LEFT PERSPECTIVES

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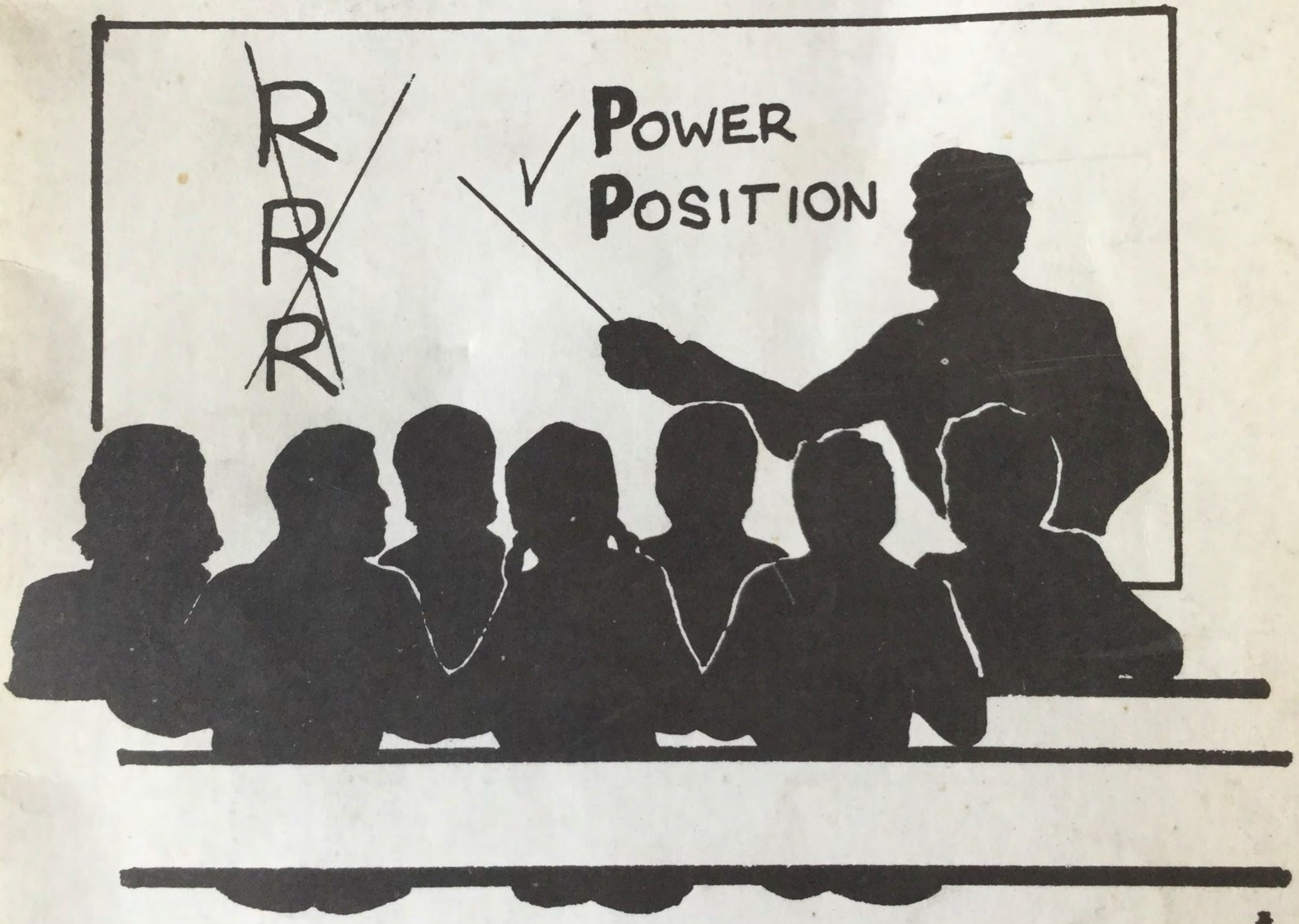

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Editorial

For socialists, Northern Ireland presents a series of political problems. The province is a development of capitalism of British imperialism and colonialism, but to state the problem thus is not to point infallibly to its solution. The Northern Ireland problem would take on a completely different aspect if there were a united working class movement fighting for its rights. This is self-evident, but also hypothetical in present circumstances. This does not mean that the struggle to create such a movement should be abandoned: simply that the obstacles to it cannot be wished away.

Colonialism involved the creation of a privileged minority of colonists who are the local embodiment of the colonial power. When the colonial thrust has been reversed, the colonists have either to put up or get out, not least because there are fewer of them than there are of the natives. In Northern Ireland the colonists (and anti-Unionist rhetoric veers uncertainly between welcoming them as Irishmen and women under the skin, and threatening to chase them into the sea), actually outnumber the natives. Only in Ireland as a whole do they form the classic political minority. But Ireland as a whole is not the political unit — and attempts to claim that it is must take second place to official insistence, however qualified, on the right of Northern Ireland's own political majority to self-determination.

The decision to force partition on Ireland in 1920 was an expression of ruling class interests in both Britain and Northern Ireland. This is not true of the present day situation. The security, income maintenance and other costs of the continuing British presence in the North are only marginally offset by the provinces usefulness as a training ground for counter-insurgency techniques or even as a cheap supply of labour to friendly multi-nationals. A colonialism, or an investment, that has gone sour does not necessarily go into reverse. The costs of reversing such a policy are frequently seen as higher than those of remaining involved, and the process of shedding control, even of something that appears increasingly to be a liability, will not be seriously considered until all sums are unmistakeably right. Capitalism, for all the rhetoric of risk in which it delights, rarely gambles with its own money. The uncertainty about the ratio between the costs and benefits of withdrawal could lead to a prolonged stalemate.

The cost to the taxpayers of the Republic, not least in the security area, gives them an undeniable right to comment on the purpose and effect of British policy, but in 1980 there are no land annuities for Dublin to withhold from a British Government as leverage. The politics of the EEC have made the threat of a veto by the smaller states an empty one and Ireland's strategic importance does not seem to be widely enough accepted to be a bargainining counter of any value.

About all that Dublin and London appear to be agreed on is that there can be no return to simple majority rule. The difficulty is that history does not provide us with examples of political majorities which have voluntarily relinquished power to any significant degree. Unionists will not do so unless they have to: but few of the options other than majority rule hold out much attractiveness for them and their capacity to resist change is legendary. The

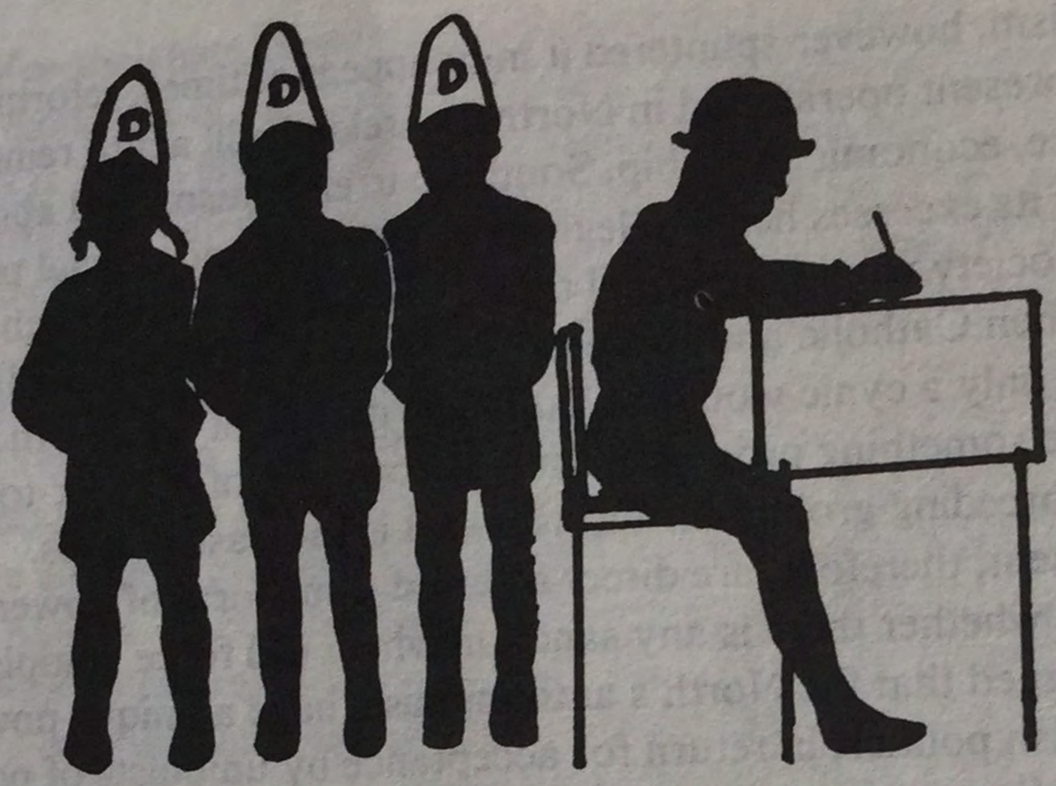
political monolith that is unionism, however splintered it may appear at times, reforms itself in crisis. Most of the forces at present operational in Northern Ireland still act to reinforce it: British Government indifference, economic hardship, Southern irrendentism, and above all terrorist violence. The latter by its excesses helps to legitimate attitudes and official practices which even a liberal capitalist society would in normal times find difficult to stomach. There was a time in hungry thirties when Catholic and Protestant workers were united under banners demanding bread. But only a cynic would welcome the decline of the North into an economic abyss simply because something progressive might come out of it. Near-total deprivation can be as potent a breeding ground for fascism as it is for class politics.

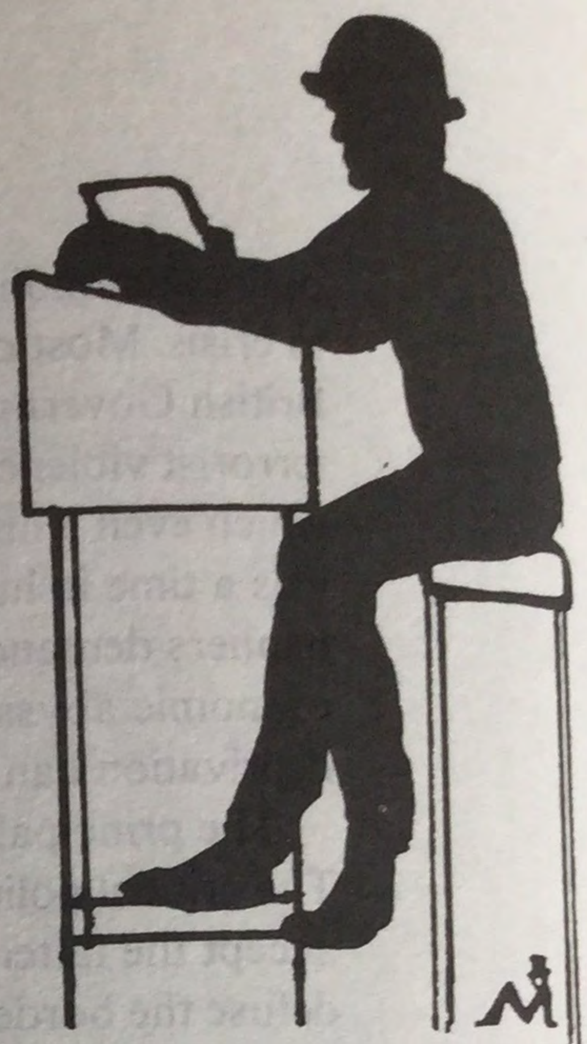
The principal options at present, therefore, are direct role and some form of power-sharing. The critical political question is whether there is any sanction which will force unionists to accept the latter. It could be argued that the North's anti-unionists have a unique power to defuse the border as an issue Irish politics, in return for acceptance by unionists of power-sharing: if one accepts that Dublin cannot, and London will not, take out by removing it forcibly.

Democratic socialists face a special dilemma in relation to any solution other than majority or — to a lesser extent — direct rule. They can only justify an option like power-sharing on the grounds that the way in which unionists majorities have behaved in the past gives little grounds for confidence that majority rule will lead inevitably to class politics or, indeed, to any politics at all this side of sectarianism.

Socialists may have to accept, in the short term, that the quality of their analyses of the Northern situation is not matched by a capacity to influence it; and that even the emergence of a conservative but non-sectarian administration, together with the democratic processes by which it can be opposed and replaced, is preferable to a type of politics which takes place only behind closed doors.

This necessarily commits socialists, whether in Northern Ireland, Britain or the Republic, to a long march: identifying the ruling groups in society and mobilising political action against them; opposing illegal violence by whomesoever exercised; persuading international socialism that the cliches of terrorism in Northern Ireland are not the language of the left; and exposing the many and varied ways in which democratic structures can be manipulated. This struggle is a critical part of the campaign for the more authentic democracy that must accompany the growth of socialist politics.





Pedagogy and Politics

Dermot Quish

Most people by now realise that education cannot provide social equality, but conventional wisdom holds that equality of educational opportunity is virtually within our grasp and is the surest way of providing social mobility and access to the good things of life in a democratic society. The purpose of this article is to explore the relationship between the socio-economic system and education and in so doing argue that schools not only fail to provide equal oportunity but succeed in copper-fastening privilege and producing docile, acquiescent workers/consumers. Furthermore, the learning process within the schools is both distorted and perverted, in particular for working class pupils, by the ideological penetration of an unjust and elitist society into the pedagogy and ethos of the classroom Attempts to reform the system without changing society can have only relatively marginal success.

Many liberal educational reformers in Ireland either fail to understand or grossly underestimate the dominant and essentially one-sided relationship between society and schools. They seem to think the tail wags the dog and that if a suitable curriculum could be designed the inherent goodness and generosity in youth would be liberated, solving all our problems from violence in the North to industrial relations in the South. Schools do interact with society, but not in any

independent sense; they are dependent agencies that reinforce the ideology of the socio-economic establishment. They divide, label and package students for an assumed rightful place in the hierarchy of a fictitious meritocratic society and in doing so provide legitimation for both the capitalist system and its myth of equality of opportunity and social mobility. It is not possible for the school to function as a haven of care and culture in a sea of exploitation and phlistinism. The teacher is no King Canute and societal values inexorably and insidiously seep in through pupil and parental expectations, the examination system, the curriculum and the particular form of organisation of the school. Radical reform of society via education is simply not on and is, this side of a socialist republic, a naive and counter-productive pipe-dream.

I intend to examine in some detail the in-built bias of social class and what Sam Bowles, Professor of Political Economy at M.I.T., calls the *correspondence principle* between capitalist social structures and the mechanics of its education system. The matter can most conveniently be discussed under six main headings, covering both access to the system, and proceses of the system.

