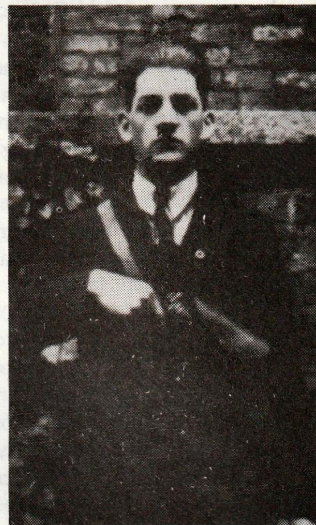
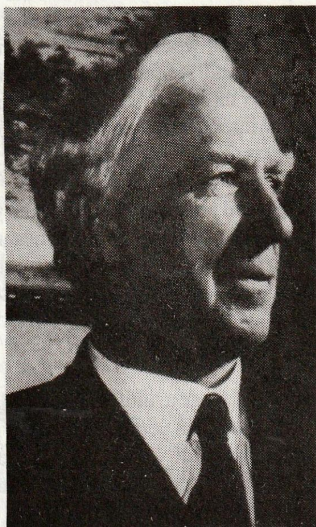


CONGRESS '86

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RALLY TO THE WORKERS AND SMALL FARMERS CAUSE.

In the Ireland of the 1980s, old certainties have gone and a new direction has yet to emerge. We can no longer content ourselves with the knowledge that a clear distinction exists between the political parties in the 26 Counties. Gone are the days when we could reasonably argue that Fine Gael represented exclusively the interests of native capital, large farmers, professional people and our remaining Anglo-Irish, while on the other hand Fianna Fail spoke for the small-farmer, the clerk and even a majority of working class people.

There may, of course, remain a tendency for both parties to separate along the above lines, yet changes in the Irish economy have blurred the distinction over the last twenty years. Fine Gael has moved slightly "down market" to cater for those newly arrived to the middle class. Fianna Fail with its home grown "nouveaux riches" has become the party of business rather than of agriculture.

Both are and have been conservative parties. Fianna Fail just as much as Fine Gael, has always advocated a capitalist society. Yet, they have both represented different constituencies within Irish society. No longer though. Truly we now

have Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee. And herein lies a grave danger.

What is dangerous is not so much the fact that we have two conservative, capitalist parties, but that we have no strong, radical alternative. Workers and small farmers have no strong party to organise around; only the Workers Party and Labour offer any sort of alternative and both of these are neither strong nor radical.

Nor are the dangers of a simple parliamentary kind. For example, where some would have us believe that an amalgamation between Fianna Fail and Fine Gael would lead to a proper Labour or Leftist party emerging to fill the vacuum, such peaceful evolution along English lines is far from probable here in Ireland. There is a much greater likelihood that any coming together of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael would lead us inexorably into a Corporative State*. Into a regime every bit as reactionary as Pinochet's Chile or Chun's South Korea.

Just in case you may be tempted to dismiss this possibility as highly unlikely at best and a wild exaggeration at worst, let us paint a little picture. We know the extent of the crisis facing the Irish economy. Unemployment, emigration and growing impoverishment. All the indications are that this chaos will only get worse in the next few years and informed opinion insists that western economies are drifting back into recession and a deeper one at that too.

*Corporate State - the economic state system which usually underpins fascism. Workers are denied the right to any independent form of organisation which would allow them to bargain for wages, working conditions etc.

For Ireland this will mean increased hardships and growing discontent. Trade Unions will be unable to keep their members in check, small farmers will become more hostile and the unemployed will be less tolerant with an inept political system. In short, Ireland will become practically unmanageable under these conditions. The talk will be of a need for strong government, of the need for an Irish "Thatcher". Our decadent middle classes will countenance any regime that can guarantee the preservation of their elegant, privileged life-style.

Candidates for the role of strong leader will, of course, be many. Who better, for example, than O'Malley of the Progressive Democrats? A man eminently suited to bringing "discipline" to the nation and making the trains run on time. Can he come to power though? Unfortunately the answer is yes and he may do so quite easily. It is not beyond possibility that in an even more desolate economic or political climate that a number of discontented Fianna Fail TDs would cross the floor, to defect from Haughey on the understanding that their old friend O'Malley would become Taoiseach. If Sean McBride could sit beside Blueshirts, could not a few Fianna Fail men sit with Peter Barry?

The new corporate state wouldn't be one of Nuremburg style rallies, silly uniforms and mystic oaths. Nothing quite so ostentatious as that, but it will be pervasive all the same. Absolute compliance by RTE can be taken for granted: the gurus of broadcasting will ensure that whatever measures are taken will appear to be welcomed by all "reasonable" people. When steps are taken to outlaw strikes and demonstrations; emasculate trade unions and protest groups; slash state subsidies and, generally speaking, make Ireland a country totally amenable to the requirements of a ruthless capitalism, there will be only a sporadic, fitfull resistance.

What opposition that does surface will be easily dealt with. A relatively small number of trade unionists, a handful of awkward journalists and a scattering of isolated political

dissidents can all be imprisoned - for the protection of the State. The process can be carried out with such an air of normality that it would be some time before the majority realised the position they had been led into. By then the corporatists would be difficult, if not impossible to dislodge.

The really frightening aspect of this projection is that Irish workers and small farmers are not organised to offer resistance. There is simply no such organisation to do that. Most of our current political parties would be so determined to maintain their legal status and structures that they would confine themselves to a very muted, verbal protest. What few rebels that may escape the internment drag-net might, at best, offer a few ineffective acts of individual terror.

That the chain of events listed above has not yet taken place, is no excuse for complacency. That they might never take place is even less reason for doing nothing. The fact is that at present Irish workers and small farmers are under severe pressure. Every indication is that their hardships will increase regardless of what form the stress takes.

There is, therefore, a need to forge a unified front to defend and liberate the masses of the Irish people. History is never kind to those who tail along behind events. It won't be kind to us if we do not recognise the urgent requirement of today.

We have called before for a new Republican Congress and we do so again. In a previous article we outlined what may be called the offensive reasons for a new congress. The present article points to the defensive or protective reasons for one. Remember that in a struggle to build the Workers and Small Farmers Republic it is also necessary to defend our people. It is imperative that the foundations for a Republican Congress are laid and done so without delay.

John Albert

Multinationals are no solution to jobs crisis!

Chronic unemployment reigns in Ireland today, depriving our people of a future in work and thereby leading to the emigration trail for many. The problem is not alone the result of mismanagement on the part of the native capitalist class. It is also to do with the fact that labour power can be bought for a lot less in third world countries.

The capitalist state would have us believe that jobs can be created if only we would sell ourselves properly. The IDA has pursued this policy, at a heavy cost to the Irish economy. Using massive grant incentives, the IDA attracts capital, rather than labour, intensive industries. These may be profitable projects for foreign investors, but they contribute least to the Irish economy. In 1983, for example, 80% of foreign, multi-nationals' profits were repatriated. The jobs created by these multi-nationals are always

insecure, when profits are threatened, they do not hesitate to close up and move on.

A multi-national corporation has the whole capitalist world to work within. Where-ever the most lucrative profits are to be made, that is where they will move to. For any economy to rely on this "foot-loose" foreign investment, as ours does, is insanity.

The real answer for job creation and development of the Irish economy as a whole, must be state led investment within a socialist planned economy. This type of system, based on workers interests, is vital if a prosperous, industrial base is to be built.

