

ORGANIZERS!

The Voice of Anarcho-Syndicalism

Volume 2 Issue 8

£1.00

75 Years of

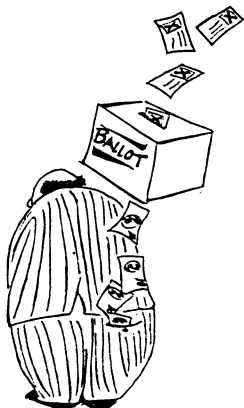


**STATE
TERROR**

International Workers Association

Contents:

<i>The RUC; 75 Years of State Terror</i>	Pg 3
<i>Dodi and Di Die</i>	Pg 3
<i>More Cream for the Fat Cats</i>	Pg 4
<i>US Tobacco Industry Let Off The Hook</i>	Pg 5
<i>ICTU - 'Investing In Peace'?</i>	Pg 6
<i>SIPTU Vice-Presidential Election</i>	Pg 7
<i>Workers in Struggle - the Montupet Dispute</i>	Pg 8
<i>A Small Skirmish in the Class War</i>	Pg 9
<i>1921 The Kronstadt Revolt</i>	Pg 10
<i>BOOK REVIEW; Revolution In Ireland, Popular Militancy, 1917-23. Konor Costick.</i>	Pg 13
<i>Liverpool Dockers - Two Years In Struggle</i>	Pg 14
<i>Shot For Nicking Copper</i>	Pg 15
<i>Provo Anarchists?</i>	Pg 15
<i>Emergency Legislation - From SPA to PTA</i>	Pg 15
<i>In The Line of Fire</i>	Pg 16
<i>Gender Violence And Freedom</i>	Pg 17
<i>What We Stand For</i>	Pg 18
<i>Welfare to Work</i>	Pg 18



EDITORIAL

Welcome to the latest (late) issue of 'Organise! The Voice of Anarcho-Syndicalism'. Since our last publication we've been involved in supporting workers in dispute at Montupet in Belfast, we hosted a public meeting addressed by Lorenzo Kom Boa Ervin former Black Panther and now an Anarchist, organised a protest against the death penalty in the US, outside the American Consulate on July 4th, in conjunction with the Anarchist Black Cross, and continued our work in support of the Liverpool Dockers through the Liverpool Dockers and Families Support Group. We took part in both the May Day celebrations in Belfast and Dublin. Members of Organise! - IWA are also active at a 'shop floor' level within their workplaces. Look out for details of up coming public meetings, and if you want to get involved, or would like to know more, just drop us a line.

So we've come through the marching season without plunging into Civil War. It did look close to a lot of us. A last minute decision was made to force the Orange Order down the Garvachy Road as negotiations fell apart - except the decision had already been made by the NIO well in advance. To the Republican movement Mo Mowlam became a figure to revile, slogans such as 'Orange Mo Must Go' and 'New Labour Same Old Shite' were daubed on walls. The Orange Order backed off on some 'controversial' parades and were credited with saving the day.

Then the IRA cease-fire was reinstated on 19th of July and Sinn Fein were given the all clear by Mo to take part in the 'substantive talks' which started on the 15th of September. Just who will be there, and who will not show up due to the presence of 'terrorists' (or whatever other excuse they think of) is a subject of intense debate among those who think it'll make a blind bit of difference.

Loyalists and Republicans are trekking back and forth to America once again. Sinn Fein are to indulge a favoured past time of 'political representatives', the selling of our sweat to international capitalism, having announced they are planning a 'trade mission' to the US. Look out for an influx of crap jobs on the Falls, in the Bogside, Strabane and any other area with Sinn Fein representation. No doubt the Loyalists will also be inviting American big business over to treat workers like shit in their constituencies.

Workers already have experience of multi-national companies, in the form of Montupet and United Technologies to name but two, and the experiences were not good. The roles of the Trade Union leaderships when dealing with attacks from these companies have also been highly dubious - but they, and our politicians (of all shades, even those formerly committed to a 'socialist republic'), do see themselves as the 'social partners' of these companies. This 'social partnership' will always be at the expense of the working class, our interests and those of the the bosses can never be the same.

There can be no cease-fire in the class war!

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THE RUC

75 YEARS OF STATE TERROR

The force which has brought, and continues to bring, us sectarian brutality, torture in Castlereagh, beatings in the back of landrovers, shoot to kill, collusion, carried out Internment without trial, enforced the Special Powers Act and Prevention of Terrorism Act, rained plastic and rubber bullets down on children and protesters alike, celebrated seventy five years of existence on June 1st this year.

This was marked by the 'News Letter' on Friday 25th of June in a laudatory double page spread. The RUC, are portrayed in the article as victims of, or brave defenders against, terrorism - while of course managing to do a bit of 'proper' policing at the same time.

One comment we cannot disagree with; "Today the RUC is the best equipped and most experienced anti-terrorist civil power (sic) in existence, often called upon to advise other forces facing similar internal security problems.

But it is an expertise which has been learned at a terrible cost in human life."

The News Letter mentions that since its formation 301 cops have been killed.

They fail to mention that between July 1969 and December 1993 the army and

RUC between them killed 357, or that loyalist paramilitaries killed 911 in the same period. In many cases there has been evidence of security force collusion in murders carried out by loyalists.

The RUC have, along with unionist politicians, used tactics in the past to break any developing working class unity. As happened, for example, during the Outdoor Relief Strike of 1932

The RUC are responsible also for the harassment of both protestant and catholic working class youth. In common with 'normal' police forces it is the laws enacted for the benefit of the rich and powerful which they are here to enforce, and the property of the middle and upper classes which they exist to defend.

Sinn Fein has reiterated their call for the disbanding of the RUC. Regrettably however they want to replace it! The establishment of 'their own' police force in Palestine hardly provides us with a shining example of a 'just' police, and

nor would any outfit which replaced the RUC. Whether it would even be possible to create the Sinn Fein option of "a new service which we can all give allegiance to", including both ex-RUC officers and former IRA members in its ranks, is not the issue. Who gives a fuck if the peeler beating shit out of you in this new reformed police force is from the same religious background or not. But then I guess some people must find some sort of comfort in that thought.

After seventy five years of terror at the hands of the RUC it is high time they were disbanded. Those who think they can be replaced with a police force committed to even handedness, justice, and a local version of Dixon of Dock Green policing are living with their heads up their arses. Working class people can expect no kind of justice from any police force. A cop is a cop is a cop.



DODI AND DIDIE

On 31st of August there was no news to be heard on radio or seen on television other than the news of the death of Princess Diana and Dodi Al Fayed. Not even the chauffeur who died with them merited much air time, until it was discovered he had been drinking.

Britain became a nation in mourning. The full media circus went into action. The Press were quick to condemn the Press, but soon became more selective. It was the Paparazzi who were responsible for chasing Mr. Fayed's Merc. at high speeds through Paris. But not any old Paparazzi, it was foreign Paparazzi. The English equivalent we are assured

would have backed off had they been asked!

The now defunct 'Class War' would have described this as a 'good start' we're sure. And the irony of two of the richest people in the world, one a Royal who leached off media attention as much as the media leached off her, meeting their deaths being chased by motorcycling photographers doesn't escape us.

The photos they got of the crash, reportedly received offers of \$1 million from tabloids around the world. Any one else who dies in a car crash is lucky to get a brief mention by the media. The hype surrounding Diana looks set to continue for some time. Hollywood blockbusters about her life and death, the

publication of various conspiracy theories and counter theories are all no doubt already being planned.

Perhaps the death of Diana will give some of us the satisfaction of knowing we have one less leaching Royal in the world. But the outpouring of public sympathy for her will probably see a great boost in the popularity of the Royal family.

Monarchists everywhere can breathe a sigh of relief as the media drops its attacks on the Royals to concentrate on the manufacture of enough public sympathy to get Charles safely on the throne whether he marries Camilla or not. Or perhaps not.

MORE CREAM for the Fat Cats

The Fat-Cat chief executives and chairmen of the UK's privatised utilities must have laughed all the way to the bank following the British Labour Party chancellor's budget in early July.

The much trumpeted windfall tax levied, on 28 electricity, water, gas and other previously publicly owned companies, by Gordon Brown amounts to £5.2 billion, a lot of dosh, but a sum which represents a mere 7% of these companies combined profits, since privatisation, of over £70 billion. This one-off tax is considered by the Blairite Labour government to be a classic piece of redistribution of wealth, with the £5.2 billion raised going towards the cash starved NHS, education and job creation projects. However, considering the excessively high profits of the companies involved, twice the amount would have been a small sum to part with. British Telecom ALONE have made \$32 billion in profits since it was privatisation in 1984 and its windfall tax amounts to only £500 million or 1.6% of total profits! The companies will be allowed to pay the bill in two installments - one in December of this year and the second twelve months later.

