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GRAFTON

An Irish Socialist Review

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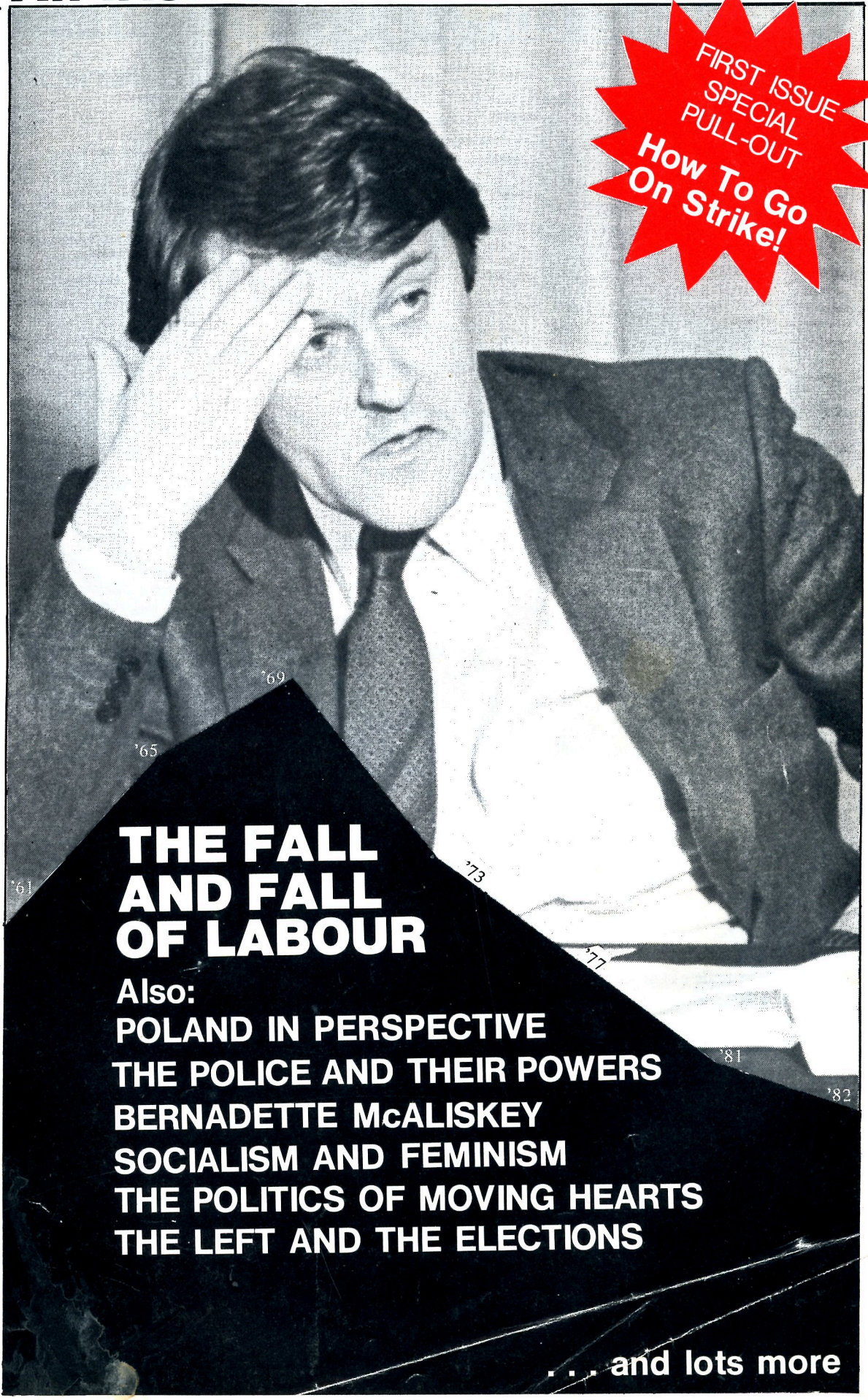

FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL PULL-OUT
How To Go On Strike!

THE FALL AND FALL OF LABOUR

Also:

POLAND IN PERSPECTIVE
THE POLICE AND THEIR POWERS
BERNADETTE McALISKEY
SOCIALISM AND FEMINISM
THE POLITICS OF MOVING HEARTS
THE LEFT AND THE ELECTIONS

. . . and lots more

FOUNDING EDITORIAL STATEMENT

What kind of people are producing *Gralton?* What kind of people will read it? We think the answer to these two questions is the same: those interested in discussing the realities of Irish society and the methods of radically changing it; those who feel that no existing publication or organisation is at present providing a forum within which the experiences, victories and defeats of the past decade can be assessed and learned from.

We hope *Gralton* can become that forum. Our aim is to promote debate and discussion centering around a number of broad positions:

* that capitalism is not a force for progress and has to be replaced by Socialism
* that Socialism consists essentially of people controlling their own lives in the workplace and the community
* that such a change of system goes far deeper than anything that can be achieved through parliamentary methods alone
* that real change cannot be brought about through the actions of any small elite group, whether guerilla army or state bureaucracy, but requires the action of masses of people acting consciously together to establish their own power
* that none of this change can be achieved solely in an Irish context

But *Gralton* will not be simply discussing ideas. We also aim to give practical support to the struggles and movements of the day by providing information, commentary and factual analysis of service to trade unionists, feminists, socialists, political and local activists – and by opening our columns to those actively involved even if we do not share their political viewpoint. We believe there is a close link between the experience of activity and the development of ideas and we shall always be seeking to strengthen it.

The Editorial Board of *Gralton* reflects who we believe to be our audience: individual socialists and activists in a wide variety of left-wing movements. Some of us are members of left organisations, more are not. Among us there are differences of tradition, political bias, interests – even some sharp disagreements on major political issues. But we all share a basic political approach and method: that of looking towards and participating in the struggles and movements of the working class and all the oppressed and exploited sections of society.

Believing that the successful mobilisation of people is itself a political gain contributing far more to real change than the mere existence of a political party, *Gralton* will be independent, broad-based and non-sectarian in all its coverage. Independent, because only freedom from the control or dominance of any organisation can produce the kind of open, self-questioning exploration and exchange of ideas that is necessary. And this is partly a recognition that none of the existing groups contain the full answer themselves – although some individuals may consider certain organisations closer than most.

Gralton will not be handing down any firm "line" Our articles are the responsibility of the authors alone. We welcome articles from currents and organisations of the left by way of contribution to the debate, but we are not a "heavy theoretical journal" so they will have to be written in ordinary English and priority will be given to articles from whatever source which raise real questions or which provide useful information.

If *Gralton* is to succeed in its aim of providing a forum for debate, discussion and analysis then the widest possible number of people involved with the magazine the better. To facilitate this, the overall direction and control of the magazine is being vested in a body called Gralton Co-Operative Society Ltd., consisting of all individual readers who are in broad agreement with the aims of the magazine as outlined above and are committed enough to the project to take out a Supporters Subscription. The Editorial Board will be accountable to the group and in future will be elected from it. We hope as many readers as possible will identify with the magazine in this way – and by writing for it and selling it – and thereby help to make *Gralton* as relevant as possible to the advance of the left in Ireland.

IT'S UP TO YOU

Unlike most magazines, Gralton does not see itself as delivering the tablets from on high. Whether or not it succeeds depends on the response from readers. The magazine is open to those on the left who need the outlet to explore new ideas or review old ones or have a contribution to make – whether in debate or in providing information.

Contributions, ideas, complaints, disagreements, fivers, threatening letters etc., to:

GRALTON,
c/o 25 Mountain View Court,
Harold's Cross,
Dublin 6.

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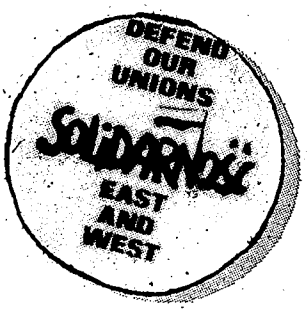
No. 1 April/May 1982

Gralton

see Gralton Forum page 6

POLAND

To read the papers one would imagine that thousands of Polish workers have been inspired by the Pope to demand the return of capitalism. On Page 21 John Goodwillie looks at the history of workers' struggle in Poland, the forces which formed Solidarity and the reaction of the State.



POLICE

The police are looking for new powers. What would be the consequences if such powers were granted? Joe Costello, of the PRO, writes on page 7.

FEMINISM

Over the past fifteen years feminists have been developing theories and strategies of their own – and feminisim and socialism have been in conflict as often as they have fought together. Can marxism meet the challenge of feminism? The argument begins on page 26.

ELECTIONS

On page 10, an analysis of how the left performed in the general election. Page 12, an interview with Bernadette McAliskey. Page 15, a look at the conflict inside the declining and divided Labour Party.

Coming soon...

Interview:
The new Democratic Socialist Party

* * *

Is there life after H Block?

* * *

Radical Theatre

* * *

Women's rights in Europe

* * *

The rise of Irish CND

* * *

... and lots more

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Cover photo and above by Derek Speirs (Report)

So far so bad

Two ICTU delegates vote on wage negotiations.

Photo: Derek Speirs (Report)

JOHN CANE details the progress of wage claims

Former IDA boss Michael Killeen has few doubts about industry's experience of free collective bargaining. Addressing personnel managers in February, he ventured the opinion that, "It is producing more realistic pay increases, giving opportunities to negotiate work practices and generally means we should end up with a more efficient industrial sector." Or looking at it another way – workers are being well and truly screwed. The question is – is he right?

On wages the answer is an unavoidable yes. The going rate for wage deals is the public sector agreement which gives 16% over 15 months. With inflation running at almost 23% on an annual basis it is estimated you will be 12% worse off at the end. That's bad enough but it is also estimated that wages dropped by 13% during the last National Understanding. Indeed real wages have not actually increased since 1975 and by the middle of 1982 ITGWU reckons that wages would have declined by about 40%! No wonder Michael Killeen is well pleased.

How has the situation come about? Back in November, at a Dublin meeting for trade union militants, left wing officials celebrated the end of eleven years of centralised bargaining. At last the shackles were gone. The mood was cautious but claims of 30% were talked of and the most important decision seemed to be whether to strike alone or together. The busworkers were already swinging into action – surely the ESB, the tanker drivers, the craftsmen would not be far behind?

It was not to be. Congress had unanimously decided on a return to free collective bargaining on October 29th urging claims of 25%. But 10 days later the leadership was back at the negotiating table. FitzGerald's government had decided to ditch its extreme insistence on the 6.5% of the "Three Wise Men". Congress was easily tempted. Not so the employers. FUE intransigence finally caused the talks to break down irretrievably on November 25th. But there was little in it at the end. Congress admitted that it would have settled for about 15% over 15 months.

Given such "flexibility" on the part of the unions, Kavanagh found it relatively easily to stitch up the 16% for 15 months (and an embargo on special claims) public sector deal by mid-December. The FUE was predictably furious. Correctly pointing out that the ICTU had been prepared to settle for even less, they castigated the government for its "irresponsibility". As the more sober judgement of Michael Killeen shows, the protests were just hot air. But they did help the public sector union leaders sell a deal to the members that amounted to a 12% wage cut.

The 150,000 public sector workers had no say in any of this – until the time came to endorse the acceptance recommendations with the appropriate X on the ballot papers. In the private sector things were a little better. Claims for 25% or more (very few flat-rate demands) were being drawn up at shop stewards' meetings. 35-hour weeks and improvements in local conditions were generally added on. Many groups (craftsmen, ESB, etc.) were presenting joint claims. The claims weren't the problem, it was the winning of them.

No-one seemed prepared to move until the public sector deal was announced. The non-Congress NBU had had a claim in from March 1981 and a strike mandate from September yet, despite all the bluster, they joined the ITGWU in time-consuming Labour Court talks. When the Labour Court recommendation was turned down they issued another strike threat in early December then waited for the public sector deal. Whenit came they immediately recommended it and thankfully received a reluctant acceptance from workers left on the boil for far too long.

The building workers, after threatening strike action in September, entered talks around the public sector deal in mid-December. They eventually agreed a slightly better deal in February. The craft workers have run up against less amenable bosses in the CIF who are still refusing to negotiate a national deal hoping to pick off small groups of workers spread over 2,500 firms. Frank Callaghan of the AUEW threatened "one hell of a bloody dispute" but, apart from the one day stoppage on January 14th, it has yet to materialise. ESB workers with a 25% claim did indeed turn down the public sector deal and the ESBOA especially began to talk of strike action. But talks have resumed and the likelihood is a settlement around 18% for 15 months.

In truth, very few workers

Disabled? Sorry, that was 1981

The International Year for Disabled Persons made no significant impression on the lives of people with disabilities. It was marked by much rhetoric and the jangling of collection boxes but there was scant evidence of any improvement in the social and economic conditions of the disabled. During the year we witnessed a flurry of "once off" events with the disabled usually portrayed as the grateful recipients of handouts, while the philanthropists assumed the roles of generous benefactors.

It was a year when the western economies were in the depths of recession and any hopes that the disabled had for an improvement in their living conditions were quickly dashed. The Irish governments (both Fianna Fail and the Coalition) were telling working people to tighten their belts and apart from mere token action for the disabled in successive budgets there was nothing but window-dressing.

We are still in the ludicrous position of not knowing the extent of disability in our community. The promised Green Paper failed to appear and we still await the implementation of the National Building Regulations on access. Despite the fact that 1982 was the target year for the 3 per cent disabled quota in the public sector, little has actually been done with only a few hundred jobs created. CIE continue to build inaccessible buses. Even the granting of the postal vote to the severely disabled proved to be beyond Mr. Haughey.

Perhaps the greatest nonentity of the year was the formation of the National Committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Joe Malone (formally of Bord Failte) and given the sum of £100,000 by the government. Its terms of reference were such that it had no clout and never attempted to stimulate public debate on the vexed question of disabled people's rights. Likewise, most voluntary organisations in the area failed to grasp the true significance of the year and saw it merely as a means of filling their coffers. Though there was one advance the ICTU published a Bill of Rights during the year as a first step towards translating this into action on the shop floor.

It will take much more than the designation of a special year before there can be any real improvement in the plight of the disabled. Our government must be forced to recognise that voluntary organisations can never effectively meet the needs. The answer is state commitment, public finance, and legislation that would make the provision of services mandatory.

Martin Hoban,
Chairperson,
Disabled Persons Action Group
Waterford.

have managed – or look like managing – to get increases substantially higher than the public sector deal. Traditionally militant unions like AGEMOU and ATGWU have been strangely quiet.

The oil workers, obsessed with individual productivity deals, have not even begun to move on general pay. John Hall of ASTMS has been claiming some successes (18% in insurance companies) but they are few and far between. ITGWU recently published a list of a couple of dozen settlements in the 20–25% range but all in tiny firms. Meanwhile no-one publishes lists of under 16% deals. The conclusion is inescapable – 16% for 15 months is the norm, no significant group has got much higher and (as time goes on and the back pay lump sums seem bigger) no-one looks willing to take it on.

There may be some exceptions to this general rule! At the time of writing, bankworkers, provincial journalists and Dublin Gas Company workers have all rejected "public service" offers and are threatening industrial action. But even if higher settlements are obtained, it is now a little late to substantially change the overall situation.

So has free collective bargaining failed? One section of the left (especially SFWP) will probably begin to answer Yes. They will argue that under centralised bargaining the same money could be won and that the union movement could also address the problems of the economy in a more direct and united way with government and employers.

But another section of the left would still argue that addressing the problems of the economy never got us anywhere, and it is not free collective bargaining that has failed to get the money but simply the lack of confidence workers currently have in taking on the bosses in an economic crisis.

It is certainly true that the last few months have at least allowed rank and file workers a degree of control over wage claims that they never enjoyed under National Wage Agreements. It may also be true that wage settlements, though well below the level of inflation, are running at a rate slightly higher than a centralised deal would have delivered.

But the most important point is that by the middle of next year workers could be 40% worse off than in 1975. Under both Centralised and Free collective bargaining, workers are paying heavily for an economic crisis not of their making. No wonder Michael Killeen is laughing

Photo: Derek Speirs (Report)

CUTS IN THE CLASSROOM

When Coalition Minister for Education, John Boland, increased the school entry age and put the under fives on the dole queues, he probably never imagined the effect his move would have on the trade union movement. Suddenly teachers began talking about "cutbacks", "redundancies", "monetarist policies" and even "Thatcherism" – words and phrases that they had never used before. The trade unions laid at his door the blame for introducing the policy of bleeding the system dry, then claiming it didn't work and selling it off to private enterprise.

But the school entry age scandal in reality merely helped to focus attention on the writing that had been on the wall for quite a while. Boland was just the latest in a series of political whizz kids who had dealt blows to our educational system.

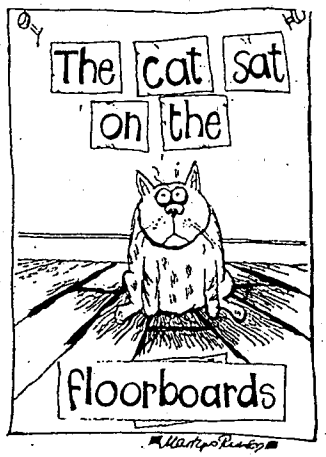
A few facts will help to illustrate this. In 1979–80, under Fianna Fail, primary level pupil-teacher ratios were as follows:

Scotland	20.3:1
England & Wales	22.7:1
Six Counties	23.8:1
Twenty Six Counties	29.1:1

Lowering our ratio just to the level of the Six Counties would require the immediate creation of 4,000 extra, and very necessary, teaching jobs.

If teachers graduating from teacher training colleges in 1981, 42% still had no work in February of 1982. Intake into teacher training colleges was cut by 16.5% last year – despite the drastic need for specialist teachers and smaller classes in all areas. Natural wastage is not being replaced and we still have over 41,000 children in classes of 40-plus size.

Boland's school entry age scheme would have meant that by



1983 900 or more primary teaching jobs would have been lost. Fianna Fail now promise to reverse his decision, but the basic problem of too few teachers at the primary level will remain.

The curse of unemployment has existed at second level too for many years with effectively nothing being done to absorb trained teachers into a system that needs them. Redundancies are the most recent development – an expected 60 by next September – due firstly to a falling population in particular areas and secondly to religious orders pulling out of schools when their person power dwindles.

This poses a threat to their continued control, and rather than allow the school in question to function under state control, they are prepared to move out and sell up. It has been suggested that application of planning laws could be used to put a halt to this opportunistic gallop. A redeployment scheme for teachers is presently being negotiated between ASTI, clerical management and the Department of Education

When we progress to third level, we are faced with a system whcih allows only 8% of the population access to it. Given

this minute base, increases in fees can only limit access even further and make it a financial nightmare for those few who do manage to make it. Yet fees have increased dramatically:

Universitises	since 1975 – up 406%; Regional Colleges: since 1972 – up 300%; Teacher Training Colleges: since 1976 – up 372%.

