



SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

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Paper of PEOPLES' DEMOCRACY

3 Ways to Break Thatcher

● Workplace Action ● International Pressure ● By-Election Victory

Britain has changed faces at the top. James Prior, the new Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, did not want the job. He believes it is not an important enough post and represents a step down in his political career. This is not relevant to the people of Ireland who want Irish unity. More to the point, it is not relevant to the prisoners who are seeking the five demands. It is not relevant WHO is Thatcher's nominee in the North. But it is relevant to ask: does this mean a new policy?

Britain now, has a threadbare almost naked policy. It boils down to saying 'crime is a crime' or 'we must stand firm against terrorism'. This is quite a retreat from the early '70's. At that time we certainly had to experience the heavy hand of a foreign oppressor, in the shape of internment and Bloody Sunday. But repression is rarely enough on its own to overcome a political problem. Britain had to offer reforms to take the pressure off. It was necessary and useful to appear capable of democratising the partition settlement. By offering power-sharing, by granting special category status to Republican prisoners a possible road to Irish Unity without conflict with Britain appeared to open up. Parties like the SDLP were given a more central role than any previous organisation based on the Northern Catholic minority. But now all such reforms have gone out the window. Britain feels it is in too much of a corner to risk being friendly to the Irish: all that has been on offer from 1976, been the mailed fist.

For Britain this policy is in a shamb-

les. Victimization of the prisoners has allowed the anti-imperialist movement to turn to the Irish People and our allies abroad and build an ever deepening opposition to the British presence. The election victories of Bobby Sands, of several anti-H Block candidates in the Northern Council Elections, of 2 prisoners to the Dail; of Owen Carron in Fermanagh/Sth. Tyrone represent the mounting price that Britain and its lackeys in Ireland have had to pay for intransigence. Yet high as this price is, Britain still will not move. We have to make that price even higher. We must move along the roads where the most effective gains can be made.

ROADS TO VICTORY

One road to victory leads from Cavan-Monaghan. We need not only a candidate who supports the prisoners and the campaign, but someone who while will take this issue to the floor of Leinster House. Who will make the benches too hot for TD's to sit on and remain silent. This is one of the most effective ways of exposing the 'nod and wink' merchants of

or we will bring you down. Internationally Britain is very weak. No foreign government wants to openly identify with Thatcher's unpopular and threadbare policy. Most prefer to ignore the issue. Some like the Spanish Government which tried to keep out Bernadette Mc Aliskey have no choice.

On the Trade Union front we need a campaign to disrupt trade with Britain. The parallel between Ireland and the

Basque and Catalan minorities is dangerous for Franco's successors. The popular support in these regions clearly indicates that it is the oppressed around the world who are the best defenders of the prisoners. In France it is the same story, where the biggest union federation, the CGT has organised massive demonstrations in support of the hunger-strikers.

Trades Councils all over the country have come out in favour of the prisoners.

Their strength must be built on, backed up by international solidarity to launch an embargo against British goods at the main distribution centres; We must build this workers action under the slogan... 'Isolate Britain'!

A co-ordinated campaign along these lines will give Mr. Prior a welcome he will not forget.



Trade Unions Must Fight For Real Wage Increases

MASSIVE OVERSPENDING, ECONOMY IN CRISIS and WORLD BANK ABOUT TO STEP IN are just three of the headlines screamed at workers as we prepare to consider whether to enter negotiations for another National Wage Agreement. The impression being given is that we are lucky to be offered wage increases at all. And if we say no to the offer we can expect nothing at all.

But workers have taken as much as they can. The vicious increases in VAT to 15% on daily consumer goods has sent the inflation rate soaring past the 20% mark. In addition to the greatest increases in living costs in Europe - outside Greece - Southern Ireland has one of the highest rates of unemployment. The jobless total in the 26 Counties now stands at 125,000 - an increase of 25,000 on last year.

Hardship and poverty have become a reality of life for a broad section of workers. Conditions are being made worse by the drastic cuts in public services. In this situation workers can only look to their organised strength in the trade union movement to defend themselves.

NO COMMON INTERESTS

The decision of the executive council of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to recommend the opening of pay talks within the framework of the existing Employer Labour Conference is a slap in the face to the rank and file. The Employer Labour Conference is based

between the workers and the employers. **With a drop of 11% in real wages in the past 15 months WHAT HAVE THE WORKERS LEFT TO GIVE?**

A new concept in wage bargaining is needed. It is time for the trade union movement to get rid of the fiction that there exists a common interest between workers, employers and the state. The Federated Union of Employers and the Government prove every day that there is no such common interest. The only common interest which exists is between the workers small farmers and other downtrodden and outcast sections of the community.

The trade union movement needs to develop a healthy contempt for the mouthings of the rich and powerful and a more active concern for the actual needs of the ordinary people.

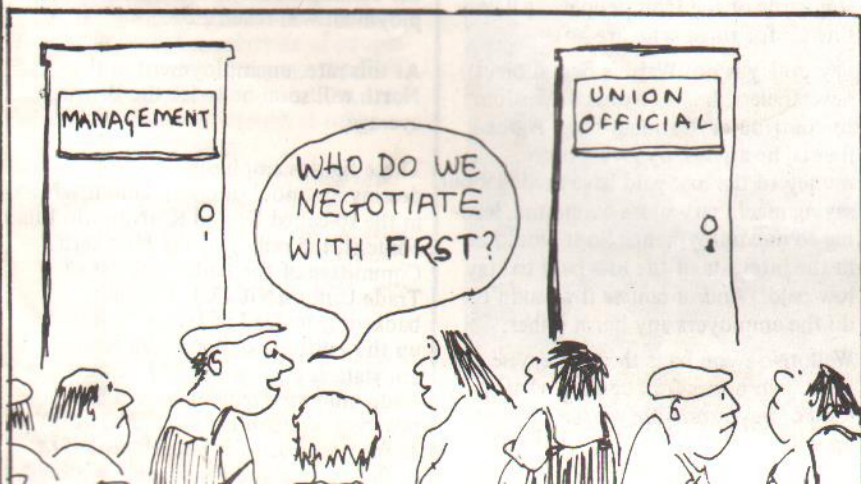
Despite the ICTU's continued participation in the Employer Labour Conference and its hopes for a new "National Understanding" there are many signs that the majority of workers are not happy with their approach.

ONE DAY STRIKE

Workers have for ten years seen that conciliation hearings, the Labour Court, and so on, are just methods of preventing them from keeping up with the cost of living. The powerful public service sector and RTE are two groups of workers beginning the fightback. The RTE Group of Unions has recommended a one day strike when the Dail resumes in order to begin a policy of opposition to all cut-backs of staff and pay freezes. They will not be

mission has called on its members to break the current National Understanding. The INTO has called for strike action against cut in primary education. An EPTU resolution to Dublin Trades Council calls on the Labour Party to resign from the Coalition. Some workers have not waited for instruction from above. Workers in Unidare, Irish Dunlop and Tara Mines have been on strike for higher wages and improved conditions. This fightback must be co-ordinated in the same way that the employers co-ordinate the support of government and media.

This fight back must be strengthened with a clear and common programme:
* No preconditions for negotiations
* A minimum 30% cost of living increase across the board.
* Full indexation of wage increases and tax thresholds.
* No cuts in public services but a crash programme of useful public works.



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- POLISH WORKERS' EXAMPLE SPREADS

PROFITS CAUSE CRISIS

Irish workers face the toughest wage negotiations for more than twenty years. Last July, the official publication of the Confederation of Irish Industry demanded 'a prolonged pay pause'. Now the National Economic and Social Council has come out in favour of an 18 month total wage freeze. The Coalition government has also given general endorsement to these proposals.

MOANS AND GROANS

The employers claim that Irish wage rates are going through the ceiling and damaging the domestic and international competitiveness of Irish industry. They argue that since 1979 wages have increased 2½ times by comparison with other EEC countries. As a result, Irish commodities are finding it difficult to hold their share of the European market. They quote as evidence the fact

that the price of Irish exports went up by 10% last year compared with a 5% increase for goods produced in Germany and Benelux countries.

Needless to say, the employers are none too happy about all this. They claim that in order to keep the price rise in export commodities to 10% they had to absorb substantial losses. Moreover, they cannot continue to

do this indefinitely. Soon industry will be facing total collapse accompanied inevitably by massive unemployment. As the Confederation of Irish Industry put it, 'there has seldom been a starker choice between pay increases for those in sheltered employment and the jobs of those who must face international competition'.

LIES AND STATISTICS

Of course, these are selective arguments to convince workers that they are greedy and selfish fools. It is true, certainly, that industry is in serious difficulty. Socialists have always held

that the contradictions and inefficiency of capitalism leads to repeated crises. The full facts, and not just those picked to suit the employers, throw revealing light on the real cause of these crises.

