secured the loyalty of Protestants by giving them marginal advantages over Catholics.

- The situation has not changed. In 1987 the government's Fair Employment Agency estimated that Catholics were two and a half times more likely to be unemployed than Protestants.

- Discrimination is just as severe in government employment as it is in private industry. Recent figures show that Catholics make up only 17 per cent of public sector employees.

- The position in private industry hasn't changed either. Less than 7 per cent of

the workers in Harland and Wolff are Catholic. Only 10 per cent of tradesmen at Mackies are Catholic.

In STC only 6 of the 69 highest skilled workers are Catholic.

- About 10 per cent of all housing in the Six Counties is unfit for human habitation. In nationalist areas like Co. Fermanagh it is as high as 27 per cent.

Discrimination is half of the equation. Repression is the other. Since 1968 the British have used no-jury Diplock Courts, shoot-to-kill,

internment, torture, Supergrasses and plastic bullets to try to force the nationalist minority into accepting the Six County state.

But the repression, combined with continuing discrimination, only breeds the frustration and anger which is demonstrated by support for the IRA.

It is the violence of the Northern Ireland state and its British masters which ensure that twenty years after the Civil Rights Movement the bloodshed still continues.

end

*Derry: October '68 - pages 6, 7 & 8*







# We Think

## Fianna Fail's con-trick

**"CONFIDENCE returning to the Irish Economy"** proclaimed a headline in the Allied Irish Banks monthly review.

Most of the financial commentators in the press agree. Countless articles are produced to show that Haughey is "playing a blinder" with the economy.

The rich are falling over themselves with joy. Most Irish companies have turned in dramatic increases in their profits. And they are grateful. Contributions to the Fianna Fail annual collection has shot up by 25% as the businessmen cough up.

It is obviously a different story for those who have borne the brunt of Fianna Fail's attacks. Public Health patients find themselves thrown out of hospitals within days of major operations. Class sizes in the schools have increased enormously. The unemployed are now subject to a range of petty harassment designed to force them off the register. Emigration is running at an all time high so that even that most conservative of bodies, the Catholic bishops, are calling on Haughey to ease up.

But can the hard medicine work after a period? Can Haughey produce the sort of right-wing miracle that is being claimed for Britain? All indications are that the upturn in the Southern economy is shallow and shortlived.

This year optimistic forecasts claim that the Southern economy will grow by 2%. This is still very much behind its leading industrial competitors, which range between 4 and 5%. Reagan's military spending and a US Trade deficit has ensured a minor upturn in the world economy. Despite its best efforts the Southern state is not benefitting.

After the November presidential elections, the American ruling class will be forced to adopt a series of measures to halt its declining position in the world economy. The only question about the next recession is whether there will be a "hard" or a "soft landing". The Southern economy, which is now

completely dependent on world trade, will be among the hardest hit.

At present its admirers point to a huge upsurge in exports and an improved balance of payments. They neglect to mention that the power house for these exports come from the multi-nationals who are also repatriating profits at unprecedented rates. Last year the amount of profits sent abroad at £1,240 million increased by five times over the 1980 figure.

Neither is the message lost on native Irish capital. At a secret conference organised by the leading accountants, Stokes Kennedy and Crowley in March, Irish businessmen were advised that there were more profitable opportunities abroad. Firms such as McInerney, Avonmore, Smurfit, Cement Roadstone, the AIB and Kerry Co-op have all taken to buying up British and American companies. All of them understand that Haughey's con-trick about an economic recovery is rubbish.

The only bright spot on FF's horizon has been its budgetary plans. Government borrowing this year is scheduled to fall to 5% of GNP. But again there are very temporary factors at work. A tax amnesty for the rich has brought in a once off flow of funds. The expulsion of thousands of the unemployed has also cut its benefits bill.

The Southern state is in fact, awash with money at the moment. But this has to do with unprecedented levels of interest it is paying those who take up its gilts and bonds. Loans to the Irish government now receive an interest rate of over 9% even though inflation is very low. Funds are being sucked in from abroad for these quick profits. Even the Departments of Finance's own official, a Mr Somers, has let it be known that the rich are getting too much.

The improvement in the Southern economy is entirely artificial. Haughey's medicine has therefore no prospect of working. Instead new attacks are already being prepared. The FUE in its latest bulletin argued that while the National Plan



had been useful in holding down wages, it was now necessary for the bosses to push for more flexible working arrangements as they had done elsewhere. Under the cover of the ICTU promise of industrial peace they have been given a free hand to widen their attack on working conditions.

Fianna Fail itself is already preparing for a new round of cuts: on the same scale as last year. £400 million is to be axed from public spending with social welfare benefits first in the firing line this time. More misery and hardship will be our lot unless a fight is joined.

Tragically, in this situation the major forces on the Irish Left seem to be in disarray. Opinion polls indicate an actual drop in support for the Labour Party and the Workers Party. Instead of launching an all out attack on Fianna Fail they are dithering and calling for planned rather than unplanned cuts.

None of them has sought to encourage working class resistance. Their horizons go no further than the Dail and the manoeuvres there. Some have mildly poured scorn on the National Plan but have made no attempt to organise their members to attack the ICTU bureaucrats who

brought it in.

Instead there is an obsession with pushing left wing proposals for reform of taxes or pressing for changes in the electoral boundaries.

As long as the manoeuvres are kept to Dail speeches, Spring and De Rossa are happy.

On one area they actually find themselves in agreement with Fianna Fail. The Labour Party and the Workers Party have joined FF in calls for more repression against republicanism. The Workers Party even organised a peace march—without attacking the role of the British army in Ireland.



Having failed to launch a fight against the cuts and the National Plan; having cheer-led FF's increase in repression they then have the gall to wonder why they are sinking at the polls. All the nonsense and cant about the "natural conservatism" of the Irish won't do.

The plain truth is that the reformist parties have no strategy except localised "clinic" work to build their base. Both Labour and the Workers' Party have spent the

last few years offering to take up individual welfare cases for their constituents, without posing the slightest political alternative. In the period where Fianna Fail has shifted the whole political spectrum to the right they are as helpless as a rudderless boat in the Atlantic.

A revolutionary alternative is desperately needed. This takes as its starting point the encouragement of working class struggle and resistance.

The Dail should only be of use as a platform for encouraging that resistance, of rendering open support to workers on strike or those fighting extradition. It means arguing a principled line that capitalism cannot be reformed—that cuts today only pave the way for more tomorrow. It means standing up to the anti-IRA hysteria being built up by Fianna Fail.

The SWM has made a start in building this alternative. Much more needs to be done. But for those who are genuinely interested in exploring in a non-sectarian fashion the way forward for revolution in Ireland, **MARXISM IN IRELAND** is a must. It is a weekend-long series of meetings and debates on the strategy of the left on 4th, 5th and 6th November.

Those looking for an alternative to Labour or the Workers' Party should get along.

## DTC must back Circuits strikers

**THE INDUSTRIAL Development Authority claims that its function is to create jobs.**

But the events at one factory in Dublin have shown that the Authority is prepared to fund whizzkids whose priority is not jobs but profit.

The management at Irish Printed Circuits in Walkinstown have ridden roughshod over workers' right.

Workers at the plant have had to use dangerous chemicals and equipment. They have been denied basic safety measures, including protective clothing and fire drills.

A group of workers at IPC have now been on strike for seven months. They are demanding reinstatement of a sacked colleague and recognition of their union.

The strikers have been intimidated by management and gardai. On one occasion scabs overturned the strikers' caravan.

Last month the strikers picketed the IDA in protest at continued funding of grants for the company. Michael Clear, the IPC boss, is himself a former IDA official.

Renewed pressure now needs to be put on the

Dublin Trades Council to organise solidarity with the strike.

At the Trades Council meeting in September, Kate McDermott of MSF—the strikers' union—raised the issue. Everyone agreed that it was an important matter but no proposals were made about taking the issue back to other workplaces.

If the Trades Council cannot deal with a wimp like Michael Clear then they will hardly take on the big bosses. Trade union activists should demand that they take action. A Trades Council sponsored demonstration in Dublin should be called in support of the strikers. Mass pickets and calls for increased blacking should also be made.

## Pope's trip funded by a Boer

**SO MUCH for the Pope's opposition to apartheid. Just after his much publicised "I am full of admiration for Nelson Mandela" speech he arrived in Harare.**

He said the people of the region should renounce violence—the very thing Mandela has refused to do and the reason why he is still in jail.

And after saying he would refuse to visit South Africa, the Pope found that bad weather forced him to

land in Johannesburg. But did the bad weather also force him to have dinner with foreign minister Pik Botha while he was there?

Perhaps the Pope was influenced by the fact that most of the £1.75 million bill for the trip is being picked up by Afrikaner businessman, Ig Ferreira.

But Ferreira's plans to make a profit on the trip by selling souvenirs will have been dealt a blow by the fact that only 50,000 of the expected 2 million crowd turned up to see the Pope in Lesotho.



Pope speaks out against anti-South Africa Sanctions



## International

## BURMA ERUPTS

By Catherine Curran

A BRUTAL military coup has occurred in Burma led by General Saw Maung. Student leaders and strike organisers are being hunted down. When caught, they have been dragged from their homes and shot in the street.

The previous regime led by the *Burmese Socialist Programme Party (BSPP)* had failed to stem a tidal wave of rebellion that began in March. Its promise of free elections which came after plans for a referendum on whether to end one party rule, was met with derision by hundreds of thousands of demonstrators. Various leaders of the opposition from within the League of Democracy and Peace and outside of it, had united in a call for an interim government which would preside of free elections.

But there existed no force that could give a lead beyond the general strike towards the seizure of power. All the indications suggested that a revolution could have been successful. The army had begun to split as soldiers joined demonstrations — in Mandalay soldiers had been very noticeable on the demos. The city had been run for months by a committee of students and monks. In Rangoon, sections of the air

force joined the demonstrations.

Tragically, the conservative leaders of the opposition delayed and manoeuvred. U Nu, a former deposed premier set up an "interim government" of personalities for propaganda purposes only. There was no attempt to build on the power of the general strike, to widen the base of the protest committees and to begin the seizure of power. This would have meant driving the split in the army wider. But instead under the influence of opposition leaders—such as Aung Sah Suu Kyi, the Oxford academic—called on the army to stay united.

All of this allowed the leaders of the army time to regroup their forces. When the momentum of the strikes had been temporarily halted, they struck a deadly blow. The events in Burma recall Trotsky's words: "Those who half make a revolution dig their own grave." In this case the graves of thousands of students and workers.

The opposition had hoped for a peaceful "democratic" solution where all classes could unite.

This could lead to the type of "revolution" that took place in the Philippines, when solid popular resistance to Marcos forced sections of the army and the state to abandon him and give power to the middle-of-the-road notable Cory Aquino.

Such a Filipino type

solution to the Burmese crisis would be no solution at all. It would only bring cosmetic democratic reform without resolving any of the major economic political problems that caused the crisis.

Aquino has refused to break the power of the landlords and sugar barons and divide out land. She has gone back on her promise to remove the American bases.

The only other solution lies with the workers' movement. They have begun to form independent unions. Dockers and oil workers have played a central role in initiating the general strike. Students and workers' committees have also been established to run parts of the major city, Rangoon. But the political force which could channel this power seems to be lacking.

The situation has been analysed by the bourgeois press as a clear cut failure of socialism. They start from the argument that because the Burmese dictatorship calls itself socialist, then it must be. The solutions, they say, are straight forward: the currency must be devalued and foreign investment encouraged. Strangely enough, the former chief of riot police who managed to become Head of Government in the current turmoil, thought so too.

In fact, devaluation of the kyat could only cause greater hardship for workers. It would also be the inescapable consequence of making Burma more profitable for investors.



Demonstrators last month in the Burmese capital Rangoon.

The situation in Burma is not that of "failed socialism", but of a failed military state capitalism, which has nothing whatever to do with workers' control. This type of state capitalism is to be found in countries where socialism is anathema; it was, for example, characteristic of Nasser's Egypt, and of Argentina under Peron.

The roots of Burma's extreme poverty and economic ruin may be found in its history of oppression by colonial powers. When the British finally abandoned the country in 1947, their divide and rule tactics left a situation which rapidly degenerated into civil war, which has gone on ever since. Ne Win seized power in 1962 as the ever

expanding population faced chronic food shortages.

Ne Win's programme for recovery which he described as socialist was actually based on a combination of Buddhism, economic isolation and nationalisation. Although this led to the development of a one million strong working class, it failed dismally as a way of producing sufficient

expand the state bureaucracy and brutally repress all opposition. This was the strategy which gave rise to today's crisis. It was not the strategy of a workers' government, but of a brutal state capitalist regime.

Socialists should welcome the present wave of strikes, demonstrations, popular committees and the opening up politically of Burmese society. But any suggestion that the free markets will give workers the freedom they are fighting for must be firmly rejected. They type of reform advocated by the right wing press can only lead to further exploitation of workers and greater hardship for the people of Burma.

## POOREST

resources. Living standards never rose above pre-world war two levels for the vast majority of people and Burma slipped inextricably into a position among the ten poorest countries in the world. The government's response was to

## Why Sudan starves

The recent floods in the Sudan have thrown that country into crisis. The spectre of colera, typhoid and famine stalks the land. Gordon Jelley looks at the real causes of misery in the Sudan.

SUDAN IS the largest country in Africa and also one of the poorest.