A one in three fallout rate at third level is attributable in large part to simple lack of finance.

The present freeze on recruitment of academic and ancillary staff in colleges is effectively a cutback – the same old story as in primary and secondary levels. Facilities at third level are being severely hit too One example: there are library facilities catering for no more than 20% of engineering students – no doubt the rest are expected to be divinely inspired.

Since 1975, expenditure on education overall has declined as a percentage of the gross national product:

1975	6.00%
1976	5.97%
1977	5.63%
1978	5.24%

More recent figures when available will no doubt highlight a continuing and even sharper decline. Education is obviously not a priority.

Theoretically, free primary and secondary education has been more widely available but those are well off are able to buy a better deal for their children as the cutbacks mean that parents more and more have to provide basic facilities out of their own pockets.

Consider that there is now an £11 book bill for the four year old starting school. The primary teacher has to exist on a £20 annual classroom grant. Parents are thus increasingly the targets for contributions to equipment funds, library funds etc. Parents of a handicapped child who has to attend a special school, will find themselves turned into unpaid fundraisers to maintain the child.

At second level, "school building funds" are set up in lieu of school fees. Uniforms, food school books and transport costs all have to be borne by the parent regardless of means. This is also the case at third level – despite the enormous increase in fees.

We are continually being told that we must "tighten our belts" in the "national interest". It is clear from the facts quoted above that the education of our children appears to be well outside that mythical "national interest". It is in fact a small and very privileged minority who do well – and will continue to do well – out of an educational system heavily weighted in their favour. For the rest, it's the "hairshirt '.

Mary Cummins

Welfare discrimination

PATRICIA McCARTHY looks at the ways in which the social welfare system discriminates against women

Being on the dole is bad enough for most people but for married women it is twice as bad. The Social Welfare Code discriminates against women in a number of ways, one of which is being challenged in the High Court on March 26th.

The section of the Code dealing with unemployment assistance states, "In order to be eligible for unemployment assistance, a married woman must not be dependent on her husband and must have at least one dependent." This provision is being challenged on the grounds that it is unconstitutional by discriminating against a section of the population purely on the grounds of sex and status.

The practical implications of this rule are that a married or separated woman with no children who becomes unemployed will not get the dole when her benefit runs out. A separated woman is considered to be financially dependent on her husband irrespective of whether she wishes to claim maintenance from him or not. She is entitled to no income other than Supplementary Welfare which is discretionary.

If this constitutional case is won, all married and separated women who become unemployed – with or without children – will be entitled to claim unemployment assistance when their benefit runs out or, if they don't qualify for benefit, instead of benefit.

In practice however many of them will still be turned down for one of two reasons; that they are considered not available for work because they have kids (even though they may have worked for years before claiming) or they are caught by the means test. Family income is assessed by a means test so that a woman living with her husband who is working will be turned down as she is considered as his financial dependent. If he in unemployed, then it is him that must claim for her. Either way she is not considered to be entitled to an income in her own right.

Both of these last two provisions are, matters of procedure which will have to be challenged if and when the constitutional case is won. Pressure from unemployed groups, womens groups and claimants groups will have to be put directly on the officials who make the judgements.

Any woman who is turned down for either benefit or assistance on the grounds that she is not available for work because she has kids, should appeal within 21 days of being refused. When she gets a date for the appeal, she should take a representative with her – someone from an unemployed group or a friend who has read up on the regulations. The majority of women who are represented at appeal win their case, so it's worth doing.

If such rulings were to be appealed by womens and unemployed groups as part of a consistent campaign, then the whole interpretation of being available for work could well be changed to exclude discrimination against women with children. But claimants work is a political activity that is largely ignored by the left in the 26 Counties. The complicated nature of the Welfare Code militates against a sense of entitlement and encourages a "charity" approach to the whole issue. And most people consider it pretty boring anyway. But with 146,000 officially unemployed and rising, there is certainly plenty of scope for welfare rights campaigning.

The Womens Campaign For A Unified Social Welfare Code is the body that has now been set up to highlight discrimination against women in social welfare and that is taking the High Court case on March 26th. We also plan to take up other areas of discrimination like, for example, the fact that married women receive unemployment benefit for three weeks less time than men or single women, or the fact that widowers can claim a housekeeper allowance but widows can't.

The Campaign can be contacted at 189 Gracepark Heights, Drumcondra, Dublin 9 or by phoning Noreeen O'Donoghue on (01) 762518. Funds are urgently needed to fight the court case which is costing £5,000. We would also be interested in hearing from women who have suffered discrimination in social welfare or other groups working on these issues.

Photo: Derek Speirs (Report)

THE POLICE AND THEIR POWER

JOE COSTELLO, Prisoners Rights Organisation

Speaking at a meeting in the King's Inns on the 20th January 1982, the Garda Commissioner, Mr. Patrick McLaughlin, made the strongest call to date for an extension of police powers dealing with suspects and for restrictions on present judicial procedures in relation to defendants in criminal cases. Exactly two years previously the Commissioner had made his first and more hesitant call in this regard when he wrote in his introduction to the Annual Garda Report on Crime, 1978, (the Reports are always a couple of years out of date) that "changes in the criminal justice system would remove some of the criminal's present advantages and would considerably enhance the prospects of preventing and detecting crime."

Earlier still there had been strong calls from the Gardai representative organisations, the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors and the Garda Representative Association, for increased powers. Indeed, ever since the establishment of the Special Criminal Court and the revival of the Offences Against the State Act in 1972 there have been calls for greater police powers.

The Gardai obviously relish the extra powers of arrest, detention, questioning and fingerprinting and feel that their lot would be so much easier if they had them available on all occasions. The great similarity between the extra powers now sought and those available under the Offences Against the State Act indicate that what the Gardai want is to make present emergency powers the norm for the future.

THE WAR ON CRIME

Until the Commissioner's speech in January 1982, there seemed no cause for alarm. The fact that the speech was so blunt and was made in the week preceding the intended Dail debate on the Bill to Abolish the Death Penalty (a Bill vehemently opposed by the Gardai) and was quickly followed by strong concurring demands from the AGSI and the GRA, suggest that a heave was on to use the expected abolition of the death penalty as a bargaining counter to force the Government to concede the Gardai's demands.

The Gardai argue that the powers are required to combat the alarming rise in crime. Crime sells newspapers so the media are grateful for the opportunity to increase their sales by highlighting a wave of crime knowing they have a clear imprimatur from the Garda Commissioner and the Garda representative bodies – and an unlimited supply of bizarre stories from 'reliable police sources'. It has suddenly been discovered that the country is hopelessly in the grip of crime and hair-raising individual incidents are trotted out to prove the point, in daily, evening and Sunday newspapers.

An exact parallel is to be found in the Loughan House saga in 1978. While the controversy over the need for a children's prison raged, scaremongering headlines painted the country as being overrun by vicious young hoodlums which the Press dubbed Bugsy Malones. There was total disregard – as there is now – for the official statistics which showed a massive *thirty per cent decrease* in juvenile crime at a time when it was supposed to have got completely out of hand.

There seems to me to be a real fear now that a major breach in traditional civil liberties will occur as a result of a wave of propaganda. But the effects would go far beyond a breach in civil liberties. The proposed changes are sought in the narrowest of contexts. They are sought as though crime operates in a vacuum, as though the police and the criminals were fighting it out for control of society and that the police needed more sophisticated weapons and machinery to deal with their ruthless enemy.

What is urgently required is a wide-ranging and informed debate on the phenomenon of rising crime in society, the role of the police in the prevention and detection of crime and the effect on the fabric of society of increased police powers.

CRIME AND SOCIETY

The Gardai operate within the narrowest of parameters. They are concerned with prevention and detection. With the increase in crime in the 1960s and 1970s they have focussed far more on detection than on prevention but to no avail. From 1970 to 1980 the crime rate quadrupled and the detection rate plummetted from sixty to forty per cent. The Gardai have willingly but foolishly donned the mantle of responsibility and become the whipping boys of the public for this failure. Thus they have focussed more and more on the decreasing detection rate and grasped at the straw that they could turn the tide if they had the necessary powers – But that is impossible.

A cursory look at the 1970s will reveal the effect of the economy on the crime rate. In the course of the decade the unemployment rate doubled, the rate of inflation spiralled and there was a virtual end to emigration. During the Coaliton's years in office, 1973–77, there was an annual increase in the crime rate of 15%. When Fianna Fail came to power in the summer of 1977, and Martin O'Donoghue

Garda Commissioner Patrick McLaughlin

Photo: Derek Speirs (Report)

endeavoured to spend his way out of the recession, there was a spectacular drop in the unemployment figure from approcimately 110,000 to 80,000 between 1977 and 1979 and for those two and a half years the crime rate actually decreased. In 1980 as the economic situation deteriorated again the crime rate increased by 13.5%.

When the figures for 1981 become available I can safely predict on the basis of the trends and figures of the last decade that they will register an increase of a few percentage points below the 1981 rate of inflation – approx. 15%.

THE RIGHT TO SILENCE

The right to silence is a time-honoured one in all common law countries. In the United States it has a particular position of prominence and is guaranteed under the Constitution. Its function is to protect the citizen-suspect on the principle that anything he/she has to say can be said in court under due process, with the protection that environment affords rather than in the rarified atmosphere of a police station that may not be conducive to his/her best interests or to his/her rights as a citizen unsophisticated in the intricacies of the law and the niceties of police procedures.

But even if the right to silence were abolished in the morning there would only be marginal improvement in the detection rate.

In the case of petty crime the problem is in actually detecting the criminal. Because of the casual and unplanned nature of such crime detection invariably occurs when the offender is caught red-handed, in flagrante delicto. The vast majority of crime is petty larceny and so the detection rate would scarcely be affected.

Neither would any improvement in the conviction rate be expected. At present the conviction rate in the District stands at a collosal 93% and approximately 90% of those in prison are sentenced in the District Courts.

In the case of serious crime it is difficult to see abolition of the right to silence making any impression on the figures. Already there is an extremely wide range of scheduled offences covered by the Offences Against the State Act and the powers granted under Section 30 of that Act enable the Gardai to detain and question a suspect for up to 48 hours and to fingerprint him/her and take samples for forensic testing. Most serious crime is dealt with under this legislation so an extension of police powers here would simply be superfluous.

THE RIGHT TO BAIL

Bail is the second major right that has come under attack. Since our system of bail was clarified by the Supreme Court in the O'Callaghan Case in 1966 attempts have been made to have the law changed. At present the position is that every suspect is entitled to bail unless there is a likelihood of him/her not standing trial or a likelihood of them interferring with witnesses. The judgement is based on what is regarded as the cornerstone of our judicial system, namely, the principle that the citizen is innocent until or unless proven guilty.

We regularly hear of large numbers of crimes being committed by people who are on bail. But these are guestimates. The Gardai have no accurate figures. Undoubtedly, some crimes are committed by people on bail.

Let us look for a moment at what would happen if we were to abolish bail. Tens of thousands of people who appear in our courts every year would be transferred to prison awaiting trial. Already a third of our prison population are remand prisoners who have been denied under the existing guidelines.

The average length of time a person spends in prison on remand awaiting trial is, at present, one month. Many of these are found to be innocent. However their period of imprisonment may have cost them their job and/or their good name and they cannot claim compensation for unlawful detention. Indeed the prison system couldn't possibly cope with the ex-

Photo: Derek Speirs (Report)

Three gardai quarrel at RDS H Block conflict after a civilian has been batoned.

Armed gardai are appearing with increasing frequency.

tra numbers and the taxpayer could not afford the cost. The present annual cost per prisoner is approximately £15,000.

Consequently, denial of bail would have to be on a selective basis. With elimination of the Supreme Court guidelines, the selection process would rest with the Gardai, who would inform the judge whom they personally believed would commit a crime if granted bail. Thus the Gardai would have virtually full discretion in imprisoning on remand whomsoever they wished to have out of circulation irrespective of the weight of evidence.

Changes in the law on bail are fraught with danger and would not affect the crime rate. Besides they are hopelessly impractical. By far the best approach is to speed up trial procedures so that cases are dealt with quickly.

THE ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

The Gardai can never solve the problem of crime and the sooner they tell the politicians that the better. While they are content to remain in the firing line they are an obstacle to an examination of the underlying causes. They allow the Minister for Justice to come up with the incredible statement that his Department has never researched nor commissioned research into the causes of crime. (Dail Debates, 1977). Indeed the same Department actively discourages any research into the area of crime and punishment. Consequently we have an extremely ill-informed coverage of major issues that may well result in a serious diminution of civil liberties and impair social progress.

The first priority then is a full scale research program to identify and isolate the factors causing crime in our society. University Departments and Government Agencies should organise and co-ordinate activities here. But the findings will undoubtedly be distasteful and the acid test will be the will to act to change or modify existing socio-economic structures.

Secondly, as an immediate practical measure, I would suggest that there is an urgent need to monitor unemployment levels throughout the country and particularly in the cities. No area should be allowed to increase significantly in unemployment beyond the national average. Once this happens ghettos are quickly created and the morale of a community is inevitably eroded through severe material neglect. Respect for property, public as well as private, will decline and will be replaced by vandalism and petty crime that will increase in degree and proportion as productive opportunities lessen.

Finally the police have failed and will continue to fail to solve crime because they are unable to tackle the causes. The more emphasis they place on detection and special powers the more they become rejects of the disadvantaged communities where their presence is strongest. They are looked on with hostility, as enemies. This is the message of Toxteth. It is also the message of the Innery City of Dublin.

COMMUNITY POLICING

Last September the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors presented to the Minister for Justice a revolutionary set of proposals for community policing. The idea outlined was to shift the emphasis from detection to prevention in order to make the Gardai an integral part of the community; to get away from the "cops and robbers" mentality but to provide a service to the community; to get involved in all the structures and organisations of the community; and attempt to iron out problems before they arise rather than hopelessly trying to cope with them afterwards.

Certainly, petty crime and vandalism cannot be dealt with in the courts and prisons. There is some hope of success if they are tackled where they originate. The proposed new departure by the AGSI would bring the problems back where they belong and put the responsibility where it belongs — on the politicians and the community leaders.

The proposals are at variance with the blunt law and order/special powers approach of the Garda Commissoner which, unfortunately, is the only one receiving attention at the moment.

It is imperative that the AGSI proposals, and other practical proposals, be examined and implemented and that the entire question of crime and society be openly and rationally debated before we allow ourselves to drift into a police state through fear and ignorance. ■

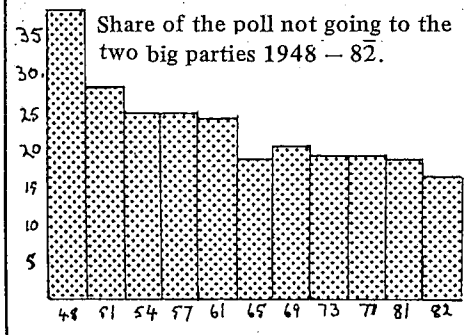
Most of the analysis of the recent general election has concentrated on whether Dessie O'Malley could get the knife into Charlie's back before Charlie got out his own cutlery — or on whether Garret would maintain his stance of fiscal righteousness, or on whether Tony Gregory should have worn a tie when he entered the Dail. While we appreciate that such questions are of burning interest we nevertheless felt that something was missing — so we asked JOHN CANE to get out his trusty pocket calculator and work out just how the left performed in this election.

THE NUMBERS GAME

The election of 3 SFWP members, Jim Kemmy and Tony Gregory in the 1982 Election has led many to talk of a radical change in Irish electoral politics. But even a cursory analysis of overall voting patterns reveals that, far from there being any "shift to the left", the dominance of the two big capitalist parties has increased. Only 15.4% of voters opted on first preference for something other than Fianna Fail or Fine Gael. Put another way: that's 5.5 people voting for the establishment for every one person who votes against. The Left has some way to go.

It wasn't always so bad. In the 1948 Election, which produced the Inter-Party Government, 38.3% were voting other than Fianna Fail or Fine Gael. But since then there has been an inexorable decline, halted only briefly by the flowering of Labour's "New Republic" in 1969. (See Chart No. 1). And there's no sign of "bottoming out". The drop from 18.2% in 1981 to 15.4% in 1982 is the largest since the mid-Sixties. With the tenacity of Fianna Fail and a revitalised Fine Gael, the hegemony of the two big capitalist parties looks assured for some time yet.

Chart No. 1



A true "radical" share of the poll must, of course, be somewhat less than those who didn't vote Fianna Fail or Fine Gael. Maybe we can stretch to include votes for Michael O'Leary or John Joe McGirl, but Neil Blaney and Dublin Bay Loftus would be going a little too far. If we exclude the votes of a rag-bag of dissident big party careerists, middle class do-gooders, irate farmers, disc jockeys, local issue freaks and general nutters then that 15.4% share drops to 13.7%. Last year, on the same definition, the radical share was 16.0% – a drop of 2.3 points.

The overall 1982 radical share of 13.7% (representing almost 230,000 people) hides some very large local differences, ranging from zero in three constituencies to 28.5% in Dublin Central. Dublin as a whole showed a higher than average radical share at 17.5% and most urban constituencies are more "radical" than rural – though a list of the "ten most radical constituencies" does contain some surprises. (See Chart No. 2).

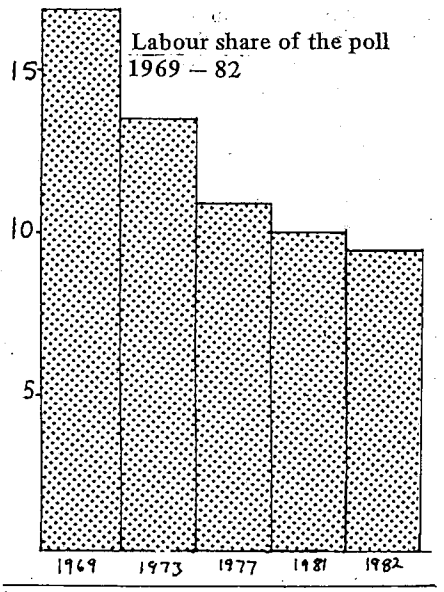
Chart No. 2

Constituencies with the highest radical share of the poll, 1982.

1	Dublin Central	28.5
2	Wicklow	26.9
3	Kerry North	25.8
4	Tipperary North	24.5
5	Dublin South Central	21.7
6	Kerry South	21.6
7	Cork North Central	21.2
8	Dublin North West	21.0
9	Limerick East	20.9
10	Waterford	20.8

The "top ten" list confirms that, despite everything, the Labour Party still dominates the left in Irish electoral politics. With 152,000 votes this year, they accounted for almost two-thirds of the total radical poll. But how long they can hold on to that dominance is another question. Their share of the total poll dropped yet again this year and, at 9.1%, is little more than half what it was back in the heady days of 1969. And whilst its share of the important Dublin area is somewhat higher at 11.2%, it is also declining at a faster rate than nationally. (See Chart No. 3).

