

UNITED IRISHMAN

An tEireannach Aontaithe Feabhra (February) 1979

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Murder most foul

Two members of the British Army Special Air Services (SAS) are charged with the murder of 16 year old John Boyle at Dunloy, Co. Antrim on July 11 last year.

They are Alan Bohan (28) and Ronald Tempedley (26) both serving at Army Headquarters in Lisburn.

The move by the Director of Public Prosecutions came following the leaking to the press of the police report on the case.

The RUC report shows that young John Boyle was unarmed and was shot in the back three times. It proves as Ian Paisley said, "that the British Army version was blatant lies."

The murder took place following the finding of a cache of arms near the Boyle home. John Boyle's father, Mr. Cornelius Boyle told the RUC of the find and they informed the British Army.

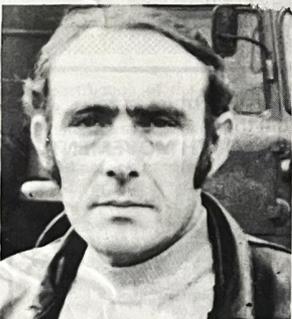
The army 'staked out' the cache and waited for someone to come to collect the arms. Later young John walked down to see if the arms had been shifted and was shot dead on the spot. When his father and brother came to investigate they were forced by the soldiers to lie face down on the ground for 2½ hours within a few yards of John's body.

Rev. Ian Paisley, MP for North Antrim, contested the army's version from the beginning and has consistently pressed the RUC to prosecute those responsible.

He now maintains that the police report has been with the DPP for the past five months. It seems likely that the DPP would still be sitting on the report but for the leakage to the press.

He is of course, subject to the direction of the British Attorney General.

● Cllr. Bernie McDonagh.



Workers get no concessions from Fianna Fáil HIGHER WAGES ONLY ANSWER

The second Budget of the 26 Counties Fianna Fáil Government was a great disappointment to wage earners and social welfare recipients.

Their wage packets and welfare cheques have been chasing a rapidly rising cost of living since the 1973 oil crisis.

The soaring food prices since entry to the EEC and the recent removal of food subsidies have also eaten a big hole in their living standards. On top of this they have been called on to pay a bigger and bigger tax burden.

Right

They had a right to feel it was time to call a halt. They had a right to feel that the new EEC dear food policy should be met with a high wage policy.

They had a right to expect that others such as farmers and self-employed should now be called on to pay up their fair share of taxes and that the burden of 86.5% of income tax should be lifted off their shoulders.

Expert

With these expectations the usual gimmicks of raising tax free allowances

or children's allowances and clawing them back with other taxes, cuts no ice with working people.

What they want is a total restructuring of the tax system, a simplified system of allowances which all can avail of and a ruthless attack on the wealthy self-employed by the Revenue Commissioners.

In Colley's Budget every worker earning £22 and over will be liable to tax but not every farmer or self-employed person.

Farmers

An extra 6,000 farmers will be brought into the tax net making a total of 27,000 farmers liable to tax out of 130,000. Are there 103,000 farmers earning less than £22 per week?

There isn't a word at all in the Budget about the self-employed, bankers, businessmen, industrialists, speculators, brokers, auctioneers, landlords, solicitors, builders, middlemen, connen, leeches and parasites who, between them have cornered over 70% of the wealth created by Irish workers, are not even politely asked by Mr. Colley to pay up their share of tax.



● 26 Co. Finance Minister George Colley.

Sinn Féin The Workers' Party made this point about the self-employed in their comment on the Budget. They welcomed the section in the Budget which promised a crack down on tax evaders by strengthening the Revenue Commissioners, examining some accounts in depth and examining the life style of some tax evaders.

Pamphlets

The Party pointed out that it made similar recommendations in their tax booklet "Come on the Taxpayer" which was issued last November.

But they point out that the provision for the increase in the Revenue Commissioners staff is totally inadequate for the purpose and leads them to believe that Colley is not really serious about the problem.

If the Fianna Fáil Government think that workers are going to moderate their wage claims as a result of this Budget they are gravely overestimating the gullibility of the 1979 wage-slave.

Cautious victory for Turf Lodge

The long battle by the Turf Lodge Club of Sinn Féin The Workers' Party, by Councillor Bernie McDonagh and by West Belfast candidate Brian Brennan for the demolition of the Turf Lodge Flats has finally ended in victory.

An exclusive report in *The Irish Times* of January 25 last disclosed that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive had decided to accept the advice given to them by a firm of architects to demolish the flats and maisonettes and replace them with two-storey houses.

Action

The local Republican Clubs campaign for action on the appalling problems in Turf Lodge to back to 1974 and continued unremittingly despite constant opposition and attacks from the Provos who obviously want a continuation of misery.

In 1977 Councillor McDonagh persuaded a deputation from the Board of the Housing Executive led by their Chairperson, James O'Hara, to visit the Turf Lodge estate.

The visitors were shocked by the conditions and admitted they did not

realise it was so bad. Later the same year Councillor McDonagh invited Housing Minister Ray Carter to visit the estate.

Admitted

Despite the bin-lid bashing by Provos and shouts of collaborator, McDonagh brought Carter around the complex of flats and maisonettes and secured from him the admission that the estate "was the worst I have ever seen either in Northern Ireland or Britain."

In August 1978, in a submission to the Department of the Environment, Republican Clubs The Workers' Party put forward proposals for a five year housing programme for West Belfast which included the demolition of Turf Lodge, Divis and Moyard flats.

A subsequent delegation from the party to Housing Minister Carter led by Councillor McDonagh and Brian Brennan, reiterated the demand for demolition of Turf Lodge.

Vindicated

All of this agitation has now been vindicated. The report which the Housing Executive has accepted confirms that Turf Lodge ranks with

Divis and Moyard as the three "most unpopular" set of housing in Belfast.

It also confirms the poor social and physical conditions in the Turf Lodge flats and says the housing is way below the standards accepted elsewhere and is hated by the residents.

Welcomed

The plan proposed in the report, and very much welcomed by the residents, would mean pulling down 258 flats and maisonettes and replacing them with 112 new houses.

However, Brian Brennan points out that it is a bit soon yet to be shouting victory. The NIHE decision has first to be approved by the Department of the Environment, and then there will still be a long battle to get some action on the demolition plan.

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UNITED IRISHMAN

An tEireannach Aontaithe

TAXATION

The great tax debate is being clearly won by those who speak for the wage earners. But the actual battle has already been won hands down by the employers, the industrialists, big business and big farmers.

They have a government which is now totally subservient to them. Their good friends Colley and O'Donohue have removed Wealth Tax from them, have reduced Capital Gains Tax to insignificant proportions and have reduced Corporation Profits Tax from 45% to 10%. At the same time they have provided them with ample opportunities for evading their share of personal income tax to the tune of £200m as estimated in "Come On The Taxpayer".

But is big business happy with its tax victory? Not at all. They want more. Mr. Niall Crowley, Chairman of Allied Irish Banks now calls for doing away with direct taxation altogether. Don't tax people on their wealth or their incomes at all, he says. Tax them indirectly on their consumption he says. This of course would tip the tax balance even further in favour of the wealthy.

