



POBLACHT SHOISIALACH

SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

PRICE: 20p. 10p, Unemployed and Strikers.
OUTSIDE IRELAND 25p.

Paper of PEOPLES' DEMOCRACY
VOL.6. No. 2.

Organise and Fightback!

G'them the sack!



G' US JOBS!

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Unions and the Labour Party

NEW STRAINS

The strains between the trade union leadership and the Labour Party have in recent weeks begun to take on the form of a public squabble. On the union side the main critic of Labour's performance in Coalition is John Carroll of the ITGWU.

The Labour Party's role in the Coalition of spearheading the vicious attacks on workers living standards in the recent budget in exchange for a few cabinet positions has forced Carroll and others to take their distance. The question is *have Carroll and the other trades union leaders an alternative strategy to the government's policy of making the workers pay for the economic crisis?* Can they force the Labour Party to act as a political leadership for the working class and resolve the economic crisis by fighting for workers' solutions? If we look at the past record of the Labour Party and the trades union leadership the outlook isn't promising.

THE LABOUR PARTY

Since ditching the traditions of Connolly in the 1920's, the Labour Party has never been a real challenger for the political leadership of the working class. Refusing to recognise the role of British imperialism in Ireland has historically left the Labour Party to play a minor role in Irish politics. The only time they have entered government has been as a mudguard for the most reactionary capitalist party, Fine Gael, while the majority of workers have voted for the pseudo-republicans of Fianna Fail because of its historical identification with the national struggle.

THE TRADES UNIONS

Is John Carroll saying something new in his criticism of the Coalition? The answer to that would be... *is John Carroll's own house in order?* His own opposition to Coalition is

not very radical. In the past the ITGWU union has had strong links with the bourgeois nationalists of Fianna Fail. Tying the trades union movement politically to another capitalist party is no solution to workers' problems. The policy followed by the trades union movement over the last 12 years of national understandings and wage agreements packaged in a collaborationist concept of social partnership has done nothing to protect jobs and living standards. Indications are that the unions are still holding on to this concept and are hoping through such a deal to moderate the severity of the capitalist austerity offensive.

This is a pipedream. While a Fianna Fail government might make some temporary concessions to ward off militant action, its general objective would be the same: defence of profits at the expense of workers' living standards. If there was any willingness by John Carroll to lead a real

fightback against austerity he would first get rid of all the trappings of the past period of 'social partnership'. The Employer-Labour Conference, the Labour Court and quiescence in the growing use of the courts against strikes and occupations. In short, he would start to rest his confidence on the militant action of union members instead of hobnobbing with 'progressive' capitalists.

Outside of developing a strategy for independent workers action, withdrawal of the political levy is most likely to lead to a wholly negative rejection of politics. That's not what the working people of Ireland need today. What is needed is a working class party committed to workers action in opposition to the attacks of Irish capitalism and the British imperialist power that stands behind it.

EDITORIAL

BUILD AN ANTI-IMPERIALIST WORKERS ALTERNATIVE!

April 13 could be a very significant day in the history of the Irish working class. The half-day stoppage initiated by the ITGWU looks like being a virtual afternoon general strike. More importantly, the discussion in the unions and the workplaces is already centering not on April 13 itself, but what to do afterwards. There is a determination emerging that unlike the massive PAYE demonstrations, this stoppage will not be a half day wonder!

The severity of the Coalition's attacks on the living standards of working people is dividing the 26 counties between those who support its pro-rich policies and those who say, 'Let's fight back!' April 13 could well be the opening shot in a massive confrontation between on one side the bosses and their political stooges in Fine Gael, Fianna Fail and yes, even in the Labour Party, and on the other the overwhelming majority of working people who refuse to pay for the mess that capitalist governments of all hues have made of Irish society.

This confrontation could bring down the Coalition. *But what would replace it?* A Fianna Fail government or a National Government would still seek to make workers pay for the capitalist crisis - they would be the old jackals in a new suit, driving down our living standards and democratic rights.

Only a government of those who are exploited, a government of workers and small farmers would offer a different remedy. It would stop spending tens of millions of pounds protecting Britain's 'partition' border and serve notice to quit to the British administration and occupation army in the 6 counties. It would tax the profits of the multi-nationals and nationalise the banks finance and insurance companies to fund the creation of jobs and provision of social services; it would confiscate the plant and resources of any capitalist employer threatening redundancies and place them under the control of the workers. It would uphold and extend the rights of women and youth. It would oppose the nuclear arms race and give support to the movements for national liberation worldwide.

It is just such a government that James Connolly fought for in 1916. The Labour and Workers' Parties have long since abandoned the aims of Connolly. A new party must be built, a party that stands up unconditionally for the interests of working people, that defends all those rights that are under attack. A new party that unites the fighters against imperialist rule with the class conscious militants in the unions, in the women's movement and amongst the youth. It is that type of party - in the Connolly tradition - that Peoples Democracy fights to build.



NICTU Alternative

A RECIPE FOR DISASTER

'The Trade Union Alternative' put forward by the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trades Unions (NICTU) will undoubtedly be endorsed at this month's Annual Conference in White-Abbey. What is equally undoubted is that it will do little to halt what NICTU call 'the monetarist experiment' which is destroying the lives of working people in the 6 counties.

Basically the NICTU plan is a rehash borrowed from the British TUC's 'Alternative Economic Strategy'. It calls for increased investment in the public sector and social services:

- ...a target of 10,000 new public sector houses a year
- ...new capital investments in hospitals and more preventive health care facilities
- ...a comprehensive system of secondary education and more facilities for the under-fives

- ...an extra £150m investment in energy to equalise prices between the 6 counties and Britain

- ...modernisation of the railways and an improved road network

- ...increased subsidies for agriculture particularly the processing industry

- ...improved industrial training
- ...import controls



standards collapse.

The NICTU estimate that if all their proposals were accepted by the British Tories it would create 40,000 new jobs which by today's figures would leave over 70,000 workers still on the dole. But even this modest plan has already been given the thumbs down by Prior despite the NICTU pleading that the North should be treated as 'a special case'.

This 'special case' argument serves to emphasise the total absence of reality from the whole approach of the NICTU to the problems of unemployment and poverty in the North. It refuses to recognise that the present international recession is not just some hiccup in the normal order of boom and prosperity: it thinks that the adoption of Keynesian measures - such as the Callaghan government's social contract - would sort everything out, that the 'mixed economy' (ie capitalism with a human face) is still the best way of organising society. So the problem becomes Margaret Thatcher and her 'monetarist experiment' ignoring the truth that in every capitalist country unemployment is soaring while living

But even if it was 20 years ago, if the crisis was just a hiccup, the NICTU plan would be useless in tackling the traditional mass unemployment and poverty that passes for life in the 6 counties. The misery of working people in the North is an inevitable consequence of the political and economic control which British imperialism exercises over Irish society. That is the reason why in Ireland North and South an international recession simply means going from a bad situation to worse and eventually to disaster. Imperialist domination also explains why there is such widespread fear that even in the event of an upturn in the world economy, partitioned Ireland wouldn't benefit.