Chart No. 3

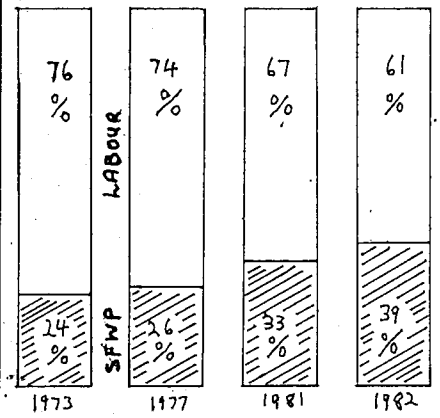


The results of the individual candidates provided little ammunition for either side in the great pro versus anti-coalition debate. Getting plugs on Fine Gael leaflets obviously helped Ruairi Quinn win back his seat in Dublin South East and some other ardent pro-coalitionists like Liam Kavanagh and Dick Spring bucked the trend with healthy vote increases. But then Michael O'Leary himself and Paddy Dunne (imposed on Dublin North West) were all but annihilated. On the other hand, blaring out the "Internationale" from vans in Ballyfermot did Mick Gannon little good and other open anti-coalitioners like Hugh Reilly in Dublin North and Michael Smith in Cork North West lost heavily. All in all there was very little pattern to be seen. Defining the nature of the Labour Party and its appeal to voters remains as difficult as ever.

One indicator remains constant however. Whether the candidate is left or right, the Labour vote still transfers massively to Fine Gael. Right-winger Dunne transferred only 23% to SFWP in Dublin North West and "left-winger" Gannon could only manage 18% in Dublin West. Jim Kemmy in Limerick East and Paddy Gallagher in Waterford fared a little better but only Joe Sherlock in Cork East managed to pull more Labour transfers to the Left rather than the Right. Class-conscious, Labour votes ain't.

This was, of course, SFWP's election. Their 38,000 vote this year was some 8,500 up on 1981 and represents a 5.9% share of the total poll for the fifteen constituencies that they contested. With 3 TDs they have finally arrived as an electoral force on the Left. And Labour had better watch out. SFWP already poll higher in Cork East, Waterford, Dublin North West and Dublin West and are poised to take over in Dublin North East. Their percentage of the Labour-SFWP vote in common constituencies has been steadily increasing since they first entered the fray in 1973. (See Chart No. 4). In Dublin as a whole, standing in only 6 out of 11 constituencies, they are taking almost one-quarter of the combined Labour-SFWP vote.

Chart No. 4



Percentage shares of the Labour–SFWP vote in common constituencies.

But it's not all one big unqualified success for SFWP. 6,000 of that 8,500 increase in votes this year came from just three constituencies: Waterford, Dublin North West and Dublin West. The first two produced new TDs, the third is the only reasonable hope of an extra seat in the near future. The SFWP share of the poll actually went down in 6 of the 13 constituencies that they also stood in last year. In addition, two constituencies they returned to this year – Donegal South West and Cavan-Monaghan – proved failures. The problem of a very narrow organisational base is still unsolved and Labour dominance will continue until it is.

Although the SFWP increase in votes hardly, therefore, constitutes an overall "swing to the left" by radical voters, those who have voted SFWP would certainly seem to be more "left-wing" than Labour voters on the evidence of transfers. Where Labour was still in the running, they took about half SFWP transfers (an exception being Pattison in Carlow-Kilkenny). But SFWP voters also preferred independent lefties to Labour where there was a choice: Gregory rather than O'Leary in Dublin Central, Kenneally rather than O'Sulllivan in Cork North Central.

But for real class-conscious voting it's the minor small party and independent left candidates that you really have to turn to. The votes may be tiny but the transfers are great! Out of 13 recorded transfers, only 2 of these minor left candidates failed to give over half their votes to other radicals – most gave well over two-thirds. The list of "most class-conscious transfers" (See Chart No. 5), may give some comfort to revolutionaries interested in electoral politics.

Chart No. 5

Candidates with highest % of transfers not going to FF or FG, 1982.

1	Burke, SF, Dublin Central	84
2	Montgomery, CPI Dub. W.	83
3	White, SFWP, Dublin Central	82
4	Noonan, Lesbian fem., Dub SE	81
5	Corr, Unempl. Dub W.	79
6	Eley, CPI(ML) Dub W.	78
7	Martin, Ind Lab. Dub Cent.	77
8	Curley, CPI, Dub Nth Cent.	74
9	Broggy, Unempl. Dub. Sth C	74
10	O'Connell, Labour, Cork East	74

Seventeen independent and small party candidates who could be described loosely as left or radical ran in the 1982 Election. Together they received 16,700 votes – just 1% of the total poll. In 1981 (if you exclude John O'COnnell) 18 candidates polled 19,200 votes. Whatever way you cut it, electoral politics is no picnic for the independent and small party left. But these figures do conceal two undoubted success stories: the re-election of Jim Kemmy and the election of Tony Gregory. Kemmy upped his vote substantially in Limerick East and with a 13.7% share of the poll to Labour's 6.0% seems certain to keep his seat. Gregory with 10.3% in Dublin Central is less secure and most be hoping that Mick O'Leary is again his only Labour rival next time round.

Let's give a brief mention to some of the also-ran revolutionaries though. There are no big success stories but the votes are often not the most important thing. Two unemployed candidates, Sean Corr in Dublin West and Aidan Broggy in Dublin South Central, stood this year. They got 183 and 296 votes respectively – a far cry from the 3,000-plus that elected Jack Murphy in 1957, but then so is unemployed agitation. Liz Noonan kept the only real feminist flag flying in Dublin South East. Her vote dropped a little this year but she wins the award for Best Election Poster. Leo Martin, incensed with the antics of Micko in Dublin Central, stood on an independent anti-coalition ticket. He polled badly but history is surely with him. The glory days of Maoism seem to have gone. "Red" Rod Eley in Dublin West got the lowest left vote going but what the hell. "Revisionist" Communist Party candidates fared better. Declan Bree in Sligo-Leitrim, Johnny Montgomery in Dublin West and John Curley in Dublin North Central all pushed their share of the poll up slightly – but Bree's share is the only significant one at 2.3%.

Many faces from 1981 were missing this year. Noel Browne, sometime of the Socialist Labour Party, perhaps wisely called it a day. His personal vote in Dublin North Central scattered all over the place. The SLP decided not to run this year after a poor showing – Browne excepted – in 1981. Two of their 1981 candidates, Billy Keegan in Dublin North West and Mick O'Donoghue in Dublin N/E decided to go it alone but with little success. Also absent were any representatives from the Socialist Party. Their two Dublin candidates did little in 1981 but with the impending link-up with Kemmy this might have been the time to re-test the water.

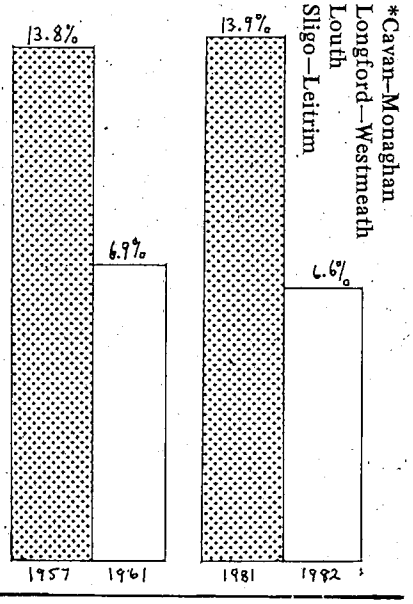
It's a big ideological jump from the Socialist Party to the Anti-imperialist camp but that's Irish politics, folks. If 1982 is the year of the Sticks, then undoubtedly 1981 was the year of the the H-Blocks. Bursting onto the electoral stage, the 13 candidates of the H-Blocks Movement last year took 8.1% of the total vote in the areas they stood in including massive 18.3% and 15.1% shares in Louth and Cavan-Monaghan respectively where two prisoner TDs – Paddy Agnew and Kieran Doherty – took seats from Fianna Fail. The question this year was: with the ending of the hunger strike, how much of this support could be

retained? The statistical answer is less than half. In 1982, 16 Anti-imperialist candidates stood in 13 constituencies under their own party banners. Their share of the vote this time round fell to 3.7%. Both seats were lost and the highest share recorded was 8.5% – again in Louth. In total, the Anti-imperialist vote slumped from 47,000 to 22,000.

History does seem to repeat itself. Almost exactly the same slump occurred between 1957 and 1961, the last time that Sinn Fein contested elections. In 1957, at the height of the Border campaign, they stood in 19 constituencies, took 10.5% of the votes and got 4 TDs elected. (One of them was John Joe McGirl who stood again in Sligo-Letrim a mere 25 years older). But by 1961, the Border campaign virtually over, their share fell to 5.3% in 21 constituencies and they lost all the seats. The 1981–82 republican intervention has followed exactly the same pattern – only the results were a little worse and the time scale shorter. (See Chart No. 6).

Chart No. 6

Sinn Fein share of poll in 4* common constituencies, 1957–61 and 1981–82.



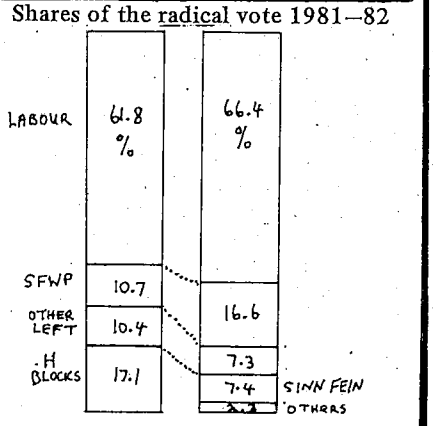
Sinn Fein pulled out of electoral politics after 1961 but they may well do better hanging on in for the Eighties. Their own vote this year, averaging 5.1% in the 7 constituencies they stood in is after all almost exactly the same level their former SFWP comrades started out with in 1973 – they now have 3 TDs. Sinn Fein, with the plum border constituencies, fared by far the best of the anti-imperialists this year. The Irish Republican Socialist Party averaged just 1.2% of the vote in their 5 constituencies and probably overstretched themselves but they have useful bases now in the urban areas of Dublin West, Dun Laoghaire and Cork North Central. Peoples Democracy obviously hoped for a higher vote in Dublin North Central where they sponsored Bernadette McAliskey but, nevertheless, 2000-plus and 5.1% was by far the best anti-imperialist vote "South of the Border". It may be possible to continue "exposing" Charlie. PD and IRSP together managed to keep the Socialist Republican flag flying in the face of the Kemmy steamroller in Limerick East but League For A Workers Republic candidate, Helen Corcoran, polled badly in Louth without the help of the Dundalk republican socialists.

And where do the transfers of anti-imperialists go? Well, for a start, a large proportion stay put – especially those of Sinn Fein. They do favour Fianna Fail over Fine Gael by 2 or 3 to one. Sinn Feiners don't favour Labour, 13% being the highest transfer. In Dublin Central, SF transferred 23% to their SFWP rivals despite other radical alternatives. The favour was not returned in Cavan-Monaghan, however, where SFWP transferred only 17% with no radical alternatives – politics are a little starker on the border. IRSP and PD transfers tended to favour radical or left candidates more than those of SF but overall the anti-imperialist transfer pattern is far from a class-conscious distribution.

Thus ends Radical Electoral Politics '82. Overall the conclusions must be more depressing than hopeful. There are some successes, there is a lot of confusion. We leave you with Chart No. 7. For all honest-to-God sectarians it ignores the painful assessments of how we are all doing in convincing the folks out there and shows just how well *your* brand of radical-left-republican bullshit is doing against all the others. But neither despair or exult – after all, it's only bourgeoise democracy when all's said and done. ■

Chart No. 7

Shares of the radical vote 1981–82



INTERVIEW

Bernadette McAliskey

With the retirement of Noel Browne Dublin North Central lost a socialist TD. In an attempt to hold some of the vote and to improve on last year's H Block vote, Bernadette McAliskey campaigned during the 1982 election. GRALTON spoke to McAliskey about her campaign and the issues on which she stood.

Why did you decide to stand in the General Election?

The whole strategy of standing is part of the ongoing anti-imperialist movement. It goes back to the H-Block campaign, when what's now called the H-Block elections were fought. The hunger strike did not achieve the 5 demands. However you measure it in terms of taking the mass movement forward or raising the question, what it did not do was win the 5 demands. There was therefore a period of demoralisation and confusion within the H-Block Movement.

Part of that falling back of the mass movement was the consistent campaign, by the Guards in particular but certainly the RUC as well, against activists. Throughout the country, fairly large numbers of people, quite apart from the question of the Provisionals, were being lifted and charged with offences like postering under the Offences Against the State Act. Paddy Keogh got 3 years for the 18 July British Embassy March. This contributed to the confusion in the Movement.

Where is the H Block movement at today?

There was to have been a H Block recall conference in February. My own argument towards the Conference was to try and analyse why we had not been able to win the 5 demands. It

simply wasn't good enough to say the Church did this, or somebody else did that, when we hadn't been in a position to force them into doing it. It was because we had not yet built up an organised anti-imperialist working class inthe South. An organised working class, yes. But they are not an organised *anti-imperialist* working class and the anti-imperialist movement had to take on the question of the Southern working class if they are ever actually to move forward.

The Peoples Democracy (PD) had very much the same point of view and it was in that context that myself, PD and a number of other people, independents within the National H-Block Committee, were approaching that kind of argument for the H-Block Conference; and the election came up in the middle of that.

I stood because I felt it just had to be done. PD also accepted that if we were going to attempt to move forward, the candidate would have to be someone like myself who would make the difference not only in terms of votes, but in the ability to put a campaign on the ground. It was much better to have an independent who was oriented towards building a broad unity of the Left and unity of anti-imperialist struggle – not a member of PD. And in that I think they were right, given the short length of time that was available, and the programmatical points of difference which would have come to the fore in the question of whether the SLP should work for a member of the PD.

Were you disappointed with the vote you got?

I got as many votes as I thought I'd get – maybe 500 votes less. We did not approach the election on the basis that winning a seat was a realistic possibility. Even the canvassers, the campaign workers, very realistically started by saying that we would go out to win a seat but that it wasn't a realistic possibility. On the other hand, a lot of the people who worked with us had no electoral experience, they believed the people at the doors who were nice to them. People are polite. They are not going to say go to blazes, unless they really hate you. They are just going to say thank you. I hope you do well. And they really do. But that does not mean they will vote for you.

Was your campaign not broader than the H Block campaign?

Yes it was. We took the core of the people who had fought the H Block election and we went out and fought for workers in defense of the working class and in defence of the anti-imperialist struggle. What was a single issue support vote we actually tightened into a political vote for the socialist republic without concession; without concession on the question of partition in order to win support from the working class in the South; without concession on working class principles in order to win support on the anti-imperialist struggle. That's the point we were trying to make.

Photo: Derek Speirs (Report)

A lot of Noel Browne's vote went to Fine Gael. Can you explain that?

It would be all too simple to say that that proved that Browne was a consistent coalitionist and had served Labour for years. But it didn't. I worked two weeks in that area and ended up knowing it like the back of my hand. My honest assessment of that vote is that Noel Browne had a constituency clinic up in Northside which catered for that whole Kilbarrack, Dromcastle area where the struggle for the day to day survival has to be intense. And when he retired the people who depended on his presence – they may not ever have had to go to his clinic, but they drew some comfort from the fact that if the water level went over their heads, the TD is across the road – actually transferred their vote down to the next available source of refuge, which was the next constituency clinic, Bermingham's in the Cawley Road. I honestly think that was the reason for the major transfer. And Bermingham runs a good clinic.

Sinn Fein did not poll very well. What do you think of the support they got in this election?

I think Sinn Fein polled brilliantly. At the last election you had a single issue campaign where the basic slogan was "don't let the prisoners die!" All kinds of people supported it for all kinds of reasons; some for, some against the armed struggle; some just worried about the troubles coming South. But you had a single issue emotional vote at the height of an emotional campaign. And the Provos walked in at a time of demoralisation when they were basically in retreat themselves, in terms of the loss of personnel over the past six months, and have carved out of that mass movement 50% of it for themselves. It's a very impressive thing to have done.

What effect do you think the success of Sinn Fein The Workers' Party (SFWP) in the election will have on the anti-imperialist struggle?

I think it clearly shows that our work is cut out in terms of our knowing what to do. SFWP started out 10 years ago to do what they did in the General Election. We don't get overly upset because the Labour Party has people in the Dail and at the bottom line there's no real difference between the Labour Party and SFWP in terms of how to achieve socialism. Tomas MacGiolla

argued, and won the argument 10 years ago, that the way to achieve socialism was to get a democratic majority of Prionsias de Rossas into Leinster House. And totally in isolation to that you get a majority of Seamus Lynchs into Stormont – of course, they took Stormont away and that spoiled Tomas's plan. So he's spent the last ten years arguing that they should put Stormont back so he can put 51% of Seamus Lynchs into it.

They believe the road to socialism is through parliamentary democracy and through trade unionism. The role of the Trade Unions is to fight on the industrial and economic front and the politics will be democratically argued out in Leinster House. and When they have patiently educated everyone into believing that they are right, they will then by parliamentary decree declare a socialist republic and put the two bits together. It's a pity that they degenerated into that position from being active participants in the mass struggle. So we tend to have an instinctive reaction, and I think everybody has . . . it breaks your heart to see them in there. But that's where they belong so we really ought not to get upset about it.

A number of issues were raised on the doorstep during the election: are you a blow-in or are you here to stay? Are you going to start trouble down here?
I think it's true that we very effectively disposed of most of these by the Saturday/Sunday before the election. I found these very reasonable questions. If the positions were reversed and I had opened the door to someone who was canvassing for me, that's exactly what I would have asked.

People wanted to know if this was some kind of protest, some kind of gimmick, or is this woman making a serious attempt to be a representative of this constituency. And given the nature of people's problems, that is a very fair and reasonable thing for them to ask. Because they do all have this concept of what a TD is and that goes back to many years of patronage in politics in this country. They have a right to ask are you serious or are you not.

A lot of it also is a partition mentality. People say why did you come down here to stand for election? They never asked Jack Lynch what took you up from Cork to be Taoiseach. The mass of people think elections are very important. They determine what they call the bread and butter issues. And that's the way they see it.

What about the abortion issue as raised by the Society for the Unborn Child (SPUC) leaflet against you? Have you any answers to issues like abortion being raised outside of your control?
It's very hard to handle. There are two points. Abortion was not a central issue either in the election as a whole or in our strategy towards the election and we didn't want to centre the whole campaign around the question. So, on the one hand, we didn't want to get into a full blown argument with the SPUC people; on the other hand, I was not prepared to make the concession of simply saying it's lies. I wasn't prepared to say, tell them anything until you get the votes in the box. That's what we're fighting against.