Indirect taxes are always regressive and hit heaviest on lower income groups. In a tax study by households derived from the Household Budget Survey of 1973 James Rafferty in the Irish Times demonstrated this very clearly. In urban households, where income tax is paid, the percentage of income paid in tax is generally progressive i.e. getting higher as income gets higher. Those earning under £7 p.w. pay 13% of their income in taxes and this rises to 29% of income for those earning between £70 and £80 p.w. However it falls to 26% for those with over £80 p.w.

But the contrast in rural farm households is startling. Here there is practically no income tax so all the taxes they pay are indirect. Those farm households earning less than £7 per week pay a massive 53% of income in taxes. This reduces to 22% for those getting between £7 and £10 per week and then falls consistently as earnings increase until those earning over £80 p.w. only pay 9% of their income in taxes.

Calls for indirect taxes to replace direct taxes should be vigorously resisted. The battle must continue for increased direct taxes on the incomes of the wealthy. The figure of 9% of income paid in tax by farmers earning over £80 p.w. would also be true for the self-employed. These are the people to go after. The pre-Budget pressure which has been built up on the Tax issue must be maintained until real tax reforms have been implemented.

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letters

Dear Friends,

My family and I would like to thank you and Sinn Féin The Workers' Party for your kind expression of sympathy for Jim.

Your touching words were a great comfort to us when we were feeling his loss so deeply. I am sure that Jim would have been very proud and deeply moved by your tribute to him.

He was indeed a Fenian to the last and we all loved him and were proud of him for it. I think I can speak for Jim when I say that if he had one wish to make I am sure it would be "carry on".

Sincerely yours,
Mary Skeffington,
Woodside,
New York, USA.

Dear Friends,

Your newspaper, *The United Irishman*, has a very readable format and news very worthwhile to me. I am enclosing my annual contribution as a token of my admiration although the amount will not cover the expense of the front page headline.

I want to call your attention to something, I believe must have been a misprint. I am referring to the December 1978 issue volume 31 No. 12 — page 8 "Finglas South" — 3rd column where it said: "In this regard we should say that we have consistently advised people in the area to form and support associations and that they should affiliate to

NATO". It is this latter statement that I cannot fit in with Sinn Féin The Workers' Party philosophy.

All my good wishes for the New Year to you and all your co-workers at *The United Irishman* and Sinn Féin The Workers' Party.

Anci Koppell,
Seattle,
Washington, USA.

The article which appeared in our December issue was about a Local Council housing estate on the north side of Dublin city. The NATO in this context referred to the National Association of Tenants' Organisations which is the Irish organisation representing tenants of local authority housing.

Your confusion is understandable and we should not have taken it for granted that all our readers would be aware of what the initials stood for.



● Seán Garland.

PARTY ARD FHEIS

The Annual Ard Fheis of Sinn Féin The Workers' Party takes place on March 2, 3 and 4. The Clár and documentation is presently being prepared and should be with all cumainn by mid-February.

The General Secretary, Seán Garland says there is an exceptionally heavy Clár this year which can only be got through by a disciplined adherence to the Steering Committee's recommendations.

In addition to the very large number of resolutions there will be discussion documents on Devolved Government, Construction and Housing, Health and Social Welfare and the EEC.

Structure
Last year's Ard Fheis instructed the

Ard Comhairle to set up a special sub-committee to examine the structure and procedure at future Ard Fheis eanna.

This sub-committee made its report to the Ard Comhairle but the General Secretary says it will not lead to much change at this year's Ard Fheis. Many of its recommendations have been accepted by the Ard Comhairle and if approved by this year's Ard Fheis will be implemented in future years.

Commissions

One of the recommendations which is being introduced this year on a trial basis is the commission system. The great advantage of commissions is that they can give an in-depth discussion and reach concrete decisions which are often more satisfactory than those made by a full Ard Fheis.

The main disadvantage of commissions are logistical. Suitable rooms must be available for the commissions to meet and their reports must then be typed up and copies distributed to delegates for amendment or approval.

Problems

If these problems can be ironed out this year it seems that commissions will play a much more prominent role in future.

Sinn Féin The Workers' Party will be contesting three elections this year: the Westminster elections in the Six Counties, the Local Government elections in the 26 Counties and the EEC elections north and south.

A major part of the discussion at the Ard Fheis is expected to be dealing with the policies to be put before the electorate at these elections.

Delegates are asked to arrive in good time for all sessions of the Ard Fheis.



● Tomás Mac Giolla, President of Sinn Féin The Workers' Party was selected to contest the Dublin City Council elections for the Dublin-Ballyfermot Constituency.

At a Press Conference in the Royal Dublin Hotel, Mr. Mac Giolla said: "Since I contested the last election in 1977 I have been fighting as best I can for the interests of the people of the constituency. I feel I could do much more if I were elected to Dublin City Council; both on the issues I have mentioned and also in the area of amenities for young people and better care services for the elderly."

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LITTLE GAIN FROM GULF OIL

In recent weeks Gulf Oil has become a household name in Ireland due to last month's terrible tragedy at Bantry Bay in Co. Cork.

Gulf Oil is one of the seven largest oil companies in the World. They are known as 'the seven ugly sisters'; EXXon, (Esso in Ireland) Mobil, Gulf, Texaco, Socal, B.P., and Shell. Gulf is in a special category among the oil giants as they have been caught out paying political bribes more often than the others.

A U.S. investigation discovered that there was an established office in the company under the management of a Mr. Wild to look after political bribes. One hundred thousand dollars were, for example, paid into the Nixon "Committee to reelect the president". In Korea, for instance, oil tankers were sold to certain individuals and then chartered by Gulf.

The accident in Bantry Bay involved an old 'French' tanker chartered by Gulf. Gulf Oil were also discovered to be involved in extensive bribing in Italy and at one time the Bank of Nova Scotia, Bahamas Branch, was used to pass on bribes to various places. The Betelgeuse, which exploded at Bantry Bay with the loss of 51 lives, was an old French tanker on charter to Gulf. The inquiry will probably uncover its history and background. Gulf were badly in need of a deep water port in Western Europe after

the Suez Canal was closed.

They picked Bantry Bay, the best deep water Bay in Western Europe. The Taoiseach Jack Lynch gave Bantry Bay to Gulf with full permission to build a jetty and storage tanks on Whiddy Island. Crude oil was transferred in this way from the giant tankers to small tankers which carried it on to European refineries. It gave only 70 jobs and is of no use to the Irish economy.

Treat

Gulf Oil treated Mr. Lynch and his wife to a World tour and when in Japan Mairin Lynch launched a super-tanker for Gulf Oil named 'The Universe Ireland'.

When the Suez Canal was closed 17 million tons of oil a year passed through Bantry. At present the figure has dropped to 4.5 millions a year. Bantry has lost its usefulness for Gulf.

During their use of the Bay their activities were completely unsupervised and they paid nothing at all to port authorities. In the early years there was no port authority and when, after protests, one was eventually established it was given no powers.

Only a Government totally under the influence of the big multi-nationals would have agreed to the Bantry deal.

