

GROWING DEMAND FOR SOCIALISM



The right wing Coalition of Garret Fitzgerald and Dick Spring got the massive rejection it deserves in the Southern local elections. This is particularly true in the urban areas where workers saw through the usual "promises" made by the desperate government parties before the election. In Dublin the Labour vote collapsed and the Fine Gael vote dropped to under 30%.

LOW TURNOUT

One of the most notable features of the election was that only 50% of voters even bothered to turn up at the polling stations. In some areas the turnout was as low as 35%. It just shows how much respect there is for the people who claim they can run the country when a bit of rain is enough to keep half the electorate away from the ballot box.

In fact a lot of people are saying there is no real difference between the two major parties — they are equally bad. The disillusionment can be seen by the fact that since 1969 no government has won two general elections in a row.

NO CHANGE

What does the swing to Fianna Fail mean for the

working class? Not much, for example, some lawyer explained on the radio a couple of weeks ago why he had invested his money in a fishing boat at a time when the fishing industry is in recession. He said "the boat makes £4,000 a week of which £1,000 goes on wages, £1,000 on expenses and the rest is profit". So while the six workers on the boat share £1,000 for doing all the work, the boss walks off with £2,000 for doing nothing. And that's in a recession!

Ask yourself, is this situation going to change if it is Fianna Fail or the Coalition who are in power?

SWING TO LEFT

So it's not surprising that the working class in urban areas took their votes away from the main parties in large numbers. In Dublin Corporation 20% of those who bothered to vote went for candidates who said they were socialists of one kind or another (Sinn Fein, Workers Party, left wing independents). The figure for Corporations throughout the 26 counties as a whole was 18.5%. Given that most of these got very little coverage on TV or radio, this represents a good sign

NOT REACHING OUT

When the present Government came to power, among one or two other irrelevancies, it was noted for being the first government to have nominated a Minister for Women's Affairs. The government pledged, true to its liberal heart, that it would do its utmost to improve things for Irish women. Yet the past two years have seen Nuala Fennell do precious little with her post.

Her latest offering is typical. You may have noticed in the past few months or so, a Radio and T.V. advertisement campaign backed up with posters publicising where single mothers can go for help, if in need of it. But don't be surprised if you didn't notice the "Reach Out" campaign. The Government after all put a meagre £10,000 into backing it, which as you can well imagine won't go very far. This in itself is bad enough but when the full scale of the problems facing single mothers are weighted up it can only be seen as a callous ploy to be seen to be doing something.

It's obvious that unless the whole stigma facing single mothers is challenged, then there are going to be more tragedies, such as the horrific death of Ann Lovett in Granard last year. But challenging this stigma would lead the government into a head on collision with the Catholic hierarchy whose Christian opinions on single mothers are notoriously thin on the ground. Neither Nuala Fennell nor Fine Gael could or would do this. Real action would necessitate breaking the control that the Catholic Church has over primary and secondary education in the South and beginning a full social and educational programme opposing the Catholic view on the family, contraception and abortion.

Clearly for Fine Gael (or any other Party for that matter) this is something to be avoided like the plague.

Deirdre Flynn

for the future. Almost one in five city and town dwellers are looking for radical change.

WORKERS CONTROL

But this is not the way to get rid of capitalism. Socialism is about the working class taking control and running society for the common good. You can't do this by just electing different people into power. Either control is held by a small minority or by the mass of people organised in workers and community councils. That is why the Workers Solidarity Movement urged you not to vote.

The strength of workers does not lie in putting numbers on a piece of paper every few years. It lies in our industrial muscle. By organisation and direct action in the workplace we can exercise our power to change the system and build a society which is controlled from the bottom up instead of from the top down. The choice is between a society run from the boardrooms and political chambers or one run from the factories, offices and housing estates.

Colin Daly

WORKERS SOLIDARITY

20p

PAPER OF THE WORKERS SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT

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BIGOTRY AND TERROR



The spectacle of RUC and British army soldiers blocking the route of Orange marches in Portadown was unusual. It was not done because the British ruling class finally decided to confront bigotry. It was a publicity stunt to make it seem the forces of the state are impartial.

Catholic homes were attacked by Orange mobs in Cookstown, Castlewelling, Ballymena and dozens of other areas during 'twelfth week'. Each time the RUC

were on the spot. The only arrests were for attacking their men. There were no arrests for intimidating people out of their homes.

These attacks are not some aberration and July is not a month of 'madness'. The Orange Order exists for only one reason — to turn Catholics and Protestants against each other. It is not some quaint cultural outfit, it is an organisation dedicated to hatred.

