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**WORKERS
SOLIDARITY**

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**Reject the bigots...
It's every
woman's right
to choose**

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IRISH ANARCHIST MAGAZINE

THE LAST few months have seen Workers Solidarity Movement members in the forefront of the struggle for abortion rights. We were among the founder members of the Dublin Abortion Information Campaign which has been publicly breaking the Hamilton injunction prohibiting the distribution of information about abortion services in other countries. It was the DAIC which organised the magnificent 10,000 strong (15,000 according to the *Sunday Tribune*) demonstration in solidarity with the 14 year old who was injuncted to stop her travelling to England.

The WSM distributed thousands of leaflets putting the case for a woman's right to choose and for the direct action of thousands of peoples to win changes in the law. The turnout on February 22nd proved that it is possible to win the 'battle of ideas' about women's rights and get people out on the streets pressurising the politicians. This does not mean that the battle is effectively won, it does mean that it is easier now than in 1983 to get people to listen to the arguments and gain their support. The

For Starters

Attorney General's scandalous decision to grant an injunction and the militant response on the streets has put the issue of abortion rights on to the political agenda.

We are also involved in the broader Repeal the 8th Amendment Campaign which is spreading throughout the country. Within this campaign we have been among those insisting that 'right to choose' arguments are not hidden or ignored.

As well as doing the necessary work of organising meetings, leafletting and putting up posters we also stress the importance of democracy and activity within the campaign. The respect that anarchists have achieved was seen in WSM members being asked to speak at DAIC public meetings and chair the February 22nd demonstration, and to address the Dublin May Day rally on behalf of the Repeal the 8th Amendment Campaign. A WSM member, Aileen O'Carroll, was elected to the

National Committee of the Repeal campaign.

We will continue our work to build a broad campaign to get rid of the 8th Amendment, and to build a direct actionist 'right to choose' current within it. We urge all our supporters to join their local action group (details from REAC, P.O.Box 3441, Dublin 1).

ARISING from a meeting between the WSM, the Belfast Class Struggle Anarchist Group and the Cork Anarchist Group a weekend of discussions and talks for anarchists and people interested in anarchism is planned for the end of the summer. The venue will probably be somewhere in the midlands, with accommodation available. So if you want to combine a chance to find out more about anarchism with a cheap holiday, write to 'Summer Meeting', c/o P.O.Box 1528, Dublin 8 for further details.

THAT'S CAPITALISM

Workers in Heinz will be overjoyed to hear how well the company is doing. Last year their chief executive, Ireland's own Tony O'Reilly, was paid a whopping £75 million! That's no less than 6,798 times the wage of a shopfloor worker. Time for a parity claim?

The system still works! The rich are getting richer. The top 1% in the USA have seen their average incomes jump to over \$560,000 per year. Meanwhile the bottom 40% saw their incomes actually decline.

Speaking after his appointment as Thailand's Assistant Police Director, General Boonthin Wrongakmit said "I shall be introducing an all-round shoot-to-kill policy towards our criminals. As

police chief of North-East Thailand for 37 years I always used this policy. Any known underworld figure was shot on sight". Asked how he could be sure his men always got the right people, the General said "You can tell by the look of them".

The Labour Party really does care about unemployment. That is why they organised a seminar in Dublin's Jury's Hotel in May entitled "Employment and Unemployment in Europe 1992-2000". However they don't seem to care much for the actual unemployed. It cost a massive £315 to attend, or an unemployed person's entire dole for six weeks.

A rising tide lifts all boats? Since 1986 the 26 county Gross National Product

has risen in value by 24.6%. Official unemployment figures have jumped to 276,792 or 20.7% of the working population. Far from wealth "trickling down" the jobless figures are expected to top 300,000 this year.

The EC has set what it calls a "decency threshold" of 68% of the average industrial wage. In Ireland that would be around £4.00 per hour. When the Joint Labour Committee for the grocery trade proposed a minimum wage of £2.00 per hour over 400 shopkeepers objected that it would "affect employment" or be "harmful to the economy".



ABORTION:

It's Every Womans Right to Choose

ANARCHISTS BELIEVE that every woman has the right to choose an abortion when faced with a crisis pregnancy, irrespective of the reasons for the abortion. At least 4,000 Irish women have abortions in England every year at present. Women worldwide have always sought to control their fertility through abortion no matter how difficult it is for them to get access to abortion and they probably always will. This is because it is essential for women to be able to control their own fertility, and not to be reduced to the level of their biological function as child-bearers only, if they are to achieve true equality and liberation.

At present the Irish Constitution, with the the Eighth Amendment, reduces women to being equal only to a completely dependent foetus and it tries to condemn women to become unwilling incubators. To compare an adult woman or teenage girl with responsibilities, social relationships, personal plans, and so on to a completely dependent foetus is unacceptable. The foetus has no independent existence without the woman and the decision about an abortion or a continuation of the pregnancy must be the woman's decision and nobody else's.

Women choose to have abortions for all kinds of reasons: poverty, bad health, too many other children, because of rape or incest or simply because they do not want to have a child at that point in their lives. We believe that all these reasons are valid. Women should not have to answer to anyone, not the church, not the state or even to doctors for their decision. This raises the question of abortion on demand. We oppose any kind of decision making process involving ethics committees or doctors or other variations on this. A woman must have the right to abortion on demand.

The question of free access is a very important one. At present only those women who can afford both the travel costs and the operation fees can get an abortion. Abortion facilities must be made available here in Ireland and they

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The story so far

IN 1983 anti-choice campaigners pushed the government into holding a referendum on abortion. The *Eighth Amendment* was then passed by 33% of the electorate (the turn out was 54.6%). Abortion was already prohibited under the 1861 *Offences Against the Persons Act*. The Eighth Amendment copperfastened this ban preventing any reforming legislation.

SPUC's next step was to take those clinics which provided non-directive counseling to court. In the *Hamilton Judgement* of 1987 the High Court placed injunctions on the Well Women Centre and on Open-Line Counseling prohibiting them from giving non-directive counseling. The clinics failed in their appeal to the Supreme Court.

SPUC continued on the offensive, taking the Union of Students in Ireland, Trinity College and UCD Student Unions to court. The Students Unions are being brought back to court by SPUC on July 19th this year in order to have this injunction made permanent.

The student union campaign took two turns. The leadership within the unions toned down the level of campaigning on the issue, concentrating solely on appealing to Europe. Those activists that argued that the law should be publicly broken were told that we would be jeopardising the case by angering the judges. In the end the European Court found that the Students Unions could not give out abortion information.

It is still illegal to give out information on abortion. Within the individual student unions, many anti-choice groups sought referenda aimed at overturning the unions' mandate to distribute information. These anti-choice groups only succeeded in reversing a pro-information policy in one of the universities, UCD. They were defeated in all but one of the Regional Technical Colleges. Overall, more students voted for giving out abortion information than against.

While the Student Union leaders waited for Europe, the Abortion Information groups in most universities ceased to exist. Meanwhile the *Censorship of Publications Act* was used to ban books and sections of magazines which contained

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•The Workers Solidarity Movement on the 10,000 strong demonstration in Dublin

The story so far

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information on where to get an abortion. *Cosmopolitan* and other British magazines now carry a blank page where ads. for British abortion clinics should be. On May 21st the *Guardian* newspaper was not distributed because of an advertisement for the Mary Stopes Clinic.

In late 1991 the Trinity College Right to Information Group held a public meeting in order to launch a broader Dublin group. Following from this the *Dublin Abortion Information Campaign* (DAIC) began to meet regularly. Initially they concentrated on defying the ban in order to draw more people into the campaign and to provide information. More public meetings were held to highlight the issue and information leaflets were distributed in Dublin's O'Connell Street.

On Wednesday February 12th., some of the Irish papers carried a short piece about an injunction being granted against a 14 year old alleged rape victim to prevent her travelling to Britain in order to obtain an abortion. The case was not yet an issue. DAIC called a picket for the following Monday and a rally the following Saturday. Though furious about the case, given the lack of advertising many felt no more than about 200 would turn up. However 1,000 people ended up marching to the Attorney General's office.

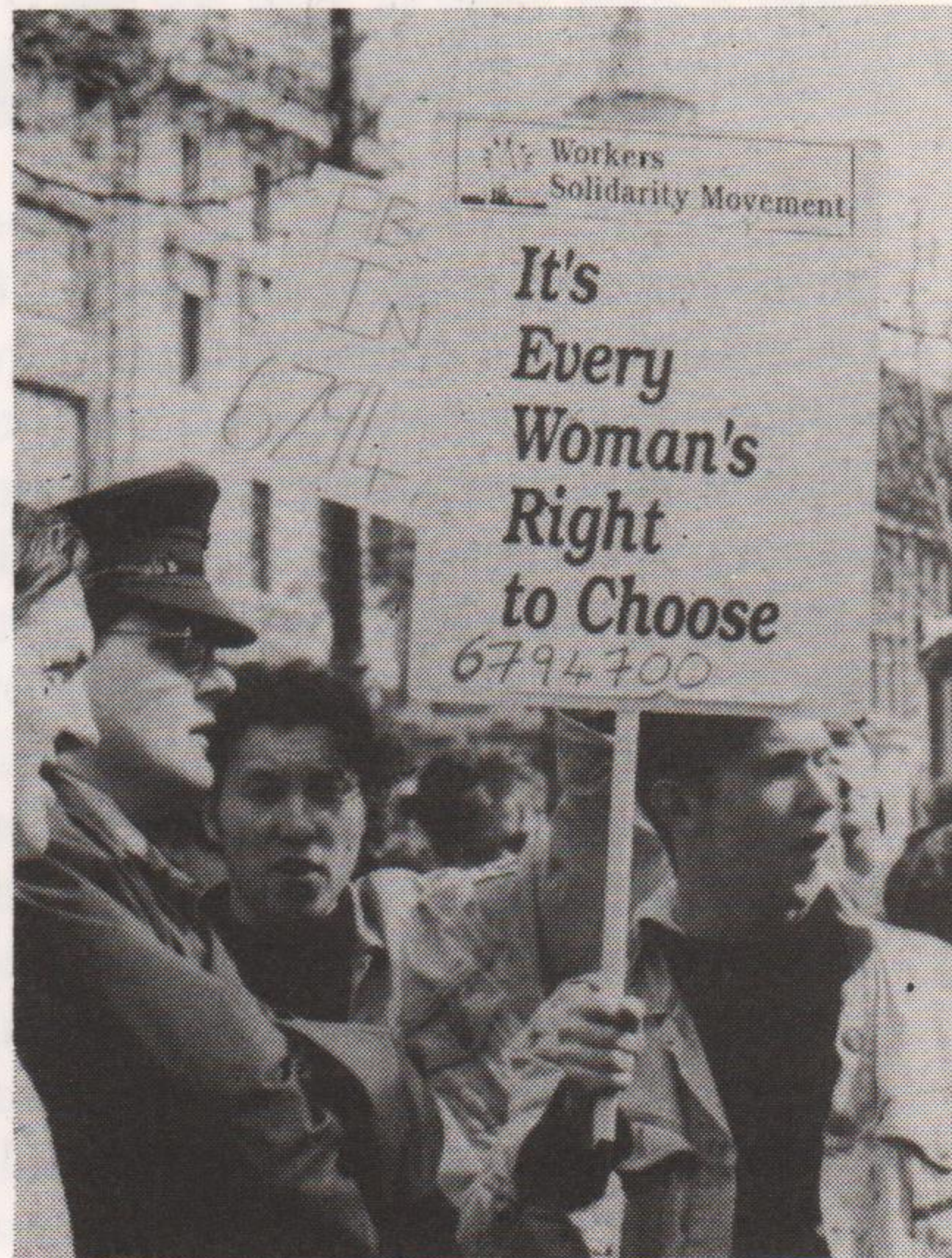
Some of those on the march had not been involved in campaigning since the 1983 referendum. Quickly jostling took place as to who would 'in charge' of any future campaigns. Secret meetings were called by separate groups of feminists and liberals. Both groups wanted to exclude the left as much as possible, when in fact, it was mainly left wing activists who had been attempting to keep the issue alive for the last 10 years.

