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AUG/SEPT 1983

GRAFTON

ANTI-AMENDMENT CAMPAIGN ON TOUR

NEW LOOK SINN FEIN

POLITICS IN ST. TERESAS GARDENS

FREE PULL-OUT GENEALOGY OF THE LEFT

EDITORIAL STATEMENT

What kind of people produce *Gralton?* What kind of people read it? We think the answer to these two questions is the same: those interested in discussing the realities of Irish society and the ways of radically changing it; those who feel that no other publication or organization provides a forum within which the experiences of the past can be assessed and learned from.

Our aim is to promote debate and discussion centering around a number of broad positions.

- that capitalism is not a force for progress and must 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 cannot be achieved through parliamentary methods alone
- that this change cannot be brought about by any small elite group 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* does not simply discuss ideas. We aim to give practical support to the struggles and movements of the day by providing information and analysis of relevance to trade unionists, feminists, political and local activists — and by opening our columns to those actively involved even if we do not share their political viewpoint. There is a close link between activity and the development of ideas and we shall always seek to strengthen it.

Our articles are the responsibilities of the authors alone. Believing that the successful mobilisation of people is itself a political gain contributing more to real social change than does the mere existence of a political party, *Gralton* is independent, broad-based, and non-sectarian in all its coverage. We welcome articles from whatever source which raise real questions or which provide useful information for the development of the Irish Left. Gralton is not a "heavy theoretical journal," so articles must be written in ordinary English: sexist terminology will be cut.

The overall direction and control of *Gralton* is vested in the Gralton Co-Operative Society Ltd., which consists of all supporting subscribers. The editorial board is accountable to the Co-Operative and is elected from it. We hope as many readers as possible will be active in *Gralton* by taking out supporting subscriptions, by writing for, and by selling the magazine — thereby helping to make *Gralton* an important force in advancing socialism in Ireland.

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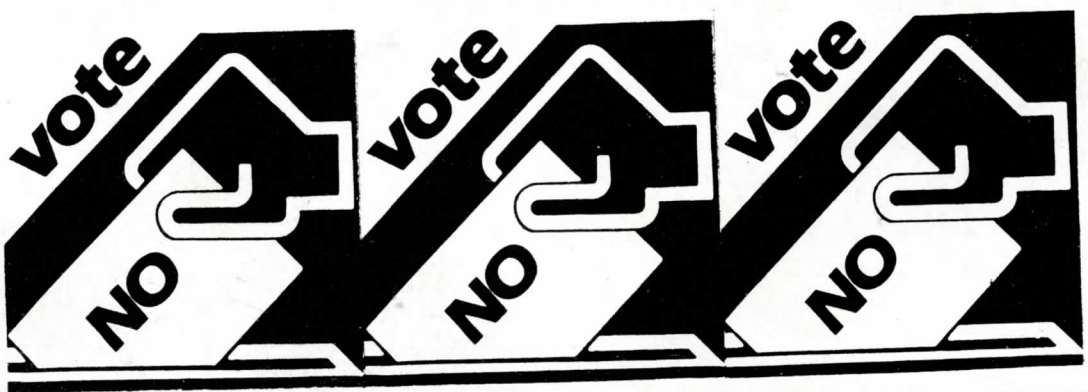

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GRALTON

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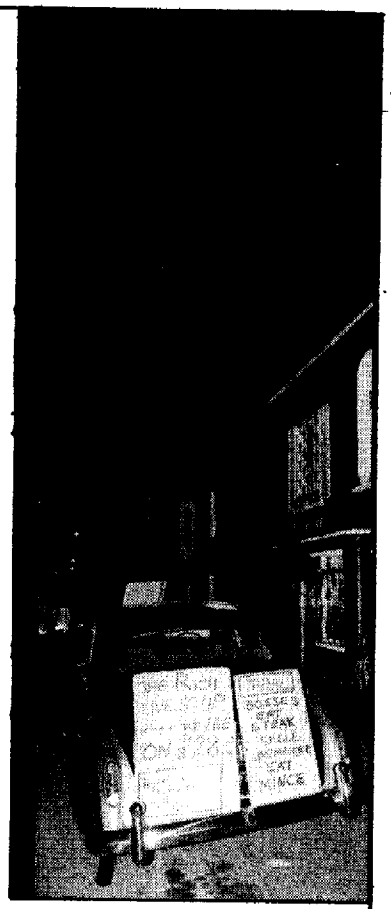
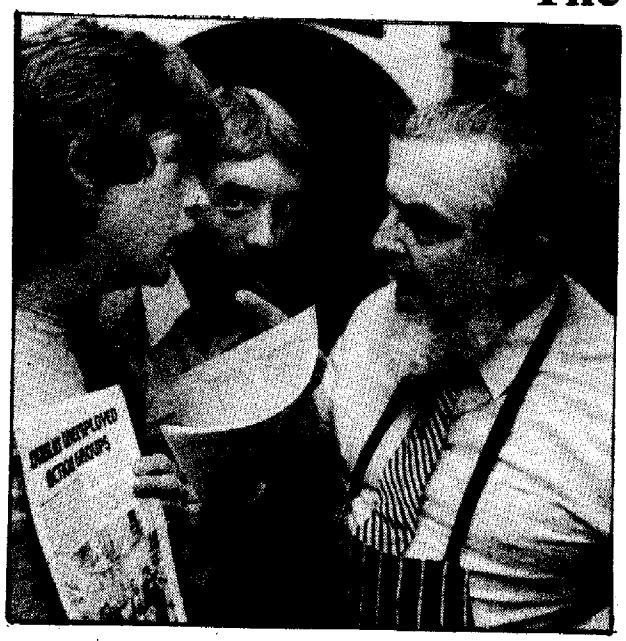
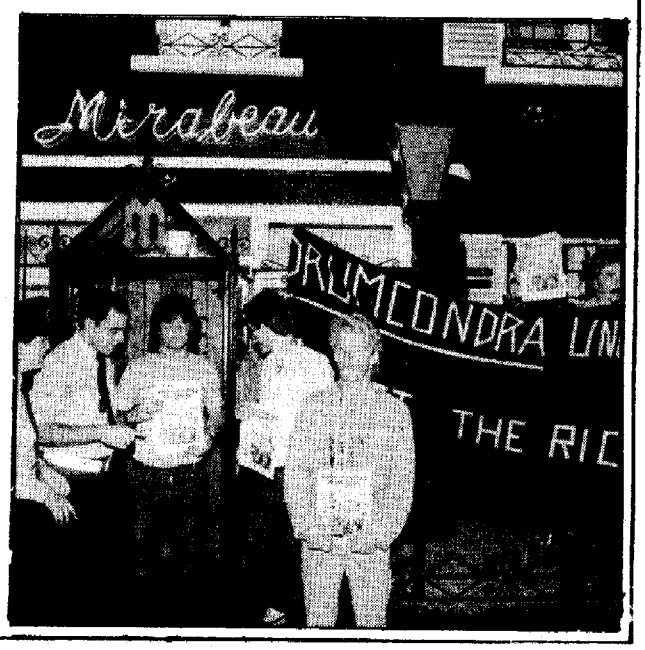


The invasion of the Mirabeau



Cover photo by Derek Speirs



Dublin Unemployed Action Groups staged a "token occupation" of the Mirabeau Restaurant in Sandycove on July 14 to draw attention to the disparity of lifestyles between the rich and the unemployed. (Photos: Derek Speirs).

Derek Speirs (Report).

BATTLING AGAINST THE LANDLORDS

The PRIVATE TENANTS ACTION GROUP has been campaigning for over two years for a fair deal for the 30,000 private tenants whose rents are decontrolled. Though the long-promised Rents Tribunal is now finally on the way, many problems still remain. NORA HAMILL reports.

". . . the right to a home greater than the right to private property".

The PTAG was first set up on foot of the successful challenge by landlord interests to the constitutionality of rent controls. Pat Murphy, a founding member of the group, describes their first task as that of trying to influence TDs to give the fairest possible deal to the tenants in the legislation that was necessary to remedy the new "unconstitutional" situation. They were singularly unsuccessful.

Fergus O'Brien, then Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, ruled out their suggestion that local councils should take over the properties. Also ruled out was the suggestion that the new rents should be struck at a rate 16 times higher than the original, in line with the rise in inflation. This simple solution was not on because it failed to take into account that holy of holies for landlords: market value, which if applied strictly would mean rents some 45 times higher than the original.

"Market Value" was, indeed, the criterion proposed by Fine Gael in their draft Bill. However it was *theoretically* fairer than the Fianna Fail Bill that eventually became law last year. The essence of the new Private Rented Dwellings Act is that rents should be based on the means of both the landlord and the tenant and were to be decided in the District Courts. Though not a "Landlord's Charter", this legislation was far from the "fair deal for tenants" that the PTAG had lobbied for — and no TD voted against both versions.

THE LEGISLATION IN PRACTICE

Since the Rents Courts came into operation earlier this year the trend of judgements between the tenant and landlord has been going steadily in the latter's favour. With rent increases of over 30 times not uncommon, the landlords virtually have their "market value" anyway. The United Nations recommends that rent should never come to more than 20% of income (local authority rents are no more than 16%) but the rents being fixed in the Rent Courts work out at 25-35%, sometimes more.

There is a general belief that tenants are fully protected against these horrendous rent increases by government subsidies (or in other words, the good old PAYE worker is funding the poor old private landlords).There are subsidies but they don't give anything like full protection. If you are on the minimum old age pension of £40 per week (most private tenants are elderly widowed or single women), then all but £3 of your rent will be subsidised. But if your income goes over the £40 mark, the subsidy is reduced to such an extent that you end up almost no better off. For example, with an income of £55 per week you will have to pay £15.50 towards the rent if it is more than this figure — and it invariably is with the "market value" court decisions.

Tenants have not only been hit in the pocket by the new legislation though; security of tenure has gone as well. It now lasts only for the lifetime of the existing tenant or 20 years, whichever is the longer. This means that spouses, sons and daughters who have lived in the house all their lives will eventually be obliged to vacate. Pat Murphy argues that there is no logical reason to abandon security of tenure along with controlled rents. Merely because it was "granted by the powers that be" at the same time is a poor excuse. Pat finds it ironic that it is a native Irish government that has seen fit to destroy security of tenure when you consider the original demands of the Land League: free sale, fair rent and fixity of tenure.

One thing that the PTAG did see as positive in the new Act was that the onus was put on the landlord to carry out maintenance and repairs, hardly ever done by the landlords before. But even this is not what it seems. When they spoke to Ruairi Quinn about how this provision could be enforced (and that's the only way it's going to happen) his response was "you'd need an army of inspectors". PTAG is not leaving it at that, they intend to bring a test case to highlight the landlord's responsibility.

All in all, the operation of the law *in practice* means that previously rent-controlled tenants are now little better off than other private tenants. And because most are elderly, vulnerable and isolated, the sudden change in their status has had a disastrous effect. Retirement has come to mean a nightmare for many. PTAG claim to know of at least three deaths (two suicides and one from stress) directly attributable to the "rights of private property".

PTAG FIGHTS BACK

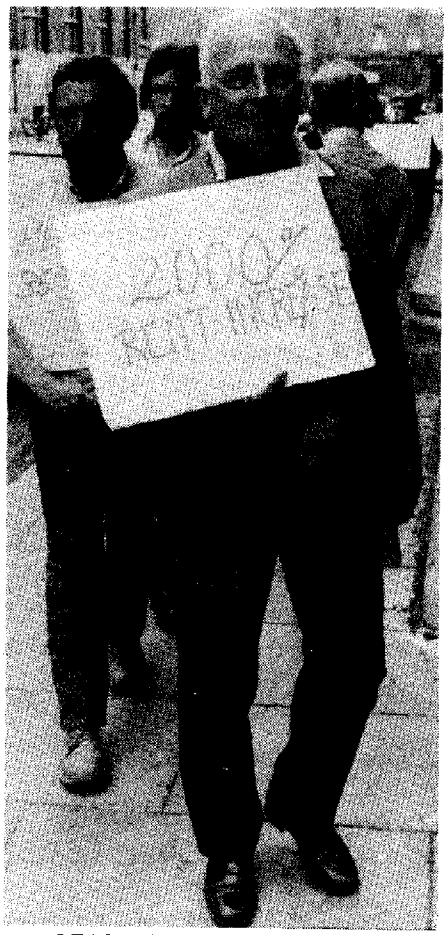
The original PTAG was based on Gardiner St. but there are now also groups in Donore Avenue, Inchicore, Leeson Street and Chapelizod, with more in the pipeline. They now feel that the time has come to evolve into a

DEMANDS OF THE PTAG

1. A Rent Tribunal.
2. Security for all private tenants.
3. Enforcement of repairs and standards through heavy fines.
4. A constitutional amendment placing the right to a home above the right to private property.
5. Illegal eviction and harassment to be a criminal offence.
6. The obtaining of a vindication of tenant right in the High Court.
7. An amendment to the 1982 Act to remove the 20 year rule.
8. The right of appeal for "rent controlled" tenants to the Rent Tribunal, including those who have already been to the District Court.