A long time ago the rich decided that dividing

the workers on sectarian lines would be a good way to keep them weak and loyal to their bosses. It worked for them. Northern Ireland has lower pay, more unemployment, worse housing and...a very weak working class.

The only way out of this is to reject all sectarianism. We need to rebuild the workers unity of the past. In 1907 they stood together to win the great docks strike. In 1932 unemployed Catholics and Pro-

testants fought together against the RUC. That unity was broken because there was no political movement that put the interests of the workers before all other interests. Our task is to show that anti-imperialism is essential, not because of any nationalist sentiment, but because imperialism divides workers and thus weakens their potential for changing society for the better. We want no republic other than the Workers Republic.

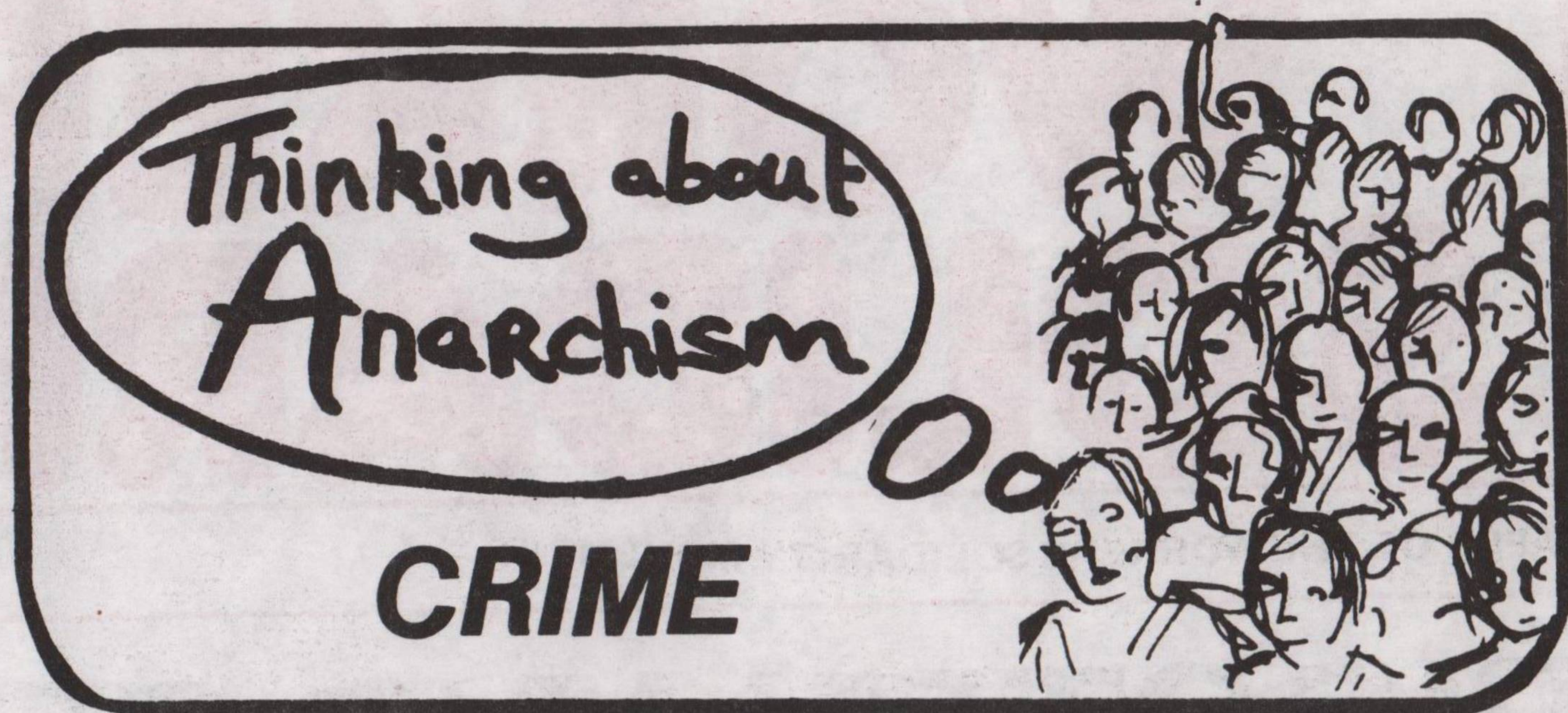
IRELAND'S ANARCHIST PAPER

In the past few months it has been nearly impossible to pick up a newspaper without criminals leaping out at you from the headlines. The way crime is reported would have you thinking we are being engulfed by a huge wave of criminality.

