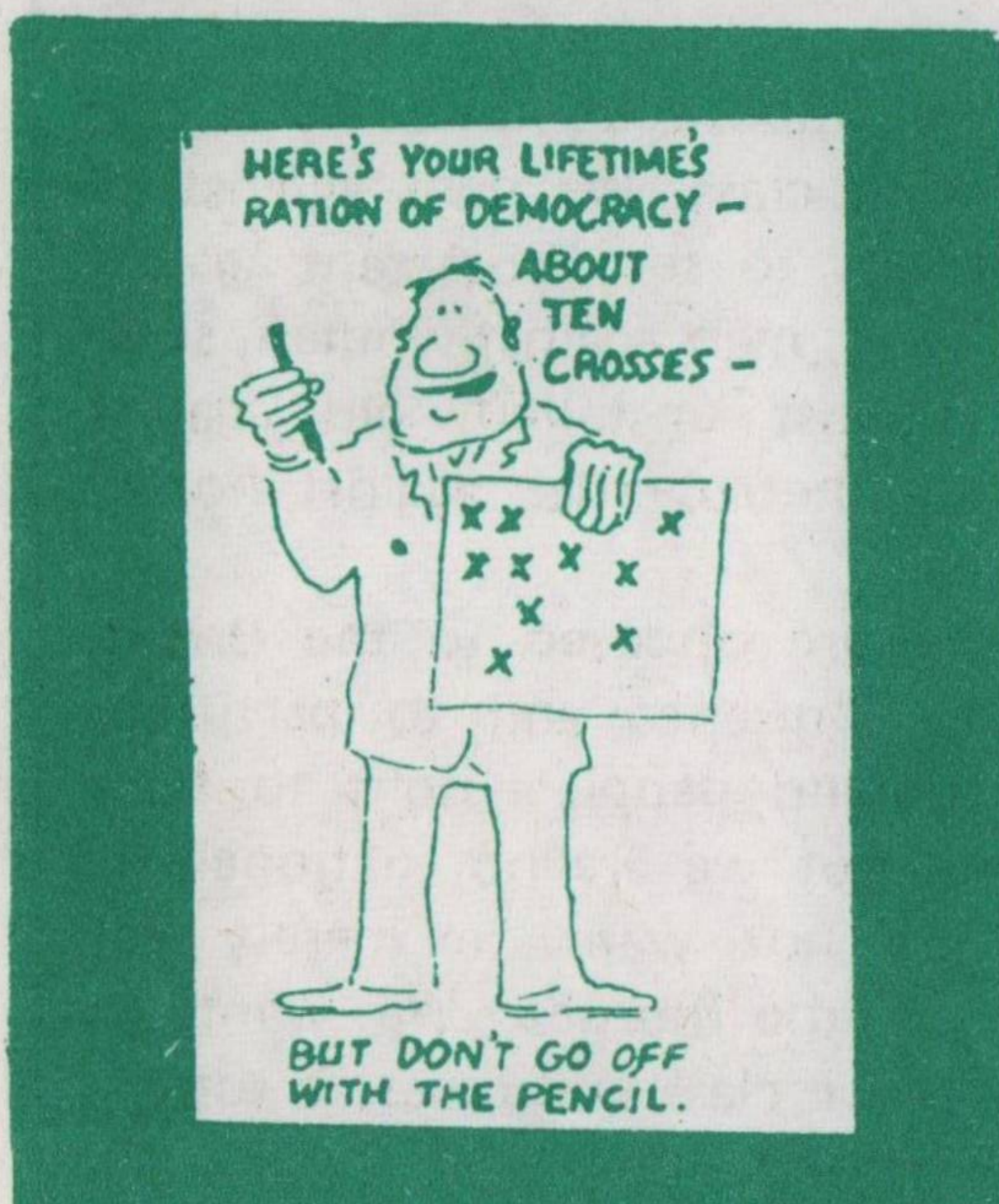


FOR MANY socialists getting elected to Government is one of the main aims of their politics. By getting to a position where they form the Government they argue that they are then in a real position to change things for the better. In Ireland, on the Left, all the main Parties from Labour to the Workers Party to Sinn Fein dedicate their resources to this end. Most of their activity involves building up their candidate's image and credibility among the voters so that they will vote them into office to represent their affairs.

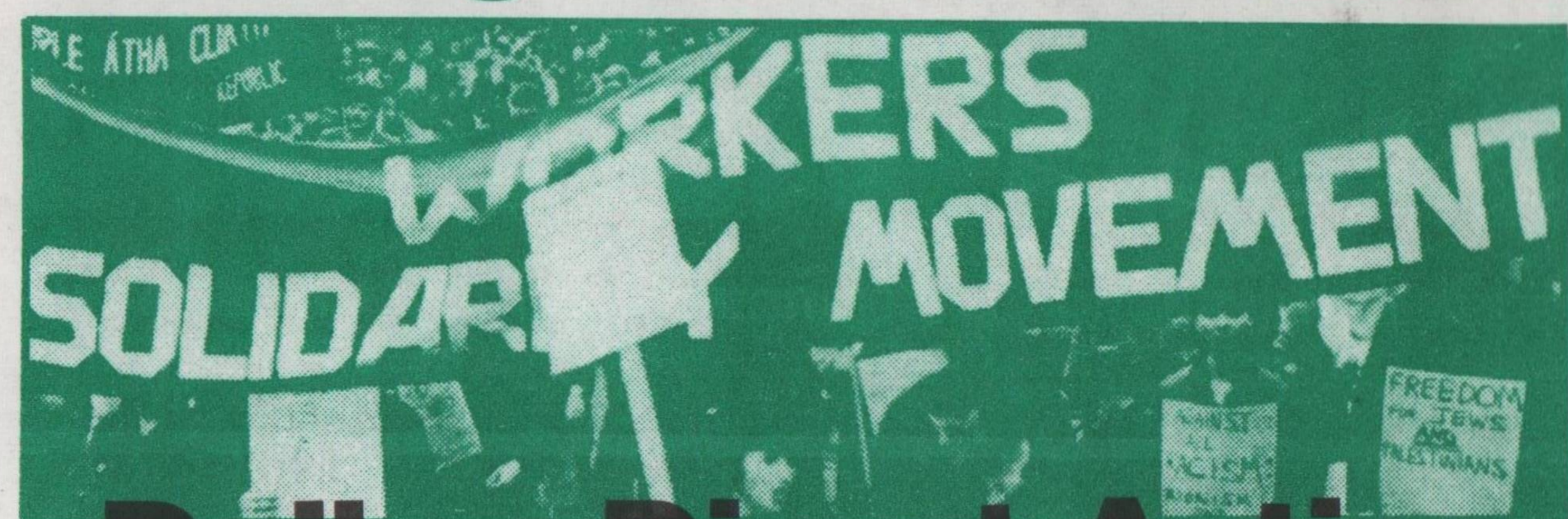
ANARCHISM IS DIFFERENT

Alone among all socialists, anarchists have no part in this activity and in general try to persuade people of the opposite to what these Parties say, that is that winning elections will never bring about socialism or even significantly improve the wrongs of capitalism. The reason for this are not always clear and often seem like arguing for arguing sake. But this impression couldn't be further from the truth. The root of the problem lies in the differences between anarchists and socialists in their view of what is wrong with Capitalism and what it is about it that needs changing.



For anarchists, Capitalism is more than just material inequality. Central to it also is a hierarchy in power in which people have on the whole less control over their lives the lower they find themselves on the social scale. Yet anarchists argue that to have control over ones life as an individual and as a community is a fundamental thing for any human being or group of human beings. Constantly living in a situation where one is bossed about, where one is forced to hem in one's personality and dreams, where one has little or no say in the real decisions

Thinking about Anarchism



Dail or Direct Action

that affect ones life at home and work is, on the whole, no life at all. Fundamental then to anarchism is the breaking of this situation where people regain control over their lives.

HIERARCHY

So anarchism opposes two things, the material inequality of Capitalism and hierarchy of order givers and order takers. The reason of course for opposing this is the misery and death it causes throughout the world justified on only one basis that it suits the rich and powerful who of course are strong enough to preserve it at the moment. So while anarchists and many other socialists have a lot in common in their opposition to Capitalism there are fundamental differences about what is wrong with it and how to change it. For anarchists the means and ends are connected. That is if the goal to be achieved is a free human society where people have control over their lives and have a say in how their communities are run then the road to achieving this must use means that increase peoples confidence, ability and willingness to do so. So where people challenge Capitalism either at work (through strikes and industrial action) or in their communities, Anarchists argue for the people directly involved themselves to be involved in the decision making about the way their struggle is conducted. This encouragement towards participatory democracy in the struggles of the here and now, is one immediate and successful way of increasing peoples confidence and belief in their own direct action. It is one fundamental way of politicising people and making them see that they themselves have the main role to play in changing society.

VOTE FOR MY PARTY

In general this emphasis of anarchism stands in mark contrast to the vast majority of the left. For them the

main point in electioneering and union activity is to get people to place their trust in *their* Party members. Rather than emphasising peoples' own ability to change things around them for the better through their own activity they seek instead to reinforce peoples reliance on unaccountable TDs and full time Union officials.

But there is a further more insidious notion that also permeates much of the Left that in some way explains this difference between anarchist and most other socialists. A great number of Socialists at heart do not believe that people can fundamentally improve their lives by themselves. That is they ascribe to their political parties the important role of "leading" people to achieving socialism. One of the best examples of this is from Lenin the Bolshevik leader in the Russian Revolution who believed that workers by themselves were unable to develop the revolutionary consciousness to overthrow Capitalism. Instead himself and his Party were given this "important" role.

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

The anarchist emphasis on direct action and control by those most affected by the issue in dispute cannot be stressed enough. Moreover to do this in the workplace is one of the main aims. It is here that people are in one respect most regimented and bound by hierarchy. But it is also here that potentially workers have real, decisive power to improve the material conditions of their lives and the control they exert over them. It is here that anarchists argue that socialism will be won and lost. To argue for direct industrial action to settle disputes with employers, to increase workers unity at the grass roots - these are the ways anarchists argue that the prospect for socialism will be increased.

Kevin Doyle

WORKERS SOLIDARITY

MAGAZINE OF THE WORKERS SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT
NUMBER 30 SPRING 1989 60p



POVERTY

It's time for a fight
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IRISH ANARCHIST MAGAZINE

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YOU CAN'T OPEN a newspaper or switch on the television without encountering yet another article or debate about poverty. According to the official Economic and Social Research Institute 1,200,000 people — one in three of the population — in the South are living below the poverty line. If there is any difference in the North it is that things are even worse.

Alarm, and sometimes even anger, is expressed by charities and clergy. The bosses, through spokespersons like economist Sean Barret shamelessly lie through their teeth and deny there is any real problem. Our union leaders seem to have little to say. In the South they are especially quiet lest they have to say anything that might upset their 'Plan for National Recovery' with Haughey. The plan explicitly holds down the wages of the low paid and implicitly endorses the cutbacks.

And this at a time when the ICTU's own figures show that over 50% of workers aged under 25 get no more than £50 a week and a further 25% get no more than £75. The 'guaranteed' increase of £4 for the low paid won't do much to improve their standard of living.

THAT'S CAPITALISM

British Labour Party candidate Dennis Knight has taken a seat on the local council in Redruth, Cornwall. He got 94 votes, just 26 votes more than the runner up. Who came second? Was it the Tories? The Democrats? David Owen's SDP rump? No, in second place with 68 votes was Freddy Zap of the Official Monster Raving Looney Party. Nice try Freddy.

With voter turnout recorded as less than 50% for the first time since 1924, American President Bush was elected by a whopping 27% of the voting-age population.

The best-seats for last December's gala opening of the opera season at Milan's La Scala went for £560. Meanwhile, orchestra members had to stage walk-outs in order to get a decent wage.

For Starters

Unemployment, North and South has been running at around one in five since 1983. The figures would be a lot higher if we included those on 'training' schemes and all those (over 100,000) who have had to emigrate in search of work. The response of the ruling class has been to further slash our living standards by cutting spending on education, health, housing and social welfare.

The answer of the clerics and charities is to point to a division between those with jobs and those without. They want us to believe that this is the important division in society. Well it isn't, the real gap is between those who own and control the economy — the ruling class, and the rest of us — the working class. If those of us in well paid and secure employment accept the propaganda for 'restraint' and a cut in our living standards we will only increase poverty while the bosses put the extra profits into their bank accounts. Those in jobs are in no way responsible for the mess and would be foolish to allow the bosses to trick them into taking responsibility for it.

The reality is that none of the sacrifices borne by those with jobs have ever been used for the benefit of the unemployed and the poor. Never. The ruling class is out to take as much as they can from us so that they may further enrich themselves. Our reply should be to defend what is left of the gains we won since the 1960s. Such a fight has the potential to instill confidence back into our class. With confidence we can turn things around and begin, once again, to demand more of the good things of life and eventually go on to tear down the whole rotten system.

A start should be made with resistance to the cuts. We have paid for all the services they are taking away from us. In our trade unions, tenants' and residents' associations we can argue for rank and file industrial and community action against service charges, against cutbacks, we can argue for union backing for workers who refuse to cover for unfilled vacancies. The fight to end poverty begins with the battle to hang on to the little we have left.

President Kenneth Kuanda's sixth successive election victory in Zambia on October 26th came as no surprise. He was the only candidate. As a liberal geature the ballot papers had a box available for voters to tick for a non-existent candidate, i.e. someone other than Kuanda.

Due to Zambia's 60% illiteracy rate, pictures were used to symbolise the candidates. The symbol for Kuanda was an eagle, the Zambian national bird. The other box had a toad in it.

Following the election Kuanda had the cheek to tell reporters that people were dying in South Africa in order to attain a "fully-fledged democracy" such as Zambia's.



CHEAP LABOUR PLAN VOTED IN

"IMAGINE DOING the same work as the person beside you but only getting half the pay. It's called the "two tier" wage system and it has arrived in Ireland"

That was the opening paragraph of an article about the Bank of Ireland in last Autumn's *Workers Solidarity*. They sought to make 2,000 well paid workers redundant and replace them with 2,000 new staff who will do the same work but receive only half the pay and have next-to-no promotion prospects.