It has a population of over 21 million. In the capital, Khartoum, over 1.5 million refugees have been made homeless by the recent floods.

They are mainly from the South of Sudan, where a bloody civil war, costing the government \$1/4 million a day is raging. At least 80 per cent of the southern peoples have been displaced and over two million cattle, the basic food source, have been slaughtered.

Since 1985 at least, the threat of famine has been clearly visible. Yet the ruling classes of the "developed"

nations have responded with meanness.

Haughey, for example, has cut Ireland's aid this year by 26 per cent to a mere £32 million—just .18 per cent of GNP. This is the lowest in western Europe.

The cut almost exactly negates the astonishing £13 million contribution by ordinary working class Irish people to Live Aid and Sport Aid.

To add insult to injury, Haughey's "gift" of £300,000 from the National Lottery, although of some immediate benefit to the people of Sudan, comes from the pockets of the working class.

## LONG-TERM

Charity and tiny government gifts to the starving are no long-term solution to the problem of starvation. And it is certainly not the rationalisation and cutbacks demanded by the IMF and World Bank. To suggest that attempting to repay debts of \$15 million will help the

people of Sudan is plainly nonsense.

Ironically, the countries which back the IMF's demands are the same one which supply weapons to the government to pursue its costly war, further worsening the situation.

It is these same western countries which, while blaming Sudan itself for its problems, sit on obscene, rotting food "surpluses" which could feed the hungry world-wide.

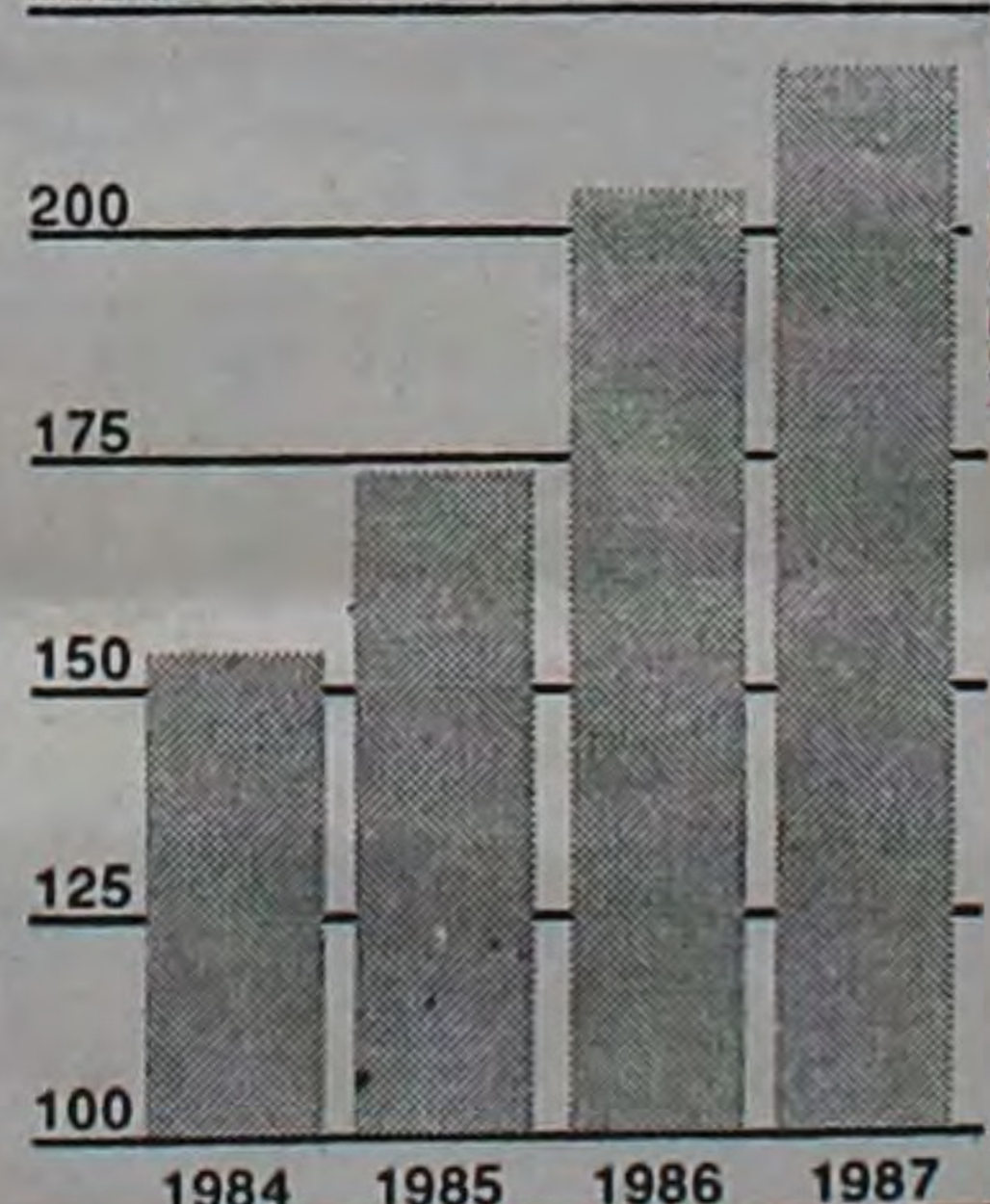
As the *Financial Times* observed: "People are not hungry these days because food supplies are not available, they are hungry because they are poor."

This, then, is the root of the problem of famine—capitalism. World food production is governed by profit, not need. As an integral part of the world economy the "Third World" suffers as the recession deepens. Countries like Sudan, while wooed in the boom, are expendable in the drive to maintain profit levels during crisis in capitalism.

## Africa: United Nations mid-term review

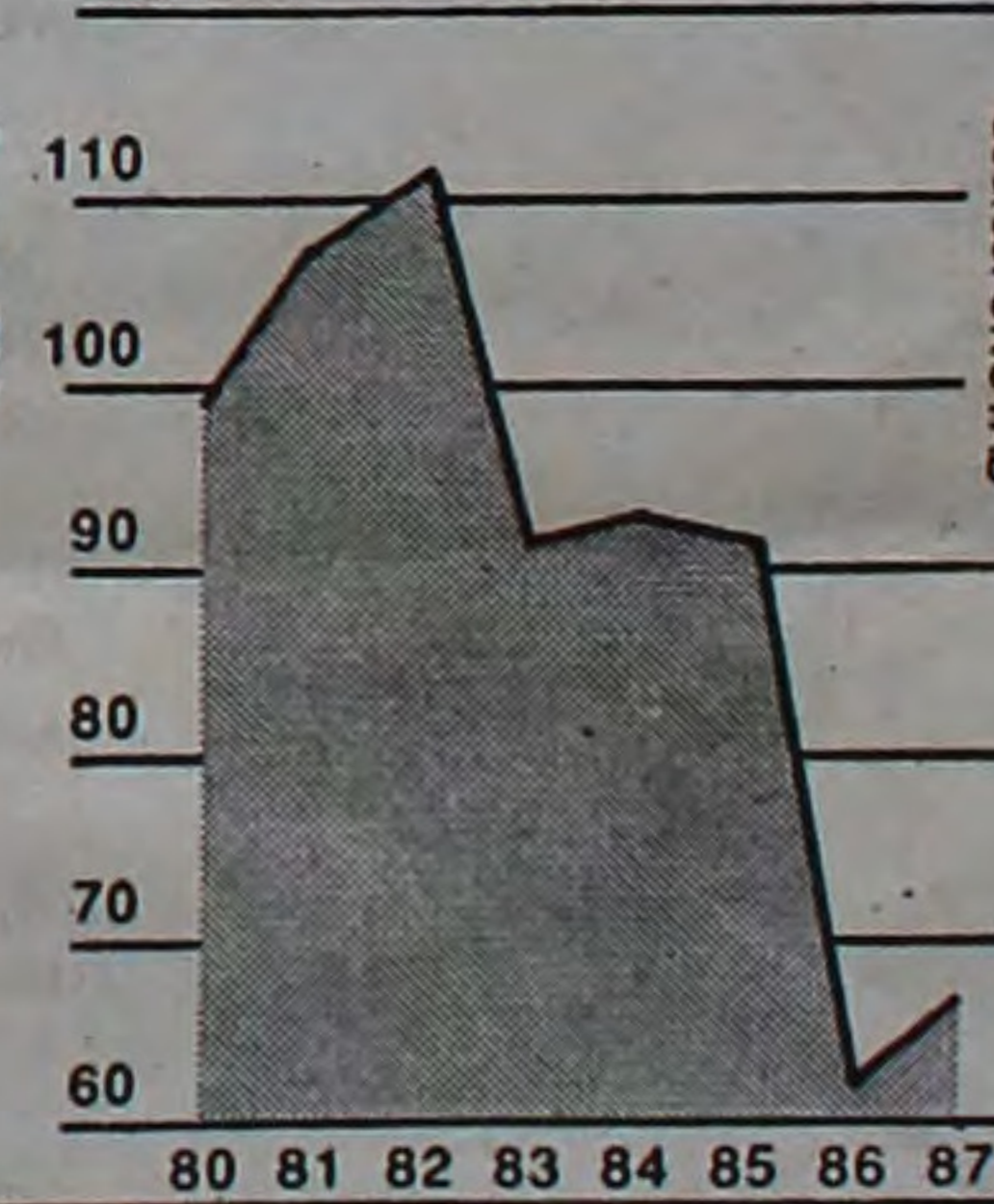
External debt

225 \$bn



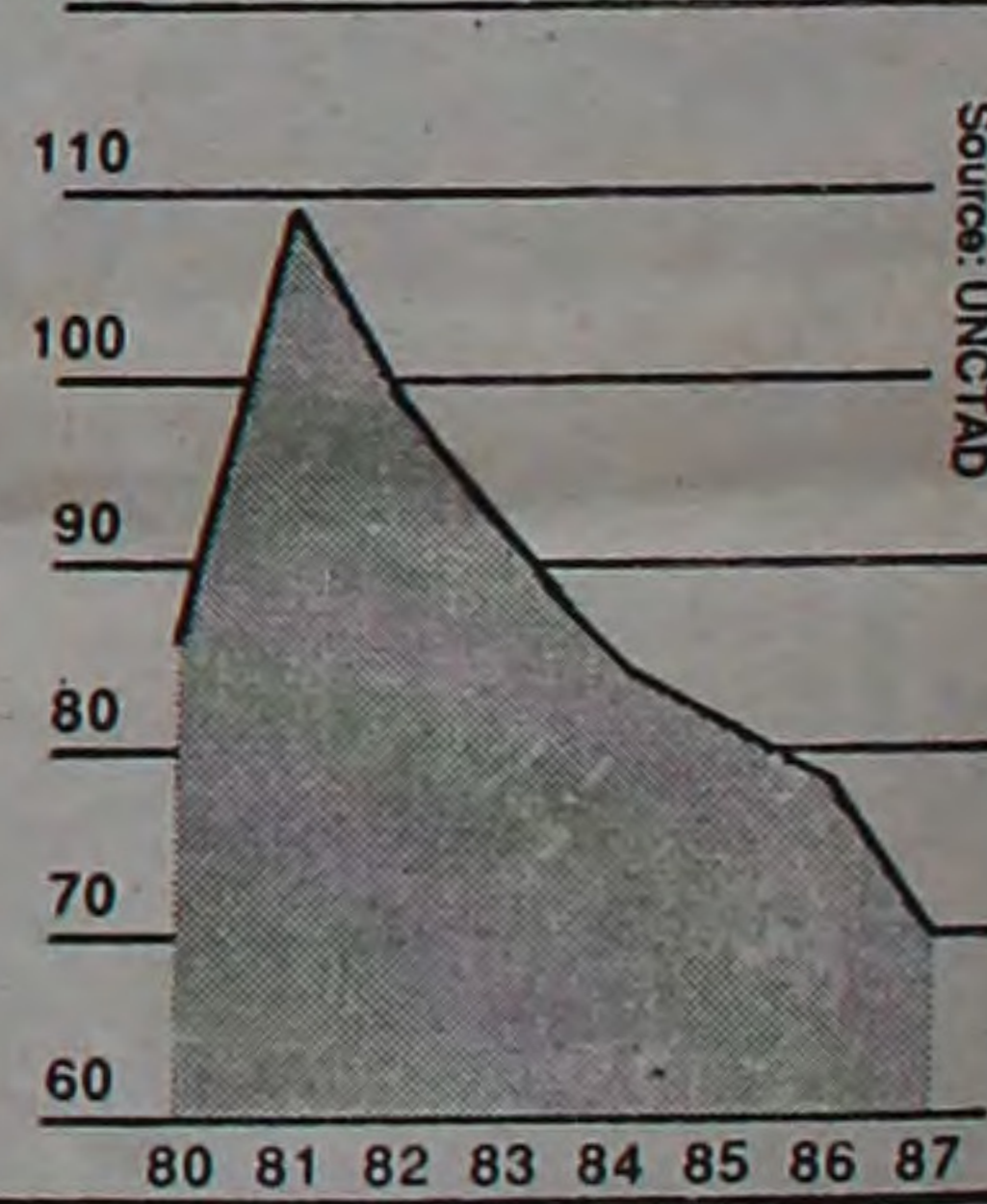
Terms of trade

120 (index 1980=100)



Volume of imports

120 (index 1980=100)



Graphs of hunger: The left hand diagram shows the mounting burden of debt to the western banks throughout African continent.

