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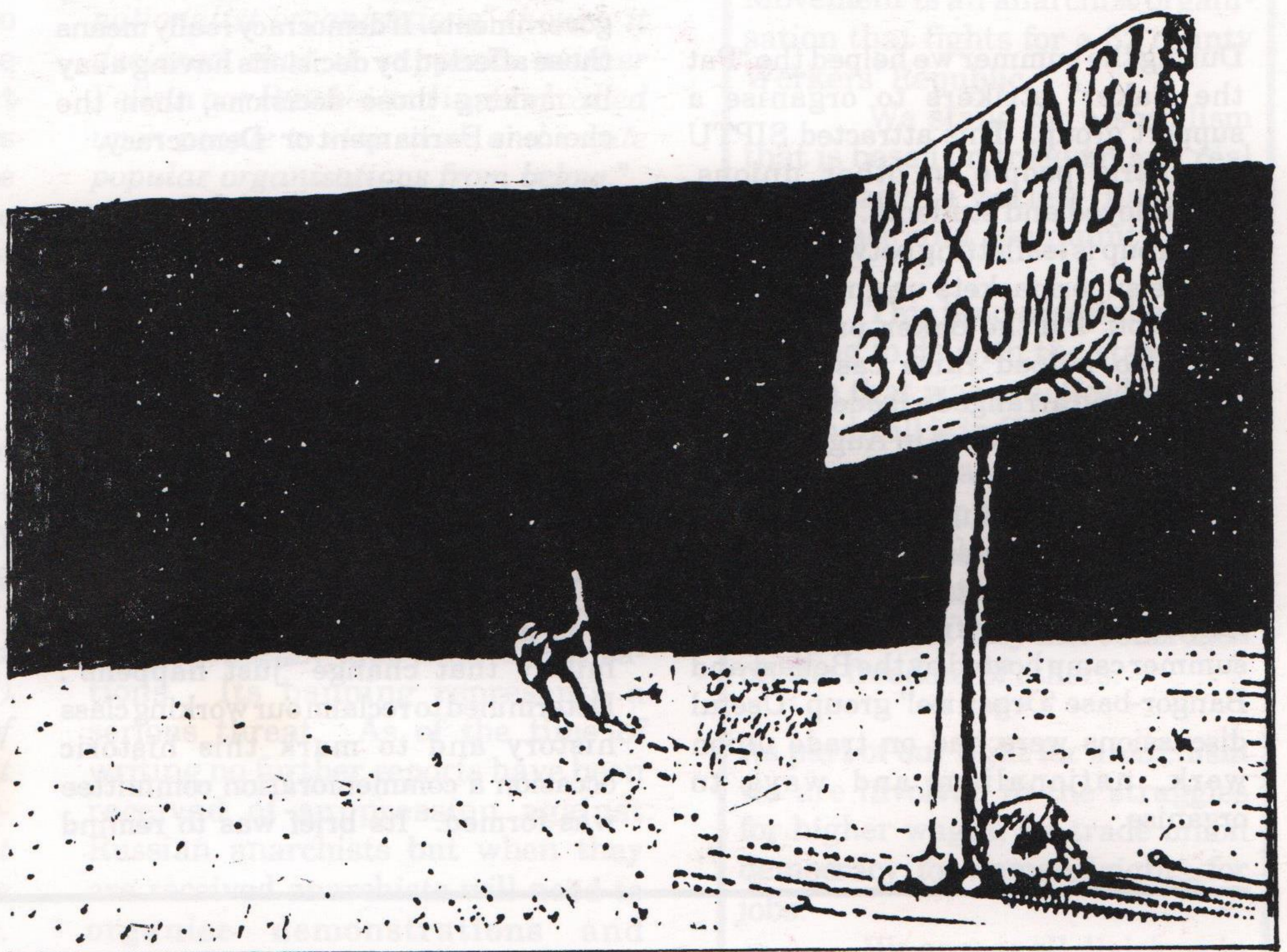


WORKERS SOLIDARITY

MAGAZINE OF THE WORKERS SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT
ISSUE NO. 40

75p outside Ireland

60p



*Aer Lingus and the ever
growing dole queue*

Turn the anger into action

...see page 3

IRISH ANARCHIST MAGAZINE

WHEN IT WAS learnt that nazi historian and organiser David Irving was to visit Ireland the WSM joined with other anti-fascists in a broad Stop Irving Campaign. Such was the strength of opposition to his proposed visit that all four separate invitations to him were cancelled. We produced a pamphlet, *Stop the Nazi*, which explained Irving's background as an organiser for fascism and why anarchists would deny him a platform from which to recruit for nazi terror gangs. A few copies are still available for 30p.

During the summer we helped the "Pat the Baker" strikers to organise a support group. This attracted SIPTU members, people in other unions, unemployed and students. Each week this group is leafletting between six and twelve supermarkets urging shoppers to boycott 'Pat the Baker' products. It has also helped raise cash for the strikers and arranged a feeder march to join the 1913 pageant in August.

Also during the summer we debated with representatives of the Anarchist Communist Federation and the Direct Action Movement from Britain at a summer camp hosted by the Belfast and Bangor-base 'Organise!' group. Useful discussions were had on trade union work, nationalism and ways to organise.

For Starters

While many anarchist organisations and publishing houses do a good job of reprinting the 'classics', there is a shortage of cheap pamphlets addressing current issues. As a small contribution towards redressing the balance we have published Kevin Doyle's *Parliament or Democracy*. This explains why anarchists don't vote for governments. If democracy really means those affected by decisions having a say in making those decisions, then the choice is *Parliament or Democracy*.

August marked the anniversary of the 1913 Dublin Lockout. Eighty years ago four hundred employers of the city - led by *Irish Independent*, *Irish Catholic* and Dublin United Tramways owner - William Martin Murphy set out to smash the unions. The ITGWU was recruiting the unskilled in their thousands and winning claims through sympathetic strikes and blacking.

It is important to reject the common fallacy that change "just happens". Determined to reclaim our working class history and to mark this historic occasion a commemoration committee was formed. Its brief was to remind

people that the improvements we enjoy today were won through struggle and solidarity. Composed of a handful of anarchists and socialists, including members of the Workers Solidarity Movement, it drew up an impressive list of events and won the formal support of several major unions.

These events included three public meetings, publication of a pamphlet (see page 17 for details), a walking tour of sites connected with lockout, an exhibition in an inner city community centre, and a radio show (on local station Anna Livia FM). Some were well organised, some not so well prepared. This reflected the small number of people involved in the organisation of the events, for while there was a lot of verbal support for this initiative there was a shortage of willing workers.

Very noticeable was the almost complete media blackout of the events. Only the pageant was covered. Everything else was ignored. The bosses' media were not in a hurry to give publicity to workers' struggles. No surprise there. Just one further reminder of how the "free press" has the limits of its freedom set by its millionaire owners.

THAT'S CAPITALISM

The latest firm to claim it can't pay the last phase of the PESP on time is Albert Reynolds C+D Petfoods. It must be awful to be a poverty stricken millionaire Taoiseach!

60% of Reagan's cabinet were millionaires or near millionaires. This rose to 71% under George Bush. But Clinton, the great hope of the liberals, has seen to it that 77% of his nominees are millionaires or within spitting distance.

After all the promises of job creation in return for votes and PESP agreements, there are now more people unemployed in the 26 counties who have been on the dole for over three years than the total

unemployment figure for 1971. Some Programme for Economic and Social Progress!

The British government plans to sell off Belfast International Airport at Aldergrove. Millions of pounds in EC grants were given for its modernisation, and now all this will go to capitalist privateers at a knock down price.

While the bosses' organisation IBEC moans about "excessive" public sector wages the OECD has reported that the pay of clerical assistants in the civil service dropped from 60% of the average industrial wage in 1981 to 50% in 1991. Some earn so little they qualify for the

Family Income Supplement.

In the six counties, supposedly an "integral part of the United Kingdom", average income has dropped from 83% to just 70% of the British average.

Allied Irish Bank have announced that they will soon be putting up bank charges because their "margins are under pressure". Their idea of being "under pressure" is a strange one as they also announced increased profits of £139 million for the first half of 1993, an increase of 42% in six months.



As the government look for more privatisation, pay cuts and job losses at Aer Lingus...

Turn the anger into action

THE CAHILL PLAN is a devastating attack on workers' conditions in Aer Lingus and its subsidiaries. Unlike Digital, where £4 million was promised to try and save 800 jobs, the government are offering Aer Lingus £175 million in return for 1,500 redundancies.

Those who keep their jobs will get no pay rise for the next two years, losing out immediately on a 5.25% rise due under the PESP. £34 million will be cut from payroll costs. Overtime will be virtually abolished. Shift pay will be dramatically cut.

TEAM Aer Lingus are facing £14 million in cutbacks. The Shannon stop-over is going to be phased out costing thousands of jobs in the West of Ireland.

DARE TO FIGHT - DARE TO WIN

Attacks like these can be fought against. Already TEAM Aer Lingus have had an impressive victory. When 300 TEAM workers were temporarily laid off, workers fought back by blocking the roadway, holding pickets and public meetings. In the end all 300 workers were reinstated.

What this shows is that direct action does work. But more than protests and road blocks will be needed to reverse the Cahill Plan. What will be needed is industrial action effective enough to make the State think twice about imposing their cuts.

All-out strike action, closing down Dublin, Shannon, Knock and Cork airports would do just that. The loss of business and tourism would cost the state and employers millions of pounds in a short space of time. If the strike lasted long enough it would be cheaper for the State to get rid of the Cahill Plan completely rather than go on losing a fortune.

Strike action, if it was supported by enough Aer Lingus workers and went on long enough would succeed, the

problem is how to get there.

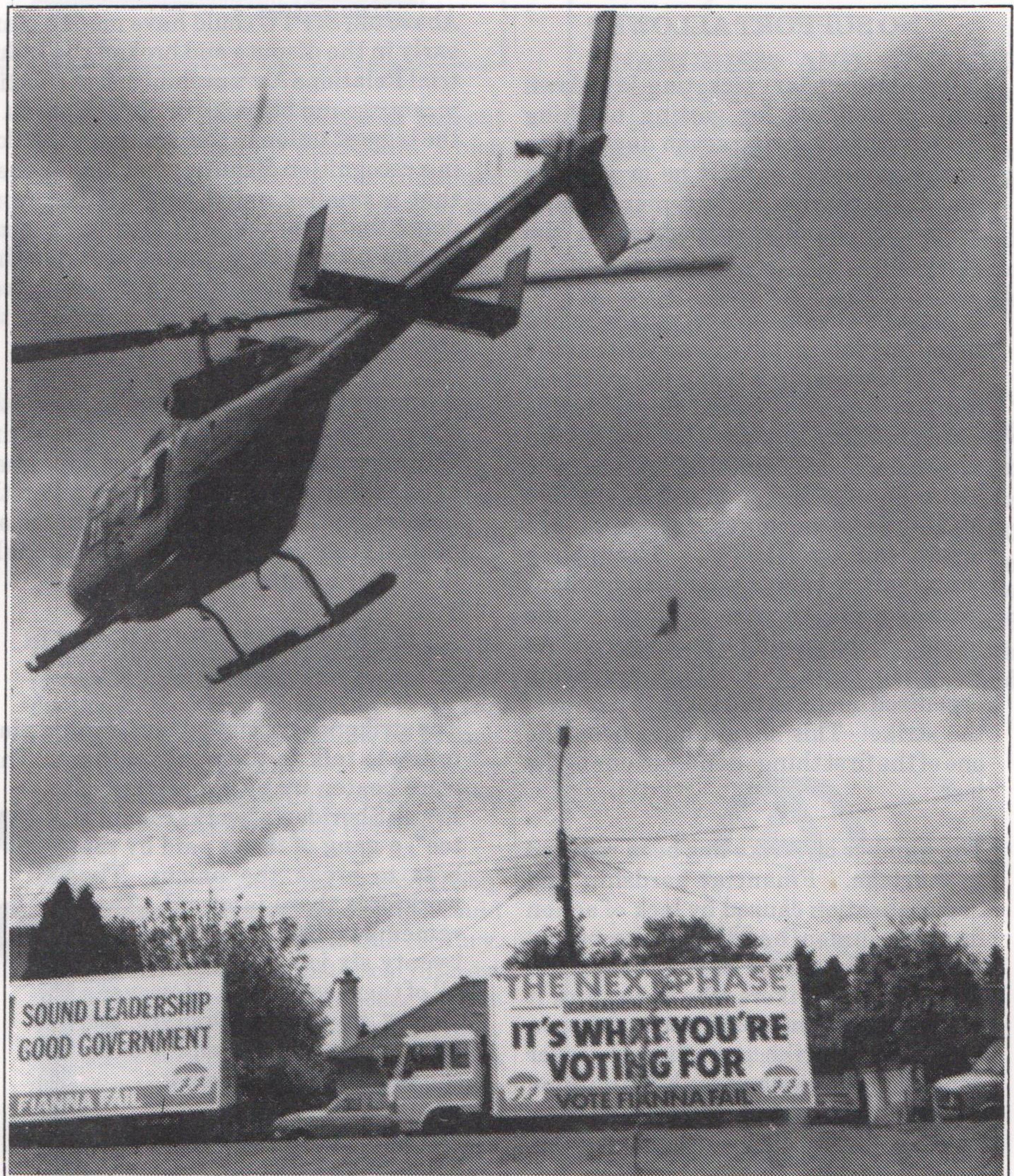
There is no point in looking to the union officials to provide the lead. The Aer Lingus unions are already negotiating with management on where exactly the cuts should be.