Following the unexpectedly large turn out of the march, the press and politicians started to speak out about the case. DAIC realised that the turnout for the Saturday rally would be big enough for a march. We hoped for 4,000. It was this march that put the case right on top of the political agenda. At least 10,000, mainly young people, marched and chanted 'Right to Choose'. It was noticeable that there were only five banners present, indicating that many people had spontaneously come out. People were angry.

Pressure was kept on by almost continual protests the following week. On Thursday February 20th. the 14 year old was granted her appeal. The injunction was lifted and soon after she traveled to Britain in order to get her abortion.

These days it's not often that you have such a good example of how far and how

Abortion ...continued from page 3



must be free as all medical services should be.

Censorship of information on abortion is a totally insulting attack on women's most basic rights as thinking human beings to know what all the options are when they are faced with a crisis pregnancy. To deny women information, to take books out of libraries, censor magazines containing telephone numbers, all these actions treat women as irresponsible children whose moral decisions need to be policed by small groups of right wing bigots.

The hypocrisy of allowing women to go to England for abortions is no longer acceptable to many Irish people. Apart from all other considerations, having to raise the money for the travel and to go isolated and afraid to another country adds untold trauma to what should be a fairly simple medical procedure. Abor-

quickly public opinion can change. A delegate from the Cork Abortion Information Campaign explained at a recent conference what happened at University College Cork.

Two years earlier UCC SU, in an extremely conservative university, had voted massively against giving out information. The Cork group felt they would probably lose another vote but would attempt it anyhow. Then the 14 year old case happened, and the UCC referendum was won with over 70% supporting abortion information. A week later, Maynooth SU, in the university of the Irish Catholic Clergy, also overturned their policy and voted to distribute abortion information.

Similarly, its not often anarchists involved in campaigns can immediately see how our actions are changing society for the better. This case is one of the exceptions. DAIC consisted of a small group of activists, per-

tion facilities must be made available in Ireland free and without restricted access.

Anarchists believe that a woman's right to choose also means the right to choose to have a child and to have decent housing, child care and welfare facilities available in order to raise that child in a reasonable way and in order that her life is not totally given over to child care. At present with the current housing crisis, the almost total lack of free child care and lousy welfare payments this is not a real choice.

We are opposed to all forms of forced fertility control, whether it is the state imposing limits on the number of children a woman can have as in China or the denial of proper contraceptive and abortion facilities as in this country. The right to choose means the right to choose not to have a child or to have a child in circumstances where that means that neither mother nor child suffer materially or socially for that decision.

Anti-abortionists say that abortion is murder. We reject this argument. The foetus is not comparable to the life of a person of any age or ability who can function independently of their natural mother. We don't deny that abortion takes the life of a *potential* human being. The right to choose means that it is the woman's right to choose whether to bring that potential life to full term. As anarchists we demand that right and we will remain active in the campaign for abortion rights in this country over the coming months.

Patricia McCarthy

haps 30 in all. Yet when things started happening, when the case arose, we were there, ready and capable of responding. Without DAIC, it is unlikely that the march would have been organised or that the protests would have continued for so long. Without that pressure, it is unlikely that the 14 year old would have been able to travel to Britain.

A section of the feminists called a conference in order to launch the *Repeal the Eighth Amendment Campaign*. (REAC). DAIC affiliated to it. The Conference itself was jumbled and frustrating. Those calling it had a fixed agenda and were very hostile to any democratic attempt to amend it through motions. Many activists found the actual conference demoralising and antagonistic. It did however lead to the setting up of a campaign, though a weak one.

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To vote or not to vote?

ANARCHISTS are calling for a NO vote in the Maastricht referendum. We called for a YES vote in the 1986 divorce referendum and for a NO vote in the 1983 anti-abortion one.

But, you say, anarchists are always going on about refusing to vote in elections. Some contradiction surely? Not at all. We may not think that all matters put in referenda should be up to the majority to decide. Matters of personal morality should be just that - personal. We may find that one side has far more access to money, the media and all the other means to win support for its ideas.

Having accepted all that, referenda are a democratic way of making important decisions. We all get the chance (or should get the chance) to hear the arguments, then we make up our minds and vote. We have a direct say in decision making.

Equally, we vote in trade union elections for shop stewards, branch committees, conference delegates, and so on. We have nothing against the act of voting. We are all in favour of it. It is the best way of finding out what decisions people want to make.

What we will not take part in is the election of rulers. Anarchists are utterly opposed to the division of society into a minority of bosses/rulers and a majority of workers/ruled. We are not interested in choosing who will rule over us. We want to get rid of the division into order-givers and order-takers. That is why we neither put forward candidates nor give support to any party in parliamentary elections.

For anarchists to get involved in choosing of rulers would be as irrational and silly as vegetarians getting involved in choosing the President of the Master Butchers Association.

The IRA and its armed struggle

A Bloody Long War

Gerry Adams is no longer an MP. The politicians and media pundits are over the moon with joy. In their eyes the republicans have been denied the international 'credibility' of having an elected MP and denied their 'mandate for violence' at home.

In the immediate aftermath we were subjected to a barrage of questions and comments about how this will effect the respective strengths of the 'hawks' and 'doves' in the IRA. Will there be an escalation of the armed struggle? Will they hit back with ferocity? Will they decide that the armed struggle is an impediment to their political progress? Will there be a ceasefire?

Much of what was said was unadulterated rubbish. Gerry Adams and Sinn Féin held their vote in West Belfast. Adams 16,826 was only 36 down on the 1987 result and was 447 up on the original 1983 poll. The SDLP did not eat into it. What lost him the seat were the 3,000 loyalists who heeded the UDA's call to vote SDLP in order to deny the seat to Adams. The Shankill's walls were covered with "A vote for Cobain is a vote for Sinn Féin" referring to the fact that if loyalists continued to vote for the Unionist, Sinn Féin would hold the seat. This was certainly not a pro-SDLP vote, it was explicitly an anti-Sinn Féin one. Supporters of the UDA/UFF hate the SDLP, it's just that they hate Sinn Féin a lot more.

Across the six counties, as a whole, Sinn Féin's vote did drop... but only from 11% to 10%. They aren't going anywhere, but they are not about to disappear either. However it is true that a tentative debate has been going on inside the IRA and Sinn Féin over the last two or three years about the relative values of the armed struggle and parliamentary politics.

In February Gerry Adams told the 'Irish Times' *'Two or three years ago, I would have seen it necessary to personally state publicly that yes, there was the right of the IRA to engage in armed struggle, and perhaps even at times that armed struggle was a necessary ingredient in the struggle. I don't feel the need to do that now. In fact, I think that my role now, and I've seen this increasingly over the last 18 months, is one of increasingly and persistently saying there's a need to end all acts of violence.'* This is interesting, not so much for what is being said, but for the fact that this shows a slightly more open attitude towards politics. It used to be that anyone questioning the value of the military campaign was shown the door pretty quickly.

However it is not this debate that the establishment politicians want to take part in. Some of them almost foam at the mouth when someone mentions republicans. They have nothing but hatred for the Provos. North and South, all the main parties have done their

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•IRA poster

A Long Bloody War

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best to repress republicanism. In the North it is shoot-to-kill assassinations, beatings in RUC stations, censorship. In the South it's extradition and more censorship. To be thought a sympathiser of Sinn Féin is to invite Special Branch attention and maybe a beating in a Garda station.

According to Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, Labour, Official Unionist, DUP and all the rest this is justified by the need to oppose violence. What a neck! The people who supported the Gulf War (and those who allowed the use of Shannon airport to US bombers) are telling us about the need to oppose violence! What was the slaughter of retreating Iraqi soldiers and civilians on the road from Kuwait to Basra if it was not an act of violence, of terrorism? The death toll in that terrible few hours when the Americans gleefully labelled it a "turkey shoot" was far more than all the deaths ever caused by the IRA... and far more than the IRA is ever likely to cause.

The hypocrisy is evident. However the question remains: should we call on the IRA to stop their campaign? To put the question in such a way implies that the IRA are the main problem, if only they would lay down their arms everything would be o.k. We have to remember that the IRA didn't start the 'troubles'. After the dismal failure of their 1956-62 border campaign the guns were dumped. A new force appeared, the Civil Rights Movement. Most of them believed that peaceful reform within the six county state was possible.

When they took to the streets loyalist

gangs (including politicians, policemen and the notorious B Specials) attacked them. Streets were burned out, a pogrom began. Since the founding of the six county state every time the Catholic working class rose from their knees (or more frightening for the bosses, every time Catholic and Protestant workers united) sectarianism was whipped up and a state-led pogrom was unleashed. The 'liberal' 1960's were no exception.

The British Army were sent back in. At first they claimed to be a 'disinterested' force standing between angry Catholics and the Paisleyites and policemen who wanted to invade Catholic areas and inflict a reign of terror. Within a year it was clear to all that their real purpose was to protect the Northern state and this would be done by keeping down the Catholics. The Falls Road was placed under a three day curfew in 1970 and three people shot dead for venturing out of their homes. The IRA began to reappear.

The next year saw internment without trial and the year after that the murder of 14 Civil Rights marchers by British troops on Bloody Sunday. The IRA grew in size and escalated its recently commenced campaign. It was clear to many young Catholics that the struggle for change had become a struggle against the state itself and the British Army that was protecting it.

Far from being the problem, the IRA is a product of it. If the IRA declared a ceasefire the problem would remain. If they completely vanished the problem would still be glaringly obvious. And as long as that problem is there there will be a response. Until imperialism is defeated and sectarianism uprooted there will be resistance.

The question to be asked is what sort of resistance do we need? The armed struggle of the IRA has no chance of achieving victory. A small minority (the IRA) based within a minority (Northern Catholics) cannot defeat the state. They are unable to break out of the confines of the Northern Catholic ghettos. Southern Irish workers are not influenced by claims that British imperialism is the main enemy, North and South. Southern capitalism is no longer tied to the apron strings of London. Workers in the 26 counties find themselves struggling against Irish and multinational bosses.

IRA bombings and shootings are a thorn in the side of the ruling class, an unpleasant pain but nothing likely to prove fatal. Neither side can win a military victory. There is no way that a small

guerrilla army can defeat the combined might of the RUC, UDR and British Army. Equally, there is no way that the state forces can wipe out militant republicanism. As long as partition, with its resultant sectarianism and repression, has existed there have been those who would take up arms against it.

While this continues there will be civilian casualties and increased communalism and sectarian tension. Anarchists oppose the republican armed struggle, it is not the way to mobilise thousands upon thousands of working class people against imperialism. It is not the way towards an anti-sectarian working class unity.

