



SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

june 77 10p

movement for a socialist republic

as s.d.l.p. grovels mason promises

MORE REPRESSION



stop the concessions to loyalism

FIGHT BACK!

INSIDE;

Unemployment & Repression
economic crisis equal pay



WHICH WAY FOR RAC



The removal of political status in March 1975 was the culmination of a lengthy process of demoralisation in the anti-unionist ghettos. In the preceding months there was virtually no political activity on the streets; instead a vicious campaign of sectarian assassinations, reaching its peak with the mass killings in South Armagh around Christmas '76, allowed Rees to bring in the SAS murder-squads on the grounds of 'protecting the decent citizens against the gusser'.

'Ulsterization' was well under way - the SBLP were prepared to talk to the Loyalists; the Coalition in the South echoed the official British propaganda machine, openly entertaining so-called Loyalist 'converts' like Craig, and embarked on the most repressive batch of repressive batch of legislation, harassment and intimidation seen in the 26 Counties since the '30s.

RESISTANCE

In this context, Rees's calculated attack on the political prisoners in the 6 Counties was a direct challenge to the anti-unionist resistance: if the challenge was ignored, it would be clear that the resistance had lost its support amongst the nationalist masses, that the process of 'Ulsterization' was almost complete, and that Britain could go on to setting up a repressive governmental apparatus for the 6 Counties; in other words, a huge defeat would have been inflicted on the national struggle and the working class throughout the 32 Counties.

But now, 15 months later, the battle to regain political status shows little sign of dying. Under the banner of the Relative Action Committee local committees have been set up in all anti-unionist areas in Belfast, providing a democratic network to draw local militants into activity, with the potential for broadening out into mass anti-repression organs of struggle.

ACTION ON THE STREETS

In certain areas, notably Turf Lodge and St James, local RAC branches and militants have been directly involved in increasingly sharp clashes on the streets against the British Army. Throughout the last year it has been the RAC which has been the constant political and organisational focus for the vanguard of the resistance, the springboard for other struggles and mobilisations. In the last few months the anti-unionist people have on a number of occasions demonstrated their opposition to British occupation: - the anti-Peace march in October, the mass turnout at the funeral of Maire Dwan, the thousands on the St Patrick's Day marches in Belfast and Derry, the Easter parade - all these mass actions have been tied together and given cohesion and continuity by the local and central protests of the Relative Action Committee.

So, undoubtedly, the RAC has been responsible for the grassroots revitalisation of the resistance, for lifting the nationalist masses out of the morass of confusion and degra-

alisation which allowed Rees to remove political status in the first place. And it has done this in the only way possible - by organising in action on the streets.

In so doing, the activities of the RAC and those it has triggered off, - in other words the lead given by the RAC to the struggle as a whole - have proved one very important point: that despite the decline in the level of mass resistance since 1972, despite the soaring intensity of raids, arrests and harassment in the ghettos by the Brits, despite the apparent isolation of the resistance in the 6 Cos, away from the rest of the Irish working class, the anti-unionist population were at no stage defeated, at no stage did they lose their basic determination never again to submit to the institutions of the 6 Cos statelet and imperialism. Their confusion and gradual withdrawal from struggle was the direct result of their exclusion from activity and democratic decision-making - an exclusion imposed by the policies of the leadership of the national liberation war, which placed the immediate

disruption of all political organisations but the preserve of some of them.

The fact that the RAC has developed its own independent profile and momentum based on constant activity and has existed for over a year indicates that it corresponded to a specific need in the resistance, which neither Provisional Sinn Fein nor the revolutionary left could satisfy. That need was and still is today felt most strongly by the most militantly anti-imperialist sections of the vanguard.

Previously the most militant layers were more or less completely under the influence of the Provos, not only in terms of political ideology but also in terms of organisation. But today, although it is still true that these militants still follow Republican ideas, in their actual practice they consciously distance themselves from every political organisation, and that includes Sinn Fein. They base themselves firmly on the belief that only in action can political status be regained, and that the test of any particular organisation is the degree of its involvement in that



BRITISH TROOPS TRY TO BLOCK RAC DEMONSTRATION

needs of the military struggle above the democratic organisation of the widest layers of people possible behind a clear programme of action.

POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS

The emergence of the RAC was a spontaneous response to this problem, which was rapidly becoming a barrier to the maintenance - let alone the development - of resistance. No political organisation was responsible for setting up the RAC; initially only the People's Democracy was involved in organising a campaign for the retention of political status; the rest of the left groups were slow off the mark, while the leading anti-imperialist force - the Provos - did not throw their weight behind building mass opposition.

However, it was the Republican prisoners in Long Kesh who were bearing the brunt and it was their friends and relatives who took up their plight outside the prisons, publicised it, and proceeded to build up an organisational apparatus on a local-branch basis, which gave formal allegiance to no political organisation. From that starting point, the RAC blossomed out into a structure allowing the part-

icipation of all political organisations but the preserve of some of them.

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

Because these militants were taking up the gauntlet of political status in an atmosphere of inactivity which affected all political organisations, they were forced to organise on a democratic basis. They defend the right of participant organisations to carry their own banners and to have speaking rights; only delegates are allowed to vote, while they have created an organising committee on a purely delegate basis. Thus organisations are forced to test their politics out in practice to ensure their full representation.

But at the same time there is a hostility to political discussion which prevents the democratic structures from reaching their full potential as a focus for political debate to involve the widest possible layers. And this is closely connected to the fact that the vast majority of the militants are women

who are put into the role of taking continual action and leaving the question of political direction to others. For example, in most local branches the members are almost all women whereas the person in the chair is a man.

This problem can only be solved through a fight to make the RAC as democratic as possible, not just in formal terms of organisational procedures, but above all through allowing the greatest possible freedom of political discussion about the way forward for the struggle as a whole, and at the same time making specific provision to allow the full participation of women in this. This means on the one hand getting up creches for children, and on the other hand positive discrimination at local branches for women to elect delegates and to be delegated and to construct their own political leadership and representation.

This sort of development is vital if the RAC is to continue its activity and its militants are not to get demoralised. Only the fullest degree of democracy and political discussion can show the anti-unionist masses that they can have a full voice in their own struggles and ensure their participation. The organising committee is a step towards this; while the presence of the Socialist Women's Group in the Turf Lodge branch, mainly composed of women, shows the ready acceptability by these militants of others who are clearly committed to activity in the interests of political status and the women themselves.

32 COUNTY CAMPAIGN

The future development of the RAC and the fight for political status has been clearly indicated by the recent course of events. The involvement of the Turf Lodge in the bitter struggle of the people of the area to expel British troops, the outbreak of similar struggles in St James where the local RAC branch took up the struggle against the troops under its own organisation, the huge RAC mobilisation for the Portlaoise demonstration in Dublin a few weeks ago and the subsequent acceptance by the RAC to establish permanent links with bodies in the 26 Cos like the Irish Civil Rights Association (ICRA), - all these point to only one conclusion: that the RAC has the responsibility for building a 32 County campaigning organisation on behalf of all the political prisoners in all the jails of Ireland.

This means primarily uniting in action with the Irish Front in Derry, whose central demand calls for the freedom of all political prisoners in Irish and British jails; with the Irish Civil Rights Association in Dublin, with the Galway Civil Liberties Action Group, the Sutton Bog team in Limerick, and indeed all these bodies in the 26 Counties which were prepared to take action in support of the Portlaoise hunger-strikers.

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On May 19, Minister for Justice, Cooney, announced the setting up of a new committee to examine possible "alternatives to imprisonment". This move is far from coincidental, coupled as it is with the Prisons Bill, which was rushed through the Dail with the full backing of all parties, ensuring the extended use of Army facilities to house the "men of violence" at the Curragh and other camps.

Following immediately after the wave of demands for an Enquiry into conditions at Portlaoise and Amnesty International's announcement that it was taking up the case, - a few short weeks before the election, the intention is clearly to damp down much of the potential support for a prolonged campaign and to isolate still more the repression of the organised Republican Movement from the direct experience of workers in the 26 Counties.

OFFENSIVE AGAINST REPUBLICANS

This "tiny minority" constantly referred to constitutes nearly 33% of the total prison population in the South. Of 780 prisoners, approximately 200 are political prisoners. In the North, the South and in Britain, there are at present up to 1500 Irishwomen and men being subjected to brutal violence and intimidation, backed up by Emergency Laws, which serve as a powerful ideological as well as legal wedge to splinter off the active organised political movement from the conscious anti-imperialist aspirations of the masses. Cooney's project of attempting to remove the most naked and glaring horrors of the prison system for non-political offenders illustrates that strategy. For British Imperialism and its supporters, North and South, this policy is one of central strategic importance in their efforts to smash the resistance and demoralise the aspirations of the Irish people for 32-County unity and self-determination.