The workers themselves must provide the lead, acting on their own initiative to save their own jobs. This is not as impossible as may first seem. The workers already closed down Dublin Airport for two hours on Saturday 17th July while having a union meeting. There is clearly deep anger and resentment within the company and in North County Dublin which will feel the redundancies most.

The anger and resentment must be converted in to action as soon as possible. A good start would be to get SIPTU to organise a major national demonstration in support of the Aer Lingus workers. With a large show of support the Aer Lingus workers may gain the confidence to take matters further. To gain more confidence and experience a campaign of protests and stoppages could begin with the eventual aim of an all-out strike. In this way the government can be defeated.

Whether Labour is in power or not the State will put the interests of the ruling class first. The Aer Lingus workers have the power, if they choose to use it, to move towards redressing the balance of inequality.

Andrew Blackmore



The government plan for Aer Lingus... one helicopter!

LAST MARCH twenty five workers at Pat the Baker's Cherry Orchard plant in west Dublin joined SIPTU. They wanted to improve their lousy pay and conditions. The company, owned by Pat Higgins and based in the Longford town of Granard, responded by sacking them.

A bitter battle has gone on ever since. Management has used all the tricks at its disposal including employing two public relations firms to vilify the strikers, 24 hour video filming of the picket, and the invention of a "works committee" for Cherry Orchard. SIPTU has responded with an expensive publicity campaign. A newsletter, *Breadline News*, has been delivered to homes all over the country. Tens of thousands of leaflets and stickers have been printed.

However, this kind of response has had very little effect. Despite what many union officials think, publicity alone, without wider industrial action, does not win disputes. The 1990 Industrial Relations Act is crippling the workers' ability to strike back at management.

NO SUPPORT ALLOWED

It forbids secondary picketing, lays down long procedures for getting blacking (which include giving seven days notice to the employer so that he or she can make alternative arrangements), and even bans having supporters on the picket line.

It must be obvious to everyone who has taken any interest in this strike that the SIPTU leadership is using the excuse of the Act to avoid taking any effective action to win. Only after six months did they talk about balloting members to black Pat the Baker bread in the five Midlands supermarkets which are organised by SIPTU. Then they cancelled the ballots after management intimidation, threats that part-time workers' jobs would be endangered. As we go to press the ballots are being organised again, in the seventh month of the strike! This should have been the one of the first things done, not one of the last.

The number on strike has been reduced to fourteen. Financial hardship and demoralisation caused by lack of action from the union has led to the others moving on in search of jobs elsewhere. The fourteen strikers who have stuck it out since the Spring have to survive on £36 a week strike pay plus whatever donations arrive when rank & file union members take up collections in their jobs.

Workers on strike for this length of time

On strike since March 28th for the right to join a union

1913 lockout replayed at Pat the Baker

and fighting for union recognition should now have their full wages paid by the union. SIPTU can well afford it. £1 million is taken in every three weeks in members subscriptions. The three senior general officers are believed (union members are not allowed to know the exact figure) to earn at least £90,000 annually in salary and expenses.

Above all, SIPTU could have made a stand early in the dispute and broken the Industrial Relations Act's prohibition of effective picketing and blacking of tainted goods. If the biggest union in the country won't do it in a recognition dispute, what hope is there that a smaller union will? It is beyond doubt that if the union had its funds seized by the courts for breaking the Act that enough trade unionists would answer a call to take immediate action and force the state to back off.

A support group exists in Dublin to help the strikers and has been active in leafletting Quinnsworth and Crazy Prices supermarkets asking shoppers to boycott Pat the Baker bread. Similar support groups are needed in other cities and towns, especially in County Longford.

BREAKING OUR UNIONS OR BRREAKING THE ACT?

The strikers have visited the Granard plant to try to talk to the workers there. They were beaten up by supporters of Frank Sheridan's "works committee", a gang of thugs paid by the boss to break the union. The workforce there is afraid. They remember that two years ago twenty six joined the union and all of them were fired. However a victory in Cherry Orchard can turn things around and provide the confidence to unionise.

When the Industrial Relations Act was introduced, organisations like Trade Union Fightback and the

Workers Solidarity Movement were dismissed as alarmists. Now even 'moderate' union officials are making noises about the restrictions the Act places on what used to be normal trade union practices. In the run up to a new PESP, however, the possibility that these people will make any serious attempt to get rid of the Act is remote.

Pat Higgins is not some giant multinational. He is a gombeen boss with a £3 million a year turnover and a profit of £300,000. He could have been brought to his knees within a few weeks if the traditional methods of industrial action had been used. Secondary pickets (on Pat the Baker suppliers and customers), blacking and openly seeking support from other trade unions; these were the teeth drawn by the Act.

If we don't want every tin pot dictator running a small business believing he can smash unions with impunity we have to make a decision. Do we meekly surrender and live with the Act? Do we wait for the Dáil to amend it (and remember that means trusting the same people who brought in the Act)? Or do we break it? Anarchists prefer to break the Act than see our unions broken.

Patricia McCarthy



paid £5 if you abuse a picket interview with a Pat the Baker striker

Noel Forbes of the strike committee spoke to *Workers Solidarity*



What are the main issues in this dispute?

It's about recognition - union recognition. The way the company acts you'd think it was a crime to join a union. Look at the surveillance cameras over there - there are three outside here and more inside the plant. The canteen was bugged before we came out on strike. He (Pat Higgins, the owner) is spending a small fortune on security firms and now has two P.R. firms working for him. We find it very hard to get publicity. His P.R. firms are making out its not a union/management dispute at all but a dispute between workers. This is a total lie.

Tell us about the works committee who say they represent the workers.

This is a made up thing by Frank Sheridan who works in Granard (the company's H.Q.). Neither Sheridan nor the works committee were ever seen in Cherry Orchard by John (the striker who worked longest for Pat the Baker in Dublin - 7 years) until the strike started. They're just a made up job, they don't represent anyone properly.

Tell us about the situation in Granard.

Well, there's 120 people working there, not 400 like Higgins claims. There's maybe 40 more in depots in Limerick, Cork and

Cavan. The rest in sub-contract work. We have two letters from workers in Granard waiting to join the union. But the workers there are afraid of Sheridan and his thugs. We went up there to picket the place four weeks ago - six of us. We were beaten up, spat on, threatened, abused - all by Sheridan's gang and locals paid £5 a day to abuse the pickets. The Gardai helped us out in the end. The parish priest denounced us as communists off the pulpit on Sunday. They knew too much about us personally and about the SIPTU official in Mullingar too. It was ridiculous carry-on - the personnel manager and his wife and daughter spiting at the pickets.

Have you managed to effect production here with the strike?

Oh yes. It's down 15-20%. Hospitals, the fire brigade, some supermarkets have all cancelled. They are using the plant here as a depot. They are wrapping the bread elsewhere now - we're are trying to find out where.

Do you think the workers in Granard will ever come out in support?

No, they're too scared. Two years ago 26 workers joined SIPTU in Granard. There are only two of them still in the job. Frank Sheridan, chairman of the works committee has been with Pat the Baker

for ten years. He's getting well paid to run the works committee farce.

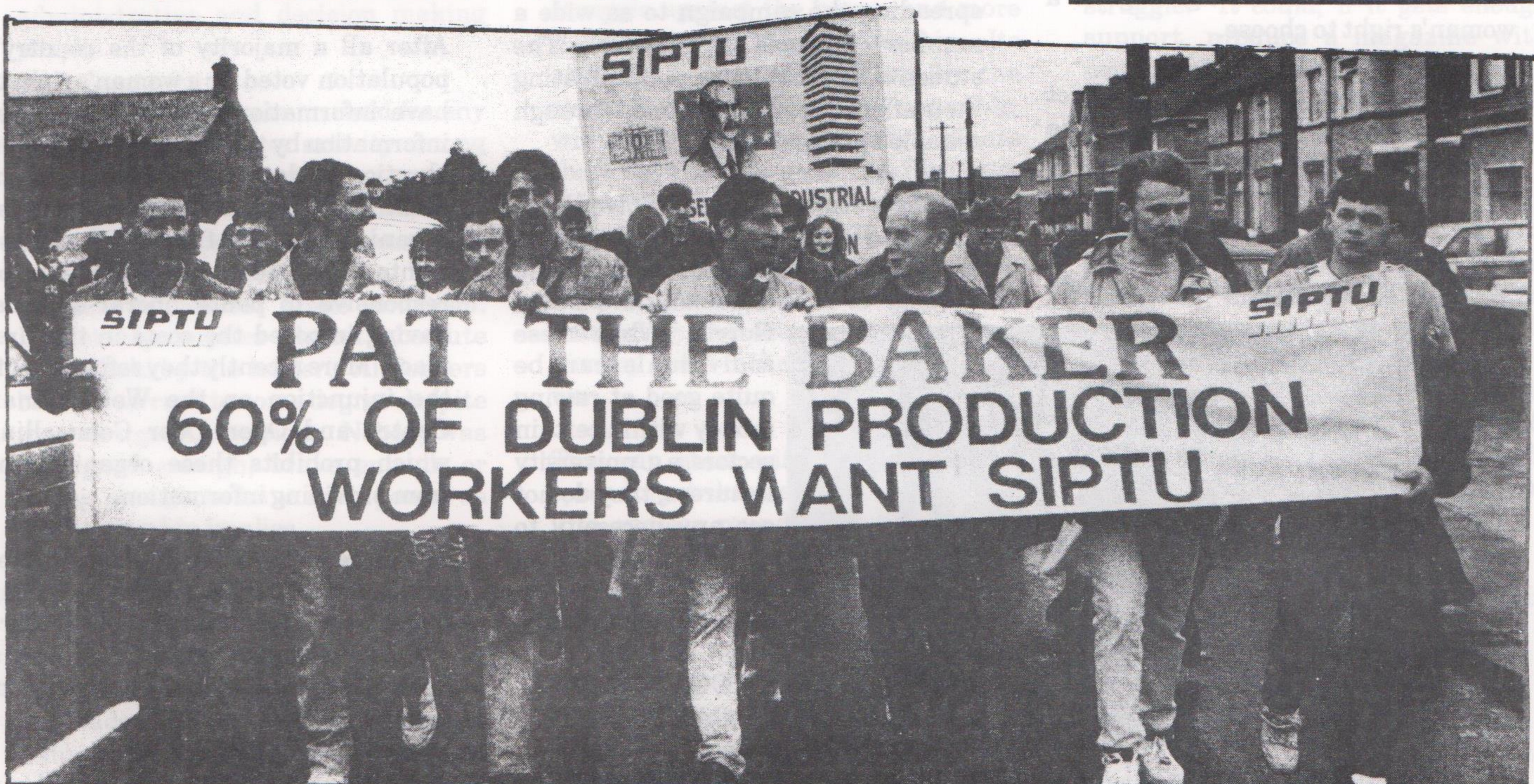
SIPTU have done a good leafletting and publicity campaign but what more would you like them to do?

