

# AN REABHLOID

JOURNAL OF PEOPLES DEMOCRACY

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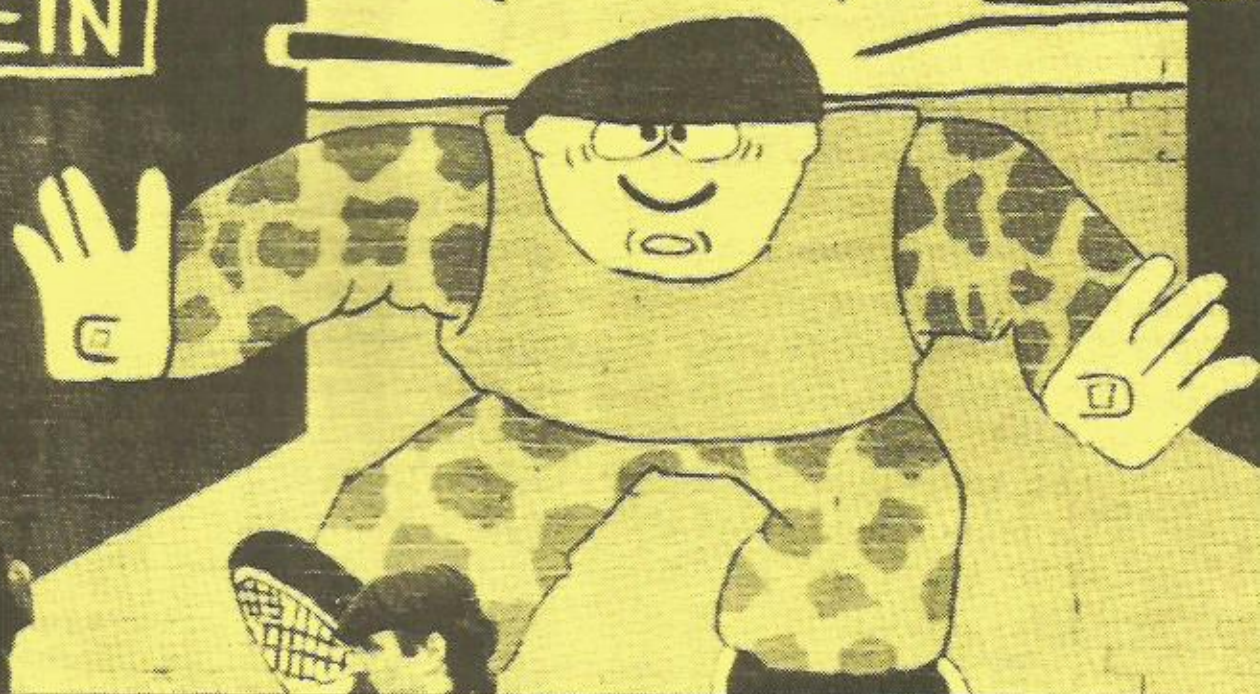
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BALLOT BOX STRATEGY?





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We would like to thank all our readers for their support and inquiries during the absence of An Reabhloid. We halted publication in order to develop an internal discussion, and we hope to feed the results into the new Journal, which we plan to produce on a bi-monthly basis.

**AN REABHLOID** [*The Revolution*] is the political journal  
of Peoples Democracy.

Normally, unsigned articles will indicate a formal statement of the views of the organisation. Signed articles do not necessarily reflect the views of Peoples Democracy.

We welcome submissions on the issues raised in the journal from outside our organisation.



# BUILD A CONFERENCE OF SOCIALISTS AND REPUBLICANS

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The election results in the 26 counties are not a flash in the pan. They show a real crisis of capitalist rule and a real failure of the anti-imperialist movement to address a growing radicalisation of the working class. Peoples Democracy is responding by calling for an open conference of Socialists and Republicans to set about the building of a united resistance. Below we explain why:

The present governmental crisis in the 26 counties represents an historic opportunity for the anti-imperialist movement in Ireland. In part this is because of the obvious aspects of the crisis - the incoming government will carry out a renewed austerity offensive through a weak administration riven by faction fights and squabbles. Working class resistance, having manifested itself in the vote, will express itself in a continued fight against the cuts.

But there are deeper reasons for seeking to realise the new opportunities that present themselves. In practice there is only one program put forward by capitalist parties - a program of austerity and collaboration with imperialism. The last administration had the support of all the capitalist parties in steamrolling through the cuts. Now, in the face of working class resistance, that capitalist unity has fragmented. The real victims are Fianna Fail. For generations they have held the support of the majority of workers in the 26 counties by posing as the defenders of the national revolution. Now their support for big business and imperialism and their attacks on the working class have lost them that support. Much more significant than the overall fall in the Fianna Fail vote was the movement of votes. The tally shows a massive movement of working class votes away from Fianna Fail and their seats being saved time and again by the transfer of Fine Gael and Progressive Democrat votes. Now a Fianna Fail government is to be preserved by the most reactionary of the capitalist parties which was itself decisively rejected at the polls.

The voters' radicalisation and their search for a fightback led to an increased vote for the Irish Labour Party and the Workers Party. We welcome this vote as the first step in an overall fightback, but we must take into account the incapacity of both these organisations to lead a fight against austerity. Neither has an economic perspective that differs radically from their capitalist opponents. They argue about the way in which cuts are implemented - not about the need for cuts or for Irish workers to pay the debt to the imperialist banks. In fact the De Rossa leadership of the Workers Party, already far to the right in its support for Unionism and partition, now openly promotes 'free market' solutions to the economic crisis!

But it is not in the realm of ideas that the weakness of these organisations is most clearly seen, but in the concrete facts of the day-to-day struggle. While the parties publicly denounce the effects of the cuts, they absolutely refuse to denounce the collaboration of the trade union bureaucracy in the so-called 'Programme of National



Recovery' which is the very framework within which the cuts are made. This bureaucracy marches in step with the bosses' Government, sabotaging and witchhunting those working class forces trying to fight back. Any party which refuses to challenge these misleaders of the trade union movement is incapable of leading the resistance to austerity.

The danger of this failure of leadership becomes more acute when we see the marginalisation of Sinn Fein in the elections. This crisis of the anti-imperialist movement is made more apparent in light of the fact that real radicalisation has taken place but has passed Sinn Fein by. This is not restricted to the vote for Labour or the Workers Party. A whole series of campaigns - on Water Tax, the rod licence, Hospital closures and education cuts - have taken place, often with republican participation, but without republican leadership. Most telling of all was the campaign of Paddy Ryan against Extradition. Both the defence campaign and the electoral campaign scored significant successes at a time when Sinn Fein's own campaign was running into the sand. The Ryan campaign made gains because it had a relatively open democratic structure and came out in opposition to Fianna Fail.

There is no doubt but that Sinn Fein completely misread the electoral support for Fianna Fail amongst working people. At precisely the time that working class voters were deserting Fianna Fail and looking for an alternative, the leadership of Sinn Fein were publicly speculating on support for a Fianna Fail Government if 'the price is right'. In this situation any prospect which Sinn Fein had of presenting itself as a radical alternative evaporated.

Peoples Democracy has consistently argued that the anti-imperialist movement can never make these sort of deals with Fianna Fail or any other capitalist party. The independence of the movement is a fundamental principle which is breached only at the price of dragging the movement into the morass of corruption which passes for politics in the 'Free State'

In our view the Republican leadership of the anti-imperialist movement is presently trying to have it both ways and this strategy had failed and has been seen to fail. Now it really is time to choose between principled reliance on the power of working class struggles by working people or the kitchen scale strategy which tries to balance revolutionary force against political pragmatism (or opportunism to give it its real name).

It is this balancing act and refusal to take a position that prevented the '68 committee from being more than a vehicle for commemoration. The same attitude has hampered the development of the FADA movement in the South and stands between success and failure for many campaigns which today represent an active fightback by the working class. This pragmatism not only poisons discussion, it also stands as a bulwark against the united action on which different political positions could be tested.

The elections show the beginning of a realignment of Irish politics. They show a radicalisation of the working class and they show an incapacity on the part of the republican movement - as Gerry Adams has already analysed - to take the leadership of that radicalisation and even a failure of their attempts to develop new political strategies. The struggle as a whole can no longer wait - it must begin to move forward and fight for the leadership of the struggle in the South. It is against this background that Peoples Democracy are calling for a conference of Republicans and Socialists for May 1990.

