



SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

nov '77

POBLACHT SHOISIALACH

NEW MASS RESISTANCE



ORGANISE
SOLIDARITY

WITH
TURF LODGE

SUPPORT
THE
COALISLAND
**'TROOPS
OUT'**
CONFERENCE

**BUILD BROADLY, ACTIVELY,
DEMOCRATICALLY...**

10p

FIGHT IT NOW!

While Roy Mason was visiting the USA chatting up the directors of Du Pont, and other multi-nationals, the real meaning of the Governments normalisation policy was brutally demonstrated yet again on the streets of Turf Lodge on Sunday morning October 16th.

THE CASE OF SAMMY HYLAND

Sammy Hyland was taken from his house in the early hours of Sunday morning on the pretence of there being a suspect car down the road. A neighbour came out to find out what the noise was and the soldiers fled leaving Sammy in pools of blood with a rope around his neck. They had beaten him so thoroughly, he looked as though he was dead. Sammy, a 33 year old father of four, and former chairman of the Turf Lodge Tenants Association, was released from hospital on Tuesday, Oct 18th. At a press conference the following day, organised by the Turf Lodge Tenants Association he showed journalists from both North and South and TV cameras how his face and head were badly cut and swollen and he had bruises to various parts of his body. But Sammy's case is just the tip of an iceberg. As the chairperson of the Tenants Association, Sean Morrissey said, Turf Lodge is like Vorsters South Africa, and is the prime interrogation centre in Belfast. 249 complaints against the Army have been lodged with the Association in the last

four months. The same night that Sammy had been beaten up by the Army, so had another boy who was also hospitalised as a result. The night before the Army had gone around breaking peoples windows. The week before they had painted Loyalist slogans on residents houses, and harassed young people. As the press conference pointed out, the regiment involved, the Marine Commandos, were settling old scores before they left the area. But the main reason that they are set loose in this manner, is the concerted attempt by the Army and the Government to break the resistance of one of the most militant areas, and isolate these militants from the majority of people in the area. This was the case in the summer when women and children were beaten up and warned not to take part in any future activities. This culminated in a march on Andersonstown Barracks and the revitalisation of the Womens Action Cttee. This committee is once again functioning and patrolling the streets at night to prevent further brutality.

TORTURE IN CASTLEREAGH.

MASON WISHES TO PERSUADE Mason wishes to persuade the world (and the E.E.C. who hope soon to establish a Belfast office) that N.Ireland is back to 'normal' i.e. that they have reached an acceptable level of

violence and he must produce evidence that the IRA is beaten. This means only one thing for the anti-Unionist population - increased brutality and harassment in interrogation centres like Castlereagh in order to get confessions for the crimes the Army wants to solve. The fact that these are obtained by torturing people is now common knowledge and local papers are littered with the evidence of such cases. But there has been a widespread outcry over such cases. Patrick Marrinan, a solicitor, stated during a recent case that there would have to be a Nuremberg trial to bring all those responsible for this savage brutality to justice. Even the SDLP have been forced to condemn these excesses by the Army. However, the 'sophistication' of Mason's policies does not extend to his local colleagues. The ready response of Constable Newman to these charges was that the IRA were inflicting wounds on themselves in order to make propaganda against the Army and the RUC. The answer to that is written up on the walls of the Falls - NEWMAN IS A CON-MAN!

This has gone hand in hand with an increase in repression since the Loyalist strike that has affected all Catholic areas, and led to a similar outcry. A 16 year old girl was assaulted and beaten up in Andersonstown, another 16 year old girl was made to strip in front of security officers and then released. In this instance even a Protestant clergyman, not known for his opposition to the Army, was moved to write a letter of protest to the Irish News - which he later retracted.

SECURITY WALL AROUND THE RVH

One of the most unpopular moves by the Army has been the building of a security wall around the Royal Victoria Hospital. Despite denials from the Hospital authorities that the Army was using it to spy on the local population and in the face of evidence that the photographic department of the hospital was processing films for the Army, on September 28, a curfew was imposed from Springfield Corner to the Children's hospital. Over a hundred Army vehicles proceeded to build a 'rocket proof' metal surround in front of a 10 foot high brick wall. The local people were once more relegated to second class citizens with an Army barrier outside their local hospital.

BUILD A BROAD MOVEMENT AGAINST ARMY HARRASSMENT AND TORTURE

All these cases show that there is widespread opposition to increased repression. The press conference for Sammy Hyland, while only a base for further activity, was valuable in itself and proved that it is possible to marshal broad support. Local SDLP members, members of the Tenants Ass, and the Relatives Action Cttee, as well as Sinn Fein members were involved in planning the publicity. This, together with the outcry against torture in Castlereagh, reassert the need for mass activity to stop these incidents. The recent interest in Castlereagh and against Army brutality should be used to get the message across that this treatment can be stopped by getting the anti-unionist people themselves back on the streets and reawakening mass opposition to the Army.

In side such a mass movement there would be a much greater opportunity to fight for support for political status and expose the terrible conditions in Long Kesh.

The small forces that have been fighting for political status must face up to the fact that while they have had a certain success they have not been able to mobilise the numbers of people that were mobilised in the early days of internment, because political status is not an issue which directly affects the masses of the anti-unionist working class.

As "worried mother" said in a letter to the Irish News on 20th October.....

"When Billy McKee and his comrades were fighting for political status (which they won in the end), plenty of fighting was done on the outside for them. Those in 'Wh'block are only youngsters. Have they to wait until someone of importance goes on the blanket for something to be done for them".

PUT THE SDLP ON THE SPOT

The best way to do something for them is by uniting with those anti-unionist parties that do have sway over the vast majority of the anti-unionist working class, such as the SDLP, and forcing them to take up these issues. That is why the decision of the RAC (unlike the press conference) not to invite the SDLP to their conference

"Political Status - the Way Forward", 6th Nov. at the Ballymurphy Community Centre, means that a valuable opportunity to get publicity for the status issue has been lost.

For only by putting the SDLP on the spot, and forcing them to back up their words with action or reveal their own hypocrisy, can we persuade those people who presently look to the SDLP for leadership to come out on the streets on this issue.

The recent talks between representatives of the new Fianna Fail government and the leaders of the British Labour government and Tory opposition have been largely passed off as a non-event. While this is true in the sense that they did not mark any major changes in British strategy in the Six Counties they did clarify how that strategy is to be implemented.

LONG-TERM BRITISH STRATEGY

It is first of all necessary to spell out what that strategy is since Britain pretends it has none at all, a lie that has been swallowed by many naive political commentators, although some, particularly Mary Holland of The New Statesman (a British Social-Democratic magazine) and Magill, and to a lesser extent David MacKittrick of The Irish Times, seem to have realised what is going on. The strategy has three main elements:

- 1) The stepping up of the war of attrition against the Catholic minority and the simultaneous "Ulsterisation" (more accurately "Loyalisation") of the conflict.
- 2) An increased emphasis on local government where the loyalists dominate.
- 3) The isolation of the SDLP so that political representation of the Catholic middle-class can be dropped as an essential element of a governmental formula - that is, NO RETURN TO POWER SHARING.

REPRESSION PAVES THE WAY

Only those who know nothing about the Six Counties or who choose to believe RUC Chief Constable Kenneth Newman when he claims that people detained in police custody are torturing themselves in order to discredit the "success" of the "security forces" would deny that state repression has escalated. As if to show that they didn't care how this was done Elizabeth II, Queen of England, was brought over by the British on the anniversary of internment to provocatively insult the Catholics and give the Loyalists a few cheap thrills.

This lays the basis for the other two parts of the strategy. Leaving aside the fact that if Britain did no more than increase repression any party representative of the Catholic minority would find it impossible to put forward a power-sharing policy and still retain support - a point proved by the Nationalist turn of the SDLP and the emergence of the Irish Independence Party - there are many recent examples of how Britain has consciously sought to satisfy loyalist demands at a political level. The press conference given by Jack Lynch served to emphasise how far this process has gone.

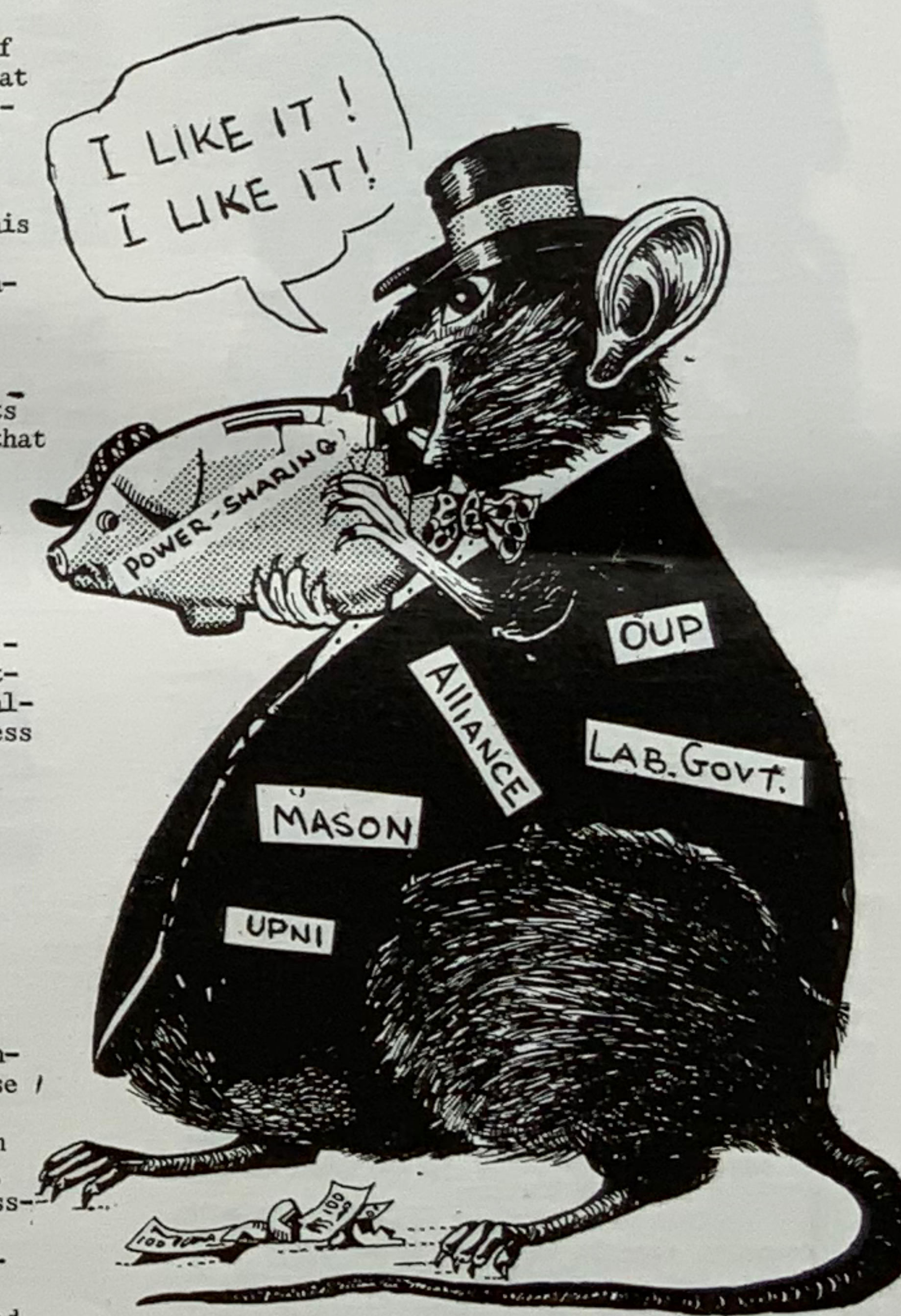
LYNCH LETS THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG

Lynch spoke in the obscure language traditionally used by Fianna Fail leaders to attempt to hide from their working class and small farmer supporters the fact that they work hand-in-glove with British Imperialism. In doing so he was led into contradictions that were blatant even by his not very exacting standards. He claimed James Callaghan had assured him that integration was not Britain's policy, that power sharing was necessary was necessary for devolution and that without power sharing there would be no devolved government. He ignored the fact that the joint communiqué issued after the talks contained no such assurance but instead talked in ambiguous terms of working towards "a devolved system of government in which all sections of the community could participate on a fair basis". He did however clarify

Lynch and Callaghan

DOUBLE TALK AT

DOWNING ST.



the meaning of this paragraph: "In the meantime, if there is a general desire (sic), the British government would be ready to devolve a range of powers to

an cheist náisiunta

Bhí alt ag Deasun Breatnach le déanaí san Evening Press inar thug sé faoi gearcadh an traidisiúin Marcsaigh ar an gCeist Náisiunta agus ar an lárachas daonlathach.

