

BOERING O'BRIEN

Conor Cruise O'Brien went to South Africa and deliberately broke the academic boycott which is supported by all those fighting apartheid. He says that he does not agree with the boycott because it strangles academic freedom and also because it is ineffective. Although he supports economic and sports boycotts he somehow believes that academics, especially those called Conor Cruise O'Brien, are above all this.

He uses an argument that there must be freedom of speech and thought. He now says that the activities of the students who broke up his lectures prove that when apartheid goes it will be replaced by another form of tyranny. For all his waffling about supporting economic and military blockades of South Africa he is now seen by his actions to be supporting apartheid and the racists in Pretoria know it.

VISA

Firstly he was let into the country. Unlike the Dunnes workers, who were invited

by anti-apartheid activists, the government gave him a visa. Secondly, a speech of his, in which he condemned the academic boycott, was televised. Although he also attacked apartheid he admitted that he knew the speech would be edited to show that he only opposed the boycott. Good propaganda for the regime.

O'Brien is despicable. For all his chat about free speech it was him who introduced Section 31 censoring Sinn Fein. Now he is the sternest opponent of its removal.

TYRANNY

On his return he tried to make out he was a victim of tyranny. He ended up by trying to tell the victims of apartheid how they should fight. This comfortable middle class academic, who is obviously not serious about getting rid of apartheid has the audacity to try and tell people who are being shot at, whipped and murdered how they should fight. He does this not from a position of solidarity but one of arrogance.

We support all those fighting apartheid. We provide solidarity whenever we can. (We never saw O'Brien on the Dunnes picket). They have called for boycotts and we support that.

We have political differences with the ANC and the Anti-Apartheid Movement but from a position of solidarity we debate and criticise. As for O'Brien he is probably above rubbing shoulders with lowly activists. As activists he can be assured we feel no loss.



JOIN THE WSM

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

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

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

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

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

NOVEMBER 1986

No. 22

ANOTHER YEAR OF BIGOTRY

November 15 marks the First Anniversary of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Far from offering anything positive to the nationalist population of the six counties (not one single reform has been forthcoming) the agreement has highlighted once again the sectarian nature of the Northern State.

Time and time again this state has been proved irreformable and the last year has been no exception. Loyalist murder gangs are again the order of the day as Loyalists attempt to cling to their privileges which are the basis for sectarianism.

PROVOS

The Northern State must be smashed. It is the only way that sectarianism can be broken. The Provos are right in seeking to do this. They understand the irreformable nature of the six counties but can they break Protestant workers from Loyalism and thus undermine the broad base of support that exists for partition?

The answer to this must be no. The Provo strategy is one that seeks to unite all Catholics regardless of



Orange marchers flaunt their bigotry... same as it ever was

their class. They seek alliances with the likes of the SDLP. By their actions they offer nothing that can break workers from Loyalism.

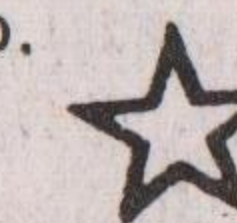
WORKERS ACTION

Only a strategy based on united working class action aimed at achieving socialism throughout Ireland can be successful. The actions of some public sector workers

in striking against threats to Catholic workers shows that unity can be built. These strikes were a small step but they showed that workers action against the bigots and murder gangs is possible. From these small beginnings the confidence can be gained for larger battles.

Of course in all of this the working class in the south has a role to play.

Partition cannot be ended without creating socialism in the whole country. Anything less is not worth fighting for. Building a movement throughout the country committed to this will be the greatest incentive to Protestant workers to break from their Orange masters. That is what Workers Solidarity seeks to do.



IRELAND'S ANARCHIST PAPER

The findings of a survey carried out by the British magazine *Womens Own* on rape this August do not make for pleasant reading. Of the 25,000 women interviewed, fully 10% had been raped. It is fairly certain that a similar picture will emerge from the survey being currently undertaken by one of the Irish 'Womens' magazines.

BETTER LAWS

In response to this situation many women pin their hopes on improved legislation to improve the treatment given to rape victims, especially in the courts, and ultimately to end the threat of rape altogether. While Anarchists support reform and improvement of laws affecting our lives (the current attempt by the Rape Crisis Centre to repeal the 1981 law regarding rape clearly falls into this category), better laws are not enough. To see why, we have to examine the causes i.e. the ideas and social conditions which lead to rape.

MEN?

Many women argue that, in the words of the London Rape Crisis Centre, "Ultimately the responsibility for rape and assaults on women lies with men". Although it is an understandable reaction to the situation, it is wrong to place the blame on men and hence male sexuality, exclusively as THE REASON. Certainly, in each individual rape case blame lies immed-



iately with the specific men involved. But the sexist and dehumanising views these men generally share about women are not ideas that they are born with or are inevitably tied up with. These men don't come from another planet — they live in this society and have their ideas determined by it.

The survey revealed that the majority of rapes were carried out by men known, sometimes intimately, to the women involved.

IDEAS

The dominant ideas in this society are those which suit the interests of the system under which we live — one in which a tiny minority of people are immensely wealthy and powerful, and the rest of us are attempting to have some sort of a worthwhile existence. Capitalism depends on the acceptance by us of ideas which keep us divided from each other, seeing ourselves as competing with each other, rather than realising our collective inter-

est in working together and becoming conscious of our capability to change things. Such ideas as sectarianism in the North which divides Protestant workers from Catholic workers for the benefit of the bosses and sexism, which divides male workers from female workers. Sexist ideas of women's "inferiority" and of women's role in life being 'children, church and kitchen' are deeply linked with class society.