Well, the Industrial Relations Act is the the problem. We have to get the bread blacked by the supermarket workers. That's what we want to see. The lads are getting fed up now. We're only on £36 a week strike pay. One of the lads is about to lose his house over the strike. I mean we appreciate all the support we're getting but it is not enough to win the dispute without blacking.



A support group in Dublin works with the strikers - leafletting supermarkets, organising collections and publicising their struggle.

Get involved. It meets every Tuesday at 8pm in the Ha'penny Bridge Inn (top floor), Wellington Quay.



In the frontline of the fight for union rights, marching through Baliyfermot

Student Unions ordered to fund SPUC's anti-choice case

Bigots send for sherrif

THE FIGHT between SPUC and the student unions over the provision of abortion information has entered a new phase. SPUC's solicitors, are now seeking costs from the student unions for the earlier stages of the case. This is despite the fact that the legal case is ongoing. In fact this is the first time in the history of the Irish state that one party has been awarded legal costs over the other while the case is still being disputed. Talk about impartiality!

What this means is that SPUC will be able to use this money to fight the later stages of the case, as well as providing resources for its other anti-choice agendas, while the student unions will be left stuck for cash, if not financially insolvent. All this for fighting for a woman's right to choose.

The sheriff has been called in to collect the amount involved, £29,000. At the time of writing he has sent several final notices and even made appointments to collect the money. The last one of these was on August 30th at the Union of Students of Ireland (USI). Having been

given 24 hours notice the students assembled journalists and photographers to cover the story. That morning USI received a phone call asking if they had any assets of value in their office. When they replied that they had not the sheriff said he wasn't coming.

This would seem to indicate a reluctance on the part of the state authorities to test the public climate. Nonetheless the students response to all of this has unfortunately been quite weak. Given the current weakness of the student movement it is possible that they will decide to pay the money involved. In the absence of a large campaign of support, not to pay the money would inevitably mean the loss of the student unions through the legal liquidation process.

However they have not decided to fight in any meaningful political manner. The "X" case was successfully fought by spreading the campaign to as wide a number of people as possible. The students appear to be concentrating their efforts on raising money through reliable but narrow channels.

The three student unions involved have combined to set up a trust fund with the sponsorship of noted liberals like Nuala O'Faolain and David Norris. While these individuals can be quite good at raising money within certain sectors, e.g. university lecturers, they do not see any necessity to spread the political campaign to the widest number of people.

COURTS OR CAMPAIGN?

With many trade unions supporting a

woman's right to information, arguably the most effective way to do this is to work on trade union involvement.

This can be done by providing a model motion for union meetings, putting posters on union noticeboards pledging support to the students, asking union executives to distribute information packs to members. In this way political support and money can be raised to support the students and to solidify support for a woman's right to information when the government brings in its legislation next year.

After all a majority of the country's population voted for a woman's right to have information and to utilise that information by travelling abroad for an abortion in last November's referendum. SPUC is seeking to penalise organisations for fighting for these rights. The courts are unlikely to be responsive to polite liberal appeals, having imposed the costs in the first place. More recently they refused to lift the injunction on the Well Woman Centre and Open Door Counselling which prohibits these organisations from providing information.

The more support the students gather now against this penalty for providing information, the stronger the pressure will be on the government to provide a broad framework for the provision of information.



Cardinal Daly - SPUC's secret godfather?



Sherrif's deputies seen during training in the grounds of the Archbishop's palace

Emma Slevin

ACCORDING to the European Commission's latest employment report, Ireland has the third lowest manufacturing employment costs for the bosses. Despite all the whining about the indirect costs of employing extra workers, Ireland has the 4th lowest indirect costs - only slightly above Britain, Portugal, Greece and Denmark.

The figures also demonstrate how

there is little link between accepting wage freezes and employment. The countries with the highest wages are also those with the lowest unemployment. The countries with the highest unemployment are also those with the lowest wages. The bosses tell us accepting wage freezes will help create jobs. This is crap. It will, however, give them even larger profits. Once again there is no common cause between the bosses and the workers.

European Commission
report

**Low wages
don't mean
more jobs**

New law aids pimps and protection rackets

IT IS IRONIC that the Act to decriminalise homosexuality also contained provisions for increased victimisation of a marginalised group.

Tagged on to the end of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 1993 were further restrictions on prostitution. Under the new act, prostitutes are now liable to fines of up to £1,000 and up to six months in prison. In addition anybody caught soliciting sex from prostitutes or believed to be "kerb-crawling" face fines of up to £500.

Most political parties raised no objections to this attack on prostitutes' right to earn a living. They wanted to decriminalise homosexuality with the least fuss possible. Governments since 1988 had promised - but failed to deliver - compliance with the European Court of Human Rights decision in the case taken against the State by David Norris.

FIVE YEARS ON

The Court had insisted on the decriminalisation of homosexual acts between consenting adults. Five years later the government was finally going to do something about it and politicians did not want to rock the boat on this sensitive issue.

The Council for the Status of Women welcomed the proposed legislation without raising a single objection to the sections on prostitution. These restrictions will cause further victimisation and hardship for women working as prostitutes but as suspected, the Council is only concerned with the status of some women.

The Minister for Justice argues that these restrictions will "provide further protection against the exploitation of people who feel they have no choice but to prostitute

themselves". In fact, they will have the opposite effect.

PIMPS & PROTECTION RACKETS

In the past, prostitutes could sometimes call on the police for protection. Under the new act, if a prostitute calls on the police to protect her from attack, she is liable for prosecution herself. A possible outcome of this is an increase in pimps and protection rackets.

The increased fines means prostitutes will have to work longer hours in order to cover the cost of fines. The increased penalties for keeping a brothel means that more prostitutes will be forced to work on the streets rather than in the safer conditions of a massage parlour.

As anarchists we are against all forms of exploitation. But restrictions on prostitution will not make it any less exploitative. Rather they will make it harder for a marginalised group of workers to make a living.

We believe that prostitutes have a right to earn a living. They have a right to working conditions where they can feel safe and work without fear of victimisation from the police, pimps or anybody else.

Kathleen O'Kelly



Doloures Lynch organised, with 70 prostitutes, a signed petition to the Minister for Justice calling for an end to discrimination against them in court. This was prompted by the discovery of their friend Teresa who was found with an iron bar stuck up her anus and out her back. Doloures, who was told to leave the country by a Catholic priest as she was "possessed by the devil", was murdered on January 16th 1983. She, her mother and her aunt were burned to death by pimp John Cullen.

AS THE UN is currently claiming to be trying to bring peace to Somalia by disarming the 'warlords' a recent US congressional study reported in the July issue of the US magazine *Financial Review* makes interesting reading. It shows that the people who pumped arms into Somalia in the 1980's are still pumping arms into the third world in the 1990's.

The United States remained the biggest arms supplier to the third world in 1992, increasing its share of the market to 57% from 49% in 1991, according to the US Congressional study. For all the scare mongering about Russian arms exports they only comprise 5.4%, of the world trade with arms deals in 1992 of US\$1.3 billion. The US total is however US\$13.6 billion.



At the moment the west is trying to build a fear of third world nations acquiring weapons as a way of maintaining social peace at home. For years we were kept in line through the use of the cold war. Now instead of Russia, North Korea and Iraq are supposed to be big threats. States which fulfil the wishes of the Western bosses get armed regardless of their record on democracy or human rights. Yet the bosses tell us that they are against arming undemocratic states.

Two of the top three recipients of US arms exports were Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Both of these countries are amongst the most undemocratic on the planet with despotic rulers and vicious anti-women legislation which even bans women from driving cars. Both have been highlighted by human rights organisations like Amnesty International as routinely making use of torture against political opponents.

The rest of the top ten, not surprisingly,

The arms trade, the "free market"... Very profitable slaughter

includes other states claiming to be bringing peace to the world. In order these are France, the second largest arms supplier in 1992 (US\$3.8 billion), Britain (US\$2.4 billion), Russia (US\$1.3 billion), Germany (US\$700 million), Spain (US\$600 million), Italy (US\$400 million), Israel (US\$300 million), Iran (US\$200 million) and China (US\$100 million). That's all the permanent members of the United Nations

security council in the Top Ten dealers of death list.

The West and the UN can not be part of the solution to any of the world's problems. They are the police for the bosses' profit margins. From the former Yugoslavia to Somalia they have no progressive role to play.

Andrew Flood

Legal limits or the limits of the law

For those who put their faith in good laws to stop racism and sexism; a cautionary tale from Minneapolis, USA. These events occurred in the course of an abortion clinic defence campaign.

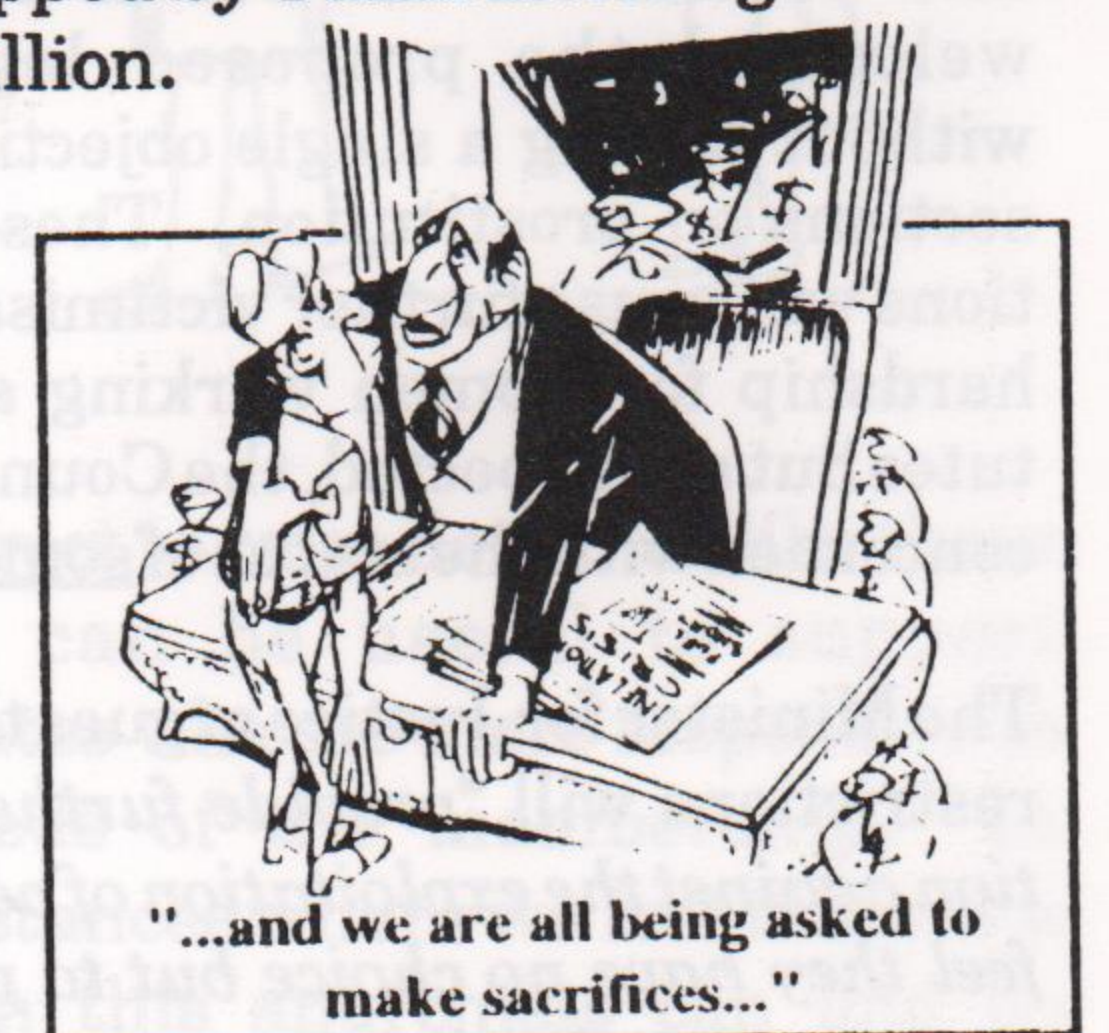
A group of 'pro-choicers' was tailing Operation Rescue for several hours to find out what clinic or doctor's home they were going to hit - standard practice for 'pro-choice' groups when OR

plans a hit. The bigots spotted them, so they pulled into a police station and got them busted. For what? For violating an "anti-stalking" law designed to stop bigots who tail & harass clinic doctors. Later outside the clinic pro-choice activists were threatened with arrest for wearing masks, by invoking an old anti-Ku Klux Klan law that prohibits hiding your face. The masks were to frustrate Operation Rescue attempts to videotape them and a protection against the tear gas being fired by the police.