Workers in the North seem to understand in their own way that the 'Trade Union Alternative' is irrelevant to their daily struggle against joblessness and poverty. There were no howls of protest at Prior's arrogant dismissal of NICTU's proposals; this lack of protest will be matched by an equal lack of interest in the fighting rhetoric of the NICTU leaders at their seaside conference in Whiteabbey.

Limerick starts to organise

Some 70 people turned out to discuss what to do about unemployment in Limerick's Connolly Hall on March 23. Organised by the Limerick Fightback Group most of them were unemployed workers with a good attendance by shop stewards, branch and trades council delegates.

Des Bonass of the ATGWU and Dublin Trades Council spoke of the need for a militant fight to defend existing jobs and referring to the recent success of the Clondalkin workers, called for support for sit-ins, occupations 'and any other action we deem necessary'. He concluded by calling on the Labour Party to withdraw from Coalition and warned that if this was not done 'a trade union political group will be set up to lead the working class fightback'.

Another speaker was Peggy Hanbury, President of the Limerick Council of Trade Unions who called for the setting up of a centre for the jobless. Pointing out that trades councils have already set up such centres elsewhere she went on to hope that Limerick would see one in the near future. 'The centre could be used to offer advice and guidance to the jobless in terms of their entitlements. It could also be a meeting place where the unemployed could devise various policies in relation to their social and economic needs'.

From the Finglas Unemployed Action Group, Eddie Conlon reported on the plans for the *Peoples March For Jobs* in April. It is hoped that a Limerick banner will be carried on this march.

In the discussion at the meeting there was a lot of support for the idea of an unemployed centre. Attention was drawn to the increasing resistance among workers to the cutbacks and redundancies. Occupations in Kerry, Cork and Dublin marked a fighting mood among working people and this was giving confidence to those out of work. The self-organisation of the unemployed was now becoming a real possibility.

In summing up, the chairperson, local ITGWU official, Mary O'Donnell spoke of the general agreement on the need for a national conference to draw together the scattered but growing resistance to the austerity drive. At a local level there was a clear desire among those present to continue as an organised group.

A follow-up meeting held on April 6 drew up concrete plans for pushing forward the idea of an unemployed centre and building a Limerick contingent for the Peoples March for Jobs.

Joe Harrington.

CAMPAIGN FOR PRESS FREEDOM

Support is growing among workers in the media for the recently launched 'Campaign for Press Freedom'. The campaign is organised around

5 basic demands

1. Repeal Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act - which bans republican spokespersons from the television and radio.

2. For a change in the laws of libel - to allow journalists to report on corruption in politics and business without fear of court writs.

3. For a change in the laws of contempt - and subjudice - these are the laws which stopped Irish journalists reporting on the link between Attorney General Patrick Connolly and the McArthur murder case, although the British press were free to print what they liked.

4. End the restrictions on journalists by the Offences Against the State Act - so that proceedings in the non-jury Special Criminal Court can be fully reported.

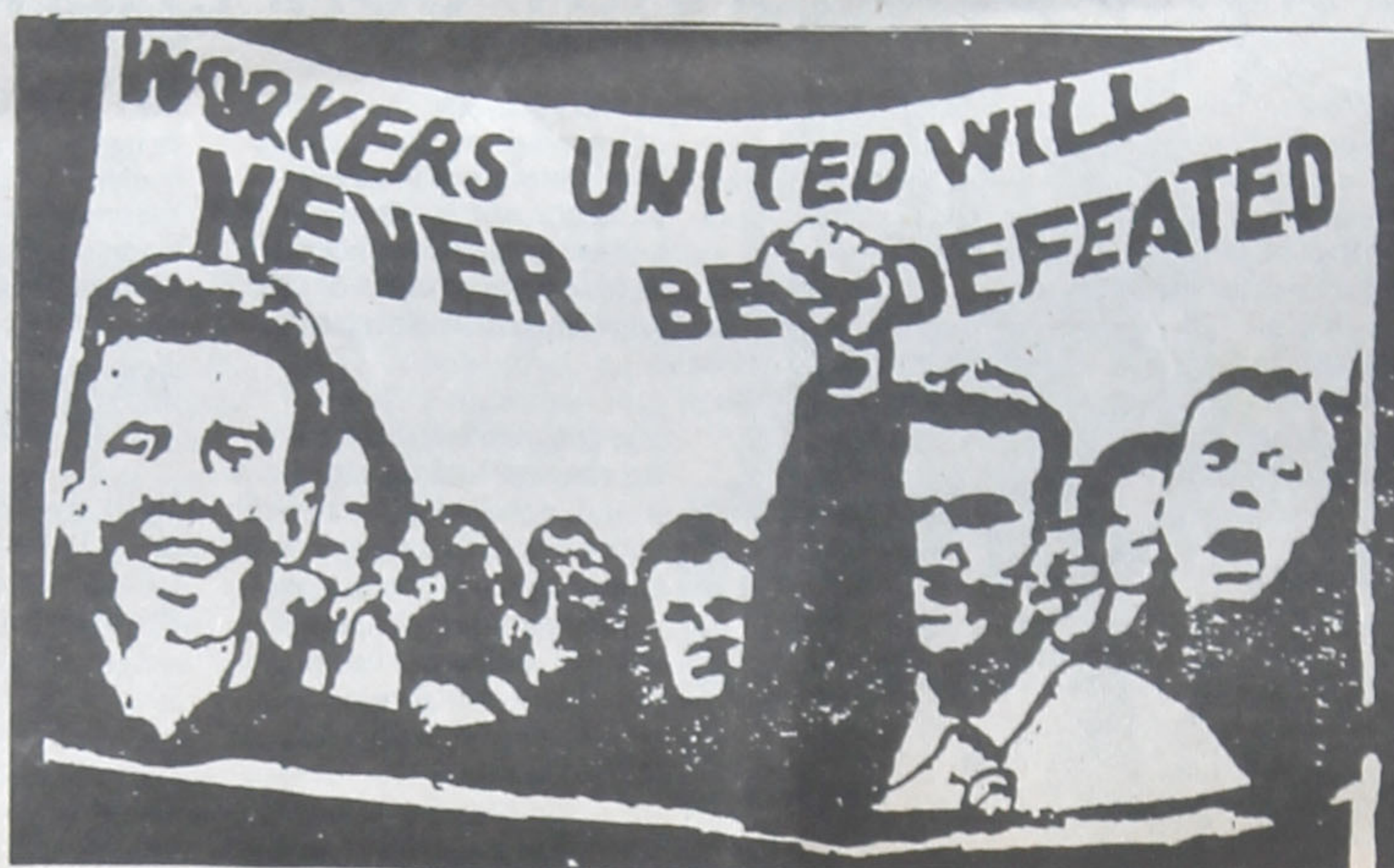
5. For a Freedom of Information Act and repeal of the Official Secrets Act - because people have a right to know about decisions that affect our future and about information filed on us by the state.

