



SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

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WHY SOCIALISTS SHOULD VOTE SINN FEIN

FROM UNITY AT POLLS TO UNITY IN STRUGGLE

Where we stand

According to the opinion polls and the media pundits the result of the Westminster General Election on June 9 is already decided. Thatcher's Tory government will be returned to office; the only unknown factor is the size of the majority it will enjoy in the new parliament.

Opinion polls don't always get it right but the failure of the Labour Party to offer a full-blooded socialist alternative makes a Tory majority almost inevitable. That's good news for the capitalist class, for the wealthy, the powerful and the privileged. The Tory Party is their party and its job is to ensure that the crisis of the capitalist system is resolved with the least cost and inconvenience to British capitalism. That means solving the crisis by driving down the living standards and crushing the democratic rights of working people.

Another term of Tory Government threatens a bleak future for all the non-privileged sections of British society. The attacks of the last four years will pale in comparison with Thatcher's plans to sell off the welfare state, strengthen police powers and make workers' organisations defenceless. The right-wing parliamentary leadership of the Labour Party will do little to oppose these plans.

The working people of the 6 Counties have suffered the experience of Tory rule at a greater cost than anywhere else. Whether on the political, economic or social field Tory policy has boiled down to repression. Under Thatcher, 20,000 jobs a year were lost, housing and social services programmes ground to a halt. The Tories forced 10 young republican fighters to starve themselves to death rather than grant them basic civil rights. They gave the go-ahead to the RUC 'shoot-to-kill' policy and the financial bribery of the 'supergrasses'. They imposed an unwanted and unworkable Assembly at Stormont in an attempt to give political cover to the naked violence which has characterised their stewardship of British imperialist domination in the North.

The Tories are unrelenting enemies of the Irish people's right to self-determination. They are the historic bedfellows of Ulster Unionism, the allies of all reactionary forces in Ireland. Back in office the Tories will feed the dynamic towards a restoration of the Orange ascendancy, a dynamic already present in the Stormont Assembly. And, if the Tories were successful with their attacks on the living standards, the rights and organisations of working people in Britain, the drive towards loyalist rule would become almost unstoppable.

Certainly the parasitic politicians of the 'Forum for a New Ireland' could not be relied on to block such a development. Put up against British imperialism, the Haugheys, Humes and Fitzgeralds turn into quivering jellies.

There is one power however that can not only halt Tory plans in Ireland but also open the way for overturning the Tory offensive in Britain itself. That power is the mobilisation of the Irish working class, a power that has not yet been felt in the struggle against British rule.

There is only one party in this election that comes anywhere near addressing this issue — SINN FEIN. That's why SOCIALIST REPUBLIC and PEOPLES DEMOCRACY urge all our readers and supporters to fight for votes to be given to Sinn Fein. We are confident that in this election Sinn Fein will go a long way in challenging the misrepresentation of nationalist working people by the SDLP and Gerry Fitt.

But there are questions that remain unanswered.. Will Sinn Fein translate the support it receives at the polls into a real movement against the Stormont Assembly? Will Sinn Fein fight to develop a truly democratic alternative to the 'Forum' charade? Will Sinn Fein go beyond the rhetoric about a Socialist Republic and the working class and through active involvement in the trade unions and in workers struggles fight to build a genuine anti-imperialist leadership for the Irish working class?

Sinn Fein's abstentionist policy suggests that it has not quite made up its collective mind on these questions. Should there be a hung parliament at Westminster with Sinn Fein seats holding the balance would Sinn Fein really allow a Tory Government into power by default? That would certainly mean the death of the solidarity movement in Britain.

So far Sinn Fein has relied on exposing the record of the SDLP and on claims that Sinn Fein offers 'principled leadership'. In urging a vote for Sinn Fein candidates we challenge them to state clearly their strategy and plans for realising the above principles. Faced with the return of the Tory Government and a renewed imperialist offensive the time has long gone by when rhetoric (or excuses) about the armed struggle would do. Nor is it sufficient to offer perennial electioneering as a filler for the lowspots of IRA activity. The support given to Sinn Fein demonstrates clearly that the basis for renewing the mass struggle to win Irish unity and independence is maturing fast. Does Sinn Fein dare give a lead?



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Riots in France

Mitterrand under seige

THE CRS riot police are fighting students in the Latin Quarter again. There are strikes in the hospitals. Many different groups march in the streets in protest against the government.

The present turmoil in Paris has echoes of 1968, and of the student demonstrations of 1973. But there is a difference.

By Tony Brown

The student demonstrations are much smaller. They are led by right wing Gaullist and Giscardian students, backed up by the fascist 'commandos'. The overwhelming majority of students, who are either apolitical or who sympathise with the left are not on the streets.

The other groups are mainly middle class, and they are protesting against a left wing government. Why have events reached this stage? Why does the right wing have the initiative? The answer lies in the growing unpopularity of Mitterrand's austerity measures, and the response to these of the major left wing parties and unions.

The problems of Mitterrand are the problems faced by all left wing reformist governments who take their plans seriously. There is no doubt that the Mitterrand government has achieved some successes in the field of social reform. The retirement age has been lowered to 60, and the statutory holiday for workers has been increased to five weeks. The SMIC, the minimum wage, has been raised in real value.

But the strategy of the government has been to try to beat the world capitalist recession by government spending. Without effective control over the major monopolies, and without effective price control, this has led to a massive loss of business confidence and a flight of capital.

It has meant destabilisation of the franc on the international money markets. The result has been the need to introduce deflationary austerity measures like higher taxes and a tough attitude to strikers along with wage restraint. Unemployment still keeps going up.

Support

Mitterrand is supported, albeit grudgingly by the Communist Party and the main trade union federations. Now the right wing has launched a big mobilisation of the enraged small business people and students. The passivity of the left plays into their hands.