Díreoidh mé anseo ar a thuairim faoin Mharcasach agus an Cheist Náisiunta. Tá ábhar ailt eile san lárachas daonlathach ach is leor a rá anseo nach ndéanam Deasun idir-dheallú ceart idir an lárachas daonlathach agus an lárachas maorlathach a chuir Stalin i bhfeidhm ar leibhéal páirtí agus stáit.

DEARGADH ENGELS

Dar le Deasún, léirigh Engels an gearcadh Marcsach ar an gCeist Náisiunta nuair a rinne sé idirdheallú idir náisiúin "stairiúla" a raibh a stáit féin bunaithe acu nó a bhí ar tí a stáit féin a bhunú nó a athbhunú agus na náisiúin "neamh-stairiúla" mar shampla na Briotánaigh, na

hálbanagh, na Bascaigh, na Serbaigh, na Croataigh agus ar uille, a bhi cloíte go hiomlán. Dar le Engels, ní raibh sna náisiúin "neamh-stairiúla" ach "driodar náisiúnta" a úsáid an frith-réabhlóid in aghaidh fórsaí réabhlóideacha a lime féin.

Is fíor go ndúirt Engels é seo agus go raibh níos mó prósáitachais ná daonlathas i dtuairim Marx fein uaireanta ar an gCeist Náisiunta. Bhí claonadh ag Marx fiú amháin féachaint ar an Impiriúlachas anois is arís mar rud dearfach, toisc gur cheap sé go spreagadh sé forbairt eacnamaíochta agus go gcuirfeadh sé deireadh le difríochtaí náisiunta.

Ach bhí na tuairimí seo ag teacht salach go hiomlán ar chroí an modh anailíse stairiúil agus pholaitiúil Mharcasach.

Is nuair a thréactann Marx agus Engels ar chúrsaí na

a locally elected body under arrangements acceptable to both sides of the community". In a display of verbal gymnastics that rivalled the best efforts of DeValera Lynch claimed that this "differed entirely" from the Molyneux "administrative devolution" proposal. The new (sic) proposal was "executive devolution" and the locally-elected body (or bodies) set up under it "would not resemble (true - they would be stronger! -D.C.) the present district councils. They would, instead, take over the functions as were now in the hands of the non-elected groups - in housing, health and education for instance" (The Irish Times, September 29).

Britain has been working towards this type of Loyalist restoration since at least early 1975 but has tried to pretend it is only "marking time" for fear of triggering a new Catholic revolt. The greater use of repression has enabled it gradually to get on top of this problem so that it more and more feels it can openly implement its political strategy.

MASON COMES CLEAN

This was graphically illustrated in the speech made by Secretary of State Roy Mason on his return from the United States of America. He claimed the Official Unionist Party (OUP) had shifted from its previous "hard-line" approach, suggested having talks immediately about "interim devolution", and that he expected "movement" from the SDLP. Of course it isn't the OUP which has moved towards Britain but Britain that has moved towards the OUP. This party remains absolutely opposed to power-sharing and proved it after the May local elections by allying with Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and other loyalists to take an iron grip on the councils. This makes particularly ludicrous Mason's suggestion that power-sharing (sic) agreements implemented locally in Derry and Downpatrick be repeated at 'an upper tier of regional government'. In Derry the SDLP/Irish Independence Party majority allow the Loyalists to hold some posts and in Downpatrick there is a 50/50 split so the Loyalists have no choice in the matter. In no case where there is a Loyalist majority has this happened.

EXPLOITING IMPERIALISM'S WEAKNESSES

Lynch's admission at the press conference was the first open disclosure that Britain plans a restoration of loyalist control through local government. In a sense therefore a watershed has been reached because Fianna Fail thus told the British government that along with the previous Fine Gael/Labour coalition it does not seriously disagree with the project of ditching the SDLP. It merely differs with the Coalition parties on the manner in which this is done and is wary of openly bending the knee to Britain, a la Cruise O'Brien and Cooney. That is why Lynch replied to Fine Gael/Labour attacks over the fact that the joint communiqué contained no reference to power-sharing by saying the return of Fianna Fail to power proved the majority of Irish people favoured Irish unity and a British withdrawal.

The fact that this is the type of argument that takes place between bourgeois politicians shows us that the Imperialist strategy has weaknesses that can be exploited by revolutionaries. This happens because it is no longer possible to claim that Britain wants to reform the Six Counties.

As a result Fianna Fail is vulnerable because of the type of working-class/small farmer/Republican support it gets. Their complicity in the plans of Imperialism can best be exposed through agitation against Garda brutality, Collins' whitewash "inquiry", and prison conditions.

The SDLP's fake "militancy" can best be exposed by demanding that they support mass protests against the growth of repression. In this way the basis can be laid for linking up struggles in the South with a potentially new phase in the struggle of the Catholic minority, seriously dislocating imperialist strategy, and this time finishing off the job of smashing the Six Counties.

off the job of smashing the Six Counties statelet and kicking Imperialism out of Ireland.

DAVID CARROLL

NO TO F.F. WHITEWASH!

The decision by Fianna Fail to establish a "Commission of Enquiry" is very definitely a response to a consistent pressure coming from many quarters. Granted extraordinary powers by successive and highly repressive pieces of legislation, the Gardaí and the Courts (especially the Special Criminal Courts) have been the subject of much attention. Since the exposure by the Irish Times, over eight months ago of police brutality, many more people who have been arrested have made allegations of torture and brutality at the hands of the Gardaí. This minor explosion has been parallel with the obvious deterioration of already harsh conditions for political prisoners at Portlaoise. The growing lack of confidence in the so-called impartiality of the police, has spread to the operations of the Special Criminal Court and its not surprising: the trial of Ronan Stenson, who was released, the use of the false fingerprint evidence, and the contortions of the prosecution witnesses in the Nairac case, all serve to illustrate the complete distortion and misuse of the norms that the Free State had set its judiciary.

strip-searched, beaten so severely they would have to be hospitalised. Any enquiry would have to answer the following questions; (which have already been posed by the ICCL)



OBVIOUS ATTEMPT AT WHITEWASH

It has been obvious from the return of the Fianna Fail party to government, that many in bourgeois circles were becoming nervous at the scope of the Coalition's repressive policy. This dissent, is illustrated by the number of individuals, judges, TDs, who have expressed concern over the allegations - including the Government nominee to the Commission, Barra O'Brien. The 'Irish Governments' cases at Strasbourg, started by Fianna Fail, and carried on by the Coalition, had become a severe embarrassment to the Coalition, who with one hand accused Britain of torture, while with the other, tried to suppress evidence of torture taking place throughout the 26 Cos. So Fianna Fail's "Republicanism" or "commitment" to providing a political solution to the national question, was challenged, and they have responded with this obvious attempt to whitewash, or as the ICCL has put it "an exercise in manipulation of public opinion", which has led to considerable and widespread misunderstanding both in the media and in the public as to what is going on."

So far government statements have been deliberately ambiguous, which seems to suggest they want to project this commission as "all things to all men". But what is not intended is quite obvious...the government does not intend to set up any kind of machinery for the systematic investigation of allegations of Garda brutality. Having promised so much, the Government's decision is a slap in the face for those who had demanded a full and impartial investigation.

CLOSE TO THE ROOTS OF THE MATTER

There are several pertinent questions raised by the substantial allegations, ranging from prisoners being thrown out of windows, kicked down stairs, forcibly (clothes torn off)



- Whether the allegations made were substantially true or untrue.
- What individuals were responsible for administering such illtreatment.
- Who immediately authorised and encouraged, was responsible for such illtreatment.
- Who condoned such illtreatment, whether at the administrative or political level.

There can be no doubt that an enquiry which adopted this framework would come close to the roots of the matter. Such possibilities have not gone unnoticed, as various TDs, especially some in the Labour Party are knocking each other down to raise "questions" in the Dail about brutality. These very same people sat dumb six months ago when their party in Government was responsible for such torture. Further restrictions of this commission, include the decision that it will not investigate complaints, but a senior Garda officer is the one who will conduct a separate (and unrelated) investigation into these complaints! There is no undertaking that the Commission's report, or that of the senior Garda officer will be published. The "private" nature of both of these is unacceptable. Who knows what is said behind closed doors, and how can a member of the police force, probably with a lot to lose by the wrong decisions, be presented to the public as an impartial investigator. According to the ICCL this is a "surrender to those elements in the Dept. of Justice, and senior officers of the Gardaí, who have constantly evaded proper scrutiny of the exercise of their powers"

MUST BE THOROUGHLY OPPOSED

So who is being fooled by all this? Not many people. Even members of the Irish Council at Strasbourg have totally condemned this commission. The establishment of such a commission must be thoroughly opposed. The slow reawakening of the Anti-Imperialist consciousness of the Irish masses, expressed in low-keyed grumbling discontent on all levels, with the previous Coalition government, must be speeded up. Much attention is now focused on the question of police brutality. It is the task of socialists and republicans to intensify that attention and guide it in the proper direction. The nature of the Southern laws on sub-judice pay make it difficult to demonstrate to the masses in practice, by launching an Independent Tribunal of Enquiry. There is ample evidence that

support for such an initiative exists, an initiative which would be a powerful force in breaking down any naive confidence that may still exist in the Governments plan. A huge drop in confidence, could even possibly push FF into opening up the enquiry, and broadening representation, something which could be a gain and a step forward. Firstly, it would weaken the credibility in Fianna Fail's capacity to provide real political solutions to the national question; secondly it would inspire the southern people with the knowledge that through mass action they can affect serious political change; thirdly it would deepen the capacity of Socialists and Republicans to give leadership in times of much confusion.

DEMAND A FULL SCALE ENQUIRY

What can be done immediately is to raise the demand that the enquiry be re-constituted, with full scale representation from all sections of the community, that it include especially, individuals who have a real record in defending democratic rights (such people as Michael Mullen Sean Mc Bride, Matt Larkin, and perhaps foreign civil libertarians); that it be independent of any Government department; that its sessions be held in public; that it have access to all the necessary evidence and is able to subpoena witnesses.

The demand should be raised within the Labour and Trade Union movement, that Roberts resign from the commission as a declaration of no confidence in the Governments initiative. Many trade unions are affiliated to the ICCL which has condemned the "Commission of Enquiry" as a farce - if this affiliation means anything more than hypocritical flag waving, they must fight to force Roberts off the commission.

Movement for a Socialist Republic

IRISH SECTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL



The Secretary, M.S.R. 38 Clanawley Road, Dublin 5.

Is léir freisin go bhfuil na gluaiseachtaí seo ag briseadh suas na sean-stáit imríflacha. Is gluaiseachtaí iad atá frith-cháipitealach go hoibachtúil agus go minic go subiachtúil chomh maith. Tagann tuiscint sóisialach na ceiste chuig a lán naisiuntóirí agus iad ag troid ar son saoirse náisiúnta. Is i gcuid de na náisiúin "neamh-stairiúla" atá na gluaiseachtaí is treise, anois, ar son saoirse náisiúnta agus an Sóisialachas. Tá Marcsaigh ag iarraidh na gluaiseachtaí seo agus a gúla a thuiscint agus an tuiscint seo a nascadh leis an teoiric Marcsaigh i gcoitinne.