Unsuitable

Furthermore the bay itself is completely unsuitable for the Gulf type of operation. It

could not by any stretch of the imagination be described as a port.

It is an open bay receiving the full force of Atlantic waves and is far too rough to be made into an oil port even if breakwaters were built at great expense. As Sinn Féin The Workers' Party pointed out on a number of occasions only in a sheltered port is it possible to surround tankers with a boom to contain oil spillage.

Tomás Mac Giolla, President of Sinn Féin The Workers' Party in a statement following the disaster expressed deepest sympathy to the families of the workers and seamen killed at Bantry Bay.

He said, "On many occasions we have pointed out the folly of using Bantry as an oil port because of the lack of adequate safety levels."

"We have also pointed out that the installations at Bantry are of no use to the Irish economy as crude oil is merely stored there for transhipment to British and Continental oil refineries."

"Sinn Féin The Workers' Party have always insisted that tankers shipping oil into Ireland should use sheltered Ports and that such oil should be for use in this island only. We believe that Irish oil refineries should be built in sheltered experienced oil ports where it is more easy to enforce safety regulations and to surround tankers with a boom while in port."

"We demand that giant oil company tankers under any and every flag should be banned from Irish ports. Oil for Ireland should be shipped in tankers owned by Irish Shipping which would then be in a position to enforce its own strict safety standards."

Oil coming into Ireland should be for processing in Irish refineries and for use on the Irish oil market".

Haughey's Bill unsatisfactory

The use of contraceptives has now become widespread throughout the 26 counties and is not regarded by any reasonable person as a criminal activity. Minister for Health, Charles Haughey has therefore no option but to introduce reforming legislation.

The Haughey Bill is, however, totally unsatisfactory. It is discriminatory in its emphasis on 'Natural Methods' of family planning and in its refusal to allow single people to avail of contraceptives.

By putting the whole scheme in the hands of the doctors and chemists it is also ensuring that only the rich will be able to afford contraceptives. In fact it is unlikely that the effect of this Bill will be to reduce access to contraceptives by making it more difficult and more expensive for people to obtain them.

Reform

The urgency to reform the law prohibiting the sale or advertisement of contraceptives no longer needs to be spelt out. For years the law was flouted in the spirit and today is being openly defied.

A welcome feature is the fact that this intensely private aspect of people's lives and

choices at least is being decriminalised and put under the administration of the Department of Health. But the introduction of the local general doctor as moral arbiter is a step backwards.

The Bill fails to provide any back-up service and the absence of references to education or training other than in 'natural methods' is a cause for concern.

Qualified

Those most qualified in contraception methods are the existing clinics. It is vitally necessary for the clinics to be increased and brought under the authority of the Health Boards so that contraception be integrated into our health service and become an unremarkable and essential part of our nation's health programme.

One other aspect of the Bill which has been overlooked is the reiteration of the ban on scientific literature which could be construed to advocate abortion.

Restriction

While this ban already exists in the law and is not new there should be no restriction on the availability of scientific information.

Rapid Rail is the answer

Dublin city streets have now become choked with traffic at almost all hours of the day. It is obvious that something must be done to make it easier for people to move about in the city.

The proposed Dublin Motorway system will not help improve the city's traffic problems; it would, in fact, encourage more cars and heavy vehicles to come in from areas outside the city and choke the inner city. This is the experience of all cities attempting to solve traffic problems by building motorways.

Communities

The destruction of the city and the break-up of living communities and amenities which the motorway will entail would still not solve the traffic and parking problems.

The motorway plan of Mr. James Molloy, City Manager, which was adopted at a special meeting of Dublin City Council in January, is in fact a partial adoption of the major system proposed in the Dublin

Transport Study by An Foras Forbatha in 1971.

The City Council has adopted the first phase of the DTS Plan which had already been rejected by the council after massive protests by the citizens of Dublin. The logic of building a bridge at Macken Street is to fill in the Royal Canal directly across from it and build a motorway on it.

Objection

The most serious objection to motorways is their failure to provide a system of public transportation for people without cars who constitute almost 80% of the population. A rapid rail system could move people at a constant speed of 40 miles an hour, winter and summer and at all hours.

It would attract business from car owners, and reduce the pressure on the city centre while leaving existing communities and amenities intact.

Increase

The existing suburban rail services are being increasingly

used and they now move more than 4% of the passengers transported into Dublin. The city bus services have lost six million passengers in ten years. In 1966 over 236 million were carried but in 1977 only 230 millions were carried on buses. People are turning away from the buses because, due to the traffic snarl up they provide a slow, uncertain service and they are not cheap.

A good rapid rail system could be built at about half the cost of the motorway plan and is the only practical way to reduce traffic congestion in the city. A much better bus service could then be provided by linking a bus service to stations along the rail system.

Argument

The only argument against a rapid rail system is one of greed. The big builder interests and Cement/Roadstone are one of the most powerful pressure groups in Fianna Fáil. It is their argument, rather than that of the citizens of Dublin, which is being listened to.



● This can lead to this... an efficient rapid transit system will encourage commuters to make use of public transport which in turn will mean a reliable bus service as the reduction in the number of private cars on our roads will allow the buses to run on time.



PORTRAIT *Oliver J. Flanagan* *Knight of the Big Wind*

In 1943 a young member of Mountmellick Town Commissioners was to be seen traversing the huge Laoise-Offaly constituency on a bicycle. A large placard on the front said: "HERE COMES OLIVER". A similar placard at the rear informed amused observers: "THERE GOES FLANAGAN." Oliver J. (now dubbed "The Knight of The Big Wind" after his recent Papal honour), was making his bid for the big time.

He was standing for the small man, he said, and the issue was monetary reform. He filled towns and tiny villages in the constituency with his block-busting speeches. He based his oratorical style on the Blueshirt haranguer, James Dillon, whom he fiercely admired, and was Dillon's Parliamentary Secretary from 1954-1957 during the first Coalition.

He was the subject in those early days of a rousing ballad, which, he insisted, was sung in every dancehall and pub in Laoise-Offaly to the tune of "McNamara's Band":

"The money-kinds and racketeers have failed to change his views, he has them on the run, me boys,

and shaking in their shoes, they dread the day in every way to meet the coming storm, when Oliver J. will lead the way with Monetary Reform.

When Flanagan traded in his bicycle in that first Coalition for the State Mercedes, he told his constituents: "That's Monetary Reform!"

Elections

Oliver J. coasted home in his first electoral bid, and has been topping the poll in his Laoise-Offaly power-base since 1949, despite startling political turnabouts and considerable adverse publicity. He was and is an intuitive political survivor, and like all gombeen opportunists, is all things to all men. Before joining Fine Gael in the early fifties, he voted with Fianna Fáil, and warmly welcomed de Valera to his constituency. When shaking hands with his supporters afterwards, a grinning Oliver told them: "This is the hand that held an umbrella over the head of the Chief."

Not long later, he had the former Blueshirt and present 26-county Chief Justice, Tom O'Higgins, as his running mate.

