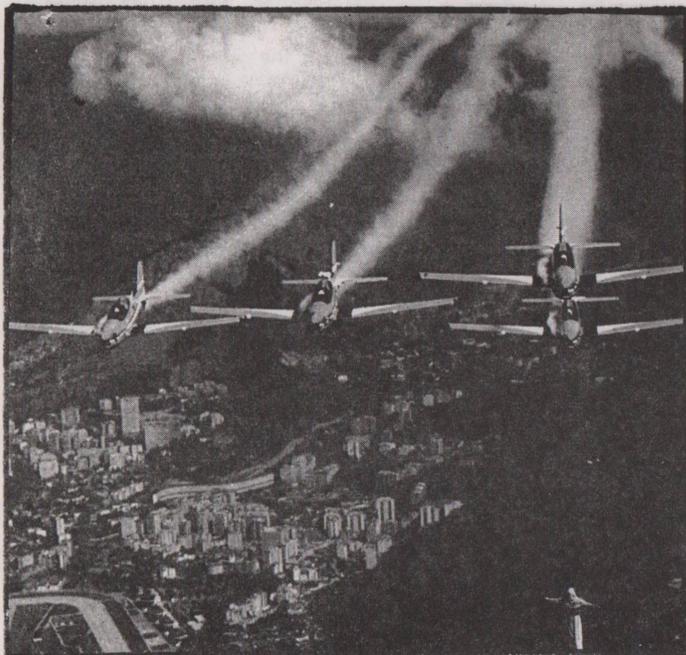


## VOTE NO TO NATO



THE BIG JOKE about the debate on the Single European Act (SEA) which has got under way in the past few weeks and will be voted on by 'the people' on May 26th, is Irish neutrality. After all, it doesn't exist does it? That point aside however - its not going to deter those determined to have a referendum about it. On the one side we have the Government along with Fine Gael, the PD's and Labour who all believe that 'Irish neutrality' exists and that it isn't compromised by the SEA. On the other side we have, lo and behold, an assortment that defies description who, like the others, believe that 'Irish neutrality' exists but that if the SEA is ratified it will be placed in 'serious jeopardy'.

### MYTH

Where does this leave us? Certainly the SEA seeks to put 'into writing' something that has in practice been the norm along - Irelands aquesience with EEC foreign policy which is at the same time in line with NATO foreign policy. Basically then, Ireland (i.e. the Government), is being

asked to pay attention to the fact that all of the other members of the EEC are also NATO members and that EEC foreign policy must recognise this.

### WAR

Those who oppose the SEA are indeed a mixture. Some are deserving of support i.e. CND and others have justifiably drawn attention over the years to the vists of NATO navy ships to Ireland; to the dangers of nuclear war etc. that the likes of NATO have no regard for. But others on the anti-SEA side have dubious reasons, to say the least, for opposing it. There are those who fear for Ireland's 'Catholic heritage', and that our further involvement with the EEC might 'hasten the day of divorce and (shock, horror) abortion.' Clearly, socialists should have nothing to do with this crap.

Because those opposing and those supporting the SEA all agree that Irish neutrality exists, very little that is worthwhile will be said during this debate. There will be little mention

of the occupation of the six counties by a NATO and EEC member - Britain. No mention of the fact that Ireland is dominated by Multinational companies who are tied more than anyone else to the Western alliance, not just by virtue of their markets in many

defense systems etc., but also because of their ideological basis. NATO, after all, is Western Capitalism's defense system. We could hardly be neutral and part of the same capitalist club.

Peter Sullivan

## Chilean anarchist held under PTA

"If you attempt to board the boat you will be arrested" That was the message from the Special Branch police at Liverpool when a Chilean anarchist tried to get on to the Belfast boat. He had been due to speak about resistance to the Pinochet dictatorship at public meetings in Belfast and Dublin (where the meeting was being organised by the Workers Solidarity Movement).

