

IRISH ANARCHIST PAPER

WORKERS SOLIDARITY

PAPER OF THE WORKERS SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT
NUMBER 48

75p outside Ireland

50p

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Bombs are no solution
- Crime and Punishment
- Free Women of Spain



WATER CHARGES

We're still not paying



LAURENCE DORAN, a retired Guinness worker from Greenhills, was taken to Rathfarnham Court in February. South Dublin County Council want to cut off his water supply. Laurence is among tens of thousands refusing to pay the water charges. The tables were quickly turned on Judge Smithwick and the County Council. Instead of being meek and shy, as you are supposed to be in court, Laurence gave them a lecture about justice.

"The PAYE taxpayer is paying for everything in this country while the big farmers, wealthy self-employed and super rich in this country get away with tax evasion. During the last eight years PAYE taxes collected from farmers and from the wealthy self-employed have fallen. If the wealthy paid their due taxes, PAYE taxpayers would not be asked to pay double tax and I would not be before this court.

"Nobody has ever been jailed in this country for tax

evasion. The rich tax evaders have been given two tax amnesties. The last amnesty in 1994 wrote off £500 million but the Revenue Commissioners report huge amounts of tax outstanding for 1995.

"These people are laughing, while people like me who always pay our taxes are brought to court. That is very unfair. The water tax is an unjust tax and PAYE taxpayers should not have to pay it."

There was so much clapping and cheering that the

court had to be cleared and its business suspended for the rest of the day. To hammer home the message that cut offs will be resisted, Laurence's neighbours on St. Peter's Road had a demonstration of support where 200 people agreed to stop any attempted disconnection.

If the Councils try to disconnect anyone the anti-water charges campaign will be able to stop them just as it did in 1994. Peaceful but firm protest, denying the Council access to stop-cocks outside the house. Even if they manage to turn someone off the campaign is confident that it can have them reconnected within an hour.

We did it the last time and it will be a lot easier this time. Over 12,000 households have now joined the Federation of Dublin Anti-Water Charge Campaigns and tens of thousands more are still boycotting these charges. Over the next couple of months the campaign needs to get more organised at local level, local action groups need to be set up in all areas and local activists kept in touch with each other.

This is necessary in order to build the sort of on-the-ground solidarity which will be absolutely vital if disconnections are to be successfully resisted. The water charges will only be defeated by direct action in the communities.

If we stick together 1996 will be the beginning of the end for the charges and a huge boost for people's confidence in their own ability to fight back. If you want to be put in touch with others in your area, or you have received a court summons, telephone the campaign hotline at 01-8729163.

For Starters

The Dublin West by-election gave the establishment a shock. Only 41% bothered to vote (most of the rest presumably being apathetic, i.e. feeling that it wouldn't make much difference to them), the Labour vote collapsed from 23% down to 3.8%, and Militant Labour's Joe Higgins came within 370 votes of taking the seat.

Now there is talk (mainly by Militant Labour but also by activists in the anti-water charges campaign) of running a slate of candidates in the next general election. During the run up to the ballot the WSM argued against that way of doing things. We explained our point of view at anti-water charges meetings and through the free bulletin *Anarchist News*. While paying tribute to Joe Higgins for the trojan work he has done to build the anti-water charges campaign we went on to say "The Workers Solidarity Movement is not standing a candidate, nor are we urging a vote for anyone.

"We advise you to abstain. It is not just a question of how dishonest and corrupt most politicians become, nor that they say one thing before an election and do something totally different when elected. [Remember Democratic Left getting elected on an anti-water charges ticket, now they are in a government that is dragging pensioners into court while the beef barons go free after multi-million pound frauds.]

"The crucial question is whether casting a vote every few years can give you any control over the things that effect your life. Many will vote for Joe Higgins or Tomas MacGiolla because of their anti-establishment stands. But neither can change the system which makes the work-

ing class pay through the nose while the rich live it up.

"Real power lies in the boardrooms of big business. They decide where to invest and on what terms. To see the

power of money over democracy you only have to look at the beef scandal. To see how far the bosses will go you can look at Chile in 1973 where a reforming government was overthrown in a military coup backed by big business. As long as a small minority have massive power they will be the ones calling the tune.

To think that elections provide a real choice, that they can fundamentally change things, is an illusion. Once your

vote is cast you have had your "say". You have given your consent to a politician or party to make decisions for you. The political system where a few give the orders and the rest obey has been given your personal stamp of approval.

"We don't abstain because we are opposed to democracy. Not at all, we are fully in favour of it. By democracy we understand the right of people to manage their own lives and collectively organise society in their own interests. Everyone

ANARCHISM = socialism + freedom

TASTE CHALLENGE

Do you prefer... the insipid taste of milk-and-water Labour Party politics as consumed by Dick Spring, and his pompous cronies in the Dáil?

Or do you prefer... the authentic taste of freedom as enjoyed by anti-water charge protesters, Zapatista rebels and anarchists the world over?

Then write to the **ANARCHISTS** for more information.

Workers Solidarity Movement
P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8

Forget Pepsi, anarchism is the taste of the future. If you would like a few of these posters for your workplace or school noticeboard, write and tell us how many you want.

Revolutionary veteran speaks at Bulgarian anarchist congress

THE EIGHTH CONGRESS of the Bulgarian Anarchist Federation took place in Sofia last September. Those present included not only the representatives of regional groups but also sympathisers and people who despite their political differences came to salute the anarchists and their congress for their courageous behaviour in the Bulgarian concentration camps under the yoke of the Communist Party.

Stoian Tzolav, who participated on the side of the Spanish anarchists in the revolution of 1936 and who spent many years in the fascist concentration camps of Bulgaria before being sentenced to death (later commuted to life imprisonment) by the Communist Party in 1949, gave a report on the international anarchist movement. Reports were also heard on the problems facing Bulgarian workers; in particular unemployment, low wages, 300% inflation, crime and the increasing poverty of pensioners.

The congress decided to struggle

- *For the dissolution of military forces and a declaration of true neutrality distanced from all military alliances.
- *For the creation of an organisation for peace which aims to work with neighbouring peoples against war.
- *For the formation of groups in districts and communes under citizen control - the police most of whom have links to the criminal mafia (which emerged from the Communist Party) being incapable of getting rid of crime.
- *Against the new millionaires who are using the people's money which was stolen by the Communist Party.
- *To organise free co-ops in agriculture, industry and distribution.
- *To organise a free commune where citizens may express their wishes and oversee the execution of projects decided upon by the General Assemblies.

effected a decision should have the possibility of helping to make that decision.

"This means workers' councils running industries & services, neighbourhood councils in our communities. These would be federated upwards on a regional and national level. All delegates would be subject to immediate recall if their electors were not satisfied with their conduct.

"The outstanding feature of the anarchist idea is that control comes from below. There would be no ruling elite. In this by-election you are being asked to change one of your, admittedly minor, rulers. Anarchists don't want to change the faces in the Dáil; we want to get rid of the division into bosses & workers, order-givers & order-takers."

Over the next few months the big task is to organise enough people to ensure that non-payment holds, that more local action groups are formed and that every attempt at a disconnection of water supply is met by local resistance. When the government sees all its threats and

promises fail and learns that this tax is truly uncollectable, that is when they will look at ways of amending it. If we have a strong enough campaign on the ground we won't have to settle for a compromise, we can have a victory.

And finally, while we were reprinting *Anarchism and Ireland* we received two new editions of other WSM pamphlets. Eddie Conlon's *The Spanish Civil War: Anarchism in Action* has been published in a Serbo-Croat version from Belgrade and *Ireland & British Imperialism* (a collection of articles from *Workers Solidarity* dealing all aspects of the 'national question') has been produced in a French edition.

Anarchism and Ireland is a short introduction to the ideas of anarchism, covering all the basics from "why we oppose the state" to "what we mean by freedom". For your copy send £1 to the WSM Bookservice, P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8.

THAT'S CAPITALISM

In the five years up to 1995 the 26 county government was allocated £2,611 from EU funds to improve transport. Most of this money, 63%, was spent on roads. All public transport, including the LUAS tramways in Dublin, got just 13%. Yet money spent on building roads is "investment in infrastructure" while the same money spent on public transport becomes a "subsidy".

Some of America's most well known corporations, including American Express, are now investing in the 'prison industry'. At last count, there was some 50,000 'privately operated prison beds' in the USA. This number is expected to rise further in the next few years. One 'successful' prison company is Corrections Corporation of America. This company now operates twenty-one prisons in a number of countries - America, Australia and Britain to name but a few. It is valued at over \$100 million on the US Stock Exchange.

U2's Bono has a brother. He owns Scotts restaurant in Castleknock. A few months ago he took on a young "barman" and paid him just

£1.22 per hour. Total pay for a two hour shift was £2.44. After deducting a £1.10 bus fare, the "barman" was left with £1.44 or just 72p for each hour worked.

According to the US Dept. of Health and Human Services, 2.4 million (64.4%) crack-cocaine users in the USA are white. This compares with just 1 million (26.6%) black users. Yet, in 1992, a study by the US Sentencing Commission found that 91.3% of those sentenced for Federal crack offences were black (African-American), as compared with only 3% for whites.

Pharmacia and Upjohn, two chemical companies, recently merged. As a result their profits are expected to boom in the coming year. Why? In order to 'cut out duplication' 4,000 of the 34,000 jobs in the new, joint company will be got rid of. This will amount to \$550 million in 'savings'.

Been playing golf recently? Well, just in case, don't use 'Spaulding' golf balls. Spauldings, are one of a growing number of companies in the US

that use prison labour to boost their profits. Spaulding, a sports company, use Hawaiian prison inmates to make their golf balls. Prison workers get paid just \$1 an hour after deductions. Often they get less. At present over 30 States in the USA allow the use of inmates as workers

Uganda now has an average life expectancy of just 42 year. Ten years ago the life expectancy in the country was 52 years of age. This can partly be explained by the problem of HIV/AIDs - but only partly. The health service in Uganda has been ravaged from a lack of money in the last decade. One doctor, recently stated that as many as 50% of all cases coming to hospital could be saved by basic medical care - but this isn't available. There isn't any money...for health.



Your job is not worth a lot... and that's official

THE ANNUAL report of the 26 county Employment Appeals Tribunal states that of the the 391 cases before it, 199 claims of unfair dismissal were upheld.

However the Tribunal only ordered that 29 people get their jobs back, and 16 of those had to lose their years of service. In the other cases an average of £4,993 compensation was awarded. Not a lot if you are facing years, or even a lifetime, on the dole. And this is when the Tribunal has decided that the sacking was illegal.

Cork strikers need more support

THE STRIKE at the Early Learning Centre (ELC) shop in Cork continues. The strikers have now been out since early December and so far, despite widespread public support and great determination, the company has refused to recognise the workers' union, Mandate. Instead, management has responded with some very minor concessions on pay and pension rights. On the core issue of union recognition, the company has said that it 'may recognise the union if the workers settle', but not until after January, 1997!

The ELC company has already spent a considerable amount of money on publicising its case in order to get more of the public to cross the picket line - a policy that hasn't worked. It has also employed a full time security man to monitor the picketers. So far it has been estimated that the ELC has spent nearly £25,000 on direct advertising against the strikers - a sum of money that would have paid their demands in full for nearly three years.

LOW PAY=HIGH PROFITS

From this fact alone it is clear that the ELC management is deeply fearful of any union involvement at any of its shops. Low pay is the hallmark of the ELC's current high profits. It has adopted a policy of attrition against the strikers from the outset. Publicly it is offering very minor concessions; in practice it out to defeat this attempt at unionisation once and for all. So far attempts at reaching a settlement via the Labour Relations Commission have not been successful. It is highly unlikely that they ever will. It must be borne in

mind that the ELC company will be unenthusiastic about any mediated settlement until and unless it is forced to be.

