

REAGANS 'SOLIDARITY' EXPOSED

One of the myths peddled by the Workers Party and other Stalinists in Ireland is that Russia and the Eastern Block countries are a living example of socialism. In reality they're State Capitalist police states. Anyway, the Stalinists are adamant, and are even prepared to argue that the Hungarian, East German and all the other uprisings in the Warsaw Pact countries were 'counter revolutionary attempts to restore capitalism'. It's this distorted logic that lay behind the refusal of the Workers Party to support the Polish trade union, Solidarity. To back up this line, they pointed to the 'support' given to Solidarnosc by Reagan and Thatcher. Of course, genuine socialists had no trouble in exposing the kind of hypocrisy you'd expect from these two union bashers in their attempts to keep the cold war at freezing

point. And now further proof of Reagan's cynical opportunism has surfaced. It seems that during Solidarity's heyday, the CIA had a high ranking Polish army officer in their pay. Two months before Martial Law was imposed, the 'socialist' Colonel defected, and passed the plans for the military clamp-down on Solidarity to, yes, you've guessed it, Ronnie Reagan. But rather than sound the alarm, Reagan said nothing. And why? Because behind all the rhetoric, Reagan and Thatcher could see what the Workers Party refused to see; that the 10 million strong Solidarity was born out of genuine grievances and represented a challenge against the existing order where a small minority live on the backs of the overwhelming majority. In the 'West' that minority is the boss-class; in the 'East', it's the Party. Had Solidarity

gone all the way and overthrown the government, the idea would have caught on all over the place. And that's

the last thing Reagan wanted, not to mention the Workers Party.

Spanish Union Attacked

SIX members of the CNT-U (an anarchist trade union in Spain) were arrested in November 1984 accused of various offences, most importantly an attack on Jesus Casanova who is a director of the Mitchelin tyre factory in Vittoria, the Basque Country, where four of them worked.

The trials are seen as an attempt to discredit the CNT-U which is the biggest union in the factory so it is expected they will be held in the Autumn to coincide with the national elections to the works committees. These committees negotiate with the management, each union in the workplace puts forward members for election to them.

The prosecution has already asked for sentences which amount of 107 years

in jail for the six men. Yet the only evidence are the confessions signed by the men under torture when they were held under Spain's anti-terrorist laws. As a result about 70% of the original charges had to be dropped.

The CNT-U in Vittoria had to find 3.17 million pesetas (about £18,000) for bail and are now in debt to the tune of 2 million pesetas. They are appealing for money to conduct the men's defence and for observers to attend the trials.

Money can be sent to Marcelo de la Torre, Caja Provincial de Alava, Cuenta No. 214 1216, Vittoria, Spain.

More information (in Spanish) from Apto de Correos 1506, Vittoria, Spain.

Source: Spanish Information Network.

JOIN THE WSM

The worlds 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 womens 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 them-

selves, we organise in a like manner. We do not set ourselves up as allknowing 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 by 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.

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WORKERS SOLIDARITY

20p

PAPER OF THE WORKERS SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT

NO. 19 JULY-AUGUST 1986

SOLIDARITY AGAINST APARTHEID

Apartheid, sooner or later, is finished. Even South Africa's racist president, PW Botha knows that much. If further proof were needed of the determination and strength of the black working class, it was shown by the general strikes on May Day and on the day commemorating the Soweto Uprising when millions of workers stayed at home.

But Botha has clearly signalled that the white minority won't give up without a fight and their fire-power shouldn't be underestimated.

We can expect the brutality to be stepped up because there's no prospect of a peaceful solution to the turmoil and no possibility of 'reforming' the apartheid state. A quick glance at history, from Russia in 1917 to Spain in 1936 and Chile in 1973 reveals all too clearly that no ruling group has ever given up its privileged position without first resorting to all the force at its disposal.

COSATU and other workers' organisations in South Africa are pleading for ef-

fective economic sanctions. Thatcher says she is against sanctions no matter who they are aimed at, this 'principle' didn't arise during the Falklands War when she imposed them on Argentina. Reagan says they won't work, if he really believes that why has he forced all the US oil companies to pull out of Libya? Of course, for these, it is just an excuse to protect their business interests.