If you would like further information from, or wish to become a member of, the PTAG contact:-

PRIVATE TENANTS ACTION GROUP
c/o SEAMUS MURPHY
GARDINER ST. CHURCH,
GARDINER ST.,
DUBLIN 1.



Derek Speirs (Report)

PTAG picket Dolphin House June '83.

TOP OF THE CLASS

The Gralton Quiz

A few questions to keep your activist brain alert while you swelter in your deck-chair.

1. Who was the only person to have been deported from the 26 Counties for political activity?

2. What 1982 Act of the Dáil led to gigantic rent increases for many pensioners?

3. The Communist Party of Ireland was re-formed fifty years ago. From what was it reformed?

4. Who published a pamphlet called "Arguments on Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland" without ever actually having *met* a Catholic?

5. A Polish socialist leader was born a few days before the declaration of the Paris Commune. Name, please.

6. Name eight European neutral countries.

7. What were the four simultaneous sit-ins, in connection with factory closures, of early 1983?

8. ". . . and to Caesar the things that are Caesar's." Which bishop recently updated that gospel message?

9. Where did truck-owners recently strike against a regime which was helped to power by a previous truck-owners' strike?

10. Who went discoing last August armed against "Sunday night fever"?

11. What person with great experience of Womens Affairs was recently reported to have put himself forward for the chair of the all-party Committee on Women's Affairs?

12. In which state sector has the embargo on recruitment been lifted:
(a) the Environment Dept. of Dublin Corporation?
(b) Air Traffic Control?
(c) the Army?

For answers see page 22.

proper membership organisation in order to provide funds for a full-time premises and to produce a monthly bulletin to keep everyone informed of what's going on.

May Hoare, Sarah Murphy and Eileen Herbert explained the tasks of the Donore and District Private Rented Tenants Group. Their own particular situation concerns a property company which bought their houses in 1967 for £50-£100 each — they were not offered for sale to the tenants. This company went into voluntary liquidation in 1979 but, under the new Act, claimed and were granted rent increases this year! The tenants decided not to pay *any* rent and are pursuing the issue of the liquidation.

As a group they offer their support to any individual in the area whose case is coming up in the Rent Court. They make sure the person has a good solicitor and valuer, one who will act in the tenant's interest. They say that it is often hard to distinguish between the evidence of landlords' solicitors and that of the tenant's solicitors. When the rent has been fixed they then give evidence about applying for subsidies.

Pat Murphy claims there has been a radicalisation of the campaign lately. A year ago, at a PTAG meeting in St. Mary's Hall, there was only a lukewarm response to his suggestion of direct action such as pickets, marches and rent strikes. By June of this year, at a meeting in Liberty Hall, the support for direct action was unanimous. From that meeting a successful picket of over a hundred people was organised outside the Rent Court on June 22nd, though it didn't get the publicity it deserved. The willingness to take direct action stems from the fact that more and more tenants are seeing their worst fears realised in the Rent Courts.

The PTAG is also exploring alternatives to the present situation. Only 10% of households are private tenants, only 12% are local authority tenants and a massive 76% are home owners or on mortgage — the highest percentage in Europe. Pat Murphy and others, believing home ownership promotes a conservative ideology based on possession, would like to see an expansion of the whole rented sector. Tenants' co-operatives are one idea with tenants sharing control, administering the finances, organising repairs etc. Already PTAG is financing a student to do research in this area and they plan to liaise with other interested groups.

A DAY AT THE RENT COURT

Mr. O'Sullivan is appearing for his wife, the tenant of the house, who is ill. She was born 65 years ago in the house in question, an artisan's dwelling in Dun Laoghaire. They married in 1945 and he moved in. Mrs. O'Sullivan became the tenant in 1960 when her father died.

In assessing the new rent to be struck, any improvements done before 1960 — a new bathroom was put in and electric lighting — are not taken into account by the court. Those since 1960 are. They include putting in a hot water supply. There is fungus on the wall in the living room and poor ventilation necessitates the floorboards being replaced every five years. The judge calmly asks "and this keeps the damp under control, Mr. O'Sullivan, does it?" Both the landlord's and the tenant's valuers agree that £2 per week can be allowed as fair return for all this tenant's work.

Mr. O'Sullivan, a joiner by trade, was made redundant in 1980. He is not yet of pensionable age and does part-time work at the local credit union for £50 per week. After due consideration, the old controlled rent of 87p per week is increased to £19.50 for the next five years.

Mrs. O'Neill has come to court without the solicitor and valuer to which she is entitled. She is in her seventies and somewhat confused about what is happening. The judge appoints a solicitor to act on her behalf.

She and her son live together in a house similar to that of the O'Sullivans. Her son has not worked for eight years and gets £26 per week assistance, she has the old age pension. She has lived 43 years in the house.

The living room is damp and the ceiling cracked. The bedroom is damp. There is no bathroom. One of the walls of the outside toilet fell down recently. There is only a cold water supply. The rent, which was 57p per week, is increased to £16 per week for the next five years.

Both these houses, and another one, were bought by the present landlord in 1979. He paid between £1,000 and £1,500 each for them. This information was supplied by a friendly valuer — it did not emerge in court and was not taken into account in fixing the rents.

The judge in this court is known to be more sympathetic than most to the tenants that come before her and, indeed, she treated them kindly. It did not, however, appear to affect her final rent decisions.

CAMPAIGNING AGAINST THE NIGHTMARE
Irish CND talks to *Gralton*

PAUL BRENNAN, for *Gralton,* interviewed DERMOT NOLAN, Secretary of the Irish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

What is the Irish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament?
Irish CND is an organisation of about 6,000 members from literally every walk of life. We have members from all the political parties, and indeed, parliamentary members of all the political parties, in our ranks. I think that what unites the people in CND is a fear about the increasing danger of nuclear war and the rapid growth of the arms race, along with the develoment of new types of weapons in the past few years, and of military strategies for using those weapons. This has created, throughout the world, a situation of increasing alarm.

ICND is largely the relection of that fear in Ireland. The realisation of what really is an imminent danger has galvanised people into action. Four years ago we had six members. That gives an idea of the growth. We are still growing at a very, very fast rate.

Irish CND is a protest organisation, in that it demonstrates against the madness of nuclear weaponry. It is also a lobbying and educational organisation. We lobby politicians to try to persuade them that Ireland must play some role in attempting to bring about disarmament. And we are educating the public through holding meetings, showing films and many other types of activies. So we are a complex organisation, serving a number of different functions at the same time.

What's the typical social and political profile of a member of CND?
It's very difficult to answer that because the membership of ICND really represents a cross-section of Irish society. However, I would mention two things. Firstly, there are a great number of young people. The average age of CND members would be quite low. There are a great number of school pupils who, while not being formally members of CND branches, engage in a lot of activities in promoting CND ideas and so on. CND is very much a young person's organisation.

Secondly, there's a very high proportion of women in CND, probably more than fifty per cent of the membership. Women hold leading positions in CND. Half of our elected National Committee is composed of women and practically all the leading positions at national and branch level have been held by women. This is a reflection of the fact that CND is a new organisation. It has no barriers to women playing the leading roles. It's an organisation in which women feel much more at home in making a contribution, and in working actively. It's very much a non-sexist organisation.

What so far has been the reaction of existing left-wing organisations in Ireland to ICND?
In general the attitude of the Left has been positive to CND. There may be some differences in tactics, and differences in approaches, between different political parties and political groupings, but it seems to me that all the left-wing groups, by virtue of their own philosophies of humanism, would certainly be in favour of the type of things which Irish CND is trying to do.

Having said that, I think that members of left-wing parties have not been as active in CND as they could have been. Paradoxically, and perhaps in contravention of the usual impression, CND is not a hot bed of opposing left-wing views.

Monseignor Bruce Kent is one of British CND's most prominent spokespeople. How far is the Catholic Church involved in Irish CND and are other religious organisations involved?
Many religious people and religious activists are involved in ICND from all the Churches. Several of our leading officers are clergymen of various Churches. We've had Bishops of the Catholic and the Anglican Churches and also leading members of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches speaking on our platforms. Quakers and Mennonites are also very active, as well as people of many other denominations. So the Churches play a very good role and frequently assit us in the provision of halls for meetings, in making announcements about our activities from pulpits, and so on. So we have an extremely good working relationship with the Churches.

How does ICND respond to the media charges that it is run by money from Moscow?
First of all, there's no such accusation, and to my knowledge there never has been such an accusation, in this country. I think that our press is rather more responsible than the foreign press, in Britain in particualr, and I think they should be commended for that.

The absurdity of the accusation is patently obvious.

You can see how tiny our office is. We have tremendous difficulty trying to survive with the voluntary donations of our members and from the public. That in itself proves quite clearly that we are not in receipt of any large pot of gold from anywhere.

What do you hope to achieve by symbolic demonstrations like the "human chain" between the US and USSR embassies on July 16?
Primarily we want to educate people, to make people more aware of the danger of nuclear weapons. We also want to provide people with an opportunity to participate in activities designed to oppose nuclear weapons. This particular protest, on July 16, was designed also to show the role that a neutral country, such as Ireland, should be playing. In other words, providing the means which would help to break down the confrontation — very direct confrontation at the moment — between the Soviet Union and the United States and get negotiations going which would lead to genuine disarmament. This is the symbolic significance of the "linking arms" demonstration.

How committed is ICND to non-violent methods of demonstration?
Irish CND is completely committed to non-violent methods of demonstration. There is no conceivable circumstance in which we would engage in any form of violent activity whatsoever.

Does ICND have a commitment to non-violent change? Do you see ICND as part of the more general peace movement, with its emphasis on agriculture and post-industrial organisation?
I think that the people who promote and work for that type of society would support CND unequivocally, and in this country many of those people are members of CND. But there are also people of more conventional views in ICND. As I said at the beginning, there are members of all the political parties from the Unionist Party in the North right across to Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and the various left-wing parties.

Most of the political parties in Ireland, of course, don't support this view of society, although many of them would support various aspects of it. To the extent that the peace has grown at the same time as the ecology movement they are certainly associated, but I would not think that they were *necessarily* associated. I think that the struggle for peace and to abolish nuclear weapons is the most important question of their political views.

What links does the ICND have with other peace movements, outside and inside of Ireland?
The situation *in* Ireland is that there is a diversity of peace groups, mainly small in size, working away at various aspects of the peace question. There has in the past been liaison between the various peace groups and, indeed, there was a liaison committee of peace groups of which CND was the Secretary. But unfortunately this group has met very irregularly and has not really succeeded in becoming a united voice for peace activists in Ireland.

We believe that there is a great need for a stronger voice for peace activists in Ireland, and that will only happen if they come together. There are particular questions on which we would like to see movement, issues which would unite all sorts of peace groups. For example, at the first UN special session on disarmament our government agreed to devote a proportion of the budget to peace education. This has never been done, despite being this type of activity which, we feel, would lead to a growth in consciousness amongst Irish people, particularly children, on the whole question of peace. It is this type of issue on which the diverse peace groups can work together. There are lots of others.

Internationally, ICND maintains very friendly relations with many peace groups. We have attended a number of international conferences including the END conferences in Berlin and Brussels. We also attended the recent assembly for Peace and Life in Prague. We keep lines open to all sides of the peace movement in all

Linking arms on July 16th

Derek Speirs (Report)

countries.

We have a principle of being prepared to co-operate and work with all people who are working for peace. We have, of course, got very friendly and satisfactory relations with British CND. We also lately have been trying to set up a network of peace groups from various neutral countries in Europe. We have attended meetings of those peace groups at international gatherings, and have been instrumental in setting up those meetings. These have been attended by Finland, Sweden, Yugoslavia, Austria, Switzerland, Cyprus and Malta: all the neutral countries of Europe. This is a particularly important aspect of international contact for us.

During the recent British election campaign the Labour Party's policy on nuclear disarmament left the public confused. Could you tell us whether ICND is multilateralist or unilateralist? Could you explain the difference between the two positions?

I hate to use a cliché, but I'm glad you asked me that question. It's one that creates an immense amount of confusion. I think part of it is due to the extent that we sometimes think of political problems in terms of British rather than in terms of our own country.

"Dance for disarmament" — Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre at the Link Arms venue.