Mobilising for an Enquiry

At the height of the Hunger Strike, support and calls for an Enquiry persistently grew. Workers throughout the country, Trades Councils, County Councils, Trade Union Branches, organisations such as the GAA, Conradh na Gaelige, Civil Rights organisations, whole communities, and

all out for june 18th

The REPRESSION Has Been Condemned But ONLY MASS ACTION WILL DEFEAT IT!



journalists, added to the wave of indignation and anger; but still Cooney had his way. Fragmented and without a clear focus, the upsurge was allowed to disintegrate. What was needed then, and even more importantly now, is an initiative which can unite all those who stood out in defence of political rights and against state repression. It is the immediate and urgent task of all Socialists and Republicans to fight for an independent, fully representative and recallable Commission of Enquiry, acting with a workers mandate, with or without the consent of the State.

ALL OUT ON JUNE 18th

The demonstration, called by the Irish Civil Rights Association on June 18th in Cork, is the first

crucial step in that direction. We must ensure that this demonstration is supported in numbers and with official banners by all those Trade Unionists, organisations and individuals backing the call for an Enquiry.

As the April demonstration proved, this will not occur spontaneously, but needs to be fought for at every level, inside the Labour, Republican and student movement. It is crystal clear that large sections of the workers movement North and South want an Enquiry, but there is confusion and lack of clarity on how to get it. Socialists and Republicans must answer that confusion by providing a clear perspective, pressing firmly for an independent Commission to be elected from all those Trade

Unions, branches, organisations and associations supporting the demand for an immediate Enquiry.

For such a Commission to be set up would, however, only be the initial step. The real struggle will rest in building a mass campaign around that Commission, for recognition, for the right of entry to the prisons, and for real action to be taken on the findings of the Enquiry.

- ALL SUPPORT FOR JUNE 18th!
- FOR AN IMMEDIATE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY!
- FOR A 32-COUNTY MASS CAMPAIGN IN DEFENCE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS!

Lette Flankett

A TRADE UNION CAMPAIGN AGAINST REPRESSION

TUCCAR stands for:

- * **Repeal of the Emergency Powers Act** - and defence of those arrested and detained without charge under that Act;
- * **Repeal of the Offences Against the State Act** - and reorganisation of those barred from public service jobs because of "connections" under it;
- * **Abolition of the Special Criminal Court** - and return to trial by jury;
- * **Trade union access to prisoners** - and trade union representation on an independent inquiry into prison conditions;
- * **Abolition of capital punishment;**
- * **An end to the use of courts and police against strikers** - and to Special Branch interference in matters of employment;
- * **An end to political restrictions on press and broadcasting.**

The appearance of TUCCAR - the Trade Union Co-ordinating Committee Against Repression - is a very welcome development in the fight against repression in the 26 Counties. Involving trade union militants from different unions - Local Government & Public Services Union, National Union of Journalists, Associated Scientific, Technical & Managerial Staffs, AUEW-IASS, the ITGWU - who have a track record in their unions as being totally against all repressive legislation - TUCCAR provides a central focus for many trade union militants who are convinced of the need to take the fight against repression into the Labour movement. The most positive aspect of TUCCAR is that it has already won the allegiance of the workers from Dublin, Ballina, Kesh and Limerick who marched from their workplaces in opposition to repression. They knew quite well, as the TUCCAR May-Day statement emphasised...that "if the trade union movement is not to be the force in resisting the extension and the abuse or abuse of repressive powers against republican activists and others, it will be in a poor position to stop encroachment of workers' rights." TUCCAR, armed with the demands listed below, has called a conference for July 30 to establish and extend its base. MSR trade union militants suggested that this conference be built around the demand for a public enquiry. This would provide a theme for trade unionists to identify with and would prevent the conference getting bogged down in the inevitable organisational squabbles that would develop in the absence of real political debate. The members of TUCCAR largely agreed with this approach and are also asking for delegations from the various bodies who have called for a public enquiry into prison conditions to attend as observers. It was also suggested that these delegations might then be approached to release a joint public statement declaring their willingness to sit on any commission of enquiry or make submissions to it. The TUCCAR conference should in the view of the MSR, take the initiative and begin moving towards the construction of an independent commission with the full and direct participation of the trade union movement, in particular the ICTU. While resolutions have been forwarded to the LGPSU, ITGWU, and ICTU conferences there can be little doubt that these will largely remain paper resolutions. TUCCAR can play a vital role in transforming them into active preparation for an independent commission of enquiry.

MSR TRADE UNION CAUCUS

The international economic recession which began in 1973 and ended by mid-1975 for most of the advanced industrial countries, has only eased off in Ireland since the middle of 1976. The trend however is unmistakable; investment and industrial output were up considerably for last year taken as a whole and this year they are forecast to rise again. Overall the economy grew by 3½ in 1976 and will grow by a further 4½ in 1977. By international standards this represents a fairly impressive performance.

Recession Over But Crisis Continues.

But just as internationally, the new upturn is sowing the seeds of a further recession so too the recovery in Ireland is limited and contradictory. Unemployment is still at recession level; inflation is running at an annual rate of 14½ which is still one of the highest in Europe; the Exchequer is still greatly strained with a phenomenal national debt of 54 billion which eats up 20% of taxes in interest repayments - in addition a substantial part of this 54 billion has to be paid back in the next few years; finally the balance of payments is showing a huge deficit which will rise from £175 m (last year) to £260 m (this year).

The over-riding problem of Irish capitalism at the moment is the huge National Debt the Exchequer has to cope with. It is hoped that the beneficial effects of the economic recovery will enable the government to start getting this problem under control. But the worsening balance of payments deficit threatens this possibility. The key to avoiding this threat is to improve the balance of payments by making exports more competitive. This can only be done by keeping costs (i.e. wages) down. Just as during the depth of the recession, so too in the recovery, the watchword of Irish capitalism remains Wage Restraint - a fact which only underlines the superficial nature of the recovery.

Wages Fall Again

Since 1970 the employers and government have succeeded in imposing a series of National Wage Agreements on workers which have gradually whittled down their annual real wage increases to the point where last year real earnings actually fell.

This year, on the face of it, employers and government seem set for a repeat performance. Hourly wage and salary rates under the current national wage agreement are likely to rise by 8-9% (according to the Central Bank); by putting in a lot of extra hours workers will increase this total earning by 13½%. But the rate of inflation will be 14%. Thus even taking the figures most flattering to the employers and government we see that they will pay workers less than they did last year and get a hell of a lot more work out of them at the same time.

Employers to Change Tactics?

Fortunately the employers and government are not yet home and dried yet. The disquiet and dissatisfaction of many workers with the terms of the current Agreement brought a warning from Liam Cosgrave (speaking, appropriately enough at the annual dinner of the Federated Union of Employers) that the Agreement would have to be strictly adhered to. In reply the vice-president of the Irish Transport & General Workers' Union (ITGWU), Fintán Kennedy, declared that with the present rate of inflation the Unions might have to abandon the agreement and press for further increases.

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

behind
the
manoeuvres

The bluff of Cosgrave and his cronies was soon called by the building workers. The building workers won their claim hands down. The ease with which the building workers won underscores the combativity of the whole working class and the fear of the employers and government of getting involved in a confrontation that could spark off a whole phase of struggle.

In this situation not only are the prospects for the present NWA dim but the possibilities of another NWA favourable to the employers is even more remote. It is not surprising therefore that whispers can already be heard among employers about changing the structure of NWA's and even of a return to "collective bargaining".

It is not that the TUE and the coalition want a head-on clash with the workers - they are in no condition for such a test of strength. The problem is that the NWA's by slowing down the rise in wages has also acted as a pressure to narrow differentials between various groups and categories of workers and the recoiling force of this process threatens to rip apart the whole collaborationist framework of the NWA's. As the Annual Report of the Central Bank puts it: "The altering of traditional relativities between different groups of income earners may also be a potential source of cost-push pressure".

What the employers are aiming at is a more flexible framework which will allow them to buy off, with relativities, the stronger sections of the workers while sticking the boot in all the more firmly on the mass of ordinary workers.

TRADE UNION UNITY VITAL

It is in this context that demands within the unions for a return to "free collective bargaining" must be judged. If free collective barg-

aining simply means wage negotiation at individual plant or union level then it plays into the hands of the employers. Such a procedure would certainly benefit the stronger section of workers but would leave the weaker sections far behind. The task of getting rid of the NWA and the Employer-labour conference must not be confused with doing away with centralised collective bargaining at national level.

The unity and power of the whole trade union movement is indispensable for defending the interests of all workers. Relativity demands of course be a powerful weapon for smashing the chains of the NWA but unless such demands are put forward as part of a general plan to defend the living standards of all workers they could have the opposite effect increasing the balance of forces in favour of the Employers and the Government.