The centre diagram shows the worsening terms of trade the world crisis has brought. It indicates that African export prices are falling while import prices are rising—more must be exported to import less.

And on the right the fall in the volume of imports—the poorest parts of the world are able to import less and less of food and other goods produced overseas. These figures are averages for Africa—the poorest African countries are very much worse off.

Famine in Africa is as much a result of these crises as unemployment in the west.

The famine in Sudan is just one in a long line of famines, not only in sub-Saharan Africa, but in the Third World

in general. They all clearly have their origins in the depression that has hit the economy world-wide since the end of the seventies.

Famine is the cost in human terms of the cyclical and

crisis-prone nature of capitalism.

When a system can no longer feed the slaves on which it survives surely it has outlasted its usefulness?



# The cracks open up

GORBACHEV'S glasnost—the policy of “reform” and “openness”—is coming under increasing strains as the Russian empire faces intensifying crisis.

Earlier in the summer the Soviet republic of Armenia was shaken by a succession of huge demonstrations and general strikes over Armenian rights in the Nagorny Karabakh region of neighbouring Azerbaijan.

Even the official Russian press was forced to admit that the people of the Karabakh have endured decades of ethnic discrimination, intense poverty, high unemployment and miserable social services.

There has existed no proper sewerage system and water was only available for an hour a day.

The Karabakh committee was at first taken in by Gorbachev, carrying his pictures on demonstrations. But attitudes rapidly changed.

Despite the arrest of protest leaders and the killing by Russian troops of demonstrators the unrest continued. Although the general strike was ended in late July, in August a demonstration of half a million Armenians was reported.

Throughout the summer demonstrations have also been reported of the USSR's largest national minority—the Ukrainians. Thousands of protesters have demanded rights for their national language—so long suppressed by Stalin's Great Russian chauvinism—an end to Russification and real measures of democracy.

The demonstrations in the Ukraine began with an 8,000-strong protest in Lvov on June 16 against the delegates who had been elected to July's special party conference.



Protestors objected to the delegates past involvement in repressive policies under Brezhnev.

The protest was organised by the informal club Ridna Mova. Speakers included the editors of the Samizdat bulletin *Ukrainian Herald*, Kykhailo Horyn and former political prisoner Viacheslav Chomovil.

Horyn declared that the entire period from 1929 to 1985 should be described as “counter-revolutionary” because it witnessed the demise of the Soviets, workers' councils.

He denounced the fate of political prisoners under Gorbachev and attacked the double standards of freedom of speech applied to the party leaders and the people.

Party delegates who addressed the crowd were heckled, and at further, larger demonstrations, shouted down. Out of these protests was formed a Ukrainian Democratic Front committed

to “citizens' control of the democratisation process”.

And in the Baltic republic of Estonia mass agitation has been no less dramatic.

Such is the groundswell that Estonian Party leader Vaino Valyas was forced to concede that the Party would become completely isolated unless it accommodated to radical nationalist demands.

In a speech in Tallinn last month he said the USSR must become “a genuine union of free peoples” in which Estonians would have their own citizenship and full sovereignty over their economic and political affairs.

The main Estonian party paper has gone so far as to publish the secret protocol to 1939 non-aggression pact between Hitler and Stalin under which the Nazis conceded that the three independent Baltic republics would “come into the Soviet sphere of influence”.

Estonian party papers also now for the first time describe the arrival of Russian troops in 1940 as an occupation. And Valyas forced to admit that Stalin had thousands of Estonians deported in 1940 and 1949, called on the government in Moscow to recognise Stalin's crime and compensate his victims.



As in the other republics, local leaders are attempting to canalise mass nationalist discontent into official channels. In April, 200,000 people—ten per cent of the republics population—took part in the first rally of the “People's Front in support of Perestroika”.

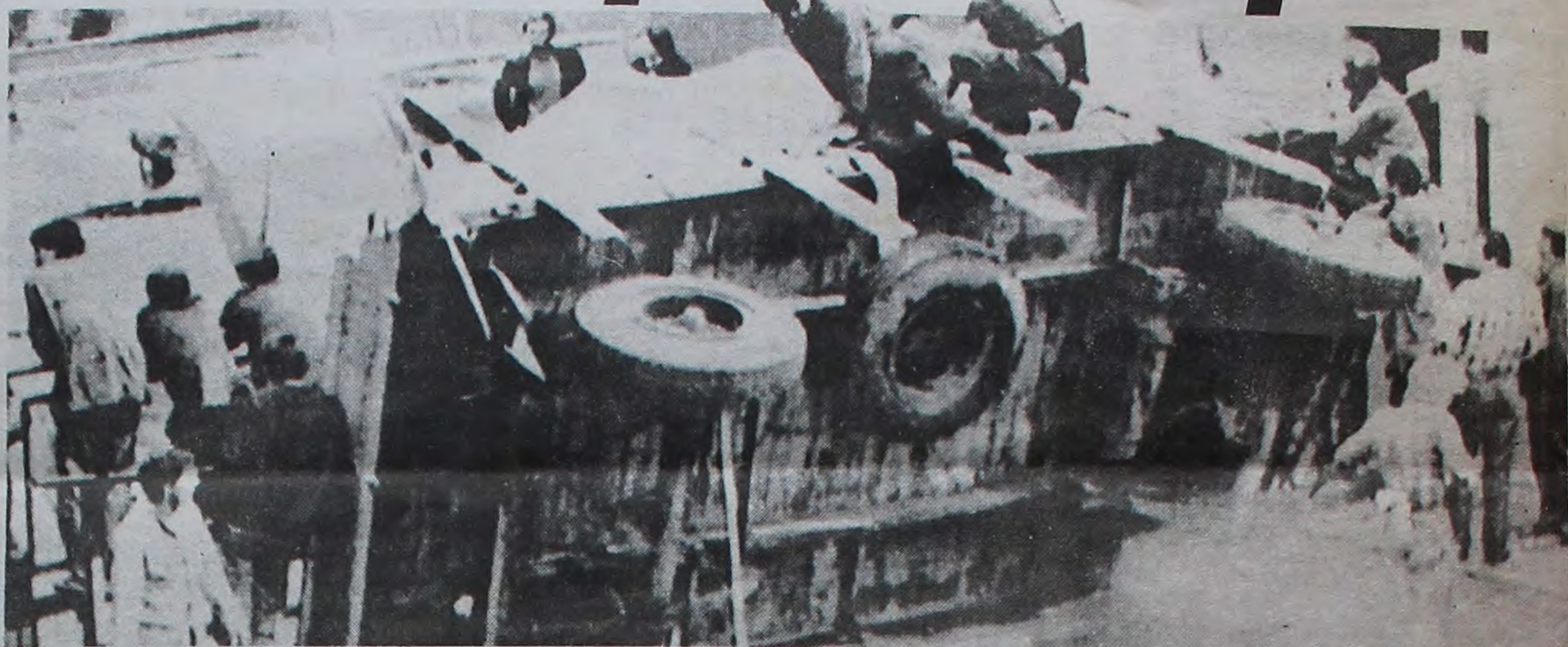
There is no doubt that national oppression is a reality in the eastern bloc. From the time of his rise to power, Stalin took every opportunity to roll back the rights for nationalities the Bolshevik revolution had provided.

Local languages were suppressed; teaching in schools was allowed only in Russian; notationally independent “Soviet Republics” were run by Moscow's corrupt placemen.

In the forties, thousands of Tartars were forced from their homes and resettled elsewhere. Overnight the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania disappeared from the map to be incorporated in Russia.

It should come as no surprise that nationalism is coming to the fore. It would be tidier if workers of the Eastern bloc simply organised for workers power. But revolutionary marxists, east and west, have to understand how to relate to struggles that fall short of socialist revolution.

The resentment of the nationalities can go two ways. Either Moscow succeeds in playing off national divisions—divide and rule—or workers of the 250 million-strong USSR come to support rights for nationalities and enlist them as allies against Russian state capitalism.



## Solidarnosc is back

IN POLAND, workers strikes have swept the country for the second time this year.

With the economy in tatters, workers have been taking the brunt. Official inflation is running at 60 per cent and wages are lagging far behind. The government admits pensions and disability payments have fallen at least 7 per cent behind prices.

It also concedes that there are shortages of powdered baby milk, dairy produce, margarine, cooking oil, sugar, pasta, coffee and cigarettes. There is a chronic housing shortage—working class couples have to wait ten years for a cramped flat—and private homes are only sold for hard currency.

Faced with massive foreign debts, the government cannot guarantee to meet the essen-

tials of life for workers. Jaruzelski—whose military coup in 1981 crushed Solidarnosc—has offered instead a “dialogue” with workers on restructuring the economy.

The government wants to continue to remove food subsidies and to link wages to workers' productivity and company profits. It is trying to create a mood of “national unity” in which it can push through its plans to make the workers pay for the crisis of Polish state capitalism.

Solidarnosc leader Lech Walesa said during the earlier strikes of May that what was needed was Gorbachev-style reform in Poland. But his moderation is not matched by many of the younger Solidarnosc activists.

They saw how May's strikes brought large pay rises and in August's actions pay rises of 100 per cent were demanded as well as the legalisation of Solidarnosc. They have faced the massive crackdown which Jaruzelski ordered.



Martial law was declared in the main strike areas after the ruling party's central Committee met in emergency session for two days. Press and radio slandered the strike leaders.

After twelve days of strikes some 10,000 workers in shipyards, docks, collieries and a major steel mill were still on strike. But other workers in some pits, engineering and transport went back after being threatened and attacked by riot police. Where the strike collapsed strike leaders were rounded up by police.

The government offered dialogue but insisted on a wage freeze. Tragically Lech Walesa swallowed the offer of talks and was driven round the country persuading strikers to return to work.

This climbdown by Solidarnosc is likely to

sharpen divisions within the Polish workers' movement. Some of the old guard like Walesa and his advisers accept the economic reforms the government is trying to force through—provided the government maintains consultation and negotiation with them.

Others, like some of the young militants leading the recent strikes, and facing the tanks and riot squads, may begin to reject notions of national unity increasing used by Walesa in favour of a class analysis of Poland.

### Keeping it in the family

THE TRIAL opened last month of Brezhnev's son-in-law Yuri Churbanov who faces the death penalty on charges of bribe-taking and abuse of power.

Having risen from lowly cop to deputy Interior Minister and chief government law enforcement by the time-honoured route of marrying the boss's daughter he seems to have made a fortune out of every imaginable scam.

★ Cotton growing magnates in Uzbekistan stole more than four billion roubles from the state by pretending more cotton had been produced than actually was. The corrupt state purchasing officers paid over the cash for the inflated amount and the magnates pocketed the difference.

★ Officials organised racketeers to terrorise other officials. One senior Uzbeki official had a private underground prison to intimidate critics.

Churbanov offered these and other corrupt officials and gangsters his official protection in exchange for a slice of the action.

Through these methods his became a rouble multi-millionaire. Until, that is, his protector died.

★ Churbanov's defence: “I was a product of the system.”

### Gorbachev's gamble

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV has been hailed as an advocate of reform and democracy. Both the western press and the Communist Parties have fallen over themselves in excitement. Most of them have missed the central point of his programme. Gorbachev's policy is designed to tackle a crisis in the Russian economy that parallels that of the West.

His economic reforms entail removing much of the central bureaucratic control of each factory which have led to waste and corruption in the past. By placing more responsibility on local managers and by subjecting enterprises to profit and loss criteria he hopes to make Russian state capitalism more competitive with the West.

This requires confronting powerful vested interests in the bureaucracy itself. In order to safeguard his position, Gorbachev has been forced to take issues out of the closed circles of the Communist Party. He has encouraged the mobilisation of the intellectuals, he has had to tolerate unofficial support groups. The policy of “glasnost” arises from the need to mobilise sections of the public against the conservatives.

But none of this means that Gorbachev has any great concern for democracy. His aim is the re-construction of the Soviet economy and the safeguarding of the interests of the bureaucracy as a whole. “perestroika” will mean the removal of subsidies and price controls on food and other necessities. It also involves closing “inefficient” factories and creating official unemployment. Workers living standards are bound to suffer. Already his quality control inspectorate have attacked bonus earnings in factories.

For the moment the masses of workers in the USSR and the Eastern bloc are taken in by Gorbachev's rhetoric. They see in it a relaxation of the Stalinist tyranny that has oppressed them. But the danger for Gorbachev is that they will take the rhetoric seriously and add their own demands.

This has already begun to happen. A Gorbachev walk-about in Siberia turned into a mass protest about the rotten housing conditions, the poor food quality, and the official sponsored pollution of the area. Many in the non-Russian nations are using the promises of reform to demand the lifting of their oppression.

Gorbachev will be unable to deliver substantial reforms to the mass of workers in the Eastern bloc precisely because the crisis in state capitalism requires exploiting workers harder if the system is to survive.

The official promise of reforms is raising hundreds of thousands to their feet for the first time in decades. A significant minority are discovering the emptiness of the glasnost rhetoric. Tomorrow many more will join them.



# DERRY: OCTOBER

IN THE run up to the October 5th march, socialist thinking in Derry wasn't as strong as has sometimes been made out.

It is true that most of those involved in the local organisation of the march, were socialists of one sort or another. But the politics were very vague and there was no coherent socialist organisation.