Building such a conference will be a difficult task for all anti-imperialists at a time when the imperialist offensive is intensifying. But it is a crucial task which should be taken up by all anti-imperialist organisations if the 20th anniversary of the deployment of British troops is to be used to launch a real renewal of the struggle.



That's why today we are calling on all individual militants - inside and outside the political parties - to agitate and build for an open conference. We look to individuals, groups, parties and campaigns to publicise the conference, to plan and build it and to organise throughout Ireland to make it a success and give it the authority to move the struggle forward.

At this early stage we do not wish to set limits on the direction of the conference, but neither will we attend with empty hands. In the view of Peoples Democracy the conference should:

- \*Oppose austerity and imperialist control of the economy
- \*Stand for an end to collaboration and Britain out of Ireland
- \*Fight for a secular society and the rights of women
- \*Oppose the 'Social peace' of the trade union bureaucracy and fight for democracy in the workers movement.

More important than the range of slogans will be the kind of movement we set up. Peoples Democracy will argue for a United Front structure - an open democratic framework which allows representation from organisations, campaigns, groups and individuals who support its program and are willing to unite in action to advance its aims. This open democratic structure must include the right to express views on the armed struggle. The political struggle we are proposing will not take place in a vacuum, and for the movement to have its own 'section 31' would be a recipe for disaster.

There is a growing protest and resistance in the 26 counties which can only fully develop and be successful if it is linked to the struggle in the 6 counties and if anti-imperialists fight for the leadership. We should begin by uniting our own movement.

BUILD THE CONFERENCE!

BUILD THE STRUGGLE!

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THE FIGHT!**

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN JOINING PEOPLES DEMOCRACY AND FIGHTING FOR A 32 COUNTY SOCIALIST REPUBLIC, FILL IN THE FORM BELOW AND SEND IT TO:

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.....



# GENERAL ELECTION

## VOTERS REJECT AUSTERITY

Many commentators labelled the general election in the South 'the unnecessary election.' At first glance this seems true. The last government had in practice the biggest majority ever. The 'Tallaght strategy' pronounced by Fine Gael leader Alan Dukes meant that in practice the Fianna Fail program was backed by the entire capitalist class. It enabled Haughey to launch a full-scale austerity offensive against the working class, to implement extradition and even, in the absence of an alternative programme, to gain in the opinion polls. What need for an election?

Yet behind the scenes resentment was growing and Fianna Fail, with its populist base, was most at risk and most aware of the discontent. Haughey hoped, through a snap election, to win an overall majority for further cuts. He left it too late and the election became the mechanism for the initial challenge from the working class.

The following pattern is clear:

‡ A crisis for Fianna Fail. It won 44.1% of the vote - the same as in the last election - but lost 4 seats. Even more important was the change in the character of its vote. There was a distinct shift away by working class voters and a number of Fianna Fail TDs were saved by Fine Gael and Progressive Democrat transfers. Now they have been faced into a coalition with their bitter enemies in the Progressive Democrats and faced with implementing further cuts which will further erode their base in the working class.

‡ An overall crisis for the capitalist parties. This is best illustrated by the fate of the Progressive Democrats. They split from Fianna Fail to develop a hard-line Thatcherite ideology combined with support for the British occupation in the North. This is essentially the programme that all the capitalist parties supported in the last Dail, and the result for the Progressive Democrats was that their vote

plunged from 11.8% to 5.5% and their share of Dail Seats from 14 to 6.

‡ A shift to the left. The Labour and Workers parties gained seats

The Greens came from nowhere to win a substantial vote and a seat and in Roscommon an independent was able to take a seat from Fianna Fail on the single issue of the closure of a local hospital.

‡ The marginalisation of Sinn Fein. The party took 1.2% of the poll, and no seats. This compares with 1.9% in the 1987 election, itself a bad result and was even more striking, given that there was a large protest vote that the republican movement was not able to relate to.

Democrats is rich with irony. The Progressive Democrats were only formed 4 years ago as a split from Fianna Fail. Relations between the two groups inside Fianna Fail and as separate parties have a lot to do with the evolution of Fianna Fail and its crisis today.

Fianna Fail owes its position as the natural party of government and the bourgeois party with mass working-class support to its role as 'the Republican party' - pledged to develop an independent Irish capitalism and oppose the British occupation in the North. In reality it has never effectively opposed the occupation and the mild experiment in capitalist independence was over by the early '60s. The Anglo-Irish Free Trade agreement and entry to the EEC underlined the role of the party as junior partner to imperialism.

The uprising of Northern nationalists threw Fianna Fail into a tailspin, one wing, led first by Jack Lynch and then by present Progressive Democrat leader Des O'Malley, wanted full-scale and open collaboration to crush the revolt. Haughey established covert intervention to keep the green card at the service of his party and in the hope of preventing a radicalisation of the Northern struggle. The battle in Fianna Fail led to the arms trial but Haughey was the eventual victor, nine years later.

Alongside the political argument went an economic one. O'Malley stood for 'financial rectitude' - code for cuts and attacks on the trade unions, while Haughey was willing to maintain the old populist tactic of making minor concessions to the trade unions in order to win their support and their guarantee to police the working class.

Time was running out for both. Successive governments built up a massive foreign debt with pro-imperialist policies which, if anything, further de-stabilised the Irish economy. The sheer size of the crisis forced Fianna Fail to obey the call of their

### CRISIS IN FIANNA FAIL

The present coalition with the Progressive  
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capitalist masters that the working class should pay. Also the H-Block crisis showed Fianna Fail that the Northern struggle had a dynamic that could extend into the South and made all-out collaboration through the Hillsborough agreement the policy of all the capitalist parties.

The results were seen in the last Dail. The most right-wing government for decades carried out a ruthless attack on Health Services, cut back public expenditure and institutionalised extradition of political offenders to Britain and the 6 county enclave.

Now, faced with a working-class backlash at the polls, Fianna Fail and their rivals in the Progressive Democrats have been forced into coalition around a programme that spells out more cuts and attacks on living standards. The strains on Fianna Fail had led the Progressive Democrats to split to its right. Today the party faces collapse as its working class base shifts to the left.

#### RIGHT-WING TURMOIL

The problem for Irish capitalism is that it has no realistic alternative to Fianna Fail. Fine Gael, the party of big business and the ranchers, has never had any hope of forming a majority government. Traditionally it has relied on coalition with Labour. Between 1970 and 1987 the Labour Party was FG's permanent coalition partner. As a result Labour consistently lost support and the growing depth of the economic crisis made it harder to find sops to the unions to justify the coalition. By 1987 Labour had gone so low in the polls and Fine Gael had swung so far to the right that Labour jumped from the sinking government ship. It barely survived the February 1987 election, gaining only 6.4% of

the vote - its lowest share since 1933 and second lowest ever since the civil war.

The then leader of Fine Gael, Fitzgerald, tried to make a virtue of necessity by dressing reaction in the clothes of reform. He launched his 'constitutional crusade' which tried to win popular support for austerity and for partition on the grounds of reforming and modernising Irish society. Unfortunately the issue he selected - reform of the divorce laws - was one that the party most closely tied to the Catholic Church would always find difficult to deliver. The rise of clerical reaction around SPUC, 'pro-life' and anti-divorce groups sent all the major parties scurrying for cover. By conceding on practically all the objections raised by the Church against divorce Fine Gael aided the failure of the divorce referendum and finally put paid to the reform strategy. paid to the 'reform' strategy.

The ball then passed to O'Malley and the Progressive Democrats. They promised to 'break the mould' of Irish politics. By drawing on the mass working class opposition to the burden of PAYE tax they hoped to exploit the vacuum created by the trade unionsfunking of this issue and thereby create an electoral base in the working class. The Progressive Democrats had no intention of making the rich and the multinational companies pay for the crisis. In fact workers were to be exploited even more heavily by cuts in health and public services. When the working class experienced this programme under the last Dail the Progressive Democrats were finished. It did not help that big business, that had heavily subsidised the Progressive Democrats, transferred funds to Fianna Fail when they began to implement the program of austerity.

The last Dail was a capitalist dream come true. The unity of the capitalist offensive,

the weakness of working class leadership, demoralised and paralysed the resistance. The election broke this logjam and immediately ended the unity of the capitalist parties. Fine Gael and the Progressive Democrats promised to invest '60 million in a health service that they had helped cut to the bone, while leaving the way open to further austerity by promising savings through the sacking of administrators. The voters were not impressed.