One of the things that I did find interesting in the whole campaign is what can only be described as the fear that the phrase "the right to choose" caused among women. We have to look at the whole fibre of this society to understand why it does frighten them. With the Catholic ethic the place of women is quite obvious – we're the people who caused all of this trouble. It goes back long before capitalism. It goes back to original sin; we caused it. And if we're not kept on a tight rein, we might cause a lot more. There is almost a hysterical fear of the phrase the Right To Choose. It's not just abortion, it's about divorce, it's about family planning. I got the feeling from one or two people that if divorce were legal, they wouldn't be there. That's what frightened them – that if the legal restraint that prevented them from thinking about the alternative to the misery they're in was taken away, and they had the right to choose, they might exercise it. Then they'd go to Hell, and that would be the fault of the Government for not having kept them down.

Would you like to say something about the reaction to you as a woman candidate. This is particularly interesting because before the June 1981 election someone from the Woman's Political Association (WPA) on Women Today *said that they supported all women candidates. She was then asked if they'd support you, "Oh, we'd have to have a meeting about that"!*
I think it's a reflection of the confusion in that type of woman's organisation – the WPA, Women's Institute or ICA type. They generally start with middle class women who believe that we are all women together unless some woman from the working class gets up and says well there's a small difference here between us, hasn't anyone noticed? Many women said they'd vote for me because I am a woman, because the men had made a hames of the whole thing, that they knew nothing about budgeting. Quite a lot of reaction along the lines that if we ran the house the way they ran the country, we'd be broke too.

Where do you go from here?
On the one hand, people asked are you going to be here to stay; you have to be here to stay. That is the right of two thousand first preference voters. In very practical ways, if we're going to build on that, we need some visible presence in the constituency. What you call it in terms of a community advice centre, socialist demands centre or whatever – you have to be available to people. On the other hand, we need to argue within the anti-imperialist movement for taking the struggle into the day to day lives of working class people.

And it does affect them. They pay for partition; they pay for it in terms of what they pay for security on the border. They pay because partition provides two cheap pools of labour on either side of the border. We're so far down the wages stakes we compete with Puerto Rico. John de Lorean had three places he might build his factory. One was Southern Ireland, one was Northern Ireland and one was Puerto Rico. The Brits had to pay £65½ million to pull him to their side of the line. So even within their own context, within the context of capitalism, partition is getting too expensive.

How do you see your own role in all of this?
I see my role as an independent to build up anti-imperialist unity and to build a broader movement which involves anti-imperialist and working class organisations. Many organisations, especially the trade union movement remained outside the H-Block campaign. It's not that they weren't sympathetic but they didn't relate to it. If you take the anti-imperialist movement into a position where they *can* relate to it, then we can put the cause of Labour and the National Question back into the one organisation. I don't mean in terms of Party, but at least the one organised broad movement which has a number of basic positions that we fight for and defend. ■

Photo: Derek Speirs (Report)

The fall and fall of Labour

Paul Brennan

Labour Party National Youth Committee

This election has brought to a head the fundamental crisis of identity and political purpose within the Labour Party.

The basis of this crisis is the whole question of coalition strategy. Its origins lie in the divide between those party members who thought that the "seventies would be socialist" through building a base upon Labour's highest ever vote of 17% in the 1969 General Election by means of an independent socialist programme – and those party members who supported coalition in 1973, 1977, 1981 and 1982 on the strategy of implementing Labour's policies in Government with Fine Gael.

The crisis of Labour emerges therefore on the question of electoral strategy and has two themes: to enter into coalition with capitalist parties like Fine Gael or to build a socialist base amongst the working class with the eventual aim of majority Labour Government.

The fall of the last coalition after seven months in office, and the subsequent election campaign, brought up the controversy once more. On Thursday 28th January, the day after the Government fell, the Administrative Council of the Labour Party met with the Parliamentary Party and, after six hours of disagreement between the pro-coalitionists and the left wing activists, a compromise was reached which committed Labour to fighting the election on its own policies.

No sooner was the ink dry on this "unanimous" agreement than party leader Michael O'Leary was telling constituency delegates at a selection conference in Dublin Central, that Labour was fighting the election on a coalition strategy with Fine Gael!

Left wing activists at the meeting who attempted to question the party leader's interpretation of electoral strategy were ruled out of order by chairperson Senator Michael Ferris.

In retrospect the events at that selection conference in Dublin Central can be seen as the first attempt by the left wing in the campaign to voice an anti-coalition position. Left wing activists proposed that Pat Carroll should stand as the candidate in preference to party leader Michael O'Leary. The result of the vote was 14 for Carroll and 38 for O'Leary.

In his "victory" speech, O'Leary continually emphasised Labour's "responsibility to the people – to govern in the national interest." Less than 24 hours after the Administrative Council meeting had decided to pursue a go-it-alone policy, O'Leary had manipulated the agreed electoral strategy by confirming that coalition with Fine Gael was on the cards.

In essence the whole Labour party campaign was a shambles. Rank and file activists received two letters in the post during the first week of the election campaign. One was from party Chairperson Michael D. Higgins, committing Labour to fighting the election independently on its own policies. The other letter (in the same envelope) was from Michael O'Leary informing activists that Labour was in an electoral alliance with Fine Gael and was committed to defending the budget.

One lesson that the left wing members of the Administrative Council have learnt from this election campaign is O'Leary's total disregard of democratic procedures on agreed decisions. It was O'Leary and his right wing supporters who set the tone for the bitter divisions that were to prevail over the three week campaign.

But the crisis of Labour has a long history. O'Leary's leadership further articulated the electoral strategy of the Cluskey and Corish years in the 1970's in which coalition was seen as a tactic and not a matter of socialist principle. O'Leary, like his two predecessors, seems oblivious to the price of Labour participation in coalition – which has resulted in the decline of the Labour vote from 17% in 1969 to 9% in 1982.

To understand what is happening in the Labour party, it is necessary to look at its composition in terms of ideology and organisation. Firstly, the 15 Labour TDs returned to the twenty-third Dail lack any cohesive ideological strategy on how Labour would achieve a majority socialist government in Ireland.

The party chairperson, Michael D. Higgins TD, said at the Labour Youth Conference last Autumn, that what the Labour party needed was a theory of socialist politics related to what is happening in Irish society.

Higgins, alone amongst the parliamentary party, has a clear understanding of Labour's dilemma. But since his election to the 22nd Dail in June 1981, he has failed to develop the political leadership the left wing rank and file need. Many activists at grass roots level still hold him in high regard as the only person who could turn the Labour party around and begin the process of building a socialist party.

A major problem for Labour has been its continual failure to build a working class base in large urban centres like Dublin and Cork. Although Labour secured five of the 48 seats in the Dublin region, the fact is that the Labour vote in Dublin is down from 93,000 in 1969 to 50,000 in 1982.

This situation may matter little to rural Labour TDs like John Ryan in Tipperary North or Dick Spring in

Kerry North. But, as the loss of Brendan Corish's seat in Wexford and Jimmy Tully's seat in Meath have shown, Labour seats are safe nowhere because Labour has never seriously developed a base that links socialist politics to local needs.

The future of the Labour party now lies in the hands of the rank and file and the affiliated trade unions. Whatever plans Michael O'Leary and his parliamentary colleagues may have, there is little doubt that many rank and file activists will now attempt to fight to wrest control of the Labour party from the current leadership. Whether or not a strongly organised left wing base now emerges will be the determining factor for the future of the Labour party.

Such a socialist opposition would have considerable support amongst the Labour Youth Movement. The womens' group, the affiliated trade unions (in particular the ITGWU and the FWU leaderships) as well as amongst many rank and file members. Such a movement must attempt not alone to reiterate socialist policies on the economy and social issues, but also to democratise the Labour party and its structures so that an independent socialist strategy can never again be watered down by parliamentary representatives who don't believe in, or wish to introduce, socialist politics in the Dail.

Labour has never fully defined what the basis of its socialism is: whether social democratic in the Swedish and West German tradition or a radical socialist perspective which acknowledges the legacy of Marxism in attempting to *transform* Irish capitalism rather than *reforming* it as social democracy dictates.

For years the Parliamentary Labour Party has operated under the guise of Labourism which has covered everything from Parish Pump politics to woolly commentaries at annual conference by successive leaderships on the role of the party in Irish society. Little thought and policy development has been put into the relationship between socialist theory and the working class, or between parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggle as means to channel working class agitation and other social and ecological struggles.

It is true that the 1969 and 1980 Annual Conferences adopted radical socialist programmes based on a planned economy citing nationalisation of the banks and other financial houses, coupled with workers' control, and progressive policies on social issues.

Photo: Derek Speirs (report)

Higgins triumphant at the crucial Administrative Council meeting.

However, the will to relate most of these policies to the working class has never been a prominent feature of most Labour TDs public utterances.

If Labour is to survive then the adoption, through mandatory reselection, of Labour candidates willing to fight elections on a socialist programme will be a central issue. So also will be democratising the party through control of the election manifesto by the Administrative Council and the election of the party leadership by Annual Conference.

The real winners in this general election were SFWP. Their emergence onto the Irish Parliamentary scene has overnight changed the future of left politics in this country. Many rank and file activists in the Labour party see their electoral breakthrough as the basis for a left wing opposition with Labour in the new Dail.

The fact that SFWP now have three TDs in the Dail, all of whom articulate class politics based on Marxism, raises serious questions for the Labour party in terms of political identity and direction. Nobody could ever accuse Labour TDs of being class warriors. On the contrary, many people (in particular the youth) perceive the Labour party as being part of the status quo — and the involvement in coalition with Fine Gael has re-enforced this view.

Since the General Election result many left-wing activists, in particular those on the Administrative Council, have been fighting a hard battle to dissuade Labour from entering another coalition. On Thursday the 25th of February, the Dublin Regional Council voted unanimously to oppose coalition and on Saturday 27th February the National Youth Committee voted to oppose coalition and called on the party's representatives in the Dail to propose the party leader as Taoiseach and then go into "socialist opposition."

The party leadership played the coalition card right up to the eve of the new Dail. It was only the casting vote of Michael D. Higgins at the Administrative Council meeting on March 9th, which decided the fate of Labour. Higgins' casting vote to break the coalition arrangement with Fine Gael has opened up a whole new area for discussion and debate within the party.

The subsequent highly personalised attack on Higgins by pro-coalitionist Barry Desmond shows that the fundamental division on electoral strategy still, however, remains. The forthcoming annual conference in Galway next May will become the battleground on which the future of the Labour party will be won or lost.

Many rank and file activists support the Administrative Council decision on coalition, others want to go further with a constitutional amendment to the rule book which would make coalition impossible with capitalist parties. The period between now and the May conference will be vital for the left in the Labour party.

A grassroots movement must be mobilised to defeat the leadership's attempt to re-commit Labour to *any* coalition strategy. Many activists remember only too well, the former leader Frank Cluskey's resolution No. 19, passed at the annual conference in 1979. That resolution had the Labour party fighting the 1981 General Election on its own policies, but then doing a deal with Fine Gael if Labour held the balance of power. We all know what subsequently happened!

We must always remember that, if Labour does not wish to develop a socialist base through the Irish working class then this General Election has proved that other socialists like Jimmy Kemmy and in particular SFWP are ready and willing to take up the gauntlet of building a socialist party on class politics.. ■

This article was written by a number of shop stewards in Dublin. *Photos by Derek Speirs (Report)*

HOW TO GO ON STRIKE

Despite the media-inspired image, workers don't strike for the hell of it. Strikes are messy, complicated, tiring, frustrating and sometimes frightening. (They can also be inspiring, unifying, fulfilling and enriching — but when you're facing a choice which means you won't have any wages next week those things are not uppermost in the mind.) It's a lucky workforce which is so organised, united, firm and assertive that the bosses hesitate before messing. But most workers will at some point have to test their strength against that of management — when someone is fired, an increase is refused, conditions are changed or jobs are threatened.

Things can be confusing at first — a strike will involve large numbers of individual, quirky people and everyone must have their say and things must be run democratically. And the issues, balance of forces etc. can be so varied that there is no simple blueprint for the job. So only general principles and guidelines can be picked out from the experiences of workers down through the decades, and experience and initiative play the largest part in winning any strike. The shop stewards who put this article together wouldn't dream of laying down an A to Z of strikes — things don't work that way and their experience was gained in defeats and draws as well as victories.

Your Union Official

Union officials are members of our movement and should be treated with the respect due to all trade unionists. They are also our employees and we should not bully them with the arrogance which we as workers get from our own bosses.

However, they are not the union — the members are. Take no nonsense. They are there to make the workings of the union more efficient (this is the theory) and not to play their own little power games. Their job is to help us win strikes if strike we must — not to act as referee or to ensure fair play for the employer. The bosses have enough help from the courts, the gardai, the media and their own union, the FUE.

The strike should be official if the members vote for it. Workers don't lightly vote to suffer a strike and if there is a grievance to be redressed it's the union official's job to help do that. Unfortunately, things are a lot more complicated than that.

However, it is worth trying hard to have the strike declared official. Apart from the strike pay there's the question of morale — and the union has facilities which can be important. An official strike also prevents the boss from exploiting any differences between the union officials and the strikers.

But if, for whatever reason, the officials let you down it's important to remember that the union movement was built on "unofficial" action frowned on from all sides. (It was quite amusing to see certain people applaud the Polish Solidarity movement — which was as unofficial as you could get — while condemnig official strikes at home for the very fact that they were "unofficial".)

Beforehand

If you are lucky enough to get prior warning use the time. Make sure everyone is in benefit and that as many of the workers are in the union as possible. Watch to see that you are keeping to local and union procedures — if they are reasonable — so that the company or union officials can't trip you up later on. If there's no union in the job contact the ICTU immediately (they're in the phone book) and tell them your problem and ask that they recommend the appropriate union.

Make sure that everyone knows the issues, including the workers who are not directly involved. They soon may be. Be precise about the demands, draw up a list — at a general meeting if possible.

"Good morale on the picket is bad morale in the boardroom" RVH dispute, Belfast 1979

Don't be afraid to hold a meeting on the job. You'll be stopping work soon enough, anyway. Where strike notice is involved and you don't want to stop work get a meeting in the union hall or in some local hall, outside working hours.

Contact any other unions on the job and request their support in the coming strike. If there's an inter-union committee get it to meet. Involve as many other sections as possible — perhaps adding the grievances of other sections to the list of demands. Strike as a workforce, leave no room for splitting or scabbing.

Get the timing right. The week before the summer holidays is obviously a bad time. High production levels or big orders due — that's the time when you're strongest. Avoid being provoked into a strike by a manegement that would like to get you off the payroll for a while when things are slack. Be particularly careful if a dispute has been building up and management reckons they will have a strike anyway over pay — and then, a couple of months beforehand there's a slack period. Beware any provocation which will force you out for that period — and then leave the workforce tired and in no mood for action when the original dispute reaches its head, at which point management can get a favourable agreement from workers who are loath to go out the gate again.

Don't over-concern yourself with All-Out pickets. One out, all out. But if necessary instruct the union official to put in the application for an All-Out picket to the ICTU *now*. Not when the strike is in its third week.

If working out strike notice don't let management move gear out of the workplace.

Ban overtime.

The Start

Try to avoid simply walking out when a dispute occurs. If management action is particularly sharp and emotions are high try to have a general meeting, with a shop stewards meeting beforehand if necessary. Take a *vote* for strike action. The picket alone won't let you know how you stand with your members. If most won't support the action now is the time to find out and to try and convince them of the case. If other sections are still working send delegations around. Don't let management rumours get their first.

Whether it's a walk out or a planned strike have a general meeting as soon as possible. If this is the first mass meeting elect a strike committee — or it may be decided that the stewards or section committee will function as the strike committee.

Outine the issues clearly and let everyone have their say. A discussion and a show of hands is the best collective way of taking a decision — everyone knows the issues and knows where everyone else stands. However, union rules usually demand a secret ballot and this can sometimes be the best test of members feelings in the circumstances. The important thing is that the vote be taken after collective discussion. The discussion is an essential part of a democratic decision — and it is not democratic that workers who don't attend the meeting and the discussion (but are open to direct influence from management and perhaps from the media) should vote separately from the decision-making process.

At the first general meeting work out the picket rosters. Give as many people as possible a job to do: fund-raising, visiting other workplaces, placard making, etc. There's no shortage of work in a strike!

Elect a secretary, a public relations officer and a treasurer (or hardship committee). The secretary should collect the names, addresses and phone numbers of each strike committee member and each person with a special job to do.

Arrange the next meeting there and then and let everyone know the time and place.

The strike committee should meet at least several times a week, if not every day. General meetings should be often and regular. Losing touch with members can be fatal — it leads to demoralisation, confusion and lends itself to manoeuvring by the bosses. The members should at all times have control over the strike and guard against everything being left to a few — that's the way circumstances may push things and it must be fought against.

Put a picket on the gate immediately.

The First Few Days

A strong picket is essential. Work out a roster of between two and four hours per person. When numbers are large don't space out the roster too much so that everyone pickets once a fortnight. The more contact the workers have with the picket line the greater the solidarity.

Put a notice board at the picket line with the roster on it. Put somebody from the committee in charge of time keeping — somebody with a sharp tongue who won't tolerate dodgers.

You have a legal right to peaceful picketing and don't tolerate scare tactics to try to reduce the numbers on the picket line. Picket for 24 hours if necessary.

If possible, have tea food and (in winter) a fire at the picket. Friendly workers in the catering industry can help here, and even friendly neighbours and shopkeepers have been known to help sustain a strike.

"Make sure everyone understands the issues". Confexim dispute, Drogheda, 1978.

Good morale on the picket line is bad morale in the boardroom. Get a radio. Decorate the gate with banners, slogans, insults etc. Let management see you basking in the sunshine (if you happen to strike on the day it shines usually one Wednesday in August!)

Never joke with scabs. Ignore them.

Challenge every vehicle and explain your case to the driver. Always have a member of the strike committee at the picket.

Put a mass picket on every Monday morning. Everybody. Or when the company pulls a stroke — such as making noises about closing down. The mass picket shows them your solidarity and does wonders for strike morale.

Draw up a press statement and a leaflet for other workplaces in the union and in the locality. Organise people to deliver them — with two people per car if travelling is called for. The leaflet for other workers can also act as an appeal for funds. The leaflet should contain: (1) what the strike is about; (2) the numbers involved, their unions; (3) information about the company, its profits, behaviour, connections etc.; (4) an address for further information, donations and messages of support.

The arrangements for paying out strike pay should be made at the first meeting. If there's no strike pay members with dependents can claim Supplementary Welfare. A letter from the union saying you are getting nothing helps and strikers should go to the Health Centre en bloc to apply. A good idea is to organise a delegation to the Welfare Officer or to the Dept. of Social Welfare, especially if there are problems.