These ideas and their influence among the mass of people ensure a number of things for the system. For a start, the restriction of women's lives to a family setting means that most of the work in rearing the next generation of workers is done by workers — specifically working class women. At times it may provide a refuge from the anonymity of everyday life, if it finally comes to the crunch, it means no matter how much a male worker is done over by the system, he can always go

home and take it out on his wife and kids.

If these ideas and the suffering that sexist ideas in particular produce in terms of dehumanising and distorting our relationships are to be effectively challenged, we must recognise that this challenge involves a fundamental change — replacing capitalism with a system whereby we make the decisions, where human beings are valued as real live individuals who contribute to society regardless of colour, sex, or sexual orientation.

The elimination of rape can only be realistically achieved if the sexist ideas of men are tackled, which in turn means addressing a number of broader issues. Foremost is the struggle of women for economic independence. The elimination of rape will only come when women are no longer regarded as inferior/passive/etc. Their fight for economic equality can uproot these ideas.

Mike Scully

THAT'S CAPITALISM

Millionaire and Brazilian presidential candidate, Antonio de Moraes was recently quizzed about the children, some as young as four, who were found shovelling coal into furnaces in one of his factories. Big-hearted Antonio replied that it was an 'excess of benevolence' which allowed the coalmen to bring their families to work with them. The coalmen, however, pointed out

that only by bringing their entire family with them could they manage their work load.

Union Carbide, whose factory in Bhopal, India killed over 2,500 people less than two years ago, were fined 1 million dollars over the Summer for breaches of safety procedures at its plant in Institute, West

Virginia. The company, investigated after a large leak of dangerous gas there, were found to be "willfully", ignoring safety by not providing workers with respiratory protection when working with phosgene, a chemical used in the First World War as a poison gas. During one incident at the plant a worker was told to look for a leak of this chemical by "sniffing" for it.

Chinese Communist Party officials are notorious for their abuse of power. Recently it's emerged, a village

official ordered the arrest of seventy-two locals, and had seventeen tortured. Worse, after their release, they were forced to cough up their prison costs. But it was a serious affair. Someone had stolen the official's bicycle bell.

Work is bad for you. Hard work is worse. Figures from the Medico-Social Research Board show that manual and unskilled workers are nine times more likely to be admitted to psychiatric hospitals than managers and employers.

THE MOST DISTINGUISHED PICKET

THE SHELBOURNE Hotel claims to be the most distinguished address in Ireland, yet the staff are the lowest paid hotel workers in Dublin

Because of this 108 members of the ITGWU have been on strike since October 4th. The roots of this current dispute date back to the lock-out of 1983 which ended in defeat for the workers. Then Trust House Forte (the owners of the hotel) were able to impose a drop in basic wages as well as a string of redundancies on the workforce.

SERVICE CHARGE

This led to a worsening of wages and working conditions. Management lowered the basic rates of pay, using the hotel's service charge to make up the difference in pay for pre-1983 staff. New staff were taken on at the lower rates. The strikers are demanding an end to this system as well as a wage increase and the payment of a Sunday premium.

SCABS

The catering multinational Trust House Forte claim they can't afford to meet these demands, yet in their



On the picket line at the hotel where a main course costs more than the Head Waiter's daily wage

other Dublin hotel (the International Airport) the basic rates are much higher and a Sunday premium is paid. In an attempt to break the strike management have stockpiled food and imported 24 "trainee-managers", or scabs as they are more commonly known, from England.

The gap between the rich and the ordinary workers is shown up very clearly in this strike. A main meal which can cost up to £30 is served by a head waiter who earns only £16.60 a day, and a waitress who earns only £13.60 a day. The staff who clean 16 rooms a day earn only

£87p a room. Not surprisingly, given these conditions, the strikers are determined to win.

Donations for the strikers can be sent to Shelbourne Strike Committee, No. 4 Branch, ITGWU, Liberty Hall, Dublin 1.

Mick Mooney
Greg Ryan

Free Press?

THE AIM of the WSM is to spread anarchist ideas among workers. To this end members carry out regular sales of *Workers Solidarity* at workplaces in their area.

During a recent paper sale outside Sunday Newspapers (where the Sunday World is printed) in Terenure, two WSM members were approached by a management type who wanted to know what we were doing there. When told we were selling this paper so that people could know about Anarchist ideas, he replied "Look here, I employ people that work here and I don't want them reading stuff like that".

After we pointed out that we were standing on a public footpath and he

couldn't stop us, he stormed off inside (without even buying a paper!). A few minutes later those defenders of free speech and democracy, the Gardai Siochana, were on the scene. Our friend in the grey suit had phoned them and demanded we be moved on.

It just goes to show what your average boss thinks of WSM. The last thing they want is for people to realise that we could get rid of them. They need us, but certainly we don't need them.

Meanwhile workers at Sunday Newspapers will still be able to get the paper at the gate. We are not easily intimidated.