The armed struggle is not something that republicans took up because they have a fascination with violence or some innate love of armalite rifles, despite what some media commentators would have us believe. IRA volunteers are brave men and women who want to hit back at the forces that have been sticking the boot into their community. They risk jailing, torture and death. If bravery was enough the British Army would have been defeated years ago. Clearly bravery is not enough.

To criticise the republicans' methods is not sufficient, the methods flow from their politics. Nationalism sees the main



struggle as one between the 'Irish people' and British imperialism. The class struggle within Ireland takes a secondary place until the border is smashed. The mass of ordinary people are kept passive. While a few hundred courageous volunteers take up arms, the role of everyone else doesn't add up to much more than joining the occasional march or casting a vote for Sinn Féin. The few

fight and the rest stay at home and watch it on TV.

Republicans see the working class only as victims of the system and not as people with the potential power to overthrow it. The bravery of the few becomes a substitute for mass action. The IRA campaign becomes central.

We do not like the romanticisation of violence. We do not enjoy seeing fathers bury their sons. We do not like part of our country being a war zone. But it is not for these reasons that we oppose the armed struggle. We are not pacifists. At times it is necessary to use violence to defend gains won in struggle. However we reject the idea that a small grouping, with guns and bombs, can set us all free.

Only masses of people involved in struggle can fundamentally change society. We have to want to be free. Nobody can force freedom down our throats. Armed struggle is a substitute (and a poor substitute at that) for mass action. When was the ruling class most worried by events in the last two decades? It was the big Civil Rights marches and the no-go areas of Free Derry and Free Belfast that set their teeth chattering. It was the huge protests after the Bloody Sunday murders that saw the British Embassy burnt in Dublin and Jack Lynch's government declaring a national day of mourning after workers had made it clear there was going to be a total closedown of industry.

It was this sort of militant mass action that forced concessions from the British government. The B Specials were disbanded, Unionist powers in local government were limited. In 1972, after the Bloody Sunday protests, the Stormont government was abolished. Of course many of these concessions were clawed back when the mass movement was eclipsed by the emergence of the IRA campaign and its promise that 1973 (and '74 and '75!) would be the "year of victory". The best example was the replacement of the B Specials by the UDR. But the lesson remains, it was mass action that won the concessions.

So if the Workers Solidarity Movement are so opposed to the armed struggle why don't we join the call for a ceasefire? We won't line up with the right wing politicians and their 'Peace Train' supporters who seek to apportion all the blame to the IRA for the 'troubles'. The IRA are a response to a problem. The primary problem is partition, sectari-

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• Scenes from the IRA bombing campaign in Omagh, Castlederg and Dungannon

A Long Bloody War

continued

anism and the occupation by the British Army. We refuse to join in the scapegoating of republicans.

Equally, we refuse to mute our criticism of republicanism and its armed struggle. We are opposed to their politics as well as their methods. We stand for anarchism, for an independent working class position. We want to break working class people from the gombeen nationalism of Fianna Fáil, from the reactionary hatemongering of loyalism, from the sub-reformism of Labour and Democratic Left, ...and from the communalism of Sinn Féin.

While opposing the presence of the British Army and the continuing partition of the country, the working class must also fight the Southern state. We have to oppose imperialism and, at the same time, oppose the clerical nationalist laws in the South which ban divorce and abortion. We have to oppose Orange bigotry while at the same time campaigning for the complete separation of Church and State.

We do not fight for a united capitalist Ireland, neither as a 'step in the right direction' or as an end in itself. Joining the six to the twenty six counties offers nothing to working class people in either state. We have no interest in re-dividing poverty on a more 'equitable' basis. The only Ireland worth fighting for is a Workers Republic where every working class person stands to gain. The way towards such a new Ireland is the way of class struggle and mass action, taking control of our own struggles and doing it in our own class interests. This is the road to freedom.

Joe King



Imperialism is not just another buzz word...

The return of the "white man's civilising mission"

WHAT USED TO be called the white man's civilising mission has returned with a vengeance. Suddenly white Europeans and Americans once more have to bring peace and harmony to the rest of the world by stamping on dictators, stopping the Islamic bomb and introducing economic stability. If all this wasn't tough enough the Japanese are cheating with unfair trade practices and unusual work practices.

This has been the message of European and U.S. politicians and media for the last two years or so. Since the end of the cold war and the collapse of the Russian empire a new struggle is taking place. Initially there was lots of talk of the 'peace dividend', that huge re-allocation of resources that would occur as military production was switched to a more humane usage.

Instead what we are seeing is the re-division of the world. The cold war has ended the same way as the 1st and 2nd World Wars, with a furious scramble by the victors for the prizes. Within a decade it is likely that Japan will be threatening world peace, or at least that is what we will be told. In fact what is happening is that driving force of twentieth century history, old-fashioned imperialism.



When George Bush talked during the Gulf War of a 'new world order', policed by the United States it was not just Iraq he had in his sights. The U.S. is a declining economic power but is still by far the world's strongest military power. The U.S. wants to be in a position to police any country which steps out of line with its economic interests.

This, in the short term, means all those brutally underdeveloped countries of Africa, Asia and Central America. In the long term it means Japan. In recent years the American regime has demonstrated the role of this policeman in Panama, Grenada, Nicaragua and El Salvador among other countries. Like all policemen this one will not be influenced by concepts of democracy or justice but rather will serve wealth and U.S. interests alone.

It is this ability of countries like the former Soviet Union, the U.S., Britain and others to dominate not just their immediate neighbours but countries on the other side of the globe that marks them out as something special. Many other countries would like to share this ability but despite investing huge percentages of their Gross National Products in the military are unable to do so.

GULF WAR

The Gulf War demonstrates what is likely to happen when one of these regional powers steps out of line with the imperialists interests. The Iraqi military machine on paper looked a formidable opposition, in practise it was incapable of fighting a real imperialist power. Calling countries like these imperialist is about as useful as referring to Fianna

Fáil or the Tories in Britain as 'fascist'.

The ability of countries to dominate large areas of the globe is seen most obviously by their military strength. Military strength is however just a reflection on the real driving force of imperialism, economic power. The demands of the large economies for markets, raw materials and products makes imperialism an inescapable part of capitalism.

Those who own and control the large 'multi-nationals' also control the actions of the governments of the imperialist countries. The use of military might by the imperialist countries flows from the bosses' demands that their companies should control the markets and raw materials of other countries. The interests of United Fruit for instance has been behind many of the U.S. interventions in Central America.

WORLD WAR III

The U.S. control of Central America has meant the exclusion from these markets of Japanese goods. As well as supplying cheap labour to the U.S. bosses the Central American countries rely on the U.S. for almost all of their exports and imports. In the U.S. itself the Japanese are allowed access to no more than 33% of the car market.

A consensus has been created throughout U.S. society which identifies the Japanese as the cause behind the U.S. recession. This includes some of America's unions and liberal Democrats like Jessie Jackson. One consequence has been a rising number of physical attacks on Asians in general.

The economic war between the U.S. and Japan has already warmed up. For American bosses it means bigger profits as they convince American workers that it is the Japanese rather than capitalism that are responsible for unemployment. Alliances between bosses and workers against another country mean little or no effective class struggle at home. This in turn means low wage rises and crap working conditions. The U.S. is one of the few countries where workers saw a real reduction in wages in the 1980's.

It is this sort of prejudice that European bosses hope to build on through the E.C. Most European countries have already seen it on a national level. In Ireland a milder version is currently being pushed through the "Buy Irish" ad's. Our interests as workers lie with the workers of

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other countries, not our gombeen green bosses.

The effects of imperialism on different countries varies, for many of the underdeveloped countries it means that their exports are permanently underpriced and their imports overpriced as they have no control over access to international markets. It means an enormous burden of debt to the imperialist countries in return for outdated or inappropriate technology and military equipment.

It means a government whose sole role is to ensure the country stays profitable for the imperialists with low wages, tame or non-existent unions and few safety laws. It commonly means famine and death as proxy wars are fought between imperialist powers there.

IMPERIALISM KILLS

Imperialism's casualties in the last decade have included 100,000 Iraqis, more as a show of force than anything else, 3 million Ethiopians in a country which exported food throughout the famine, 50,000 Nicaraguans in an effort to topple a government less disposed to American interests. Were it not for the death and destruction it would be funny that the West poses as part of the solution. The imperialist powers are not part of the solution, they are the problem.

The sheer level of destruction guarantees some resistance to imperialism wherever it is found. Commonly this takes place through the mechanism of National Liberation Movements like the Provos or Sandinistas. Such movements attempt to unite sections of the bosses with the workers in order to throw out

imperialism and restructure the economy. This is in the interests of the native ruling class rather than of the imperialist ruling class.

Sometimes such movements take up socialist sounding ideas in order to gain support from the workers. Sometimes as in Cuba or Vietnam this occurred because they allied themselves with a different imperialist power (U.S.S.R) against the imperialist power that they were fighting (U.S.). The interests of the workers are not central to such movements, whether or not the workers gain is incidental. In practice gains are commonly made by workers in terms of education and health care as the new system attempts to build and maintain an industrial base. This also helps to create loyalty to the new regime.

Apart from providing markets and sources of cheap raw materials, imperialism has another plus for the bosses. It is used in the imperialist countries to get workers to side with their bosses against the people of other countries. Workers identify with the soldiers of 'their' imperialist armies who share their language and traditions rather than with the workers of the oppressed nation. Anarchists in these countries have to be able to break this cross-class unity in order to challenge the bosses.

NO WAR BUT THE CLASS WAR?

The nature of the national liberation movements has led some anarchists in the past to make the mistake of arguing that such struggles are not relevant. This is commonly based around the slogan "No War but the Class War". During the Gulf War, for instance, British groups like the Class War Federation argued that the outcome of the war was irrelevant and that it was wrong to call for an Iraqi victory as - among other

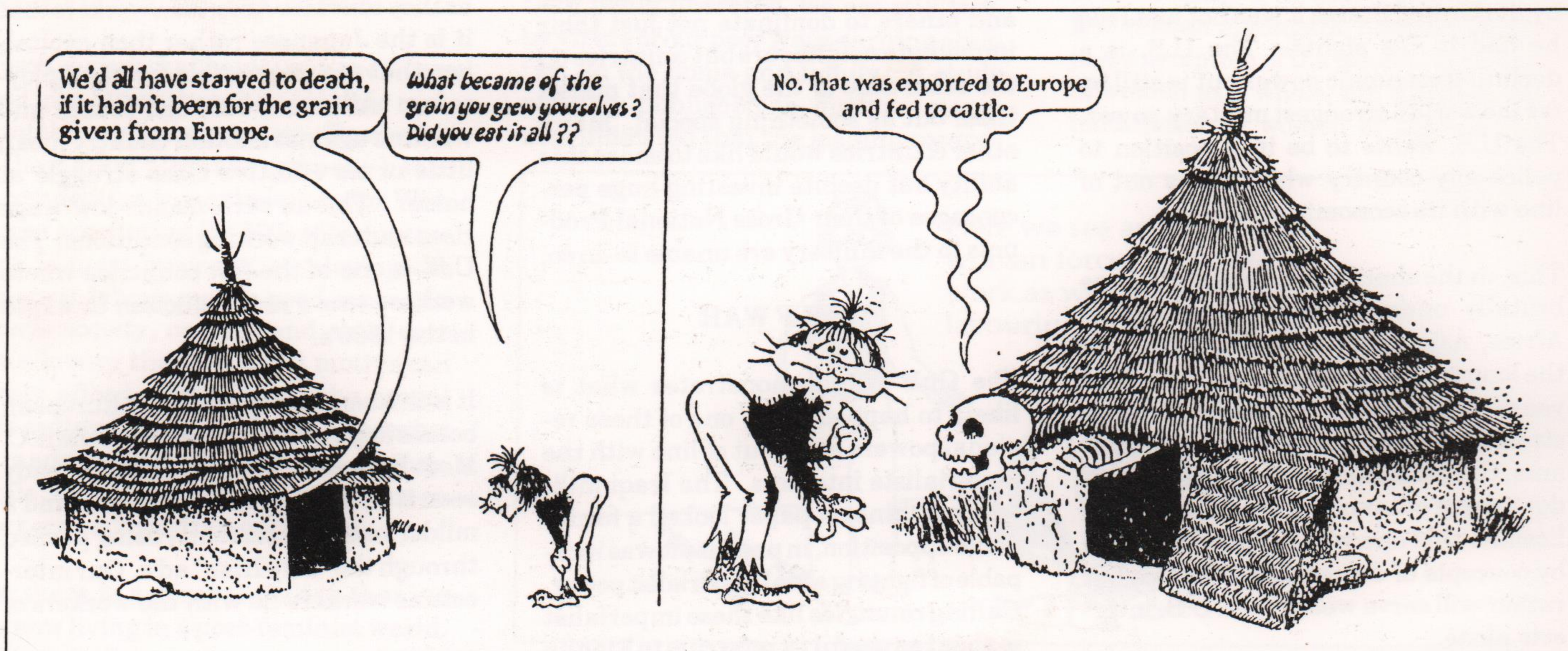
reasons - this meant British soldiers would die.