Fitzgerald and Spring aren't entirely innocent either. Look at the way they

dragged their feet during the Dunnes strike. Now they have turned down a request from the Anti-Apartheid Movement to ban a delegation from South Africa attending the World Computer Congress in Dublin this September. Computers are central to maintaining the apparatus of apartheid, such as the racial classification system and the Defence Forces.

The only real chance of effective measures to isolate

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IRELAND'S ANARCHIST PAPER

"HUMAN nature being what it is, you could never have an anarchist society — not one in which both individual freedom and co-operation exist anyway". How often have people fighting for real change heard statements like that?

It is constantly put to you that people are naturally short-sighted, selfish, apathetic or prone to violence, and are incapable of creating anything better than the present mess we live in.

The idea that there is some abstract and eternally flawed 'human nature' that we can't do much about gets plenty of plugging from the churches and others with an interest in the present set-up. But for anarchists the way people behave reflects the type of environment they find themselves in, and not the after effects of some mythical original sin.

PROFITS

The reason selfishness and self-centred behavior are so common is because we live in a society where in order to succeed or even survive people must take part in a system of ruthless competition for jobs, money, etc. Aparthy is the result of the



lack of power which most of us have over our own lives. War, crime and poverty all have their roots in the system which puts the accumulation of profits before all else, rather than in some undefined 'human nature'.

SOLIDARITY

Yet in spite of all the madness of the capitalist system human beings remain social animals (otherwise any form of society would be impossible). When people are motivated they show themselves to be capable of tremendous acts of solidarity, such as during the miners strike in Britain or even the huge public response towards

the victims of famine in Africa. Although charities like Band-Aid and Live-Aid failed to tackle the root causes of world hunger, they did show that the mass of people are not 'naturally' or irredeemably selfish.

However it is during periods of mass struggle that the most striking changes in the every day attitudes of people take place. One example is the way in which the previously hostile attitudes of many British miners changed towards gays after some gay groups supported the miners by fundraising and picketing during the strike.

Faced with the struggle against the ruling class, if

we are to win, we must act as a class rather than as individuals and must strive to involve as many people as possible. It is through struggle that we learn the value of group action and co-operation, thereby laying the basis for a new kind of society.

It is the struggle for a better world that creates the spirit of solidarity and the attitudes necessary for an anarchist society to exist. It is this that makes a new society possible and is why no small elite or conspiracy can make the revolution. An anarchist society can only be created by the activity of masses of ordinary working people.

Greg Ryan

people willing to adopt, the number of applications to adoption societies far exceeds the number of 'illegitimate' children available as about 80% of single parents now opt to keep their child.

But Catholic law, which is written into civil law, says

the children can never be adopted and must remain institutionalised.



...continued from front page

the South African government is for workers to follow the lead of the Dunnes Stores strikers and a host of other unions around the world. In other words, direct action in the form of protests and industrial action. If people in South Africa are left waiting for Fitzgerald and Co. to help them in their struggle, they'll be waiting for ever.

Dominic Carroll

* Four members of the Cork Branch of the Anti-

Apartheid Movement were arrested recently whilst making a collection for striking workers in South Africa. They're due to appear in court in July for collecting without a permit. So much for Fitzgerald's 'concern' about apartheid.

* Join the Anti-Apartheid rally outside Trinity College, Dublin on Monday September 1st to protest at the presence of a South African delegation at the World Computer Congress being held there.

THAT'S CAPITALISM

Nothing illustrates the distorted priorities of capitalism better than the world of advertising. Even so, Pepsi-Cola's forthcoming promotional campaign is set to scale new heights of absurdity. They've signed up pop mega-star Michael Jackson to do three adverts, lasting 90 seconds, for a fee of 15 million dollars. This will add to Jackson's personal fortune of more than 200 million dollars. The final cost to Pepsi for filming and screening the ad's will be 50 million dollars. But they'll have no trouble finding the cash. Between them, Pepsi and Coca-Cola sell 65 billion dollars worth of the black

stuff every year. That's about six and a half thousand times more than was raised by 'Live Aid'. Craziest of all is that Jackson doesn't even drink Pepsi. It's against his religion.