March and April had seen a European speaking tour by Oscar Ortiz, the National Organiser of the Chilean Libertarian Movement. Well attended meetings in several countries had heard him tell of the growing opposition to the regime. The MLE are anarchists involved in the illegal trade unions and street protests.

During his visit to Denmark some official in the immigration service 'discovered' a 'technical irregularity' in his visa! He was deported to France and told to apply for a new one.

For the meetings in Britain and Ireland his place was taken by Roberto Torres, secretary of the Paris-based Group of Chilean Libertarian Exiles. Roberto was stopped on his way into Britain and detained for two hours but was then allowed to continue his journey. He received a great response at all the meetings he addressed.

On Sunday April 12th he was detained at Liverpool under the infamous Prevention of Terrorism Act. The

notes for his speech were seized along with a video about current events in his homeland. After a couple of hours he was told an exclusion order had been granted barring him from entering the six counties.

No reason, either written or verbal, was given for this decision. He was not even given a written copy of the exclusion order but was threatened with arrest on the spot if he tried to continue to Belfast.

While most Western governments pay lip-service to the fight to bring down Pinochet it is not because of any real 'moral' or 'humanitarian' concern. They are afraid that the brutal repression indulged in by his regime will lead to the growth of a mass movement of workers outside the control of right wing 'democrats' like the Christian Democratic party. The British state was one of the first to supply the Chilean junta with arms, which is hardly the action of politicians genuinely opposed to dictatorships.

On April 14th the planned public meeting in Dublin was turned into a protest at the exclusion. After a brief talk about what had happened and the use of repressive legislation in Britain and Ireland, the meeting adjourned to the British Airways office where a picket was placed calling for the scrapping of the PTA and expressing solidarity with the Chilean libertarians.

Joe King

# WORKERS SOLIDARITY

PAPER OF THE WORKERS SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT NO. 27

MAY 1987 20p

## FREEZE PROFITS NOT PAY!

Hands up all those who want to pay £10 a day to be sick in hospital. Step forward anyone who doesn't want a half-decent pay rise this year. Say 'Ay' if you're happy with the promised increase in your dole. Jump in the air, shake your legs and shout 'I love Charlie' if you're over the moon about the attack after attack after attack that you've been subjected to for God knows how long. Well, where are you? Now then, how much longer are we going to put up with it? The choice is simple. We can either fight or lie down.

The big question is how can things be turned round. The majority of union leaders have accepted the myth that the country can't afford to pay. This is crap. Tony O'Reilly, Jeff Smurfit and the rest of them have never stopped flaunting their wealth in front of us. The profits just keep on rolling in, and yet John Carroll and the ICTU unbelievably ask only that they be consulted about where the cuts are going to be made. If we rely on them to lead the fightback, we'll

be a long time waiting. At most, they'll sanction action only to remind Charlie they're around.

So it'll take militancy to gain anything, and the argument has to be taken up everywhere. Spanish workers found themselves in exactly the same position earlier this year, and they

responded with a wave of strikes that continue to rock the country. That's the first step. But secondly, as the Spanish workers have realised, strikes have to be controlled by the rank and file and linked up for maximum unity and strength. If we do that, Charlie & Co. will find that money. It's

there . . . the hard bit is getting our hands on it.

One more thing. Who wants to spend the rest of their life begging, scraping and fighting for just enough to keep us going in a miserable, oppressive, violent crazy society? There is an alternative.



Spanish workers show how to fight.

## IRELAND'S ANARCHIST PAPER

It's never been easy for Gay people, but the attacks on them have been stepped up of late, with AIDS being used as a cover. How many more times does it have to be said that AIDS is not a 'Gay disease'? Not that it would matter if it was. But once more for the record, AIDS is an illness which is spread through a variety of ways, though not as many as is still commonly thought and the victims are both heterosexual and homosexual. In Africa, thousands of people have contracted the virus through heterosexual sex, blood transfusions, poor hospital hygiene and in a number of other ways.