Avoid losing people to nixers and alternative jobs. The strike or hardship committee should first allocate whatever money is collected to those who need it most.

The Press

There's no need to act sour if the press comes to the picket line — so don't turn them away. But the record of the media on strikes is appalling — no surprise, guess who owns the media! — so be careful. Publicity can be useful — in gaining support, raising striker's morale and depressing management. So, the PRO should ring the papers, ask for the industrial correspondent or the news desk. Put the case. Send in press statements.

The media is not on your side, but try not to turn the individual reporter against you. At the picket the PRO or strike committee member, should speak to the press. Try to keep one voice.

If the press messes you about or does a "greedy workers" job on you don't hesitate to strike back. They don't like being caught out doing something nasty — and they're vulnerable — they depend on you to buy their product. If they print lies get on

"The bosses have enough help". Garda ushers car through picket, ESB dispute, Sandyford 1981.

the phone and hassle the reporter. Hassle the news editor. Hassle the editor. Go down to the paper and demand a retraction and an apology. (You probably won't get it but it puts them on the defensive). If they are particularly vile — picket the paper.

Getting Help

The union should print your leaflets, arrange transport if necessary, provide phone facilities etc. But you may find that they won't.

Student's unions can be helpful, try them. There are lots of left groups around only too glad to be of service. Don't be afraid of the red tag — if they can help, take it. On the other hand, don't take any bullshit. If you find that they're more interested in quoting a shop steward's opinion of El Salvador or the Provisionals or the Budget in their paper give them the bum's rush. If you want to talk about those issues there's plenty of time later. What you want now is help and if they give it thank them as comrades, fair enough. Most left groups have enough cop to provide genuine help when workers ask for it, so don't hesitate.

The Second Week

Now is the time to campaign for wider support. Organise delegations to stewards throughout the whole town, city or country, if necessary. Bring a box for collections, don't leave it to your supporters to make one, If members of other unions are still working inside, go see their officials. Leaflet all union meetings you hear about and lobby (with placards) district meetings and trades councils if their support is not forthcoming. In any case, leaflet them.

If you have the numbers, organise a march through town. Welcome husbands, wives, kids and supporters along. You have a right to march down the main street — inform the gardai about two days before. Contact the press beforehand and have a statement ready to hand them.

If the IDA, FUE or whatever are involved, picket their offices. Picket the head offices of the company.

Funds are essential. As well as collections, organise a social, with sympathetic musicians. There are a few friendly singers, musicians and bands around. If you don't know then your friendly local lefties should. Take plenty of time to organise it, printing and selling tickets beforehand.

Send delegations to union officials looking for special meetings of the local branch. Don't write off the union. Don't pull out. The last thing you want in a strike is a fight over transferring to another union. Don't allow the officials to meet with the bosses on their own — if they do, kick up a stink. (You may need the officials if it's an unofficial strike and the company won't talk directly to you.)

Above all you want sympathetic action from workers, particularly blacking of goods. Contact union HQs, but don't rely on this alone. Go directly to the dockers, suppliers, warehouse workers or wherever the stuff needs blacking.

At present at least two unions are refusing point blank to officially black goods. The Supreme Court ruling on the Talbot case has their leaders scared stiff, even though blacking would be illegal only *after* an injunction was issued in each case.

If the company gets an injunction against picketing (for whatever reason, and the judges seem to hand them out for any old reason) you must decide what the balance of forces are. If you continue picketing will the company go through with its threat and put you in jail? Will that help or hinder your strike? Are you strong enough to come through that with a solid strike force? Should you fight back through the courts? The particular circumstances of the strike will dictate.

A public meeting, with prominent speakers, will help if successfully organised. Get poster out.

Whatever you do — don't just picket and leave it at that.

Ending the Strike

The strike could end with an occupation — and that's an escalation that we'll deal with in a future issue.

When negotiations begin it's vital that members of the strike committee are present at all talks. Report back on the negotiations and get a settlement before returning if possible. Try to avoid the sticky webb of the Labour Court of possible.

Don't fight a losing strike to the bitter end. A shattered, demoralised workforce will be weak in the future. Better to cut your losses, remarshall your forces, maintain unity and organise for the next time.

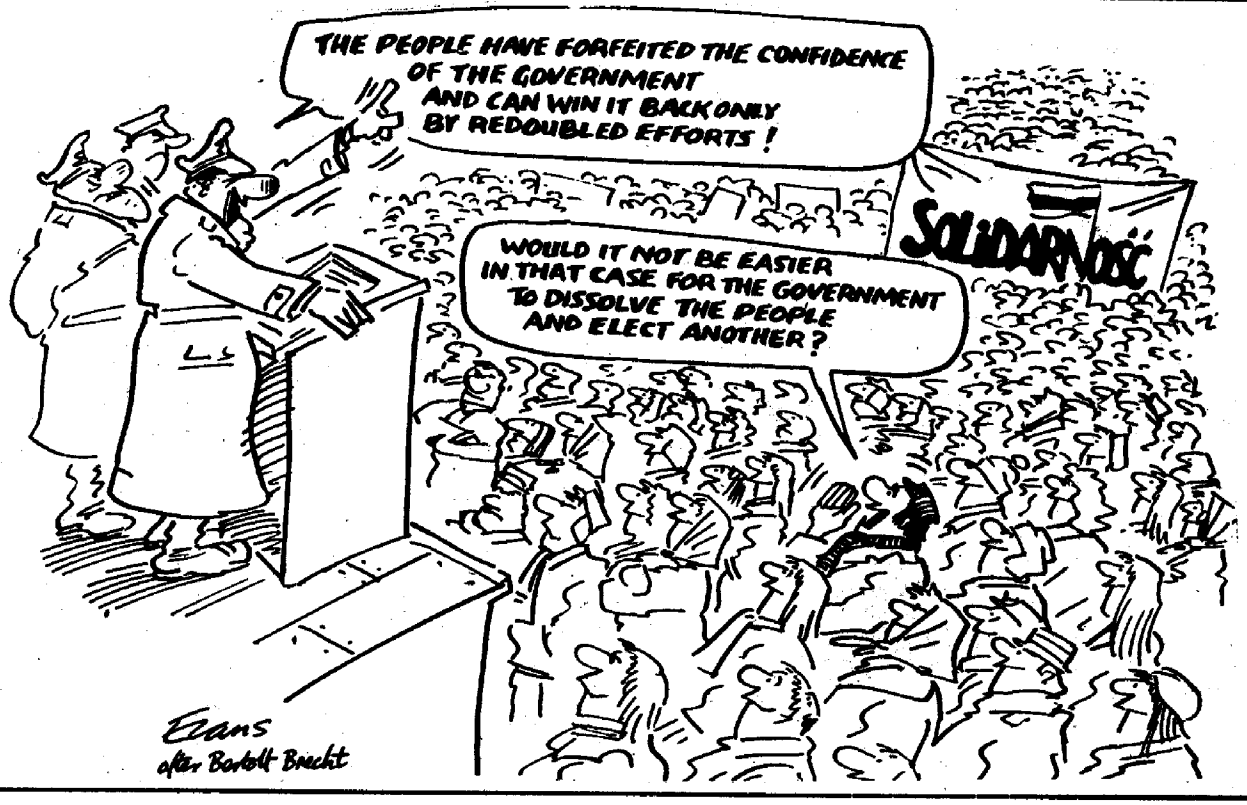
Technically, some union executives can send you back — make sure it's the *members* who decide to go back, and that they know the settlement terms. Get the terms in writing, with a no-victimisation clause.

Nurture the organisation built up during the strike. Take no shit from the supervisors or managers. Watch out for company attempts to claw back the costs of settling the strike. ■

"Never joke with scabs". Shelbourne Hotel dispute, Dublin, 1978

POLAND IN PERSPECTIVE

JOHN GOODWILLIE



Q. *Why does the Polish working class refuse to work hard?*

A. *We know from history, comrade, that the ruling classes never work hard.*

This joke points to one of the major problems which faced Poland even before Solidarity came along. The economy has been far from healthy. The rate of economic growth had fallen back as Poland became a comparatively industrialised country. The strategy of the Gierek government during the 1970s was to invest by buying advanced technology from the West. Many of the products made with this equipment were to be exported in order to earn the money to pay back the bank loans. However, much of the loan money was spent non-productively, for example on special hospitals for Party members.

In agriculture two-thirds of investment and fertiliser were put into the inefficient state and collective farms (making up only 20% of the agricultural land). Private farmers were starved of investment – you only have to look at the television pictures of farm horses. Poland's urban workers depend on food from these private farms, and a lot of food is exported also. But private farmers could not buy better equipment even if they had the money. So the food supplies, and therefore the money to pay for exports, began to dry up.

Inefficiency is widespread in the economy. The price system was so crazy that farmers were buying bread at subsidised prices, feeding it to their cattle and selling the cattle at a profit! The price of steel was lower than the cost of the energy used in making it.

Corruption existed in many spheres of life. Now corruption is not just due to ambitious careerist officials. Corruption flourishes when there are obstacles to efficiency. A factory manager knows that his bonus depends on his fulfilling the Plan. But he knows from experience that some of his suppliers are unreliable. So he "forgets" to declare some of his stock in hand, some of his machines. Less will be expected of him. And when his planned supplier lets him down, he'll get some of his raw materials on the side from a friend in another factory. And he'll return the favour by

using some of his own machines on the side. Sometimes it is said that the Plan would work if it was computerised. But computers depend on accurate information. And as Leonid Plyushch has said in relation to Russia: "Men would still have to feed information into the machine. And why should they be honest with machines when they are dishonest with bureaucrats?"

The Polish economy invests capital at a high rate. But it does not get the return in increased output that could be expected. Massive waste is the only explanation for this. The planning process encourages waste by rewarding total production: the more raw materials are used, the higher production figures appear to be. Innovation needs resources which the Plan has allocated elsewhere. Massive industrial projects tie up the resources of a comparatively small economy. Military spending amounts to 6% of national output.

It is to a large extent the way in which Poland – unlike the rest of Eastern Europe – has retained private farmers and failed to collectivise most of the land, which has ensured a conservative base on which the Catholic Church has kept a lot of influence.

The Church has also a historical identification with the Polish nation. In 1655 the Swedish army had taken the whole of Poland, except for the monastery of Czestochowa. After a siege of 40 days the Swedes retreated, and a miracle was ascribed to the Black Madonna kept there. In the years when Poland was partitioned largely between Orthodox Russia and Protestant Prussia, the Catholic Church became a symbol of national identity. And when Polish culture began to reassert itself before the First World War, it was in the small territory held by Catholic Austria that liberal freedoms were greatest.

In modern Poland, of course, according to Marxist theory, the Church should be withering away. Marx wrote that religion was the sigh of the oppressed creature. Either Marx was wrong, or there are still oppressed creatures in Poland.

The military move in. The movie playing is Apocalypse Now.

Poland is an authoritarian society, where if you set up a chess club a member of the Communist Party will be told to join it to make sure it is discussing only chess. The churches are therefore one of the few areas of comparatively free speech. (The emergence of a peace movement among the churches in East Germany is another example of this.)

Free speech is the area of particular interest to the intellectuals. The intelligentsia, especially the core such as writers, artists, teachers, journalists, have a professional interest in freedom of speech. Hence dissident intellectuals. But they tend not to think along the same lines as manual workers, even though their income may not be all that different. The most immediate problems in the factory like the speed of the production line, the foreman looking over shoulders, the calculation of the bonus are not problems of free speech: that comes only later, when workers are thinking of organising. So there is a gap which needs to be bridged if workers and intellectuals are to combine.

That gap can be seen in the Eastern European countries which have similar economic systems to Poland – East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria. I will leave on one side Yugoslavia and Albania which have both, in their own separate ways, broken away from the influence of the Soviety Union. Yugoslavia and Albania also share the distinction that their revolutions were homegrown, carried out by their own armies of peasants and workers, springing directly from the resistance struggle against fascist rule.

In the other countries, however, much nationalisation had taken place under German rule, and the revolutions were assisted by the presence of the Soviet Army. And the Soviet Union was careful to control the speed it proceeded at. Indeed, when units of the Bulgarian Army in 1945 started hoisting red flags, the Soviet Marshal Tolbukhin was sent to calm things down and tell the soldiers to allow a coalition government to be formed.

In these countries, then, the revolution came from the top downwards. And that meant that from the beginning everything depended on bureaucrats making rules. Of course, any state has to have some rules. But is socialism just a matter of state ownership and planning of the economy? Is it a matter of providing good social services? Or is it about freedom, about freeing workers from constant obedience to orders that they know are wrongheaded, about giving people in their factories, their offices, their communities, control over their own lives? About freeing workers from the fear that if they suggest an improvement in production methods, somebody will be out of a job?

Some people argue that the regimes in Easter Europe have only existed for a little over thirty years. Isn't it a little early to judge them? Well, of course, the Soviet regime has existed for quite a bit longer, and it would not seem to be any better. But apart from that, if the defects in the Eastern European regimes could be seen to be short-term matters which could be remedied gradually, they could be viewed with some tolerance. But, in fact, attempts to change things have been brutally suppressed.

In 1953, troops had to be sent to Plzen in Czechoslovakia to disperse demonstrations against a currency reform. The same year, 300,000 workers struck in East Germany against

a rise in work norms: the Russian army moved in and killed 19 (government figure) or 267 (West German figure).

In Hungary in 1956 100,000 students and workers demonstrated in solidarity with contemporary events in Poland and were attacked with machine-guns. Barricades were set up in Budapest and Russian tanks moved to restore order. The tanks were attacked, the insurgents obtained arms, the government's authority disintegrated, and after a three-day withdrawal the Russian tanks returned. 20,000 or more people were killed in bombardments. After a fortnight's general strike and several shorter ones, they were forced back to work.

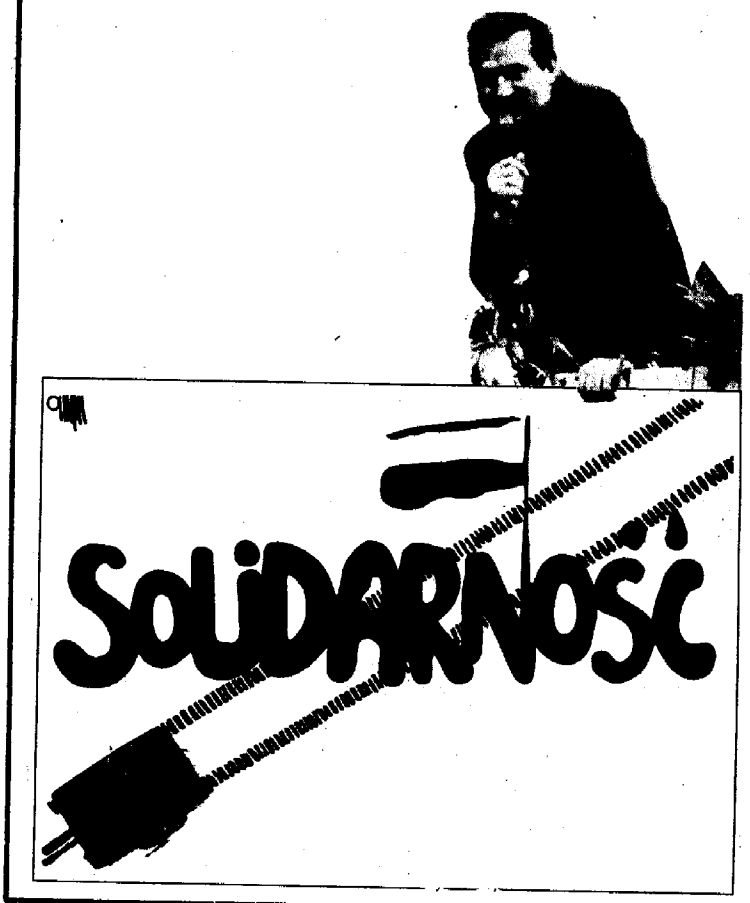
In Czechoslovakia in 1968, after an intellectual ferment demanding "socialism with a human face" and reforms in the Communist Party, the Russians invaded and, despite militant calls from the trade unions, all those who supported reform were gradually squeezed out. In 1977, 90,000 miners in Jiu Valley in Romania struck and took two members of the Party Central Committee hostage in order to obtain a visit from President Ceausescu; 4,000 miners were subsequently expelled from the area.

Obviously, there are differences between one country and another. But the similarities are striking. In Poland in 1956 100,000 people demonstrated in Poznan demanding bread, lower prices, higher wages, and freedom. 53 (official figure) were killed. Strikes occurred elsewhere. Workers' councils were created in the factories and the trade union congress was taken over by factory delegates, but these moves were gradually stifled.

In 1968 students and some workers demonstrated against attacks on dissenters and in solidarity with the Czechoslovak movement. In 1970 workers in Gdansk, Gdynia and Sopot marched to the local Party headquarters in protest against price rises. They were met with machine guns. Szczecin workers struck in sympathy. Hundreds were killed in response. Strikes broke out again and were pacified only by government promises of change, wage increases and cancellation of price rises. In 1976 another attempt at price rises was met by strikes in many towns, riots in Radom, and blocking of railway lines at the Ursus tractor factory near Warsaw.

In Andrzej Wajda's film, *Man of Iron*, the hero is tormented in 1968 because the workers wouldn't join the students in their revolt. He is tormented in 1970 because the students wouldn't join the workers. But his father, the subject of *Man of Marble*, tells him to be patient. The old Stakhanovite hero still has a basic faith in the workers. When his hands were crippled when a burning hot brick was passed to him, he had asked "How could one worker do that to another?"

In the end in Poland, the workers and the intellectuals got together. But it was not spontaneous. Links were built up slowly. After the persecution of the workers who had struck in 1976, a Workers' Defence Committee (KOR) composed of intellectuals was set up to offer legal and financial assistance and campaign against repression. It gradually established links with groups of sacked workers. Speaking in 1977 about the 1970 struggle, one of its members said: "The idea was implanted once and for all that a fresh explosion of social struggles would require vigilance and solidarity on the part of intellectuals. Thus, when repression again struck the workers after the 1976 strikes, a section of the intelligentsia already knew what to do."



Following the release of prisoners, KOR became the Committee for Social Self-Defence. An underground newspaper, *Robotnik* (Worker), was founded in 1977 to campaign for workers' interests and independent representation, and soon produced 12,000 copies. In 1978 Committees for the Creation of Free Trade Unions were formed by workers in Katowice (including Kazimierz Switon) and on the Baltic (including Andrzej Gwiazda). The Baltic Committee produced their own newspaper, *Robotnik Wybrzeza* (Coastal Worker). In 1979 a Charter of Workers' Rights was issued with the long-term aim of free trade unions. Among the 65 original signatories were 12 editors of *Robotnik*; The Gdansk signatories included Lech Walesa and Anna Walentynowicz (the welder whose dismissal was to spark off the Gdansk strike in 1980). Later in 1979 a Founding Committee of the Free Trade Unions of Western Pomerania was formed in Szczecin. The activists named above were among the many who later became prominent in Solidarity.