NSH TRADE UNION CAUCUS

Movement for a Socialist Republic

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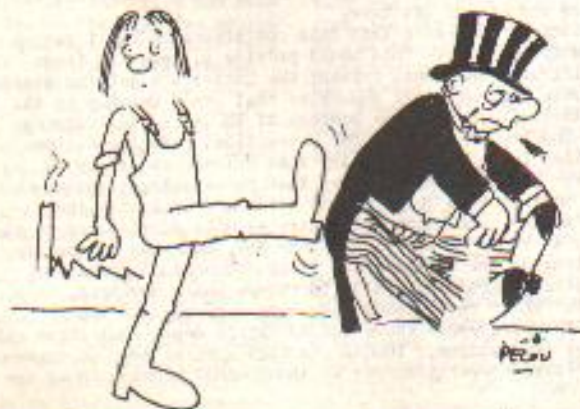
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JACK MURPHY ADDRESSING A MEETING OF THE UNEMPLOYED IN THE 1950'S

UNEMPLOYMENT

A PROGRAMME OF ACTION

The unemployment situation in Ireland has already reached crisis proportions. And all the indicators are that the situation is likely to deteriorate rapidly in the near future. In the immediate term Harold Binks (Vice President of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions) told the recent (May 21st) annual seminar for trade councils that in the next few months the number of unemployed would top the 120,000 mark. In the medium term the picture is just as bleak. According to a survey of the Economic and Social Research Institute unemployment will rise to 16.5% by 1980 leaving us with two and a half times more unemployed than Italy, our nearest rival in the E.E.C.

In this situation the problem of unemployment breaks down into two parts - preserving existing jobs and creating new ones.

In the second place the alternative to redundancy schemes has to be clearly mapped out. If a firm is threatened with closure then obviously state intervention is required, firstly in the form of legislation to ensure the proper access to company records for workers and to prevent the withdrawal or transfer of assets etc. Secondly, in the form of direct financial aid in cases where a firm has genuinely been bankrupted by employers mismanagement.

But is it simply a case of giving money to inefficient and unscrupulous employers who are just as likely to squander such money? Any funding of private firms must be linked to some kind of nationalisation where workers have a veto over management decisions which they feel are harmful. And this poses an even broader question since a decision which might be in the interests of one group of workers might be harmful for another group. In short any realistic fight against redundancies poses the necessity for planned production.

CREATING NEW JOBS

It is around the need for overall planning of production that the fight against redundancies dovetails with any credible strategy for job creation.

On top of replacement for jobs lost each year 30,000 new jobs (about half of which would have to be in the manufacturing sector) are required annually if anything near "full employment" (i.e. 4% unemployed) is to be achieved in the next decade.

FIGHTING REDUNDANCIES

Until now the general attitude of the trade unions towards closures and lay-offs has been to get the best redundancy payments possible. This was an attitude shared by the rank and file who believed that their stay on the dole queue would be short and fairly well-paid. But as the proportion of permanently unemployed increases and unemployment benefits gradually scale down many workers are beginning to see redundancy schemes as a trap. The new change in outlook was reflected in the speech of John Mulhall (President of the ICTU) at the annual Connolly Commemoration when he hit out vigorously at "the practice of selling jobs for easy money".

Of course it is easy to make red tinted speeches over the grave of Connolly. But can workers now take it that the policy of the Union Movement is to resist redundancy? And what are they to advocate as an alternative to redundancy?

In the first place trade union activists should ensure that Mulhall's "sentiments" are translated into hard policy by immediately putting down resolutions based on Mr. Mulhall's remarks, at their branch committee, executives trades councils etc. In that way it will soon emerge whether or not the Union hierarchy are just blowing hot air.

UNEMPLOYED TO CONTEST ELECTIONS

NEWSPAPER CUTTING FROM THE 1950'S

March Six-Deep In Dublin

THE Unemployed Protest Committee are to put up a candidate in the general election.

Announcing this at a general public meeting in Dublin last night, Mr. Samuel Nixon, chair-man of the committee, said that the committee would put up a candidate in the constituency of Dublin North-Central in the general election.

The committee, which was formed last year, has been working to bring about a general strike in the event of a general election. It has also been active in the campaign for a general strike in the event of a general election.

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When one realises that in 1973/75 (the latest dates available) employment actually fell by 16,000 in the manufacturing sector then it becomes obvious that a comprehensive and detailed plan to exploit every resource available must be put into practice if the scourge of unemployment is to be eliminated.

As far as economic planning is concerned the policy of the trade union leadership is ineffective and moreover dangerous to working class unity. For example, Harold Binks calls for State Development Corporation to expand the state sector with particular emphasis on new profitable industrial projects. Such a policy can mean only one of two things:

- i) new jobs are to be created at the expense of the private sector - and what is to happen to those workers in the private sector whose firms go to the wall as a result of the State's super-efficiency?
- ii) the State sector will not enter into competition with the profitable private sector but will confine itself to areas where the private sector finds it difficult to operate. Again the question arises: how will 30,000 net new jobs be created annually on the basis of unprofitable operations?

In the end there is no way around the challenge of the private sector except to face up to it. And this means drawing up a comprehensive economic and social plan within which the private sector will be compelled to conform. Naturally nationalisation of key sectors of the economy such as the banks and a State monopoly of foreign trade would be essential to such a plan.

But the key to such a plan could not be the unrealistic and politically premature mass nationalisation - a prospect which certain reformist sections of the Left use to try and discredit the idea of a centralized economic and social plan - but workers control in the form of a veto over management which would ensure that the terms of the plan were adhered to.



THE UNEMPLOYED MARCH THROUGH DUBLIN IN THE 1950'S

ANATOMY OF LOYALIST STRIKE

"PAISLEY THE SUPER-FLOP" was the headline of a Dublin evening newspaper on the first day of the United Unionist Action Council (UUC) strike. It was clear from the outset that this was the hope of almost every section of the ruling-class in Britain and Ireland. What was not so clear was the reasons for this unanimity: was it because, as Gerry Fitt and Ian Paisley maintained, the Official Unionist Party (OUP) and the British government plans another power-sharing government? The fact that the OUP described such suggestions as "slander" and that the chief Unionist newspaper in Belfast - "The Newsletter" - magnified out of all proportion a statement by Fianna Fail leader Jack Lynch about wanting a United Ireland in order to prove its anti-Catholic credentials tells us immediately that all talk about "moderates" being everyone against the strike and "extremists" being the small truculent minority who supported it is groundless. We will see that the divisions within loyalist were tactical and that they centre around who can best defend the Northern statelet and strenuously oppose all efforts to rid it of its sectarian features.

STRIKE BRINGS EXTRA REPRESSION

Even if the strike took 11 days to 'flop' the significance of its defeat, or the degree of support it achieved, should not be exaggerated. Secretary Of State Mason went out of his way to agree to many of the strike's demands when he had a meeting with representatives of the Ballylawford power-station workers. He promised to beef up the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), stiffen up 'anti-terrorist' laws, and make greater use of 'covert techniques' involving the SAS. This was designed to impress these reactionary workers living in the heart of Paisley country that Britain was not 'soft' on Catholics.

One of the main elements of propaganda about the strike has been the story that the RUC and the Brits were not soft on the 'loyalist thugs' engaged in 'intimidation' either. According to Gerry Fitt this has led to increased 'respect' for the RUC in the Catholic community. By the third day of the strike however it had become patently obvious that the type of repression the RUC was going to inflict on the Catholic ghettos was not intended for the strikers. An incident in Sandy Row illustrates this. Loyalists had blocked a number of streets leading into the city centre. When the RUC arrived they went up to the picket lines and chatted freely. It was only when the TV cameras arrived that those blocking the road were ever-so-gently directed to the pavement.

INTIMIDATION OR WILLING SUPPORT?

As the strike gained some momentum in the first week, and the 'flop' angle strained too much credibility, a new 'reason' was found by the British and Irish media: intimidation. This has been a time-honoured 'explanation' of why the troubles have continued along with the claim that

only a tiny minority of extremists support illegal para-military activities. The 'experts' putting forward such 'theories' never seem to be able to understand that 'intimidation' of this type can only be successful if there is some degree of broad support for it, especially when a notoriously thuggish force like the RUC would like to stop it. Thus, as with the previous loyalist strike in 1974, although intimidation was used, it would be wrong to say that the strike did not have significant support. Most of the Protestant-dominated factories in West Belfast closed in the first few days. The towns of Larne, Portadown, Banbridge, and Ballymena closed down. Once again the Protestant working-class demonstrated its reactionary loyalties. Loyalists who didn't back the strike sympathised with its aims: the Reverend Martin Smyth, Grand Master of the Orange Order, stated that he thought that the Action Council should wait until after the local council elections before calling the strike. This is the key to understanding the tactical divisions that have threatened the unity of the United Ulster Unionist Council (UUC).