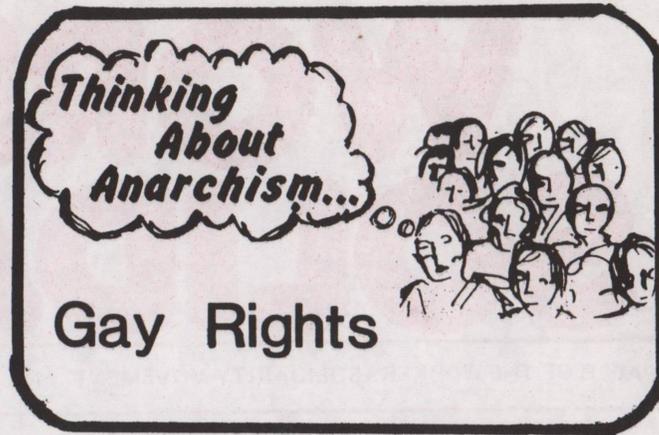
That said, it's clear then that the real issue is the centuries old problem of prejudice, discrimination and attacks against Gays.

family. And the primary purpose of the family as we know it is to produce the next generation of workers, as well as to condition them to accept the values of capitalist society. Of course, it's not quite as simple as that, and the question of the family's role in society is much more complex. Nevertheless, the prevalent attitude toward Gays can essentially be linked to the preservation of the family in its present form.

On a day to day basis, the prejudice suffered by Gays is sustained by a barrage of abuse, jokes and violence, making it difficult, and often impossible for the estimated 1 in 10 people who are gay to reveal or even express their sexuality.

**SCAPEGOATS**

On top of all this, Gays are forced to take their place alongside all the other scapegoats that exist to divert attention from the parasites who run society, so as to forge a common identity amongst the 'majority'. Funny thing is,



all of us fall into the category of 'minorities' of one sort or another, either some or all of the time. Which is one good reason why Gay men and Lesbian women have the absolute right to their own sexuality regardless of how many others share it. What possible difference should it make to anyone else?

**LIBERATION**

Real progress towards Gay Liberation has been achieved during the past twenty years or so. Unfortunately, there's still a long way to go, and as with so many other reforms and gains that are achieved by pressure and struggle, Gay

rights are being eroded and often ignored. We're living in a period of reaction as so graphically illustrated by the referendums on abortion and divorce. So everyone who despises prejudice against Gay people must challenge every jibe and attack directed against them. In the long term, the tide of reaction can be turned, but it'll require a fundamental challenge on the economic and ideological underpinning of all prejudice and oppression, which ultimately means building a socialist society that will be free from such crap.

Dominic Carroll

**THAT'S CAPITALISM**

News of Mikail Gorbachev's reforms can't have reached the Soviet republic of Estonia. Recently, a judge sentenced a teacher to 15 days in gaol because his long hair 'impinged on human decency and morality'.

\*\*\*\*\*

A police raid in Guatemala discovered a racket in which children were being sold to couples in the US for £200,000 each. Here in Ireland, a recent seminar heard that 40% of travellers children die before the age

of 5. And in Bangladesh, 300,000 children go blind each year through malnutrition. Funny old world, ain't it?

\*\*\*\*\*

As "more proof of the democratic vocations" of his regime, Chilean dictator Pinochet has legalised some of the country's political parties. There are, however, some slight snags. Marxist parties will remain banned. Those allowed to operate will have to collect some 40,000 signatures; parties will be required to

publish their membership lists. Individuals can be stopped from voting if suspected of Marxist sympathies or if they are too poor to renew electoral identity cards. Democracy!

\*\*\*\*\*

The Pope's junkets abroad must be putting pressure on the Vatican's coffers. But no, they've recently admitted to being worth £350 million, excluding art treasures.

\*\*\*\*\*

The London Metropolitan police paid nearly half a million quid in out of court settlements last year, as compensation for activities ranging from assault to false imprisonment.