SEAN O TUAMA

NOTA: Ní ball de Ghluaiseacht na Poblachta Sóisialaí é, údar an ailt seo agus ná glactar leis go n-aontaíonn muid go hiomlán leis na tuairimí atá curtha i gclion aige anseo.

REPRESSION

AND WORKERS RIGHTS

Repression is associated in most peoples minds with maltreatment of individuals in Garda Stations, prisons, and other places of detention. But it is not confined to those areas. Very many working people at some stage in their lives have also experienced police intimidation. One can recall the way the Dublin Housing Action Committee marches of the late '60s were dealt with, for example, with people being bated brutally on O'Connell Bridge. Remember how the Forcible Entry and Occupation Act was later pushed through to be used against families in unused property owned by speculators? Still on housing, how many recall police intimidation in Cromcastle Court, Coolock during the rent strike of 1972? Older workers will need no reminder of the force used against the unemployed marches of the '50s, while police interference against the picket line has been going on since time eternal. It is in this last area that the most serious threats to the rights of working people have come in recent months, and the situation at Gouldings has highlighted the issues involved.

PHYSICALLY REMOVED

Earlier this year after a series of unsuccessful attempts by Gouldings Ltd. to serve an injunction, the Supreme Court upheld the legal right of 21 men to continue their picketing of the firms East Wall Plant, which they had been doing since the middle of last year in protest against redundancies and for the right to work. The Courts decision provoked hysterical outbursts from the FUE and employers generally, who ranted

on about 'anarchy' and 'irresponsible minorities' and the need to curtail the right to picket. This campaign has been maintained on and off since, and received a huge boost early in September when the High Court on the application of Tara Mines (who had subleased a jetty from Gouldings to enable them to export the first consignments of raw lead and zinc) gave an injunction against the picketers. The men continued to picket however, and soon found themselves being physically removed by Gardaí to allow ore-carrying freight trains through, and only the intervention of the Port Authority at the last minute prevented one of the men from going to jail.

Many people hoped that the negotiations between the men and Gouldings set up by the Authority would resolve the matter. It was not to be; after three weeks the men resumed picketing and immediately were subjected to vicious assault by a large squad of Gardaí, leaving one of the men needing hospital treatment. They were later charged with obstruction and remanded on bail.

NOT AN ISOLATED CASE

Gouldings however was not an isolated case because meanwhile another ominous court decision was being issued against the striking Local Authority maintenance craftsmen. An injunction restraining picketing was granted on the basis that the workers like most Public Service employees did not have the protection of the 1906 Trades Disputes Act which legalised the picket. While injunctions have been given before in the Public Sector

they have rarely, if ever been given on that basis. (It is generally accepted that the 1906 Act should be amended to extend to all workers. Taking both cases together, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the courts are doing their utmost to help the employers to curtail existing picketing rights. In the past of course they have traditionally aided the employers with individual injunctions, as a rule (courts being the instruments of class rule). Systematic curtailment of picketing rights is a new dimension, however, and that is the implication of the decisions in both these cases. Hints have also been dropped by Government spokesman that new regulations to standardise picketing procedure may be considered. Police and court interference in industrial disputes has gone on for too long. It is surely high time that the Irish Congress of Trades Unions act on this question. The Gouldings workers in particular must not be left isolated. They have taken a very courageous stand and are entitled to strong support. One way or the other the offensive against the picket must be beaten back.



Garda interferes with peaceful protest.

HOW TO FIGHT THE T.U. BUREAUCRACY

The leaderships of many trades unions hold power and position not because of the confidence of the rank and file members; they maintain their status and place at the top of the union structure through a combination of bureaucratic and undemocratic means. From practices such as, 3 term service (of 3 years each duration) which entitles one to become president "for life"; wholesale block voting by branches, not through conviction but by rotation, at union conferences — leaders are elected to positions on Executive Councils etc, which are totally out of touch or reach of the ordinary members, and unrecallable by the rank and file. The conferences themselves totally under-represent the rank and file. Moreover, the delegates in some unions are elected by branch committees, not by general meetings of the branch, which are not held prior to conferences to discuss branch policy, the branch committees decide on union policy.

WORKERS BETRAYED BY THEIR LEADERSHIP

This has become most obvious during the course of the last (6) N.W.A.s. Negotiated by representatives from Executive Councils of each union, these agreements, by virtue of their restrictive clauses have weakened the ability of the rank and file at different

levels to fight for their immediate interests. Under these agreements, many workers have little experience or room for bargaining on the shop floor, and increasingly have had to rely on the bureaucracy at middle and top level levels. Where the workers have decided to take the initiative and fight, eg Gouldings, Ferenka, the workers have been badly let down by their leadership.

SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP TO THE STATE

The men at Gouldings have been fighting on one of the main demands of the Trade Unions, the right to work. Instead of giving them full support, these men are now in struggle for 16 months — the leadership has totally abstained and the reasons are obvious. Such support would involve confrontations at legal and political levels. To lead such confrontations would contradict the special relationship of the bureaucracy to the state and successive governments, through a whole series of appointments to the directorships or boards of various state or semi-state bodies, (appointments with little or no power). Such positions have also paved the way for a closer relationship with many employers and their managements, connected with these bodies. Nobody would deny that these also offer special material privileges which raise the "social status" of many trade union leaders, who would otherwise be excluded from certain social circles, by virtue of their class.

NOT A MORAL QUESTION

What could be called misleadership, and in some cases direct collaboration, often does not arise from a lack of sincerity or honesty. It is not a moral question, Bureaucracy in any organisation stems directly from the absence of real democracy. It is only to be expected then, that the Employers and the Government would have a stronger pulling power on trade union leaders than the rank and file. To eliminate the disease of bureaucracy in the unions a fight for direct democracy must begin. This can take place at two levels,.... firstly around specific struggles taking place, attempting to widen support, and seeking the involvement of large numbers of workers in this support. This involves a fight against the stranglehold of the bureaucracy which impedes struggles through the use of the two tier picket system (which has resulted in one branch passing pickets of another branch of the same union).



L.K.

THE FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY

- The second prong of attack should be directed towards the internal functioning of the unions. Militants should demand,
- That all paid posts be secured through election only.
 - That all those holding positions, paid or not, must be subject to recall.
 - That the unions withdraw from permanent negotiating bodies, such as the ELC, Industrial Councils etc.
 - These bodies only allow employers to cultivate continuously relationships with and pressurise trade union officials.
 - Broader representation on branch committees
 - Broader representation at union conferences.
 - For delegates to be elected by general meetings of the branch.
 - A deliberate policy of holding TU meetings on the shop floor at times suitable to the workers, to allow the right of greater participation.

The separation of union structures from the shop floor has led to the alienation of many workers from their unions and a weakening of class solidarity (which is encouraged by two tier pickets). To overcome this alienation requires not only the internal changes already mentioned, but also a much more aggressive political role on the part of the unions. This would enable workers to rebuild internal cohesion as a class and develop concepts of solidarity in struggle. It is through this framework that real steps can be taken towards challenging the dominance of the union bureaucracy. In doing so, it must be recognised that the bureaucracy is not impregnable nor monolithic, that it exists at various levels and that the lower echelons can be drawn into struggle and in doing so, cause greater divisions within the bureaucracy itself. Some union officials are not confirmed bureaucrats, and in attacking the TU bureaucracy as a whole, we must recognise that these elements are more susceptible to pressure from the rank and file.

PROTESTANT WORKERS AND ANTI-IMPERIALISM

In the wake of the Ulster Workers' Council (UWC) strike in 1974 many sectors of the Irish left thought they could see the emergence of "independent working class politics" in the Protestant community. This illusion was started not only by the Official Republicans (now Sinn Féin - The Workers' Party) but also by some 'economist' organisations of the far left. The results of the subsequent United Unionist Action Council (UUAC) strike in May of this year has reproduced similar illusions. There is much talk among some socialists about the possibility of winning at least small sections of Protestant workers to the socialist cause.

THE UUAC STRIKE

A careful look at the UUAC strike shows however that nothing new or significant has happened among Protestant workers. The failure of the strike itself was due to tactical differences within the Loyalist camp. But not a single leader of Loyalism opposed the strike on the grounds that its aims were illegitimate. On the contrary they went out of their way to endorse the UUAC's aims in order to undercut support for the strike action. How then can one argue that the rejection of the strike by Protestant workers constitutes in any way a rejection of reactionary politics?

If we look at the role of the trade union bureaucracy during the May '77 events we find that during the UWC strike they not only condemned the strike but its aims as well, this time around they, like the Loyalist leaders, endorsed the strike's aims and actively collaborated with West & Co, in having more repression introduced. The way in which the UUAC strike - limited as it was - forced the Northern Ireland trade union leadership to move openly towards loyalist policies, shows what a solid grip Loyalism still has on Protestant workers.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Of course it will be argued that the results

of the May local government elections prove that the failure of the UUAC strike does indeed reflect a real turn away from Loyalism. This argument rests on the results attained by the Alliance Party. It is true that the Alliance vote increased to 14% but this is hardly significant since they received a similar vote in the Assembly elections of 1973. Moreover it has been conveniently forgotten that there has always been a "liberal" Unionist vote among Protestant workers. For example, at the height of the troubles in 1973 the Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP) got 8% of the vote in East Belfast. It is not clear if the Alliance got as good a vote here last May but if they did all it proves is that some Protestant workers moved from pseudo-socialist Unionism to openly bourgeois Unionism. This is hardly evidence of a new trend towards "independent working class politics".

No full breakdown of the local government election results is yet available, but as Terry Carlin, Northern Ireland officer of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), has said, the clear evidence of the elections is a shift of Protestant workers towards Paisleyism. Recently when Paddy Devlin began to rave about the possibility of Protestant workers breaking from extreme Loyalism, even the moderate Unionist "Belfast Telegraph" (while welcoming Devlin's break with the SDLP) was embarrassed. It thought Devlin would be more credible if he didn't "over-emphasise the shift in Unionist voting towards the centre in the last elections" (Editorial, August 26).

LOYALISM STABILISING

The whole trend of events in the North is towards more open and active collaboration between British Imperialism and the loyalists. In this context the trend within Loyalism itself is towards recomposition and stabilisation. The most astounding feature of the

May elections was that after three years of intense bickering and in-fighting the loyalist camp received almost the same vote as during the Convention elections. In addition, on all practical issues Loyalism operates with a single voice, especially on maintaining its iron grip on local government.

On the fundamental question of maintaining the sectarian nature of the Northern statelet Loyalism is more united and entrenched than ever. The fact that the bigots of yesterday, West, Smith, Craig, Molyneux and Taylor, appear as the moderates of today, shows that the conflict within Loyalism reflects in essence not a shift towards moderation and away from sectarianism but a shift to the right and greater reaction.

TACTICAL AND STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

In the light of all this what does it mean to talk about sections of the Protestant workers breaking from Loyalism? If we were to admit that even small sections were undergoing a rethink that significance would it have for the strategy and tactics of socialists? Would it mean for example that the strategic orientation of smashing the Northern statelet by mobilising the Catholic masses could be replaced by a much more favourable strategy of smashing the Northern statelet through an alliance of Catholic and Protestant workers? Should the nub of a socialist orientation be the forging of a Catholic-Protestant workers' alliance rather than the mobilisation of the Catholic masses independent of the Protestant workers?

As far as we know no revolutionary socialists propose any fundamental change in the strategy pursued in relation to the mass movement over the past few years. It is clear, given the current balance of forces and trend of development, that a break from Loyalism by a small section of Protestant workers

would have very little effect within the Protestant working class as a whole. In short, the alienation of a section of Protestant workers from Loyalism would not, at this point in time, create any new strategic options for the anti-imperialist struggle.