Not surprisingly the greedy bosses of the 28 privatised utilities whinged and moaned non-stop to the British media that the tax was 'much too high', and was a 'tax on success, not excess'. Locally NIE was the only company billed, and despite electricity bills being on average four times higher than those of other privatised electricity companies, and the recording of record profits, they still managed to complain about this one off bill.

The same bosses have still recently managed to award themselves massive

pay rises. Graham Hawker, chief executive of the Welsh group Hyder, got a pay rise of £2,500 a week. This has boosted his annual income by 66% to £325,000. Thames Water chairman, Sir Robert Clarke got a raise of £1,850 a week, taking his annual pay up by 63% to £247,000. Power Gen gave chief executive Ed Wallis a £1,000 a week increase bringing his annual income to £466,000.

Meanwhile the chairman and chief executive of United Utilities have upped their six figure salaries by 21% and 27% respectively because of 'extra responsibilities'. The extra 'responsibilities' it seems involves a pending strike and the cutting of 2,500 jobs to *lessen costs*.

These money grabbing bastards, and their pals in parliament, each deserve another raise. Preferably one that involves a rope with one end knotted around their corrupt necks with the other end in the capable hands of all those members of our class they've robbed for years.



Meanwhile, for the rest of us, things aren't so rosey. The benefits of the 'Celtic Tiger' have not 'trickled down' to those at the bottom of the heap - workers and the unemployed.

The North is still one of the poorest regions in the 'U.K.'. A fifth of household income comes from social security 'benefits'. Official unemployment statistics range from 6.5% in Ballymena to 14.5% in Strabane. Food, fuel, light and power costs more.

Golden Handshake

'Ulsters' top civil servant, Sir David Fell received a staggering retirement package from the Northern Ireland Office.

This already rich bastard, received a golden handshake of £350,000 of taxpayers' money, for taking early retirement in September. He also got a lump sum of £100,000 and *compensation* of £42,188.11p a year for six years until he draws his pension at sixty!

To top it all off he's due to start a £70,000 a year job as chairman of the Northern Bank. It couldn't be more obvious that being rich pays.

US TOBACCO INDUSTRY LET OFF THE HOOK

Lawsuits Payout

In June of this year five leading tobacco companies in the USA agreed to a settlement, soon to be ratified by Clinton and Congress, in which they will pay out a staggering \$360 billion (£220 billion) in the face of hundreds of lawsuits filed against the US tobacco industry by people suffering serious ill health due to smoking.

10 Years Profit?

However the payout, which seemingly represents 10 years profits for the companies, is not about to bankrupt the US tobacco empire. The payment will be spread over 25 years and will be raised simply by a small increase in the price in a packet of cigarettes. In other words, the deal really means that present and future smokers will cough up a little bit more for their addiction in order to pay for the illnesses of past

smokers. In addition the tobacco industry cleverly faces a future free from all the lawsuits it has been fighting up to now and the accompanying bad publicity.

Wall Street

One sure-fire indication that the deal lets the tobacco industry well and truly off the hook was the very favourable reaction it had from Wall Street.

Corporate Cunning

This entire exercise in corporate cunning and cynicism reveals just how deeply politicians in the US, as elsewhere, are stuffed in the pockets of the tobacco industry and big business in general. The tobacco industry churns out so much revenue for western governments, in the form of taxes, that it is virtually a law unto itself.

Nicotine Under Threat?

One outcome of the settlement not in the tobacco industry's favour however, is the fact that the US food and drug administration will acquire new powers to control the amount of nicotine in cigarettes. There is a chance that they could eventually ban tobacco's most addictive component. But, no doubt, the industry will have something up its sleeve (like a few bought Senators and Members of Congress) to help it wriggle out of that particular 'threat'

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OUT
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ICTU - 'Investing In Peace'?



CONGRESS

WORKING FOR PROGRESS

IRISH CONGRESS OF
TRADE UNIONS

With the passing of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions conference on 29th of June it should be more than apparent to any onlooker that the trade union movement in this country has become a very different organisation to what it was intended to achieve. Gone is the talk of empowering the workers of Ireland and challenging the bosses. The ICTU now seeks to maintain a 'partnership' with our social counterparts in the directors chair!

Consensus

The ICTU bash, held at the flashy Waterfront Hall, seen the endorsement by Congress of the document 'Investing in Peace'. The aim of which is to encourage a process of economic 'understanding' and 'consensus' with our 'partners' (that's the bosses) in industry. ICTU seems to be of the mind that all out capitulation and collaboration with management can lead to a settlement or at least to a reduction of tension in the north! Presumably this means that they consider job creation as a way to keep us all busy and prevent us from going out and shooting each other!

Sweat Instead of Blood

Its reassuring to know that the directors and managers here are so concerned

about our welfare. This is a social-democrats dream come true, as workers begin to spill their sweat instead of their blood (to paraphrase John Hume). What John failed to mention was who eventually profits from this wonderful system of wealth creation and enterprise.

Valuable Dynamic

ICTU has called for a commitment from the New Labour government to support; "...the valuable dynamic that has already been achieved through the development of partnerships between trade unions, employers... and local political representatives..."

Try telling that to the people who were on the Montupet picket line in Dunmurry. Try telling that to those same people who were refused permission to speak at this years May Day rally in Belfast. Try telling that to the 600 people who were sacked by United Technologies in Derry just several days before the ICTU Congress.

Embarrassment And Disgrace

The union leaderships are an embarrassment and a disgrace to the movement and to the people they so badly represent. The shameful action from the AEEU bureaucracy throughout the Montupet dispute is testament enough to the unprincipled and underhand attitudes of those who are in the driving seat of our unions. These are the union bosses who are more concerned with 'consensus' than they are with defending and protecting the rights of their rank and file membership.

Shackled

The whole ideology behind the present unions is one which restricts and confines the ability of workers to make significant gains at the managements expense. The emphasis placed on moderation and compromise has

shackled the working class to a system which has left us with low wages, rubbish conditions and only the threat of unemployment and poverty to keep us turning up for work in the morning.

Political Front

On the political front also, the union leadership is pathetically lacking in anything resembling confidence or principle. In the 'Investing in Peace' document they appear naively hopeful with the election of the New Labour government; "...and the appointment of a new Secretary of State and team of ministers for Northern Ireland, Congress looks forward to a more positive framework... to ensure progress towards a just, equitable and more prosperous society in Northern Ireland."

Positive Side

They do, on the positive side, call for a reduction of unemployment to 3%, an end to violence from all quarters in the North. They call for the development of a 'transparently and democratically accountable' police force - as if any police force in the world was built on transparency and democracy as opposed to hierarchy and oppression. But just how do we reduce unemployment to 3% when the bosses are relying on high unemployment to keep those in a job in shit conditions? Well ICTU seem to think cooperation with such exclusive capitalist clubs such as G4 and G7 on economic development (the sort of economic development which has had devastating consequences for the working class across the globe), reversal of cuts of jobs on training schemes and payment for bosses to take the long term unemployed off the statistics.

Crap

Yes, perhaps they can drive down unemployment, not quite to 3% perhaps. But with the social partners they are committed to working with it would be achieved through the dismantling of the benefit system and the creation of more crap jobs for crap pay, and the further undermining of existing conditions.

In an effort to keep everybody happy (not least the Labour government and CBI) there is also a determination that no issue shall pass without deafening silence or meaningless platitudes from the union hierarchy. As an example; there was a motion from the Derry Trades Council that the ICTU call for an International Trades Union commission on the events of Bloody Sunday. The motion was defeated as ICTU wiped its hands of the whole affair in case it began to look as if they had minds of their own.

Blatant Injustice

Whilst on the one hand this attitude may be advisable on the basis of not dividing the rank and file, in cases of blatant injustice at the hands of the State (such as Bloody Sunday or the use of Plastic Bullets) the union bosses do admirable impressions of ventriloquists dummies.

Insult

Exploitation, drudgery and misery is what we expect employers to inflict on us. After all, they are capitalists, its how they make their money. However to see such behaviour condoned and unchallenged from those in charge of our unions is a gross insult to the thousands of us who fund the unions. And to have Bertie Ahern patronise us with talk of social partnership is a slap in the face to workers, especially those in the south who have seen none of the benefits of the 'thriving' Celtic Tiger economy.