Founding members of the campaign include .. Sean

McBride, Vincent Browne of the Tribune and Tomas Mac-Anna of the Abbey Theatre, Eamon McCann, Brian Higgins, Betty Purcell and Des Bonass of the ATGWU.

AINÉ FURLONG

PEOPLES MARCH FOR JOBS



With unemployment rising towards 200,000 in the 26 Counties, Tuesday 26 April sees the start of the 1983 Peoples March for jobs. Between then and Mayday, the marchers will cover the 160 miles from Cork to Dublin, stopping off in Dungarvan (26 April), Waterford and Kilkenny (27 April) and Carlow and Newbridge on the 28 April to make sure their message is heard by as many as possible. The march will finish with the marchers joining the Mayday demonstration organised by the Dublin Council of Trades Unions.

DEMANDS OF THE MARCH

- (i) Opposition to all redundancies and closures ...OCCUPY to demand nationalisation
- (ii) For a 35 hour week to create jobs

(iii) For a guaranteed living income for all unemployed persons

(iv) For a crash programme of investment in the social services and useful public works

(v) Defend the right to occupy ...end the use of INJUNCTIONS against workers in struggles ...REPEAL the Forcible Entry and Occupation Act.

(vi) REVERSE the cuts in public spending

Organise support for the march in your area, in your trade union and workplace or among your unemployed friends.

EDUCATION FOR SOCIALISTS



Starting with this issue Joe Craig will be writing a regular column dealing with the ideas of Marx and other great socialist leaders, such as Lenin, Trotsky and James Connolly,

and explaining their relevance to militants today. Joe wants the column to cover those questions which our readers find most puzzling so he'll welcome it if you drop a line

stating your viewpoint with any ideas for what he should write about. Below, he writes about Marx's view of the role of the working class.



WHAT DID MARX STAND FOR?

This year marks the centenary of the death of Karl Marx. As we would expect there has been a flood of newspaper articles and television programmes marked by ignorance of, and prejudice against, what Marx said, wrote and fought for. To the media he was at best an eccentric dreamer, at worst a fanatic whose ideas have been used to bring half the world under the totalitarian dictatorships of Russia and China. While many Irish anti-imperialists see through this black propaganda many others are suspicious of Marx's ideas or simply do not see the relevance of marxism to the fight for a socialist republic.

Perhaps the most important thing Marx said was:

Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, the point, however, is to change it. He believed that there was nothing natural about capitalism and workers could and should change it.

He saw the possibility of building a new socialist society where the fantastic technology created by industrialisation could be used, not to create more profits for capitalists, but for the good of all humanity.

SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

But Marx was not only a philosopher. In 'Das Kapital' his greatest work, he put forward a scientific explanation of what was wrong with capitalism that no right wing economist has been able to refute since. He showed that economic crises - with mass unemployment, falling living standards, poverty and starvation - were not just 'hiccups' of the system but part and parcel of it. As long as the rule of profit endured the working class would be expected to bear the brunt of crises and recessions. He showed too the inbuilt injustice of a system where creating profit for the few, from the labours of the many, came

before the basic needs of humanity. How else could we explain the death of millions from malnutrition while billions is spent on nuclear weapons? Or the mass unemployment that exists while plant machinery and resources lie idle that could be used to build houses, schools or hospitals?

THE ROLE OF THE WORKING CLASS

'Das Kapital' used philosophy, economics and politics to show that the mess humanity was in was not due to 'human nature' or 'greed' but the capitalist system. Yet this system had created the instrument for its own destruction - the working class. The working class has no stake in the present society: its interests lie in abolishing exploitation altogether. Because of its numbers - the vast majority of the population in almost every country - and because of its economic power as the creator and operator of all wealth, (in the factories, mines and other

workplaces), it is the only force which can destroy capitalism.

In 'The Communist Manifesto' written in 1848, Marx explained not only why the working class should fight for socialism, but how they could do it. For Marx was not only a man of theory, all be it revolutionary theory, he was also a man of action, whose lifelong involvement in working class struggles led him to look at how workers should organise against oppression.

Marx asserted that the workers would lead the fight for a new socialist society. In doing so they must unite all those oppressed and downtrodden by the system. He argued for the creation of a Communist Party that would organise and lead the struggles of all workers and oppressed. This was necessary because the working class would not spontaneously be able to overthrow the capitalist system - they would need to prepare and plan their attack. That is why Marx saw the

need for a programme for the socialist revolution in which all those who fought capitalism could combine their energies and thus strengthen their fight. This was necessary to counter the divisions created by capitalism in the working class. There could be no watering down the working class demands - it should stand in defence of unity, women's rights and the rights of oppressed nations.

MARXISM

No-one involved in the present day class struggle, be it in Ireland or elsewhere, can deny the relevance of the system of ideas developed by Marx. Marxism is not only a way of understanding the world, but a method, a tool to be used by anti-imperialists and socialists in their fight to change it. In that lies its central importance to the development of the Irish revolutionary movement.

P.D. DISCUSS THE CRISIS

REPORT ON PEOPLES DEMOCRACY CONFERENCE

The National Conference of Peoples Democracy took place in Dublin over the weekend of March 12-13. The two days of debate centred on the political situation in Ireland following the republican hunger strike in the H-blocks and the developing attacks on the living standards of working people being mounted by both the British and Dublin governments. Plans were made to strengthen the political profile of the organisation and its intervention in the struggles of working people, particularly in the trade unions.

IMPERIALIST COUNTER-OFFENSIVE

The first session of conference was concerned with making an assessment of the present balance of forces in the class

struggle. The document presented by the outgoing National Committee explained that events in Ireland had to be set in the context of the international counter-offensive launched by imperialism against the world revolution. To resolve the present crisis in favour of imperialism would require brutal defeats of those in struggle. A major problem for imperialism is that at the same time as it intervenes against the colonial revolution the crisis demands that it also drives down the living standards and democratic rights of the working class in the developed capitalist countries.

The bogey story of the Soviet nuclear threat is supposed to divert attention from the bankruptcy of the capitalist system and its horrendous brutality in the colonial world. Fortunately

by its success has been limited. A powerful anti-war movement is developing in the imperialist countries; while austerity policies have been imposed in many countries the capitalist governments have not yet been able to throw the organisations of working people into total



The fragmented and hesitating character of the resistance to the imperialist counter-offensive can only be explained by reference to the bureaucratic and reformist leaderships to which the oppressed masses are still attached. The suppression of Solidarnosc in Poland, the constant striving for a compromise with imperialism and national capitalists has left working people with little confidence in the ability of their organisations to fight back and secure radical change. In fighting to build the World Party of Socialist Revolution,

the Fourth International struggles to remove these leaderships and replace them with revolutionary leaders accountable to the rank and file of the organisations.

THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN IRELAND

Dealing with the class struggle in Ireland the National Committee explained that the working people faced attacks on all fronts on both sides of the border. The Northern Assembly and Fitzgerald's Council of Ireland represent different attempts at bolstering up partition and are accompanied by stepped up repression of anti-imperialists; massive unemployment and welfare cuts go side by side with attempts to curb the rights of trade unionists; the limited

rights that women enjoy now are being pushed back through the reactionary 'Pro-life' Amendment in the South and attacks on equal pay in the North.

The demoralisation which set in after the hunger strike was recognised but the document pointed out that Sinn Fein's triumph in the Assembly elections had halted its spread and indeed had inflicted a big blow against Britain's attempts to 'criminalise' the anti-imperialist resistance. Workers struggles like Clondalkin, De Lorean and Ranks show that workers are prepared to fight and the growing support for the Anti-Amendment Campaign is evidence that Ireland is no longer a country where right-wing social measures will be accepted without a challenge.

CONFERENCE DECISIONS

The Conference discussed

how it was that reactionary initiatives could be taken, with some success, despite the obvious militancy of working people. It took account of the divisions within the Irish working class and the fact that many struggles remained isolated within that section of the population who traditionally have supported these issues. The Conference decided that it was a major task of revolutionaries to find ways in which these struggles could be united into a coherent challenge to imperialist rule.

Most importantly, the Conference concluded that it was an urgent task to develop the influence of anti-imperialist politics within the working class and particularly within its mass organisations, the trade unions. To this end it decided that P.D. would focus its political activity in the coming period on the winning of radicalised workers to an under-

standing that there was no real solution to the problems faced by working people that did not confront the domination of British rule in Ireland.

A complementary task decided by Conference was to campaign for anti-imperialist militants to take up methods of struggle that could involve all the oppressed sections of Irish society and reject the elitist methods such as militarism which simply serve to exclude the overwhelming majority of working people from the struggle.

'Socialist Republic' will aim to assist these tasks. Our goal is to be both 'A Workers Voice in the Anti-Imperialist Movement' and 'An Anti-Imperialist Voice in the Workers Movement'. We will try to explain the nature of the capitalist crisis, why anti-im-

perialism is so central a part of the Irish revolution; the role of the Irish working class and why and how a revolutionary party must be built. We will be promoting the central campaigns of Peoples Democracy; for a national fightback against austerity, building opposition to the right-wing 'Pro-life' Amendment, and campaigning for 32 County elections to an All Ireland Assembly; and we will be promoting the international campaigns of the Fourth International, getting out the truth about the imperialist war drive, the revolution in Central America and the struggle against the bureaucratic regime in Poland.

This internationalist commitment of People's Democracy was recognised at the Conference by greetings given by representatives of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and the British revolutionary organisation, the Socialist League.



JAMES CONNOLLY SOCIETY

Finally in reaffirming the need to build an independent

organisation of revolutionary marxists in Ireland the Conference decided to relaunch the James Connolly Society as a forum for discussion and united activity by militants who see the need for an anti-imperialist workers party in Ireland. Branches of the James Connolly Society will be set up initially in Dublin, Belfast, Limerick and Cork.

During the last few months a number of important initiatives have been taken to advance the building of a solidarity movement in Britain. We have had Ken Livingstone's much publicised visit to Belfast and as we report below, in Britain itself there is a new burst of activity on the Irish question.



Our reporter is Peoples Democracy Councillor, John McNulty who was a speaker at both these conferences.

New Advance in British

Solidarity

Movement?

MANCHESTER PLASTIC BULLET CONFERENCE

The British Labour Committee on Ireland (LCI) conference in Manchester at the end of February marked a high point in the revival of interest in Ireland among the Labour left. Its theme was the campaign against plastic bullets, but it also gave focus to a new discussion about reviving the Irish solidarity movement in Britain.

Speakers from the British left included Richard Balfe (MEP), Jonathan Rosenhead (NCCL), and Martin Collins the LCI organiser of the conference. The Irish speakers were Owen Carron, M.P., Kathleen Stewart whose son Brian was killed by a plastic bullet and myself for PD.

The conference was an impressive success. Over 120 delegates attended from constituency Labour Parties, 80 were from trade union branches and more than 100 observers were also present. It showed conclusively that the Irish struggle is now having a direct influence in the British class struggle. Many speakers gave reports of struggles in local government over the deployment of plastic bullets.

However, the main discussion point at the conference was a political one, with a small rump of ultra-leftists led by the Revolutionary Communist Party defining solidarity in terms of support for the armed struggle of the IRA and the majority calling for a broad movement linking up with the day to day struggle in Ireland around issues like the use of plastic bullets or the PTA or the exclusion of Sinn Fein representatives from Britain, and the operation of the Assembly in the North.

The ground was cut from under the RCP by Sinn Fein's opposition to their strategy. Owen Carron called for the formation of a broad movement on the lines of the Vietnam Solidarity movement to fight for a British withdrawal.

The conference ended with a plan for reportback meetings to all the constituency parties and trade union bodies involved, a series of regional conferences and a major national demonstration against the use of plastic bullets.

Although the Sheffield Conference in March (also organised separately, it served as a valuable follow-up to the Manchester conference. It allowed

a wider area of discussion but focusing down on immediate tasks for Labour Party and trade union activists.

I was on the platform with Ken Livingstone who restated his conviction that the British Government must withdraw from Ireland and negotiate

with Sinn Fein.

The main opposition to a Troops Out position came from the Militant tendency. Despite the fact that they are the targets of a witch-hunt in the British Labour Party, their views on Ireland differ little from those of the Labour right. They began by calling for 'bread and butter' unity of workers in the 6 counties but discredited themselves when they went on to abuse the republicans and effectively blame them for the violence and working class divisions which we all know long predate the IRA's campaign.

The conference went on to hold workshops on the women's movement in Ireland and work within Irish and British trade unions. There was a great deal of concern expressed at the veto on discussion imposed by the trade union bureaucracy in the North and in Britain. The conference ended with a determination among delegates to seek further support in the trade unions and Labour Party and to link up with a national solidarity movement.

SEE LIVINGSTONE ARTICLE, PAGE 6.



SHEFFIELD L.C.I. CONFERENCE

IMPERIALISM'S WAR DRIVE

More than 700,000 people took to the streets of West Germany over the Easter weekend in protest at the deployment of U.S. Pershing 2 and Cruise missile. In Britain some 130,000 joined demonstrations and there were large marches in many other European countries. In Ireland, Irish CND organised smaller protests in Dublin and Belfast.

These demonstrations bear witness to the tremendous anxiety that exists over the imperialist escalation of the nuclear war threat. Today's nuclear arsenal is capable of destroying the present population of the world - at least 20 times over. According to the report Comprehensive Study on Nuclear Weapons, submitted to the U.N. General Assembly in 1980, the explosion of 1,000 nuclear warheads of one megaton against the USSR and USA would cause the instantaneous death of 150-200 million people in these two countries. There are now already more than 40,000 nuclear warheads stored in the world.