Workers do not have the resources for a very long strike. With over 200 shops in Ireland and the UK, and with the backing of its parent group, Menzies, the ELC can withstand an isolated strike like this for as long as it takes. If nothing else, this current dispute shows the limits of such an uneven battle - when workers don't win wider support. This support must be built now.

WHAT CAN BE DONE:

Within Mandate: Mandate members throughout Ireland are familiar with the ongoing fight against low pay and casualisation. Shop-stewards in Cork should be approached by the strikers to organise an immediate letter to the Mandate executive asking it to:

- >Organise a Mandate led march in Cork in support of strikers.
- >Sponsor a regular mass picket every



Saturday. The law prohibiting this was successfully defied at Dunnes, if there is enough support why not here?

>Target the other ELC shops for a recruitment drive.

Outside Mandate: A Strike Support Group should be initiated by the strikers. The strikers should retain full

control over this group. Its principal activities should be to win wider trade union support for the strike, and to spread news about the strike outside of Cork - especially to the other towns that have ELC shops: Belfast, Waterford, Limerick, Galway, and Dublin.

BOMBS ARE NO SOLUTION

FINALLY, IT HAPPENED. Three bombs in London in February, that killed three people, put an end to what had been an 18 month long cease-fire. As we go to press, it is still far from certain as to what will happen in the coming months but the prospects now may well be for a full scale return to the 'armed struggle' by the IRA. With this, undoubtedly, will come renewed sectarian attacks and violence in the North. It is a prospect that no one will welcome, least of all those living in the Northern Ireland

The Peace Process was on shaky ground for quite a while, but particularly so in the last six months. The constant 'road-blocking' efforts of John Major and the British government inevitably caused strife. Throughout the last eighteen months they have placed obstacle after obstacle in front of every attempt to have a meaningful dialogue about the future of Northern Ireland.

Issues relating to ongoing discrimination and sectarianism in the North, and its political institutions - a central source of antagonism for the large nationalist population - never saw the light of day. Instead, everything got bogged down on issues relating to 'arms decommissioning' (and this didn't include the guns of the British Army!).

Even when a compromise was finally reached on this issue - the Mitchell

Principles - Major again destroyed any hope for dialogue with his 'new' proposals for 'elections before talks'. It was a performance that inevitably led to disaster and John Major stands fully to blame. At no time did he show any inclination to shift from his traditional stance of shoring up unionist and loyalist privilege in the North.

In many respects anarchists can be forgiven for saying, 'We told you so' A process that relied so heavily on the British and Irish governments was inevitably flawed. Were we to believe that either government would move in any substantial way towards bringing about meaningful change? Let's face it: this was always highly unlikely.

Both governments have far more in common than divides them, and this is not just in terms of economic policies. As

much as anything else, both governments have assisted and presided over the existence of the Northern Ireland statelet for over 70 years, a statelet that has always been based on discrimination against one section of the community. Neither government has ever made any significant efforts to end the discrimination that is the basis of the Northern State. The British government, in particular, has actively assisted in propping it up.

In fact, it was mass struggle and huge demonstrations by ordinary people (the Civil Rights Movement) that forced the first real compromises from the unionist ascendancy in Northern Ireland. It was these efforts, and not those of either

the British or Irish governments, that brought the first flowers of hope.

Sinn Féin seem to have forgotten this. Or have they? Of course those privileges are minuscule compared to the division between the ruling class and the working class. Major put the maintenance of these privileges, in return for unionist support in the House of Commons ahead of a chance of peace.

In many respects Sinn Féin's performance during this Peace Process has been an eye opener. Its strategy from the very beginning has been a nationalist one: the formation of the so-called Pan-Nationalist Front. Throughout the last number of years they have moderated their politics, in favour of an alliance between the main Irish nationalist forces: the Dublin Government, the SDLP, 'Irish-America' and themselves, Sinn Féin.

But, it has been an sorry strategy and it has led Sinn Féin into defending some of the strangest and most worthless of things. To give but one example, in 1994, when the Irish Government fell (following the Fr. Brendan Smyth child sex abuse scandal) Sinn Féin, almost alone among

political parties in the South, was calling for support for this Labour-Fianna Fáil government. This was at a time when the government was totally discredited. Strange politics indeed.



•Another 25 years of a failed strategy?

BOMBS ARE NO SOLUTION

continued from previous page

But the problems do not end there. The Peace Process never, at any time, addressed the huge problems that face so many people in Ireland today - both north and south of the border. Unemployment is now at record levels, as are the levels of poverty and inequality. This disastrous situation is one that has been created and 'presided over' by many of those central to the Peace Process, including, of course, the Irish and British governments. In this regard, they have never been offering anything else, throughout the last 18 months, other than more of the same.

Sinn Féin stands indicted for falling in so readily and easily with politicians who have punished working class people again and again. Sinn Féin's performance has raised real question marks about their claims to represent an 'alternative Ireland.' '\$1000-a-plate' fund-raising dinners say a lot, after all.

Very few people will welcome the return of the IRA's strategy of the 'armed struggle'. It is a strategy that is deeply flawed and a dead-end to all intents and purposes. It fails, even when it is at its most dramatic, to lay any basis for

working class unity in Ireland, let alone within the North. In fact, more often than not it creates the opposite effect.

It builds tension, leads to increased State power (and the use of Emergency and repressive legislation) and

it shores up 'traditional loyalties' Sectarianism will never end when the strategy being used to bring about a British withdrawal is primarily that of the 'armed struggle'. At its very best it will only lead us back to the very place that

we've been for the last 18 months: cosy wheeling and dealing with the Clintons, Majors and Brutons of this world. What a prospect!

Over the last 25 years, Sinn Féin and the IRA have demanded the leadership of the struggle to bring change in Ireland. But their failure during this peace process, and their failure at the end of it to offer anything other than a return to the 'armed struggle' stands as a major indictment. Sinn Féin are nationalists first, and because of this they can never offer anything to those who do not share their 'Irish-

ness.' These are not viable politics, not in today's Ireland.

But, just as bad, they have shown themselves to be elitist and 'traditional' in their operations during the last 18 months. They have tried - very hard it must be added - to play 'the game of politics'. They have walked the 'corridors of power' but they have created no real mass-struggle alternative to it; that is why they have no strategy now. They are floundering. All they can offer is a return to the 'armed struggle' - a policy that is certain to fail.

As anarchists, we remain convinced that real change is possible. The recent strikes in France confirm once again that the power of the working-class in Europe is far from finished. Workers have much in common. Often that commonality spreads beyond the borders of any country or the colour of anyone's skin. We believe that this is the way forward. The 'peace process' failed because it was conducted in the traditional elitist "men in suits behind closed doors" way of trying to sort out our problems.

The chance for change remains because it will only come through mass mobilisation. Indeed it was the huge struggle of ordinary people in the Civil Rights movement that last won something progressive in the North. Imperialism remains as the great obstacle to progressive change in the North as it continues to fuel hatreds and successfully helps to divide and rule the people.

Northern Ireland is still the poorest area of Britain to live in. What is there worth fighting for? It is now more imperative than ever to build solidarity in our class around this issues that we face as workers: double-taxation, low pay, worsening job security and sex discrimination. Admittedly, this is not a short term strategy. But then where did 25 years of the armed struggle get us?

Why not start on the right road now?

Kevin Doyle



•A common struggle for a better life is the logical solution to common poverty. Shankill Road (top) and Falls Road (below)

HOMELESS IN IRELAND IN 1996 What are the facts

HOMELESSNESS is a major issue in most of Europe, the U.S.A, and a crisis issue in the developing world. Militant housing rights groups, who see squatting as a political act, have sprung up in France and Germany. In Ireland the issue is dealt with almost totally by the charity and service organisations. This is partly because because of Ireland's draconian legislation against squatting, the Forcible Entry Act, and because few people on the left have seen it as a political issue. So what are the facts about homelessness, here?

There are approximately 28,000 households on the waiting lists of local authorities countrywide. The majority of these households are lone parents, reflecting the changing social reality of Irish society. Lone parents and the single homeless are especially likely to have housing problems because local authority housing stock still caters mostly for the standard nuclear families, three and four bedroom houses which they are very reluctant to give to lone parents and never give to single people.

The housing crisis is such now that particular groups have no chance of public housing. Single people will not even be considered for public housing and lone parents have a limited choice of a long stay in a homeless hostel or an inner city flat until something suitable comes along.

These flats are often referred to as drugs supermarkets by applicants.

South Dublin County Council, for example, have 1,000 households on their waiting list for housing. Three quarters of these are lone parents. They build 100 new houses a year at present and have a maximum of 100 casual vacancies to offer applicants. It is obvious in this situation, which is a typical one, that people will have a very long wait for council housing.

Many have to rely on the privately rented sector in order to survive. This means small, poor quality flats and bedsits at very high rents.

The health boards pay rent allowance but not everyone gets it. Young people wanting to move out of home often have a lot of trouble getting rent allowance and

some do not get it at all.

A recent survey of youth homelessness in Tallaght found 79 young people had been homeless in the previous year. Some of this was due to the fact that they would not get rent allowance. Even for those who do qualify it is a ridiculous system where the state subsidises landlords who are overcharging for awful kips. The housing shortage means that these landlords can charge what they like and get away with it.

Travellers also have serious accommodation problems. The government's Task Force estimated that 3,100 extra units of accommodation are needed straight away to cater for the backlog of families living in primitive conditions without sanitation or electricity.

The housing crisis was brought about by the government's decision back in 1987 to stop building public housing. That