Among the students, the initiatives of the right wing are most striking. The reform of the university admission system proposed by education minister Savary stems directly from the economic crisis. He proposes more selective admission, and an emphasis on science courses, because of the inability of French capitalism to employ the number of graduates being turned out.

Protest

Both right wing and left wing student unions opposed the measures. But the right wing took the initiative to mobilise protest. The Socialist and Communist Party students organised only a small token protest. The situation has echoes of the 1930s when the fascists in the Latin Quarter demonstrated against the Popular Front government.

It also has nasty parallels with Chile under Allende, when the students at the Catholic University were able to link up with the copper



miners, in a reactionary mobilisation against the fascists.

May 1983 will not turn into a May '68 in reverse. The huge majority of the French workers are not about to be mobilised by the chic middle class fascists from the law faculties. But the situation is a dire warning for the left.

Important

To seize the political initiative from the right it is not enough to 'defend' the existing government.

It is only by ensuring that the interests of the working class are championed by the left, if necessary against the SP-CP government, can the offensive of the right wing and the bosses be checked.

WAGES - DEMAND 30% - BACK IT UP WITH STRIKES

Since the onset of the recession in 1979 the level of consumption in the South has fallen each year. Today, ordinary people - especially urban workers - are consuming less than they were four years ago. The basic reason for this is that take-home wages have risen less than inflation. Workers are simply getting poorer each year.

This is not enough for the government or the employers. They are afraid that if there is any upturn in the economy, workers will demand major increases in living standards to offset previous declines. And if there is no economic upswing ... well then, wages will just have to be cut further still. So the keystone of the employers and government's economic strategy is to drive down wage rates as close as possible to subsistence level.

One of the most 'original' features of the Fine Gael election programme was a strategy for attacking wages. Fitzgerald set out to do away with 'incomes policies' i.e. National Wage Agreements. Although NWAs had helped to keep wages in check during the 70's, they are no longer of any use to the employers. The centralised nature of the agreements did not sufficiently undermine the unity and strength of the trades union movement. More over the NWA's forced the government to grant public sector workers increases similar to those obtained by private sector workers. Successive govern-

ments have been dissatisfied with this because they feel that, in the absence of NWA's, they could force public sector workers to take much lower wage increases. Private employers have also been annoyed because 'unnecessarily' high wage increases in the public sector have pushed up taxes and influenced the private sector workers to demand even greater wage increases. Finally, employers also recognised that there were many branches of industry, trade and commerce, where the recession had undermined the confidence of workers so that very unfavourable wage deals could be easily pushed through.

For the above reasons, employers and the Coalition ditched the NWA framework and opted for decentralised wage bargaining i.e. picking the workers off factory by factory. The employers and politicians know that 'industrial relations' could plunge the economy into chaos as a result of this approach. But they also know that workers have no political alternative and so they hope that trades unionists will bow meekly to the inevitable - wage cuts!! It is with this kind of confidence that the FUE and the Coalition entered into the present pay round offering a 6 months pay pause and a 5% increase thereafter.

The trades union leadership has failed to call for any fightback. Unlike previous wage rounds the ICTU has refrained from even recommending a specific percent-

age increase. John Carroll of the ITGWU came nearest to making a recommendation when he said that a 10% increase would mean a real cut in wages of 7% after taxation and inflation, are taken into account. The implication is that workers should demand an absolute minimum increase of 17%.

None of the wage settlements published in April by the ICTU come near 17%. Most of the 31 agreements have been around 10-12%. This discrepancy is only to be expected given the absence of any clear lead from the trade union top brass. However, the settlements to date indicate an underlying militancy. Pay pauses have been rejected in the majority of cases and the money terms, though inadequate, have been far in excess of what employers would like.

Most important of all, the bulk of wage agreements to date have been in small workplaces of less than a hundred workers. Major factories and industrial branches have yet to wade in. The first signs of a movement among these workers are now beginning to emerge. The 13,000 ESB workers have lodged a 22% claim and given notice of rolling industrial action. They were quickly followed by Aer Lingus workers who are also considering industrial action. Meanwhile New Ireland and Standard Life insurance workers have already taken industrial action. More recently workers in Carralls (Dundalk) and the

Bank Officials have slapped in hefty demands.

As the 23rd national pay round begins to shape up, the employers and politicians have cause to be concerned. A front page article in the *Irish Times* 4.4.83, summed up the Coalition's dilemma: 'The Government clearly fears that developments in the private sector, where both its own and the FUE's guidelines are being widely disregarded, could encourage public sector workers to seek similar increases'.

In short, the overall effectiveness of government economic strategy is at risk. Consequently, the politicians and employers will go all out to defeat the latest round of pay claims. For this reason, workers need a nationally co-ordinated, centralised response.

Different groups of workers fighting at the same time but without any unity makes no sense. Just as the FUE has set a common guideline for employers so the trades unions must set a realistic guideline for workers - at least 30%. Equally important, the unions must give a full commitment to industrial action to achieve this demand. Finally, the unions should ensure that the maximum number of workers join the fight at the same time so as to maximise the pressure on government and employers.



ICTU BARGAINS RIGHT TO STRIKE

Delegates to the Annual Conference of the Northern Committee of the ICTU in April were stunned by the revelation that the Northern Ireland Officer Terry Carlin had been involved in discussions about making the North a 'strike-free zone'.

The charge was levied by Inez McCormick, NUPE regional officer who told the conference that in January the Labour Relations Agency had produced a paper which proposed that

in return for wage parity with Britain, trade unions in the North should abandon the right to strike.

McCormick quoted from a confidential letter from the Labour Relations Agency to Terry Carlin which said that Prior had 'responded very positively and favourably to the agency's ideas'.