The logic of seeing the problems in those terms would be to support an imperialist victory once the war was in progress. Those groups who worried about the number of British Squaddies who would die had their wish fulfilled, only a very few were killed. In Iraq this meant enormous casualties due to indiscriminate bombings and the deliberate destruction of basic infrastructure.

The position taken by the rest of the left was at least as absurd. Nearly all the "revolutionary" left called for "Victory to Iraq". In calling for victory to Iraq the implication was that it was an Iraqi victory and not an American defeat which was important. Yet Saddam, even if he had beaten the Americans, would have just as quickly rejoined their camp or that of one of the other imperialist powers. The Iraqi ruling class might have wished for a free hand in the region but their interests clearly lay in stable relations with one or the other imperialist powers.

WHO CAN DEFEAT IMPERIALISM?

The only force in the region capable of dealing a lasting blow to imperialism are the workers and peasants who live there. Rather than supporting the Iraqi ruling class (however 'critically') or worrying about British squaddies it was these forces socialists should have supported. The Trotskyist presentation of Saddam as the "objective anti-imperialist" was rubbish by the unfolding of events. The war ended when the Iraqi ruling class and the imperialists both recognised that their common enemy, the working class in Iraq, had moved centre stage.



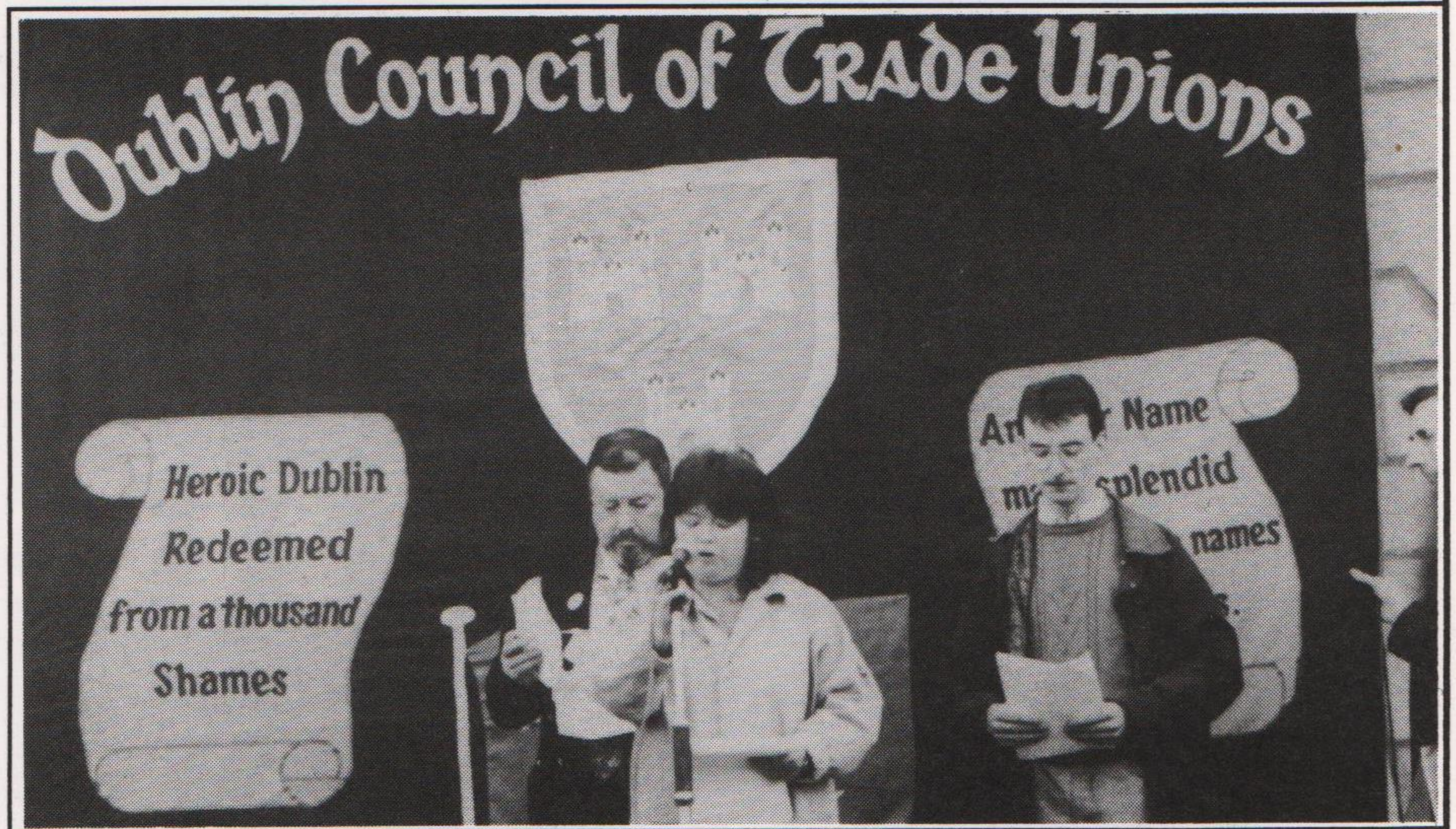
The story so far

continued from page 4

Most of the co-ordinating committee of REAC wanted to run a media campaigning and set about getting sponsors and important speakers. They however ran into troubles. Besides Democratic Left, no other political party would come near it, expressing caution and wanting to wait and see. Many of Ireland's womens organisations also refused to get involved.

At the moment the main weakness of the campaign is that is still attempting to become an 'important' force at the expense of organising viable local action groups.

If we are to put repealing the 8th amendment on the political agenda we need more than media stunts. We need to involve huge numbers of people through



• REAC activist Patricia McCarthy addresses the Dublin May Day march

activity in the unions and the community. We need to construct action groups based around activities in all areas. This must become the first priority of the campaign. We forced the government to overturn the

injunction when 10,000 marched in Dublin. We need to get out similar numbers if we are to have any hope of forcing the government to hold a referendum scrapping the 8th amendment.

This happened when uprisings broke out throughout Iraq. Although they had a religious or nationalist base these uprisings saw the formation of workers councils (shoras) in many of the larger cities. Saddam was left his elite divisions and allowed by the U.S to fly helicopters against the uprisings throughout Iraq. The combination of the Iraqi army and the deals stitched up by the nationalist leaders of the uprising meant that the Iraqi ruling class regained control of the situation. Saddam the "objective anti-imperialist" performed his age old function of guaranteeing stability and oil for the imperialists.

The lessons of the Gulf War can be applied generally. No bosses' government whether a dictatorship as in Iraq or the more liberal regime of the Sandinistas, can be really described as anti-imperialist. When faced with a choice between the revolutionary anti-imperialism of the workers or compromise with imperialism they will always choose the latter. Workers in those countries have two enemies, their own ruling class and the imperialist powers. Neither of these are potential allies, even in the short term. The role of a revolutionary organisation in those countries is to build towards a situation where the workers and peasants can take control.

The same applies in general to national liberation movements like the ANC or the Provos. The idea that the working class should work for national liberation first and then emerge to assert its own class interests shows no understanding of the nature of such movements. Only an anarchist revolution

can hope to end imperialist exploitation of a country.

WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?

Does this mean we say there is no difference between the national liberation movements and the imperialists. It does not. Our problem with such movements is that they offer no solution to the problem of imperialism. It is, however, imperialism that is the problem. Therefore anarchists have to defend the right of such movements to fight against imperialism, particularly anarchists in the imperialist country itself.

Anarchists in Britain, for example, have to take a clear position on Ireland. The British ruling class in the past has been able to defuse opposition internally by uniting all classes against 'common enemies' in Argentina and Belfast. As long as the British working class supports the British government on Ireland or does not see it as an important issue it will find it more difficult to take up independent working class politics elsewhere. British anarchists must be prepared to defend the Provos against the state by pointing out that they are not the real problem. They must be prepared to call for 'troops out' no matter how difficult this might be. Concretely this means arguing to British workers that it is 'their' state and not the Provos that is the cause of the conflict in Ireland.

In Ireland anarchists have to be not only willing to defend the Provos but capable of putting forward a real solution to the conflict. The Provos today

have no solution beyond calls for UN involvement and the demand for talks with the British government. We need to be able to build a movement that in the South is able to undermine the basis of the southern clerical state. In the North we have to be able to unite Protestant and Catholic workers with them in the fight for an all-Ireland workers republic. This will be not only in opposition to British imperialism and its loyalist puppets but also to the green nationalist bosses.

On a wider level we are entering a new period of imperialism. The break up of the cold war world will mean a rush by the victors for new spheres of influence. Ireland is bound to be involved on the fringes of this through the E.C. and the U.N. Both these bodies are dominated by the big imperialist powers.

The U.N. is a talking shop for the ruling class of the world. It gives a veto to the victorious imperialist powers of World War II and so it can only act in their interests. The E.C. is designed to act in the interests of the European bosses. It provides them with a super state through which they hope to compete with the rival imperialists of Japan and the U.S..

We need to expose the real nature of the U.N. and build opposition to any Irish involvement in 'peacekeeping'. Our class is international, our allies are the workers of all countries, our enemy is the "Buy Irish" green bosses.

Andrew Flood

Equality for some women?

LAST SEPTEMBER the Bank of Ireland was, according to the *'Irish Times'*, *'basking in an unadulterated glow of approval'* from the Employment Equality Agency, the Council for the Status of Women and the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Womens Rights among others. What the Bank of Ireland had so progressively managed to do was to provide one creche which will cater for up to 45 children.

The Bank of Ireland employs 11,600 people. However, at £55 a week the centre is obviously aimed at helping only a very small section of the workforce. As Bertie Ahern said, it did not make sense having highly and expensively qualified women leaving the workforce because of lack of childcare facilities. However, it does make sense, to industry, to employ over 50% of the entire workforce on low pay or with no security of employment (or both).