Ireland, along with Iran and Iraq, are the only countries in the world which do not allow the adoption of abandoned 'legitimate' children — even when the natural parents give consent.

As a result around 250 children are in foster care and up to another 700 are in health board institutions on a long term basis. There is no shortage of

DIVORCE...WHAT WENT WRONG?

Anybody with a progressive idea in their head will have been dismayed by the result of the divorce referendum. The Catholic Church has once again asserted itself and shown that it still wields a hell of a lot of power.

To some extent this power has been underestimated. It was genuinely felt that slowly (very slowly) the church was losing its grip. It lost on contraception and on a number of smaller issues but now it has shown what it is capable of. In some ways divorce was a last stand. If the church lost those with progressive ideas could push forward but if it won it could go on the offensive and begin to roll back the small gains that have been won.

DEFEAT

The defeat was not unexpected. As the campaign progressed it was clear that the anti side were getting the upper hand. What was shocking was the extent of the defeat. A large majority in favour of divorce had been turned into a huge one against it.

There were many reasons for this. Fianna Fail weighing in with the church while Fine Gael and Labour were unable to mobilise their supporters. In many areas political expediency came before taking up an unpopular issue and challenging the power of the Bishops. The Progressive Democrats hardly had a campaign.

FEAR

The fear generated about the position of women. Suddenly the right became a 'champion' for women. (We look forward to seeing them supporting women fighting low wages and poverty in the future.) Unfortunately their arguments about women were not really answered. There was no significant feminist response (except for one public meeting in Dublin)

to the lies about women being impoverished. Most feminists along with many socialists abstained from the campaign. Somehow they did not see the issue as relevant. Where do these people live?

DAG

The lack lustre campaign run by the Divorce Action Group (DAG) got bogged down in a lot of legal mumbo jumbo instead of pushing much harder the idea that divorce was a basic civil right. DAG failed to appeal to most working class people. Being liberals and mostly middle class they were incapable of doing this. Their contempt for ordinary people was revealed after the vote when they said that the Irish people had disgraced themselves.

The Anti-Divorce Campaign stuck to simple messages and came across as the people really concerned about the plight of separated women. Ultimately though it was the moral authority of the bishops that won out.

RELIGION

It could be pointed out that in times of recession people swing to the right. But here we are dealing with something much more basic. The church controls education. Its influence spreads into many spheres of Irish life. In many ways the Catholic religion gives meaning to peoples lives. It helps them make sense of a cruel world. In times of recession this takes on an even greater importance.

But all is not gloomy and even in the defeat there are good signs for the future. If we look at the results of this poll and the results of the abortion referendum we can see that in certain areas there is a consistent vote against the church. Large areas of Dublin have turned in anti-church majorities in both polls.

This is a good base to build from. It can be used to resist the attacks that are bound to follow. They will be small local attacks (such as non-religious teachers being forced to teach religion, dismissals of single pregnant teachers and gays working in jobs like childcare) but each one must be fought tooth and nail.

We were dismayed by the attitude of some of the left. We also believe that the lack of any real participation by Sinn Fein raises fundamental questions about their swing to the left. All the lefty rhetoric in the world is worthless if a campaign for a basic democratic right is not taken seriously. The left must seek con-