DEMORALISATION?

The appearance of illusions in winning over sections of Protestant workers does not flow from any deep concern to find a new way forward for the mass movement. If anything it reflects demoralisation of the anti-imperialist vanguard. This is above all evident in the Provisionals who have abandoned the demand for a United Ireland as a concession to the Protestants and have substituted the abstract and meaningless demand for a Nine-County Ulster. It is reflected in Paddy Devlin's attempt to build his own "flat-earth society" in conjunction with Glenn Barr. Every time the anti-imperialist struggle has found itself in decline some magical knight in shining armour has come to the fore. More often than not it has been the Protestant working class which has been expected to turn up lance in hand. It is only to be expected that at a time like this, after many years of downturn in the mass struggle that such illusions should flourish. It is only natural that these illusions should find an echo in the revolutionary socialist camp. But let us sound a warning; let us not repeat mistakes that have already been dearly paid for; let us not put our faith in spectres but in the real mass movement and in the real opportunities that do exist!

DARA MACEVOY

BELOW: Workers at Harland and Wolff vote against UUAC strike.

While the British administration was running into sore problems during October, over the goings on at Castlereagh and the clear harassment of the people of Turf Lodge by the British Army, Roy Mason was enjoying himself flying around the United States assuring American capitalists that vast profits awaited those willing to invest in Northern Ireland and telling the American people that he was making steady progress in "creating a more prosperous society" in the North of Ireland. Mason arrived back here just in time for the publication of the October unemployment figures which throw into sharp relief Mason's prophecies of prosperity under the British link.

There are some 70,000 people on the dole in the 6 Counties, that's 13% of the insured population. Of these 70,000 some 28% are under the age of 20. Mason and other ministers are constantly prattling on about the benefits of the North's links with Britain. However, any clear examination of the Northern working class shows the hollowness of such claims. Not only is unemployment in the North on average twice that of Britain's 6.9%, but in nationalist areas it is up to nine times the British figure. For example, male unemployment in Catholic areas in Belfast reads, Ballymurphy 52%, Clonard 46%, Falls 45%, New Lodge 45%, Shortstrand 3%.

DOUBLE DOSE OF MISERY

Not only does the British link entitle Northern Irish workers to a double dose of unemployment it also entitles them to a double dose of misery all round. For example, although the prices of basic foodstuffs and materials are considerably higher in the 6-Counties, the average weekly wage is at least £5 per week less. Electricity costs consumers in the North some 35% more than their counterparts in Britain, and gas can cost them up to one and a half times more. A report by the Housing Executive published towards the end of '76 disclosed that a staggering 35.5% of all households in the North are living below the poverty line. Since that report was published a further 15,000 have joined the dole queues.

MACKIES

During the past few years, the British link has also ensured that workers in the North of Ireland have been subject to British Labour's "social con trick" which effectively blocked any attempts on the part of the working class to defend its living standards. With the refusal of the majority of workers in Britain to accept further wage restraint while profits soar, wage militancy has also developed in the Six Counties. The attitude of the British Government to this wage militancy is clearly demonstrated by its response to the 22% increase won by the workers employed by Mackies Engineering. The 130 year old family firm of James Mackie has a notorious reputation as one of Belfast's most reactionary employers. Always a skilful Orange card player, it is only in recent years with the 'troubles' that the firm has begun to employ Catholic labour. With its exclusively Protestant workforce and its site on the fringes of Catholic West Belfast, Mackies have utilised sectarian tensions to maintain a docile workforce subject to lousy wages and working conditions. It has always resisted trade union organisation and still refuses recognition to plant shop stewards. That Mackies conceded the workers claim for a 22% increase reveals not any change of heart on the part of the firm but an attempt to halt the drift of its skilled workforce to better paid jobs in the shippards and aircraft industry. Mackies wages are so bad that even this increase only brings wages up to supplementary benefit level (skilled engineers have a basic of around £32).

While in Britain itself the Labour Government has turned a blind eye to some leading export firms which have granted wage increases above the 10% level it is seeking, it is standing firm against the Mackies increase. Already it has declared that Mackies will lose export credit facilities if it insists on paying the rise. These sanctions jeopardise some £6 million worth of orders and open the possibility of mass sackings. With unemployment already running at 13% and some 2,000 additional redundancies in the pipeline

the Labour Government's determination to maintain subsistence level wages at Mackies threatens to add to Belfast's already swollen dole queues. The importance for the British Government of standing firm on Mackies is highlighted by the fact that in Belfast alone 15 engineering companies are faced with major pay claims of between 30% and 40%. The strike underway at British Oxygen which threatened closure of the Harland and Wolff shipyards is in support of a 30% pay claim. Dozens of other claims going way beyond the 10% limit are in the pipeline, the farm labourers for instance wanting 54%, Grundig 45%, Sirocco 40%, and Harland and Wolff 30%.

TRADE UNION BUREAUCRACY

With large pay increases being demanded by the workers and industrial action already underway in a whole number of plants, the trade union bureaucracy has been doing a lot of extra huffing

Misery & Exploitation in the North

'A DOUBLE DOSE OF MISERY'



Workers at Tyrone Crystal lock out the management.

and puffing. Andy Barr, President of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and a leading member of the Communist Party has stated that he wants the whole trade union movement mobilised in support of the Mackie workers. But these militant words of Barr have not been accompanied by any action. Barr and his fellow bureaucrats have done nothing over the years to combat the reactionary policies of the Mackie family, and it is certain that they will do even less in a head on confrontation with the British Government. Indeed the leadership of the ICTU, both North and South has always caved in when there has been any chance of a clash with either the British State or the Ulster Loyalists. Back in the '60's they agreed to an autonomous Northern region of the ICTU in return for recognition and a £10,000 grant from the Unionist Government at Stormont. The foremost promoters of this deal was the Churches Industrial Council, a reactionary alliance of Catholic and Protestant clerics dedicated to opposing 'communist influence' in the trade unions.

WORKERS ACTION COUNCIL

Again the only response to the stagnation policies of the British Government in the North to come from the ICTU bureaucracy was the pathetic 'Better Life for All Campaign', launched at the beginning of '76 - do you even remember it? The ICTU bureaucracy's answer to the problems imposed on workers by the British link, by the total dependence of the Northern Irish economy on British imperialism, was to strengthen the British link. No, if the workers at Mackies are going to defend their wage increase they are going to have to look elsewhere for leadership and support. One body, certain to respond is the Workers Action Council, established in West Belfast following the successful battle over victimisation at Eastwoods Andersonstown plant. The Workers Action Council will have to see that the defence of the Mackie workers is the defence of jobs in Catholic West Belfast.



hÉireann sna seascaidí a fheicimid an bunús le teoiric ceart Maircsach ar an gCeist Náisiúnta. Sheas Marx agus Engels go hiomlán le muintir na hÉireann in aghaidh Impirialachas na Breataine. Bhíodair páirteach i bhfeachtas chun na Finíní a shaothradh. Thosaigh Engels ar leabhar faoi stair na hÉireann a scríobh agus deirtear gur fhoghlaim se roinnt Chaeilge.

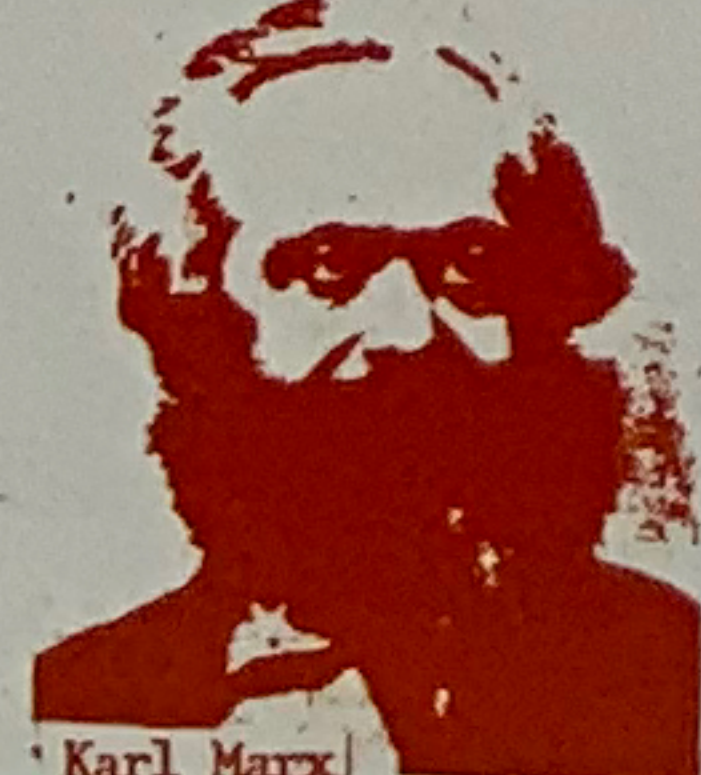
EIRE AGUS AN HÉIREAIN

Níos tábhachtaí fós, nuair a scríobhadar faoi chursal na hÉireann, duradar rudaí ar féidir impleachtaí ginearálta a bhaint astu chun teoiric dhaonlathach Maircsach ar an gCeist Náisiúnta a bhunú. Dúirt Marx, agus e ag labhairt faoin tír seo, go mbeadh cosmhuintir na Breataine i gcomáiríocht le hÉireann agus pholaitiúil bhuirgéisigh na Breataine fad is a mbeadh Kire faoi chos ag an mBreatain.

Lagóidh saoirse na hÉireann cumhacht pholaitiúil, eacnamaíochta, agus idéolaíoch bhuirgéisigh na Breataine. Dúirt sé freisin nach mbeadh comhoibriú idir cosmhuintir na hÉireann (na hÉireannaigh i Sasana ina measc) agus cosmhuintir na Breataine.

DEARCADH LENIN

Rinne Lenin forbairt ar na gnéithe daonlathacha de smaointe Marx ar an gCeist Náisiúnta. Dúirt sé gur prionsabal ginearálta



Karl Marx

daonlathach ag Maircsaigh é go raibh ceart féinrialú ag gach náisiún. Bhí sé de cheart ag gach náisiún scaradh ón stát ina raibh sé, fiú amháin ó stát Sóisialach agus fiú amháin dá mba mhian le náisiún scaradh ó stát Sóisialach, chun stát buirgéiseach dá chuid féin a bhunú.

Ach bhí coilíníoll pragmatach ag dul leis an prionsabal daonlathach agus ag teacht salach air. Dúirt Lenin go gcaithfeadh an scaradh sin bheith le leas na cosmhuintire i gcoitinne sula nglacadh an páirtí réabhlóideach leis. Ach, go fad-théarmach, conas a fhéadadh an ceart daonlathach seo teacht saalach ar an Sóisialachas? Agus cé aige a bhfuil an ceart a rá go bhfuil neamhspleáchas i gcasanna airithe in aghaidh leas na cosmhuintire? An Páirtí Réabhlóideach sa

"mháthair-thír" an ea? Ach ní bheadh an páirtí sin saor go hiomlán os na tuairimí impirialacha sa cosmhuintir sa "mháthair-éir."

AN tAONTAS SOIBHÉIDEACH

Leiríodh tábhacht na ndeacrachtaí

seo san Aontas Sóibhéideach tar éis na Reabhlóide nuair a dhjúltaigh Lenin féin cearta náisiúnta roinnt náisiún le linn an chogaidh chathartha. Is fíor go ndearna sé seo i gcoinne a thola. Ach, ag an am céanna, ba bhótuin é a raibh baint aige leis an gcuide pragmatach den teoiric. Ni hionann seo is a rá gur mhara a cheille a bhí ag Stalin agus seobhaineachas botúin Lenin agus Stalin roimh a Rúiseach Stalin. Difeach Stalin na rudaí a dhein Stalin in aghaidh pobal Georgia.