Japanese government is doing alright

A recent survey of Japan's 749 lawmakers in both houses of the legislature showed, as in all other countries, Japan's rulers come from the rich. Those from the Liberal Democratic Party own an average \$1.2 million in personal wealth. Parliamentarians from Komeito (Clean Government Party) held average assets of \$508,000, followed by \$440,000 of those from the Democratic Socialist Party (SDP), and the \$404,000 of those from the Social Democratic Party (SDP). Assets held under the names of spouses and family members, jewellery, precious metals and gold, did

not have to be declared. Parliamentarians in both houses own an average \$835,000 of personal assets but the list was topped by Takashi Sasagawa with \$40 million.



"...and we are all being asked to make sacrifices..."

Catholic church seeks state aid for child abuse!

THE CATHOLIC Church is looking for payment in return for sexually abusing children! Right up to the 1960s young children from Catholic orphanages in Britain and the six counties were shipped out to Australia. There the boys, some as young as eight years, were used as almost slave labour by Catholic farmers and the Church itself. Girls were sent into domestic service in the homes of rich Church members.

In Western Australia the Christian Brothers are facing over 50 compensation claims by former child migrants who say they were sexually abused while in Church care. In July, in the *Western Australian* newspaper, the Christian Brothers admitted that "physical and sexual abuse took place". But rather than face up to their responsibilities, the Catholic Church asked the government to help fund compensation claims. They wanted taxpayers - Catholic and those of all other and no religions - to pay for their crimes.

This is an amazing display of arrogance from one of the richest institutions in the world. The Western Australian provincial government thought so too, and turned down their plea. With the victims of sexual abuse at the hands of clerics telling their stories all over the world, will we see Archbishop Cathal Daly getting out the collection can and asking us to pay for the crimes of his child molesters?

Cuba

socialist paradise or Castro's fiefdom?

"..the major event of the twentieth century has been the abandonment of the values of liberty on the part of the revolutionary movement, the weakening of Libertarian Socialism, vis-a-vis Caesarist and militaristic Socialism. Since then, a great hope has disappeared from the world to be replaced by a deep sense of emptiness in the hearts of all who yearn for Freedom...."

(*'Neither Victims nor Executioners'* by Albert Camus)

AS CAMUS SAYS, a deep sense of emptiness is felt by all those who wish for a revolution leading to the creation of a society which is classless and truly socialist. As the history of the 20th century has unfolded we have witnessed the repeated failure of vanguards and leaders to create the society for which the true-hearted revolutionaries have fought and died. Not so long ago most of the left held up the Soviet Union as an example of Socialism or something with some socialist features.

As the Eastern Bloc crumbled and the true horrors of sick states like Ceausescu's Romania were exposed Cuba became the new Mecca for the left. What we find there is unfortunate and there is little to inspire us in the country which has had Fidel Castro at the wheel of power for over 30 years.

Cuba, about 90 miles off the coast of North America, is the largest of the Caribbean islands. The social services are in a far better condition than they are in other Latin American countries. Virtually every Cuban under the age of



Fidel Castro

30 can read and write. But the cost of these benefits is high for the working class who have never been in the saddle of power in Cuba. This is not their role as the dotting Father looks after their interests. While the figures about literacy and health are good there are a number of statistics which aren't so impressive.

One Cuban in every 340 is in prison. There are 400 political prisoners. Around 50% of the Cuban male

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Cuba

socialist paradise or Castro's fiefdom?

continued from page 9

population are known to the police or have criminal records. The Cuban police force regularly carry revolvers, tear gas and electric truncheons. The crime rate itself is very low, so the equipment of the police and the jail population would seem to indicate a state that is repressive in it's dealings with the people.

BATISTA

To understand how Cuba functions now, why it developed the way it did and why socialism was never on Castro's menu, we must look at the origins and path of the revolution. Fulgencio Batista y Zaldivar had taken control of Cuba in a military coup called the 'sergeants revolt' on September 4th 1933. He promoted himself to the position of Commander in Chief of the armed forces and comfortably ruled through a host of puppet presidents.

Batista contested and lost the presidency in 1944, after which he exited to Florida with millions from the small country's coffers. He returned to power in a coup d'état in 1952, three months prior to the presidential elections.

An interesting point to note is the cordial relationship between Batista and the Cuban Communist Party. They were allowed to function openly and supported Batista's candidates in the 1940 elections. As their reward they got control of the state controlled trade union, the Cuban Confederation of Labour (CTC-Confederacion de Trabajadores de Cuba). The First Secretary General was Lazaro Pena, a post he would later hold under Fidel Castro.

The 26th of July Movement was born out of an attack on the Moncada military barracks in 1953. The attack, though brave, was bungled and failed. The movement really grew during the subsequent trial where Castro successfully gave the impression of the July Movement as being nationalists who would no longer be restrained.

The political aspirations of the



Che Guevara resting after the battle of Fomento

movement extended no further than "total and definitive social justice" and "absolute and reverent respect" for the 1940 constitution. Incidentally the attack on the barracks was condemned by the Cuban Communist Party who defined their role as being to "unmask the putschists and adventurous activists as being against the interests of the people".¹

SIERRA MAESTRA YEARS

The July 26th Movement grew in prestige from the trial of the Moncada attackers. Two years later, after the movement had been in exile in Mexico where Castro met the young Che Guevara, they returned on the "Granma" pleasure cruiser in December 1956. The 80 strong insurrection failed in the Oriente region and they retreated to the Sierra Maestra mountains. It is here according to the folklore historians, whom Castro had later appointed, that the discussions of Marx and Lenin took place into the long hours amongst the revolutionaries around the camp fires.

Castro had been a follower of the Partido Ortodoxo which was a nationalist organisation who put their faith in the 1940 constitution. Now, according to re-written history he became a Marxist-Leninist. Che Guevara's story of this time is more enlightening, they "...had neither ideological awareness nor 'esprit de corp'...." ². Castro goes on to

contradict this history of his own making by saying that "the proclamation of socialism during the period of instructional struggle would not have been understood"³.

In 1958, a year prior to the revolution, Castro said "true, the extension of government ownership to certain power companies - US owned - was a point of our earliest programmes; but we have currently suspended all planning on this matter."⁴ What the 26th July Movement was seeking was "industrialisation at the fastest possible rate. For this purpose, foreign investment will always be welcome and secure here."⁵

THE REVOLUTION

By 1958 the Batista troops had retreated to their barracks. The rebels stepped up their attacks. There was broad popular support for the 26th July Movement, and mass strikes and demonstrations followed. (Che Guevara said that the Batista regime collapsed under the weight of it's own corruption.) Many who weren't in the July movement lost their lives, yet they seem to be forgotten in the process of deification which has taken place around Castro.

There was the raid on the Mantanzans garrison in which all the young members of the radical nationalist Autentico Party lost their lives in 1956. Then there was the attempted assassination

of Batista in 1957 by the Revolutionary Student Directorate. All of them were massacred.

It is important to remember that the Cuban revolution was the work of a few armed insurgents. It was the work of a few hundred armed guerrillas in the Sierra Maestra mountains and various other rebels. The working class supported the rebels but it was a passive support that did not extend beyond strikes and demonstrations when the dictatorship was close to crumbling. "The emancipation of the working class is the task of the workers" and unfortunately in Cuba true emancipation was not to follow the revolution.

YESTERDAY'S NATIONALISM - TODAY'S SOCIALISM

Following the toppling of Batista the first cabinet contained a judge, a lawyer, the head of the Havana Bar Association, a member of the Orthodox Party, and the ex-president of the national bank. (Within 14 months all of these disappeared to the USA and became 'contras'.) The 1940 constitution was reinstalled. The first office set up was the National Tourist Board. All this would not seem to indicate a very socialist revolution had taken place.

In April 1959 Castro went to America to visit and talk with vice-president Richard Nixon about securing a development loan. Castro made assurances to the White House about protection of American interests but he stood firm on Cuban sovereignty. However, even the demands for very limited economic control were against US interests and therefore Cuba was portrayed as part of the "world communist conspiracy". The imperialist USA set out to smash small independent Cuba.

The Americans had wanted Batista to capitulate to a caretaker government before Castro could come to power. They were never really prepared to do business with the man. The further down a road one travels the less options one is faced with. Castro had reached a "T" junction. The first road would have been to concede sovereignty to the Americans and keep a section of the old ruling class on his side. The second road was to industrialise the country, using the confiscated wealth of the ruling class.

Cuba was going "Socialista". In October 1959 Che Guevara becomes head of the National Bank. In February 1960 a new agreement is reached to supply sugar to the USSR. In July of the same year Castro nationalises American

owned sugar companies and oil refineries. By the end of the year few foreign industries are not nationalised. Castro had made a decision, America had refused to budge an inch and now it was time to side with the other major power. So began the myth of the July Movement always being Marxist. As the plaque reads at Havana's main cemetery "What the imperialists cannot forgive is us having made a socialist revolution under the very noses of the United States."

CUBA: CASTRO'S PLAYGROUND

It comes as no surprise to learn that Castro chose to call himself a Marxist-Leninist. "I am a Marxist-Leninist and will remain one until the last day of my life" said Castro in 1961. This is a good political philosophy to adhere to if one intends to remain in power for 30 years and never release the reins of control to the working class.

How does Cuba function? On this Caribbean island you have a ruling class composed of the bureaucracy which came from the July 26th Movement. You have the remnants of the Stalinist Partido Socialista (Cuban Communist Party) who saw the Revolution and the nationalisation that followed as a means to strengthen their positions.