Sadly the bank staff have since voted 3,300 to 2,700 in favour of management's scheme. It was carried by the votes of older staff who hope to take advantage of the very good redundancy terms that are part of the package. Before the end of last year over 1,200 had expressed an interest in this.

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT

The Irish Bank Officials Association did call for a "no" vote, but some members feel their union could have run a more vigorous campaign. They are undoubtedly right, in the newspapers the IBOA was pushed aside by priests, who made a stronger appeal for a "no" vote! More importantly, in the bank branch offices the union did not do much to counter the push by local managers for a "yes" vote.

This was a crucial vote for both existing staff and for the new recruits. Bank officials enjoy good wages. They got them by fighting: national bank strikes have been very potent and successful weapons. Things will be different in future. A divided staff, with one section regarding the other as having voted them into a second class status, will be an open invitation to management to demand further concessions.



If the bank's projections are correct, by 1992 one in three workers will be in the new "bank assistant" grade and another one in five will be temporary. This means that over 50% of the entire workforce will be either on low pay or have no security of employment (or both). Most of these can not be expected to see themselves as having a lifelong career in the bank. This means they will be less likely to get actively involved in the IBOA and be prepared to stand up to their bosses. In this situation management will develop an insatiable hunger for concession, and the union may end up too weak and divided to do much about it.

Of course it does not have to happen like that, there is an alternative. Some of those who voted 'yes' will be taking redundancy over the next couple of years and will be replaced with workers who will begin to deeply resent getting only half pay. In this situation activists within the IBOA should argue against the IBOA's "professional association" attitude; for it to become a proper trade union and affiliate to the ICTU; for a new vote on the deal with exhaustive campaigning against any concept of 'two tier' or temporary workers; and for a threat of a national all-out strike to back up a 'no' vote.

WARS and WAGES

An American research group, Washington based World Priorities has stated that there are 25 wars taking place around the world at present. It estimated that 17 million people have been killed since the end of WW11 in 1945.

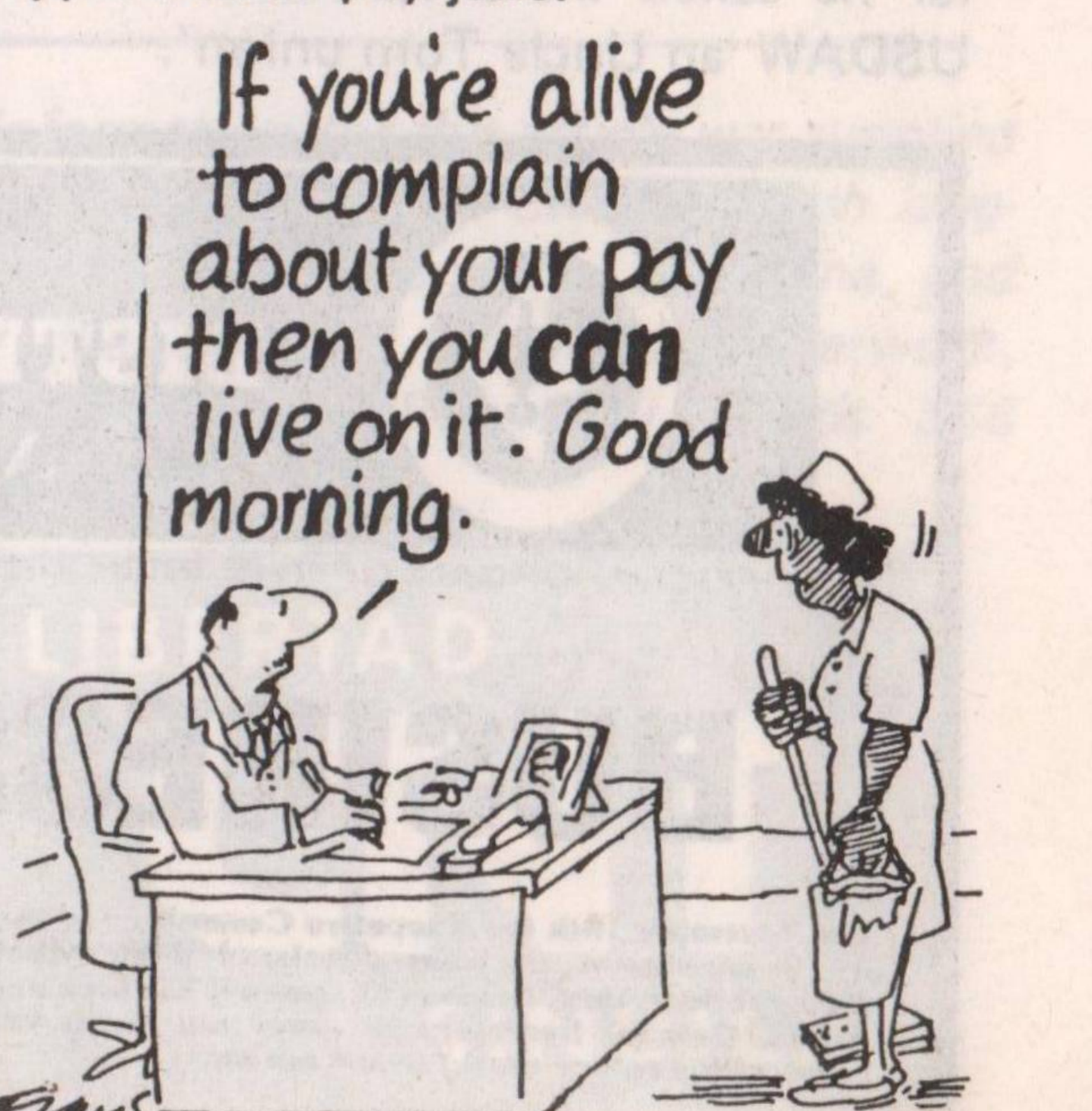
An Irish Congress of Trade Unions survey, compiled by John Blackwell of UCD, has found that one out of every four workers in the 26 counties is low paid. Of these six out of ten are women. Seven out of ten workers aged under twenty are low paid. And it does not only happen in traditionally badly paid jobs like shopwork and clothing, of all the low paid men in industry 28% are in engineering and 23% are in food, drink and tobacco.

Yet More Tory Laws

YOUNG WORKERS in the North are to be hit yet again by Tory legislation. A new Employment Bill (outlined in the Queen's speech to the Westminster parliament) will get rid of the provisions of seven existing Acts that go some way towards protecting 16 to 18 year olds at work.

The Bill will do away with the ban on starting work before 7am and finishing after 8pm, working more than 10 hours a day or 48 hours per week. The right to a meal break after four and a half hours will also go, as will all current restrictions on weekend, shift and night work. Another section of the Bill reduces the range of trade union activities for which shop stewards can claim time off work.

Time after time the British Trade Union Congress and the Northern Ireland Committee of ICTU have refused to stand up for their members against Tory attacks. Their 'responsible' and 'realistic' behavior has only encouraged more and more assaults on our rights and living standards. As far as the government is concerned 'moderate' trade unionism adds up to just one thing — weakness. The new law will work alongside the withdrawal of dole from unemployed school leavers and the introduction of compulsory 'Employment Training'. The effect will be to drive more young people into the very worst types of low pay jobs.



UNION LEADER GETS THE SACK

JOHN MITCHELL was sacked from his job as general secretary of the Irish Distributive and Administrative Trade Union (IDATU) because he gave too much support to his own members. The manner of his sacking ran counter to all accepted trade union principles. The conservatives on the union executive did not like his militant stand on pay and conditions so they got rid of him. Their next move will be to try to take the union back to the way it was in the early 1980s when it did little for its members and enjoyed an 'all pals together' arrangement with the employers.

In the six years he was general secretary Mitchell supported strikes and sit-ins instead of 'playing by the rules'. He won the argument against taking part in the ICTU/Fianna Fail "Plan for National Recovery" — and IDATU members starting winning pay settlements twice the size of those allowed under the Plan. This did not endear him to the ICTU leaders nor to many of the time-servers on his own executive.

His support for campaigns against extradition, strip-searching, Israeli state policy towards the Palestinians and the Stalinist regime in Poland strengthened the view among union bureaucrats that he was too much of a difficult character.

The first move against him came in January 1987 when he gave an interview to a local Belfast paper, the *Andersonstown News*. In it he had a go at Northern union officials who never open their mouths about discrimination or repression. In particular he called the shop workers union USDAW 'an Uncle Tom union'.

USDAW lodged a complaint with the ICTU which kicked Mitchell off its executive. Although it was made very clear that he had been speaking in a personal capacity, the ICTU suspended IDATU. Even though the IDATU conference at Easter 1988 backed Mitchell's stand by a large majority, many on its executive longed to get back into the respectability of ICTU membership.

Just three weeks later they suspended Mitchell for 14 days because he refused to cancel the hiring of the union hall for a meeting addressed by Gerry Adams. This is the *only* charge levelled against him that has any real basis, i.e. he disobeyed an instruction from the union executive.

At the same time the union, which has a policy in favour of a united Ireland, began to pull out of the North. The Belfast and Derry offices were closed and a ban put on further recruitment. The reason given in an internal union circular was that these branches were not economically 'viable' — as if unions were businesses only interested in making a profit from branches. Anyway the branches were growing. Danny Brown, the Derry branch secretary, was able to report a 300% increase in membership in the year up to this. The executive refused to even send someone to Derry to explain their reasons to the members.

The members have since been transferred to the Dublin Distributive branch. That will stop them attending branch meetings and asking for an explanation! A second allegation has been thrown at them — that they were recruiting on a sectarian basis. This is a very serious charge to make against trade union activists. If there is even

the smallest bit of truth in it why has the executive been unable to produce one whit of evidence? The northern members regard it as an outright lie and a despicable slander.

Last November Mitchell was called before the executive to answer unspecified charges. He was not allowed to have a union representative although he is an IDATU member. He was suspended from office. Three days later he was told what the charges against him were! A very odd way for a union to behave.

These charges were that he had given 'moral support' to the Derry branch's campaign to stay in the union and that he had been 'seen in the company of Derry members'. Secondly he had attended branch meetings, 'without executive permission' — the union rule book gives the general secretary the right to attend any branch meeting. The third charge was that he 'broke procedures' in Tullamore. In the Quinnsouth chain 43 of the 46 shops had won double the pay terms of the National Plan without any conditions. In Tullamore the official, Owen Nulty, had negotiated the pay rise but with the condition that next year the terms of the Plan would apply. Mitchell went to the members, organised a strike ballot and won the same deal as the rest of the chain. It says a lot about the people running IDATU that they thought this a terrible thing to do.

To cap it all, the final charge was that he had a drunk driving conviction! When he refused to resign he was sacked on November 15th. In doing this the executive showed contempt for the union rules, rule 24:12 says that the general secretary has to be given three months notice if he is to be fired.

Ten days later a campaign for his reinstatement was launched by IDATU members from Cork, Dublin, Derry and Dundalk along with members of other unions and socialist organisat-

ions. The campaign hopes to win a majority at the union's conference this Easter to overturn the sacking.

John Mitchell has offered to debate the issues with union President Joe Donnelly at any time. Donnelly and the entire membership of the executive have consistently refused to put their side of the dispute. We are entitled to ask why? The nearest they came to it was at a meeting of IDATU members in Waterford where full-time officials Betty Dillon and Jim O'Connell and executive member Frances Roche disrupted the meeting by loudly heckling anyone who questioned the executive's decision.

The campaign will have to set what happened in a wider context than just the manner of Mitchell's sacking. The National Plan is a way of aiding the bosses by holding down wages. The ICTU has refused to face up to sectarianism and repression in the North, this has made it even harder to gain a hearing for class politics rather than communal ones. Unions should be militant in support of their members and not see themselves as "responsible social partners".

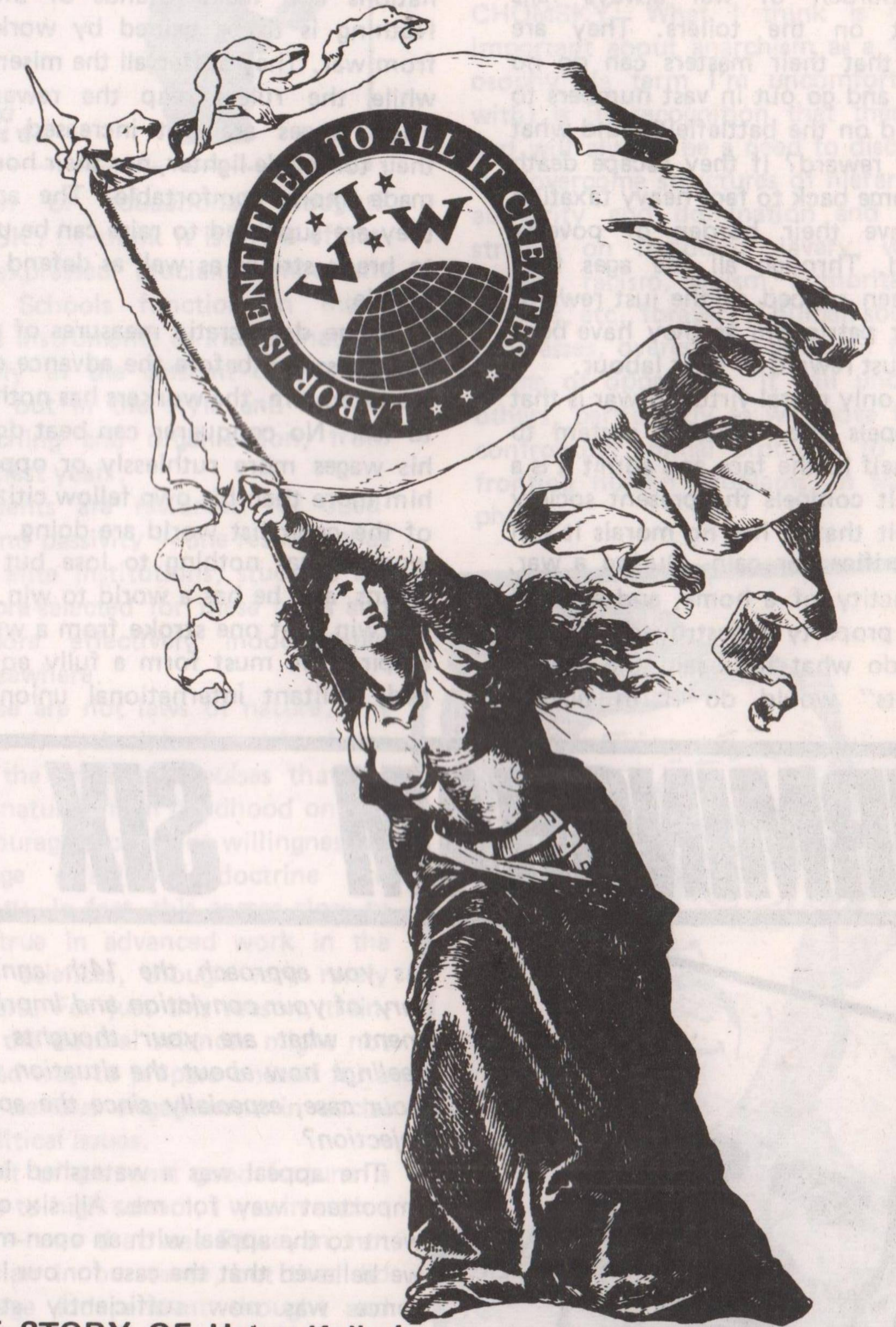
John Mitchell is not some sort of great trade union hero. Even though he got up the noses of union bureaucrats, he behaved in an authoritarian and bureaucratic manner himself. Previous issues of *Workers Solidarity* have covered his behavior at the end of the Dunnes Stores strike and his recruitment of strikebreakers in Clerys. Some bureaucrats are a lot better than others but they are still bureaucrats — people who exercise power over their members.