Na rudaí a dhein Lenin, b'e a dhearcadh orthu gur beartais sealadacha a bhí iontu a bhí riachtanach chun an réabhlóid a bhhabháil le linn an chogaidh chathartha.

SAINMHÍNIÚ AR NAISIÚN

Deacracht eile a bhain le teoiric Lenin ná an sainmhíniú a bhí aige ar náisiún (sainmhíniú Stalin a bhí ann i ndáiríre, ach scríobhadh leabhar Stalin fe stiúr



an important step forward

FIRST 32 CO'S WOMENS CONFERENCE

Over 130 women, from both sides of the border attended the first ever Irish Womens Liberation Conference on the 1st and 2nd of Oct. Held in Belfast, the conference attracted widely differing groups of feminists from Belfast, Derry, Cork, Dublin, Limerick and Galway. Workshops were varied and included discussion of Health; Sexuality; Women in the South; the Revolutionary potential of Lesbianism; Feminist Socialism and Republicanism, among others. There was overwhelming agreement from the women present on the importance of the meeting for the development of a womens movement in Ireland, on the need to build towards a second, and develop ongoing methods of communication and solidarity.

In the first initial grouping together of active feminists from throughout the country, it was necessary, and indeed a very positive and strengthening experience that both the discussion and the organisational framework of the conference was loose. It was a very badly needed opportunity to listen, exchange

experience and ideas, in an atmosphere which was both friendly and stimulating. It is however, of equal importance to remember for future conferences, that there is little which such a small grouping of women can do alone to change the nature of the society we live in. That we exist as a collective body is a great step forward, but our collectivity must achieve more than self-support, more than a coming together of feminists to draw strength from each others presence. There are several million Irish women who suffer the same repugnant oppression that we do, in all its myriad forms. The only guarantee of our liberation rests with the eventual mass organisation and strength of Irish women in a fighting movement.

WIDEN THE SCOPE OF THE MOVEMENT

In Ireland especially, where we are isolated and obscured by the strength of the churches, it is of vital importance that we demystify the womens movement, that it becomes a move-

ment which identifies and gives expression to the real day to day struggles of women. In practice, and in the immediate future, that necessitates that we identify the main areas around which women have been and are now active, and that we take real steps to widen the scope of the movement around those areas. It also necessitates that we use a method which will establish Womens Liberation as a force which bears a close relationship to the concrete experience of women, North and South, and that we offer a means of organisation and support which women at present outside the movement can understand.

None of this will be easy. Whether it is in taking up issues of nursery facilities, Equal Pay, and work conditions, rape, the right to contraception and abortion, health and welfare of women, or the dramatic confrontation between anti-imperialist women on the streets of Belfast, and the British troops, we will continue to be hampered by our numbers, until we open the way for women to approach us at the level of their own experience. The most effective way to do this is to organise our future conferences around the central themes on which Irish women have in the past and are presently fighting. Those themes fall into three major categories, Violence and Brutality; Work and Welfare; The Right to Control Our Bodies. To organise on those themes, would not necessarily prevent other topics being discussed at workshops, merely limit the time allowed. Each conference would have the potential of drawing towards the movement many women who are breaking through to consciousness and activity on perhaps only one vitally important area of their own lives. Of equal importance, it would provide Irish feminists with an opportunity to examine in depth each theme with all its implications, and with the time to decide on ways of collectively organising with women outside the movement.

Lotte Plunkett.

THE LAW : A man having unlawful intercourse with a woman by force, fear or fraud.

"Rape is a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear and powerlessness"

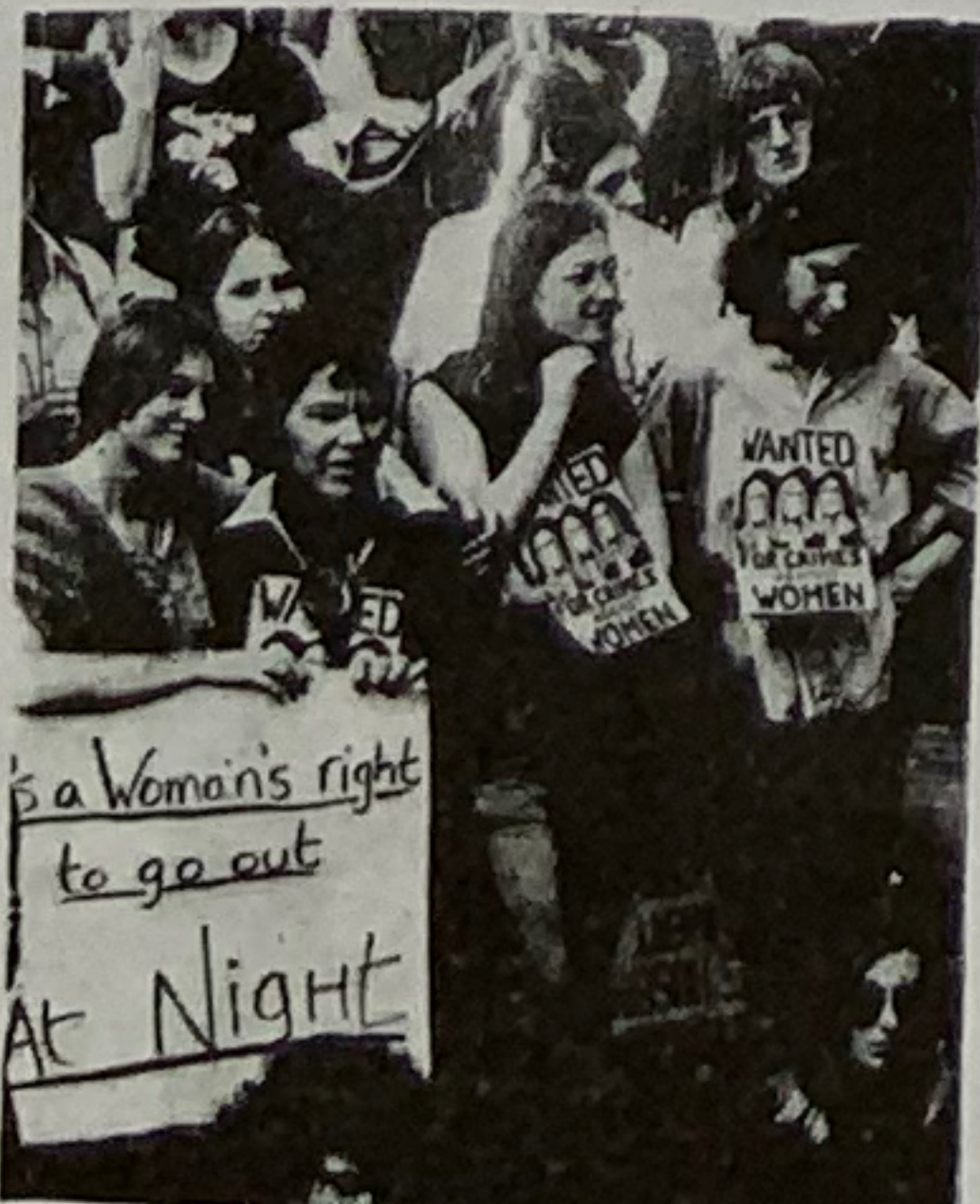
Susan Brownmiller.

Rape, as one of the burning issues of sexual politics, has recently come to a head with such force that all the bourgeois media has covered it in one form or another. Women have always felt the threat of sexual violence, but recently these attacks have become more frequent and sordid and now are being more openly reported by the press. Historically, men have released their anger and frustration onto women, but since the 1960s, with the growth of the Womens Movement and as women struggle to break away from the old stereotypes, and strengthen themselves, there has been an increase in sexual violence, intimidation and brutality. Rape is a violent crime against women, and has very important implications for the womens movement.

There is another element involved as well. We live in a time when our social and sexual relationships are extremely distorted by capitalist society, and the repressive sexual environment of the family and religion, particularly in Ireland. This is further exaggerated by the capitalist crisis and huge unemployment. Now you get gangs of men with nothing to do and no encouragement to find anything creative, turning for their thrills to bashing old women, or raping, often women whom they know. Rape is one of the most frightening and totally dehumanising experiences a woman can ever have. Most women who are raped or assaulted lose every bit of confidence and control they may have gained. Rape is not found in any particular class, women of all classes are attacked and their attackers also can be of any class. Very often the rapist is known to the woman, who can say how many times a woman is raped if she does not really consent but doesn't have the courage or support to stand up to her husband or boyfriend? Many women cannot see a way out.

BREAK THE MYTHOLOGY — ORGANISE !

The whole popular concept of rape and the legal system that tries to deal with it, totally militates against women. Dozens of myths surround the victim of rape..... "she asked for it", etc. However many of these myths are now being challenged, even in so much as they have begun to be discussed. Yet a lot more is needed. As people will know from those articles in the press, there is a group in Dublin now, which is working towards the setting up of a Rape Crisis Centre, which is very badly needed. A centre is one step forward, but rape effects not only the women who are the victims, but is a threat which



RAPE

every woman is consciously or unconsciously aware of at all times. As women, we get pushed around at all levels and rape is the extreme of that scale. The presence of a centre will undoubtedly give women a certain amount of support and confidence. Beside it we must develop a campaign which will involve as many women as possible, and will pose feminist demands.

RAISE WOMENS CONSCIOUSNESS ON A MASS SCALE

On an issue like this one, we can too easily respond only at the level of anger, with demands for longer prison sentences and even castration of the rapist. Such demands will do no good for the victim, nor will they deter the potential rapist. They will get away with it, and who is to say that even after twenty years inside he wont come out and rape again. Women must concentrate on demands of prevention demands which raise womens consciousness on a mass scale, and ones that help the victim. The legal area of rape can be complicated enough particularly as it is not statutory law in Ireland. A great deal of work must go into the choosing of the correct demands. In the immediate term we need better treatment for the victim. Women doctors and garda's must be demanded. The victim must have the right to keep her

identity secret if she wishes, and her sexual history not brought up in court. We must demand that there are at least four women on the jury for a rape trial (the solicitor has the right to object to jurors). Where crisis centres are concerned, women will have to set them up themselves, but we must demand the cost of running them from the state. Other demands from the state can include better street lighting, improved late night transport, and self-defence classes for girls in schools. A campaigning group could go to schools and have discussions with older pupils or hold public meetings, local or otherwise.

BRITISH OCCUPATION

These demands are not exclusive to Ireland, however we do have some which are. Namely those created by the occupation of the North by the British Army. Specific discussion of this situation is necessary, but it is important enough in itself to demand another article. Discussion within the Womens Movement on a Thirty Two county level has only just started. Rape and brutality against women are issues which must be brought to the fore of that discussion. The most effective demands and type of campaign must be decided on and the fight can start.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

In recent weeks some women who were involved in what was Campaign Against Rape, who's priority is a rape crisis centre, have left to set up an action campaign. The campaign will work in co-operation with the rape crisis centre in future. Many women are angry and frightened by the increase in rape and by the fact that the rape victim has to re-live the whole thing with very little sympathy in the courts.

If women are interested in getting involved in this campaign they could write for further information to P.O. Box 909 Dublin I We need to give each other all the support we can!