Access to eduction. With the passing of the 1930 Vocational Education Act a dual system of post-primary education was brought into existence in the state. Technical or vocational schools, and the secondary schools run mostly by religious interests, had very different class intake patterns. Technical schools catered for working class pupils and for pupils rejected by the more academic secondary schools as unsuitable for their type of education. Most technical schools did not, and were in fact forbidden to, provide courses for students beyond the age of 15. The courses provided had a practical rather than an academic bias. The common Intermediate Certificate course as introduced by Dr. Hillery as Minister for Education as late as 1963. Technical schools did not, however, qualify pupils for further and higher education and were — not least because of this — regarded as much inferior to the secondary, private schools. Most pupils attending them loked on their stay as a necessary and irrelevant burden to be endured before entering the workforce. Secondary schools, although patronised mainly by the middle class, had a more comprehensive class intake, especially since the introduction of the "free" post-primary education scheme when Donogh O'Malley was Minister for Education in 1967. Different secondary schools catered for different levels among the middle class. for example, Glenstal Abbey, Clongowes Wood and Belevedere provided the higher professionals, administrators and captains of industry, whereas the Christian Brothers' Schools churned out the civil servants, priests and teachers. Technical schools provided apprentices to trades, and general workers. As Joyce noted in *Portrait of the artist as a young man:*

> 'Christian Brothers be damned', said Mr. Dedalus. Is it with Paddy Stink and Micky Mud? Let him stick to the Jesuits in God's name since he began with them. They'll be of service to him in after years. Those are the fellows that can get you a position.

The most blatant method of limiting access to secondary schools is by charging suitably high fees. Most up-market schools opted out of the O'Malley scheme in 1967 but more subtle forms of discouragement also operate, for example the class ethos of the school, expensive uniforms, money for extras, and schemes of 'voluntary' cash contributions from parents. In the early 1970s Desmond McCluskey in his report *Access to Secondary Education* highlights some of the discriminatory selection methods used by schools, in particular in the Dublin area where just over half of all schools did not admit all applicants. Many of the criteria used for selection had an obvious middle class bias. They included having brother or sister of present or past pupil or being the child of a past pupil, residence within a particular area, attendance at a specific private junior school, passing a written entrance examination, attendance at a specific national school, an interview with parents, or a report from primary schools.

Most of the criteria can be used as class filters. The most blatent discrimination is found in relation to attendance at private junior schools, which charge high fees although they do not have to employ qualified teachers. They appeal strongly to the *nouveau riche* parents in the scampi belt of Dublin who wish to protect their children from the 'riff-raff' in the national schools. Many distraught parents are pressurised into sending their children to private schools to guarantee them a place in the secondary school run by the same authorities at a later stage. There is a serious shortage of places in such socially selective secondary schools in urban Ireland, and, with the highest percentage of our population in the younger age groups of any country in Europe, the situation is intensifying this scarcity. Finally, access to extra tuition, grind schools and pre-university courses all depend on the parental

ability to pay and obviously this too discriminates against the less well off.

Classification of pupils. Pupils are classified on the basis of age, sex and ability. Division based on age is obviously necessary or the development of the child but dividing young people by sex and rigidly prescribed 'ability' corresponds very closely with the division of labour in capitalist society. The whose question of sexism in education requires another article but let it suffice to say here that the stereotyping and exploitation of women in society is reflected in tthe ethos and curriculum of all schools, especially of girls' schools. The various means of dividing pupils on the bsis of ability such as streaming, banding and setting reflect the hierarchy of the so-called meritocratic society and are maintained by social engineeringing through the medium of the examination system. The professional justification for streaming is a spurious 'objective' understanding of the concept of intelligence. Assessment of a pupil's progress is essential to teaching. What is at issue is the nature of assessment in our schools, the use it is put to, and above all the social role assessment plays. For most teachers assessment means examinations, and one feature of examinations is that they are designed in order to achieve a given percentage of fail, pass and honours results. An examination which allows all students to achieve 100% is deemed to be a bad examination. The inevitable stress on the question of success and failure can have no basis in seeking the consolidation of learning or measuring the intellectual ability of the student. Indeed, grading by comparison within a class or a year, so-called norm-referenced assessment, is the exact antithesis of measuring the ability of a student against supposedly rational or even 'objective' criteria. Yet the competitiveness of the assessment system in use throughout our schools is absolutely central. Why should this be so? The function of a terminal examination is to opertate as a rejection mechansim depressing the demand for higher paid jobs. It creams off an elite, as defined in school terms, for privileged positions in society and so projects the illusion that societal kudos is distributed purely on the basis of ability and personal merit. In short:

> All things bright and beautiful,
> everything in its place,
> the rich man in his castle,
> the poor man at his gate

The debate on the ideological content in the concept of intelligence and methods of measuring intelligence seems to have had little effect on educational circles in Ireland. Most teachers believe in a static, genetically formed and limited intelligence which may or may not unfold, depending on environmental factors. With the growth of guidance counselling there is a danger of classifying pupils much more formally than streaming by the use of IQ tests. Psychometrists such as Galton, Burt, Eysenck and Jensen have developed a concept of intelligence to justify social and racial inequality on biological grounds in Britain and the U.S.A. This static concept of intelligence has been effectively demolished both by empirical and theoretical analysis by sociologists, psychologists and educationalists such as Leon Kamin, Hilary and Steven Rose, Sam Bowles, Herb Gintis, Paul Henderson and Brian Simon. They see intelligence as a changing relationship between the individual and others and with the social and natural worlds which confront her or him. To quote Pavlov's understanding of intelligence, "the chief, strongest and most permanent impression we get from the study of higher nervous activity by our methods, is the extraordinary plasticity of this activity, and its immense potentialities: nothing is immobile or intractable, and everything may always be achieved, changed for the better, provided only that the proper conditions are created."

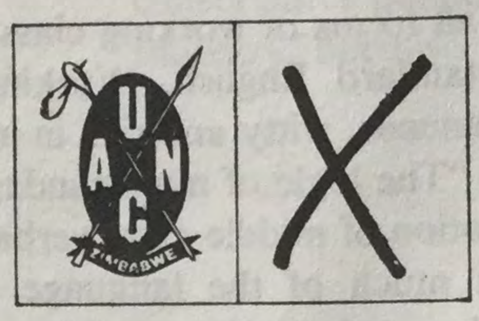
This dynamic understanding of intelligence lends no support to the 'fixed ability' theorists: rather, it adds conviction to the view that a pupil's development is actually retarded or at lest restricted by schools which operate streaming systems.

In examination and IQ tests, middle class pupils do better than working class pupils targets because they possess the necessary cultural capital such as a potentially realisable personal ambition, parental expectations and proper study facilities at home, control of 'examination' language, favourable teacher perception, and specific cultural values. There is no such thing as a "culture-free IQ test". The advantage in standard tests is with middle class pupils. Although tests have been designed to reverse this advantage, they are, needless to say, rarely used.

Motivation of pupils The system of extrinsic rewards and retributive punishment has a blighting effect on the pupil's motivation to learn. The examination and points systems correspond exactly with the 'carrot before the nose' incentives of capitalism. The threat of 'lines', detention, sarcasm and sometimes corporal punishment further undermine any intrinsic reasons the pupil may have for learning. A pupil, therefore, studies primarily to keep teachers and parents happy or in order to secure a passport into a job. If the product of study is alienated the process of study

EDUCATION FOR THE MASSES

1. Your UANC Government will educate your children free.
2. Free education will make all young Zimbabweans ready and able to make worthwhile careers for themselves.
3. Your UANC Government will also give free higher education to all those whose talents demand it.
4. Your UANC Government will keep schools, colleges and universities free from indoctrination so that your children may develop into the same broadminded, tolerant and free thinking human beings that you would like them to be.



THE SOCIALISTS PROMISE FREE INDOCTRINATION FOR ALL

While your UANC Government promises free education for all, the Socialists promise free indoctrination and "re-orientation" for all. So while we will build schools, colleges and universities, technical training institutes and teaching hospitals, they would only set up "indoctrination and re-orientation" centres.
As you know, "indoctrination" and "re-orientation" are simply the words used to describe a plan of systematically forcing all people to think alike and to accept a hideous form of human bondage.

becomes a process of active alienation.The fact that study is not voluntary but coerced, not the satisfaction of a need but merely a means to satisfy needs external to it, many students will shun like the plague any form of study once the compulsion of school has been removed.It is interesting to quote Marx on the alienating effect of work in a capitalist society:

> The labour is external to the worker, i.e.,, it does not belong to his essential being; in his work therefore he does not affirm himself, but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy, but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. A corresponding alienating drudgery is inevitable in the school system of a capitalist society.

Authority in schools. Probably the most consistent theme discussed at school staff meetings is the problem of discipline. Many schools strive for conditions of maximum passivity among their pupils. School rules are formulated in minute detail. Hierarchies are constructed among both teachers and pupils. Deference to authority, respect for property, hard work, attendance and punctuality are top priorities in institutions designed to 'educate'. Devotion to order and competitiveness are further encouraged on the sports field. This obsession with authority and discipline in schols indicates one of major functions of schooling — not the pursuit of enlightenment but rather meeting the needs of capitalist employers for a disciplined and skilled labour force and to provide a mechanism for social control in the interests of the type of political stability which suits them. In pre-capitalist society the family was the unit of production and, with the church, socialised the younger generation. The extension of capitalist production and particularly the factory system undermined the role of the family as the major unit of both socialisation and production. The social relations of production — the authority structure, the prescribed type of behaviour and response characteristic of the work place — became increasingly distant from those of the family and the school became a suitable institution for the replication of the social relations of the work place, with specific emphasis on discipline, punctuality, the acceptance of authority outside the family and individual accountability for one's work, successful or otherwise. The authoritarian character of schools in Ireland was stiffened by hierarchical ecclesiastical structures and by a sense of the divine nature of authority in schools owned and controlled by church or religious interests. Finally, the packaging and distribution of knowledge has reinforced the values of passive consumerism among

pupils. The system demands very little active participation. The pupil is not encouraged to be independently minded and self-directing beyond certain narrow confines. The result is the mass production of passive pedantry.

Use of language. Basil Bernstein's theory of the elaborate code and restricted code of langúage has often been used to explain middle class success in school and particularly in literary/verbal forms of examination. It is clear that if the language of instruction and examination in schools reinforces the language of middle class children and rejects the language of working class children,then the latter are at a severe educational disadvantage. However, it is not at all clear that all forms of working class speech are "inferior" to Standard English. Working class speech can be spontaneous, witty and rich in imagery. Labov, in his essay: "The logic of non-Standard English", attacked the notion of middle class verbal fluency. He argued that much of the language said to exemplify the elaborated code represented an elaborated style, often turgid and redundant, rather than a superior system. Standard Engish is the dominant language of society and therefore of education bcause it is the language of the ruling class. Some educationalists have advocated a crash programme of linguistic compensation to give children language structures that would enable them to benefit from school Bernstein totally rejected this approach. In an article entitled *Education cannot compensate for society,* he argues:

> The concept of compensatory education serves to direct attention away from the internal organisation and educational context of the school and focus our attention on the families and children. The concept of compensatory educaton implies that something is lacking in the family and so in the child. It follows from that the school has to compensate for somethin missing in the family and the children have become little deficit systems. Once the problem is seen even implicitly in this way then it becomes approprite to coin the terms "cultural deprivation", 'linguistic deprivation'. And then these labels do their own sad work.

The total invalidation of working class speech can undermine the child's sense of self-worth and hence manufacture an attitude of inferiority and subservience.

The concept of knowledge. The hidden curriculum of the school is naturally supportive of an actual body of knowledge — the syllabus. No subject is value free, but georgraphy, hisotry, English, Religious Education and Civics are to the forefront in inculcating certain attitudes to society. A popular textbook on civics some years ago by John Waldron describes Communism as "a most pernicious form of government' whereas "an aristocracy or oligarchy, a form of government in which the rule of law rests in the hands of a number of people determined by wealth, birth or intelligence, can be a legitimate form of government when it has regard for the general welfare of the people within the State." Women who are not inclined to work outside the home and wish to make a civic contribution are advised that "the making of clothes or knitting for the poor and less fortunate is but one way in which this can be done." The section on trade unions warns workers of the dangers of communist infiltration and argues that "in present day society many trade unions have swung to an extreme — the extreme of over-emphasising their rights, while little is said of their duties."

Some teachers in the area of social and environmental studies claim to teach in a balanced, objective way from an ideologically neutral position. The very act of selecting and organising material, relying on sources and using language contains an implicit bias. However, it is importnt not to confuse bias with prejudice (pre-judging).

Recently the Confederation of Irish Industry has turned its attention to the Irish educational system. Mr. Con Power, its director of Economic Policy, has been speaking to schools throughout the country, urging them to take a more positive attitude to industry. The structure of Irish society has indeed changed from an agricultural to an industrial base, and schools have not yet fully reflected the change. it is reasonable to expect a greater technological/scientific content in the curriculum as the rsult of such a change. Teachers, however, must guard against using the schools as a means of dispensing speciaized skills that may become

redundant in two or three year's time, at the present rate of technological innovation. Trade unionists must urgently involve themselves in this new chapter of debate currently taking place in Irish education. At the annual conference of the Irish Association for Curriculum Development this year, Mr. Power spelt out more clearly what he meant by a positive attitude to industry: he called on schools to play their part in emphasising the responsibility of the individual to society as a whole.

> In the context of personal and social skills required for working life, it seems at present as if there is a trendency towards the rejection of all authority in most European countries — and this includes even a rejection of the authority of trade unions. This rejection of authority is accompanied by an over-emphasis upon the rights of the individual as defined in a very narrow sense, without an equal emphasis placed upon the responsibilities of the individual to the community as a whole.

For too long, discussion on the nature of education as contrasted with discussion of the bureaucratic control of schools has been left to professionals and the churches. Schools are a major arena of class struggle and socio-cultural dominance and, as such, must been seen as being of great political importance not only to conservative politicians and the Confederation of Irish Industry, but also to socialists and trade unionists.

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What's Left Behind?

Francis Devine

The Irish Labour History Society, in association with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, is promoting a major, international conference on the theme "The Making of the Irish Working Class". Already the event has attracted speakers and participants from all parts of Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, USA, Canada, Australia and Japan. Many are delegated and paid by their trade unions, thus ensuring a conference blend between professional labour historians and labour movement activists. Irish historians, at the time of writing at least, are sadly conspicuous by their absence from an impressive list of some 200 advance bookings.

Labour History and Objectivity. Explanation for this non-appearance lies in the neglected state of Irish labour history. That this should be so, particularly when the subject is receiving unprecedented attention in countries as diverse as Mexico and Japan, France and Bulgaria, is puzzling. John Saville, a leading figure in British social history, may provide clues in his definition of labour history as

> . . .the story of the working class within a society whose social parameters have, in the main, been determined not by themselves, but by other social factors and social forces, including 'objective' historical development and evolution.(1).

Here is history's lack of neutrality exposed and recognised for what it is: a powerful agent for forming society's identity, its consciousness, it political values. Bertolt Brecht's worker reading history and encountering its alienation, dealt with it in the most positive manner through questioning: "In the evening when the Chinese wall was finished, where did the masons go?" Labour history pursues such questions, restoring people to history and history to people.