This is clear from an examination of the role of the Derry Labour Party. A small myth has developed about the Derry Labour Party of 1968 which it is necessary to correct.

It was the local branch of the stodgily respectable constitutionalist Northern Ireland LP: its official name was the Londonderry Labour party. It had around a hundred members "on the books" of whom about forty were active in the sense of attending fortnightly meetings and having some input into party activity.

The LLP had made an impact in the local government elections of 1967 in which it contested both the Catholic-majority South Ward and the Protestant-majority North and Waterside wards and picked up almost thirty percent of the vote without winning any seats.

The act of contesting all wards signalled the party's opposition to the sectarian carve-up. Neither Unionists nor Nationalists ever stood on the "other side's" territory. And the figures did show that sizable minorities were prepared to break from both sectarian camps. However the politics of the party offered no clear lead to these minorities.

The Labour approach in the 1967 election was to attack both Unionists and Nationalists for their sectarian bickering which, so the argument ran, was detrimental to the general interests of Derry. Labour changed the

Unionists to a public debate on the topic, "Is it Unionist policy to run our city down?". Leading party member Harry Doherty defined the party's aim as: "to unite all classes and creeds in this city". The party quite consciously avoided "divisive" issues—such as partition. The campaign was "wholly based on issues pertinent to local government atrocities in this city" and would try to "unite various elements and differing opinions".

## Derry '68

These middle-of-the-road ideas and commitment to "Derry" attracted support from a section of the business community, as well as from trade union officialdom and ordinary workers. But the same ideas sat uneasily with the street agitation on the housing issue which began to gather momentum from the beginning of 1968 and in which younger, instinctively more left-wing members of the party quickly became involved. Moreover, the fact that Republicans were also involved in the street action alarmed both the local party leadership and the NILP hierarchy in Belfast.

In Derry a number of prominent moderate members dropped out. As a result, the Left came into the ascendancy in time to commit the party to the October march, but this Leftism was based on radical activity, not on any clear set of socialist ideas.

This was paralleled by developments in the local Republican Movement. Republican morale had been hard hit by a disastrous showing in the 1966 Westminster election (just over 2,000 votes in a constituency with more than 25,000 Catholic electors). The 1967 Easter Rising Commemoration had attracted thirty-seven people (including the platform party and two special branch men) to a meeting at Little Diamond. Meetings of members were drawing around a dozen. The IRA was entirely moribund.

A handful of younger members eagerly seized on the new line being



pushed by Dublin leaders like Cathal Goulding and Sean Garland which emphasised economic and civil liberties issues rather than the age-old question of partition. At the beginning of 1968 they joined with housing activists, individual leftists and Labour Party members to form the Derry Housing Action Committee, which was to spearhead a campaign involving squatting, street protest and disruption of corporation meetings. A number of older Republicans disapproved of this move, arguing that it downgraded the national question.

Thus, by the middle of 1968 a group perhaps thirty-strong was cooperating loosely together to highlight issues of discrimination and deprivation and the inability of the old sectarian parties to offer any remedy. The street protests, disruption of official events etc. served not only to unnerve the Unionists but to alarm the Nationalist party, whose

leadership of anti-Unionist politics was under threat. What's more, it also perturbed some elements in the parties that the street protestors belonged to.

It was this activist group which organised the October 5th civil rights march. The Belfast-based executive of the Civil Rights Association, anxious for a respectable image, asked Nationalist councillor James Doherty and John Hume, a local factory manager, to sign the official notification of the march to the RUC. However neither wanted anything to do with the venture.

The march was banned on October 3rd by Stormont Home Affairs Minister, William Craig. This angered many in Derry, including many who had been wary of the march. The Labour Party met the same night and resolved to defy the ban—an important factor in forcing a very reluctant CRA

not to back down.

The RUC trapped the march between two police lines in Duke Street and launched a mass assault. Many injured were hosed by water cannon as they fled. RUC men snarled sectarian insult of the "fucking Fenian scum" variety as they wielded their batons.

Reports and pictures of RUC violence caused uproar in Dublin and London as well as nearer home. Within hours, the Bogside had risen up in anger. By the next morning the most prominent half dozen of the organising group were being credited in Derry with having being instrumental in bringing about the most significant change in decades.

*The most important question for socialists today is how come this group, self-consciously socialist to a man and woman, had so little influence over subsequent developments.*

## The moderates take over

FOUR DAYS after the march, on October 9th, a new organisation was formed at a meeting in the City Hotel.

This was the Citizens' Action Committee, a fifteen-strong body which included: factory manager Ivan Cooper, chairman; John Hume, vice-chairman; millionaire bookmaker Michael Canavan, treasurer; wealthy butcher and Nationalist councillor James Doherty, secretary; and Derry's biggest shop-owner and Unionist party member Campbell Austin, press officer.

The first action of the CAC was to call off a further protest march which the October 5th organiser had announced for the following Saturday.

The CAC represented a take-over of civil rights activity in the town by the Catholic establishment. The City Hotel meeting brought together leading Catholic businessmen, solicitors, teachers, priests, etc. plus a sprinkling of liberal middle-class Protestants.

The reason they succeeded so well in placing themselves at the head of a movement which they had done nothing to build was that many of the left-wingers who had been involved pre-October 5th accepted the CAC

takeover. A number of the most prominent became non-prominent members of the CAC.

This wasn't a "sell-out". Rather, there was no plausible alternative. The "original organisers" weren't members of any grouping in which they could have worked out a common line on the CAC interventions. So it made "common sense" to "work from within" in the hope of out-manoeuvring or exposing the right-wingers like Hume, Canavan, Doherty etc. But they weren't even "working within" on an organised basis. So they were trapped as individuals, inside the CAC, pushed forward to provide it with a left-looking image when Hume etc. thought that tactically appropriate.

The CAC organised a number of tightly-controlled demonstrations. The political flavour of these was apparent in a march on November 2nd along the October 5th route, which only the fifteen members of the CAC marched, three abreast, while the masses lined the footpaths to applaud!

A fortnight later about 15,000 set out behind the CAC banner to march illegally on the same route again. This time the CAC had negotiated with the RUC in advance that four CAC members would "symbolically" breach a police cordon. The deal was that that CAC stewards would ensure that none of the other 14,996 marchers would cause bother, in exchange for which four symbols were permitted their moment of mock belligerence.

An indication of the depth of the CAC leadership's dishonesty, and of the left-wing's naivety, is that the two left-wingers among the chosen four did

not discover until years later that this deal had been done.

The CAC's watchword was "anti-Unionist" unity. Anyone insisting on political debate within the anti-Unionist camp was denounced as a "wrecker". This meant that there could be no clear breach with the Nationalist Party, no questioning of the social power of the Catholic Church, no attack on Lynch's Fianna Fail government in Dublin.

Given these politics, "anti-Unionist unity" was a euphemism for Catholic unity. And insofar as the Left hadn't broken with the CAC it became established in the public mind as the more noisy and extreme wing of an essentially Catholic movement, with Hume, Canavan and the others who were later to form the SDLP as the moderate leadership of the same movement.

*This was a disastrous position for the Left to get itself into and in Derry, it has never really recovered.*

## Derry '68

AT TRINITY College in Dublin in March 1970 Hume delivered a closely-argued account of where he thought the civil rights movement was headed.

"Recent events must also produce radical change in the attitudes of those traditionally opposed to the Northern State", he declared. "For it goes without saying that those who have

fought for civil rights must also be prepared to accept civic responsibility. In short we must accept the fact, whether we like it or not, that the Northern State now exists by the will of the majority of its people and that we must involve ourselves at every level of it".

Hume hasn't strayed very far from this position since. It is a classic statement of middle-class resentment. Hume, Copper, Currie, O'Hanlon etc. represented the interests of those articulate well-qualified, socially ambitious Catholics, mostly in their twenties and thirties, who weren't going to tolerate their Protestant equivalents continuing to monopolise all positions of power and influence in Northern society.

Their impatience had been building up in the years prior to 1968. The replacement of the sectarian boor Lord Brookeborough by Terence O'Neill as Stormont Premier in 1963 had promised change. O'Neill wanted to hustle Northern Ireland into the 20th century.

The area's first motorway was under construction as well as a new airport at Aldergrove and the most modern hospital in these islands at Altnagelvin in Derry. A raft of reports was commissioned on economic development on the railways, on higher education etc.

In the imminent era of rational management and modern planning, there could be no place for the type of silly sectarianism which refused to engage the talents and ambitions of the Humes and Curries just because they were Catholics. So a whole layer of well-doing Catholics confidently anticipated upwardly mobile times just ahead.

But it wasn't to be. The planning

process became emmeshed in the sectarian structures of the State. Thus the Lockwood Report sent the North's second university to a wasteland outside Protestant Coleraine, not to Derry where Magee College was ripe for full third-level expansion.

The Mathew Plan put a new town at Craigavon rather than develop bursting-at-the-seams Derry, etc. etc. And in town halls and the offices of district councils the old Orange guard stiffened their resolve to keep Catholics out, no matter what the sharp-suited forward-thinkers around O'Neill were urging.

In this situation, the gathering revolt of the Catholic working class in a place like Derry provided Hume and his ilk with a great opportunity—while at the same time posing a great danger.

The muscle and the threat of mayhem represented by masses of Catholics on the streets could force O'Neill to push through the changes Hume etc. wanted. But Hume and his associates sought only modest change: to be involved "at every level" in the affairs of the State as it existed.

To limit the changes to those that they wanted, the Humeites also had to control the masses.

It was for these related reasons that they stepped in after October 5th. They suddenly realised that people like Finbar Doherty, Dermie McClanaghan, Cathy Harkin, Eamonn Melagh, Eamonn McCann, Brigid Bond, Johnny White etc. weren't to be dismissed as of no account. Here was a movement suddenly big and strong enough to put enough pressure on O'Neill to make him face down the backwoodsmen.

And it was terribly worrying to the like of Hume that a movement had developed outside the control of the Catholic middle-class. That had to be remedied, too.



# ER '68

## How Trade Unions failed

A MAJOR difficulty we faced in trying to argue that Catholic workers should look to the working class movement rather than to an alliance with middle-class nationalists

among the fourteen dead.

Evidence of the way this worked at local level in Derry in the late sixties comes from the minutes of Derry Trades Council. The Council backed the campaign in 1965 to bring the second university to Derry, added its voice around the same time to demands that Derry be developed rather than a

six local trade unionists lay in the morgue at Altnagelvin Hospital, the Trade Council expressed sympathy with the relatives. It said *nothing* about the circumstances of their deaths.

*Down in the Bogside, where young men and women were hurling themselves, stones in hand at the cops, the suggestion that we should "look to the organised working class movement" invited understandable derision.*

### Derry '68

SOME OF the "Marxist" theories fashionable in the sixties didn't help.

Throughout the West, the long post-war boom had encouraged many to write off the working class and to look instead to oppressed groups—blacks, women, the third world masses etc—to provide the dynamic for a revolution which would liberate humanity. This trend was particularly marked in student circles. It played a large part in shaping the strategy of the Queen's University-based Peoples Democracy which emerged in direct response to the RUC assault on the October 5th march.

Since the PD has since been blamed (by opportunists like Fitt and Currie and by Stalinoid automatons like Eoghan Harris of the Workers' Party) for deliberately provoking sectarianism, it needs to be said that the PD leadership were the most determined anti-sectarians of the time. The Northern Catholics were an oppressed group and when they stormed onto the streets to combat their oppression they were entitled to the total support of all who claimed to oppose sectarian oppression.

What the PD, and those of us in Derry who became increasingly associated with the PD in the public mind, lacked was a political analysis which put the working class at the centre of the fight against oppression.

In the early stages of its existence the PD was scarcely an organisation at all. In tune with the spirit of sixties student revolutionism, its basic unit was the mass meeting. Anybody who turned up could vote. If the next meeting drew a different attendance, it could overturn all previous decisions.

Such an organisation can only be sustained on the basis of constant activity. And almost by definition it cannot formulate consistent strategy, much less arrive at an agreed analysis.

Since the PD had virtually no structure, almost any group anywhere could set itself up as the local "PD". As marches, pickets, sit-downs etc. erupted in Catholic working class areas all over the North in the weeks after October 5th, the PD emerged as the militant opposition to the Civil Rights Association.

Derry, as always, being a particular place, the CAC roughly filled the role of the CRA, while our own loose Left group substituted for a Derry PD.

But organisationally and politically, the lines were not clearly drawn. Where the CRA was weak or so moderate as to be moribund (Omagh and Armagh, for example) local PD groups became the effective civil rights leadership.

Where the CRA was strong and militant, as in Lurgan, the local PD operated happily within it. At the January 1968 agm of the CRA, three PD members were elected to the executive. Meanwhile, five "members" of the Left group in Derry formed a third of Hume's CAC.

The PD is best remembered from the period for the "Bumtoller march" from Belfast to Derry of January 1st-4th 1969 in which the Derry Leftists joined. The CRA, the CAC, the Nationalist Party and the Catholic church opposed the march, wanting to

Turn to page 8

Twenty years ago a march for Civil Rights was banned in Derry. Those who defied the ban were batoned off the streets by the RUC. It was a spark that set the North alight against bigotry and repression. Here EAMONN McCANN, one of the original organisers of the march and now a member of the Derry SWM, looks at the role that socialists played in the fight for Civil Rights and draws the lessons for today.