BRITISH STRATEGY

All loyalists want a return of Stormont because it gave the Unionist Bourgeoisie greater local control which allowed them to consolidate their control over the Protestant working-class and extend their domination over the Catholic minority. It is this local power that the loyalists are eager to retrieve and the axis around which it revolves is the relationship between Westminster and Local Government. As was argued in the last issue of SOCIALIST REPUBLIC Britain is now actively seeking to satisfy this demand by combining an increased level of repression with the strengthening of loyalist controlled local government and the increasing of Six-County representation at Westminster. Since the OUP monopolised Unionist representation on both bodies prior to the May 18 Council Elections it was fairly behind this plan. In ignoring the UUC and fielding 120 candidates for the 526 seats it hoped to out-manoeuvre its ex-partners and win the battle for loyalist leadership. Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) retaliated by joining the Action Council set up by Ernest Baird's United Ulster Unionist Party (UUUP) and an assorted number of para-



Until the enactment of the Criminal Law Bill (CLB) and the State of Emergency the only opposition to the escalation of State repression in the South was coming from those who were already committed to a more or less global opposition to British Imperialism. But since the CLB and the emergency there has been a gradual change. In the initial phase (from 1969 to 1974) the repression was justified in the context of reforming the Six Counties. Subsequently it was seen as a means of placating the extreme loyalists and forestalling their return to power.

CRISIS OF PERSPECTIVE IN THE RULING CLASS

Today the era of sunningdale and power-sharing is over; and as the leaders of the DUP and the Northern Catholic middle-class have repeatedly pointed out, the current British policy of marking time is in fact wearing down the "moderate" camp and weighing the scales in favour of loyalism. The credibility and legitimacy of the Southern state's repression is under strain. The repression is beginning to appear in its true light, not as a defence of "democratic progress" but as an unquestioning response to the dictates of British Imperialism. Sections of the ruling class see the danger of this and are "sounding off" to prepare their defences for the future. At the same time the lower middle class (petty bourgeoisie) who are threatened by imperialism but who, characteristically, had illusions in collaboration with their enemy are taking fright and sounding the alarm.

While it would be an exaggeration to say that the Southern bourgeoisie are suffering a crisis of confidence with regard to their repression policies it is nonetheless true to say that the initial stages of such a crisis does exist. This crisis can be observed at many different levels. At the highest level it can be seen in the conflict between the Cabinet and the President, leading to O'Rahilly's

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WORKING CLASS MAN

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groups, some of them affiliated to the OUP. A failure was a reverse because while Britain's policy was pushed further there was no 'Return' - and it was precisely this to pull the rug from the Mason-OUP strategy back power via the Western Government axis. this the OUP failed to its position in the al-
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ELECTION RESULTS

The 1975 Conventional EUP and DUP held their votes but both the Unionist Party (UP) and the split from it over 'evolution', the UUP, declined. The overall loyalist vote just under 50% to 45%, a reflection of the total poll. In the next few events the DUP would be in the best position to support, but only under the UUP which the OUP is destroying. There was no moderate Unionism in the Alliance Party support by absorbing the

old Faulkner/WILF vote while losing a lot of ground west of the Bann. On its own neither loyalist party can control most of the councils but together they can restore their iron grip and the sectarian structures of the statelet will push them in that direction. The only alternative for the OUP is an arrangement with the Alliance Party which however has to be prised apart from the SDLP. Such a rift has been opening since the fall of the power-sharing executive in 1974 but this process does not appear to have reached the point where Alliance can be formally integrated into the loyalist block.

Even the threat of a DUP/OUP coalition at local level would speed this process up, especially if the security issue is played up. West of the Bann and in other areas with a Catholic majority the UUP remains intact, and the OUP maintains itself by supporting the policies of the DUP right down the line. If extra power is to be given to the councils even the possibility of a Catholic majority must be ruled out - the author of the reforms which stripped the councils of most of their powers, MacBride, now wants 3 councils based on Belfast, Coleraine, and Craigavon in order to 'get away from' the divisions between East and West of the Bann.

SDLP IN TROUBLE

Where does this leave the SDLP? In the elections its overall vote did not change significantly but it mobilised very near the full Catholic vote in a number of strongly Republican areas so that it now dominates a number of councils west of the Bann along with Newry and Mourne. It had failed to do this before because of abstention, boycott, or support for anti-Provo candidates such as 'Unity' in Fermanagh. The party gained a lot of ground against these currents and also crushed some bourgeois independents who tried to mount a challenge on their right. The increased support was not reflected in a jump in their overall vote partly because of the fact that in some areas they did not put up enough candidates to take advantage of their gains - for instance Gerry Fitt's huge surplus gave a seat each to the Republican Clubs and the Alliance Party as there were no other SDLP candidates in the area - and partly by a decision not to contest areas that had been fought before but where there was no hope of a seat. In spite of this the political result of all the factors we have mentioned leads in one general direction: a renewed attack on the SDLP. Mason is having 'discussions' with Southern Foreign Minister Fitz-



Gerald and the loyalists about local government 'reform'; in the South the ruling class is preparing a campaign against Articles 2 & 3 of the Constitution which express support for the concept of a United Ireland; the assault on the ghettos promised by Mason combined with a probable para-military murder campaign will also have its repercussions.

TASKS OF THE RESISTANCE

The failure of the resistance to forge an effective method of struggle going beyond an increasingly sterile militarism is leading to an even greater division between it and the Catholic masses now putting more trust in the SDLP. While some of the support it got probably reflected a desire to throw weight behind a single force after the strike it was also a result of the militant verbal pose adopted by the party since its last conference. In other words the Catholic middle class is still capable of politically hegemonising a renewed desire to fight Unionism. If this stranglehold is to be broken the vanguard of the struggle must concentrate on rebuilding its links with the masses and the most effective way to do this is to put the SDLP on the spot. When it talks it must be challenged to take action, its bluff has to be called. Verbal condemnations come cheaply from the mouths of the likes of Paddy Devlin and Seamus Mallon. A valuable opportunity to begin doing this was lost because there was no revolutionary presence in the elections. There is a long hard task ahead for the resistance if it is to roll back the flood of repression and it will be made no easier through errors such as this. Stopping the re-occupation of loyalist - now reduced to two main blocks - means tearing the straitjacket of constitutional nationalism off the identity as a whole and showing those parts of it which remain committed to destroying the statelet root and branch that they must take action which acts the support of people with a less advanced understanding of the causes of the troubles and thus shatters their reformist illusions. To fail to see this is to fail to chart an adequate course for the struggle in the next period and witness a further erosion of the resistance helplessly.

DAVID CARROLL

STATE REPRESSION

government offensive

of the and the placed on Court. With- is takes the they's in- the labour on of the al success and file on . Outside asses itself vained by the Irish and Peace ic hierar- re for Peace Incorporated r Peace, Rex ction of ch the Att- er) etc,etc. by the Irish of Garda ntly around strike sever- ies, ex-jud- their voices.

Unions was forced to publicly declare its opposition to repressive legislation. In addition to these, mass cultural organisations such as Conradh na Gaeilge and the GAA have been used lately as vehicles for expressing popular discontent with the growth of repression.

VANGUARD: POLITICAL LEADERS

In the meantime, as these developments continue to unfold, there exists a fairly large vanguard, (comprised not just of Republican strata, but also of the far left which now has a credible if as yet small influence in the trade unions) with an understanding of how the repression is connected with the manoeuvres of British Imperialism in Ireland. Given the state of flux that exists, the intervention of this vanguard can have decisive importance. Up till now the vanguard has not recognised its role as a potential

layer and guiding force for a mass upsurge in defence of democratic rights. It has been inward looking, content to operate with its own forces and with its own level of consciousness. This self-activity of the vanguard is important, but alone insufficient to mobilise the broad mass of working people. No amount of exhortation and sloganeering will draw the masses into action at the same level as the vanguard. The masses can assimilate a full anti-imperialist consciousness, not by having it shouted at them by the more politically aware, but by their own experience of struggle. Thus the key task of those who are already consciously anti-imperialist is not to arouse the masses by militant example, but to draw them into struggle through the appropriate organisational channels, and on the basis of political demands that do not lose sight of the inexperience of the masses. This is not to say that we should base ourselves on the "backwardness" of the masses since nearly all socialists are agreed that the consciousness of the masses is now on the rise and moving in a general anti-imperialist direction. The point is to put forward demands in such a way as to make contact with this elementary consciousness and to propel it forward.