Fianna Fail claimed that the 2 years of austerity were part of a hitherto unheard of 'grand strategy'. Now that the cuts had 'restored order' to the national finances we were entering a new phase of development.

This is moonshine. Since the early 1970s the 26 county state has slid more and more into debt. Since the early 1980s all bourgeois governments have pushed through a very tough austerity policy, with the alleged aim of cutting the debt. In fact the debt has continued to grow, and under Fianna Fail has gone to over 150% of gross national product. The new coalition will continue with an escalating austerity policy which will bring it into further conflict with the working class.

So the future holds more austerity, but the contradiction between the demands of capital and the need to retain a popular base means continuing division within the capitalist parties and savage infighting within the new coalition. The trend to the left will continue as long as the reformist parties avoid a deal or coalition with the capitalist parties.

#### LEFT SWING

The parties of the reformist left are winning votes on the basis of working class protest,



The ups and downs of politics—Des O'Malley wasn't smiling after his party's electoral savaging





Haughey; far from happy about his future.

but they are incapable of leading that protest to a conclusion. They treat the 26 counties as an independent capitalist state and have no alternative to a policy of debt repayment to the imperialist banks. They are restricted to complaints about the debt falling on the working class and calls for the rich to pay their share. The failure to confront imperialism acts as a sheet-anchor, pulling them to the right on a whole series of other issues.

In the last Dail the concrete test of their willingness to fight came through the 'back door' of the Trade Union bureaucracy. While they protested the cuts on the floor of the Dail their partners in the Trade Union leadership signed a 'Programme for National Recovery' supporting the austerity drive.

As the more ideological party the Workers Party are more constrained by these factors. They are defined by their pro-unionist positions on the North and history of right shifts on the economy - first developing a strategy of growth through multi-national investment - i.e. precisely the policy of the capitalist parties - and more recently through acceptance of 'market forces' to generate growth.

The Labour Party's links with the trade union movement give it deeper roots and a greater stability than the Worker's party but unlike

that party they are held directly accountable for the actions of the trade union bureaucracy and the operation of the 'programme of national recovery'. The action of the Transport union leadership in sacking two MP TD's who were union officials confirms this link and acts to give the Workers party a more radical image - one they have done nothing to deserve.

Despite its appalling record on the National question the Labour party's search for radicalism has led it to toy with the green card. Labour personalities have begun to take positions on extradition, section 31 and frame-up victims such as the Birmingham 6. The process was taken further recently when Emmet Stagg announced that the Labour Party now supported British withdrawal. The Workers Party leader De Rossa denounced Stagg as 'fascist' for his speech.

Before the election a Workers Party drive for 'left unity' struck a responsive chord but rivalry over seats and their attempts to exclude the North from the agenda led to the initiative backfiring. It does not help that their own base is not firm around their pro-imperialist position - where Workers Party candidates were eliminated there was a substantial transfer to Sinn Fein.

Both parties have made decisive gains, although in the general election the tendency was for the Workers party to gain seats at the expense of Labour. They took 11.4% of the vote in Dublin compared to a labour vote of 9.5%. Two of these three gains were from the labour party, while all five of Labours gains were from the right. However the European vote in Dublin had a combined 'left' vote of 45.6%. De Rossa topped the poll with 93,420 votes while Labour totalled 51,431. In practice the future growth of both parties will depend to the extent to which the working class mobilises. In the absence of mobilisation they can continue to grow on a diet of rhetoric and bluster. Any mobilisation on the streets or in the factories will immediately present difficulties for both parties.

#### SINN FEIN'S FAILURE

Sinn Fein however played almost no role in this election. Their vote was bad in both the General and European elections. A radicalisation has begun, and the Republicans are on the sidelines. There were plenty of warnings for Sinn Fein after the 1987 elections. At that time we wrote:

\*the campaign exposed weaknesses in Sinn Fein's electoral strategy. The Republicans

have a perspective of building up a base through steady work on local community issues, and eventually becoming a credible national alternative as a result of the accumulated gains of this work.

The outcome of these elections should dispel these illusions."

(John Meehan in International Viewpoint, 23rd March 1987)

We were too optimistic. Sinn Fein ran exactly the same campaign this time, only on a smaller national scale, with fewer members and less enthusiasm. To blame the result on censorship, as 'An Phoblacht' did, is to ignore the results for other candidates who faced minimal or largely hostile coverage. The absence of real analysis carries the danger that anti-imperialist militants will become cynical and demoralised - less able to break out of their isolation and link up with the wider mobilisation.

One factor in the republican isolation is the military campaign and the present tendency towards a widening of targets and spectacular mistakes. In the period before the elections the bomb attacks on the Belfast-Dublin rail line had negative consequences within the working class and allowed the Workers Party to go on the attack in the trade union movement.

The policies of concentrating on military struggle and political action through community work are both a result of a basic political failure by the republican movement. Twenty years of struggle in the North, the mass all-Ireland radicalisation of the H-Block campaign and a left leadership have all been insufficient to move them from a traditional programme of Petty-bourgeois nationalism. They constantly balance between the politics of right and left, now and again falling into the arms of the bourgeoisie.

The class struggle today demands a challenge



De Rossa





to the capitalist parties and support for the working class. Sinn Féin has failed recently in both these areas.

The extradition campaign needed a broad open mobilisation which consciously challenged Fianna Fail. Sinn Féin built a lobbying organisation that did not manage to represent all those opposing extradition. The campaign claimed major successes within Fianna Fail and revolt at local level. When this failed to materialise the blame fell on the the apathy of the masses, yet in practice a forthright attack on Fianna Fail in Munster by Paddy Ryan build a broad campaign and a mass challenge.

The Sinn Féin record in the workers movement is even worse. They have consistently failed

to target the 'Programme for National Recovery' and the collaboration of the Trade Union bureaucracy in the cuts. They refused to defend John Mitchell, who was witch-hunted out of ICTU and then from the secretaryship of his own union (IDATU) because of his criticism of the sectarian history of many Trade Unions in the North and activity on issues like extradition. The reason that Sinn Féin gave: 'political differences' with Mitchell show an irresponsible sectarianism and capitulation to the witchhunt. Sinn Féin have yet to publicise their 'political differences' with trade union leader Phil Flynn. A former vice-president of Sinn Féin, he is the architect of the deal with Haughey and a leading figure in the witchhunt against Mitchell.

The 'Programme of National Recovery' was at the centre of this election. The collaboration of Trade Union leaderships delegitimised and obscured the resentment of the working class. This led to Haughey's miscalculation - a belief in his unassailable popularity - and the calling of the election. Haughey's losses benefited the very people who had been in a 'back door' coalition with him through this programme. A campaign over the past two years against the collaboration of the trade union leadership could have harnessed much of that support for anti-imperialist candidates.

The issue will not go away. The bureaucracy

has totally betrayed the interests of working people. Any mobilisation will find itself locked in head-on struggle with them. Republican defence of the bureaucracy will exclude them from the leadership of working-class radicalisation.

Sinn Féin are aware of the weakness of their position and the last Ard Fheis aimed to open out the movement and make new alliances. Unfortunately the crisis is so deep that even the vehicles for discussion and action - like the recently-formed FADA and the '68 committees in the North - were not able to bring discussions to a conclusion or agree even minimal united action beyond commemoration marches.

The crisis for the capitalists is unmistakable. The crisis for the workers movement is one of leadership. A new leadership will be formed in struggle, but it will be very much weaker if it is not able to draw on the history and experience of the anti-imperialist movement or if it does not from the beginning come to terms with the reality of imperialist domination of our country.


That's why Peoples Democracy has responded to the elections by calling for a conference of Socialists and Republicans and why we urge that militants work with us to organise and build it

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# LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESULTS

On the whole the North's local government election results on May 18th produced the most convincing picture of the present balance of forces in the North. Although there was some erosion in Sinn Fein's support, particularly in rural areas, their core support remained solid. The decline in their rural support meant that Unionists gained a marginal majority in Fermanagh council while in Newry and Mourne and Down councils the SDLP gained an absolute majority of the seats.

In Enniskillen it is likely that the Poppy Day bombing was a factor, but generally the question of the IRA's military campaign did not lead to any significant change in the vote, despite the Warrenpoint 'mistake' shortly before the election. There is evidence that different views of the military campaign inside the Republican movement were looking to the results for evidence of reaction from their supporters. This was not in evidence, but the question will not go away, and is likely to be discussed now in more direct terms, outside the question of gains and losses in votes. One thing which was quite clearly evident was the way in which the present campaign isolates and marginalises Sinn Fein outside its traditional vote. There was a consistent pattern of Sinn Fein doing well in first counts and then losing as the votes for every other party turned to an anti Sinn Fein vote.