Since Ronald Reagan became United States President in January 1981 the US has taken an increasingly belligerent direction in its foreign policy, particularly in its drive to make Europe a nuclear timebomb. Reagan has publicly speculated on fighting "limited nuclear wars" in Europe. From this flows Reagan's decision to begin producing the neutron bomb, dubbed the "ultimate capitalist weapon" because it kills people but leaves property undamaged.

The latest US plans - a fantastic scenario for mobilising the scientific community to construct ray-guns in space, laser beams and the rest - may sound a hilarious follow-up to 'Star Wars' and 'The Empire strikes back'; but Reagan is desperately serious. Far from being funny these plans are a scheme for the most incredible escalation of the arms race.

All this is justified by reference to 'the Soviet threat'. According to Reagan, communism is "...the focus of evil in the modern world." He falsely claims that the Soviet Union has outstripped the West in its nuclear build-

up. In fact, every significant new technology of nuclear warfare, i.e. nuclear submarines, MIRVs, cruise missiles, the neutron bomb and now the planned 'ray-guns' have been introduced into the arms race by the United States. The real objective is to attain first-strike capability against the Soviet Union without the possibility of significant retaliation.

Reagan's latest plans, if achieved, would give the US invulnerability to Soviet attack, while of course leaving the Soviet Union open to US attack - the plan involves constructing a 'shield' around the United States. In reality,

this would provide the most massive escalation of the arms race, as the Soviet Union would be left with no choice but to join this frantic search to build weapons of the most destructive kind.

The immediate objective of the imperialist powers however, is not nuclear war but legitimising their military intervention against revolutionary struggles throughout the world. Not surprisingly Reagan's 'Star Wars' plot to "make nuclear war impossible" was unveiled simultaneously with the latest US backed aggression against the Nicaraguan revolution. The Nicaraguan revolution has been a beacon of hope for the peoples of Central America and the US ruling class is determined at all costs, to stop another country freeing itself from economic and political domination by imperialism.

A big problem for US rulers in the period since the Vietnam war has been their inability to convince their own working class to go along with US military intervention. Opinion polls in the United States show that over 60 per cent of the population is opposed to US involvement in war anywhere in the world. It is this 'popular opposition' to war that imperialism needs to break,

For anti-imperialists in Ireland developing solidarity with the revolutionary struggles of the oppressed in other countries is the best contribution we can make to opposing the nuclear war threat.

SUE CORRIGAN

World arms bill is £600,000 a minute

THE WORLD is now spending £300,000 million a year on arms. Half of one hundredth of this amount would go a long way to providing all the farm equipment needed by low-income countries to be able to feed their people adequately. (570 million people in the world are undernourished.)

The other half per cent could pay for providing everyone in the world with clean water by 1990.

For the price of one tank, 1,000 classrooms for 30,000 children could be provided in developing countries. (250 million children do not attend school.)

The cost of one Polaris submarine would pay for 23 hospitals with 3,600 beds. (1,500 million people have little or no access to medical services.)

By \$300 million, spent over 10 years, the World Health Organisation virtually eradicated smallpox from the world. This is roughly the cost of one strategic bomber.

The major powers and Western Europe are not the only countries smitten with arms madness - a survey of ten Asian countries* showed that between 1975 and 1979, of each dollar they spent, on average 40 cents went on arms, 12 cents on education and only four cents on health.

Burma, India, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand.)



Anti-Amendment Campaign

A CHANCE TO REORGANISE



The new wording of the proposed amendment to the Southern Constitution on abortion has opened a can of worms and led to vicious infighting both among the various parties supporting an amendment and the far-right groups campaigning for it. The history of the amendment is beginning to look like an 'Irish joke' but like all such jokes it is not funny. Despite the confusion all the parties and far right groups remain determined to force through an amendment which would serve as a starting point for further attacks on women's rights and the rights of workers in general.

CAPITALIST CRISIS

The Irish capitalist class is in crisis and on the major issues facing it - the rebellion against imperialism in the North and the willingness of workers to resist austerity - there are no quick or easy answers. The amendment looked like such an answer. The major parties believed that the support of the Catholic Church would enable them to push it through

quickly and a victory on this issue would open the way for a general advance against democratic rights.

It hasn't proved that easy. Not only is opposition to the measure much greater than expected, but it has come into contradiction with other major projects of Irish capitalism. They want to build a modern capitalist economy and many elements of this are built into agreements with the EEC and link up with Fitzgerald's determination to make a new deal with imperialism through his battered 'crusade' on the North. The capitalist parties need to accommodate far-right groups like the 'pro-life' amendment campaign (PLAC) and the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC), but they don't want to give them their head and risk an obscurantist society based on the theology of the middle ages.

Fitzgerald's new wording reflects this. While the new amendment does bend to the demand to block off access through the Courts for the repeal of the barbaric 1861 Act,

the formula shies away from a constitutional guarantee to the 'unborn' foetus. This meets the original demand by PLAC and SPUC but it has not satisfied them. In the heat of the moment they have revealed some of their plans for an offensive if the amendment is passed. Mary Kennedy of the Irish Family League wants to prevent women from going to Britain for abortions and in addition believes that 'sexual morality should not be outside the scope of the criminal law'. Dr Eamon De Valera opposes the new wording because he wants to outlaw the coil, a contraceptive device currently in use by many thousands of Irish women.

TIME TO RE-ORGANISE

The far-right has not been defeated and although the Government has met a great deal of opposition it is determined to proceed with a referendum. The main gain for the anti-amendment campaign is that it has won time to re-organise and build.

In the last issue of 'Socialist Republic' we criticised the leadership of the campaign

for their reliance on the opposition of Protestant Churches and lobbying prominent individuals. We pointed out the need for activists to force the pace in local action committees. To some extent this has been successful and as a result the opposition to the amendment is now much broader than the campaign. However, with more time at our disposal, we should realise that a loose collection of action groups with no central direction cannot have sufficient impact. A new attempt to build a centralised and effective movement must be made.

BROADEN THE CAMPAIGN

There is an urgent need for an open national conference for all activists and interested parties which would:

- **Build a mass campaign on the streets
- **Make a big push to get active support in the trades unions and working class districts
- **Press anti-imperialist organisations like Sinn Féin to

transform their policy of opposition to the amendment into activity alongside the campaign

Such a conference should also implement decisions already taken but put on the long finger: the agreement to publish an organising bulletin and to establish an international tribunal which would show the links that the PLAC and SPUC have with far-right movements in other countries.

This sort of movement forward would help to clarify the confused debate about the long-term aims of the campaign. It would establish that broader forces exist willing to fight to separate Church and State and demand a democratic secular society. It would give confidence to the forces fighting on questions of divorce and illegitimacy and form the broader democratic movement that feminists need to bring forward their own demands, for the right to choose and an end to sexual discrimination and repression.

PAT DONNELLY

FEMINIST NOTES

MARY NELLIS SPEAKS

TO SPARE RIB!