TOWARDS A MASS ANTI-IMPERIALIST MOVEMENT

The weakening of the masses' anti-imperialist consciousness in the South, is as yet uneven and hesitant. The general questions of democratic rights (e.g. Political & National Self-determination) have not even been raised in opposition to repression as a whole. There has been a widespread response to repression (e.g. around the Criminal Law Bill and the Emergency Law) and to particular instances of it (e.g. police brutality and prison conditions). But even here it has not been on an on-going basis nor has it taken the form of mass-mobilisation.

continued page 11

the ruling nation where erialist in- rking class o the surface- m of indust- y had been tak- owners in e, and Mayo, generally ref- resolutions ide union ills, tenant in the execut- ss of Trade



In a recommendation that could have far-reaching effects on pay in the postal service, an equal pay officer has found that the work performed by female telephone supervisors is equal in value to that performed by male night supervisors in the demands it makes on skill, physical or mental effort, responsibility and working conditions. The recommendation could have a bearing on negotiations that are continuing on behalf of about 2,000 telephonists who have been campaigning for equal pay since about 1960 and who recently staged a series of one-day strikes in support of their claim.

equal pay: NOW COMES THE CRUNCH

METHODS OF STRUGGLE - SERIOUS WARNINGS

Disappointingly these these strikes were seen by the Post Office Workers' Union (POWU) leadership as a means of forcing the Department of Posts and Telegraphs into yet another series of talks, under the Civil Service Arbitration Scheme (A body under the thumb of the Department and no doubt a useful "delayer" in any conclusions to these talks). At no stage were the strikes seen as an adequate or reliable method of forcing a victory for the women. The strike committee which played the role of "support-building" body for the series of strikes, and had little decision-making influence, most of which was left to the POWU branch committee; in addition it seemed hesitant in summoning the support and active involvement of other sections of the POWU membership throughout the postal service. There can be little doubt that the traditional problems of women workers' lack of confidence and experience (further accentuated by their involvement in male-dominated unions without access to their own non-mixed meetings) reflected themselves among the women telephonists and further entrenched the hegemony of the ultra-conservative leadership of the POWU.

GOVERNMENT AND EMPLOYER RESISTANCE

These were not the only pressures at work on the women. They were subjected to a massive barrage of propaganda from the government and the Employers. The resistance to the women's claim has been fierce, with Conor Cruise O'Brien, Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, as the main orchestrator of the campaign. Not only did he (also a member of ITGWU No. 2 branch which has put down a motion to its annual conference calling for full support on industrial action on equal pay) publicly declare against the women's right to take industrial action, but he also attempted to completely distort the women's claim. This was countered in a small way by the women themselves and their supporters in Irishwomen United (IUW) who produced 800 posters for national distribution which declared the real and truthful aspects of the women's claim. This is for equal

pay for equal work, with the maintenance of a separate but distinct night allowance, and not as Cruise O'Brien has claimed, for the night allowance to be paid to day workers!

BASIS OF RESISTANCE

It is of course no surprise to us that the resistance of both the government and the employers - as represented by the Federated Union of Employers (FUE) should have been so massive and persistent. Both are caught in the trap of supporting an economy which is clearly suffering severe blows and heading towards total collapse. The response of government and employers has been to follow a policy of cut-backs in State expenditure and wage restraint.



Thus we see the embargo on "anomalous" pay increases in the public service, and the virtual banning of industrial action on equal pay under the National Wage Agreement. A successful claim, a victory for the women telephonists, would implicitly smash the embargo on pay increases in the Public Service as equal pay is considered an "anomaly" under the NWA - and if won through the pressure of industrial action, could successfully break the straitjacket of the NWA. So at the level of government and "control" of the economy this equal pay claim has wide-reaching implications. The Coalition, faced with the huge problems of unemployment, and ensuing social upheaval, is attempting to squash any mounting pressure from the working class on all fronts, the issue of equal pay being the most immediate and significant. For the FUE, awareness of the effect, a victory on equal pay for the telephonists could have on large sections of women workers, has sharpened their determination to defeat the possibility of real equal pay. As far back as 1974, in preparation for the 1975 legislation on equal pay, the Anti-Discrimination Pay Act, they circulated a document on basically how to avoid equal pay. In the industrial sector, this doc-



ument advised the establishment of unisex pay scales and did in the white-collar area, specifically stressing here, the implications of real equal pay which would implicitly mean a whole re-grading of women's traditional jobs. Secretaries and typists would then be classified as skilled workers, equal possibly to plumbers and fitters. In most instances, save for a few small victories, the employers have been successful in using this method.

UNITED FIGHTBACK

Think what would happen among both those women who have accepted unisex scales and those women who have not even started to seek equal pay, if the telephonists were to win a straight equal pay claim! Not only among women, would there be great dissatisfaction, but among large sections of male workers who would realize that women's low and unequal pay had in fact acted as a weight on their level of pay.

What is obvious from all this is the urgent need for all militants in the trade unions and women's movement to understand the strategic importance of the fight for equal pay, as part of the overall fightback against government policies on economic issues and on equal rights for women. If the Coalition - or for that matter Flanna Fail and other parties and individuals seeking votes - stand in favour of equal rights for women, they must be forced to commit themselves to implementing one of the most basic, the right to equal pay. Also, only a determined effort culminating hopefully in victory, by women workers, on equal pay can concretely assert their right to a job, and the proper wages and conditions of that job. Die-hard reactionaries who deny women this right, in "times of economic recession" or indeed at any other time can be put firmly in their place.

Unity among women workers in struggle is also vital and the first attempts of IUW in conjunction with women from "The Irish Press", Kilmartin's (12 WEEKS ON STRIKE) and the telephonists to discuss this is a positive step in the right direction.

MSR WOMEN'S CAUCUS



ARGENTINA

ONE YEAR AFTER THE COUP

Mass grave in Neuquén of people killed under torture and not traced by anyone (hence the numbers)



conference in London recently how he had been picked up by a group of armed and masked men in a working class suburb of Buenos Aires, on 11 October last year, and taken to a police station where, having identified himself, he was asked no further questions but savagely beaten

up. From there, he was taken to an army barracks, together with an Argentine girl who had been with him when he was arrested, beaten up again and submitted to water torture and electric shocks. The girl was given the same treatment in the same room "and the whole of the following day, I could hear her cries of pain", he said.

WORKERS RESIST

The working class of Argentina, without doubt the most highly organised and combative in Latin America, has managed however to respond to the savage military regime. Despite the intimidation by the army and the death squads, workers have organised strikes, go-slows, and sabotage and lighting stoppages. These have been organised to support demands for wage increases, to protest against the anti-trade union measures, and in solidarity with dismissed, imprisoned or kidnapped workers.

Actions have been centred on the strategically most important industries and sectors of the economy:

the car manufacturers; the steel makers; the ports; the electricity generating industry; and the banks. This general resistance to the reign of terror is the most serious problem facing the military government today. If the workers succeed in forcing the Junta to give way on the question of trade union rights, it will give hope to millions of working people all over Latin America.

THE NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY IS PRESSING The Fourth International has campaigned vigorously for the release of our comrade, José Páez, a trade union leader from Córdoba and vice-presidential candidate for the P.S.T. (Socialist Workers Party - sympathising organisation of the Fourth International) in the 1973 elections who has been in prison since before the coup and is in grave danger of execution. We wish to support, however, a campaign of solidarity with all political prisoners in Argentina and for the international isolation of the Argentine Junta.

JUAN SOGA

The whole of Latin America is rapidly coming under the heel of the military boot, and since the bloody coup in Chile in September 1973, the next significant setback for the popular masses has been the military coup in Argentina in March last year. The military Junta, under General Jorge Videla rapidly showed its repressive nature. Wages were immediately frozen and prices allowed to soar, - in the first year since the coup the purchasing power of wages has dropped by more than half. All trade union and political activity has been banned and there has been a dramatic upsurge in murders and kidnappings by right wing death squads. Trade unionists, lawyers, journalists and priests have been amongst those killed recently. The grisly "score" of one year's military rule has been 5,000 people killed and 20,000 or more political prisoners rotting in the Junta's jails.

TORTURE

The experiences of the Irish missionary, Father Patrick Rice, at the hands of the Argentine security forces are familiar. He told a press

UKRAINIAN WORKER'S OPEN LETTER TO BREZHNEV

It is rare in the West to hear the authentic voice of a Soviet worker. It is even more rare to read first hand about the demands of the Soviet working class. The document below is therefore of special importance.

It was written by L.M. Siryj, a Soviet Ukrainian worker from Odessa, and addressed as an open letter to Leonid Brezhnev, general secretary of the Communist party of the Soviet Union. The circumstances under which the document was written are exceptional. Siryj wants to emigrate from the Soviet Union because his material condition is abysmal and no amount of protest to trade union and other officials has improved it. He feels he has no other choice.

But what is remarkable about the letter is that Siryj details his "disagreement with the policies of the party and the government." His list of complaints is long, and many of his demands could form part of a program for political revolution.

We are asking you to hasten our emigration from the Soviet Union as soon as possible to any of the following countries: Canada, the United States, or Australia.