Oliver leapt from one controversy to the next with

great regularity and lavish publicity. In the early sixties he clashed with Garret, FitzGerald on several occasions, and FitzGerald, then a lowly Fine Gael Senator, repeatedly called for Flanagan's resignation from the party. "He is an economist and I am a politician," Flanagan said, "and economists do not make good politicians." He had "the greatest affection, admiration and loyalty for Mr Cosgrave" and the party, he said, and wouldn't for a moment consider resigning.

In 1971, when FitzGerald, then a TD, put out a cautious feeler on the clerical domination of Irish education, Flanagan lashed out at Godless Garret and

said he was putting forward his own views and not the views "of those of us who make up the Fine Gael Party."

One of his best headline grabbing stunts was his comments on German land-owners when addressing a farmers' meeting in Dublin in 1969.

"Too much of our land has fallen into German hands," he roared. "We have no room in this country for Nazis and we are not going to entertain them here. We have no liking for Nazis and there is no room in this country for them. The land of Ireland for the people of Ireland, to have and to hold from God alone who gave it", he bellowed, quoting Fintan

Order) naming local TDs who had voted with the Bill.

Sometime later, he was rewarded for his reactionary behaviour and loyalty to Cosgrave, and was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Local Government. In this position, he conspired with Dick Burke, then Minister for Education, to ensure clerical control of education.

In 1976, when parents in the Dublin suburbs of Marley Grange, Dalkey, and Firhouse, were calling for an end to sectarian education in their local schools, Flanagan leapt to the defence of the bishops — and of Burke, the suave Catholic reactionary who is now a £20,000 a year EEC Commissioner.

In December, 1976, Cosgrave, despite widespread protests, appointed Flanagan Minister for Defence — (Flanagan had announced his own appointment two weeks earlier at a function in his constituency) — and put the former Town Commissioner of Mountmellick in charge of the armed forces of the 26 Counties.

Flanagan is also a Fine Gael member of the European Parliament. He had opposed EEC entry vigorously, largely because he suspected Dr. Sicco Mansholt, the EEC supremo, of trying to encourage the use of contraceptives in Ireland. "This man is trying to control the size of the family in Ireland and, to spread the idea of birth control which is contrary to the law of God," Oliver declared.

But no doubt the greatest honour in Oliver's life was when the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, Dr Lennon, called on him at his home with a piece of paper from the Papal Nuncio, Dr Alibrandi, informing him that the Pope had conferred on him the Grand Order of St Gregory the Great.

The honour was bestowed on him on the recommendation of a number of Irish bishops, he was told, and he has now taken to calling himself "Sir Oliver."

"Sir" Oliver J. Flanagan, after forty years of unswerving loyalty to Capitalism and Catholicism, said he was "very thrilled indeed".



Lalor.

The farmers lapped it up, the media splashed it, and Germans and their land were afforded 24-hour police protection. Reporters went digging into Oliver's past and found that when he was a member of the LDF (Local Defence Force) during the Emergency, he had refused to shoot at a target depicting Hitler on a rifle range in Pim's Yard, opposite Mountmellick Courthouse. Oliver laid low for a while.

Creeping

But Flanagan is best known for his stand against creeping Godlessness, which, in Oliver's book, is any tendency towards social progress. He followed Cosgrave and Dick Burke into the Fianna Fáil lobby to vote against his Government's own Bill on contraception, and sent out anonymous circulars to Laoise-Offaly priests and members of the Knights of St Columbanus (a Catholic businessmen's clique, similar to the Orange

the party platform

Conflict

Eamonn Smullen, Director of Economic Affairs of Sinn Féin The Workers' Party in a statement on industrial disputes said: "The Government are seeking conflict with the trade unions because they wish to use industrial unrest as an excuse for the failure of their economic policies.

"It is for this reason that they refused to pay a few pounds for postmen's overtime and rejected the busmen's pay claim.

"The Government has allowed the profit-making parts of C.I.E. — road haulage and coach hire — to pass in an ever increasing degree to private enterprise.

Vengeance

Republican Clubs The Workers' Party Councillor, Bernie McDonagh, today

condemned the "hot pursuit" tactics of Coldstream Guards in the Ballymurphy estate, following the recent wounding of a soldier.

"In what can only be described as a bloody minded vengeance soldiers smashed in doors and windows in scores of homes, without even attempting to permit residents to admit them. Such unnecessary destruction serves no cause — least of all that which the British Army pretend to operate under — keeping the peace. No one's home was spared in this display of thuggery, not even the homes of the elderly and the ill.

Construction

Republican Clubs The Workers' Party Alderman Seamus Lynch called on the Department of the Environment to create, out of

Enterprise Ulster and the existing Direct Labour Squads of the N.I.H.E., a public construction company capable of undertaking new building contracts and maintenance work.

"Despite the massive amounts of public money made available to combat housing need, that need has not been significantly reduced in the same period. Rather there have been half-hearted efforts at initiating some improvement schemes while an earlier 'over-investment' zeal in rehabilitation work has reaped no reward — for either the tenants or Housing Executive.

It has become increasingly clear that one of the biggest failures in the programme is that of total dependence on private contractors to carry out the programme of both new building and maintenance work.

STRATHEARN AUDIO

The one we haven't been waiting for

The closure of Strathearn Audio, the state-owned Hi-Fi company at Kennedy Way in West Belfast, has come amid speculation that its closure was a condition of the take-over of the firm's operations by the Japanese AKAI Corporation.

Following his trip to Japan last Autumn, Northern Ireland Secretary of State Roy Mason announced a possible production tie-up between Strathearn and a "well-known Japanese electronics firm".

Announcing the Strathearn closure, company Chairman Mr. S. Smyth said he was "95% confident that the Japanese would take over the Strathearn premises later in the year and would be in production by 1980."

Investment

If Mr. Smyth is right the arrival of AKAI in West Belfast will represent the first major Japanese manufacturing investment in the Six Counties.

Moreover, it could in itself represent a new trend in the development of the northern Ireland economy whose position as a sub-region of the EEC will be of particular interest to Japanese industrial investment.

In any event Mr. Smyth's predictions cannot be much comfort to the 120 workers paid off last week at Strathearn. Only six weeks ago he announced that Strathearn had "now got it right" in the Hi-Fi market — production problems had been overcome and big sales in Europe and Australia were expected.

Publicity

The Hi-Fi press — often critical of Strathearn — also agreed that the Company now had a successful product and the big 'glossies' carried double page advertisements confidently stating 'Strathearn — the one you've been waiting for'.

Against this background the suddenness of the Strathearn closure announcement (the workforce first heard the news on the local radio station) has increased speculation about a secret "close Strathearn" deal with the Japanese firm.

The plot goes something like this — AKAI wanted Strathearn closed in order to ensure that it received maximum industrial development grants associated with setting up a new company as opposed to a simple take-over or licenced production arrangement with Strathearn.

Such a 'big plot' speculation is somewhat dubious for a number of reasons. The decision to curtail Strathearn's development was taken long before any Japanese deal and began with the reluctance to produce a full suite of stereo products.

Hesitation

If AKAI does come to West Belfast it will be to produce Hi-Fi components only, echoing this hesitation to attempt a breakthrough into the highly competitive Hi-Fi industry.