Hooray for Cork. They have a wonderful new ferry service. Not horray for the Polish crew, who are being paid £10 a week. Wonder what happens to the other £100 per car which the ferry operators charge as fare (fair?!). The British National Union of Seafarers is picketing the ship in Swansea.

\*\*\*\*\*



**TIME TO FIGHT BACK**

ONCE AGAIN public sector workers are being set up as scapegoats. That is what lies behind the government's talk of a pay freeze. No provision has been made in the budget for wage increases. This happened before. It doesn't mean that Charlie & Co. actually expect to get away with a total freeze. But it does mean that they do expect to pay very little.

They will allow a compromise which may well be less than the rate of inflation. Over the next few months the newspapers, which are owned by people like multi-millionaire Tony O'Reilly, will start discovering 'lazy, unproductive workers who are paid too much'. The intent of this media offensive will be to make any public sector worker who wants a decent rise look 'greedy and selfish' and 'undeserving of support'.

**WAGES FALL**

FACT: Many of these workers, such as clerks, typists and library assistants take home less than £100 a week. Over the past six years the buying power of wages has fallen by 10% (figure from ITGWU research dept.). Public sector wages have fallen by even more, because of the mini-freezes between pay rounds. FACT: The TDs talking drival about workers being 'paid too much' draw large salaries; don't have to show up for work if they don't want to; often draw a pension while still working; double up as publicans, auctioneers and company directors.

**SPOON FED**

FACT: Extra pay for the public sector does not have to be paid from the PAYE

tax pool. The 26 county state probably does more than anywhere else to spoon feed and subsidise the rich. Tax on profits at 10% is the lowest in Europe. The take from Corporation Tax has been reduced by a quarter in just the last five years. If even the tax laws on the books right now were properly implemented it would yield more than enough to foot the bill for a proper rise. That is to say nothing of actually squeezing the wealthy.

FACT: Low pay and freezes do not create jobs. If they did plenty of jobs would have been created over the past decade. The opposite is true. The more public sector workers forgo increases, the less necessary the union is seen to be . . . the more union organisation is weakened . . . and that makes it easier for the state to force through job cuts.

**RUBBISH**

Let there be no talk of trusting in the 'left' TDs to stop the freeze. They may hold a formal balance of power but that is only if the three right wing parites are divided. They won't be on a question of screwing workers.

Instead we need a campaign of industrial action.

Most of the union leaders will argue that their members are too timid and won't take action. Rubbish! That is what they said in October 1985, the very day before over 90% of white collar public service workers came out on the one-day strike against the last attempt to impose a freeze.

**MIDDLEMEN**

Unfortunately these leaders did not set such a massive display of anger and determination as a date to

take on the government in a forceful way. To them it was just an 'expression of support and confidence' they could use in bargaining. (A few crumbs more Minister, please). They absolutely refused to go beyond token action. But that is no surprise. They are, afterall, professional negotiators and middlemen (and women)



More of this needed

who are not directly responsible to their members.

Not only did they refuse to fight but they tried to sabotage the unity created by the one-day strike. Each looked for a sectional offer at the expense of other groups of workers. The semi-state unions, in Telecom, ESB, CIE, etc., didn't even join the strike.

**ALL-OUT NEEDED**

This time we need to build a feeling that all public sector workers have to fight together. Too much division and we can be picked off one group at a time. The sense of solidarity can be strengthened by things like taking up collections for workers on strike at the moment and by arguing that pickets be respected regardless of whether they are 'all-out', official or unofficial. At national level the unions

have to make common cause, as the five main ones in the health service have done to fight the cuts. But that is not enough. We can't trust our leaders. We also, and more importantly, need links at branch level.

On the basis of this we can more realistically push for an all-out strike for a decent cash rise. We will be able to say no to inadequate token action that only demoralises, as in the tax campaign. We have made sacri-

fices for too long and gained nothing for it except higher unemployment and lower wages. By all means use one-day stoppages to rebuild confidence but activists in the unions have to argue that, on their own, short stoppages are not enough.