Patrick Donnelly

IMPERIALISM AND THE ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT

The Anglo-Irish Agreement (AIA) seems to have drawn as many putative explanations as the cartoons of Andy Warhol. Some insist that it was designed merely to defeat Sinn Féin. Some believe that its purpose is either to betray the Loyalists or to remove their "veto". Others would have us believe that it is an attempt to fortify a flagging SDLP. The Dublin government even go so far as to claim that it has been formulated at their behest to end the nightmare of Northern nationalists!

There may indeed be a grain of truth in some of these proffered explanations. It's even possible that the AIA may be a cocktail of all of them. Above all though, the agreement is a clever and flexible British creation, drawn up to protect and guarantee British interests in Ireland. It has been a long time since a British Foreign Secretary declared that Britain had neither permanent friends nor permanent enemies - just permanent interests. The passing years have not altered this position. The perfidious old lion does not make platonic agreements with anyone, much less the Irish.

Britain's interests in Ireland are strategic, political and economic - in that order. Ireland must, in the London plan, remain within the British sphere of influence just as much as Belgium is kept within that of France or Mexico within the USA. Finally, in the British view, Ireland must never be left open for a potential attack on the UK. It must therefore be ensured that Ireland remain loyal to NATO, so that the Scandinavian-Ireland pivot remains firmly closed to potential enemies. Ireland in rebellion or an Ireland liberated by revolution would, in British eyes, endanger these requirements.

Politically, the British establishment have the same dread of volatile Ireland that all imperial powers have had in their colonies. Long festering wars overseas have proven to have a dangerous tendency to introduce "seditious" ideas to those countries. Mozambique did it for Portugal and Vietnam for the US. An independent, revolutionary Ireland could, conceivably, be worse. What could possibly be more irksome for Whitehall than the sight of a viable socialist state right on the doorstep of the west?

Economically, Ireland may be less important to Britain now than previously. At the same time, however, Ireland is a useful little market; it is also a convenient source for cheap, white labour and, in times of emergency, a source of food. In the long-term Ireland is profitable at the margin.

These are the interests which the AIA has been drawn up to secure. Once again the British aim to pacify Ireland but this time in such a way that this island remains firmly within the British sphere of influence and in the hands of

Britain's dependable Irish lackeys. In this sad world of realpolitik what threatens British interests most are, as always, the Queen's rebels. Constitutional opposition, no matter how garrulous or excitable, can always be accommodated. The Parliamentary Nationalists of old had greater numbers in Westminster than will be seen again and yet their impact was minimal.

This is not to say that the AIA has the sole objective of defeating the IRA. It goes far deeper than that. Its purpose is to stymie the possibility of country-wide insurrection - something qualitatively different than defeating the IRA.

In order to hold off revolution, several factors must be achieved simultaneously. Blatant sources of discontent must be ended. Intransigent politicians who refuse to recognise this must be emasculated. The rule of the southern capitalist lackeys must be safeguarded while at the same time keeping them dependant on Britain. Lastly rebellious instincts and energies must be channelled into the constitutional process.

The AIA is now emerging as the safeguard for all British interests in Ireland. Already we see the blatant sources of discontent are being tackled. In the six counties housing has slowly improved as have recreational facilities! The worst excesses of discrimination are being attacked. Although discrimination in the private sector still exists, as does the high rate of Catholic unemployment, don't underestimate the ability of capitalism to make reforms here too.

The AIA has given impetus to all these developments while at the same time emasculating the intrasigency of Unionism. In order to make them behave as Britain wants them to, the Unionists are being denied effective political power until they accept some form of power sharing. Because Britain remains the supreme arbiter of affairs in the 6 counties, she retains the ability to elevate or smash the standing of native gombeen men. Those who say and act as London desires will receive a favourable hearing.

The AIA gives power to both Dublin and the SDLP. Not independent and executive power as they would have us believe, but the power of the courtesan. And yet Thatcher can still wield her influence over this country. There will be many aspects of policy covered by the AIA, not just the Diplock Courts and extradition. Still the Dublin bourgeois government will go along with it simply because they fear what the alternative might be. They have already proved themselves incapable of managing their 26 county economy and fear that any spill-over from the north could lead to a class war in the south!

Thus the AIA provides a mechanism for perpetuation of

the rule of the southern bourgeoisie and the influence of their northern partners by judiciously granting them a modicum of power. Since this power is Britain's gift, it cements the dependence of Dublin and the SDLP on Britain.

By the same token the British can channel the rebellious instincts of other less amenable groups in the 6 counties. For a start the more calculating unionists are coming to see advantages to be gained in sharing the system. The Frank Millars and Peter Robinsons are only temporarily in abeyance.

So too perhaps with Sinn Fein. In competition with the SDLP for a sizable section of nationalist votes, they too will feel the pinch if unable to deliver mundane benefits. In the same way as has been used against the unionists, skillful manipulation of the rewards/punishments roundabout, the British can draw the SF bedrock further along the road of constitutional reformism. It won't happen overnight, but what ever does?

The very fact that SF must put extra resources into community activity in order to counteract the SDLP has resulted in manpower and finance being drawn away from the war. Thus helping to achieve the British objective of drawing the most disaffected along the parliamentary road.

By a strange paradox therefore the AIA's design vis a vis SF may not be to see them defeated at all. The British are too long in the tooth to ignore the underlying social problems which account for Sinn Fein's existence. Their singular purpose is to drag the rebels down from the hills and into the political chambers. From a British point of view, the beauty of this tactic must be its subtlety. The essence of the AIA is that it serves a simple objective by addressing a complexity of issues and yet still remains virtually intangible.

In many ways it has the inherent dangers of the Act of

Union. There really isn't a lot to be attacked. There is nothing similar to the old Stormont to be brought down. It is, by its nature, a negative sort of device - to prevent rather than construct. How then can we actually prevent the British from negotiating with people who would sell us out over our heads?

Herein lies the problem for all who attempt to rally support against the AIA. As we have seen the unionists have spectacularly failed in trying this approach and so too will others who attempt the same methods. So should we jump into apathetic inaction? Should we leave the problem unsolved because we can't end it? Of course not. It's much too great a threat to the cause of Irish labour to allow that to happen.

We must come to understand the nature of the AIA. It cannot be broken by confrontation since there is nothing to confront. It will only be broken by rendering it redundant, by making it an irrelevancy. There is only one way to do this and that is to develop and activate unity among the class forces which cannot ultimately be appeased by this agreement. We must therefore concentrate our attack on the problems created by Imperialism and Capitalism in Ireland. Unemployment, emigration, low paid work, political oppression and the problems of small farmers. These problems are the visible, physical manifestations of imperialism and capitalism. By organising a struggle against them we challenge directly their very existence.

We must rally people around a common standard to demand the only possible solution to these problems. That solution is a Workers and Small Farmers Republic. In this way alone will the AIA be defeated, just as the 1920 Government of Ireland Act was defeated in the 26 counties.

*Footnote - Appreciation to our comrades in Reabhlóid for a reminder of a previous oversight.

Photo: Derek Speirs



CRITIQUE OF THE PROPAGANDA WAR

One of the saddest things that anybody ever has to do is to be forced to clinically analyse the mistakes of the brave and selfless.

It is easy to criticise the charlatan but how painful it is to question the wisdom of the hero.

Yet if we don't the hero will continue to die at the behest of the charlatan.

At the heart of this problem in Ireland is the disastrous misconception that the resolution of conflict is a matter of will rather than the gaining of hard material advantage. We do not seem to have learned yet the implications of that useful question: how many battalions has the Pope? Perhaps the strangest paradox of Irish society is that the people best known for physical force are those most ignorant of this misconception. So absorbed are they in making war that the very purpose of making war seems to have totally escaped them.