The unilateral versus multilateral debate has been a peculiarly British one. It's a ludicrous debate in the Irish context because we cannot be in favour of unilateralism in this country for the simple reason that we do not have any nuclear weapons. What our position is, and we must always remember that we are speaking from the point of view of a neutral country, is that we in Irish CND oppose all nuclear weapons. We would be delighted if everybody were to get rid of their nuclear weapons. And if everybody isn't prepared to get rid of them at the same time we would be delighted if any country were to abolish them. But we think it would be a ludicrous for an organisation in Ireland to ask the Americans, or to ask the Russians, to disarm unilaterally. That would be a waste of time. It's not going to happen.

The type of role we can play is to try to promote a process of disarmament, a step by step reduction in the arms race: the opposite, if you like, from the way the arms race has built up. If we could get one side to make some concessions, however, small, it would put pressure on the other side to reciprocate.

This is the type of move which we would like to see the Irish government promote through the United Nations. Therefore we are in favour of unilateral measures. That is written into our constitution in Irish CND. And we consistently call on all sides to make some gesture in the hope that it will set off a process which could ultimately end in complete multilateral disarmament.

Over the last few years various commentators, like the former chief-of-staff of the Army, Carl O'Sullivan, have suggested that Ireland should join NATO, or be in some form of military alliance. What is ICND's view of this position?

It's absolutely true that several retired officers have in the past few years expressed the view that we should join NATO. But it should also be pointed out, although it doesn't get the same amount of publicity, that other retired officers have expressed an opposite point of view. So it's by no means a unanimity, even among ex-Army officers.

Personally, I would feel that only a small proportion of our armed forces would have this view. I think there *is* a feeling in the Army that it is being asked to defend the security of the country but is not being given the means to do it. There's a sense of unhappiness with this situation, and it sometimes expresses itself in a call to join NATO. We believe that this would be a policy of insanity.

The worst threat to the security of the country, and, indeed, to the security of the human race, lies in the existence of military blocs armed to the teeth with nuclear weapons. To aggregate and consolidate those blocs by other countries joining with them, would, in our view, decrease our own security and that of the world.

What we want to do is work to break up the military blocs. Instead of siding with this sort of association, we should instead ally ourselves with the neutral countries of Europe and the non-alligned countries and work to break up, as I said, those military blocs rather than consolidate them.

What role do you see a small country like Ireland playing in the world of the 1980s, the world of the arms race?

We're very strongly in favour of Irish neutrality. The only way a small country like Ireland can actually play a role in promoting disarmament is by remaining netural. We're not just in favour of some type of passive neutrality. We want a positive, active use of Irish neutrality to try to decrease tensions in the world and to lead to a situation in which nuclear weapons could be abolished.

We would like to see Ireland playing the type of role which Sweden does in putting forward proposals which try to find some common ground between the two military blocs. A good example of what a type of country like Ireland could do is the international initiative which Australia has taken recently to try to have nuclear weapons testing banned, particularly in the Pacific area. Australia is not a neutral country in the same sense as Ireland, but it is still able to take this type of initiative. It shows the type of thing which Ireland could of is we are serious about doing something to promote peace.

Suppose, as seems likely, Cruise and Pershing missiles are deployed in Europe. What will ICND do then?

Firstly we don't accept that Cruise and Pershing missiles will be deployed in Europe. That's still some way off and we think the situation can still be turned around. The defeat of the anti-missile campaigners in the British general election was something of a set-back, but by no means a permanent one.

In the months ahead we will see a growth of the peace movement and strong activity against the deployment of these missiles. We believe that their deployment is a very crucial question which will place the possibility of nuclear confrontation on a dangerous new level, where the accidental occurrance of nuclear war would be much more likely. For example, a Pershing missile fired from West Germany could reach Soviet territory in six minutes. Consequently the Russians have warned that if Pershing missiles are deployed they will palce their own weapons on a "launch and warning" basis. This is a higher state of readiness than at present. With a six minute time scale there's notime to cross-check if the other side has made a mistake. The margin is getting smaller and smaller.

If these missiles are deployed next December a situation will immediately be created in the world akin to the Cuban missile crisis of twenty years ago. The difference is that it would be an *on-going* nightmare. It won't last for just two weeks but could go on for years. People don't realise how crucial the question of Cruise and Pershing missiles is. We are going to re-double our efforts in the next months, together with the peace movements in the other countries, to try to stop this development.

The German Greens have done much to put anti-nuclear campaigning on a more conventional political footing by standing for parliament. Do you see any chance of the emergence of a similar type of party here?

The Greens have played a very important and vital role in West Germany in promoting the movement for nuclear disarmament. The Green movement is spreading to other countries and I understand that in Ireland the ecology alliance is trying to develop along the same lines as the Greens in West Germany. But conditions are different in other countries. In Britain, for example, the Labour Party has been a major focus for anti-nuclear weapon campaigning.

It's very difficult to see a clear line of development in the peace movement. Certainly a development of the ecology movement in Ireland would be helpful to the peace movement and would bring recruits to it. We in ICND have a policy of not accepting the affiliations of any particular political parties. That applies right across the board. The reason for this is that we wish to keep ourselves open to members of all political parties. This is a very important and fundamental principle for us. We welcome the growth of consciousness about peace in any political party.

What is ICND's opinion of the commercial application of nuclear energy in power stations?

We are opposed to anything which helps to make nuclear weapons. There are a great number of people who believe that nuclear power can be used, and widely used, without assisting in the proiferation of nuclear weapons, and without providing facilities for the makers of nuclear weapons. There are also people who have the opposite point of view, who believe strongly that nuclear power stations lead to the manufacture of nuclear weapons and that the waste from these stations is used to make nuclear weapons.

CND contains people of both these views, in what proportion I don't know. We specify in our constitution that if nuclear power is being used to facilitate the production of nuclear weapons we would oppose that usage of nuclear power. We would oppose the building of a nuclear power station in Ireland if its waste products were to be reprocessed by laboratories in Britain to be passed on to the makers of nuclear weapons there. We would oppose uranium mining in Donegal unless it could be absolutely guaranteed that the ore extracted could not be sold into the nuclear weapons process.

What is ICND's stand on pollution and other environmental issues?

I think most of our members would be very, very concerned about environmental questions and many of them would be active in organisations which deal with these

Derek Speirs (Report)

Co nomment

problems. But CND, as an organisation, has to do with trying to promote the peace movement and opposition to nuclear weapons. We stick to that. Our constitution is very specific about our objectives. So that while we would be very sympathetic to campaigners against pollution, we don't actually do that as CND.

Finally, who is to blame for the arms race? Where did it begin and who is responsible? What bearing has that for ordinary people who have little or no control over the decisions of government made in their name?

Again, I would like to refer you to our constitution. In CND we condemn the use, deployment or possession of nuclear weapons by everybody and anybody. We believe that the situation is so crucial now that the vitally important question is to seek means to get rid of nuclear weapons, this sword of democles which is hanging over the human race. This is what we concentrate our efforts on. We have a situation now where each side has the power to destroy the world several times over. Yet more and more weapons are being added to arsenals. New types of weapons are being produced. New strategies and uses for them are being thought up, for example, President Reagan's recent talk of "star wars", of building the ultimate defence system against nuclear attack.

We don't believe "limited war" is possible. Any use of nuclear weapons will result in a holocaust in which all the weapons will be used. Therefore the only sane and rational approach is to try to create the conditions in which disarmament will begin — genuine and real disarmament which could bring about a situation in which our children could live free from the terrible tension and worry which infiltrates into our daily lives.

THE CHANGE IN SPAIN

JOE McDONALD suggests that the brave new world of Spanish Socialism is more a reaction to Catholic Church dominations than the advent of a new social order.

On the eve of the Spanish elections of 28 October 1982, half a million people crowded together for the final Socialist rally in Madrid and cheered deliriously for their handsome idol, Felipe Gonzalez. It was clear that the socialists (the PSOE) were going to sweep into power. And a landslide victory was what the PSOE got, leaving Fraga's Popular Aliiance (AP) to mop up the right wing vote and what was left of the centre vote (UCD). The result: a Socialist government in Spain for the first time in 40 years.

The socialist slogan "For Change" had struck just the right note. It proved irresistible for the 10 million voters (over 40%) who voted PSOE — tired of the isolationism/protectionism of Franco's dictatorship and equally weary of the ineffective UCD liberals who had governed the so-called Transition. The single bold and successful stroke of UCD had been the legalisation of the Communist Party (PCE) in 1977. Thereafter, the UCD, a product of Opus Dei and "Catholic Action" groups, muddled on. The shock of the attempted coup on 23 February 1981 sent reverberations through the UCD establishment that eventually brought about the disintegration of the entire party. It has now finally folded up, leaving millions of pounds worth of unpaid debts and loans.

Expectations of the Socialist government, both at home and internationally, have been enormous. Just what kind of "change" was envisaged by Felipe? It is by now obvious that the struggle towards change on the home front is primarily to wrest power from the omnipresent Catholic Church — to "modernize" Spain — and on the international front to gain acceptance as a serious country with a new "model of society" — efficient and pluralist. All highly significant changes in a Spanish context but hardly the Socialist transformation of society that might have been expected. Instead the PSOE seem to want to answer the expectations born in the 1960 boom times and the envious over-the-Pyrenean-shoulder-look at prosperous neighbour France.

The struggle, so far successful, to wrest the reins of power from the hands of the Catholic Church has been mainly economic. Of course, on the social front,

Above left: Felipe with employers' leaders. Above right: Ruiz Mateos.

Spain has not been immune from Wojtyla's concerted international campaign on abortion which has hit Ireland so badly. The Socialist draft law to decriminalise abortion and introduction legal abortion for certain cases (rape, certified danger to the mother's health, etc.) is tame, but it has been met with mass protests and a propaganda campaign in the schools. The Church's case has been championed, not surprisingly, by the Popular Alliance. Fraga said on television, "The Socialists can't create jobs for the workers, so now 'they've turned to killing babies". Plenty, in short, of the kind of theatrics all too familiar to the Irish public. At least the Spaniards have been spared constitutional amendments.

But the real war front is elsewhere, in an economy dominated by the lay Catholic army of Opus Dei and controlled by an infrastructure put into place by General Franco. The first battle has been a clear victory for the government — the nationalisation-that-wasn't of Rumasa, Spain's biggest multinational. The government, clearly sensing a victory which turned out to be of unimagined proportions, timed its takeover exquisitely to coincide with the second anniversary of the attempted army coup. Now it was the Left's turn. On 23 Februry 1983 "Superminister" Boyer surprised the nation by declaring Rumasa bankrupt, seizing its headquarters in the centre of Madrid and announcing its "expropriation" by the government.

Rumasa was the showpiece of the Spanish economy, the highflier in a time of recession. A financial and commercial multinational controlling 20 banks, hotel chains, wine and sherry merchants and department store chains, it employed 70,000 people with a turnover equivalent to almost 2% of the total Spanish GNP. According to its own unaudited figures, Rumasa's 1982 profit was Pts 6 bn (£38m). What the government suspected, and what has now been proved, is that Rumasa cooked the books to cover up a real loss in 1982 of Pts 9.5 bn. In actual fact Rumasa had been bankrupt since 1981.

Ruiz Mateos, the slick president of Rumasa who wisely fled the country when the scandal broke, is accused of massive fraud and a number of other criminal offences. The outstanding crime is the long-term non-payment of social security, including channelling the employees' contributions into the company's commercial profit-making activities. Now Ruiz Mateos, whose opinion of the takeover is of "intolerable government interference" can watch the judicial proceedings against him from the safe distance of his Chelsea duplex.

The case is certainly a meaty one. Recent police finds in a working class suburb of Madrid of 30 cubic metres — about a thousand files — of documentation behind a false shed-wall have given the government irrefutable evidence of the company's irregular activities. But more interestingly the papers reveal the complex interconnections between the dominant Francoist elite, Opus Dei, and the Transition governments. Not only do they show contributions given directly to church educational bodies, but also "donations" of the order of Pts 1.5 bn to Opus Dei; proof that employees were vetted for their religious beliefs and never promoted if less than diligent in their Catholic practice; and evidence of mutual co-operation with civil authorities for speculation purpsoes (another familiar one to Irish readers, that).

The Rumasa affair should not be mistaken, however, for a nationalisation in the style of Mitterand. The PSOE have repeatedly emphasised that their main concern is rectifying the economy. Redistribution of wealth is postponed until "later". The election programme made no mention of nationalisations. In the particular case of the Rumasa takeover, the government was at pains to stress that its intention was primarily to protect the bank deposits. It has stated that it is prepared to meet the losses with public money if necessary. A commitment of sorts has been given to return the banks eventually to the private

Right: a painting by Juan Genoves, from 'Nuestra Bandora', the Spanish communist party journal.

sector. The government has also given its public commitment to the free market mechanism. So how socialist are the Spanish socialists? It is worth looking at the men — and they all are men — who are orchestrating "change" in Spain.