## Wishful thinking of the Left

ONE OF the mistakes made by the Left is that we underestimated the depth of the sectarian division. In part, this was wishful thinking.

On the face of it there had seemed no shortage of evidence that religious hatreds were receding. O'Neill may have been an asinine and unconvincing reformer, but at least here was a Unionist saying that discrimination was wrong, which was new.

Taoiseach Lemass visited O'Neill at Stormont in January 1965. There was much talk of the "two traditions" coming together. "Reconciliation" was the buzz-word. The Nationalist Party agreed to become the Official Opposition at Stormont.

### Derry '68

In the wake of the Second Vatican Council there were reports and instances of an ecumenical spirit flitting around in the land and only small numbers seemed to be taking the Paisleyite protests seriously.

Teenagers in the North hadn't been entirely immune to the youthquake epicentred in Liverpool and in keeping with the spirit of the times many had responded happily to the oft-repeated ecumenical call for more inter-denominational intercourse.

In this general atmosphere it seemed sensible to interpret the modest advances being made by leftist politics as part of a deep-rooted and inexorable process which it was the duty of socialists to push farther and faster.

The broad argument was that since their side—green and orange Tories, North and South—were drifting together, our side—Catholic and Protestant workers, North and South—should come together against them in a realignment at last along the class divide.

Implicit in this was an assumption that the national question would not,

and could not, arise again in traditional, stark, for-or-against-partition terms.

This ignored the extent to which Catholic workers continued, reasonably to regard themselves as members of an oppressed community rather than a section of an exploited class.

The situation in Derry made the point sharply. The 1966 revision of the electoral register showed 14,125 Catholic voters and 1,474 Protestants in the eight-seat South Ward; 4,380 Protestants and 3,173 Catholics in the eight-seat North Ward; and 2,804 Protestants and 1,420 Catholics in the four-seat Waterside Ward.

In round figure, sectarian head-count terms, 20,192 Catholics could hope for eight councillors, 10,274 Protestants for twelve. The Labour performance in 1967 showed that by no means all electors were thinking in sectarian head-count terms. But even so, it was a fact that Catholics were being treated with official contempt.

And since local government power was being used to ruthless sectarian effect in the allocation of houses and jobs (there wasn't a single Catholic working in Derry Guildhall) this wasn't a matter of Catholics feeling vaguely excluded from civic life but of real hardship.

Moreover, there were powerful ideological forces binding the Catholics together as a community. The Catholic Church is not just a set of beliefs but a brilliantly-organised institution reaching into almost every area of the life of "its" people and providing them with a sense of identity.

Once October 5th happened these factors operated to ensure that Catholics reacted as a community. There had, of course, been Protestant trade unionists, Labour Party members and students on the march.

But when people streamed back to the Bogside, bloodied from the batons and soaked by water cannon, and the first flimsy barricades were thrown across Rossville Street, a pattern of play was established which conformed exactly to the traditional shape of struggle in the North.

In this situation socialists, even if we had had coherent organisations and clear ideas, which we hadn't, would have faced very formidable difficulties in trying to argue for an approach based on class rather than on communal solidarity.

was that the working class movement had held itself aloof from Catholic grievances.

Union leaders can, and regularly do, point to ringing resolutions against discrimination, gerrymandering, the use of repressive law etc. But in practice the track record of the unions in relation to sectarianism was (and remains) appalling, and this was reflected in the NI Labour Party.

From the inception of the State, and indeed before, the unions had refused to fight sectarianism at shop-floor level on the ground that the issue would "divide the work-force".

The brave, brief successes of Larkin in 1907 and of rank and file leaders in 1919 and again in 1932 in uniting workers across the sectarian divide are exceptions to the general rule of official union silence about (i.e. complicity in) workplace sectarianism.

Even leading members of the Communist Party who have held prominent positions in the shipbuilding and engineering unions have kept their politics and their union activities strictly separate, as some still do.

Even so, until the emergence of "O'Neillism" in the sixties Unionist governments refused to deal with the unions because the Irish Congress of Trade Unions was organised on a thirty-two county basis.

In 1964, in order to involve union officialdom in the new era of economic planning, O'Neill negotiated a deal with the ICTU whereby a Northern Committee of the ICTU was established to handle "internal" Six County matters. Union officials were now appointed to all manner of official bodies and given "access all areas" passes to the tatty corridors of Six County power.

Four fifths of the running costs of the Northern Committee has come from the Stormont Government, latterly from the Northern Ireland Office.

The union leaders, always unwilling to confront sectarianism at grass roots level, were now also beholden to the State apparatus.

In his book, "Have the Trade Unions Failed the North?", the Labour historian Andy Boyd provides a detailed and devastating account of the effect this had, particularly on issues where the vital interests of the Northern State were involved.

For example, Boyd reckons that the Northern Committee was the only union body of its kind in all Europe to fail to condemn internment in 1971. Similarly, it made no condemnation of the Bloody Sunday massacre—in which six trade union members were

new town constructed at Craigavon, protested against the closure of one of the town's rail links etc.

These were entirely respectable campaigns which drew support from the Churches, most of the business community, and, particularly in relation to the university, even a section of the local Unionist Party.

In 1967 the Council was particularly prominent in an Industry for Derry Campaign, formed after the fly-by-night owners of the Monarch Electric factory had thrown more than a thousand workers on the scrapheap and rocketed the town's unemployment rate to above twenty percent: Catholic male unemployment to above forty percent.

Their Campaign, again, sought backing from "all sections of the community", emphasised the unfairness of Derry's lack of work and the good industrial relations of which any incoming investor was assured.

This "common-sense" perspective—an appeal for all sections of Derry society to come together for Derry's sake—was the basis for the local Labour Party's programme in the 1967 Corporation poll.

The failure of all this campaigning helped fuel the frustration which spilled out onto the streets in 1968. At that point the inadequacy and irrelevance of the Trades Councils involved were exposed.

### Derry '68

In keeping with its moderation and distaste for "divisive" issues and actions, the Council brusquely rejected all appeals from the Left for support. In June 1968 it refused even to hear a deputation from the Housing Action Committee. "No useful purpose would be served" by such a meeting, it declared.

The following month a letter from the Republican Club asking the Council to protest against its proscription was "noted". In August the Council voted not to protest against the convictions on public order offences of ten DHAC activists. Invited by the local organisers to co-sponsor the October 5th march, the Council voted that it should be "left to individual trade unionists" whether to take part.

After the march, on October 10th, the Council, having considered walk-outs in local factories in protest against RUC violence, reminded all concerned that the right to call strikes "is vested solely in the trade union movement".

This trend was to continue. After interment in 1971 the Council held a special meeting which echoed the line of the Northern Committee by "not taking sides". No motion was passed.

On the day after Bloody Sunday, as



"give O'Neill time" to deliver on reforms promised in November and December.

The march was modelled on Martin Luther King's Selma to Montgomery march in Mississippi in 1965. It was resolved at the outset that no matter what the provocation, no-one would retaliate. The march was harassed and battered all the way across the North by large squads of Loyalists who mustered quite openly with cudgels and nailed sticks. Of the eighty or so marchers who set out, only a quarter arrived in Derry uninjured.

## Derry '68

At Burntollet Bridge on the final day a large force of Loyalists, marshalled by off-duty members of the B Specials identified by arm-bands, launched a mass attack which scattered marchers across fields and into a river. The accompanying RUC contingent joined in the attack. As word of this spread into Derry five miles away hundreds of local people poured out in cars and commandeered buses to escort those who were straggling on.

Later that night large gangs of police invaded the Bogside, many of them drunk, beating people up, kicking doors, breaking windows with batons and bellowing sectarian songs. These facts were attested to in the report of the subsequent enquiry chaired by Lord Justice Cameron. There is no record of any marcher hitting back.

*This is the event characterised by deliberate liars like Eoghan Harris as a sectarian attack by the Peoples Democracy on Protestant people.*

# The rise and fall of P.D.

**CATHOLIC OUTRAGE** after Burntollet boosted the PD's standing and credibility among anti-Unionist groups.

This was reflected in the result of the February 24th Stormont general election called by O'Neill in a futile attempt to solidify the

Unionist centre at the expense of the ultra-Right.

The PD put up eight candidates and polled 25,000 votes, winning an average of a



third of the poll where it stood against conservative nationalists and mopping up most of the Catholic vote where it stood alone against Unionists. In Foyle in Derry the Labour Party with myself as candidate took twelve percent against Hume, who won handsomely, and Nationalist Party leader Eddie McAteer.

This was certainly a success for socialists but it is far from clear that it was a success for socialism.

The socialists had emerged as the most militant fighters against Unionist sectarianism. But given the spontaneous nature of the socialists' main organisational expression—the PD—and the absence of clear-cut ideas, this militancy was as much a reflection of gut opposition to the Northern State as of commitment to a socialist solution.

The implications of this became clearer the following month when the Unionist MP for the Mid-Ulster Westminster seat died. It was a knife-edge mainly-rural constituency with a small Catholic majority and a call arose immediately for a "Unity" candidate and no "splitting the vote". Bernadette Devlin won the nomination at a "Unity" convention, defeating the opportunist fraud Currie and a number of moderate claimants.

She went on to win 30,000 votes and a famous victory in April. In her victory speech she said with typical, enchanting candour: "There may not be 30,000 socialists in this constituency, but it has a socialist MP anyway", which perfectly encapsulated the undefinable nature of the Left's "advances".

As events spiralled on towards August 1969 and the entry of British troops, the Left continued to operate as the militant element within a civil rights movement aiming at winning full citizenship for Northern Catholics. Increasingly, the argument between Hume and the CRA etc. on the one hand, and the PD and the Derry Leftists on the other, came to be expressed as an argument about the wisdom and efficacy of the proffered strategies for achieving this.

Our strategy, being more urgent and street-orientated and couched in rhetorically revolutionary terms, matched the mood of many young workers in Catholic ghetto areas. But matching a mood was almost all it was. We weren't recruiting them to socialist politics. Indeed, we had nothing to recruit them to.

Within a year of the February 1969 poll the PD had effectively disappeared in areas where it had polled well: in Fermanagh, South Derry and South Down, for example. After all, the local "PDs" had scarcely been organisations at all. And as student militancy receded, as it tends always to do, the main base in Queen's University eroded steadily away.

In Derry, the Labour Party had begun a process of slow disintegration. The liberal business element which had been around in 1967 had long gone.

*In Foyle, a number of right-wing trade unionists left to back Hume. And while the party did replenish its membership with new, younger recruits, many of these were very soon to begin looking to Republican guerrilla struggle, rather than working-class mass action, as the way forward.*

## The C.P.'s 2-stage theory

IN THE late sixties Republicans in the North worked mainly through the Civil Rights Association.

The idea for a broad-based civil rights group had been mooted as far back as 1962 by Desmond Greaves, a Moscow-line Communist who headed the London-based Connolly Association.

But it was not until 1967 that the NICRA was formed, on the initiative of Communist Party members in Belfast including Betty Sinclair, Noel Harris and Edwina Stewart. Their "communist" reason for initiating such a soft reformist campaign was an expression of the "stages" theory of revolution. This had been devised under Stalin in the thirties and applied since by orthodox CPers around the world to situations involving national or communal oppression.

In essence, the theory declared that

in such circumstances it was futile to raise specifically working-class demands and that communists should concentrate on winning the support of "progressive" and "democratic" elements for a campaign to end the oppression: only at that stage would "normal" class-based, Left-versus-Right politics become possible.

## Derry '68

Thus the CP core worked energetically to draw a very wide range of elements into the CRA: conservative Catholics (such as those around Knight of Columbanus Dr. Con McCluskey in Dungannon), liberal academics, members of the NILP and of Fitt's Republican Labour Party, trade union officials, traditional Republicans like Kevin Agnew of Maghera and even moderate Unionists: Queen's young Unionist chairman Robin Cole was coopted onto the first committee.

The CRA strategy had an immediate appeal to Republicans analysing the disastrous failure of the IRA's "Border Campaign" which had petered out in 1962. Many of these, Cathal Goulding, Tomas MacGiolla, Sean Garland etc.

had come to regard themselves in general terms as "socialists".

One of the reasons this group found the "stages" theory congenial was that Left-thinking Republicans had always operated their own version of revolution-by-stages: first unite Ireland, then commence class war. All that the CRA strategy did was add in another "stage"—the "democratisation of the North"—to this process.

Moreover, the notion of a tightly-disciplined body operating in a clandestine manner within a broader organisation came easily to those whose politics had been shaped in the IRA.

Having embraced the strategy, the Goulding group eventually swallowed whole the politics from which it was derived until, today, the Workers' Party competes with the CP for the franchise to represent Moscow within the Irish working class.

For the first year of its existence the CRA did little, apart from issuing letters of protest and appealing to O'Neill to move faster on reform. It built up no grass-roots following. For example, it wasn't until mid-1969—much too late—that a paper branch was set up in Derry.

The CRA's first public demonstration, the Coalisland to Dungannon march on August 24th 1968, was forced on it by events in the locality, most importantly an angry and widely-publicised squatting protest against the allocation of a house in Caledon to a single Protestant woman ahead of Catholic families living in desperate conditions. It was after this that the Left group in Derry decided to organise the October 5th march and invited the CRA to give the venture its endorsement.

Again, the initiative hadn't been taken by the CRA. The CRA had reacted to an initiative already taken.