Of all the revolts in Eastern Europe, this was the most radical, the best organised and the best prepared. And that is why it lasted for so long. Never before had an Eastern European government tolerated 17 months of dissent and disruption.

Why did the revolt happen in Poland when it did? It is always difficult to foresee when a situation becomes so intolerable that people are prepared to risk their necks to change things. It is also important, however, that the old situation is no longer viable: that even the leading circles in the country realise that there have to be changes. When these two things come together, an explosion is liable to occur. In other words, the economic crisis was not the

result of the rise of Solidarity. The failure of the investment programme to produce a large increase in production, a drop in real wages, inflation, shortages, the stagnation in food supply, the peasant strikes in 1978 against a new pension scheme, the psychological boost to national self-respect of the Pope's visit, came together with the traditions of 1956, 1968, 1970 and 1976 and the patient work which had been done in propagating worker-intellectual links and the idea of independent trade unions.

But however much the leaders of Solidarity said, at first, that they were not trying to change the political system, the existence of an independent self-governing union was incompatible with a monolithic state dominated by one party. This is why there was such difficulty over the question of the "leading role of the Party". Eventually, the authorities agreed to register Solidarity as a trade union, when it added an annex to its constitution recognising the leading role of the Polish United Workers' Party in the country in general. Solidarity had refused to put that clause in as part of the constitution itself, because that would have been recognising the leading role of the Party within the union.

Now clearly, a party which has a leading role in the country will no longer have a leading role if there exists a body of 9½ million members in which it does not have a leading influence – that is why such importance attaches to the Catholic Church, the one body in which a Communist Party cannot look for a leading role.

So there was a basic contradiction here: if Solidarity was to be a genuinely independent union, with the right of access to the media which the Gdansk agreement promised in August 1980, then the Polish United Workers' Party would no longer be the leading force in the whole of Polish society. The Party Congress of July 1981 recognised that "it was only the mass protest of the working class which sparked off the process of transformation."

But if Solidarity was to be genuinely independent, then any proposal by which the working class was to exercise more influence in Polish society would channel itself through Solidarity. The moment that the union moved beyond demands for better wages and conditions – and it was demanding more than these right from the beginning of its existence – it was acting as a political opposition. The demand for workers' self-management in the factories inevitably clashed with the centralised structure of the economy.

There was without any doubt a lot of naivety among the leaders of Solidarity about facing up to this problem. Of course, it could hardly be otherwise. Most of the leaders had no experience of running anything, let alone a large trade union. They had not thought out a strategy which would have looked at the balance of forces in Polish society and considered whether the regime could tolerate indefinitely a focus of opposition like Solidarity. So they were naturally gradualist, thinking that the problem was to reform a socialist state. They did not recognise that the ruling elite was a social group with its own interests – special privileges, managerial power and ever more grandiose investment schemes. These interests are different from those of the working class – higher wages, a shorter working week, cheap food, control over their workplaces. The ruling class therefore could not tolerate real power-sharing: it would have to be overthrown.

One of Solidarity's intellectuals, Jacek Kuron, called for a "compromise" between the social movements such as Solidarity and "the need to preserve the so-called 'leading role' of the party, in other words its control over the central administration, the police and the army." But a coalition between Solidarity , the Church, the Party and the Army could not have lasted because of the clash of interests.

Could there have been a compromise along Hungarian lines? There was a lot of talk of an economic reform which would devolve power to factory managers, as has happened in Hungary. Undoubtedly this would have solved some of the economic problems. But one of the major problems is hidden under-employment. If factory managers were told to run their factories at a profit, many of them would start by sacking part of the workforce. Such a solution was incompatible with the existence of a militant trade union.

The Yugoslav solution of workers' control at factory level is also based on the criterion of profit. In Yugoslavia, central control is enforced through the state banks refusing credit rather than through bureaucratic directives. Again, Solidarity would hardly have accepted such a solution. These reforms can be brought through after a working class has been crushed (Hungary in 1956). They could not have solved the Polish situation.

But any idea that Solidarity should have accepted a compromise ignores the fact that it was a mass movement of workers in struggle, a movement which did not yet exercise real power and which therefore did not have responsibility. Anybody can work out a compromise on paper. Anybody can say: "The workers should not have pressed their luck so far." In practice, the pressure for compromise meant that Solidarity leaders were rushing round Poland persuading strikers to go back to work. Gwiazda commented July: "Walesa is presently devoting all his energies to suppressing strikes." Switon said at the September Congress: "The union is somehow being crushed from the inside." Karol Modzelewski, the KOR activist, said in early December: "The union is not as strong as it was; it is weaker and every activist realises it." The movement lost its impetus and its self-confidence while Jaruzelski was preparing his coup.

The militia patrol the streets of Warsaw

Jaruzelski presides over queues for food.

The leadership of Solidarity was not thinking clearly. It would be ludicrous to expect them to have done so. The course of events in Poland was unprecedented. Solidarity's leaders had got away with so much that they continued with the idea that theirs would be a "self-limiting revolution". Some put forward the idea of a workers' chamber, composed of the elected representatives of the workers, to sit alongside the old Sejm (parliament). If it had been possible to put such a scheme into effect, you would have had a power struggle between the two, with the working class building up its own lines of communication, its own activities, and rendering the Sejm and its bureaucracy powerless. But the people who put forward the scheme viewed it as a sort of power-sharing arrangement.

Was there a threat of the restoration of capitalism in Poland? Undoubtedly there were pro-capitalist elements in Solidarity, especially around the Confederation of Independent Poland founded in 1979 around the human rights activist Leszek Moczulski. I know of no evidence that any group of workers raised a demand for their factory to be put on to a capitalist footing. A public opinion poll did suggest that in a free election a majority would be won by a Christian democratic party. But this probably reflected a desire for Western-style freedoms and parliamentary democracy rather than a wish to denationalise industry.

However, if there was a threat that capitalism might be restored, what a telling condemnation of the Polish regime! Over thirty years after the establishment of "socialism", the workers, the "ruling class" in a "workers' state" want to put an end to it and go back to capitalism!

The military coup d'etat took the Solidarity leaders by surprise. They thought the clampdown was months away when it was hours away. Former leaders of KOR had formed "Clubs of the Self-Governing Republic". There was a small Trotskyist party around Edmund Baluka, leader of the 1971 Szczecin strike. There were other minute organisations. But it was too late. Such organisations would have needed long periods to gain the confidence of the working class.

There is nothing surprising in this. A party or the political programme which guides it is not born by an immaculate conception. It can only be the product of a real struggle. There has to exist a section of the working class which realises that the state will not yield to reform, which knows it needs to find a way forward for the mass struggle. The historical situation which created Solidarity did not create such a realisation quickly enough.

Three months after Jaruzelski's crackdown, it is impossible to say whether, or in what form, Solidarity will rise again. It is clear that some of its structures have survived. It may have to rebuild itself in illegality. It may not be able to openly challenge the government for some time.

Jaruzelski is learning that factories do not operate like armies. Factories (or mines or offices) are social enterprises, based on co-operation between workers as much as on direct commands. If you want to treat the workers as slaves, you have to have an Army unit inside with a horde of foremen to back them up. The Polish economy will be operating well below its capacity for a long time, and will require massive assistance from the Soviet Union, whose own economy is not the healthiest.

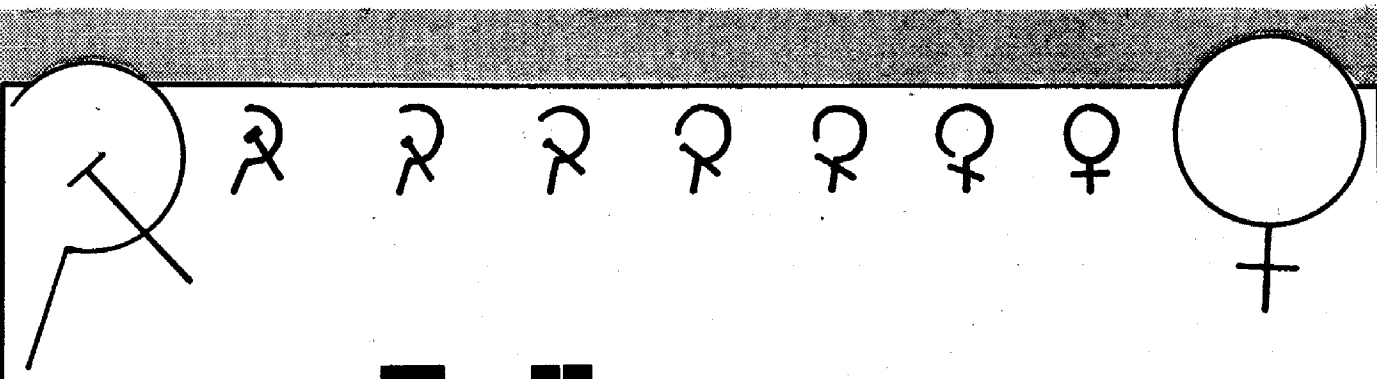
Jaruzelski's hope of getting out of this situation is to persuade Lech Walesa or somebody like him to reorganise Solidarity as a more pliable junior partner to the government. Only if a sizeable section of Solidarity can be persuaded to co-operate will the Church dare to support the deal, and the peasants lend their support as well. Walesa may fall for the temptation, and when he has exhausted his popularity among the workers, be case aside when the government no longer need him.

This is not to say that Jaruzelski's overtures are a mere ploy. Jaruzelski may sincerely want a genuine trade union which is content to operate within the present structure of society. It is the structure of society which cannt tolerate a genuinely representative union.

We can be confident that there will be others who will refuse the role of junior partner and start to organise for the next occasion. That there *will* be a next occasion is ensured by the disastrous state of the Polish economy: 27 billion dollars owed to the West and production disastrously slumping.

The success of that next occasion will not depend only on the strategy followed by the Polish working class. It will also depend on whether they can convince the conscripts in the Polish army that this time the generals will be on the losing side. Soldiers need a great deal of self-confidence before they will disobey orders.

And it will also depend on what happens elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Solidarity at its September Congress declared its support for free trade unions elsewhere in Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union may be destabilised by its own working class or by its subject nationalities. The present rulers of the Soviet Union could not cope with several simultaneous "Solidarity's". ■



Full marx for feminism?

Marxism has been found wanting in the development of a feminist theory. Are the two compatible?

Mary Gordon

One of the most difficult problems facing the women's movement lies in the area of analysis. Feminists have, so far, failed to develop a theory of women's oppression which can deal with all the questions and issues raised by the movement while, at the same time, providing a strategy for emancipation. To some extent its present fragmentation and lack of direction are the results of this failure.

All feminists share in common the view that women are dominated by men and that this domination is institutionalised in most social structures. The problem for analysis is how to explain the origins and forms of this dominance. Radical feminist theory appears to be able to do this with fewer internal inconsistencies than socialist feminist theory but is severely weakened by its basic inability to provide any coherent strategy for change. Socialist feminist theory, on the other hand, because it accepts that this society is characterised by a capitalist mode of production, can define itself within the framework of socialist political practice.

But the difficulty for socialist feminists lies in marrying an analysis which uses class as its central category to an analysis which uses sex as its central category. In the last few years a number of books have been published which attempt to resolve this difficulty. In this article I plan to review some of this work in the hope of finding the theoretical approach which would seem to offer the best way forward.

PATRIARCHY

Modern feminism has been responsible for the development of a body of theory which addresses the division of society into two distinct genders. These genders are built on biological sex differences (we are born male or female) but are not reducible to sex as gender is a social construct which defines the work, role and status of an individual in a way that is not determined by his or her sex. This division of society by gender has not only meant that women and men are allocated specific and exclusive roles but also the subordination of the female gender to the male.

In that this gender division appears to be universal and systematic feminist theory posits the existence of an underlying system to explain it. This system is often called Patriarchy.

As a term "patriarchy" is problematical. In anthropology it is used to describe a particular type of household organisation where the father is dominant and controls both production and reproduction within an extended kin network. Thus it refers to a hierarchical social structure which places men over other men as well as over women. As used by feminists it can mean either control by individual men over their wives, daughters, etc. within the family or male dominance within the overall organisation of

society.

Because of these variations in the use of the term and also because it is felt that it is not necessarily helpful to lump together all forms of women's oppression across and within different historical periods into one distinct universal system other terms such as "sex-gender systems" or simply "male dominance" are preferred by some socialist feminists.

RADICAL FEMINISM

For radical feminists such as Shulamith Firestone and Kate Millett Patriarchy is defined as a sexual system of power which is rooted in biology rather than in economics or history. Whereas neither Firestone nor Millett deny the existence of other forms of oppression they insist on the primacy of sexual domination as the cornerstone on which all other oppression is based. The political power that men wield over women is the fundamental political division in society. Class differences are relevant only to men, they say, as between women they are transitory and illusary.

For Firestone the solution to women's oppression is technology which will free women from their biological role by allowing reproduction to take place outside of the body. Only by eliminating the sexual distinction between men and women can the social and political differences disappear.

Quite apart from the fact that she is ignoring the crucial question of who controls technology, Firestone is reducing the social domination of women to the fact that women reproduce the species – equating sex and gender. It is a reductionist argument which explains a political factor in terms of a biological one.

And because it is not a historical explanation it is doomed to being static and incapable of giving meaning to the specific differences between or within historical periods.

MARXIST THEORY

Marxist analyses, on the other hand, have generally been concerned with women's connection – or lack of it – to the economic system. In the process of defining women as part of the working class their relations to men become subsumed under the relations of workers to capital.

The Early Marxists: Marx and Engels saw the first division of labour as being the "natural" one between men and women for child-breeding. This led to the creation of the family in which the women and children were appropriated by the men. Engels argued that this transference of power to men within the family represented "the world historic defeat of the female sex."

Another thesis that Engels developed to explain the origin of the family was that it arose out of the institutionalisation of private property. Men of property wanted legitimate heirs to inherit their wealth and so had to curb and control women's sexuality.

Under this view only the bourgeois family could strictly be termed oppressive for women as the proletarian family owned no property. Insofar as the proletarian family did contain patriarchal relations these were ideological leftovers from the previous peasant economy in which the head of the household controlled the labour of the rest of the family.

For Marx and Engels the key to the emancipation of women lay in their entry to the workforce which would both break down the division of labour between the sexes and destroy the authority of the male heads of households. While they recognised the double burden this placed on women they believed that as socialism would collectivise and socialise domestic labour the final solution, for women as for men, lay in socialism.

A hundred years later it is easy to see that Marx and Engels underestimated (although they were aware of) the chauvinism and sexism of male workers. Rather than homogenising the workforce Capitalism tended to create vested interests for sections of the working class, thus dividing rather than unifying it. Because they form a large part of the reserve army of labour women's experiences under capitalism are often quite different from men's. The early marxists also failed to appreciate the extent to which the privatised family served the interests of capital.

Modern Marxist Theories: Some of these failures have been redressed by modern marxist analyses. Eli Zaretsky, for example, addresses the different experiences of men and women under capitalism. He argues that capitalism has been responsible for dichotomising the worlds of men and women by separating home from workplace, production from reproduction and consumption, an outside alienating society from an inner nurturing family. It is this privatisation of the family which, he claims, gives the impression that women are working for men whereas, in fact, they are working for, and only for, capital.

By asserting that the separation of society into public and private spheres oppresses both men and women, Zaretsky is dismissing the importance of the inequality between them and the economic dependence of women on men. Whereas he offers valuable insights into the social relations created by capitalism he is denying the existence of differing levels of oppression and he is also ignoring the role men play in oppressing women.

The role of housework has been another fruitful area of study by marxists. Analyses of the relation of housework to capital have focussed the attention of socialists on the importance of domestic labour. Wally Seccombe and others have developed the thesis that the labour power of the worker, which is being exchanged as a commodity in the market place, incorporates the embodied labour of the housewife in the home. The value of his labour power (what it takes to produce and reproduce it) is in part created by the work within the family. The housewife is thus annexed into the theory of exploitation at the very heart of marxist analysis.

While there is no denying the value of these developments in marxist economic theory socialist feminists quarrel with some of the conclusions and implications drawn. Merely showing how the family and domestic labour are functional for capitalism does not mean to say that they *only* serve the interests of capital. Men can also be seen to benefit from the servicing they receive in the home and the authority and control they have there as a result of being the breadwinner. Thus to state, as Seccombe does, that women see their husbands as their oppressors only because of their lack of any direct relation with capital implies that women's awareness of sexism is more a product of their isolation and political backwardness than a perception of the oppressive relationships which they experience.

Another conclusion resulting from this analysis of the role of housework has been the demand for wages for

housework. Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James argue that joining the labour force is no advantage to women as it compounds their exploitation and means that they still perform housework services to capital for free. This demand may make sense from an anti-capitalist point of view but it is not a feminist demand as its effect, if successful, would be to consolidate further the division of labour between the sexes and the isolation of the woman in the home.

Marxist analyses fail to address themselves to the object of feminist study which is the nature of the relations between men and women. Because their concern is whether women can make a contribution to the advancement of the class struggle they reduce women's oppression to its economic functionalism for capital.

DUAL SYSTEMS THEORY

Some socialist feminists, like Heidi Hartmann and Zillah Eisenstein, dismiss both radical feminism and traditional marxism as inadequate and argue that women's relationship to the world is mediated through two distinct but integrated systems – Capitalism and Patriarchy. Both systems have a material base. Hartmann defines patriarchy as "a set of social relations between men, which have a material base, and which, though hierarchical, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women." She sees this material base as lying fundamentally in men's control over women's labour power, achieved by excluding women from access to essential productive resources and by restricting women's sexuality.

Hartmann takes Engels' distinction between economic production and the production of people, which together determine the social organisation of any historical epoch, as a distinction between two separate systems. Marxism alone cannot explain gender-relations, she argues, as its categories, like the categories of capitalism, are sex-blind. Therefore it is necessary to posit another system, patriarchy, to explain the sex-gender system. The aspects of social structures which perpetuate patriarchy, she claims, are theoretically identifiable, i.e. can be separated from class aspects. There is no necessary connection between changes in one system and changes in the other. Thus a society which undergoes the transition from capitalism to socialism could remain patriarchal.

This dual systems theory, however, does not mean that the two systems have not adapted to each other. Hartmann argues that because the "two aspects of production are so closely intertwined change in one ordinarily creates movement, tension or contradiction in the other." She claims that there is historical evidence to show that capitalism modified patriarchal relations but was also forced to respond to the interests of men. In particular, she states, the mutual accommodation between them took the form of the family wage. This institutionalised men's role as the primary breadwinner and made women economically dependent, either directly as housewife, or indirectly through low pay. In this way men gained the best jobs on the labour market and the services of women in the family.