If anything, erosion of the republican vote came from the even more pro-militarist Republican Sinn Fein, who ran an abstentionist campaign, made more effective by the totally opportunistic way in which Sinn Fein representatives presented their decision to sign an 'anti-violence' oath. They were right to stand, but wrong to divorce this from the need for defence against electoral, legal and media curbs and the need to challenge the SDLP and Dublin Government on the issue.

In West Belfast the Sinn Fein vote increased

by approximately 3% against the overall trend. The party polled a total of 69000 votes (11.2%) compared with 75600 (11.8%) in the 1985 Local Government elections. This compares with SDLP results this time of 129750 (21.2%) and in 1985 114000 (17.8%). No clearer test of the strategy of Sinn Fein - SDLP talks or the various 'unity' drives which failed to challenge SDLP collaboration could be found.

So the SDLP made gains against a background of increasing repression, the absence of any mass struggle and an armed campaign which is seen as increasingly reckless. However these gains are not the decisive step forward that has been trumpeted in the media.

On the Unionist side the DUP vote took a sharp drop of 5% to 18% while that of the DUP climbed from 29.4% to 30.4%. The DUP total vote remained virtually static compared to '85, the DUP vote went down from

155000 to 114500.

British supremo King and the media have again hailed this as a 'swing to moderation' and a shift away from confrontation over the Hillsborough agreement. In fact it represents a criticism of Paisley from the Loyalist far right as he distanced himself from 'Ulster Resistance' following arrests in Paris linked to a missile deal with their blood brothers in the Apartheid South African government.

For Socialists and Republicans the elections confirm that the wave of political radicalisation that followed the H-Block struggle and was channelled through the electoral rise of Sinn Fein has been halted. While Republican activists talk of the 'Long war' and of marking time on this base it is unlikely that their enemies will do likewise. The 32 county strategy of repression is starting to lock into place. It is becoming increasingly urgent for the anti-imperialist movement to break out of its isolation. For socialists that breakout must occur in the direction of the working class in the South. An increasingly sterile 'Long War' strategy linked to humiliating and demoralising 'unity drives' to the SDLP and Fianna Fail can only further damage the whole movement.





# CHASING RAINBOWS

## HOW "PEOPLE FIRST" LOST ITS WAY

In May 1987 the southern state was forced to have a referendum on the implications of the West European integration. Since the first one in 1972 the bandwagon had blithely rolled along. The promises of full employment, eternal sunshine and cheap wine has never materialised. Nonetheless the Brussels utopia was still able to spew out more illusions of motorways to Connemara, the dole in Crete and cheap Mercedes in Hollyhill.

The Southern bureaucracy - faced with crisis after crisis - was thrilled to be able to present this latest illusion to the increasingly cynical masses. An agricultural economist who saw more in common between Ireland and Jamaica than with Belgium challenged this cosy consensus. Raymond Crotty went on to force a vote. Although it was defeated, the referendum on the Single European Act pushed the question of West European capitalist integration to centre stage, for however brief a time. Issues like neutrality, cultural identity, NATO and nuclear power took centre stage from the more mundane concerns of the neo-colony based in Dublin.

Crotty's legal adviser was a Cork radical lawyer called Joe Noonan. His remarkable professionalism and commitment did much to put consideration of the implications of the SEA beyond the concerns of a well-intentioned fringe. Noonan had been prominently involved in CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) and other alternative social issues. The result was a campaign that saw a 17% No Vote in Munster and the only constituency in the 26-counties to vote against the SEA in 1987-Cork North Central.

The lessons of this intervention came to the fore in the summer of 1988 when attention was focussed on the implications of 1992. Various groups and individuals had emerged from earlier campaigns in Munster who were convinced that further progress towards a

united capitalist Europe would spell the end of radicalism, national resistance to imperialism and ecological awareness.

### PEOPLE FIRST/MEITHEAL

As a result of these concerns, various individuals came to the conclusion that a more effective forum for opposition would be provided by the elections to the EEC parliament in June 1989. It was clear that the fifth seat in the Munster constituency was up for grabs. A conference was held in Cork in November 1988 when these various concerns were articulated. It was decided in principle to run a candidate in the forthcoming European elections.

This meeting also decided to link such a candidacy to a wider political movement which had the concern for not only the environment but also the question of Irish identity and cultural and economic impoverishment. The role of British and Western imperialism was specifically raised. Close on 100 activists decided to call the project 'People First/Meitheal'. A movement- however ill-defined- was born. While the danger signs were obvious (Sen. John. A. Murphy delivered a scurrilous attack on 'fellow-travellers and republicans') the overwhelming approach was non-sectarian and progressive.



Our Cork correspondent Alan Bruce.

Joe Noonan was subsequently selected to run as the candidate of the People First/Meitheal. Initially, enthusiasm was high. It was clear that the issues of neutrality, national independence and economic sovereignty were vital issues in the Munster constituency. Mass unemployment and cutbacks were the only tangible results of EEC membership for Munster workers. Noonan, with a properly articulated campaign, had victory within his grasp. Links were established with the Rainbow group of the European parliament and with a radical group in Denmark.

### WHAT WENT WRONG?

Victory was not to be however. On 15th of June Noonan secured a 15,000 first preference votes. Munster saw the extraordinary return of that defender of unionism, John Cushmanan, and the excellent campaign of Fr. Paddy Ryan. So what went wrong for Noonan?



Despite its initial openness, the concept behind the campaign was essentially that of the 'popular front' - a unity of right and left based on 'lowest common denominator' politics. In these movements the politics of the right comes to dominate. A classic example was the Crotty campaign in Dublin which was a hostage to the Catholic right. The effect in the Noonan campaign was less the direct expression of right-wing politics and more the refusal to define a position or move from what was essentially a media campaign to one on the streets and in the factories.

People First/Meitheal was riddled with contradictions. Politically it never came clean on whether it was a Green campaign

(ironically it would probably have done better if it had) or a broad anti-capitalist front. Economically it never espoused a clear anti-capitalist line. Tactically it refused to confront the evident splits in the main bourgeois parties. Morally it refused to articulate a coherent working-class viewpoint on the nature of the EEC and the possibilities of opposition to it.

The refusal to take political positions led to the campaign becoming increasingly dictatorial. An inner circle of non-accountable gurus imposed diluted politics and ruled out broader national questions. Unlike the Fr. Ryan campaign, no public rally or mass meeting was ever held

throughout the constituency. The campaign was based almost exclusively on Cork city (or the more esoteric fringes of West Cork hippydow).

The Fr. Ryan campaign shows a strong anti-imperialist current among Munster workers. For its voice to be heard a greater awareness of proletarian democracy and the dynamics of national resistance needs to be articulated. Is it too much to hope that next time the forces within People First/Meitheal will actually consult the working class?

ALAN BRUCE.

## EXTRADITION VICTORY IN MUNSTER

The first concrete evidence that extradition was a major issue of concern to the Irish people came to light when Fr. Paddy Ryan addressed a public meeting of 500 in Co. Tipperary following his return from Belgium. To the establishment, who had hoped that this expression of opposition to collaboration was based on paraochialism and on the fact that a priest was involved, his Euro-election vote came as a shock. As the word came through that the anti-extradition vote had topped 30,000 in Munster the political 'experts' and Party leaders live on TV could not disguise their alarm.

Certainly the Fr. Ryan campaign could no longer be dismissed as a localised reaction to a native son. The extradition issue had been taken into every corner of Munster including the 3rd and 4th largest cities in the 32 counties. In the Southill area of Limerick City one ballot box gave Fr. Ryan more votes than any other Euro candidate. Neither could the vote be discounted as 'one for the collar' as the major parties had ensured through an intensive pre-election campaign that the 'Priest' tag became more

of a hindrance than a help.

The capitalist parties had to face the fact that extradition was a major issue among the electorate. Even John Cushman, former Alliance Leader and successful Euro-candidate for Fine Gael, openly admitted that a couple of thousand Fine Gael supporters had voted Fr. Ryan No.1 and then reverted to their own party. Subsequently those 'Ryan transfers' helped to elect Cushman.



Limerick observer - Peoples Democracy Cllr. Joe Harrington.