This is not to say that these same people do not know what it is they wish to achieve. In that respect their aims are both admirable and admirably clear. An end to British occupation and the establishment of a Democratic Socialist Republic. Nor should one suggest that those who are thus engaged do so on behalf of a number of shadowy and sinister "godfathers". The situation is much more complex than that. Indeed for the most part the godfather is the creation of the British Yellow-Press. In the vast majority of cases (and more so over the past few years) those involved in physical force are mature and experienced adults.

No, the problem with physical force in Ireland is not one of evil manipulation by brutal people. The malaise runs much deeper than that and is subsequently more difficult to cure. The basis of the problem lies in a misconception that force can be used to change or undermine the will of the opposition, that by carrying out a sufficient number of operations at a certain level, the opposition will become unwilling to pay the price in political unpopularity.

Inextricably connected to this method of thinking is the ever present need for propaganda. With the underlying *raison d'être* being one of breaking the opponents will, goes the obvious necessity of demonstrating to him the awfulness of his situation. It would be pointless after all if the enemy were not made aware of the damage inflicted on him. Thus the yardstick for the relative success of any and every action is measured by the number of column inches and broadcasting minutes it earns. This is the logic behind the thinking that casualties among the regular army are of more value than similar casualties inflicted on their local equivalents.

Why, we might ask? Are both not equally armed and equipped? Does the local knowledge of the part-

timers not compensate for their marginal inferiority in skill. The reason for the difference is that the regular casualty will have a greater impact on the public will of the British homeland. The propaganda battle becomes all important. Every action is geared to and designed to accommodate it. What makes propaganda is useful and what goes unobserved abroad is discarded.

The objective for the physical force people becomes one of making propaganda by their deeds. And lest anyone think that propaganda is something carried out by politicians alone, or by a political wing alone, let us look at this a little deeper. In the eyes of some, propaganda may well be the type of publicity work done in and through newspapers and magazines. It may seem to the media to be only interviews and speeches made with and by spokespersons at public meetings. True enough this is one form of propaganda.

Ultimately though, what is it that gives these spokespersons a platform? Why is it that the world listens to their message? It's certainly not their political acumen or their insights into economics. It is, bluntly, the fact that they represent the people of physical force. The spokespersons may honestly argue that they are the chosen representatives of the people of force. That may well be so but it doesn't change the fact that their voice is only as strong as the propaganda generated by those carrying arms. A fact that seems to have escaped all and sundry is that there are few who vote for these peoples' transparent social policies. A vote for the spokesperson is a vote of confidence for the armed struggle.

In turn, what is the strategy underlying the campaign of force? It quite obviously is not designed to deny the opposition territorial control. If it were, no energy would be wasted on irrelevant targets. It patently isn't designed to support the authority of an alternative administration: there isn't one. It isn't the phase of armed propaganda (armed propaganda and propaganda by the deed are very different) because there are no commissars. So what is it then?

It is a strategy based on a theory crudely summed up in the often repeated phrase of "send them home in boxes and they'll scream to bring their troops home". The logic being that public opinion in Britain will force their leaders to organise for withdrawal. The

target, therefore, is British "public opinion" more than actual British armed might. The purpose behind any attack is ultimately to change this "public opinion"; to influence it. This is in sharp contrast to conventional military thinking (be it regular army or guerrilla) which understands war to be a method of physically preventing an enemy exercising his will. It is this strategy of attempting to undermine the "will" of the enemy rather than his physical ability which makes this struggle a propaganda war. When the objective is public opinion, we can use whatever euphemism we want to describe the action. It may be advertising; a hard sell; a publicity campaign or a propaganda war but it all amounts to the same thing. Arms are being used merely to deliver a message.

Some pertinent questions must therefore be asked. First, is this a criticism of the brave men who fight? In a nut-shell, most definitely NO. They are the victims, not the authors of a dreadfully wrong analysis. Second, is this a correct analysis of the logic behind the campaign of physical force? In the following article we shall outline the evidence for the assertion. Third, why is the long held belief in a strategy of influencing British "public opinion" so tragically mistaken? That also requires an article in its own right. Finally, what is the alternative? Does one in fact exist? Yes, there is an alternative and it will be laid out and we shall continue to lay it out until it has exposed the utter paucity of the thinking of the present day strategists.

LOUGHGALL

THE ASSERTION EXAMINED

We must now examine the assertion that the present physical force campaign has for its logic, a war of propaganda. Many examples could be used but two recent events will suffice. One involved the death of a man attempting to throw a hand-grenade into a police barracks in Belfast. The other ended in the death of eight IRA men during an attack on another police barracks at Loughgall in County Armagh.

The two events differ only in so much as in the former case death was accidental. In the latter, death was inflicted by the British and the casualties were many. On both occasions, the fallen men were of immense courage. They had little fear for their personal safety and died showing heroic bravery. Of that let there be no doubt. Yet there are other similarities between both operations. A commonality which makes for sad recounting.

To understand why, let us pose the question: what would have been the result if both events had been unqualified successes? Let us imagine that the grenade had landed in the courtyard of Springfield Road Barracks and that Loughgall Barracks had been

demolished. That all the men involved had managed to return safely. What then would the outcome have been? To what extent would the Empire's grip on Ireland have been slackened? A short answer to the last question is - practically none.

A small explosion in the Belfast case, would have hardly interrupted the daily routine of the occupants. A couple of policemen would have been assigned to make a note of the details. The rest would have continued to patrol the local area, to man the garrison and to conduct whatever other activities the militia engage in. Not one activist would have avoided arrest as a result of it. Not one car would have avoided being searched in its aftermath. The process of gathering information would hardly have been checked nor would house-searching have been prevented. If anything, this entire syndrome would have been intensified.

So what conceivable use was there for the attack? Only one: to gain publicity, to make propaganda. To earn a few minutes air space, a couple of lines in the newspapers, to show that the organisation was still alive in the area.

Ah! Finn, bhí do chuid fola níos mó fuínteach na sin!

And what of Loughgall? What would have happened had it turned out different? The conclusions are depressing. If other cases are anything to go by the police would have secured the area within hours. Before daylight on the following day, portable accommodation, together with radio and telephone communications, would have been installed. Apart from the inconvenience of the temporary arrangements there would have been no appreciable hindrance inflicted upon crown effectiveness.

The very siting of the barracks almost dictated this. The RUC do not even need an out-post to control that part of Armagh. By the same token republican forces would have gained no material advantages by destroying it. One does not have to be privy to any information to know (or at least make an educated guess) that Loyalist Loughgall, even without a barracks, is hardly an ideal location for republican training camps; as a route for munitions; as a safe area for resting or for any other form of republican activity. Nor indeed was it an essential outpost for the crown. Its continued existence was more for political than practical reasons. It wasn't a vital link in any chain. It served neither as a training depot nor a communication base. It didn't house great numbers of men or materials. In the eyes of the crown it was almost an irrelevancy.

In effect, it wasn't worth the trouble of taking, since it neither gave control of an area nor posed a danger to any other. So why was it attacked? As always, for



the same reasons, to make a point, to create propaganda. Because if we can find no military significance in its destruction and we can rule out vandalism as the motive, there then only remains the publicity value of this place being attacked.

Finally, do these two actions and their logic fairly represent the conduct of the physical force campaign in general? Within reason they do. The yard-stick by which one measures this is to determine whether any action is designed to impair the opposition's physical ability to function or whether it is only capable of influencing his opinions and his will. It may come as a surprise to many how often it is the latter.