In some ways a dual systems approach to the difficulties of dealing adequately with both gender and class appears attractive. It means, for a start, that the very real material advantages to men of a society unequally divided on the lines of sex are recognised and not marginalised. It means that men's role in the oppression of women is not glossed over. As one feminist said "it isn't 'capitalism' that beats wives, rapes women, hires prostitutes and degrades women in pornography – it's men." Also, by giving material weight to patriarchy it avoids the problem of having to relegate women's oppression to the realm of ideology alone. (Juliet Mitchell, for example, sees patriarchal structures as residing in a universal ideology which is independent of the mode of production. The effect of this view is both to universalise women's domination and to grant ideology absolute autonomy from the economic base.) Finally it seems to bypass the weaknesses of radical feminism's biological reductionism while avoiding the economic determinism of traditional marxist theory.

However, there are also very real problems with this theory. If patriarchal relations are not separate from the system of social relations of production (i.e. if they also exist in the capitalist workplace and in other institutions outside the family), as Hartmann argues, and capital benefits directly from domestic labour within the family, by what principle can patriarchal relations be identified from capitalist ones? As they are both manifest in identical social and economic structures it suggests that they belong to one system and not two. The fact that women have a dual relationship to society, mediated by sex and class, does not require that there be two systems underlying that relationship. Nor does the prior existence of patriarchy mean that it is a separate system from capitalism – if male domination is embedded in capitalism.

Further, because there are material interests involved in male domination it does not mean that patriarchal relations do not also operate at the level of ideology. Indeed many of the successes of the women's movement to date have been in exposing ideas of male superiority and the mysogeny behind many attitudes to women. Consciousness-raising, or the development of awareness among women of their own oppression, has been a fundamental component of feminist practice. Michele Barrett suggests that Louis Althussar's theories of ideology could prove a useful starting point for socialist feminist analysis. Althussar locates ideology as a practice enjoying relative autonomy from the economic level, which however is determining in the final instance. In other words, ideas and social meaning are not simply a mechanical reflection of a determining base. This gives room for ideas of male superiority, for example, to have a relative independence of any usefulness they might have for capitalism. But is patriarchal ideology determined by the capitalist economic base in the last instance?

TOWARDS A UNIFIED THEORY

Historically capitalism did not emerge out of the blue with a pre-packaged set of social and economic relations to impose. Where it was not foisted through imperialism, capitalism developed slowly out of the society which preceded it. In most cases, therefore, it co-existed for years with feudal or even tribal societies. Thus it was built on the existing social relations and only transformed those which were in opposition to it. The societies before capitalism were also characterised by a division of labour by sex and the social subordination of women.

These social forms served the interests of capital and so they survived and thrived. While it is theoretically possible that capitalism could have developed without them, it didn't; and for capitalism to have emancipated women it would have had to have been in its interests to do so.

It is also possible that the existence of the privatised family is an essential precondition for capitalism. One of the economic effects of capitalism was to rationalise production by taking it out of the small private units which had existed under Feudalism. This collectivisation of industry proved very profitable to the bourgeoisie. It would appear then that the collectivisation of domestic labour could also prove profitable for capital as it would cut down on wastage and duplication and would release vast quantities of labour power onto the market. If this could not have been attempted easily in western countries, where the economy has developed in a haphazard and unplanned way, it could have been tried in 'socialist' countries, where the economies were dramatically reorganised.

But in Russia, for example, where industry and agriculture underwent national collectivisation, it was not found profitable, despite the extreme need for labour, to collectivise housework. Whereas it would appear that collectivisation in industry is essential for accumulation the opposite applies to housework. The role of unpaid domestic labour in creating surplus value, and the other tasks performed by the nuclear family, would appear to make them an essential component of capitalist social structure.

However, the economistic marxist theory dismissed by feminists for not being able to explain the oppression of women is, indeed, inadequate for the task. If we are to find one theory then it must be a considerably extended and expanded marxism. If what is understood as "the relations of production" refers to the social relations involved in any task or activity which the society identifies as necessary then they must be extended to cover all areas of women's work and not just economic production. Capitalist society reproduces itself by creating gendered as well as classed individuals, survives by producing social persons as well as the goods we need.

As Iris Young says "if marxism has no place for analysis of gender relations and the oppression of women then that theory is an inadequate theory of production relations." The relations of production, in other words, are not sex-blind.

Division of Labour Analysis: Young proposes that the division of labour be used as the central category for analysis. Marx himself used this category almost as often as class. Whereas class analysis aims to get a vision of a system of production as a whole, concentrating on the broadest social divisions of ownership, control and appropriation of surplus product, a division of labour analysis can address the different situations found within classes. Thus it can address the question of privilege and the problems raised by national, racial, religious, occupational differences as well as gender ones.

A gender division of labour can help explain the differential access to the means of labour and control and thus help to explain how the institutions of male domination originate, are maintained and change. Such an approach can also allow a material analysis in gender specific terms without assuming that all women in general or all women in a particular society have a common and unified situation.

It seems to me that a single system approach holds more promise of resolving the difficulties involved in the reconciliation of marxism and feminism. Firstly, it is not necessary to propose the existence of a second system to recognise the very real material advantages accruing to men from their privileged position. Nor is it necessary to see these privileges only in economic terms – male privilege bestows real benefits in social control and political power.

Similarly, the economic, social and political benefits to white people of racism, to craft workers of elitism, to Protestant workers in the Six Counties of partition can be understood without proposing the existence of as many different systems.

Secondly, a single system theory is indicated by the developments in marxist economic theory and the work of people like Zaretsky, Seccombe and Jean Gardiner, while the use of Young's division of labour approach avoids the pitfalls of reducing women's oppression simplistically to its functionalism for capital.

Thirdly, the historical evidence cited by Hartmann to support her thesis that patriarchy wrested gains from capitalism can be reinterpreted, without losing any of its feminist value, to support Young's analysis.

Finally, the gender division of labour analysis of women's oppression seems to be able to preserve the irreducible element of feminist theory that tends to get lost under a marxist analysis. If the particularly deep nature of women's oppression can be understood as the result of the particularly deep and entrenched nature of the first division of labour it is also the case that this first division of labour was based on a real biological difference between the sexes. There was something on which to hang the oppressive social constructs of gender. One implication of this is that the particular requirement for women's emancipation is for women to control their fertility and sexuality. (To the extent that fertility control requires technology Firestone was right – but the key is control and not neuterdom).

Another practical implication is that, because men have nothing to gain from this, a certain amount of autonomy for women is essential within the overall struggle against this single system.

Numerous practical implications follow from this single system approach to the problems discussed in the article. Unfortunately there is not enough space to consider them now. They would require at least one other article as Young's division of labour analysis is as relevant to the questions of strategy raised by anti-imperialist and anti-racist struggles as it is to feminism. Perhaps these implications could be considered in further issues of Gralton. ■

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THE POLITICS OF MOVING HEARTS

Brian Trench

Moving Hearts has become *the* political band, the band the would-be opinion-formers of the musical scene love to hate, almost by a series of accidents. It is doubtful if they could have achieved their wide social range and their political potency if it had been any other way. Musical groups formed on the basis of a political programme rarely connect, because the political content is seen as going no deeper than the explicit messages of the words.

It was the excitement of a new musical formula which convinced the seven Hearts who came together one year ago that they were on to something. There was the personal excitement of making a jump out of their previous routines. And there was the excitement of a novel instrumental line-up, and an original approach to matching traditional music and rock.

The series of accidents begins with Christy Moore's personal political involvement of the years preceding the formation of Moving Hearts. He came to the group with politically pointed songs ready for adaptation and with ideas born of his experience in the anti-nuclear and H-Blocks movements. All of the band members were committed to founding the band on a co-operative and self-sufficient basis.

Recently, that self-sufficiency has shown itself in a rather surprising way. Matt Keleghan, a member of the co-operative who has been working on sound for the past year, has replaced Brian Calnan as drummer. The band is also self-sufficient in the sense that it has survived a year of intense activity, the launch of an album now nearing 20,000 sales, and is considering a tour of continental Europe – all without a manager. As it happens, they were looking for one, but nobody fitted the bill.

Self-sufficiency also means that the band has committed itself to over £60,000 worth of equipment. If they seem to have been hogging the available gig space in certain Dublin venues it is because, financially, they have to keep running to stand still.

A professional manager might have taken a large part of the financial responsibility – but tied the band with strings. A professional band manager might, on the other hand, have pushed the European touring possibilities harder, prevented the cock-up with the twice-released single, and maybe even done something about the boring album cover.

The series of accidents continues with the launching of Bobby Sands' hunger strike just a month after Moving Hearts was formed. It stirred them as it stirred others. Donal Lunny had already made a commitment to the campaign by producing the H-Blocks album released six months earlier. Christy Moore's position was well known. Saxophonist Keith Donald was hardening his. And the band hardened collectively in response to the hostility of RTE, *Hot Press* and the *Irish Times*.

They were not holding back on what they were saying because of RTE restrictions, guitarist Declan Sinnott insists. They had gone so far politically as they could – both individually and as a group.

The musicians have developed their political views within the band. The H-Blocks affair has perhaps given an exaggerated notion of their willingness to push political lines. It drew out the worst in conservative and liberal music critics obsessed by provo-phobia.

Christy Moore has been the principal filter for material coming to the band. He brought with him the Jim Page songs (Hiroshima and Landlord) the one number from the North, No Time For Loving, and suggested others which he and the band have lived with for a year.

The dependence on Christy Moore, which he sought strenuously to lessen, is seen in other ways. When he became ill in January of this year, Moving Hearts could not function. The remaining musicians stayed active (they had to), but with a changed identity. For the first time, they worked on improving what had been the pure fun part of their show, Danny and the Valtones.

This good-time, funky, swampy band used to full the gaps. But in February, it was Danny and the Valtones who played a benefit concert for Bernadette McAliskey's election campaign. Now the Hearts may meet the Valtones.

As he readily acknowledges, Declan Sinnott finds it nearly impossible to sing the songs which have become identified as Christy Moore's. Years of working in the rock world have given Declan Sinnott an "American" twang which doesn't fit the Irish material. No amount of knowing the words can make a singer who faces that stylistic hurdle jump it first time.

Each of the seven Hearts has been stretched, however, to make the new formula work. The plural music itself represents a political option, which a comparison should make clear. It would never occur to the Wolfe Tones to draw in "foreign" in-

fluences. They sing rebel songs to a cliche-ridden pattern. Their style is brutish, backward and inward-looking. It leaves no room for spontaneity (those whoops come out of the machine, too) or individual invention.

In a fast-collapsing cabaret scene, the Wolfe Tones are one of the few acts to still pack the lounges – with people who would undoubtedly not be able to stomach the novelty of Moving Hearts' music. For all the stuff about the IRA making bits of the whole bloody lot (great stuff, lads) and the ban on individual Tones' songs by RTE, their music is profoundly conservative. Not for nothing is their manager a convinced Haugheyite.

Yet – and here the ironies start to accumulate – it is songs which the Wolfe Tones have appropriated for themselves which are shouted out at left-wing and republican parties. There are good songs among them, but, more than anything else, it is the required assurance of familiarity which makes this environment hostile to anything new.

The new songs have not been coming forward. It is perhaps one of the more remarkable features of the upheavals of the past decade that they have produced so little of any musical-political consequence. Songs about individuals heroic figures – Joe McCann, Bobby Sands – tend to be tradition-bound and sentimental, if not mawkish. The world of rebel songs has been impervious to change, reproduces constantly an authoritarian style of performance and remains a thousand miles distant from the efforts of "alternative Ulster" punks to deal with the new realities.

Larger, but more superficial, movements such as that for tax reform in the 26 Counties have not progressed musically beyond the trade union brass band. Some of its demonstrations were like funeral corteges, in which shouting or singing would have been hissed at. One has only to experience how such numbers – and the very physical proximity which causes so many Irish people to recoil – spark off celebrations among workers in any continental European country to see how impoverished our political culture is. People still sing "We Shall Overcome" on demonstrations here!

Not even the feminist movement, whose demonstrations have celebrated togetherness positively and which has often been imaginative in its use of theatre, costumes, and of rhythmic and rhyming slogans has added to the common store of political songs. The anti-nuclear and H-Blocks movements have done so in some degree, however, and that is what provided the political springboard for Moving Hearts. But the band doesn't in any sense reflect those movements; their musical language is not that of the street rally.

Nor do they measure their musical programme against current issues. They don't have a good song about unemployment or about Knock airport. Indeed, as yet, their only original material is instrumental.

The Rhythm Kings, who are not regarded as a political band in the same sense, do have a song about unemployment. Rocky de Valera uses the sharpest musical weapons of all – irony and humour – to make his points, as he does in the magnificent "John Wayne".

Knock airport, which for Hearts members and certainly for their constituency is the most tangible demonstration of what gombeen, clerically-dominated politics is all about, is crying out for musical treatment in the same vein as Faithful Departed, again making full use of verbal and musical irony.

The Hearts have not found the material which matches the humour of their instrumental exchanges, the swopping around phrases in different treatments. Many of the overtly political songs are just a bit too reverent and naive. The occasional echoes of the oh-so-serious folk-rock of the late 1960s strengthen that impression. What makes "Hiroshima" successful is that it manages to be serious, to use word play and to be light and airy in its arrangement. The jazz and traditional-instrumental aspects of the music, invariably bringing smiles to listeners' faces, are the necessary antidote to occasional over-doses of good-intentions-clumsily-expressed.

The political significance of any music cannot be read off the text. To take an outrageous example, Frank Zappa – who *appears* (and here one has to be careful when so many layers of irony are laid on each other) to hate women and who indulges endless vulgarity – is also capable of being politically pointed, even against his own intentions. His consummate handling of so many musical styles allows him to deflate pomp and pretention and to put every accepted musical standard and the organisation of the commercial music world (including corrupt trade unionism, as in Rudi) into question. Now that is subversive.

As so many black jazz musicians have shown, words are not even strictly necessary – much less words with an obvious message or rallying call – to make music with a political cutting edge. The ability to include references to other styles or to known songs in a new framework may be the most powerful political asset. Moving Hearts have that ability; they still need to find the best material to let it develop.

With the return of Christy Moore to a full involvement Moving Hearts will be able to work on new numbers (and they also demonstrate their political option within the musical world by working very hard and very co-operatively). Some of these will be written by Mick Hanly, one of the more original politically aware song-writers.

The band members know they need new material. Declan Sinnott says, nearly seriously, that he would like to see them start with a completely fresh programme and that they would not necessarily be looking for a political or social point in every song. But Moving Hearts have made their own mould and shaped theri audience's expectations of them. They cannot escape easily. ■

Books

The poor are always with us

ONE MILLION POOR Ed. Stanislaus Kennedy RSC. Turoe Press - £10.

"ONE Million Poor" is a collection of essays which attempts to describe the extent of poverty in Ireland and analyse in various ways its nature and causes. Topics covered are the relationship between poverty and housing, the law, old people, the church, social and community work, education, the health services, homelessness and the rural/urban split. Its publication is important in a country which has so little literature widely available concerning social or political problems.

The "poor" in this collection are generally defined as those whose standard of living is that attainable on statuary social welfare payments. Over one million people and 30% of all Irish households fall into this category. It is well to remember though, as Kincaid in his book "Poverty and Equality in Britain" points out, that, "In the last analysis to be poor is not just to be located at the tail end of some distribution of income but to be placed in a particular relationship of inferiority to the wider society.

Poverty involves a particular sort of powerlessness, an inability to control the circumstances of one's life in the face of more powerful groups in society."

Most of the authors in this book accept the "structural" explanation of poverty where the problem of poverty is the problem of inequality. The underprivileged exist not because of bad luck or personal failings such as "laziness" or "dishonesty" but as a direct result of the inequalities inherent in Ireland's social and economic structures.

The authors consistently show that efforts by successive governments to tackle these inequalities have been fragmentary and have lacked coherence. At no time has there been a comprehensive, long term policy to eradicate poverty – only incremental responses to disguise its more glaring symptoms.

The fact that a recent E.E.C. survey has shown that less than one Irish person in five believes injustice in society to be a contributory factor in poverty, indicates the damaging influence of received ideas about the underprivileged which Church and State tacitly support rather than discourage. And, as contributors Gilligan, O'Brien and Kearney point out, the lack of current and relevant social data is also a factor which seriously inhibits an assessment of poverty and the development of methods to combat it.

Again, this lack can only be seen as the deliberate avoidance of self-analysis by a political system which stands to gain from existing inequalities.

When the authors in this collection turn to proposals for structural reform they are, however, often vague and somewhat evasive. There are calls for greater "awareness", more "education" about poverty and injustice, "restraint" and "generosity" on the part of the better-off, a redistribution of wealth.

The tone here is of liberal concern and longing for an ill-defined social justice which will one day be granted by a conscience stricken government. Tony Brown of the Labour Party even believes that unless our "political leaders" are prepared to tackle poverty, "then there can be no hope" – as if people were themselves incapable of organising against political injustice and needed party gurus to direct them.

Peter Mernagh of the Combat Poverty Action Committee, on the other hand, advocates an "action-education" method where the stress is laid on problems of definition, analysis and planning and where local people are closely involved at each stage of the process. People are worked "with" rather than "for."

Admitting the limits of community action in dealing with more than purely local problems, he nevertheless believes that links between local problems and social/economic/political structures can be indicated where they exist and communities be encouraged to act at both a local and national level on these.

Other contributions are also worthwhile. Dale Tussing's essays on Education and the Health Services are provocative and interesting though his attacks on third level educational spending omit several important considerations. Walter Walsh on Poor People and the Law is lucid and offers useful suggestions for expanding Community Law Centres.

This collection is important not so much for the alternative strategies that it offers, with the exception of Mernagh's they are few, but as an attempt to present the pressing social problems and initiate debate around them – though all too often it remains just that.

And then, at its present retail price – almost half a single person's weekly dole – the people the book most concerns will most probably never get a chance to read it.

Michael Cronin

Bugsys versus the law

YOUTH AND JUSTICE : ED. HELEN BURKE, CLAIRE CARNEY AND GEOFFREY COOKE. TUROE PRESS - £7.97.

THERE was much bellyaching in the recent general election about law and order. Both of the main groups in the election put forward only one concrete promise on employment: to increase the number of Gardai. It is one of the few promises that they will implement.

A similar scenario of a country racked by terrorism and vandalism was painted in the run up to the 1977 election. Following the victory of Fianna Fail they intensified their efforts, aided and abetted by the media, to convince the public that the country was on the verge of anarchy. The focus then was the inner city and the young people who lived there.

Inspired by a childrens spoof gangster film at the time they were labelled by the headline writers as the "Bugsy Malones". Soon graffiti began to appear on walls in the area affirming that, "we are the bugsys."