Labour History and Ideology. The cost of such questioning is the frequent accusation of abandoned objectivity and bias. Indeed, a reviewer of recent work in social and economic history noted, admittedly as a self-confessed 'outsider', Iirsh labour history's "strong, ideological flavour".(2) But ideologies are, of course, an essential dimension to societies and the historical writings produced within them at a particular time. Such dismissals of labour history fail to distinguish between conceptual conflicts, inevitably connected with broader ideological structures, and crude bias, the antithesis of scholarly rigour. They nevertheless explain why labour history, among many Irish historians at least, remains apparently bogus. This is unfortunate, not least because without professional leadership the subject will inevitably be slower to reach its potential.

Labour History and Marxism. Reservations concerning "ideological flavour" may relate to one particular ideology: marxism. Much of the recently produced work in Irish labour history, MacCarthy, Mitchell, Gaughan, Larkin, has been contributed by non-marxists, thus defeating the point immediately. Nevertheless, marxian approaches to study of the labour and working class movements have been, and will continue to be, profoundly influential. The works of Lysaght, Bew, Farrell and Patterson, indicate the breadth of interpretation within what is often considered, by outsiders, to be a limiting perspective.

James Connolly, in his still classic *Labour in Irish History*, laid the foundations of a marxist tradition in Ireland, correctly relating class formation and attitudes to the economic factors that determine social and political relations. Exciting new works analysing the role of the state and its relationship to and effects upon the working class, continue this tradition, although with widely varying conclusions. Such approaches demand inter-disciplinary methodologies and techniques, thus broadening the framework of histori-

cal scholarship. The challenge of such work is surely refreshing and stimulating. How such developments can, by implication or insinuation, be considered retrograde is baffling. The 'marxist school' in British economic and social history, for example, have produced many invigorating and formative studies, losing completely any suggestions of bias or forsaken standards of scholarship.

Why Labour History? Few among the leading practitioners in Britain, Thompson, Hobsbawn, Foster or Rowbotham, would deny commitment. Why should they? They are radical socialists as others are not. Many labour historians make their contribution through their work. Labour history is written to inspire the contemporary movement with a knowledge of the sacrifices of its pioneers and, more crucially, through analysis, assist the modern movement in the understanding of its past. Such an understanding may only be, as in the case of women even within the labour movement and its 'history', that their past is denied. In this way labour history can help give understanding of contemporary social phenomena and thus perhaps contribute to the refinement of tactics and strategies for contemporary struggle. Now, is this the "ideological flavour" so suspiciously viewed, not the written history but its possible effect?

To have effect, however, the history must be accessible. It must be written in a manner that is understood in the tradition of Cole or Ryan, Craik or Connolly. But now the discussion is of the uses of history and must involve calls for educational reforms beyond the scope of this paper, although not beyond the concern of labour history and its students.

The Irish Labour History Society. Accepting the crude 'glorious march' motivation, the antiquarian and the occasional polemic, the Irish Labour History Society since its inception in 1973 has proved a gathering force in the campaign for wider attention and acceptance of labour history. Monthly lectures have beenen through the Society's annual journal, *Saothar* Other activities have included an active policy of archive location, collection and preservation, in which the ILHS has received magnificent and growing support from the trade union movement. All in all, much experience has been gained and those close to the Society would probably agree that the time has arrived for the more active pursuit of demands for specialist labour history appointments in at least one university; a research project under joint university/ICTU supervision to produce textbooks and teaching aids for the schoolroom and worker education courses; an expansion of specialist research projects in oral history and labour archive retrival; and the recognition by the left that issues are not ones unconnected with more general campaigns aimed at changing our society in a progressive direction.

Which Past is the Left Behind? The retarded state of 'left' politics in Ireland has part explanation not alone in historical phenomena but in their explanation and elucidation. The left can thus ignore the teaching and research of history at its peril. It must be recognised that history is studied by socialists not alone to interpret their past but to change the future. Labour history is but one step, but in the broad interpretation adapted by the ILHS, and reflected in its conference programme later this month, it is a vital step in both developing awareness of class issues and their historical origins and in constructing a framework of analysis essential to our political development, individually and collectively. So in whose possession will the left leave the past?

NOTES

1. John Savsaville, 'The Radical Left Expects the Past To Do Its Duty', *Labor History 18* (2), Spring, 1977, pp. 267-74.
2. L.A. Clarkson, 'The Writing of Irish Economic and Social History Since 1968', *Economic History Review* 33 (1), February, 1980, pp. 100—11.

Inflation: Is Pay Restraint a Remedy?

Art Kavanagh

Predictably enough, my answer to the above question is "No". However, the question is worth asking because it raises important problems, namely the nature and causes of inflation, the relationship between unemployment and inflation and the way in which the present crisis is affecting capitalism.

Since the recession of 1973/4 our economy, like most of the world economies, has been suffering from a coincidence of inflation and recession. The Keynesian view of recession and inflation is that the one is caused by an excess of supply over demand whereas the other is caused by an excess of demand over supply. The long-term co-existence of both over the last seven years has surprised a lot of people who hold that view. For Keynes, the way to control inflation was to reduce demand by raising taxes and cutting Government spending. This was the policy pursued by the American Government in the early '70s. Other governments quickly followed the American example. Not only did these deflationary measures contribute to the recession but they left inflation unaffected. To understand why this was so, it is necessary to examine a number of suggested causes of inflation.

(1) Socialists will be familiar with the theory which blames the colossal sums spent by the Western major powers on army production and defence for the tendency to permanent inflation. This argument states that, as the workers and capitalists engaged in the production of these military items are paid wages and surplus value respectively and the "commodities" they produce are bought directly by governments, there is an inevitable tendency for demand in the economy to exceed supply. The fact that the weapons which are produced are commodities is irrelevant. If inflation were to be avoided the Government would have to remove the extra purchasing power by extra taxation. This would obviously increase the burden of taxation greatly for workers and capitalists alike and make it very difficult for governments to justify continued high arms expenditure.

This brings us to one of the major faults in most modern economics, the tendency to ignore the structure of demand and supply. In his reproduction schemas in vol. 2 of *Capital*, Marx made the point that, for capitalism to achieve a balanced growth, equilibrium had to be achieved between the amount spent by the department which manufactures consumer goods on means of production and *vice versa* While we are not concerned here with the condition necessary for equilibrium and growth, it is an obvious fact that is too often overlooked that wages never buy means of production or, more importantly, large scale military weapons. Yet people who try to use either fiscal or monetary policy to control the economy never take into account the fact that supply and demand in the economy can be numerically equal and imbalance can still exist.

Thus, it is easy to visualise a situation in which such measures, public spending cuts, control of the money supply etc., can actually add to the depth of a recession without altering the movement of inflation in any way whatsoever. To take a very simplified example, let us imagine a government whose public expenditure is divided into two categories, expenditure which creates a demand for consumer goods or increases real wages (spending on the health services and unemployment assistance both come into this category) and expenditure which increases demand for means of production (money paid to rescue companies in trouble, for example). This Government decides to cut public expenditure. Let us imagine that it is politically more acceptable for the Government to cut back on aid to its ailing industries than to axe the health service or the dole (this would be the case particularly where the latter two are totally inadequate to begin with). It will immediately be seen that, if the Government takes the line of least resistance, the result will be a decline in the demand for means of production and probably

in the production of consumer goods, whereas the demand for consumer goods will remain static. This will obviously do nothing at all to help curb inflation and will quite likely cause a recession into the bargain. (2) J.K. Galbraith has pointed out that inflation appears to begin in what he calls the "ologopolistic or price fixing sector" of the market. Inflation then spreads to the rest of the market. Galbraith's proposed "solution" to inflation caused in this manner is instructive in that it partly ignores the problem it purports to solve. In suggesting across the board wage and price controls, Galbraith appears to forget the strength of this sector of the market which is precisely why it is able to fix prices in the first place. The application of Galbraith's method of controlling inflation to this country would involve our using legislation or some other coercive measures to control the prices, not only of the oil companies but of all the other major cartels to boot. Clearly, this is just not a realistic possibility. Galbraith dismisses the idea that wage controls on their own can be an effective remedy for inflation. He points out that though wage increases often precede a price rise in this sector the price increase is by no means caused by the wage increase. In fact, the company will often have refrained from making a price rise which it knew the market would bear in order to forestall a wage claim (remember that we are here talking about a specific part of the market where unions are in a strong poosition and not about the market as a whole). When the wage claim comes there is no longer any reason to delay a rise in prices and of course it looks as if the company is simply passing on increased costs to the consumer, which is good from a public relations point of view.

At this stage, it is quite clear that, if wages are restricted in some way, whether by agreement, legislation or guidelines, that will not necessarily, or even probably, prevent price increases and therefore inflation.

We have now reached the stage where it can be stated with confidence that wage restraint, be it National Wage Agreements, the National Understanding or some other method, will not help to bring inflation under control (it can be said with equal confidence that neither fiscal nor monetary policy will do so either but that is not the point here). Why then do we hear so much talk about the need for an incomes policy? Ever since the Second World War, up until the early '70s, capitalism enjoyed a prolonged boom, entailing a rise in the number employed and a fall in the "reserve army of labour", the body of unemployed and partly employed which capitalism creates as a necessary

condition of its survival. When the numbers of the reserve army drop conditions are favourable for a general rise in wages. The last seven years, by contrast, have seen an alarming rise in the number of the unemployed, reconstituting the reserve army. Throughout the period of the boom, many people had made the unspoken assumption that real wages could no longer be subject to reduction when the labour market was unfavourable to labour. This illusion was made possible by the inordinate length of the post-war boom but further confusion was added by the fact that some workers are in a more favourable position than others as regards the labour market.

Now the unemployment has risen to such a level that it can officially be admitted to constitute a "problem", Marx's theory of the reserve army would lead us to expect either (a) a reduction in real wages or (b) at least a slowing down in their rate of growth. This, I believe, is exactly what has been happening in the past few years. If wages rise more slowly than inflation then, clearly real wages have fallen. Even if wages rise more quickly than inflation, inflation will quickly erode real gains. This, of course, is perfectly obvious. What confuses the issue somewhat is the widespread belief that wage increases somehow contribute to or cause inflation. This attitude, which we have already concluded is wholly erroneous, is based on the unspoken premises that (a) the workers should bear the brunt of the present crisis and profits should, where possible, be maintained at their present level and (b) that it is at precisely the moment when capitalism is fighting for its survival that the working class should moderate its attempt to improve the general living standards of the workers. Obviously, both of these premises are entirely untenable by anyone who claims to act in the interests of the working class. Yet we have had, with the cooperation of the trade union movement, successive National Wage Agreements and a National Understanding. Why are the Unions, in effect, acquiescing in the moderation or reduction of its members wages?

We have, of course, already touched on the answer: unemployment. It is no longer permissible for an individual employer to dismiss a particular worker simply because he or she refuses to accept a cut in wages. Such a method of proceeding would be very inefficient in any case. But by threatening an investment strike, implying mass redundancies and worse, the capitalists are still able to use the reserve army to erode the gains made by the labour movement in better times. And here we have the only "causal" relationship between wage claims and unemployment — it depends on the voluntary behaviour of the capitalists: the wage strike. When employers' organisations call for wage restraint as the only alternative to further unemployment the depth of cynicism and dishonesty involved is stunning. And let us not forget that, in spite of the rise of the Trade Unions, in spite of legislation supposedly designed to protect employment, the situation has not changed all that much since Marx's day. It is still the case that the workers can make their most significant gains when the reserve army decreases in number for a relatively long period of time and, when the same reserve army inevitably returns to a significant level, those gains again come under attack.

To conclude, there is no reasonable ground for stating that either wage restraint or wage controls can be of any help whatsoever in bringing inflation under control. In fact, it is doubtful, if the present inflationary crisis did not coincide with a more traditional crisis of overproduction (recession), if anybody would seriously suggest that anything of the sort was possible (I think this is reasonably clear even though National Wage Agreements preceded the present recession — it is a question of people's expectations). It is undeniable that the Unions should refuse to be a party any longer to the continued attack on living standards. No doubt the employers willcounter this with the threat of redundancies but it is quite obvious that capitalism cannot guarantee full employment or anything approaching it. Above all, it should be made clear that the workers should not be expected to make sacrifices in order to maintain capitalist profits. They contribute quite enough to those already

A Question of Control

Paul Gillespie

The real context in which new technologies will be applied in Irish factories and offices over the next few years is recession, austerity policies and cutbacks in public expenditure. This is against a background of a continuing crisis of profitability here and throughout the capitalist world. The economic context provides an essential backcloth for understanding the precise management plans to use the new techniques of automation and also the way in which these systems are designed: precisely in order to displace labour or lessen management reliance on skilled labour's control of the work process.(1)

This perspective provides a necessary corrective to that view of the new technologies which regards application as the inevitable consequence of operational feasibility and which tends to be dressed up in windy generalisations about the second or third industrial revolutions.There is a direct continuity between previous cycles of capitalist innovation and this one in the sense that the attempt to shift the balance of class advantage is central to the real history of the application of the new methods. That is why socialists and trade union militants should not be misled by the type of propaganda for the "information technology" which argues that application of the techniques will in itself guarantee that a post-industrial society (sic) can be ushered in without benefit of fundamental shifts in the balance of class power. Even leaving aside the important issue of whether the technology itself is politically "neutral"(2), it is quite clear that within a society in which economic interests are so much in conflict as this one, these new processes cannot be expected to transcend or be insulated from such conflicts. In a previous article(3) emphasis was placed on these issues at a rather general level. Here the economic context in the Republic and the appropriate trade union response to the new technologies will be examined and some attempt made to relate this to wider issues raised for socialists.

Some of the arguments touched upon have been obscured in the Republic by the IDA's relative success in attracting a number of the new multinationals engaged in the microelectronics business. Attracted not only by the range of grants and subsidies available but also because of location within the EEC, they are set fair to become a significant sector in the Irish economy. There is some potential for establishing linkages within this sector, which may provide downstream markets. In addition there is evidence that the new investment is not exclusively to be found in the component manufacture side but also extends to equipment manufacture and system development,(4) although these are much less developed than the first. There is certainly the danger that if investment is concentrated in the manufacturing side the entire sector will be much more subject to comparative market trends as changing costs are weighed up in different parts of the world.

The thrust of this argument is that Irish workers have little to fear from the microelectronics revolution because we are to benefit from a disproportionate share of the extra jobs being created in the manufacturingsphere. But the argument is based on the false premise that the predominant impact is in this sphere. In fact, as was argued in the first of these articles, the manufacturing and development side of microelectronics, while it is the recipient of colossal investment, is very unlikely to produce anything like the number of jobs necessary to replace those that will definitely be lost as a result of automation in the main industrial and service sectors. Further, the presence here of a substantial microelectronics sector is no guarantee that Irish managements will not seek to use the new technology to displace and deskill labour. In fact the reverse is more likely, given the successful penetration of this ideology in the advisory bodies servicing Irish management and the presence here of many of the multinationals using the new techniques.