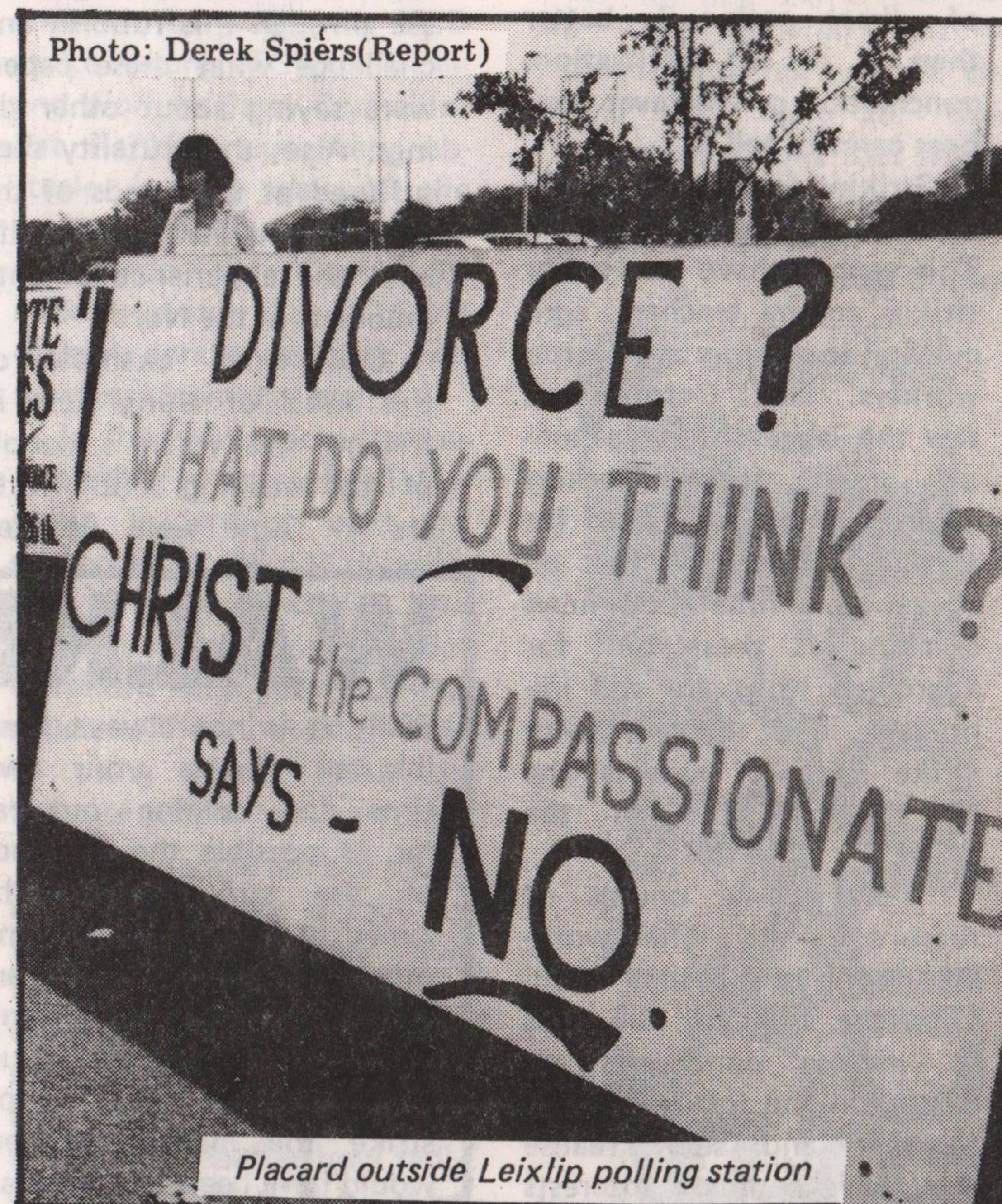


Photo: Derek Spiers(Report)

Placard outside Leixlip polling station

THE WORKERS SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT was actively involved in the campaign for divorce. We leafleted, postered and canvassed on the doorsteps. We produced our own pamphlet outlining the Anarchist view on marriage and the family. Some copies are still available for 50p (incl. p&p) from the WSM address.

Unlike most of the left we did not abstain. We understand that divorce is a fundamental civil right which will make a real difference to many people. We also recognise that wherever possible the power of the clergy must be challenged and weakened.

flict with the church and through the small local struggles expose the bankruptcy of it. In every area the right of priests and nuns to run tenants and community groups can be challenged. It will be through struggles like this that people will be broken from the clergy and given the confidence to take on the church on the larger issues.



Eddie Conlon

STRIKING BACK

A CENTRAL tenet of anarchism has always been that workers organised on the job have tremendous muscle that can and should be used not only to win short term demands but to overthrow capitalism and replace it with socialism. Anarchists have always said that a small amount of direct action is better than a lot of arbitration, conciliation or whatever your boss cares to call it.