A FUTILE EXERCISE

A pertinent question now must be whether it is at all possible to influence public opinion or the will of Britain's leaders by such activities. In this case we must be utterly clear-headed while making this examination. We dare not be distracted by anger or passion, no matter how understandable it may be. The question is: **Can the British Government be forced to withdraw from Ireland as a result of public pressure, or influenced by acts of physical force?** Maybe the question should be, can the British Government afford to be forced? No matter, in either case the answer is no.

This conclusion goes very much against the grain of republican physical force thinking. So patience please, and let us explain. It is essential here that we have a firm grasp of the role of the government in any state.

Unless the title is purely honorary and therefore meaningless, a sovereign government must have the

final and ultimate right to decide on policy and legislation. This is not necessarily a moral right, a government might be downright corrupt. In this case that is of no importance. What is important to realise is that any and every government must secure for itself the imperative ability to govern. It cannot concede this power, in part or in total to any other body.

And why is this? Because were it to do so, the other body would have the power to govern which would then make it the government. For this very reason, no government, never mind the British, can afford to have its policy changed by any propaganda campaign. Much less one generated by the use of physical force. The reason for this has nothing to do with the fortitude or courage of the political executive. It is quite simply because if it were to do so it would no longer be the de facto government.

That position would then rest with any group of people with access to a quantity of war material. Those with dynamite wouldn't just be influencing the government - they would be the government. This is the fundamental reason why a propaganda war is doomed to failure. Other specific factors also add to the weakness of the strategy. One of which is the actual intensity of operations, another the power of the opposition to manipulate their own media and a third, the imperial tradition of the British.

In the case of the first instance - intensity - British regular army casualties, after sixteen years in Ireland, are hardly greater than those suffered in four weeks on the Malvinas. Taking into account the size of British population and the spread of time, the impact is, frankly, minimal. Bear in mind also that the British army is totally voluntary. Nobody is legally forced to join. As with any other dangerous occupation undertaken for remuneration, the most common reaction by the uninvolved is "if you take the

king's shilling, you engage the king's enemies".

Coupled with this type of public indifference is another reaction. That of imperial jingoism. After at least 300 years of fighting colonial wars (and benefiting financially from them) the British - working class included - are accustomed to losing men in small wars or "pacification campaigns" as they used to be known. Fighting the Irish is not new for them; the very first standing army in Britain was built to combat the Irish. Their entire media assists in ensuring that this mentality continues. We should be realistic about the influence of even a substantial number of well meaning radicals in Britain in the face of such universal opposition. Even were British casualties much greater it would be portrayed as death in defence of the British way of life. As for international foreign opinion - how many capitalist states condemned Britain when Bobby Sands died? How many French or Germans vote in a British general election?

What we are saying is that it is totally useless to fight a physical force campaign geared to "change the climate of British public opinion" in order to "undermine the will of the British to remain in Ireland". The will of the British to rule never has and never will be undermined. In terms of "will" they have the "will" to rule China, India, Africa and any other country where they held sway. It is not a lack of "will" which prevents Britain from ruling any or all of these countries. They would do so tomorrow if they could. What prevents them doing so is their physically and military inability to dominate these places.

WHAT ALTERNATIVES EXIST?

The analysis outlined above is bleak and maybe even depressing but that is not to say that it counsels surrender. In fact it can provide us with the means to succeed. Realism is, after all, a prerequisite for victory.

Having identified the futility of a strategy based on a war of propaganda (the break the British will syndrome) we must insist on placing total emphasis on a different strategy. A strategy based on breaking Britain's physical ability to remain in Ireland. This will come about when the Westminster Parliament is unable, militarily, to make its writ run in Ireland. When in place of a foreign writ, that of the Irish people is physically capable of being enforced.

The idea is not really a new one. It is basically just another way of saying make Ireland ungovernable by the British and in their place institute the authority of Dail Eireann. You have heard it somewhere before, no doubt, but the understanding of its im-

plementation seems to have been lost somewhere between Crossbarry and Loughgall.

Acknowledging its import is not enough though. It must be understood what its implication involves. That is nothing less than a peoples' popular war, the whole-hearted commitment of a population to do battle. Since this is not a military manual we must leave the tactics of popular war unmentioned: the broad concept is what matters. A final word on a genuinely popular cause what constitutes such a popular cause in contemporary Ireland is material for another day, another debate.

To conclude then with a few words of optimism. With a popular cause and a peoples' war we beat the Black and Tans, with those same assets we'll bury their sons and their sons' allies.

Liam O'Connor

CONSTERNATION IN THE RANKS!

Since bringing out the first edition of Congress '86, reaction has trickled back to the authors. Readers opinions on the venture were varied. "Whole-hearted and unqualified approval", was one view. This generous praise came from a contributor's mum, no less! We are well pleased that she has such regard for her son's efforts!

As for the rest, many found the paper complicated and difficult to read. We are working on this so please be patient. Possibly it's because we spend so long talking to each other that we take so much for granted. Another reaction was a polite rebuke from a feminist. We made the unforgivable error of overlooking the problems of women, again we hope to remedy this problem shortly.

Feminists were not alone in feeling slighted, it has been brought to our attention that other groups were also disappointed not to get a mention. Again, it wasn't intentional and we're sorry for the oversight. Other responses ranged from the warmly interested to the outright hostile. Here are some of the things said about the paper in reviews:

An Reabhlaid: "This journal is ample evidence of the waste of talent and intellect that the lack of proper channels of communication and publication is causing among the present POW population..... Points are well expressed and the prisoners are clearly bursting with ideas."

Class Struggle: "The journal's supporters, in breaking with Sinn Fein, have turned in the direction of revolutionary Marxism and show a healthy openness towards serious, frank and fraternal debate and socialist regroupment."

MITCHELL WOULDN'T SAY UNCLE!

By an overwhelming 406 votes to 15, the Irish Distributive And Transport Union was suspended from the Irish Congress of Trades Unions for one year. What a sad reflection on organised labour in this country. The most consistently radical union in the country finds itself summarily outside Congress for what appears, on the surface, to be the most trivial of reasons.

Ostensibly, IDATU was suspended because it refused to apologise for a remark made by its leader, John Mitchell, in an interview with the Belfast newspaper, the Andersonstown News. During the course of the interview Mitchell referred to Northern trades unions in general and USDAW in particular as "Uncle Toms". For this peccadillo, the ICTU found it necessary to remove the franchise of 22,000 unionised workers from the field of unified labour action.

The ranks of organised labour must feel exceptionally strong to demand such awesome discipline. Few indeed, it would seem, are the problems faced by the working class if such a sanction is felt to be justifiable. Irish workers have taken charge of their own destiny at last? Of course it is obvious that Irish workers are not in such a strong and healthy position. We have mass unemployment and its concomitant emigration. Many of those who do have jobs are poorly paid. Each day we are witness to deep cut-backs in the public sector and continuous closures in the private sector. All of these clearly illustrate the plight of Ireland's workers.

So, how on earth can the ICTU afford to do without the services of IDATU for a whole year? The "crime", after all, wasn't really so heinous. Even the Dail doesn't hold its majesty so precious!

But perhaps there was more to this decision than meets the eye. Maybe Mitchell and his union caused more anxiety among the other unions than merely ruffling the feathers of a few "big-wigs" in Belfast. No doubt, IDATU and its leader are in some ways unconventional. Since assuming the leadership, Mitchell has changed what was once an insipid union, into one of the country's most militant. This in itself is a major achievement as IDATU recruits largely among the poorly paid end of the service sector, a sector which has been most difficult to organise.