On February 16, 1976, we wrote a letter addressed to the Twenty-fifth Congress of the Communist party of the Soviet Union in which we outlined in great detail our living conditions and declared our unwillingness to continue living under them. We also wrote that it was impossible to survive on the 30 rubles per person established as the norm, which is supposed to meet minimal living requirements. But I don't have even that. There are eight of us - myself, my wife, and our six children. Our combined income is 195, plus a 35 ruble supplement for three children under the age of eight, and 13 rubles from SOTBEZ (social welfare) for the infants. After deductions for taxes, trade-union dues, and accommodation, only 180-190 rubles remain.

In general, I do not want to repeat myself. But on numerous occasions I have written to the trade unions, to newspapers, the Supreme Soviet and the Central Committee of the Communist party of the Soviet Union, but you have not helped and do not consider it necessary to reply. Regardless, I will pose certain issues again. As a non-party citizen, worker, and trade-union member since 1952, I officially declare my

disagreement with the policies of the party and the government on the following questions:

1. a.) Wage increases are very small and limited. As they say in our pay office, you won't get more than 140 (rubles a month).
- b.) Piece rates and tariffs are often revised. Consequently, one barely makes 5-6 rubles a day, almost the standard tariff. However, there is no improvement in working conditions. The technology is always the same, and there is always a lack of equipment. I have to bring my own tools to work. It seems that more sweat and blood is being squeezed out of the workers, but they are being paid less.
2. a.) Since 1961 prices have risen sharply in our country: in the state stores by 30-40% for groceries such as meat, eggs, lard, butter, and other high calorie products. Prices on the collective farm market have also risen - 1.5-2 times for vegetables, fruit, lard, honey, and other products.
- b.) The amount that can be purchased in stores is rationed in the following way: 2 kilos of bread, 1 kilo of flour and macaroni products, 1 kilo of sugar, 0.5 kilos of fats, butter, etc.
- c.) Meat, butter, potatoes, carrots, cabbage and many other items are often not available.
- d.) Many grocery stores have been closed down, while on almost every corner "Vodka-Beer" stores have opened. Our children are being raised on alcohol.
3. a.) With regard to relief for large families, unfortunately there is none. While lining up we show our booklets displaying our "motherhood medals." This won't even get you milk in the store. They tell us, "Show me where in your booklet it is written that you have the right to get groceries without waiting your turn, and more than the restricted amount." All we can do is shrug our shoulders. It's true. Where are there rights for large families? There simply are none. Maybe we should pin the medals on our chest and let the children look at them instead of eating. What's the use of having them? Housing for large families is not given in good faith, according to the law. If it is given, it is through bribes, or on the basis of "I'll give you something no one else will take." As a rule, these families are badly treated at school, at work, and in daily life.
- b.) Poor medical service, "ambulances" don't respond to calls, and the doctors have an indifferent attitude. (Poor service, poor medical treatment, poor food in hospitals.)

It's like in the story "Grand Inquisitor": if the patient behaves, he will cure himself.

c.) There is no financial assistance for medicine and prescriptions - you can't live on advice alone.

4. I do not agree with restrictions of individual liberties and civil rights.

a.) We have freedom for atheistic propaganda, but no freedom for religion. There are no religious publications, books, journals, newspapers, or radio and television programs. Churches and monasteries are closed down or only pretend and building new ones is simply unheard of.

b.) Our trade unions have been merged into one organization subordinated to the party and the government, even though there are longshoremen's, fishermen's, sailors', metallurgists', etc., unions. Each has its own interests and problems. The trade unions should defend the rights of workers before the party and government. They should have the right of collective protest and to demand wage increases, as well as better working conditions and vacations. The leading bodies of trade unions should be elected by, designated by, the workers themselves and not by the Politburo. The trade unions and the party should be independent of one another. This is especially obvious in the local city trade-union committees where, for example, lists of acceptable candidates (lockers, drinking buddies) are prepared by the party and given to the local trade union, then the Politburo is created that they were chosen by the trade-union meeting.

c.) These type of elections without elections are held somewhere, locally, and in higher bodies. Sometimes, at a party gathering, a friend of the bosses or a lackey will stand up and nominate his chief. He praises him and they place him on the ballot. There is only one candidate on the ballot, so there isn't anybody to choose from. And even if a second deputy to the Soviet - (INPRECOR) should arise, they give him few rights and little opportunity to help the people.

d.) Our citizens are denied the right to demonstrate, strike, and protest in other ways. Complaints do not help.

e.) Citizens who disagree are persecuted by the militia, the KGB, and at work by the bosses. This happened to me. For my demands to raise the standard of living and wages so that we and our children would not have to go hungry or walk barefoot or go without clothes, so that it would be possible to pay for school and other necessities, I was persecuted. They don't allow me to work my way into the Fifth skill group. They don't hire my wife to clean offices at the dry-docks. They don't give me a visa to board a ship for abroad. Sometimes jokingly or seriously they call me an "enemy of the people" and an anti-soviet element. And who says this? The bosses.

f.) Restore and expand the rights of the national republics, in particular Ukraine. Education - schools, universities - should be in Ukrainian. State institutions should also conduct their business in Ukrainian. The republics should have their own national codes at all levels.

g.) Stop the campaign of persecution and slander of various intellectuals, writers, and agents Salzenitzyn, Sikkharz, Yevdokhinev, Bukovsky, Volentyn Moroz, N. Strakota, Dzyuba, and Konarsky. Give them the right to appear at meetings and let the people decide if they are right or wrong. Free all political prisoners in the Soviet Union. Down with censorship of mail and publications.

continued page 11

Le turall amas, tá troid tosaithe ar Gluaiseacht na Gaeilge ar son cearta sibhialta Ghaeilgeoirí. I léithair na huairé, tá fíú amháin na cearta a bhí ag Gaeilgeoirí go dtí seo á baint uathu. Tá an Comhairleas ar leamhnt Inisic Chríste Ói Shriain nuair a dúirt sé: "The Irish language and culture are weapons in the hands of the IRA".

GLUAISEACHT NA GAEILGE

cá bhfuil a thrial?

I lár na seascadái tháinig dros radicíál chun cinn i gConradh na Gaeilge. Bhí anailís maith acu ar staid na tíre agus staid na Gaeilge. Chlacadar seansh maith ar ceisteanna polaitiúla. D'fhanadar áfach ar leibéal anailíse agus cáineadh rialtais agus níor eagraíodar Gaeilgeoirí i bhfeachtas ar son a gcearta. Ar Ard Fheis deiridh an Chonartha, áfach, tharla cheim tabhachtach ar aghaidh nuair a ghlac an An Ard Fheis le rún a dúirt gur chóir an bhéim a chur ar sin amach ar fheachtas ar son cearta sibhialta do Ghaeilgeoirí. Go dtí sin bhí nuairín coitianta i nGluaiseacht na Gaeilge gur chóir díriú ar Gaeilgeoirí na Gaeltachta agus gan bacadh le Gaeilgeoirí "seanaicteacha" na Gaillachta.

Níor thug na daoine seo gur féidir le feachtas cearta forfóir Gaeilgeoirí na tíre (idir Gaeltachta agus Gaillachta) a eagrú agus a aontú ar son a gcearta sa chóras oideachais, sa chóras stáit, i gcearta teilifíse agus mar sin de. Is trí feachtas den tséit seo, freisin, is fearr is féidir tacaíocht an phobail i gcéimse a tháil, mar is féidir léiriú go bhfuil na heilíne seo réasanta agus cóir.

Léirigh an tacaíocht a fuair Ite Ní Chiennaith agus Donal O Lubhlaí, an tacaíocht a fuair na nicléóim agus na daoine óga a rinne leiríú sa GPO agus an léiríú a bhí ag 300 nicléóim lannúigh de RTE, fíantacht an polasaí seo. Ach eagraíodh cuid mhór den aoidíocht le déanaí ag grúpaí seachas an Conradh, cé go raibh bail den Chonradh páirteach iontu agus go bhfuadreadar tacaíocht an gConradh. Níl Conradh na Gaeilge, i féin, gníomhach ag eagrú aoidí. Faidíocht i bhfadhar cearta agus brí ar pholaitíoirí agus daoine nór le ra is ná stá ar síúl acu go dtí seo.

Is é an Conradh an eagraíocht teannta is mó agus ná tá feachtas léidir co-ordaithe a bheith ann, caithfidh an Conradh i féin, an aoidíocht a stiúir. Tá an béal eile ann freisin, áfach, an béal go gcuirfí an tionsc bheas ar ghníomhaíocht ná-díleatbach. Tá an sahas seo gníomhaíocht tébhachtach agus is féidir leis daoine a spreagadh. Is cóir an bheas a chur ar aoidí inar féidir le gheath Ghaeilgeoirí páirt a ghlacadh iontu. Tá roinnt mháith Gaeilgeoirí ann nach bfeadh násta an dif a bhriseadh nó nach bfeadh féin orthu tacaíocht a thabhairt do lucht bhriseadh dif.