The £11 million investment in Strathearn was not sufficient to achieve such a marketing breakthrough or to



solve the production difficulties of the highly advanced 'direct drive' Strathearn decks.

Production of AKAI compounds requiring a large scale re-equipment and training process would have realised high capital grants independent of any production formula involving Strathearn.

For the reasons behind the scrapping of the Strathearn company we have to look much nearer home than Japan.

The establishment of State industry is a serious business and should not be regarded as an occasion for "social experiments". Strathearn was described as such by John Hume when the company was launched under the power-sharing Executive in 1974.

Its final demise underlines the need for a definite four point strategy for the development of the State sector.

(1) It is essential in the Six Counties to build up a basic core of established state companies through the expansion of the British State Companies to Northern Ireland.

The right-wing alliance of green and orange Tories against the British State companies must be broken and these companies allowed to create an effective new arm in the jobs creation effort in the Six Counties.

The extension of the Gas Corporation's successful Irish Sea exploration programme to off-shore northern Ireland is a case in point. The development by British Steel of a scrap processing Steel Mill in Belfast harbour are others.

(2) Highly successful state companies such as the Belfast aerospace firm Shortt Bros. should be developed as the kernel of much broader state corporations with upstream and downstream industrial

development using natural resources and related to fill such sectoral plans as the development of the aerospace industry throughout Ireland.

(3) The development of a tripartite role for the Northern Ireland Economic Council giving N.I. trade unionists access to State planning bodies in both the 26 Counties and the United Kingdom.

This would allow the creation of a north-south Development Corporation involving co-operation between state companies on both sides of the border.

(4) The creation of a Research, Development and Marketing body for state sector companies.

Such developments towards a comprehensive approach in planning state industry will create the stable industrial climate in which new initiatives like Strathearn can have a serious prospect for survival.

IONADAÍOCHT COTHROM AR NA MBÓRD BAINISTÍOCHTA

Niorbh aon dea scéal d'óige na tíre an scéal a tháinig le deireannaí faoi bhóird bhainistíochta na mbun-scoileanna. Ainneóin iarrachtaí Chumann Múinteoirí Éireann agus daoine nach iad le blianta anuas, tá na bóird le fanacht go daingean faoi smacht na neasbog agus na heaglaise Caitlicigh — leisce fós ar an eaglais chéanna a smacht ar an óige agus ar phobail áitiúla na tíre seo a ghéilleadh. Eagla i gcónaí — ortha greim a chailliúint ar ghné ar bith de chóras oideachais na hÉireann a mhaolódh, dar leo, ar a seasmh i bparóistí na tíre.

Níor bhogadar — ná níor chuir an Roinn Oideachais iachall orthu bogadh — cé

nach athrú romhór a bhí ag teastáil ós na múinteoirí. Ní rabhadar siúd ag iarraidh nach mbéadh ach áit amháin ag an gcléir ar bhóird bhainistíochta na mbun-scoileanna. Séard a bhí uathu na go mbéadh ionadaíocht cothrom idir thuismitheoirí, múinteoirí agus an chléir áitiúil — dhá shuíochán an duine mar shampla.

Léiríonn seasamh na heaglaise ar ndó go dtuigeann siad go bhfuil maolú mór ar a dtionchar siúd nó ní chuirfidis chomh láidir sin in aghaidh múinteoirí a oiltear, taréis an tsaol i gcoláistí oiliúna atá fós faoin a smacht féin. Ach sin scéal agus fadhbh eile a caithfear a sháru thuaidh agus theas go tuaidh.

Fanfaidh greim daingean na heaglaise caitlicigh — agus na n-eaglais eile cé go bhfuilid go mór sa mhionlach — ní hamháin ar na bóird bhainistíochta ach ar cheapachán múinteoirí freisin.

Tá dóchas éigin ag Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann go bhfuil an scéal seo feabhsaithe beagán mar beidh árdmhaistir nó árdmhaistreás na scoile ar an mbóird agallaimh. Ach beidh meastóirí (assessors) air freisin. Agus cé cheapfaidh iad siúd — an eaglais ar ndó, go breá midhaonlathach.

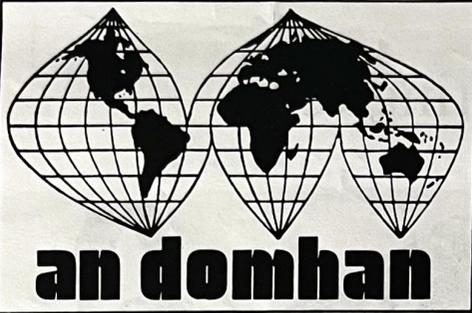
Níl an scéal baile ach chomh dona agus a bhí abair triocha bliain ó shoin nuair a dhibear sagart paróiste múinteoirí toisc nár thaitn siad leis — toisc nach raibh na múinteoirí

sásta géilleadh dh'fhocal an tsagairt mar a rinne b'fhéidir an chuid eile den pharóiste; Nó toisc feallsúnacht ro-liobarálach bheith ag múinteoirí, sóisialach nó cumannach féin; nó b'fhéidir go raibh suim ag múinteoirí sna leabhair mhichearta nó nios measa fós b'fhéidir gur scríobhadar leabhar nó go raibh gaol acu le duine a raibh leabhar scríobtha aige. Ba chuma, dá scródh an sagart iad a dhibeir ba bheag a d'fhéadfadh na múinteoirí adhéanamh.

Má tá an scéal sin athraithe roinnt níl aon chuma ar an Roinn Oideachais féin go bhfuil morán athrú orthu siúd. Tá siad chomh sásta seasamh le "húdarás" na heaglaise

anois agus a bhíodar an tráth sin féin. Is léir ón gcineadh is deireannaí seo on Roinn Oideachais go bhfuilimid chomh fada ó chóras oideachais neamhsheictheacht Stáit agus a bhí riamh.





A.A.M. CONFERENCE ON SOUTH AFRICA



● Mr. Oliver Tambo.

An International Conference organised by the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement on the subject of the EEC and South Africa, was held in Dublin on the last weekend in January.

The principal speaker Mr. Oliver Tambo, President African National Congress told the conference that "the European Community was the lifeblood of Apartheid".

"The EEC provides 43% of South Africa's imports and buys 39% of her exports. The nine member states account for 64% of direct foreign investment in South Africa, he said."

The Irish Government was also criticised at the conference for allowing exports worth £6.2 million to South Africa during the past year.

In order to understand why there are a number of Vietnamese leaving the country, it is necessary to have a clear picture of the background situation of Viet Nam during the past three years, since the war ended.

Right from the start, when the Vietnamese people began healing the wounds of war and rebuilding the country, they were faced with mammoth problems arising from 30 years of war, which devastated both zones of the country and from the consequences of US occupation in South Viet Nam. In North Viet Nam, US bombs and shells destroyed cities, towns, hundreds of villages, thousands of hospitals, schools and the majority of economic establishments such as factories, state farms, water conservancy works, roads, bridges and means of communication and transport.