## CONTRADICTIONS

The campaign had two contradictory aspects which both explain the large vote and also explain the failure to have the candidate elected. On the one hand, the united movement created around the election campaign showed just what the unity of anti-imperialists can achieve. In this respect Fr. Ryan played an important role in quickly establishing himself as a candidate to be trusted and one who was sensitive to the various political tendencies that made up the campaign. This united positive campaign secured a vote beyond its own expectations.

On the other hand a drawback of the campaign was a certain lack of democracy. No mechanism was established to allow the campaign activists to have an input into strategy and tactics. On the practical level the wide experience which anti-imperialists have gained in contesting elections over recent years was not centralised and opportunities for an even more effective campaign were lost.

At the political level the same applied with the election posters, leaflets, adverts and manifesto being drawn up by a small core group or by individuals. Luckily this caused no serious divisions in the campaign but, with decisions being handed down from above, the possibility was always there.

The closest things came to a revolt was when election workers in some areas refused to handle posters with the slogan; "Defend Irish Values - Vote Fr. Ryan". This was seen as code introducing the politics of clerical rightwingers into the campaign. Later the manifesto explained the slogan in terms of "erosion of our principles as a caring peoples" and went on to condemn the "creeping acceptance of economic solutions such as Beef and Butter mountains while people elsewhere were starving".

## BOOST

Fr. Ryan's vote has given a much needed boost to the anti-extradition campaign in Munster and indeed in all Ireland. Substantial backing for the campaign came

from Dublin and from Belfast where Fr. Des Wilson and others were a constant source of support. Sinn Fein, which had advanced plans to stand candidates in Munster, withdrew in favour of Ryan and diverted the resources it had earmarked for its own campaign to the new movement. Seamus Healy and his supporters in South Tipperary played a leading role in getting the campaign off the ground.

The election campaign allowed the anti-extradition movement to be taken to new areas in an organised fashion for the first time. This included Gerry Collins own constituency of Limerick West where Aileen Dillon and Jim McNamee together with some very committed Sinn Fein members and others to put extradition to the top of the agenda and achieved excellent results.

The basis for a united militant ongoing anti-extradition campaign at local and national level clearly exists. Over the summer period the Munster activists will be meeting to plan future activity in the light of the election results.

JOE HARRINGTON

# International VIEWPOINT

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# CAPITALIST OFFENSIVE IN EUROPE

The one thing that didn't become an issue in the European elections was Europe itself. Traditionally these elections have been used in Ireland to measure the strength of opposition to partition and the balance of forces between various parties. They also offer a chance to register a protest vote and build campaigns. The capitalist parties have used them to reward the faithful with rich Euro-salaries and as a retirement ground.

All this is not too surprising. The European parliament is a largely impotent talking-shop, and all attempts to popularise Europe and build a pan-European patriotism (in reality a European chauvinism) have failed utterly. Yet Europe and 1992 are important issues for Irish workers. They herald a new attack on the rights of workers throughout Europe.

The elections were an attempt to give legitimacy to this new offensive. The results show that to a large extent this attempt failed. The conservative architects of Europe suffered setbacks. The socialist parties gained - but most of their leaderships offer no resistance to the bosses' Europe. The result was a crisis of leadership, with a proportion of the vote going to the extreme right, to the Greens and to far left parties

## CAPITALIST NEEDS

The project of the Single European Act (SEA) and the 1992 deadline is to answer the needs of the biggest European corporations. They need to face up to competition from the US and Japan and the crisis following the 1987 stock market crash. The answer they have put forward is an economic restructuring around a single market.

For the working class this means; redundancies, wages freezes, deskilling of jobs, privatisation - with attacks on the social needs of workers and on public sector workers and a constant drive to lower wages and conditions. Europe today is riven by national and regional inequalities. The new

offensive will make that worse. The Europe of today holds 44 million poor and 16 million unemployed. The bosses plan to increase these numbers. Resources will flow from the poor to the rich and Ireland will become ever more marginalised, its population acting as a reserve army of labour for European capital.

## EURO-PATRIOTISM

The bosses tried to sweeten the pill with a glossy campaign aimed at developing a European patriotism - made uglier in many countries by a growing discrimination against immigrant workers - and by compensatory financial mechanisms aimed at defusing protest. In the elections they were met by cynicism and hostility.

The problem for the bosses is that the workers have heard it all before. Economic rationalisation and 'Free Market' policies have been in place in most national economies for over a decade. All the policies to develop European mechanisms have been in response to the inertia of the national economies in Europe. After each crisis the inertia returns anew, with the

rights of working people further eroded. Also in practice the big companies follow their own interests. Sometimes this is a single European market, but often the solution is alliances or mergers with Japanese or US capital. In fact, the bourgeoisie does not believe its own speeches on the virtues of economic liberalism. The bosses know very well that international relations do not boil down simply to market relations. They need a common currency, a diplomacy, an army, a state. Without such instruments, Europe can only become a huge free-trade zone open to pressure from all directions.

Against this background the mainstream conservative parties, seen as the architects of today's Europe, suffered most in the elections, and there was a distinct swing to social - democratic forces, most marked in Britain.

But Social Democracy is increasingly presenting itself as the most coherent and determined champion of Europe. The social democratic leaderships have presided over the failure of reformism in their own countries and turned away from leading fightbacks by the working class. Now they hope a capitalism organised on a Europe-wide basis can provide an economic expansion and





that they can avoid conflict by looking for European codes on unemployment, workers rights, social conditions and so on. But their total and unquestioning submission to the capitalist logic of the SEA leads them to accept and organise the social attacks implied in the 1992 project.

### PROTEST

The large vote for Green parties is an indication of the radicalisation of many voters. The Greens are against the SEA, denouncing the threat the free market presents to the environment and the logic of the European arms policy. The weakness in their position lies in their refusal to take a clearly anti-capitalist position and turn towards the working class. Why separate an ecological commitment from class commitment, when the profit motive is at the root of the evils they are denouncing?

The traditional policy of the Communist parties has been to link with the most reactionary forces of the right against the EEC in the name of national unity. An example of this sort of campaign was the Crotty candidacy in Dublin.

In terms of revolutionary potential, the real focus of opposition to the EEC lay with the Sinn Fein campaign. Yet they had even less impact in the European elections than

in the local government elections in the North and in the General election in the South. On top of the overall problems of their election intervention came the issue of Europe and the failure of the Sinn Fein leadership to make this an issue which motivated their organisation and supporters and was seen as a dynamic part of the struggle.

### INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

In order for this to be possible it is no longer enough simply to stand by the demands of national self-determination. Self-determination is the basis for a non-exploitive relationship among nations but, faced with an international offensive by imperialism we need an internationalist response that is capable of uniting struggles in many countries.

The basis of such a perspective was outlined by the Fourth International in its manifesto for the European Elections:

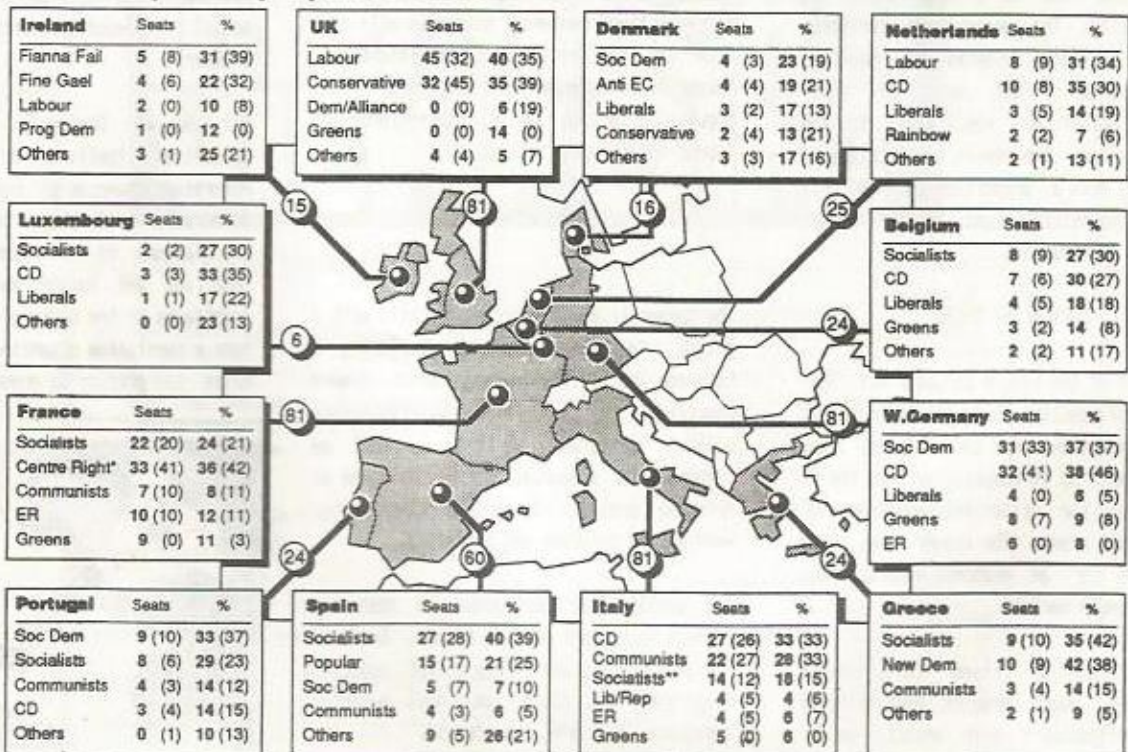
"We are for a Europe without frontiers, that develops comradeship between workers, brings down artificial barriers between the peoples and frees oppressed nationalities from the straightjacket of the old state. We are for a Europe that opens up new and broad horizons for the development of material wealth, of technological resources and of