The campaign for his reinstatement deserves support because the sacking was unjust and contrary to trade union principles. It also deserves support because it is an attempt to stop the executive returning the union to the lazy, cautious conservatism of former years.

However, win or lose at conference left wing IDATU members should stick together. A network of militant stewards and rank & file activists is needed. If the union is to be democratised and turned into an organisation that fights for its members it won't be done by putting a handful of 'good people' into positions of power and authority. Dependency encourages passivity. The alternative is a struggle to put the real decision-making power into the hands of the members at workplace and branch level.

Joe King

A Clarion Call for Liberty



THE STORY OF Helen Keller's life is well known and celebrated all over the world. Made blind, deaf and mute by disease in her infancy, she was locked inside her sensory-deprived mind. When she was seven years old, her mind's door was painstakingly unlocked by her own genius and the patient teaching of Ann Sullivan.

What is not generally known is that Helen Keller became a devoted socialist and One Big Union advocate. She gave numerous talks on socialism and labour issues. She campaigned on behalf of New York textile strikers,

and despite warnings from the authorities, spoke in California at a demonstration against unemployment. In 1916 she was raising funds for a unionising drive organised by the metal workers union of the Industrial Workers of the World. The *New York Times* in that same year quoted her as being a member paid up in good standing of the IWW, a revolutionary union that was influenced by anarchism.

Helen Keller also campaigned hard to counter war hysteria and to keep in view the economic truth about the World War. In the interests of uncovering a little of the lost history



THE
DISTRIBUTIVE WORKER
AN TOIBRI UMHALA

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE IRISH DISTRIBUTIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE TRADE UNION
Editor: Seamus O'Donnell

BUSINESS AS USUAL

On November 15th the Executive Committee of the Union by a unanimous decision dismissed John Mitchell as General Secretary. Seamus O'Donnell has been appointed Acting General Secretary to carry out the functions of General Secretary until further notice.

MARKS AND SPENCER
OPEN IN GRAFTON STREET
Seventy new staff have been recruited by Marks

*If you believe
that headline
you'll believe
anything!*

KELLER

continued from previous page

of the labour movement we are happy to reprint a speech she gave at the Labour Forum in New York City on December 19th, 1915.

"The burden of war always falls heaviest on the toilers. They are taught that their masters can do no wrong, and go out in vast numbers to be killed on the battlefield. And what is their reward? If they escape death they come back to face heavy taxation and have their burden of poverty doubled. Through all the ages they have been robbed of the just rewards of their patriotism as they have been of the just reward of their labour.

The only moral virtue of war is that it compels the capitalist system to look itself in the face and admit it is a fraud. It compels the present society to admit that it has no morals it will not sacrifice for gain. During a war, the sanctity of a home, and even of private property is destroyed. Governments do what it is said the "crazy Socialists" would do if in power.

I look upon the whole world as my fatherland and every war has to me a horror of a family feud. I look upon true patriotism as the brotherhood of man and the service of all to all. The only fighting that saves is the one that helps the world toward liberty, justice and an abundant life for all.

After all, the best preparedness is one that disarms the hostility of other nations and make friends of them. Nothing is to be gained by workers from war. They suffer all the miseries, while the rulers reap the rewards. Their wages are not increased, nor their toil made lighter, nor their homes made more comfortable. The army they are supposed to raise can be used to break strikes as well as defend the people.

If the democratic measures of preparedness fall before the advance of a world empire, the workers has nothing to fear. No conquerer can beat down his wages more ruthlessly or oppress him more than his own fellow citizens of the capitalist world are doing. The workers has nothing to lose but his chains, and he has a world to win. He can win it at one stroke from a world empire. We must form a fully equipped, militant international union so

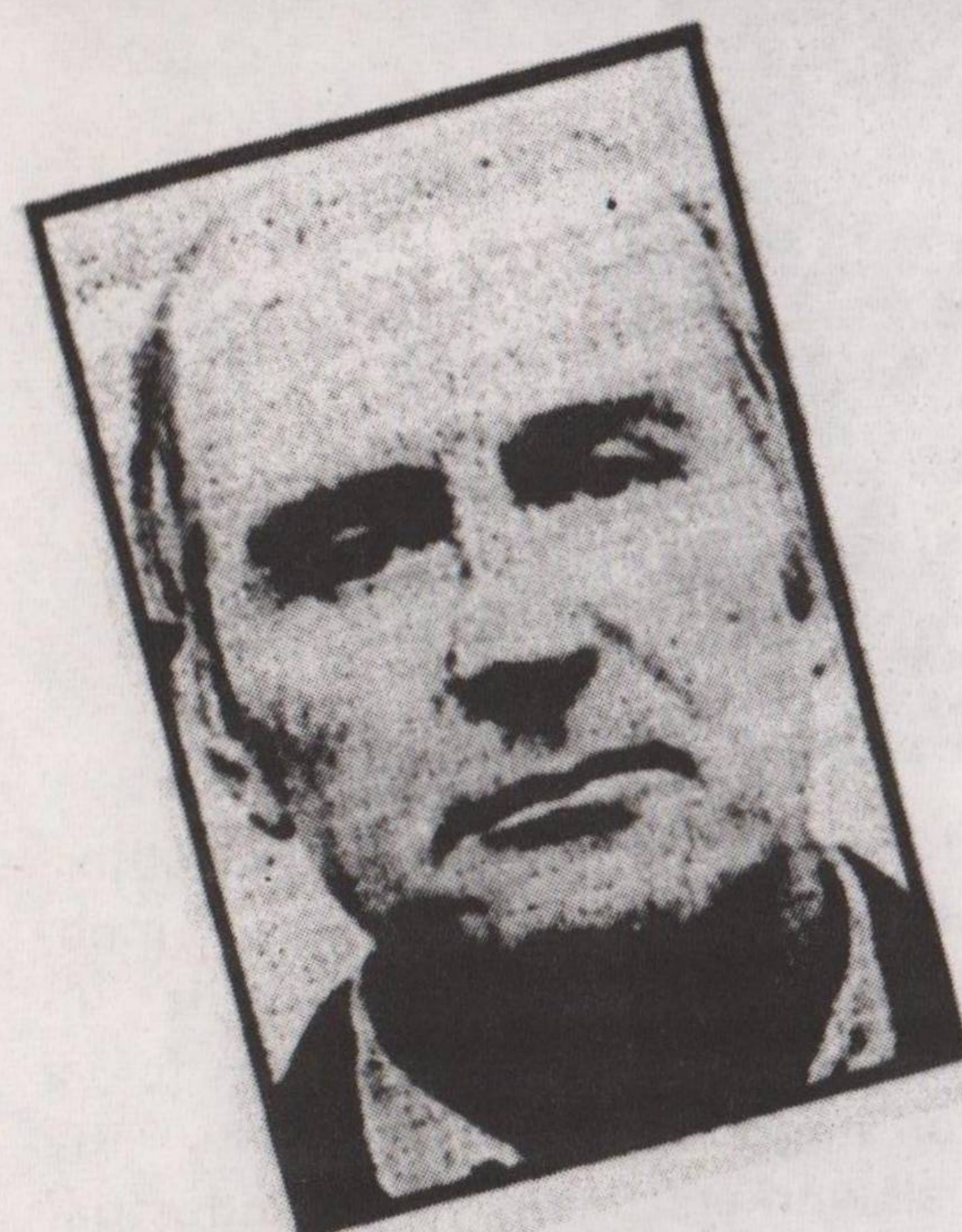
that we can take possession of such a world empire.

This great republic is a mockery of freedom as long as you are doomed to dig and sweat to earn a miserable living while the masters enjoy the fruit of your toil. What have you to fight for? National independence? That means the masters' independence. The laws that sent you to jail when you demand better living conditions? The flag? Does it wave over a country where you are free and have a home, or does it rather symbolize a country that meets you with clenched fists when you strike for better wages and shorter hours? Will you fight for your masters' religion which teaches you to obey them even when they tell you to kill one another?

Why don't you make a junk heap of your master's religion, his civilization, his kings and his customs that tend to reduce a man to a brute and God to a monster? Let there go forth a clarion call for liberty. Let the workers form one great world-wide union, and let there be a globe-encircling revolt to gain for the workers true liberty and happiness."



BIRMINGHAM SIX INTERVIEW



As you approach the 14th anniversary of your conviction and imprisonment what are your thoughts and feelings now about the situation with your case, especially since the appeal rejection?

The appeal was a watershed in an important way for me. All six of us went to the appeal with an open mind; we believed that the case for our innocence was now sufficiently strong enough to budge them, and we were understandably quite hopeful or optimistic about the outcome of the appeal. In other words, we felt that all the important legal arguments had been answered or won. Nothing that happened during the appeal, during the actual examination of the evidence, caused us to change our feelings about that. But of course our appeal was eventually rejected out of hand. That was a terrible blow, and one that made me realise that the whole thing was a charade, a game that we were never really going to win anyway. Now I'm more convinced than I've ever been that there is no such thing as

British justice, it simply does not exist in reality.

You know at the end of the day the establishment just closed ranks on us in order to uphold our wrongful conviction. They conspired behind the scenes to actually pervert justice. What we were ultimately confronted with at that appeal was a deliberate and calculated cover-up, a brick wall that simply wouldn't listen or respond to the truth; in fact wasn't really interested in it. As far as I was concerned it only illustrated what so-called British justice amounted to — injustice and lies.

How closely affected, do you imagine, is the fate of your case by the course and development of Britain's military involvement in Northern Ireland?

Well, it's obvious that the British government is intensifying or stepping up its war against the IRA, and I think this is obviously reflected in the legal system's treatment of our attitude towards our own case. At the time of our arrest and original trial we were

alleged to be IRA members, and as far as the government are concerned we are now IRA prisoners. At the very least we are here in prison because of the war in Ireland, or at least influenced by it in an important way. At the end of the day I don't think what happens or has happened to us can be separated or looked at in isolation from what Britain is doing in Ireland.

We hoped that the Free-State government would take a more active role on our behalf, but the extent of its collaboration with Britain, highlighted in particular by the extradition business, obviously prevents it from genuinely supporting us or the campaign for our release. Before our appeal we got all sorts of messages that the free-state government would be really pushing to get us out, but at the end of the day they've done basically nothing to help or support us.

I feel very depressed about the continuing situation in Northern Ireland and the stepping up of Britain's war there because it inevitably means that myself and the other five have a long way to go before we're likely ever to be released.

How broadbased would you like the campaign for your release to be?

Let me answer that in the following way. Public opinion immediately after the Birmingham Pub bombings allowed the police to pick up six innocent Irishmen and torture confessions out of them. It allowed them a completely free hand to do as they pleased in terms of framing us and then getting us convicted. Now, it will be public opinion that ultimately gets us released. I therefore ask ALL progressive groups and organisations who

are genuinely committed to the cause of justice to join and support our campaign, to highlight and publicise our case amongst as many ordinary working class people as possible. We desperately need public support, and we need it from all sections of the population, especially from working class people.

You know, since we were arrested in 1974 people's perception of the police in this country has changed considerably. I think that black people especially, have always known what the British police are really like; but now even white working class people are beginning to wake up, and the Miners Strike in particular forced a lot of ordinary working class people to change their opinions of the British police. I think that today, as opposed to the time when we were first arrested, a lot of people are prepared to accept that we are the victims of a blatant injustice; all we now need is for more and more people to actually come out and support our campaign. Because at the end of the day, the struggle for justice in this country is the duty and responsibility of everyone. The working class must fight for justice on all possible fronts, which includes the fight to win the release of innocent Irish people imprisoned in this country on trumped-up charges.

Over the years in prison one thing I have come to realise and understand deeply is that our situation is but one dimension of a wider thing involving the suppression of Irish people, and I suppose ultimately we're talking about the suppression of whole groups of people by this system, both here and throughout the world. I strongly

believe that all of us, the oppressed throughout the world, share a common interest in winning our freedom.

The campaign for our release is politically neutral, in the sense that it appeals to all classes and sections of the population to support us; but although it is organised to highlight our particular case, or based on the 'single issue' of our continuing imprisonment, it should also be an instrument of mobilisation around the whole question of Britain's military involvement in Northern Ireland — the real backdrop, so to speak, of our case.

Have you or your campaign received much open support from the Catholic Church?