Part Two

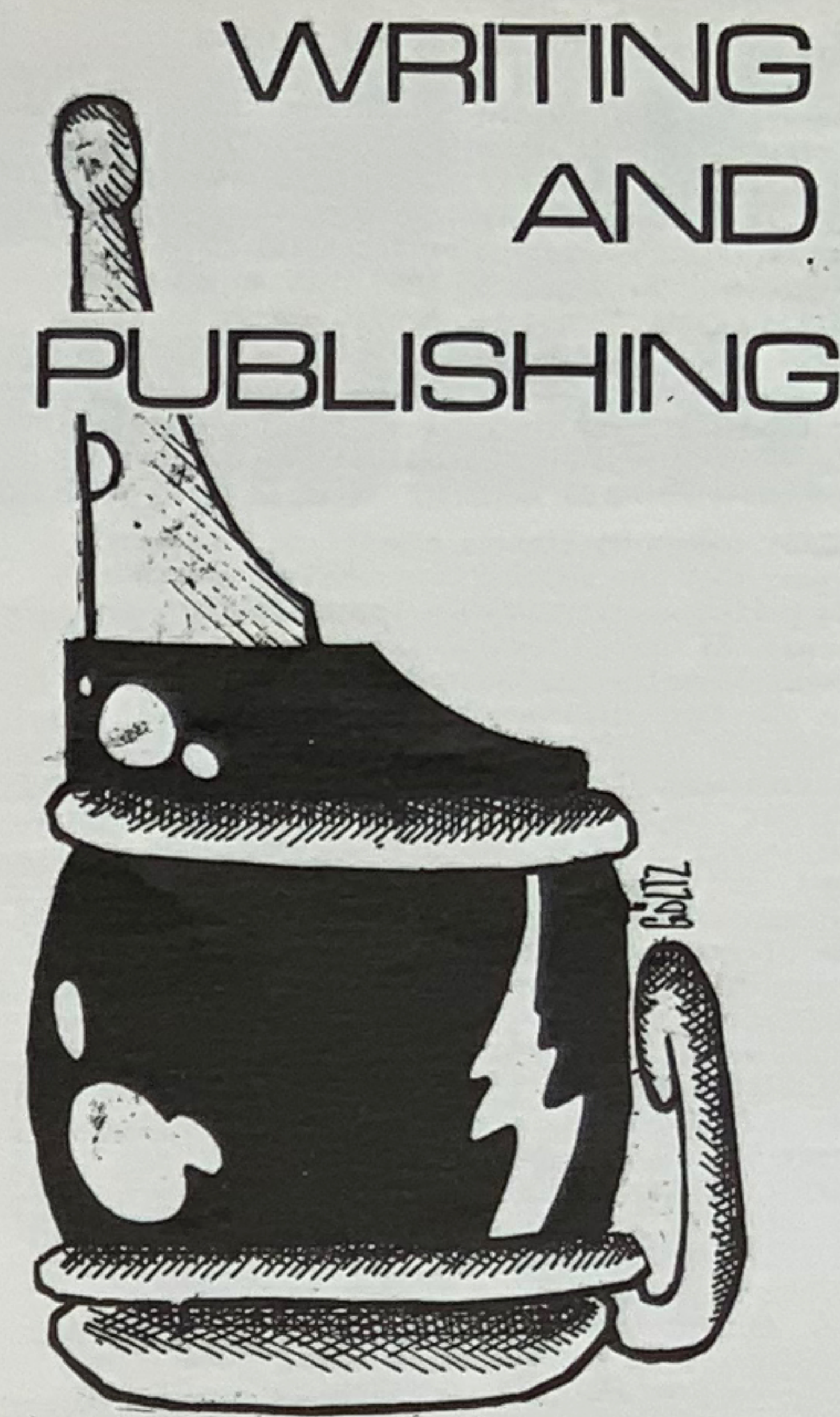
It is important for editorial control over book and magazine publication, and the disposition of foreign rights, to rest in Ireland. This requires the establishing of publishing channels which are equal to foreign publishers in standards of production and design, and equal in the amount they can pay writers. Such a development would go no further than bringing us to the situation as in developed capitalist countries, and would be equivalent to the achievement of bourgeois democratic demands.

Under capitalism, however, this will not happen. Publishing will continue to be dominated by the larger capitalist countries. It is only by going beyond the bourgeois democratic idea that we can have any chance of realising even these limited objectives. The Irish publishing industry has neither the capacity nor the will to change the international circumstances. In seeking to sell foreign rights of books they have published, they face the same editorial preconceptions as the writer; so they, even more perhaps than the writer, will wish to provide the international market with what it wants.

A Co-operative, held in common ownership by writers, can begin to overcome some of these problems. It can allow writers control over their own work; though it is unlikely to be able to provide adequate rates of pay. It can result in work being published which would otherwise not be published because it did not suit the international market.

Any Co-operative, if it is to go further, cannot restrict itself to Irish distribution. But if it looks towards bourgeois publishers then it will meet the same old problems. What it must do is to seek links with those in all countries who have an interest in presenting not the marketable image of Ireland, but Ireland as Irish writers (for all their faults) actually see it.

The only ideological tendency that expresses such an interest - in understanding a national culture without exploiting it - is socialist internationalism. What we have been talking about is nationally self-determined publishing as opposed to publishing distorted by the domination of imp-



WRITING AND PUBLISHING

rialism. And the only allies that the cause of self-determination has are the working class and socialist movements internationally. As yet there are few signs of trade union

movements tackling the question of culture (In Britain the movement seems to have even taken several steps backward in this respect since the early years of unionism). But socialist movements - both on party and non-party bases - have set up publishing companies, which have not always restricted themselves to politics but have made a concrete intervention in the field of culture.

It is no accident that, despite the fact that the Irish Writers' Co-operative has no ideological stance and that the books it has published are in no sense socialist, it has established links with the British Writers & Readers Publishing Co-operative, which does explicitly align itself with the labour movement, and which will be publishing the Irish Writers' Co-operative books in Britain.

What the Irish Writers' Co-op has proved so far is that there are young writers with a real voice in their work who would not have been published (at least when they were) without the existence of the Co-op. It does not yet, I think, fully understand itself and the context of writing in Ireland. While there is a frustration at Irish society, which is reflected time and again in novels and short stories, there is little real understanding. As a result, the easy response (which generally coincides with the international caricature of Ireland) is to fall back on bemoaning what a priest-ridden hole of a place we're in.

Without the advent of a new self-consciousness Irish writing will make little progress in understanding and digging deeper into the fabric of its world. Still less will it tackle with confidence the world outside Ireland. If instead of tirelessly repeating the frustrations of Irish life we begin to look at what causes them, then I think we can begin to strike up a radical and productive relationship with Irish society that could see literature take on new meaning. Who knows, instead of associating Irish literature with plane loads of Yeats and Joyce scholars, we might even start associating it with everyday life.

STEVE MACDONOGH

Steve MacDonogh is Chairperson of the Irish Writers' Co-operative. The views expressed in this column are his own and should not be taken as being in any way representative of the Co-op.

TRIBUTE TO SEAMUS COSTELLO

The Movement for a Socialist Republic and People's Democracy have already, in common with the Republican movement and most of the organised left in Ireland today, unreservedly condemned Seamus Costello's assassination. Both groups sent delegations to one of the largest funerals seen in the South in recent years. If there were any doubts about Costello's widespread popularity or his commitment to the Irish working class they were dispelled by the size and composition of the attendance at the funeral. The proceedings were chaired by Nora Connolly-O'Brien (James Connolly's daughter) and Bernadette MacAliskey gave a short speech in his memory. A large number of people from Costello's native Bray marched behind his coffin forcing the three local TD's and most of his fellow councillors from Bray Urban District Council and Wicklow County Council to join the rest of the mourners. Also in attendance were the General Secretaries of two of the largest unions in the country Michael Mullen of the Irish Transport & General Workers' Union (ITGWU) and Matt Merrigan of the Amalgamated Transport & General Workers' Union (ATGWU), along with many other well known trade union activists. Finally mention must be made of the fact that some members of Costello's old party, Sinn Fein - The Workers' Party (SFWP), especially those from Bray, put aside petty sectarian considerations to demonstrate their opposition to this act of gangsterism.

COSTELLO'S CAREER

Whatever faults Costello had he has by far the most principled record of any of the 1950's generation of Republicans. When the traditionalists opposed the involvement in social issues in the 1960's Costello gained much prestige through his active participation in the ITGWU and his championing of the cause of the homeless and the small farmers. If any issue of importance was to be discussed on either Bray or Wicklow council Costello organised the people affected to attend the meeting to embarrass and expose the State authorities. Most of the Republicans who supported this change failed to keep the National Question in view as a priority and became solely involved in the routine of local agitation. This had disastrous results in the 6 Counties for it tended to further strengthen a traditional Republican weakness - illusions in the Northern Protestants. What was later to become SFWP came up with the idea that since the Protestant workers were really

Irish and were being hoodwinked by Unionist bosses they could be won from reactionary politics by agitation on social issues. As a result they gradually abandoned the revived national struggle because of fear of worsening sectarian tensions. While the Provisionals had no better idea of how to tackle this problem they did attempt to carry on the fight against Imperialism once the Protestants tried to smash the civil rights off the streets in 1969.

THE FORMATION OF THE IRSP

The pendulum of popular support thus swung back to the traditionalists. Costello, faced with this, tried to solve the real problems instead of retreating into sterile fantasies about the growth of "sectarianism". It was probably his activity in organising the burning of the British Embassy in Dublin as a protest against the 1972 Bloody Sunday murders in Derry which opened up an unbridgeable gap with the rest of the Official's leadership. A few months later they declared a ceasefire and were not to consistently use their guns again until they attempted to wipe out the IRSP as soon as it was formed in late 1975.

The formation of the IRSP represented the most consistent attempt by any section of the Republican Movement to overcome the

division between national and social questions on this island. It is a mark of Costello's individual greatness that he was able to lead such an attempt while all his colleagues from the '50s had to one degree or another fallen by the wayside at numerous stages of their careers. For that alone he deserves credit and stands in our estimation above his contemporaries who have made the same effort.

At the time of his death Costello was still in the process of political evolution. He would have been the last to claim that he had formulated definitive answers to all the problems of the Irish revolution. While Costello had found a correct understanding of the interconnection between economic and national demands he had not discovered how to make a practical organisational transition from Republicanism to Marxism. He knew that such a transition was necessary but he was unduly apprehensive that the IRSP would become identified as another "far left" sect, and thereby lose its credibility with the other strata within the Republican movement.

As a result he consciously kept the politics of the IRSP vague. The net result of this was

negative for the IRSP. On the one hand the party was simply too weak to act as a significant pole of attraction for Republican dissidents; on the other hand its political defuseness prevented him from formulating a clear cut perspective for action which could have built the party into a strong and significant organisation.

Seamus Costello showed a capacity throughout his life to make a realistic assessment of the prospects for advancing the socialist and anti-imperialist struggle. He was cautious, slow moving, even conservative in his moves. But at each decisive turn of events he took the correct road. The limitations of the IRSP were not necessarily his limitations. Had he lived he would have learned, as undoubtedly his comrades still will. Costello's death is a great loss not just to the IRSP but to the entire socialist and anti-imperialist movement. We salute his memory and pledge ourselves to carry forward the struggle he played such a decisive role in initiating. To his widow Maeliosa, his children, his many friends and comrades, we offer our condolences.

THE EDITORIAL BOARD.



60 YEARS ON

OCTOBER 1917



It is now sixty years since the Russian revolution of 1917 which started on February 23rd and reached a successful climax with the seizure of state power by the Bolsheviks on October 25th. In this article we attempt to show that it still has a direct relevance and that the Marxist tradition it represents is continued today most consistently by the followers of Leon Trotsky grouped in the Fourth International. This is necessary because the "official" inheritors of this tradition, the Communist Party of Ireland (C.P.I.) are so isolated and backward that they do not even now, unlike most of their Western European co-thinkers, dare to admit that there might be something wrong with the way the state born out of the revolution has come to be run.

STALINIST DISTORTIONS

More than ever today the majority of workers are repelled by the prospect of repeating the experiences of a revolution which devoured its own daughters and sons: by 1940 (excluding only those who died of natural causes) one member of the Bolsheviks central committee elected at the historic April 1917 congress, Joseph Stalin, had presided over the murder of every other member in a series of purges, "trials", and secret police assassinations. This paved the way for the complete abandoning of a revolutionary perspective in favour of dogmas such as the "stages" theory which seeks to ferret out a "progressive" wing of the bourgeoisie, that will at some unspecified time in the future bring about "democracy". (what relation this has to the Stalin variety is never clear) Only then will backward countries like Ireland become "ready" for proletarian revolution; meanwhile the workers must content themselves with reforming capitalism and ensuring they do not "skip stages" by directly challenging their own bourgeoisie.