The March issue of Spare Rib, the English feminist magazine once banned in the South for its coverage of the contraception issue, contains an interview with Mary Nellis, long-standing anti-imperialist activist from Derry.

Mary describes how she became involved in the early days of the civil rights movement and how this taught her not only about the Orange State but also about her position as a woman in the family.

It makes valuable reading and along with the other international material gathered for International Womens Day offers a wide scope of international feminist news. Perhaps the most interesting article is the interview with 83-yr-old Meridel Le Sueur, lifelong socialist feminist, who survived the Depression, being blacklisted in the McCarthy era and at 83 thinks the womens movement is 'remarkable'.

It is well worth a read!

BRITISH LABOUR PROMISES ABORTION RIGHTS IN THE NORTH!

The next Labour Government in Britain will extend rights to abortion facilities to women in the 6 counties according to its Election Campaign document released at the end of March. It is expected that the provisions of the British 1967 Act which provide for abortion on social grounds and which at present do not apply in the North, will be introduced.

This limited commitment by the British Labour Party has already drawn outraged venom from the usual reactionary forces in the churches and political parties. The cynically named LIFE group, which has been distributing the fanatical ravings of an American Jesuit at church services in recent months, has threatened to campaign against the Labour Party in those British constituencies with a sizeable Irish vote. It remains to be seen if Labour leader Michael Foot, who was the architect of the pact with Ulster Loyalist MP's that kept the last Labour Government in office, will also abandon the rights of women in the face of the combined bayings of right-wing nationalism and the loyalists.

NIPSA TO DEBATE

RIGHT TO CHOOSE!

An important advance for the struggle of women to secure rights to abortion could take place at the end of May. The North's largest white-collar union, the Public Service Alliance, is to debate a resolution at its annual conference calling for the right to choose and free abortion on demand. The resolution has been tabled by Branch 705, a social services branch, which covers North and West Belfast. If successful NIPSA would become the first Irish-based union to adopt a clear position in favour of women's rights to abortion.

ARMAGH



ANTI-IMPERIALIST FEMINISTS SHOW THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE WOMEN PRISONERS IN ARMAGH IN A NOW TRADITIONAL DEMONSTRATION ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY.

LIVINGSTONE

VISIT

Despite the hysterical attacks by the British media on Ken Livingstone he is not a revolutionary marxist or a member of the far left groups that have kept up a reasonably consistent level of propaganda on the Irish question. Why then has he been willing to run considerable risk and massive personal abuse to deepen his involvement in the Irish question?

The fact is that the effects of the hunger strike are still operating and have convinced many in Britain and on an international level that British involvement in Ireland is no longer justified. Ken Livingstone himself has pointed to a second outcome of the hunger strike - the Sinn Féin election victories. He has pointed out that this drives a coach and four through British propaganda about terrorism and shows that the Irish struggle is a political struggle with mass support which demands a response from British labour politicians.

So the Livingstone visit is not just a flash in the pan. Ken Livingstone has spoken at many meetings and given a number of interviews to the left press since his visit and this activity is helping to promote a general shift in the views of many Labour party activists.

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U.S. HANDS OFF NICARAGUA!

'Participate in the revolution, increase production.' (DR)



An invasion of Nicaragua by United States backed right-wing forces has long been expected. After many months of border skirmishing and sabotage attacks, a full scale invasion by 'contras' belonging to the so-called Nicaraguan Democratic Front took place at the end of March. The FDN claims that a 5,000 strong force entered Nicaragua from Honduras and is both well-armed and being supplied by air from Honduras.

The Sandinista government while confident that it will defeat the 'contras' is more concerned that this invasion is part of a pretext for a declaration of war by Honduras who would then call publicly for

U.S. backing. These fears are well grounded. Last December the U.S. magazine 'Newsweek' published evidence that attacks on Nicaragua are co-ordinated from the United States Embassy in Honduras.

invasion was co-ordinated by John Negroponte, the U.S. ambassador to Honduras.

the fear that the advances of Nicaragua and Grenada will prove attractive to other countries in the region that lies behind the U.S. aggression

THREATS

BIG LIE

Naturally, the Reagan administration denies these charges. Jeanne Kirkpatrick, the American Ambassador to the U.N. claims that Nicaragua is 'suffering from an obsession concerning the hostility of the U.S.' But both the 'New York Times' and 'Time' magazine have alleged that the latest

Reagan's administration has also recently been threatening the revolutionary government of the Caribbean island, Grenada. In 1979 the New Jewel Movement led a revolution to oust the right-wing Gairy regime and during the last four years the revolution has brought many gains to the people of Grenada. Fidel Castro coined it 'a big revolution in a small country' and it is

RESPONSIBILITY

Irish socialists have a responsibility to prevent the U.S. imperialists from committing further crimes against the people of Central America and the Caribbean. A start would be setting up a broad based committee to oppose the latest invasion of Nicaragua.

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FREE NICKY KELLY!

WHAT THE REVOLUTION ACHIEVED

For the workers and peasants of Nicaragua, July 19 1979 marked the final defeat of hated US backed dictator Anastasio Somoza. Over 50000 Nicaraguans lost their lives as the hated National Guard tried to defeat the revolutionary movement led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). The Somocistas adopted a scorched earth policy as they retreated, including the bombing of civilian areas of the capital, Managua. They left enormous devastation behind them. The new Nicaragua would have to be built upon ruins.

The defeat of the National Guard, the mass organisation and participation of the people in the revolution and the installation of a workers

and peasants government led by the FSLN in Nicaragua at least after April 1980 if not after the actual insurrection, opened the way for many gains for the Nicaraguan workers and peasants.

Since the revolution the FSLN-led government has:

****Nationalised the vast wealth of Somoza and his followers.**

****Nationalised the banks and insurance houses**

****Expropriated the land of the Somocistas and of landowners who leave land fallow and distributed it to co-operative farms and landless peasants. A further 6000 families received land this year as 350 square miles of land was turned over - 80% to co-operatives and 20% to individual families.**

****Built nearly 8000 new houses, proportional to Nicaragua's population this is the largest government housing program in Central America.**

****Announced that rented housing will become the property of its occupants. Rent and landlords are on the way out in Nicaragua!**

****Increased social spending on health, welfare, education, succeeding in wiping out Polio in 1982 and bringing the level of illiteracy down to the second lowest in Latin America.**

****Encouraged the self-organisation of the oppressed through trade unions, local neighbourhood committees, Sandinista Defence Committees (CDS) and organised a people's militia through the CDS.**

****Rejected the claims of Nicaraguan capitalists and given a decisive majority to the organisations of the workers and peasants in the Council of State, a key advisory body to the government.**

And this list is by no means complete! These gains have been made in a country with a population of 2.9 million. (Nicaragua is also the 2nd poorest country in the region). And they have been made against the opposition of the Nicaraguan capitalists who have organised widespread sabotage and decapitalisation of enterprises to say nothing of the support they have given to the ex-members of Somoza's National Guard holed up in Honduras who have made armed attacks inside Nicaragua for at least 2 years.