We had some degree of open support from the Catholic Church in the Irish free-state — people like Cardinal O'Fiach and Bishop Edward Daly in particular have been very good; but of course the Catholic Church hierarchy throughout the world is inherently conservative, and the Irish church is no exception. As far as the Catholic Church in England is concerned, forget it. We've received absolutely no support at all from that quarter. As far as I'm concerned Cardinal Hume is an Englishman first and a Catholic second: in other words his ultimate and real loyalty lies with the British political establishment. He hasn't shown the least interest in our case and has never once commented on it.

It seems to me that the Catholic Church in England is very good and enthusiastic about condemning socialist or left-wing governments around the world, but when it comes to speaking out against injustice in this country it seems to maintain a conspicuous silence indeed. In my honest opinion the Church here in England is little more than a lackey of the State, a mouthpiece of the well-off and powerful. Look at its track record: it fully and openly supports Britain's involvement in Ireland, and have never done anything whatsoever to improve the conditions of Irish political prisoners in this country. I really can't adequately express the extent of my anger at the sheer hypocrisy of the Catholic Church in this country.

You've now been in prison 14 years; how are you treated by the prison authorities?

Well, Let's be absolutely clear about the fact that the prison authorities are fully aware of my innoc-



continued over the page

WE HAVE BEEN sent an interview with John Walker, one of the Birmingham Six. The interview was conducted on behalf of the British anarchist paper *Black Flag* by prisoner John Bowden, their correspondent in Long Lartin prison. As far as we are aware this is the first such interview to be published.

BIRMINGHAM 6

continued from previous page

ence — they always have been. But of course they continue to keep me locked up.

It's very difficult for me to describe the pain and anguish of being an innocent person locked up in prison for life — the agony and fear of growing older in this place, of watching and feeling my life pass away when I know deep in my heart that I committed no crime. After 14 years in prison that

agony is becoming progressively worse. Prison is a killer — everything about it is designed to kill and destroy the human being; and if it wasn't for the love and support of my family, which itself encourages a continuing sense of hope, I'm not sure that I could have survived the last 14 years of this hell. The support of other prisoners also has been an important factor in my survival here.

I often reflect on that now infamous statement by Lord Denning in which he said, in relation to our

case, that it was better that innocent people should remain in prison rather than the integrity of the establishment be called into question, and I start to fear that maybe I'll be here in prison for eternity. That's why it is so vitally important that we receive the help and support of ordinary people as well as sympathetic governments. Without that support the truth about our case will forever be ignored or denied by the British government, and we shall remain and probably die in prison.

LESSONS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

IF THERE IS A growth industry in Ireland at the moment it must be the rewriting of history. According to the people involved, who include the Labour and Workers Parties, it was the Peoples Democracy (PD) march from Belfast to Derry that stirred up sectarianism and the Provisional IRA which turned a peaceful protest movement into

a violent and bloody one. The logic that flows from this is that the IRA are the primary problem and until the London and Dublin governments are able to totally smash them there will be little or no progress in the North.

This is why the Labour Party, both inside and outside coalition governments, has supported special non-jury courts, broadcasting censor-

ship, 'emergency' laws and the extradition of political prisoners. This is why the Workers Party calls for support for the RUC, calling them "the best community police force in the world". Though quick to condemn violence whether it comes from republican or loyalist paramilitaries they never seem to have anything to say about the violence of the British army, police or UDR. They go so far as to describe Sinn Fein as "fascist". Their attitude is a lot closer to a moderate Unionist party than one which calls itself socialist. And that explains the praise they have received from people like former UDR major and Official Unionist MP Ken Magennis and ex-Northern Ireland Tory Secretary of State James Prior.

BLAMING THE IRA

After twenty years of seemingly endless death, injury and destruction the 'blame the IRA' school of thought has a certain attraction for many people who find it difficult to understand why the fighting started and why it is still going on. But it offers absolutely no solution, instead it serves as an additional prop to imperialism and the rotten six county statelet it set up. Regardless of its intentions it helps to perpetuate the problem.

In 1968...

Hello! I'm Captain Terence O'Neill, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland. Here in the North

- Unemployment is 4 times the British average.
- Wages are 78% of Britain's.
- 22% of houses have no flush toilet.
- 19.3% of houses have no piped water!



If a problem exists it is necessary to look for its cause before one can set about solving it. The cause in the North is the state itself. While all states represent rule over the majority (the working class) by a minority (the bosses) there is something special about the Northern one. When it was created in 1921 it was done so on the basis of religious discrimination. Governments and bosses have consistently and deliberately secured the loyalty of Protestants by giving them marginal privileges over Catholics.

BORDER CAMPAIGN

By the 1960s the IRA had almost disappeared, its 1956 to 1962 border campaign having been an abject failure. It retained only a handful of active members and was regarded by most working class Catholics as a thing of the past. But something else was stirring. The Catholic middle class had given up waiting for a united Ireland and instead began to look for equality of opportunity within the six county set-up. The increased access to university education raised their aspirations and made them less willing to passively accept a second class citizenship. The Catholic working class, equally, was more concerned with concrete improvements in their day to day lives than with dreams of unity with the South.

Discrimination within the North was the issue. Of 319 administrative positions at Stormont only 23 were held by Catholics while in the technical and professional grades there were 196 Protestants but only 13 Catholics. In Fermanagh, a county with a Catholic majority, the County Council employed 338 Protestants and just 32 Catholics. This pattern was repeated across the North in both the public sector and in private industry. A striking example of what this meant hit the headlines in 1968 when a council house in Caledon, County Tyrone was occupied by civil rights protesters. It had been allocated to a single 18 year old Protestant over the heads of a long waiting list of Catholics some of whom had as many as 12 children and were forced to live in overcrowded conditions with relatives or in damp and cramped caravans.

CIVIL RIGHTS

To combat these myriad inequalities the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Assoc. (NICRA) was formed in 1967. Many of its early members were drawn from the Dungannon-based Campaign for Social Justice, a middle class grouping

who had been collecting data on discrimination since 1964, along with some members of the Republican Movement and the Communist Party of Northern Ireland. Its demands were: one man — one vote; allocation of housing on a points system; redrawing of gerrymandered electoral boundaries; repeal of the Special Powers Act;



abolition of the B Specials; and laws against discrimination in local government.

An understanding of these demands shows the sort of society that had been in existence since 1921. "One man — one vote" was counterposed to the situation where businesspeople were allowed multiple votes and people who were not rate payers (tenants in private accommodation, lodgers, etc.) had no vote. Gerrymandering was commonplace. Derry had a population of 36,000 Catholics and 17,000 Protestants. Elections to the Corporation always returned a safe Protestant/Unionist majority. This was achieved by splitting the city into three wards and only allocating houses to Catholics in one of them.

JOBS AND HOUSES

Laws against discrimination in local government speak for themselves, especially when Catholics were finding it a lot harder to get local authority jobs and Catholic areas were granted fewer services. In some cases they received almost none. The call for a housing points system was to replace the set-up where local councillors decided among themselves who got housed and did not have to take into account anything other than their own prejudices.

The Special Powers Act gave the Stormont Minister for Home Affairs absolute power to arrest people on "suspicion" of endangering the state and to imprison them without trial. It also empowered him to send police raiding parties into homes without warrants, impound any property without giving a reason, suspend Habeas Corpus and even abolish inquests. It contained an additional clause giving him the authority to do anything he wished even if it was not specifically mentioned in the Act. The B Specials were effectively the state-paid part time armed militia of the Unionist Party and were notorious for their bigotry and brutality.

HARDLY RADICAL

The NICRA demands were hardly radical. They were the minimum required for any country that even pretends to be democratic. The association did not raise the border issue or adopt any republican policies. The original members had mostly been middle class Catholics who were willing to work within the existing system. Throughout their lives they had been told that, like it or not, they were British subjects. All right, they reasoned, if we are supposed to be British we should enjoy the same conditions and protections as all the other residents of the United Kingdom. The nationalist/republican arguments were not important to them at that time, they were not too impressed by the clerically influenced gombeen society they saw on the other side of the border.

In August 1968 NICRA took to the streets for the first time with a 2,500 strong march from Coalisland to Dungannon to protest against local housing discrimination. Since 1945



• IAN PAISLEY

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71% of local authority houses had gone to Protestants in an area with a 53% Catholic population. The demonstration was a friendly and almost carefree one despite threats from Ian Paisley's Ulster Protestant Volunteers who had occupied the market square in Dungannon to deny access to the 'taigs'. The loyalist presence that day was a warning of what would come if the Catholics didn't quietly go home and accept their inferior status.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

Loyalist bigots did all they could to incite sectarian hatred. Typical was the claim by Paisley that the Civil Rights campaign was a Sinn Fein front whose intention was to drive the Protestants 'into the sea'. In his paper, the *Protestant Telegraph*, he printed what purported to be the Sinn Fein 'oath'. It was claimed republicans swore that: *These Protestant robbers and brutes, these unbelievers in our faith, will be driven like the swine that they are into the sea by force, the knife or by poison cup until we of the Catholic faith and avowed supporters of all Sinn Fein actions and principles clear these heretics from our land . . . At any cost, we must work and seek, using any method of deception to gain our ends, towards the destruction of all Protestants and the advancement of the priesthood and the Catholic faith until the Pope is the complete ruler of the whole world.*

A second civil rights march was announced for October 5th in Derry. Stormont Home Affairs Minister William Craig banned it. After local left wing activists and the Derry Labour Party said they would take to the streets regardless of any ban, the NICRA leadership agreed to go ahead with the march. 2,000 set off. Almost immediately their way was blocked by lines of RUC. A short meeting was held and the NICRA leaders asked the crowd to disperse peacefully. When they tried to do just that they found more RUC blocking the other end of the street. The police charged into the demonstrators batoning, kicking and punching. Eighty eight were injured and another 36 were arrested. Then a water cannon was brought up which sprayed marchers, shoppers and local residents alike.

DANGEROUSLY SUBVERSIVE

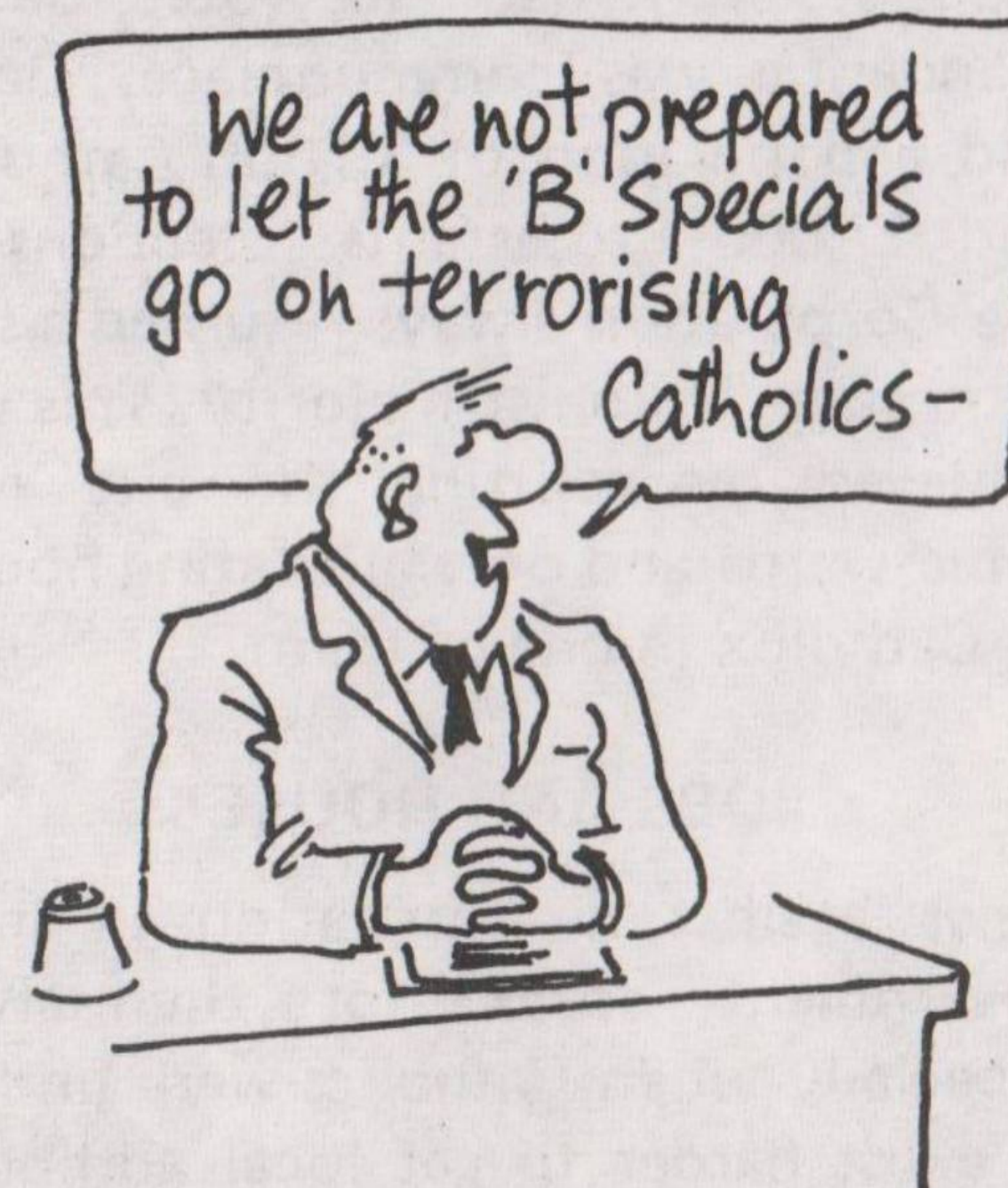
Stormont had given notice that it was not prepared to allow people to peacefully demonstrate for equality. In their

rotten little statelet even the most moderate democratic demands were considered dangerously subversive. However times had changed. Most people had a TV and when they saw pictures of blood spattered marchers whose only 'crime' had been to demand the passage of anti-discrimination legislation they began to ask questions. What sort of place are we living in? And how much longer are we going to put up with it?