human capacities, which are today fragmented and confined in narrow nation states. We are for a Europe rid of all inequality between men and women. We are for a Europe that upgrades social gains (in wages, jobs and social protection) to the most advanced and promotes equal rights to jobs, health and education - the most basic of human rights. We are for a Europe oriented towards the future, capable of overcoming regional inequalities, of foreseeing the damage caused by the race for profit and unbridled pillaging of natural resources. We are for a Europe of peace and disarmament, which uses the resources today squandered on military budgets to satisfy real needs, to carry out research and to protect the environment. We are, finally, for a Europe that overcomes - rather than deepens and consolidates - the split that has divided it for almost 50 years between an imperialist 'West' and a bureaucratic and Stalinist 'East'."

As the class struggle in Ireland develops and meets the new international offensive of imperialism, so the ideas contained in the call 'For a United Socialist States of Europe!' will become more central to revolutionary militants.

JOHN NORTH.

### How Europe's major parties fared



CD = Christian Democrats, Soc Dem = Social Democrats, Prog Dem = Progressive Democrats, Lib/Rep = Liberal & Republicans, ER = Extreme Right  
 \* Centre Right (Fizco) includes, for 1989, both the Glacard and Veil lists. \*\* Socialists (Italy) includes Social Democrats seats 2 (3), 3% (4%)  
 Results as expected yesterday afternoon with most counting completed

1989 (1984) Elections  
 (1987 for Spain & Portugal)  
 Seats for each country



# THE DEAD END OF LOYALTY

In August and September 1980, mostly Protestant, workers will be thrown on the unemployment scrapheap; 700 will be laid off from Short Bros. and over 300 from Harland and Wolff shipbuilders. Both companies are owned by the British government and both are about to be privatised.

The announcement of the latest redundancies came in the week just before both companies broke up for the two week 'twelfth' holidays. A week later many of the same workers were passing resolutions at the end of the traditional Orange parades professing loyalty to the Queen and country which had just kicked them in the teeth. Not for the first time and certainly not for the last loyalty was shown more and more to be an ambiguous asset for Protestant workers.

## ECONOMY

It wasn't always like this. The Belfast shipbuilding industry used to be the biggest in the world - employing over 30,000 workers. Shorts alone employed over 20,000 during the early 40's. It was industries like these, tied to the imperial market, that formed the economic basis for partition.

Now both employ only around 10,000. Moreover such has been the decline of industry in the North of Ireland that they still form a central part of the economy - 10% of all manufacturing jobs and half of those in the engineering industry. These are the jobs now threatened by the privatisation program. If both companies were to fold the knock-on effect on the rest of the economy would be dramatic. Harland and Wolff alone does business with 680 other companies in the North and it has been estimated that a further 5000 jobs would be lost if the two firms were to close.

## THATCHERISM

It is quite clear that this is a risk that the British government is quite prepared to take. Far from proving that a British withdrawal is on the way it proves exactly the opposite. So confident is Thatcher of her position that the economy in the North is to be treated in exactly the same way as that in Britain - even though the results could be disastrous. The position of Shorts in the Northern economy is equivalent to a company in Britain employing 280,000 people - British Airways, Gas, Coal, Rolls Royce and Jaguar all rolled into one. The long decline of the Shipyard and Shorts means that their importance as a bastion of Loyalty to Britain is now much less.

This decline is ultimately due to the long term recession in the world capitalist economy, especially in shipbuilding but, massive subsidies notwithstanding, it has been aggravated by deliberate Government neglect, particularly glaring in the case of Shorts. The company has been saddled with massive interest payments, the bulk of which originated in 1964 when the government of the day reneged on an order. Investment has been woeful. It averages '2,500 per employee, compared to an industry average of '10-15,000.

## UNIONS

The trade union campaign, faced with an uphill task, has pointed to this history of neglect, but it is clear that the bureaucrats who lead the union movement have already given up the struggle. The fight

against privatisation has given way in Shorts to demands over how it should be implemented and in Harland and Wolffs the workers have been sucked into participation in a 'Management /Employee Buyout' scheme in partnership with a Norwegian shipping capitalist called Olsen. It is already clear that while workers will be expected to put up '2 million of their own money they are going to have absolutely no say in the running of the company. Under threat of dismissal they were asked to sign an 'agreement' which would mean a significant deterioration in their working conditions.

Paying for your own slavery seems to be the new deal being offered by trade union leaders in the North!

## LESSONS

The saga of the North's shipbuilding and Aircraft industry has many lessons for socialists:

-It shows the decline of the Irish Unionist Capitalist class, again reinforced recently by the takeover of the local unionist paper 'The Newsletter' by an outside company.

-It illustrates the declining economic base for partition.

-More clearly than ever before it highlights the dead end which loyalty to Britain offers to Protestant workers.

-Most of all however it reveals the continuing tragedy of the yawning gap which still remains between those fighting for a United Ireland and Socialism and a Protestant working class facing its own attacks from imperialism while still remaining bound to it.

JOE CARTER.



# THE SOCIALIST VIEW

The first thing that socialists should be clear about is that they are opposed to the redundancies at Harland and Wolff and Shorts. They are opposed to the worsening of worker's conditions and opposed to privatisation. This is an elementary duty of socialists, but it needs to be said lest some succumb to the sectarian attitude that 'Loyalists' are now getting a dose of their own medicine. Sectarianism is a cancer which has injured Nationalist workers most of all. We can not advance by promoting it.

This being said it must be understood that this is only the ABC of socialism and Connolly long ago berated;

"our socialist friends...who have never got beyond the ABC of the question".

The fight at Shorts and the Shipyard is not and cannot be a simple 'class struggle' with the workers on one side and the bosses and state on the other. Socialist who see the issue in these terms and secretly hope that somehow Protestant workers can come to socialism through this economic struggle are kidding themselves. It is quite possible for many Protestant workers to be militant on economic questions and throughly sectarian as well. They see themselves as not just defending jobs for the working class but also the privileges of their own section of that class.

This is not just some sectarian idea in their heads. It is the actual reality. The 'Yard' and Shorts are bastions of reactionary Loyalist privilege. Socialists who refuse to confront this do a disservice to everyone.

This is true not least for Protestant workers themselves. Ignoring the sectarian dimension is tantamount to condoning it and means that there is no realistic possibility of mobilising nationalist workers in the fight. Why should they if the jobs being

fought for are not theirs also? The basic trade union policy of opposing voluntary redundancy is understood because jobs are seen as belonging to the working class as a whole and not the property of an individual worker to sell. It is even more clearly understood that the jobs in the two firms are not the property of the whole class.

A basic point that socialists have to make is that they should. The number of Catholic workers in the firms must be increased until it reflects the balance in the overall population and trade unionists should be in the forefront of the fight to enforce this.

## OBJECTIONS

A standard objection is that this means sacking Protestants to employ Catholics. That's simply a lie. Recruitment for new jobs and normal staff turnover should be utilised positively to achieve equality. Anyone objecting to this is only paying lip service to equality - all other proposals are simply window-dressing which don't have

a hope in hell of changing the sectarian balance. 'Equality of opportunity' measures don't lead to equality of results - and it's results that count.