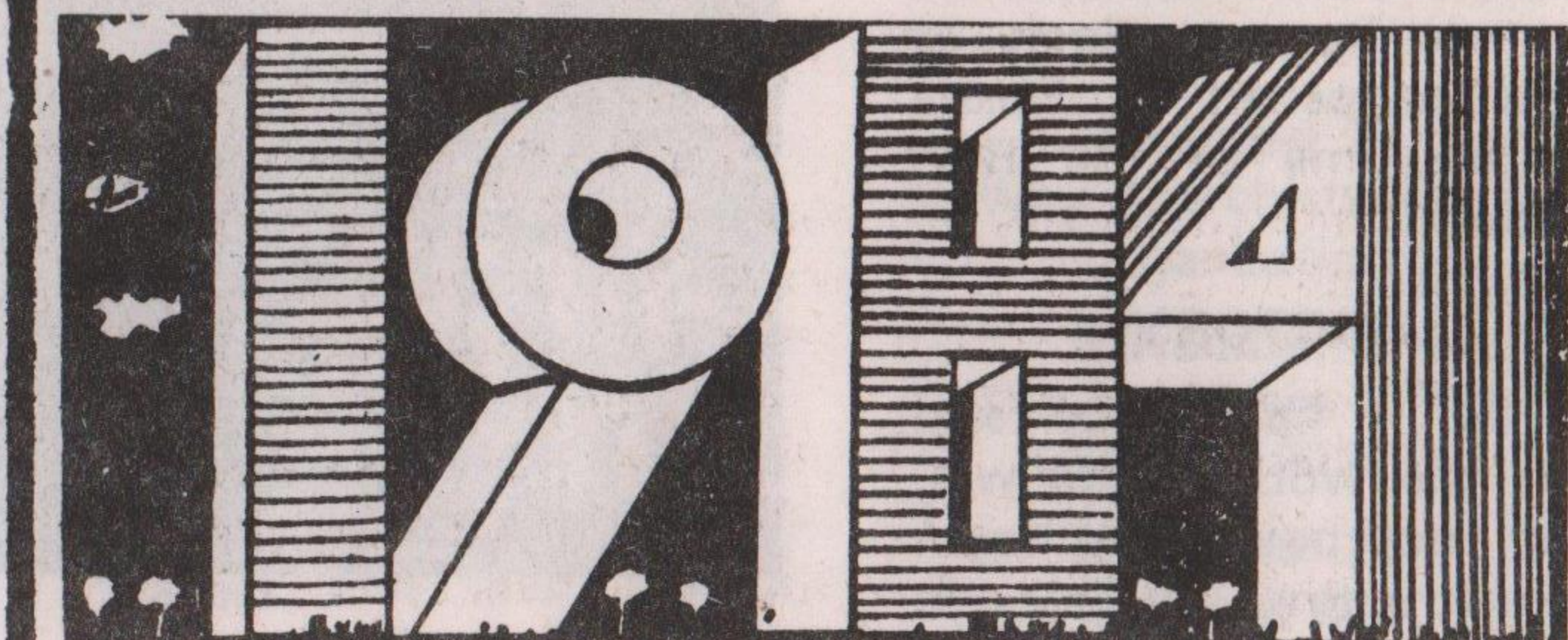
Greg Ryan

"Lifted"

ANARCHISTS have been saying for quite some time that (1) Thatcher's government is a supporter of the Botha regime in South Africa, and (2) give the state extra powers and they will eventually use them against activists in the labour movement, not just against 'terrorists'.

Last month Brendan Barron, a member of the Irish

Distributive and Administrative Trade Union and one of the Dunnes Stores anti-apartheid strikers, was detained at Birmingham airport. He was on his way to address anti-apartheid meetings in the British midlands. His notes and an anti-apartheid pamphlets were seized by the police. This is by no means the first case of this kind.



IS RUSSIA SOCIALIST?

THE BIGGER the lie, the less likely it is to be questioned.... and if ever there was a big lie it is that Russia is socialist.

The victory of the Russian Revolution in 1917 showed that the ideas of socialism could become a reality. In a world opening out of a barbarous war for colonies and markets (World War 1), where millions of workers suffered from poverty and even starvation, the victory of the Russian working class gave hope all over the world that society could be changed for the better. In Ireland in 1918 thousands of Dublin workers attended a celebration of the 1st anniversary of the Revolution.

But what we see today is very different to the picture in 1917. While cynically using the language of socialism, Russia has shown itself to be no better than the set-up in the West.

KREMLIN

From the crushing of the *Soviets* (workers' councils) and the attacks on the newly won freedoms in the 1920s, to the Moscow show trials in the 1930s, to the brutal smashing of the Hungarian workers' uprising in 1956, to the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, to the threatened invasion of Poland in 1980, there is little that could make genuine socialists enthusiastic about the boys (not many girls allowed in!) in the Kremlin.

To understand how regimes so obviously anti-working class as those in Russia, Poland, Albania or China can pay lip-service to the traditions of workers' power, we have to look at what happened in Russia at the time of the Revolution.

VICTORY

Firstly it has to be said that the workers did win, they took power and began reconstructing society in

their own interests. A new era seemed to be dawning. Factory councils were taking over production, *soviets* were in control of the towns and cities, women took great strides towards liberation and homosexuality ceased to be a crime. No mean feat for one of the most backward countries in Europe.

Two fundamental obstacles stood in the way of progress towards a new, free and communist society. The first was the failure of the Revolution to successfully spread outside the borders of Russia, and the second was the Bolshevik Party itself.

RAVAGES

The material basis for socialism did not exist in Russia. It did not have a productive and well developed industry. It could not satisfy the needs of all the people. It certainly couldn't after the ravages of the World War, the civil war, armed intervent-

ion by 16 countries and blockades which sought to stop foreign trade.

If Russia was to survive there would have to be a spreading of the Revolution to other, more developed, countries. This seemed a real possibility. In Hungary, Bavaria, Finland and Latvia *soviets* actually took control. The German Kaiser was overthrown. His army turned on its masters. In November 1918 the High Command of the navy surrendered to revolutionary sailors and soldiers.

COUNCILS

Workers councils sprang up throughout the country. The task was now to consolidate all this into a final showdown with capitalism and the establishment of a workers republic. The problem was that the dominant ideas among the workers were those of social democracy (Labour Party politics). The social democratic leaders, who at May Day rallies talked of class

war but the rest of the year had sat in parliament as junior partners of the ruling class, showed their true colours.

They decided to muster all the energy they could... to save capitalism. Their leader, Ebert, even opposed the abolition of the monarchy. They did all they could to encourage the workers to accept a "new and democratic" capitalist regime.