It isn't sexism that holds us in the worse paid jobs but rather the economic reality of the capitalism system. To survive in the market place any company has to be competitive, to maximise profits. With wages accounting for 80% of the outgoings in most business, employing the cheapest labour makes good sense. In todays society, creches and child-care are a luxury that the profit motive can rarely afford. To women who accept this system, the provision of expensive & inadequate child care is a victory, while the plight of ordinary women workers isn't worth mentioning.

But there is a general feeling that we are now living in a post-feminist world.

Women may not be quite equal to men, but the principle of equality has been widely accepted and liberation is only a matter of waiting. We are allowed to vote, to drink in pubs and to work outside marriage. Our right to an equal education and to equality in the workplace is enshrined in law. We have a women president.

In Ireland there is now a wide acceptance that women have the right to participate in society on an equal basis with men. However, despite this change in hearts and minds, life on the ground for most women today, is quite similar to those of forty years ago. Though we may not, in general, have the same sexist morality to put up with; economically we are still second class citizens.

For the majority of us, our right to choose the way of life we wish to lead is as limited as it has always been. Rather than being liberated, we are still tied, by virtue of our poor wage earning abilities, to the home and family. A study recently published in *Fortune* magazine indicated that the leading occupa-

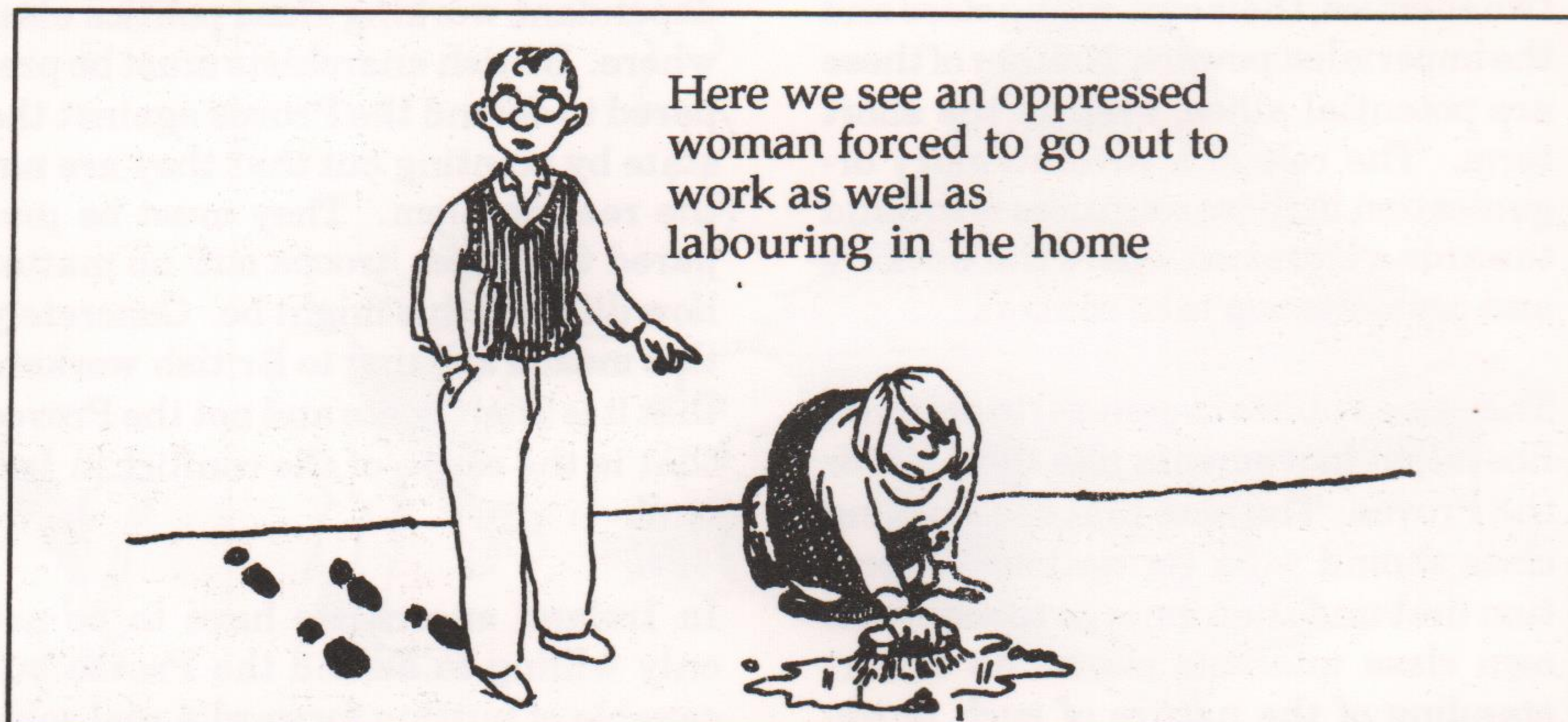
tions for women in 1990 weren't so different from the top jobs for 1940 (see table). The average hourly earnings of woman are still 68% of those of men. In hard cash terms, men earn on average, £1.83 more per hour than women.

So, what are the problems facing women in the workforce? The answer you'll get to that question, will depend very much on who you are talking to. For the last six years, Social and Community Planning Research, a non-profit making institute, has been surveying British social attitudes to everything from should revolutionaries be allowed to have public meetings (only 48% said yes) to should the tax system be changed. Looking at the recently published 1991 survey, it becomes obvious that the key factor preventing women from working is children; i.e. lack of nursery places, lack of creches at work and "guilt at leaving the care of children to others".

It noted that while 51% of those surveyed would have thought a work-place nursery suitable for the care of their children, none of the sample surveyed had access to such a service. Overwhelmingly, children were cared for by a close relative.

On the other hand, the *Financial Times*, in a major article on women managers cited the main problems for women going into business as confidence, training and expertise, credibility and networks. For women at these higher levels, child-care provision is not a key problem, as they can afford to hire other women to stay at home so they are freed to go out and work. So when women managers seek to overcome sexism, provision of free 24 hour childcare is not a priority. Women may not be equal to men in today's society, but undoubtedly some women are more equal than others.

It is certainly true that there are very few women managers, however this is just a symptom of the general situation of women as a whole, not a cause. The installation of women at the top of a



Here we see an oppressed woman forced to go out to work as well as labouring in the home

profession won't change the basic ground rules by which society is run. Those women at the top may suffer sexism from their colleagues. They may be ostracised from the old boys network and may find it more difficult to succeed.

However, they also have an interest in seeing the system continue. Their high incomes, standard of living and position in society is dependant on them being on the top of the pile. So while they may lobby on 'safe' issues that affect most women, such as rape and domestic violence, when it comes to issues that question the way society is run and thus threaten their position, sisterhood quickly breaks down.

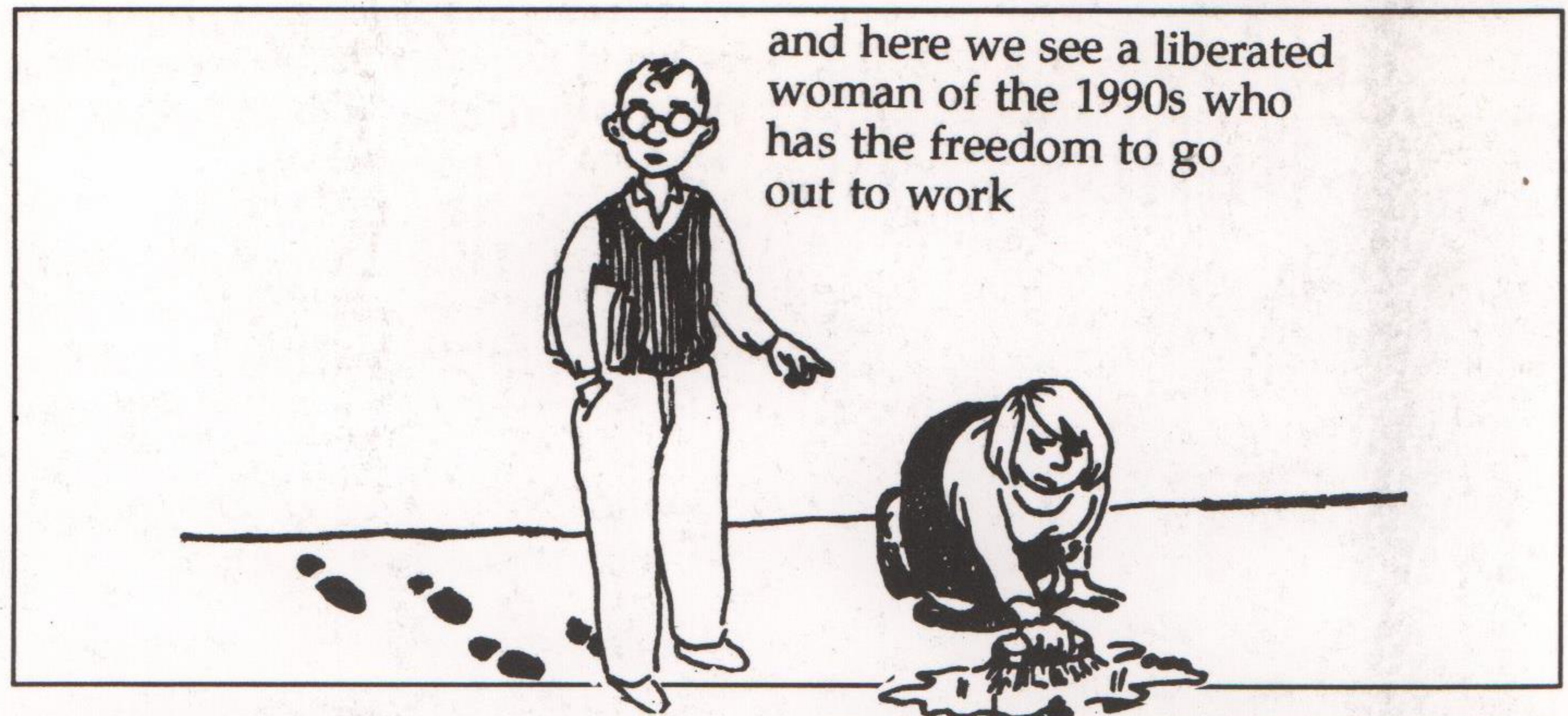
Fortune Magazine Table

1990	1940
1. Secretary	1. Servant
2. Cashier	2. Secretary
3. Bookkeeper	3. Teacher
4. Nurse	4. Clerical worker
5. Nursing aide	5. Sales worker
6. Teacher	6. Factory worker
7. Waitress	7. Bookkeeper
8. Sales Worker	8. Waitress
9. Child care	9. Housekeeper
10. Cook	10. Nurse

How many of the Irish women TD's, who support abortion information are willing to publicly say so? On the one hand they may be members of the womens movement while on the other protecting their seat is more important. Mary Robinson may be a woman, but she didn't show much sisterhood or solidarity when she signed into law the new social welfare regulations on cohabiting couples. This provision limits couples to 80% of the benefit that two single people receive. Normally the woman is the partner who receives the lower income.

Women will remain as second class citizens as long as they are relegated to an inferior position in the work force. They are now in that position because to the bosses they are an unstable workforce, likely to want pregnancy leave, likely to come in late if a child is sick, likely to require a creche or want to work part time. It is because men in society are seen as the breadwinner that they have more secure, more dependable jobs.