At a private conference in England last June - attended by Garrett Fitzgerald, Lord Gowrie of the NIO, repre-

sentatives of the US government and employers and trade union officials from the North, there was considerable discussion of the possibility of making the 6 Counties 'a strike-free zone which could be presented as a selling point to outside investment'.

The Ditchley Conference report states:

'General agreement was the keynote of this session with a high degree of consensus

between those representing traditionally opposed sections of capital and labour'.

Along with NUPE both the ATGWU and NIPSA have declared that the right to strike is non-negotiable. Trade union activists should fight to extend this stance to all ICTU unions.

John Magee

NICKY KELLY CAN WIN!

Nicky Kelly is on hunger strike at a time when the most right wing government of recent times in power. It is quite obvious to Nicky Kelly and to all those who support human and democratic rights that a government which day after day tramples on peoples rights, will have scant regard for the plight of one of its victims. Nicky expects no justice from the Coalition. His appeal is addressed only to those who gain no benefit from the repressive policies of the Coalition. Only sustained pressure from the working people of Ireland can force the politicians hand and save his life.

TEST CASE

Nicky's case, now that it is in the public eye, will rapidly become a challenge to the Coalition's attempt to revive their 'Law and Order' policies of 1973-77. They are intent on pushing through at the behest of their paymasters, the Irish capitalists and the imperialist backers, those austerity policies which will impoverish the great mass of the working people. The

coalition's only answer to the deprivation and discontent which it created, are calls for yet more repressive laws, more gardai and more prisons. Nicky's struggle is also a test case for all those who oppose the Coalition. In the wake of a defeat, collaboration with Thatcher's military solution to the National Question which will be further enhanced. The arrests and harassment of anti-imperialist militants will be stepped up. The defence of the Embassy Twenty will be greatly hampered.

On the other hand, if unity is achieved around Nicky's case, a breach can be made in the Coalition's repressive drive and the chances for his release greatly increased. This outcome would greatly benefit the Republican movement, in the forefront of this repression. It would also be in the interests of the Labour and Trade Union movement to defend Nicky. Workers are also coming into greater conflict with the repressive arm of the Coalition, the most recent example being the Ranks case. There are, no doubt, other clashes on the horizon.

CAMPAIGN GOALS

The target of the campaign is clear. The politicians of all political parties are responsible for Nicky's continuing imprisonment. They hold the key to his freedom. In order to force their hand, the campaign must base itself on those who are fighting this government. Essentially, this is the organised working class. It is the working class who are starting a fightback against policies which attack the old, the sick, the unemployed. It is workers who will most fully identify with Nicky Kelly's fight for justice. If action groups fail to direct their efforts towards workers who have already organised, they will be taking a short cut which will prove to be the longest route.

POLITICAL PARTIES

Maximum pressure must be exerted on the Labour component of the Coalition. They have already earned contempt from workers under attack. Their exposure has made them somewhat vulnerable. Workers should be mobilised to confront these TD's



and let them know simply that enough is enough. They should be told that they have already dragged the cause of Labour through the mud by their collusion in shifting the burdens of capitalism's crisis onto the backs of working people. They must not be allowed to denigrate any further the memory of a man they claim as inspiration. They must not be allowed to turn their backs on a working man facing death through hunger strike in the name of James Connolly.

Fianna Fail must not be let off the hook either. Their pseudo republican rhetoric which fools thousands of Irish workers must be challenged. We must call their bluff. Nods and Winks such as they gave during the H Block, are not good enough.

WORDS ARE NOT ENOUGH

The campaign has scored impressive successes in gaining support and sponsorship in all areas of public life - among trades union

leaders, political leaders and organisations. But words are not enough at this crucial stage. All those who have indicated their support must take their place on the release committee or else mobilise their resources to force Nicky's release.



SOCIAL SERVICE CUTS

Social workers in North and West Belfast have started a campaign of industrial action in opposition to cutbacks being demanded by the Eastern Health and Social Services Board.

The cutbacks amount to £300,000, two-thirds of which is to be found from the home-help budget - an essential lifeline for many elderly and sick people. Between 100,000 and 125,000 working hours would be lost if the cuts go ahead. The balance is to be found by not replacing social workers who leave their posts and chopping transport services to voluntary organisations.

A spokesperson for the social workers' union, the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance said:

'They are hammering services in one of the most deprived areas of Europe and putting lives on the line especially those of the elderly and sick.'

Executive Committee member, John McGeown told *Socialist Republic*: 'There is no way this cutback will be implemented without a fightback from the unions. NIPSA are already refusing to cover for vacant posts and have been threatened with disciplinary action by management. If any member is victimised, the branch has agreed that all members will walkout.'

Similar action is being taken by NIPSA members in East Belfast where the home-help service is also under attack. Delegates from both these branches will be seeking support for their action when NIPSA holds its Annual Conference at the beginning of June.



● John De Lorean

Crying poverty

QUOTE OF THE WEEK: From the American judge listening to a plea from John De Lorean's lawyers for a reduction in his bail bond because he and his wife were reportedly struggling along on \$20,000 a week.

The judge's response was that if \$20,000 a week meant that someone was about to fall into financial ruin, then "there must be thousands queuing up on the edge

LIMERICK FIGHTBACK

S.P.S. WIN INCREASE!



Joe Harrington

Believe it or not there are a few people in this country who take Alan Dukes seriously when he talks about the need for wage restraint. Normal people don't accept that incomes should fall below prices. This is shown by the fact that average wage increases negotiated so far this year are over 12% - which equals the estimated increase in the cost of living for 1983. Locally in Limerick, How-medica has offered 16% (accepted), E.I. 11% (not accepted) and Essilor 14% (accepted).