They would not have succeeded except for the fact that the "left" was swaying between reform and revolution. They eventually allowed themselves to be pulled along by the right-wing. Only the anarchists and the small Spartakus League defended the workers' councils. After a premature rising by the Spartakus League the Revolution was crushed. This defeat isolated Russia. To survive in a hostile capitalist world it would be necessary to compromise with it and accept its econ-

omic rules.

BOLSHEVIKS

The second reason for the success of the counter-revolution in Russia was to be found in the Bolshevik Party itself. Nobody with any knowledge of history would deny their heroism and courage. Unfortunately that is not enough to make a successful revolution. Their ideas were profoundly authoritarian. They decided that they represented the 'objective' interests of the working class, and therefore should rule on behalf of the workers. In time, even debate within their Party was suppressed and the leadership came to wield total power. The basis had been created for the rise of Stalinism.

All power was to rest in the hands of the Party. This meant the emasculation of the factory committees as early as 1918. By 1921 the local *soviets* had been turned into mere mouthpieces for the Party,

without any real power of their own. In the Ukraine the Revolution had been made by the workers and peasants, and defended against Tsarist invasion armies by the anarchist Revolutionary Insurgent Army (the Makhnovists). The Bolshevik response was seen when Trotsky tore up a treaty and had the Red Army attack their rear.

POWER

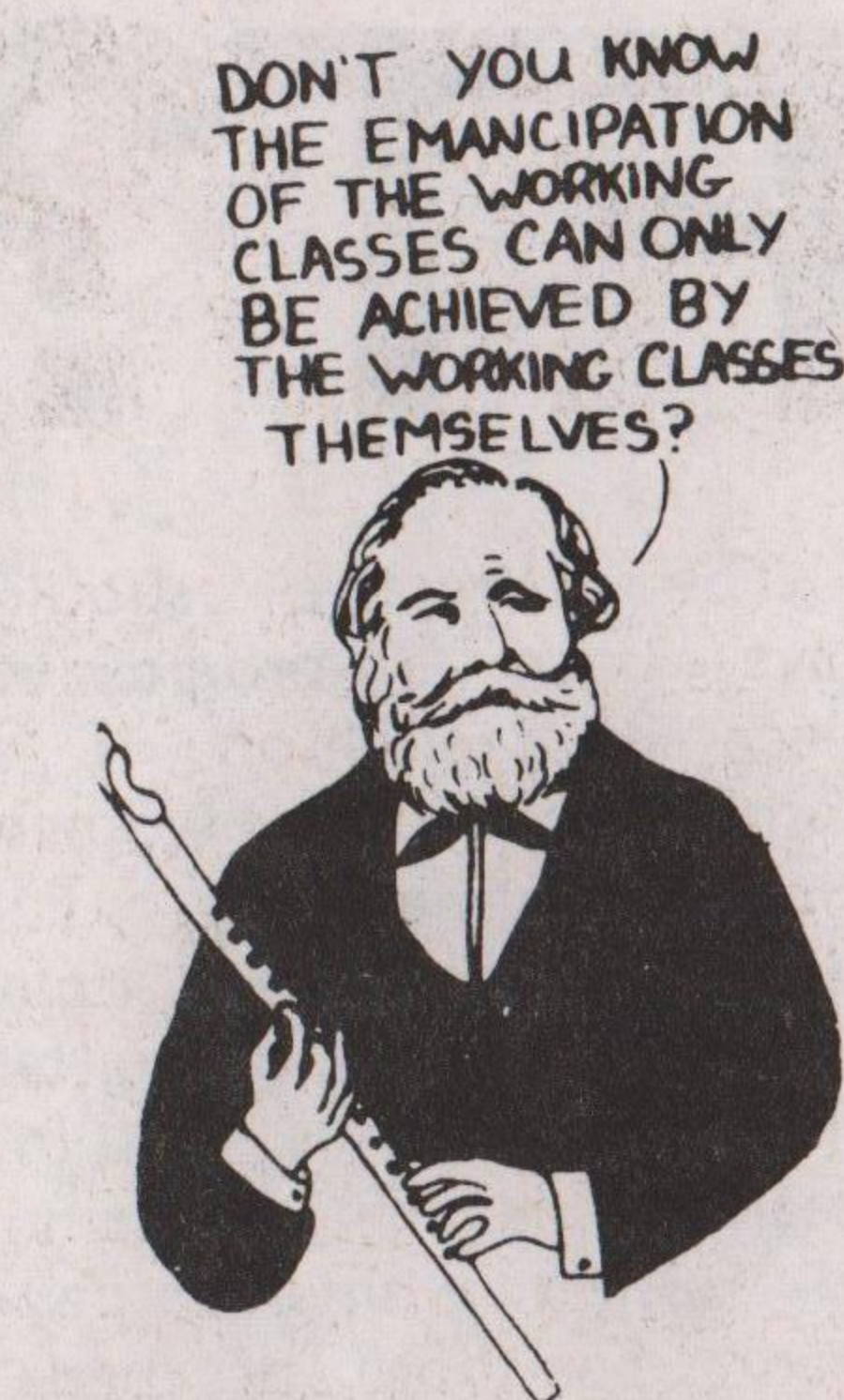
The Bolsheviks wanted complete power. The jails filled up with socialist and anarchist political prisoners. Lenin spoke of the 'need' for a period of state capitalism. One-man management and piecework were reintroduced in the factories. The gains of the revolution were being stolen away.

This was not the result of some bizarre conspiracy to sabotage the Revolution but it was the logical outcome of a set of ideas that sees the initiative being taken from the workers and put into the hands of political 'experts'. These 'experts' gradually sought to increase their control. Just two years after the Revolution an amazing 53% of Bolshevik membership was composed of government officials. Only 11% were factory workers.