Vigour, Determination And Militancy

We do not call for the replacement of such union leaders with more militant or principled people - its all too easy to lose touch with the everyday realities of life as a worker. We want to see the creation of a union movement that can harness the vigour, determination and militancy of the working class, north and south, and use it to make life difficult for the bosses... just as they make it difficult for us. Such a union must rely on direct democratic principle and accountability to prevent the emergence of a new clique of leaders.

All Fronts

We must remain separate from political parties and politicians of all hues whilst being confident enough of our own anarchist politics to be able to speak up and be heard. Only an Anarcho-Syndicalist union movement can deliver on all these fronts.

SIPTU Vice-Presidential Election

From August 25 to September 12 balloting will have been taking place for the election of Vice President of SIPTU (Services, Industrial Professional & Technical Union).

This is of course a 'very responsible' post, concerned with the 'direction of the general policy of the Union and the conduct of the Union's industrial affairs - in conjunction with the General President'. Whoever is elected will also be required to fill in for the General President at National Executive Council meetings and sub-committees, represent the Union on 'many major public bodies' and be a key spokesperson for the Union in the media. Whoever is elected will hold the post for 6 years.

Five candidates have been nominated and are trying to convince us that they are the best suited for this £59,812 (over four times the 'average' industrial wage) a year job. The five are Norman Croke, Carolann Duggan, Des Geraghty, Noirin Greene and George Hunter.

Whats On Offer?

Norman Croke has reasserted his assessment of 1994 that SIPTU needs to be identified as a workers organisation, it does indeed show the sorry state of affairs in the trade union movement when this has to be stated by one of its 'leaders'. It took the Union a four year in depth analysis to come to the same conclusions!

Carolann Duggan, Socialist Workers Party member and the 'only rank and file worker running in this election', believes our leaders in SIPTU are out of touch with the factory floor. So she wants to become one to put everything right. Carolann will start by drawing the average industrial wage if elected and campaigning for the repeal of the Industrial Relations Act in the South. She also believes that SIPTU should pull out of Partnership 2000 if workers are not 'automatically' granted union

recognition.

Des Geraghty, the hot favourite, talks about solidarity, equality, equity, and democracy. He describes himself as coming from 'a strong Larkinite family' who has always believed in 'a practical socialism'. His record in SIPTU and the ITGWU, as well as membership of the European Parliament has given him an excellent background in 'Social Partnership'. He will on election be demanding full implementation of Partnership 2000 and a minimum legal wage of £(IR)5.00 an hour.

Noirin Greene, a 'dedicated and loyal Union activist for the past 25 years'. She believes 'its time' for a lot of things, but most importantly for a woman, specifically herself and not Carolann, to get that £59,812 a year for six years.

George Hunter, the only candidate to mention the north and the fact that SIPTU also 'represent' workers there. He believes that the 'process of consultation is not working'. National Wage Agreements have benefited the economy and given the Union a greater consultative role with the state, but has not benefited the workers. This of course creates 'justifiable resentment', which 'must be addressed'. But how George? Social Partnership is what makes the Unions tick these days, it won't be ditched until the reformist unions are ditched by the workers.

So when the votes are all counted SIPTU members can rest assured that whoever wins it'll make fuck all difference. Whether the new Vice President is a genuine 'rank and file' worker, a self proclaimed Larkinite (who wants to ensure the implementation of Partnership 2000!), or Atilla The Hun it is only constant pressure from below that will deliver any action from this, or any other reformist, Union.

Montupet: Workers Unity & Trade Union Betrayal

June 19th saw the end of the ten week long strike by Montupet workers in Dunmurry. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the Labour Relations Agency brokered a settlement which fell far short of the striking workers demands.

Eighteen sacked workers received leaving packages of £4,500 - workers leaving Montupet voluntarily after the dispute also received severance packages based on redundancy payments. The reaction on the picket line to the settlement was unsurprisingly described as sombre.

280 Workers, all members of the AEEU, went on strike on 14 April, due to an ongoing dispute over pay and working conditions. For months before the dispute the union had been attempting to negotiate the years pay deal, for a rise of 4.7% against the offered 1.4%. Lack of union recognition was also an issue in the dispute.

Workers had been balloted by the AEEU and industrial action was ongoing against the company. This consisted an overtime ban, work to rule, no participation in management's business plans and a 'half day strike' every fortnight. Matters came to a head when management left machinery *they* had been working in "an unserviceable and unsafe state".

Bob Markham and Micheal Muchmore refused, under union instructions, to service the machinery. They were immediately suspended by management. A full factory union meeting was held at which strike action was decided upon.

On April 22nd management offered of a two year pay deal reminding them of the illegal nature of the dispute and that they could be dismissed. At the same time 20 of the strikers received hand delivered dismissal letters. The central demand of the strike now became reinstatement for the 20 sacked workers. Negotiations with the company through the Labour Relations Agency were cut short when the company issued 26 High

Court Writs, preventing them from picketing or coming anywhere near the Montupet factory. The writs were issued to men pointed out by Montupet boss Georges Senninger as they picketed the factory.

The strike went on, despite the targeting of these 'ringleaders' - six of those who ignored the writs faced jail when they were sent before a magistrate to answer contempt of court charges.

Montupet also tried a bit of 'damage limitation', claiming it would create a thousand jobs within two years, and started recruiting for these 'new' jobs during the dispute. It is interesting to note that Montupet, a French owned multi-national, had been given over 140 million in grants by the IDB from their opening in 1989 up to the time of the dispute. They promised they would create hundreds of new jobs while they received this money - but the jobs never materialised.

As the management were launching an all out offensive the AEEU acted as their 'partners in crime'. From the beginning they urged the men to return to work. Early on in the dispute AEEU representative Peter Williamson balloted 40 scabs on a three year pay deal and led them back to work. None of the 240 AEEU members on strike new the ballot was taking place! AEEU House was picketed by strikers, angry at their role in the dispute.

Terry Carlin, Northern Ireland Officer of ICTU, called the strikers an 'unruly mob' as they demonstrated outside Congress House to demand 'proper support' from the union movement.

On May Day striking Montupet workers took part in the demonstration in Belfast. Striking Liverpool dockers were also present, and arrangements had been made for one of the dockers to address the May Day rally outside the Art College. Trade union officials had other ideas and pulled the plug in an effort to prevent the crowd being addressed by the docker or Montupet strikers.

Members of 'Organise! - IWA' marched with the strikers on May Day, carrying a banner which stated 'One War Class War. One Solution Revolution'. We also accompanied the strikers as they broke away at the end of the parade to march on AEEU headquarters.

There was a great amount of solidarity for the strikers from rank and file Union members, the strikers ran things on the basis of mass weekly meetings and thus controlled their own struggle (although some on the left continually complained that they weren't 'doing it right', weren't 'aware of the issues' or had a 'low level of political consciousness' - top prize for spouting such bullshit must surely go to Socialist Democracy).

At the last mass meeting before the LRA - ICTU brokered deal was accepted they restated their resolve not to return to work until their 20 colleagues were reinstated. But the pressure was beginning to take its toll. The next week the dispute was 'settled' although many chose unemployment over the option of returning to work at Montupet.

In the course of this dispute a lot was achieved, a mixed workforce stood up against a powerful multinational, the Unions and the courts. Montupet became the first employer to apply the full weight of Thatcher and Blairs anti-union legislation in the North. An election, usually an event which drives people back into their respective ghettos took place during the strike and still they stood firm.

What solidarity there was was hastily organised - as it had to be. One must however wonder how different the outcome may have been if there had been a permanent structure in existence for the coordination of such disputes along with an untreacherous union movement. That would be a movement under the direct control of its members in which solidarity is more than just a faded slogan on a dusty old banner.

A SMALL SKIRMISH IN THE CLASS WAR

I am writing this short piece to tell you about a small, isolated dispute which took place at my workplace recently. The incident itself and the events leading up to it are fairly trivial, in and of themselves, but the implications they contain should point us in the direction that we should be taking if an alternative working class movement is to be established in this country.

BACKGROUND

First, a little background. The firm itself is based in several sites throughout the North. It produces knitwear and hosiery and in the areas in which they are based, provide several hundred jobs. The site I work in is based in the South Down/South Armagh area (which has some of the highest unemployment rates in the North). The workforce is more or less evenly split between men and women, though the majority of workers are under 30. Given the location of the plant most of the workers are Catholic, and for the most part Nationalist or Republican, although there are many Protestants working there also.