When employers talk about a 2½ times increase in Irish wages compared with European countries they leave out a vital factor. Ireland has consistently had one of the highest inflation rates in the EEC. When inflation is allowed for it happens that real wages actually decreased by 30%. In Europe the decline in workers' wages was not nearly so drastic. Wage rates rose by 38% since '79 whereas in the four major countries inflation rose by only 32%. It is clear therefore that the competitive advantage gained by Irish industry during the 70's has not been seriously eroded. In fact, in a recent survey, the Economic and Social Research Institute has confirmed that Irish exports have more or less maintained their share of the European market.

PROFITS: THE REAL CAUSE

The employers do not scruple to whip up a campaign of hysteria based on lies. The reality is that despite a sharp decline in real wages Irish capitalism still finds itself in considerable difficulty. In fact, it would be more correct to say that it is precisely because of the decline in workers' earnings that Irish industry is crisis-ridden.

The attack on workers' wages, which has intensified over the past three years, has occurred in conjunction with a systematic 'rationalisation' at factory

level. Labour-intensive production has been replaced by capital-intensive techniques. This is true even for those industries which were already capital-intensive.

This development has had two important effects. Firstly, it has led to growing unemployment. Contrary to the propaganda of the employers, low wages in the Irish context go hand in hand with high rates of job loss. Insecurity of employment has become the chief restraint on workers' income. Secondly, the fact that Irish industry now employs less labour to produce more output, means that it is increasingly difficult to maintain an adequate profit rate. Since the exploitation of labour is the usual source of profit, the level of labour exploitation must be raised intensively.

IRISH THATCHERISM

The industrial crisis in Ireland is, as elsewhere in Europe, basically a crisis of profitability. The onslaught against wage incomes, despite variations, particular to Ireland, is fundamentally the same as in Europe. The rehabilitation of capitalist profitability through intensive labour exploitation and mass unemployment is the Thatcherite aim of the Coalition and the employers. There is no room for compromise with such an aim. The era in which reformist compromises were possible is long since gone. Either the workers fight tooth and nail to defend their living standards or they will go down to defeat ... and abject poverty.

Brendan Kelly.



Workers refuse to accept Employers propaganda and fight on for a living wage.

THE 'PRICES NORM' CON TRICK

The setting up of a Prices Council to recommend pay norms is a poor joke even by Coalition standards. But the claim that this Council, staffed by high-minded 'intellectuals' will produce 'honest' and 'objective' proposals is even more corny.

The 'three wise men' - Dr Mc Aleese, T.J. Baker and Prof Brendan Walsh - have much in common with the fabled monkeys who hear no evil, see no evil and speak no evil. Such purity of mind is too good to be true.

Below we look at the record of these objective sages.

Dr Dermot Mc Aleese is the leading apologist for the Industrial Development Authority, an employers' organisation which has often called for wage restraint. Mc Aleese, however, does not confine himself to Ivory Tower theorising.

Not so long ago he took an active part in the Review Body on Teachers' Pay - a supposedly 'objective' institution similar to the Prices Council. The Review Body was supposed to recommend a

wage increase for teachers to compensate for a 30% decline in income over the past decade relative to other sectors of the public services.

It recommended a paltry 7% increase. Even Mr Wilson (the then Minister for Education) was embarrassed. So he topped up the award to 12%. Wilson certainly wasn't breaking his heart - or the bank.

How did Mc Aleese react? He was so 'honest' and 'objective' that he resigned in disgust and accused the Minister of encouraging 'irrational' and 'intemperate' wage claims!

T.J. BAKER is one of those 'intellectuals' who stretches out one hand in friendship while holding a knife behind his back in the other. Baker is an economist with the Economic and Social Research Institute, a government sponsored body! Despite assuming a liberal image, the ESRI has a very definite pro-employer and pro-government attitude to wages.

An ESRI review of incomes policy (part of a major review of the Irish economy in the 80's) concludes: The direction that incomes policy must take in the medium term is a positive (?) one, leading to increased profitability of Irish industry. Without the positive commitment to profitability and growth by both sides of industry, they will be 'social partners' in name only. (Irish Economic Policy, p 263)

It is not surprising to find, therefore, that Baker is a long standing member of the 'wage freeze' school. In a contribution to a trade union symposium in 1975 he argued that a pay pause 'by holding down labour costs would improve the competitiveness of Irish industry, leading to the prospect of higher exports and a greater share of the domestic market'. He adds endearingly: 'The mere fact that this point has been stressed ad nauseam by the employers organisations, the Central Bank and the Government itself does not make it untrue'.

In other words: workers, wake up, and listen to the words of your betters!

BRENDAN WALSH is perhaps Ireland's best known practising economist. He too originated in the ESRI.

Walsh's area of expertise is demography - population control to be exact. As Walsh sees it the problem of unemployment is not too few jobs but too many workers. The solution therefore is to get rid of the surplus hands. Accordingly, he recommends to the government 'a less negative attitude to emigration, recognising the major role it will probably play in raising the living standards of the Irish people'. All very fine ... for those who are left!

Pay policy is not Walsh's best subject; nevertheless, he has words of wisdom to contribute. National Wage Agreements, he argues, by giving more money to the low paid have made labour saving machinery more economic, leading to unemployment. So it would be in the interests of the low paid to stay low paid. And of course it wouldn't do the employers any harm either. Well, there you have the 'three wise men'. No prizes for guessing what kind of pay norms they will come up with.

Niall Meehan

Northern Unemployed

A staggering 109,153 workers or 18.95 per cent of the labour force are now unemployed in the six counties. As usual the Nationalist community is the worst hit. Appalling unemployment rates exist in Strabane (36%), Dunganon (31%), Cookstown (31%), Newry (29%), Derry (29%) and Limavady (26.9%).

Male unemployment has reached 23% and female unemployment, now at 13% is accelerating rapidly. Nearly a fifth of those without jobs are under 19 years of age. The proportion of long term unemployed within the total is also rising steadily.

In short, the poor, the oppressed, and the exploited are bearing the brunt of economic crisis. But even the above figures do not reveal the full extent of deprivation inflicted on certain sections of the community. A recent report by the Belfast consultancy firm Cooper and Lybrand reveals that in Nationalist areas such as the Falls Road and the Ardoyne, unemployment has reached 50% and 40% respectively.

Bad as the situation is at the moment worse has still to come. The September survey of PA International (an economic research firm) reports that 40% of Northern firms expect to employ less workers next year; on average firms are using only 80% capacity; investment will fall 11% by next year. Overall, the survey concludes that in the coming weeks and months, unemployment will reach 22%.

At this rate, unemployment in the North will soon be twice the British average.

These figures emphasise the North's destiny as a pool of cheap labour within the so-called United Kingdom. In this context, the policy of the Northern Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NICTU) is totally bankrupt. Instead of trying to shore up the artificial status of the Northern state as part of the 'U.K.', the trade union movement should be pointing to an all-Ireland framework as the only basis for a real solution to both Catholic and Protestants workers' endemic poverty.

ALCAN: TUs not to blame

Remember the big strike/lockout at Alcan last year? Anti-union and anti-worker feeling in the mass media reached an all-time high. Gerry Collins TD talked about running 'cowboys' out of the area. Trotskyists and 'reds' were under every bed in west Limerick. 'British-style' shop steward power had arrived in the last boat to Foynes. Matt Merrigan was directing the 'sabotage' of the Shannon Estuary from a soap box in Dublin. The senior shop steward was 'Kerry born' (!?) And the Bottom Dog was co-ordinating the whole 'revolution'.

It was in this atmosphere that the then Minister for Labour, Mr Gene Fitzgerald, decided to appoint a tribunal to investigate industrial relations on the island - no doubt certain that the rantings of his colleagues and the mass media would be vindicated.

To make sure, the members of the tribunal were chosen with care. James Nugent of the Irish Management Institute, Richard Haslem, Limerick County Manager - not a person who moves in

diff of the WUI.

But the findings of the tribunal were not what the establishment expected. The evidence showing the workers to be blameless for the chaotic industrial relations on Auginish was so overwhelming that even a tribunal weighed in the employers' favour could not ignore it.

The tribunal found that the Alumina Contractors Ltd consortium was chiefly responsible for the problems on the site and it also criticised the contrac-

tors on the job and the Construction Industry Federation. On the other hand, there was only a 'mild rebuke' for the unions, chiefly for not giving enough attention to their members. The tribunal also endorsed the shop stewards' demand that they should be in on any negotiations on bonus payments - one of the big issues in last year's major dispute.

Now that the truth is known, it will be interesting to see what terms the media and the politicians will use to describe the management side at Alcan. 'Reds' would certainly not fit the bill. 'Cowboys', 'outsiders' and 'saboteurs' would come closer to the mark.

'Inflexible' was the term used by the tribunal. The workers on the site have come up with even more descriptive ones but the media doesn't like having to use too many bleeps.

JOE HARRINGTON

Kelly to
make
sausage
meat
of us all?



Now that cannibal piglets have been added to the Mongrel Foxes in the Fine Gael menagerie, it has become clear that the Coalition Leopard has not changed its spots. The same arrogance is present, the same attitude to anyone who dares voice an alternative opinion

PRINCESS MARGARET.