Striking is the most common form of direct action. This year we have seen major strikes among teachers, agricultural inspectors and Corpo workers. Last October we saw the biggest stoppage among public sector workers when they all came out for a day. Of course not all strikes are as dramatic or news catching as these but, for anarchists, they are still important and that is why strike support work is one of the priorities of the WSM.

There are a couple of reasons for this. When workers go on strike they challenge the right of the boss to impose conditions on them. On the job they band together and soon realise they have common interests which are opposed to those of the boss.

COMMON INTERESTS

They also realise that to win they must involve other workers who either work in their job or in a supplier firm. The lesson is learnt that to win the solidarity of other workers is needed. Thus they begin to see they have common class interests.

Secondly strikes are important in that they help to change ideas. Once you come up against the system you begin to realise that it does not serve your interests but those of the boss class.

A good example of how ideas can change was during the British miners strike.

Many of the miners used to read the tabloids like the *SUN* and the *STAR* prior to the strike and believe the nonsense they were fed about the Irish and what was going on in the North. When they saw the lies these papers were telling about their strike they began to see through this rubbish and challenge what these papers were saying about other things. Also, the brutality they suffered at the hands of the cops helped them to identify with the experience of anti-unionists in the North.

One small example of this kind of thing here in Ireland was when a couple of the striking ESB workers in Cork were arrested

under Section 30 of the Offences Against the State Act. They began to challenge the idea that the law is somehow impartial. In the same vein, when the teachers read the rubbish printed about them in the papers some had to think about how true was the reporting of other workers' struggles.

FEAR

Strikes that bring victories, no matter how small, are especially important these days. With mass unemployment has come a climate of fear. Fear that taking action may put your job in jeopardy. Thus the possibilities of winning solidarity are

reduced and victory made more difficult. Every time a victory is won it helps to turn this tide and start the process of rebuilding confidence.

Unfortunately not all strikes are successful. All of the major strikes this year were settled with only partial gains. Defeats do not mean it is not worth while taking industrial action in support of a claim. Rather they raise questions about the way disputes are run. The role of union full-timers is central in this context. Because rank and file organisation is weak at the moment the officials have more control and are more likely to sell-out. More often than not they do.

It is no exaggeration to say that rank & file organisation is very weak at the moment. The initiative within the unions is very much with the layer of unelected full-time officials – the bureaucrats. Most of these people have jobs for life, are paid much more than most of the people they are supposed to work for, and are unresponsive to the needs of their members. They live a different life style and, into the bargain, some sit alongside the bosses and government on commissions and the boards of semi-state companies.

They see their union work as a career. More than a few of them have never even had an ordinary job but came straight from student politics. Their career is that of an arbitrator, a fixer, a conciliator. Some have pre-

WALKING OUT

While it is not always possible to choose your own time for coming out, as far as possible the demands of the strike should be aimed at drawing in as many other workers as you can. For wage rises, joint claims should be formulated. During the recent Dublin Corpo strike the manual workers would have been helped greatly if all local authority workers, throughout the country, had submitted the same claim at the same time. Co-ordinated action would have quickly brought victory.

Cash claims are to be preferred. Percentage claims benefit the higher paid most and often give the low paid little reason to fight.

DEMOCRACY

Strikes should be run by those directly involved. Democratic strike committees should be elected in the workplace(s) involved. These committees should have members from all the unions on the job. Committee members should be given a specific mandate and be recall-

able at all times if the workers are not satisfied with their conduct of the dispute. The major decisions should be put to general meetings of all the strikers.

It is very important to involve everyone in activity. It is not good enough for somebody to picket once a week and then go off home to hear the lies about the strike on the TV. Everyone should be brought together as often as possible for mass pickets, marches, socials. A regular strike bulletin should be produced keeping everyone up to date about what's going on.

CONFIDENCE

The strike should never become the 'property' of the few who are energetic enough to keep abreast of what's happening. No striker should be allowed to become 'passive'. Confidence can easily be lost this way and such people are usually the first to give up hope and vote to go back.

In fact there is plenty to be done. The most im-

portant tasks are to organise picketing and start looking for solidarity. This has to be done immediately. The quicker the strike is won the better. The longer it drags on, the more the financial pressure and the more likely that people will have to settle for less than they want.