MANAGEMENT

There is also management - of course. Before long the friction between workers on the shop floor and those at the top of the ladder began to make itself apparent. For the most part the individual jobs are boring, monotonous and repetitive. The company operates a 'training scheme' through which employees are 'encouraged' to work as fast as they can to move from 'training-pay' onto a piece-rate system. This was encouraged by line managers who threatened people with the sack if they did not work at breakneck speeds. The pressure to speed up was relentless, and speaking from personal experience, workers had to operate their machines like the clappers

in order to avoid written warnings or a bollocking from some other manager higher up. In some cases 'unproductive' workers were assigned someone to stand by them all day, timing their work. This made it impossible to do anything other than work... talking to workmates, cutting corners and toilet breaks were out of the question. This proved to much for some people and a small trickle of resignations began.

EVERYDAY PRESSURE AND LITTLE HUMILIATIONS

This sort of behaviour from management is fairly typical in most factories. The everyday pressure and little humiliations are part and parcel of this sort of production system. The whole problem came to a head when temperatures soared during the summer

protective clothing).

THEFT?

In addition to the ill feeling this caused, management decided to get stroppy with the workforce over people stealing some of the factories produce. For my part, I couldn't care less if workers were stealing from the company. The bosses do very well out of the mind-numbing work that we do and if a few workers walk off with a couple of pairs of tights... well, so what?

ANGER

In order to deal with this 'problem', management decided to hire private security guards to carry out random spot checks on peoples bags and cars. Needless to say this didn't go down too well with the workers and the system



months. People began to get sick, faint or have to take numerous days off (for which the whole workforce was disciplined). The reason? The people who had designed this new, modern factory hadn't thought to install air-conditioning! I saw workmates become physically sick because of a combination of heat, standing for seven hours a day, and the fumes wafting out of the nearby dye house (in which workers were forced to handle large vats of ammonia without masks, goggles or any sort of

was made unenforceable when the bosses were told by angry workers what would happen if someone went through their stuff. One suggestion involved the directors head, a brick wall and an ambulance.

STRIKE

This culminated in an illegal stoppage one afternoon during a period of intense heat at the plant. Our Union Rep. was stonewalled by management who did little or nothing to remedy the situation. Our Rep. made her feelings clear by

17 1921 Kronstadt REVOLT



Although the events detailed in this article occurred in 1921, Kronstadt is of great importance, not only to Anarcho-Syndicalists and Anarchists, but to any one interested in building a revolutionary working class movement today. 'Kronstadt' raises such issues as the relationship between the 'masses' and the party claiming to act in their name, as such it remains a lasting challenge to the Bolshevik concept of a party's historical role and the notion that the Soviet Union was at any time a 'workers' or 'socialist' state, or if indeed such a state is possible - and if so even desirable!

CIVIL WAR AND FAMINE

The Kronstadt Revolution broke out 3 months after the conclusion of the civil war on the European fronts. As the civil war drew to an end Russia was suffering from famine, increasingly dominated by

a ruthless regime, ruled by a single party.

Material conditions were intolerable, there were acute shortages of food, fuel and transport. At the end of February strikes broke out in Petrograd, Moscow and several other large industrial centres. Ida Mett describes the strikers, not as the counter-revolutionaries and White Guards of Bolshevik myth, but as follows;

"This generation had comprised a very remarkable section of the working class. It had reluctantly abandoned its demands for equality and for real freedom, believing them to be, if not incompatible with war, at least difficult to achieve under wartime conditions. But once victory was assured, the workers in the towns, the sailors, the Red Army men, and the peasants, all those who had shed their blood during the Civil War, could see no further justification for their hardships and for blind submission to a ferocious discipline. Even if these might have

had some reason in wartime, such reasons no longer applied."

Those very workers and peasants who overthrew the Czar in of 1917, when the Bolsheviks and the other socialist parties lagged far behind the revolutionary spirit of the people, this generation had not forgotten what it had struggled for during the revolution.

The winter of 1920-21 was particularly hard. The population had already dropped by two thirds, food shortages worsened. The rural economy was in crisis in many regions, the countryside could barely feed the capital. This, the delapidated; state of the railways and increasing antagonism between town and country made the situation all the more difficult.

To those factors, unavoidable due to famine and Civil War, must be added the "bureaucratic degeneration of the administration and the rapacity of the State organs of food supply. Their role in 'feeding' the population was actually a negative one."

In January 1921, according to Petrokommouns (State supplies of the town of Petrograd) workers in smelting factories got 800gms of black bread a day - this was high! - most workers were on 200gm rations. Even this pitiful amount was not distributed regularly.

Under these conditions (according to official statistics working class wages in Petrograd 1920 were 9% of those in 1913) workers demanded 'bread and



liberty'. People with any links to the countryside left the city, this counters the Bolshevik lie that the strikes were down to peasant elements 'insufficiently steeled in proletarian ideas'. There was no exodus of peasants into the starving towns!

'THE SYNDICALIST DEVIATION'

At this time there was also a crisis within the Bolshevik party regarding the 'Trade Union debate' in the run up to the 10th Congress, with outcry from both Trotsky and the Moscow Party Committee over the "tendency of the Petrograd organisation (all staunch Leninists) to make itself a special centre for the preparation of Party Congresses".

In relation to the 'Trade Union debate' Lenin wrote in Pravda, Jan. 1921; "Now we add to our platform the following: we must combat the ideological confusion of those unsound elements of the opposition who go to lengths of repudiating all 'militarisation of the economy', of repudiating not only the 'method of appointing' which has been the prevailing method up to now, but all appointments. In the last analysis this means repudiating the leading role of the Party in relation to the non-party masses. We must combat the syndicalist deviation which will kill the Party if it is not completely cured of it."

Later he wrote (V.I. Lenin, Selected Works, vol. IX, p 35) that; "the syndicalist deviation leads to the fall of the dictatorship of the proletariat", the dictatorship of the proletariat of course meaning the dictatorship of the Bolshevik party.

The strikes in Petrograd were of particular importance to the events in Kronstadt. The strikers demanded measures to assist food supplies, some demanded the reestablishment of local markets, freedom to travel and withdrawal of militia detachments blocking the roads around the town (which were in place to stop 'illegal'/unsanctioned food from getting in). Several factories also made more political demands; freedom of speech and the Press, freeing of working class political prisoners, etc. This was the 'syndicalist deviation' which Lenin feared so much and that must be

destroyed for the sake, not of the revolution, but of the Party!

THE KRONSTADT RESOLUTION

On 24th of February the Committee of Defence declared a state of siege in Petrograd - the city was brought under military law. On 26th of February the Kronstadt sailors, once described by Trotsky himself, as the, "pride and glory of the Russian Revolution", sent delegates to Petrograd (Kronstadt was only 25 miles offshore from Petrograd) in order to visit a number of factories. They returned to Kronstadt on the 28th, on that day the crew of the battleship Petropavlovsk passed the following resolution:

"Having heard the reports of the representatives sent by the General Assembly of the Fleet to find out about the situation in Petrograd, the sailors demand:

- 1) Immediate new elections to the Soviets. The present Soviets no longer represent the wishes of the workers and peasants. The new elections should be by secret ballot, and should be preceded by free electoral propaganda.
- 2) Freedom of speech and of the press for workers and peasants, for the Anarchists, and for the left socialist parties.
- 3) The right of assembly, and freedom for trade union and peasant organisations.
- 4) The organisation, at the latest on 10th of March 1921, of a Conference of non-Party workers, soldiers and sailors of Petrograd, Kronstadt and the Petrograd district.
- 5) The liberation of all political prisoners of the socialist parties, and of all imprisoned workers and peasants, soldiers and sailors belonging to working class and peasant organisations.
- 6) The election of a commission to look into the dossiers of all those detained in prisons and concentration camps.
- 7) The abolition of all political sections in the armed forces. No political party should have privileges for the propagation of its ideas, or receive State subsidies to this end. In the place of the political sections, various cultural groups should be set up, deriving resources from the State.
- 8) The immediate abolition of the militia detachments set up between town and countryside.

9) The equalisation of rations for all workers, except those engaged in dangerous or unhealthy jobs.

10) The abolition of Party combat detachments in all military groups. The abolition of Party guards in factories and enterprises. If guards are required, they should be nominated, taking into account the views of the workers.

11) The granting to the peasants of freedom of action on their own soil, and the right to own cattle, provided they look after them themselves and do not employ hired labour.

12) We request that all military units and officer trainee groups associate themselves with this resolution.

13) We demand that the press give proper publicity to this resolution.

14) We demand the institution of mobile workers' control groups.



15) We demand that handicraft production be authorised provided it does not utilise wage labour."

'YOU WILL BE SHOT DOWN LIKE PARTRIDGES'

Hardly the stuff of counter-revolutionary plots and conspiracies. The man who once had high praise for the workers and sailors of Kronstadt, Trotsky, now told them: "You will be shot down like partridges".