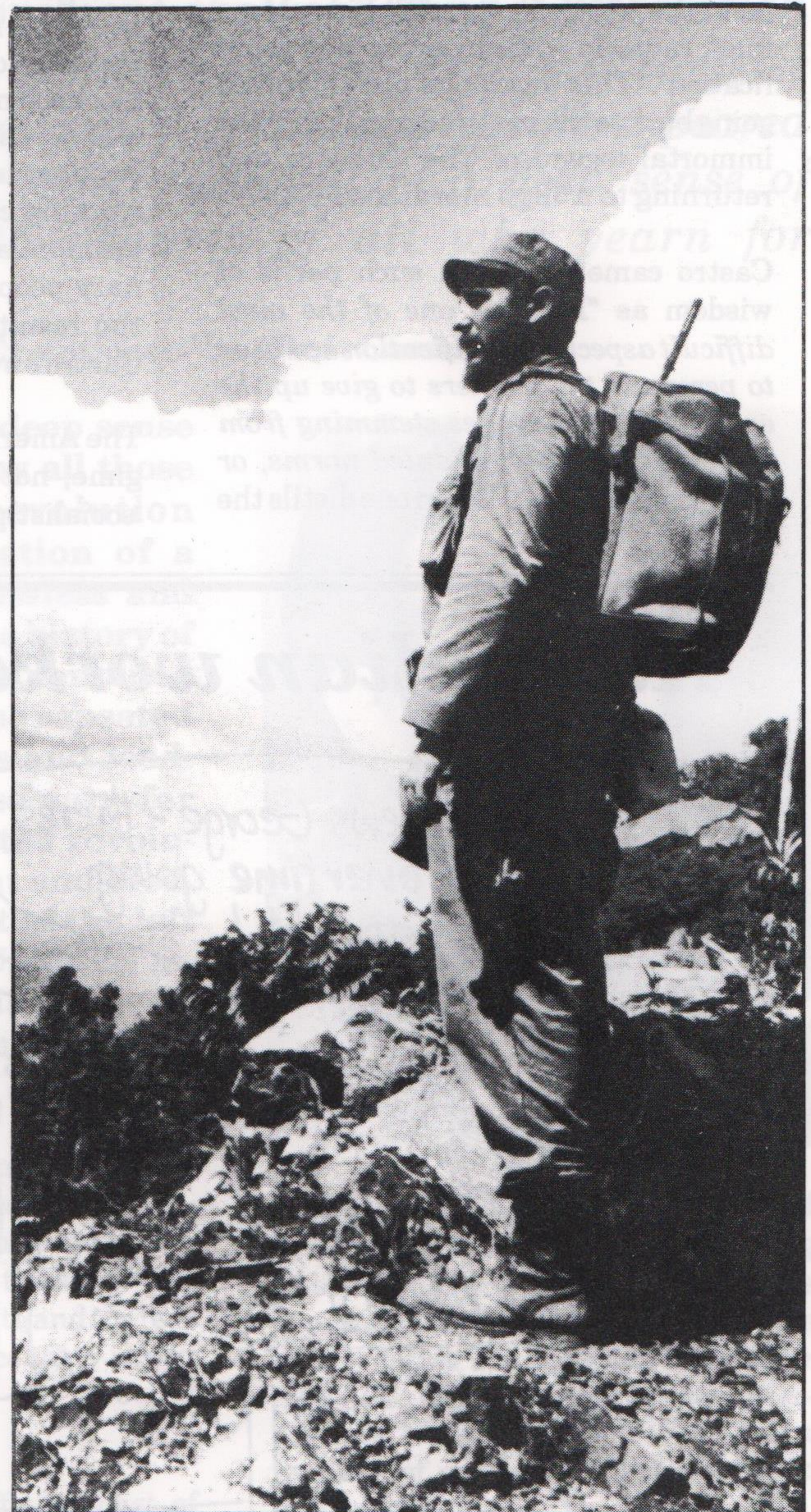
To the Cuban Communists their own survival is paramount, principles were abandoned as unhealthy a long time ago. Then you have the professionals such as academics, scientists and management. They have fewer privileges than their counterparts in the 'West' but are rewarded with praise and prizes as long as they remain uncritical. The ruling class is bonded together by a fear of the working class.

Castro is the cement which holds Cuban society together. As Che Guevara wrote "It is true that the mass follows its leaders, especially Fidel Castro, without hesitation but the degree to which he has earned such confidence is due pre-

cisely to the consummate interpretation of the peoples' desires and aspirations."6 This is the cult of Castro's personality which cannot be underestimated, he is the consummate master of telling the people what they wish to hear. As rumblings of discontent come from the working class about the bureaucrats, they still look to the father figure of Fidel to deal with the nasty bureaucrats.

The 'internationalist' policy of armed support for nationalist regimes in Africa and the scientific work all gives credence to the popular story of one little island standing strong against the wicked winds of imperialism. The economy of Cuba has been distorted for years so that it is like looking at something at the bottom of a pond. The funds from

continued over the page



From 1956-59 Castro made his base in the Sierra Maestra. Here he stands on Pico Turquino. Many, including whole classes of students have walked to the peak as a way of showing their support for Fidel. A Cuban version of Croagh Patrick, though the saint is a secular one.

Cuba

socialist paradise or Castro's fiefdom?

continued from page 11

Russia are drying up. The Cuban cigars are partly filled from Bulgarian tobacco. There is little to be said when you find out that there have been sugar shortages in a country where about 50% of the economy is based on this crop.

The embargo is blamed for everything covering vast areas of inefficiency. Trading has been going on with the USA for years through a series of front companies. When the squeeze had to be put on in the 1980's Castro, "El Lider Maximo", came up with the process of 'rectification'. This ingenious plan involved going back to the past and digging up the immortal legend of Che Guevara and returning to a 'high moral socialism'.

Castro came up with such perils of wisdom as "Perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of rectification has been to persuade the workers to give up the excessively high wages stemming from implementation of outdated norms, or erroneous criteria". When one distils the

true meaning from such pedantic language, we get the old maxim, work harder and ask for less. The words of a leader who is prepared to squeeze the working class more rather than attack the inequalities of the society which he helped create.

WHAT NOW?

The Cuban regime is called many things as people try and categorise it, and excuse it for its policies and glaring faults. The working class did not create the revolution and they have been crippled since Castro and his cohorts installed a new bureaucracy. The aspirations of the workers are low and so is their confidence. However, as you can ascertain from the steps preceding and following the revolution Castro did not set out to even create 'socialism on one island'.

Recognising that Cuba is not 'socialist' does not mean, however, that anarchists and socialists ignore the U.S. blockade of the island. This attempt to starve the island of even medical supplies is yet one more attack on the working class. The Washington government are happy to squeeze the ordinary people of Cuba in the hope that the resultant discontent will lead to Castro's overthrow.

The American ruling class hate his regime, not because it is some sort of 'socialist' paradise but because its very

existence challenges Washington's political monopoly in Central and South America. Their hope is to replace Castro with a government obedient to their wishes, like those of Guatemala or El Salvador.

The revolution was nationalist inspired and Castro adopted the political ideology of Leninism to suit his needs after his courtship of American investment had failed. The working class in Cuba need to unite and fight the ruling class who reap the rewards from their island. Those who see something inspirational in the way Cuba functions today are those blinkered to the possibility of the only true socialist society, one where freedom and equality are central.

Dermot Sreenan

Notes

- *. All statistics quoted in the remainder of this paragraph are taken from *Analysis*, Winter 1991-1992.
- 1. *Daily Worker* (Paper of the U.S. Communist Party), August 10th 1953
- 2. *Castro's Revolution* (New York 1964) p.35.
- 3. *Granma* (Cuban paper) 28th December 1975.
- 4. *Cuba, an American Tragedy* (R. Sheer & M. Zeitlin) Penguin 1964. p. 61.
- 5. *Cuba, an American Tragedy* (R. Sheer & M. Zeitlin) Penguin 1964. p. 63.
- 6. *Venceremos, the speeches and writings of Che Guevara*, London 1968 p.388.

Australian workers have law set on them for creating jobs!



WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S Engineering & Electrical Union is being threatened with deregistration and individual members face fines. The employers and the state government are not going to put up with their behaviour.

So what awful things were they up to? Job creation! For the last three years the union has imposed a total overtime ban in the contracting industry in the greater Perth area. As a result of this ban the employers have had to take on more workers.

One of the best examples is at Hismelt, with an electrical workforce of 100, where the overtime ban resulted in an extra 40 electrical workers being taken on. Les McLoughlan, an organiser with the union said "We have made a conscious decision to help the unemployed. There has not been a more deserving cause for union members. Now the bosses want to get rid of it."

Lack of democracy... 'social partnership'... bureaucracy... demoralisation...

There is a great potential power in the trade union movement. According to the Department of Industrial Relations in University College Dublin (DUES Data Series on Trade Unions in Ireland) 54.6% of employees in Ireland are trade union members. This means that throughout the public sector and in most private sector employments which are not just small family businesses most workers are in a union. Of course this potential is not being used.

US AND THEM

To join a trade union implies, although it may not be clearly thought out, that we have different interests to those of the boss. It further recognises that to look after our own interests we have to get together with other workers. This is the beginning of class consciousness, an understanding that our interests are different to those of our employers.

In 1990 over 350 shop stewards and union activists sponsored the unofficial *Trade Unionists & Unemployed Against the Programme* grouping which campaigned for a NO vote to the PESP. Over 100 regularly attended TUUAP meetings in the main towns and cities. Many of these had long records as militants fighting against centralised bargaining, for more democracy in our unions and for solidarity with workers in struggle.

Given the small numbers involved in taking the anti-PESP arguments into jobs where there was no TUUAP contact, leafleting, postering and



On the picket at Nolan Transport in New Ross, fighting for the right to be in a union

How much change can we achieve within the unions, ..how can we do it?

STRONG workforces like Aer Lingus stand to be decimated. Strong unions like SIPTU are humbled by a minor union busting boss like Pat the Baker. Job losses mount while top union officials earn top salaries. Cynicism and demoralisation are found among trade unionists in almost every job and union branch. Everyone knows that big changes are needed in our unions, but what changes?

organising public meetings, TUUAP did very well. Where there were TUUAP contacts explaining the case against the PESP the vote almost inevitably went against it.

Even in SIPTU 33,244 'NO' votes were won against the 57,103 in favour. Unions that turned in majority 'NO' votes included the ATGWU, MSF, IDATU, IMETU (now part of IMPACT) and the FUGE. While TUUAP can not claim the credit for all of this, it is indisputable that it made a significant contribution.

'TRADE UNION FIGHTBACK'

After the ballot TUUAP became a lot less visible but did not disappear. It had organised almost solely on the single issue of the PESP. Once the vote was in most supporters did not see much point in going to meetings. With another PESP-type deal being put forward TUUAP has relaunched itself as *Trade Union Fightback*. It is continuing to make the case against 'social partnership' between government, employers and unions.

It is also taking up the issue of the lack of democracy and membership involvement in our unions, and is hoping to be able to do a lot more solidarity work with workers who are in struggle. Although the number of activists in most unions is declining, due to most decisions being taken at a national level and a bureaucratic control that takes the

initiative away from the rank & file, there is still a layer of people who are prepared to fight against both the bosses and bureaucracy. The question is how do we organise? What are we up against in our unions and what can we do about it?

Anarchists have always said that workers organised on the job have tremendous power. This is a power that can and should be used to win day-to-day improvements. It is also the power that can overthrow capitalism, replacing it with genuine socialism and liberty.

DIRECT ACTION

Anarchists have also said that even a small amount of direct action is better than a lot of conciliation, arbitration and mediation. This is action that is taken collectively by workers and which remains under their direct control. It is no exaggeration to say that there is a grave shortage of direct action at the moment!

Trade unions were set up to defend workers under capitalism, to stop the bosses having a completely free hand in setting wages and conditions. They organise workers to get the best possible deal (at least that's the idea) under the present system. Their goal is to get the best price for their members' ability to work, the highest possible wages. It is not to get rid of exploitation and the wages system.

Their preferred method is negotiation,
continued over the page

Unions

continued from page 13

rather than struggle. This is not to say that trade unionists are naturally conservative or meek. It merely shows how the ideas of capitalism are reflected inside our unions. Part of this is that



here must a division into leaders and led, order-givers and order-takers.

The initiative is very much with the full-time officials, many of whom are not even elected but enjoy considerable power and influence. Most of these see their union work as a career.

Most of them have jobs for life. They are paid more than people they are supposed to represent. SIPTU's Billy Atley gets about £90,000 per year in salary and expenses, the exact figure is kept a secret from the members. The vast majority are unresponsive to the needs of their members.

They live a different lifestyle, often being found alongside employers and senior civil servants on commissions and the boards of semi-state companies. Quite a number never even had an ordinary job but came straight from student politics.