I.C.T.U.

Solidarity will rarely be delivered by the ICTU. The reality is that the ICTU executive encourages scabbing through the use of the 'two-tier' picket. This means that members of other unions not directly involved in the dispute (and even members of another branch of the same union) are told to pass the picket. Solidarity comes through directly putting your case to other workers, that means sending delegations to meet them and discuss the issues.

During the UCD cleaners strike a lot of energy initially went into getting the ICTU 'all-out' picket. When it came it was not to be put on UCD but on the offices of Contract Cleaners Ltd. (the women's immediate employers).



It was so worthless that the women handed it back.

ACTION

Instead they took it on themselves to approach other workers in UCD. As a result a one-day stoppage was organised and proved successful. Some cleaners, who were in another union, came out solidly behind the women after they had met and learnt the reason for the strike. They soon realised they had a stake in the strike and that if the initial group won they could make gains too.

WHY DO UNION LEADERS SELL OUT?

viously worked for bosses' organisations like the Federated Union of Employers the Construction Industry Federation or as personnel managers. Others will move on to do so.

What is important to them is proving their skills as smart negotiators, not pulling out all the stops to win their members demands. They have narrow sectional interests, they only look after their own patch regardless of the general interests of workers. Thus that great self-proclaimed radical John Mitchell of the Irish Distributive and Administrative Trade Union called on workers to scab in the Clerys strike a couple of years back. His need to get more members came before aiding the ITGWU members on strike.

These people rarely initiate or lead strikes. They will have you running back and forth to the Labour Court, the Employer Labour Conference and every other talking shop they can find. They seem to thrive on endless negotiation, all aimed towards finding a 'reasonable' solution. They see striking as very much a last resort and condemn, without hesitation, unofficial action (i.e. action that hasn't been sanctioned by them).

These people do not usually lead strikes but sometimes will, generally when the whole negotiation machinery has been brought into question as was the case with the teachers strike. In other cases they just have no choice because of an employers intransigence. Most of the time, though, they try to patch things up rather than go for industrial action.

There are numerous examples of this. The Dunnes strike (where John Mitchell

did all in his power to get the strike ended, even going behind the strikers backs to give an interview to the *Irish Press* saying the strike couldn't be won), the UCD strike where ITGWU official and Workers Party Councillor Pat Rabbitte put every obstacle in the way of the women getting solidarity action, and the Cork ESB strike where the ATGWU officials condemned their own members from day one.

In the public sector strikes (including the teachers) the union leaderships used the stoppages as way of showing that they had muscle. The stoppages were posed as declarations of support for the officials. They never envisaged using all-out strikes as the sure way to bring victory.

These people are not nasty individuals. They behave as they do because they have too much power and are unaccountable. Power corrupts, regardless of who you are. Their behaviour is inevitable, no matter how radical or left-wing they start out they gradually get sucked into the conciliation business.

The way to stop this happening is to change the rules and build democratic structures in the unions. Put power where it belongs – on the shop floor. Make all full-timers elected and recallable. Pay them the average wage of their members, take them off all bodies where they rub shoulders with the bosses and make their jobs ones of service to the members – not taking decisions over their heads.

Right now, in each strike situation they should not be allowed to have an undue influence. The democratic structures referred to above exclude order-givers, and they prove we can do without a

layer of unelected, over-powerful and over-paid officials. The fight for democratic structures in each strike can be the springboard for a more general fight to democratise our unions. Unions that fight for their members, unions that understand what solidarity is and how it can be won.

Eddie Conlon



Anarchism and Ireland – Pamphlet outlining the politics of the WSM. Available for 80p (inc. postage) from P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8.

BATTLE OF MOORE STREET

THE THREE week Dublin Corporation strike will be remembered for a long time. 150 strikers chased the army and the gardai out of Moore Street, let the trendies who say there is no fight left in the working class take proper note of this.

Corpo workers, members of IMETU, FWUI and ITGWU, who take home between £90-£130 put in a claim for £15 extra. The government responded by instructing the Corpo management to offer only a miserly 7% over 18 months, with a four month pay freeze. In real terms, after tax, this would have meant very little.