This time the target is a bit different: now it's a case of cannibal piglets eating up the resources of the state. John Kelly has turned James Joyce ground to make people cannibal piglets eating up the old sow. Of course John Kelly is not the first person to refer to Irish working people in this manner. A certain Princess Margaret also described us as 'pigs' not so long ago to a huge volume of protests. One would have thought that sauce for the goose would have been sauce for the gander.

SHOWMAN.

But seriously though, the Dail's chief showman is not making all these after dinner speeches to the well-fed business community without a purpose. Arguments of this sort are designed to soften us up for the next wage round. Making the working people feel guilty about the already grossly inadequate social services is one way of trying to reduce the protests

when the Government cuts back again. After all, who who wants to be a cannibal piglet?.

LEFTIES.

Mind you, most people do not take such talk all that seriously and care little what nasty John Kelly calls them. It is, however, a bit embarrassing for Kelly's 'socialist' colleagues on the Coalition benches...especially for the 'lefties'. So up jumps Micheal D(Higgins, to you) to defend the 'Welfare' State and salvage his image-as a radical.

LABOURS HOT AIR LEFTIES.

No doubt the 'hot air lefties' of the Labour Party will appreciate this. Though Micheal did not declare opposition to future attacks by the Coalition or about proposing a fight-back. We judge people not only by what they say, but also by what they do. Micheal D. is a legal supporter of the Coalition in the Dail lobbies.

Up there on the Coalition benches, it may sound like 'jolly good stuff'...maybe it will even earn a few more Chamber of Commerce dinners...but the message from down here in the sty is..Bring down the Coalition before they make sausage meat of us all!

An Muc ar Buile.

Halt Plastic Bullet Murder

Since the death of Bobby Sands over 10,000 baton rounds of 'plastic bullets' have been fired in the nationalist ghettos of the North. At the time of writing it is known that at least 8 people have been killed by them since April 1981. Hundreds have been seriously injured, some horribly mutilated, and many victims still depend on life support systems suffering from severe brain damage. According to the guidelines issued by the British Army plastic bullets are only supposed to be fired at selected persons and not indiscriminately at the crowd. They should be aimed so that they strike the lower part of the target's body..... Rounds should be fired at a range of not less than 20 metres Just like the 'yellow card' that is supposed to regulate the use of lead bullets, these guidelines are not worth the paper they are written on.

The plastic bullet replaced the rubber bullet 'because the disability and serious injury rates caused by the rubber bullets were not acceptable'. According to an information sheet on plastic bullets issued by the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science (BSSRS) the rubber and plastic bullets were developed

at Porton from the wooden 'broomstick' rounds used by the Hong Kong police in riots which occurred in 1967. It continues: "The fatality rate for the 55,000 rubber bullets fired (in Northern Ireland) was 1 per 18,000. Prior to the current disturbances 13,000 plastic bullets had

been fired; a further 1,955 were fired in April 1981 (more than in the entire previous year). Eight deaths from the 16,000 rounds gives a fatality rate of 1 per 2,000. This is nine times the rate for rubber bullets, which were withdrawn in 1975 for their high casualty rate."

The casualty rate for plastic bullets is not surprising. Many of our readers have already had first-hand experience of their indiscriminate use at H-Block demonstrations, particularly during the funeral of Joe MacDonnell. Not only have they been fired point blank into crowds, but the bullets themselves are doctored by the 'protectors of life and property' who fix jagged pieces of metal or bottle tops onto them.

Even without these additions plastic bullets are deadly. USA army research has shown that any crowd control weapon based on blunt impact is in the 'severe damage' region if its impact energy exceeds 90 foot lbs. Even at 50 yards the plastic bullet has 110 foot lbs. energy. At five yards its impact is 210 foot lbs. Sean Tumelty present on a life support machine in the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, is evidence of what this can do to a young man. The deaths of Julie Livingstone, Carol Ann Kelly, Roisin Stewart and Paul Whitters show its effect on children.

Recently the Association for Legal Justice (ALJ) held an independent international tribunal in Belfast. Doctors and lawyers gave evidence to a panel made up of such people as Tim Shallice an English neuro psychologist and Dr. Antoine Lazar from France. All were unanimous in their condemnation. Despite this and other denunciations by the Catholic hierarchy, the SDLP and anti H-block councillors Fergus O'Hare and Sean Flynn, the British Government, RUC and British Army are unmoved. Indeed the Church of Ireland Primate Dr. Armstrong has supported its use and backed RUC Chief Constable Jack Hermon who described it as a 'humane weapon'.

The plastic bullet is being used by the RUC and the British Army as a punishment weapon against the nationalist community old and young. It is deliberately and vindictively used to maim and kill as an attempt to intimidate and punish the nationalist community because of its continued support for the prison struggle. The determination of the British Government to defeat the struggle for political status has been translated on the streets into carte blanche for the British Army and RUC. The continuing support of the Catholic Church and the SDLP for these sectarian and racist murders makes their protests ring hollow and the British treat them with contempt. This contempt is underlined by William Whitelaw's comment that plastic bullets would not be used in Britain because "someone might be killed".

Peoples' Democracy have consistently called on all organisations in the H-Block/Armagh campaign to organise to defend the campaign. We called for defence after the murders of Miriam Daly, Ronnie Bunting and Noel Little; defence not only of the people supporting and working for the campaign but also of our democratic right to campaign and demonstrate without persecution.

The silence from the Trade Union leadership over the plastic bullet deaths and banning of H-Block rallies at City Hall in Belfast must not go unchallenged. Neither must the pious hypocrisy of the Catholic Church and SDLP. They must be challenged at every turn and by every means. every trade union, tenants association, cultural and sporting body at home and abroad.

A campaign against plastic bullets not only restrict Britain's arsenal of terror but supply the H-Block/Armagh movement with another opportunity to split the SDLP and the Church, dragging them off the fence. They must be forced to use their influence with the Southern Government to the withdrawal of the 'plastic death' from our streets.



Belfast Peoples Democracy Councillor, Fergus O'Hare shows some of the plastic bullets fired by the RUC during the riot at Unity Flats. In a statement O'Hare said: "Just as the RUC have not defeated the prisoners - their plastic bullets will not defeat their supporters on the streets either."

'Silent ~ too ~ Long' loyalist hypocrisy exposed

The recent visit to London by the three Dunlop children from Ballymena (whose mother was accidentally killed in an IRA bombing) where they met Ken Livingstone, leader of the Greater London Council (GLC) is part of a campaign being waged by Unionists, the British government, and the media, to blacken and discredit the hunger strikers. It is being suggested that the responsibility for the deaths of civilian victims rests with the Republican forces. Thatcher said so explicitly in a recent speech.

On 23rd August, however, a meeting took place in the Felons Club, New Lodge Road, Belfast of people determined to fight these lies and propaganda. They were relatives of people killed by the British Army, the RUC, the Ulster Defence Association, the Ulster Volunteer Force and other Loyalist terror groups.

The meeting was an emotional one. People told of relatives murdered, often in the most brutal and sadistic fashion, comparable to the victims of government terror in El Salvador. One victim, Frank Rice, was almost decapitated: he was found with his religious medals pulled up through his his throat to hang out his mouth.

Other equally brutal stories were told. In the local area alone (including Unity Flats, Dock, New Lodge and Newington) seventy three Catholic

civilians who had no involvement in military groups had been murdered. Upwards of six hundred have been

murdered throughout the North. Indeed the worst single bombing incident in the North occurred in

December 1971 when McGurks Bar in the New Lodge was blown up by loyalists killing fifteen civilians, adults and children.

The meeting decided to set up a group called **Silent-too-Long** with three main aims

1. To get further meetings of relatives of victims of British forces and loyalists. These are not to include members of Republican military groups.
2. To get the UDA proscribed.
3. To produce a book on the murders for national and international distribution.

They hope also to demonstrate the collusion that exists between loyalists and the security forces.

The new group, if successful, should prove a useful and effective means of countering the British propaganda offensive. In the particular context of the hunger strike campaign, where the security forces collaborated with loyalists in the murder and attempted murder of H Block activists and where the British army and the RUC have brought death by plastic bullet onto the streets, **Silent-too-Long** is important because it highlights, in a broader sense, British crime in Ireland and the suffering of the nationalist minority.

Anyone wishing to help the group should contact Seamus MacAlorum at 2 Duncairn Parade, Belfast.

THOMAS LAVERY.

JIM MULVENN.

Strengths and Weaknesses HBlock Armagh CONFERENCE

The September 6th H.Block/Armagh conference faced great problems and great opportunities. Many striking victories have been won. The prisoners indicated confidence in the campaign and determination to continue the hunger strike in a message read out during opening of conference. The attendance of 1,000 delegates was evidence of national representation. At the first conference only 20 action groups were represented, this time 400 were registered.

As against that, there was a grim background of dead hunger strikers 10 in all, intransigence from the British government and a chorus of slander from the Dublin Government, the conventional political parties and the Churches. It was possible that frustration would divide and break up the campaign or alternatively that previous gains could be built on.