Yet, as I said, there are some people who take seriously the hairshirt policies of the Coalition. Individuals of this rare species have been discovered in the Limerick-Clare area. Collectively, they are jokingly referred to as 'The management of S.P.S.' Recently, when the time came around for wage negotiations the company just didn't want to know,

However, a workers' sit-in soon changed their minds and talks began.

It was then it became clear that the management had caught a bad dose of Duke's disease. Their offer? A 12 months pay pause!!! The workers prescribed a go-slow but there has been no real recovery in the management's condition. A second offer of a 6 months pay pause and a 3% increase was followed by a straight 3 1/2% offer!!!!

A symptom of Dukes' disease is an irrational belief that a combination of threats, intimidation and soft talk about 'fellow employees' will force workers to accept buttons for wages. Also victims of the disease tend to live in the past, in the 'good old non-union days' and try to act accordingly.

However, all is not lost. The disease is not incurable. Experience has shown that unity and determination among the workers is the

best remedy. A taste of this medicine helped management to up their offer to 7% from last January and another 4% from September. This offer was

accepted on a vote of 138 for and 77 against - clear evidence that a complete recovery will need stronger medicine from the workers.

NEW VIDEO

Peoples Democracy has made a video film with; Padrigin Ni Murchu (IPWU), Des Bonass and Mattie Merrigan (ATGWU) and Brendan Kelly (PD) discussing the recent struggles of the workers movement and the need for political leadership.

We believe that the time is right for an open discussion in the workers movement about the need for a political alternative to the betrayals of the Labour party and the dead-end reformism of the Workers Party.

This video film is available for hire at a small charge and serves as a useful introduction to discussion.

Contact; Horizon Books, Arca Pl, Belfast 11.

THE BRITISH ELECTION ...

Interest in the British General Election in Ireland will focus sharply on the contest between the SDLP and Sinn Fein for the votes of nationalist working people in the North. But as John McNulty explains below this election is of critical importance for the very survival of British capitalism. The central issue of the election is who will pay for the crisis of British imperialism: the capitalist class or working people.

CRISIS OF THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM

Britain is the sick man of Europe. The profits of Empire which once made it the most powerful country in the world acted as a cushion that blunted the pressures to modernise and change. The profits of the capitalist class were squandered in an attempt to ape the gentry. Royalty and nobility who still parasitise on the British working class and in the league of world powers. The structural weakness of British capitalism and its backward and outmoded system of production were thrown into glaring relief in the recession. In weaker industries the vicious attacks on workers living standards could not compensate for this inherent weakness and many have collapsed.

So the crisis today is not simply one more round in the cycle of recessions. It is a real struggle for survival for British capitalism and one of the first casualties has been the traditional 2-party system.

THE PARTIES

The focus of media attention has been the debate in the Labour Party, but the fact is that a fundamental shift has already taken place in the Tory party. The move to the right under Thatcherism has brought to the fore the most extreme elements of Toryism determined to inflict a crushing defeat on the workers.

The situation in the Labour party is more complex. The political weakness of the British labour movement has been reflected by its development as a party well to the right, even by the corrupt terms of European Social Democracy. It has never

strayed from the path of reform, and has frequently been willing to attack the working class in order to defend capitalism. Above all, it has from its formation been a party dedicated to the defence of imperialism - Roy Mason is by no means an unusual type in British Labour

History.

In practice Labour Governments have traditionally moved to the right and in opposition they have shifted to the left. The difference this time is that the crisis of capitalism is so deep and

fundamental that the Labour and trades union leaderships have opposed even rhetorical moves to the left. Unfortunately for them, it is precisely around the trades unions and the Labour party that the sections of the British working

class most willing to fight back have organised and, although they have not defeated or changed the leadership, they have forced important concessions on policy.

The rag-tag-and bobtail of the

SDP-Liberal alliance can be dismissed. They haven't been able to fudge the reality of the class struggle and their main importance now would be to prevent any of the more radical Labour policies being implemented in a hung parliament.

IRELAND

The Tory manifesto reiterates their support for continued repression, for the Assembly (though retaining the formula of 'cross-community support' before power is devolved) and an unconditional guarantee to unionism that partition will be maintained.

Now put that in context: A new Tory Government in Britain would move to dismantle the welfare state, advance a policy of nuclear aggression, centralise state power, muzzle the unions, crush democratic rights and greatly strengthen the powers of the police and army. Its instinct here is to step up repression and re-establish Unionist ascendancy, but it is held back by fear of destabilising the 26 counties and opposition in Europe and America.

However, if it was to win victories over its own workers these considerations would carry less weight. There is no doubt that a Tory victory would bring the spectre of Stormont one step nearer.



EDUCATION FOR SOCIALISTS

Our View of Elections



Why vote in elections? All the vested interests of society; big business, the media, the pro-capitalist parties and the churches, have a ready answer. They say that it's the mainspring of democracy and that it is through the electoral process that we can all control and run 'our' society.

Most workers know instinctively that this is nonsense and in Ireland its not hard to see why. Through partition the British are able to gerrymander the vote. Even then, when the results don't suit them they can change the rules as they did following Bobby Sands victory. It is this sort of analysis that led Republicans to boycott for years and that even now leads them to view elections as mainly propaganda initiatives subordinate to the armed struggle.

The sort of class analysis presented by Karl Marx gives a more rounded picture. It shows that partition and the British presence and the lack of real national independence prevent a developed democracy from being established. It also shows that greater levels of democracy do not lead to workers power.