Mitchell, himself is unapologetic about his desirability to see a British withdrawal from Ireland. He has also given support to the promotion of the Irish language. On their own, these two issues are probably enough to make him appear dangerously radical in the eyes of the ICTU bureaucracy. And yet, his radicalism doesn't end there, it was IDATU members, with the support of their union, who took a brave stand against apartheid in the Dunnes Stores

strike. Where others have offered words, they took direct action. IDATU also have a record of assisting traveling people. On many occasions Mitchell has spoken from public platforms about the need to actively help the poor and the unemployed.

Nor has he stopped at simply lending support to such causes. At one time he called for a Campaign to build an All-Ireland Socialist Party. Hardly a welcome idea with the various party political interests in the ICTU. Might this then indicate the real reasons for the heavy handed approach that has been taken against IDATU? Bear in mind too that some uncomfortable ghosts walk the floors of places such as Liberty Hall. Ghosts of men who once organised the poor and unskilled labour of Dublin, Cork, Limerick etc.

THEY didn't just build a fighting union in the face of opposition from selfish craft guilds. It wasn't only a case of scaring Irish capital to its roots. They built a political movement with the potential to change this country. That their hopes suffered a humiliating betrayal in later years was not the fault of those men and women who founded the One Big Union and the Labour Party.

Of course, it would be unwise to cast Mitchell and IDATU in the role of Connolly, Larkin and the old Labour movement. But what we can say is that for many of the timorous people who make up today's ICTU, there are sufficient similarities to have them panic. Many sections of the current labour movement have betrayed their members by agreeing to anti-working class pacts, like for example, Haughey's "Programme for National Recovery" and other arrangements dictated by the owners and managers of capital.

Too many trade unionists are only too willing to act within a very limited set of parameters. They are the essence of "reasonableness" and "common sense". They defend, if it is possible to defend, workers pay rates and working conditions. They lobby for a more equitable form of taxation and pay lip service to deploring unemployment. Nevertheless the country's present economic plight demands more radical remedies. The soft options of the '60s and '70s no longer exist. It is not enough to merely represent employed union people, while depending on government and capital to provide jobs and a sound economic environment.

Since 1922 Irish Governments and Irish owners of capital have proven incapable of developing the resources of the State. Apart from a brief interregnum in the previous two decades, when international factors, rather than any internal measures, allowed for a modicum of prosperity for

some, the story of the Irish economy has been one of failure. Our politicians have tried capitalism with protection (high tariffs to hinder imports), and it failed. They have been trying capitalism within the EEC free-market, and this has failed. What will not fail and what has not been attempted is an economy properly planned by and for working people.

This concept of an economy planned in the interests of the workers, rather than the owners of wealth, is not new. However it is an idea that is not widely understood by Irish workers, who have been fed the lie continuously by a capitalist media. Trade Unions and trade union activity, on their own, cannot correct this lack of knowledge. They can though, do an enormous amount to help, if they choose. By acting as agents for change - agents to enlighten workers.

We cannot say for certain that this is what Mitchel and IDATU have been attempting, but, whether consciously or not, if they pursue this course the momentum of their actions will carry them along this welcome path. Welcome, that is, to those who are prepared to struggle for a Workers' Republic, to those who won't settle for the crumbs from the rich mans table. Was this, perhaps, the real reason for the suspension of IDATU? Was this why the trade union bosses of the ICTU expelled the "Voice of Justice, the Voice of Freedom". Because when it came to a compromise with Capitalism, Mitchel refused to say "Uncle".

Mary Ryan

IRELAND TODAY AND TOMORROW

That the border is a major contributing factor to the chronic unemployment and poverty facing our people is undoubtedly true. To identify it as the main cause is not only false but dangerous, as this leads to the conclusion that reunification is the panacea for all our problems. Unemployment is the direct result of capitalism and the failure of any socialist party to understand and promote this fact is an act of gross political incompetence. Profit is the dynamo which drives this system. Profit gained by the labour of the working class is used by private individuals, who invest it as capital into whichever area or industry which promises the highest returns. The outcome is the anarchic production of goods and services, not because they are socially useful, but because they are profitable. The system is inherently cyclical, with periods of growth followed by periods of recession.

Marxist economists offer the most coherent explanation of this slump and boom cycle, which causes so much human suffering. They identify two types of crisis, both caused by the falling rate of profit. The first they call crisis of realisation. Stripped to its most basic components, the argument runs that as workers are paid less than the price at which the goods they produce are sold, in the long term capitalists will find themselves producing goods which they cannot sell. It's not that people may not need the produce, it's simply that they cannot afford it. The results are obvious; producers will cut back on output and lay off workers, leaving people with less in their pockets to spend. This means production still outpaces demand, so more workers are laid off and we witness a downward slide into recession.

The second kind of a crisis is termed a crisis of accumulation. In this instance strong, unionised workers push up their wages and eat into profits, so the capitalist has no incentive to invest. Workers are laid off,

and again the end result is a slump. Unemployment therefore, under a capitalist system is endemic, whether workers are weak or strong.

Since the end of the second world war, the Keynesian economic policies followed by most western governments appeared to have solved the problem. In essence what Keynes advocated was that when profits were falling due to lack of demand, the government should increase its spending, employing those laid off and providing the wage packets to increase demand for goods. Then as industry responded to this by taking on more workers, government could cut its spending and, by acting in this regulatory role, ensure full employment.

In the '30s, the depression had been due to lack of demand, so the Keynesian approach worked. In the '70s however, with full employment, the strong labour force pushed up wage demands, and rightly so. This and other external factors, such as the rise in the price of oil, bit into profits. Investment fell and left us with the massive unemployment figures of the '80s. This conflict between the working class insisting on high wages and employers wanting maximum profits, leaves the capitalist system unstable.

No amount of piece-meal tinkering by parties following social democratic policies can alleviate the hardships and suffering. We have witnessed the tax concessions, de-rating and sundry subsidies, all used to attract investment, and in turn employment, into Ireland. We are now living with the result. As for the much vaunted membership of the E.E.C., only a fool would believe that the likes of Britain, Germany and France have any interest in helping Ireland to industrialise. Any party claiming socialist credentials must, of necessity, advocate government planning on a huge scale in the economy. The nationalisation of banking is imperative, and the establishment of a national development body to co-ordinate investment on a national scale, is the only hope we have of employing this young and growing population. The present external debt of £8440 million represents a phenomenal drain on our resources. Where we once struggled to win freedom from the absentee land-lords, today it is foreign owned industry and banks who bleed the country of its wealth.

This is not to say, of course, that there can be no role for private industry, but investment must be geared towards the long term interest of the Irish people. We can look for examples amongst other post-colonial socialist countries, such as Zimbabwe, where the need for private industry is recognised, yet they place their emphasis on Government planning and investment. At present much of the foreign investment in Ireland leaves us producing a specific component for a product and thereby integrating us into a world economy over which we have absolutely no control. If we have a firm producing one part of an I.B.M. machine, that firm and its workers are totally dependant on the decisions of directors in London or New York. Hardly the type of freedom we crave!

We have often heard the specious argument that the lack of mineral resources dooms us to a future of poverty. A cursory examination of the barren land the Japanese people have made prosper gives the lie to this rubbish. Our greatest asset is our people. The establishment of state funded research and development facilities, followed by production and aggressive international marketing is the path to prosperity. The colonial brand has been burned deep into our psyche. We wait passively for the Americans, Germans, anyone, to develop a product and then honour us by availing of our cheap labour and generous tax perks.