LEADERSHIP OF THE CAMPAIGN.

One lesson of the campaign is that a small narrowly based leadership elected directly from the conference cannot properly organise and co-ordinate all the work of the campaign. We need now a broad national delegate structure that will represent all the forces active in the campaign; the action groups, political parties, trade union and factory committees, sporting and cultural groups and representatives womens groups, student and youth groups groups.

ACTION AGAINST COLLABORATOR.

The main task of a new leadership would be to fight against the attacks and slanders of the Irish Government and major political parties. The campaign has demonstrated that Britain is to blame, but these forces tried to intimidate the prisoners. We called on them to stop collaboration with Britain and instead they attempted to divide and isolate the campaign. Now we must directly challenge these quislings and build mass demonstrations against Gardai and Irish Army collaboration on the border. We must actively oppose Fitzgerald's intentions to sit down in cosy talks with Margaret Thatcher while prisoners die in the H. Blocks.

WORKERS ACTION.

The campaign has demonstrated the mass support for the prisoners demands. Now it must transform that support into direct action against British interests. To do this, it must rely on the force represented by the working class. Delegations of workers along with relatives, can build an effective organised blacking of British goods. Their work can be backed up by mass mobilisations of the whole campaign at major distribution centres. Workers would be encouraged not only to take action, but to

organise directly inside the campaign to bring the struggle in support of the prisoners right into the workplaces and the unions.

ELECTIONS.

The use of elections has led to some major victories of this campaign. But it also has led to confusion among militants of the campaign. This is especially so with the question of using elections victories to advance the campaign as a whole

We believe that future elections must be fought by non-prisoner candidates who will use their position to build a movement for the prisoners of T.D.'s and councillors inside the campaign and be in the forefront of the mass campaign itself.

a further difficulty lies with the fact that elections raise many other questions alongside the H.Block issue questions like unemployment and

to win the demands of the prisoners up to this present time, its activity has at least the effect of raising the intransigence of Britain and the costs of this for them. The campaign has raised the stakes. For the first time in many years there is an international questioning of Britain's role in Ireland and widespread activity in support of the prisoners. We can best use this support by bringing all the forces together in a single conference and organising it in a worldwide political offensive against Britain.

CONFERENCE AND DEMOCRACY

A crucial issue arose at the beginning of the conference. A series of resolutions which denied the right of political forces to be represented or to have an independent presence in the campaign were presented. They were to the relief of many activists only narrowly defeated.

We argued that the broad campaign we urgently need can not be built with such restrictions. The problem for the campaign is not the number of small parties who support it, but its close identification with the Provos an association which can be manipulated by the media and the enemies of the prisoners. It is deeply disturbing that leading Sinn Fein members like Daithi O'Connell and Paddy Bolger voted for the 'anti-political' motion. This suggests they are more concerned with ensuring the dominance of Sinn fein through numerical weight rather than ensuring the broadening of the campaign if this is not so, we would like to know how you can invite people to join a campaign and then deny then political rights?

However An Phoblacht has criticised the anti-political motions and it is to be hoped that their approach will be shared by growing numbers of Republicans.

A similar problem arose in the discussion over campaign structure. PD's resolution in favour of a delegate leadership based around the committee elected at Conference was defeated. Conference instead passed an amendment from Daithi O'Connell for an expanded committee directly elected from conference. There will also be a middle tier involving delegates from various sectors of the campaign. But this middle tier remains an 'advisory body' without any guaranteed integration into the decision making of the leadership.

CONCLUSION.

The opponents of the prisoners have been disappointed by the Conference. Instead of a factionalism there was a massive turn-out and a series of new action proposals.

These were adopted with little rancour and indicate that new initiatives are possible for the campaign. But a great deal of work will have to be done to transform the decisions of conference into flesh and blood in the ranks of the campaign. There is a great responsibility on the new leadership to develop structures to carry out this new stage of the campaign. We need a formal commitment to a broader and more democratic campaign from the Republican movement.

The Hunger Strike continues. The 5 demands must still be won. The conference indicated the high level of support available. We must develop from this mass and industrial action... the only weapon guaranteed to smash Thatcher.



the general question of the British presence that the candidate must deal with.

The campaign should encourage the political parties to come together and establish an United Front based on an united anti-imperialist programme which would serve as the basis for an electoral intervention.

DEFENCE OF THE CAMPAIGN.

If the campaign is to succeed it must not only bring the mass of the people on to the streets, but it must be able to keep them on the streets and afford them a minimum level of security. In the North the unrestricted use of plastic bullets and the banning and physical attacks on H.Block demonstrations has meant a serious reversal for the campaign.

We must build national and international pressure to reverse this trend and highlight the inaction of groups like the SDLP on this issue.

INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN.

French Trade Union Solidarity

The end of August saw an important visit to Ireland by a high level delegation from the French Confederation Generale du Travail (CGT), the biggest union federation in France and one which is politically allied to the Communist Party. Among the delegates was the Secretary of the Paris region and an official in charge of youth work.

In Belfast the delegation met relatives of the hunger strikers and activists in the prisoners' campaign including trade unionists from the De Lorean car plant, the deep sea docks and the Royal Victoria Hospital. The delegation learned with shock that the Irish trade union leadership had failed to speak out clearly on behalf of the political prisoners.

Since H Block was a fundamental issue of democratic rights the French trade unionists believed they had to be on the prisoners' side.

The delegation were very interested to hear about loyalist pressure in the trade unions. They noted the failure of the union leadership including prominent members of the Irish Communist Party, to seek affirmative action for Catholic workers in the Six Counties

it was heartening to hear of the campaign by the CGT itself in support of the prisoners over the past months. Indeed, on the night the delegation arrived in Belfast, the CGT organised a demonstration of over 10,000 people through the streets of Paris in defence of the hunger strikers. CGT members have also been involved in leafletting trains and ships bound for England, explaining the prisoners' demands and condemning the British government.

The CGT will continue its campaign in France and will also attempt to widen support for the prisoners in the international trade union movement. It will make the hunger strike an issue at a meeting of the European Trade Union Union Confederation; it will be raised with the British TUC and the leadership of the ICTU will also be challenged on its failure to defend the democratic rights of the prisoners.

The efforts of the CGT are simply an indication of the potential support for the prisoners within the international labour movement and should highlight the need for more resources devoted to trade unions in the H Block/Armagh campaign.

BOSSSES SUPPORT KEMMY

While Jim Kemmy uses the platform of the Dail to attack the H Block prisoners, his former workmates in Limerick Corporation have been organising themselves in support of the five demands. The Corporation Workers H Block Committee has already undertaken a number of activities in defence of the prisoners and will soon present a petition to the Town Hall, signed by the vast majority of the Corporation workers.

The petition reads We, the undersigned Corporation workers, call on the Mayor, City Council members (including Kemmy - Ed) and Corporation officials to take all steps possible to help ensure that the H Block prisoners' five demands are granted without further loss of life. We call on our Mayor and all politicians who back the prisoners to get together and organise themselves in active support immediately.

...BUT WORKERS DON'T

How does the boss class see the performance of Limerick's 'socialist' TD, Jim Kemmy, in his first few weeks in the Dail? Tom Morris, a past president of the Limerick Chamber of Commerce and an acknowledged voice of the city's employers, writing in this month's Limerick Consumer, used the

following terms in reference to Comrade Kemmy's efforts: 'well done', 'sensible', 'shines out like a beacon', 'maturity', 'courage', 'such worthy motives', and 'commonsense'.

At least someone thinks Kemmy is on the right track...

KEMMY ON THE RUN

Further indications that Jim Kemmy's support for Margaret Thatcher's H Block policy is rejected by the working class has come from within his own union, the bricklayers. The Dublin branch decided to support the prisoners on August 31. Their motion will now go forward to the national executive and probably later to the national conference.

The meeting which supported the prisoners was very eventful. First of all, the executive proposed a motion favouring general prison reform and declared it passed after a show of hands. This was challenged from the floor and a secret ballot was called. The executive's motion was defeated by 60 votes to 34 with 4 spoiled votes. During this vote a check was run on the eligibility of all those in attendance to vote, and it was found that 20 who voted in the show of hands had no right to participate in the secret ballot. Then the motion supporting the H Block prisoners was proposed and carried by 68 votes to 30 with 2 abstentions.

Another notable absentee from the meeting besides Kemmy (who usually attends) was Sinn Fein - the Workers' Party member, Fergus Whelan, a leading member of the Dublin Trades Council and prominent in the PAYE tax campaign.

Since the Dublin branch is the biggest in the union there are grounds for optimism among anti-imperialists that support for the H Block prisoners will eventually become national policy of the bricklayers' union.

The precarious position of the Southern government emphasises the importance of elections at the present time. The winning of two Dail seats by H-Block prisoners means that the anti-imperialist movement has a powerful lever for keeping the prisoners' cause before national and international public opinion. Unfortunately the best use has not been made of this situation. The pending by-election in Cavan-Monaghan requires urgent redress of this weakness.