MOORE ST.

As soon as the pickets went on Labour Party Minister Ruairi Quinn sent the army to scab in the water pumping stations. No ground was to be given to a group of the lowest paid workers in the country. After the strikers routed the strikebreakers in uniform at Moore Street, Quinn sent riot cops in the following weekend in the early hours to help the army drive off the pickets and remove the huge piles of rubbish.

Despite this morale was good. Everyone in the city area was out. The only exception was the engineers who had previously left the LGPSU and joined the ITGWU after being given a 'gentlemans agreement' that they would never have to respect a picket!

SOLIDARITY

Dun Laoghaire was out, bin collection on the south side of the County area had been stopped and some of the LGPSU depot and library staff, without any guidance from their national union officials, had refused to pass the pickets. 300 craft workers, again with no encouragement from their officials, were also out in solidarity.

At the time Dublin branch of the WSM issued a leaflet to the strikers which said "..."too much trust must not be placed in the full-time officials of the unions. Most of them don't know how to fight. They are always looking for 'deals' and 'compromises'. They see their role as middlemen between management and their own members. That is why the ICTU has refused to use the 'All-Out', they see it as a bargaining ploy and not as a way to win. That is why Redmond (IMETU leader) said on 'Today Tonight' that there might be no problem with the 7% if officials like him were consulted on how it was to be paid. That is why the ITGWU has refused to discipline the engineers who are the main scabs.

COMMON CLAIM

What would help to strengthen the strike is general meetings involving members of all three unions, to keep everyone together and informed. Mass pickets of key sites. A call for a common national claim for £15 and the spreading of the strike

to other areas by flying pickets. A call for immediate solidarity from LGPSU and craft union members...and insisting that their union leaders back them all the way. In the face of such widespread action and solidarity the government could not break the strike".

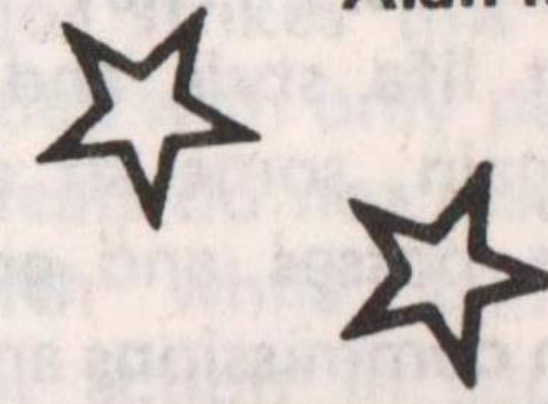
This was possible. Limerick Corpo workers had just won a victory over short time working (see Workers Solidarity No. 18), Cork had a claim on the table. Instead the officials ran off and negotiated a slightly better deal of a £250 lump sum, £5 from May 1st and another £6 from next February. The officials of all three unions pushed hard for acceptance of this 'final' offer. The vote for it was 1,134 to 618.

POSITIVE

While not a great settlement, many positive things have been seen. Last year the workers didn't have the confidence to strike, this year they did and they won a partial victory. They established the principle of cash claims instead of percentages which offer less to the low

paid and maintain differentials. They built an important spirit of unity on the job and shed many of the illusions about union officials like Bobby Pike (ITGWU) and Sean Redmond. The 35% who voted to fight on are a good base from which to build for the battles ahead.

Alan MacSimoin



ON THE RIGHT ROAD?

The Workers Party held back from supporting the strikers claim. Their suggestion was to go to the Labour Court and work out a compromise.

Communist Party member and Corpo Group of Unions secretary, Johnny Montgomery, called to the houses of several craft union members urging them to pass the picket. He even tried to drag a painter through the picket line at one depot.

Two members of "Militant" have been expelled from the committee of the Local Authority Workers Group (a rank & file grouping) for working throughout the strike.

Photo: Derek Spiers(Report)



An army lorry gets pushed out of Moore Street

Review

Unhealthy Belfast

INFANT mortality in Northern Ireland (12 per 1,000) is the highest in either Britain or Ireland. Heart disease among women is the highest in the world. Spina bifida is ten times higher than the 'normal' rate. I could go on but you get the picture.