The Kronstadt Soviet was to be renewed on 2nd March, a meeting of the First and Second Battleship Sections took place on the 1st. Sixteen thousand people attended including Kalinin, President of the All Russian Executive of Soviets, and Kouzmin, political commissar to the Baltic Fleet,

they were the only TWO present to vote against adopting the Petropavlovsk resolution - now the Kronstadt Resolution. They proclaimed that "Kronstadt did not represent the whole of Russia" (unlike their two votes of course!).

The following day the delegates meeting took place, Vassiliev (Party member and president of the local Soviet) and Kouzmin stated that the Party would not relinquish power without a fight. Their speeches were so aggressive that they were ordered to leave and put under arrest. The delegates endorsed the resolution and set about examining the question of elections to the new Soviet, which were to;

"prepare for the peaceful reconstruction of the Soviet regime".

Fearing retaliation a Provisional Revolutionary Committee was

this the Party is making a profound mistake."

COUNTER-REVOLUTION

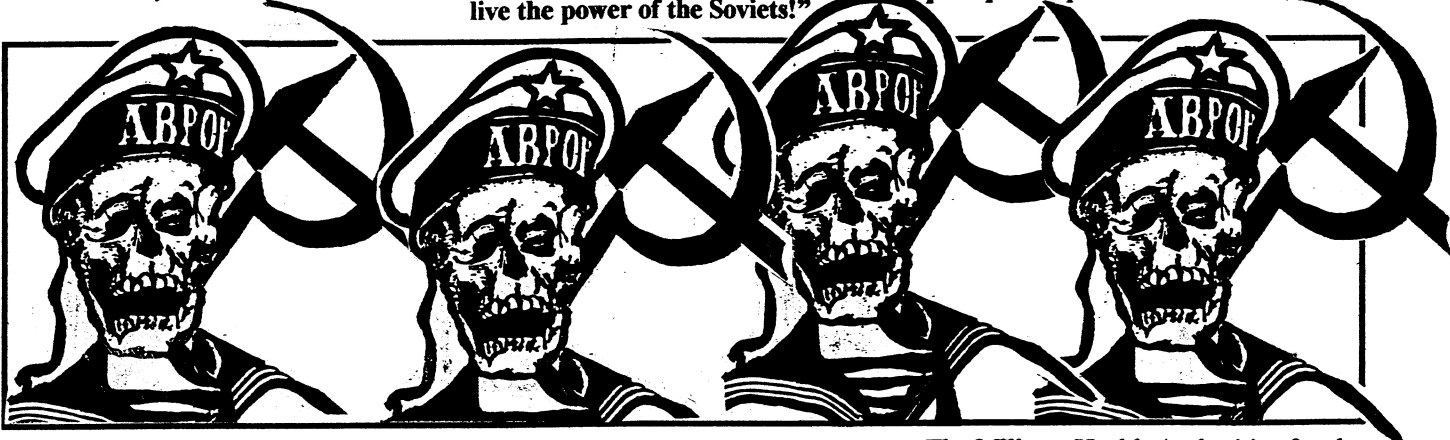
The Kronstadt Resolution and revolt were far from counter-revolutionary but were rather an extension of the revolution, an attack on the Party which, not the Party of the masses of Bolshevik myth, was consolidating its position over the masses as a new oppressor. The real counter-revolution was to come down on Kronstadt with all it might.

The forces sent against Kronstadt had to be carefully selected, as many Red soldiers would not fire on those they saw as comrades. The bombardment began on 7th of March. Kronstadt issued a last appeal:

"May the blood of the innocent be on the head of the Communists, mad, drunk and enraged with power. Long live the power of the Soviets!"

defending troops were mixing in indescribable confusion. No one quite knew who was on which side. The civilian population of the town tried to fraternise with the Government troops, despite the shooting. Leaflets of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee were still being distributed. To the bitter end the sailors were trying to fraternise.

... the fighting raged on. By the evening the Northern Group (Red Army) had occupied most of the forts. Street fighting continued throughout the night and well into the following morning. One by one the last forts - Milioutine, Constantine and Obrouchev - fell. Even after the last one had been occupied, isolated groups of defenders were still desperately fighting back with machine guns. Near the Tolbukin lighthouse, a final group of 150 sailors put up a desperate resistance."



established, it stated in its first proclamation;

"We are concerned to avoid bloodshed. Our aim is to create through the joint efforts of town and fortress the proper conditions for regular and honest elections to the new Soviet."

On 3rd of March the first 'Izvestia of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee' was published and in it printed:

"The Communist Party, master of the State, has detached itself from the masses. It has shown itself incapable of getting the country out of its mess. Countless incidents have recently occurred in Petrograd and Moscow which show clearly that the Party has lost the confidence of the working masses. The Party is ignoring working class demands because it believes these demands are the result of counter-revolutionary activity. In

After days of savage artillery fire and bombs two battalions of the 561st Regiment advanced across the ice, on reaching Kronstadt they surrendered, sending their officers back alone. The Orchan Regiments also refused to attack. When two more regiments mutinied rather than attack they were disarmed by force. Trotsky's artillery continued to rain down on Kronstadt.

Some Red Army units lost half of their men to their own bullets - machine gunned in the back "to prevent them surrendering to the rebels".

Faced with mutiny the Bolsheviks sent for 'reliable' troops from far off Kirghiz and Bashkir. The final assault came across the frozen Gulf of Finland on March 17th, Ida Mett gives this account;

"The street fighting was terrible. Red Army soldiers were losing their officers, Red Army soldiers and

The Military Health Authorities for the Petrograd district put out figures of 4,127 wounded and 527 killed. These figures did not include those drowned or the many left to die on the ice. Excluded also were the thousands who disappeared in the following 'revolutionary tribunals', the rebel losses can not in truth be estimated.

Although Anarchists played little part in the revolt;

"the Anarchist influence was brought to bear only to the extent to which Anarchism itself propagated the idea of workers democracy."

Kronstadt was taken advantage of to finally crush an ideology that continued to frighten the Bolsheviks.

"Kronstadt blew high the myth of the proletarian State; it proved that the dictatorship of the Communist Party and the Revolution were really incompatible." Alexander Berkman.

REVOLUTION IN IRELAND,

Popular Militancy 1917-23, Conor Kostick

BOOK REVIEW

The period under study is one of unprecedented and unsurpassed militancy and organisation amongst the working class in Ireland. Mostly, histories of this period, even radical ones, are dominated by the triumvirate of the British government and army, the Republican movement, and Unionism. This book reminds us of the critical role played by working people in shaking the British authorities, exposing the bourgeois politics of Republicanism, in threatening the hegemony of Unionism in the north east, and in taking over the running of towns.

Much of the books material is available elsewhere, eg. O'Connor, Larkin, Patterson, Bradley and McArdle, but its usefulness lies in the painting of a fuller picture, both in terms of the north and south divide, and in the relationship/conflict between class and national struggles. Kostick writes in an accessible style and from a position critical of the Labour and Trade

Union leaderships and structures of the period. But it is not without its limitations.

His chapter headings have a tendency to follow the received wisdom about political developments. One example is where the chapter 'Repression and Resistance' is followed by 'Workers In the War of Independence', and yet the end of one and the beginning of another cover the same issue of the land war. If he is tracing developments based on workers experiences, instead of perceived political events, it would be more appropriate to have a chapter dedicated to the land war.

A recurring irritant is the tendency to claim that if only a revolutionary

socialist party (i.e. a forerunner of the author's own SWP) had been organising during the anti-conscription mobilisations of 1918, during the 1919 Belfast general strike, the Limerick soviet of the same year, etc., etc., then history would have been different. There are many problems with this sort of writing. Firstly it is an attempt to justify current strategies of 'if only the working class had the right leadership, i.e. us'; secondly the 'what if' approach to history clouds attempts to learn important lessons for current struggles.



This brings me to the treatment of the most important organising methods developed by the working class of that period - syndicalism.

Although 'soviets' were declared in many industries and in many regions, often in spontaneous outbursts, and the name was taken from the Russian example of a complete take over of ownership, the name in Ireland referred as often as not to an occupation which was used as a tactic to improve conditions.

The principles and methods which were developed to their fullest were based on syndicalism. The largest organisation of the working class was the Irish Transport and General

Workers Union, organised amongst farms, industry, service, clerical and transport workers. Its syndicalist tendencies lay in cross-industry membership, its accountability structures, its opposition to capitalism and nationalism, and its policy of direct action. Although Kostick's last chapter is entitled 'Syndicalism and Civil War', we are offered no in-depth analysis, nor a critique which would enhance efforts to learn lessons from the limitations of that movement. The author remains stuck in his 'question of leadership' mode.