The Cavan-Monaghan contest will not be an ordinary by-election. There are two distinct aspects to it. Firstly, it will not be simply about the fate of one seat in Leinster House but about the fate of a whole government. Because of this it will be difficult to win a large sympathy vote. Given that Kieran Doherty won 15 per cent of the vote last time out a pro-H-Block prisoners' candidate will need double that figure this time. The campaign is undoubtedly in an awkward position.

The second factor is the state of the H-Block campaign itself. Since Last June There are now ten dead hunger-strikers. Four prisoners have been taken off the fast by their relatives. The nationalist collaborators have not been shifted beyond verbal condemnation of Britain while Thatcher remains as intransigent as ever. It will be hard enough to convince people that a mere vote for a H-Block candidate will bring any real change. And it will be twice as hard because the voters will feel they may be bringing down the Coalition government. Certainly, Fianna Fail supporters of the prisoners, who have illusions in the verbal militancy of Haughey, will be reluctant to vote against the party on this occasion.

Who does Noel Browne Speak For?

In a recent letter to The Irish Times concerning the Fermanagh South Tyrone bye-election Socialist Labour Party TD Noel Browne takes to a new level his "suspicion" that the struggle of the Irish people for national liberation and an end to British occupation is really a conspiracy involving trigger happy fascists and Christian Brothers in a massive plot to distract us from the real straightforward struggle for socialism.

In his letter Browne attacked the SDLP for failing to stand a candidate in Fermanagh/South Tyrone. According to Browne the SDLP should have put up a candidate in order to split the Nationalist vote and elect the Unionist in the interests of democracy. It is hard to see how democracy served by electing a Unionist MP in a constituency that is majority nationalist. But Dr. Browne is not talking about democracy but a specific form: bourgeois parliamentary democracy. He is not interested in the democratic right of the Irish people to self-determination; when the struggle to achieve this right challenges the parliamentary institutions which maintain partition, Browne stands for Unionism.

To defend parliamentary democracy against the democratic wishes of the people Browne has to ignore the facts or turn them on their head. The Provos are slandered as 'fascists' and Browne gives us the amazing 'fact' that the Provos shoot people because they are Protestants. On



the other hand the Unionist candidate, Ken Maginnis, an ex-major in the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), representative of a tradition which has denied democratic rights to Catholics during the 50 years of Stormont rule, becomes "the Protestant Unionist parliamentarian who is not a gunman".

Browne is a self-styled socialist with a warped view of the world. He thinks the national question is an unnecessary complication in Irish politics. He has ignored events in the 6 Counties for years, only hesitating to advise others to do the same. He can ignore it no longer. The H-Block campaign has once again made what is happening in the 6 Counties an issue in the 26 Counties. The victories of Kieran Doherty and Paddy Agnew have shown clearly the

level of support for the prisoners. In Browne's own Constituency he was challenged by Peoples' Democracy candidate Vincent Doherty, who supported the prisoners. Browne sees in all this the beginning of the end for sham democracy practised in Leinster House and the end of a cushy career living off his achievements in the first inter-party government of 1948-51.

Browne claimed credit for his 30 year old Ministerial accomplishments during the 1981 campaign. A generalised populist denunciation of unequal distribution of wealth (without explaining how the have-nots could get an equal share) was presented to remind people that Noel Browne was, once, a Socialist Labour politician.

It is fitting that he now shares a room in Leinster House with Jim Kemmy (who would have been more honest, and even more successful had he campaigned under the slogan 'Jim'll fix it'). -Defying the SLP to which he still claims allegiance, he seems set on trying to Revive with Kemmy the parliamentary contribution of the National Progressive Democrats (NPD) that he maintained in the early 60's with Jack McQuillan. Alas, as Marx said, the first time is tragedy, the second farce; the NPD consistently opposed the government of the day, and did not 'critically support it

There is a second difference. The NPD was partly able to act as vanguard of the left because it was a 26 county party at a time when it seemed possible that the national question could

continued on page 8.

BELFAST WORKERS RAISE H BLOCK

H Block activists in Belfast have taken a major step forward to win the support of trade unionists for the campaign. H Block committees have mushroomed throughout workplaces in Belfast, the result of years of hard work by individual trade unionists.

The Trade Union Subcommittee of the Belfast H Block/Armagh Committee took the initiative. Formed at the start of the campaign, its membership never expanded beyond left-wing trade unionists who had been involved with the defunct Trade Union Campaign against Repression.

Although the subcommittee always got a response to its leaflets around the big industrial 'Days of Action', the responses tended to fade away in between these events and got poorer as the H Block death toll rose.

The strongest support came from the Royal Victoria Hospital and the De Lorean car plant, where workplace committees had been set up by the workers themselves. But even there the activists had begun to feel demoralised and isolated because of the lack of ongoing action in the other workplaces.

Efforts to develop support in a greater number of workplaces, and to promote the formation of H Block/Armagh committees in these workplaces, tended to be frustrated because they generally came from outside. In early August, the De Lorean committee agreed to launch a campaign for more workplace committees.

Workers from De Lorean leafleted workplaces and held factory gate meetings, which were generally well attended. It was also agreed that this campaign would include even those work-

places, such as the Royal Victoria, the deep sea docks and Bass Ireland brewery, where support had been given in the past.

The next phase was to bring together delegates to set up a Belfast work co-ordinating committee. Welding together the support in the different factories maximised the strength of the campaign.

On August 28, delegates came from De Lorean, Royal Victoria, Blackstaff Textiles, Ross's Mill, Ford Aulite, Belfast Leisure Centres, Department of Health and Social Services City Council workers and others.

The discussion at the meeting showed that workers faced the same problem in all the different workplaces and cleared up the doubts of sympathetic workers.

The committee has taken responsibility for building action in the workplace and unions around the decisions of recent H Block Armagh Conference and to spreading support for the hunger strikers into those places which are as yet unorganised.

There are lessons for workers throughout Ireland in the way that Belfast workers are organising in the workplace. It is through organisation at this level that support can be won and, importantly, maintained in the fight for the five demands.

JOHN MCGEOWN



Cavan Monaghan WHAT KIND OF CANDIDATE?

These factors illustrate what the H-Blocks H-Blocks campaign must do if it is to triumph in Cavan-Monaghan. It must convince the electorate that by choosing a supporter of the hunger-strikers they will in fact be taking a step towards bringing down the Coalition. The campaign must also convince the electorate that a new general election will not result in the type of government -- be it Coalition of or Haugheyite Fianna Fail -- which will continue to defer to Thatcher.

To make such a breakthrough the H-Block campaign will have to seriously reconsider its approach to elections. Another abstentionist

would definitely be the opposite of what is needed. Much of the broad based support for the prisoners would be lukewarm towards that kind of election campaign. More importantly, an abstentionist candidate, even if elected, could not lead the fight to kick out the Coalition.

RAISE HELL

We need an election campaign in Cavan-Monaghan which highlights the broad support for the prisoners in a dynamic way. Above all, the situation demands a candidate who will enter Leinster House to raise hell, day in and day out with the avowed intention of voting

against the Coalition in order to bring it down.

Within Leinster House the strategy of a H-Block TD would be to constantly expose the hypocrisy of FitzGerald and Haughey. Such a TD would play not play the genteel parliamentary game but would disrupt proceedings on every possible occasion. At the moment conditions in Leinster House are very favourable to this type of tactic. The democratic facade of the parliamentary game is paper thin. An unpopular government with a knife edge majority is trying to force through sweeping anti-working class measures. Fianna Fail and the

"Independents" at best only offer token opposition because they essentially agree with the Coalition strategy. This situation provides a favourable context for the anti-imperialist TD's to cut through the phoney war of words between the established politicians.

If the H-Block TD's were expelled from the Dail it can be imagined what would happen to the credibility of "Republican" Fianna Fail and the "objective" Independents.

The Coalition depends for its survival on the "Independents" Some of them

like Ceann Comhairle John O'Connell visited the H-Blocks with Neil Blaney and Sile De Valera and Sean Loftus claims he is sympathetic to the hunger strikers. A vociferous and principled H-Block TD could make it impossible for these hypocrites to abstain or vote with the Coalition [not only on the H-Block issue but also on a whole range of social and economic issues] are vulnerable on H-Block; for example pseudo Republican Joe Sherlock pseudo Socialist Noel Browne. It would then be impossible for the hypocrite "Independents" and "Republicans" to hold their seats in the next General Election.

A defeat for the government in Leinster House at the hands of the anti-imperialist movement would be a historic breakthrough. It would put the national question firmly at the centre of Southern politics. This in itself would create favourable conditions for the election of a sizeable band of anti-imperialists in a future election. Such a development would in turn put Fianna Fail on the defensive and ensure that no Haugheyite cabinet would survive long while collaborating with Britain.