Those who aspire to lead this country out of the morass will most certainly not do so by following a blend of ad hoc pluralist measures. They must have confidence in the people and know exactly where they are going. Let those who have the vision of a socialist country have the nerve to propose the massive changes that are necessary. Our future lies not within the large, capitalist, trading bloc of the E.E.C. but with other socialist and non-aligned countries. Of one thing we can rest assured: **Mediocrity will not bring about radical change.**

Séan McGlynn

The SDLP:

A prop for imperialism in Ireland

The left is as susceptible to the currency of rhetoric and empty catch-phrases as anyone else. In the 6 counties, republicans and left wing activists often tend to dismiss the SDLP as Castle Catholics or middle class constitutionalists. Like all stereotypes, these hide more than they reveal and are useless to the activist genuinely interested in revolutionary change.

The SDLP has its roots in the old Nationalist Party and the civil rights campaign. It never did claim to be a proletarian party seeking revolutionary change. John Hume's dictum, "politics is the art of the possible" reflects a philosophy based more on hope than on programme.

Politics is indeed the art of the possible - what matters, though is what a person or a party considers possible. In the hands of the reformist this can be taken to mean that reforms can be bargained for in exchange for support for the status quo; while in the hands of the revolutionary, the "art of the possible" can mean that reforms, or more accurately, transitional demands, are used to speed the revolution.

The SDLP, which was formed with basic anti-imperialist tendencies, following their "art of the possible" have ended up in practice, supporting imperialism, against the forces for radical and revolutionary change. The Anglo-Irish Agreement and the SDLP's role in its formulation, illustrates this pro-imperialist and thus, pro-British position clearly. Taken to its logical conclusion, the SDLP are now supporting a system which has given us unemployment, emigration, poverty, interrogation centres, health and social security cuts as well as increased spending on security.

For some then, the real question in Irish politics has become, "is imperialism reformable". When applied to the politics of the SDLP the answer must be a simple yes. Imperialism is reformable. It is very flexible. Imperialism had all the flexibility and ingenuity to become the highest stage of capitalism. Imperialism can deliver, housing schemes, farm subsidies, modern industry, technical revolution, etc etc. For these reasons being a pro-imperialist in Ireland in 1987 and working for what may be possible does have its attractions.

However it also has its price. For every flashy car on our roads, there are dozens of Philipino children living from

what they can scavenge from rubbish tips. For every Cruise missile there are thousands of people living in the sewers of Calcutta. For us in Ireland imperialism has meant Flags and Emblems Acts while people die on the streets of the six counties, and the fantastic personal wealth of the Smurfits and O'Reillys while thousands are homeless throughout the 26 counties. Imperialism is built on exploitation, both national and class exploitation. At its core is the accumulation and control of surplus value. While it may appear to be flexible, it is always exploitative.

By its very nature, imperialism can never cater for the majority. So does it have anything to offer the SDLP or those they represent? At most it may offer some jobs, influence and wealth. But, like the rest of us, in a time of recession, many of them will be made unemployed or forced to emigrate. Despite this, classical theory indicates that the national bourgeoisie, part of which is represented by the SDLP, will, in their political activity, swing like a pendulum back and forth between support for imperialism and support for the national anti-imperialists.

In practice, since the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the SDLP has firmly and most consistently been working in the interests of the imperialists. It is up to us, as revolutionaries, to break this connection with the imperialists. In the course of our political work, therefore, we must ensure that we antagonise and drive into the arms of the imperialist, as few of our national forces as possible. There is a populist tendency within the SDLP. Perhaps we could begin by encouraging this. To take a concrete example, when the SDLP expose sectarian disparity of prison sentences, as they did recently, they should be challenged to expose the sectarian disparity in employment, unemployment, the standard of living etc.

Constitutionalism alone is a bourgeois concept, not a revolutionary one. Constitutional politics of the kind we have in Ireland or any capitalist country, are bourgeois politics. We need to create an awareness of the weakness of bourgeois politics and popularise the importance of proletarian democracy. We must fight the notion that constitutional and bourgeois politics is the level that people are at when this is used to dismiss the need to even think about any form of proletarian democracy.

Steeped in their tradition of constitutional politics and the "art of the possible", the SDLP believe that power should be left with themselves and their friends in the representative chambers. While they adhere to such politics, then of course they must accept responsibility for the oppression that system breeds. We must make them aware of this and we must also develop our alternative, proletarian, democratic organisations. Imperialism has nothing to offer this country, our future must lie with socialism, the Workers Republic and an end to exploitation.

EMIGRATION: A SHAMEFUL SPECTACLE

"We shouldn't be defeatist or pessimistic about it. We should be proud of it. After all we can't all live on a small island" Brian Lennihan, Tanaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

"A country that cannot care for its own people is a shameful spectacle", so a television talk show host declared recently. His guests sadly nodded their heads in agreement.

The Ireland we live in today is, seemingly, unable to sustain a total population of only five million (3.5 million in the twenty-six counties). People are leaving in their thousands to look for work abroad. About 100,000 have left the twenty-six counties over the last three years and another 150,000 are expected to join them over the next five years. An estimated 70,000 Irish emigrants are living in the USA illegally, and 200,000 of those left behind here applied, last year, to the American State Department for 3,000 Special Entry Visas.

The 26 county economy, the most woeful in Europe, and the illegal partition of Ireland are jointly to blame for the forced emigration of the country's most energetic young people, who have been forced to flee from a state incapable of offering them jobs or hope. Unemployment is rampant, with over 70,000 fully dependant on social welfare. Altogether one and a half million people depend on social welfare for some or all of the year.

On the industrial front, at least 47% of the top 1,000 manufacturing companies in the country are foreign owned. American companies make their highest rate of profit in Ireland, a profit of over 30%. In the main, this profit is repatriated to their headquarters and not re-invested in Ireland. Those workers fortunate enough to have a job face a tax system which discriminates against them by taxing their income at source rather than taxing wealth and/or property. 85% of all income tax comes from PAYE workers. The foreign debt per head, in the twenty six counties, is about twice as high as that of Mexico or Brazil. Servicing this national debt costs the Irish economy almost as much as is collected in income tax in one year!

The small farmers are facing ruin. Over 30% of family farms have incomes of £3,000 or less per annum. 70% of Irish farms are classified as non-viable by the E.E.C., this means that these farms are ineligible for most grants, so forcing people to leave them. As a result the rural population has dropped by 23% over the past 70 years. Potatoes and other food-stuffs are imported while only 6% of the land is used for growing food. 400,000 live cattle are exported every year, causing massive job losses in Irish industry.

Despite the enormity of the immediate problems confronting the Irish workers and small farmers, most people, living in the 26 counties, still support the reunification of the country. However, despite that aspiration, they continually elect one or other of the two most reactionary political parties, Fianna Fail or Fine Gael to power. That this is so is due to the fact that the Irish worker and small farmer has yet to realise that, as Connolly said, **"The struggle for Irish freedom has two aspects; it is national and it is social"**.

In the partitioned six counties area Sinn Féin are the main contenders for the nationalist working class vote. Politically, Sinn Féin are absolutely correct on one point, they argue that the northern state cannot be reformed but instead must be smashed. But Sinn Féin is a Nationalist party rather than a revolutionary socialist organisation. To SF the problems of the Irish economy are a result of being "an extension of the British one". They fail to point the finger at capitalism itself. Instead they hold the hope that all Irish men and women, whatever their class, can be won over to the "struggle for independence".