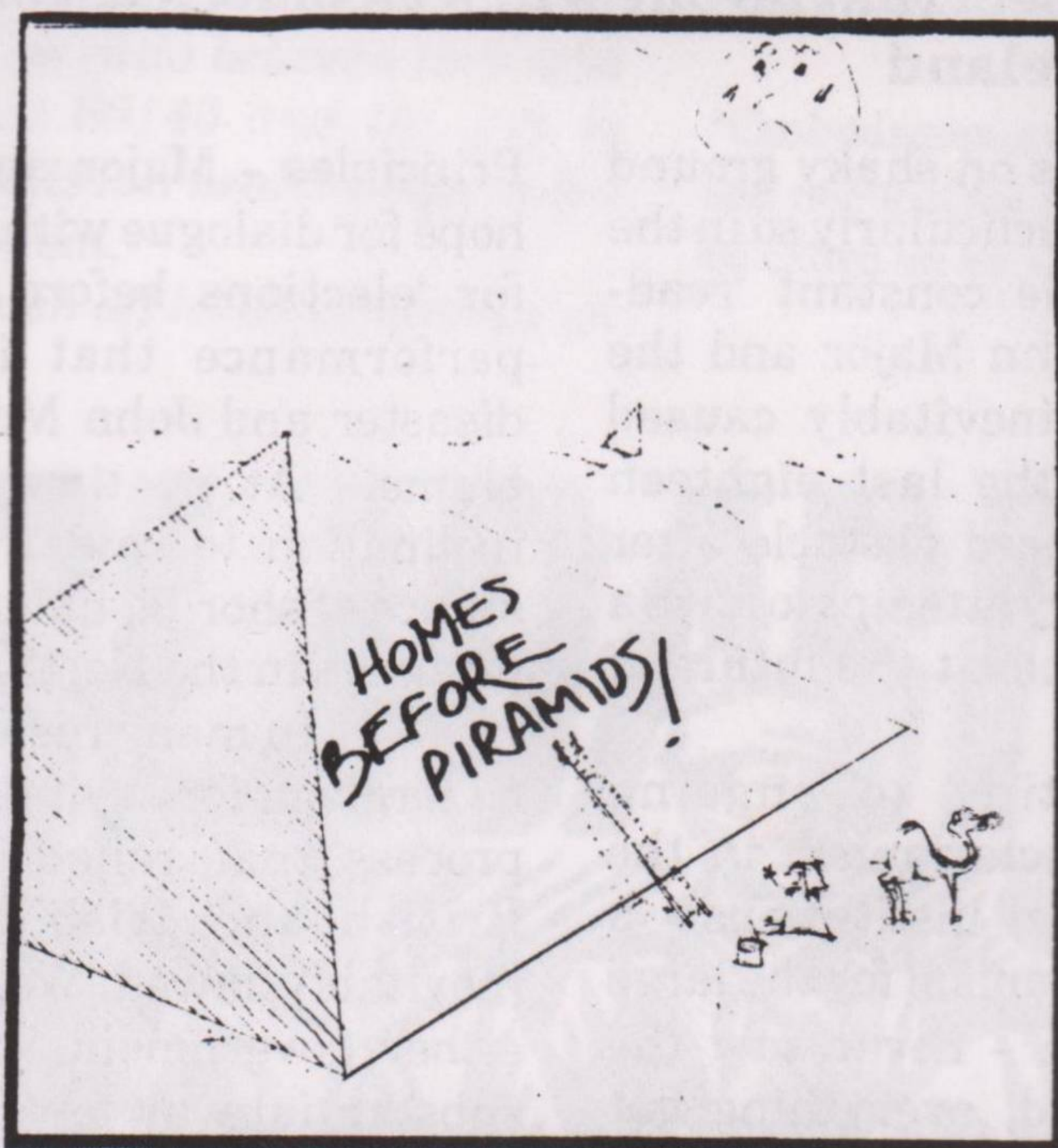
policy lasted for five years and the number of house being built now is still only a fraction of what it was in the seventies and early eighties. While Cork, Dublin and Galway are full of new apartment blocks for yuppies there are thousands living in squalor, waiting for decent housing.

Homelessness is not just about people sleeping rough on the streets. It is also about people living in overcrowded flats and houses, living temporarily with friends and relatives but having no place of their own, people threatened with eviction and people living in hostels and institutions because they have no where else to live. Homelessness is an issue for young gays and lesbians who can be thrown out of home when they declare their sexual orientation. It is also an issues for women and children who are being abused in their homes.

Homeless people are especially vulnerable to physical attacks, exploitation and abuse of all kinds. Their health suffers badly. Many of the long term homeless in this country are mentally ill and have been discharged from institutions to the non-existent 'community' of the streets.

There is no solution except a major increase in affordable, good quality public housing, accessible to everyone who needs it. Next to struggles for wages and conditions, housing struggles are vital to the interests of the working class - the people who can end up homeless in this society.

Patricia McCarthy



HOMELESS IN IRELAND IN 1976

When squatters won

TWENTY YEARS ago Dublin Corporation was forced to give tenancies of hundreds of squatters. Those people got themselves housed, not by pleading with politicians, but through direct action. Alan MacSimóin, who was one of the organisers of Dublin Squatters Association, remembers how they did it.

In 1976 there were several hundred families squatting in local authority flats in the Corporation area. Waiting lists were long and increasing numbers were housing themselves in flats which had become vacant or were due for rehabilitation work.

Evictions were very common, with most being put out within a few months of squatting. Nobody was jailed or even prosecuted under the Forcible Entry and Occupation Act as this would have been politically embarrassing for local councillors. In the private sector, however, there had been jailings. So what usually happened was that after being evicted families would squat another flat. And this process would repeat itself again and again.

The Williams family in Dolphin House, a large south inner city complex, were served with an eviction order. The offer made by the Housing Department was the Legion of Mary hostel for the wife and child, nothing for the husband. They decided to resist.

An information picket was held outside the local rent office and we also went door-to-door in Dolphin House, where there are 400 flats, asking people to help. On the morning of the eviction we went around with a megaphone asking locals to stand with the Williams family. By the time the sheriff, his bailiffs and the cops turned up we had 400 locals blocking the landing, stairwell and courtyard. It was amazing.

After a feeble attempt to execute their order the eviction crew withdrew in defeat. Two further unsuccessful attempts were made. The Williams family were then offered a flat in a complex across the road, Fatima Mansions. All of this was carried on the front pages of the evening papers.

On foot of this victory we were approached by squatters from other areas who wanted our help and advice. The Dublin Squatters Association was formed, with about 40 squatters regularly attending meetings in Killarney Street. The DSA built up a membership of about

100, mainly in Joseph's Mansions and Mary's Mansions in Sean McDermott Street, Phil Shanahan House and St. Bridget's Gardens in Sheriff Street,



Dolphin House and Basin Lane, off James's Street.

Our first task was defend squatting as legitimate. This we did by convincing squatters and many local associations that it was a direct way to force the Corporation to increase the housing stock. We were quite successful, in the areas where we had a base, in winning the argument that families should not have to spend a couple of years on the waiting list or have additional children to build up their points.

Leaflets making this argument were widely circulated in the north inner city flat complexes. We went door-to-door in Sheriff Street and brought over 80 squatters to the May Day march under a DSA banner.

The next threatened eviction that we were asked to organise against was in Phil Shanahan flats in Sheriff Street. Through door-to-door canvassing and a meeting in the local community centre we won the support of the majority in the flats. When the day of the eviction arrived the sheriff found that the entrance to the flats was closed off to cars (we had placed pallets across the road to stop the cops and bailiffs driving right up to the door) and that groups of women and teenagers were waiting. The eviction was called off.

Next came a threatened eviction in Basin Lane, behind James's Street. A teenage couple and their baby were due for eviction. The woman suffered from heart trouble. The Corpo was offering only hostel accommodation. We organised, once more, on a door-to-door

basis. On the day of the eviction about 100 locals faced about 60-70 cops and eviction crew. Time after time they dragged us away from the door. Finally they got us clear but little did the bailiff with the axe know that we had nailed a metal grill to the inside of the door and connected it to the mains electricity. When the axe struck the door the bailiff went flying back across the courtyard, extremely shocked but not injured.

At this stage the ambulance crew from James's hospital broke through the window and took the young mother out on a stretcher. While this was a preventative measure in case the excitement got the

worse of her heart condition, people in the area thought it was more serious. A very angry crowd pushed the cops back. One cop even broke ranks and announced he was not going to evict anyone, before walking away while his inspector impotently yelled at him.

This victory received front page coverage in the evening newspapers. Confidence was rising all the time. The bureaucrats decided that things were getting out of hand. People, the most difficult people to organise, were defeating the Corporation and the gardai. They were doing it in public, and it could spread.

The Corporation responded with an amnesty. All squatters would be rehoused as tenants. However anyone squatting after that date would go to the bottom of the housing list if they squatted a local authority dwelling. With evictions being called off and tenancies offered the DSA rapidly ceased to exist. That particular phase of the housing struggle was over.

Race hate at the Indo

THE RECENT SPATE of vicious attacks on old people living alone, which was responsible for some of their deaths, disgusted everyone. In the hysteria which followed, the media looked for scapegoats. As usual, it was not long before some of them went again for the easy targets: Travellers.

The Sunday Independent published a number of articles which were virulently racist by any standards. One of these, by that noted right wing sensationalist Mary Ellen Synon, referred to Travellers as "beasts with no human qualities".

This article was withdrawn from the Dublin editions of the paper but circulated in the country and English editions. This was followed by another article by Veronica Guerin quoting unnamed Garda sources as saying that they knew "eighty Travellers" who were involved in crimes against the elderly.

In response, the Irish Travellers Movement lodged complaints with the Gardai about the offensive and racist content of these articles under the Incitement to Hatred law. Supporters in England and in Northern Ireland also lodged complaints under the Race Relations Act. It remains to be seen if any of these complaints will be upheld.

In the meantime, Travellers have been harassed by the Gardai, their children have had to endure even more abuse than usual - with some now afraid to go to school - and the cause of Travellers' rights has been set back again. The only people charged for these murders were, in fact, settled people and, in one case, relations of the victim.

The Irish Travellers Movement issued a statement condemning the attacks on the elderly and pointing out that Travellers too were horrified by them. The statement continued: "We also condemn that part of the media coverage of these crimes which has singled out and scapegoated the Traveller community. It has created the impression that all or most of these crimes were committed by Travellers and that all or most Travellers are criminals."

"This impression is much more easily created than dispelled and we fear that long-term damage may be done to the work for better inter-community relations and understanding. We call on the National Union of Journalists to censure those members who have engaged in this activity, both journalists and sub-editors."

"We call on the Gardai, in this climate of pressure on them to catch the culprits, to ensure the highest possible standards of policing. In the interests of avoiding a miscarriage of justice they must refrain from allowing the anti-Traveller antagonism in the media, combined with the pressure to get results, to translate into suspicion and harassment of Travellers as a whole."



•Bulldozer being used to evict Travellers at Clondalkin

They also called for a boycott of the Independent newspapers by the voluntary and community sector when placing advertisements for jobs. Again it remains to be seen if this boycott will happen.

A militant picket on the offices of Independent newspapers would have left them in no doubt how decent people felt about their racist journalism. And a call to the journalism and print staff to support a demand for an equal amount of space to reply to the racist attacks would have been useful. Ordinary people have to learn to support each other. The alternative, trusting to the "good intentions" of government and gardai is - to put it politely - a wee bit naive.

Northern workers paid less

CHEAP LABOUR for sale. That's the offer made by the North's Industrial Development Board. Their fact sheet for potential investors is to the point: "Labour costs in Northern Ireland are lower than the rest of Britain and Ireland, and are among the lowest in Europe. The total average hourly cost (including overtime and social costs) for manual workers is 14% lower than the UK, 52% lower than Germany and 22% lower than the US".

They go on to assure foreign bosses that "there are no government restrictions on work hours for adults over 18 years of age in factories. Workers in Northern Ireland are happy to accommodate a variety of shift patterns. There are no government restrictions on overtime."

The North's Department of Economic Development has put figures on the benefits of being a worker in one of the last colonies. In manufacturing, average male manual earnings are £263 a week and average women's earnings £171 a week. The female figure is 14% lower than in Britain, and the male figure 16% lower.

THE POSITION of workers and peasants in Spain in the 1920s and 1930s was bad. If you were female it was appalling. Conditions for Spanish women were oppressive and repressive in the extreme. The position of women in Spain in the 1930's was similar to that in many Muslim countries today. They had no independence, could be "given away" in arranged marriages and single women were not allowed out without chaperones.

The average daily wage of a male agricultural labourer was 3 pesetas, a woman got half this (1.5 pesetas) for working from dawn to dusk. Reforms often did little to benefit women workers. For example, when the republican government of 1931 bought in the eight hour day this just meant that women could be home at 5pm to cook and clean.

The 1931 government had introduced limited divorce, given women the vote and some limited maternity leave. There was a small movement for women's rights but it was reformist and based on middle class and professional women. Within the anarchist movement there was little discussion of women's issues. However just before the military coup in May 1936 two small groups of anarchist women from Madrid and Barcelona merged to form the *Mujeres Libres* (Free Women) organisation.