A CANDIDATE

One person identified with the H-Block campaign stands out as the ideal candidate: Bernadette MacAliskey. She has fought on the barricades of Derry and the floor of the Westminster parliament. She has the courage, tactical ability and iron will-power to take on Leinster House and beat it. PD is confident that she could unite the people of Cavan-Monaghan behind the hunger-strikers and provide a real anti-imperialist alternative to the Coalition and Fianna Fail.



The Story of the Pink Triangle

The Project Arts Centre in Dublin recently staged a production of 'Bent', a play dealing with the effect of Nazism on love relationships and, in particular, love relationships between men.

The story of the suppression of gays has not been fully told and even today there are people who claim that the Nazis did not victimise gays. When Germany was 'liberated' by the Allies, gays were the only group not paid compensation for their sufferings. Even in 1975, when the gay movement in Germany sought belated compensation, the surviving victims who offered themselves for test cases were threatened with imprisonment.

'Bent' begins as a very funny play. It opens with Max, heavily hung over, trying to reconstruct the events of the previous evening. His lover Rudi, a dancer at Greta's night club, helps him to remember while gently poking fun at some of the wilder things he has done. It is a scene that must be familiar to many of us.

While they are thus engaged, Wolf, a teenage member of Hitler Youth begins to stir from the blankets to the right. It transpires that Max, while drunk, pretended to be a rich Polish baron, the better to seduce the handsome youth.

The reality is somewhat different. A loud banging at the door announces what Max and Rudi believe to be the arrival of their landlord looking for three weeks rent. When they open the door, the SS burst in, drag away Wolf and threaten to return for the two lovers. Max and Rudi have been unwittingly caught up in the aftermath of the Night of the Long Knives. Wolf is the plaything of Ernst Rohm whom Hitler has just had eliminated.

The year is 1934, 15 months after Dachau concentration camp first opened its gates for what Heinrich Himmler termed 'the extermination of degenerates'.

Greta, a lonely transvestite, gives the pair money and advises them to leave

a wretched existence of hunger and cold. This is nothing new from their life in Berlin, but now they must hide their love from other outcasts. In the hierarchy of oppression under fascism, it is even 'better to be a Jew than a queer' (sic).

They are soon rounded up and transported to Dachau. On the train, in an effort to save himself, Max denies his love for Rudi who is brutally murdered by the guards. Max does a 'deal' and earns the 'right' to wear a yellow Star of David - badge of the Jewish inmates - rather than the pink triangle of homosexuals who are universally despised.

In the concentration camp Max meets Horst, a gay incarcerated for signing his name to a petition demanding an end to laws making homosexuality a crime. (Section 175 of the Penal Code was not repealed until 1969 and gay internees were never compensated. Many of those who survived the extermination camps were re-imprisoned as 'criminals').

Horst and Max argue constantly about whether it is better to stand up for oneself, fight and die or to accommodate to the violence of oppression. In the end, the contradiction is resolved by Horst striking out at a cruel SS officer. As he is killed by the officer, Max realises that death is inevitable. Better, then, to fight than to passively await death. Max dons Horst's jacket, proud now of his pink triangle and its symbol of resistance.

'Bent' is a graphic illustration of life under a totalitarian regime. The lesson of resistance is well made. It shows clearly that unity in the defence of all oppressed groups is essential. Fascism sets people against each other. The only answer is to fight the denial of democratic rights to any section of the population. This is the main point of 'Bent'.

SEAN O' LAOIRE.



Gays march in Belfast against H Block

Berlin. The Nazis rule now and all those not fitting the 'master race' stereotype are 'treated'. By 1935, 56,000 homosexuals, schizophrenics, epileptics, drug addicts, blind and disabled people had been sterilized.

Without work permits or identity cards, Max and Rudi take to the forest, living



The Women's organising Committee of the H Block/Armagh Campaign held a successful planning meeting in Dundalk on the 13th of September. Women from Dublin, Derry, Belfast and Louth attended. Plans for a cross Border Women's Assembly were agreed. Women will gather on the Muff-Derry Border on Sunday 4th of October at 1.30pm. They will walk three miles to Derry City to join activities surrounding the 13th anniversary of the original 1968 Civil Rights march.

Most of the time very little is heard of the second chamber in Leinster House, the Seanad (Senate). It has become, as its founder Eamonn DeValera intended, a tool of the sitting government, composed mostly of politicians who failed to get into the Dail. In fact this tool, precisely, is a rubber-stamp. Formally it might be thought that Senators elected by University graduates of the National University of Ireland (NUI) and Trinity College Dublin (TCD) would be more independent than their colleagues elected directly by politicians or simply nominated by the Taoiseach. In fact the difference is small, and a look at some of the new University Senators shows they are stalking horses for Unionism.

A new Senator for TCD is stockbroker Shane Ross who writes a weekly business column for the business section of *The Irish Times*. An important part of his platform was the abolition of Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution, which claim jurisdiction over the 6 Counties, and the extradition of Republicans from the South if Britain wants to put them on trial. It should be remembered that a significant minority of TCD graduates are Northern Unionists. So Ross is their "Trojan Horse" in Leinster House. Mary Robinson and Catherine MacGuinness, while in no sense republicans or anti-imperialists, have a better record than most of their fellow parliamentarians on the issue of democratic rights for Republicans.

The National University of Ireland produced two anti-Republican Senators of note, Fine Gael's Gemma Hussey and John A Murphy of Cork University. Ms. Hussey, who will lead Fine Gael in the new Seanad, has made several attacks on the Republican movement. Professor Murphy's views are almost indistinguishable from Sinn Fein the Workers' Party (SF-WP), which is the reason he appears so often on RTE's main current affairs TV programme, *Today Tonight*. Ms. Hussey by now is too well versed in the hypocritical approach of Fine Gael to come out openly as a Unionist. Her party, and her career, depend for power on concealing their true-blue colour. But Messrs. Murphy and Ross, however high their ambition, are not yet in any position to think of climbing into the Dail. They will join their colleague in the lower house, James Kemmy,

West Brits Infiltrate Senate



in saying what many of the other bourgeois politicians really believe. This is hardly an impressive or representative team. Their importance is that they say publicly what other Southern politicians will only confess privately to prominent Unionists. We can confidently expect therefore to see Messrs. Kemmy, Murphy and Ross pushed forward and publicised favourably by powerful forces in the upper reaches of Southern Irish Society. They will receive a status totally out of proportion with their real significance. Most of all we can expect to see and hear them at length on RTE. The anti-imperialist movement will not be defeated by these methods. But we can not ignore our enemies. We can begin a campaign against the Unionist Senators right now. As many people as possible from the Irish intelligentsia, and the student movement, should be encouraged to stand up for Irish Unity. A new Seanad election could take place in the near future. We should try and ensure there are University Seanad candidates who support the prisoners, and who are endorsed by the Union of Students in Ireland (USI). Anti-imperialists must continue to resist pro-British manoeuvres until they figure only in history's refuse collection.

JOHN MEEHAN

Women March In Support Of Prisoners

Recently women from the Liberties area in Dublin approached the local H.Block/Armagh action group with a request for a womens march in support of the prisoners. They felt this would give women a special opportunity to unite together and support the prisoners five demands.

A large number of women organised the march with support from Dublin Central Committee and the National Committee of the campaign. The march set off from the GPO on August 22nd after speeches from Sheila Darragh and Ruth Taillon of the National Committee.

The March which drew about 1,000 women behind its banner, headed for the offices of the Council for the Status of women. At a November conference organised by the Council, resolutions were adopted in support of the Armagh women at several of the workshops. The letter demanded to know why the call for enquiry into prison conditions had not been made of the previous government. Other demands made at that conference had been notified to the elected representatives. The marchers also went to Government buildings as a protest against continuing Dublin/London collaboration.

The success of this march encouraged a number of women to continue on and organise cross border action on October 4th.

This will be an important activity for the campaign. A Chance to bring together

er all those women North and South active and interested in the campaign. The sponsors of the women relatives of the hunger strikers. The Donegal Derry border will be the crossing point in commemoration of the October 1968 Civil Rights march in Derry City. A march which sparked off the present struggle against partition.

It is intended that 2 marches will



start from each side of the border. The organisers hope that the impressive international solidarity shown by feminists at previous womens assemblies outside Armagh jail will and can be repeated.

To find out more about this marching Dublin 747200 or Belfast 49973.

FELICE COHEN

Polish Disease Spreads

The threat of a spread of the Polish disease' is a nightmare which haunts the stalinist bureaucracies of Eastern Europe. The Husak regime in Czechoslovakia, put in power after the Soviets invaded that country in 1968, is preparing a massive show-trial of 19 supporters of Charter 77, the Czech human rights movement.

The Stalinists have every reason to be afraid. On June 14th a new body announced its existence, The Preparatory Committee of Free Trade Unions in Czecho-

slovakia. 'Above all', said the statement from the committee, 'we wish to defend the right of our working people, their interests and demands, their criticisms voiced at various times, during personal discussions, at meetings, in factories and elsewhere.'