In Belfast 800 students from Queens University, Catholic and Protestant, marched in protest and organised themselves into *Peoples Democracy*. It was to be a loose but active group, more radical than NICRA and contemptuous of the nationalist elements whose goal was no more than a few gains for Catholic professionals and politicians. It pointed out that while Protestants might be a little better off than Catholics they also suffered from low pay, bad housing, unemployment and that working class Protestant areas were just as likely to be denied proper amenities. Their aim was to unite the working class through common action on day-to-day issues, and to make this part of the civil rights campaign.

"MEN OF VIOLENCE"

Although the moderate leaders of the Civil Rights movement would have been only too happy to divert the campaign from the streets they knew that to do so would cut them off from most of their supporters who were furious about what had happened in Derry. The Catholic working class of Derry were going to march again



regardless of what John Hume or Ivan Cooper said. Six weeks after the RUC attack 15,000 marched in Derry, an unheard of number for an anti-Unionist protest at that time. Being outnumbered 50:1 by demonstrators who were not in any mood to be told they could not march in their own city the RUC had little choice but to

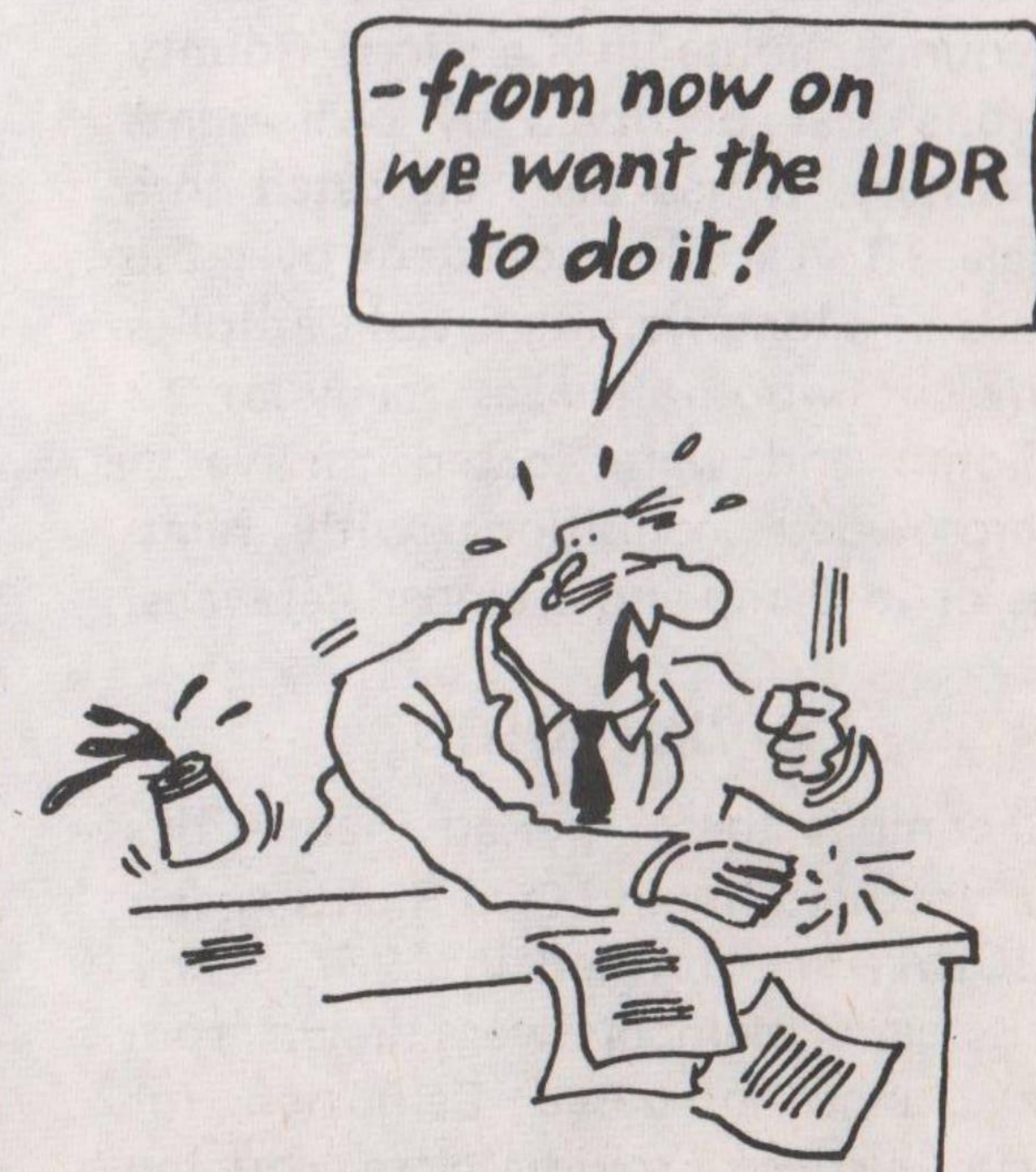
hide away in their police stations. With these 'men of violence' absent there was no trouble.

The Labour government in London, which had previously not even discussed Northern Ireland in parliament, told Unionist Prime Minister Terence O'Neill that it was time for a few reforms to cool things down. On November 22nd 1968 O'Neill unveiled his package of reforms. Council housing would be allocated on a points system, the extra votes of business people would be abolished, a Development Commission would be appointed to replace Derry Corporation, the Special Powers Act would be 'reviewed' and an ombudsman would be employed to hear complaints of discrimination. This was enough to satisfy, at least for a time, the majority of 'respectable' civil rights leaders including most of the NICRA executive.

"UNNECESSARY REFORMS"

Other reactions were not so favourable to O'Neill. Paisley and his loyalist pals in the UVF accused him of giving in to disloyal elements, 'republicanism' and 'Popery'. Within the Unionist Party MPs started an 'O'Neill Must Go' campaign. William Craig ranted about 'unnecessary reforms' and claimed there was absolutely no religious discrimination in Northern Ireland. Only one group of any size was neither satisfied or discredited, the Peoples Democracy. They held there was no guarantee that these few limited reforms would be implemented, let alone enlarged to tackle all the other manifestations of discrimination. The promised scrapping of a handful of

The trigger-happy 'B' Specials are disbanded and replaced by the new 'non-sectarian' Ulster Defence Regiment — which immediately recruits the ex-'B' Specials.



Unionism's worst excesses was hardly a great victory after 47 years of near-dictatorship, pointed out PD. The civil rights marches had shown that direct action can win gains and now was the time to step up the pressure.

BURNTOLLET

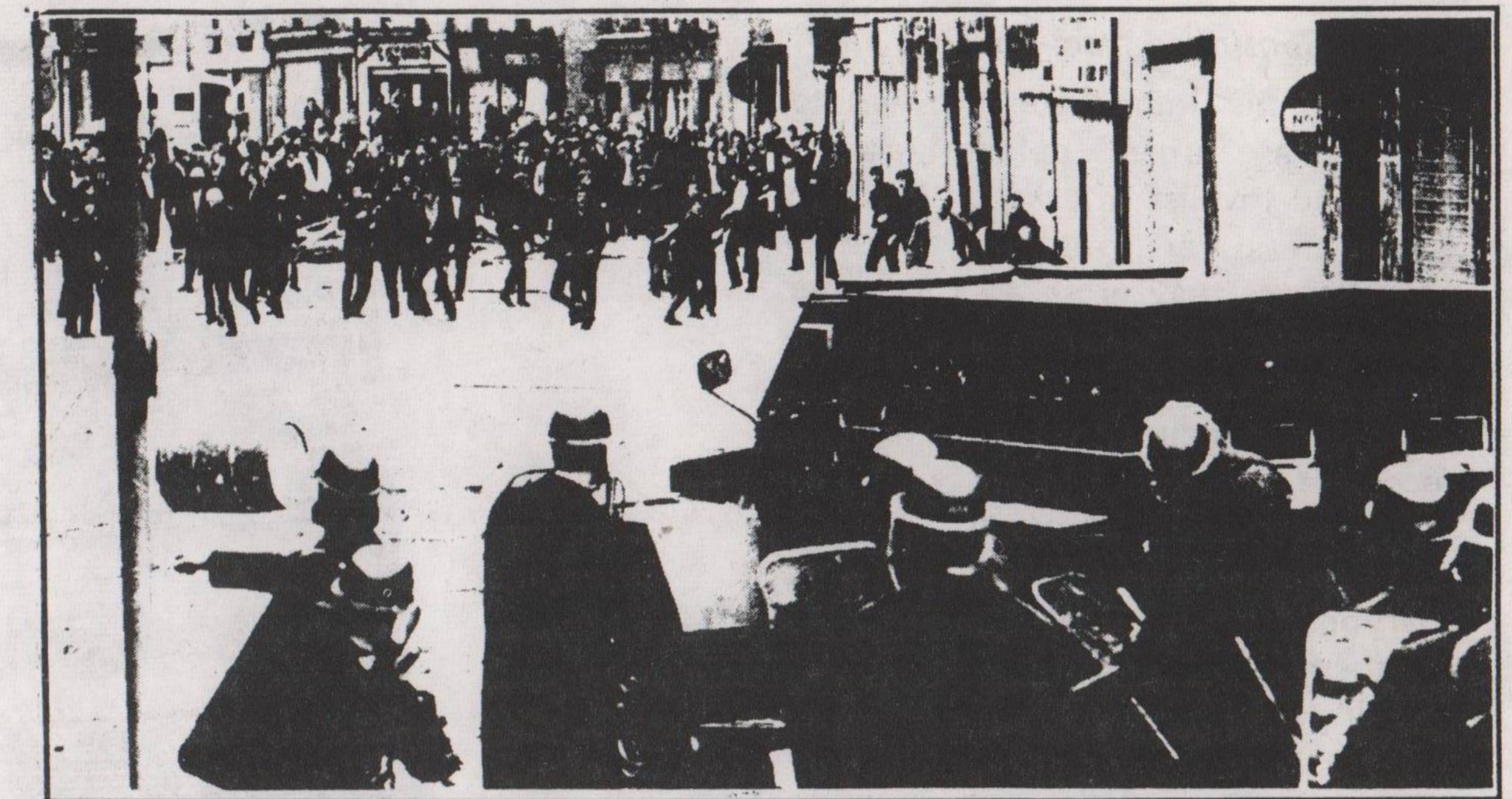
Therefore PD decided to organise a march across the North, from Belfast to Derry, setting out on New Years Day 1969. The 100 or so marchers were met throughout the four day event with RUC barricades and forced to go down country lanes and across fields. When they reached Burntollet Bridge, just eight miles from Derry, they were attacked by about 350 loyalists throwing rocks' and using clubs spiked with nails. Several marchers were seriously injured and a couple nearly killed. Many of the attackers were off-duty B Specials. The RUC accompanying the protest refused to give any protection. Not one of the attackers was ever convicted in a court of law. O'Neill who was now being presented as a great reformer, went on TV to blame the victims for the violence and said *"we have heard sufficient for now about civil rights. Let us hear a little about civic responsibility"*.

It was not enough for his opponents in the Unionist Party and on April 28th O'Neill resigned. His replacement, Major James Chichester-Clark lasted less than two years because although he favoured more repression than O'Neill it was still not enough for most in the Unionist Party. Indeed Brian Faulkner who in turn replaced him and was even more repressive was nevertheless judged too moderate and was eventually banished to the political wilderness.

AS CLEAR AS DAY

Something was so clear that only those who stuck their heads in the sand could not see it — the Northern state was unwilling and unable to implement a series of widespread and meaningful reforms. It had been built on the basis of a sectarian division, nurtured by bigotry and defended by thuggery. To talk of real reforms and of equality meant challenging the very basis of the state. It had not been the intention of most of the early civil rights activists but it was the reality they found themselves in.

Things finally boiled over on August 12th. The Apprentice Boys who were parading around Derry's walls demonstrating their contempt for the Catholics below by throwing



Mass mobilisation in defence of Bogside, August '69

pennies down into the Bogside. Some youngsters threw stones at the loyalists. It was unplanned and uncontrollable. The police responded with a vicious attack on the Bogside. Residents had their houses attacked and their heads split open. A riot developed. But the police had no idea of what was to happen this time.

The mainly Catholic working class Bogside and Creggan areas of Derry expelled the RUC, organised their own 500 strong defence force and built barricades. The police unleashed a vicious attack and fired hundreds of canisters of CS gas over the barricades. The area was defended with bricks and petrol bombs. People fought not only because they literally feared for their lives should the RUC get in but also because they had been humiliated and bloodied too often to now give up with a fight. The 'Battle of the Bogside' triggered smaller riots in other towns in an attempt to draw some of the RUC's forces from Derry.

them occupied by Catholics, were burnt-out. RUC Land Rovers sped up and down the Falls Road firing their Browning machine guns. The high velocity bullets from these have a range of 2½ miles and it is only with murderous intent that they would be sanctioned for use in densely populated urban areas. Ten people were killed and about 100 injured. The dead included a 9 year old boy shot as he lay in his bed and the first British soldier to die — a man home on leave who was shot by the RUC! His mistake was to visit his family in a Catholic area. (It is also worth recording that the first policeman to die, Constable Victor Arbuckle, was shot by loyalists.)