It's a vicious circle, because men are in reality better paid it makes more sense within the family to assign the role of main earner to the male and housework to the female. The only way to permanently get out of the circle is



to change the system. In a society run for profit women loose out, in a society run for need, womens fertility is no longer a limiting factor.

Women can of course win gains at the moment. In Ireland women are no longer forced to stop working on marriage, though lack of child care can make it impossible to continue. Attitudes have changed considerably in the last thirty years. Most importantly, the position of women is now an issue.

Whereas before it was only addressed by the few socialist or womens groups, now it's taken up by the mainstream media, by chat shows and newspaper articles. However, any of our new freedoms are very much dependant on the economic conditions of the day. So, while in the affluent 1960's British women won limited access to abortion (used by thousands of Irish women), now in recession those rights are being pushed back inch by inch.

When you come down to basics equal education and equal pay & job opportunities amount to little without free 24 hour nurseries and free contraception and abortion on demand. While a small minority of women can buy control of their own fertility, for the majority family and child care is still, as it has always been, the largest problem faced by women workers.

And as a small finishing thought, under capitalism most managers are paid a hell of a lot more than most workers. That's a situation women managers won't want to change. After all, Margaret Thatcher was the ultimate woman manager, wasn't she?

Aileen O'Carroll

What ever happened to equal pay?

WOMEN in the 26 counties earn £109 a week less than men on average. Figures from the Dept. of Labour last March show that men earn an average weekly wage of £266.79, while women earn an average £157.85 - less than 60% of the male rate.

Factors identified to explain the difference include the fact that women work an average 5.5 hours per week less than men. Other factors are wage rates, overtime pay, shift and unsocial hours premiums and payment for length of service.

Clearly women are still finding it very hard to get into the better paid jobs (especially in the 'blue collar' area). And there is still blatant discrimination by managements who deliberately undervalue womens' work. The fight for equal pay is not over.

and what happened to houses too?

With 8,000 people in 1,400 families on its housing list, Kildare County Council has been given enough cash by the government to build just 20 houses this year.

The Bank Strike

WHAT WENT WRONG?

BANK WORKERS went back to work on April 27th. After three weeks on strike they voted narrowly to accept a revised offer from the big four banks.

The dispute began with a claim for a wage increase of 6.5%. The settlement only allowed for a 3% increase under the 'local bargaining' clause of the PESP, a lump sum of £1,000 in exchange for longer opening hours and one day's extra leave. The hidden agenda was the banks' desire to smash the staff union, the Irish Bank Officials Association.

Bank management remembered the last strike in 1976, when not a single IBOA member from branch manager downwards scabbed. They were determined to break the unity and confidence of the staff. Firstly they bought off most of the 1,000 managers by offering them individually negotiated increases (though in the case of at least 50 they failed as these well paid branch managers stood by their colleagues and walked the picket line).

THE RETURN OF WILLIAM MARTIN MURPHY

When the IBOA lodged its claim and balloted for industrial action managers called in staff individually. They were told that if they stuck with the IBOA their career prospects would be damaged, that they could wave goodbye to any ideas of promotion. In the Bank of Ireland they were told to sign a 1913 lock-out type of letter that they would not take industrial action. Refusal meant suspension.

Others were told they would never get house loans, temporary staff were told

they would not be taken back unless they broke pickets and strong hints were made of transfers for union activists. This intimidation didn't frighten the workers, it angered them.

On January 20th action began with an overtime ban and a refusal to charge customers for services like bank drafts. AIB responded with suspensions and the other three banks announced they were imposing pay cuts of 20% on everyone supporting the action.

LIMITING THE CHANCE OF SUCCESS

It was only after 900 workers had been suspended that the IBOA executive used its mandate to call a strike in early April. A month previously the *IBOA newsheet* carried a front page article by General Secretary Ciaran Ryan saying that strikes are not the best way to force concessions and that 'limited industrial action' which would "*not discommode bank customers nor destabilise existing relationships*" was the way to win.



Lest we be unsure Ryan spelt it out on the Today Tonight programme of March 4th. "We have said it. I've said it so many times publicly, we don't want to close the banks, we won't close the banks for any type of action, one day or full closure. That will not happen and I'm delighted to get the chance to say that here this evening. What we're doing is taking limited, and I would suggest, very responsible industrial action."

Maybe Ciaran's views reflect his background. He previously worked for the Federated Union of Employers. Two of the banks' negotiators used to be his juniors in the FUE. He now earns £80,000 a year as a union official. Not many people on that sort of wage believe in striking!

If the executive, who were deciding strategy, believed the 'new realist' nonsense about strikes no longer being ef-

fective it is hardly surprising they didn't come up with ways of winning the strike. In fact they had no clear plan for winning, just hopes that the Minister for Labour would intervene (impartially!) or that the Labour Relations Commission would give a favourable ruling. It did, the problem being that it was favourable to the banks.

PUBLIC OPINION ISN'T ENOUGH

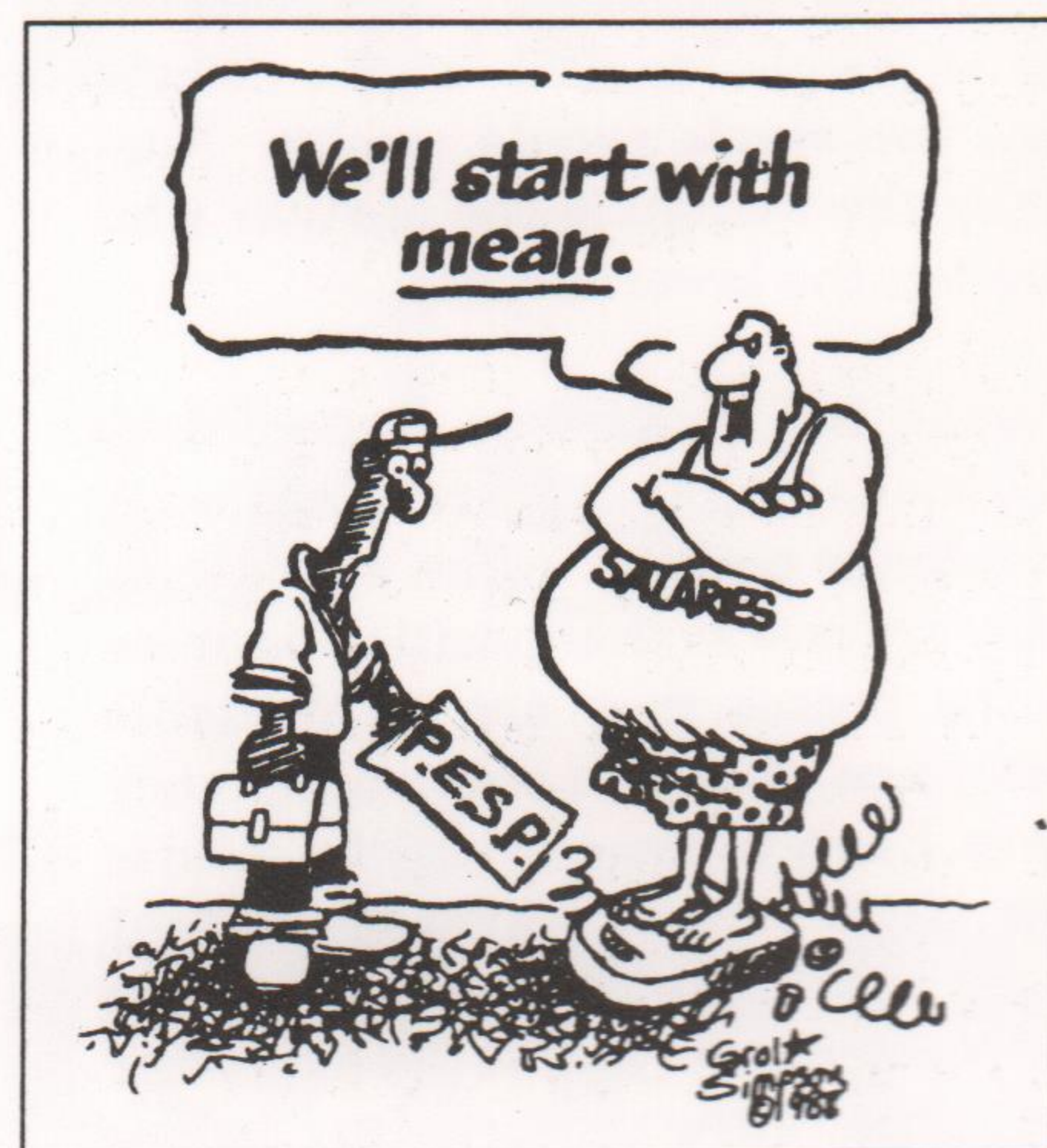
The executive believed that public opinion could win the dispute for them and that the government and its agencies would take a neutral position. Public opinion is a great aid in any dispute, it raises morale and can be of concrete use.

However it does not, on its own, force the bosses to give in. If ever there was a popular strike it was the 1984/5 Dunnes Stores anti-apartheid strike. Despite having the public, media figures, and clergy on their side they were outside the door for 18 months and ended up going back with only a partial victory.

The bank strike was winnable. Despite threats from management and having no strike fund, 70% of staff stuck with the IBOA. Pickets went on every branch. So, what went wrong? What lessons are there for the future?

ANTI-SCAB PICKETS

Where scabs were going in there should have been large and loud pickets to let them know this was unacceptable and would be remembered long after the strike was over. It could have kept all but the most hardened scabs out.



Mass pickets should have been placed on the computer centres. Close them down and all the banks other operations would have come to a halt. Management knew this and well before the strike were working to break the power of the union by offering a mixture of



threats and promises. The IBOA did not do much about it.

The result was that enough staff stayed in work to keep things ticking over. In AIB good union work kept the number in work to under 30% but the Bank of Ireland centre in Cabinteely saw far more crossing the pickets. (To be accurate they were bussed in by Campbells Coaches). Mass pickets could have stopped this.

WAGES CHEQUES

It would have been difficult to keep customers out of the branches. Where were people to get their wages cheques cashed? Due to people moving their accounts in solidarity with the IBOA there was a 10 day wait to just open an account in the Trustee Savings Bank, where there was no dispute.

However it would have been possible, especially in the larger and better organised jobs, to force payment of wages in cash. Sadly there was no public appeal from the IBOA for this. There was not even a proper leaflet putting the case for pickets to be respected and for solidarity action by other workers.

Such action could have turned things around. SIPTU did not call on its members who are bank porters and caterers to come out. SIPTU also refused to call on security staff from Group 4, Securicor and Brinksmat to respect the pickets. Without cash deliveries the banks could not have remained open.

They did not even use the excuse of the Industrial Relations Act making sym-

pathetic strikes illegal. They used the pathetic excuse that if unionised security workers didn't cross pickets their jobs would be taken by new non-union firms. In this case it was a nonsense. You can't set up overnight the sort of security operation required by the big banks.

And anyway, if a union the size of SIPTU can't defend its members' jobs and union rights it might as well throw in the towel now. It is more than capable of protecting its members, the difficulty is that the top bureaucrats aren't interested in struggle. They prefer sitting down with the bosses over a few drinks and cobbling together crap deals. This is what 'social partnership' means.