The majority of those arrested are prominent cultural intellectuals and academics. The Husak regime is well aware of the important role played by the Polish intellectuals around KOR (Committee to defend the Workers)

in the events leading up to the Gdansk Strikes in 1980. In East Germany also, the regime is reacting sharply against any demonstration of support among East German workers for Poland's Solidarity.

According to a report of the West Berlin based Human Rights Working Group there has been intense discussion in the factories and work-places of East Germany in recent months. These have evolved around the question of the democratisation of the state controlled union in the GDR, the Free German Trade Union (FDGB).

In the past two months alone the report says that seven workers have been arrested in four big industrial plants in Eastern Germany for publicly expressing their support for Solidarity.

These arrests took place at the Cari-Zeiss-Jena works in Thuringen, the union machine tool factory in Gera, at the steelworks Maxhutte in Unterwellenborn and at the Wilhelm Pieck chemical workers plant in Rudolstadt. Another worker by the name of Detlef Abramson was imprisoned last autumn for ten months after he stated publicly that the East Germans should do as the Poles had done

In January of this year a doctor by the name of Wilhelm Koch was imprisoned by the East German authorities for 4 years for having contributed the sum of 10,000 marks to Solidarity.



Bernadette speaks in Spain Brits Feel the Pressure

Supporters of Free Speech and the H-Block Prisoners have triumphed again. Bernadette Mc Aliskey has spoken in Spain despite a Government ban. She was due to speak in support of the Prisoners at Catalan Independence Day Celebrations.

Since the Spanish state oppresses the national minorities within its boundaries, it was disturbed at the obvious parallels drawn between the H-Block/Armagh campaign and the struggles of the Catalan and Basque peoples.

Bernadette was invited to Spain by the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria /Liga Kommunistia Iraultzea (LCR /LKI) the section of the Fourth International in the Spanish state. After Bernadette was expelled from Barcelona to Paris, the French section of the Fourth International, the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR) organised a publicity campaign. 50 members of the French LCR occupied the British Airways Office in Paris in support of the prisoners. The LCR, on foot of a press conference which was carried in most European papers at which Bernie made a statement on the ban imposed on her, organised her appearance at the Catalan celebrations.

Over 70,000 people heard of the prisoners struggle and of the British

refusal to grant the five demands. International solidarity is a vital part of the H-Blocks campaign and the Fourth International is playing its part. It is a world wide socialist movement (which Peoples Democracy is discussing joining) which has, through its national parties and groups, been working for the prisoners. The Portuguese section were the main force behind an August march, of 10,000 people; in Australia the FI members there, the Socialist Workers Party, are the major part along with Republicans in the H Block/Armagh committees in many of the major cities; In Mexico a leading member of the Mexican section Manuel Aguila de Mora debated the hunger strike for over one hour on National TV with the British Ambassador to that country. In Britain the International Marxist Group has been to the fore for the past 13 years in the Irish Solidarity movement. These are but brief mentions of the role that the constituent parts of the Fourth International have played in aiding the Irish Struggle. Its ability to expand that work will no doubt be aided by the present discussions between the main leaders of the FI and Peoples' Democracy.

For us we intend to make international not just a 'good idea' but a living part of our political existence and contribution to the Irish struggle.

U.S. Controllers Resist Reagan

In early August 12,000 members of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) went on strike all over the USA. 95 per cent of the membership voted against a contract proposed by Ronald Reagan's Secretary for Transportation, Drew Lewis. The contract had not included issues which the controllers considered the most important: a shorter working week and a right to earlier retirement -- issues which would contribute to the improved safety of airlines.

Reagan's response was to order them to return to work or be fired and "barred for life" from government jobs. He followed this up by imposing the unions' strike funds. Millions of dollars in fines have been imposed. Fines of 1,000 dollars are threatened against each striker. The Federal Government has officially moved to have the union decertified by the National Labour Relations Board as the bargaining agent for air controllers. New controllers are being hired and trained alongside military personnel. The media are queuing up to see who can launch the most vicious attacks on the strikers. The FBI have declared publicly they are investigating each of the strikers.



Steven Wallaert, president of PATCO Local 291 in Norfolk and Newport News, Virginia, being led

Despite these sustained attacks from every institution of capitalist society in the USA the strikers remain confident. Commercial airlines have been ordered to reduce their flights by as much as 50 per cent. Private and military aircraft flights have been drastically reduced. Small airports have closed. Many openly admit that flying is now extremely dangerous and most scheduled flights are empty.

The strikers have been greatly inspired by international solidarity. The strongest support has come from Canada and Portugal where controllers have carried out 48 hour protests. Controllers in Australia, New Zealand, France, Britain, Spain, The Netherlands, Italy and the Scandinavian countries have all demonstrated support for the strike.

On August 13th a meeting of the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers Associations representing 61 countries throughout the world demanded immediate negotiations to end the strike.

The attack on air controllers is an opening shot in the employers', and their government's, drive against working people.

The Reagan administration is determined to break the union. It comes at a time when the USA Congress has massively increased the military budget while at the same time approving Reagan's plans to drastically cut back on social democratic and economic

But there are signs of a fightback from the labour movement. The American Federation of Labour Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) representing 14 million members organized a September 19 demonstration for social justice and against criminal cutbacks. The name of the protest was 'Solidarity Day'. Besides 100 unions the action was also sponsored by organizations of the

most oppressed, including major civil rights and women's groups. This is a welcome break with tradition for the AFL-CIO. It opposed massive marches against the Vietnam war. According to AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland "changing times call for changing tactics

True: but not in the way Kirkland sees things. America's rulers are weaker.

They can't push the oppressed around with the same confidence as before. They have been badly shaken up by the trauma of the Vietnam war. Americans now question their society more. The air controllers are part of struggle for change in the USA to the advantage of oppressed people the world over. They deserve our support

SEAN MARMION

Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada under threat U.S.-THE WORLD COP

While the Sixth Fleet was engaged in its deadly work of the coast of Libya, the US navy and marines were engaged in Caribbean manoeuvres including practise landings off Puerto Rico. There is a mass of circumstantial evidence to suggest that this exercise was a practise for a possible invasion of revolutionary Grenada, the tiny island in the Caribbean whose two year old revolution is under constant threat on economic, political and military fronts from the United States. The admiral in charge of the operation described Grenada, Cuba and Nicaragua as 'practically one country and a politico-military problem'.

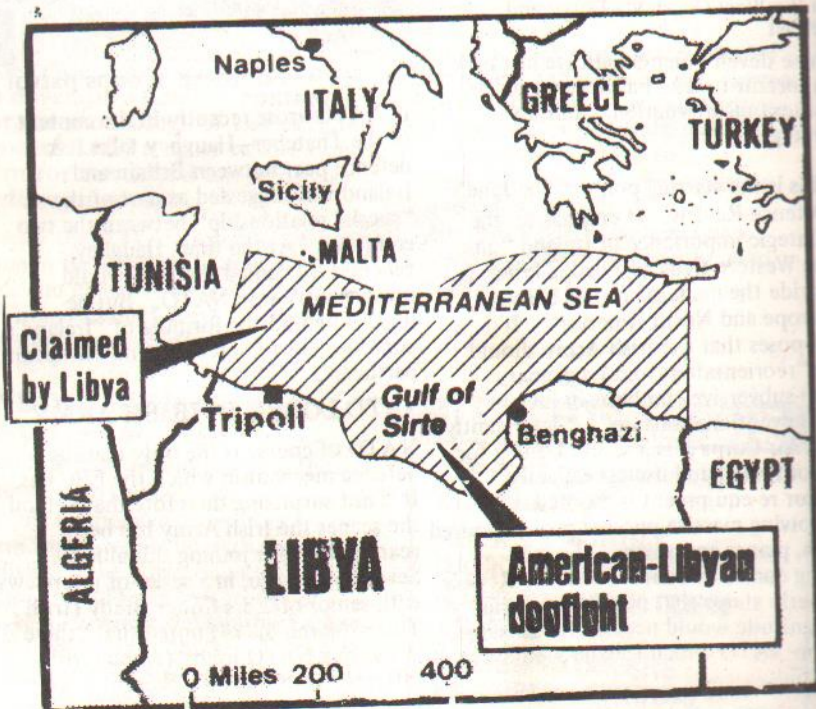
Hot on the heels on these developments comes the South African invasion of Angola. The United States refusal to condemn this aggression indicates its preference for leaving Namibia under the South African yoke. Statements of 'concern' about the alleged presence of Soviet military personnel in Angola, also suggest that the U.S. is looking for a pretext to intervene directly in Africa. The urgent task of the hour is to mobilise international public opinion to defend the right of self-determination for the Libyan and Grenadian peoples and to make solidarity with the Angolan peoples against South African aggression.

The International bully boys of the Reagan regime must be stopped in

In recent weeks the true face of American Imperialism has been displayed with all its mighty arrogance.

Almost within sight of the Libyan coast the huge American sixth fleet provoked an air battle with the Libyans, as part of the USA's openly declared plan to destabilise and overthrow the Libyan regime.