As events then unfolded the "stages" theory was tested against reality, and it failed. The RUC harassed the Dungannon march, attacked the Derry march, operated as bigots-in-uniform at and after the Burntollet march. At street level in Catholic working class areas the reaction to all this couldn't be contained within the limits laid down by the CRA's strategy.

*And the CRA didn't have the presence at grass-roots level or the political prestige to seriously influence, much less determine, how those who marched for "civil rights" responded.*

## The Left without a Party

IN THE lounge of the City Hotel in Derry after the October 5th march Betty Sinclair, leading CP member and CRA chairperson, loudly denounced the "hooligans and anarchists" who had "ruined our reputation".

She wasn't referring to the RUC but to the small section of marchers who had fought back.

This analysis of what went wrong is still advanced by Currie, Fitt, the WP and others who argue that a broad, peaceful movement which had a real chance of achieving democracy in the North had been destroyed by the turbulence provoked by "ultra-Left" agitators.

In fact there never was a "civil rights movement" to be destroyed, not in the sense of a coherent organisation

of which large numbers of people were loyal adherents.

Additionally, the record shows that whatever reforms were achieved—always too little, too late—came in response to trouble on the streets, not to moral pleas or broad-based protest.

O'Neill's first "reform package", promising a points system for housing, the appointment of an ombudsman, a Development Commission for Derry and a "review" of the Special Powers Act—was unwrapped on November 22nd 1968, six years after he'd become Premier, six weeks after October 5th. If the lesson of that still escapes puppy-intellectuals like Eoghan Harris, it wasn't missed by Bogside teenagers at the time.

Politically more important is the related fact that it was the very nature of the Northern State, not the tactics any Left-wing activists used against it, which ensured that any progress towards reform was certain of speedy derailment.

For example, it's perfectly true that if the Burntollet march hadn't happened it couldn't have aroused the

sectarian attack made on it. But to blame the organisers of the march for the sectarianism displayed in the attack makes as much sense as blaming the organisers of the Bloody Sunday march (the CRA, as it happens) for the ferocity of the Para attack which left fourteen dead.

The truth is that *nobody* on the civil rights side had anything like the influence which needed to dictate what course events would take once the first baton smashed into a head on October 5th.

What was decisive was that the machinery of the State—the cops, the courts, the Stormont parliament—operated in a brutal and thoroughly sectarian manner to try to bludgeon the civil rights protests off the streets. That forced the Catholic community back in on itself, embattled against the State. In time, this provided the basis for the emergence of the Provisional IRA.

The Left in the civil rights movement had surfed along on the tide of events. It had no politically-hard organisation and no clear orientation to the working class. It was therefore quite unable to

stand fast against the direction in which the tide was flowing. We were carried along by it.

This is not to argue that if we had all been hardened revolutionaries working clear-mindedly to build a revolutionary socialist party things would have worked out very differently.

The deep-rootedness of sectarianism, the extent to which people in places like the Bogside think "naturally" in communal rather than class-terms, the fact that even mildly Left-wing politics had long been anathematised by the Catholic establishment, all this would have confronted even the most consistent of Marxists with formidable obstacles.

The obstacles would have been easier to overcome if we had been able to point to an organised working class movement—the unions most importantly, and the Labour Party—with a clear record of fighting vigorously for an end to the oppression of Catholics. If that had been the case it might have been possible to point to the working class as the force which, properly

mobilised, had the power to remedy the ills we were campaigning against.

But that wasn't the case. The realistic possibility we did have and didn't take, was of recruiting relatively rapidly from the masses of angry, urgent working class youth whom we had helped bring onto the streets, and perhaps entering 1969 with a revolutionary socialist organisation a few hundred strong.

Instead, all that was on offer to those who were battered and subjected to sectarian insult was the sleazy opportunism of the chancers who were later to form the SDLP, Catholic conservatism and the abstractions and "revolutionary" play-acting of the stages theorists.

*Nobody* in 1968 pointed a clear way forward to a socialist Ireland. Small wonder, then that thousands of those who did want to fight the sectarian State to a finish were to gravitate shortly to the Provisional IRA.

*The task of building a revolutionary socialist party remains.*



# Marxism in Ireland '88

**A weekend of political discussion and debate  
organised by the Socialist Workers Movement**

**Dublin 4,5,6 November**

**Institute of Adult Education, 1/3 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1**

This is the third time *Marxism in Ireland* has been organised and each time it gets bigger. It has now become the most important forum for the discussion of marxist politics in Ireland. This year the venue is the Institute of Adult Education in Mountjoy Square, just off Dublin's city centre. A wide range of topics draws on the revolutionary tradition of the past and looks at the current questions

facing socialists.

A deliberate effort has been made to make the debates accessible to those who are interested in Left politics for the first time. Jargon and sectarianism are positively discouraged. Throughout the

weekend there will be a choice of meetings.

Accommodation is provided free in Dublin for those travelling from outside. There will be a creche for the kids. Cheap meals will be available at the venue.

Tickets for *Marxism in Ireland* cost £7 for the full weekend (£4 unemployed). As space is limited, it is advisable to book early by filling out the coupon below.

## FRIDAY NIGHT

★ ***Fascism and the rise of Le Pen in France***  
Brian Hanley (6.30)

★ **LEFT FORUM**  
***October '68: 20 years on: Which way for the Left*** (8.00)

★ EAMONN McCANN (SWM)  
★ JOHN MITCHELL  
★ VINCENT MCDOWELL (Member  
'Dublin '68 Committee')

## SATURDAY NIGHT

★★★★★★★★★★  
***A Night of Socialist Cabaret***  
with

★ **MARK STEELE** (British  
Socialist Comedian)

★ **DERMOT BYRNE and guests**  
Billy Doyle's (off Gardiner  
Place) at 9.00pm

★★★★★★★★★★

## ★ HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WEEKEND SATURDAY

★ ALEX CALLINICOS (Author:  
'Revolutionary Ideas of Karl Marx', 'Is  
there a Future for Marxism')  
***The End of the Third World?*** (7.15)

★ GORETTI HORGAN (ex-organiser  
Anti Amendment Campaign)  
***What Causes Violence against  
Women?*** (10.00)

★ JOSH CLARKE  
***Reds and Greens*** (3.45)

★ EAMONN McCANN  
***Republicanism at the Crossroads***  
(11.45)

★ MARY SMITH  
***Marxism and Imperialism*** (3.45)

★ MIKE SCULLY  
***Gorbachev's Russia*** (7.15)

★ **PLUS**  
***DEBATE: Can the Labour Party ever  
Fight for Socialism*** (2.00)  
★ KIERAN ALLEN (SWM)  
★ and speaker for LABOUR LEFT

## SUNDAY

★ PAUL FOOT (Daily Mirror columnist  
and SWP member)  
***Rosa Luxemburg and the German  
Revolution*** (12.15)  
★ KIERAN ALLEN  
***Why Southern Workers Vote for  
Fianna Fail*** (2.30)

★ ALEX CALLINICOS  
***Marx's View of History*** (2.30)

★ **FINAL MEETING:**  
***Against the Stream —  
Revolutionaries in the 80s***  
★ PAUL FOOT and ★ EAMONN  
McCANN

Please send me a ticket for the weekend

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

Do you require us to arrange accommodation for  
you? YES/NO

Do you require the use of the creche? YES/NO  
If YES state ages .....

I enclose the sum of £

send to SWM PO Box 1648 James St Dublin 8



## Reviews

# In place of an obituary

MARXISM HAS produced few scholars of Irish history. Emile Strauss's marvellous book (now out of print) *Irish Nationalism, British Democracy* stands out as an exception. So too does the biographical work of the recently deceased C Desmond Greaves. His three books on O'Casey, James Connolly and Liam Mellows are rich in detail and research.

Greaves used the biographical method to throw light on Irish society. His book *Mellows and the Irish Revolution* was the first to reveal the scale of working class involvement in the Irish freedom struggle from 1919 to 1923. In *The Life and Times of James Connolly*, Greaves examined the relationship between the national question and the struggle for socialism.

Greaves' influence as a theoretician was at its heights in the sixties. Irish emigrants came across his Connolly Association in London through its paper, the *Irish*

*Democrat*. Being forced to leave the suffocating atmosphere of arch-Catholicism, many gravitated to the Left. At that time the Left was the Connolly Association.

When they returned in the late sixties these former emigrants were to play an important role in reviving the socialist movement in Ireland. They helped to re-build the tiny Irish Communist Party. They were the key elements that pushed the republican movement to the left until the Official Sinn Féin (now the Workers Party) took off. And the politics they had learnt from Desmond Greaves seemed to offer a guiding light.

## UNEARTHED

The positive aspect of the Greaves' legacy was that he unearthed a previous Irish socialist tradition. Until Greaves' book on Connolly appeared in 1961, little had been published on this founder of Irish Marxism since a collection of his writings had appeared in 1948. Connolly was viewed simply as the right hand man of Padraic Pearse or

as just another hero of the 1916 rebellion with a peculiar liking for the cause of Labour.

The negative aspect of Greaves' legacy was that his scholarship and talent came wrapped in the politics of Stalinism. This meant a clear defence of the "stages theory" whereby the national struggle had first to be completed before socialism could be sought. During the first stage of the struggle i.e. until partition was removed, the working class had to seek out progressive allies among the national bourgeoisie. This meant necessarily limiting their own demands which could only be raised fully after the first stage had been completed.

These politics meant that Greaves was often uncomfortable with Connolly.

Greaves praised Connolly as the one who joined the republicans in 1916 and overcame the earlier leftism expressed in *Labour and Irish History*. There Connolly had argued that only the working class could be the "incorruptible inheritors" of the fight for Irish freedom. According to Greaves, the Connolly of 1916 had finally

learnt that there were in fact allies to be found among the national bourgeoisie. But even this was not far enough for Greaves. He also argued that Connolly should have liquidated his Citizen Army fully into the Irish Volunteers!

## 'ULTRA-LEFT'

In order to defend his rigid adherence to the stages theory, Greaves became a scourge of the "ultra-left" which in typical Stalinist style he claimed was a product of British imperialism. (The mind boggles at imperialist-sponsored "ultra-left" groups in Ireland in the fifties!) This attitude was to find a resonance in the Official Sinn Féin movement in the late sixties. They were to attack the "ultra-left" for taking the Civil Rights movement beyond the stage of democratising Stormont. The result for them, and for Greaves, was to be a deformed birth: the Provisional IRA.

Yet the irony today is that the same Provo movement has also found its theoretical guru in Greaves. A recent obituary in *An Phoblacht/Republican News* praised his constant

attacks on the "ultra-left" in Ireland. The reason for the convergence is not hard to find. For all of Greaves' claim to the most orthodox brand of Marxism, his stages theory led to terrible concessions to nationalism. Anything that disrupted unity between the national bourgeoisie and the working class at this stage was ultra-left! In a period when Gerry Adams and the leadership of Sinn Féin are pressing for a pan-nationalist alliance with Fianna Fáil and the SDLP, Greaves' writings will be a source of comfort.

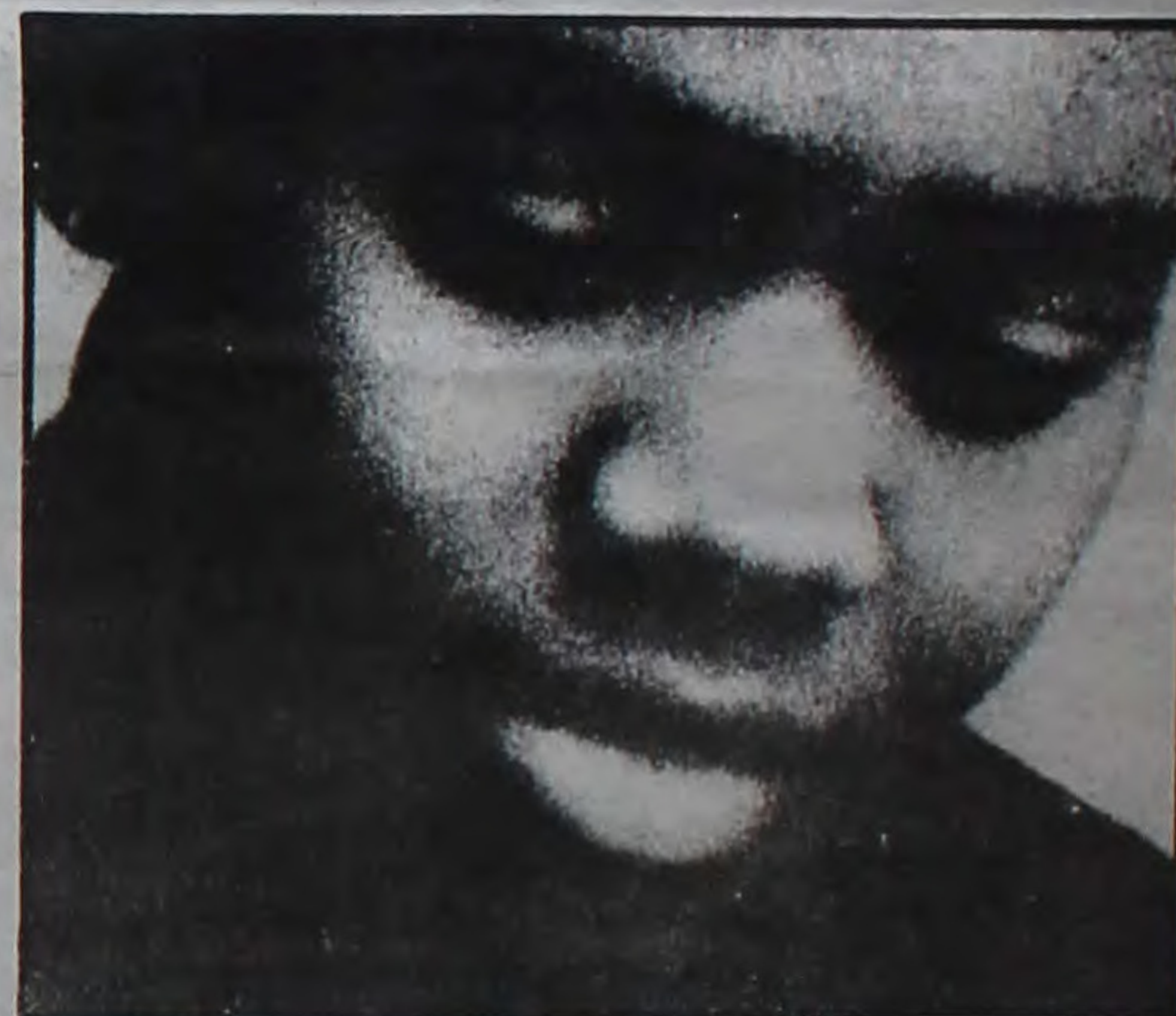
In contrast the revolutionary socialist tradition in Ireland will thank him for his scholarship—but mercilessly oppose the legacy of his politics and the disasters they have led to on the Irish Left.