The modern PSOE was born in Seville, the capital of Andalusia, an area larger than Ireland and desperately poor. It was traditionally, and still is, the region of the big estates, a place where the landowners ostentatiously display their offensive wealth in the midst of dire poverty. Both Felipe Gonzalez and Alfonso Guerra, the vice-president, are from Seville.

Aside from the social inequalities of Andalusia, it is true to say that the PSOE is a creation of General Franço — at least to the extent that its militants were all radicalised by Franco's prisons. Although Felipe himself spent only 3 months in jail (in 1971), superminister Boyer, who is, to this writer, a socialist in name only, languished there for a full year. Boyer is now directing the Spanish economy on liberal Keynesian lines with trendy monetarist overtones. He speaks of "dominating the inflationary process", "continuing Ordonez's (former minister, now bank director with numerous US multinational connections) programme of fiscal reform", "stabilising the economy"...

Boyer, the perfect technocrat, is probably the single most important man in the new government. His rise among the Francoist élite was sponsored by Sr Boada of the employer' federation, president of Ford Espana and a member of the Spanish section of the Trilateral Commission. The socialist government's recent appointment of Moya, another intimate of Boada and also prominent in the employers' federation, to the presidency of the INI, only confirms the continuity of the dominant élite. Boyer, meanwhile, is obsessed with the "struggle against communism".

Boyer's economic programme naturally holds no terror for foreign and domestic capital. The first economic steps under his direction have been concessions to private banking interests, currency devaluation, a rise in petrol prices, and handing over to the private sector those companies formerly under the INI umbrella. These moves are claimed to "sanitise" the economy and create a state of readiness to profit from the "upturn", when it eventually comes.

There have, however, been positive achievements already. The real "revolutionary" content of the socialist programme has been the reform of the administration, the replacement of hacks in senior positions, the reduction of the working week to 40 hours, and the so-called Law of Incompatibilities, aimed at stamping out the common practice of deputies and senior civil servants holding down several jobs at once. In fact the reform has meant longer working hours for civil servants whose previous working day was from 9-2 only. Afternoon opening of government offices, previously unheard of, is now a reality.

Another considerable development has been the stiffening of some of the farcical sentences imposed on the conspirator generals. General Armada, the mastermind of the 1981 coup, who had been given a derisory 6 year sentence under the previous government, has had his sentence considerably hardened and will now serve 30 years.

However, the irresistible impression for a foreign observer is that these changes have meant a good deal of shuffling at the top, but almost nothing at the level of the working classes. The same families of the élite remain in control.

The gigantic white elephant of the Union Explosivos Rio Tinto (ERT) provides an excellent case history. ERT is a major producer of chemicals and is also the largest stock market listed company in Spain. After an expansion programme in the 1970s, it announced late last year that it was unable to meet debt repayments. A loss of Pts 5 bn is expected in 1983. So, as always in Francoist times, help is being sought from the government to bail the company out. At the time of writing it seems that government subsidies will be forthcoming, hardly surprising with such a powerful friend in court as Miguel Boyer, and with so much banking interest at stake.

ERT is the typical Francoist monopoly holding comprising such diverse interests as the production of military explosives, the exploitation of minerals, naval shipyards, plastics, real estate and book publishing. The restructuring which is now being negotiated with the banking multinationals in exchange for debt rescheduling means hiving off the loss-making sectors and channelling public money into the rest.

Under Franco ERT was supplied with all manner of public credits, tax concessions etc, all subsidising ERT's private sector profits. This situation has not changed under the PSOE. It remains to be seen whether the Socialists will follow the Francoist policy, which led to the creation of the INI, of "nationalising losses".

ERT contains all the élite families, starting with former government President Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, who was Director General of ERT from 1964-1975. The present foreign minister, Morán, is married to a sister of Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo. The ERT family list takes in the Spanish business community (like the Entrecanales family) and the finance community (like the Urquijo family of the Banco Urquijo).

In many respects the heralded "change" amounts to no more than the reform of what existed previously and consolidates the traditional hold of the bourgeoisie. The PSOE's model of society is a vision of Spain as the new social democratic West Germany. Seen from the presidential palace in Madrid the SPD seemed the "rosy" alternative. There will be no questioning of the underlying structures, no change in foreign policy. And, for the time being, the Spanish people are fully behind the "realism" and "pragmatic" policies of the PSOE.

CULTURE SHOCK

John Cane talked to MARY O'CONNELL and EDDIE CONLON, two of the survivors from the recent Anti-Amendment Campaign expedition into darkest Ireland.

"We were treated to a propaganda exercise, in which the unborn child was totally ignored, and which sought to discredit the Pro-Life Movement, while advancing untrue and outlandish claims about the effects on Irish society if a Pro-Life Amendment is passed by the people . . . completely unsubstantiated claims, obviously untrue statements and outrageous propaganda was put forward as truth at Monday's meeting in Mullingar."

Is there just a hint of hysteria, panic even, to be seen in this press release from the Mullingar branch of SPUC issued on foot of the first Anti-Amendment meeting in the town? Does the fact that the local paper didn't report the actual meeting but only the SPUC statement mean that the local power-that-be are just a trifle worried?

Maybe not. After all, as the tiresomely cynical *Magill* report of the same meeting pointed out: there were only 60 people present and the majority were vociferously pro-amendment. There is no real doubt that Mullingar, along with most other places in the "heartlands" of Ireland, will vote YES on September 7th. That's not in question. What is in question is how big the anti-amendment minority will be and, perhaps more fundamentally, is something stirring in the Ireland that the Left prefers to ignore.

No better people to ask then members of the 11-person Anti-Amendment Campaign, week-long expedition to the Midlands which took place at the end of June. It would be no exageration to dub them "pioneers" — when was the last time that radical politics were openly espoused in places like Mullingar, Tullamore, Birr, Athlone, Roscommon, Boyle, Carrick-on-Shannon and Ballina?

Mary and Eddie are very realistic about what the tour managed to achieve. This was no triumphal procession. The good folk of Birr and Boyle kept away in their thousands. No meeting attracted more than a hundred and, though not always as bas as in Mullingar, a good proportion of those attending were convinced pro-lifers. And those that weren't were understandably nervous of engaging in open debate with their neighbours. It was hard work.

But everyone knew it wasn't going to be easy. These particular towns had been picked for the tour precisely because they were where the Anti-Amendment Campaign was judged to be at its weakest. There were no groups operating in any of the towns, just a few isolated individuals who had contacted the Dublin office or written to the papers. Publicity for the tour was of necessity restricted to a few individuals putting up posters and announcements in the local press. It was very much a case of going in blind.

Another problem was the "low-profile" nature of the tour. No local speakers could be found to address meetings and only a few "stars" could be enticed out of Dublin to perform for the night (amongst them, Andrew Rynne, the Contraceptive One). Not only the hard graft but also the "public face" of the tour fell largely on the shoulders of the eleven young, unemployed Dublin activists zipping from town to town in a beat-up minivan. Little razzamatazz to stir the sleepy citizens of Tullamore here. But razzamatazz brings its own problems too. Besides, the money simply isn't there for a bigger operation.

And then there was SPUC. Seasoned anti-amendment activists always have a deliciously ambiguous attitude to their "fellow extremists": on the one hand they don't want them around so they can speak to "the people" direct, on the other hand the counter-productive nature of much of their ranting is often the catalyst that tips some undecided people into the anti-amendment camp. A curious situation.

There was no chance of avoiding them on this trip anyway. This was an expedition into injun territory . . and the smoke signals had gone up well in advance. In Birr a local shopkeeper described how SPUCers had attempted to intimidate him and others into refusing to place posters for the meeting in their shops. It was all organised. The same faces appeared at meetings in different towns. Chief Father Brown stood outside the meetings in both Athlone and Roscommon, briefcases in hand, giving last minute instructions to his intrepid braves. Ballina was invaded by the Knock Family Life tribe.

And the result of all this crap? Very mixed as far as the pro-lifers were concerned. Sure, no doubt they managed to intimidate a good few from attending the meetings or keeping silent inside them. But the "counter-productive" theory was also at work. It was no coincidence that at the Athlone meeting, where SPUC seemed to lose the head altogether, the largest number of people were signed up afterwards into the new anti-amendment group.

The fact is though that this tour managed to set up some sort of organisation in *every* town they visited with the sole exception of Birr. Only tens and twenties at the moment but think what even ten people in Tullamore can do.

And what sort of people are these that will brave the wrath of priests and bigots on their home ground? "Quite ordinary people" report Mary and Eddie. Women in the main — housewives, nurses, teachers. Some men too, of course — a few trade union activists, some older "anti-clerical" types of a kind less common in Ireland than some other Catholic countries. Very few politicos. Both the Labour Party and the Workers' Party hardly exist in these towns. And *if* Young Fine Gael are mobilising for the anti-amendment camp, then someone should give the Midland's organiser a ring.

Once again this issue — the pro-woman and anti-clerical Anti-Amendment Campaign — has proved that it can unite more people behind its banner than any other. Win, lose or draw on September the 7th, something has changed in Irish politics for the good. And not the least of that change is the stirrings in darkest Ireland. We would not have known that without the Anti-Amendment Campaign expedition. A woman who joined the campain in Athlone put it simply: "Thank God you came".

Mini-bus trips can be boring. The AAC Eleven were wont to pass the time with a ditty or two. This, dear reader, was one of the best.

FATHER BROWN

***Words:* Mary O'Connell and Stephen Dowse**
***Tune:* Battle Hymn of the Republic**

We went up to Roscommon town, and there met Father Brown
A lovely Irish parish priest, a credit to his town
He founded SPUC in Ireland, and he spreads it all around
BUT ABORTIONS KEEP GOING ON.

Chorus:
Equal rights for the unborn
Equal rights for the unborn
Equal rights for the unborn
And let the women die!

Father Brown's a lovely man, he's cuddly and he's round
When he begins to talk of sin, the women gather round
He says if they're in trouble, he will never let them down
BUT ABORTIONS KEEP GOING ON

Chorus:

Father Brown is very keen to save each woman's soul
So he's against all forms of effective birth control
He believes that motherhood's a woman's natural role
BUT ABORTIONS KEEP GOING ON

Chorus:

Father Brown, he wants to see the amendment getting in
Cause he believes abortion is the biggest, blackest sin
His answer is to make the egg an Irish Citizen
BUT ABORTIONS KEEP GOING ON.

POLITICS IS FOR EVERYBODY

Tony O'Shea

Matthew Boden and Dan Browne look on while Paul Humphrey plays at being "Lord Mayor"

St. Teresa's Gardens on Donore Avenue in Dublin has about 1250 residents in just over 300 households. Almost 50% of the current tenants have moved into the area in the past five years: 65% say they wish to leave. Some 58% of the population is under the age of 24 (almost 10% above the national average), yet only 5% of the 15-24 age group participate in full time education. The unemployment rate in this age group is 57.9%: the rate among all tenants who have moved to the Gardens in the last two years is 67%.

These and other facts are contained in the report entitled *Fighting Back*, which was compiled by a group of eight people who recently completed a Community Workers' Training Course initiated by the St. Teresa's Gardens Development Committee and carried out by AnCO with the help of the Eastern Health Board and other groups and individuals. Six of the group came from the Gardens, while two came from elsewhere in the inner city.

***Fighting Back* was launched publicly in April at a session which included a slide and tape presentation about the course and the community's plans for future development, as well as a play about life in the Gardens, writte in, directed, and performed by the group. (Dublin Arts circles please note: an excellent production). MATTHEW BODEN, MARGARET WILLIAMS, and PAUL HUMPHREY talked to JEFF KALLEN about Teresa's Gardens today.**

JK: I know you're doing a Summer Project now. What's involved with the project?

MB: I'm co-ordinating the project. The first objective is to provide an outlet where kids can have a lot of fun. But there's an educational flavour to everything we do. If we take a kid out, it's not only to the sea to swim: on the way out we point out, that's such and such a place, such and such a thing happened there years ago.

There's thousands of things that people don't know, thousands of things that kids don't know, and in this area there's fucking hundreds and thousands and millions of things that kids never ever know unless somebody tries to do it in an informal structure.

Because it's not achieved in school. Kids just drop out. One, because the family income needs to be topped up, and secondly because it doesn't bear any relevance to the problems of the community or the life of the community, or even it doesn't allow any scope for the future. It's all based on a middle class situation, where kids can't relate those issues to their own lives.

JK: I remember the report talking about the low numbers that were in education in the 15-24 age group. In fact there's nobody in education from the 20-24 group.

MB: That's right. There's nobody I know of who's gone to university from Teresa's Gardens. Absolutely nobody.