However the banks failed in their real objective, the smashing of the IBOA. What they did achieve was a change of mood. As a result of their experiences very few workers now believe that they are 'professionals' who enjoy a special relationship with their bosses. That is why so many of them are now describing themselves as bank workers and not 'bank officials'. This is why affiliation to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions was raised at the mass meetings around the country.

Thousands explicitly see themselves as workers and trade unionists. They have broken from much of the 'professionalism' that weighed them down. Their next step must be to discuss why the strike did not lead to an outright victory. The lessons drawn will point to the need for militancy and solidarity action, for rank & file control of struggles.

Alan MacSimóin

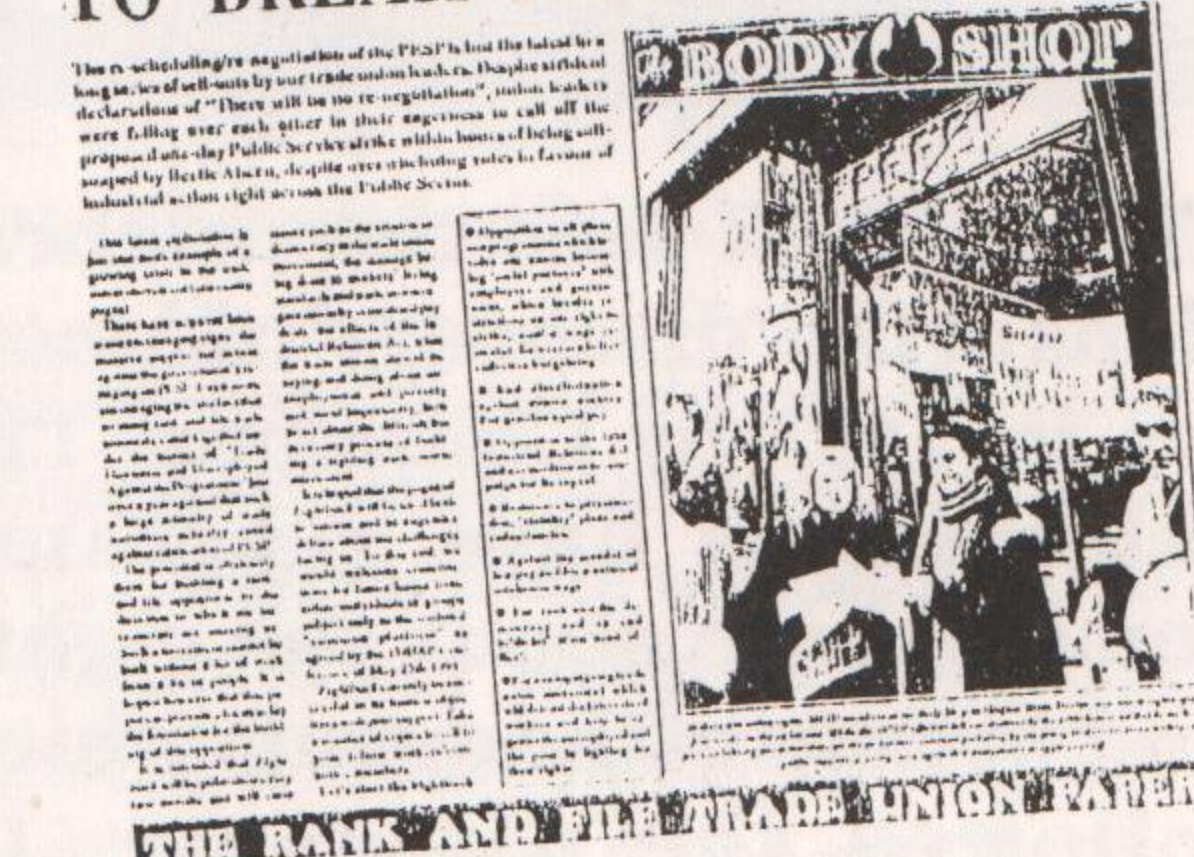
REVIEW

The TUF get going

Trade Union Fightback.. Published by Trade Unionists & Unemployed Against the Programme (TUUAP), 10 Comyn Place, Drumcondra, Dublin 9. 30p + postage.

TRADE UNION
Fightback
ISSUE 1, APRIL/MAY 1992
30p

ORGANISE
TO BREAK FROM THE PESP



A new bi-monthly paper for union activists, produced by the network that came together to oppose the Programme for Economic and Social Progress and the idea of 'social partnership' between workers and bosses. The first issue is packed with facts about how the PNR and PESP have been a disaster for trade unionists. Detailed figures are given to show what has happened to wages, tax and jobs. Also covered are the bank strike, the story of how democracy was denied in one SIPTU branch, the new PRSI changes and the full wording of the motion on abortion that was passed by the Dublin Council of Trade Unions. Independent of all political parties and groups, TUUAP seeks to build a rank & file movement to fight both the bosses and the bureaucrats who are running our unions.

The chaos of capitalism

Northern Ireland's Industrial Development Board had a goal of creating 1,800 new jobs last year. They created just 44! They spent almost £150 million doing it. That's an amazing £3.4 million per job.

In the South the Industrial Development Authority created just 7,000 net new jobs in the 10 years from 1981 to 1990, just 700 per year. According to the Department of In-

dustry and Commerce the real cost of each one of these jobs, when tax reliefs are taken into consideration, could be over £500,000. That added up to £4,580,000,000.

And we are told that the bosses are better suited to running things than are workers. It's true, but only if we are talking about their ability to put our money in their pockets!

Reynolds Law

Pro-Choice campaigner Rachel Millotte was arrested by gardai on May 22nd. She had attempted to collect 25 copies of the edition of the *Guardian* with the advert. for the Marie Stopes Clinic, which were sent to her from Belfast to a Dublin Fastrack depot. The newspapers were seized by customs. Rachel was arrested and told she would be charged with 'breach of the peace'. Five supporters went into Store Street garda station and grabbed a copy of the paper. They then called the media. When the press started arriving Rachel was released without charge. This was not before Garda C116 lost his head and threatened to arrest everyone in sight. If Albert Reynolds is claiming that the state had no involvement in Eason's decision not to distribute the paper, why did customs seize these copies and why did the Gardai arrest Rachel! What is this if not state censorship?

1492 - 1992 Christopher Columbus slaver and thief

THIS YEAR sees the celebrations of the 'discovery' of America in 1492 by Columbus. The celebrations have generated some debate about the rights and wrongs of the events which followed the discovery. In Spain itself, Seville has seen riots as marches protesting at the celebration have been broken up by the police.

America was not discovered, it was already populated by many nations of people. Some of them were composed of primitive communistic societies of hunter-gathers. It was these peoples that the European merchants first found and exploited to extermination. In Mexico and Peru two military empires were in existence, the Aztecs and the Incas.

A TIME AND A PLACE

America was 'discovered' at a time when Europe was entering a period of rapid change. The merchants were gaining more power and coming into conflict with their feudal rulers. It would take 200 years for the merchants to settle the conflict in the French revolution of 1788 but the seeds were growing. Part of this expansion of early capitalism

was based on the search for the source of the spices and metals that international trade was based upon. The direct trade routes having been cut by the Turkish empire. The 'discoveries' of this period were driven by this historical process.

When Columbus reached the Caribbean in 1492 he had little interest in the new plants and animals of this land. Instead he was confident that the Spanish crown could make the Arawaks and Caribs collect and give "what was needed". He established a system by which the Arawaks were required to produce a certain quantity of gold every three months or have their hands cut off. The survivors of this period were worked to death on the sugar plantations.

The empires on the American mainland also fell before the Spanish expansion. The Aztecs at the time ruled over central Mexico but their empire was overstretched and full of internal divisions. The ruling class was divided along religious lines but in an echo of the process occurring in Europe there was also conflict between the Empire and the merchant class. The Inca's ruled the length of the Andes, some 5000 kilometres but they too were internally divided. By allying with the

enemies of these two empires and making use of these internal divisions the Spanish were able to overthrow and enslave both nations with comparatively few men.

WORKED TO DEATH

Both these empires were class societies whose development was halted by their destruction at the hands of the Spanish. They suffered similar fates to the primitive communist societies of the Caribbean. Within a single generation 80% of the Aztec population had been worked to death in the mines or on the land. They had died of torture and because of the destruction of the infrastructure that had supported them.

Throughout this period the Catholic church was involved with the carnage, Columbus himself was deeply religious and the slogan of the conquistadors was "God, gold and glory". Forced conversions were a policy of the time, commonly as a preliminary to execution. One of the few to publicly argue against the brutal treatment of the Americans was a Catholic priest, however he was rapidly shut up by the Vatican. The church produced an ideology of conquest designed to provide moral right to the brutal

Pregnant and happy... Congratulations
If you are not happy about it,
information on all options
- keeping your baby, adoption or abortion -
is available.

Womens Information Network
Telephone 01-6794700

COLUMBUS

continued

oppression of the native people.

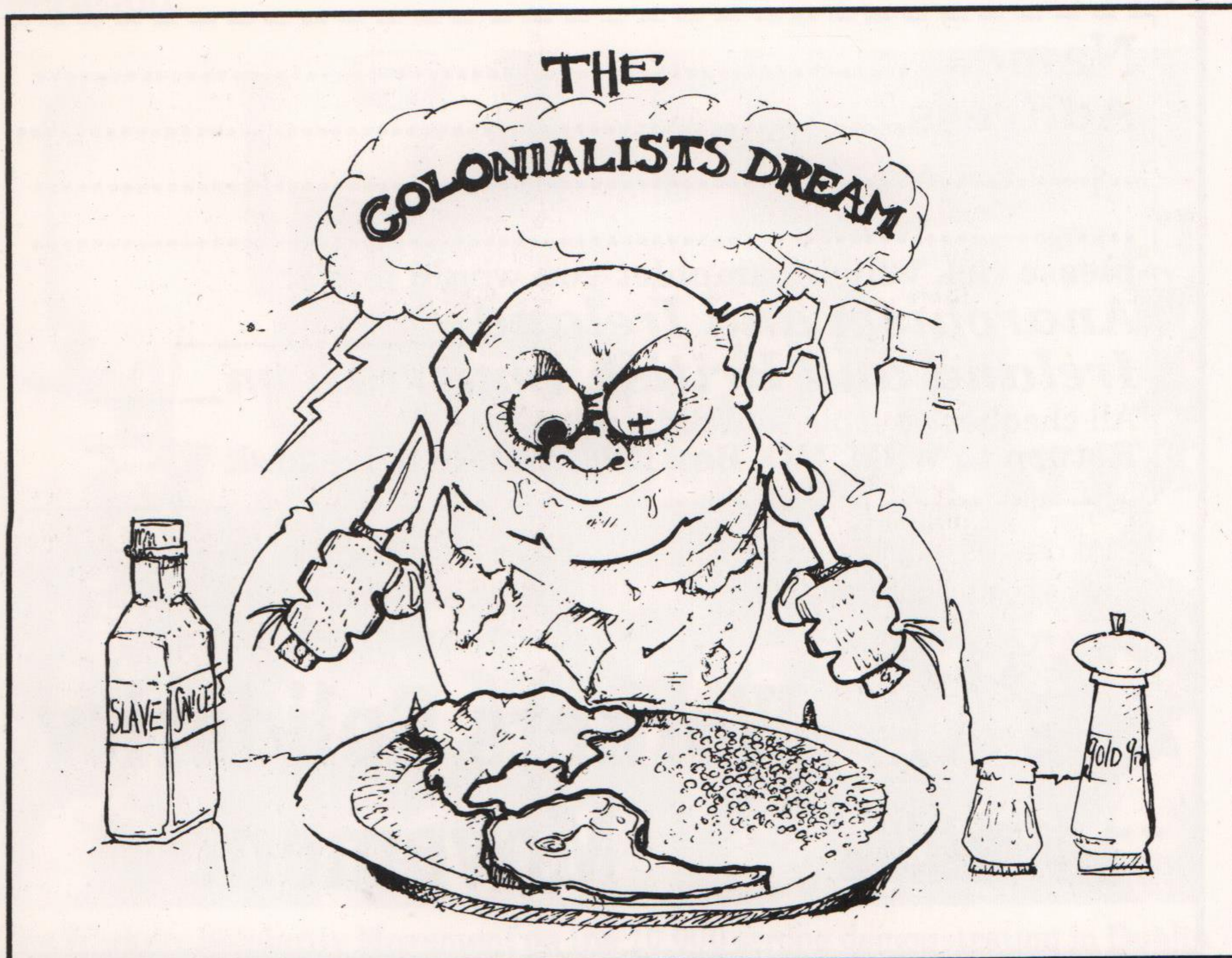
The wealth that was generated by the Spanish conquests was enormous. This wealth and the trade it generated within Europe was the backbone around which capitalism was built. As the native populations of the Americas were wiped out merchants made more profits by kidnapping Africans and selling them to the sugar plantations and mines of America as slaves. This along with the earlier barbarities required capitalism to develop a racist ideology as a justification for its brutality.