This sensational reporting has more to do with boosting circulation than with telling what is really happening. Garda figures show that last year there was actually a drop of 7% in the crime rate, the first such drop for five years. Still, behind the media hype, there is a real problem.

Crime does not just happen. Like everything else it has its causes. Much of it results from the set-up of capitalism, which is based on inequality. Anarchists are realistic enough to know that some level of crime is an inevitable product of the kind of society we live in. A system which allows 5% of the people to own 65% of the wealth while one million others live under the official poverty line.

No amount of new legislation or extra gardai will get rid of the problem. As fast as they lock up criminals society produces new ones. The way to deal with any problem is to tackle the causes. No gov-



ernment, no new law, no extra powers for the gardai can do this. Their role is to uphold the capitalist system, which breeds anti-social behaviour.

In an equal and self-governing society these institutions would serve no purpose. The government is more concerned with policing the have-nots than with seriously dealing with the causes of crime. The value of unpaid tax owed by the rich in 1982 was £334 million while the value of stolen property was £29 million. Nothing like the same amount of time, energy or resources is put into catching the tax evaders as is put into hunting down the common criminal.

Governments and their laws cannot prevent crime. They support the system

which produces it. They can only punish the criminal. The uselessness of this is seen in the fact that six out of every ten Irish prisoners have served time before, and nearly half of these have been in prison at least six times.

Only a token attempt is made at 'rehabilitation'. Prisons usually harden the inmate and create a criminal sub-culture.

In an anarchist society the vast majority of crimes, which stem from poverty and alienation, would disappear. 98% of crime is directed against property. Only 2% is solely against the person. This minority of crimes, such as crimes of passion, may still happen but probably less frequently.

They would be dealt with humanely, the per-

petrators being seen as in need of care rather than punishment.

We hold no illusions about the nature of crime. The victims are often those who can least afford it, the old and the less well off. The rich and powerful can afford to pay for special protection, security guards and complex alarms. The rest of us can't.

Yet we know that there will be no real or lasting solution until we overthrow the system that encourages the dog-eat-dog attitude. If stricter laws could do the job there would have been no crime in the days of hanging and transportation. It didn't work then and it won't now.

Gene Murphy

arabs to wipe each other out, but for the supposedly socialist Yugoslavia, arming both sides is simply a matter of good business sense.

Among the subjects discussed at the annual shareholders meeting of one of America's largest corporations, General Motors, was the profit returns from the company's operations in South Africa, where it provides a vital financial prop to the apartheid regime. Its a little surprising then, that among the institutions holding shares in General Motors are three catholic religious orders, the Franciscan Friars, the Dominican Sisters and the rather inappropriately named American Sisters of Charity.

Shock figures showing that

10% of the British population are believed to be criminals have been released. The Police National Computer has been used extensively to criminalise miners, Irish people, trade union activists, black people and members of socialist organisations.

Special police units have had to be set up in Pakistan to smash gangs smuggling Bangladeshi women into the country and selling them as slaves.



THAT'S CAPITALISM

The *Washington Times* is a daily newspaper with a circulation of about 80,000. It is owned by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church (known as the 'moonies').

Recently it started a campaign to raise 14 million dollars in "humanitarian aid" for the Contra mercenaries attacking Nicaragua. The Contras are trying to overthrow the Sandinista government by terrorism. They murder school children, gang rape women and launch vicious raids on border towns.

A US government investigation in 1978 found clear

links between the Moonie Church, the South Korean government and the South Korean CIA. Rev. Moon is currently in an American prison for tax fraud.

After five years, the war between Iran and Iraq, which has left hundreds of thousands dead, continues to be sustained with an endless supply of weapons from governments, friendly and otherwise. In fact, some governments are so friendly they've been supplying both sides. Top of the league in this activity are Israel and Yugoslavia. Israel has its own reasons for helping

ONE YEAR ON STRIKE



July 19th saw the Dunnes strikers enter their second year on the picket line. There is massive support, no strike in Ireland has ever been so popular. So why are they no nearer a victory than the day when they first walked out.

Public support is a great thing to have but it is not the most important factor in winning strikes. Solidarity action is. Everyone from the Catholic church to young Fine Gael to the Workers Party is full of praise for the strikers. They

should be. But words of praise won't move Ben Dunne.