A second objection is the old chestnut that by raising questions of the religion of the workforce we are being sectarian. This nonsense implies that if we don't talk about a problem it will go away. Sectarian discrimination exists and those who refuse to confront it are in fact capitulating to Loyalism and abandoning the fight for socialism before they have even begun. The history of socialism in the North is littered with the hulks of so-called socialists who first condoned and then went on to defend the sectarian set-up.

## WORKERS UNITY

This is the socialist approach. It seeks unity of the working class on the basis of equality - not inequality and oppression. Karl Marx explained in the 'Communist Manifesto' that the key distinguishing feature of communists was that they stood for the interest of the whole working class and not just sections of it defined by nationality, race, sex or religion. The fight for jobs at Shorts and the Shipyard can only become a fight of the whole working class if the jobs really do belong to the whole class - Catholic and Protestant.

To many people this view seems utopian. Protestant workers are hardly likely to spontaneously support such a policy. The trade union leaderships are even less likely to campaign for it. Catholic workers are by and large on the margins of the industrial workforce and the trade union movement. Yet the present policy has led to many Northern Catholic workers as seeing the trade unions



as politically irrelevant. It has emasculated the union movement in the whole of Ireland. 'Worker's Unity' has went capitulation to Loyalism, at best lip service on questions of repression and discrimination and at worst a cosy collaboration with state forces.

The right-wing veto has gone well beyond the national question to engender a right-wing consensus and collaboration on social and economic questions. It has helped underpin reaction in the ranks of British trade unionists and prevented discussion of the British occupation of Ireland.

The struggle for a true workers unity falls to socialists willing to work inside and outside the unions to pose an alternative to the present reactionary policies based on the needs of the class as a whole.

#### ALTERNATIVE

Our problems do not end there, for what is our alternative? Opposition to privatisation implies support for continued British government ownership and reinforces the tendency of Protestant workers to look to Britain for support. Are socialists to support British ownership and control of resources which should belong to the Irish people?

Our alternative is that these industries should be controlled by their workers in the framework of a 32 county national plan drawn up by the trade unions and communities and presented as a workers alternative to the austerity measures of the British and Irish governments, the EEC and the International Monetary fund.

These are the ideas that Peoples Democracy is fighting for. We realise that they are ideas that will appeal firstly to those North and South who agree with the republicans in seeing imperialist domination as the root cause of the impoverishment and repression of the Irish people. The road to

winning the support of Protestant workers for a revolutionary programme may lead through Ballymun and Limerick.

But above all they are ideas whose time has come. Full employment for Protestant workers (at rock-bottom wages) rested on a system of British domination that partitioned the island, led to constant discrimination and mass unemployment among Northern Catholics, the impoverishment of the Southern economy and ensured that the inevitable uprisings on both sides of the border would be met by state repression and has now led to twenty years of continuous war. The economic base that led to the symbiosis between Loyalism and imperialism is now in decay. Imperialism can no longer deliver full employment for Protestant workers and the politics of loyalism offer no solution. Its up to us to put the only real solutions - based on the power of a unified working class.

JOE CARTER.



THE FLAG FLIES AT SHORTS



# NEW DEBATE BY FEMINISTS

A group of anti-imperialist feminists from Dublin and Belfast came together recently for a discussion and exchange of ideas. Several women travelled from Dublin to the Belfast meeting in July, which was held in the Falls Womens centre.

The meeting was the first of its kind for several years - women from North and South meeting to discuss the question of organising as anti-imperialist feminists.

The impetus for the exchange came from the Dublin group. They have been meeting regularly since October 1988 and have organised themselves as a Women Against Imperialism group and have produced a short leaflet outlining their aims and what they stand for. It was to further explore these aims and draw from the experience of Belfast women who have been in the forefront of the struggle which led to the Belfast meeting.

The morning session of the meeting took reports from North and South. Particular emphasis was given to developments in the language and cultural movements and to the necessity of relating to these movements. The afternoon session saw further discussion on the future plans and aspirations of the two groups.

## COMPARING EXPERIENCES

The Belfast women have formed a fightback group and are working towards building a national womens conference to be held in Belfast this October around the theme 'Building on our Differences'. All aspects of the struggle against women's oppression would be examined.

The Dublin group had set out to organise themselves as a group and bring the



analysis of anti-imperialist feminism to both the womens movement and the anti-imperialist movement. Public meetings were planned to examine and develop that analysis.

## ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

It was agreed by the meeting that both tasks were important, but a number of women present argued in favour of anti-imperialist women clarifying their outlook as a priority. The question of militarism and the difficulty women had in critically discussing the armed struggle were referred to. Republicanism was suggested as a discussion topic for a further meeting, as were the questions of economic imperialism and socialism. The latter topic was regarded as important given the recent election results and the large protest 'socialist' vote in the 26 counties.

The meeting ended with agreement to hold a further joint discussion in Dublin in September. In the meantime the respective groups will meet and try to define an agenda for the tasks facing anti-imperialist feminists today.

ANNE CONWAY.



# WEST BELFAST WITCHHUNT

There are plenty of examples around the world of an oppressed population being forced to rise without weapons or with pitifully few weapons and being met by terror, repression and witchhunt; the intifada in Palastine in which 500 people, many of them young children, have been killed by Israeli forces; more recently the barbaric supression of Chinese students and workers, follwed by the terror - lies, misinformation and show trials.

the funerals of the Gibraltar 3. He was captured at the cost of 3 lives simply through the raw unarmed courage of West Belfast youth. When 2 plainclothes soldiers, in circumstances which have never been explained by the British, drove into the mourners and opened fire the same raw courage overcame and disarmed them and they were subsequently shot.

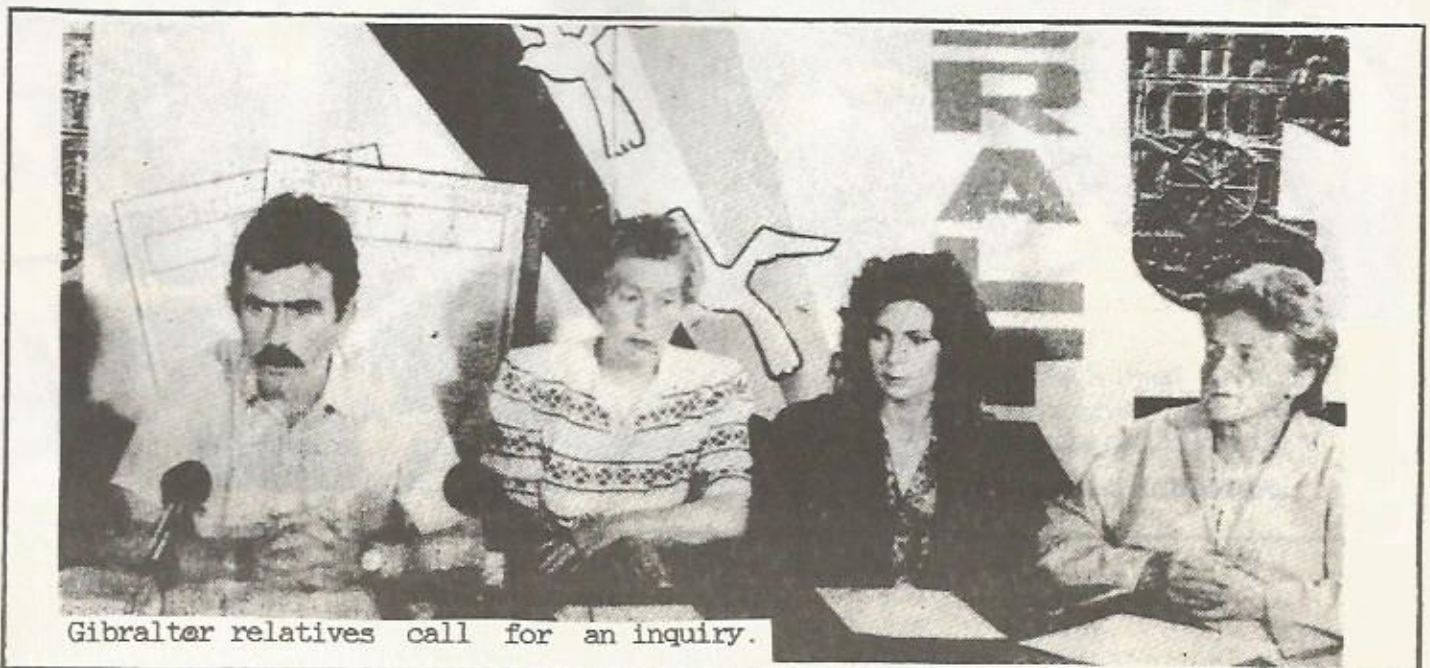
At home few events have demonstrated more clearly Britain's role in Ireland than the trials following the killing of two plainclothes soldiers at the Belfast funeral of Caoimhin Mac Bradaigh - himself a victim of the Milltown massacre.