Tá gá le feachtas a chosbáidh tacaíocht a forfóir Ghaeilgeoirí na tíre. Is cóir, de thóir sin, roinnt léiríthe nára a eagrú ar fud na tíre. Is bheadh poiblíocht agus eagrú maith orthu roimh ré. Tá sé cruthaithe ag nuairíonna go bhfuil tacaíocht ann don Gaeilge ach uathu éil amach agus an lucht tacaíochta a eagrú. Is cóir de Chonradh na Gaeilge Coiste Gníomhaíochta a físiúnta a bhunú a eagróidh feachtas náisiúnta cearta. Thabhairfí míradh co-eadróidaité teanga eile bheith páirteach samh maith le eagraíochtaí

polaitiúla a bfeadh násta bheith páirteach. D'fhanadai coitianta áitíúla a bhunú freisin ar fud na tíre. Tá se dhualgais oideire, sóisialaigh, réabhlóideacha, ar tacaíocht a thabairt d'fíleásh gníomhaíochta Ghaeilgeacht na Gaeilge. Thabairfí freisin tacaíocht na Gaeilge agus eallár na heilíreanna troid in aghaidh an impiríálachais. Iarraidh, de thóir sin, ar an gcluaiseacht frísh-aspicúilach i gcéimse seansh le Gluaiseacht na Gaeilge sa troid seo.

SEAN O TUAMA

look, it makes a lovely little pattern, when you cut out the 'Irish bits'!!



CARTOON FROM CONRADH NA GAEILGE PAMPHLET



DRAWING FROM THE COVER OF BELLAR, MAGAZINE OF TRINITY COLLEGE WOMEN'S LIBERATION GROUP

WOMEN AND THE ELECTIONS

The forthcoming general election takes place in an atmosphere of severe repression for the Irish working class generally, and for women in particular. From the banning of *Spare Rib* and withdrawal of the Dublin Corporation grant from the Project Arts Centre to the defeat of the Family Planning Bill and Cosgrave's statement in *Le Monde* that he will not favour or sponsor changes in the law on contraception, women are being pushed from the openings proffered to them in the expansionist 60's. The determination of the government to withhold the basic democratic right of Equal Pay shows again the necessity for women to raise their voices heard in the coming election, and to demand that they are not forced to bear the brunt of the economic recession.

VOICE FOR WOMEN?

The alternative held out to women by the reformist women's organisations (Women Elect, Women's Political Association) is "Vote for Women - To Make Your Voice

heard". They pose the problem in terms of getting more women elected to the Dáil and changing the numerical balance of forces "to even things up". But is this any solution? Surely it is one of placing the cart before the horse since the blocks to women participating at all levels of society and government, are social blocks which perpetuate women's secondary place in society. Only a false sense of equality can be achieved without dramatically changing the basic discrimination against women in social life (e.g. the denial of Equal Pay, contraception, divorce, nursery facilities, etc.). This is substantiated further when we notice that most women politicians are wives, daughters or sisters of male politicians now deceased or departed.

While some of the women running for election are doing so as independents, most are nominees of the political parties, in particular Fine Gael. Yet they make no criticisms of their parties' attitudes on issues concerning

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Peter Sheridan, writing on Theatre & Politics in a new magazine of cultural criticism, *The Crane Bag*, has this to say about radical theatre:

"What the political progressives of the early sixties gradually came to realize was that their plays (aimed at dislodging the status quo) were being played in established theatres that themselves were helping to foster and perpetuate the very myths the plays sought to destroy. Audiences were solidly middle class (not of necessity reactionary) which meant the total disenfranchisement of the working class. So it was plays about the working class, presented for the middle class, in the hope that the aristocratic legislative class might listen.

"The most radical change in the mid-sixties was to forsake entirely the concept of a play for a particular building, to get away from the limitation (in terms of the audience played to) imposed by 'establishments' and theatre-going traditions. (1)

Although in literature the technical apparatus is such subtler than the very solid question of a particular building, there are similarities in the relationship to politics. As with theatre, the key point is not the political ideas directly expressed. Poets, short-story writers, novelists write from a level of experience and thought which is different from the level at which they form political views.

The central radical tendency of literature is not its ability to express 'correct' political sentiments, but to draw on resources of the alternative world of the imagination and reveal facets of the fabric of everyday life beyond the alienating structures of our society.

Very often this separation of levels results in conflict between them; the narrow and alienating confines of social and political structures bear oppressively on the creative, imaginative world with its rich texture of human potential. Society slaughters potential, reduces the human person to the wage slave, the consumer, the cog in a mechanism. And so it is no surprise to find the tendency among writers to be anti-establishment, to be radically dissatisfied.

women's rights, and indeed have no serious program of demands which they will agree to jointly fight for. Even in the male-dominated political parties, they refuse to fight for positive discrimination in favour of women, preferring to rely on the law of the market that the best "people" will come up tops. Most have no record of fighting on women's issues, and the women's tag is more an afterthought to advancing their political careers. These opportunists have little to offer to advance the position of Irish women.

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

What attitude should the women's movement take towards the election then? Because the women's movement is non-exclusive and incorporates a wide range of political views, it cannot project support for any one particular candidate. (It is notable that the W.F.A., having pledged support for all women candidates, refused to support Ita Ní Chinnéide in the last

THE WRITER AND SOCIETY

But, while the drive of literature to extend the possibilities of human expression may parallel to a certain extent the political struggle for a classless society and an end to exploitation and oppression, there is also an opposite tendency at work. Writers, whether they like it or not, occupy a privileged position in society (which is not to say that they are treated well by society or the state). Mostly of bourgeois origin, they write for a bourgeois public. Even 'proletarianized' writers operate a means of production owned by and inherited from the bourgeoisie.

Of course, some writers work at a job and write only after the work-



king day is over. But a practical privilege many writers enjoy is that of pursuing their own interests rather than suffering the alienation and exploitation of wage labour. Thus Henry Miller:

"Now I'm gonna write, do y' see... looking at all those poor bastards who are working, struggling, selling and buying things, y' know. That's a marvel. I can't get over it, how marvellous it is to feel detached from this mechanism, this cogwheel..." (2)

The exhilarating sense of freedom and of separation from the "five-cights" can be real enough. But it is also illusory and a

source of potency. Because writers are involved in a particular form of production which, like any other form, is subject to certain social constraints. Those constraints can, in the case of revolutionaries, lead to the renunciation of writing - as in the instances of several South Americans from Vallejo to Marguerite.

The writer inherits culture as a property of the bourgeoisie. The response of radicals is very often to transmit radical political ideas through their writing. But a contradiction of this approach is that they are at the same time transmitting the means of production which are essentially bourgeois. In practice, the effect can be to render revolutionary sentiments harmless, to incorporate them into the stock of socially acceptable entertainment. Thus a brilliant literary portrayal of an aspect of capitalist oppression can become an aesthetically pleasing object which does nothing to challenge the reality of the oppression. And while the audience is bourgeois, the writer who is a revolutionary is cut off from the very class whose struggle s/he wishes to forward, - the working class.

There are no easy answers to these kinds of problem, which exist not only for writers but for other intellectuals as well. But revolutionaries must surely challenge the forms within which they are working, must subvert the bourgeois character of their means of production. Intellectuals cannot take on the historic role of the working class; they cannot themselves overthrow capitalism. Neither can they be content with merely weakening the ideological base of the ruling class, - by, for example, propagating revolutionary ideas to bourgeois audiences or developing Marxist studies within the universities. Revolutionaries must at all times pursue an active relationship with the working class revolutionary movement.

The above may seem general, abstract and grandiose; but I hope in future articles to bring some of the questions raised down to earth and to deal with them in a more practical and immediate way.

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 This state of affairs is reflected in the myriad of small anti-repression and civil rights groups that have sprung up periodically around various issues and in isolation from each other. Clearly there is a need to begin a unifying process here. Such a process would eventually culminate in a common organisational structure based on a comprehensive programme of civil and democratic demands. But the fact is that some of the small groups already in existence have succeeded with real mass mobilisations and rapidly become defunct in that the above kind of unity is not an immediately realistic perspective. Campaign organisations set up on different issues and in different localities and social milieux still have a vital role to play in helping to express the hesitant awakening of the

In particular, the reader may object that it is all very well to talk about "an active relationship with the working class revolutionary movement" in the French or Italian context, but the Irish left has failed to establish any mass credibility. One could also ask what on earth it is that parts can do to "subvert the bourgeois character of their means of production" And in relation to my mentions of "revolutionary intellectuals", one might tersely demand: "What intellectuals, - let alone revolutionary ones?"