Some of the careerists who pass themselves off as leaders of the unions are even slow with their empty words of praise. It took the Irish Congress of Trade Unions eight months before they even made a statement. At their recent conference they sounded radical with their call for a boycott of all Dunnes shops. Unfortunately they intend to do nothing to make it happen. It is only a bit of rhetoric to let them gloss

over their total inactivity.

The strikers need more support on the picket, they need blacking of deliveries, they need sympathy action from other branches of Dunnes. A whole year has gone by. The union officials have not tried to build support for such tactics. Immediately IDATU should start working for action, if they won't take on the task the strike committee should call on all its supporters to get together to build a campaign of solidarity. The WSM will give all the help it can to such an initiative.

JOE'S GAS

The decision to 'nationalise' Cork Gas was welcomed in strange and varied quarters. Strangest amongst them was ITGWU official, Joe O'Callaghan. During his election campaign for Cork Corporation, O'Callaghan, who until recently was a member of the Administrative Council of the Labour Party, expressed his delight at the 'nationalisation' and called on the government to bring the staffing levels back up to what they had been before the recent redundancies at the company.

This ranks as sheer hypocrisy. To begin with, the

company hasn't been nationalised at all. The government not only paid two thirds of the market value of the company, they also took on the debts of over £9 million. But worse still is that Joe O'Callaghan, as secretary of the union branch involved at Cork Gas, is himself mostly to blame for the redundancies in the first place. Only strike action could have saved the jobs at Cork Gas, and although strike ballots were carried by a substantial majority, O'Callaghan instructed his assistant to negotiate a deal that finally resulted in the

redundancy figure being lowered from 85 to 79, five of which were compulsory, and this was hailed as a momentous victory for the workers.

It was only after the company had been 'rationalised' that the government was prepared to step in, so any talk now of re-employing the redundant workers is at best fanciful, and in O'Callaghan's case, nothing short of criminal.

Peter Sullivan.



WAGES SNATCH!

A worker was jailed because his boss wouldn't pay wages. Staff employed to redecorate Westons restaurant in Dublin's Dame Street were refused their pay after completing the job. The employer, Stephen Dooley, had no complaints about the standard of work. He simply thought he could pull a fast one by holding on to the final weeks wages.

The three workers responded by occupying the restaurant and picketing his other business, Print Point. He got a court order. The gardai arrested one of the occupiers and carted him off to Mountjoy.

It is clear that this situation would not have arisen if they had been union members. For all their faults the unions are necessary and everyone should join one. It is also clear whose side the courts and gardai are on. The employer was not arrested for theft. A worker was jailed for the crime of wanting to be paid for his work.

WSM MEETING

CORK: Every Thursday at 8 p.m. in the Quay Co-op, 24 Sullivans Quay.

August 1st
Poland's Solidarity Union

August 8th
The Role of the Church

August 15th
Politics of Rock Music

August 22nd
The Spanish Civil War

DUBLIN: Every Tuesday at 8 p.m. at the Resource Centre, 6 Crow St., (off Dame Street).

August 6th
The Belfast Police Strike of 1907

August 13th
Is Russia Socialist?

August 20th
Can we fight unemployment

August 27th
The Churches in the North

The rising fortunes of Sinn Fein, and the Loyalist backlash, have once again focused attention on the North. The bitterly sectarian nature of Loyalism is there for all to see. But the rise of Sinn Fein is also opening up a debate on how we can go about getting rid of the border. Below we look at the nature of the Northern State and show that partition was, and still is, in the interests of the British and Irish ruling classes and that only by basing ourselves on the working class and arguing for a real socialist alternative can we win.

Partition did not just happen, nor was it a matter of keeping different religions apart. Partition made good economic sense to the bosses and it reflected the uneven economic development of the country at the time.

As a British colony Ireland could not be allowed to offer any real economic competition to Britain. The economy of the country was run to suit the interests of the British. Thus in the 17th Century laws were passed by the English government which discriminated against Irish trade.

THE NORTH EAST

Industrialisation in the North-East of the country was initially based on the linen industry which did not threaten any British industry. That it was able to develop in the North-East was due to the plantations of the 17th Century. Large tracts of land were handed over to English landlords and adventurers. They were given these lands unconditionally and tended to stock them with animals.

In the North-East however, lands were entrusted to 'undertakers' who were required to bring over English and Scottish settlers to colonise the province. These Presbyterian colonists who settled in Ulster came from areas of small scale independent commodity farming and weaving. Many brought with them their small capital savings and basic skills in linen manufacture.

ENGINEERING

Other factors which allowed industry to develop in the North East included the fact that the Belfast area had abundant water power and a good harbour. Also at the end of the 18th century the shortlived cotton industry which was centred around Belfast provid-

ed a model for the re-organisation of the linen industry using machines. An engineering industry grew up based on the maintenance of these machines.