## THE FACTS

The British have broken new ground in their drive for vengeance. On 1st June Alex Murphy and Henry Maguire were found guilty of the murder of the soldiers. Chief Justice Hutton sentenced them to life imprisonment and recommended that they serve 25 years. This was on the evidence of videotape - not one videotape - but a whole series of tapes spliced and joined to make a script for the prosecution. To help things along a little the tapes were computer enhanced. The court saw not what the tapes recorded but artificial pictures formed by computer software. Even then what the tapes showed was that the two defendents had NOT killed the soldiers - the murder verdict

Britain causes the violence. British repression unleashed a chain of blood. They were responsible for all the deaths, including the deaths of their own soldiers, and they have responded with a savage witchhunt against the people of West Belfast which adds a new link to the chain of violence and repression.

The facts are as follows: The British tried to claw back a criminalisation policy defeated at great cost in the hunger strikes by unleashing mass intimidation and violence against republican funerals. Margaret Thatcher authorised the assassination of 3 IRA members in Gibraltar and the RUC kidnapped the bodies as they crossed the border to prevent demonstrations of support. Michael Stone, a Loyalist who saw himself as an auxilliary member of the imperialist forces, carried their policy to its logical conclusion by launching an armed attack on



Gibraltar relatives call for an inquiry.



involved a similar doctrine to the doctrine of 'common purpose' evolved by South African courts to pack Black demonstrators into death row.

One month later came another turn of the screw - Judge McCallum sentenced Sean Lennon to 15 years and David McConnell to 9 years for 'falsely imprisoning' the two soldiers. The charges were based on the same sort of evidence and referred to the immediate struggle around the car when people were struggling desperately to defend themselves. Judge McCallum referred to the right to self defence - he ruled it out. So its now official - its illegal for Northern Nationalists to defend themselves. Sean Lennon's father was found not guilty - he is 63 and walks with the aid of a stick.

Yet more was to come. A few days later Brendan Moyne was arrested and charged with causing grievous bodily harm to one of the soldiers. He is the 31st person to be charged, 16 months after the attack. The

RUC have indicated that they plan to make further arrests.

#### CONTRAST

All this is in sharp contrast to the trial of Milltown killer Michael Stone. Stone kept faith with his imperialist masters and presented no defence. He was presented as a lone madman and no other arrests were made. It was never explained how he obtained modern weaponry which had just been smuggled into Ireland, how he claimed to have access to RUC intelligence files, how he could launch his attack directly under the guns of British soldiers or why a van of heavily armed RUC men drove away from the massacre and only returned to rescue Stone after he had been captured. Nothing was ever said of Stone's links with the UDA, which remains a legal organisation.

There is also a sharp contrast with the

punishment meted out to the two British soldiers who have ever faced the courts for killing civilians. The killer of Kidso Reilly served 18 months. The killer of Aiden McAneaspie was fined 'an undisclosed sum'.

#### SILENCE

The nightmare of terror that the British are casting over West Belfast is accompanied by a deafening silence. It is the silence of the Nationalist politicians who support the Anglo-Irish agreement and claim to have ended 'the nationalist nightmare'.

The witchunt won't go away. We have to fight back, to organise, and to challenge and break the silence of the Nationalist collaborators.

FRANK ROSSA.









**T**HIS movement was the product both of the decades long crisis of the bureaucratic regime and of the economic and social measures embarked on at the end of the 1970s. It was characterized from the start by democratic and egalitarian demands that struck at the very roots of the bureaucratic regime.

From the outset it created new instruments that, in the best revolutionary tradition, met the movement's need for organization and assured the emergence of young leaders and the exercise of control over these leaders by the masses. From the first days, the working class took part in the mobilizations and began to establish nuclei of unions, independent of the old, ossified structures. Along with students, workers played an active role in the most significant and moving episode of the revolutionary days — the fraternization between the masses and young soldiers that prevented the application of martial law for ten days.

### **"Market socialism" and bloody repression**

In this crisis, the bureaucracy has revealed more than ever its intrinsic weakness: the narrowness of its social base; its isolation from those masses that it falsely claims to represent; its inability, as soon as the masses go into action, to get its mechanisms of domination and manipulation to function; its own divisions over how to deal with an ever worsening crisis and the challenge to its own power.

It was for such reasons that, after some weeks of hesitation and prevarication, the bureaucratic leaders decided that they had no choice but to unleash repression on a large scale, throwing overboard any concern for their "liberal" or "reformer" image. They have thus demonstrated that "market socialism" is no guarantee of democracy.

The only way that they could crush such a massive movement was by using the army, putting in the front line those sectors over which they had the tightest control.

It was the army that crushed the movement in Beijing, and it is the army, along with the police, the secret services, and all sorts of provocateurs and informers, that is carrying out the massive arrests that are now taking place. The Chinese army, which was born out of the flames of a popular and anti-imperialist war, has now perpetrated a massacre of those very popular masses who — despite all the contradictions — identified with it for dec-

# **The bureaucratic counter-revolution**

**THE EVENTS of April-June 1989 in China will go down in history as a milestone in the struggle of the masses against the domination of the bureaucratic caste.**

**A huge movement of students, workers, intellectuals and other sectors of the working population swept Beijing and other big cities, virtually paralyzing the country.**

**Statement of the United Secretariat Bureau of the Fourth International**

ades. These events, therefore, mark the culminating point of the historic degeneration of the army.

In order to justify their crimes, the sinister figures — in the first place that old super-bureaucrat Deng Xiaoping — who have been appearing on the Chinese television have resorted to the old Stalinist refrain. It was, they say, necessary to defend the "socialist" state against counter-revolutionaries who wanted to restore capitalism. It is impossible to imagine a more blatant lie! Aside from the occasional formulation or symbol, the basic demands of the movement were for elementary democratic rights and against the oppression by the bureaucratic caste.

### **A party that has no internal democracy**

The movement demanded an end to privileges and corruption and to the growing social inequalities. People nostalgic for capitalism do not struggle for these kinds of objectives nor adopt such forms of mass self-organization to obtain their ends! Nor do they raise their voices together to sing the *International*!

It is the bureaucrats of the ruling caste who are responsible for the Chinese tragedy. Forty years after the revolution, no democratic institutions have been established. The fate of the coun-

try depends on decisions by the leaders of a party that has no internal democracy whatsoever. It is these decisions that have led the Chinese economy from one crisis to another. The crisis, furthermore, far from easing, is getting worse. It is the bureaucrats who explained that the solution lay in introducing a market economy, who have made concession after unprecedented concession to the multinationals of the capitalist countries and who have encouraged the development of a national private sector, in industry and commerce as well as in agriculture.

### **A revolutionary leadership is essential**

They are the ones who have dealt hard blows to the standard of living of the majority of workers and peasants and provoked the appearance for the first time since 1949 of the blight of unemployment. They are the ones who have conducted and are conducting a policy of compromise with US imperialism at the expense of revolutionary struggles, especially in Asia, and who have sung the praises of the West European bourgeoisies, including its most reactionary representatives.

The Fourth International, which has always vigorously denounced every crime committed by the bureaucratic caste, stands unreservedly on the side of the students, the workers, the peasants and intellectuals of China. It is on the side of all those who have given such a striking example of revolutionary initiative and combativity.

These militants, drawing the lessons of their dramatic experience, will make their contribution to the development of the revolutionary leadership whose necessity has been demonstrated yet again by the events in China.

Such a leadership is essential if the question of the replacement of the bureaucratic regime by revolutionary democratic institutions, designed to guarantee the self-organization of the masses and democratic planning of the economy, is to be posed concretely in the crises that Chinese society will inevitably experience in the future.

**For a united mobilization worldwide against the repression!  
Support the struggles of the students, workers, intellectuals and peasants of China!  
Down with the bureaucratic dictatorship! ★**

June 10, 1989