The revolution in Spain began as a reaction to the military coup (see *Workers Solidarity* no.47). Workers organised by the anarcho-sindicalist CNT union and, to a lesser extent, the socialist UGT union federations took to the streets. The response was spontaneous and courageous, heavily influenced by

"It was like being brothers and sisters. It had always annoyed me that men in this country didn't consider women as beings with full human rights. But now there was this big change. I believe it arose spontaneously out of the revolutionary movement."

Margarita Balagar quoted in 'The Blood of Spain' by Ronald Frazer, p.287

Free Women of Spain

anarchist ideas which had a deep implantation among Spanish workers and peasants.

Women were everywhere in the initial resistance and fought as full and equal members of the anti-fascist militias up until November 1936, when the republican government ordered women away from the frontline. Many were killed in the battle for Madrid. There were changes in work, leisure and in attitudes towards women.

Women were involved at all levels in the collectivisation of industry and land. Piece-work in the home was abandoned as women flooded into the factories. It was a time of tremendous excitement as a wave of revolutionary enthusiasm swept over the republican zone. As one woman, Pepetia Carpena of the Catalan regional committee of *Mujeres Libres*, put it "even if I had died I wouldn't have wanted not to have had that experience."

Revolutions bring about dramatic



Anarchist militiamen and militiawomen leave Barcelona for the front

that the way in which we see the world is radically altered. So, as we can see in Spain, no revolution is cut and dried.

In areas where they were well organised, such as Terrasa where anarchist women in the textile industry had a group since 1931, they gained maternity leave and full equality of pay. In many cases, though, the CNT was unable or unwilling to make real its goal of full equality. In textiles, in general, where women formed the overwhelming majority of the workforce they still had the lowest wages.

On the land there was further to go as attitudes lagged even further behind. However, in the collectives women found that for the first time ever they did have a real say, although sometimes not an equal say or vote to the men. In some collectives such as Mazon and Miramel in Aragon women and men were paid the same. In many, though, this was not the case.

These collectives did assume that a woman deserved an income in her own

social changes. Old expectations, assumptions and ways of behaving begin to be questioned. But change doesn't occur overnight. Rather, change starts with a discussion. It's though the often long and messy process of debate and disagreement

Whoever pays the piper call the tune

FEAR OF CRIME touches most of us at times. Nobody wants to be a victim, we all want to feel safe at home and in the street. When politicians talk about crime they all say much the same thing, "put more cops on the beat", and little changes. Dermot Sreenan offers an alternative view.

Crime and Punishment

JUSTICE IS a great concept ..but it has little place in capitalist society. Once you start to question this economic system you find that so much of what we are told is lies. The very attributes which capitalism boasts: Law, Order and Justice, are like props on a film set. The closer you examine them the more hollow and fake they prove to be.

In order to enforce justice you first of all have to decide what's criminal. The French sociologist Emile Durkheim in the 1890's wrote "What confers a criminal character on an act is not the nature of the act but the definition given it by society. We do not reprove certain behaviour because it is criminal; it is criminal because we reprove it." In other words what society deems a crime is a crime.

The people who have always defined what is and isn't criminal have been the ruling class. In pre-industrial Europe crimes fell into two major

categories

- 1) against the Church
- 2) against the aristocracy

The rulers, those in power at the time, were the Church and the aristocracy. Heresy, Sacrilege, and Blasphemy were all punishable by death. It was also a capital offence to pick fruit,

hunt or fish on the lands of the King or the nobles.

After the industrial revolution the only thing that changed was who decided what was or wasn't criminal. The new ruling class replaced the Church and aristocracy as the authors of laws. They moved the goal posts and set the laws to protect their own property. Property and wealth is, after all, what differentiates the ruling class from the working class.

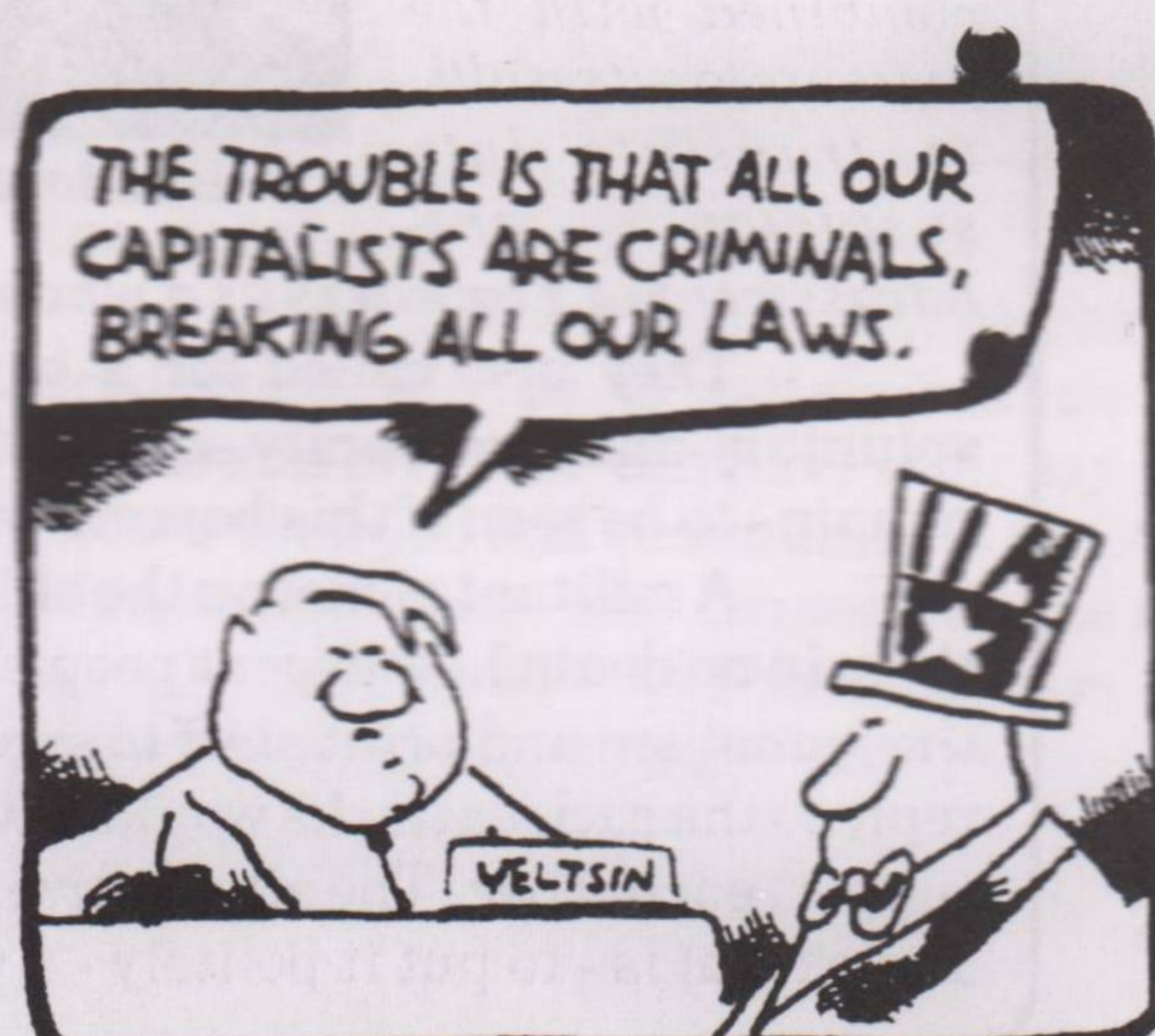
Victorian Values still alive

The Victorians, those beloved moralists, decided to add a new dimension to dealing with criminals. Punishment (an idea as old as the Bible) was the way to ensure that lessons were learned. Huge institutions were built to house the mad and confine the criminal. They would be locked up and forgotten about. The ruling

class would institutionalise those who did not conform to the norms set down by them. In the field of medicine, advances have been made which led to a rejection of these primitive views. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for the judicial system. We have Mountjoy (Dublin) and Strangeways (Manchester), prisons still in use in the 1990's even though they were built in the 1800's.

Paper Versus Mary Jane

The laws have changed with the times but still seem to be weighted towards protection of profit and the wealthy. Cannabis and marijuana were outlawed in the United States in 1937 after William Randolph Hearst led a campaign against them to protect his paper manufacturing industry. Five years later during World War II the United States department of



right, which was an advance. Most collectives, though, had a "family wage". This, of course, was almost always paid to the man who would be assumed to be the head of the household. The social division of labour remained. "Women's work" was "women's work" and when women did "men's work" they still got women's wages!

The CNT was committed, at least in theory, to full and absolute equality. They declared, at their 1936 Saragosa conference, that after the revolution "the two sexes will be equal, both in rights and obligations."

In practice, up to 1936, the CNT was failing to draw in women. Women in the union often found that they were not being taken seriously and that sexism was not uncommon. To combat this the Mujeres Libres group was founded in May 1936.

They aimed to empower women, giving them the confidence to become involved in anarchist politics. They saw it as crucial to involve women directly in the struggle for their own liberation. They did not see themselves as feminists, in fact according to one member, Soledad Estorach, most of them had never even heard of feminism. They believed that ending the domination of women by men was part of a larger struggle to abolish all forms of domination.

Unlike the feminists who narrowly focused on the individual liberation of individual women, they believed that the struggle for emancipation was a collective one for anarchism and freedom as a whole. None the less a major part of this fight was against the undervaluing of women within the anarchist movement.

Achievements

During its short two year existence Mujeres Libres came to number 30,000

women and achieved much throughout republican Spain. A major focus was on education. In Barcelona they set up the Casa de La Dona, a major women's college, in 1937. By December 1938 the Casa was taking in 600-800 women per day. They ran numerous schools and courses to train women to enter industry in both Madrid and Barcelona. As well as technical training they urged trainees to fight for full equality within the workplace.

They also undertook military training, setting up a shooting range in Madrid. They opened maternity hospitals in Terrasa and Barcelona, and many schools for young children. These schools based themselves on the anarchist idea of education as a process of development and exploration rather than one of factual brainwashing.

They also fought for and won legalised abortion, contraception and divorce and, locally, some rights to child care for women workers. As the war went on many members became increasingly involved in the housing and education of refugees.

This article only allows for a short summary. Above all else, Mujeres Libres stuck to their original agenda of emancipation for women through their own struggle. As the war progressed the socialists, communists and POUM (anti-Stalinist Leninists) all set up "women's sections". All wished to draw women into the struggle against fascism, and into their own organisations. None, however, took seriously the idea of women's emancipation as a goal in itself. Mujeres Libres was the only group which did so.

The fate of women in Spain was closely tied to that of the overall revolution. As this was pushed back by the

Communist Party and the government of the day, so were they. As the militias and collectives were destroyed their first brief taste of freedom was snatched away. The victory of Franco only served to copper-fasten this process.

It is clear that the revolution did bring some real gains for women. It is also clear from the events of the Spanish revolution that women's freedom cannot be ignored or side-lined by

revolutionaries. It cannot be left until after the revolution or to "the women's section." A struggle which does not, from the beginning, aim to win freedom and equality for all does not deserve the name revolution.

Conor McLoughlin



BEWARE

the Butchers Of Social Welfare

THE "WELFARE STATE" as we know it in Ireland and other EU states is a child of the post-World War II period when governments were forced to introduce Social Welfare payments in order to deal with spiralling unemployment and to head off social unrest.

Recent years have seen this "Welfare State" under vicious assault as Thatcherite economists and politicians attempt to drive down what they see as state 'meddling' in their free market. Welfare payments are blamed for high wages (tell that to workers in fast food restaurants, contract cleaning or catering!) and for making it "uneconomic" for welfare recipients to re-enter the jobs market (as if there were tens of thousands of jobs just waiting to be filled!).