SHIPBUILDING

In the 1850's, it became cheaper to build ships from iron rather than wood. Belfast was in an ideal position to benefit from this change. It had available land, a deep water harbour and an enterprising Harbour Commission. Again from this new industry other supplementary industries sprung up. In all of this the access these industries had to British markets was of key importance. The Irish home market was too small and even in the 18th century the linen industry relied on the English market for its further expansion. Likewise shipbuilding, which by 1915 employed one quarter of the male labour force in Ulster, depended on exports for its survival.

THE SOUTH

In the South the picture was very different. The plantations had left a situation where the land was owned by absentee English landlords who let their lands at a fixed rate to resident middle-men who sublet the rest of it in very small holdings to the peasants. The peasant had no security of tenure and could be evicted at any time at the whim of the landlord or his agent.

In this situation the linen industry failed to establish itself in the South because of the lack of skilled weavers and the lack of capital to invest in manufacture. Of course the major factor was that Irish agriculture was highly specialised to meet the needs of the British economy. Basically this meant con-

WHY IRELAND IS PARTITIONED

centrating on the production of foodstuffs.

PARTITION

When partition occurred it reflected this uneven economic development. It was in the interests of the bosses in the North to remain part of Britain. The North depended on Britain for its new capital, its



raw materials, its trade and markets. On the contrary, the South's industrial development had hardly begun and was having a hard time starting in the face of British competition. The interests of Irish capitalism demanded an independent Irish government with the power to impose tariffs on foreign imports in order to protect its infant industries. This is what Sinn Fein stood for.

This demand for protectionism was dramatically opposed to the economic interests of the Northern capitalists.

Unfortunately Protestant workers also saw their interests tied up with the maintenance of the link with Britain. For them, a united capitalist Ireland breaking from Britain would mean job losses and thus lower standards of living. The bosses understood and

Catholic minority. In all of this the Unionist bosses were supported by the British ruling class. They feared the spread of protectionism in the empire and knew that a divided working class could be more easily dominated.

After partition the North became truly a 'Protestant State for a Protestant People'. Privileges were handed out to Protestants in the form of jobs and houses. Proportional representation was abolished and gerrymandering was such that even in a city like Derry, where Catholics formed 63% of the population, the unionists controlled the local council.

Everywhere it was made clear that the interests of the Protestant workers lay with the Protestant bosses. These owned the factories and made sure that only Protestants were employed in them. Protestants were given nearly all the jobs in the Unionist run civil service.

This was all managed through the Ulster Unionist Council, an umbrella organisation including Unionist Party branches and the Orange Lodges. It was all backed up by the Special Powers Act which allowed for internment. Then there was the armed RUC and B Specials to implement this law.

THE SOUTH

Down South partition had favoured those big farmers and ranchers, represented by Cumann na nGael, who did not want protectionism as they depended on exporting cattle for their survival. They wanted to stop the struggle for independence at this stage because they feared its transformation in a social upheaval. In the thirties Fianna Fail which represented the small farmers and capitalists who did want protectionism came to power. They set about raising tariff barriers. This policy, as is well known, was a complete failure, the only result of it being emigration to Britain.

In the sixties these policies were abandoned for policies aimed at attracting foreign multinationals. That is still the policy today.

A similar change occurred in the North. Its industrial base was narrow, and failure to diversify meant that its economy was vulnerable. Between 1949 and 1969 120,000 jobs were lost in the three main industries. So in the six counties there was also a turn to foreign firms. Thus by 1974 44% of all manufacturing employment was created by 24 subsidiaries of British or American corporations.

CIVIL RIGHTS

When the Civil Rights Movement appeared, it was based on the Catholic middle classes' demand to participate as equals with the Protestants. This middle class had been created by the intervention of those foreign firms whose employment policies were not controlled by the Unionists. Also the post war Welfare State had made it possible for Catholics to go to universities.

The point is that the Civil Rights Movement had not set out to smash the Northern state. It sought reforms only. Some were conceded but only after Catholics had been batoned off the streets and the British Army had intervened. This intervention was not in order to protect the Catholics as is often stated, but to protect the status quo. The RUC had lost control and order had to be re-established.

SECTARIAN

Fundamentally the Northern State is still sectarian. The Orange card is still used to divide workers. Catholics still suffer from discrimination, and they are still being batoned off the streets, shot at or imprisoned. Economically its no longer profitable for Britain to stay but it will not leave until stability can be ensured and at the moment the ruling class of Britain

and Ireland cannot ensure this. So the policy is one of repression against anti-imperialists North and South.