LESSONS OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

PERMANENT REVOLUTION OR BOURGEOIS REACTION ?

This particular controversy had raged at a less crude level in Russian Marxist circles in the years preceding the revolution. The principal protagonists were Lenin and Trotsky. Until 1917 Lenin saw the immediate task of the revolution as the creation of a bourgeois democratic republic and regarded the posing of socialist goals as a diversion. He argued in 1905 that an extensive period of the 'broadest, freest and most rapid development of capitalism' was a pre-condition for socialist revolution and that the political reforms Marxists sought 'will, for the first time make it possible for the bourgeoisie to rule as a class' (1).

Unlike today's Stalinists however he insistently argued that the working class had to maintain its political independence from the bourgeoisie because it wanted 'social peace' and would shrink from challenging the tsarist autocracy by carrying out the 'bourgeois revolution'. As a result the Bolshevik slogan of 'revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry' did not clearly define the relationship between the social goals of the proletariat on the one hand, and the bourgeoisie on the other. Trotsky was explicit on this point: while it was true that the classical demands of the bourgeois revolution (particularly the confiscation of landed estates) remained to be solved, the working-class in power would not be able to limit itself to creating the conditions for ensuring the social domination of the bourgeoisie and would be forced to take state power itself, because this was the only way democratic tasks would be accomplished.

The argument was decisively decided in practice in 1917. Lenin went beyond his previous positions in his 'Letters from Afar' when he developed his argument that the proletariat would have to seize power in the immediate coming period and later went to the point of deriding people who still spoke of the old formula of 'a revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry' as 'Bolshevik pre-revolutionary antiquities' and that 'there can be no government (barring a bourgeois government) other than that of the Soviets of Workers, Agricultural Labourers, Soldiers, and Peasants' Deputies' (2). As Trotsky had foreseen the 1905 formula proved to be 'obsolete, no good at all, dead' (3) and as a result Lenin was forced to launch a vigorous fight within the Bolshevik party to force it to fundamentally revise its programmatic positions. In practice they found the revolution had to lead uninterruptedly to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat, that is to become a permanent revolution.

RELEVANCE TO IRELAND

As we see then, to get to the real lessons of the October revolution we have to reject the suffocating grasp of Stalinism right from the start. We have highlighted the debate about 'Permanent Revolution' because of its particular relevance to an imperially-dominated country like Ireland and because we believe it will help militants understand why the C.P.I. and its allies in the official Republican movement were so keen to avoid a real challenge to the Six County statelet when the mass movement it helped to create went beyond elementary civil rights demands and why even today they refuse to call for the immediate withdrawal of British troops. It is surely beyond doubt that this refusal arises not because these are revolutionary organisations which have lost their way but because they, along with numerous other Stalinist splinters, are irreconcilably opposed to genuine social revolution and pull back when they are faced with it.

THE GAINS OF WOMEN

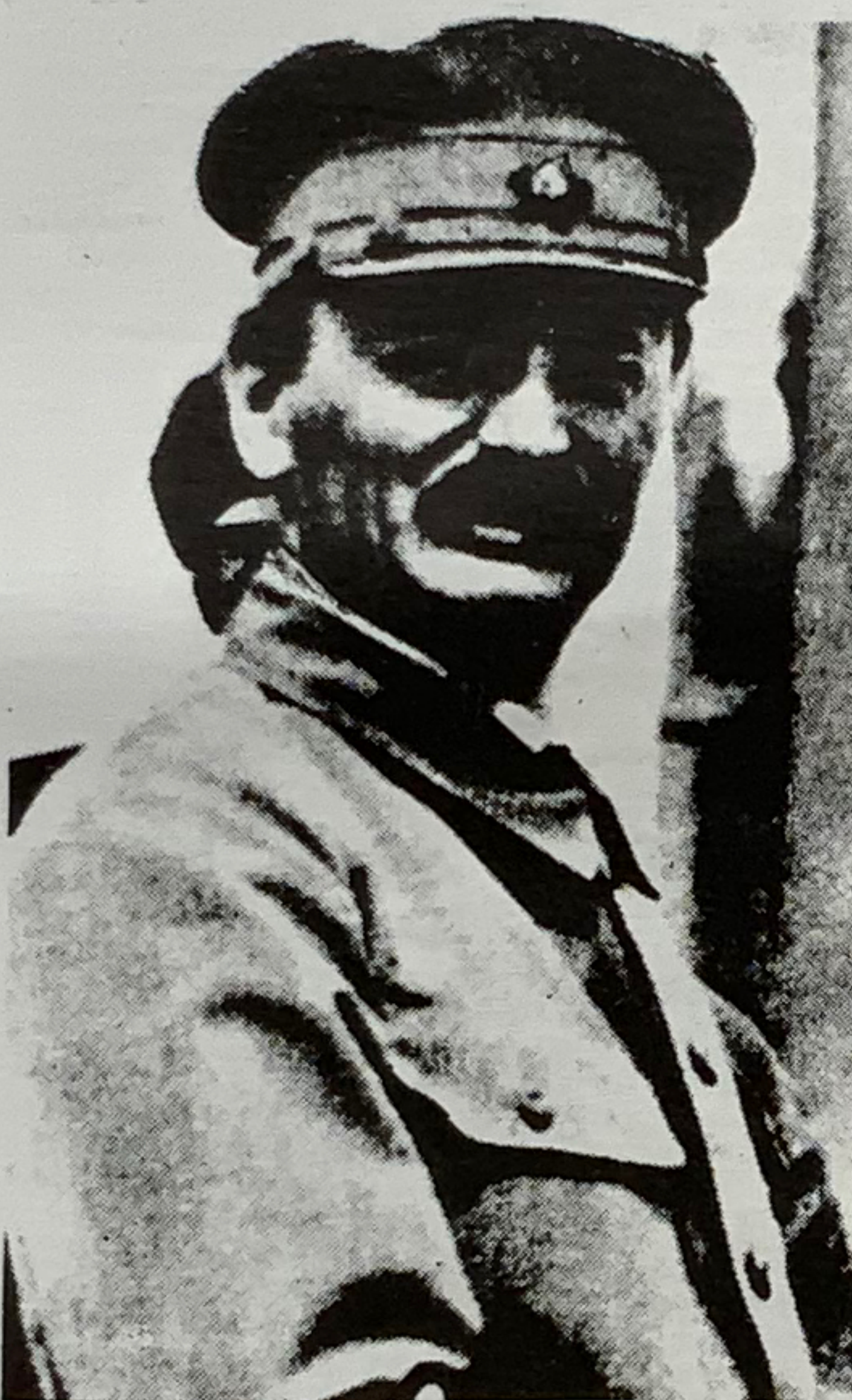
So Trotskyists say it is possible for a socialist revolution to take place in a backward country and can add the examples of China, Cuba and Vietnam to the example of Russia as practical proof of the point. We do not say that these countries have achieved socialism. All that has happened is that private property relations have

been overturned and the preconditions for moving towards socialism have been established. Women in Russia for example did not achieve liberation from the revolution but the extent to which legal and economic barriers to their liberation were removed went beyond what any bourgeois state is even capable of granting. Between 1917 and 1927 the following measures were carried out; Marriage laws became an easy registration process based on mutual consent (by 1927 it was no longer necessary to register). The concept of illegitimate children was abolished. Free legal abortion was every woman's right. Divorce was granted automatically at the request of either partner.

In addition a programme of building kindergartens, social laundries etc was launched in order to begin to free women from the burdens of family toil.

STALINIST HYPOCRISY

From the late 1920s onwards however more and more of these laws were repealed or severely restricted. Ironically this was also the time when Stalin decreed it was possible to build 'Socialism in One Country'. As the Soviet Union retreated from the real gains of the revolution the exaggerations of its leaders became steadily more fantastic. The process is today taken to the point that although Ireland is the only European country which has a higher number of political prisoners per head of population than the Soviet Union the C.P.I. says it is one of the freest countries in the world!



Leon Trotsky

CONCLUSION

Things came to this sorry state in Russia in a period of reaction with fascism rampant leading headlong into World War II. It was only through forcing humanity through such a calamity that capitalism was able to gather resources for the post-war boom. That is now petering out and the question of its historic bankruptcy is becoming a very real one for a new generation. Questions which had seemed to be resolved are again being disputed and tendencies in the workers movement are confronting each other on new grounds. Under this strain the Stalinist monolith has begun to crack wide open. There are no two Communist Parties with any degree of independence that think alike or pursue the same line. In Ireland there is a multiplying number of 'Moscow' tendencies (most of them Two Nationalist or teetering on the brink) while the Trotskyist forces are moving closer to each other. This is only a local reflection of an international trend which we hope will in time fully vindicate the work of the founder of the Red Army and the leader of the insurrection which began the victorious working-class revolution in a whole country. In the meantime we take the opportunity to commemorate its 60th anniversary and note how its lessons are being rediscovered by greater numbers of people.

DAVID CARROLL

Footnotes;
1) See Lenin 'Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution'; Collected Works, Vol. 9, pp 48-50
2) See Lenin 'Letters on Tactics' C.W. Vol. 24 pp 45-48
3) Leon Trotsky 'Results and Prospects', London 1971, pp 223-4.

CHALLENGE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

A factor which distinguishes Trotskyists from other socialist currents to the left of the Social-Democratic and Communist Parties is their adherence to the Fourth International (FI). Historically this is best explained by the way Lenin and the Bolsheviks called for the formation of a Third International in 1914, at the outbreak of the First World War, because the vast majority of the parties of the Second International betrayed revolutionary Marxism in principle by supporting 'their own' bourgeoisies in the War. Similarly Trotsky called for the formation of a Fourth International in 1933 after Hitler's rise to power. The bureaucratized and Stalinist leadership of the Third International declared that the policy pursued by the German Communist Party (CP) was faultless and there was not the slightest criticism of this judgement within the organisation. As a result Trotsky concluded it was incapable of internal reform - a judgement verified by its subsequent evolution which has led to its present dispersal into numerous factions: The Burocrats, The Maoists, The Titoists, etc. We therefore see the FI as the organised heritage of the international working class from the Communist League of the young Marx and Engels, through the Bolsheviks and the Left Opposition opposed to Stalin, to the present militants of the FI organised in over 50 countries.

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL'S HISTORY

The history of the FI can be viewed in roughly 4 phases.
1) THE PERIOD OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR This paralysed the movement in many countries. In Nazi occupied Europe the Germans hunted down the Trotskyists while the Stalinist dominated resistance swallowed the lies of the Kremlin and attacked them. This weakened the ability of the movement to take advantage of the openings in the post-war period. In the United States of America (USA) 14 leaders of the movement were jailed under the infamous Smith Act for agitating against the involvement of their country in the Second World War. The CP supported this persecution only to suffer themselves under the same legislation during the McCarthyite witch-hunt of the 1950's. The Trotskyists opposed this political repression despite their political differences with the CP.

2) 1945-1950 This was a period of steady growth in Europe and the USA. The working class basis of the movement was strengthened. In Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and Bolivia the Trotskyists were the leaders of the organised working class.
3) THE 1950'S AND MCCARTHYISM At this time the world seemed to be divided on a geographical basis between the Workers' States and Imperialism. To some in the movement this meant that there was no possibility of building parties independent of Stalinism. This caused a split in the FI. This was aggravated by constant repression and a decline in the size of the major sections. As a result internal debate became much more difficult to organise and there was

BELOW: Various European sections of the FI to protest against EEC Imperialism.



a disappearance of organised Trotskyism in countries like Ireland where, unlike the CP, they did not have any assistance from abroad - even in the form of subscriptions from abroad for a periodical! In Ceylon and Bolivia petit-bourgeois forces outflanked the Trotskyists, taking advantage of the weaknesses of the leaderships.
4) THE 1960'S AND THE CUBAN REVOLUTION With the Cuban breakthrough proving that revolutions could develop with non-Stalinist leaderships and with similar attitudes to it by the major components of the movement re-unification took place in 1963. The two largest components which stayed out were the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) of France and the present Workers' Revolutionary Party (WRP) of Britain. This marked the beginning of the growth which has led to the FI's present strength.