At one point Kostick refers to syndicalism as the 'Achilles Heel' of the workers movement, because of its contradictory tendency to be both militant and adopt a 'wait and see' approach. No evidence is offered and no serious effort is made to understand syndicalism. This would of course threaten the project of raiding history to buffer the theories of party

leadership.

Yet despite the books limitations, and the off-putting cover photo of Michael Collins (which is obviously a cheap attempt to cash in on the recent film, despite having next to no relevance to its contents) the book is a recommended antidote to the more common nationalist histories, and reminds us of the struggles of those like James Baird who helped organise the Belfast general strike, was persecuted in the shipyard pogroms, moved south and became a key organiser in the 1923 Waterford farm strike.

(Next issue we will review Emmet O'Connor's 'Syndicalism in Ireland').

LIVERPOOL DOCKERS

Two Years In Struggle

Monday 8th of September saw Belfast joining ports worldwide in solidarity with the 500 sacked Liverpool dockers.

A Very Damaging Blow

Action, by dockers across the globe in support of their Liverpool comrades, had been coordinated at the 2nd International Dockworkers Conference in Montreal. Returning delegates told the weekly mass meeting in Liverpool; "The international dockers movement which has come to life during our dispute is now poised to deliver a very damaging blow to Mersey Docks and Harbour Company".

No Shoddy Deals

"We don't want our union to cut across this opportunity with a shoddy deal to sabotage the international movement," declared international coordinator Terry Teague.

Local Support

Belfast Liverpool Dockers and Families Support Group marked the international day of action with a picket at the Dargan Road end of the docks, such was the support of motorists that tailbacks of up to 5 miles were caused on the M2. A two hour protest was also held that afternoon outside Belfast City Hall.

Rolling Programme of Industrial Action

This is a small part in the start of a rolling programme of industrial action aimed at winning the 24 month dispute, moving immediately to "a movement organised in series and relays, in accordance with the itineraries and destinations of the vessels of the shipping companies (Cast, ACL, Canmar...)" which continue to call in Liverpool.

Victory to the Liverpool Dockers!

Many other potential and actual dockers' disputes are bubbling up around the world. Dockers everywhere are getting the message that it can happen to them. A victory for the Liverpool Dockers will be a victory for dockers, and all workers, everywhere!

The Dockers Quid

If you would like to donate one pound a week (£4.34 a month) to the dockers and their families, please fill in the form below and send it to your bank.

Monthly Standing Order Mandate

To: (name of your bank)

At:

(address of your bank)

Please pay: *MSD LAMB BANK, Norton Street, Liverpool*

Account No: *01775480 Sort Code 40-29-12*

For the credit of 'Merseyside Dockers Shop Stewards' Appeal Fund'

For the sum of: four pounds and thirty four pence (words)

£4.35 (figures)

Starting on: (date)

And Every: (day of month)

Name of Account to be Debited:

Account No. (figures)

Signal: Date:

If you would like to send a cheque donation, then please make it payable to: 'Merseyside Shop Stewards Appeal Fund' and send it to:

Mr. J. Davies, Sec. Merseyside Port Shop Stewards, 19 Scorton Street, Liverpool L6 2AS.

Name:

Organisation:

Address:

STOP PRESS **Welfare To Work** **To Be Piloted In North.**

The Labour government has decided that we in Northern Ireland are to be the guinea pigs for their Welfare to Work scheme (see article pg 18). £140m is earmarked for the Northern Ireland scheme, coming into force in October - six months ahead of the rest of the 'UK'.

The responsibility, as head of the Norths Welfare to Work taskforce, for implementing this latest attack on the unemployed is Training and Employment Agency, and Sperrin Metals, boss Chris McGinnis.

The task force also consists of representatives of the voluntary sector, employers, youth, education and the environment along with the Trade Unions. Trade Unionists involved in implementing Welfare to Work are Jim McCusker (NIPSA), and Jim McKeown (NATFHE).

LABOUR FIDDLE FIGURES

It comes as no great surprise to learn that the Labour government is continuing to use the same methods as the former Tory government.

Unemployment is still being calculated in the same way, using a system which Labour has criticized for the last 18 years, but seem quite happy to use when actually in power.

The thing is that its all well and good to try and embarrass the government with the truth about high unemployment when you're in the opposition. People will after all blame them. And thats why its not so smart to reveal the real figures when your own party comes to power, because you'll be expected to do something about it.

Doing anything about it isn't too easy for government, their friends the bosses do, after all, rely on high unemployment to threaten their workforces and to drive conditions down. Unemployment, while not a very pleasant state of affairs for the unemployed, is a good thing for the bosses economy.

PROVO ANARCHISTS?

Big Ian Paisley has taken us all by surprise with his claim that the IRA want to establish a 'complete reign of anarchy' in Northern Ireland.

Although the 'anarchy' he claims they want to establish has little in common with Anarchism as a political ideology. It has to do with claims of attacks upon the 'Protestant people', hooligans and gunmen on the streets of Ulster and the IRA attempting to 'call the shots on the wishes of the majority population of Ireland.'

This of course isn't new, anarchy and anarchism, has often been used to describe civil disorder and chaos. And

while we're not opposed to the odd bit of civil disorder this view of anarchism is all we can really expect from people who couldn't imagine going for a crap without one form of higher authority or another being involved.

The Orange Order has in the past raised the spectre of 'anarchy' (often simultaneous with those of 'communism' and 'Popery'!) whenever sectarian boundaries have been threatened by class interests. Most notably was their role in trying to split unemployed protestants and catholics as they fought side by side against the RUC in 1932 during the Outdoor Relief Strike.

SHOT FOR NICKING COPPER

A 21 year old man was shot in the leg by the police on the night of Sunday 7th September.

Wayne Hinds was among a group of young men stripping copper from a house in Lecale Street in the Loyalist (*more to the point working class*) Village area of South Belfast. Police burst in on them after 3am and Wayne was shot when him and his mates tried to escape through the back of the house. Police initially claimed that they had come across a bomb factory and that at least one of the men had had a gun! No gun, however, was found. Police have however reassured us that following their failed attempt to kill Wayne there will be a 'full' enquiry by 'The Independent Commission for Police Complaints'!

Emergency Legislation Special Powers Act to Prevention of Terrorism Act

The history of the whole of Ireland is one dominated by state oppression, military and political. The current troubles in the North may only go back to 1968 but the reemergence of political violence in the late '60s developed directly out of a history of 'emergency' legislation dating from the formation of the Northern Ireland state.

The Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (NI) 1922 was passed by the Northern Ireland government. This Act, which was based on the Defence of the Realm and Restoration of Ireland Acts, allowed it to,

"take all such steps as may be necessary for preserving the peace and maintaining order".

Section 2(4) of the Act stated ;

"If any person does any act of such a nature as to be calculated to be prejudicial to the preservation of peace or the maintenance of order in Northern Ireland and not specifically provided for in the regulations, he shall be deemed to be guilty of an offence against the regulations".

This alone prompted Voester, the architect of apartheid in South Africa, to say, as he introduced a new Coercion Bill, that he 'would be willing to exchange all the legislation of that sort

for one clause in the Northern Ireland Special Powers Act'.

Section 1 allowed the Minister, or any officer of the RUC to whom he had delegated power, to **"take all such steps and issue all such orders as may be necessary for preserving peace and maintaining order according to and in execution of this Act and the regulations"**. The powers built up over the years of the Act included arrest without warrant and 48 hours detention for questioning, internment without trial, outlawing of organisations, banning of newspapers, periodicals or books as the Minister saw fit, the imposition of curfews, internal exile, prohibition on inquests.

The SPA remained in force until 1972, its repeal was one of the central demands of the Civil Rights Association. March 1972 saw the replacement of the Stormont government by 'direct rule' from Westminster. Direct rule followed increased civil disorder and civil rights demonstrations, increased use of emergency powers and the calling in of the Army in August 1969 to assist the RUC. It was concern over the RUC's ability to function, not any moral problems with its policing which

brought in the British Army.

The SPA was replaced by the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1973. A commission, headed by Lord Diplock, had been set up to look at what arrangements 'could be made in order to deal effectively with terrorist organisations by bringing to book, other than by internment... individuals involved in terrorist activities'. This merely re-enacted the previous provisions and saw the establishment of the infamous 'Diplock Courts' with trial without jury for 'terrorist' offences.

1974 and on saw the introduction of the Prevention of Terrorism Acts, which extend 'emergency' legislation across the UK.

The PTA allows for detention of up to 7 days, banning of organisations, internal exile and has seen the creation of special powers of interrogation at ports - all have been used to harass and frame members of the Irish community in Britain.