Alan MacSimóin

**WSM MEETINGS**

Want to find out more about the WSM? Part of each branch meeting is given over to a discussion and readers are welcome to attend.



**CORK**

Every Thursday at 8pm in the Quay Co-op, 24 Sullivans Quay.

**DUBLIN**

Details from Workers Solidarity sellers or from P.O. Box 1582, Dublin 8.

Workers Solidarity Page 3

# GLASNOST AND PERESTROIKA: A NEW RUSSIAN DOUBLE ACT

Recently, the BBC World Service reported that two delegates to the Soviet Union's Communist Party's Youth Section had voted against the main resolution. Hardly earth shattering, yet supposedly an example of 'glasnost' or openness. Much more serious was the announcement by the Hungarian government of their intention to sack ten thousand steel workers over the next two years. That's 'perestroika' or restructuring. Glasnost and Perestroika are the buzz words of the so-called 'Gorbachev revolution', which the Western media has interpreted as the beginning of the eventual return to capitalism in Eastern Europe.

## STATE CAPITALISM

So what is Gorbachev really up to? Well, to begin with, neither he nor the Western media even understand communism. The system operating in Eastern Europe was first established in Russia by the Bolshevik Party after the 1917 revolution. A combination of factors, including Russia's economic backwardness, invasion by foreign armies, civil war and most importantly of all, the political practise of Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolsheviks gave rise to a system that can best be described as 'State Capitalism'. Private enterprise was eventually abolished, with all economic power becoming concentrated in the hands of the government. The influence and control that the workers had won during the revolution was gradually eroded under Lenin and finally broken in the most brutal manner by Stalin.

The Party itself had become the new ruling class,

and it's army of bureaucrats now made the decisions and awarded themselves privileges. This system of State Capitalism was introduced into Eastern Europe following Russia's occupation of these countries after the second world war. The Communist Parties loyal to Stalin were installed in power.



From Pravda:

Free thought and a free country, of course... but free labour?!

As in Russia, the principles of capitalism have been maintained and strengthened. Production is not decided on the basis of needs, but according to bureaucratic plans geared towards profit. Two classes exist, and those running things ensure the status quo with repressive police forces.

## CRISIS

So why has Gorbachev embarked on his 'reform' crusade? Essentially, it all comes down to the simple fact that since the Eastern Block is an integral part of the world capitalist system, it's been hit by the recession just as hard as everywhere else.

The notion that the Warsaw Pact consists of self

contained economies is mistaken. Russia and it's satellite states not only trade on the world market, they also operate in the West's money markets and are heavily indebted to Western banks. All this trade is done in dollars, so in order to get more of them, Russia and its allies have to improve their competitiveness. But



Gorbachev— shaking up the bureaucrats

repression and inertia, the workers have usually responded with an apathetic approach to work. So Gorbachev first launched Glasnost to shake up the bureaucrats. Suddenly, the Russian papers were filled with stories and complaints about their mistakes and behaviour, though not about Gorbachev of course! But to show they meant business, the government encouraged criticism of previous regimes so as to really create the impression of something new happening. Even a film depicting Stalin as the monster he was made it past the censors!

## PERESTROIKA

Once everyone were publicly agreed that Russia was in a real bad way, Gorbachev unveiled stage two of his plan, 'Perestroika'. And so now moves are underway to reorganise production along Western lines. Nages are being more firmly linked to what a worker produces and firms are even encouraged to make extra 'profits' that they can plough back into their own enterprise.

Stage three of the Gorbachev revolution is his plan to force the changes on the other Warsaw Pact countries. But this won't be straightforward. For instance, Hungary already has 'structural unemployment' which even Russia hasn't managed to introduce yet. But the nervous Budapest regime is resisting the new openness of criticism for the very good reason that it only came to power after the bloody crushing of the 1956 revolution. Czechoslovakia is also being pressed by Gorbachev, but like their counterparts in Hungary, the Czech government was installed by Russian tanks in 1968 when a previous liberalisation

programme was deemed to have gone too far. The Czech rulers are deeply unpopular and afraid to rock the boat.