This attack on the Welfare State is part of the drive towards a single European currency. In a global context we are witnessing the creation of three world "economic superpowers" - the US/NAFTA axis, the EU (expanding into the former Eastern bloc) and the Japan/Asia/South Pacific axis. In Europe, governments and bosses see the need to reduce or at least hold back wage levels in order

1% of total taxation while taxes on personal income amounted to 31.5% of the total tax bill.

*PRSI on workers amounted to 16.2% of tax raised, almost double the 8.8% contribution from corporation tax.

*PRSI collected in 1994 - £1,801 million - was more than the combined totals of corporation tax and income tax from farmers and other self-employed.

*Business and Finance magazine has claimed that the Dunnes Stores family trust owes £120 million in taxes since 1985.

*The 1994 tax amnesty wrote off £500 million in due taxes. 35% of those who availed of the amnesty also availed of the 1988 amnesty.



Of course when the Beef Tribunal turned up evidence of massive tax evasion by the beef barons, no company execu-

tive was brought before a court to account for his/her actions. This, of course, had nothing whatsoever to do with the fact that these same beef barons were and are among the biggest contributors to the political parties (or so we are supposed to believe!).

Social Welfare "fraud" is hyped for two main reasons. Firstly, the path to introducing cutbacks in welfare payments (necessary for what the economists refer to as the "convergence" of EC economies) will be so much easier if workers can be convinced that all Social Welfare recipients are ripping them off.

Secondly - and equally importantly for the immediate future and job security of the politicians - if workers believe that the reason for high taxation on their income is the high level of welfare "spongers", their anger will be deflected from the real cause - tax evasion by the wealthy.

Workers and the unemployed must not allow this "divide and conquer" tactic to be successful. United resistance to welfare cutbacks is a must.

Gregor Kerr

agriculture released a film called "Hemp for Victory" which encouraged farmers to grow hemp for the greater good for the war effort.

Murder Versus Industrial Death

In the USA they have come up with a new definition for murder which depends on who commits it. A boss who saves money by not providing safety equipment for his workers is responsible for what is termed an "industrial death". This happens if a worker dies at his place of work due to a work related task. This is not a criminal offence.

The American public are bombarded with the latest homicide statistics but are not so well informed

"The sin of property we do disdain, no man has any right to buy and sell the earth for private gain.

By theft and murder they took the land, now everywhere the walls spring up at their command."

about how many "industrial deaths" occur in North America each year.

It's not what you do it's who you are that counts

In his excellent pamphlet "Spike Island - the answer to what", Fr. Peter Mc Verry highlights an exemplary couple of cases.

* A low-paid worker stole a television worth £400. He was sentenced to a year in prison and lost his job.

*A property speculator bought land for £350,000. He later sold it for £2,500,000. His earnings amounted to £21,500 per week and his search for profit added £400 to the cost of each house.

Officially no crime was committed.

This example really brings home to us the fact that justice is also defined by what class you belong to: working class, i.e. the low paid worker, or the ruling class, i.e. the property speculator.

The State V. the Working Class

Last year John Lonergan, the governor of Dublin's Mountjoy prison, admitted that 50% of the prison population come from a few deprived areas of Dublin. 75% of the prisoners are under 30 years old and 30% are under 21.

The State, including all the various governments, has changed little in the last 30 years. Regularly we read in the newspapers how the politicians are waging a war against crime. In all reality, they are simply preying on people's fears. The war is mainly being waged by the police against the poorer working class areas.

The police in larger towns and cities are viewed by some as the enemy. The police are waging the war against crime. The ruling class have defined the crimes. The police seek the criminals in working class areas. Their search seldom takes in the upper echelons of society. In Cherry Orchard they send in the riot police, when corruption is revealed in the

beef industry they have a tribunal and manage to find nobody guilty.

Who do the police protect ?

Childish notions that the police are there to protect and serve the community soon disappear upon experience. Their primary purpose is to serve and protect the state and it's ruling class. Their use, over many years, to smash picket lines during strikes illustrates that point.

Capitalism continues to open the chasm between rich and poor. The poorer people get, the less facilities are provided for them. The councils and government ignore the problems, hoping that nothing

will happen or blow up before the end of their term in office.

The police are often the only representatives of authority in these places. They are there to keep a lid on a growing discontent. Last year over 900 complaints were dealt with by the Garda Complaints Commission, this resulted in just three suspensions from the force.

Justice for the police appears more lenient. The state prefers not to punish it's foot soldiers. It does not want demoralisation among men and women who do their bit for the class system by dealing with those who will not conform.

REVIEW

FIGHTER FOR FREEDOM

THE BASIC BAKUNIN, WRITINGS 1869-1871
Translated and edited by Robert M Cutler
Prometheus Books, New York, £6.95

History is written by the victors. The victory of Stalinism in the USSR was certainly one of the reasons why the works of Marx were classified, published, translated and sold in their millions. The opposite is true for Mikhail Bakunin's political ideas.

This has meant that many of his major works remain untranslated and published. There are many well paid academics who call themselves Marxists but only a handful, like Noam Chomsky, with the courage to call themselves anarchists. So the work of translating and printing Bakunin's ideas remains the work of a handful of dedicated and unpaid activists. This book is a useful addition to that ongoing effort.

Bakunin led an adventurous life travelling throughout Europe. When it was once remarked to him that his manuscripts were in disarray he replied "my life itself is a fragment." (see introduction).

This is a collection of writings spanning what Cutler describes as "a phase of his activity which is central to his anarchism, which is generally agreed to be one of his most significant projects and which marks the height of his influence in his life."

They were originally written as articles for the Swiss newspapers 'L'Egalite' and 'Le Progress' in 1869. As articles they are well written and readable, not boring economic or political tracts.

Cutler divides the writings into five parts. Parts 2, 3 and 4 would be of greatest interest to present day anarchists or activists with an interest in anarchism. These deal with the differences between bourgeois and revolutionary socialism (his terms!), and the programme and tactics which revolutionaries need to succeed.

Much of his time was spent trying to show the difference between his ideas and those of Marx. Bakunin's position in this battle of ideas is clearly outlined in chapters like that on the policy of the International Workingmen's (sic) Association. Bakunin emphasised the point that ideas are not handed down ready made by intellectuals hot out of the library. Ideas are learned through living and through struggling. As he says of "the worker". (p.103)

"On the other hand, through practice and collective experience, which is naturally always more broadening and instructive than any isolated experience, the progressive expansion and development of the economic struggle will bring him more and more to recognise his true enemies: the privileged classes, including the clergy, the bourgeoisie and the nobility; and the state."

Socialism was not bought in from "without" but was carried instinctively by the great majority. (p.140) "People have always longed for their emancipation from every yoke that has enslaved them."

This instinct was not enough though, organisation was necessary. Bakunin pointed to the International Working Men's Association of which he was then a member as an example of how

to organise. He shows how it was acting as a 'leadership of ideas'. (p.140) "The International's influence has never been anything but one of opinion".

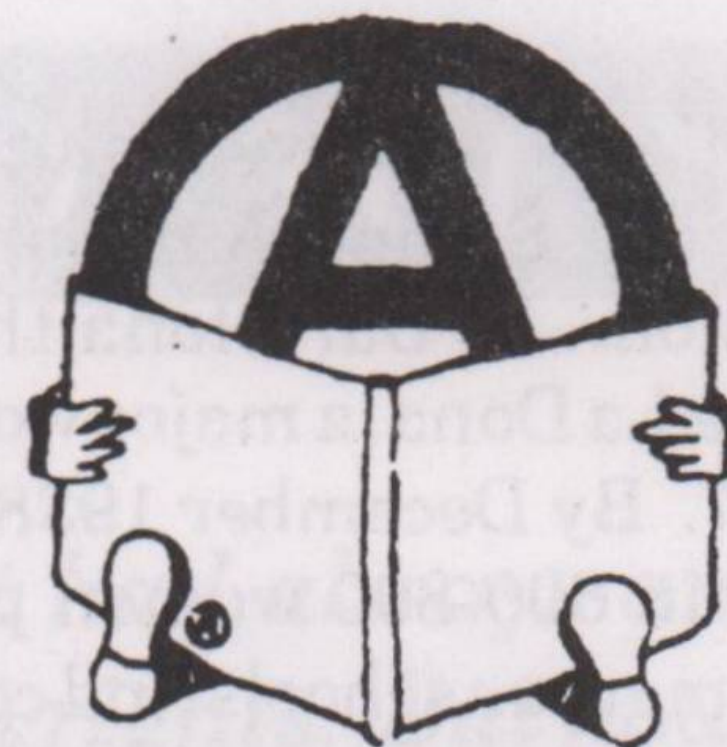
This he compares to the state which never calls on workers for anything other than their "submission".

Besides these basic anarchist arguments there are other articles on a range of issues like nationalism, social democracy, education, land and inheritance, and the general strike.

Overall this book is readable, inspirational and still relevant. Unlike the adoration of Marx by some Marxists, we don't claim Bakunin as a deity with all the answers. But he did point us in the right direction. As a basic introduction to anarchist ideas you could do worse than start here.

Des McCarron

Available from the WSM Bookservice P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8 for £8.00 inc. p+p. Write for a free catalogue.



MEMORIES OF AN ANARCHIST

I COULDN'T PAINT GOLDEN ANGELS by Albert Meltzer
AK Press, Edinburgh, £13.95

THERE IS A long tradition of personal autobiographies written by ageing activists in the anarchist movement about their experiences and motivations. This is the recently published autobiography of Albert Meltzer, a British anarchist whose life has taken him from the fights against Mosley and support for Spain in the 1930's

through fringe involvement in a plot to assassinate Hitler, the Cairo mutiny after WWII, supporting the Spanish resistance, to the Angry Brigade trials and fighting the National Front in the 1970's.

The book also touches on more recent involvement up to and including the Poll Tax riot in London. Albert's book is a valuable addition to the archive of anarchist history, not because its an accurate portrayal of the movement in this period (it's extremely partisan and anecdotal) but because it reminds us of the reason and motivation we have for being anarchists in the first place. Also among the brief mentions of events are many that would encourage you to try and find out more and a valuable reminder of the way anarchists have been written out of even recent history.

Andrew Flood

This book is available from the AK Distribution, 33 Tower Street, Edinburgh EH6 7BN, Scotland. Write for a free catalogue.

IN A WORLD where we are taught to leave most of the important decisions to bosses and leaders, it can seem quite novel to suggest that we make up our own minds and carry out our own decisions. When people first began to talk of 'self-activity' and 'direct action', near the end of the last century, it meant discarding trust in 'better' politicians who promised to change things from above.

In the workplace today it means using work-to-rules, strikes and occupations to win claims rather placing our trust in Labour Relations Commission, Labour Court or any other supposedly impartial body. In the community it means tenants & residents associations organising the non-payment of water charges instead of trusting the local politicians to keep their promise to get rid of them.