This was brought home to me in a Channel 4 video last month, **Under the Health Surface**. It didn't just tell me how bad things are, it began to explain why. It showed the connections between unemployment, poor diet and ill health. It showed that the working class get the worst deal.

It also showed how the medical profession spend most of their time (and our money) treating the symp-

toms instead of tackling the causes. But it isn't just another 'worthy' documentary. It has ordinary working class women relating their experiences and telling us about the fight they put up in Moyard.

This Belfast estate had the first outbreak of polio in Britain and the North in five years. The area suffered terribly from gastro-enteritis and accounted for 75% of all hepatitis cases in Belfast. Tenants organised for the demolition of the shoddy maisonettes, which had been built on the cheap, after their anger came to a head when a burst pipe was found to contain 90% raw sewage. They won their fight.

A lot of you won't have seen this video on the TV, so if your tenants association or womens group wants to hire a copy they can get in touch with Marilyn Hyndman, 7 Winetavern Street, Belfast 1.

M. Jones



letters

In last month's *Workers Solidarity* Dominic Carroll wrote that 'National Liberation Movements' can not bring about socialism. He puts this down to their playing down independent working class activity as divisive in the quest for maximum national unity. He is quite right.

But there is a further

reason of at least equal importance. They may talk about *socialism* but in their mouths it usually means a mix of social democracy, authority and better living conditions. It does not mean that workers will take over the running of society and control it through their own democratic bodies. Their vision is essentially paternalistic and refuses to accept that workers can and should take control of their own lives. It is not socialism in

Kilkenny Bakery Strike

TWO YEARS ago the family firm of Kieran Crotty TD in Kilkenny did a repeat of 1913 when they issued forms to their workers asking them to state they would leave the ITGWU. Since then the union has managed to get back in and organise the workers, some of whom only earn £50 a week.

Since May 29th the 42 workers have been out on strike in support of two sacked colleagues, one of whom is the 19 year old shop steward. Crotty is trying to smash the union, he has openly said he will only take back non-union labour.

He has run to his friends in the Courts and the Gardai and got injunctions re-

stricting the number of pickets and where picketing may take place. But the workers have friends too and solidarity collections are being taken up in firms around the town. It isn't only financial help they are getting, trade unionists from many workplaces including the brewery, health board and Corporation depots have been walking the picket line. One Corpo worker was threatened by a representative of the firm that he would never work in Kilkenny again because of his support for the strikers. But this intimidation isn't working. The solidarity is growing and if it keeps up can bring Crotty to his knees.

Joe King

South Africa

The Southern government likes to make out it was a progressive attitude towards apartheid. After all won't they curtail imports of South African fruit from January 1st next? If we cast our minds back we remember that this small concession was forced on them after a long and bitter struggle by the Dunnes Stores strikers. It certainly was not granted because Leinster House is inhabited by a gang of 'good guys'.

If they are so opposed to the apartheid regime why have they appointed Chris de Burgh to the Local Radio Commission? For years he has had no misgivings about playing in South Africa.

Why have they appointed Tom Kiernan to the board

any real sense of the word. That is why their victories lead to either a continuation of the old system with a few reforms tacked on or to state capitalism of an authoritarian type.

Alan MacSimoin,
Dublin 8

of NET? He has said on RTE, that he supports rugby tours of South Africa, not only for the sporting links but because for him it was a question of whether or not to support South Africa, so as to prevent "the slide into multi-racial chaos".

Why have they maintained diplomatic relations through the Honorary Consul in Johannesburg, a Mr Patrick Ryan? When in Ireland last year he gave an interview to the *Cork Examiner* which was a straight propaganda job in favour of apartheid.

COLLINS BROS. meat plants in Waterford and Carlow have gone into receivership with the loss of fifty jobs. One of the owners is Eddie Collins who doubles up as a Minister of State at the Dept. of Industry, Commerce and Energy. He made the pages of *Workers Solidarity* last February too, when we reported that management had been caught bugging union meetings in Waterford. Can Eddie the Idiot get nothing right?