There are also structural problems facing Irish capitalism which are likely to attract its managers, whether in the private or public sectors, to the solution offered by the new automation. There is for example, the increasing burden of financing the public service, which absorbs nearly 50% of GNP, and in which the greatest proportion of cost is devoted to administrative and clerical wage bills. Together with the new government emphasis on limiting public expenditure this financial crises is certain to involve a great increase in productivity proposals to public sector unions linking job losses to special pay increases for those that remain. There is a danger that these will be more acceptable to trade union officialdom precisely to the degree that a tighter national wage round or understanding is imposed. The same argument applies to the administrative and clerical side of the private sector, which is, in any case, comparatively numerous here compared to urban occupations in other EEC member-States.(5) In spite of recent unionisation the ASTMS calculates that up to a third of jobs in the commercial and public administration sectors, 80,000 in all, are endangered.(6) There are signs that it is in the smaller and least well organised offices that the initial jobs are being lost, but the pattern is certain to spread.

Even if Irish capitalism were to enjoy greater than average rates of growth in the next few years this is no guarantee against the likely loss of jobs, since a key factor in management calculations for the use of new technology is the possibility of generating growth from increased productivity of existing resources rather than from an increased use of labour power. Thus high growth rates combined with high productivity based on the new technology can lead to an increase in unemployment. When this tendency is superimposed on the Republic's demographic structure, with some half of the population under 25 and no sign that immediate trends will reverse this pattern, it can be seen that the problem is compounded, as it is also by the increased participation of women in the labour forces.

It has however been argued, notably by the National Board for Science and Technology,(7) that a number of factors

> "suggest that the experience in Ireland may be substantially different from other countries, especially in the short to medium term"

Their report notes that there are bound to be delays in applying the new techniques and that the following factors differentiate the Republic's economy from others which have been studied in detail:

- A large proportion of the workforce (22%) is engaged in agriculture, mainly on small family farms. (63% on less than 15 acres).
- Small firms predominate in industry, with relatively new plant.
- Industry is export orientated.
- Electronics sector is relatively important (20% of industrial exports in 1979)".

The NBST is engaged on a comprehensive study of the impact on employment here of the new technologies and we must await the outcome before commenting in detail on their position. It is true that the relative absence of heavy engineering and manufacturing industry in the Republic means that we are not as exposed to automation based on the substitution of electronic for electromechanical control elements. Nonetheless nothing they suggest leads one to believe that the impact in the services area will be less than traumatic and their emphasis on training and education begs a whole series of questions concerning the use by capitalism of the new technologies. As regards the quality and location of employment there is also little basis for an argument for Irish exclusivism. Thus while we may in the Republic benefit disproportionately from that part of the new technologies which leads to new products and services, there is much less reason to believe that we will be spared the effects of automation on new methods of manufacturing, distribution and the provision of services.

What then should the attitude of the unions be to this latest round of automation? In the light of the previous discussion it would, first of all, be extremely shortsighted for union attitudes to be based mainly on the likelihood that the electronic sector will continue to grow and provide extra jobs. However desirable this is it is largely irrelevant to the impact of automation in manufacturing and services. Secondly it should be understood that the main principles applying are not fundamentally different from those that form the basis of any effective trade unionism. Thirdly, however, it is essential that trade unionists realise the need for an overall response to new technology proposals whether at plant, industry or national level. The capacity of the new systems and the fact that many of them are modular, so that once introduced they can be built upon further, makes a piecemeal approach very shortsighted. It is this need for a comprehensive response which holds out possibilities for socialists to intervene on the issues and particularly to point up the contradiction between the liberatory potential of new techniques in contrast to their use by capitalism to destroy

levels of jobs and skills and to weaken rank and file trade unionism. These issues are much more likely to attract workers' attention in circumstances where the whole process or even industry faces reorganisation.

It would nonetheless be a mistake to underestimate the difficulties involved. One issue that tends to be falsely posed is whether trade unionists are in favour of technical innovation. It is suggested that the only alternatives are either to resist the process, in which case one is against "progress", or to accept it alongside the deleterious effects of "rationalisation".

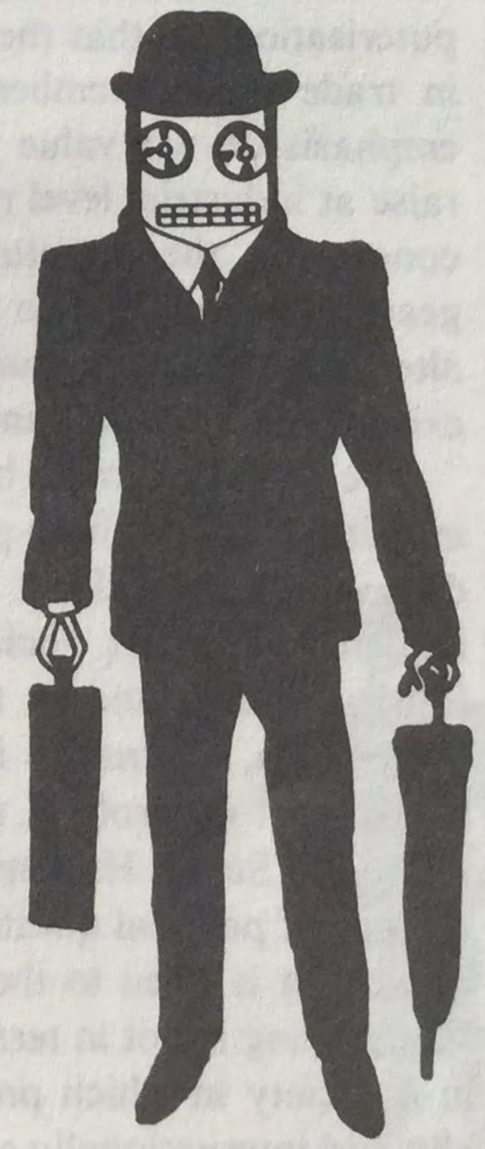
But the real issue is not that of the abstract desirability of innovation but whose interests are to be served by it and the conditions to apply to its introduction. In the previous article it was argued, that there are very specific interests for modern capitalism's use of the new systems, in boosting productivity through job losses and diluting the skill content of labour power. It follows that unions should put the greatest emphasis on protecting jobs, defending current levels of shop floor control and skill and ensuring that all changes are subject to full consultations, negotiation and agreement before implementation. The stress on jobs is paramount and involves a consciousness that the overall number should be protected not only against compulsory and voluntary redundancy but also against the depredations of "natural wastage". The best way to approach this issue positively is to claim shorter working hours, longer holidays, special leave etc. as conditions for co-operation on the grounds that the new system should be used to ease the burdens on all workers rather than simply to distribute benefits to profitability.

It is one thing to outline these principles, however, and quite another to ensure that they inform the negotiation of new technology agreements. This is because negotiations often follow the lines established in a succession of productivity agreements where conditions have been sold for money, an especially dnagerous precedent given the qualitative changes in productivity made possible by automated techniques. Unfortunately it suits many trade union officials to follow the paths well worn through productivity dealing, which is endorsed and even required by clauses in the last few national wage agreements or understandings. It is all the more necessary, therefore, to stress the need for rank and file involvement in the negotiation of new technology agreements and to extend this principle across orthodox demarcation lines in workplace and industrial contexts.

This has been a lesson learnt by many groups of workers the hard way, having belatedly discovered that concessions made in one section have unanticipated effects on the pace and intensity of work, with management in greater control than previously. The same applies to health and safety factors, with, for example, the generalisation in the use of visual display terminals throughout many white collar occupations.

Workers confronted with management proposals for new technology are usually in the best position to give the lie to loose talk of an increase in the levels of skill required as a result of new systems of automation, where computers can now replace the working operations of even the most skilled craftsmen and which are expressly constructed on a transfer of control to the machine, it is surprising that these views have had such currency. Much of the deskilling is a function of reorganisation rather than exclusively a technical matter, with managements seeking to recapture as much control as possible of the work process, the better to regulate the pattern and intensity of work. This objective is not always apparent at the opening stages when managements will be willing to concede benefits, usually money, in order to clear the ground for future "rationalisation". A cardinal principle for the trade union side, therefore, is to assert their continuing capacity to monitor the development of systems and to insist on the status quo, through blacking, etc., when attempts are made unilaterally to change or develop the system.

It can be seen that at the workplace level the issue of new technology can be turned to advantage by trade unionists in asserting control over decision-making through insisting on negotiated change in working



conditions. Often this will involve a markedly extended degree of participation by trade union members in the union process. It can also create problems if the level of participation is deflected into the area of workers' participation in management.

While the comprehensive nature of the response needed to new technology proposals can lead to a heightened consciousness amongst workers as to control of the working process there is a lot of evidence that incorporation of this into participatory structures blunts the capacity of independent trade unionism when it is necessary to confront management.

An alternative approach to "industrial democracy", laying emphasis on the negotiability of all aspects of the working process, has been extended lately in the context of new technology changes and recessionary policies to embrace negotiation not only of the output but also over alternative products. The best known example has been in Lucas Aerospace in Britain where the combine shop stewards committee drew up a proposal for a whole series of new products which they argue will both save jobs and supply human need to better effect than the current mainly defence related products.(8) There has been a bitter battle over the last four years by the committee to force the company into a response to the shop stewards' Corporate plan, during which the plan became a rallying point for development of the committee. Lucas is notable for the high number of skilled scientists and technologists in the workforce. The compaign has overlapped with an attempt by the management to reduce their numbers and rationalise their working operations through computerisation, so that there has been a marked growth in trade union membership and consciousness. The emphasis on use value has enabled the committee to raise at industrial level many highly political questions concerning the structure of priorities in a society geared to profit and to pose in a concrete fashion an alternative based on human need but grounded in the existing level of skill and expertise.

The Lucas example has attracted a lot of attention in Britain and has been particularly influential in Scandanavia. Historically it was developed very much in tandem with Left social democracy in the British Labour Party, and is to be set alongside planning agreements, alternative industrial strategies and selective import controls in the political panoply of Tony Benn and Stuart Holland. While the tactic does allow a range of political questions to be raised with workers at work it is open to the objection that the

"Bargaining is not in terms of what could be produced in a society in which production was planned rationally and internationally so as to satisfy human need. It is bargaining over what can be produced so as to be sold at a profit inside existing, capitalist society, with its irrationality, its crises and its 'overproduction'. It involves trade unionists trying to persuade management that it does not understand its own real interests, that it can obtain more markets and bigger profits by accepting the advice of its workers". (9) When this is translated into detailed negotiation it is likely to involve an acceptance of sacrifices by the workforce while the viability of the new products is tested on the market, which can be very dangerous in the context of new technology, given the limited number of extra jobs that are likely to be created by diversification and new products.

In the Republic there have not been any proposals as yet on the scale of the Lucas plant although many unions have been involved in negotiating alternatives to redundancy and closure with managements. The emphasis on diversification and market development or improvement of services is likely to be a continuing tactic when unions face job losses associated with technical change.

The issue of new technology has become a live one in the labour movement and the ICTU now has a working party which is due to produce a report by the end of the year. Its remit includes the development of policy in relation to job losses, deskilling, retraining and redeployment of workers affected by new technology changes.

It is worth quoting the policy resolution passed by the ICTU in 1979 in some detail for the record and to facilitate a brief commentaty on some of the issues raised.

"Conference affirms the need for a policy of overall planning in regard to the new technology so that the benefits which can accrue will be equitably distributed and its introduction matched by a reduction in working hours. Conference supports the negotiation of agreements on technology which will give trade unions the right to full information about technological changes, the right to be involved in decisions about the introduction of new technology at the earliest possible stage and the right to have proper training for trade union representatives in relation to these matters. Conference declares its support for workers who in the absence of full protection against involuntary reduction in jobs resist the introduction of the new technology. Furthermore, Conference calls on both Governments to establish co-ordinating bodies, representing trade unions, employers and Government to plan, regulate and monitor new technological developments and ensure that these do not bring about wholesale unemployment".

In addition a number of individual unions have adopted policies and there are quite a few negotiations in train. Amongst these are the ITGWU, FWUI, AUEW-TASS, ASTMS and the NUJ, NGA and IGS amongst the print unions.(10) It is becoming clear that the existing machinery for inter-union co-operation, whether at ICTU or industry level is inadequate to cater to the need to respond in a co-ordinated way to technoloical developments. There is no liason between the unions representing clerical workers, for example, which could compound difficulties thrown up by competition for members. The congress emphasis on shortening the working week is welcome but difficult to translate into practice given the amount of overtime being worked and a marked reluctance of many union officials to go against what they perceive to be members' preferences for money improvements.

On information, consultation and negotiation of all changes a number of unions have developed sophisticated policies to cater for workplace situations but as yet there are no signs of industry level agreements with employer bodies or national level agreements with the FUE along the lines of the policy in Norway, for example, which provides endorsement for a structure of negotiation at local and plant level.(11) These kinds of agreement are useful to the extent that they bolster the capacity of rank and file workers to veto changes that involve job losses or a deterioration in working conditions. Without rank and file involvement through democratic union structures they are likely to be of minimal importance.

The ICTU policy on redundancy pledges support for workers faced with involuntary loss of jobs, which begs the question of the overall number of jobs and the need to protect this in a context of growing structural unemloyment, continuing growth in the young job-seeking population and an increase in the number of women seeking employment. While these demand the formulation of national claims on government this is no substitute for a much sharper attitude to policies on voluntary redundancy and non-replacement through "natural wastage".

On all these issues there is a need for a campaign in the unions at rank and file as well as national level on a propoganda basis and with a view to bringing together workers across union and industrial demarcation lines. Although the ICTU tends to defer to individual unions excessively on such matters there is the possibility for such a campaign to be co-ordinated centrally through its structures.

Clearly this needs to be supplemented by a national policy and demands on government. It is tempting to believe that involvement in tripartite planning operations such as those set up in the national understanding or through the National Economic and Social Council are sufficient to deliver the guarantees required.

However such participation draws trade union officialdom into structures where the conflicts of interest are subsumed into consensus about the "national interest" and the "social partners". Without, at the very least, an active campaign across the unions they are generals with an army.