Well, I hope to deal with all these points and more in future articles. In particular, I intend to deal next with the access that those engaged in intellectual production have to information and knowledge, and how that can be brought to bear on the struggles of the working class.

STEVE MCDONOUGH

Notes: (1) Peter Sheridan: Author of 'No Entry', Director of 'Rebelle Homes' and 'Ear'. *The Crane Bag*, Balinacorney, Palmerstown Park, Dublin 6; one-year sub: £3. Once you get past the editorial sere of the articles are well worth reading. (2) From 'This Is Henry, Henry Miller from Brooklyn', by Robert Snyder.

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(apologies for the print being sideways!)

5. a.) Work out a constitution which will guarantee the rights of the citizen to be free and which will put an end to the activities of the KGB. Let the KGB choose the foreign exchange services rather than hunt after their fellow citizens-dissidents.

b.) Work out concrete laws concerning freedom of speech, press, assembly, demonstrations, and strikes.

c.) Establish a law concerning freedom to emigrate.

Only in such a democratic and flourishing country will we agree to live and raise our children.

L.M. Stryl
 Odessa, November 14, 1976

masses. Their role at present is to assemble the basic material that is a precondition for building a genuine mass anti-imperialist movement. But within the framework of this Socialists and Republicans can set the process of unification in motion tentatively, by pointing the interconnection between the various demands that are being raised and by getting united action going wherever practical and possible - the participation of the Murray Defence Committee in the Hunger-strike Campaign against prison conditions, being a case in point; clearly also all organisations concerned with the defence of civil rights must come together to defend the Irish Republican Socialist Party, to fight vicinisation, police brutality, and Seven Days detention. Such is the way forward for all Socialists and Republicans.

EURA MACEVY

The Bottom Dog Sponsors Candidate

VOTE FOR WORKERS ACTION

A Socialist Republican candidate sponsored by the "Bottom Dog", will contest the General Election in the Limerick East constituency. The candidate, Joe Harrington, is going forward with the support of a number of left-wing and republican tendencies as well as individual militants around the "Bottom Dog".

Supporters of the "Bottom Dog" are intervening in the elections with a candidate because they consider it is necessary to raise the issues which the paper has concentrated on since it was set up in September 1975. They do not see Parliament as a means of achieving socialism but by using the elections they can support for campaigns; against unemployment and repression; in support of women's rights and in solidarity with the struggle of the anti-unionist minority in the North.

UNEMPLOYMENT

The issue of unemployment will figure prominently in the campaign as the Limerick area boasts an unemployment figure of between 7,000 and 8,000. In Limerick itself, thousands of workers have been

sacked in such traditional industries as Damsa, the Limerick clothing factory, Clover Neats and the Limerick Shoe factory while in the nearby Shannon Industrial Estate, since the beginning of the latest recession, many multi-national firms have either closed down, or laid off through rationalisation leaving the "show-house" of modern Irish industry with a 25% unemployment rate. In nearly of these cases, these sackings occurred quietly, with no trade union movement. In the one notable exception to this, Janus, where the workers occupied the factory in order to save the jobs, no support was given by the Irish Transport & General Workers' Union (ITGWU), the union involved. Throughout the weeks of occupation the union took the attitude that "time would take its toll" and in the end, in a sense of sheer frustration and isolation, the workers accepted defeat and so the Damsa case, instead of becoming the landmark of organised workers efforts to save jobs became instead just another name in the sorry list of closed down industries to be quoted maybe by the union officials in some research survey on unemployment in the Limerick area.

The Bottom Dog candidate will be calling for an independent working class campaign against unemployment. The Government, whether Flanna Fail, Fine Gael, or the National Coalition, is incapable of solving unemployment, as they are unable to take the necessary political steps to do so, i.e. the use of the wealth of the country to provide jobs instead of stimulating profits. The campaign for full employment must begin from the basis of defending existing employment which may be threatened. Unless the working class develops the know how, leadership and ability to successfully fight redundancies,

it can only be utopian to offer as "the socialist alternative" lists of areas, such as offshore oil and smelters for providing full employment. Only from the confidence and strength gained from fighting to defend jobs, will workers be in a position to demand the nationalisation under workers control of natural resources and other areas of potential wealth in the economy.

The Bottom Dog will use the election campaign to increase the awareness and consciousness of workers in order to begin the long needed fight back against closures and redundancies. Along with this it will also be concentrating on building support among workers for campaigns against wage restraint and for the separation of the unions from state structures such as the Employer Labour Conference, and bosses organisations

which keeps women isolated from the mainstream of society. This is particularly so in the 6 counties where the sale of contraceptives is illegal and where the dominance of Church influence lays an ideological basis for the retention of women in this oppressed position. For working women, the E.L.C.'s directive to implement equal pay from Jan 1st, 1976 was sheerly academic as the recent action by the Post Office Workers Union has shown. By opening up their election campaign to oppressed layers such as women, the Bottom Dog hopes to assist in the strengthening of organised resistance to attacks on women's rights and other weak sections of society, a resistance which will continue regardless of what government is in power.

On the National question, the Bottom Dog's position is underlined by the slogan with which

state or one integrated with Britain. Over 50 years of partition has shown in unclear a manner as possible the "democratic" nature of Unionism or its nearest child, Loyalism. The Bottom Dog has not accepted the new trendy and liberal culture of C.C. O'Brien and his fellow-travellers which is one of regarding Britain as no longer having an imperialist interest in Ireland. Too many historical and hard political facts say otherwise as Ireland's partitioners with 15,000 British troops in occupation in the North and in the 26 Counties the forces of the state stronger numerically now than at any time since the state's foundation, has an unemployment figure of 200,0 has a wide open economy with no industrial base whatsoever, has the worst record of the E.L.C. countries on the rights of women. This certainly is not the criteria for a state free of imperialist domination. The Bottom Dog will use the opportunities which the election campaign will give to demand the abolition of repressive legislation in the South which is aimed directly at those supporting the struggle of the anti-unionist minority in the North and can be used as well against the Trade Union Movement should the Government so desire.

A FIGHTER

These then are the main areas around which the Bottom Dog campaign will concentrate. The candidate, Joe Harrington, represents in a clear way these struggles. He has been an active socialist for many years and has participated in the building of an active union membership in S.F.S. Shannon, which had successfully fought off for over 12 years any attempt at unionisation. He has experienced "the hard reality of the deal" because of his commitment to

his union principles, being sacked on two occasions solely for trade union activity. So, by voting for Joe Harrington, workers in the Limerick East Constituency have an opportunity of striking a blow against the anti-working class policies of the Government and employers. Anybody wishing to support the Bottom Dog campaign in any way, financial or otherwise, should write to the Bottom Dog, 109 SPK Park, Southill, Limerick.

continued from page 2 including trade union branches. In this way the issue of the political prisoners, and eventually of the British occupation, would be an on-going campaign for the entire Irish working class. Such a campaign would echo the seeds of democracy sown by the RAC in Belfast and be devoted to mobilising support for action.

At the same time, the RAC, while not pretending to be a broad ranging anti-imperialist front that can mobilise all anti-imperialist forces around a set of anti-imperialist demands, must see that the question of prisoners fits into the broader framework of the anti-imperialist struggle. Consequently it must as far as possible, while not submerging its own identity, associate with and support the demands of other sectors of the anti-imperialist struggle - the struggle for "Troops Out", civil rights etc.

MIKE PINCHER



such as the FUE and the Chamber of Commerce. This type of collusion in the past has brought nothing to the workers but demoralisation and an erosion of union democracy, as union officials when faced with a dispute or threatened closure have gone to the employers to hammer out a solution rather than concentrating on the independence and strength of the workers' organisation.

NATIONAL STRUGGLE

Because the Bottom Dog supporters do not see the economic struggle as the only area in which social change can be brought about, the position of women in society will play a major role in their election intervention. The vast array of discrimination against women poses the need for women to organise to break out of their position of second class citizens. By sentencing women to a clearly defined role in the home as house keepers, child minders and servicing machines for their husbands, capit-

the campaign will be fought "A Socialist Republican" candidate for workers' action. This slogan was adopted at the meeting of the Bottom Dog which decided on running a candidate. The reason for the slogan was to show which type of workers' republic Bottom Dog supporters along with many other socialist and republican militants throughout the country were fighting for a 32 County Socialist Republic. The B.D. by using the term "Socialist Republican" to describe its candidate could clearly distance itself from the Limerick Socialist Candidate, Jimmy Kenny, who has included in his electoral platform as a means of solving the National question the "right of the Protestant community in the North to opt for a state of their own choosing". The Bottom Dog sees the unification of Ireland as an integral part of the struggle for socialism and opposes any attempt to maintain a sectarian and reactionary statelet in the 6 Counties, whether it be a Loyalist

**Vote
for a socialist republican**