MW: And the AnCO training course figures were only ourselves.

MB: Six of them. There was eight people on AnCO training. I think six of them were on the course.

JK What about community work itself?

MB: Yeah, if you come from a rural background, like Margaret does, generally the way you're brought up, the culture of an area is what you're given. If you come from a rural background, you should generally be a rural person.

JK: That's a point that you made in the report as well, about the Gardai — the nice country lads coming in and having no idea what it's like to be living in the inner city.

MB: Actually a lot of Corporation officials are from the country as well. That's true: You're talking about the people who make the ideologies. They're people who haven't got a clue how people in the city have lived and live now. Which is a point we were trying to hammer across in everything, really.

MW: I found it entirely different living here, when I moved here first, even from England. The way things were worked over there. You know, you have complaints over there and you got over and they are soon rectified, you don't have to go down today and go down tomorrow. Once you report it, it's done. It's a different kettle of fish here. You seem to have to chase what is your right, you have to chase it.

MB: The trouble with police is, when

they look at you, they think you're hardened. They think that if they hit you with a baton, that you don't feel it, it stuns you for a while, and that you've no emotions, that you've no fucking value at all. And the looks they give you: you see a car flying up and down, you'd look at them, naturally, and they look back. So everybody looks at them and they look back at everybody else, as much as to say that the faces looking at them are fucking enemy. That's the way I see it.

JK: Is that part of what you're working on now, the relationship with the police?
MB: Yeah. We were supposed to be playing them on Monday night in a football match, but it had to be cancelled because some of our lads are playing elsewhere. But we hope to get it off the ground soon.

We actually have a very good relationship with one particular member of the force, the Juvenile Liaison Officer in Kevin Street. But the rest is really weird if you ask me. It doesn't come up to my standards at all for society, if it's in any way a caring society, rather than as it is now, a very punitive society.

JK: What about these problems that are very hard to get a handle on, like education and future prospects? Like you can talk about putting doors on rubbish chutes or something — you can actually do that — but this whole problem of long-term opportunities?
MB: It *is* the problem. But I suppose it's like the media, and it's like the Church. You can't touch it. It's controlled from somewhere up there. If you take the Church, the media, and the education system, you find that it's only relevant to the system which already operates: the untouchable ideological mechanisms. And what happens in between is, you know, the Corporation, and the bureaucracy, and the courts, the lot: things that work against you to keep you from changing the system.

JK: I remember in the report also about the parish priest and the youth centre.
PH: Oh, yeah. The management committee, that was for bingo. We were looking for running a disco, and they were sort of objecting because they kept telling us that the people across the road in Hamilton Street had their backs on Donore Avenue, and the priest says anytime the kids'd come out, they'd throw bottles over and they could never sleep. You'd think the disco was on until two or three in the morning, you know.

Eventually come along the Summer Project and we put it on the programme, and they couldn't say no. And then we tried to persuade them that it was a success — we fought them for two or three years. The new management committee came in three years ago, and they were told the same story by the other PP, not to have discos in the hall, and we convinced them. During the summer project they saw how successful the discos were, and they gave us sort of a "if it keeps up like this, fair enough, yous'll have yours a disco". Then the management committee broke up — they saw that we were getting the better of them at this stage.
MB: The whole point of it was that it was back and forward — they were saying that it was the PP had the last decision, and the PP said no, there's a management committee.


Tony O'Shea
The Summer Project.

JF: That was another question I had, because you've a reference in the report to relations with the neighbourhood.
PH: Well, *we* haven't a bad relationship, *they* have a bad relationship.

We started a club there twelve months ago. It was open to the whole parish — it was open to anyone at all, now — and we had none, none, out of the Tenters area, we have some from the buildings in Cork Street, and some from Cork Street itself. But we don't see anyone at all now from the Tenters and you see the reason why, they say, "Oh, the fellows in the flats is in there", you see.

Well, the club is open for anyone, and I've often approached a couple of young ones. We've a good club on, we've everything in it. We have a disco on there of a Thursday night: you wouldn't see anyone out of the Tenters at all now. Which I think is mad. But yet if there was a disco in Scoil Treasa out here or a youth club, it'd be packed — and yet people from the Gardens would still go. It's a one-sided thing all the way, as far as the community around here is concerned.

JK: Is there anything that can be done about that, do you think?
MB: Just don't have anything to do with them. Your own autonomy is more important, without having to unite too many of the groups in the area. But what you've got to change first, as we were saying, is attitudes, and the whole outlook on the flats itself.

Because they're just looking at the problems in a vacuum, really, to say they're there, that's it. They don't really say any more. There's no real understanding of the underlying causes of anything. Yet.

I'll probably sound like a crazy socialist saying this, but they're the people who have the purse-strings. And they're the people under the current term of reference — governmental agencies, right? — who can enable people to work on problems themselves, on the ground. They could be saying to people, listen, you've got a big unemployment problem in your area, what do you think you should do about that? Or even better still, if you go up there and say, here, we've got an unemployment situation in our area, and this is what we're going to do about it. Right now, it's just treated with a lot of awe, you know, they just say "Awww", their mouths wide open because they haven't got a clue what you're talking about.

JF: What would you want to do about it? If it did get changed around and they —

MB: And they'd say "Here's the money for it"? Well, they'd have to say, listen, you've got a good suggestion, if we back you what are you going to do? I'd say to them, well, *I'm* not going to do anything, but I'm going to get other people to do something. We're going to help other people to work.

Take the Youth Employment Agency. If they were to turn around to us, or we was to turn around and say to them, as I've said, that we can provide jobs, we can

get people to manage their own jobs, be their own bosses, give them the independence and give them an opportunity to practice their skills and market them, and leave the profits for themselves and the spin-off to the community is that it gets people off the streets into a job. And the community stablilises a bit more — becomes economically more viable.

We'd also want to see that the young people in the area are given an education which means something to them, which they can use to their advantage. They can't get that at the moment. It's a waste of fifteen years, whatever, it didn't do anything for me.

JK: How do you see power? Is a project like this about finding your own power?
MB: You've got to use what power you have. We don't have any power, even with people in the flats we don't have any power on as much.

But we do see the need for change, and we are exploring ways in which we can say to people, listen, this is the situation — how about this situation here? Would we accept this, would we live with this, rather than what we're living with now? That's the whole issue idea of community development, really. It's basically fucking change. It's not running summer projects. That is a part of it: that is a part of seeing change, it's part of being able to grow up in an area like this . . .

You see the need for change. The whole system is rotten, inside out. And it's because the thing is rotten that you've

Tony O'Shea

"Unemployment is 58% among . . . "

places like this. Such an accumulation and concentration of problems.

JF: What about when the summer ends?
MW: We're hoping to start a Welfare Rights timing going. I'm reading up on a lot of pamphlets and that at the moment. During the course as well I went out to Finglas, working with younger children, and I said I'd like to go back out there for a few weeks.

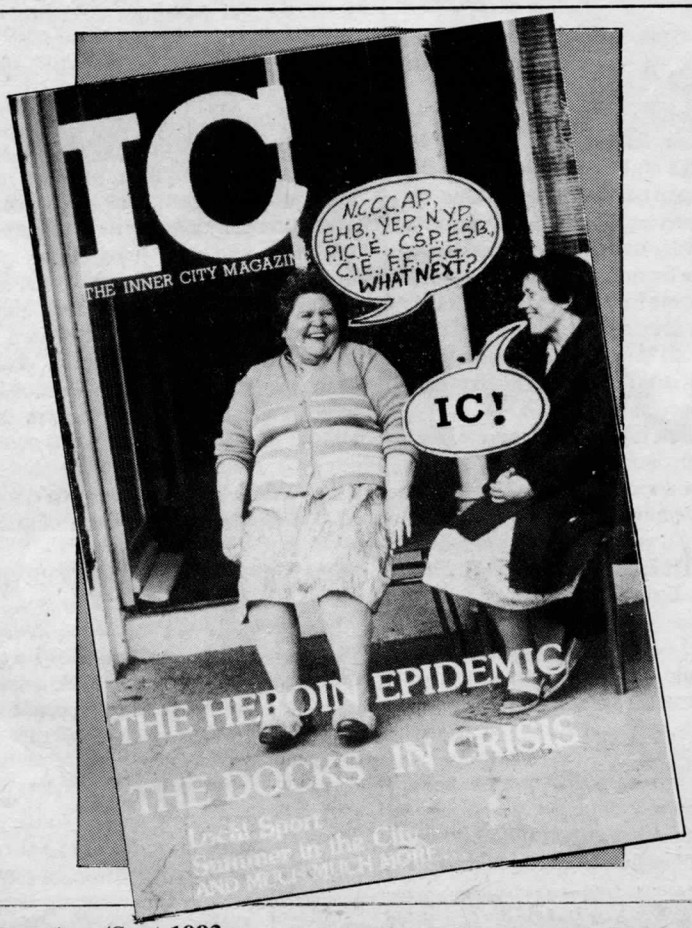
JK: Any comments on the local politicians?
MB: They've no real politics. I think they just like their name in lights.

JK: What about people like Cluskey, or the Workers' Party, or any of those? Are they any better?
MB: We had a two hour meeting with Cluskey in the Dail. He has politics if you ask me. What I call politics. I've my own definition of politics, and it's that it's for everybody. But the others — it's politicians for the politicians, and the rich. That's a real Workers' Party phrase: I don't know what your politics are, but I think the Workers' Party just blame the rich, and it's a whole mess up. It's more than that, more than just the rich and the poor.

JK: This is where the social thing is really happening.
MB: This is it. This *is* the society that they talk about so much, you know. This is the bum end of it. And a lot of them aren't prepared to let us talk about it, because they say, "right, we've got the whole thing."

It's just like what I'm saying about the media area, you can't use it to your own advantage. You have to use other means. Like with *Fighting Back*, we found that drama that time ws the correct medium to use.

We could go on all night, really . . .



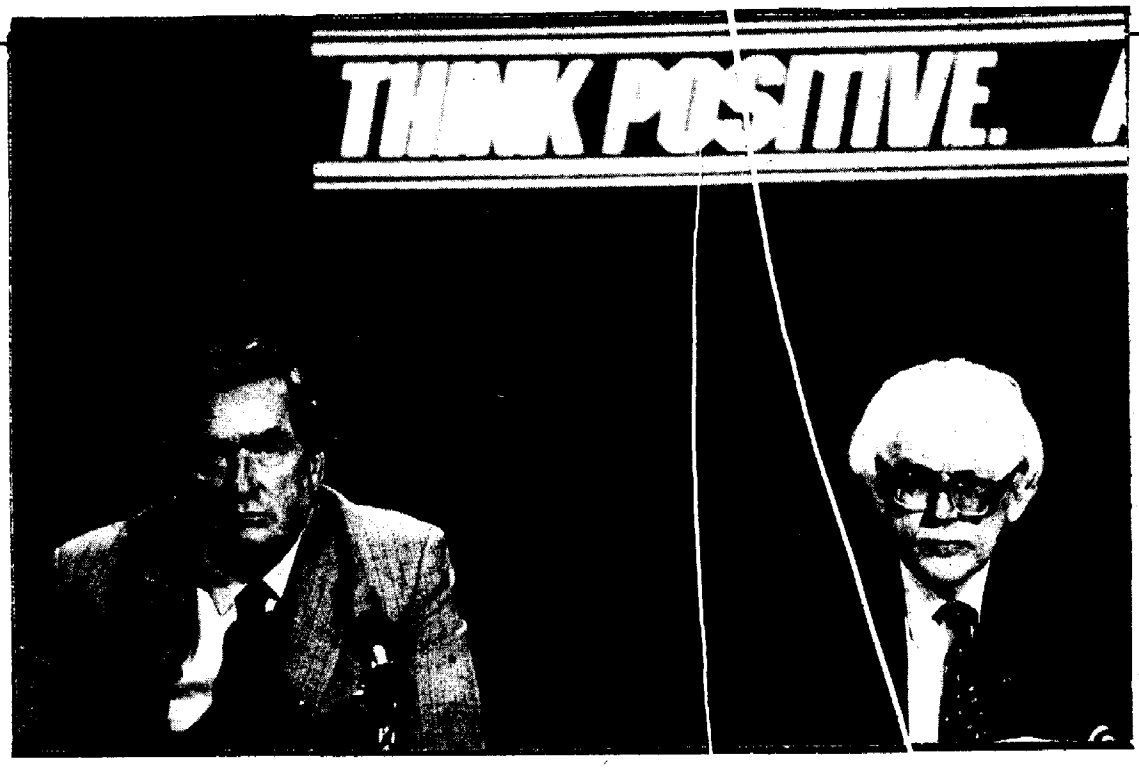
IC — PARDON?