CLASS

Throughout the 1920s this caste of experts moved from being a grouping with special interests of their own to become an actual ruling class. Workers were denied the right to strike, the unions became no more than a police force for enforcing production quotas and labour discipline. Workers lost even the right to change jobs and from 1929 to 1936 wages were cut by half. Even the shadow of socialism was well and truly dead, only the funeral ceremony was missing.

But can Russia really be described as capitalist? There are no stock exchanges, large private com-



panies or any of the other trappings we have in Ireland. The point is that it is not the same form of capitalism as we live under, it is not a system based on private bosses and firms. Instead the state owns most means of production. The ruling class collectively control the economy. It is state capitalism.

CONTROL

The worker is exploited in much the same manner as in the West. He or she has no control over their work, no control over what is done with their 'surplus value' (profits), no real control over the running of the country.

If state ownership of the means of production, attempted planning of the economy (to suit the pace of international competition, not a socialist planning where the only determining aim is needs of the population) and the absence of a private 'bourgeoisie' makes Russia fundamentally different from capitalism, then Irish capitalism must be getting less 'capitalist' all the time. The nationalised industries must be paradises of socialism. But try getting a redundant Dublin Gas worker to agree with that!

SOCIALISM

Just as much as Ireland does, Russia needs a Revolution. To avoid the tragedy that happened after 1917 a mass organisation will be needed, one that draws together all those fighting for workers' direct control and freedom. It can not be a group of 'leaders' and their passive followers. That will always

be a recipe for defeat and a mere change of rulers.

The analysis of Russia as state capitalist is crucial to the understanding of socialism. Without workers' control of the economy there will be no workers' control of society. Without workers' control of society there will be no real freedom.

Alan MacSimóin



WSM MEETINGS

Like what you read in this paper? Want to find out more? Part of each WSM branch meeting is given over to a discussion and readers are welcome to attend.

CORK:

Every Thursday at 8pm in the Quay Co-op, 24 Sullivan's Quay.

November 13

Women's Liberation

November 20

Rosa Luxemburg

November 27

Nuclear Power - How To Get Rid Of It

DUBLIN:

Every Tuesday at 8pm in the Resource Centre, 6 Crow Street, off Dame Street.