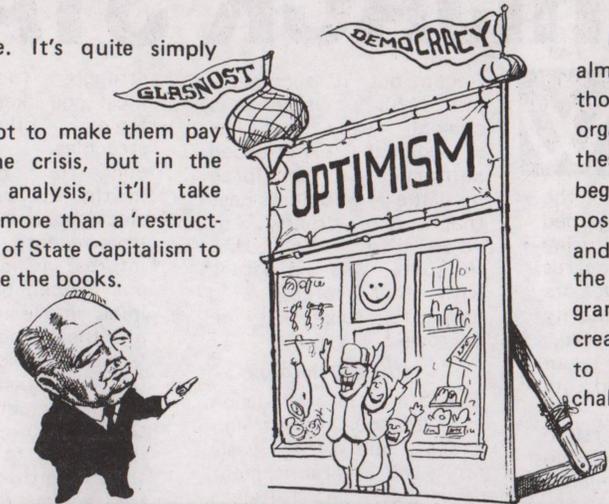
Nevertheless, all the Eastern European countries face major economic difficulties. They're all up to their eyeballs in debt to Western banks who are urging cutbacks in government spending. But the most recent attempts to increase prices and lower wages have met with resist-

ance. Illegal strikes have occurred in Hungary, Romania and Poland. Yugoslavia is no longer in the Warsaw Pact but operates the same economic system. When the government recently cut wages by as much as fifty percent, a strike wave swept the country and the army was put on standby.

So Glasnost and Perestroika are yet more bad news for the working class in Russia and Eastern

Europe. It's quite simply

attempt to make them pay for the crisis, but in the final analysis, it'll take much more than a 'restructuring' of State Capitalism to balance the books.



Dominic Carroll

In the meantime, it's almost inevitable that even though independent union organisation doesn't exist in these countries, workers will begin to fight back. And it's possible that the instability and confusion created by the Gorbachev reform programme will unintentionally create openings for workers to organise an effective challenge to the regimes.

## When East European workers shook the system

### EAST GERMANY

In the 1950s the German Democratic Republic was in dire economic difficulties. There was dissatisfaction among considerable numbers of the working class, against the growing dominance of the Moscow oriented elements of the ruling Socialist Unity Party and against the rigours of Stalinist orthodoxy. Matters came to a head after Stalin's death.

A new economic programme was introduced under Moscow's supervision which made concessions to the farmers and the middle class but failed to rescind the recently increased industrial work norms. On the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th of June 1953, 300,000 industrial workers struck, first against the work norms but then increasingly against the regime itself.

The '17 June Movement' was the first mass working class uprising against Stalinism. Although the movement was quickly stamped out by Russian tanks and large scale purges and arrests, it was successful in getting the sought after concessions.

### HUNGARY

On Tuesday 23 October 1956 a spontaneous mass revolt began which matched the might of the Soviet army against the Hungarian working class. A demonstration of solidarity with the Polish working class turned overnight into a



Russian tanks roll in.

nation wide revolution which shook the very foundations of Soviet power. Workers controlled the factories and fought to defend and further their gains on the streets.

Just under two weeks later the revolution was smashed with 30 to 50,000 people dead and mass repression underway. Still the spirit of the Hungarian workers was not destroyed - they had tasted freedom - and industrial action and demonstration continued well into 1957.

### CZECHOSLOVAKIA

After the uprisings of 1956 in Hungary and Poland the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia felt reassured that Stalinist type

rule was the best. By 1962 however, the country was economically, socially, politically and culturally stagnant. CPC members began to seek reforms.