A few worth mentioning are Kieran Mulvey, ex-General Secretary of ASTI and now head of the Labour Relations Commission; Pat Rabbitte and Eamonn Gilmore, ex-SIPTU officials now Democratic Left TDs. Another is SIPTU's National Nursing Officer, Pat Brady. All of these went straight from the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) to full-time jobs as union officials. A problem with this is that they have no direct experience of the daily realities experienced by their members.

No matter what ideas they have at the

beginning they quickly have to accept that their career is that of an arbitrator, a smart talker, a fixer. What is important to them is proving their skill as smart negotiators, not helping their members to **fight** for their demands.

They have narrow sectoral interests, only looking after their own sector regardless of the general interests of workers. That is why we saw SIPTU officials telling their members to pass the NBRU pickets in the rail strike last April.

These people rarely lead strikes. Instead they will have you 'making submissions' to the Labour Relations Commission, to 'impartial mediators', and to every other other talking shop they can find. They seem to thrive on almost endless negotiation, aimed at finding a 'reasonable settlement. Some negotiations go on, literally, for years.

They see taking any form of industrial action as very much a last resort and are very quick to condemn unofficial action



(i.e. action that hasn't been sanctioned by them). The 'correct procedures' and negotiation machinery are vitally important to them. Confidence among the members at workplace level rarely merits even a second thought. The official believes it is his or her negotiation skill that wins concessions from the boss. The activity of the rank & file is seen, at best, as secondary.

MAKING THE MEMBERS OBEY

Once a deal has been struck the official has to see that the members stick to it. The continued existence of the negotiation machinery depends on an element of trust. If the employer can't be sure that the union official can ensure that the members adhere to the deal, why should any boss enter negotiations? The union official's career depends on being able to make the members comply with

agreements.

The result is a cautious, conservative bureaucracy at the top of the unions that seeks more and more control over the members, and opposes any independent organisation among the rank & file. This does not mean that these people will never give support to struggles. While they don't exactly make a habit of it they are capable of leading and supporting strikes when the negotiation machinery is brought into question. This is why, for instance, SIPTU's leaders were prepared to spend a small fortune explaining the case of the "Pat the Baker" strikers who very bravely fought for union recognition.

However, in many strikes even verbal support is slow in coming, if it comes at all. With the PESP and the anti-strike provisions of the 1990 Industrial Relations Act (which was agreed as part of the PNR and hailed by ICTU's Kevin Duffy as leaving us "better off") we are seeing even less support for strikers.

WHAT WAY FORWARD?

So, how can activists inside the unions organise to combat the authority of the officials and bring together workers who take their trade unionism seriously? Three options can be put forward. Let's take a look at them.

1. Building Broad Lefts. These are groups within individual unions whose main purpose is to elect a "left wing" leadership, though as part of this they will also try to generate support for workers in struggle. Sometimes they also argue for officials to get no more than the average wage of their members and to have to stand for regular re-election.



It is correct to raise demands like these and it can be useful to support candidates who are more responsive to the needs of the membership. In circumstances where we feel there is a value in this anarchists can and do

as useful to trade unionists as an ashtray on a motorbike



Billy Atley (SIPTU), Peter Cassells (ICTU), Edmund Browne (SIPTU)

support such candidates. A problem arises, however, when electing leaders becomes more important than winning support for rule changes which would allow for more participation and democracy.

WHO NEEDS LEADERS?

As the Broad Left idea concentrates on leadership we must start off by asking if leaders are a good thing, and are they necessary. These are not two separate questions since if leaders are necessary they must also be good. Here we are not talking of a 'leadership of ideas', of those whose ideas are accepted because they make sense to the rest of us. We are talking about the leadership which divides us into leaders and led, the leader being the man or woman who - as a representative - has acquired combined administrative and decision making powers.

As such he or she sees no need for any high level of debate or activity among the rank & file. Indeed, from the point of view of the average official, such thought and action - by encouraging questioning and criticism - is an obstacle to 'normal' trade unionism. Leadership implies almost absolute power held by the leader. All leaders become corrupt to some degree despite their own good intentions. Nobody was ever good enough, brave enough or strong enough to have such power as real leadership implies.

The power of initiative, the sense of collective responsibility, the self-respect that comes from making decisions is taken from the members and given to the leader. Most of the members are reduced to inactivity and passivity. Attendance at meetings, participation in internal union life, and even basic

identification with the union, declines as power shifts from the workplace and the branch.

Of course not all advocates of the Broad Left strategy see things this way. Though constantly proclaiming the need for a "fighting leadership" they also look for more internal democracy and activity. In reality, however, the main task is still seen as getting Broad Left supporters elected to positions of influence. The rank & file are to elect a new leadership who will then bring about change from the top. That's the theory anyway.

RANK & FILE

2. The Rank & File Movement. This is a strategy for organising within the union to win more democracy, more struggle against the bosses and more involvement by the membership. Its attitude is best summed up by the slogan "with the officials when possible, without them when necessary". Where there have been large rank & file movements they have always been based on combative workers who find the union bureaucracy is an obstacle in their way. They are then forced to ignore the instructions of the bureaucracy and disobey them if their struggle is to be won.

This can start with problems about spreading strikes, refusing to get sucked into endless rounds of mediation, or being denied official sanction for a strike. The point is that large rank & file groupings are created when workers are fighting the bosses, are confident, and then find the union officials are trying to sabotage their struggle. The need for independent organisation within the union is then posed. Struggle creates genuine rank & file movements,

not the other way around.

At a time when most workers are on the defensive and lacking in confidence, any attempt to create such groups will attract only small numbers of activists. This is not to decry such attempts (where they arise from a genuine desire to take on the bosses and bureaucrats) but to warn against setting any unrealistic goals at this time.

GETTING TOGETHER

3. Building a Solidarity Network. We have to face the fact that mass unemployment, growing poverty and two decades of centralised wage bargaining have left many good union activists demoralised. They are doubtful about the possibility of fighting back against the Larry Goodmans and Billy Atleys. Another PESP certainly won't improve matters.

But all is not doom and gloom. They are militants who want to fight back. The 1990 TUUAP campaign and, more recently, the support for the "Pat the Baker" and Nolans strikers are signs of this. There is a need for a structure to bring these people together, a visible network that can attract other activists. *Trade Union Fightback*, which is not under the control of any political party, could become this.

It wants to break down the isolation that makes us weak, to combat 'social partnership' deals, to support all resistance to job losses and cutbacks, to fight for more democracy in our unions, and to organise solidarity with workers in struggle. It could, if it gets enough support, produce a magazine with factual information on disputes, wage deals, the behaviour of union leaders. It could also be a forum for debating different ideas for changing our unions.

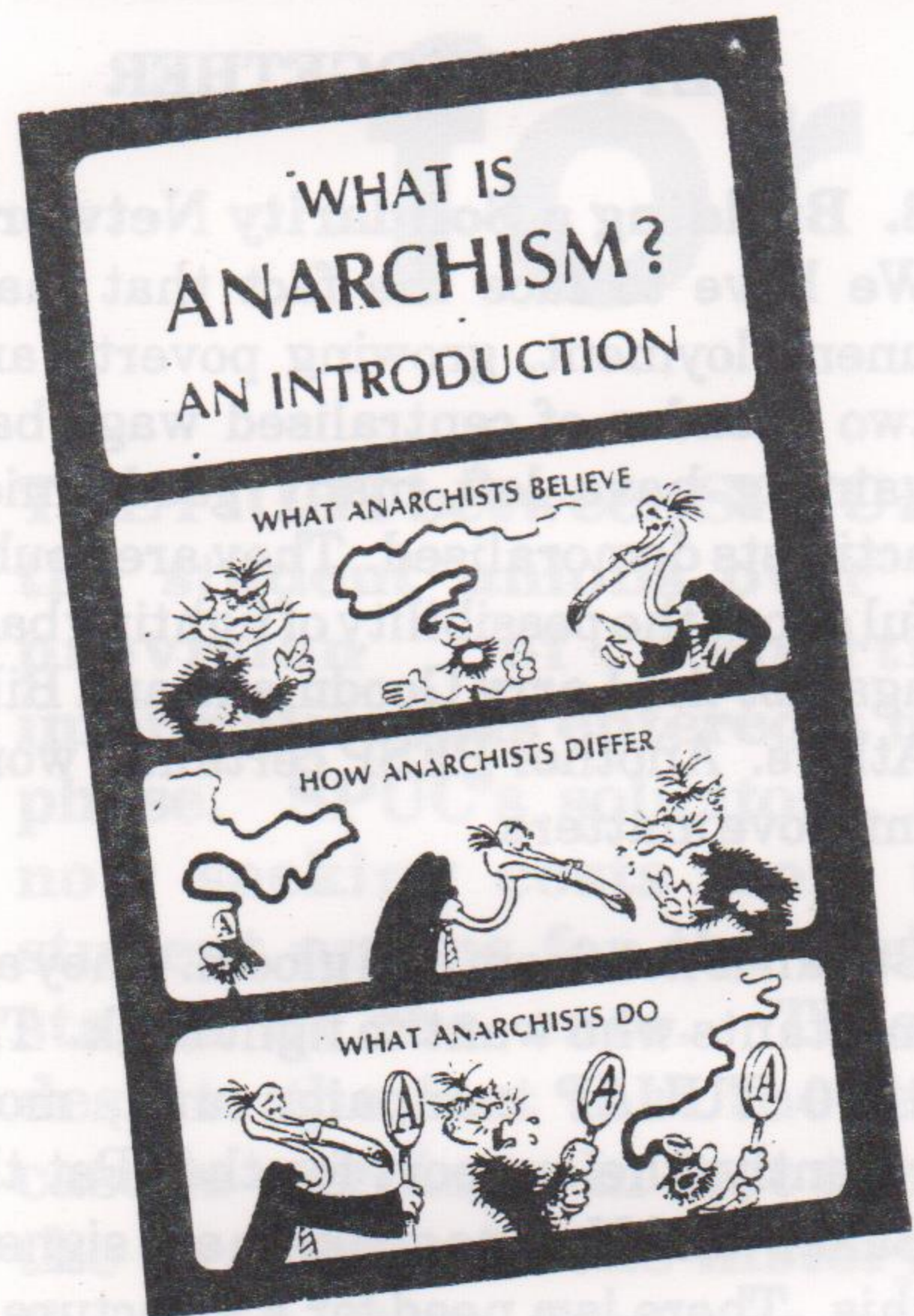
A network such as this would allow us to pool our efforts while at the same time discussing the different strategies for putting trade union power where it should be - in the workplace. It is a moderate proposal but one which could provide a springboard for real rank & file organisation. The conditions for it will reappear, now is as good a time as any to start making preparations.

Alan MacSimóin

Trade Union Fightback has issued a statement against another PESP, which has already been signed by scores of shop stewards and activists. Write to TUF, 10 Comyn Place, Drumcondra, Dublin 9 and ask for a copy.

REVIEW

ANARCHISM'S GREATEST HITS



WHAT IS ANARCHISM? AN INTRODUCTION edited by Donald Room. (Freedom Press). £1.95

FREEDOM PRESS is an anarchist publishing house in Britain. They also hold meetings and run a shop in Angel Alley, Whitechapel, London. Books such as 'Anarchy' by Malatesta; Kropotkin's 'The State, its Historic Role'; Vernon Richards 'Lessons of the Spanish Revolution', among others have been produced by Freedom over the years.

'What Is Anarchism? An Introduction' is their latest offering. The booklet begins with a long introduction by Donald Room, best known for his 'Wildcat' cartoons. He writes under the headings 'What Anarchists believe', 'How Anarchists differ', 'What Anarchists do' which were lifted from Nicholas Walter's 1969 pamphlet 'About Anarchism'. Donald gives us a theoretical introduction to some anarchist basics. His writing style is very clear and the points he makes are easy to understand.

The rest of the pamphlet is given over to the Freedom Press equivalent of a K-Tel greatest hits album. Old essays resurface, this time with a new cover. Over twenty short works by the old (mainly dead) favourites; Malatesta, Kropotkin, Godwin and Woodcock, etc, writing on topics from the meaning of the

word 'Anarchy' to 'Is Anarchy possible?'