The problem with this line of thought is that it fails to take into account that many of the nationalist bourgeoisie have a vested interest in maintaining partition as a bulwark against the possibility of a Workers Republic being established. It is not that this class is betraying Ireland, it is simply the fact that they know where their class interests lie. The Irish people, like the people of other capitalist countries, are divided into the master class and the working classes. It is precisely because the chief task of the workers and small farmers is socialism, that they alone are capable of carrying the national fight with Britain to a conclusion. The class interests of the workers and small farmers, will drive them beyond the national independence of the country towards the social liberation of the working masses - to socialism.

The workers and small farmers are the only people capable of achieving the great task of leading the masses to complete national and social emancipation. To carry out this task they must organise their forces into a revolutionary movement to lead the struggle. Only the class conscious proletariat can thwart every attempt to deceive the people, to curtail their rights, to make them a mere tool in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Only the creation of a Workers Republic can bring to an end the shameful spectacle of a country no longer capable of caring for its own people. Comrades, let us set ourselves the task of building such an organisation.

Angela Maguire

PATRIOTISM AND WORKING PEOPLE

Revolutionary socialists, without equivocation, consistently support and promote two inter-related issues: the interests of the working class and the identification of the source of domination which keeps that class in subjection. Irrespective of how "progressive" various brands of nationalism may or may not be, the fact remains that nationalist appeals do not differentiate between social classes, instead they appeal to all classes in the name of the nation. If class divisions are "concealed" then their causes remain "unknown"! It is therefore a logical conclusion that one cannot even hope to "solve" the problem unless one firstly understands the "causes" of it.

Workers must understand the real source of their continued enslavement. While it is important to talk about "the nation", its unity and self-determination, this alone will not alleviate workers problems, nor will it draw their widespread support and energies to the revolutionary forces. Workers must learn to understand the nature of class domination, and no amount of nationalist rhetoric can fulfil that undertaking. Promotion of a "class consciousness" is therefore essential.

This can be achieved whilst simultaneously promoting the "patriotic" elements of national or cultural values and opinions specific to our people. The patriotic resistance to the occupation of our country by a foreign and alien power, and the specific Gaelic, cultural tradition of our people, are but two examples.

In this sense, a national outlook and Marxist ideology are neither opposites or incompatible, as the patriotic elements which underpin the former can be harnessed to the latter. However, the political objectives and goals of "nationalism" must be subordinated to the political objectives and goals of the working class. So in this sense, class ideology and class consciousness must, at all times, take precedence.

Revolutionary forces seeking to transform society are always accompanied by a revolutionary ideology embracing radical ideas and promoting radical structures and radical solutions to alleviate the problems and injustices evident in society. In a late twentieth century Irish context, there is nothing new or radical about nationalism. For over a hundred years it has been part of our history and many revolutionary movements have tried to weave it into a coherent ideology capable of mobilising social forces, to strike for freedom. The formation of the 26 county state, arguably, may be seen as a measure of nationalism's

success. The subsequent history of that state shows that the promotion of nationalist ideology forms one of the greatest aids to the "legitimation" of that state's political order and rule.

Nationalist ideology, therefore, has been and will continue to be an integral part of bourgeois rule and ideology. The revolutionary forces must seek to develop and promote a revolutionary ideology which upholds the interests of the working class and its rural associate, the small farmer. This ideology must make clear to the people the nature and cause of class domination. It must encompass and draw upon the patriotic fervour of our people.

It has often been said, that the mark of progress in any society is the extent to which its most subject class has been liberated. Patriots of all shades will undoubtedly agree, for after all, what is patriotism, if not a genuine love for one's people and one's country. In this light, patriots and Marxists alike, must consider the key political objective enshrined in nationalism - unification.

Will the political unification of our country liberate the working class and the toiling peasant? Will political unification liberate them from their real source of hardship, injustice, oppression and inequality - economic exploitation? History tells us that it will not. Political unification brings only "political independence". The same political independence that has prevailed over the last 60 years in the 26 counties. And how fairs the working class and the small farmer then?

Nationalism is no longer a revolutionary ideology. It has been harnessed to the side of the bourgeoisie and debased of its radicalism. Revolutionary forces struggling in our country today must base their ideology, strategy and tactics on the concrete situation of today. Only a class-based ideology fused with the patriotic fervour of our people will create the passion needed to mobilise broad social forces capable of a truly revolutionary transformation of society.

**This journal has been produced
by a group of political prisoners
and their associates.**

**It represents a major new contribution
to the struggles and debates
within the Irish working class.**

Comments and criticism are welcome.

Letters should be sent to P.O. Box 2189

The problem of low pay

The bitterly fought election in the 26 counties earlier this year saw the defeat of the coalition partners, Fine Gael and Labour, and the transfer of power to the rival Fianna Fail. What has become more noticeable as the months slip by is the singular inability of the Soldiers of Destiny to use their grip on the tiller to steer the ship of state to less troubled waters. There have been no radical proposals to expand the health and social services, the education system or indeed to create employment. On the contrary it appears we're to face cut-backs and unemployment for the foreseeable future. Another very worrisome trend is the growing percentage of the work-force who are being forced to accept low paid employment.

A recent report commissioned by the ICTU makes for interesting reading. It informs us, for example, that while the number of people employed here has fallen since 1979, the number of women in employment has actually increased. It goes on to say that 23% of the workforce can now be classified as low paid, but amongst women 46% are low paid. No doubt it will be argued that these people are lucky to have work at all, and that while things are bad at the moment the long term trend is towards a better life for all. However the report arms us with a few statistics with which to see off this little myth. In 1960, the 10% of the workers who were lowest paid earned 62.1% of the average wage. In 1979 this had slipped to 55.4%. So the trend is a widening in the income gap. The poorly paid are not going to disappear, in fact the Thatchers, the Reagons and the Haugheys of the world are doing their best to depress workers wages.

If we glimpse at the figures Metcalf supplies in Discussion Document 80, Centre for Labour Economics, LSE, we see that the problem of the low paid and the preponderance of women as the most likely victims, is not peculiar to Ireland. Metcalf claims that 20% of male manual workers in British industry are among the low paid, as are a grand total of 68% of female, manual industrial workers.

Before considering the low paid as an economic group, it is perhaps necessary to say something about the particular plight of women in the labour force. In spite of the strenuous and sus-

tained efforts by the many enlightened women over this past century, the prevailing attitude to the sexual division of labour is that of the man as the main bread-winner and the female as responsible for rearing the family. This is often reflected in parents attitude to their childrens' education and training for the job market. The importance of academic achievement is stressed to their sons while the notion that their daughters will not participate seriously in the workforce anyway dissipates parental ambition on their behalf. A woman's potential earnings can therefore be restricted due to society's view of what her role in life should be.

In Discussion Document 151, Centre for Labour Economics, LSE, Zabalza and Arrufat argue that if all forms of discrimination against married women were eliminated, they would still earn only 74% of the average wage of married men. This is due to the fact that women opt out of the workforce periodically, either to give birth to a child or to take care of it. As a result, firms are unwilling to give them positions of seniority.

It is interesting to note that in the USSR in 1970, gross earnings of women were approximately 70% of that of men. Presumably the reasons for this tally with the findings of Zabalza and Arrufat, ie the sexual division of labour with regard to taking care of a family leaves the main burden with the mother.

Of course, as we all know, not all low paid workers are women. It is in the interest of any employer to keep his wage bill as low as possible in order to make his product competitive and keep his profit margins high. In Europe throughout the '60s and early '70s real wages rose, and as labour's slice of the cake increased there was a corresponding decrease in profit for employers. As labour became more expensive relative to capital, less labour and more capital was used in production. In many cases this introduction of capital intensive methods, led to a deskilling of the workforce and an increase in the use of cheap, unskilled and often female labour.