The fact is that we live in a society ruled by the capitalist class and democracy is the best system of rule for capitalism just as feudalism was the best system for the kings and nobles who ruled before

ensure the obedience of the ruled and armed force as a permanent method of control is too unstable. In any case the capitalists are too much a minority and modern society too complex for them to rule by naked force alone. They need a system which allows workers to be represented and to participate without having power. But as Marx pointed out the state is not neutral. Any workers government that won an election and then expected the capitalist-controlled police and army to disarm would be in for a surprise! (The last Socialist to try this was Salvador Allende of Chile. The generals assassinated him and tens of thousands of unarmed workers).

So is marxist analysis just a more long-minded way of saying that elections are useless? No! We mustn't forget that workers fought and died for the vote and that the demand for a local Government vote was an important factor in the early Civil Rights struggle. This is because these rights are important defensive weapons for the working class. A big vote for Labour in Britain won't stop the capitalist offensive or a vote for Sinn Fein halt the Northern assembly, but they will give the workers time to prepare a fightback. Parliaments give workers representatives a chance to confront the capitalists and use it as a platform to define their own programme - this is why the Republican abstentionist policy is wrong in regard to

has yet to fully establish itself and Nationalist abstention can yet bring it down). The value of these democratic rights is shown most clearly during the election itself. The state forces, normally ready to drive you off the streets, are reduced to petty harrasment - they are even required to provide a free postal service so that you can send revolutionary propaganda to the workers.

How then can elections be used for revolutionary change? Marx said firmly that the independent mass organisation of the workers was key. Anyone who sees elections as bringing change by themselves is living in a dream-world but ignoring them or using them simply as propaganda vehicles is irresponsible. Elections properly used are a springboard for organisation and independent action by the working class. The problem is that only class-conscious parties of the working class have the programme to do this effectively. The questions posed in building such a party are best left for another issue!

Journalist to challenge section 31:

In the last issue of 'Socialist Republic' we reported a new campaign for press freedom now, as we go to press, there are reports that RTE journalists will react to the Government ban on Sinn Fein candidates.

A STRAIGHT CLASS BATTLE IN BRITAIN BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR IRISH WORKERS?

LABOUR VICTORY

Labour policy is worth quoting in detail. It supports a policy of Irish unity by consent, but goes on to say: 'we respect and support however, the right of the Northern Ireland people to remain within the United Kingdom, although this does not mean that Unionist leaders can have a veto on political development.' It goes on to promise several things that directly counter their record in Government: reform of the Diplock Courts, abolition of the PTA and Payment for Debt Act, the introduction of abortion legislation and comprehensive schools.

Again this has to be put in context. Labour policy on unemployment, welfare rights defence and nationalisation cut right across the interests of the capitalist class. Many elements in the leadership are already opposed to implementing these policies or will back-track at the first sign of opposition. It will require an active movement of the working class on the streets and in the factories to prevent a sell-out.

Ireland would become an issue immediately after the election. A new Labour Government would find itself responsible for a partitionist assembly which contradicts its declarations of support for Irish unity and the massive rejection

by nationalist voters. Furthermore to preserve the Assembly Labour would need the whole armoury of repressive legislation that it has pledged itself to scrap: an active campaign by the labour movement by the labour left and a united campaign by anti-imperialists in Ireland could open the way to a new co-operation

restoration of Stormont. Such a deal would be a massive gamble for Maggie. It would make Ireland a central issue of conflict in British class politics for the first time since the 1920's, lead to world wide protests, and destabilise and leave politically bankrupt the major nationalist

"Don't vote Sinn Fein"

Bishop Daly instructs his Flock.



and bring the Irish issue right to the heart of the class struggle.

ORANGE CARD

There is of course one other way that the Irish question could emerge as the major issue. Unionists have already indicated that the price of their support will be the

parties both North and South. But Maggie would gamble a lot for a further '5 years of power and' would see an advantage in striking such a blow against both the British and Irish working classes before they had time to prepare.

SINN FEIN

The only anti-imperialist

organisation that has nominated candidates in the elections is Sinn Fein. It is clear that the best hope for a real fightback must rest on a massive vote for their candidates. But how prepared is Sinn Fein politically to lead such a fightback?

The high level of organisational activity by the Republicans since the Assembly elections masks the fact that they have not moved forward politically and may in fact have gone backwards. Their call immediately after the last election for a united campaign against the Stormont assembly has been followed by total inaction. Their only discussions about electoral unity have centred on the SDLP and IIP and they have ignored the perfectly real possibility of building an anti-imperialist electoral front.

Even more disturbing has been their back-tracking on the question of militarism. In the Assembly elections the candidates made no secret of their support for the IRA's military struggle but said that it was a

separate issue. In this election they have linked the two together. Indeed,

An Phoblacht/Republican News states flatly in an article 'The IRA and the Election' that *only* the IRA campaign can defeat the British. Electoral work is reduced to a role of propagandist support. The ongoing economic offensive by imperialism has led Sinn Fein to highlight social and economic deprivation, but the heated debate in their own organisation has remained deadlocked and they have been unable to produce a programme of working class action to challenge and defeat these attacks.

We don't raise these points in any sectarian way. Workers should vote Sinn Fein, but they should do so without illusions. An unfounded belief that they had a worked out programme for the working class and for mass political action against British rule and collaboration in the 26 counties would lead to

massive demoralisation after the election.

Peoples Democracy believes that the motive power for a working class victory against imperialism lies in the independent activity of the mass of workers. A victory for the anti-imperialists in this election would be a powerful boost to the building of such a movement.



Oh, me dad's just a bit pessimistic. As soon as they announced the election he started digging out a nuclear shelter ...



ON BOARD the *Alrey Neave* Will the Election blow up in Maggie's face?