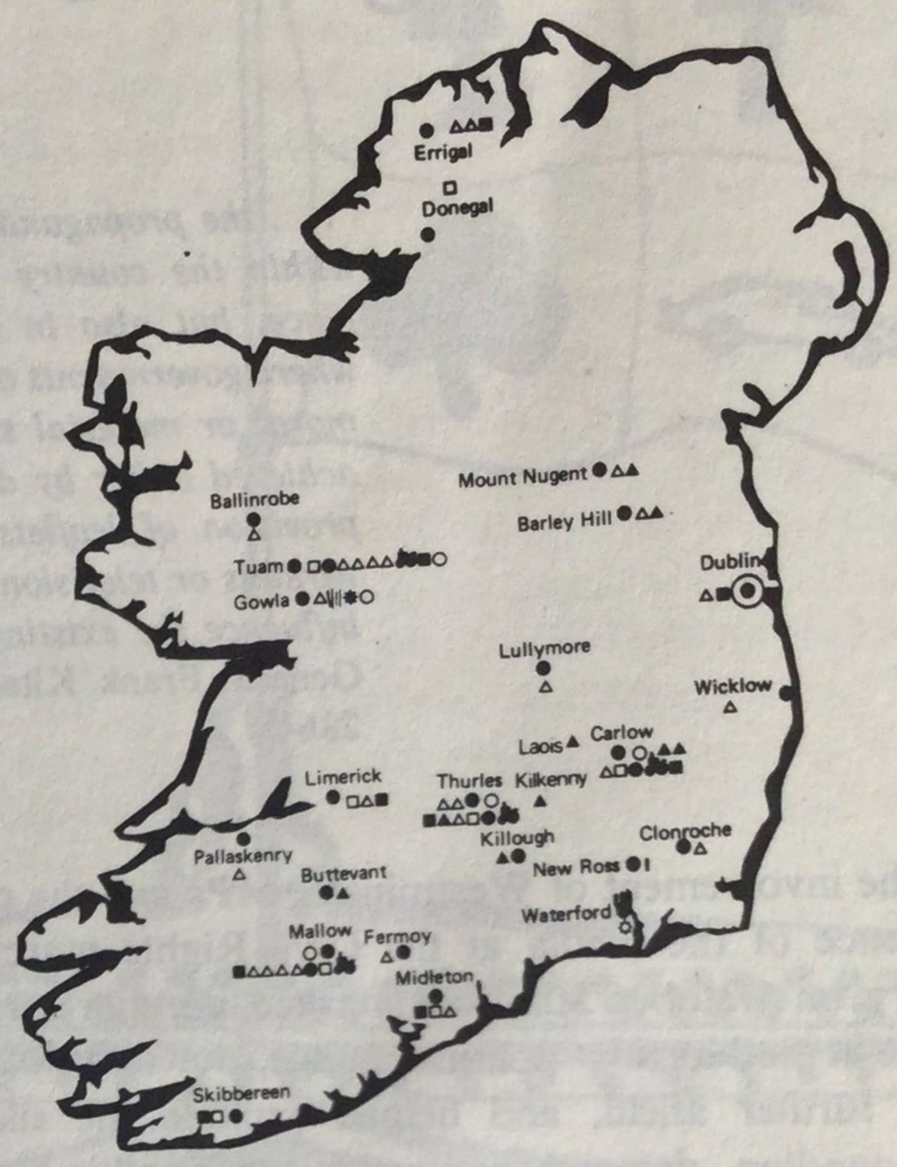
Demands in such a campaign would include, as a first priority, a reduction in the working week, no loss of jobs overall as a result of new technology and guarantees that all such changes are fully subject to negotiation. It can be seen that these are fundamentally political demands in the context of austerity policies and recession. They clash with the requirement of capitalist profitability and the underwriting of this by the state.

In a period when consciousness of the new technology is suffused by misplaced futurological speculation that the benefits will be equitably distributed socialists have an obligation to insist on the reality of capitalist application of the techniques. But it would be gravely mistaken simply to take a negative view of the new microelectronics, given their potential for relieving drugery and meeting human need. The very scale of the likely impact, which will affect up to half the workforce in the next decade, makes it possible to argue, to paraphrase Lenin, that microelectronics plus soviets equals communism.

NOTES

1. See Mike Cooley, *Architect or Bee? The human/Technology Relationship, Langley* Technical Services, Slough, 1980, *passim*
2. *Cooley, op cit*, Political Implication of New Technology', pp 41-62
3. *Left Perspectives*, Vol 1, No 1, Dublin, Summer 1980, pp 9-14.
4. National Board for Science and Technology, *Microelectronics, The Implications for Ireland*, first phase report, Dublin, June 1980, pp 39-41.
5. James Wickham, 'The Politics of Dependent Capitalism: International Capital and the Nation State', in Austin Morgan and Bob Purdie, eds., *Ireland, Divided Nation, Divided Class*, London, Ink Links, 1980, pp 67-8
6. ASTMS, *Consultation or Chaos, Microelectronic Technology* Dublin, 1979, p 25
7. *op cit*, p 36
8. Cooley, *op cit*, pp 63-82; also, David Elliot, *The Lucas Aerospace Workers' Campaign*, London, Young Fabian pamphlet, 1977
9. Chris Harman, *Is a Machine after your Job, New Technology and the Struggle for Socialism*, London SWP, p 29
10. A useful survey is Brian Trench, 'Computed Dole?', *Irish Press*, August 21, 1980
11. Agreement reprinted in John Evans, *The Impact of Microelectronics on Employment in Western Europe in the 1980's* Brussels, ETUC, 1979, pp 134-9.

CÓMHLUCHT SIÚICRE EIREANN THART TIMPEALL NA TÍRE



IRISH SUGAR IS 25,000 JOBS

Its raw materials are all home produced

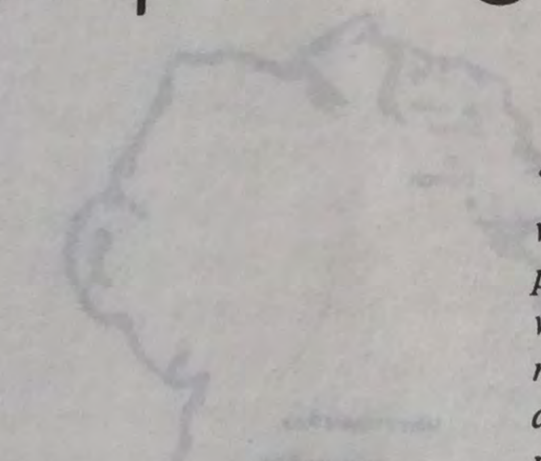
It generates £400,000,000 annually in our economy. And it sends it 400 products to markets across the world.

Irish Sugar IS your own industry

CÓMHLUCHT SIÚICRE EIREANN, TEO.,

(early among the nation's builders)

Exporting the Problem



". . . the propaganda battle has not only got to be won within the country in which the insurgency is taking place, but also in other places throughout the world where governments or individuals are in a position to give moral or material support to the enemy . . . It can be achieved either by direct action, as for example by the provision of leaflets, or the setting up of an official wireless or television network, or by trying to inform and influence the existing new media."
General Frank Kitson,*BUNCH OF FIVE*, (1977), pp. 286-7

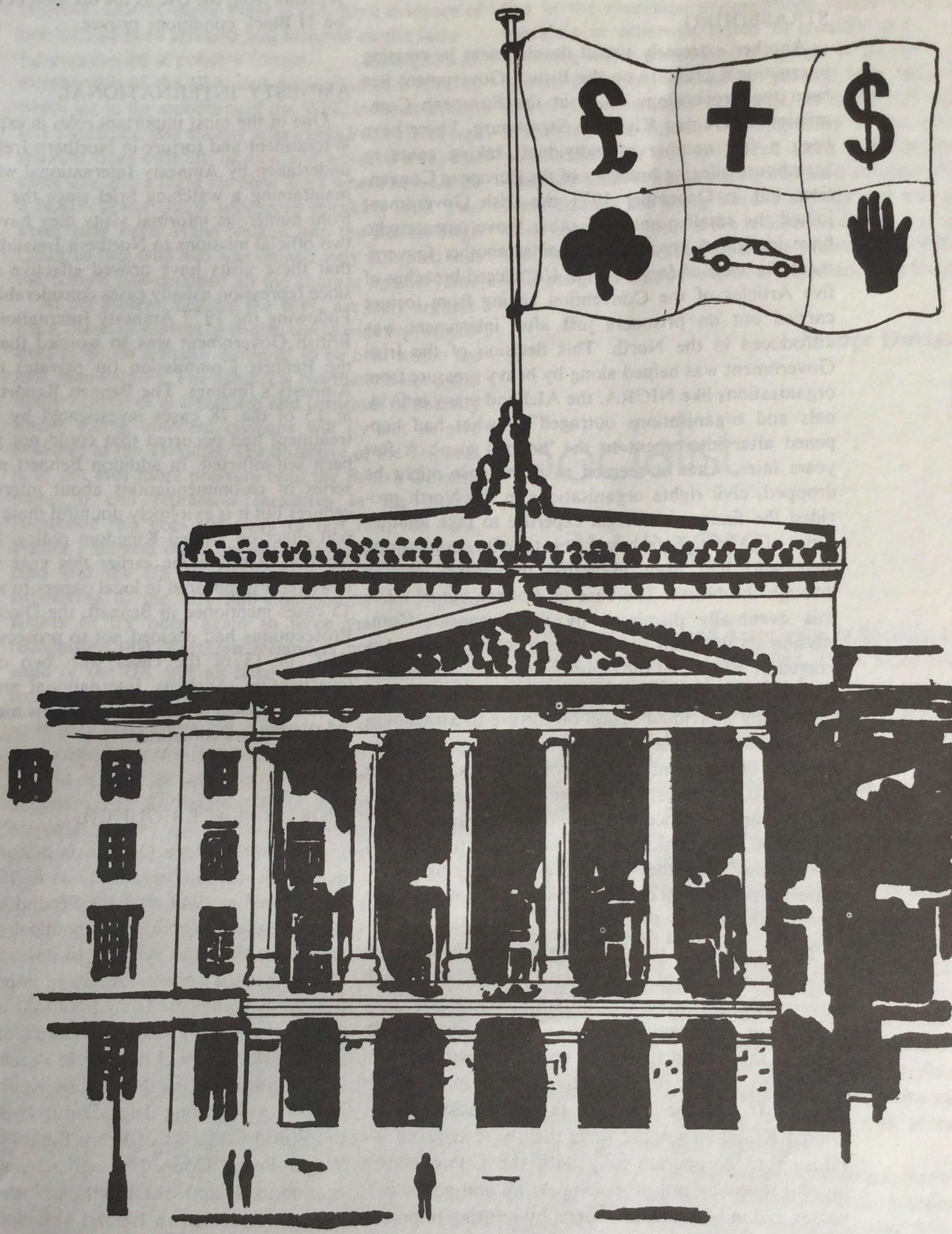
The involvement of Westminster MPs and the presence of the media at the Civil Rights march in Derry on October 5th 1968 marked a major turning point in the North's political image, not only locally but further afield, and helped explode the silence surrounding. demand for equal rights for all in Northern Ireland.

The four MPs had been asked by the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association to attend the march as it was recognized at an early stage that Westminster's responsibility for Unionist abuses had to be clearly exposed. It was also realised at this point that suport from outside Northern Ireland was going to be crucial. Indeed, the decision to campaign in the form of marches was directly inspired by the huge marches of black people in the USA led by Martin Luther King.

The steady stream of journalists, film crews and writers to Northern Ireland since 1968 continue even to the present day, but with a few notable exceptions little attempt is made to analyse why Northern Ireland is the way it is today.Nowhere is this more so than in the United States of America, where the Northern Ireland issue has become little more than the proverbial political football, notably at election time. From the heady days of 1969 when dollars were flowing thick and fast into the North's troubled areas, comparatively little has ever found its way into the NICRA coffers and the reason was simple. NICRA and its civil rights demands were okay so long as they were confined to Northern Ireland, but were anathema both to large sections of the Irish-American population and to US politicians, when translated locally into support for the black population and the US's other ethnic minorities.

US politicians could look to two main areas for supportive information about the North — one was the Dublin Government, which was anything but supportive of the demands of the civil rights movement. The second was a physical force movement (the Provos) whose policies, expressed through organistions such as the Irish Northern Aid Council did nothing to rock the US boat and which had the right line on so many issues from supporting racialism to 'commie-bashing'.

The other side of the American coin is that the leaders of the black civil rights movement in the US have been invited and have attended Annual Conference of NICRA in Belfast. The National Association for Irish Freedom the US representatives of NICRA, supported much of the work of the civil rights movement in the US. But the exploitation of the North by certain US Politicians and groups has taken its toll and today the NAIF is a tiny caucus of dedicated workers who strive continually to spell out the real issues in Northern Ireland and Britain's responsibility. They have won many friends as well as enemies for this. Foremost are trade unionists. The largest Union in New York — the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees — which is not a union organising amongst the Irish Americans but in fact is known as a key black workers union, has been rendering invaluable support for many years by publishing free of charge many publications by both NAIF and NICRA as a solidarity gesture.



STRASBOURG

Another extremely useful development in creating international pressure on the British Government has been the proceedings taken at the European Commission of Human Rights in Strasbourg. There have been a fair number of individuals taking cases to Strasbourg alleging breaches of the European Convention, but in December 1971 the Irish Government joined the small number of other Governments who have instigated proceedings against another Government.The case of *Ireland v the UK* alleged breaches of five Articles of the Convention arising from torture carried out on prisoners just after internment was introduced in the North. This decision of the Irish Government was helped along by heavy pressure from organisations like NICRA, the ALJ and many individuals and organisations outraged by what had happened after internment to the 'hooded men'. A few years later, when it seemed as if the case might be dropped, civil rights organisations in the North provided the finance and legal expertise to take another series of cases to Strasbourg, this time by seven young men who had been ill-treated in various centres through the North. The case of *Donnelly et al v UK* was eventually dismissed by the European Commission on the basis that adequate domestic remedies existed in NI (ie that the Court system had not broken down). This disgraceful decision has effectively debarred any individual action on torture to Strasbourg in the future because if the victim receives compensation for ill-treatment that is considered an effective remedy. It is interesting to note that Amnesty International are so concerned about the operation of the Diplock Courts, which convict largely on the basis of 'confessions' that they are presently undertaking research which will no doubt culminate in another major report indicting the system.

The decision of the Commission and the court in 1976 came as one of the greatest shocks to the British Government and caused them more international embarassment than any amount of Provo bombs. It brought the United Kingdom beofre the bar of world opinion to answer for ill-treating epople in Northern Ireland. It had the effect of further blackening the United Kingdom's name since they were rebuked for refusing to co-operate fully with the Commission's investigations by not producing Army and police witnesses and in addition, of course, by refusing to punish any of the men guilty of torture. Strasbourg had had its benefits but also severe limitations. Action there is costly and time consuming and subject to political pressure from the UK as the decision in the recent case on H-Block conditions proves.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

One of the most important roles in exposing official ill-treatment and torture in Northern Ireland has been undertaken by Amnesty International who have been maintaining a watching brief since the 1960s. Apart from numerous informal visits they have carried out two official missions to Northern Ireland, and the fact that these visits have proved effective is undoubted since repression usually eases considerably afterwards. Following the 1977 Amnesty International report the British Government was so worried that they set up the Bennett Commission (in private) to investigate Amnesty's findings. The Bennett Report did find that in 15 of the 78 cases investigated by Amnesty, ill-treatment had occurred that could not possibly have been self-inflicted. In addition Bennett made a whole series of recommendations about interrogation procedures but it is extremely doubtful these will have any real effect on United Kingdom policy. Indeed an indication of this came earlier this year when a small news report appeared in local papers to say that in the 15 cases mentioned in Bennett, the Director of Public Prosecutions had decided not to prosecute any of the RUC in 13 of the cases with two cases pending investigation. Amnesty International are also known to be concerned about the allegations made in relation to the H Block situation.