Above all, the Nicaraguan workers and peasants have been opposed by the United States Government. The U.S. is determined to defeat the workers and peasants and to this end has cut off all economic aid to this devastated country, has threatened a blockade against Nicaragua and has organised many military provocations most notably the 'Big Pine' manoeuvres, as well as arming the Somociste guerillas in Honduras.

CARL BRENNAN

PD is calling on its supporters and readers of Socialist Republic to support the campaign for the release of Nicky Kelly presently serving 12 years for his alleged part in Sallins train robbery 1976.

Nicky Kelly has always protested his innocence. His treatment at the hands of the police - an elite squad known as the 'heavy gang' - and the conduct of his trial in the Special Criminal Court, and the rejection of Nicky's final appeal to the Supreme Court, ranks as one of the most scandalous episodes in the history of the 'Free State'.

NICKY KELLY IS INNOCENT

At Nicky's trial, there was no evidence, no witnesses and no jury, only a concocted statement which he signed after prolonged 'in-depth' interrogation by members of the 'heavy gang'. Despite medical evidence of two doctors, (one of them a prison doctor), of extensive bruising found on Nicky's body, the court ruled his confession was voluntary. In the closing stages of his trial when it became clear to all that he and his two co-accused Osgar Breatnach and Brian McNally could expect no justice, Nicky Kelly skipped bail and went to the USA. He was later admitted to the New York Belle Vue Mental Hospital suffering from severe anxiety neurosis - a result of his ill treatment in Ireland.

In 1980 on hearing the news that his co-accused had won their appeals when their statements were thrown out of court, he immediately returned to Ireland to assert his innocence.

POLITICAL HOSTAGE
Despite general belief both among ordinary members of the public, and the authorities in the 26 counties of his innocence, he wasn't released. This can only be seen as a face saving exercise by the state to avoid further public embarrassment such as the release of his two co-accused caused. It is also an attempt to prevent public scrutiny of the methods used to secure his conviction.

GROWING SUPPORT

A growing number of trades unionists have come out in his support including the General Secretary of the ICTU, Donal Nevin. The AGM of the EEUPTU has called for his release and the IPOEU is discussing his case at their AGM.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

1. Write to the Minister for Justice calling for Nicky Kelly's immediate release.
2. Write to the local and national newspapers.
3. Raise the issue at your trades union and tenants association meetings and urge public support for Nicky Kelly's release.
4. Lobby your local TD's and councillors
5. Write to Nicky Kelly c/o Portlaoise Prison, Portlaoise, Co. Laois
6. Support any activities of the Release Nicky Kelly Cttee.

Nicky Kelly Release Cttee
c/o 11 Grange Terrace,
Blackrock,
Co. Dublin.
TEL 801438/331463

Support leafletting/picket
GPO every Saturday
3 pm - 6 pm.

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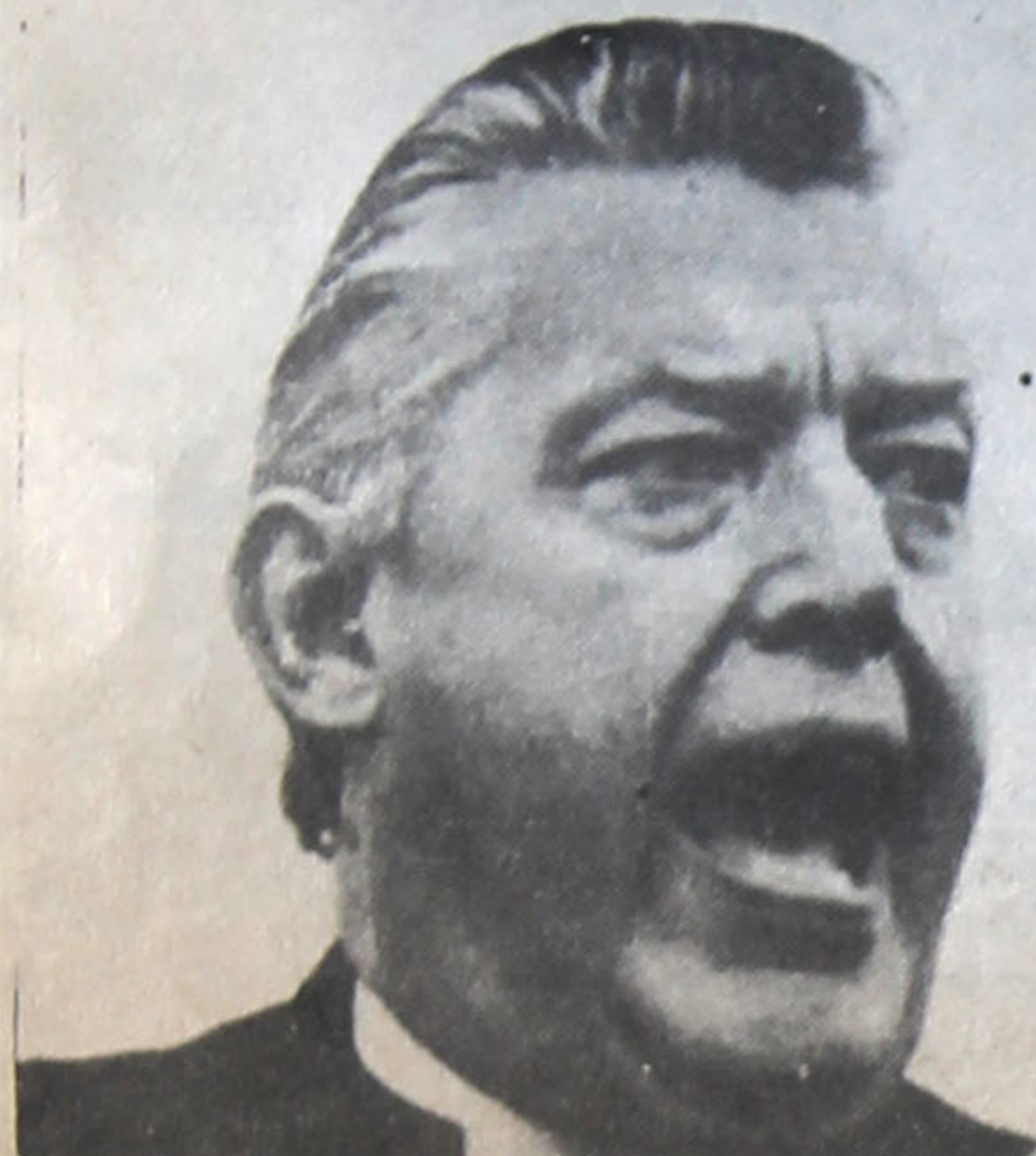
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SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

Paper of PEOPLES' DEMOCRACY

The 'Council for a New Ireland'

A DANGEROUS CON-TRICK



When the Council for a New Ireland was announced the Dublin Govt. made it clear that Sinn Fein wouldn't be invited - the reason given being their support for 'violence'. Then rumours began to circulate that the I.R.A. might call a cease fire. The Govt. issued a hysterical statement saying that Sinn Fein still would not be invited.