November 18

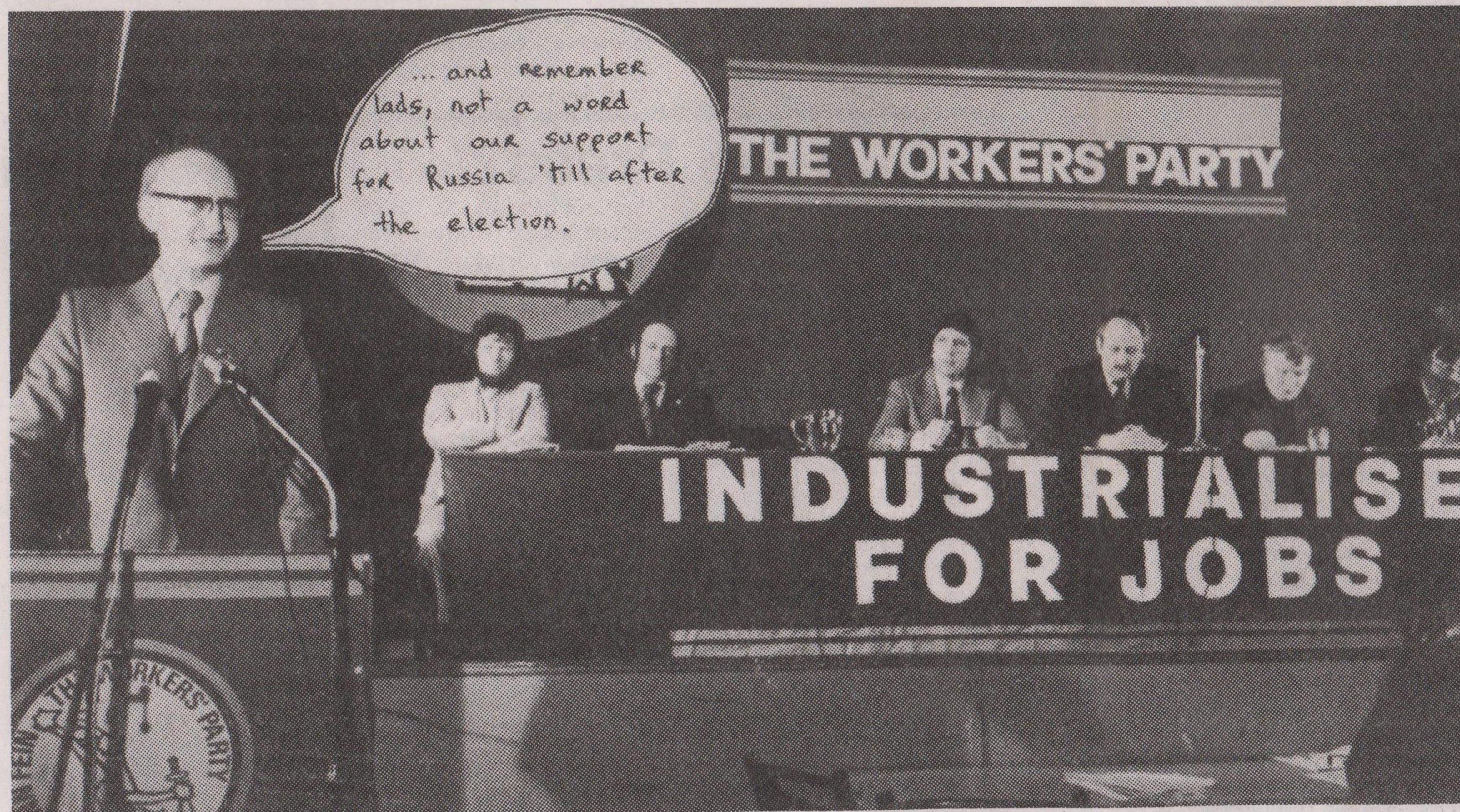
Why Anarchists Need Organisation

November 18

The Anarchists In The Ukraine 1917-21

November 25

The Politics of Sinn Fein



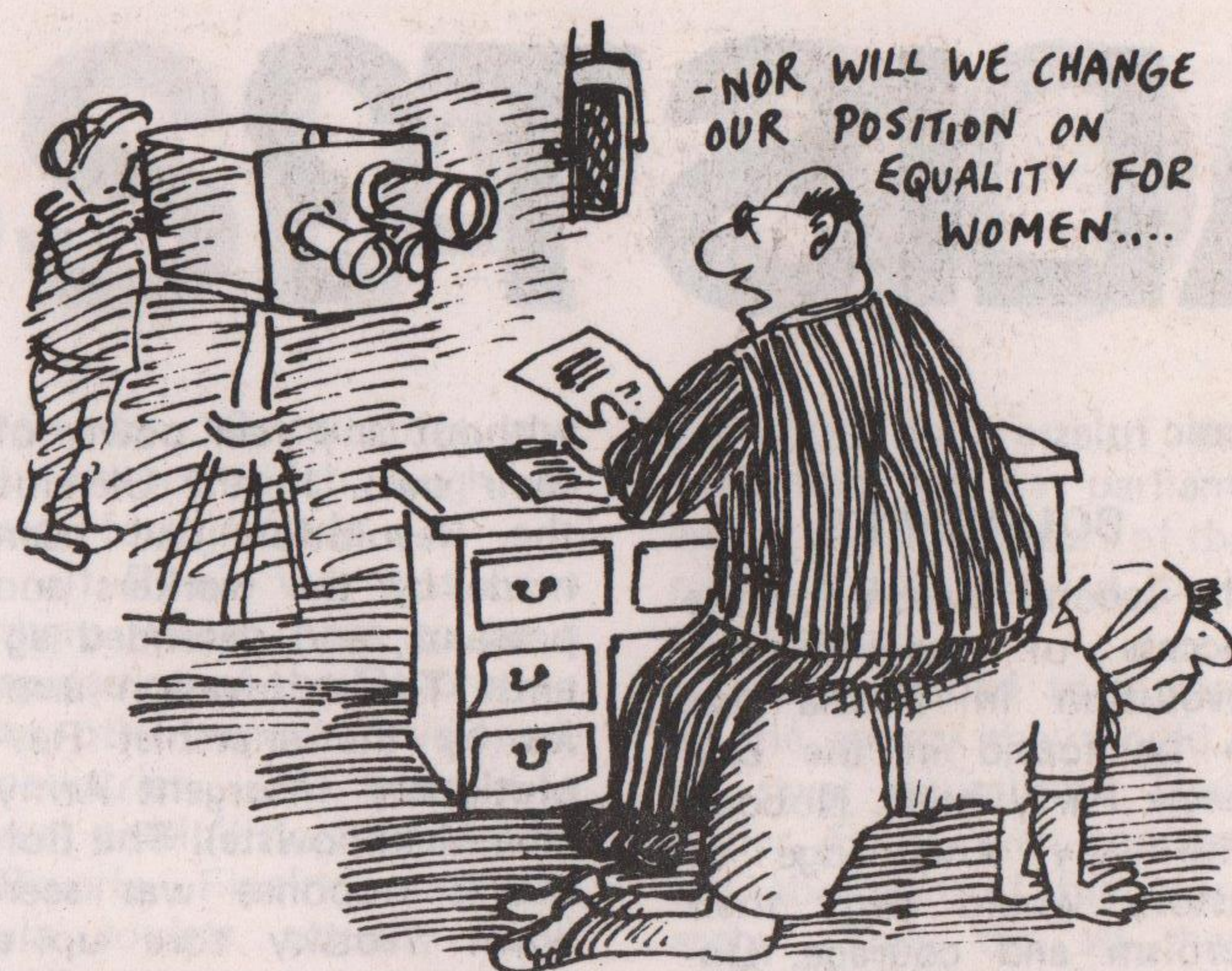
THEFT?

Last month the Dail voted to go ahead with the implementation of the EEC Directive which made women equal to men under the social welfare code. They did this despite the fact that many families' incomes will drop as a result of it. Some couples will lose as much as £30 per week. Gemma Hussey said that those affected could apply for the shortfall under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme. This though will only apply to families where both partners are on social welfare. About 8,000 cases. In all it was estimated that 26,000 couples would lose out. So what are the remaining 18,000 supposed to do?

The Directive should have been a progressive piece of legislation. It is absolutely right that women should be treated as individuals in their own right and not just as a chattel of their husbands. But instead of bringing equality by raising women's payments to those of men's the government have decided to lower what men get.

LIVING INCOME

Welfare payments are low enough anyway. So not only should we be looking for equality for women but also that all payments be raised to a level to ensure that everybody has a living income. The people



who will suffer most now are those couples where the women has a job and earns over £50 a week. There will be no pay increase for these workers to compensate.

The cynicism of this government knows no bounds. They used a progressive piece of legislation to cut back on the living stand-

ards of working class people. As usual, budget balancing comes before the living standards of ordinary people, and the Labour Party go along with it. Maybe it is time we put all politicians on the dole and see how they manage.

Eddie Conlon

DISCRETION

Indeed there is no guarantee that the shortfalls will be met in full. Money paid under the supplementary scheme is at the discretion of the Community Welfare Officer. You have no statutory right to it. If the officer decides that you have had enough and is supported by his or her superiors well then you have had it.