WORLD PEACE COUNCIL

The World Peace Council is a world wide movement with national organisations in 120 countries. It was formed in 1949 after the Second World War and exists to unite people of all political religious beliefs and from all social systems to ensure peace and remove the causes of war. It has an important consultative status within the United Nations and has taken a close interest in Northern Irleand affairs since the early 1970s. In 1973 the World Peace Council sent a fact-finding mission toN.I. led by Krishna Menon, and in 1973 a 30-strong delegation from Ireland attended the World Congress of Peace Forces in Moscow. The World Peace Council issued a report from its delegation to NI and sent it to the UN where most reports concerning Northern Ireland have unfortunately been quietly buried. In 1977 again on the initiative of the WPC the World Assembly of Builders of Peace was held at which two people from Northern Ireland gave

evidence. One of them, Peter Hand, gave evidence of how he had been arrested and tortured on the false information of a police informer. Charged with membership of the IRA and possession of a firearm, which led to the mobilising of the WPC internationally. It is significant that shortly afterwards Peter Hand was released from custody on bail and whisked away the same day into a flight for New York where he went on a NAIF/Trade Union-sponsored speaking tour. Two years later Peter Hand walked into the Belfast High Court to face trial and was immediately informed that the Crown had dropped all the charges against him.

At the present moment the WPC are busy orgnaising a venue in Europe to enable world wide representatives to sit on a major Tribunal to be held within the next nine months. The subject is Northern Ireland and many victims of ill-treatment and witnesses of security forces killing innocent civilians will fly out to give evidence to the Tribunal. The objective of the Tribunal is to put ever more pressure onto the British Government to end repressive measures in the North. Alongside this goes the work of NICRA, the ALJ, Father Faul and other organisations in Northern Ireland and the US on finalising a major report for submitting to the UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights to try once again to force that body into recognising that Northern Ireland is not an internal issue of the UK but an issue of major international concern.

It may sound trite but it has to be said again and again that in general the only place where one can look to find a sensible analysis of the Northern Ireland situation is in the socialist press and in the socialist countries. It was only a few months ago that French Communist Party General Secretary, Georges Marchais, condemned the repression in NI to the assembled members of the European Parliament.

But in the one area where solidarity and support would have made the most impact, sections of the left have found themselves fragmented. In England and further afield whether for sincere or opportunistic reasons the NI issues has been rasied at different times as an easy catch-cry to rally support for these organisations. Simplistic slogans like "Victory to the IRA" have the effect of shocking the British working class rather than helping it to realise the real nature of its government's interference in and responsibility for the situation in the North.Similarly, although resolutions passed at successive British TUC Conferences supporting civil rights in Northern Ireland are very helpful, a bit more action by the TUC micht move the British Government on issues such as repressive laws. But in the meantime organisations which either deliberately or otherwise refuse to consider short term demands which would ease the plight of people in the North, preferring instead to present long term demands as immediately realisable, do no service either in helping the British working class in the North which, like it or not, is divided along sectarian lines. The only answer lies in a long and hard struggle where bitter lessons are being learned already and will continue to be learned until the realisation dawns that until the Northern working class are united there will be little progress made towards a united socialist Ireland.

Madge Davison.

Socialist Lawyers

The Northern Ireland Association of Socialist Lawyers was founded on March 22nd, 1980. Since then, a considerable amount of time has been spent preparing a manifesto, and detailed study will now commence in the areas of law which appear to them to require a socialist analysis.

The Association's members are primarily drawn from the junior ranks of the legal profession and comparitively few of their senior colleagues would sympathise with their aims or attitudes. Even among junior lawyers, not many practitioners seem attracted by socialist ideas. The prevalent attitude would appear to be that lawyers should operate within various sets of rules, as set out by parliament in statute and by judges through the common law, without reflecting on the influences which dictate the precise formulation of those rules. The Association does not accept that lawyers should work within such narrow confines. It believes that lawyers who daily see how justice can be thwarted, should highlight injustices and press for action to prevent their repetition.

In June 1980 the English-based Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers held a conference in London, at which NIASL were represented, together with the southern-based Irish Association of Democratic Lawyers, to discuss "Law and the Crisis in Northern Ireland". The Society adopted a number of papers,

most notably one calling for the withdrawal by the British Government of the constitutional guarantee to Northern unionists, the introduction of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, the withdrawal of the Republic's sovereignty claim over Northern Ireland, and the condemnation of emergency legislation. Plans are under way for a November conference in Malta of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers.

J.H., M.A.J.

* * *

The text of the introduction to the NIASL Manifesto and Constitution is as follows:-

The Northern Ireland Association of Socialist Lawyers has been formed by a number of socialists involved n the law in Northern Ireland. It includes practising barristers and solicitors, law teachers and others whose jobs bring them into close touch with the law.

Our principle aims are to expose legal injustice in Northern Ireland, showing in particular how working-class people and organisations bear the brunt of this injustice, and to work for radical reform of the law and the way it is enforced.

It is ironic that in Northern Ireland, where the population is more highly politicised than in the rest of the United Kingdom, the political and class nature of the law and its administration receives much less attention than it does in Britain. The reason, of course, is that the constitutional question dominates local thinking, and public attention is focused primarily on so-called 'emergency legislation', which has now become to all intents and purposes a permanent feature of the legal system.

The high profile of emergency legislation is attributable to the fact that law has been used here in a manner which has consistently failed to meet even the most basic standards of fairness and impartiality.

The notorious Special Powers Act was in concept and in application directed almost exclusively against anti-Unionists. The transfer to Westminster of ultimate responsibility for law and order has done little to improve standards of justice. The Emergency Provisions Act and Prevention of Terrorism Act have replaced the Special Powers Act and the system of remand in custody pending trial has been used as a new form of internment. Indeed confidence in the whole system of the administration of justice in N. Irland has been undermined by the failure of the RUC, the British Army and the Courts to discharge their responsibilities in a way which is fair and seen to be fair.

The members of NIASL have individual views on the constitutional position of Northern Ireland, but it is common ground that the constitutional question has been used in the past and continues to be used to divert attention away from the other issues — social, economic and legal — which affect the working class of Ireland, North and South. Whatever form the ultimate solution of the constitutional question takes — be it united or federal Ireland, independent Ulster, integration or whatever — the law will continue to be weighted against working class people. For this reason we regard the constitional issue as indeed of central importance, but we feel it is time to promote a greater public awareness of the many other, less conspicuous ways in which the law operates against the interests of the working-class and of progressive elements.

The organisation of society in Britain and Ireland is based on private ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, i.e., land, factories, banks, etc. This inevitably divides society into those who own these means and those who don't, and thereby creates classes with conflicting economic interests, e.g., landlords and tenants, and employers and employees. The interests of the members of these respective classes are nutually antagonistic. This is so even when individual relationships between members of different classes appear to be cordial.

Of course class distinctions are now more blurred than they used to be, and some of the worst effects of the capitalist economic system have been ameliorated through the efforts of the labour and trade union movement. . However, the capitalist principle of production for private profit rather than for social need still remains the guiding principle in our society, and there is, therefore, still a very wide gulf between the working class and the upper classes. This gulf will remain until industry, agriculture and commerce are transferred from the ownership and control of a small number of individuals to the people as a whole. It is against this background and within this context that the law must be examined.

It is simply not true to say the law is a neutral set of rules drawn up and administered in the interests of all members of society equally. Rather it is a system designed principaly to consolidate and protect the prevailing social order and therefore to maintain the inequalities and injustices which are built into that order. By virtue chiefly of the fact that the British Labour Party has enjoyed several periods of government since the war, it is no longer valid to identify law

as a monolithic repressive instrument of the ruling class, pure and simple. A distinction much now be drawn between substantive law and its enforcement machinery. There are many laws on the statute book introduced by Labour governments which are progressive, e.g. the Rents Acts, Factory Acts, Employment Protection Acts, Equal Pay Acts, Trade Union and Labour Relations Acts, etc. All that legislation, inadequate though it may be, judicially sabotaged though it may be, contributes to the reduction of social and economic exploitation and represents an advance of the socialist movement and a corresponding retreat of capitalism. Nevertheless, the bulk of substantive law, especially the law of contract crime and tort, reflects bourgeois values in that they are based on notions of individualism and private property. Moreover the injustice and inequality suffered by working class people are exhibited not only in the substantive law itself but also in the enforcement of the law, which is still firmly in the hands of people whose ideas and attitudes reflect those of the dominant classes in society. The police in Britain and Ireland alike are notoriously conservative, even though many of their members in the lower echelons have much in common with the working class. This conservatism is readily demonstrated by their antipathy towards striking workers, pickets, political demonstrators and others who are adjudged to be politically and socially deviant. This identity of interest with the dominant classes has been particularly apparent in Northern Ireland where the police are regarded by many as a sectarian and highly political force.

The judiciary is drawn almost exclusively from the upper classes. Their education, upbringing and associations cause them to be imbibed with the same general outlook on life as their class-colleagues in industry and commerce. This means that even if they make genuine attempts in court to adopt an unprejudiced position, their socialisation and class prejudice (conscious and subconscious) make it impossible for them to do so, especially in those cases which involve conflicts of class interests and principle. There is, of course, nothing new in this proposition. Several judges, notably Lord Justice Scrutton as long ago as 1924, have expressed the same view. Moreover, in Northern Ireland, the interlocking relationship of the judiciary and the governing Unionist Party in pre-Direct Rule days added a particularly sinister and sectarian edge to this general predisposition and was a bitter travesty of the liberal-democratic notion of the independence of the judiciary from the executive. The Unionists are no longer in government but their ideology still pervades the ranks of the judiciary. The importance of this factor is heightened by the fact that judges, of course, act as the jury in Diplock Courts.

This, therefore, is the broad perspective of the Association. Working parties have been set up to examine specific areas of law and its operation, and the following are among the subjects which we propose to examine:

Legal Services; Director of Public Prosecutions; Law and Labour; Housing and Housing Law; Welfare State and the Law; Equality, Discrimination and the Law; Emergency Legislation; Penal Reform and H-Blocks.

Copies of the *Northern Ireland Association of Socialist Lawyers - Manifesto and Constitution* are available from the Association at 22 Lombard Street, Belfast 1.

Expanding the Question

In August this year unemployment in Northern Ireland reached a post-war record of 88,000, more than 15 per cent of the insured working population, and will continue to rise so long as Britain remains in economic crisis and the British Government continues with its present drastic economic politices.

Unfortunately the trade unions in Northern Ireland and especially the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, seem utterly unable to do anything effective either to reduce the unemployment figures or to eliminate the fundamental economic weaknesses of the six counties.

For the past 25 or 30 years the Northern Committee of ICTU, and before that the Irish TUC, has been issuing pamphlets and reports about the unemployment in the North. Furthermore ICTU has willingly participated in several economic councils, sponsored and financed by the authorities but composed of people who either do not know or do not want to admit that economically the six counties may never be a viable entity.

The reports and pamphlets issued by the ICTU have invariably deplored unemployment, blamed the government of the day and have urged that more public money be expended on safeguarding existing jobs or subsidies and state-guaranteed loans to firms like Harland and Wolff in Belfast and to the De Lorean car plant at Finaghy.

Meanwhile essential services such as hospitals and housing and education are deprived of funds, and other firms go bankrupt either because they cannot survive in the modern multinational economy or because the economic straightjackets applied by Mrs Thatcher and Sir Keith Joseph squeeze the very life out of them.

The economics that Mrs Thatcher sees best for Northern Ireland is to rob the social services and the smaller industries while subsidising useless giants like Harland and wolff and doubtful enterprises like De Lorean. This policy places ICTU in a dilemma. They cannot complain about certain firms being subsidised if jobs remain but they cannot condone cuts in the social services and job losses there.

Instead, however, of examining the basic economic structure of the six counties, testing the thesis that the so-called link with Britain does more harm than good and maybe admitting that something fundamentally may be wrong both in the economics and in the politics of Northern Ireland, the ICTU annually deplores rising unemployment and urges that more be done to purchase and subsidise employment.

They cannot take Mrs Thatcher's "no" for an answer, because they assume that everything depends on government and are bewildered when government policies, like the policies of the present Tory Government in Britain, are designed to reduce demand by destroying jobs — all in the praiseworthy cause, of course, of "squeezing inflation out of the economy".

Last July the Northern Committee of ICTU travelled to London to see Mrs Thatcher personally and to urge her that Northern Ireland be treated as a "special case". That Northern Ireland is a special case has been the whining cry of ICTU officialdom for the past 20 years, if not longer. When the place will cease to be a special case and be able to stand economically on its own two feet they cannot say. They probably would not have the faintest idea, nor would those who act, behind the scenes, as ICTU's economic advisers.

Do the officials of the ICTU or their economic advisers ever ask themselves why Northern Ireland has to be treated perpetually as a special case? Do they inquire into the real reasons why unemployment in the six counties has always been double the national average or unemployment in the United Kingdom? In other words do they ever exercise real economic thought?

None of the remedies they have ever suggested for dealing with unemployment would suggest so. There is no evidence in any of the ICTU's statements on unemployment to give the slightest hint that they might be examining economic fundamentals. On the contrary, while endlessly complaining, the Northern Committee of ICTU has accepted the policies of every government in Britain and, when Stormont existed, in Northern Ireland for the past 30 years.

The former Northern official of ICTU, now Lord Blease, once admitted that they admired Brian Faulkner and had worked well with him, and that was some time before Faulkner became a latter-day reformer and was willing to share political power with the North's Catholic minority.

Such acquiesence is nothing to be wondered at since the majority of ICTU officials have been men of "Unionist" or at least "Labour-Unionist" outlook. Ideologically they had no conflict with the parties in power.

The ICTU officials assumed, like the Stormont Governments, that unemployment in Northern Ireland could be reduced to "acceptable" levels by attracting

sufficient outside firms to open factories in the area.

But such firms, always motivated by the need to earn the highest possible returns on capital invested, will not come to Northern Ireland unless generously subsidised. Some of them would not come under any circumstances, least of all since it has been revealed, over the past ten years, that Northern Ireland is a place of communal unrest, intolerance and danger. The heads of two multinational corporations, Thomas Neidermeyer of Grundig and James Agate of Du Pont, have been murdered by terrorists in Northern Ireland.

When news of such atrocities spreads abroad it will most certainly deter other industrialists. Furthermore economic terror is a problem organisations such as ICTU would not know how to deal with.

The ICTU clearly did not know how to deal with the "loyalist" workers' strike which in 1974 overthrew the power-sharing executive. Taking the advice of Merlyn Rees who was then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Northern Committee of ICTU invited Len Murray, General Secretary of the British TUC to lead a back-to-work movement in the hope that it would break the strike.