There's nothing new about this process. Prior to the 1880s, for example, office work was a generally male preserve, but the invention of the typewriter led to the introduction of women into offices. With this new technology, employers were not bound by the social tradition to employ male operatives and were thus free to bring in cheap, female labour. Historically, therefore,

Continued overleaf

Tuarascáil

Thugamar alt faoi deara san *Irish Times* le déanaí. Rinneadh tagairt dúinn agus le fírinne a insint ba chóir an píosa sin. Ach, tharla go raibh míthuiscint beag ann. De réir dealraimh, measann an *Irish Times* go bhfuil "Vanguard" an t-ainm atá ar páirtí nua na bpríosúnach. Ní cheart go díreach é sin.

Scríobhadh alt faoi teideal "Vanguard Party" ceart go leor ach de réir mar an t-údar, is é sin prionsabal bunúsach na Leninigh ar fad an domhain; Páirtí urgharda an lucht oibre a thógáil.

Cibé ar bith, tá an t-údar aag déanamh miongháire láthair. Chítear gur tharla rud éigin cosúil le seo le V.I. Lenin agus a pháirtí fein - na Bolsheviks. Níorbh é sin an fíor ainm ach oiread. B'iad Páirtí Sóisialta Daonlathach agus oibre na Rúis.

B'fhéidir gur comhartha dóchais an rud seo arsa'n t-údar.

LOW PAY (continued from p. 14)

mechanisation has been used to depress wages. Alternatively, capital could choose to move production to where labour is more plentiful, less unionised and therefore less expensive. In an article from the *Far East* magazine, Sister Mary Neylon, examined the disparity in wages between the First and Third Worlds. In 1981 women in the clothing industry in Britain earned £1.78 per hour. In the Philippines, for comparable work, they earned only 20p per hour. The drive for profit leads, on the one hand to low wages and on the other to unemployment as capital leaves one country for another.

Low pay then, isn't an unfortunate accident, but a deliberately contrived situation inherent in the market system of production. The government, whether the previous coalition or the present one, plays its part in maintaining the status quo. By squeezing social security payments, enforcing health cuts etc. they hope to force workers to sell their labour for a lower wage. Shorn of all its niceties that clichéd phrase "the freedom of the individual" really means the right of the owners of capital and their political representatives to starve the workers into submission. We'll either work for a pittance or they'll transfer their operations to even more deprived areas. Finally it must be stressed that the introduction of technology is not in itself a social ill. The problem lies with the abuse of that same technology by its owners to gain economic and political control over the mass of the working population.

Dochasact

THE LAW AND CLASS CONTROL

"Law is based on an admission of legitimacy" and "the soundest proof in law is admission".

Two dicta from the legal field which sum up much of how law sees itself.

These two revealing concepts contain many lessons for us about the role of law and the judiciary in our society.

As we grow up and develop the ideological institutions of the state, the education system, the media etc. indoctrinate us with the notion of respect for the "law". The "law" represents a set of values which we are supposed to accept as unquestionable. This despite the fact that many of us have been raised in a

society, large sections of which hold the law enforcement agencies, in particular, in contempt.

We know, of course, that the law is not separate from or different to, politics and economics, and that the judiciary, the legal profession and the enforcement agencies are no different from the politicians, civil servants and the business sector. Law, therefore, is an integral and interconnected part of the state apparatus. The concept of law is not fixed in time, law has changed through the years according to the needs of the ruling ideology. James Connolly illustrated this in *Labour, Nationality and Religion*, with his sketch of the black slave/plantation owner. "Boss", said the

slave to the owner, "if I go up there (to fasten shingles to the roof) and fall down and get killed, you will loose the \$500 you paid for me; but if you send up that Irish labourer and he falls down and breaks his neck, you won't even have to bury him and you can get another labourer tomorrow for only \$2 a day." This is an oversimplified and crude example, but in it Connolly was making the point that morality and other "intellectual processes", including law, do change. At one time slavery was both morally and legally acceptable. By Connolly's time it was outlawed and, as he pointed out so clearly, the underlying reasons for this were economic ones.

So, what's new? Well nothing much.....except that even with such draconian legislation as the Special Powers Act and the Offences Against the State Act, to quote but two, few in our country today are actively involved in doing anything to change our repressive laws. Some, especially in the six counties, resent them deeply, while a greater number are worried about other forms of legislation like Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act and anti-referral legislation. It is often claimed that many young people, disillusioned by the way they have been treated by the state, have withdrawn from the rule of law and refuse to recognise the "legitimacy" of the law makers. Unfortunately, many have acted in a devil-may-care fashion. They are alienated but not activated. Until this withdrawal of legitimacy is clearly formulated and actively expressed, the status quo and the corrupt legal system will survive unchanged.

History has taught us that if we want change we must organise and work for it. If it is accepted that the soundest proof in law is admission then, as a prominent Unionist barrister recently argued (in support of a different conclusion), a legal system and the state it represents can claim that admission of legitimacy does exist, until such time as it is made clear that the admission has been made under duress.

Until now there has been no mass expression of "denial" to replace "admission". The reason for this is partly that people have no means of expressing that "denial". Fortunately the situation is changing. The campaign against the Extradition Act, for example, provides a vehicle for such an expression and withdrawal of support. If there isn't a branch in your area you should form one and organise your friends into actions which make it clear that you will not accept such a ludicrous piece of legislation.

The government of the 26 counties is currently engaged in a horse-trading process with the British Government. The British want extradition and are offering nothing. Haughey wants the release of a number of political hostages as well as superficial changes to the Diplock Courts, just so that his conscience will be somewhat eased when he extradites his citizens to face trial before them. Repression

breeds repression, the system of law in the six counties is one of great notoriety.

Beginning with the infamous "conveyor belt" of interrogation, ill-treatment and abuse in Castlereagh or one of the other processing centres. "Evidence" is fabricated or beaten out of the victim in the form of self-incriminating statements. There then follows a lengthy remand in Crumlin Road jail leading to a trial without a jury. These trials are farcical and the judges often political and sectarian. The vast majority of these trials are passed over with minimal attention and the sentences are often savage and unbalanced. Once sentenced those who have been processed are forgotten about, warranting attention only periodically when liberalising soundings are made near election times, to give the impression that the Anglo-Irish Agreement is productive and thus aid the SDLP's electoral prospects. From time to time we hear of harsher sentences and "life meaning life", just to let us know how ruthless Thatcher and her minions could be if they were to take the gloves off.

So its not just the Special Powers Acts that needs changing either. Why do we have the PTA and the Offences Against the State Acts? Why are the judiciary unrepresentative and brutal? Why are our jails full? Connolly claims that everything was linked, in the final analysis, to the economic base. Well lets examine the economic base in Ireland today. As well as repressive legislation, it gives us mass unemployment; it threatens the existance of the health services; it cuts expenditure on education; it threatens the existance of the small farmers; it forces our young people to emigrate and those who are left are forced to accept lower wage rates and a lower standard of living.

In short, the economic base supported and legitimised by all this repressive legislation, is one of imperialism. Connolly was right when he pointed out that law represents the thinking of the class which controls the economy. It's used to protect their property, their rights, their state, their wealth, their privilege and their power. Our youth are condemned to jails while the yuppies play.

The Anti-Extradition Campaign targets a "special law", but as women, travellers, the youth and many minority groupings know, the ordinary laws work in much the same way. If struggle against these laws is the right path for you then get involved, help to organise those around you. You will find many people receptive to your message and willing to help. Many people know that change is now necessary, and there is no struggle more heroic than that against cruel and oppressive laws. Issue your denial in whatever way you can.