In early 1978 the then minister for Justice Gerry Collins proposed the opening of the first childrens prison in Europe located in a redundant seminary 100 miles from Dublin in County Cavan. Immediately the letters column of the *Irish Times* erupted, spewing out letters for and against the idea. The letters against (which were in the majority) were written by child care or social workers who saw the move not just as a kick in the teeth for the young people and their families but also a kick in the teeth for them.

Loughan House went ahead despite their protests and is still open today despite the Government committment in 1978 that it would close in two years. Indeed, reports emanating from Cavan indicate that it is truly a children's prison, with intensive surveillance by Prison guards, a solitary confinement cell and reports of beatings of the inmates by some of the warders.

The working party that produced this book developed from a meeting of students, graduates and staff of the Department of Social Administration in UCD over the Loughan House issue. That meeting decided to produce a document that would put together information on the young offender in Ireland. The goal of the book was a simple one: that policy making for children and young people in trouble with the law should grow from a sound knowledge base.

If we are to assess the book within these parameters it has been successful. It contains plenty of facts and figures, comparative pieces on the juvenile justice

system in England and Scotland and a concluding section on a community-based approach to young people in trouble which is by far the most important chapter in the book.

However, it is an indication of the political position and understanding of social workers that a meeting called during the Loughan House controversy, instead of organising to stop the prison opening, sidestepped the issue by producing a book on the subject. The book itself shows up the political weakness of the people involved. There is scant attention given to the political nature of the problem. More importantly, there is little idea of how groups like child care workers, social workers and community workers can organise to defend their interests and the interests of the people they work with.

Indications are that there will be more attacks on the poor i.e. politically powerless members of society as they are made to pay for the economic recession. Now is the time for all those working with these groups to organise to defend their interests. The last thing oppressed people want is a book describing what has already happened to them. What they do need are people who will seriously organise to attack the system that renders those who suffer most the victims.

Joe Duffy

Armagh: the inside drama

Tell Them Everything. Margaretta D'Arcy. Pluto Press. £1.95 (UK).

MARGARETTA D'Arcy gave a press conference the day she was released from Armagh Jail. It was great. Because she wasn't subject to the restraints of republican propaganda or Catholic morality, she spoke in a completely open way about the effects of the "dirty protest" on women.

What emerged from that press conference in graphic detail was the constant gnawing hunger; the flies in the shit-filled crevices of the cell walls; the many and varied physical complaints of the women which the doctors refused to treat; the interference in the women's private lives by the prison authorities. It's all in the book but it's weakened by the fact that the book is really about Margaretta D'Arcy.

Margaretta was one of the eleven women arrested and charged for picketing Armagh Jail on International Women's Day 1979. They were all eventually presented with the choice of going to Jail and joining the dirty protest or staying outside by paying their fine in order to work on the growing campaign in support of the Armagh prisoners – and they were the key to that campaign. The women were divided. Accusations were flying around of "martyr complexes" on the one hand and "betrayal" on the other.

It is clear from the book that Margaretta's personality didn't help matters. Obsessed with her role as an "artist" in the drama, she was rigid about her own views and totally incapable of making collective decisions. Interested in flamboyant and shocking behaviour at the expense of the slow, hard slog of building the campaign, she became an impediment to any form of united action.

Her going in to Armagh was, in the end, a purely personal gesture so that, when she came out, she could, as an "artist", "tell them everything".

The book does deal with all the problems among the Armagh Eleven and with the conditions in the jail. But at no stage does it attempt to explain how the protest for political status came about or even what it meant. It presumes quite an intimate knowledge of the political status campaign and it also presumes support for that campaign.

It tells everything to those who already know almost everything and it tells little to those who know nothing.

It is a great pity that this is the only book now available dealing with the women republican prisoners in the north since Nell McCafferty's "The Armagh Women" was withdrawn from the shelves. Nell at least attempted some explanations.

Molly O'Duffy

Sounds of the city

Unheard Voices. Ed. Anne O'Byrne. St. Joseph's Day Care Centre. £1.

IT IS seldom that the publishing market gives way to a collection of poetry and prose written by working people. This booklet is, therefore, something of an achievement. Compiled by Anne O'Byrne, who works in a Dublin City Literacy Project, it contains nineteen writings of varying length which together offer a refreshing insight into the lives and struggles of the working people of Dublin.

The booklet was launched by James Plunkett at a reception in January attended by many of the authors, local people and a fair smattering of politicians – the Dail had fallen the previous day! The presences of the politicians and Ms. Mary Flaherty's address (which amounted to a rather incredible apology for being middle class) were stark reminders of the remoteness of government and our own particular form of "democracy" from the energy and misery behind the Unheard Voices. Much of the credit on the occasion justifiably went to Anne O'Byrne who carried the whole idea through and got the writings into an attractive format which also displays some excellent photographs by Brendan Walsh.

The writings include some powerful commentaries on the everyday lives of their authors – like Margaret Comerford's "Left with a baby with nowhere to go":

> "My husband left and went to live with another girl in Ballymun, but that didn't last for long and then he thought he had nothing to do but to come back to me as if nothing had happened."

Nothing is spared when some authors exercise a unique opportunity to reply to the repression and state violence with which they have to contend. One piece, "The Courts and the Police", contrasts the Children's Court and the District Court, where "the judge always takes the copper's word." There is also a welcome counter to the hysteria of the conventional press about vandals and the like:

> "We got to the Embassy and the men with black flags went up front. The boys at the back started throwing bottles and stones. And the Gardai started moving in on us. . . the bastards charges us. The Gardai beat the old men, young girls and women."

The achievement of Unheard Voices is in providing an outlet for people who would never otherwise have their work published. At the same time, the writings raise the most pressing questions about the realities of urban society – the anwers to which are not, and cannot be, forthcoming from those who created the problems.

Alex White

Tailpiece

THE DAY THE REVOLUTION BROKE OUT

GENE KERRIGAN

Everyone knew that things couldn't go on as they were – confusion piling upon chaos – but most people were taken by surprise when the revolution broke out that Monday morning.

Some say that the final straw was the raising of the school entry age to nine. Others point to the rationing of meat as the catalyst. The fact that meat was still being exported by the ton was explained by the Minister for Shortages – it would reduce dependency on foreign borrowing and help the budget deficit no end. "Have you tried sprinkling sugar on your bread? Very nutritional and it's in the national interest."

The left made very effective use of the slogan "No return to 1845!"

It's probably that there was no single spark to the revolution. It had become obvious for a long period that Irish capitalism was an impotent limb on a threshing, dying dinosaur of an international economic and social order that was hanging on beyond its time.

Economists said that the economic crisis resulted from an oil shortage. Arabs and things like that. Non-christians.

This explanation took a bit of hammering back in March '82 when OPEC held an emergency meeting in Vienna to discuss the "oil glut".

The economists had already adjusted their theories. We are paying ourselves too much they said. Economists were earning four or five times the average income. (This high income was justified because of their great expertise at spotting the cause of a crisis.)

Irish capitalism went through a phase of fiscal righteousness during which some nice people got into government and tried to straighten out the mess in the interest of all. They sincerely regretted having to take harsh measures and were genuinely puzzled by working class resistance. The failure of the working class to placidly take its medicine caused the nice people to break out in a rash. The nice people became not so nice.

It was after they sent in troops to break up a factory occupation in Finglas and two workers were so badly beaten that the first Workers' Councils began forming.

At this point it was clear that the old system could not continue but there wasn't yet a structure which could challenge the old order for power. The Workers' Councils took their time about it and there was all kinds of messing.

Lefties ran around like red arsed flies. On one day in April alone 43 different pamphlets titled "The Way Forward" were published. Lefties

made the links
drew the lessons
posed the question
sharpened the polemic

On the Friday before the revolution four situations were concretised. Gestetner, the duplicating firm, had opened six new factories. Eight new firms thrived at the business of translating leaflets and pamphlets from jargonese to English. The biggest was Soctrans. Slogan, "Your megaphone to the working class."

A Congress of Workers' Councils was held in Croke Park that Sunday to discuss the situation. The Congress received a joint telegram from politicians, business people and bankers asking the Councils to disband. "Do you want our blood on your hands?"

The stadium shook with a roar of *"Yes!"*

There was a proposal from the Revolutionary Workers Council of The Sacred Heart, Kerry, that the Councils should seize power. It was at this point that someone notices that there were no delegates present from Waterford. Inquiries revealed that the Waterford Councils had seized power three days ago – but the secretary of the Committee had gone on a celebration binge in Geoff's and forgot to inform the rest of the country.

That did it.

When the Special Task Force came charging out of the Dublin cop shop they found several dozen inner city kids sitting on the steps, carving little wooden busts of James Connolly – with hatchets. The STF decided to sit this one out.

When a unit of soldiers was ordered to open fire on a crowd in Cabra 19 year-old Private Kevin O'Gralton sauntered over to join the crowd, unbuttoned his tunic and told the officer, "Go blow it out yer ear, creep." Only two of the thirty soldiers returned to the barracks with the officer.

A small but loud Trotsykist tendency which had since 1938 been predicting the imminent collapse of capitalism issued a leaflet headed, "See, we told ya so!" They were a bit miffed when someone pointed out that even a stopped clock shows the right time when the time comes round.

A prominent member of the Congress of Workers' Councils argued that delegates from feminist groups and "other minorities" should not have voting rights until the revolution was secure. "Women must wait", he said. He was voted off the Congress when 17 major factories with large numbers of women threatened to strike if he opened his gob again.

All sorts of barriers – between the sexes, across the border, across the Falls and the Shankill – were pushed aside as workers struggled to defend, secure and spread the revolution.

A section of the Dublin leadership of the republican movement received a promise from Downing Street that Irish unity would be granted if order was restored. The leaders ordered the movement to oppose the revolution – and hastily withdrew the order after a parcel with a Belfast postmark arrived containing several sets of leather kneecaps.

The money people had already started to move their capital out of the country. But where to? The pressures which had provoked the revolution were international and the example of Waterford had spread to Britain within two days. Italy was next. Then Spain. Almost six weeks passed before the USA erupted. By then even the ESkimos were exchanging revolutionary greetings with the revolutionary council based in Geoff's.

Word eventually got through to the Soviet Union, despite the best efforts of the Kremlin censors, that socialism was spreading, the workers were in control.

"The *workers* in control. Now why didn't we think of that. Knew there was *something* missing."

And, as Our Lady of Fatima had predicted, Russia too was converted.

Meanwhile, at the edge of a distant galaxy, Luke Skywalker looked up from the glowing image of Earth on his Distavideo.

"Golly", said Luke, "So that's socialism! Gee Willikers, it's time we gave up this individual heroism shit with the laser swords and the multizapping pistols. What we need is collective action! Can't wait to see Darth Vader's face when the Intergalactic Transport and General Workers Union calls a universal strike!"

Luke called out enthusiastically, "Hey, Comrade R2D2, come see this!" HE thumbed a button on the Distavideo and increased the magnification by four zillion.

The screen quivered and an image appeared of a flat in a Dublin side street. A small, rather tatty room, books, papers pamphlets all over the place. There were three people and a dog in the roon. Seamus O'Trotsky, Sean McLenin and Roisin Ni Luxembourg. The dog's name was Vladimir.

This was an Executive meeting of the *League for the Reconstruction of the International Committee of the People's Revolutionary Communist Party Tendency of the Movement for a Workers Republic (Marxist-Leninist) (Kevin Street)*. This was also the Dublin Regional Committee of LRICPRCPTMWR(M-L) (Kevin Street). And the rank and file. (Vladimir was a candidate member).

Seamus O'Trotsky took minutes, noting the attendance at the tope of the page – TOS, LMS, LNR. (He used only initials and reversed these, in case the minutes fell into the hands of the Special Branch. It was when they started this practice of reversing initials that the split had occurred and LRICPRCPTMWR(M-L) (Gardiner Place) had been set up by a guy called Dave Vaughan).

"Okay, comrades," said Sean, "we have a task of massive importance in historical terms, strategically speaking."

"Indeed", said Roisin. "We must concretise the situation and sharpen the dialectical imperatives which have been prioritised by this so-called revolution."

"Exactly", said Seamus, "it may well work in *practice*, but what's it like in *theory?*" ■

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WHY NAME A MAGAZINE AFTER JIM GRALTON?

Brian Trench

Jim Gralton is the only person to have been deported from the 26 Counties for political activity. The deportation was ordered in February 1933 by de Valera's Fianna Fail government, which had just had its position confirmed in the second general election inside a year.

Gralton was not prosecuted for any criminal offence. His offence was to have helped give the poor, the landless and the unemployed of Co. Leitrim the confidence to fight for themselves. Conservative politicians and the Catholic Church waged an intense, occasionally violent, campaign against him. The Labour Party and the IRA watched the battle; only individual members of each stood firmly with Gralton.

Like many before and since Jim Gralton decided to leave Leitrim where his family had a small farm while still in his teens. He joined the British Army, soon running into trouble for refusing to serve in India. By the time he headed for New York in 1907 at the age of 21, he had worked as a miner and docker in Wales, and served on merchant ships as a stoker.

In the USA, he joined Clan na Gael, a nationalist organisation with which James Connolly was also associated about the same time. Later, Gralton became involved in socialist politics and the trade union movement. In 1920 he was active in the campaign to have Jim Larkin released from Sing Sing prison.

The War of Independence drew him back to Leitrim – just weeks before it ended. Although he drilled IRA members and supported the republicans in the Civil War, he took no part in military actions. The base for his activity in Leitrim at that time was the Gowel Hall and the Direct Action Committee which operated from there.

The Black and Tans had burned the social hall at Gowell, in South Leitrim, so Gralton decided to re-build it at his own expense. There he organised classes in Irish, music, agricultural science and gymnastics! The priests were soon warning parishoners not to attend the Gowel Hall dances.

The Direct Action Committee was set up to help tenant-farmers regain lands from which they had been evicted. Gralton and his supporters drove cattle on to the property of large estate-owners and settled former tenants on the land. "He has the young men of the countryside ruined," said Leitrim's Sub-Sheriff, Wilton Vaugh, at a court hearing. Free State forces and the IRA agreed. Gralton was arrested and detained for a week. The South Leitrim Brigade of the IRA expressed its concern at the actions of "certain evilly disposed and unauthorised persons."

The next time the Free State troops came for Gralton he was one step ahead, and escaped. On that occasion (May 1922), the soldiers had surrounded the Gowel Hall while 300 people were attending a Direct Action Committee meeting. Eleven people were arrested, the crowd shouting "Up The Bolsheviks!" as they were taken away. Gralton decided things had become too hot and went back to New York.

He thus missed by some months the foundation of the Communist Party of Ireland in which comrades of his were involved. But in New York he joined the Communist Party (as Jim Larkin had done) and helped in the foundation of the Transport Union. He also kept in touch with events at home. In 1931 Gralton sent money back to Leitrim to have the Gowel Hall re-furbished. He came home in 1932 after his brother's death and quickly picked up the threads of his earlier activity.

Gralton re-opened the hall, formed a local branch of the newly established Revolutionary Workers' Groups and took up the land agitation again. The local IRA remained cool, the clergy were furious. Gralton was not easily put off. When Canon McGraver said he would have him fitted with horns, Gralton presented himself the next day on the priest's doorstep "to have his horns fitted." He spoke at anti-eviction meetings, at a Longford demonstration of the National Unemployed Movement and organised a series of cultural and political activities in the hall.

On one night in November, 1932, a dozen shots were fired into the hall. Gralton told the people to throw themselves on the floor, and there were no injuries. The band kept playing. A small land mine placed against the wall of the building during December did little damage. But finally, it was soaked in petrol and burned. The local Knights of Columbanus were the chief suspects, but it was thought that IRA members may also have been involved in the earlier incidents.

In February 1933, the de Valera government served a deportation order on Gralton – just two days after his father had died. The order, which was directed against Gralton as an American citizen, was to take effect on 4th March. Gralton went on the run.

The response reflected Gralton's popularity, the hesitations of the IRA about associating with revolutionary communists, and the imprisonment of the major parties in clerical claptrap. One newly elected Fianna Fail TD thought that the "deportation of a man propagating English ideas was desirable." Gralton he said, held "views contrary to the Christian principles of the majority of the people."

The Gralton Defence Committee, in Dublin, rallied leading left-wing trade unionists, representatives of the unemployed movement and a number of independent radicals. But the IRA withdrew its two invited speakers from a meeting in the Rotunda – a move which, at least indirectly later prompted some left-wing republicans to set up the Republican Congress. Peadar O Donnell, then editor of the IRA's paper, *An Phoblacht*, agreed to join the campaign in Leitrim after he had seen evidence of Gralton's strong local support. O'Donnell was due to speak at an after-mass meeting in Drumsna, but it was a fiasco. Father Cosgrave had incited the mass-goers to attack the speakers with stones and mud, and it broke up in confusion. A planned second meeting had to be cancelled.

The anti-Gralton campaign went on the offensive. Leitrim Health Board resolved to "rouse up the Clans of Breffni . . . and put an end to the devil's work." They ceremoniously burned a letter in support of Gralton from the Irish Workers' Republican Emancipation League in New York. Only a couple of individual Fianna Fail politicians opposed the hysteria.

Leitrim County Council, which had wanted to show its approval of the government measure was forced into retreat first by Gralton's mother attending a meeting and then by a demonstration in his favour staged by road workers who heckled a council discussion on the affair. (They were in the council chamber to press their claim for a wage rise – successfully, as it turned out.)

Gralton was being sheltered by sympathisers in various parts of the county and managed to move around and meet supporters. He escaped one Garda raid when he was tipped off in advance. But on 10th August, 1933, the Gardai caught up with him. As Gralton shook hands with the people who had housed him he said: "So long boys. I'll return to Ireland when we have a Workers' Republic."

He never did return. Depriving his mother of a last chance to see her son, the Gardai took Gralton to Cobh where they bought him a passage to New York with his own money. Back in Leitrim, the priests set about organising groups to remove the pro-Gralton posters and obliterate the slogans.

Gralton resumed his political activities in New York, promoting Irish Workers' Clubs and re-printing some of Connolly's writings. He helped Frank Ryan canvass support for the Republican Congress in 1934. When he died in December 1945, at the age of 59, the clubs erected a headstone and the nationalist *Irish Echo* refused to print an obituary.

It was Gralton's actions which determined who should remember him and who revile him. He was no political sophisticate and few of his public pronouncements are recorded. There is some evidence that he sought out supporters of the minority ("Trotskyist") line in the Revolutionary Workers' Groups to come and speak to his local branch. At the same time (1932–33) he was briefly a member of Fianna Fail, trying helplessly to persuade Leitrim cumann to take action on social issues.

Above all, however, Gralton's name represents a challenge to established authority, a call for people to take their fate into their own hands, an imaginative application of socialist ideas in a difficult environment, and a recognition that wherever socialists happen to be, that's where they should be active. For all that, and more, he deserves to be remembered.

This article is based on research by Pat Feeley, Paul Dolan, Luke Gibbons and Mike Milotte.

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