We are against partition because of the effect that it has had on the Irish working class. It has led to, as Connolly predicted, a 'carnival of reaction' both North and South. The only way that it can be overcome is through working class unity and socialism. Not the working class unity of the Workers Party which denies the importance of the border and calls for unity on 'bread and butter' issues. The WP believes that the Orange state can be reformed. They want a Bill of Rights to protect the rights of Catholics. They want the sectarian RUC and UDR to ensure that this bill of rights is implemented. How naive?

SINN FEIN

But on the other hand Sinn Fein do not even care about workers unity. They rightly understand that the Northern State must be smashed but to them, the getting rid of the border comes before winning socialism. Thus they seek alliances with the SDLP and sections of Fianna Fail. Their central slogan is 'One Nation One People'. They do not accept that class is the central division in society. Thus their appeal is exclusively Catholic and nationalist.

Connolly was right when he ascertained that the struggle for national freedom could only be successful as part of the struggle for socialism. He pointed to the need for working class leadership in the national struggle and indeed it was the lack of such a leadership that provided the unionist bosses with a mass base from which to mount opposition to independence.

UNITY

Almost 40,000 Protestant workers had shown through the 1919 Engineering Strike that they could take on their Unionist bosses but without independent working class politics in the struggle against Britain there was little likelihood of northern workers economic mil-

itancy turning into political opposition to British rule.

Workers in the north have also shown that they can unite as they did in the 1932 Outdoor Relief Strike. The unity that was forged was undermined by the fact that the Orange bosses could distribute concrete privileges to Protestants and thus encourage the re-emergence of sectarianism.

SOCIALISM

But to some extend their ability to do this has changed. Industry, and thus the control of jobs, is no longer owned by native Presbyterians. As in the South foreign firms are in control. Also allocation of housing and welfare is more centralised and less controlled by local bigoted councils. This is not to say that sectarianism does not exist but to point out that there are new possibilities.

The key is in the South. A determined working class anti-imperialist movement is the only guarantee of the end of partition. Why should we fight for anything less than socialism. For workers there is little to be gained from spreading what is in the 26 counties to the six. What we fight for is not to take away from Protestants and give to Catholics but for more of everything — houses, jobs, education — and socialism is the only guarantee that they will be provided. By going forward on this basis can we deprive the Unionists of the mass base which was used to force a compromise sixty years ago.

This is what the Workers Solidarity Movement is fighting for. We don't see workers unity as something abstract for the sake of which we give up all anti-imperialist struggle in the here and now. We fight against repression North and South and do not pander to reactionary Protestant or Catholic ideas, but at the same time we say that only the working class can unite this country, as they are the only people with anything to gain, and only through socialism can the country be united.

Eddie Conlon

JOIN THE WSM

The world's wealth is produced by us — the working class. We ought to enjoy its benefits.

The WORKERS SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT wants to abolish the existing system of capitalism, where the bosses get the profits and the workers get the blame. We want to build a new society based on workers' direct control and socialism. Not the farce called "socialism" practiced in Russia, Cuba and other police states!

We want a completely different type of system — one without bosses or bureaucrats. A society run in a truly democratic way through workers councils, assemblies and delegates, a society run by working people in their own interests. We want to abolish all authoritarian relationships and replace them with control from the bottom up instead of from the top down.

We oppose coercive authority, and believe the only limit on the freedom of the individual should be that they don't encroach on the freedom of others.

The WSM is not made up of idle dreamers. We are active in many fields of practicable struggle: for better wages and union democracy, for women's rights, for jobs.

The WSM also fights against divisions in the working class. We oppose all attempts to set men against women workers, skilled against unskilled, old against young, Protestant against Catholic.

As we want a society managed by working people themselves, we organise in a like manner. We do not set ourselves up as all-knowing leaders. We argue for strikes to run by an elected strike committee and general meetings of the workers, not by the full-time official. Local issues should be taken up by a democratic tenants' associations, not by a couple of self-appointed "community leaders". Our unions should be run by regular workplace and branch meetings open to all the members, not be a handful of over-powerful bureaucrats.

The role of the WSM is to support struggles that improve the conditions of working people, to show that the roots of our problems lie in capitalism, to popularise rank and file activity and organisation, and to explain the anarchist idea.

I want more information about the WSM.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

Return this form to WSM. P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8.

Impartial?