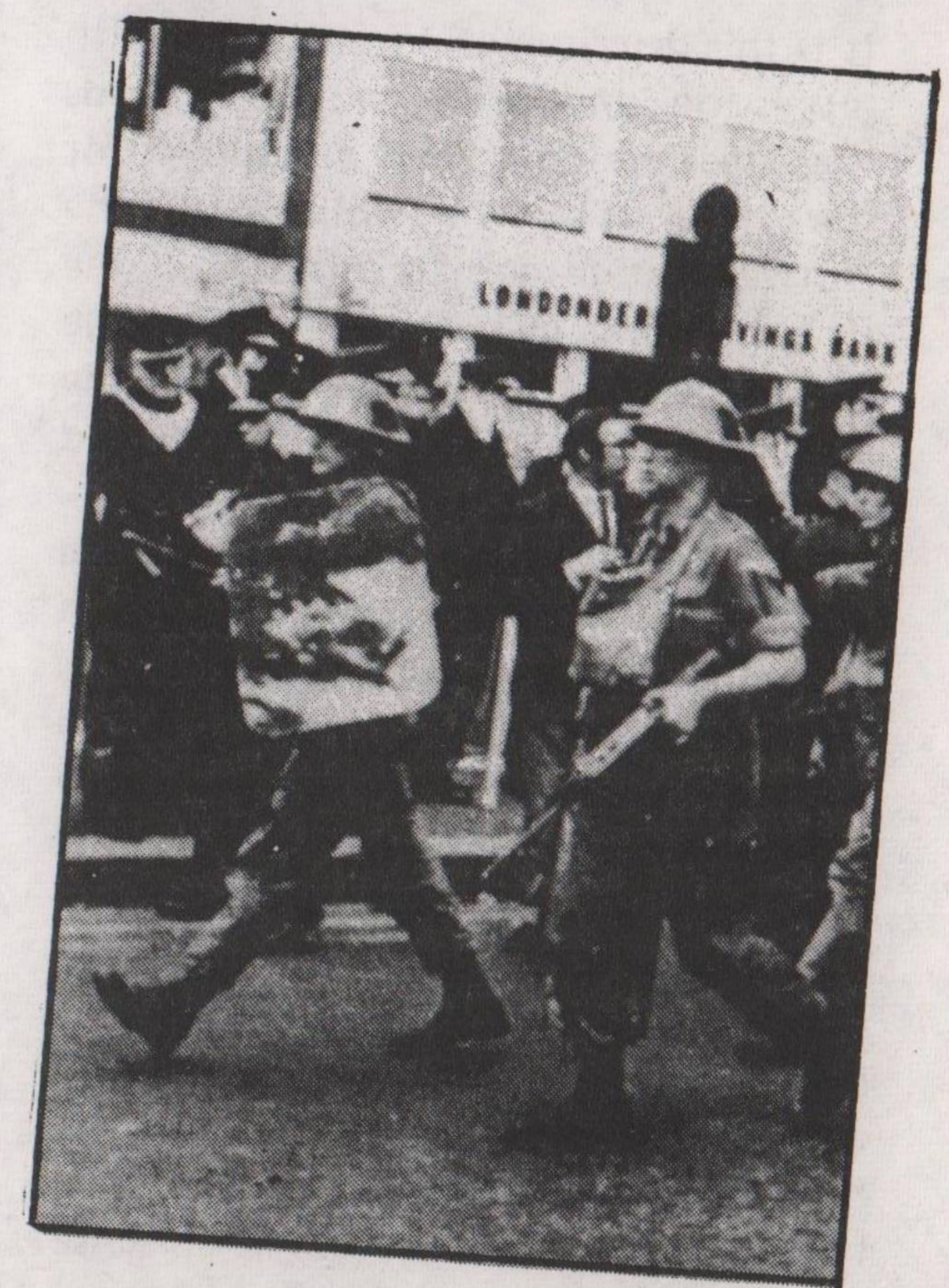
BIRTH OF THE PROVOS

It was in this situation that the Provisional IRA was formed. The politics were old-style Catholic repub-

THE ARMY ARRIVES BACK

At 5p.m. on Thursday August 15th 1969 400 soldiers from the Prince of Wales's Own Yorkshire Regiment took up positions around the city. The British Army was again on the streets of Ireland. As later events were to prove they had not been deployed to protect people from the RUC and the B Specials. Harold Wilson's Labour government acted because the RUC were being beaten. No government will stand by while its monopoly of force is being brought into question. The army were sent in to uphold the authority of the state, to stop a counter-power developing.

Now it was Belfast that exploded. Loyalist vigilantes stormed the Falls on August 14th. Within a day and a half over 200 houses, nearly all of



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licanism, the immediate aim was to provide an armed defense against RUC and loyalist attacks on Catholic ghetto areas. Far from being the cause of violence, they arose as a response to the violence of the state. No matter how much we may disagree with their politics and their methods we have to recognise this.

Far from being a handful of gunmen who enjoy little or no support, everyone can see that one third of Northern Catholics, mainly from working class areas, vote for Sinn Fein. Despite all the ruling class's attempts to isolate them their support holds. The fact is that discrimination and repression continue and that is the ongoing source of the conflict. The 'bad old days' are not over.

Despite the Fair Employment Act of 1976 and the state-operated Fair Employment Agency, the FEA had to admit in 1987 that after twelve years in existence a Catholic man is still two and a half times as likely to be unemployed as his Protestant counterpart. In the aircraft and shipbuilding industries less than 5% of the workers are Catholics. The Sirocco Works, which is located in the Catholic Short Strand area of Belfast, has only 4 Catholic employees (0.4% of the workforce). This pattern is repeated throughout private industry. There has been some improvement in Catholic representation in the public sector — but only in the low pay jobs. Skilled work and promotion is largely denied to them.

BREEDING THE ANGER

It is this discrimination combined with repression and brutality, that breeds the anger which is seen in support for the IRA. It is the violence of the Northern state and its masters in the British ruling class which have made certain that twenty years after the Civil Rights marches the death and destruction continues.

The task of anarchists is to build a movement that can unite the Catholic and Protestant working class on class issues, a movement that can challenge the Northern and Southern states. Our goal is not a nationalist united Ireland. But that does not mean we are prepared to equate nationalism with imperialism, we will defend the Provos against the state and oppose the attempts to scapegoat them for the problems created by the boss class. However we are in no sense in political alliance with republicanism for our goal is very different. We stand



for a united Workers' Republic based on socialism, workers' control and individual freedom. We will settle for nothing less.

Alan MacSimóin

Letters

AT LAST some good news. Tito (Luis Tricot) was released from jail in Santiago, Chile on Thursday, 17th November, after having been confined there since September 1987, on false charges.

As you are aware, the Ireland-Chile Support Group have been campaigning for his release since his arrest, and have been highlighting in particular the severe beatings and torture suffered by him during his imprisonment. We have received much support and assistance from many people all over Ireland, and we are convinced that without this solidarity and goodwill Tito would still be locked up, if not in a worse predicament. So, to anyone who, in any small or large way gave assistance to the campaign for his release, much gratitude and thanks is due.

Declan Turnbull,
Ireland-Chile Support Group,
c/o St. Francis Xavier's Church,
Upper Gardiner Street,
Dublin 1.

YOU WERE quite right to mention in a recent edition about the £10 hospital services charge. Most people are under the illusion that this has to be paid to the hospital to obtain treatment. But this isn't so. I was recently injured in a fall and was taken to hospital for treatment. I was immediately asked for said money, but told the person in question that I neither had the money nor would I pay if I had it. I was treated in any case and given a bill by the hospital for a tenner. I have received two further bills since asking for the money but I have ignored them and intend to ignore any others. As far as I am concerned I got away with paying this £10 tax and others can, in the same way. I am not opposed to paying taxes or anything like that but we are being squeezed through the nose by the Government and from what I can see only the rich are benefiting.

J.M.
Waterford

We welcome letters from readers

Interview

The manufacture of consent

NOAM CHOMSKY first came to public prominence during the sixties, both for his vocal opposition to US imperialism in Southeast Asia, and for his work in the field of linguistics. He has made his anarchist beliefs known through his political activities and in a number of books. Among his recent books is the very topical *The Faithful Triange — Israel, the US and the Palestinians*. This interview is part of a longer one given to the Canadian anarchist magazine *Open Road*.

OPEN ROAD: *Today you are probably best known as a critic of US foreign policy. What sort of audience are you trying to reach? Are you afraid that you may just be preaching to the converted?*

CHOMSKY: I'm aware of the danger, but don't feel that it is real. The major groups of 'the converted' — that is, the deeply indoctrinated with naive and immutable quasi-religious beliefs — are the mainstream elite intelligentsia. But they are much too well-disciplined to listen to anything I have to say, and they know of it, if at all, only through the fabrications of various party liners or their own incomprehension of anything that parts from doctrinal purity. The reactions among the various Marxist sects and the like is similar, and for similar reasons.

The audience I try to reach, and to some limited extent do reach is a different one: partly, activists of a less doctrinaire sort than the mainstream liberal intelligentsia and sectarian Marxists, partly the kind of general interested audience that one finds everywhere: around universities (primarily students), church groups, and so on.

I'm not trying to convert, but to inform. I don't want people to believe me, any more than they should believe the party line I'm criticizing — academic authority, the media, the overt state propagandists or whatever. In talks and in print, I try to stress what I think is true: that with a little

willingness to explore and use one's mind, it is possible to discover a good deal about the social and political world that is generally hidden. I feel that I've achieved something if people are encouraged to take up this challenge and learn for themselves.

There are a vast number of people who are uninformed and heavily propagandized, but fundamentally decent. The propaganda that inundates



them is effective when unchallenged, but much of it goes only skin deep. If they can be brought to raise questions and apply their decent instincts and basic intelligence, many people quickly escape the confines of the doctrinal system and are willing to do something to help others who are really suffering and oppressed.

This is naturally less true of better-educated and 'more sophisticated' (that is, more effectively indoctrinated) groups who are both the agents and often the most deluded victims of the propaganda system.

OPEN ROAD: *What position do you think North American anti-authoritarians should take with regard to Third World liberation movements especially the more authoritarian, Leninist/Maoist type of movement? Do you think that our first priority should be to simply oppose US imperialism?*

CHOMSKY: The US has not been elected God, and has no authority to impose its will by violence in the Third World. Apart from the matter of principle, some familiarity with recent history shows clearly enough the effects of its benevolence, in Central America and the Caribbean for many years, in Southeast Asia, and elsewhere. Any honest person will therefore oppose and attempt to block such intervention, exactly as in the case of subversion or aggression by any other power.

This truism aside, our attitude towards Third World 'liberation movements' should be to find out and tell the truth about them. Where we can do something to defend people who are oppressed, to alleviate suffering or to expand the scope of freedom, we should do so, though the best we can do, quite often, is to keep our bloody hands out of their affairs. We should also try to offer constructive assistance to people attempting to overcome centuries of misery and oppression, in part because it is just and right, in part out of a recognition of what the plague of European civilization has created as it spread through the world. Outside intervention regularly tends to enhance the authoritarian and oppressive elements in these movements, and in fact is often designed to achieve this end (Cuba and Nicaragua are two obvious examples).

It is not clear that there exists any way for most of the people of the Third World to overcome the enormous problems they face, which transcend anything in our historical experience. Whatever slight chance there might be for decent prospects are reduced or eliminated by the violence

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CHOMSKY

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of the great powers, in part motivated by fear that successful development will take place outside of their control, with a 'demonstration effect' that will undermine their dominance elsewhere. These are some of the facts of the world that have to be faced. It is easy to preach to the Third World, a little more difficult to offer constructive recommendations.



OPEN ROAD: *Yet in Radical Priorities, you deny that either feminism or the ecology movement pose a real threat to capitalism — presumably the demands of both movements can be met within the capitalist system. Do you see any revolutionary potential in these movements, or do you think that the working class remains the most likely agent of revolutionary transformation?*

CHOMSKY: The feminist movement, and to some extent the ecology movement, have, I think, had a significant and lasting effect on social thought and practice. But it should be recognized that capitalism can easily accommodate the idea that individuals are interchangeable tools of production and that the environment should be maintained to be exploited by the masters of the economic and political system. A radical and emancipatory movement is not necessarily anti-capitalist. There are many forms of

authority and domination apart from those of the capitalist system; correspondingly, there are many forms of 'revolutionary transformation'. It doesn't seem to me a matter of 'one or the other', as your formulation tends to suggest.

OPEN ROAD: *Isn't industrialism itself becoming obsolete?*

CHOMSKY: Industrialism is far from obsolete. The vast majority of the human race has not even entered the industrial era, or has barely entered it, and in the advanced industrial societies the production of useful goods poses real and imminent problems. One major problem of advanced industrial societies — England, and now the US — is that the capacity for useful production is to a certain extent being lost, a fact that has been emphasized for many years by Seymour Melman, among others.

OPEN ROAD: *Many of your political writings are directed against the 'new mandarins', the intellectual servants of American power and interests. Why do you think it is important to expose the collusion between intellectuals and the state?*

CHOMSKY: It has been widely recognized for many years that 'the manufacture of consent' is a major task in societies where obedience cannot be ensured by violence. Whether they are aware of it or not, a substantial part of the intelligentsia commit themselves to this task. The result is a system of indoctrination that is often remarkable in its effectiveness.

The first step in freeing oneself from its grip is to recognize that it exists, to come to understand that the pretended objectivity and neutrality of social and political commentary, or simple news reporting, masks presuppositions and ideological principles that should be challenged, and that often collapse very quickly when exposed.