No, I haven't got the hiccups. It's a new mag. IC — inner city, get it? Slow to-day, huh? It's produced by a bunch of people on the North side of the Liffey. They reckon that their area has been the victim of media misreporting — all the bad and none of the good news gets into the national press. So they have produced this cheap (in money terms) magazine so that the local people have their own means of communication. It looks good. Packed with gossipy pieces, photos and cartoons, but also with serious pieces and feature articles.

It doesn't set out to be political. But a magazine by and about working class people struggling to live in deprived areas like Dublin's inner city can't help but be political, with a small p.

The overall impression is a cheerful all-comers mag. The style will encourage local people to get involved — I hope they do.

So do you get it now? £0.30p, contact IC at 29 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1.



BRITAIN:
IN NEED OF AN ALTERNATIVE VISION

The massive victory of Thatcher's government has sent shock waves through the labour and radical movement in Ireland as well as in Britain itself. In this article from the British magazine *New Socialist*, STUART HALL, a professor of Sociology at the Open University, argues that the British Left needs an alternative vision as popular and as credible as that offered by the Right. Though written shortly before the election, nothing in this article, unfortunately, needs any amendment.

There are worrying signs about that the Labour movement is simply not willing to grasp, or incapable of grasping, the seriousness of the position into which it is steadily drifting. Crises are not reversed simply by thinking about them. But to recognise that they exist, and to try to analyse why they are occurring, is the first, essential requirement for overcoming them. Simply to deny their existence is to exhibit the political nous of the ostrich.

If such an appraisal is going on in the leadership or the active ranks of the labour movement at the moment, they are keeping it very dark indeed. So dark that those outside these circles who have been looking hard for some glimmer of light on the issue have failed to catch the illumination as it flashed by.

Perhaps I am a minority of one. But what I am hearing is the troubling noise of a great deal of whistling in the void. It is the solid affirmation, against all the evidence, that 'we can still win', 'things will turn our way,', 'unemployment is the key issue and that will deliver the vote to us' or, at best, 'we are going through a difficult patch, but Labour is going to form the next government'.

I would dearly like to know what the evidence is for any of those pious hopes. It doesn't please me to say so; but as Gramsci once observed, you must turn your face, violently, towards things as they really are. 'Things as they really are' is not just that Labour is losing ground in circumstances which ought to be favourable more seriously, it does not seem capable of getting its act together to form a credible alternative or to make an impact on the electorate. And without a major revival, there can, realistically, be no possibility of another Labour government this decade.

'Things' are not turning our way. The short-term electoral polls point the other way — and, in a situation of extreme political volatility, this is becoming a self-fulfilling, band-wagonning prophecy. It can, surely, only be because Roy Jenkins is already said to be a winner in the polls, that anyone can credibly believe him to be one!

Nevertheless, the electoral mould has been shaken by the 'unthinkable' Labour/SDP split; and the party's morale has, clearly, been deeply affected. Unfortunately, these short-term reversals only compound the long-term electoral trends, which have now been moving steadily against Labour, for some years, as shown in the erosion of its popular base and solid class character.

WINNING HEARTS AND MINDS

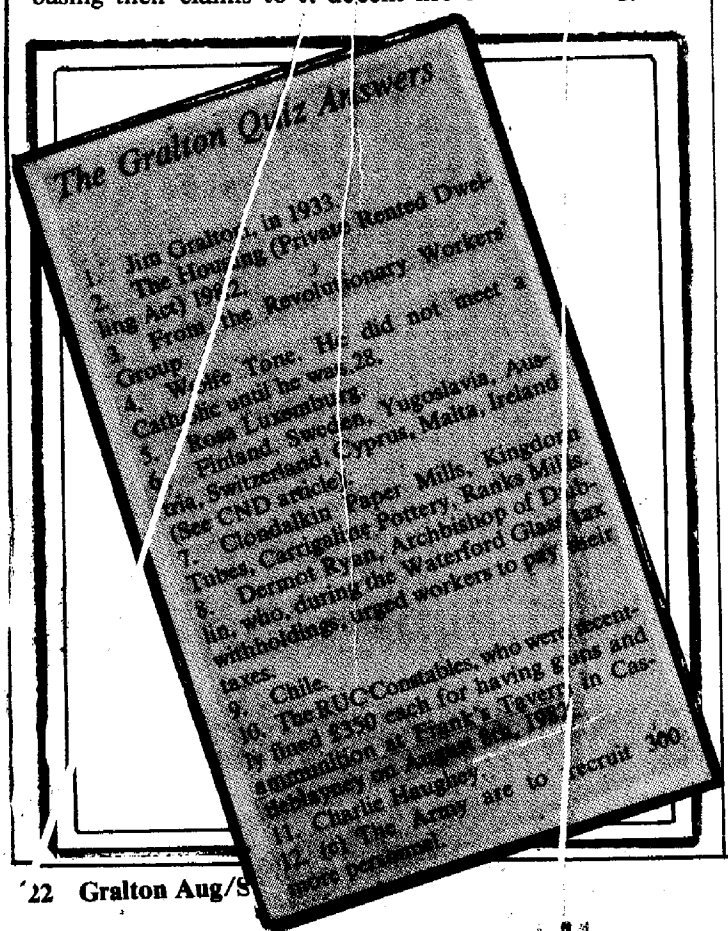
Unemployment is indeed the key issue. The problem is that very few people put the slightest faith in Labour's capacity to reverse the trend. On this, as on so many other questions, Mrs Thatcher has won the battle for hearts and minds; and those who command the definitions command the credibility.

A deep fatalism has therefore settled over the country: unemployment is the responsibility of 'world trends, outside our capacity to influence. The problem is that this ideologically motivated 'explanation' contains a tiny, rational core. Some part of unemployment is indeed the consequence of a deep, capitalist world recession. Some of it is also structural: located in the endemic structural weakness of the British economy, and in the restructuring of our economic base which is progressing — unevenly, as it always does under capitalism — at a very rapid rate under conditions of recession.

Of course, something can be done to reverse the trend of mass unemployment and deindustrialization. But, to be convincing, the short term measures have to be credible and concrete, and the long-term strategy has to acknowledge frankly the structural problems and address them.

Labour has so far done neither. 'Jobs' and 'more welfare' are the pious hopes to which the so-called 'Alternative Economic Strategy' has been brutally reduced — not only by the press but by Labour's spokespersons as well. When asked, 'What would you do instead?', the plain fact is that the reason why Mr Foot cannot complete any sentence on which he embarks is that nothing concrete whatsoever comes to mind.

In the long term, while microchips eat people's jobs, and word processors themselves show secretaries the way to the local dole office and miners are driven back to basing their claims to a decent life on the strategy of



mining pits until the sea begins to seep through the pit floor — Labour has nothing strategic to say. If they know there is a problem there, they're not telling . . .

In this climate of fatalism, a trace of the old recividism appears. 'If an economy is running into difficulties, best trust the people who own one . . .' That is the Tories, the bosses, those who still have a few jobs to hand out. So long as the sytem prevails, there is a sort of logic to saying that more jobs will depend on the revival of capitalist industry. That is the logic in which reformism is always caught.

In conditions of recession — in these terms — is bound to come to the fore as a determining factor in the actions of those who, as the phrase goes, have nothing to sell but their labour. What the historical evidence is for the belief that recession produces an automatic turn to the Left, I have still to discover. Fascism has emerged as often out of such circumstances as socialism. Neither is inevitable. It depends ultimately on how the struggle is conducted.

THATCHER'S TWO-PRONGED STRATEGY

There is a further problem about expecting unemployment to serve as an electoral conveyor belt. Labour's simple strategies run headlong into the brick wall of an ideological campaign which Thatcherism has already largely won. This is the belief that the only way to reduce unemployment is to increase public spending; but that this will inevitably lead to inflation.

We are trapped between the millstones of dislike of unemployment and fear of inflation. Thatcherism has effectively encapsulated all the economic alternatives within the terms of this brutal 'either/or'. It is part of a wider strategy, which it has also conducted with masterly effect. It has two prongs.

The first consists of convincing people that the nation has been living beyond its means, paying itself too much, expecting perks and benefits it can't afford, and indulging in all that consumption, permissiveness, and even pleasure. Very un-British! Expectations must be lowered! In that campaign, British masochism is a powerful recuit.

When the economy is not being represented as like the 'house hold budget' ('you can't buy more at the shops this week than you have in the kitty'') — then it is like the British weather. One good summer has to be paid for, in psychic currency, by at least five severe winters.

The second prong of the strategy is to disconnect, in the popular mind, the word 'public' from an association with anything that is good or positive; and to harness it instead to a chain of negative associations, which automatically connect it with everthing that is nasty, brutish, squalid and bureaucratic: and to exalt, in its place, the private market as the sole criterion of The Good Life.

This has been the strategic ideological project of the New Right. It consists, first, of the struggle to disorganize the Left: to interrupt the social-democratic consensus which has dominated and defined the political settlement between Left and Right since the war. Second, it aims to command popular conceptions of what is 'good for the country'; and third, to reverse every sign and signal pointing towards Leftish or social-democratic solutions, and move them in the opposite direction.

In 1945, it seemed that the only way to get less-well-off people decent health care was to break the circuit of

money and market in health, and establish a public form of provision. In 1983, the aim is to make it seem inevitable that the only decent health service people can get is that which they pay for themselves.

This is much more than eroding the welfare state — a thing not wholly unknown to Labour governments, (which may be why the gap in popular consciousness appeared in the first place). Nor is it simply 'dismantling' the welfare state — though, we can be sure, every time Mrs Thatcher reassures us that it is safe in her hand, she means that another branch is about to be lopped off.

It is also — as the Social Affairs Unit (Sir Keith Joseph's 'think tank') pamphlet put it: 'Breaking The Spell Of The Welfare State': dismantling it ideologically — as a constant reference point, taken-for-granted, inevitable fact of the political scene. The historical project of Thatcherism is to reconstruct and redefine the political terrain, to alter the balance of political forces and to create a new kind of popular common sense, in which the market, the private, possessive, competitive 'man' (sic) are the only ways to measure the future.

THEY REALLY DO BELIEVE IT

It would be quite wrong — as 'hard-headed' Labour people are frequently to be heard affirming — to think that all this is 'merely' ideological window dressing, or that the Tories don't really believe it. They believe in this — and in the kind of society which can be constructed in its image — profoundly. This is what Mrs Thatcher is 'conviction politician' about. Consider the light that gleams in Mr Tebbitt's eye — or even the light that has gone askew in Sir Keith Joseph's. It is the light of the Salvationists. They regard the catechism of capitalism, so tarnished and discredited among the young in the 1960's and 1970's, as the Sermon On The Mount. It is a creed to live by, to bring up children by: a faith which will move capitalist mountains: the salvation of the civilized world — the 'Free West'. For such things, Mr Heseltine is willing to commit nuclear suicide.

Why is it that the Labour movement neither understands this project, nor believes that it is happening, nor seems capable of confronting it? It is the political business on which Thatcherism has been engaged since 1975. When Sir Keith was set aside in the Tory Party leadership stakes, it was not a sign that this philosophical project was being moth-balled. It was a recognition that the test would be its capacity to become popular — to capture hearts and minds.

Mrs Thatcher clearly commanded the gift of translating this vision into the home-spun idioms of daily life better than her mentor. She had the populist touch. but the stake in the struggle remained — and remains — the popular will. The signs of its deep penetration into the very heartland of the labour movement is there fore she who runs to read. Why is Labour, then, politically illiterate about it?

One explanation is that Labour understands perfectly well, but is incapable of organizing a popular political and ideological struggle of this kind. There are some signs that this is so. It can mobilize the vote, provided it remains basically solid. But it shows less and less capacity to connect with popular feelings and sentiments, let alone transform them or articulate them to the Left. It gives the distinct impression of a political party living on the capital of past connections and successes, but

increasingly out of touch with what is going on in everyday life around it.

It has always been deeply suspicious of the self-activation of the working class. It is often the actual base for, but it is not the organizing centre of, local or national campaigns. It has become an electoral rather than a political machine. Extra-Parliamentary activity — politics and campaigning in any political space other than that directed to the House of Commons or within the space of the formal electoral system — produces in its leadership the deepest traumas and the most sycophantic poems of praise for parliamentarism.

It is precisely the confinement within the parliamentary mould and Labour's containment within a formal definition of 'the political' which has been its undoing. The more the issues which arouse popular feeling arise somewhat outside the direct terrain of local constituency politics, the more marginal the party appears, in terms of the real political process.

Besides, it does not possess the material means with which to wage this kind of popular political/ideological struggle. Of course, it has to operate on the public terrain where the media are either entirely colonized by the populist Right — like the popular press — or so solidly grounded in the taken-for-grantedness of right-wing,

neo-liberal assumptions that to start a conversation on radio or an interview on television from any other baseline is literally unthinkable.