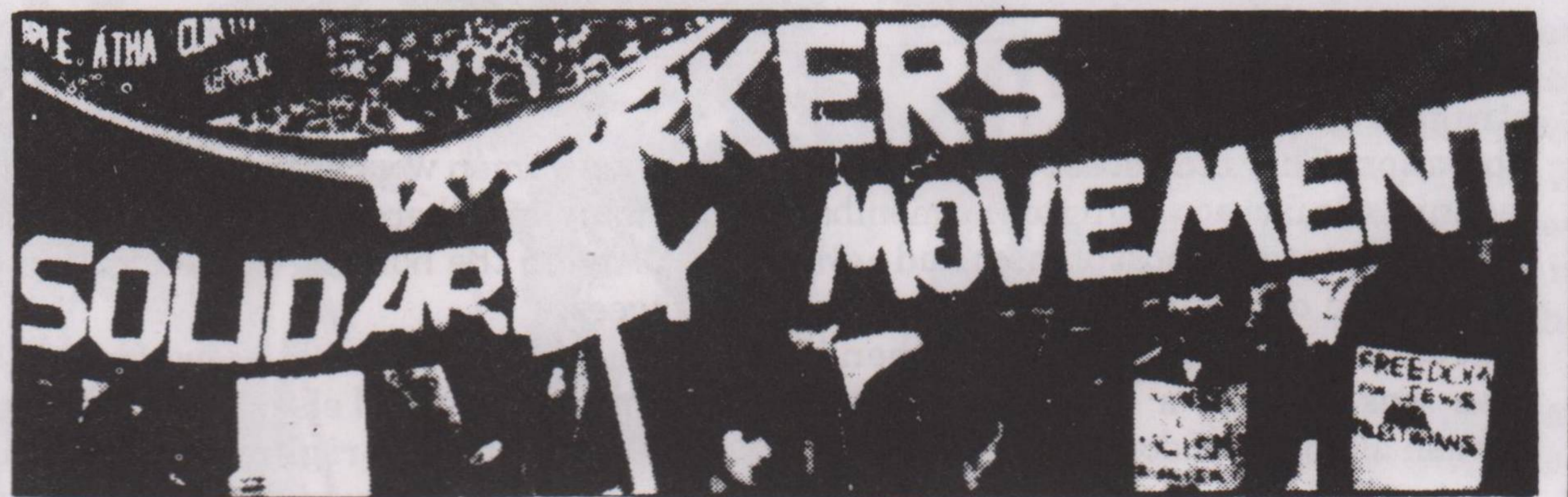
What those with authority don't like is that by involving everyone who will be effected it rejects the idea that most people are stupid and powerless, and so must leave the important decisions to someone else. Most major improvements were not just benevolently handed to us by bosses and governments. Most had to be fought for, even things as basic as having the weekend off work or being able to buy a condom.

For anarchists, capitalism is not only about rich and poor, it is also about order-givers and order-takers. There is a pyramid of power and the lower down you are the less control you have over your own life. Anarchists hold that control over one's life ought to be a basic right of every person and group of people.

Living in a society where you can be bossed around, where the decisions that effect you at home and at work can be made by someone else, is not a good way to live. Fundamental to anarchism is that everyone can be involved in making the decisions that will effect them.

Our goal is a free society where production will be to satisfy human wants and everyone can have their say in how their job and community is run. Means and ends are connected, the means used must be ones that increase confidence, that encourage participatory democracy. When people challenge the order-givers at work or in their area, anarchists argue for those effected to

Thinking about Anarchism



Direct Action

take control of their own struggles, to decide how their struggle is to be conducted.

This is the antidote for apathy, for what apathy often signals is not a lack of interest but a lack of belief that anything can be achieved. Encouraging real involvement in day-to-day struggles builds up people's confidence and belief in their own ability to change things for the better. By showing people their potential power we help to politicise them, and make them see that they can have the main role to play in changing society.

This emphasis on self-activity stands in marked contrast to most other socialists. Rather than encouraging people to use their ability to change things, they seek instead to encourage dependency. Trust the politician, the party, the leader ... trust a minority to make the rules for everyone else.

The problem for Lenin was that in factories, on railways, in mines and lots of other industries workers had taken over, elected their own factory committees and were showing they were more than capable of managing their own workplaces. Not going to let reality get in the way of a good theory, the Bolshevik government outlawed the committees.

Absurd in their arrogance, they still hand down a useful lesson for us today. The Bolsheviks did not start out as self-seeking despots. They had ideals, though not enough of them. We learnt there is no pre-condition more important for a successful revolution than working class self-confidence. If there is not enough of this the running of society will be taken over by whoever can sell the image that they are the most 'expert' and 'professional'.

When this happens you can forget about socialism. A minority is running things. At first they convince themselves that it is a 'temporary' measure, but a 'necessary' one.

But rather than handing away their power they begin to develop into a group with its own interests, and then into a fully fledged ruling class. This is what happened in Russia, and every single time a minority has been trusted to rule a country after a revolutionary upheaval.

Only a self-confident, active and politically aware working class can create the true democracy that will prevent this happening. We start getting that confidence through taking direct action.

Joe King



•Direct action: the non-payment campaign

If one wants to do away with the division into workers and bosses, why not also the division into rulers and ruled? Perhaps a great many socialists do not believe that ordinary working class people can run their lives, can run a modern industrial country? One of the most ludicrous results of this was Lenin and the Bolshevik Party deciding during the Russian Revolution that the working class was not capable of running industry.

ERRICO MALATESTA

ANARCHISM IS based on the idea of individual freedom but the anarchist movement, unlike most other political movements, does not revolve around particular individuals. Our history cannot be reduced to the 'history of great men', rather it is the story of the development of a particular set of ideas, and the struggle to put those ideas into practice.

That said, there are famous anarchists. Some are known because their writings helped stimulate new thinking in the anarchist movement, or define a new current in anarchist thought. Others, like Errico Malatesta, are famous because their very lives epitomised the development of anarchist politics, and reflected the setbacks and advances of the movement.

Born in 1853, into a growing mood of republicanism, Malatesta soon saw the need for a more profound change in society, and in 1871 joined the Italian section of the International. At the time, the main anarchist/socialist strategy was to start insurrections, driving government officials out of small towns and burning the tax ledgers and bank books in the hope of sparking more widespread rebellions, a tactic which Malatesta supported enthusiastically. He was forced to flee Italy in 1878 after the assassination of King Umberto, by a republican cook, led to a general crackdown on radicals.

He returned to Italy after five years spent travelling around Europe, continually agitating for anarchism, but was arrested in 1884, and had to leave again, this time for Argentina, where he lived for twelve years and was very involved in the organisation of the labour movement. He again returned to Italy, where he became the editor of *L'Agitazione*. After only a year, however, he was arrested once more, but he managed to escape, and after a few years in America he travelled to London.

There he lived and worked for the next thirteen years, with a mass campaign stopping him from being deported in 1909. In 1913 he went back to Italy of his own volition. Following the collapse of the general strike of 1914, Malatesta, now in his sixties, had to leave for London once more. He spent the war years there, writing and



speaking often on the need for anarchists not to choose sides between two capitalist, imperialist powers. Finally, in 1919, he was able to return to Italy, this time for good.

Although he had spent barely half his life in his native country, his experience and dedication had won him much respect in anarchist circles there. At the time, the anarchist movement in Italy was strong, the popularity reflected in the fact that *Umanità Nova*, the daily anarchist paper which Malatesta founded, had, at its peak, a circulation of over 50,000. Unfortunately, this golden period was to be short-lived. When Mussolini came to power the left-wing papers were closed down, the anarchist movement decimated and driven underground, and Malatesta himself spent the last five years of his life under house arrest.

Malatesta was, above all, an activist. While he wrote many articles and pamphlets he was no academic, he was a working electrician who wrote when there was something to be said, not for the sake of writing. He described an anarchist society simply, as a "society organised without authority, meaning by authority the power to impose one's own will", "a society which reconciles the liberty of everyone with co-operation and liberty among men". What more needs to be said?

We also see in Malatesta's writings the changes that were taking place in the general anarchist movement. Though he always reserved the right to use arms in the defense of social gains, maintaining that "if you want the corn, you need the cannon", over the years the tactics he emphasised changed, from the insurrectionism of his youth to the syndicalism of his older years. He had always said that the anarchist movement needed to be as visible as possible, and this change reflects his coming to believe, as did the wider anarchist movement, that this is incompatible with the strategy of 'propaganda by the deed'.

There is no one action or book for which Malatesta is famous. There have almost certainly been better anarchist writers, more skilled anarchist organisers, anarchists who have sacrificed more for their beliefs. Perhaps though, Malatesta is celebrated because he combined all of these so well, exemplifying thought expressed in deed, ideas backed up by action, and all driven by a fierce commitment to freedom.

Ray Cunningham

Find Out More

The world's wealth is produced by us - the working class. We ought to enjoy the benefits.

The Workers Solidarity Movement is an anarchist organisation that fights for a 32 county Workers' Republic.

We stand for a socialism that is based on freedom and real democracy, a society based on workplace and community councils.

This kind of socialism has nothing to do with the state capitalism that was practiced in Russia, and still is in China, Cuba and other police states.

We oppose coercive authority, and hold that the only limit on freedom of the individual should be that they don't encroach on the freedom of others.

As part of our fight for anarchism we are involved in the struggles for higher wages, for trade union democracy, for women's rights, for jobs.

We oppose all divisions in the working class. We fight against all attempts to set Protestant against Catholic, men against women, skilled against unskilled, old against young, heterosexual against homosexual.

We are opposed to the British state's presence and to partition. We defend peoples' right to fight back. But we are not nationalists, we do not merely want to get rid of the border. We want to unite our class and create a totally new Ireland.

I want more information about the Workers Solidarity Movement.

NAME

ADDRESS

Return to WSM, P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8.



Mexican anarchism

a rich history and a re-emerging movement

ALTHOUGH most attention on Mexico has focused on the libertarian aspects of the EZLN, a consciously anarchist movement is also coming into existence there. This emerging anarchist movement is disorganised and small but has a rich history. It was born in the last century under the influence of Rodakonty and Chauvin, and later Ricardo Flores-Magon who is still a popular figure.

Groups today range from the counter-cultural Anti-Authoritarian Revolutionary Youth (JAR), to the Motin

group which seeks to create the conditions for social anarchism. Throughout the whole of Mexico there are about 30 groups spread out in a dozen towns with 400 to 500 militants.

In 1994, inspired by events in Chiapas, the Self-Management Libertarian Union (ULA) was born bringing together individuals from JAR, Motin and a social library. There are plans for a national journal put together by about a dozen groups spread out over five towns.

On May 1st 1995 when the official unions refused to organise a May

Day march, Mexico saw its biggest protest march since 1968 with 1.5 million people demanding:

- *an end to NAFTA,
- *a rise in salaries,
- *the re-employment of workers sacked during strikes,
- *political freedom,
- *support for the EZLN.

The anarchist contingent brought together some 3,000 people on this march.

Independent unions are appearing in several towns and are beginning to draw thousands of members, who have carried out sporadic actions at Ford, in telecommunications and in the oil industry. Some unions give libertarian ideas a warm welcome.

In December 1995 a meeting took place between militants of the French Anarchist Federation and a dozen other Mexican anarchist groups in the premises of the Independent Textile Workers Union.

Source: *Le Monde Libertaire*, 7 February 1996

Subscribe

Free pamphlet with each subscription

Ireland: 9 issues for £5.00
or 4 issues for £2.50

Britain: 6 issues for £5.00

Europe: 4 issues for £5.00

Eastern Europe: 4 issues for \$1.00

NAME:

ADDRESS:

I enclose £ for issues. Send me my free copy of *Ireland and British Imperialism*, or *The Spanish Civil War: Anarchism in Action*. (please tick one)

Return to *Workers Solidarity*,
P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8.

in
brief



**ANARCHISM
IN ARABIC**

OVER ONE hundred million people in the world speak Arabic, or languages closely related to Arabic. Though most live in and around the Middle-East and North Africa, a large number also live in Europe, America and Asia. Very few, at present, have access, in their own language, to any of the major anarchist texts that are currently in print.