Until people free themselves from

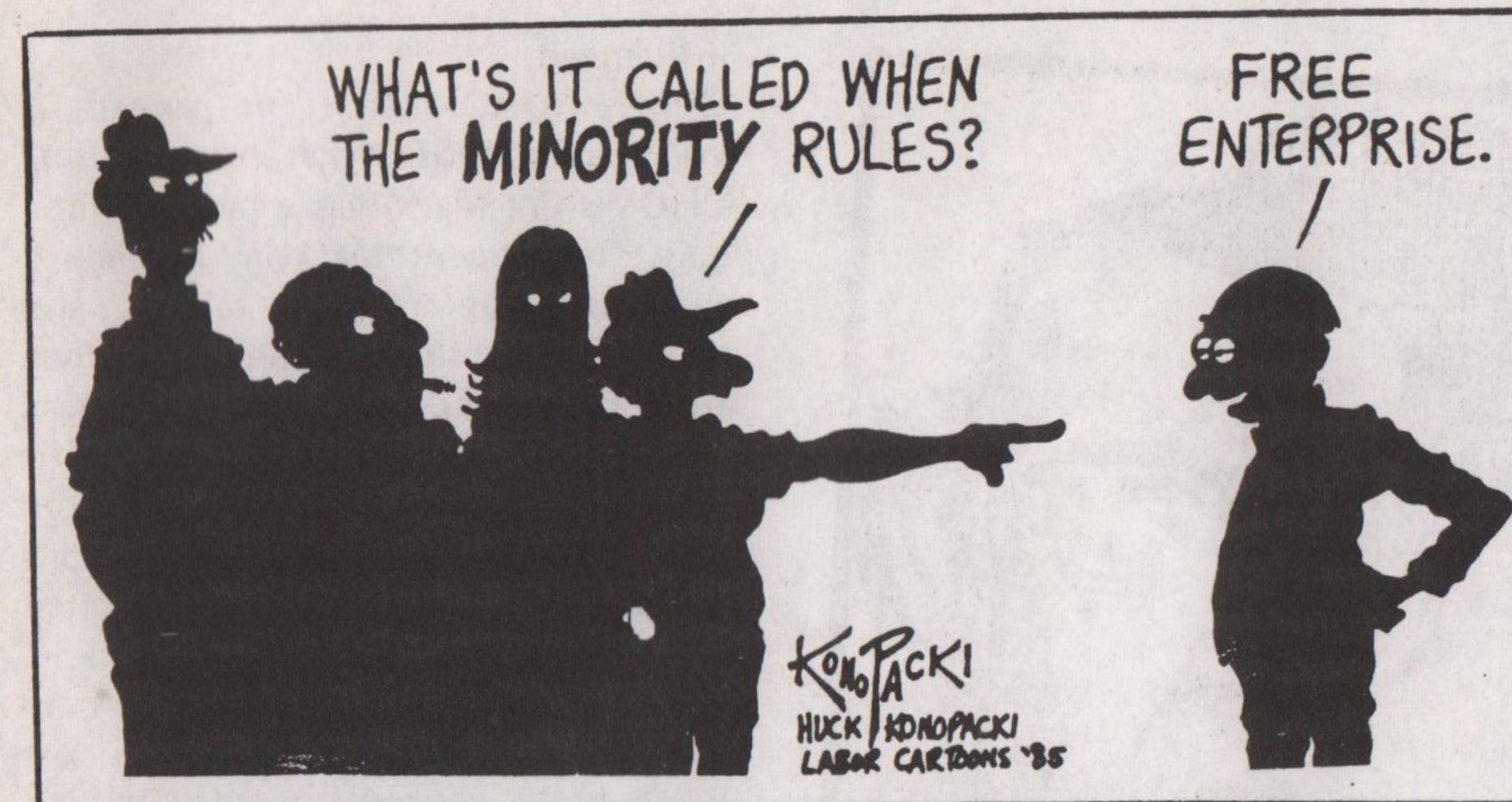
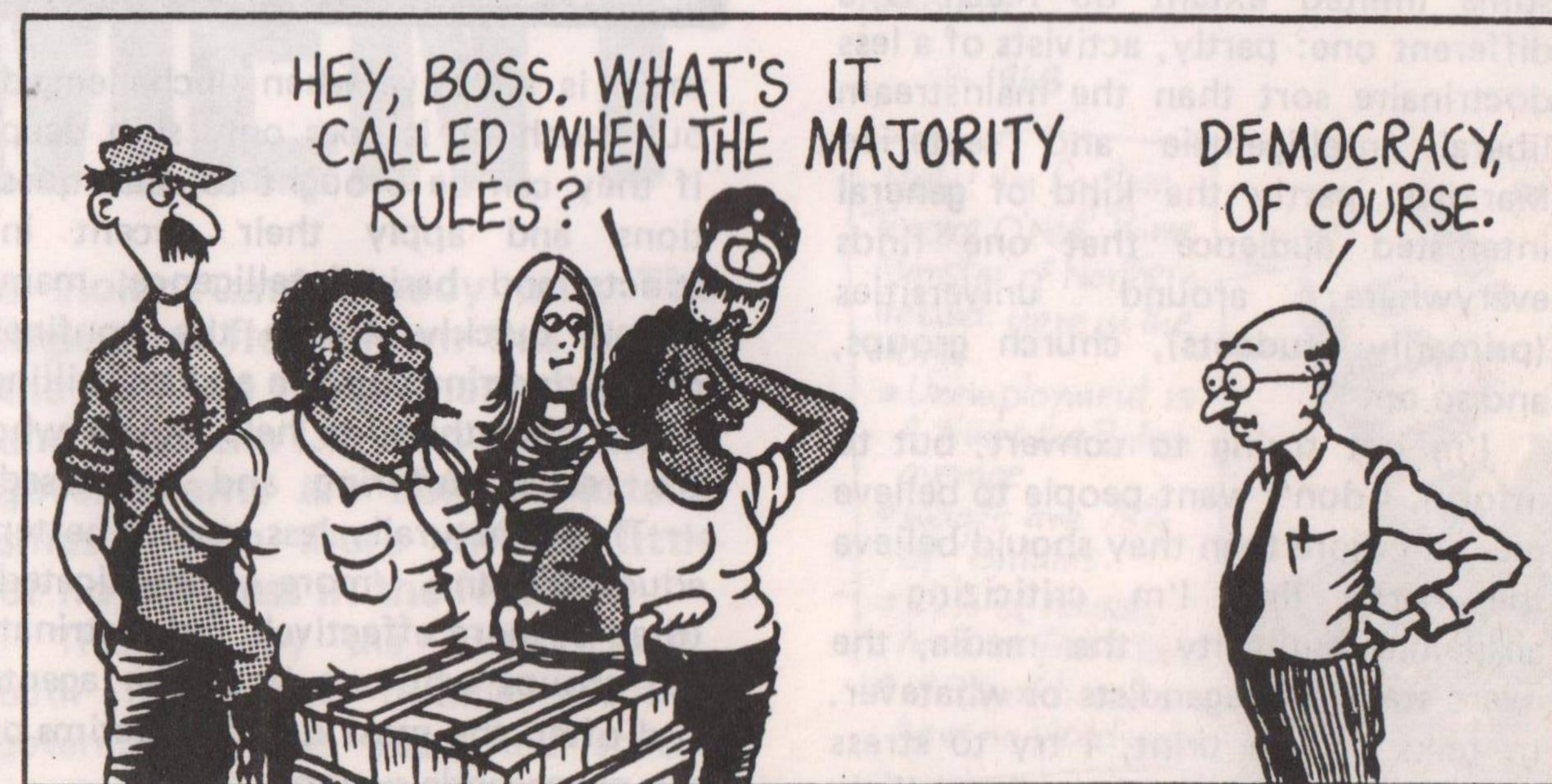
the system of indoctrination, they will continue to support the violence of existing institutions. If they can free themselves, they can often combat it effectively in countries such as ours, where the level of institutionalized violence is relatively low, for the privileged at least. So I think it is important to continually bring out the ongoing collusion, whether it is tacit and subconscious or quite consciously undertaken.

This is an unending task, since the major institutions and their servants naturally never cease to construct the perceived world in the form that suits their needs. It is a great mistake to believe that once the lies of the propaganda system have been exposed about, say, the Vietnam War, then it is pointless to take the topic up again. On the contrary, the intelligentsia will maintain their natural commitment to restoring the shattered faith and do so in the course of time, quite effectively if unchallenged.

OPEN ROAD: *As a self-described 'statistical error', meaning that people with your sort of political views are generally excluded from prominent positions in the US, how do you see yourself as an intellectual teaching at a major American university, in your role as a member of the very intelligentsia you criticize, and in relation to your students?*

CHOMSKY: In fact, I have very little contact with the so-called academic or intellectual community, apart from a few friends and colleagues. With regard to students, the matter is different. They are in a phase of their lives when they are uniquely able to question and explore. They haven't been completely socialized.

It is, in fact, quite striking to see how differently students and faculty respond to issues involving the university or the larger society. Take just one other typical example. A few years ago MIT in effect arranged to sell



about 1/3 of the nuclear engineering department to the Shah of Iran. When the scandal surfaced, there was much uproar on campus, leading to a student referendum that showed about 80 per cent opposed. There was also a series of well-attended faculty meetings (a rare event), which led to a vote in which about 80 per cent approved.

The faculty are simply the students of a few years ago, but the difference in reaction, on a matter of simple academic freedom apart from the obvious broader implications, reflects the fact that they are now a functional part of the institutional structure of power. It is that step towards acceptance and obedience that it is important to try to prevent. Once it has been taken, the rest is fairly predictable.

OPEN ROAD: *So you think a large American university is a suitable place for free education and independent thought?*

CHOMSKY: Insofar as the universities provide the opportunities for free inquiry and expression, it would be crazy not to make use of them, while trying to expand these opportunities. This can be done; it was done quite effectively, in fact, by the student movement of the sixties, one reason why it was so hated and why it is so maligned by the custodians of history, whose privilege and authority were threatened by the student pressure for free inquiry and who now have to mask their real fears by the pretense that the main thrust of the student movement was totalitarian, Stalinist, opposed to academic freedom, and so on. There is a whole literature of falsification on this topic, which is naturally very highly regarded in intellectual circles.

OPEN ROAD: *Anarchists, from Godwin to Goodman, have developed libertarian theories of education very critical of conventional, state-controlled education systems. Do you have any thoughts on this libertarian*

tradition of educational thought?

CHOMSKY: I think it is often effectively expressed crucially important values. Schools function in many ways as instruments of indoctrination, not only in the content of what is taught, but in the style and manner of teaching and organization, from the earliest years.

Students are rewarded for obedience and passivity — one result is that in the elite institutions, students are often pre-selected for these traits and are more effectively indoctrinated than elsewhere.

These are not laws of nature. It is possible in principle for schools to foster the creative impulses that are rather natural from childhood on and to encourage a constant willingness to challenge established doctrine and authority. In fact, this comes close to being true in advanced work in the natural sciences, though very rarely elsewhere. For just this reason, training in the natural sciences might not be a bad way to prepare oneself for a life of serious engagement in social and political issues.

A bit of personal good fortune is that up to high school, I was in such a school — one that was Deweyan, not libertarian in our sense, but that did encourage independent thought and self-realization in the best sense. It wasn't until I entered a city high school, for example, that I discovered, to my surprise, that I was a good student. It was assumed in my earlier school experience that everyone was. Insofar as students were 'measured', it was not against one another but against what they could accomplish.

Such schooling is fundamentally subversive, in the best sense, and therefore rarely undertaken, but it is possible even within the institutional constraints of our societies as they now exist, and the effort to create and expand such possibilities merits much effort and struggle. This is most im-

portant within the state educational system, where the overwhelming majority of the population is educated, or dis-educated.

OPEN ROAD: *You have described yourself as a 'derivative fellow traveller' of anarchism and as an 'anarchist socialist'. Just how do you see yourself in relation to anarchism as a philosophy, and anarchism as a movement?*

CHOMSKY: What I think is most important about anarchism as a 'philosophy' (a term I'm uncomfortable with) is its recognition that there is and will always be a need to discover and overcome structures of hierarchy, authority and domination and constraints on freedom: slavery, wage-slavery, racism, sexism, authoritarian schools, etc., forever. If human society progresses, overcoming some of these forms of oppression, it will uncover others, particularly as we move from confronting animal problems to confronting human problems, in Marx's phrase.



Anarchism does not legislate ultimate solutions to these problems. I see it as a rather practical 'philosophy', inspired by a vision of a future that is more free and more conducive to a wide range of human needs, many of which we are in no position even to identify under the intellectual and material constraints of our present existence.

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CHOMSKY

Continued from previous page

We will each commit ourselves to the problems we feel most pressing, but should be reading to learn from others about the limitations of our own conceptions and understanding, which will always be substantial. It is only in this sense that anarchism can be a 'movement'. It won't be a party with members and a finished doctrine.

OPEN ROAD: How did you come to embrace such ideas? Is it true you were influenced by the kibbutz movements in Israel when you were young?

CHOMSKY: Yes I was influenced by the kibbutz movement, and in fact lived for a while in a kibbutz and almost stayed on. I think there is much of value in the kibbutz experience, but we must also not forget (as I have sometimes tended to do) that the historical particularity of the kibbutz movements in Israel embodies many serious flaws, sometimes crimes. One should also explore other facets of the experience, for example, the kinds of coercion that arise from the need for acceptance in a closely-knit community, not a small topic, I think.



I can't really say how I came to be influenced by anarchist ideas; I can't remember a time when I was not so

influenced.

OPEN ROAD: What, in general, is your opinion of Marx and Marxism?

CHOMSKY: Marx was a person, not a god. The concept 'Marxism' belongs to the history of organized religion, and should not be seriously employed by a free and independent person. Marx was a major intellectual figure and it would be foolish not to learn from him or to value his contributions properly. He was, like anyone, limited in his perception and understanding. His personal behaviour (not to be confused with his thought) often left much to be desired, to put it mildly. There are also very dangerous and destructive elements in his ideas some of which underlie the worst elements of Leninist thought and practice.



WILDCAT

The Emperor must be given the credit for stopping the war.

Yeah. After starting it, and keeping it going till he was defeated!!

He was in no position to stop it.

That is to say ... er ...

The old fellow never did us any harm.

Never did any harm ???!!??*#&? What about all the slaughtered dissidents? What about all the young men conscripted without hope of leave? What about all the massacred villages? What about all the prisoners of war starved and worked to death ??? What about... Steady on!

Just calm down. I didn't say he never did any harm.

I said he never did **US** any harm.

RICH

VICTORY FOR SPANISH ANARCHIST UNION



JUST BEFORE last Christmas Spain saw its first general strike in over 50 years. Eight million workers (about 90% of the workforce) took part in the one day stoppage. The action was against the imposition of a cheap labour 'youth training scheme' and in opposition to the 'socialist' government's policy of holding down wages and public spending. Shaken by the massive turnout, the government has now withdrawn the youth training scheme.

Earlier the Spanish anarchist union, CNT, experienced a spectacular advance in the works committee elections at the big SEAT car factory in Barcelona. These committees are elected in each workplace as a central negotiating body. A few days before the elections Anton Saracibar, secretary of organisation in the UGT union, said the elections at SEAT would be of 'great importance', so the result is especially significant.

The CCOO (dominated by the Communist Party) went from 25 delegates down to 15, the UGT (dominated by the Socialist Party) went from 18 to 16, the Confederation de Cuadros (a smaller union) got 5, and the CNT gained 12 which saw its representation jump from 5 to 17. The CNT received more votes than either of the two main unions who have dominated the Spanish workers' movement since the death of Franco.

less radical, approach seems to be the one that is furnishing results.