The meaning of the Reagan administration's huge arms build-up is made abundantly clear by these events. From now on the U.S. is going to re-establish its pre-Vietnam role as world cop, using its military muscle to to control and intimidate anyone, who dares oppose the United States and its reactionary allies. .



Forged map by 'Economist' whips up hysteria against Libya.

POBLAUGHT SHOISIALACH

SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

Paper of PEOPLES' DEMOCRACY

THE PEOPLES DEMOCRACY bases itself on the following points:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE NATO THREAT

Over the past few years the "arms race" with the Soviet Union has accelerated and NATO has continuously refurbished its military capacity. A major problem, however, was the weakness of Britain's air defence system. This became a cause for serious concern when the Soviets developed a "backfire" bomber force capable of launching a nuclear attack on Britain from the Atlantic in the west rather than from the east. Britain had to completely overhaul its air defences. Ireland immediately became an attractive area for locating part of a new string of radar stations. One such station has already been installed at Bishopscourt, Co. Down.

For a really effective air defence system Britain needs to extend its radar facilities south of the border. Earlier last year, Michael Mates, Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office, admitted as much on RTE radio. Since then, an earth satellite station has been built on the South West coast in Middleton, Co. Cork, instead of Dublin where most telecommunications traffic originates. The Irish government's Minister for Telecommunications at the time, Albert Reynolds, could not explain this unusual decision. He merely stated that it was taken "on the advice of a foreign expert". Subsequently two more similar stations were completed in Sligo and Donegal. This gives Britain complete access to the colossal capacity of the Irish communications system on the West Coast, via Derry and Belfast.

These developments indicate just how important Ireland has become in the context of international military strategy.

This is the starting point of the Jane's Defence Review. It emphasises the strategic importance of Ireland "on the Western flank of Europe lying astride the main sea routes between Europe and North America". It proposes that the Irish Army should be "reorientated from its primary anti-subversive emphasis in favour of conventional warfare". Significantly, the Air Corps gets a severe lashing for its outdated and useless capacity. A major re-equipment is mooted involving massive purchases of armoured cars, planes and ships. The real sting comes of course when the Review soberly states that purchases of this magnitude would necessitate subsidies from NATO which Ireland would have to join.

The question of Ireland's membership

Last month the Jane's Defence Review published the most comprehensive analysis of the Free State Army to appear for several years. The Review is influential with senior military personnel in Western countries and can be taken as reflecting NATO thinking about the role of Ireland in the Western imperialist alliance. Its conclusions give an important insight into the evolution of Ireland's international relation.



Southern troops patrol border near Crossmagler

of NATO arose recently in the context of the Thatcher-Haughey talks. A defence pact between Britain and Ireland was suggested as part of the "special relationship" between the two countries. At the time, Haughey vehemently denied that this would involve entry into NATO. But he hedged behind the formula of "Ireland's commitment to defence of its European partners".

NATO LOBBY IN IRISH ARMY

NATO of course is the only realistic defence mechanism which the EEC has. It is not surprising therefore that behind the scenes the Irish Army has been gearing itself for joining this alliance. Several years ago, in a series of interviews with senior officers Conor Brady (Irish Times, March 3, '77) noted that "there is a strong NATO lobby (among Irish officers) which sees the present quasi-police phase as a necessary evil which they will be glad to see end". The

key feature of this so-called "police-phase" has been the building of an impressive arsenal of modern weapons modelled on NATO basic weapons. The command staff course was also reorganised to allow for training in "conventional warfare" ala NATO. For example, tactics up to divisional standard are studied although the Irish Army is not of divisional strength. In 1979 the FCA was divided off and the Army reorganised on a more professional basis.

All the evidence indicates a steady streamlining of the Army with European defence in mind. As Brady concluded, the Irish Army "is well trained, well officered and capable of adapting at short notice to a broader role such as would be required in NATO".

DANGER FOR WORKERS

A whole range of dangers which are of

concern to Irish workers and their allies arise from this gradual but relentless drift towards NATO membership.

In the last 10 years defence spending has increased by 800% and now stands at £450 m or 1.6% of GNP. To increase expenditure to a level where practical participation in NATO could become a reality would require trebling this figure. The foreign subsidies necessary would increase Ireland's dependence on imperialism and reinforce the neo-colonial nature of our economy.

The role of the officer corps in politics would be greatly enhanced. Up till now the fragmented and limited size of the Army command staff has deprived it of any coherent intervention in political life. For example, up to 1978 there was only one rank of General in the armed forces. Today this has already been increased to nine. Also the co-ordination and contact between land forces, navy and air force has been minimal.

In an army organised on conventional lines this would change significantly. The command staff would be enlarged and in closer liaison with army officers from colonel onwards currently earning up to £30,000 a year, this would constitute a coherent and socially privileged elite with a direct interest in the status quo.

Membership of NATO would mean Ireland becoming Britain's western shield against nuclear attack. The implication of this for Irish independence and unity is obvious. Membership of NATO would rapidly boil down to integration into the United Kingdom.

When the Free State entered the EEC, it committed itself to the aim of a common European Defence Policy. But the other EEC powers already have such a policy, shared with the USA through membership of NATO. The South of Ireland's foreign policy is said to be governed by the principle of neutrality. We must ask ourselves how long this can last in any meaningful sense if the trends we have revealed continue. One thing is certain: if political parties like Fine Gael, Labour and Fianna Fail remain dominant we will be tying our hands behind our backs. They have put us in danger of losing the very limited gains made through ending direct British control of the South in the 1920's.

The struggles for Irish Unity; against British imperialism; against the danger of nuclear war; are therefore linked in a very fundamental way by the threat of NATO membership. Such a disaster must be firmly resisted.

JAMES CONWAY

FUND DRIVE

Well, comrades and friends, its fund raising time again. Since we inaugurated the fund raising column over a year ago Socialist Republic has come out more regularly, expanded its coverage and increased its size. We want this improvement to continue. Your help will increase the possibility of success.

You can help, not only by buying and reading the paper regularly, but by making a regular contribution to the Fund Drive. We do not have the sponsorship through advertising provided to the capitalist newspapers which act as apologists for British rule in Ireland. We have no intention of being courted by the defenders of the Status Quo. As the name of the paper implies, our only appeal is to those who want to see the creation of a 32 County Workers and Small Farmers Government.

Making a financial contribution is as direct and as political a way of aiding the struggle as taking part in the H Block Campaign and other campaigns. This is specially relevant to readers of the paper outside Ireland.

Money can either be transferred direct into the account below from any bank or crossed cheques or money orders can be posted to us. Socialist Republic Editorial Board. Account No: 46613030, Allied Irish Banks, Waterloo Road, Dublin 4. A regular contribution through a Bankers Order would help us most of all.

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

CONNOLLY BOOKSHOP
Avoca Park, Andersonstown,
Belfast 11.
38 Clanawley Road, Killester,
Dublin 5.

be solved peacefully. The brief Sinn Fein revival based on the 1950's armed campaign had petered out due to lack of Northern support, and because of the Republicans' own lack of politics. There were few mass demonstrations at the time, fewer still confrontations with the Gardai. On this basis the Irish left began to recover from the traumas of the second inter-party government (1954-57) and forge a precarious unity in action. The high spot of this was probably the referendum campaign of 1968 to defend Proportional Representation (PR) against Fianna Fail efforts to introduce the straight vote. Even then, the national question was raising its head. In reaction, the Labour leaders pushed their party into coalition with Fine Gael, with a main aim of preventing the Northern troubles coming south. Although Noel Browne criticised coalition, he originally proposed it was not broad enough. He wanted an alliance of all people of goodwill behind the Lynch-collaborationist wing of Fianna Fail (!). He remained a loyal opponent of the Labour leaders and supported their campaign to expel members of the anti-coalition Socialist Labour Alliance (SLA). Once Browne was used, in turn, he was thrown aside.

Browne's opposition to Republicanism seems to date from his betrayal by the constitutional Republicans of Clann na Poblachta (over the Mother and Child scheme which was attacked by the Catholic Church hierarchy) and a dispute with Fianna Fail leader Sean MacEntee later on. Browne's theory of Irish political history is constructed in the following way: Republicanism is an undifferentiated bourgeois mass; it is not qualitatively different from Unionism; incidents like the Civil War and relentless Free State repression of Republicans are merely faction fights.

Worse still Browne's pacifism leads him to defend the constitutional wing of Republicanism against the physical force people. It would not be so irresponsible if he had not admitted that if he had been a teenager in an Ulster ghetto, he would have been in the Provos. He has never developed this insight into an analysis of how to solve the 6 County problem. Instead he denounces the Provos, upholds the Union and pleads for evolution towards Socialism in the semi-colonial South.

Despite his Socialist claims Browne is merely the far-left of the prevailing bourgeois consensus. In order to delude himself, he calls this consensus "Republicanism".

Despite his past record, Browne's present obsession with defeating the national struggle has eclipsed his interest in social reform. He is another sad example of how a Socialist who errs on this fundamental issue ends up serving the most conservative elements in Irish society. **RAYNER LYSAGHT AND PAUL HURLEY**