A few courageous individual trade union members and several full-time union officials followed Mr Murray into the Queen's Island — but not enough to have any effect. The majority, loyal to the Orange and Unionist ethic or intimidated by the bully-boys of the UDA, remained at home. Brian Faulkner, then Chief Executive in teh power-sharing administration, later described Murray's back-to-work march as "a fiasco . . . and another humiliation for authority".

The workers on strike took no notice of the ICTU, yet it is their weekly union contributions which finance both the ICTU and the British TUC.

The Loyalist Workers' Strke of 1974 was not only a humiliation for authority: it was also evidence of the alienation of rank and file union members from union officialdom. Such alienation is recognised as regrettable in Britain and is exploited by the Conservatives when they seek to undermine the trade union movement. In Northern Ireland, where effective working class organisation and leadership is sorely needed, it is tragic.

It is the explanation why in political and in economic terms the Northern Committee of the ICTU, through claiming to represent the majority of Northern Ireland's 200,000 and more trade unionists, has been silenced and reduced to depending on government and capricious outside entrepreneurs to provide employment in Northern Ireland.

If employment has not been forthcoming from these two sources it is because neither the British Government nor the multinational corporations are interested in a region whose economy has been depressed since Ireland was partitioned in 1921.

ANDREW BOYD

Whatever you say, say nothing

I'm writing just after an encounter
with an English journalist in search of 'views
on the Irish thing'. I'm back in winter
quarters where bad news is no longer news,

where media men are stringers, sniff and point
where zoom lenses and uhers and coiled leads
litter the hotels. The times are out of joint
but I incline as much to rosary beads

as to the jottings and analyses
of leader-writers or newspapermen
who've scribbled down the long campaign from gas
and protest to gelignite and sten,

who proved upon their pulses 'escalate',
'backlash' and 'crack down', 'the Provisional wing',
'polarisation' and 'long-standing hate',
yet I live here, I live here too, I sing

expertly civil-tongued with civil neighbours
on the high wires of first wireless reports,
sucking the false tastes, the stony flavours
of those sanctioned, old elaborate retorts:

'oh, it's disgraceful, surely, I agree,'
'Where's it going to end?' 'It's getting worse,'
'They're murderers,' 'Internment, understandably,'
The 'voice of sanity' is getting hoarse.

Seamus Heaney

Books

The Rape and Plunder of the Shankill. Community Action: The Belfast Experience. By Ron Wiener. Published by Farsett Co-operative Press, 1980.

Mr. Wieners book sets out first to look at the history of working class housing in Belfast, the changes that occurred, and the motivation behind those changes; secondly to document the resistence of one community (The Protestant Loyalist Shankill) to those changes, the causes of such resistence and finally the achievements of the local community. It is necessary to mention the religious political make-up of the community since Mr. Wiener contends that this was fundamental to the resistance in the first place and to what successes were achieved. In a very clear and well documented analysis he claims that the necessity for redevelopment was caused not by a desire to give people better standards of housing, but to facilitate the changing nature of the Northern Irish economy.

The houses in the shankill had been built mainly in the middle of the last century and were meant to house those working in the traditional industries i.e., linen, engineering and shipbuilding. Due to the long hours and arduous working conditions in these industries, not to mention economic expediency, it was necessary to have housing located nearby, thus we have closely knit communities based on local industries going back 150 years. The political allegiances of these communities were determined by the fact that the Orange system, an alliance of the landed aristocracy and industrial enterpreneurs, was in a position to distribute favours, (particularly in times of economic recession), in jobs and housing. The deliberate cultivation of sectarianism through the creation of a Protestant aristocracy of labour, ensured the continuation of Orange control. One of the major contentions of the book is that the decline of the traditional industries led to a need to dismantle the Orange control system, in order to facilitate the re-shaping of Northern Ireland to the needs of international monopoly investment. A necessary pre-requisite for this was the breakup of the Unionist monolith in its previous form. The book dates this positive intervention on behalf of monopoly interests to the emergence of cross border discussion between O'Neill and Lemass. At a period when Lemass through the "First Programme for Economic Expansion" initiated the concept of economic development through foreign investment, traditional industries in the North were on the decline and the problems facing both parts of Ireland were somewhat similar. The difficulties faced in the North in developing such an economic strategy were complicated by the structure and emphasis of the "Northern Irish" statelet. Being, as it was, based on the interests of the now redundant local bourgeois it could no longer facilitate the needs of monopoly controlled capital. The economic planners decided to develop the idea of "growth Centres" outside the Belfast Urban Area. The main reason for this was the availability of cheap land, (not to mention cheap labour) and a desire to de-centralise the new industrial base of the economy, thus further facilitating the break-up of local bourgeois political control. Resistance by the local bourgeois was supported by the petty bourgeois and indeed working class Protestants who saw their "privilages" going by the board in a non-sectarian, hard-headed modern neo-colonial state. The dynamic brought about by this situation is one of the more important elements of the book. It is, in my opinion no exaggeration to say that one of the most important questions facing Marxism to day is the one of "community" and "class". While not solving the problem this book at least raises it in real terms and in a real situation. The confusion and contradictions which existed among the local politicians and their inability to organise themselves into any cohesive resistance is shown clearly as a contradiction of class interests. For those who believe that the difficulties in Northern Ireland can be boiled down to the Catholic "have-nots" and the Protestants "haves' this book should be compulsory reading. It

points out that the development of the civil rights movement brought home to Protestant workers in places like the Shankill that in real terms they were no better off than their Catholic neighbours.

The major part of the book deals with the specifics of the campaign in the Shankill area. Having laid a theoretical base for his contentions, Mr. Wiener proceeds to justify that theoretical conclusion by recorded facts and personal experience. It is at this level that the book takes on its relevance to deprived communities elsewhere. There were times when while reading the book, I was prompted to say "a take of two cities". Ron Wiener challenges the planners to justify themselves in a way that has rarely if ever been done before. His documentation of the tricks, sabterfuge and drownright lies of the planning authorities could very easily be transferred one hundred miles south to the capital of the alleged Irish Republic. It has been said before that experts are most expert at protecting their expertise and in order to do this they create their own language. I know this to be true in Dublin Inner City experience and this book verifies the Belfast experience as a basic contradiction. Planners are hired by the state, which is controlled by economic interests and their claim, i.e., the planners, that they have some kind of progressive sociological objective in the back of their mind is fallacious. One cannot serve two masters and the fact of the matter is that they get their terms of reference from their capitalist overlords.

Mr Wiener, in his analysis of "participation" and "negotiation" tackles the subject of community workers, councils etc, in a way that has been whispered throughout Dublin but never seriously discussed before. He claims on P. 151 that the government prefers to employ its community workers directly in order to have control over them. Interesting that, in the light of the imminent demise of Combat Poverty and the various local projects they were financing, and the Minister of Health's attempts to bring such projects under the control of the National Social Services Council. Of course, in Belfast they had the added difficulty of the army and the RUC infiltrating local community groups with so called social workers. At one particular meeting attended by six people one was a "community liaison officer" from the RUC and two were "community liaison officers" from the British Army. While in Dublin we have not yet got to that stage, nevertheless there are two essential viewpoints among community workers, that of working with the state to make things run smoother, and that of firm commitment to support of whatever the community decides it wants for itself.

The actual housing campaign in the Shankill bears a lot of similarities to the struggle of the people of the North Inner City of Dublin against local authorities and indifferent planners, the tactics of the authorities were the same, i.e., no consultation, blight brought about by lack of maintainance, continuous delays, confusion between one department and another and outright lies, all tending to lead to a breaking of community spirit. The position in Dublin at the moment is that through a concerted campaign supported by the local people and led in the main by locally based community workers the Corporation were forced to change their plans to the extent that instead of the original proposal of fifty houses they are now committed to building two hundred and seventy houses. In the Shankill the issue was not so much the number as the kind of houses and where they would be situated. However the fact of the matter is that despite what has been achieved in Dublin it is obvious now that it has been a Pyrrhic victory. The community which fought so hard to survive has been almost completely disbanded. What we did not have in Dublin and what Ron Wiener claims was the deciding factor in the Shankill was our own power, separate from the state. He claims that success only came after the Ulster Workers Council strike in 1974 and their direct participation, along with the UDA and other paramilitary groups in the "save the Shankill" campaign. That is a very serious proposition I am well aware, but it seems to me that the book raises such serious and fundamental questions. This book is not just a documentation of one case history, but has significance which reaches well beyond the borders of Northern Ireland. It raises cultural and historical questions, the understanding of which are imperative to the solution of the national "problem" and it also raises fundamental issues of community politics which still need to be tackled.

All thanks are due to Farsett Co-operative Press for publishing this valuable book and indeed to "Buzz" Logan whose photographs are very reminiscent of the work of Brendan Walsh in Dublin's Innter City, amply illustrate it.

Seanie Lambe

CONNOLLY'S MARXISM. By Bernard Ransom. Pluto Press. £2.95 (U.K.)

It seems the battle for James Connolly's soul can go on indefinitely. There are still people who can stand up at meetings and affirm, without blushing, that "James Connolly was, of course, a republican." There are texts which set out to prove that Connolly had the correct materialist approach to religion. In yet other versions it is his fusion of Catholicism, socialism and nationalism which distinguishes him. For isolated revolutionaries in search of a native heir, he was all but a Leninist, only lacking a vision of the revolutionary party to complete his orthodoxy.

All of this should be sufficient warning against any attempt to squeeze his writings and his actions into a single mould, to assert coherence and continuity when his personality and his work invite such contradiction. It is a warning which Bernard Ransom does not heed. But if there is, indeed, an intellectual strand which runs through Connolly's work, then Ransom may, with his concept of a hibernicised marxism have come closer to identifying it than any previous biographer. However, precisely because it is an intellectual, even philosophical, consistency which he is trying to establish, he runs into problems.

Connolly did not spend many late nights reading, after the children had gone to bed, in order to construct a world view. Even allowing for the possibility that someone's writing may reveal a deep-structural coherence of which the writer is not aware, the purpose and the meaning of Connolly's work are not primarily philosophical. Those late nights, those years on starvation wages, that persistent polemicising were all committed to workers with whom Connolly was always in direct contact. He wanted to influence their consciousness and organisation so that they could change the world. Readers of this principally intellectual biography will need to keep reminding themselves of that banality.

It is questionable whether Connolly permits of the kind of treatment which others have had in this Pluto Press series, *Ideas in Progress* Most of the other subjects either sought, or were forced into, a greater physical distance from the toilers who were, in principle, their audience and their interest. Trotsky's marxism was elaborated, at least in part, in Siberia and on a Turkish island. Gramsci's marxism was teased out in years in prison. Althusser's marzism is a product of the Ecole Normale Superieure. But Connolly's writings were in large majority circumstantial and ephemeral, responses to the events of that day, to the latest challenge from an opponent of socialism, or a comrade with whom he disagreed.

In his first chapter, Ransom states the case: Connolly was engaged in "a programmatic attempt at a detailed accommodation of marxist science to the national and religious traditions of Ireland". So, it isn't even a question of some unconscious coherence, but a deliberate, planned philosophical project, and one to which Ransom ascribes great sophistication, for he has Connolly's thought simultaneously rooted in secularism and in Catholic tradition. As if reflecting a later realisation that the emphasis was over-stated, Ransom's preface invites readers to read this first chapter, "The Hibernicisation of Marxism", *in parallel* with the second which deals more directly with Connolly's political trajectory through the Irish Socialist Republican Party, and the American Socialist Labour Party to industrial unionism. Few have the gift of reading two consecutive texts in parallel; the exhortation changes nothing; the view of Connolly as a romanticising marxist who was trying to cook scientific solialism to Irish palates sets the tone.

Bernard Ransom does have a case worth making, even if he does it clumsily and with an irritating penchant for neologisms or just wayward vocabulary. There is undoubtedly a nuance to his choice of "Catholicity" over "Catholicism", but is not always evident. He makes frequent reference to "erastianism" — three times in one page, in fact — in dealing with Northern Protestant attitudes, but never once explains it. All the easity available references say that the use of this term to mean subordination of church to state in ecclesiastical matters is misleading; Thomas Erastus, the 16th century Swiss theologian, never touched on this idea. Still, the term serves Ransom as a catch-all for everything from Roaring Hugh Hanna to William Walker and on to Ian Paisley. Perhaps more significantly, it avoids any implication of supremacist attitudes on their part.

Stripped of its wrapping, the case for which Ransom offers considerable evidence is that the threads of Connolly's commitment to a view of the future society as a re-incarnation of early Christian spiritual and

Celtic communal values can be traced through much that, at first glance, appears remote from such a vision. Much of his writing did reflect this perspective of socialist change as a retrieval of ideals which have been buried in the obscenity of capitalism, imposed from outside on the Irish people. Connolly did seem to believe that Catholicism (Catholicity, says Ransom) provided the focus for the development of "a unique Irish Consciousness, of the *idea* of Irish nationality". He did say that the church would find relations easier with a socialist republic than with capitalism, as there would be no need to apply religious sanctions on the people.

Ransom knowingly runs close to some unwelcome allies. There have been many who have sought to prove that Connolly's Catholicism was consistent throughout his life, and that his last-minute call for the priest was no death-bed conversion. In doing that, they have fitted him for the role of national martyr because he rejected alien marxism. But, in the late 1960's, when national martyrdom was much in the air following the 1916 commemoration, Owen Dudley Edwards gave a speech — subsequently made into an essayistic monograph — in which he demonstrated that Connolly was both Catholic *and* Marxist. Ransom refers to Edwards (his thesis supervisor in Edinburgh University) as "the most subtle and erudite commentator on Connolly" and on the foundation which Edwards laid, he seeks to build a more complex picture of the hibernicising marxist, the scientific socialist whose work is shot through with Catholicity.

The picture certainly is complex — as befits the subject — but it is also contrived. Ransom has to raise concepts like that of Catholicity to such a level of abstraction and has to rely so heavily on phrases like "in principle" and "implicit" to establish continuity that he raises the suspicion that he has purposes beyond historical research. Connolly had a "normative" approach to socialism, he says, which distinguished him from the determinism and dogmatism which were dominant in the socialism of his time. Ransom appears to be using Connolly to argue, however implicitly, with a contemporary determinism and dogmatism which he perceives to be at work. However, Connolly's more important departure was to revolutionary activism and in dealing with this, Ransom has further problems. Even at the closest reading it is impossible to discern how he has Connolly cross the line from "revolutionary" to "sectarian" during the period he was under the influence of Daniel De Leon. Connolly himself could explain the difference — in terms of political method, organisation and tactics. But then he also knew the difference between revolutionary and opportunist. And when Ransom puts that latter term, as applied to the French socialist Millerand — criticised by Connolly and others for joining a bourgeois government — into inverted commas, he gives the game away. He never misses an opportunity to refer to any organisation with thich Connolly was associated as "diminutive" or "tiny" and he even tried to use the Communist Manifesto against the notion of a vanguard party at all.