Annual aid

In South Viet Nam the withdrawal of the United States marked an end to the annual economic aid valued at 700 to 800 million dollars; yet it left behind a most chaotic society with 1 million people in the Saigon administration and army, about 1 million war wounded and orphans, half a million prostitutes and hundreds of thousands of young drug addicts and about 3 million unemployed.

In many areas, land was left unused

while millions of peasants were herded into the towns and cities. As far as the industry was concerned, it was totally dependent on other countries for machinery, equipment, material and fuel.

Added to all these problems during the last couple of years, the Vietnamese people have been faced with continuous natural calamities like floods, typhoons, frosts and droughts, etc., and the economic blockade by hostile forces.

Difficulties

Now the Vietnamese people are being faced with new difficulties. The international reactionaries with expansionist ambitions are working hand in glove with forces hostile to Viet Nam in an attempt to hinder and sabotage the reconstruction of the Vietnamese people.

They have abetted and aided the Pol Potting Sary regime in Cambodia to make war against Viet Nam along the whole border. At the same time, they have concentrated their troops in other border areas, provoked clashes

The 'rotten apple' is ready to fall

THE CRISIS in Iran holds the potential for one of the biggest and most disastrous defeats ever suffered by US imperialism. But the dangers are enormous.

To understand what is happening it is vital to grasp the central fact that the Iranian regime was installed, and is propped up and controlled by the US. Without the military, political and economic backing of Washington, neither the Shah nor the Pentagon's substitute stooge, Shahpur Bakhtiar, could survive one week. (Events are moving so rapidly both may be gone by the time you read this.)

The key issue of the Iranian conflict is independence — the right of the people of Iran to democratic control of their country's internal and external policies. The revolt against rule by US imperialism — either through the Shah or any other puppet — has grown into a genuine and powerful mass national liberation movement.

Lesson

But it remains to be seen how well the Iranian people have grasped the central lesson of the history of this century — that national liberation without socialism is not just meaningless — it is impossible.

Until two months ago, Iran was one of imperialism's biggest oil suppliers — second only to Saudi Arabia. It controlled the vital Gulf oil route which the Shah called "the West's jugular vein". It was the cornerstone of the Pentagon's military and intelligence bases along the Soviet border. And it was the biggest single customer for the West's armaments and military-industrial complex.

Suddenly all this is threatened. The oil has stopped — and not just the US, but South Africa which got 90% of its oil from Iran, and Israel which got 60%, are suffering. Military, political and economic power in today's world depends on industry — and industry depends on oil.

On holiday

The Shah has gone "on holiday", with his billions and his family and his court favourites, and some of his generals and secret police bosses too.

And the huge multi-million pound

contracts for jetfighters and tanks and missiles and nuclear plants could well turn out to be not worth the paper they're written on.

The dramatic overthrow of one of the world's most absolute monarchs — the King of Kings on the "eternal" Peacock Throne — seemed to take place in a few short months, but was of course years in the making.

Sixteen years ago, Nikita Khrushchev, then President of the Soviet Union, told US President Jack Kennedy: "Iran is a rotten apple. All we have to do is wait for it to fall."

The rotten apple is now ready to drop. The chances of Washington keeping Shahpur Bakhtiar in power as an acceptable substitute for the Shah are very slim. The latest slogan of the Iranian people — in a strange echo of Connolly's great call of "Neither King nor Kaiser" — is "Neither Shah nor Shahpur".

Civil war

It is already clear that only full-scale civil war can prevent the complete rejection of the US-Shah regime, and the setting up of an Islamic Republic. At best this would be an Islamic Socialist republic, at worst reactionary elements of the national bourgeoisie and the military could combine to try to impose ultra-Right rule.

There would of course be reactionary aspects to any Islamic regime, particularly in social attitudes based on the Koran, the Islamic bible. But it is a perversion of Marxist analysis to twist the facts of the Iranian conflict to a position which sees the Shah as "objectively progressive", and the people's mass struggle against Washington-imposed rule as backward conservatism.

The Shah's grandfather was installed by the British in the 19th century. But when British imperialism weakened after the Second World War his father was deposed by nationalist forces, and the oilfields taken into public ownership. (The country is still quaintly called Persia by the *Daily Telegraph*, nostalgic for the days of Empire.)

As John Bull lost control, Uncle Sam took over and the Shah himself was put in power in a Right-wing

military coup organised, armed and financed by the CIA. Washington has been in total control of Iran ever since.

Strike

The scale of events is enormous — millions of people striking, demonstrating, and defying the regime's military might. But the key tactic has been the political strike, stopping energy supplies, the banks, industry, communications and trade. This brought the country's rulers literally to their knees — at one stage the Prime Minister designate issued a public appeal to the strikers saying: "We humbly beg you to return to work".

The vital factor was that the strike demands were political — not for better pay or conditions, which the regime offered without even being asked — but for the Shah to go, for free elections, for the blood-stained SAVAK secret police bosses to be put on trial, for the release of political prisoners.

Above all, the strike stopped the oil. The lesson is clear — any modern State cut off from its energy supplies simply cannot survive.

The regime could not concede the democratic demands of the strikers. The military could not run the oil installations and other complex technology. So the Shah had to go.

Conflict

A funny incident of the strike, and one which sums up what the Iranian conflict is all about, is the sabotaging of the huge Iran Air Force computer complex.

Despite massive security precautions, the computer's central control system was reprogrammed so that whatever query was fed in, the same reply appeared on the read-out: "Yankees go Home".

There remains the danger of another CIA coup in Iran, similar to Chile but on an enormous scale. But Washington may find it is one thing to order a military take-over, but another matter altogether to carry it out.

For the sake of world peace, it must be hoped the people of Iran are allowed to work out their own destiny in their own way and their own time.

Vietnamese face massive rebuilding problems



● Ho Chi Minh the renowned late President of Viet Nam.

against and threatened Viet Nam with war. They have cut all aids, withdrawn their technicians and sought by every means to strangle the economy of Viet Nam.

They have even used the question of the Hoa people — Vietnamese citizens of Chinese origin — to carry out a huge forced emigration and enticed a number of the Hoa to sabotage and create troubles in Viet Nam. Moreover, they have launched a campaign of slander and distortion against Viet Nam in an attempt to harm the reputation of Viet Nam in the world arena.

In spite of these difficulties, millions upon millions of Vietnamese are trying their best to build and defend the country, to overcome the present state of destruction, poverty and backwardness and to build a peaceful, independent, united and prosperous Viet Nam.

Patience
This is a great cause which demands, from all Vietnamese their patience, tremendous efforts and sacrifices. It

demands their sense of being masters of their country, self-respect, and self-denial in the interests of the people and of future generations.

Facing this hard choice: to work at this time of need and hardship and to participate in the building of the country, or seek a more comfortable life for themselves, a few have left, just at a time when their homeland needs their contribution most.

In other words, a few thousand people, who were accustomed to a more comfortable life thanks to foreign aid in the past, have left Viet Nam. They could not stand up to the difficulties and hardships caused by 30 years of war. Apart from these people, there were some others who sought by every means to leave. Some were wealthy merchants who in former days thanks to the war, prospered by economic monopolies and speculation. There were soldiers, officers and officials of the former administration and army who took part in the destruction of the country.