IMPORTANT INTERNAL DEBATE

In the last 8 years there has been an intensive debate in the movement which has led to the formation of two major tendencies. This debate covered armed struggle, its relation to the building of the revolutionary party and the growth of mass struggle, and what form the crisis of Imperialism has been taking. Instead of a split the debate to the dissolution of the tendencies on the basis of a political rapprochement at a higher theoretical level. Thus strengthened, the movement is prepared to turn the present quantitative growth into qualitative effect in the class struggle in many countries.

Internationally there are 3 important currents outside the FI. Two of these, the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI) led by the French OCI, and the grouping around Lutte Ouvrière in France are in discussion with the FI. The third, led by the British WRP has succumbed to virulent sectarianism.

REGROUPMENT IN THE USA

In the USA, a small group, the Revolutionary Marxist Committee (RMC), which has disagreements with the majority of the movement on the nature of the workers' states (It regards them as State Capitalist ruled by a bureaucratic capitalist class - the majority regards the vast majority of them as either degenerated or deformed Workers' States under the control of a bureaucratic caste) has united with the supporting party of the FI there. This opens the way back to the movement of this current internationally who as Trotsky pointed out in 'In Defence Of Marxism', should be in the movement.

RECENT GROWTH IN INFLUENCE

A brief look at the world shows the growing significance of the FI. In the USA it was a major component in the movement against the Viet-Nam war and its candidate got over 100,000 votes in the 1976 Presidential election. In France it publishes a daily paper, 'Rouge', and its electoral coalition (with Lutte Ouvrière and the Organisation Communiste des Travailleurs (Communist Workers' Organisation - OCT) got an average of 5% of the vote in the areas it contested and above 10% in some working class areas, in the 1977 Municipal Elections. In the Spanish state it fights for the self-determination of the Basques, the Catalans, and other oppressed nationalities, and is now in the process of a huge growth. In Latin America it is in the forefront of the struggle for democratic rights. Many of the militants who turned to the strategy of armed struggle as outlined by Guevara have turned to the FI for a rounded Leninist approach to revolution where armed struggle is not isolated as a tactic and divorced from the needs of the situation.

THE KREMLIN'S REACTION

In the Soviet Union the Kremlin now finds it needs to revive the old lies to counter Trotskyism. The revived Stalin school of

Falsification on the one hand accuses the Trotskyists of being small and irrelevant and with the other sees them as responsible for all that they oppose. A lot of this malignant rubbish has spread to this country and is purveyed by people who prefer to win some kind of victory over Trotskyism rather than oppose British Imperialism. In the so-called third world of Asia and Africa small Trotskyist nuclei are beginning to emerge. The decline of China as a revolutionary model is causing young militants to turn to Trotskyism. The distinguishing feature of Trotskyism is that it regards international solidarity as a priority. This has, for example, meant that it organises internationally in support of the South African revolution.

GLOBAL REPRESSION

An aspect of the growth of Trotskyism is the tremendous repression it suffers internationally. It is banned in all the Workers' States. To this day the Trotskyists, including Trotsky, have not been rehabilitated in the Soviet Union in spite of Khrushchev's admissions at the 20th. Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1956. In Czechoslovakia militants of the Revolutionary Socialist Party are jailed as Trotskyists. In China members of the Trotskyist movement, also founders of the Chinese CP, are in jail while the regime releases Kuomintang criminals. In Latin America Trotskyism is banned under all the military regimes. Numerous members of the Argentine Partido Socialista dos Trabalhadores (PST - Socialist Workers' Party) have been murdered by numerous illegal police squads. Hugo Blanco, leader of the Peruvian peasants, is exiled and can only find refuge in Sweden. (Recently he was refused entry to the USA for a lecture tour by the 'liberal' Carter regime.). Ernest Mandel, a leader of the FI and one of the world's foremost Marxist economists, is banned from many countries. This includes Germany where he was born, which he originally fled during the fascist days because of his politics and his Jewish background. A strange contrast here is the effective asylum Germany has provided for the SS war criminal Herbert Kappler, who recently 'escaped' from an Italian jail. These are just a small selection from numerous incidents of harassment and persecution.

TROTSKYISM IN IRELAND

In Ireland the movement has had a chequered existence. It was originally founded in 1939 when it published the 'Socialist Appeal'. After the war it published the 'Workers' Republic'. During the ultra-repressive climate of the 50's the movement decayed and the various individuals involved worked inside the Labour Party where they were a component of its left-wing. The present movement dates from the 60's and the revival of the Socialist and Republican movement. The official section of the FI, the MSR, was formed in 1972 as a result of a split in the Labour Party Young Socialists. It seeks to bring to the Irish revolutionary movement the experiences and heritage of the international Communist movement and in turn pass on the experience of the Irish revolution internationally.

JAMES MACMAHON

BELOW: A selection of the newspapers produced by different sections of the FI.





SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

POBLACHT SHOISIALACH

STRIKE WAVE!

BEHIND THE FERENKA CASE

The present series of unofficial strikes is causing great concern to employers and Trade Union officials alike. Business And Finance in its October 13 issue, in an introduction to an article entitled "Those Worrisome Wildcats" stated that "The latest rash of unofficial strikes is worrying the official trade union movement as much as the employers". Gerry Cronin, President of the Cork Trades Council in a radio interview on October 18 described unofficial stoppages as "the cancer of modern Irish society". What is more worrying however, to genuine trade unionists, is the fact that unofficial strikes have to occur at all, as decisions to go on strike without official backing are taken democratically by the rank and file at shop-floor level. The absence of official backing can be traced to a growing movement on behalf of the professional trade union leadership, towards integrating the trade union movement into state and employers' structures, which seek to transform the movement into a disciplining apparatus, that is, police force for the Federated Union of Employers (FUE) and the Confederation of Irish Industry (CII).

ICTU GIVES WAY TO BOSSES

The present situation has its origins in the late '60's and early 70's, when after the militancy of the decade just ending (in 1970, the record number of 1,000,000 days was lost through strikes) the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) under pressure from the employers, introduced

the 2 tier picket, individual unions refused to sanction members' decisions to strike, and the Lynch government attempted to enforce a 7% wage ceiling, which led to the long and bitter cement strike. The demand of the cement workers, in 1970, was "£7 not 7%".

It was in this period that Ferenka, one of the factories involved in the present spate of disputes, was under construction. It opened in 1972 and in the 5 years since it has had no less than 15 strikes - all of them unofficial! One of the charges being made by the Ferenka strike committee is the lack of representation given by the Irish Transport & General Workers' Union (ITGWU). The fact that in 5 years, whenever a strike occurred, it was without the official support of the union must surely bear testimony to this.

FERENKA NOT UNIQUE

The background to the present dispute at Ferenka is the suspension by the company of 6 Shop-stewards who in the words of the management were "clearly identified as leaders" of the stoppage last month, which occurred because workers would not accept management's authority to put a production worker cleaning toilets. The bitterness and determination of the strike committee - who along with 830 production workers at the plant have declared their allegiance to the Marine Port & General Workers' Union (MPGWU) - can only be explained through the frustration and annoyance which built up over the year because of bureaucratic "rerepresentation" by the ITGWU. This type of trade union 'leadership' is not peculiar to Ferenka. As the trade union movement becomes more and more integrated into pro-employer structures, it gains a certain respectability and identifies with the establishment rather than its own members.

THE ROLE OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Since protectionism ceased as the economic policy for building the 26 County economy and the old native sweatshops disappeared, all the resources of the state - economic, cultural, and ideological - were geared towards the multi-nationals and their needs. Ireland is being presented in glossy Industrial Development Authority (IDA) magazines as a haven for "happy hunters" in the form of any industrialist who can be coaxed to set up shop here. Compliant workforces and cheap labour are the main marketing tags. It is therefore

vital that the slightest hint of industrial unrest should be carefully crushed as this could spoil the sales propaganda.

SWEETHEART DEALS

This has led to the signing of "sweetheart deals", or 5 year agreements between companies and unions. These agreements are negotiated in a most undemocratic manner, in a lot of cases where the workforce is new to industry and with very little experience of trade unionism. The clauses are very binding, with long "conciliation procedures" which serve no other

purpose but to break down and undermine any form of action which if pursued could lead to a quick victory for the workers involved. The whole conciliation procedure in the long run leads to a situation where the union officials and management tend to consult in order to quickly "cool down" the situation, thus leading to the isolation of the workers from their so called representatives, and a lack of any democracy whatsoever within the unions.

FERENKA'S HISTORY

This is exactly what happened at Ferenka, in 1973 during a strike (unofficial, of course) involving the appointment of two foremen from outside the workforce, shop stewards accused the union official of going to management rather than to his own members. Maybe this is what the ITGWU mean by referring the dismissal of the six shop stewards to "established conciliation procedures", in their advertisement on Ferenka, in all the national dailies on October 14th. Likewise on the wages front the ITGWU claim that workers who were earning £23 basic, in 1972 have made great financial progress as their wages are now up to £49 basic. But as was shown in the last Socialist Republic from a chart published by Trade Union Information, (an I.C.T.U publication) workers earning £25 pw in 1970 would need to be earning as much as £65 pw now in order to be in line with the Consumer Price Index. With the unsocialable 4 cycle shift in Ferenka which only allows 12 weekends off a year, the "wage increases" which the union "won" amount to no more than a cut.

WORKERS COME BEFORE MULTI-NATIONALS

In Ferenka, the ITGWU has paid for its bureaucracy by the defection of 840 of the 900 or so production workers to the MPGWU. That Liberty Hall is seriously concerned about this is borne out by their immediate setting up of a separate branch, with a full time secretary for its Ferenka section. For Transport Union workers elsewhere it is vitally necessary that they organise at rank and file level against the bureaucracy, tabling motions at section and branch level condemning the unions role in situations like the one at Ferenka, where the welfare of the multi-nationals profits account took precedence over the workers it purported to represent.

SUPPORT THE STRIKERS

The pressure on the Ferenka strikers is tremendous. It involves threats to pull out of Enka, the group within Akzo, which Ferenka is a part of. It also places them in the middle of a bitter inter-union dispute, with the ITGWU desperately trying to cling on as the loss of such a large group of members could set a precedent. They, the strikers must be supported, as the strike pay of £7 per week will not go very far. Their defeat would also have a demoralising effect on militant workers elsewhere. At present, ranged against them are the Ferenka management and their parent company, all the employers organisations in the state, who consider it vital that they are defeated, also the Government, and local politicians (including Labour Mayor, Frank Prendergast, an ITGWU official) who are busy peddling propaganda from Enka, that they will close down the Ferenka plant unless there is an unconditional surrender. To show how serious they are, on October 15th, 2 weeks protective notice was issued to craftsmen and production workers, with three weeks been given to clerical and administrative workers. Workers who are vital to the continuation and maintenance of special machinery will not however be laid off. Meanwhile, the strikers who have declared that they will not return until their union is recognised and all suspensions are lifted, have to live on £7 per week strike pay. They are desperately in need of financial support if they are not to become demoralised and so forced back to work. All donations should be rushed to: Ferenka Strike Committee, Imperial House, Roches St, Limerick. or The Bottom Dog Ferenka Fund, 109 O'Malley Pk, Southill, Limerick.

Bottom Dog

THE WORKING CLASS PAPER
OF NORTH MUNSTER

Bottom Dog can be contacted
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