Meanwhile they sent a letter to Paisley, Commandant of the 'Third Force', begging him to come. Violence wasn't an issue.

The big fear is that someone might come to the council who thinks that a 'New Ireland' means a United Ireland!



HE CAN COME ...

... BUT HE CAN'T

The one thing that can be clearly said about Garret Fitzgerald's proposed council for a new Ireland, is that it is a con-trick. It established a talking shop of pro-imperialist politicians who seriously suggest that they will co-operate to bring about a united Ireland and who all have a history of working to prevent it. Fitzgerald's first act was to exclude from the discussion the republican forces who have borne the brunt of the struggle to end partition and his second was to plead with the most reactionary unionist elements in the North to participate in the council. The most glaring give-away of all is the fact that the Southern government does have it in its power to take a step towards a new Ireland - by consistently

opposing the Northern Assembly. Instead their policy is one of verbal opposition and practical collaboration.

SAVING THE SDLP OR THEMSELVES?

The Government policy is widely interpreted as an attempt to save the SDLP from the growing Republican radicalisation in the North. This is indeed a major element but it is also an attempt to save themselves. For 14 years all the major nationalist parties have tried to pressure the British to treat them as equal partners and to reform the North. The hunger strike, followed by the establishment of the Assembly in the teeth of nationalist opposition gave the kiss of death to this pol-

icy and has fueled the decline of the SDLP. The 'Council for a New Ireland' is simply the same policy writ large. What they have failed to achieve separately they hope to win together. They have really no hope of success, especially when they can't agree on method. Haughey and Hume want more republican rhetoric while Garret Fitzgerald wants more collaboration.

MASS PRESSURE

There is however, one positive aspect of the council which anti-imperialists should not ignore. This is that the whole process is the result of the continued polarisation and radicalisation of the working class and the pressure this exerts on the capitalist parties. To see this all we have to do is contrast Fine Gael policy before the election with policy now. Then they were clearly willing to support the Northern Assembly. Now they have set up an all-Ireland body which is seen to be in opposition to it and have endorsed the SDLP boycott. No matter what the long term intentions of Fitzgerald and company are, the immediate effect it to throw the spotlight on the North and highlight the British as the force preventing progress there.

THE ASSEMBLY

While the SDLP and the Southern parties prepare to double Ireland's output of hot air the Assembly rolls on. It is now clear that the Republican movement made a bad mistake in failing to follow up their post election call for united opposition to it. It has not fallen apart from its own contradictions and, despite continued rhetoric from the Official Unionists, it is not very likely that it will do so. However, we have now had a chance to assess the sort of threat that it represents.

The Assembly offers Unionists a more effective pressure mechanism aimed at the British. The success of their

'shoot to kill' calls demonstrates this. However, there is no indication that they would have won this if British policy had been against it, and there is no sign at all that the British are willing to give real powers to the Unionists and make the return of Stormont a reality.

The Assembly poses a threat on three levels:

1. As long as it exists it will contain the threat of the restoration of the old Stormont Loyalist Assembly.
2. It is still possible for it to win substantial support. The British have a policy of steering economic 'good news' through the Assembly and in the absence of a militant fightback the trades union leadership will attempt to demobilise struggles by pointing them towards lobby exercises around the Assembly.
3. By its very existence, it serves as a guarantee to the British that any long-term settlement will be a partition settlement. A working Assembly acts as a bulwark against a united Ireland.

DANGER

It is here that the real danger of the 'Council for a new Ireland' lies. A council which excludes anti-imperialists and does not oppose the Assembly may provide the means for the British to secure its future. Its notable that James Prior did not join in Unionist hysteria about the Council. In effect he remarked that if the British had their Assembly and the Nationalists their council he was sure a deal could be struck.

It is precisely this sort of deal that Hume was angling for before the Assembly elections - a formal Council of Ireland as a sop to the SDLP's nationalist support in return for their participation in the Assembly and support for repression in the North. In the absence of a mass struggle this betrayal could be sold as a genuine move towards unity.

ANTI-IMPERIALIST RESPONSE

This is why action by the anti-imperialist movement is so vital. A movement on the streets against the Assembly would lay bare the reality of British plans and make nonsense of the nationalist posturings of the capitalists.

Fitzgerald's 'Council for a New Ireland' is a fake but it is a dangerous fake. Instead we need to bring forward our own alternative - we need a forum truly representative of the Irish people as a whole. That means elections throughout the 32 counties to elect delegates to an All-Ireland Assembly which can place a United Ireland on the order of the day and elect a government of working people who will implement the measures necessary to end British domination in any part of the national territory.

SINN FEIN CALL

In a recent issue of An Phoblacht/Republican News Sinn Fein announced that they would shortly be calling a conference to discuss opposition to the Assembly and would be inviting other political parties to participate. Peoples Democracy strongly supports this move and we will be sending delegates to the conference.

Coalition offensive

The full effects of the Coalition's February budget are now being felt by working people. Along with all the increased charges on consumer goods, the following provisions began applying on April 5:

- a one per cent levy on gross wages
- reduction of the PRSI allowance from £286 to £246
- raising of the PRSI ceiling from £9,500 to £13,000
- reduction in mortgage relief
- scrapping of tax relief on personal loans for home improvements etc.
- £17 a year increase in telephone rental charges
- an average £40 per annum increase in road tax

.....and there's more to come.

Even on the basis of a 10 per cent rise in wages this year, the average worker will suffer a drop in real income of between 10 and 12 per cent. The Coalition and the employers are determined to see that wage rises fall far below 10 per cent.

W. P. CRITICS

ONE SURPRISING DEVELOPMENT IN THE REACTION TO THE 'COUNCIL FOR A NEW IRELAND' WAS THE CONDEMNATION BY THE WORKERS PARTY.

AS USUAL THEIR CRITICISMS ECHO THE UNIONIST FAR RIGHT. THEY DON'T DISAGREE WITH THE BAN ON SINN FEIN OR THE PLEADING WITH UNIONISTS TO ATTEND. INDEED THEY THINK THAT THE UNIONISTS SHOULD HAVE BEEN ASKED FIRST. HAVING ACCEPTED THAT THEY HAVE A VETO ON A UNITED IRELAND, W.P. HAVE GONE ONE FURTHER AND DECIDED THAT THEY SHOULD HAVE A VETO ON EVEN TALKING ABOUT THE ISSUE.

WE AWAIT WITH INTEREST THE SORT OF 'CLASS POLITICS' THAT ARISE FROM THIS FURTHER CAPITULATION TO LOYALISM.

Title: Socialist Republic, Vol. 6, No. 2

Organisation: People's Democracy

Date: 1983

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