The worst terrorist in the North, the worst terrorist in Britain, the worst terrorist facing working people the world over, is government. Government which uses its laws and armies, judiciaries and police to keep down any opposition. Smash the State.

In The Line of Fire

Four days after coming out of a coma, caused by being shot in the head with a plastic bullet, 14 year old Gary Lawlor was released from hospital care. He had been injured in the wake of the Drumcree disturbances. Commenting from his home, where he is continuing his recovery, he said that he "couldn't remember a thing" about the injury that left him fighting for his life.

Following the British government 'guidelines' on the use of baton rounds, its only too clear that these so-called guidelines are (ensuring minimum use with minimum risk) are not applied here. When the 14 point recommendations were declassified, the British Home Office said that "The police in Northern Ireland should attempt to issue rioters with public warnings" before opening fire. They also called for the maintenance of records listing any injuries which 'may' have occurred from the discharge of this weapon.

In saying that, this is just an exercise by the British Government in feigning concern, the report into their use of plastic bullets here in 1996 demonstrated that the RUC's use of the lethal baton round did breach all 'reasonable' government rules, and of course, that the weapons had been used in an uncontrollable and 'reckless' manner by them. So the government emphasize that 'rioters' must be alerted, by use of a loud hailer for example, that plastic bullets are about to be fired and warned to disperse. This reinforces the now popular saying "New Labour - Same Old Shite!" given that they have 'forgotten' their 1987 policy statement from the party's NEC stating they would ban the weapon when in power.

Years previously, in 1982, the European Parliament voted to ban the use of this weapon throughout the European Union. The 'baton round', a cross between a bullet and a truncheon, was first developed in the 1960's and used in the former colony of Hong Kong. Concern about its ongoing use here in the north has also been expressed by the United Nations Committee Against Torture.

The concern of these various committees, while it may be quite



touching, is of course of little included.

consequence. It is obvious that these weapons won't be taken off our streets by the New Labour government or any successive government without immense pressure from below. Even though we are in the midst of what is called the 'peace process' and are hearing a lot of talk about decommissioning weapons held and used by state forces aren't set to be

We would call on our readers, both national and international, to actively support the United Campaign Against Plastic Bullets in demanding the immediate banning of these weapons.

Contact the **United Campaign Against Plastic Bullets**, c/o 92 Stewartstown Park, Belfast BT11, N. Ireland. Tel: (01232) 6222854

'In the Line of Fire' is a document, produced by the Belfast based Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) and the Pat Finucane Centre in Derry, which reports on the events in Derry following the Drumcree stand off that began in July 1996. In the document they outline the following five reasons to ban plastic bullets:

1 PLASTIC BULLETS ARE LETHAL WEAPONS CAUSING HORRIFIC INJURY AND DEATH

2 THE RULES GOVERNING THE USE OF PLASTIC BULLETS ARE NOT ADHERED TO

3 THOSE WHO USE PLASTIC BULLETS GET AWAY WITH MURDER

4 PLASTIC BULLETS HAVE BEEN USED AS A SECTARIAN AND INTIMIDATORY WEAPON

5 PLASTIC BULLETS HAVE NOT FURTHERED PEACE, THEY HAVE PROLONGED CONFLICT

This document can be obtained from The Pat Finucane Centre, 1 West End Park, Derry City, BT48 9JF, N. Ireland. Tel: 01504 268846. Fax: (01504) 266453. Email: PFC@www.serve.com

Gender Violence and **FREEDOM**

Abuses Across the Globe

As President Mary Robinson signs off here to take up her latest post as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, this move seems somewhat more like a farce than a turning point in modern Irish history or the achievements of Irish women, coming so closely to the publishing of the 'Progress of Nations' report. This report highlights the continuing violence and human rights abuses perpetrated against women and girls across the globe.

Gender Violence

The report, from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), estimates that over 60 million women have gone "missing" from the world's population, due to what it calls "gender violence". There are a variety of practices, including infanticide, gender based abortion and mere neglect which it lists as among the reasons for the shortfall of the world's female population.

As the UNICEF report outlines what it calls "a shocking litany" of violence towards women and girls today it reveals that:

- * Between 25 to 50 percent of all women have suffered physical abuse at the hands of an intimate partner.
- * Rape as a weapon of war has been documented in 7 countries in recent years.
- * Between one in five and one in seven women will be victims of rape in their lifetime.
- * More than 1 million children, mostly girls, are forced into prostitution each year, the majority of which are in Asia.
- * About 2 million girls each year, or 6,000 a day, suffer genital mutilation (female circumcision).

Of course **such reports** bring to light some disturbing facts, which are both highly inhuman and unacceptable, however in such a **society as we live** in today this is the reality.

One woman from UNICEF Ireland commented that; "In today's world to be born female is to be born high risk."

Never a truer word, as they say, but hardly a new development. The 'Progress of Nations' report brings to the fore many serious facts yet it shouldn't be seen as a sort of year zero document on the oppression of women.

"The Most Dangerous Woman In The World"

The Anarchist feminist Emma Goldman, once described as "the most dangerous woman in the world" wrote of her childhood existence many times. Oppressed for her sex, her class and her politics, as a young girl she, like so many others, suffered at the hands of her parents. From the beginning, her father, whose fury and beatings she remembered as "the nightmare of my childhood", always complained that she, his first born, had been a girl. At the age of fifteen he tried to marry her off, as was the custom, transferring her from her fathers rule to her husbands, with whom she was to find all her worst fears about abuse in marriage to come true. In her autobiography, 'Living my Life', runs the steady narrative of the injuries dealt her as a woman, and that of her own sex. Emma used the class struggle politics of Anarchism to fight back and to explain the oppression of women, and she knew this went much deeper than institutions.

Education

Education is an important component in efforts to protect girls from violence. Only 44 countries have enacted bills/laws against domestic violence, but is that enough to stop gender based violence. Although this country is listed in the report as having laws against marital rape and sexual harassment, they are still with us, and appear to be increasing.

The report, interestingly enough, covers the likes of multinational manufacturers of children's baby food over their sales activities in so called third world countries. Despite boycotts and protests Nestle, Wyeth and Gerber, manufacturers of breast-milk substitutes, continue to promote their products unethically (to say the least). It slams the

multinationals for "willful misinterpretation", and attacks the distribution of free samples as an "insidious" form of promotion. The fact remains that breast-feeding does strengthen the babies immune system, unlike formula milk which can cause disease and at times even death, especially in countries where access to safe water is next to impossible for the poor mothers they are targeting in the 'developing world'.

However, to look for an answer or solution to what women and children are continually being subjected to in this society is something which Anarchists, such as Emma Goldman, had been working on. Although she passed away in 1940, her politics are as relevant today as they were then. Society hasn't changed that much, if at all:

"Woman's development, her freedom, her independence, must come from and through herself. First, by asserting herself as a personality, and not as a sex commodity. Second, by refusing the right to anyone over her body: by refusing to bear children, unless she wants them; by refusing to be a servant to God, the state, society, the husband, the family, etc., by making her life simpler, but deeper and richer. That is, by trying to learn the meaning and substance of life in all its complexities, by freeing herself of the fear of public opinion and condemnation. Only that, and not the ballot box, will set women free."

Revolution

The changes which have actually occurred over the last 80 odd years - women's suffrage, legal and social reforms, even the so-called 'sexual revolution' - have in practice, as Emma Goldman herself predicted hardly liberated women. The revolution she called for is still to come.



WHAT WE STAND FOR



Our class is suffering attack after attack: the 'Welfare State' is being carved up, our bills and taxes go up while real wages go down, working conditions are getting worse and worse, 'job security' is a thing of the past, anti-social crime is increasing in our communities, unemployment is rampant.

What passes for politics in the north of Ireland offers our class nothing but continued and perhaps worsening hardship and sectarianism. The choice between British nationalism (Loyalism) and Irish nationalism is no choice. Neither will do anything for the benefit of our class, rather they would play one section off against the other while seeking to maintain their sectarian power bases.

Sectarianism serves only to weaken us at a time when capitalism is waging all out war on our class.

Likewise, things are just as grim for workers in the 'Free State'. North or south, and across the globe, workers face the same onslaught. The only unity we are interested in is class unity in the struggle against the bosses.

We need new forms of organisation, ones that would do away with the false barriers between us, if we are to fight capitalism successfully. In short the form of organisation needed, one capable of defending the working class from the capitalist system, is one that would scrap it.

We want a workers movement that is confident, and has the commitment to fight a class war, with the same conviction as the bosses and governments are now. A movement which is open to all working class people, waged or unwaged, where Solidarity is not a mere slogan.