Bob Clarke has just been appointed as a Rights Commissioner. In this job we are supposed to believe that he will give impartial judgments on unfair dismissal cases and trade disputes that don't involve pay.

Clark runs a private consultancy firm which helps bosses to get the upper hand in negotiations with unions. Before this he spent 25 years as a personnel director for Irish Industrial Gases and Brooks Thomas. This bosses' advisor was appointed by Labour Party Minister Ruairi Quinn.

CORK ELECTS ...MURPHY

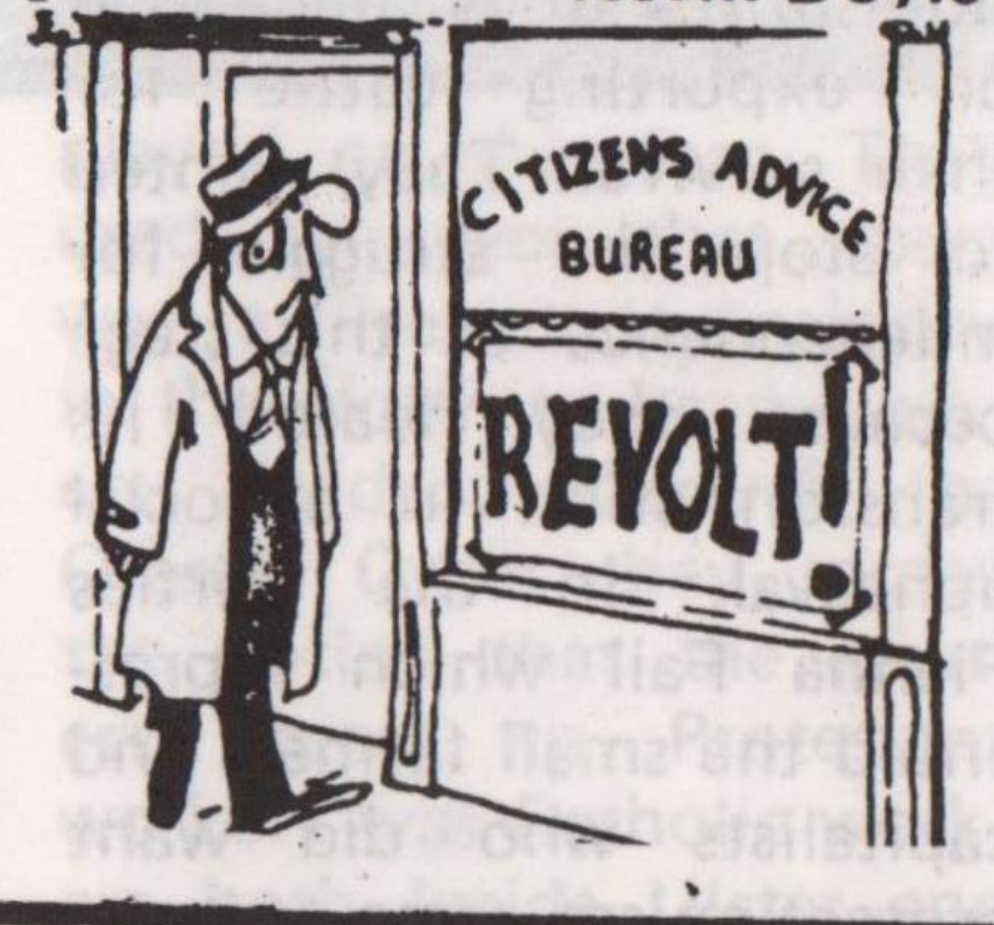


"They have all our money, the least they could do is save our lives". Such was the response of Cork City's newest council member, Bernard Murphy, when he was asked whether or not he supported the Government cutbacks in the hospitals and the health service just after his triumph in the recent local elections. Murphy, a self-confessed sandwich-boardman and 'character', renowned for his 'foulmouth' on the streets of Cork came second in the first preferences vote count and finally ended up beating a former Lord Mayor to a seat in the Council chambers. His success left many Cork politicians with alternating red and green faces depending on whether they were feeling embarrassed or envious.

His success was not such a surprise though. After all Bernard Murphy stood for election on the basis of absurdity. In a city that has lost thousands of jobs with no end yet in sight, he invited people to give Cork back its 'character'. His election campaign culminating as it did with a 'mass rally' on the night prior to the elections played on the contempt many people held those elections in. It wasn't a complete shock then that he coasted home — contempt is a penny a pound when it comes to elections these days.