In addition, there were Chinese and

demands their sense of being masters of their country, self-respect, and self-denial in the interests of the people and of future generations.

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In addition, there were Chinese and

Vietnamese of Chinese origin, who were incited and organised by the international reactionaries to flee in order to create more difficulties for Viet Nam.

Thus, the "refugee" problem in Viet Nam is the consequence of the war of aggression and of the neo-colonialist regime which existed in Viet Nam for a long time. It also originates from the present anti-Viet Nam policy by the hostile and reactionary forces. The complications for the present situation is that in order to shirk their own responsibility and to cover up their acts of sabotage, the forces hostile to Viet Nam and international reactionaries have levelled slanderous and distorted accusations against Viet Nam claiming that there were "violations of human rights in Viet Nam".



U.S.I. Officers, Pete Davis, Tom Costello, John Gallagher and Padraig Mannion vote on a resolution at Congress.

Anniversary night out

Those plucky enough to brave the extremely inclement weather the night the United Irishman 30th Anniversary Concert was held in Liberty Hall last month were rewarded by being present at a very successful evening of traditional music and song, a comical sketch and of course, the interesting talk given by Cathal Goulding on the part the revolutionary press has paid in our country's history.

Our sincere thanks goes to the artistes who gave their time and talents and of course to the large attendance. Brendan O'Duill was compere and the entertainment was supplied by Tommy and Ann Sands, Francie Grehan, Clann Eadair from Howth, Eilis Moore and Martin Lynch, Kevin Brennan and co. from Belfast.

In the course of his talk Cathal Goulding said:

"When we look back over the past thirty years it is with a great sense of achievement on the progress made, the attitudes we have thrashed out and the policies that have developed as a result.

Our position in the Irish political arena is clearly to the left. Our concern is no longer for some vague principle which none can explain but is for people, for humanity, for progress.

One of the troubles of Irish politics is that we always seem to be celebrating the anniversary of something or other — and that, as often as not, our ideas about the events or people or even achievements that we commemorate are vague.

That isn't how we want it to be, as we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the *United Irishman*. It certainly isn't how it ought to be, as we discuss the role of the revolutionary press, because — to put it simply, and there's no point in doing it any other way — there is nothing more revolutionary than the plain truth.

Revolutionary movements everywhere have been built around the seemingly insignificant apparatus of small papers with small circulations — by comparison with their capitalist counterparts — but with powerful political impact and prestige.

The *Nation* and the *United Irishman* were in circulation even before the Famine. The *Irish People* was a product of the Fenian years, as the *Irish*

Worker was of the struggle of the Dublin working-class against its tyrants.

The lifelong journalism of Davitt produced "The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland" as Connolly's years with the *Worker* produced "Labour in Irish History".

All of these papers and books had several things in common. They were firmly rooted in their times, composed of real experience, clearly written and inspired by the political vision of their authors and clearly intended for the working people and small farmers who were their natural readers and

supporters.

That's how it should be. And that's how we believe it has been with the *United Irishman* in its 30 years of life. For the revolutionary press cannot succeed, unless it is of its time and prepared to change with the times.

Its message cannot be heard and understood unless it is written in the language of the people. It cannot afford the airy luxury of fitting the facts of social, economic and political life to theories, whose originators lived in other centuries, other countries and under quite different conditions.

● Cathal Goulding.



Last month, the Union of Students in Ireland held their Annual Congress. Naturally enough, education was the main item on the agenda, and here the British and Irish Governments stood accused of neglect, mismanagement and class discrimination.

As many of the delegates pointed out, higher education in Ireland is the privilege of the rich. Even if working class people succeed — against all the odds — in finishing secondary school, their chances of getting into a third level college are almost non-existent.

Means-test

The present student grant is so low and so cruelly means-tested that few people benefit. Someone from a two-child family living on the average industrial wage wouldn't qualify for the grant. And if you're not well off you have to be twice as clever. You need four Leaving Cert honours to get the grant, but only two honours to get into most colleges.

USI is fighting for the introduction of a comprehensive grants scheme. While such a scheme would not end discrimination against the working class, it would open up higher education to more people from low income backgrounds.

Concerned

The students are also very concerned about the financing of education in general. At a time when Ireland has a very young population and there's a real need for expansion in education, governments both North and South have introduced vicious cut-backs in spending.

The result is huge class sizes, the lack of the most basic facilities and a serious shortage of teaching staff — at a time when there's high unemployment among qualified teachers.

The USI delegates also attacked Fianna Fáil's economic policies, and in particular the heavy reliance on the private sector to create jobs. They called for state control and development of our natural resources and state control of the banks and other financial institutions.

On Northern Ireland, the delegates reaffirmed their commitment to USI's "Peace, Jobs, Progress" campaign. In particular they called on the British Government to "encourage political activity in the North by instituting a representative Assembly which would have substantial powers to tackle economic and social areas, to be controlled by inbuilt civil rights safeguards."

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● Tomás Mac Giolla (right) meets with Mr. Nord (centre). Also present were Des O'Hagan, Jim Fahy (Ireland's EEC Information Officer) and Seamus Harrison.

TURF LODGE FLATS — A SOCIAL DISASTER

The Turf Lodge estate, comprising some 250 flats and maisonettes and 700+ houses was built in the early sixties on what was then the outskirts of the city to accommodate families being moved out of inner city redevelopment areas.

But in the stampede to provide homes, social conditions and amenities were to be further ignored and so the Belfast City Council, with the blessing of varying shades of Nationalist opinion consented to the extension of ghetto complex in West Belfast... more people, quite crudely meant more votes: and none was to make this point more fittingly than the present member of Westminster for the area Gerry Fitt.

It is the considered opinion of planners that flats/maisonettes complexes will never hold down a stable population: rather there will be continual movement as people, with bigger families, seek houses elsewhere. The problem in West Belfast was, of course, that there were no houses to go to and Turf Lodge flats and maisonettes were to be permanent dwellings.

With the onset of terror however, and despite the massive population influx into West Belfast, small instances of depopulation of the flats began. A family moved out here and there and no one was prepared to move in.

Terror on the streets was primarily responsible for ensuring that the daily repair/maintenance service that such complexes need was suspended and it further resulted in the inability of the social service agencies that could quickly spot a break-down in the overall social fabric, to carry out their work in the area.

Consequently when housing need again reached break-point in West Belfast it was decided to rehabilitate the empty flats... about 30 in all in 1974. There was no major community opposition at the time because the war worn residents believed it better to have someone living in a flat than have an empty one occupied by gunmen... whether in or out of uniform. Further, rehabilitation was going to provide a few jobs in an area of massive unemployment of at least 50%.

But perhaps rehabilitation was, in its own peculiar way, the key that eventually led to the demolition proposal. Rehabilitation meant connecting back into sewerage and drainage systems where it was found, though not revealed, that major land slippage had occurred since the flats were built causing the drainage pipes to be fractured and cracked virtually right along the system. However, that was tomorrow's problem, so they simply patched up here and there.