Until recently Daniel Guerin's book, *Anarchism*, was one of these books. Written in 1965 by the well known French anarchist, it remains one of the best and most comprehensive introductions to anarchist ideas. Now this book has been translated and published in Arabic - a major achievement.

Those who have worked on the translation and the publication of this first Arabic edition of *Anarchism* are in the Lebanon. They have minimal resources. Their efforts have already been assisted by a number of anarchist organisations in Europe, including the WSM.

Now word has reached us that funds are too low to allow for widespread distribution of the new Arabic edition. This is why we are appealing to you to send any funds (no contribution is too small) to help with this project. Please send your donations to: *Anarchism in Arabic Appeal*, c/o WSM, PO Box 1528, Dublin 8.

All moneys received will be forwarded to our Lebanese comrades to help with the distribution of this important publication. Please let us know if you require a receipt.

**BANGLADESHI WORKERS
FIGHT 7-DAY WEEK**

A SEVEN DAY working week, sometimes as long as 16 hours a day. That's the lot of many clothing workers in Bangladesh. Mistreatment and beatings are common. So is sexual harassment. Even rape and murder are not unknown.

Since last summer, the National Garment Workers Federation has organised many large demonstrations against these primitive conditions. Job security is non-existent and hundreds of union activists have been sacked.

The NGWF are fighting to make Friday a free day, for overtime rates to be paid and for an end to the harassment of women workers. The union has built links with anarchist and radical unions in other countries, including the Swedish SAC and the anarcho-syndicalist International Workers Association.

Messages of support can be sent to Amirul Haque Amin, NGWF, GPO Box 864, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

**ANARCHISTS IN
RUSSIA'S FAR EAST**

IN KHABAROUSK, in far eastern Russia, some people have to walk to work because they can't afford the massively increased bus & train fares. Anarchists have been organising a non-payment campaign. They have also set up their own pirate radio station, club and a free university.

**World anarchist
News**



News from the Land of the Cedars

LAST YEAR the Workers Solidarity Movement took part in an international libertarian meeting in Spain. The following article, which originally appeared in the French journal *Alternative Libertaire*, is based on a report by Basina Bassan, a Lebanese anarchist.

"The second Lebanese Republic faces serious problems. Although the war was ended by the 1989 Taef agreements, the underlying cause of the war - the religious divide - has not really been addressed, and so the situation remains explosive. For example, although the Taef agreements required that civil service recruitment must ignore religious denomination, we still find near-perfect segregation between, and within departments.

This mirrors the division of the higher political functionaries - President of the Republic, President of the National Assembly, etc. - into Christian positions and Moslem positions. What is worse is that you cannot choose to remain beyond this division - if you want to marry, for example, you must have a religious service for it to be legally recognised. You can be an atheist only in your thoughts, no more...

GENERAL STRIKE

The situation is charged by the continuing presence of Syrian and Israeli troops. What's more, civil liberties are coming under increased attack. In July of last year, the General Union of Workers (an umbrella organisation similar to ICTU) decided to organise a general strike to protest against the 40% increase in the price of petrol. The government replied with a ban on demonstrations, and called in the army to enforce it. The Lebanese

unions did not retreat, and held a huge demonstration in August to force the government to rethink their position. Even this, though, falls far short of the changes that are needed.

Lebanon is a land of unrestrained capitalism, with a government in favour of economic liberalism and privatisation - this in a country with little electricity, few telephones, and little clean drinking water. The wages of the most impoverished continue to fall, while the rich avoid paying their taxes, and what money there is the government spends on luxuries for its ministers.

THE OPPOSITION - AGAINST WHO AND WHAT?

There is little to say about the Lebanese left - much of it is identical to the petit-bourgeois parties, more interested in getting a bigger slice of the cake than with real change. Its members actually support the liberal economic policies of the government - it is strange to sometimes hear the old Maoists quoting Marx to justify their 'provisional return' to capitalism.

THE NEW LEFT

Following the repression of the July demonstrations, the radical communist left is starting to regroup. It is made up of many political strands, but it is noticeable that even the nationalists are becoming

more influenced by libertarianism, even anarcho-syndicalism. There is, then, a glimmer of hope, providing everyone learns the bitter lessons of experience. If we can work together in our areas of agreement, we may be able to regain the good years of 1970-75, before the war overtook the radical left.

In conclusion, the Lebanese left will have no chance to progress if it is not open to all who agree with certain fundamental criteria: combating the Israeli occupation, fighting for secularisation, collectivisation of vital sectors (health, education...), the safeguarding of public liberties, equality between women and men, openness to the 'advanced west', openness to agreement on the left...

STRIKING BACK

THE LEBANESE General Union of Workers called a strike and demonstration for February 29th. Their claim was for increased wages to keep up with inflation, more freedom of expression and an end to bans on demonstrations. On February 27th the government and army declared a curfew for the 28th and 29th.

There was no demonstration but the strike took place all over the country. This is the first time we have seen a curfew used to stop a demonstration. The government is afraid of workers' anger, the minimum salary is \$150 but the cost of living is as high as in Europe. The government's 'justification' for the ban is the conflict with Israel.

Samir
Labanon

**Swedish trade union says
yes to libertarian socialism**

IMAGINE A TRADE Union satisfying its members so much that they voted to increase dues, spend more on their 'revolutionary' newspaper and cut the number of paid officials. That's what happened in Sweden last year.

The anarchist-influenced SAC trade union has rejected attempts to play down the union's libertarian socialist politics. Kieran Casey, the SAC's international secretary, explained "an internal crisis arose when due to economic constraints the union decided to lower the number of ombudsmen* while continuing to support our weekly paper 'Arbetaren' (The Worker). It was also necessary to increase union dues which had remained still for the past few years. The following referendum resulted in a small majority voting for a relatively high increase."

Members who wanted to cut back on overtly political activities and concentrate on more conventional trade union work split away but only took 15 of the 120 local branches with them.

About 1,400 members resigned. While this was happening five new SAC branches were set up, and these had recruited a few hundred new members by the end of 1995.

"Otherwise the SAC has enjoyed a steady, if slow, increase in members, mainly in large towns, with young people dominating. The ratio between men and women is about 60/40 and the gap is diminishing. This is a healthy sign and a source for optimism.

"To finish off let us remember on

this anniversary of Joe Hill's execution, his focus on the word 'organise'. We organise ourselves not only in the struggle to change this rotten system of wage slavery but also to gain experience and learn how to build a future society based on self-management and mutual aid" said Casey.

*Ombudsmen are full-time experts in labour law and negotiation procedures whose services can be called on by local union branches

SOLIDARITY



LETHAL LOANS The bankers who KILL PEOPLE

continued from page 12

ways to help people. The problem with this theory, however, is that it takes no account of capitalism - the prevailing manner in which the world is organised. Because of capitalism the World Bank creates poverty and destitution in most countries that it involves itself with.

DEBT IS GOOD

Colonialism created massive inequality wherever it went. Many Irish people, for example, will be familiar with this in regard to Britain - a country that has always been wealthier than Ireland. But in 1870, when colonialism was well underway in Africa, Asia and the Americas, estimates of the disparity in wealth in world were put at only one to ten. That is, rich countries were ten times wealthier than poor countries. By 1960 however - just ninety years later - that estimate of the disparity had risen to thirty eight times. (That is, rich countries were thirty eight times wealthier than poor countries.)

The amazing thing is, is that just twenty five years on from that again (in 1985) the estimate had risen to fifty two times.

This gives some idea of the impact that institutions like the World Bank and the IMF have had from the time they were set up. Rather than helping to alleviate inequality they began, very quickly, to make it worse.

Looking at the figure above, another thing is also very noticeable. In more recent decades (since the early 1970s) the increase in the disparity in wealth has actually begun to accelerate - that is, it is beginning to increase at a faster and faster pace. To explain and understand why is this so, a couple of things must be borne in

mind - these give some indication of the disaster than is now facing many millions of people in this world. It also explains, in part, why nothing short of revolution will change it.

Borrowing to pay for development became an accepted (and correct) part of the world economy after WW2. Almost all countries borrowed to some degree - in part as a response to the need to develop, in part because borrowing was an accepted economic practice. However, with the onset

of massive oil price rises in the early seventies, prices sky-rocketed. So did the interest rates that were payable on borrowed money. In response to this, many countries (in the First World) cut back on their borrowing and spending - this in turn led to a massive recession.

BIG STICK

All countries were hit by the oil crisis and by the recession. But poorer countries were hit severely. Because their economies were weak and vulner-

able they had to continue borrowing despite the high costs involved. Some just borrowed to pay the interest on the massive debts that they had already accrued with the WB. Between 1977 and 1982, the crisis that became known as the 'Debt Mountain' was well underway.

In some countries over 50% of all monies earned in exports was immediately going to pay off just the interest on the debt. This was the first real occasion when the IMF and the World Bank began to step in with the big stick, demanding that things be done its way or else. In particular, the

World Bank underwrote a lot of the world's debt (much of which was owed to private banks).

In this way, it began to obtain an enormous say in the internal affairs of many countries. Indeed, it should be borne in mind, that while this was happening at its worst in Africa, it happened to some degree in all countries including Ireland.

As the 'Debt Mountain' began to grow, economic thinking (if one could call it that) also began to shift towards what we now call 'Thatcherism' or 'Reaganomics'. This meant, that if there were bills to be paid, then it was better to get poor people to pay them. These sorts of policies began to be applied throughout Africa, in particular, from the early 1980s onwards. They were known as Structural Adjustment Policies (or SAPs).

In general, their thrust was to cut funding to all non-essential services as a means of 'saving money' in the debtor countries (Mozambique for example). The 'saved money' could then be diverted to paying off the banks (the WB included). One of the major problems with SAPs, as they are applied, is that 'non-essential services' are often defined as the very services that the most people need in the first place - for instance hospitals, schools and the public services in general.

DISASTER

Even in the early eighties, some countries were able to avoid the more stringent aspects of the SAPs. This was largely because of the existence of the Soviet Union, which, to a degree, funded development in its own right. For obvious reasons, the Soviet Union tended to financially support countries that took a friendly attitude to it; it also tended to trade with these countries. This, at least, gave some countries an alternative source of credit and food (which allowed them some bargaining room with the IMF/WB).

However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, this fallback position was removed. Many countries, from that point on, had

no choice but to deal with and accept the commands of the World Bank and the IMF - which led to the real disaster that is now facing millions in the world. At a time of enormous wealth, millions are starving and dying from problems that could be eradicated with a relatively small sum of money.

The United Nations has estimated that just \$11 billion would pay for all the primary health care needs in all countries that are, today, considered to be 'developing countries'. This includes catering for all the immunisation requirements in these countries and for the removal of all serious malnutrition, as well as providing safe, clean drinking water for everyone. Just \$11 billion - one tenth of what rich countries spend on weapons every year.

Since the introduction of the SAPs in the 1980s, levels of poverty and destitution have risen rapidly in Africa and throughout the world. Ironically, the World Bank's *World Development Report* (a yearly publication) often flags this. In fact, there is no better source for data on the world's appalling poverty statistics.

But the World Bank, while having the facts and figures at its fingertips, rarely draws the right conclusions about its policies. On certain occasions, it is true, it does admit to 'errors', and even 'miscalculations' with

WORLD BANK DEATH: FIGHTING BACK

The World Bank and the IMF are killing thousands of people every week with their policies. They won't change unless they are forced to. During the coming months the Workers Solidarity Movement - along with other anarchist groups in France, Switzerland, Sweden, Spain and Italy - is taking part in a campaign to highlight and fight against 'WORLD BANK DEATH'.