But, even within the media as they currently exist, Labour commands no intellectual presence. It has never acquired a proper legitimacy. And that is partly because — apart from the handful of experts who advise its committees on policy matters — it cannot organize a core of 'organic intellectuals'. Until *New Socialist,* it had no organ primarily concerned with intellectual mobilisation and strategic analysis. This is astonishing for a party whose support amongst the non-commercial middle classes has, if anything (until the exit point provided them by the SDP), been more solid than in the working class.

There is no programme of political education in the labour movement, though there is a lot of useful education about the business of trade union bargaining and negotiation. When a programme of political education seems likely to arise, it must be a Trotskyist plot — which has to be decapitated at once, even if that involves dragging the party through the slime of hostile press coverage. As if the Labour Party could ever expel enough people or deny enough socialism to genuinely please the *Express!*

Of course, the picture is not as flat or as hopeless as I am painting it. But local constituency parties or areas and regions, where, in recent months, politics has returned to the agenda of debate, are the exception rather than the rule. Labour in general simply looks like a party which has never heard of the strategy of a 'war of position' — struggling for leadership and mastery over a whole number of different fronts, in the course of making itself the focal point of popular aspirations, the leading popular political force.

THE RADICALISM OF INERTIA

A more worrying possibility is that Labour does not believe such a struggle to be necessary. Anti-marxist as it is in its political culture, Labour is profoundly 'economistic' in outlook and ideology. It really does believe that economic facts transmit themselves directly into working class heads, without passing through the real world. Working class consciousness is as automatic as self-programming underground trains. Once Labour, always Labour.

The irony of a party committed to social change, whose roots in the populace depend on their inertia and habit, has not penetrated. This is often called, by Labour's leading lights, 'realism'. It is a kind of realism which seems to have escaped the voters of Bermondsey or the highly realistic miners, who have heard the cock crow thrice and each time refused to acknowledge that 'Arthur' was known to them. Automatism is certainly at an end — if ever it existed.

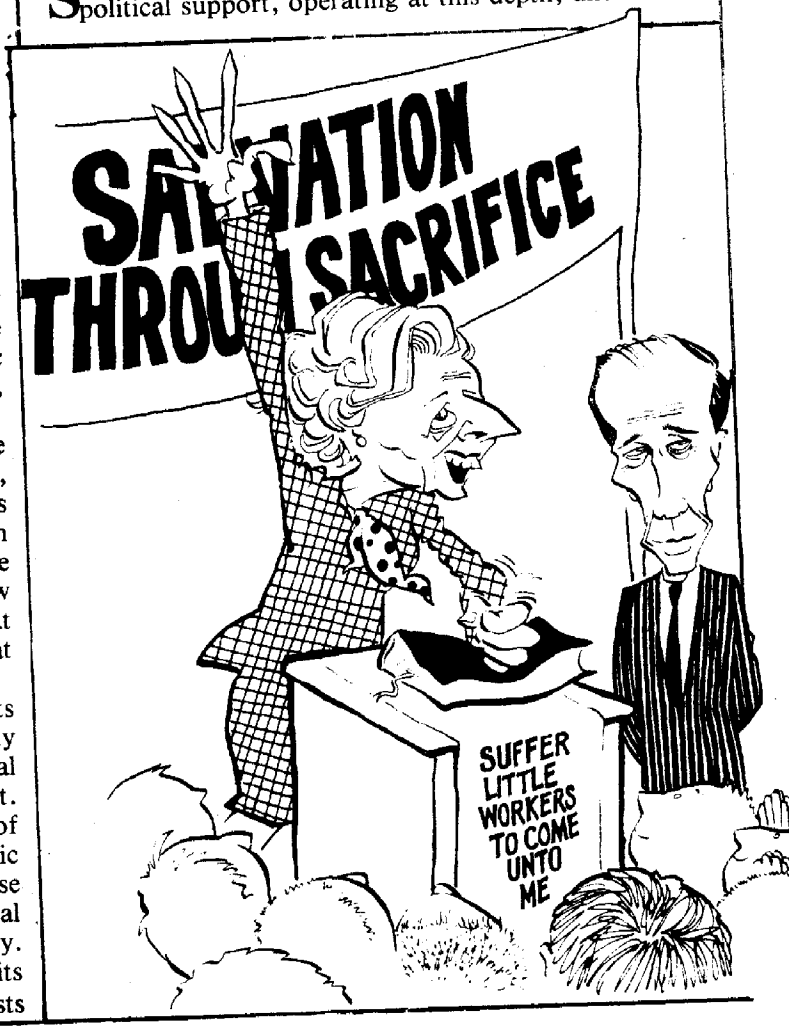
The deeper reason behind Labour's confidence in its own inevitability is that the structure of the party loyalty and political support is said to be grounded in the material circumstances of the class Labour claims to represent. 'The culture of the working class is the culture of Labour'. Is it? The consequences of uneven economic deindustrialization is bearing down directly on these traditional Labour communities, whether occupational ones like mining, or ecological ones like Bermondsey. The heartland of the Labour vote, the backbone of its traditional support, the traditionalist roots of its loyalists have been profoundly disaggregated.

The traditional vanguard sectors are also increasingly a dwindling proportion of the modern working class — though not for that reason insignificant or less important. The structure of support in urban areas, where Labour has traditionally amassed giant majorities, is changing both in scale and political character. Unemployment is savaging the given structure of skills; technical developments are fragmenting occupational communities. The age, gender, ethnic structure of the working class is changing rapidly and profoundly and — for the foreseeable future — permanently.

Changes of these kinds fragment the class culture of the party as a political formation. They give rise to new constituencies, new demands. They generate new tensions, demand new forms of organization. This is emphatically not to lend credence to idiotic prophecies that class is about to disappear. It is to insist that, under modern conditions, the class is in the process of a deep reconstruction. And this has undermined the social infrastructure of Labourist politics. One has only to think of the profound shift in the character of industrial conflict fromthe private to the public sector, and add to that the social composition and character of the class strata who, from this point of view, have represented the vanguard of the class in action against Thatcherism, to catch a glimpse of how out of date is the typical Labour view of the connections between party and class.

POLITICAL DEPTH CHARGES

Social and cultural changes in the infrastructure of political support, operating at this depth, under the



contradictory pressure — the 'dull compulsions' — of economic recession, present a new set of circumstances. They demand new conquests, not simply the stirring from slumber of old constituencies. The inevitablity of Labourism — its automatism — is now Labour's most serious blockage to establishng a hegemony in these conditions.

I am afraid it was clearly evident, in the terrible strategic defect which the miners suffered in March. To invite people in the tightest of economic squeezes to come out on strike when coal stocks are at record levels is to act, frankly, with the political nous of the leaders of the Charge of the Light Brigade. To imagine that people will sacrifice their livelihoods on the un-evidenced assurances of their leadership is to misread the relationship between leaders and troops and to misunderstand the rationality of working class action.

To expect that the defensive position — mine the pits to the bitter end — is enough on which to build a long-term alternative economic strategy, is profoundly to misread the current mood of the working class. Of course, the clear intention is indeed to savage and butcher the pits. Of course, politically, the Government means to break the organized strength of the unions. Of course the miners clearly perceive what is at issue. But to mistake the moment of 1983 for 1972 or 1974 is an unforgiveable error. Saltley Gates was a heroic moment: but there is no automatic button marked 'Destruct Mrs Thatcher'. To believe this is not to build on an understanding of the past, but to be transfixed by the past.

The miners were offered three reasons for voting for a strike: in memory of those who had built the union; for their families; and 'as men', who have a duty to stand up and fight. Glowing sentiments. And yet, in their backward trajectory, their familial and masculinist assumptions, those words fall on my ears as archaic. The cause is correct. The language is a dying one.

What is at stake here is no more and no less than 'the people'; the popular will. Stuck at the end of a strategy of 'social democracy from above' for so long, they are taking a terrible revenge on Labour. Decades of blocked votes, things sewn up in back rooms, deals done in compositing meetings, localities where Labour mafias have ruled the roost like small-time Borgias, a view of politics which depends on mobilizing the respectability rather than the radicalism of class consciousness, both exist, to be mobilized by different political forces), the engineering or hydraulic view of electoral politics — these have become deeply engrained in the culture of Labourism. But the times are changing.

As a consequence, Labour voters are nodding at the canvassers when the knock on the door comes: but slipping, sliding, eroding, drifting into unchartered paths as soon as they go away, and they meet and talk in the pub, on the job, in families, with mates, hanging out the washing, calculating the pennies, and the kids' chnaces in a micro-chip world of permanent unemployment. Are they really recidivist Tories at heart? No. Are they Labour's automatic electoral fodder? Don't put your money on it.

Can they be won to a vision — not simply a programme — of the future? Here there is something to learn from Thatcherism. Pardoxically, she does raise hearts and minds an inch or two because, vile, corrupt, awful as her vision of the future is, we know what it is. We can imagine what life according to the gospel of free enterprise, patriarchal respectability and authoritarian order would be like. We know how we could be expected to bring up our children, make them manage their pocket money, how women should live, who should have babies, under what circumstances, how teachers in our classrooms should dress and what lessons are to be read in the RE hour — as well as what the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement should be. It is an 'alternative future'. It is a philosophy of life'.

The one thing nobody knows is what Labour conceives to be an 'alternative way of life'. It currently possesses no image of the future. It provides no picture of life under socialism.

It has failed to construct an alterantive 'philosophy' of socialism for modern times. In its profound empiricism, it has mistaken adaptation to the present as progress towards the future. In fact, realistically, Labour can never adapt enough to become the 'natural inheritor' of capitalism. It has no alternative but to renew itself and its vision — or to go out of business. Whether it is capable of that renewal or not is an open question, now, for many of us. And, if it can't, we had better batten down our hatches, for, as Bette Davies once said in a memorable old movie, 'it's going to be a bumpy evening'.

NEW DEPARTURES FOR SINN FEIN ?

Sinn Féin's recent election success in Northern Ireland have focussed attention on the Provisionals' new turn to political activity at local level. There have been parallel developments in the organisation in the 26 Counties. *Gralton* spoke to PADDY BOLGER, Ard Comhairle member and National Organiser, with special responsibility for Dublin, about the changed perspective.

GRALTON: We have heard a lot about Sinn Féin's more serious invovlement in constituency work in the North. Is there something similar happening in the 26 Counties? Are you now planning for the local and European elections next year?

BOLGER: There have been major developments in our political appreciation of the situation in the country over the last few years. The basis of this is the realisation that military action and political action purely in support of that were not sufficient, to build a base even for national liberation and the realisation that sloganising about socialism and relating it to a vision of a better future and to some magical formula which would work itself out when the British withdrew, were not a sound basis on which to build a conscious mass movement.

The developments that have taken place in the movement are general, and not confined to the North. A lot is due to the fact that the people who were young activists in the early 1970s, some of them in the late 1960s, have by a natural progression moved into more prominent positions. For the first time in decades, republicans have had the opportunity through this long struggle, on a sound minimum basis, to develop our politics not abstractly but in experience.

GRALTON: Was that a difficult process? Did you have difficulties in dealing with the traditions, and maybe even a certain traditionalism in the organisation?

BOLGER: It was more of a gradual process than a difficult one. In the early 1970s there was a definite belief, supported by some of the circumstances, that a short quick push would secure a withdrawal. The fall of Stormont was one of the major factors to influence that kind of thinking. After the Loyalist workers' strike and the period of the cease-fire with the British, we saw that the British were not going to go and that the idea that they wanted to go and were simply looking for a way out was a false one.

We also saw that it was going to be a long process. Some people realised it in prison, other people realised it in their daily activity. We had to have a long-term strategy for political consolidation of the organisation. It was only when the movement in the North got over the effects of the Mason repression that we were cohesive enough to come up with that kind of strategy. The broad front around the prison issue and the hunger strike was a fruit of that.