The Columbus debate is important because it exposes the brutal basis on which capitalism was built. There is however another argument that sees the pre-Columbus societies as perfect societies which would have remained so were it not for European interference. Could these societies have developed without going through all the horrors imposed on them by the European bosses?

History can not be re-played but we do know that these societies were already going through a process of change. Both the Aztecs and Inca's were military empires based on conquest of other peoples. The Aztecs also carried out ceremonial murders on a mass scale, in 1486 for instance 20,000 captives had their hearts cut out during a temple dedication. They were societies with class and caste divisions. Those peoples who still lived in primitive communist societies did so because these societies were not capable of generating any surplus for a minority to take.

The 500th anniversary serves as a remainder of how barbaric capitalism as an economic system is. It is not Columbus who should be celebrated but rather those millions of native Americans on whose lives modern society was built. There is no finer monument that can be raised to them than the creation of a society based on satisfying needs, not greed.

Joe Black



BOOKS FOR ANARCHISTS

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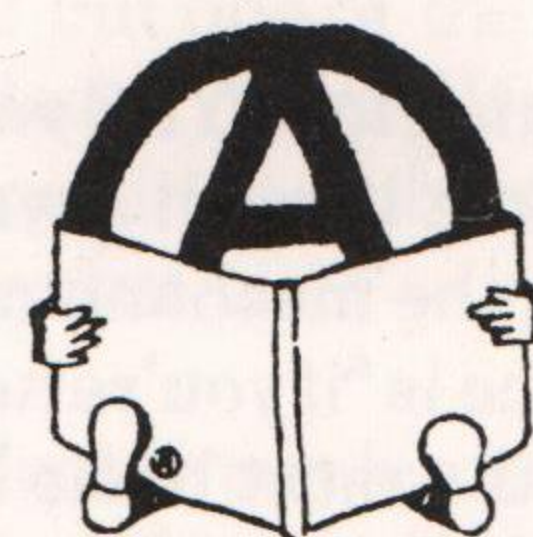
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Voting NO to Maastricht

continued from the back page

and the Third World are seen as a threat.

"Fortress Europe" seeks to unite the European bosses and workers against the peoples of the rest of the world. Integration means a tightening of immigration controls. Euro-racism is not seen only in the far right parties but also in the rhetoric of many European governments, a la Edith Cresson (the ex-French prime minister who suggested that planes should be chartered to fly immigrants home). Add to this division the internal conflicts within the EC as each country competes against each other for European contracts and foreign investors. Germany, the richest country is viewed with suspicion by the others. Cheaper labour in Greece, Spain and Southern Italy is blamed for loss of jobs in Britain and the northern countries.

Many of the EC's supporters in Ireland point to the liberalisation of social attitudes that has occurred through membership. Part of the Maastricht treaty prepares the way for European Monetary Union (EMU). Before this can occur states have to bring their spending, debt and inflation to common levels by cutting public spending. The sugar coating to this bitter pill is the EC Social Charter also contained in the treaty. What is most notable about the Social Charter is that unlike the economic and defence agreements it is mostly optional.

Industry (but not the workers) is protected by clauses that state the Social Charter directives must avoid imposing administrative, financial and legal burdens on small and medium-sized enterprises in such a way as would hold back their creation and development. So this only applies if it costs little. As it won't be the workers who decide if it's affordable, the Social Charter amounts to little more than an aspiration, which can be easily be ignored.

Those arguing for a YES vote have been trying to do it in such a way as to avoid discussing the mechanisms behind the EC. The line is "if you're not in you can't win". On the most basic level this is a misrepresentation of the case. If any country votes against the treaty, it falls for every country. On another level this argument implies a level of unity or consensus that simply does not exist.

Most countries are looking for excep-

tions to different bits, for example France and Luxembourg are unhappy about the provision giving all EC citizens the right to vote or stand as candidates in local and European Community elections across the community. England is split on the EMU and has opted out of the Social Charter. More importantly, EMU is dependant on German support, on a German government report due in 1996 on the fitness of countries to enter union. The EC is more like a cattle mart than one big happy family.

On the £6 billion it should be noted that it is depended on two things. Firstly, that on applying, we are actually OKed to receive the money (which is quite likely). Secondly, that the money is there in the first place to give to us. The £6 billion depends on the EC getting agreement on proposals, which involves increasing the overall EC budget by a third, a proposal already rejected by Britain. Finally, and most importantly, its extremely unlikely that this carrot will ever be given to workers. It will go on road building, grants for rich businesspeople and probably to some of their golf clubs - just as lottery money has.

So what we are being asked is how best to run European capitalism. This is a strange position for socialists to be in. We are opposed to capitalism because it is unfair, authoritarian, unproductive and prone to continual crisis. It is a very uncaring and inefficient way to run society. Yet within this framework we are being asked which way the bosses should go.

If this was all we were being asked, our response would be to ignore the question as irrelevant to us. If somebody is opposed to capital punishment, it is meaningless to ask them should executions be carried out by gun or guillotine. We support solidarity between the international working class. We don't want to tell the bosses how to run capitalism, we want to shut it down.

However the Maastricht treaty in particular covers two other things besides monetary union. It is these that determine how we will vote. These are the questions of European defence and the Protocol.

Armies don't exist to defend populations but rather to defend governments, to defend capital and to defend markets. Wars have an economic base to them, the Gulf War being the most re-

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VOTE NO
TO MAASTRICHT



cent example. That Kuwait was involved was a handy coincidence as it helped sell the war as liberation to the populations at home. Much the same situation is occurring in Yugoslavia, with rival armies invading neighbouring regions.

Yet the UN isn't likely to invade because Yugoslavia doesn't contain oil or any necessary commodity. We oppose any country forming a military alliance because we know from what we've seen before that military power is used to protect markets, not a very good reason for dying. Because we oppose any military alliances of capitalist governments we will be voting NO to Maastricht.

The Protocol is an extra addition to the Maastricht Treaty. It simply forbids Irish citizens to appeal to Europe on issues surrounding the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution. When the clinics and the student unions were taken to court for providing abortion information they both appealed to Europe in order to try to reverse the decision that was made in Ireland. If this protocol is passed the door to Europe will be closed to us on anything to do with the Eighth Amendment.

Remember it is the Eighth Amendment that bans information on abortion. It is the Eighth Amendment that was used to grant an injunction preventing a 14 year old from travelling to Britain. It is because of the Eighth Amendment that Dublin Corporation banned Womens Health books from the libraries. It is because of the Eighth Amendment that

Cosmopolitan, Company and other womens' magazines censor the ads. for abortion clinics in their Irish editions. The Maastricht Protocol ensures that none of these issues can be dealt with by Europe.

In a practical sense, this is little loss, as the EC in the past tended not to solve our problems for us. An appeal to Europe rarely results in a positive change for the better on the ground here. The EC does not want to rock the economic boat by enforcing extremely contentious decisions on a conservative country. It is very clear that if we are to win on the abortion issue, we must win it in Ireland. However, that said, in moral terms, the Maastricht Protocol is an addition to all the defeats we have suffered in the last 10 years. It may not be a very important addition, it's not a very major defeat, but every time we loose it makes it more difficult for people to keep on fighting to change Irish society. For this reason we will be voting NO to Maastricht.

Of course, in many ways the most interesting things about the Protocol is its existence at all. When the treaty was first negotiated, no mention of this protocol was made in the Irish media, no discussion, no nothing. If the case of the 14 year old had not arisen it is questionable whether we would be aware of it at all. Yet this was negotiated 'in our interests' by a government which was responding to pressure from someone. And they call this democracy!

Angela Murray

GET IN TOUCH

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

The Workers Solidarity Movement is an anarchist organisation that fights for a 32 county Workers' Republic.

We stand for a socialism that is based on freedom and real democracy, a society based on workplace and community councils.

This kind of socialism has nothing to do with the state capitalism that is practiced in Russia, Cuba and other police states.

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

As part of our fight for anarchism we are involved in the struggles for higher wages, for trade union democracy, for womens' 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 peoples' right to fight back. But we are not nationalists, we do not merely want to get rid of the border. We want to unite our class and create a totally new Ireland.

☒ I want more information about the Workers Solidarity Movement.

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WORKERS SOLIDARITY

MAGAZINE OF THE WORKERS SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT
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Stand up for womens' rights... Vote NO to Maastricht

On the 18th of June, we are going to be asked to vote on a 234 page document that most of us won't have seen, and they call this democracy. If you've been reading the papers about the Maastricht Treaty you'll know it deals with Economic Monetary Union and a common defence policy. Maastricht is about closer European integration. And if you've been reading the papers, that's about all you will know about the referendum. Those three phrases keep getting thrown up, with no explanation, no elaboration and then an occasional mention of £6 billion is chucked in to clinch the argument. The impression left in many minds is that Maastricht is very important, very confusing and very boring.



Maastricht is the next step towards closer European integration. Closer European integration is a code for protectionism. If the rules of the 'free market' were applied the EC would be out-competed by the US and Japan. European capitalist economies are heavily dependant on agriculture and traditional manufacturing industries. Through CAP (the Common Agricultural Policy) subsidies and guaranteed price levels Europe's farmers are protected against US and Third World competition. Similarly EC subsidies prop up the EC coal, shipbuilding and steel industries.

The main force driving the EC to Maastricht is the decline of EC competitiveness on the world economy and the need therefore for tougher measures to insulate the EC from more dynamic capitalist economies. The reduction in internal border controls, the standardisation of VAT rates, and so on isn't occurring in the interests of 'European harmony', but in the hope that EC countries will increase trade among themselves. They also hope that a unified Euro-economy would be better able to withstand the worst effects of competition from Japan and North America.

Instinctively, many people support the idea of integration, they see it as a move towards a world community, a 'brotherhood of man'. However, the European Community is in many ways a bit of a misnomer, as the EC creates as many divisions as it dissolves. Other economies, particularly those of the Japanese

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IRISH ANARCHIST MAGAZINE