SOCIALIST ACTION - A FIGHTER FOR IRISH FREEDOM IN BRITAIN

BY STEVE POTTER
(SA Staff member)

Socialist Action is a new labour movement weekly. Launched in March, our most immediate objective is the fight to kick out the Tory government and replace it with a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

We don't underestimate the problems facing the British working class in the battle against the Tories. Many workers are dissuaded from fighting attacks on the unions, on the welfare services and on living standards because of unemployment and the cowardly role of the right wing labour leaders. But there is a large and militant minority in the labour movement, in CND, in the women's movement and the

Tories attacks and against the sabotage of the leadership. Our paper is addressed to that minority with the objective of organising them as a national current.

That is the importance of campaigns such as *Socialists for a Labour Victory*, a campaign which seeks to link up with all these fighting the Tories to win a Labour victory. Likewise the paper will fight to build the broad left currents inside the unions to campaign against incomes policy and for the democratisation of the unions. A crucial part of this is support for the struggle of the nationalist population against Britain's occupation of the North. Our paper will fully report the anti-imperialist election campaign in the North. An important part of this is getting out the views of the anti-imperialist movement to the British labour movement. We have published lengthy interviews

PD supporters in the first 5 issues of our paper. We believe this is a fundamental task of our paper. A debate has come to the fore on Labour's bi-partisan policy. We want to make sure that this issue is put at the centre of attention in the election campaign.

While it is vital to defeat the Tories and Alliance, we do not have any illusions about the character of the type of Labour government that would come to office. But it would be a mistake to conclude that the outcome of the election is irrelevant either for British or Irish workers. The removal of Thatcher in itself would be a body blow for British Imperialism. Secondly, the numerous policy gains and democratic reforms within the Labour Party, and the experience of the Wilson-Callaghan governments means that the left will have an

conference decisions, as the Foot-Healey team would.

But the advances of the left have also created an opportunity to take forward the cause of Irish self determination in the labour movement. We support the Labour Committee on Ireland's initiatives to raise the issue of Ireland in the labour movement. That means getting out the opinions of elected representatives of the nationalist population. We want to build a large labour movement delegation to accompany Ken Livingstone on his next trip to the North and support campaigns which take advantage of existing Labour Party policy, for example against Plastic Bullets.

But our medium term strategy is to break Labour from bi-partisanship and to a policy of Troops Out Now. We want to win the



Why We Support

A Woman's Right to Choose

A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE

In countries all over the world, women are beginning to challenge their centuries old oppression, with the growth of the women's liberation movement, and the organisation of campaigns to overcome the discrimination which women face. The struggle for control over their fertility has often been a key issue for in no capitalist country do women have the right to regulate their reproduction as they wish through free contraception, abortion and sterilisation on demand. The reasons for this are found if we consider the nature of women's oppression under capitalist society.

Female oppression originated during the transition from pre-class to class society, with the development of the patriarchal family. In order to protect private property and its inheritance from one generation to the next it was necessary to subjugate women as a sex via the family structure. The control of female sexuality and its inevitable concomitant in those days — reproduction — was a feature of early class society which now remains an important prop in the capitalist system. This is reflected in the exist-

ence today of abortion laws as the visible instrument of this special characteristic of women's oppression. Twentieth century women in the most advanced countries have the right to vote, choose a husband, work where they wish, travel alone, divorce, control their own finances etc. But they do not have the fundamental right to control their own bodies.

The control of female fertility was not taken away from women overnight. It involved a long and bloody struggle with the combined weight of the church and the state as the main protagonists. In the early years after its establishment, the church allowed abortion up to 'ensoulment' — following the somewhat whimsical pronouncement of Aristotle

that male foetuses received a soul at 40 days and female at 80 days after conception. Pope Gratian declared that: 'He is not a murderer who brings about an abortion before the soul is in the body.' Church doctrine subsequently changed, abortion was outlawed and the church hardened its position to the final sanction in 1917 — excommunication of the woman and all her accomplices. Many millions of women have died over the centuries as the church and state used

their representatives to initiate witch-hunts against women whose 'crimes' included practising abortion, giving advice on contraception, using drugs to aid delivery and other practices related to female reproduction. It took several hundred years to stamp out the knowledge, the medicines, customs and organisation of women healers, and to put the control of fertility into the hands of the state. Since then, the state has exercised this control through a combination of coercion and ideological conditioning.

The issue of control is central because control is the cornerstone of class rule, through the agency of the state.

In some circumstances, the state will use this control to discourage pregnancy and childbirth when it is in the interests of the ruling class to do so. In Puerto Rico for example, the government had a plan to expand tourism and develop a petrochemicals industry. The only obstacle standing in its way in developing this new source of profits for capitalism was that the regions tended to be overpopulated. The answer of course was to open up a contraception, abortion and sterilisation centres and try

to persuade men and women to take advantage of them. Such manoeuvres have nothing in common with the demand for the right of women to control their fertility, even though

retains control. For example, the 1967 Abortion Act in Britain was one of the most 'liberal' laws of the time, but even then, there was never any doubt over who would control the

the facilities may have been made available by the state.

Even when laws governing abortion are introduced or amended on more 'humanitarian' grounds, the state

decision on abortion. Two doctors must give their permission for abortion, based on medical, psychological and social considerations. And even these legal grounds for abortion are governed by the overriding assumption that the norm for a healthy, well-adjusted woman is motherhood. A woman must plead that she is somehow unfit for this role if she is to get an abortion under the Act.

Women's right to control their own bodies was usurped by the state in order to preserve the material and ideological props of class rule. The struggle to win back for women this right to control their own fertility cannot be won without taking on the state, the church, the medical profession, and the many other representatives of a system of class rule. That's the crucial and central lesson of the campaign to stop the



Feminist Notes

FRENCH OUTLAW SEXISM

Articles, pictures, adverts or television programmes that show women in a degrading light became illegal under a new law introduced by the Socialist Party in France during March. Offenders are liable to a fine of between £200 and £30,000 and up to a year's imprisonment.