By 1968 a mass reform movement existed with intellectuals and reforming communists at the head. The Czechoslovakian people were convinced a new, open more democratic society was about to be handed to them by these leaders. Although reforms would have been made, it is questionable just how wide-ranging these would have been. One set of rulers was merely in the process of replacing another. We will never know now however, because on August 20 1968 Warsaw Pact troops invaded to restore Moscow rule. The country was thrown back into its pre-1962 state.

### POLAND

The formation in 1980 of the free Polish trade union Solidarnosc was the culmination of many years militant struggle by Polish workers.

In 1956 it was Polish workers who set in motion the process which brought a new, temporarily reforming, regime to power. From this

they won a number of economic improvements and the right to form workers councils. These gains were later taken back as the new regime under Gomulka consolidated its position.

The winter of 1970/71 saw more widespread unrest caused by the same issues as the 1956 revolt - wages, prices and production. The seaboard industrial centres erupted in a series of strikes and riots. Some gains were made but these were lost again in the resulting repression.

An attempt in June 1976 to introduce large food price increases led to an instant wave of strikes. The result was the same as in 1971 but with one difference, small scale organisation and agitation against the state began among the workers.

This prepared the ground for the struggles of 1980 which saw over 10 million workers on the streets in the most powerful workers movement in Europe since the war. In December 1981 a military coup crushed the movement but the spirit of Solidarity lives on.

Mike Tierney.

# THE HIJACK STATE

## Review

The situation in the Middle East is regarded by many as a confusing affair. Israel regards any criticism of its action as necessarily anti-semitic. Therefore, every action Israel takes is justified in its own eyes. But Zionism has given birth to another persecuted group - The Palestinians. Palestinians were referred to by Manachem Begin, while still Prime Minister, as 'two legged animals'. Given the deliberate confusion generated about the Middle East, it is good to come across a good, readable and informative pamphlet written from a revolutionary socialist standpoint.



The Middle East is an important area. 55% of the world's natural oil reserves are there, compared with just 4% in the U.S., so the region is obviously of great strategic interest to the superpowers. As the Financial Times put it: 'The stakes are immensely high, not just for the stability of the region but for Western interests for the remainder of this century.'

The U.S. has made a massive financial and military investment in the Israeli state, which in turn acts as America's watchdog in the region, ensuring that the U.S. interests are guarded. If the Arab states have to be put in line, then Israel can do it. Ronald

Regan put it succinctly in 1980: 'Israel is combat ready and has a combat experienced military ..... a force in the Middle East that is actually of value to the U.S. If there was no Israel with that force, we'd have to supply it on our own.'

### PALESTINIANS

The forcible expulsion of 750,000 Palestinian Arabs laid the basis for the establishment of Israel. The refugees fled in fear of their lives as a result of massacres of Arabs and a clever campaign of psychological warfare.

Most of the refugees ended up in the camps in Jordan, Syria and the Lebanon. The skilled and professional workers among them found work in the Gulf states. The majority being unskilled peasants and labourers, languished in the squalid refugee camps. Their lot was one of poverty, discrimination and repression. In the Lebanon for example, Palestinians were excluded by law from most jobs.

The growth of Arab nationalism prefigured an explosion of Palestinian nationalism in the early sixties. Palestinian guerilla groups grew by leaps and bounds in the camps and Arab cities. It was not a development welcomed by the Arab governments who saw a mass Palestinian movement as disruptive. Their own peasants and workers tended to emulate it, gained confidence and pressed their own demands.

The P.L.O., set up by the Arab rulers to contain the Palestinians, was soon taken over by the guerilla organisations. Yet despite the obvious conflict with the Arab elites, the dominant view within the P.L.O. has been that the

struggle for Palestine must be kept separate from other Arab struggles. This has been the major flaw in the P.L.O.'s strategy, since none of the Arab governments have an interest in an independent mass based Palestinian movement, despite all their rhetoric about 'Arab brotherhood'. On the contrary, such a movement threatens their power. When it's comes to the crunch they've either attempted to smash the P.L.O. or have left the Israeli's to do it. In the 70's,

both Jordan and Syria hammered the P.L.O., and no Arab regime came to its assistance when Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982 and laid seige to the refugee camps in Beirut.