Demonstrations are planned on May Day. A further mobilisation will take place in Lyon, in France, in June to coincide with the next meeting to the G-7 (the 'donor countries' in the WB). If you want to get help out with these protests, contact the WSM as soon as possible. Remember the more people that get involved, the more we can do!

regards to the SAPs. But, largely, it tends to blame forces outside its control, like 'Africa' or 'corruption' or 'famine'. The fact is that the SAPs, more than any other single policy strategy in the last twenty years, have impoverished millions.

WHO BENEFITS?

Given the degree of debt that currently exists in the world, one might be forgiven for thinking that the world's economic system has gone mad. After all, it is a strange to think that a country as rich as Mozambique is close to collapse - given its mineral wealth, its natural amenities and its resources. Indeed the impression that

the world's economic system is 'out of control' is quiet wrong. Bear in mind that now as much as ever, enormous wealth is being made from the

misery of the poor. Therein is the key to what is wrong.

Institutions like the WB and IMF have an enormous say in the running of the world - this is why they were set-up. But who benefits from this power? You? Me? Hardly. The real beneficiaries are the people who depend on the Third World for its enormous mineral resources and for its cheap labour pool. Coal, diamonds, alumina, coffee, tea, grain, nickel, tin (to name but a few) are all purchased at prices that are far, far below their real worth.

We may ultimately buy the tea or the coffee or the coal - but it is the merchants in the middle that make the real profit. Ultimately they control the price of many commodities - and in this way they also obtain an important say over the wages and conditions of the workers in these countries. From such control comes the massive profits that are the hallmark of capitalism today.

Kevin Doyle

THE WORLD BANK AND CHEAP LABOUR

Cheap labour means massive profits for business people. In today's world this means that companies are much more prepared to travel anywhere to rip-off workers. The World Bank encourages this by "encouraging developing countries to adopt favourable wage policies". In return the World Bank gives these countries a good 'credit rating'. An example of this policy in action is the case of Indonesia where the government has officially set the minimum wage below the poverty line. But who benefits?

Nike, the sports shoe company, pays its workers in Indonesia just 16p an hour to make its 'Nike Air Pegasus' brand. These shoes sell for over £45 here in Ireland. Total manufacturing labour costs for this type of shoe are only 2% of the final retail cost!

THE WORLD BANK GAME

The Money: The USA, Canada and Britain set up the WB. These 'donor countries' also set up the rules. 'Donor countries' vote on the WB Board according to the size of their 'donations'. The USA has always dominated the Bank.

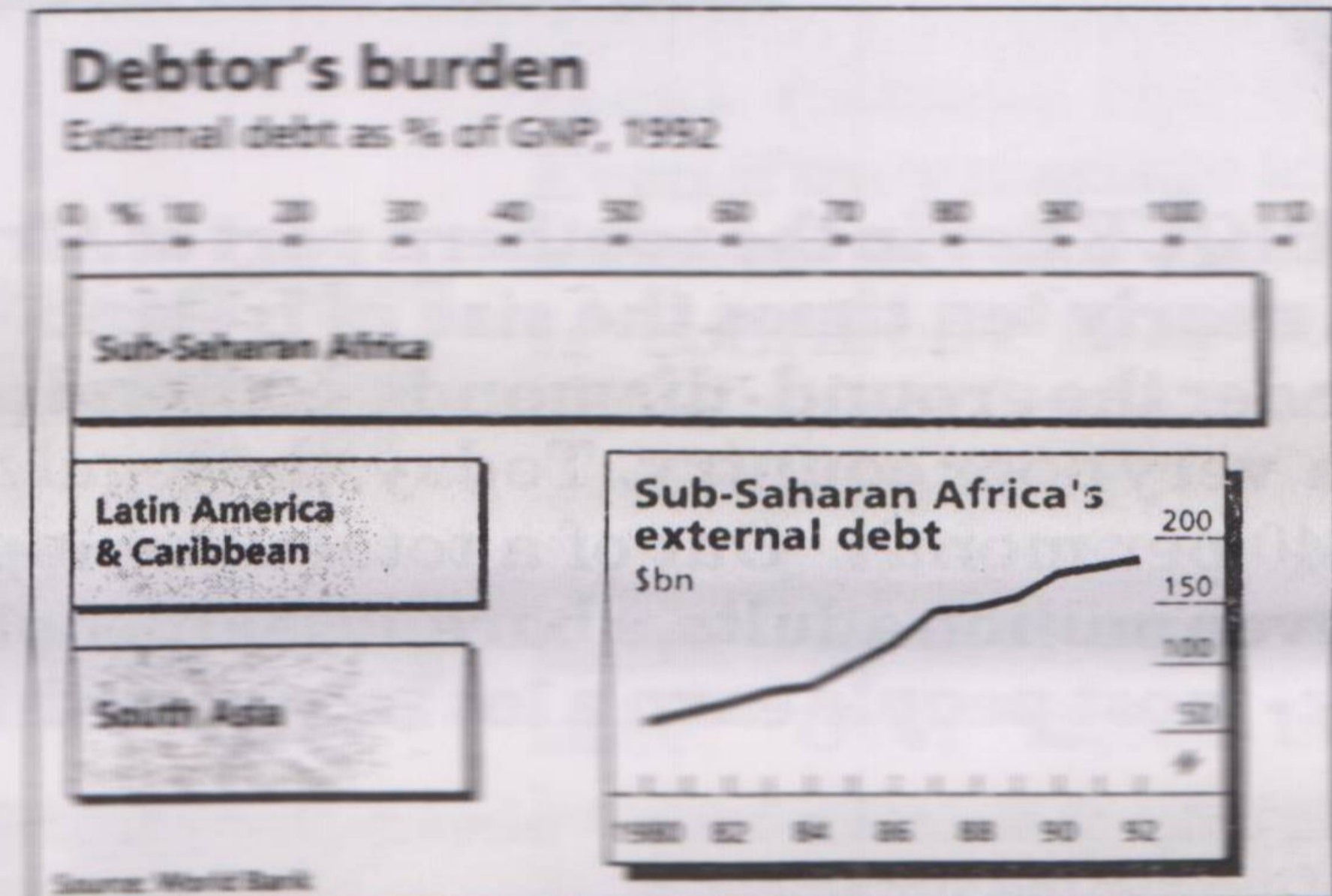
The Projects: Hydroelectric dams, ports and highways are favoured by the WB. Projects like these eat up 50% of all money 'loaned'. Often the ports are located 'conveniently close' to a some Multinational company that is doing business in the country at the same time. For example: modern deep sea port and dock facilities to allow for the export of iron ore, coal or alumina.

The Jobs: Often very few jobs result. For instance, 'heavy industry' construction is often contracted back to companies in the 'donor countries'. (In fact a lot of the 'loaned money' ends up there).

The Bills: The 'debtor country' pays the bills on all constructions. Often the final bill is a massive mark-up when interest payments are taken into account. A further headache is that 'heavy industry' construction is often the wrong thing for poorer countries. Their requirements are often much more basic: housing, water pipes, irrigation.

The People: WB bank planners don't tend to consider 'the other side' of development: community disruption, environmental degradation, etc. Dam construction is a classic example - disrupting huge numbers of people for benefits that might often only accrue to a few.

Human Rights? Not necessary. The WB will work with all types - the bottom line is you must be a capitalist. The WB regularly does business with dictatorships. Often people connected with the dictatorship obtain 'spin-off businesses' from the main project (bribery and backhanders are not uncommon.)



ANARCHISM ON THE INTERNET

The Workers Solidarity Movement is at
<http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/2419>

WORKERS SOLIDARITY

PAPER OF THE WORKERS SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT
NUMBER 48

75p outside Ireland

50p

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Racism at Sunday Indo
- Cork low pay strike
- Anarchism & direct action



The bankers who KILL PEOPLE

LETHAL LOANS

MOZAMBIQUE lies in the southern part of Africa. It is a huge country, nearly ten times the size of Ireland. Despite great riches under the ground - diamonds, coal and precious minerals - it is a very poor country. Today, the legal minimum wage is only \$40 per month. Out of a total working population of nearly seven million adults, a bare 90,000 people earn this sort of money - most people earn a lot less or nothing.

Last year, in order to maintain basic standards of income, the Mozambique government announced, with the agreement of business and the trade unions, that it was increasing the minimum wage by about 37% or \$14 dollars per month. At first sight this might have seemed like a bonanza - in actual fact it wasn't. Last year, inflation in Mozambique was running at over 40%. Putting the sums together, you'll see that even with the increase of \$14 per month most people would still be losing out.

Anyway, this increase of \$14 per month never actually happened. A dispute arose between the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary (IMF) and the government of Mozambique as to whether or not Mozambique "could afford" this pay rise. A representative of the IMF, a person by the name of Sergio Leite, intervened and ordered that, in accordance with IMF/WB policy, inflation in Mozambique be kept at just 24% annually. In other words, no pay rise.

A further dispute then arose. It was pointed out to Mr Leite by a group representing countries such as Denmark and Sweden that the infrastructure of Mozambique was already in danger of collapse. Some 30,000 jobs in the government had already gone, largely as result of cuts introduced by the IMF/WB in 1994. These jobs, a quarter of all salaried work in the country, were mainly in areas like health and education - areas

already poorly funded.

The outcome for Mozambique, in relation to this particular case, is still not clear. Despite the interventions of outside governments on its behalf, the stark likelihood is that the World Bank and IMF will eventually get their way. This gives some idea of their enormous power in today's world. It is often power over life and death.

No one ever elected the IMF's Sergio Leite into power. In fact, it is probable that few people in Mozambique even know who he is, or even know about what he is doing. In reality, Leite himself is just a messenger for decisions that are taken about Mozambique in Washington, London and Geneva.

In the headquarters of the World Bank and the IMF, decisions are also taken about many other countries - in Africa, Asia, South America, and European countries like Ireland. It is here that the real course of our lives is decided. We may vote - at elections - for whomever we want, or for whatever policies are on offer - but, at the end of the day, what actually happens is not decided by us but by the likes of those who run and staff the World Bank and the IMF.

These two institutions - set up during World War 2 - decide on the main features of our economies today. They decide whether money should be put into the economy (increased public spending) or whether money should be taken out (cutbacks). They have one main consideration in mind when they make these decisions. They consider 'what is the best thing for business' - that's what



• Child eating from a rubbish bin, just one result of 'structural adjustment'

happened in Mozambique.

The World Bank and IMF obtained the power that they now have largely as result of the unequal balance in wealth that was created in the world by colonialism.

Countries like Mozambique, and to a lesser degree Ireland, were plundered under colonialism. They were left with very little in terms of infrastructure - that is schools, housing, roads, electricity services, hospitals, etc. On the other hand, countries such as England, France, Italy and the United States emerged in much better condition. It was these countries, the main beneficiaries of colonialism, that set up the World Bank and the IMF in 1944.

The proper name for the World Bank is actually the *International Bank for Reconstruction and Development*. From

this name, one can get some idea of what the actual purpose of the WB is meant to be: "to loan money at a favourable rate to developing countries for the purposes of economic development and progress."

In theory this is a great idea. Developed countries like Britain, the USA and Japan have enormous resources and wealth at their disposal. Why shouldn't they lend money at a reasonable rate to poorer countries for the purposes of development? In fact, obtaining cheap money (credit) so as to provide hospitals, schools, roads, power plants, and a clean water supply is one of the best ways to help build up the wealth of a country.

Actually, it is one of the best