The secret of reading this pamphlet is to understand where it comes from. The anarchism of Freedom Press is intellectual and almost entirely theoretical. They are not involved in the activities that most anarchists in the world take part in; trade unions, campaigns, etc.

This emphasis on theory is reflected in the pamphlet. In the introduction names of groups are not mentioned. Facts and figures are rare. In theory there is nothing wrong with theory. But unless you link your ideas up with day to day struggle it is very hard to see the relevance, if any, of those ideas. Secondly they do not further the class struggle by encouraging action which should be the whole point of getting involved in the first place.

500,000 ANARCHISTS!

Donald claims on page 20 that there could be half a million anarchists in Britain. It is interesting to see how he got this estimate. At some of the anti-nuclear marches in the late 50's and early 60's about one in forty marched behind anarchist banners. Donald claims that "it seems fair to extrapolate from this that anarchists numbered more than one in forty of all those in favour of nuclear disarmament, perhaps one per cent of the total population".

Another method is to use the numbers not voting in a general election. "There are many reasons for refusing to vote, but it seems a conservative estimate that one in seven of the refusers, or more than one per cent of the population, refuse to vote for the anarchist reason that "it only encourages them".

"If it is correct that the anarchists are between one and two per cent of the adult population, then there are about half a million of them; a small minority, but not a minuscule minority".

There is no reason to take these "estimates" seriously. Even if they were true, these "undercover" anarchists are politically useless. They are sitting on their backsides watching TV or thinking anarchist thoughts at the football match. They are certainly not agitating, educating and organising.

HOMOGENISED ANARCHISTS

Donald also gives a homogenous view of anarchism, "Anarchists believe this. . .anarchists believe that". In fact as he says on the cover he means "I believe this. . ." or at most, "Freedom Press and I believe this. . ."

"The differences which most often causes anarchists to separate into different groups is a difference, not of political opinion, but of presentational style" Page 13

Anarchists are made out to be essentially one happy family, but squabbling over trivia. Freedom Press has one set of anarchist ideas. There are other strands of anarchism such as anarcho-syndicalism or anarcho-communism and there are clear political differences between them. That is why we are in different groups.

In fighting the Poll Tax differences between groups were clear. Freedom held a number of discussion meetings and in the end could not decide whether or not the Poll Tax was bad.

Other groups such as the Anarchist Workers Group and the Direct Action Movement got involved in anti-poll tax groups in the unions and in the community. To say that this is only a difference of presentation only trivialises the politics involved.

PERSPECTIVES AWRY

Any short introduction to anarchism must contain generalities but too many important facts are left out. Under "How anarchists differ" there is no mention of the anarcho-communist strand of anarchism.

The relevance of Makhno's 'Platform of the Libertarian Communists' written from the experiences of anarchists in the Russian revolution is not mentioned. Nor are the 'Friends of Durruti' in the Spanish revolution.

The only mention of communism is "Some anarchists are communist in the strict sense, maintaining that all goods should be held in common". Apart from being a pathetically small reference it is also wrong. Anarcho-communists do not want to hold all goods common. I do not want to share my toothbrush or razor with anyone. Likewise I have no desire to wear a communal set of underpants.



•Errico Malatesta

REVIEW

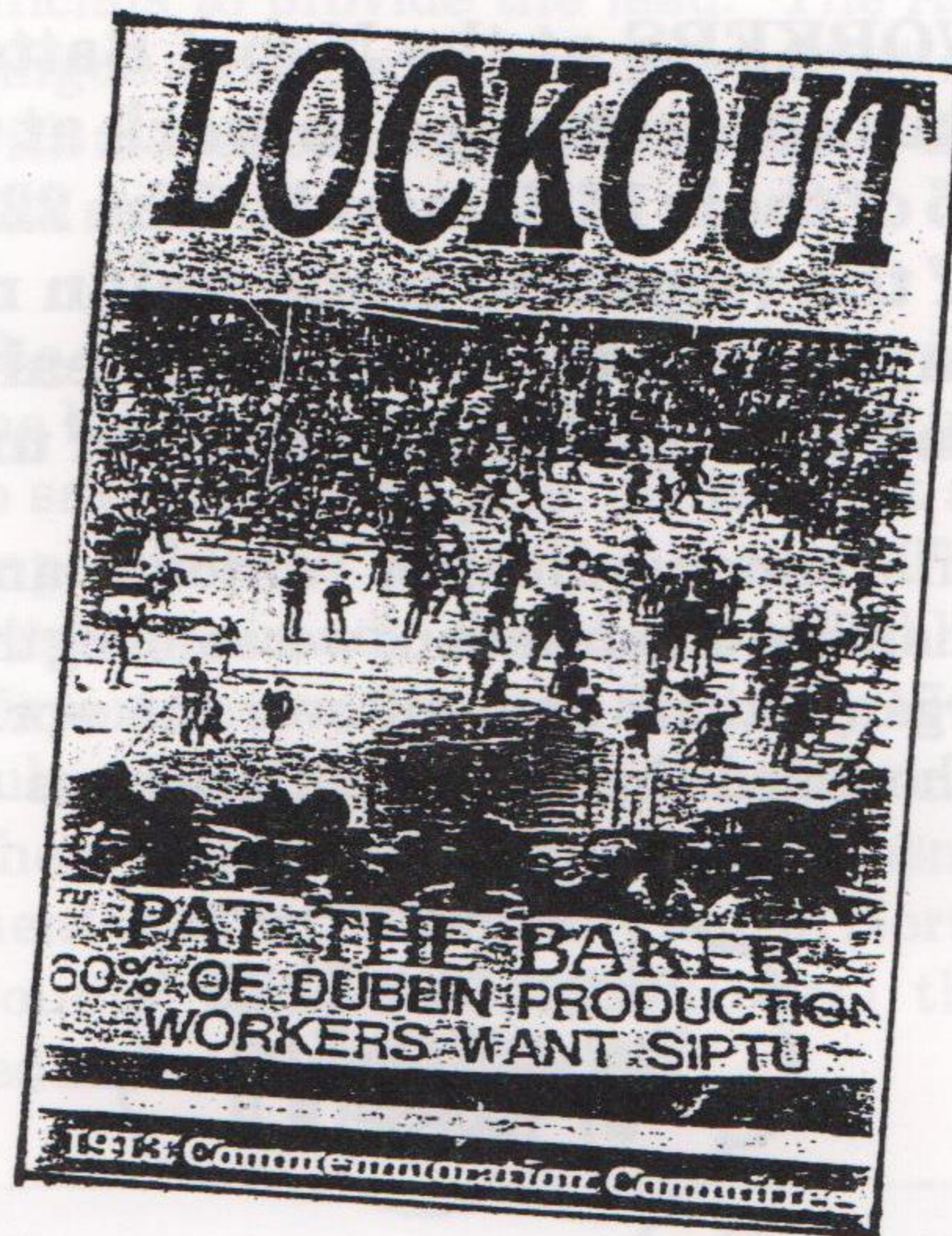
REMEMBERING THE LOCKOUT

THIS SUMMER the Workers Solidarity Movement was involved with other activists in organising events to commemorate the 1913 Dublin lockout. The lockout happened when the bosses got together to try and smash the ITGWU, workers who were members of this union were locked out. The workers held out for a year, fighting the combined forces of the bosses, the church and the cops. In the course of which they set up one of the first armed workers defense forces.

One part of the commemoration was the production of a pamphlet called *Lockout*. This pamphlet ties together the events of then and now with articles by trade unionists on the

Industrial Relations Act, poverty in Dublin to-day, the national plans between the bosses and the unions and of course a piece on to-days lockout at the Pat the Baker plant in Cherry Orchard. There are also two historical articles looking at nationalist politics at the time and the formation of the Irish Citizen Army.

Lockout available from the WSM Bookservice, P. O. Box 1528, Dublin 8 for £2.



ANARCHISM'S GREATEST HITS

continued

We are communists because we believe that the means of production should be controlled by the working class and not by some rich elite. It is only in this way that we can eliminate the exploitation of the working class and have the basis for an anarchist society.

The reference to anarcho-syndicalists is roughly the same length as the reference to Individualists. Anarcho-syndicalists have a long and rich history and have played by far the most significant role, going by numbers, of any strand of anarchism.

In the Spanish revolution the anarcho-syndicalist National Confederation of Workers (CNT) numbered up to two million and led the fight against Franco. The militant Industrial Workers of the World were among the first to unionise unskilled, black and low paid workers in the USA. To give them the same space as Individualists who have played a relatively insignificant role in history is to lose all sense of perspective.

WHAT IS NEEDED

Today, for the first time ever, the two other strands of socialism, Leninism and Labourism, have been completely

discredited. The only socialist current with any credibility is anarchism, which throughout its existence has contained the most advanced political ideas of the socialist movement.

Now the potential for growth in anarchist numbers and influence is very real. Anarchist groups are organising, campaigning and growing. Groups are forming throughout the old Eastern Bloc but notably in Russia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and the Ukraine. Already existing anarchist groups are growing in Ireland, France, Spain, USA, Peru, Uruguay and elsewhere.

In Britain this is not happening. All the groups appear to be shrinking, splitting or disbanding. The pamphlet is a sad reflection of this. We should be getting stimulating pamphlets, written by activists, debating, urging us into action and realistically assessing the future.

'What is Anarchism? An Introduction' rehashes and reprints articles which could have been written any time this century. It is a good read and of historical interest but nothing more. What is needed are the ideas, the organisations and the activists. Hopefully we will see a resurgence of this sort of anarchism in Britain in the near future.

Andrew Blackmore

BOOKS FOR ANARCHISTS

PARLIAMENT OR DEMOCRACY by Kevin Doyle £0.50 12 pages. Why anarchists didn't vote for Albert Reynolds, Dick Spring or any other power-seeker. A new WSM pamphlet outlining why the parliamentary system falls far short of real democracy.

THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR: ANARCHISM IN ACTION by Kevin Doyle. £1.50 42 pages. The anarchist resistance to fascism in Spain, and how anarchism worked in practice for millions of people.

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ORGANISATIONAL PLATFORM OF THE LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISTS by Nestor Makhno, Ida Mett, Piotr Arshinov and others. £1.50 38 pages. An awkward title for an easy to read pamphlet about how anarchists organise. Written in 1926 by revolutionaries who had fought both Tsarism and Bolshevism in Russia and the Ukraine.



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Brazil

Landless use anarchist methods to improve their living standards

BRAZIL is the world's fourth largest food exporter. Yet 40 million of its 155 million people go hungry, even in good times. Millions of peasants are landless; while American, Japanese and European multinationals control 36 million hectares of prime farmland.

The Movement of Landless of Brazil (MST) has been organising landless rural workers to seize large estates and work them themselves. One such occupation lasted for more than two years and involved 600 families.

Some 1,400 families are camping on lands in the state Rio Grand do Sul, while there are another 30 encampments in the state of Parana. The landless share the work necessary to run these camps. Hygiene, education and food production are all organised co-operatively. Decisions are taken after discussion at general assemblies, which in turn take place after discussion in smaller groups.

Of course, the authorities don't sit around with their arms crossed - police regularly attempt evictions and more than 100 activists have been assassinated since 1991. But this hasn't ended the occupations because, as a government study admitted, participants have seen their purchasing power double, while infant mortality has fallen well below the national average.