□KIERAN ALLEN



C Desmond Greaves—good scholar but poor marxist

# Talkin 'bout revolution



TRACY CHAPMAN

TRACY CHAPMAN'S new album is currently riding high in the charts world wide. With tracks like *Talkin' bout a revolution* and *Why* Chapman has rapidly become the Left's new heroine.

While it's good to see thousands of people buying and listening to songs with such directly political lyrics, unfortunately I don't think Tracey Chapman fans will be rushing out to join revolutionary organisations.

The best socialist music is that which connects with people's experiences and very few people are 'talkin' bout a revolution'.

The Redskins singing *Keep on keepin' on* made sense in the context of the miners' strike but it would mean nothing to a non-left-wing audience now.

When workers do start to move it matters little what the music they adopt was originally intended to mean. A motown dance track was taken as the anthem of the 1968 Detroit riots and an anti-union rant from the Strawbs—*Part of the Union*—was sung and marched to by thousands of workers during the great trade union struggles of the early seventies.

For that reason I think the best tracks on the LP are the songs which are overtly political but relate to experiences everyone has had: *Fast car*, a sort of Bruce Springsteen's *The River* Part Two; *For My Lover* and *For You*, for example.

It's a good album, most left-wingers will enjoy it and it's certainly better than most of the crap in the charts. But despite all that it's not going to move the masses to revolt.

I may be being cynical but I have a feeling that the vast majority at the RDS came to see Hot House Flowers.

☆BRIAN HANLEY

# Lenin's fight to build the party



Lenin fought the "Economists"

"What is to be Done?" by VI Lenin, Penguin Classics £3.95.

IN 1900, through the medium of a paper, *Iskra* (*The Spark*), and after a series of closely reasoned pamphlets arguing against the populist terrorism of the "Narodniks", Lenin began the task of building the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP).

In doing so, he linked the growing circles of Marxist intellectuals in Russia with the spontaneous wave of working class struggles.

It is in the context of this work that the much misused *What is to be Done?*—essentially an examination of the RSDLP's organisational methods and objectives—must be viewed.

Attacking the "Economists" (a group who argued that socialists should restrict themselves to the economic struggles of the workers and subordinate their politics to the liberal constitutional demands of the capitalists), Lenin's aim

was to transform the RSDLP into a disciplined party, a party of a new kind, organically related to the working class, capable of both popularising and acting on Marxist ideas.

Central to *What is to be Done?* is Lenin's insistence that "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary practice". A revolutionary class consciousness, he stresses, far from being a "spontaneous" growth, can only come to the mass of the workers "from without". The party intelligentsia, who are to argue the socialist message with the workers, must then be dedicated full-time revolutionaries but under the discipline of the workers in the party branches.

Today, Lenin's polemic is best remembered for the political wrangles it inspired (over who should be entitled to become a party member) which split the RSDLP at its 2nd Congress in 1903 into two factions: the Bolsheviks (majority-ites) led by Lenin and the Mensheviks (minority-ites) led by Martov. But the argument turned not on a word or two "that only he is a member who puts himself under the discipline of the local organ-

isation", but over a whole conception of revolutionary struggle, and the split in the Russian movement was never really to be healed. (In 1912 the two sections became separate organisations.)

For contemporary critics, Lenin's emphasis on the incapacity of the mass of the working class to achieve a revolutionary socialist consciousness through its own immediate experience of life under capitalism, and his stress on the necessity of democratic centralism, constituted an "aberration" from a "truly Marxist" position and an argument for "authoritarian control".

However, Lenin's insistence on the inability of the working class to advance spontaneously, beyond trade union consciousness was not new. Indeed it was commonplace in international socialist circles. What was new was Lenin's demand for a tightly organised revolutionary party, able to survive illegality and repression.

## MISTAKE

But it is also important to note that in 1907 Lenin pointed out: "The basic mistake made by those who now criticise *What is to be Done?* is to treat the pamphlet apart from its connection with the concrete historical situation of a definite and long past period in the development of our party." (Collected Works Volume 13, p.101)

In fact Lenin argued for variations in party structure in relation to changing circumstances. In the period 1900-1905, when his polemic was written, conditions of illegality made a small secret party a necessity. The 1905 Revolution changed this, allowing the mass enrollment of workers into the party, and the introduction of elections, factions, etc., within the Bolsheviks.

Again though, it must also be

emphasised that the differing tactics and structure of the Bolsheviks, from illegality to legality, all depended on a view of class consciousness which denied all notions of workers spontaneously realising the necessity of smashing capitalism and of overthrowing their oppressors. Workers may develop trade unions; but that doesn't automatically make them political revolutionaries. This side of the revolution, revolutionaries will always be in a minority. For the moment our main task is to increase the size of that minority to ensure that, in a revolutionary situation, there will be enough experienced revolutionaries to overcome "the wall" of trade union consciousness.

The issue by a mainstream publisher of this revised, more accessible translation of Lenin's classic 1902 pamphlet must be welcomed, despite its price (the less readable Russian and Chinese editions are much cheaper). Unfortunately, the same can't be said for the inclusion of Robert Service's lengthy 66-page introduction.

The trouble with such "introductions" to Lenin's thought is that when they are not criticising his supposed "Jacobinism" and "power mania", they are almost always couched in terms of his brilliance as a "pragmatic politician", with Lenin pictured as a "ruthless schemer", "inconsequential" as a theorist but a "superb opportunist and organiser".

While Service's piece isn't as bad as some (although it relegates text to the realm of political archaeology) for those who recognise the tremendous integrity and coherence of Lenin's thought, *What is to be Done?* remains of continuing relevance as an important contribution to the Marxist theory of the revolutionary party.

□BRUCE MORTON



# Reds in Green Heartland

THE MOST noticeable thing about County Mayo is the lack of people. The famine and mass emigration are to blame.

Both unnatural causes, acts of the British rulers in the last century and of the ruling class in this one.

The large tracts of empty green fields, empty bogs, empty houses, empty schools, with some scatterings of cows, the odd few sheep and some half empty factories show the need for socialist revolution as do the awful social conditions in the cities. It is a green desert.

This is Padraig Flynn country. Clientelism rules life here. The TDs and local councillors who decide who gets a council house, who gets on a water scheme. The health inspector admits to having no say at all.

On the left, Sinn Fein has a few activists and some passive support. But there has only been one Anti-Extradition

meeting.

The Labour Party is more right wing than in the cities. You can get branches made up entirely of the petit bourgeoisie with a majority of shopkeepers.

They have a push on now to recruit new members and some enthusiastic young members. But confining politics to issues like fixing drains and ID cards for young drinkers is already disillusioning them.

There are two kinds of womens' groups—unfortunately both dominated by bourgeois women. The more organised one lost its few working class members to emigration. The remainder are turned inwards to consciousness raising, theology studies and business skills.

## FRIGHTEN

They are very afraid of the left, using the old cliché, that "it might frighten other women away". The others are jaded academic feminists engaging exclusively in women's studies and the home. They would make the full-blooded feminists who fought so hard for womens' rights die of boredom or turn in their graves.

Then you have the *Alternatives*. The academic feminists are usually members.



Bourgeois and petit bourgeois right wing liberals. Though some have converted to Islam and even Catholicism. Mostly former city dwellers, they have turned their backs on the problems in their cities, blaming "over-population", and fled to this malthusian paradise.

Doggedly attempting to live as "traditional" Irish peasants in their Walt Disney type "natural lifestyle", "craft workshops", "organic" farms and fishing lodges, they are obsessed by self

sufficiency.

Among some of these there is a campaign for the return of gold and silver as common currency.

## ROOT CAUSE

They claim this would end "usury, which is a root cause of the injustices of our time". Their propaganda hints fairly broadly that Jews and "scientific materialists" are the culprits. Lunatic fringeish but scarey.

There is a simultane-

ous campaign to prevent local gold mining, which would provide desperately needed jobs. Some of the campaigners are rabidly anti-leprechaun. Bad taste, they say. A few of them are also very rich with "investments" in the background, and want to keep the scenery they have invested in free of ugly mines and "aggressive" workers.

So their gold coinage would most likely have to come from nasty South Africa. These make a lot of noise and

get a lot of quite obsequious respect locally.

## HATRED

For all that, there is a crying need for a fight for womens' rights. There is a strong feeling here of hatred towards women, particularly among officials. The two gynaecologists in Castlebar managed to defeat a campaign to open a family planning clinic.

The bosses at the Westport Allergan fac-

tory are renowned for community spirit. They gave some local travellers £1,000 to move out of sight while the directors were visiting. Now the council is building a wall to stop them ever coming back.

The working class is tiny. Yet there were some good long strikes in the Halal and Claremorris meat plants. But a really bad feature of the downturn is that bosses, to avoid strikes here, more and more often close a factory and then, big surprise, reopen taking back only the non-militant workers.

This could be stopped if some workers get the confidence to occupy. But there is not much of a lead coming from the ITGWU HQ in Castlebar. The local union bureaucrat is also the local undertaker!

The saddest thing for the people who are left here is that so many of the young people are gone. But even though it's an awful thing that they were forced to go, now in cities, it is their best chance of becoming politicised. It is much easier to get involved in left-wing activities away from relations, neighbours and priests.

In spite of all the right wing gloom and horror, *Socialist Worker* is being sold in the streets in Castlebar and to the ones and twos around about.

□MAYO SWM

## LETTER

### SWM 'wrong on 26-Counties

Dear Comrades, With reference to Eamonn McCann's article in *Socialist Worker* (August 1988) identifying quite rightly the current move within Republicanism to the right.

It appears to me that *Socialist Worker* possesses a very dangerous position on the underlying nature of British Imperialism in Ireland, which places the SWM in the same boat as "bourgeois socialist" groups such as *Militant*.

Although the article made the obligatory marxist analysis that only the working class can deliver a socialist Republic, the belief that Irish capitalism has reached maturity and is an equal partner in the world of international capitalism, obscures for the working class of the 26 Counties, the real reason why their struggle for national liberation is really as much their struggle as the "nationalist working class" in the 6 Counties.

Surely from the SWM's position on the nature of 26 County capitalism, it follows that workers in the South should not really have any interest in destroying the "Orange State" and ending British imperialism? This is a treach-

erous position and needs careful re-examining. It is revisionist and belongs to the "bourgeois socialist" school.

A careful study of the 26 County economy will show that the 26 Counties is a neo-colony and that the division between "heavy goods" and "consumer goods" areas of production, which Marx identified as a major sign of capitalist maturity, is not evident.

## INDUSTRIES

Thus Ireland especially the 26 Counties is a "feeding ground" for multi-nationals, whereas native industries employ only a small percentage of the population. Similarly within the finance sector, most banks, credit companies etc. are dominated by British Capital.

SWM must revise its attitude to the relationship between the 26 County bourgeoisie and British capitalism and come to the realisation that Ireland is a neo-colony, that Irish capitalism is not independent of British capitalism and that the struggle against British imperialism affects Southern workers as well as the Northern working class.

MA  
REVOLUTIONARY,  
Belfast

## £550 million banks spending spree

IN THE same week that Fianna Fail Minister Brian Lenihan went cap-in-hand to America begging for US investment and jobs for Ireland, his two top bankers Niall Crowley (Allied Irish Bank) and Mark Hely Hutchinson (Bank of Ireland) were spending a massive £550 million between them buying up banks in Maryland and New Hampshire.

The contradictions contained in the capitalist system are limitless and at all times would be hilarious but for the tragic consequences.

As experienced e.g. by the married couple

who have been refused a house loan by Big Spender Crowley's AIB, "because the woman might leave her job if she had children".

The woman bank official, who refused the loan to Mrs. Pamela Fleming,

agreed that the bank's decision was "discriminating".

The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Womens' Rights reminded the AIB of the 1979 United Nations Convention on the elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (ratified by Ireland) particularly in the area of financial credit provided by private organisations.