To understand why the CNT made such gains at SEAT (a factory of 16,640 workers), a bit of background history is necessary. In the 1986 committee elections the CCOO and the UGT had an overwhelming majority and arrogantly used it against the interests of the workforce. A night shift was introduced, there were speed ups and a massive push by management for increased productivity. Work on Saturdays and even Sundays was made virtually obligatory for some workers. Temporary workers were introduced into jobs previously done by full time employees with job security. The CCOO and UGT delegates sold all this to management in return for a pitiful 3.15% wage rise followed by a pay freeze.

Most scandalous of all, was that they 'bought' members for their unions by telling new workers and older ones without a fixed contract that if they joined "we will get you a fixed contract". They also got jobs for their relatives and some 20 cases are known of people actually paying for a job!

The CNT, along with the LCR and MCC (two revolutionary marxist groups) ran a campaign against sexual and contractual discrimination, holding protests at the company's central offices. The CCOO and UGT silently maintained their arrogant, machistic position.

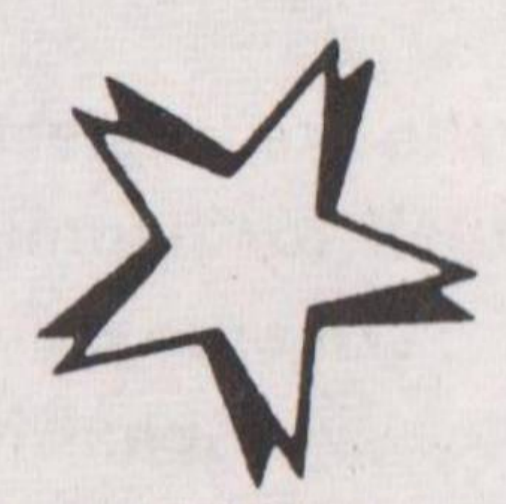
Despite a smear campaign against the CNT the workers finally saw that they were right. The CNT collected 6,324 signatures in three days (to revoke the committees the law says you need the signatures of one third of the workforce in order to call an assembly, and 50% plus one of the votes there to call new elections). A referendum was held asking

but participation was 60%, and taking into account the habitual 20% abstention, this meant that only 20% followed their call. This is the first time a works committee has been replaced in a large factory, the CNT hopes it will set a precedent.

The fact that the *El Pais*, the paper with the largest circulation in Spain, devoted an editorial to the CNT victory illustrates its significance. The signs are that SEAT is not an isolated case. In the banks the CNT won a referendum to overturn the collective agreement signed by the CCOO and UGT. There have been several defections from the CCOO to the CNT. The workers democracy of the anarchist union is appealing to increasing numbers of workers. To quote Antonio Bernal, secretary general of the CNT in Catalonia "CNT's model of continuous participation and consultation with the workers was sufficient in itself to give them victory at SEAT and it will produce future successes."



Information for this article was supplied by a member of the CNT's English language teachers' branch in Barcelona, and by the Spanish Information Network, 6a The Drive, Roundhay, Leeds LS8 1LF, England.



The CNT only takes part in these works committee elections in order to maintain its influence and whenever possible attempts to divert the power from the committees and transfer it to the workers themselves in open assemblies. Incidentally, the argument over whether to participate in these elections was an important reason for the split between the CNT and the CNT-AIT a few years ago. Both agree that the state's reasoning behind the setting up of the committees was to remove power from the workforce and place it in the hands of a small group to whom appeals for 'moderation' and 'restraint' could be made. The CNT-AIT won't participate, the CNT does because it has decided that not to would strip it of any effective influence in the workplace. This pragmatic, but no



workers if they wanted new elections. 9,301 to 320 voted yes. CCOO and UGT had asked the workers to abstain



RANK & FILE TRADE UNIONISM

REVIEW

IN PLACE OF COMPROMISE
(Anarchist Workers Group, Britain). IR£1.50 inc. postage from WSM Bookservice.

You have to pinch yourself to realise that by far the warmest response to the third successive deflationary budget which is certain to further vandalise crucial public services has been from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions — collaborators with the current right-wing consensus.

The Anarchist Workers Group is a recently formed organisation with the stated objective of building a more revolutionary organisation than a syndicalist union. The roots of the group are within the British Direct Action Movement, and stem from a split around this issue.

In the WSM, we identify with the ideals of syndicalism but we also argue the need for a purely revolutionary organisation which will connect the political and the economic — and we believe history shows that ruling class hegemony will need to be fought at the political level, the economic level and also at the level of ideas.

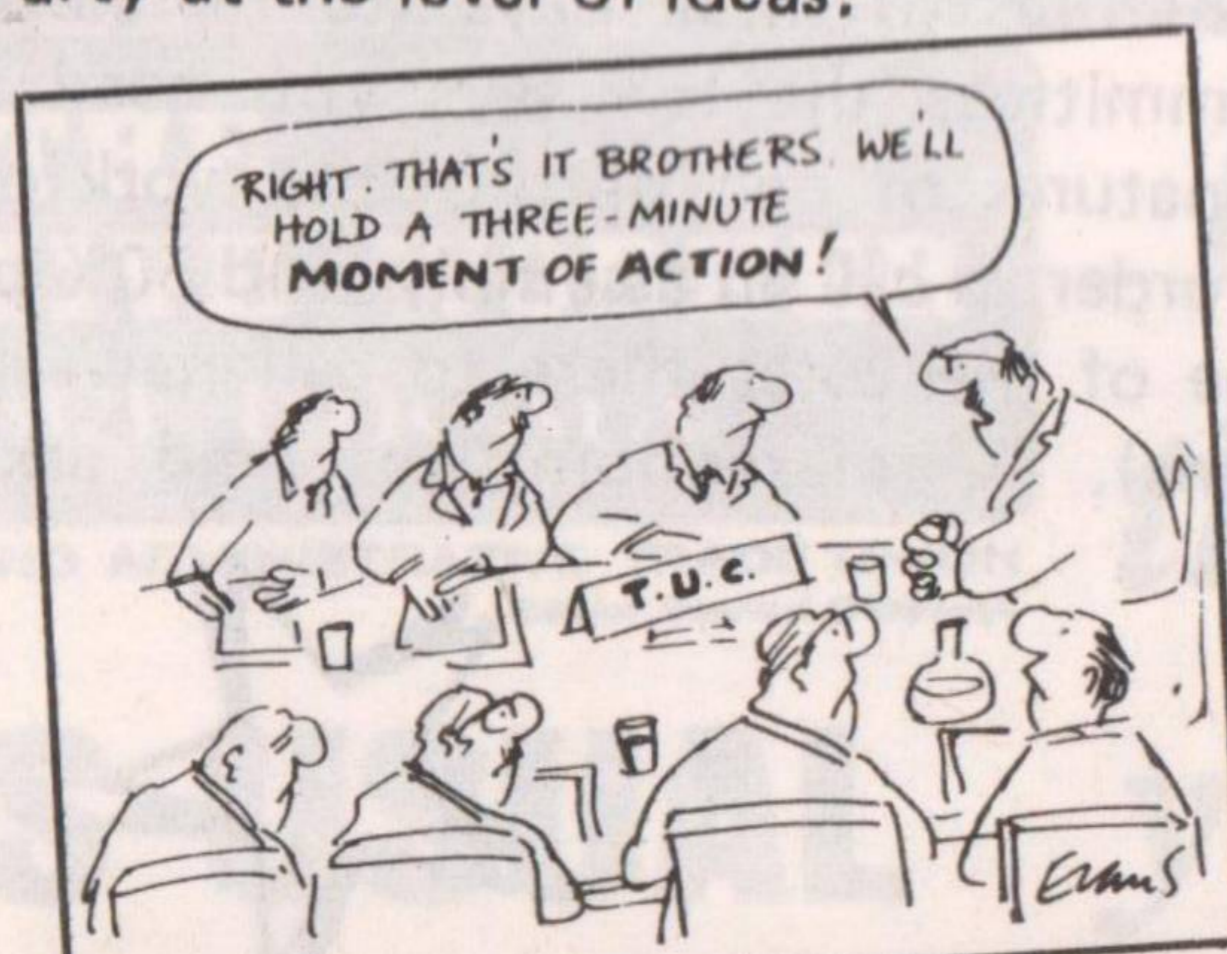
This pamphlet is subtitled "Why We Need A Rank And File Movement" and argues its case with great clarity. It includes brief analyses of Warrington, The Miners Strike and Wapping. Warrington was the last time the Trade Union bureaucrats could have claimed not to realise the intent of Thatcherite Employment Legislation. The NGA's dispute with media mini baron, Eddie Shah, came to a head on November 29th 1982, when 4000 or more picketers were battered and beaten by police outside the scab printworks. Hand in hand with iron fist policing, which Britain had hardly seen in a generation, the Legal System unveiled its new trick of sequestration. This is a law which allows the state to seize your union dues for any activity which might make a strike effective. The Trade Union Congress refused to support the NGA for fear it might have its assets seized too.

It must now have been clear to the union bosses what the scope and intent of the new laws were — and it

must have been equally clear to the state that the trade union bureaucracy would be compliant with anti-union legislation.

Through comparisons between the potential of rank and file activity and the inertia of bureaucracy, this pamphlet shows how even a left wing bureaucrat like Arthur Scargill will come to the aid of the state by "policing" wildcat activity. Only a rank and file movement could have forced the TUC to follow through on the resolution at their 1984 Congress to support the Miners' Strike in every way possible. Scargill's appeals to the union bosses rather than to the membership helped hasten defeat.

The pamphlet also contains an outline history of non-bureaucratic trade unionism in Britain from the first world war to the present. It touches on The Shop Stewards Movement, The National Minority Movement and the National Rank and File Organising Committee. Throughout the analysis avoids painting a fanciful picture or underestimating the mistakes made. The pamphlet shows how the Socialist Workers Party's abandonment of rank and file-ism allows it to avoid directly opposing the TUC and rejects the conclusions they draw from their "down-turn" analysis. The pamphlet argues that, despite the low level of rank and file revolt, a rank and file movement is highly relevant and is the only vehicle which could seriously struggle for class interests. Despite the SWP's glib "The Bolsheviks didn't need a rank and file movement . . .", the Anarchist Workers Group is aware that Russia (after years of union repression) had no entrenched caste of union bosses, which is far from being true in Britain. In the final section of this pamphlet it is made clear that the AWG vision of a rank and file movement is of one which would be independent of any Party at the level of ideas.



In Ireland, the ICTU is in open collaboration with a viciously right wing government and its monetarist

policies. In the last election, 85% of voters opted for right wing parties. This is why the Workers Solidarity Movement sees the crucial importance of persuading people of the potential reality of free socialism. It would have been nice if the first pamphlet from a new Anarchist organisation fleshed out their essential vision of anarchism in a way which this polemic piece fails to. Having said that, it is an excellent introduction to the concept of 'rank & file' and well worth reading. If you want to know what is meant when people talk about rank and file organisation, and to find out what Thatcher's anti-union laws mean in practice, this is the pamphlet for you.

Myles Kennedy

Theatre

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As part of our fight for anarchism we are involved in the struggles for higher wages, for trade union democracy, for women's rights, for jobs.

We oppose all divisions in the working class. We fight against all attempts to set Protestant against Catholic, men against women, skilled against unskilled, old against young, heterosexual against homosexual.

We are opposed to the British state's presence and to partition. We defend people's right to fight back. But we are not nationalists, we do not want to merely get rid of the border. We want to unite our class and create a totally new Ireland.

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BOOKS FOR ANARCHISTS

BOOKS ABOUT ANARCHISM and the anarchist movement are not the easiest to get hold of in Ireland. Most bookshops stock only one or two titles. To make them a little easier to find the Workers Solidarity Movement operates a mail order book-service. In this and future issues of *Workers Solidarity* we will be listing a few of the books and pamphlets available.

*For a full catalogue send a 24p stamp to WSM Bookservice, P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8.

*When ordering add about 20% to the price to cover postage.

ANARCHISM

Daniel Guerin, IR£4.95.

Written by the noted French anarchist who died last year, it is a good introduction to the essential ideas of anarchism. Explains why anarchists oppose the State, criticises authoritarian socialism, puts forward a democratic alternative to the parliamentary system. How the ideas were put into practice by the anarchist movement in Russia, Spain and Italy. *New Statesman* described it as "perhaps the best short introduction to anarchism there is".



FIGHTING THE REVOLUTION 1

IR£1.10
Short biographies of three revolutionary military commanders, two of whom, Makhno and Durruti, were anarchists. Nestor Makhno fought in the Ukraine during the Russian revolution and Buenaventura Durruti fought in the Spanish Civil War. The third is Emiliano Zapata who fought in the Mexican revolution until he was killed in 1919. A little bit of interesting history along with food for thought about anarchist organisation and how it deals with the military requirements of a war situation.

FIGHTING THE REVOLUTION 2

IR£1.30
Largely a selection of writings by Peter Kropotkin, the anarchist theoretician. About half the material is about the Paris Commune in 1871 which was the first time workers took over rather than just rebelling. Included is the defence statement of Louise Michel, an anarchist sentenced to life transportation to New Caledonia for her part in the Commune.

THE IRRATIONAL IN POLITICS

Maurice Brinton IR£1.50
"How modern society manipulates its slaves into accepting their slavery". Why people accept authoritarian, hierarchical and class society. Looks at how the ideas of the ruling class are passed on to the rest of us. An appendix is an excerpt from Clara Zetkin's *Reminiscences of Lenin* which illustrates an aspect of Lenin's thinking little known — or deliberately 'forgotten' — by all the Leninists who tried to put themselves at the head of the movement for women's liberation.



ABC OF ANARCHISM

Alexander Berkman, IR£2.00
Answers those questions you always wanted to ask: is anarchism violent, can we really live without government, how would society be organised, who can change society, is a revolution necessary?

YOU CAN'T BLOW UP A SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP

Author unknown IR£1.20
Subtitled "The Anarchist Case against Terrorism". Why anarchism and the activities of terrorist groups are incompatible. Written in Australia, it draws on examples from there as well as Europe and the Americas.

IWW SONGS

IR£2.00
Produced by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), a great collection of labour songs including ones by Woody Guthrie and Joe Hill. Forty one 'songs to fan the flames of discontent', 'Union Maid', 'Banks of Marble', 'The Rebel Girl', 'Casey Jones the Union Scab' and many more tunes to set the bosses teeth on edge.