Victory

NORWEGIAN metal workers have won a reduction in the working week to 37½ hours without loss of pay. The bosses tried to defeat the workers and break their union by imposing a lock-out but after only seven days they gave in when they saw the determination and solidarity was getting stronger not weaker.

Underground shift workers in the ore-mining industry won even more — a 33½ hour week. The more hours we can knock off the norm the more time we gain for ourselves and the more jobs the bosses have to create to keep production up. The next time someone asks you what time it is, tell them 'time for a six hour day'!

SPANISH ANARCHIST veteran Enrique Marco Nadal was in Ireland last month for a series of public meetings organised by the Workers Solidarity Movement.

Marco, a railway worker, joined the anarchist union CNT as a youth. During the Civil War he fought Franco as part of the Iron Column militia. At the end of the War he was caught by the fascists and interned but he soon escaped and made his way to France where he joined the fight against the Nazis.

After the defeat of the nazis he returned to Spain to assist the underground organisation of the CNT. Though caught by the police and interrogated for over 100 days he refused to name his comrades. For this he was sentenced to death. His sentence was eventually commuted and he spent 17 years in Franco's jails. Today he is still active in the CNT.

One hundred people heard him speak in Dublin, 140 at two meetings in Cork and smaller num-

bers in Belfast and Wexford. They heard how workers' control of industry and agriculture operated during the Civil War, how workers had been able to organise a democratic and egalitarian army in the militias. Most heartening they heard how successful this had been and how it disproved those critics who tell us that anarchism is impossible because it runs against "human nature". It only ended with the military victory of Franco's troops.

TOUR SUCCESS

Whose Schools?

In Italy teachers are organising against new proposals to give the Catholic Church more control of the public schools. As well as religion being a compulsory part of the curriculum there are proposals for direct and indirect funding of private Catholic schools from public money. Also local bishops will have control over the hiring of teachers in the public schools.

Italian anarchists (members of the Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists and the Union of Comm-

unist Anarchists of Tuscany) involved in the teachers unions are supporting the fight to keep religion out of the public schools.

They oppose the clerical indoctrination and argue that religion, at primary level, should only be taught at the request of the parents and out of school time. They call on teachers to refuse to teach religion. At the moment 40% of teachers are saying no. They say religion can be studied as part of "cultural research" but should not

be taught as doctrine.

The anarchists see this struggle as part of the general fight against religion and for the separation of church and state. They do not oppose the right of people to practise their religion but oppose the fact that these beliefs are forced on others. They believe the need for religion springs from misery, ignorance, exploitation, loneliness and unhappiness and that only by getting to the root causes can we really remove this need.

Review

ROSA LUXEMBURG

A Film by Margarethe Von Trotta 1985

Hands up all those who were taught in school about the German revolution of 1918. No, neither was I. But it did happen, and a new film about the life of one of its participants, Rosa Luxemburg, is both a marvellous introduction to the period and a heart rending account of the inspiring and ultimately tragic life of a principled and dedicated revolutionary.

Rosa Luxemburg was born in 1871 in an area of Poland which was still part of the Russian Empire. (Much like today!). From the age of 16 until the end of her life, she was active in the Polish and German socialist movements and paid particular attention to events in Russia. Although in Germany she was a member of the SPD, which was something like today's Labour Party, only bigger and more to the left, she always maintained her revolutionary outlook, an approach which brought her into conflict with the leadership of the SPD.

MASS STRIKES

Rosa believed that socialism could only be created by the activity of the working class itself, and not by parliamentarians attempting to reform or legislate capitalism out of existence. Following the first Russian revolution of 1905, she set out her thoughts on how the kind of mass strikes that had occurred there could become the actual weapon for overthrowing the old order and for creating the conditions for the re-organisation of society on socialist lines. But already Rosa was out of step with the SPD leadership, who trembled at the prospect of workers taking matters into their own hands. Her ideas were rejected.

Nevertheless, she remained in the SPD, even when the entire parliamentary

party gave their backing to the first world war. Although despairing to the point of suicide, she embarked on a campaign of anti-war propaganda that was to land her in prison; the ninth and final time she would be locked up.

REVOLUTION

In much the same way as the war hastened the revolution in Russia in 1917, Germany was gripped by rebellion the following year. Mutinies, strikes and street fighting led to the abdication of the Kaiser and the ending of the war. Rosa Luxemburg was released from prison and was immediately swept along with the revolutionary tide. She had already abandoned the SPD, but her new party, the Spartakus League, soon to become the Communist Party, was too small and inexperienced to measurably influence events. The situation in Germany was confused, and in January 1919 the Spartakists organised an insurrection that was doomed before it began. Rosa paid for it with her life. Both she and her comrade Karl Liebknecht were battered to death by the counter-revolutionary militia, acting in collusion with the SPD leadership.

The film about Rosa Luxemburg covers these events

in a confused and confusing way. Often its difficult to follow what's happening or when it's supposed to have taken place. But the director, Margarethe Von Trotta is obviously sympathetic towards Luxemburg, and the film is intended more as a tribute to the woman herself, rather than as a history lesson. But still, it does tend to romanticise Rosa, portraying her as someone always guided by her heart rather than her head. To strengthen this image the film over-looks Luxemburg's theoretical contributions to socialism, possibly because it would look too staid and unexciting.