AIB responded that a "balanced approach" must be adopted here and still refused the loan. The female of the species is unbalanced and unrel-

able. They get pregnant, don't they? Come in SPUC!

Meanwhile over at the B of I, Mark Hely Hutchinson was berating the Irish Bank Officials Association for their lack of sympathy for his latest cost cutting proposal.

New staff will be recruited on a scale £6500-10,000 p.a. as opposed to the existing scale of £840-£18,000 p.a. A mere wages cut of 25-30%.

"The bank is in a very serious position", he said. Wouldn't even talk to the IBOA officials. Meetings are being held in separate

rooms with the "conciliation" officer relaying messages between the two sides.

Mr Hutchinson described the purchase of the First New Hampshire bank as a "cheap" buy.

Banking in America may not be such a clever bet after all. 1,500 US banks are classified as being "in trouble".

The FDIC, which insures American Banks, has rescued 200 banks to the tune of 10 billion dollars in the last five years. And the US economy may well nose-dive after the November elections.

## IRISH DISTILLERS TAKEOVER FRAUD

AMIDST ALL of the treachery, double-dealing and viciousness involved during the takeover battle for the Irish Distillers Group (IDG), little attention has been paid to the fate of the workers or indeed to the entire drinks industry itself in Ireland.

Over the last year or so GC&C, owned by the giant British Grand Metropolitan Group, have been accelerating their purchase of shares in IDG. During all of this time, GC&C lied through their teeth to hide their intentions.

Finally, on May 30th this year, they were forced into

the open and made a final bid for the purchase of IDG. By August, they had increased their bid to £4 per share, due to the flak encountered from the EC Commission, (GC&C were breaking Club rules), the Irish government (not too sure of its ground) and, of course, IDG itself.

■■■■■

The IDG management was really running scared because GC&C had prematurely announced its intentions to "rationalise" the Irish industry: i.e. all but close it down, management and all! The Bushmills distillery in the North was mentioned as an early victim.

The workers in IDG whiffed the financial cordite and formed the "Irish

Distillers Employee Survival Group". Hello Armageddon! What are the Unions doing we venture to ask?

However, back to the other war. Along comes predator No.2 in the disguise of a friendly "White Knight" to the rescue from them bad Brits (GC&C). Pernod, the French giant drinks company, had entered the scene. They made allies within IDG (we won't close you down!) and they bid for £4.50 per share.

GC&C replied with a counter bid of £5.25 per share and battle was really joined.

Since early September, the lies and counter-lies have increased in number and volume. Promises have been made to each other "to be good" and have been broken just as quickly.

Court injunctions have been taken out, courts have been set up on Saturday nights to resolve instant insults and lies. Takeover Panels have intervened in London.

Brussels is upset at this unseemly conduct of senior club members. Haughey's government is concerned and reputations generally are being sacrificed to the Gods of High Finance. Isn't it a great pity that duelling was made illegal?

One of the key lies—that of the fate of FII's 20% holding of IDG will be sorted out—in the High Court, (no less) this month. Pernod says FII promised to sell their 20%, FII says "Oh no we didn't!" etc. etc.

One of the most telling features as to what these lunatic but powerful in-

stitutes really stand for, slipped out over the Haughey government's Joint Oireachtas Committee decision in Irish Life (state sponsored) and their 15% shareholding of IDG.

Chairman Lawler said after a private committee meeting, "the interests of the Irish tax-payer will best be served if the shares held by the semi-state body (Irish Life) are sold to the highest bidder." And therein you really have it all.

Between the lot of them, they will protect only the interests of the capitalist system and maximum profits will be realised. The highest bidder, i.e. GC&C will win.

No prizes for guessing who will suffer. The Irish workers and taxpayers will lose out badly.

★JOKER



# Socialist Worker

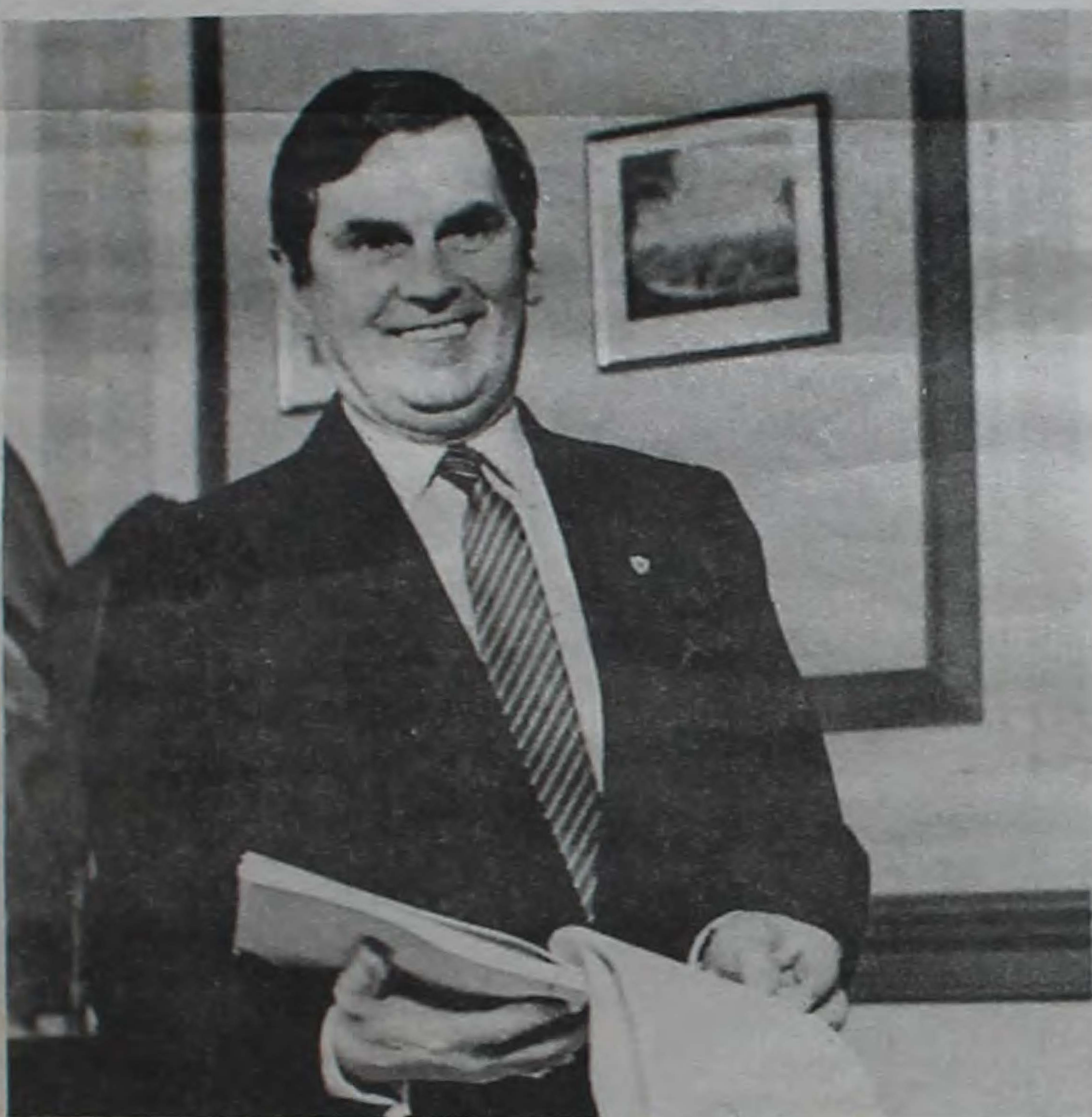
## FF plans new cuts...

# IT'S MACK THE KNIFE

RAY McSHARRY—our own *Mac the Knife*—is preparing a new round of cuts. Between now and January 1, the Fianna Fail government must produce its book of estimates. Over £400 million is to be slashed from the public spending programme.

Fianna Fail's aim is to cut enough to make room for some minor tax cuts. In this way, they will give a few carrots to the union leaders who have stuck with them on the National Plan. They also hope to use the tax cuts to sweep back into office in a snap election in 1989.

It is only now that the full effects of the last round of cuts are becoming clear. The health



● The Minister for Finance, Ray MacSharry

service has been devastated.

● Nurses' leaders have warned that elderly patients have been forced into private nursing homes where they are locked up for the night from 3 p.m.

● Women are being forced to leave hospital

within a day of delivering their babies.

● Patients have been forced to lie for hours on stretcher beds.

● Nurses' jobs have been slashed to such an extent that Fianna Fail has had to introduce a crash programme for recruiting

student nurses as cheap labour.

The effects on the education service are as bad. Overcrowded classes, a shortage of teachers, poor resources, are common.

It is not as if there is no money in the country. Grants are available in abundance for the international financiers who are setting up on the Customs House Dock site.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■  
The banks and big business are turning in enormous profits and paying minimal tax.

The big farmers are getting off scot free from the Land Tax. Haughey has deferred collection.

A tax amnesty is available for businessmen who have not paid taxes in years.

Fianna Fail—the party of the rich—is going all out to defend the interests of its class.

It is time that *our* side drew the lessons.

## Eamonn McCann

IT EMERGED from the SDLP/Sinn Fein talks which ended last month that there is no fundamental difference of principle between the two parties.

This is the view of the parties themselves. In a document presented on June 13th and published when the talks ended on September 5th, the Sinn Fein side referred to the fact that they and the SDLP between them "represent the majority of six-county nationalists" and suggested that they should therefore "join forces", work towards a "common strategy", a "common platform of political activity" and so on.

For its part, the SDLP on July 11th declared that "politically, the positions of Sinn Fein and ourselves are not unduly removed from one another and are bridgeable".

Both sides agreed that the differences between them concern strategy, not principle, and that their different strategies were rooted in a disagreement about Britain's role in Ireland.

The SDLP argued that Britain no longer had any objection to a united Ireland and that it is not therefore necessary to force Britain out. The SDLP asserted that this is "beyond doubt" and "removes all justification for the IRA campaign".

Challenged by Sinn Fein to produce evidence for this, the SDLP referred to Article One of the Anglo-Irish Agreement where the British Government declared that it would not stand in the way if a majority in the Six Counties decided to pull out of the UK and join the South.

Sinn Fein countered that British actions in the North over the past twenty years speak louder than words and testify to a very real determination to stay in the North and that to achieve a united Ireland nationalists would therefore have to exert maximum pressure to push them out.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Specifically, Sinn Fein suggested "that Sinn Fein and the SDLP join forces to impress on the Dublin Government the need to launch an international and diplomatic offensive to secure self-determination". Later, on June 13th, Sinn Fein suggested a method of testing the validity of the SDLP view: that there should be a united nationalist effort to persuade the British to adopt "a policy of disengagement" and that towards this end "Sinn Fein and the SDLP jointly issue a call to the Dublin and London Governments for them to consult together to seek agreement on the policy objectives of Irish reunification".

This argument was batted back and forth from the beginning of the talks in January until they registered a failure to agree on September 5th.

On the evidence of the published documents, it seems that neither side attempted any objective analysis of what the British interest in Ireland actually consists of. Is this interest economic, political, strategic, all three? Or something else entirely? It seems that these questions weren't asked, much less answered, by either side.

The Marxist view is that the British ruling class would be perfectly content to contemplate a united Ireland if they reckoned that was the best way to ensure political stability, the preservation of capitalist property relations and the maintenance of Ireland within the western "sphere of influence".

Thus the reason that Britain stays is precisely that British capitalism believes its departure would not secure these objectives.

This view takes it for granted that "the British interest" refers to a class interest. Otherwise we'd have to believe that there's some insubstantial concept called "the British interest" hovering over the North, unconnected to capitalist reality.

However, the question of class seems not to have figured at all in the detailed, eight-month discussion between the SDLP and Sinn Fein.

At no point in any of the three substantial documents produced by the Sinn Fein side is there even a passing reference to a disagreement between the two parties as to the kind of united Ireland, the class content of the united Ireland, which was envisaged.

That is why the two sides, despite being unable to reach agreement on strategy, were nevertheless able to conclude that there is no fundamental difference of principle between them.

Rank and file Republicans who do see themselves as socialists, and their struggle as part of a struggle for socialism, would do well to consider the implications of this.

## Join us!

☐ I would like to join the SWM

☐ I would like more details

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

send to SWM, PO Box 1648,  
Dublin 8

## ★WHAT'S ON

### DUBLIN

Dublin Branch meets every Wednesday in the Bachelor Inn at 8.00pm.

5th Oct. *Cuba—Is It Socialist?*/speaker Sean McVeigh

12th Oct. *The lessons of October '68*

19th Oct. *Thatcher and the British Left*/speaker Dave McDonagh

### GALWAY

Thurs Oct. 6th: *The North, the Socialist Solution* venue: UCG

Tues Oct. 11th: *Why workers vote F.F.* venue Billy Walsh's, Dominick st, 8.00pm

Sat Oct. 22nd: *DAYSCHOOL, 2.00pm to 5.00pm Atlanta Hotel, Dominick St, sessions on Women and Russia.*

Tues Nov 1st: *What the SWM stands for*, venue: Billy Walsh's, Dominick St, 8.00pm

### CORK

Note new venue: Arichor Inn, Georges Quay

Sept 27: *Will workers ever fight?*/speaker: Dominic Carroll

Oct 4th: *Revolutions in the Third World*/speaker: Neamh Connolly

For details of meetings in other areas write of national address or see local paper sellers



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