Unfortunately, as John Rose explains in his pamphlet, as long as the P.L.O. refuse to make common cause with workers in all the Arab countries the tragedy will continue.

Mike Scully.

'Israel - The Hijack State' is available from the W.S.M. Bookservice, P.O. Box 1508, Dublin 8. Price £1.00 plus 30p postage.

## JOIN THE WSM

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, 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 want to merely get rid of the border. We want to unite our class and create a totally new Ireland.

\*\*\*

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# Kinnock facing defeat



Is Thatcher about to wipe the smile off Kinnock's face?

**THE BRITISH Labour Party doesn't look like being able to win the not too distant General Election. To many people it seems unbelievable that Mrs Thatcher will get a third term in office even though the Conservative Party has never had the reputation of serving working class interests. The Labour Party on the other hand, are supposedly the representatives of the working class, with their roots in the Trade Unions, yet they have failed to be elected when in competition with Thatcher and are doomed to failure again.**

The problem with the Labour Party is it's politics, or rather, it's lack of them. However right wing Mrs Thatcher and her Tory views, at least she sticks to them! Not so with Labour. The Labour Party has consistently been moving to the right and in doing so has confused many of it's traditional supporters. It has abandoned it's unilateralist disarmament stance and shifted to that of multi-lateralist, thereby succumb-

ing to the belief that Cruise missiles are necessary to maintain Britain's defence. Proposed cuts in nuclear arms spending would only be matched by increases in traditional military methods. The money saved from contributing to Global destruction would not go towards something the working class could use like housing, education or health - care, but still, it would shorten the dole queues - by making everyone a soldier!

Internal wranglings within the Party have done much to strengthen the Tories criticisms of Labour. The rows about the black sections are one example. Labour supports immigration controls. The racist views held by the majority of the British population are reflected in the Labour Party. At a time when prejudice and violence against blacks is rampant, a socialist party should be challenging these views, but clearly the Labour Party does not see this as a priority. More important for them is that they would lose even more votes if they openly attack-

ed the racism of the voters.

Neil Kinnocks own views that lining up with gays and Lesbians is doing the Party's electoral chances some harm have recently been revealed to the press. This is quite true given the state of British society at the moment,

Eileen O'Carroll



## Laura Ashley: Made in a sweatshop.

Laura Ashley shops are strictly for the rich. You can pay a couple of hundred pounds for an off-the-peg summer dress. The atmosphere is relaxed and affluent.

Its a different story at Ardbride Products in Scotland where women machinists earning little over £40 a week turn out 'handmade' lampshades which Laura Ashley sell for between £15 and £80 each.

(ATGWU) and voted to strike for safe working conditions, an hourly rate of £2.50 and union recognition. They have been on strike since then. The bosses only response was to sack them and bring in scabs.

The workers' financial loss has been severe. Two have lost their houses. However they are determined to stick it out and make the boss give in.

### DUBLIN PICKET

Laura Ashley shops in Germany, France, Britain and the USA have been picketed by anarchists at the request of the strikers. In Dublin the WSM demonstrated outside the shop on Easter Saturday. Pressure on Laura Ashley, Ardbride's biggest customer, is making them put pressure on Ardbride. They are threatening to end their contract if there is no settlement.

### FAINTED

They have fainted due to glue fumes. The extractor fans don't work. There are no safety guards on machines. Dust levels are twelve times the legally permitted limit. The top wages in this hell hole are only £1.70 an hour.

Last September the workers joined the Transport & General Workers Union

## ANARCHIST BOOK SERVICE

Books and pamphlets on anarchism, socialism, labour history, Ireland, women...hundreds of radical titles. For a free list send a 22p stamp along with your name and address to ABS/WSM, P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8.