We want nothing but the best for our class, and that doesn't mean 'a fair days wage for a fair days work'. It means, in the short term, higher wages, shorter hours, better conditions. In fact we want what the middle classes take for granted. Why shouldn't we have decent homes for all? We bloody built them!

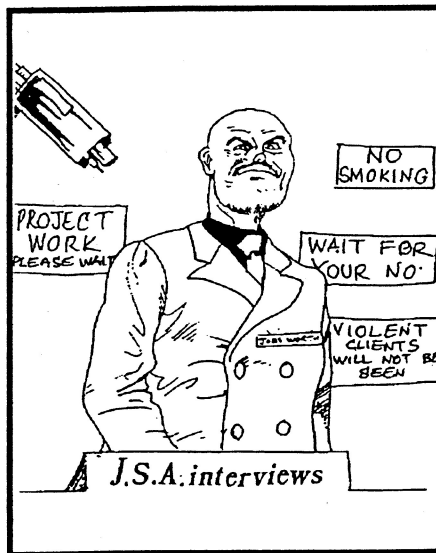
We want all that and more. But must be at the expense of the bosses, not other workers. Surely the past number of years have shown us that sitting back and watching, while one section of workers have been attacked, has got us nowhere and the bosses in the position they are in today.

A revolutionary, or Anarcho-Syndicalist Union, is one that is by necessity both political and economic, based within industry and our communities, independent of all political parties and bureaucracies. The ultimate goal of such a union is the destruction of capitalism and its replacement with a free and classless society based on mutual aid and cooperation. A society run by and for workers on the basis of 'Need not Profit'.

It is a union movement that recognises that workers and bosses can never have common interests and which, while fighting on day to day issues such as pay and conditions, knows that in order to win, and maintain, any decisive victories from the ruling class we must smash it.

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BT12 6BQ.

Welfare To Work



New Labour's "radical" approach to unemployment is heading our way on a very tight schedule. Regional and local discussions are supposed to be going on at the moment. "Pathfinder" programmes are to begin in 10 areas in January 1998 with the programme going country wide from April 1998. So far we only know the rough outline of the scheme. The Welfare to Work component is aimed at a total of 178,000 18-24 year olds unemployed for more than six months. After a "job guidance and counselling" programme lasting for up to four months they will have to choose one of four options. Refusal to choose will mean JSA style cuts in benefit. The four options are:

- 1) Work with an employer. The employer gets a £60 a week subsidy to employ someone for six months at a standard job. The job must include one day a week training for which a grant of £750 is paid.
- 2) Full time study on a approved course for up to a year for people without NVQ Level 2 qualifications or similar.
- 3) A six month job in the voluntary sector. The claimants will get benefit plus a grant of up to £400 paid in installments. The job must include one day a week training. Up to £3,200 will be paid to the voluntary organisation to facilitate the placement.
- 4) Environmental Task Force - this will be a new organisation carrying out work to improve local environments. The conditions etc.

will be the same as the voluntary sector option.

Some or all of these options will also be introduced for all long term unemployed (over 2 years).

The programme will be managed by the Employment Service, in partnership with national and local voluntary and statutory organisations.

This so-called New Deal is basically an extension of the JSA and Project Work, with compulsion underpinning it. It is as badly thought out, involves no consultation with unemployed people to find out what their needs might be and, on the proposed timescale, has a good chance of being a complete disaster.

Offering employers a six month subsidy to pay someone a "standard" wage begs the question - what is a standard wage? We all know that wages are falling and that employers are seeking any excuse to introduce low paid casual work. The new deal will intensify that process. Labour promises that there will be monitoring to ensure that employers don't just replace jobs with New Deal workers or use them to fill naturally occurring vacancies. But to do that they will have to create a huge bureaucracy - and they haven't got time or money to do it. Also, who will help identify potential work providers in the private and voluntary sector? In view of the time constraint the Employment Service will no doubt continue with the training providers already in place for Project Work, Training for Work and Restart Courses - despite the fact that everyone knows these outfits are a joke. As for the Environmental Task Force - its just Community Service for the unemployed, as if they were guilty of a crime against society. It sounds just like work camps for the unemployed which Labour ran in the 30's.

The New Deal is just a slap in the face to the millions of low paid and unemployed. Yet all the good and worthy organisations that condemned the injustice of the Tories on employment have fallen strangely quiet. Only cynics would suggest that it is because socially and politically they are Blair Babies - middle class liberals and do-gooders who know fuck all about life at the bottom of capitalism's slag heap. But if no one else is prepared to expose the New Deal for what it is - we will!

'A Small Skirmish In The Class War' Continued From Page 9

movement that can appeal to ordinary workers... workers who are not the romanticized 'proletariat' of socialist mythology.

walking out that morning. During the short strike managers shit themselves and had line managers trying all sorts of intimidatory tactics to get people back to work. Threats of sackings, loss of pay etc. were delivered to workers. One line manager told me that she "knew that youse didn't have a leg to stand on because I was the shop steward in Strabane". She was not giving out friendly advice. A negotiator was put forward by us and work resumed. There was no outcome from these 'talks', if any took place at all.

Our Union, the GMB, was completely ineffective during this whole period. Not only was everyone left in the dark as to what was going on, our shop steward, who was doing her best to do an excellent job, was not getting any backing from the regional organisation. Any phone calls I made to the head office in Belfast were met by the answering machine.

CLASS WAR IS JUST THAT!

All of this points to several things that we, as a Syndicalist organisation, should be tackling. In every workplace that has a member of our organisation, every attempt should be made to make an issue out of what may seem even the smallest of problems. The class war is not going to be won by getting involved in trendy lefty campaigns or any of the 'fashionable' causes that come and go. Life-stylism, punk etc. is not going to form the basis of an alternative union

Ordinary people have racist and sexist and sectarian notions. We cannot stand back from these people just because they haven't got the 'right' ideas, Syndicalists have to get stuck in wherever they work. The active process of organising in the workplace may be a boring and unrewarding one, it may not have the fashionable connotations of supporting the Zapatistas or whoever. It means having to deal with ineffective union officials, supporting those shop stewards who have militant attitudes, helping your workmates out without continually banging on about politics to them...

In short, my small taste of industrial action has confirmed by belief that the class war is just that. a war!

EVERYDAY STRUGGLE

The dislike felt between managers and workers is a very real thing, even in out new 'classless' society. I hate my bosses and their regard of me as a commodity to be hired and fired whenever they please. For Anarcho-Syndicalism to make progress the 'boring' job of having to complain and fight over dull things like heat levels and fumes has to be done. Unless Syndicalists are willing to get their hands dirty in everyday struggle then we are going to remain in the lefty ghetto with the nutcases, loonies and political lepers. Personally, I've had enough of the ghetto.

SOLIDARITY APPEAL

A new union movement isn't built on fresh air. As well as the ideas we need to build up our membership and resources if we are to meet with any success in fighting the bosses.

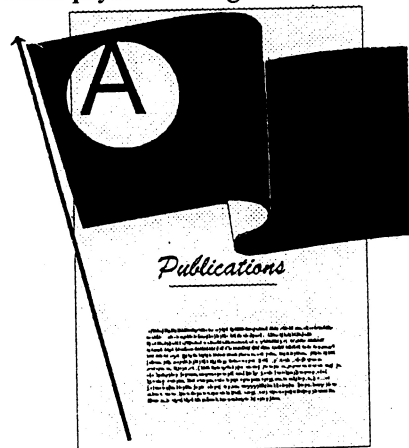
Organise! - IWA are working towards the creation of a 'Solidarity Centre' in Belfast. This is envisaged as a centre where workers in struggle can come to for practical solidarity and support. It is not our intention to set up yet another 'advice shop' for 'clients'.

We see the establishment of a 'Solidarity Centre' here in Belfast as an essential step in the creation of a fighting union movement run by and for its members.

In order to realise this goal we need YOUR help. Please send donations, big or small, to us at:

**ORGANISE! - IWA,
P.O. Box 505,
Belfast,
BT12 6BQ.**

Please make all cheques or Postal Orders payable to 'Organise!'.



JOIN US

If you agree with what you've read then help us build a real fighting alternative - join Organise! - IWA today. Send this coupon to our national address at;

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A NEW WORLD IN OUR HEARTS



“We have always lived in slums and holes in the wall. We will know how to accomodate ourselves for a time. For, you must not forget that we can also build these palaces and cities, here in Spain and in America and everywhere. We, the workers. We can build others to take their place. And better ones. We are not in the least afraid of ruins. We are going to inherit the earth. There is not the slightest doubt about that. The bourgeoisie might blast and ruin its own world before it leaves the stage of history. We carry a new world here, in our hearts, and that world is growing in this minute.”

Buenaventura Durruti, August 5, 1936.