It is difficult to recognise Connolly's "Labour in Irish History" in Ransom's description of it as "fundamentally a metaphysical vision, a construct of speculative reason justified through empirical research technique". Even Connolly's most substantive "theoretical" work had a political purpose which this cannot reflect. Ransom has good reason to underline Connolly's unorthodoxy, and some reason to celebrate it. But in doing so within a primarily philosophical framework, he misses the contradiction in the different critical standards which Connolly applied to social and economic reality, on the one hand, and to moral and religious ideology, on the other. He understates

Connolly's admittedly incomplete achievement in incorporating an anti-imperialist content into a social strategy. And he fails to draw out clearly the thread which does link Connolly's varying choices between the socialist options of the day, his improvisations, his doubts, his largely unexplained (by himself) involvement in the Easter Rising — the constant search for ways to promote the revolution.

Brian Trench

TRADE UNIONS AND CHANGE IN IRISH SOCIETY. Ed. Basil Chubb. Mercier £2.50.

Professor Basil Chubb sums up this series in succint fashion as "the academic study of trade unions and of industrial relations viewed as other than personal management". It cannot be presumed that he includes the full time trade union official as nowhere among the ten eminent contributors is there an exemplar of that breed to make a contribution towards the new scientia.

Charlie McCarthy did at one stage attend at the negotiation altar and, in all probability, experienced the full adrenalin flow and increased perspiration rate as he strived to move employers "not notorious for their spontaneous generosity towards their workers" to an acceptance of his exceptional advocacy. He has, however, now sadly departed that scene and can view and diagnose, with somewhat comfortable objectivity, the defects and frailties of the trade union movement from without.

Jim Plunkett was also at one time involved in the grass roots process but, and understandably so, relates deeply and almost messianically to the old Larkin period.

Pat Sweeney has had, and continues to build upon, a rapport with trade unionists right across the spectrum. This relationship is reflected in the coldly pragmatic *resumé* of the realities of the current industrial relations scene, and indeed in the journalistic claim of the Fourth Estate that "one reality of Irish industrial relations that has changed little if any over the years of this study . . . is that as representatives of the public, journalists have no access to deliberations which crucially affect the public". This somewhat plaintive observation immediately conjures up a picture of Pat and his literary colleagues sitting in and absorbing the cut and thrust of Cabinet debate, the deliberations of the Irish Bishops' Conference, the financial discussions of the Standing Committee of the Irish Banks, the General Council of the Irish Medical Association . . . *et al!*

For the rest of the distinguished contributors, they largely represent the "halls of old ivy" or, as Professor Chubb might well have put it, "the world of academia".

In this erudite and literary company Professor J. J. Lee leads the charge. With the historian's sense of the relevant he raises in high relief the stagnant nature of Irish society, the mediocrity of the ruling elites in that society — the poor quality of the decision makers in all sectors of that society right up to the period following the Second World War. It is against such a backdrop that he observes "it is difficult to think of any major initiative, or any great social and economic design, which was frustrated by obscurantist workers' obstruction before 1960". Of course, change of real social and economic significance only became a real issue with the dawn of the Irish industrial resurgence the rapidly following technological revolution.

Humankind has never been unanimous in its acceptance or applause of the technology which it has created. It is in fact both for and against it. On the one hand, inventiveness has tended to make life less arduous by making the physical tasks easier, by helping in the mastering of nature, by allowing full rein to the imaginative process in order to combat and overcome the natural obstacles presented from time to time. On the other hand, we tend to question critically the effects of our own technology in terms both social and economic.

There is nothing new in the human resistance to change where such change alters, or appears to alter, the social or economic balance. The ranks of opposition to change, in the industrial scene, are not and never were composed of workers alone. The German poet Schiller clearly perceived the machine as an instrument for the "degeneration of culture". Karl Marx saw in the same machine the "degradation of the worker". Thomas Carlyle was outright in his condemnation of the machine and predicted, and was in all probability the first to do so, the displacement of the worker by the machine. Workers subjected to the inexorable process of change reacted understandably and tended to view the process with fear and distrust.

Prior to the Irish industrial Renaissance, workers were not exposed, in any great degree, to the vicissitudes of their counterparts in the United Kingdom and else where. Since then they have experienced all the shock effects of the changing system and have reacted in precisely similar terms, giving rise to oft

repeated claims, and these lectures appear to labour that theme, that current trade union structures are outdated and in urgent need of modernisation.

While Professor Lee talks of "the inadequacy of the existing trade union structure", Dr McCarthy speaks of "a movement, so traditional, so fragmented and slow to change". Brian Hillery maintains that "the trade union movement is structurally fragmented and its membership remains conservative and steeped in tradition". Hugh McNeil, from a management perspective, quotes an inner trade union source on "the inadequacy of many trade union leaders", with this deficiency apparently "a major reason for the fragility of industrial peace". He then goes on to advocate the need, *inter alia*, for "a re-organised trade union movement slimmed down by amalgamations, better financed and staffed". Pat Sweeney avers that "both inside and outside the movement it is recognised that Irish trade unionism badly needs to be rationalised", and "there is a little prospect that, on the union side at least, steam age structures will adapt to nuclear age needs". Professor Michael Fogarty makes the point that "the trade union movement has not equipped itself to cope with the speed and type of decision making which it has had to face in a highly organised modern economy".

All in all, this manifests quite a massive pre-occupation on the part of those mentioned with the desirability of change within the movement — fragmentation of the movement, inadequacy of trade union structures etc. — and much of it is enlightened commentary. Our trio of university commentators come from an environment wherein fragmentation and personal and institutional jealousies are not unknown and are as yet unresolved. Whether or not this apparent failure to have one's own house in order might militate against the acceptance of opinions on the need to shape up someone else's abode is a moot point indeed. It may take some time to find out because Charles McCarthy appears to give up the ghost in the final sentence of his lecture, while the hard boiled Pat Sweeney makes his grand exit in similar fashion.

In the last analysis it may be that all concerned missed the vital point — that the trade union movement is about people and whether in its shape or form it is consensual or authoritarian depends upon the perceived need for change within its membership. The very nature of the trade union movement is involved here when set against the backcloth of clear and unequivocal association with government policies.

Another common theme of these lectures is the British dimension within the Irish Trade Union Move-

Fogarty deal with this phenomenon, for phenomenon it is, in one degree or other. In no other part of this globe of ours save Canada are non-national trade unions permitted to operate and Charles McCarthy's lecture highlights what was perhaps the greatest irony of all, that the first British trade union to depart the Republic was that very trade union — the National Union of Railwaymen — which successfully fought off the attempt to create an identifiable national trade union movement. A further common theme, and a topical one to boot, within these lectures is the vexed question of differentials, albeit each contributor views it from his own perspective. Professor Lee deals with the issue through the eyes of the historian — the class and status syndrome — the pecking order — individual and group identity. As he observes, the function of the craft unions "was to preserve their differentials against all comers, particularly against other workers" and the explanation for this seemingly callous and insular attitude was because "the obsession with relativities after all is partly bound up with the struggle to preserve a sense of identity in a spiritually shallow society whose own identity sometimes seems exceptionall fragile".

Dr McCarthy, from a standpoint of practical experience, is less understanding and contends that the craftsmen's dispute of 1968/69 in pursuit of the restoration of differentials "was conducted by some of the draft unions members with unparallelled cynicism and indifference to the welfare of other workers". Pat Sweeney comes in too on the differential issue: "Much of the unrest which leads to industrial action to-day seems to centre on the question of differentials — the preservation of relativities — as though differentials and their preservation in no matter what circumstances was a trade union principle".

We have observed that much of the commentary within these lectures is enlightened and topical. The topicality of this issue is extremely clear when one recalls that quite recently officials of 21 craft unions picketed the Labour Court in protest at that institution's tendency to tie general wages too closely to craftsmen rates. The historical justification for such action as laid bare by Professor Lee would appear to have little or no application in this situation, but attitudes die hard.

Professor Chubb makes the extremely valid point, no doubt derived from his Employer/Labour Conferencee experiences, that the problems can be easily diagnosed but, it is a somewhat more difficult process to come up with practical rather than arm-chair solutions, and even those who speak from the depths of their professional chairs have not all that much to offer. A harsh judgment — maybe.

I prefer to tail off on the note of high hope expressed by Jim Plunkett.

Chris Kirwan

Dossier

Farmers and companies are still among the groups most favoured by Irish tax laws. The Minister for Finance, Mr. O'Kennedy, is the authority for these statements. During the debate on the Finance Bill in the Dail, he found himself obliged to lift the corner of the veil of financial secrecy that normally surrounds tax matters in an attempt to justify the marginal taxation increases contained in the Bill.

He gave examples of the following figures for farm income (Dail Debates, 11 June 1980): one farmer in Leinster with more than 700 acres of land and a valuation of over £600 paid no income tax at all in 1974-77 inclusive by virtue of the operation of the notional system; another Leinster farmer with a valuation of over £575 paid £300 in income tax in 1974-75, £500 in 1975-76 and 1976-77 paid no tax. In respect of 1978-79 and 1979-80 no tax has yet been paid because while opting for the notional basis assessments were still under appeal; a third, similar farmer with a farm of over £480 valuation and more than 530 acres of land, paid no tax in any year from 1974-75 to 1978-79.

On company taxation, the Minister was equally forthright (Dail Debates, 12 June 1980). "The total intake last year in corporation tax was £130 million of which manufcturing industry contributed about £17 million. That cannot be said to be a burden when one looks at the whole range. In the current year the total intake from corporation tax will be of the order of £150 million and manufacturing industry will account for about £22 million or about 15 per cent of the total corporation tax. It is fir to say that the overall picture is most favourable for manufacturing industry."

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

"The significant trend to watch in American television is the beginning of a decisive shift from a system of broadcasting largely advertiser supported to one that will be, for the most part, be paid for by consumers. By the end of the decade, some pay-tv experts predict, the ordinary family will be spending more money for television purchases each month than for their telephone service".

So writes Desmond Smith, a producer with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (Irish Broadcasting Review, Summer 1980). The cash, as he points out, is important: a networked film on television is estimated to be able to generate only a sixth as much revenue from advertising as it would if it were broadcast on a pay-tv system — and the ultimate bonanza is in videodiscs costing approximately £10. Advertising sponsors will, in the light of the growing ability of viewers with video-cassette recorders to pre-record programmes and minimise or even exclude advertising spots, be increasingly unwilling to pay up to $134,000 for a prime time 30-second commercial.

The possibility of recording, by remote control, special-interest programmes broadcast at unsocial hours will also, says Smith, "present a serious challenge to the print medium by taking away its single most important advantage — the flexibility it allows in the consumption of its product. Magazines and newspapers can be read when convenient to the consumer, not at a time dictated by a network. The video-cassete reduces that advantage. Particularly vulnerable are the speciality magazines that have prospered by filling a market niche hitherto unavailable to mass audience television."

A senior executive of one company has predicted that the market for video-disc machines alone will reach $4.2 billion by 1985.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

The average daily prison population in the Republic has more than doubled in less than a decade, from 505 in 970 to 1,140 in 1979 (Annual Report on Prisons and Places of Detention, 1979, Department of Justice). During the same period the authorised number of prison staff has increased almost five-fold, from 336 to 1,500, no doubt reflecting increasing security and in particular a decade of politically-inspired violence. The report notes that the recruitment figure did not reach the target for the year "because of external circumstances". New recruits get a ten-week training course, five weeks in a classroom and five weeks on the job.

Comments by the boards of visitors appointed to the various institutions reveal that, despite the impression of order, severe problems recur. Mountjoy: "We again would like to emphasise our deep concern . . . at the large numbers in custody who present as very emotionally unbalanced and disturbed persons"; at St. Patrick's institution, where "the inadequate number of appointees to the Visiting Committees . . . renders it difficult to assure attendance of sufficient members even to guarantee a quorum at meetings", more than half of the 508 convicted inmates (all under 21) were 17 or under. Different reasons are adduced for the improvement in the conduct of the prisoners during the year: the Governor suggested to the Visitors that the introduction of the Intensive Supervision Scheme may have had a big impact, whereas the visitors surmise that "the anticipation and aftermath of Pope John Paul's visit to Ireland in the Autumn must have had considerable impact".

The principal offences for which females were sentenced were simple larceny (47), drunkenness (26), assault (11), malicious damage (10) and trespass and larceny (9). The total number of women sentenced was 136.

The number of lengthy sentences has increased noticeably. In 1975 there were 6 sentences of more than 2 years duration; in 1979 there were 105 — all for men. During the year six prisoners escaped — none of them women.

* * *

The advertising department of the Bank of Ireland produced, in connection with their annual report for the year ended 31st March 1980, a supplement intended to "give a clearer picture of our position and performance . . . for the benefit of all our stakeholders — i.e., stockholders, employees, customers and, indirectly the general public.

The general public will be mystified to learn that apparently, under the impact of inflation, there was an "erosion of real capital" of the group to the extent of £7,388,000. The shadowy and unidentified "providers of capital" who feature in the report do not, however, go entirely unrewarded. Their share of the added value created by the banking group activities is higher than that reaped by the government in company taxation on its profits. A section headed "Contribution to State income" includes in the Bank's "contribution" £17.3 million in PAYE collected and paid by the bank but earned, of course, by its employees. No doubt the same employees are suitably grateful to find their hard-earned taxes forming the major part of the Bank's "contribution to the State".

letters

Comrades — As a Marxist, I disagree entirely with what Kieron Connolly has to say on the Trade Unions and the Left. Apart from reviewing the left-wing ideologists, the "moderate socialists" and the pro-capitalist party followers in the Trade Union movement — he presents no strategy for the socialist revolution. Any realistic analysis of the Trade Union movement and the Left must proceed from this basic premise. What we have at issue — which especially haunts the Left in Ireland — is the old question of reform or revolution.

This question cannot be fully resolved without taking into consideration the precise nature and role of the Trade Unions within capitalist and transitional societies. In the Irish context this also means putting the Trade Unions through a historical perspective. It would be absurd to deduce, as Connolly implies, that moderate socialists are devoid of all ideology and that therefore they are "nearer to reality".

On the contrary it is the ideology of reformism, which these moderates promulgate, that has crippled and paralyzed left-wing politics in Ireland since the defeat of the Irish Citizens Army in 1916. The "reality" of the bourgeois state is the most that a reformist is willing to acknowledge without perceiving or conceptualizing its total negation associated with the new reality of the socialist society.

Reformism subsequently affects ones perception of the bourgeoisie. One tends to overlook the precise relationship between the worker and the managerial capitalist: capital. Concessions given to workers by the capitalists are not, because of this relationship, administered by the letter on "recognition" of the T. U. movement's "role' and "input" into society — except in the sense that this "role" and "input" will further multiply and secure the accumulation of profits by the capitalists. This fundamental axiom Kieron Connolly tries to cover with the fog of reformism and fails.

Fraternally
OWEN MC CARTHY
Cork.

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