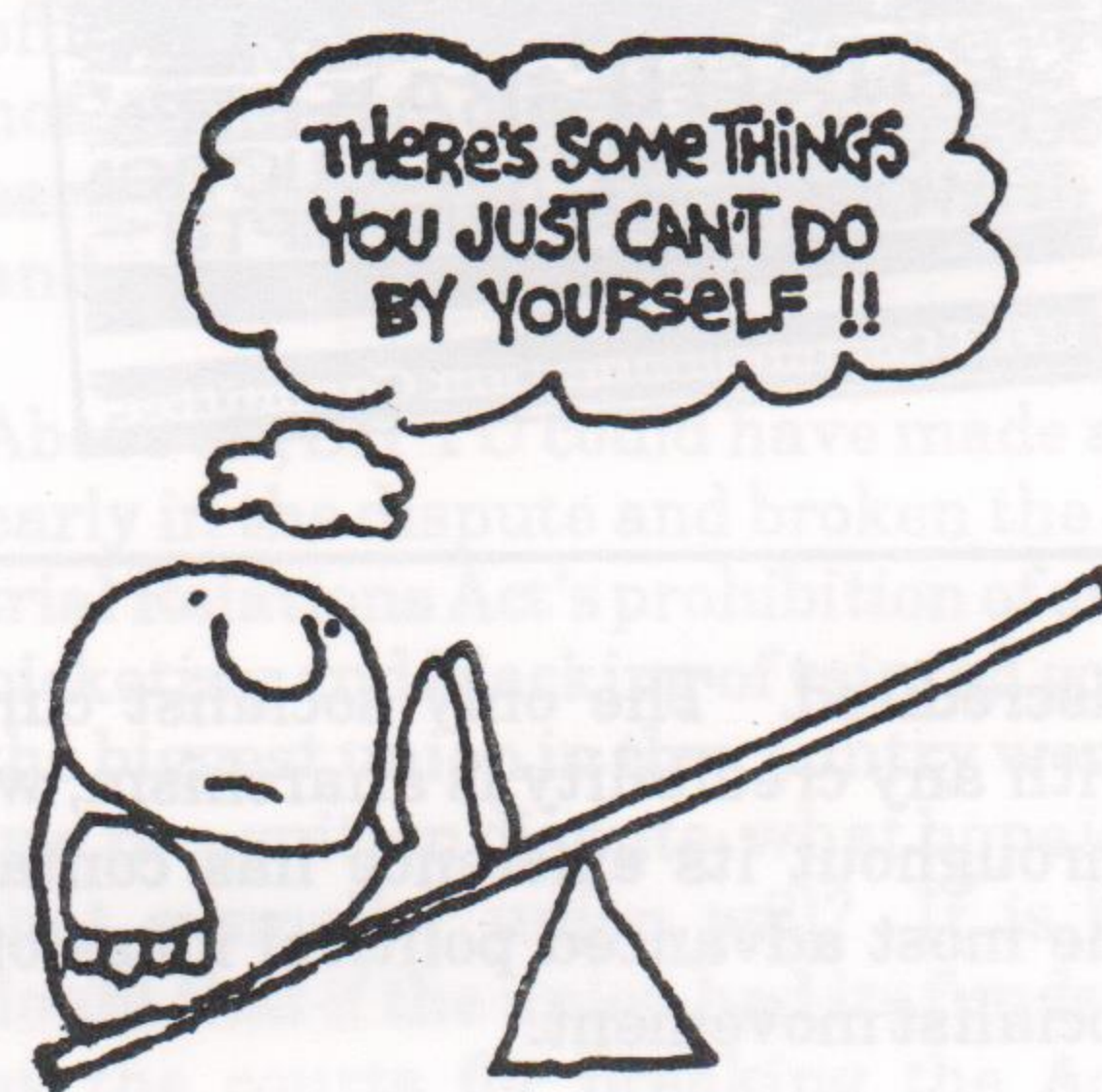
World anarchist News

Longest ever strike in Nepal ends in victory

WORKERS at the Nepal Battery Company, a subsidiary of Union Carbide, returned to work at the end of the summer after winning 15 of their 16 demands. The 222 day strike was longest in the history of the Nepalese trade union movement. The dispute was for sick pay, protective clothing, health & safety standards, life insurance and against intimidation of union activists.

Anarcho-syndicalist unions and anarchist organisations were among the organisations from all over the world who aided the struggle. Messages of

returned to work with back pay. The workers received many faxes and letters of solidarity. They ask that their gratitude be conveyed to those who joined them in their struggle.



support and donations arrived from India, Hong Kong, Japan, Australia, Germany, the Ukraine, Britain, Sweden, Spain and France. The Workers Solidarity Movement also expressed its support.

The NIWU union and the GEFONT trade union congress wrote to the Workers Solidarity Movement with their greetings and thanks. The victory *“was possible because of our militant solidarity and solidarity support from our*

International Solidarity made illegal in the good ol' USA

Solidarity is illegal, and so is internationalism. That was the ruling of a US federal court when it issued an injunction barring the International Longshoremen's Association (dockers union) from asking unions in Japan for help in dealing with two non-union companies. The companies load citrus fruit in several Florida ports, and the ILA hoped that Japanese dockers would refuse to unload the ships when they arrived there.

The ILA argued that the courts have no authority over the actions of unions outside the United States. The court - surprise, surprise - took the bosses side and ruled that the ILA's request for help from Japanese workers amounted to an illegal secondary boycott. Source: *Libertarian Labour Review*

Solidarity Wins Victory

Workers at the 'East-West' factory in Guatemala have reported that physical abuse and sexual harassment of workers stopped after international pressure from trade unions, including anarcho-syndicalists, forced a visit from a labour inspector. Workers who were suspended or fired have

Solidarity is our strength

late news... late news... late news...

After Russian bosses finish fighting
over the spoils of power

Anarchists banned

AS WE GO to press the 'coup' in Moscow has just ended, although the question of whose coup it was still seems open. In any case it was no more than an argument between two equally undemocratic wings of the ruling class. It was clear that whoever won it would be the workers that lost, as the victors would use the events to clamp down on some of the democratic gains won over the last few years. Yeltsin won and sure enough he has begun the process of eroding these gains.

According to news received from Moscow Yeltsin has moved against all his opponents, whether or not they were connected with or supporting parliament. It is reported that "On October 4th it was announced that the Ministry of Justice (sic!) declared illegal a broad variety of "pro-communist and nationalist organisations" that supported the parliament, including the fascist Russian National Unity and the social-democratic Party of Labour. The list of organisations was kind of weird since there was nothing about the Civic Union (the association of entrepreneurs and industrial managers) which supported

parliament and declared it's loyalty to Rutskoi, but the Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists was in the list together with "pro-communist and nationalist organisations" though it declared that it supports neither Yeltsin nor Rutskoi and instead called upon people to stop work and create popular organisations from below."

The severe beating that Boris Kagalitsky underwent when he was arrested shows how serious such a ban could be. Kagalitsky is a social democrat well known in the West and it was probably only the rapid response of the Western left to his arrest that resulted in his quick release. The Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists is the largest of the Russian anarchist organisations. Its banning represents a serious threat. As of the time of writing no further reports have been received of suppression against Russian anarchists but when they are received anarchists will need to organise demonstrations and messages of protest in support of them rapidly. If you want to get involved in organising such activity write to the WSM today.

Source: KAS-KOR Labour Information Centre

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 was practiced in Russia, and still is in China, 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, hetrosexual 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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THERE IS a commonly held idea that universities are some sort of "red nucleus", a hotbed of activism and socialism. The fact is that students come from many different backgrounds and classes, although mainly 'middle' and upper class. There is no underlying political or economic interest that unites or could unite all students.

You would think that poor housing, low grants and student poverty would have everybody flocking to become socialists but surprisingly these are tolerated by many students because of the promise of wealth at the end. In reality therefore only a small fraction of the student population ever become active in the "student politics".

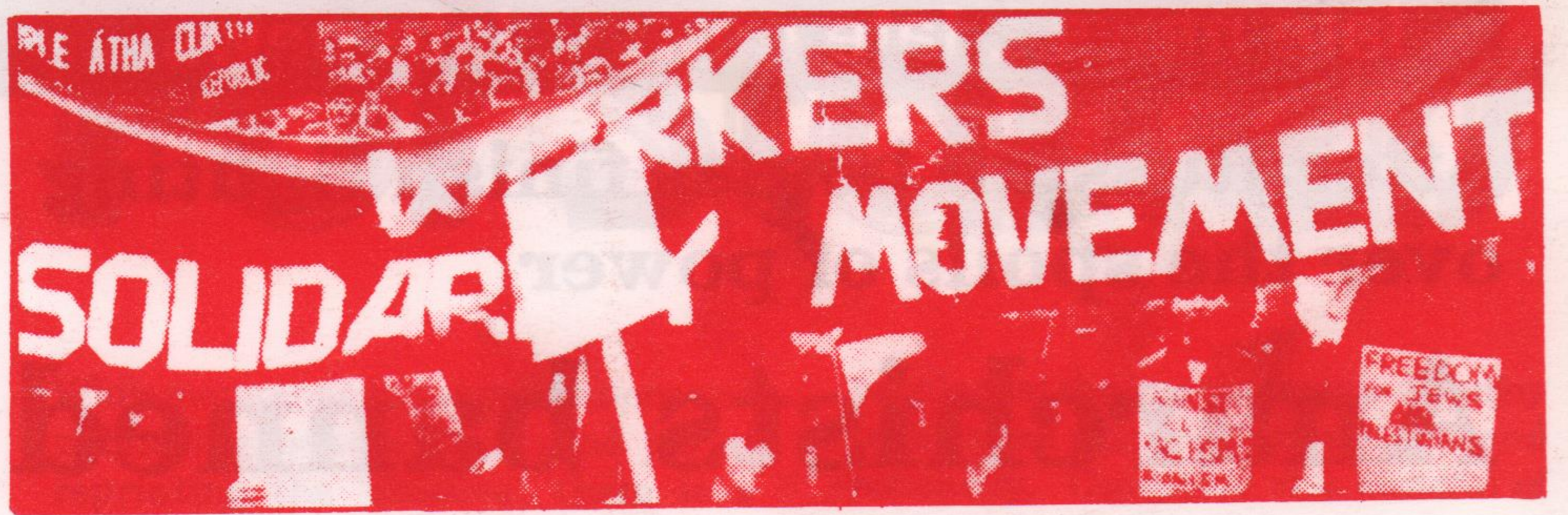
This happens most commonly through student unions. The largest part of any student union's work lies in welfare and provision of student services. In many student unions much more time is spent arguing about control of the student bar than on any political issue.

THE POLITICS OF PHOTOCOPYING!

The candidates who win elections are often the ones who promise an increase



Thinking about Anarchism



The Myth of the Student Radical

in student services like photocopiers. In the last decade the only politicised part of the students unions' ongoing work has been fighting the increasing cuts in education being made by government. The only notable exception was the campaign for abortion information.

The way these campaigns are fought is important. If the campaign is fought only through full-time student officers writing letters to the press and lobbying ministers then the majority of students remain uninvolved and often uninterested. While the cuts are making an impact on their lives they do not see how, practically, they can stop them. This type of campaign is good for a full time official looking for credibility with the minister but not very good for winning improvements.

The kind of tactics which win are the kind of tactics which get students involved. The only way a student union can show the government that it means business is to show that it has most of the the student body behind it. This means tactics like occupations, sit-ins and marches. These cannot be just for show but must be part of a well organised and co-ordinated campaign. As anarchists we would argue that structures must be democratic, with decisions being made by everybody involved.

The value of campaigns like

this must not be underestimated. While fighting only on a student issue may seem quite narrow, it does teach the value of struggle and the empowerment of taking control over an issue that affects your life... in short Anarchism. Trinity College Students Union won, through an occupation, an extra library earlier this year. If they had relied on representatives sitting on the College Board they would still be waiting.

While the student movement can be a way for students to learn the need for struggle, it is only through building links with the working class that the potential for a proper class struggle movement is created. The best known example is what happened in Paris in 1968 with students joining workers in struggle.

Closer to home, the fight for abortion information did involve Irish students in something happening outside the four walls of their colleges. If, when the summer dole was abolished, students had fought its the loss in terms of the broader issue of unemployment and joined forces with the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed and the trade unions, then this would have been a small step in the right direction.

It is not enough for students who have become politicised to sit around and talk all day in socialist discussion groups. It is only through getting involved in struggles both inside *and* outside the colleges that students can really make a contribution to the class struggle.

Catherine Byrne