The law bans any act liable to lead to 'discrimination, hatred, violence, civil wrong or libel' on the grounds of the sex of an individual or group.

EQUAL PAY?

According to the International Labour Organisation the gap between male and female earnings is widening. The ILO Year Book of Labour Statistics reports that in Britain between 1977 and 1981 the average earnings of women fell from 71.9 to 69.5 per cent of men's.

In South Korea in 1981 women engaged in non-agricultural work earned only 44.8% of male wages.

Women workers in Sweden and Australia seem to do best getting 90.1 and 86.2 per cent of male average earnings.

WOMEN'S RIGHT TO WORK UNDER ATTACK

'Hugh Coveney, Fine Gael T.D. and Lord Mayor of Cork is very concerned about unemployment, or so he would have us believe. But his solution is emigration and, wait for it — one family, one job. He's concerned about '2 car, 4 jobs families' next door to families of unemployed.

Coveney's proposals are a recipe for pushing married women out of the workforce. As women's jobs are declining in number, there is no telling where Coveney plans might end.

Coveney's annual income amounts to around £38,000 per annum. Our Cork correspondent tells us that down that way the question everyone is asking is: 'This 2-car, 4 job family — the name wouldn't be Coveney would it?'

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NICARAGUA

OPPOSITION GROWS TO U.S. WAR

'A performance', that was how Nicaraguan Foreign Minister, Rev. Miguel D'Escoto described Ronald Reagan's address to the joint session of Congress in Washington, on Wed. April 27th 1983. Reagan attacked the popular resistance to oppression in Central America, aiming in particular at Nicaragua, Grenada and Cuba. In making wild allegations about many foreign troops in Nicaragua he even claimed that Nicaragua (population 2.9 million) was threatening US security.

'We don't have any foreign troops in Nicaragua', replied D'Escoto, 'Mr Reagan was lying and he knew he was lying.'

But 2 weeks after Reagan's speech, Washington further tightened the economic screws against Nicaragua by cutting its sugar quota to the US by 90%. Like the slanders and the military attacks this action was a further attempt to destabilise the Sandinista Government.

A performance and a lie Reagan's speech may have been but it gave a green light to the counterrevolutionary forces (contras) engaged in destabilisation efforts against the workers and peasants government of Nicaragua. Within a week reports emerged that a further 1200 contras had invaded Nicaragua, this time under cover of an artillery barrage provided by the pro-US Honduran army. This sequence of events followed the pattern of the undeclared

US war against Nicaragua that has gone on for over 2 years: slander and lies from Washington, dollars from the Pentagon and CIA to the contras and stepped up military and economic pressures from both the contras and their US backers. Only by relying on their mass support and on mass mobilisation including organisation of a peoples militia, have the Sandinistas been able to hold back the US pressure.

And in spite of the contras attacks the Sandinista forces have scored a number of military successes, routing a number of contra bands in early May.

But a crucial factor in shaping US policy is shown by the fact that Reagan had to give his performance in Congress in the first place. There are open divisions among the US rulers over the best way to roll back the Central American revolution. Unlike the situation in the 1960's, the US cannot simply send in the Marines as they did in the Dominican Republic in 1965. Today there's widespread opposition among US workers and youth to any thought of direct US military intervention in Central America. This is the so-called 'Vietnam syndrome' that so worries the Washington strategists.

And this is shown most graphically by the recent call by the AFL-CIO - the US trade union congress - for an end to US military and economic aid to the genocidal Salvadorean government. During the Vietnam War the right-wing leader of the AFL/CIO,

George Meaney, backed the US war to the hilt. Now under pressure from US workers the AFL/CIO has had to distance itself from Reagan.

This is why the Democratic Party also fear that the Reagan Administration can't defeat the Nicaraguan workers and peasants. The response of the Reagan administration has been more lies about Nicaragua. Thus on the UN Security Council on May 9th, US representative Mrs Jeanne Kirkpatrick claimed that the contras have popular support in Nicaragua. This allegation was easily answered by Nicaraguan Foreign Minister d'Escoto. Indeed TV audiences the world over have seen who the contras really are - ex-members of ousted dictator Somoza's National Guard, responsible for the slaughter of thousands of Nicaraguans. And those audiences have also seen clearly who the supporters of these contras are - the US Government and their Honduran allies.

But the campaign goes on and the stakes are high. The recent successful efforts by US business interests in Ireland in watering down the De Rossa/Andrews Dail resolution critical of US Central American policy shows how high the stakes are. For Irish socialists, republicans and trades unionists therefore, the task of the day is clear - we must mobilise to defend the Nicaraguan revolution.

CIARAN MacNAMEE



EL SALVADOR

U.S. BACKED GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO CRUMBLE

In early April the Salvadorean revolutionary movement suffered a cruel blow with the assassination of Melida Anaya Mantec and the suicide of Salvador Cayetano Carpio, 2 of the central leaders of the Peoples Liberation Forces (FPL) a component organisation of the Faribundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN).

Anaya Martes, Commander Ana Maria, was murdered on April 6th in Managua, capital of Nicaragua, while Cayetano Carpio, Commander Marcial, founder and leader of the FPL, committed suicide on hearing that the assassination of Ana Maria had been organised by an individual who was

part of the central command of the FPL.

The Nicaraguan Ministry of the Interior pointed out on April 20th: 'Our investigations indicate that these developments are a result of enemy activity, characteristic of the USA, CIA.'