Yet Murphy is no solution to the problems. He along with the low poll countryside is a sign of the times. Many people clearly recognise that there is no alternative being offered in the electoral system. That Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Labour are just three names for the same thing — the status quo. Clearly also many are tired of those who only want to take their place, the likes of the Workers Party and Sinn Fein. What then is the alternative? Elect Bernard Murphy as Taoiseach? Definitely not. Rather than put another clown in that position, it would be far better to get rid of this farce that passes for a democracy altogether and put in its place a real democracy where everyone can have their say through workplace and community councils.

Kevin Doyle



The alternative is workers relying on their own strength to take industrial action, and the solidarity of other workers prepared to support them.

The Labour Court, Rights Commissioners and all the other conciliation institutions, are not impartial. The cards are stacked against the workers. They were set up to sidetrack union militancy into a cul-de-sac of polite discussion. More often than not the findings are in favour of the employers.

The bosses' friend COMPANY UNIONISM



Down in Shannon it has been known for the ITGWU to get sole negotiation rights for new industries before the factories are even built! Arranged through the IDA it happens because the union officials can convince the new bosses they will be able to provide a 'trouble free' union. Something worse has been growing across the water and may soon be tried here.

COMPANY UNIONISM

'Company Unionism' has been provided by the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (AUEW) in both Ireland and Britain. Company unionism refers to the sweet-heart deals and no-strike agreements between employers and union officials, which has become the norm in Amer-

ica. The trail blazers in Britain are the AUEW and the electricians union, the EETPU. The latest deal was struck with the Japanese car firm, Nissan, who are about to open a plant in the North East of England.

Nissan invited the unions to submit their terms for sole negotiating rights at the factory, and when the bureaucrats had finished grovelling, the AUEW was awarded the contract. Although the union denies it, the deal amounts to a no-strike agreement since all disputes will automatically go to 'arbitration'. The union has also agreed to 'flexibility and mobility of all labour within the plant' which means no demarcation between trades. In return, the AUEW will be the only recognised

union, although a closed shop will not be accepted by Nissan.

The AUEW were not alone in the 'talent contest' for negotiating rights at Nissan. Three other unions competed with them, including the TGWU, whose Irish section is the ATGWU.

£18 DROP

Faced with dwindling union membership, the bureaucrats are attempting to boost numbers by wheeling and dealing with the employers, rather than by launching a recruitment campaign which would explain the advantages and merits of belonging to a trade union. But that would go against the grain for most union officials, who see themselves as running a business rather than

leading workers in their struggles against employers. When the EETPU was working out a deal with the television manufacturers, Sanyo, the union boasted of its record of avoiding strikes. Now the workers at the factory in Suffolk earn £18 a week below the average for the industry.

Although the EETPU and the AUEW are the most blatant of the new company unions, they are not alone and could be joined by many more unions which are responding to declining membership and funds by attempting to stamp out militancy so as to save strike pay and in an endeavour to present a moderate image to the employers, most of whom prefer a tame union to none at all, so as to channel discontent through the union apparatus, confident in the ability of the bureaucrats to extinguish any spark of militancy.

Company unionism leads inevitably to a decline in working conditions and living standards, and must be stopped in its tracks. This can only be done by rank and file union members, particularly those in the AUEW and EETPU raising the issue with other union members and at branch meetings, and by beginning the slow task of organising independently of the officials so as to wrest control from their corrupt hands.

Dominic Carroll



Politicians hit in jobs fight

A novel form of industrial action has been taken by members of the Local Government & Public Services Union in Dublin County Council. It doesn't affect anyone except politicians.

With re-organisation of the County Council into three new bodies and an increase in councillors from 36 to 78, the union branch demanded that more staff be taken on in the departments that have to service the councillors.

Liam Kavanagh, Labour Party Minister responsible, promised to get in touch before any changes were made. That was before the elections, since then nothing has been heard from him. Local management gave the game away when they admitted that not only was there to be no increase in staff to deal with the new work, but that 5% of the Council jobs were to be scrapped over the next three years.

As a result the union branch decided not to cooperate in any way with the Council reorganisation and not to do any work involved in any way with the servicing of any councillor. One of the immediate effects will be a great shortage of those "through my representations I have got you a house/pot holes have been filled in/street lights fixed" letters that come through the letter box.

Incidentally they rarely

do anything except have a look at the housing list or work orders and then claim that whatever is being done is because of their "representations".

This fight for jobs is a step forward. It is not just a defensive battle to hang onto what they have. They are fighting for jobs for the unemployed. Workers in other parts of the public service should put their heads together and see if they can use a similar tactic against the job-cutting politicians.