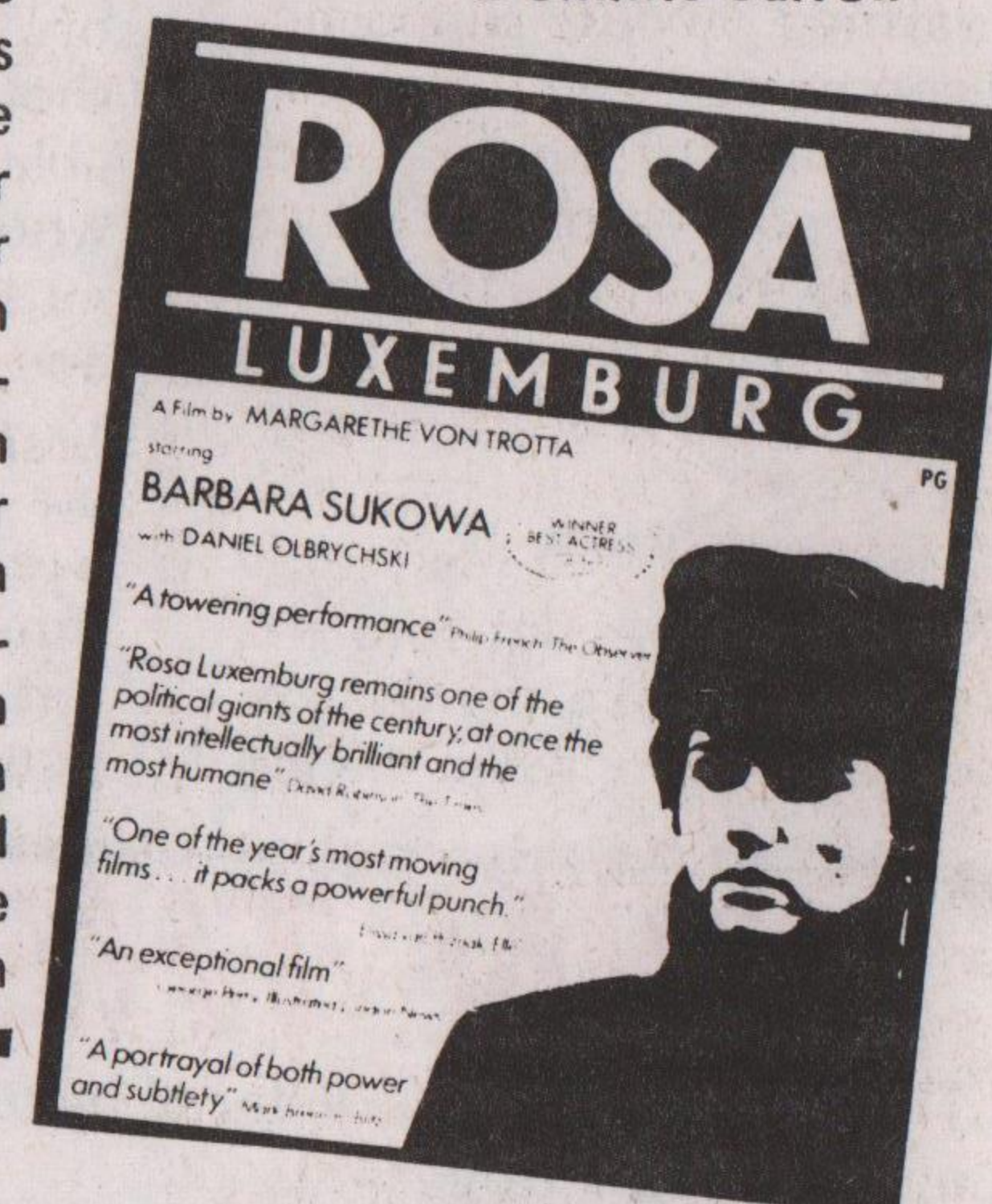
BOLSHEVIKS

Anarchists have always had a soft spot for Rosa Luxemburg. Unlike her contemporaries Lenin and Trotsky, she sincerely believed in the ability of our class to change society. She was extremely critical of the Bolsheviks, especially after the revolution. But her criticisms were confused in that she mistook the character of the organisation for its nature. She never challenged the right of Lenin and the Bolsheviks to govern Russia even though this was incompatible with real workers control. Had she lived, she would have pursued the same goal in

Germany, though probably in a less opportunist and brutal fashion than both Lenin and her own comrades in the Communist Party. She might even have ditched those politics altogether and committed herself fully to the idea that not only must workers smash capitalism, they themselves must control the new society through their own democratic organisations if socialism is to become a reality and state capitalism avoided. Still, we'll never know, and maybe I'm engaging in wishful thinking. But would you blame me?

Rosa Luxemburg was a unique socialist and it's that uniqueness that set her apart from other socialists of that period, and many of today's too. The film manages to convey this spirit well, and you're pretty hard-hearted if you don't end up crying. I did.

Dominic Carroll



UNEMPLOYED TRADE UNION

Since the current round of mass unemployment began there have been attempts to organise the unemployed. Although a lot of work was put into these efforts not a lot was achieved. The problem is that unemployed people lack the muscle to win most of their demands.

What has been needed is for the Trade Unions to take in the unemployed, giving them the benefit of the potential strength they have. This would also allow those on the dole to directly address workers on questions of voluntary redundancies, systematic overtime and the scapegoating of those on welfare.

A very positive step forward has been taken by the Irish Distributive & Administrative Trade Union (IDATU). At a recent meeting in Dublin of unemployed members they decided to set up a new branch of the union to cater for the unemployed. It is to be open, not only to jobless IDATU members, but to any unemployed person.

Among the aims agreed are seeking improvements in the set up at Manpower and campaigning for cheap or free bus fares for people on the dole. Setting up this branch is only a small first step in what needs to

be done but it is a very important one. It marks the recognition by a major union that the unemployed should be organised within the T.U. movement.

If you are out of work and want to do something positive write for more details to: Maurice Sheehan, Branch Secretary, IDATU, 9 Cavendish Row, Dublin 1.