Cayetano Carpio and Anaya Martes, were outstanding revolutionary fighters who drew the lessons of Salvadorean history, especially the uprising of 1932-33 and its bloody defeat, and of the international class struggle after the Cuban Revolution. These leaders drew profoundly revolutionary conclusions which led to Cayetano Carpio's rejection of the line of the Salvadorean Comm-

unist Party (of which he was the General Secretary) and to his forming the FPL in 1970 although this was not made public for a further 2 years.

Although the deaths of the 2 main commanders of the FMLN is undoubtedly a blow, the Salvadorean revolutionists have responded by affirming their revolutionary determination. 'We declare, that in spite of the grief that seizes us, we will remain firm in struggle, and that nothing and no-one can stop the revolutionary advance of our people,' declared the FMLN and the Revolutionary Democratic Front on April 20th. Their struggle goes on.

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National Fight Back Needed

The massive demonstrations involving almost a quarter of a million workers on April 13th marked a new determination amongst working people that they will not be forced to pay for the mess of the Irish economy created by the bosses and their politicians. The most popular demand at all the marches and rallies summed up this determination - "MAKE THE RICH PAY!"

The April 13th protests were quite different to the big PAYE marches of a few years back. There was no carnival atmosphere, just a mood of militant anger. Nor was there much patience with those trade union leaders who rhetorically denounced the Coalition but refused to map out a strategy for defeating its attacks on living standards. The greatest reception was reserved for those like Matt Merrigan who pulled no punches, calling for a stepping up of industrial action rolling on to a general strike.

The angry determination to fight back shown on April 13th has been confirmed since. Despite the scandalous lack of leadership from the ICTU and most major trade unions the tax protest has refused to die down. The workers at

Waterford Glass, the Aer Lingus workers on May 9th and the CIE trade unionists on May 16th through their actions have provided a sharp contrast to the inactivity of the ICTU leadership.

The Tax campaign is not the only one that workers have taken up the cudgels on. Tens of thousands of workers have broken through the Government/employer pay pause and workforces all over the country are lining up to follow through the breach. But here too, the union leaders have refused to provide real guidelines for battle with the bosses.

With unemployment pushing towards the 200,000 mark the fight against job losses is being led by 800 workers - mainly ITGWU members) - who are occupying their workplaces; Ranks flour Mills in Dublin and Limerick, Kingdom Tubes in Tralee Interton in Ennis and Carrigaline Pottery in Cork. It is these workers who are the frontline leaders in the fight to defend jobs and living standards - not the so-called leaders of the ICTU.

The willingness of working people to fight back that is developing must not be



Matt Merrigan - "Need for effective action."

wasted by failing to link up these struggles on different fronts into a united national fightback against the coalition's austerity measures.

Efforts to organise a conference to launch such a national fightback are already underway. But to be successful the workers who are providing the leadership in the tax battle, the fight for decent wages and the defence of jobs must be brought together to hammer out a national strategy on all these issues.

When Matt Merrigan lambasted the role of labour Ministers in the Coalition at the tax march in Dublin on April 13, the applause was enthusias-

tic and prolonged. Merrigan called for a review of the links between the trade union movement and the Labour party and for the opening up of a discussion within the worker's movement on how to forge a genuine political representation for working people.

In the next issue of SOCIALIST REPUBLIC, Peoples Democracy will be spelling out its own views on this vital question, will examine the origins and history of the Labour Party and set out the sort of political programme that a genuine worker's party in Ireland could defend.

Don't miss it!

Anti-Amendment Campaign A LAST CHANCE TO ... UNITE AND FIGHT THE ABORTION AMENDMENT

It now seems inevitable that the referendum on the Constitutional amendment to outlaw abortion will be held later this month. The people of the 26 counties will be compelled to vote on an amendment to the constitution that opinion polls suggest the majority of them don't want, believe to be a major source of division in Irish society and a monumental waste of resources.

The forces behind the amendment, the so-called pro-life brigade are wholly unrepresentative of the Irish people. They are the most reactionary layer of Irish society - religious and moral fanatics who are pro-repression and anti-democratic, pro - the death penalty and anti-welfare, pro - the strikebreaker and anti-trade unions.

As the real nature of the Amendment's backers has been exposed over the past few months, those politicians who pretend to 'liberalism' have tried to take their distance. This is what the contortions of Fine Gael - the original

authors of the Fianna Fail wording - has been about. The PLAC, SPUC and

the other right wing groups threaten to blow the cover off Garrett's crusade to 'modernise' Ireland by building a truly pluralist society.

But the 'good doctor' Fitzgerald was already committed and despite his professed abhorrence of this 'sectarian' amendment when the opportunity to sink it presented itself first in the Dail and then in the Seanad Fine Gael abstained and let it pass. Indeed, those members of Fine Gael

who had swallowed all the guff about Garrett's crusade and continued to oppose the amendment received no support from the 'doctor' when they were subjected to a vile campaign of abuse and intimidation.

Fitzgerald will lose no sleep over the passing of the Fianna Fail amendment. In the present crisis of Irish capitalism the Coalition has no option but to maintain cordial relations with these reactionary forces. Fitzgerald will have no qualms about exploiting the opening presented by the Amendment as a starting point for more attacks on women's right and the rights of working people in general.

In the last few remaining weeks before the referendum the right wing will be going all out to intimidate and cajole the Irish people into voting for the

amendment. It would be an enormous task to stop them. But it can still be done though only if the Anti-amendment campaign shows a greater degree of urgency and determination. If the case against the PLAC is got across then they will be defeated.

This is the lesson of the support which has already been won. A big drive into the trade unions and working class communities would mobilise a tremendous response. Time is short. But it is still time enough to turn the apparent success of these fanatics into their rout.

* Build a mass campaign on the streets.
* Make a big push to get active support in the trades unions and working class districts.

* Press anti-imperialist organisations like Sinn Fein to transform their policy of opposition to the amendment into activity alongside the campaign.