Determined

But given the gradual reduction in violence and the people's determination to build some type of community there was slowly an awakening that the flats were being allowed to be run down. As the children of families grew older and insisted on play space, none was to be found.

A Republican Clubs The Workers' Party

initiative, led by local Councillor Bernie McDonagh, elected to the City Council in 1974, to have a district centre constructed on waste land nearby, providing recreational facilities, health centre, library, shopping complex, etc., which involved agitation and protest, was the first real stirring of discontent. The intense political debate that accompanied this campaign in the area, through news sheets etc led inevitably to questions being asked about the estate itself.

There was then formed a Flats & Maisonettes' Action Group, led by local Republican Club Chairman Martin Lynch that concerned itself principally with getting the HE and social service agencies back into the estate to carry out day to day tasks. They were partially successful.

Faults

But it soon became very evident that there was little could be done. Each minor repair revealed a major fault. What had been presumed to be dampness/condensation by glib officials soon revealed itself as permanent rain penetration: ceilings fell in during heavy rain; ground floor maisonettes simply flooded; drains and sewers ran down along the street instead of their pipes.

In 1977 a deputation from the Board of the Housing Executive, led by James O'Hara, Chairman, visited the estate with Cllr. McDonagh. Everyone agreed that 'they knew Turf was bad but not this bad.' One visitor said it was worse than anything he had ever seen in Glasgow's Gorbals.

Later that year Housing Minister Ray Carter came to the area at the invitation of Cllr. McDonagh.

Pressure

Continual pressure for action resulted in agreement to install a new bin chute system in some blocks... despite work on this for 18 months they are still not working.

Programme

In August last year RCTWP, in a submission to the Department of Environment proposals for a five year housing programme for West Belfast indicated that the demolition of Turf Lodge, Divis and Moyard flats had to come off any long-term plan and be incorporated into short-term initiatives. For some residents too long had meant death. At a subsequent meeting with the Minister in November that year, led by Cllr. McDonagh and candidate for West Belfast Brian Brennan, the Party reiterated its demand that Turf Lodge be demolished.

Much remains to be done and RCTWP are to the fore in ensuring that the matter is not left lying. The Department of Environment have to consent to the demolition and Cllr. McDonagh has requested a meeting with Mr. Carter to discuss this matter.

Secondly well over half the families now living in the complex are going to have to be rehoused elsewhere.

Fact finding visit to EEC parliament

Having decided to contest the first direct elections to the EEC parliament, Sinn Féin The Workers' Party are now making serious preparations for the contest.

As part of their preparations they availed of the generous subsidy provided by the EEC Information Office for organisations visiting the EEC institutions to send a fact-finding mission to Strasbourg for the opening of the Parliament there.

In January a group of thirty members, drawn from both north and south and led by Party President Tomás Mac Giolla and General Secretary Seán Garland spent five days in Strasbourg.

Purpose

Their purpose in going was to see at first hand how the EEC institutions worked, what effectiveness — if any, the Parliament had, what were the forces which prevented the growth of the Regional Fund, what image Ireland had and what was known of our problems, and also to question the basis on which EEC funds were given to certain political parties for the direct election campaign.

To carry out the programme they had set themselves, the group had to break up into delegations and even then they were at full stretch for the five days.

They had meetings and discussions which, in some cases, extended up to two hours, with Mr. Nord, Secretary General of the Secretariat of Parliament, the Regional Committee of Parliament, the Agricultural Committee, the Women and Youth Committee, the External Relations Committee and the EMS Committee as well as with some of the Irish permanent staff.

Meetings

Delegations from the group also met representatives of the Socialist Parliamentary Group and the Communist and Allies Group. Finally they had a lengthy meeting with a representative of the European Human Rights Commission of the Council of Europe, which of course is completely separate from the EEC institutions.

In between all these meetings they also attended some sessions of the Parliament and had informal talks with some of the Irish members.

Facts

The fact-finding mission found quite a few facts which will be helpful in the election

campaign. One was the fact that the Irish members seem to have been curiously ineffective in the important job of disseminating information about Ireland and the secretariat and different Parliamentary committees do not know precisely the problems which the Irish people face.

Secretary General Nord, a highly intelligent man, who considers himself well informed on all the member countries of the EEC was under the impression that Ireland was a land of peasants.

He was most surprised to hear that less than 10% of the population of the Six Counties and only about 25% of the population of the 26 Counties were engaged in agriculture.

Ignorance

The consequences of this ignorance are far reaching. The top civil servant of the EEC Parliament was not aware of the extent of our urbanisation, of the huge problems of urban poverty facing cities like Belfast and Dublin, of the closures and redundancies in industry, of the low-scale of social welfare benefits, the imbalance in taxation and of child malnutrition as a result of the enormous increase in the price of foodstuffs.

These issues had not been highlighted by the Irish members in the EEC parliament — whether Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael or Labour. All of them have concentrated almost exclusively on the Common Agricultural Policy to the total neglect of industry or the Regional Fund.

In fact they seem to have left the impression that Regional Fund requirements would be to alleviate rural poverty!

Attitudes

During the five day visit the group did an outstanding job in picking the brains of everyone they met and uncovering their ideas and attitudes to issues ranging from the collapse of the timber and leather industries to youth unemployment, civil rights and international peace.

What they learned confirmed the correctness of the decision to contest the EEC elections and to speak on behalf of the working people of Ireland.

Incidentally, they made one thing very clear to Mr. Nord. The element of democracy which the direct elections were supposed to give to the new parliament has been considerably tarnished by the funding system which is designed to ensure that all the advantage will be with the existing parties in the old parliament.

DEFECTS OF CAPITALISM

The Law Society of University College Dublin, had a high powered line-up on February 1st to debate the motion 'That the Benefits of Capitalism far outweigh its Defects'.

The motion was vigorously supported by Senator Noel Mulcahy who seems to have become one of capitalism's chief spokesmen of late.

The Minister for Economic Planning and Development Martin O'Donohue, also supported the motion although his opening remarks were to the effect that he would speak "on the motion rather than for or against it".

He spent most of his speech trying vainly to refute Marx's predictions about the development of capitalism and made this momentous statement:

"The actual ownership of wealth is in many cases of little or no significance. What has become much more important is the question of who has the power to control or influence the use of capital."

Remarks such as this really make one wonder if he man is sane.

Opposing the motion were Seán Garland, General Secretary of Sinn Féin The Workers' Party and John J. Carroll Vice President of the I.T.G.W.U.

Between them they made a powerful and comprehensive case.

They both made the point that you cannot weigh the benefits against the defects of capitalism. "What sort of scales do we employ", said Garland "to weigh the evidence in question?"

"What constitutes admissible evidence? How many lives can be equated with a scientific achievement?"

Both he and John Carroll went on to describe the enormous cost in human misery of any capitalist achievements in the past and the growing inequalities in capitalist societies today. The case for socialism was overwhelming.

ELECTION FUND APPEAL

We are faced with three elections in the coming months, Westminster, EEC and Local Government. Subscriptions urgently required for Head Office Election Fund. Send to Sinn Féin The Workers' Party, 30 Gardiner Place, Dublin 1, Ireland.

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