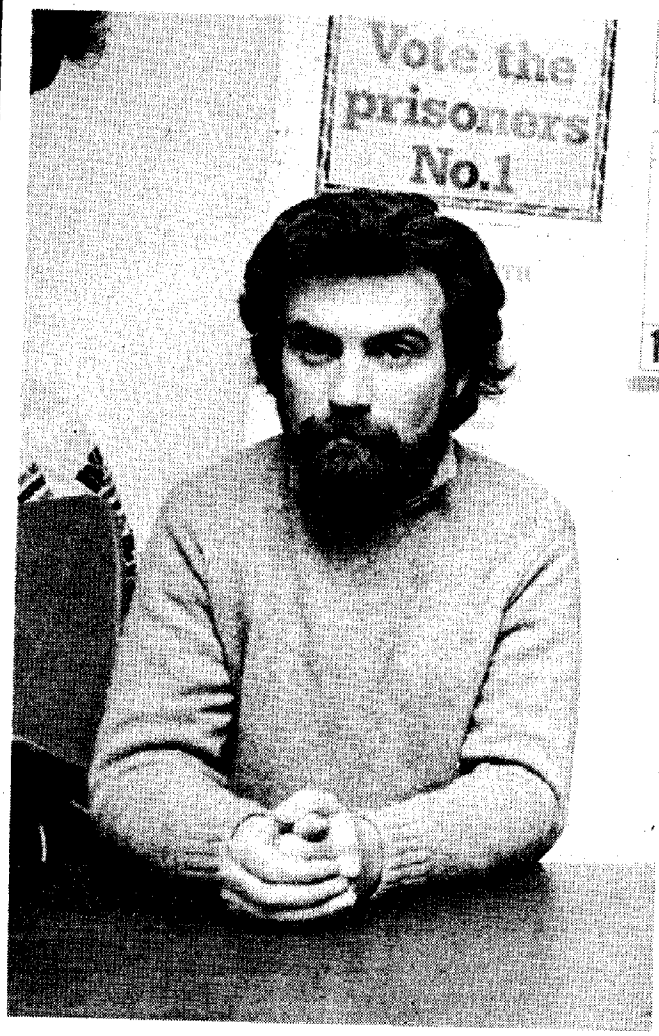
Some people were suspicious of what they saw to be political work. The movement has always had two extremes in the past — the constitutional extreme which ran away from radicalism of any description and tended to be strictly parliamentary and the military extreme which said: Keep your powder dry until the day you can rise and the opportunity presents itself. The second of them may have been more legitimate in terms of anti-imperialism but in the end was still based on short-term activity only.

GRALTON: Do you think the memory of what has happened the Officials in the late 1960s was in some people's minds as well?

BOLGER: Some people went further back than that, even, and looked at Fianna Fáil. But the gradual development — and it could be called that, rather than a dramatic change — took several years, through a process of debate and education. The people who were dubious about these moves were quite sincere in their doubts. But there has been an acceptance at the last few Ard Fheiseanna that the strategy that had been unfolding is correct and what's wrong with people who go into Leinster House and betray and what's wrong with politicians who renege even on the partition question, not to mention armed action against the British, is that their ideology was bad before their tactics were bad. What was wrong with the Officials, for instance, was that they wanted to reform the Six Counties.

Our attitude is that as long as our basic republicanism is not diluted we have no reason to fear for the future. The new outlook is accepted throughout the organisation. It's not just a question of a few radicals in Belfast holding these views.

GRALTON: What has been happening within the organisation in the South, precisely to overcome this



Derek Speirs (Report)

Paddy Bolger

notion that the Provisionals' new radicalism is a Northern phenomenon?

BOLGER: We have two problems in the South; firstly, we do not have the mass community base that exists in the Six Counties for all the obvious historic reasons and for some political reasons. We are significant for the public's eye in relation to Northern events. So, we are going through a major internal re-organisation to switch from mainly propaganda activity in relation to the North to structuring the movement in order to face local issues and political issues in the South. We now have a much more developed education programme to motivate our members.

We recognise that the political parties we are opposing don't just fool the people at election time. They actually have a real domination for instance of tenants' organisations (Fianna Fáil ideology, in particular, dominates the individual members). Our first task down here is to improve the public's perception of us, first of all by refining our policies and bringing them down to earth, and secondly, by the hard slog of local organisation and by principled work on issues convincing people that our analysis is correct.

Having broken through on that basis, we would want to make the Northern issue count, less on the basis of moral condemnation, of those who have ignored it, but by saying particularly to Fianna Fáil voters: the party's policies have not worked, the hope for British goodwill is misplaced. We have not changed our basic position but we have amended our approach for putting it to the people.

GRALTON: You refer to "the public" and to "the people". Do you have within the 3½ million population strategic targets you are trying to reach?

BOLGER: We have two objectives. The principle one is to secure a British withdrawal, and bring about a situation where self-determination can be asserted. In that area, we address ourselves to everybody in the 26 Counties, saying that the Six Country state is irreformable and that the policy of compromise with the Loyalists not only is not accepted by the Loyalists, but has failed, as history has proven.

We also have a social objective and in terms of our social policies, we would be much more specific. We are aiming at the working class base and at the small farming base. We have in a strip along the Border and down through the west, a reasonable local government base in the real small farming community. That is likely to be sustained. Our main breakthrough, we believe, must be in Dublin and Cork.

The middle class in the 26 Counties is affected by factionism. The professional middle class veers between Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael depending on whether the national question is a major issue at the time. And we address ourselves to them on the national question, on civil liberties and on the general issue of economic sovereignty.

The rest of that class is probably at this stage, through the development of Fine Gael, committed to anti-national and, currently, monetarist positions. But there are sections of the people who could not be described as working class or small farmer who would not be reactionary on economic issues. Fianna Fáil have, through mild social democratic policies, maintained that broad constituency of working class, petit bourgeois and small farming support. That is the base that we would be aiming at as well, primarily because they are the people who need to be given a project for a political and economic independence, with a socialist programme — not an ultra-Left programme, but a thoughtful socialist programme with a long-term objective.

GRALTON: How would you measure success for this strategy a year from now? Given that it is long-term, what would be a reasonable aspiration in your view?

BOLGER: The aspirations are internal as well as external. We would hope in Dublin to be well organised in every local government constituency and we are organising at the moment on that basis. We are already organised reasonably well at cumann level in about two thirds of Dublin, city and county, a couple of corporation seats in Dublin and Cork we would see as a major step forward.

We don't expect to make a great big splash because of the hegemony of the other parties. We see the Workers' Party as a problem but not a major blockage. Working class support for Fianna Fáil on the national question and trade union acceptance still of Fianna Fáil's project fo the economy are our major problems.

GRALTON: Do you not recognise that this concern for

electoral achievement imposes certain patterns of work and obligations to engage in service politics? Is that a price you reckon you have to pay?

BOLGER: The problem that the Left here and throughout Europe has to face is that in a non-revolutionary situation — and that's what we have in the 26 Counties — you can't always advance as far along the lines of your programme as you would like. We are very conscious of the dangers of slipping into reformism. At the moment, we are providing in Dublin what could be called a clientelist service. It is better and more principled than the service which the other parties are providing, including the Workers' Party. We see this simply as a means of establishing our presence and our credibility in the areas. People are extremely cynical of all parties.

We do not believe that revolutionary sloganising, however correct its content, will produce results. We are now building up our organisation to get ourselves accepted as a credible and locally informed organisation. But we see that only as the basis to build up agitational politics. We would also hope to build a base for propaganda work, through publications, seminars and surveys at 26-County level.

Our education programme is geared to preventing an influx of new members who don't have a definite ideology but might be attracted to us because of the Northern successes. We want to prevent such an influx blunting our revolutionary edge. But we have no fantasies about the possibilities for red revolution in the 26 Counties. We know it's a hard slog. The clientelist work is principled service. People are in need and even if we only provide a better service than the rest we will be accomplishing something. We need to develop, as the major left parties in Europe have done, an alternative constituency, a body of the working class who just don't accept the strategy that the other parties offer.

GRALTON: Do you find in your service work when acting as intermediaries between the consumers and the state or the local bureaucracy, you get a response as Sinn Féin?

BOLGER: Certainly in Dublin Corporation we haven't experienced any prejudice from the administrative people. A lot of them are very helpful. Even at this low level of servicing they recognise that there is a real concern. The average TD will deal with problems by correspondence whereas we have two full time people working with Christy Burke in the No. 6 electoral area who actually go to the Corporation every morning and work through the files with the Corporation people. We certainly have credibility with them.

We have been very successful in housing matters, particularly with transfers. The Labour Party and the Workers' Party won't deal with such cases because they are transferring votes out. We have a woman working in Ballymun area part-time who is likely to be the candidate there, but she is handling transfers out of the constituency. We also involve the community in the work we are doing. We have advisors invited on to tenants' associations in three city centre areas.

GRALTON: How do you choose issues at local or regional or national level for your involvement? The issues volunteer themselves in the service work but how do you decide to commit resources to an industrial issue or a political issue?

Gerry Adams, post-election speech

Derek Speirs (Report)

BOLGER: We have a general policy mapped out by the Ard Comhairle. So, in the industrial sphere, we are opposed to closures and in favour of occupations to prevent them. We have always been opposed to centralised wage bargaining. Strike action is spontaneous and specific — often not very different in structure from the kind of problem we get in the clientelist work — and our members have directions to support that kind of action. They do it not as a political intervention, but in support of the workers' own demands.

GRALTON: Let's take Rank's as an example. You are heavily involved there. How did that arise and what's Sinn Féin hoping to achieve through its involvement?

BOLGER: The situation there is that the workers had a high level of consciousness about the state of the industry. They were politically fairly advanced already. They were isolated at the start of the dispute and some of them turned to us. We did not get involved politically. We didn't want to get them a bad name, as you might say. But we did provide the service of a phone, stationery and contacts with journalists and trade unionists who might assist.

Our attitude is that we did not intervene. The workers asked us to become involved. We didn't inititate any policy decisions they took. We're very pleased from our own political position to see how they have responded, especially in their manifesto (published in *Gralton* no 7) which is one of the best pieces of trade union commentary which we have seen for years.

We didn't believe that a party can intervene in a strike if

the workers themselves haven't decided on a line of action. We're the only grouping on the Left which has a substantial base which gave Ranks' workers any help. We would have preferred if the trade union movement had given them more active support.

GRALTON: Were you influenced at all by the fact that Ranks is a multi-national and that there was an implicit issue of sovereignty in the dispute? Would your response have been the same if it had been a local company?
BOLGER: Local companies don't exist on the same scale, at least not with the same relationship to distribution and to imports and exports. I think our response would have been the same if it had been an Irish-owned company. Ranks symbolises what is wrong with the economic strategy in the 26 Counties and there are political lessons to be learned from the dispute. What's happening there is an indication of the insecurity of the current economic structures, with foreign companies being invited in with bigger concessions than they would get over in Sri Lanka or Mexico and without any concept of state planning in relation to them. We're opposed to multi-nationals in principle as a pattern of development, because of their threat to sovereignty. Even in a purely capitalist sense they have nothing to offer in terms of economic development.

But we should be careful not to exaggerate our role in this area. We have a lot of militants who are republican in their political work and republican in their trade union work. They're not zany, but are as thoughtful as any decent trade unionist. They introduce the republican questions when it's appropriate and when the opposition doesn't block it. They're now getting some general direction from the organisation. But our work as Sinn Féin is still largely limited to individual, specific actions, for instance in support of strikes. We believe that industrial work is not of itself enough to change working class consciousness. We have to carry out the local work as well.

GRALTON: You referred earlier to the need to take steps to prevent the rapid influx of people with political expectations you couldn't meet, perhaps looking for some instant success. Has Sinn Féin had a problem with the turnover of members since those periods, notably during the hunger strike, when it was the focus for young people in Dublin who were looking for action? Are you now consciously looking for a different kind of recruit?
BOLGER: Particularly after Francis Hughes died on hunger strike there were a lot of young people, particularly from the poorer districts of Dublin, coming on to the demonstrations. Most of them accepted the republican position about keeping the demonstrations peaceful, about keeping militancy controlled. Most of them then went away again when the hunger strike ended. It wasn't all that different from the North, except that up there we have been able to give that support a political focus. Because of our dominance in so many areas turn it into the beginnings of a mass political movement.

The problem in the South is that we haven't been able to provide that focus. A lot of young people who did join the campaign as activists, and not just for the demonstration, were driven away by the police. We suffer greatly from police harassment. Most of the people we have now as activists are essential activists, the same people as we had in 1977 who weren't scared away by the repression under the Coalition government. Many of the H-Block action groups which might have developed into Sinn Féin cumainn — and that would have been a natural progression — were broken up by police action. Since the successes in the North and since the realisation that we might become a serious political force down here, some of the best of those people have started to come back. We're quite convinced that if we could make ourselves credible electorally — well, at least initially, electorally — a lot of the support the hunger strike had in Dublin would come to us. The next local government elections are our immediate target in that regard.

Derek Speirs (Report)

. . . and the armalite.

GRALTON: Are you consciously grooming candidates at this stage, a year ahead of the earliest possible date for the local elections?
BOLGER: All of the candidates we'll be running in Dublin have been selected locally. They haven't yet been ratified by the Dublin Comhairle Ceanntair but that's really a formality, as it would be a formality at Ard Comhairle level. We have six advice centres, one of which is full-time. We're currently buying caravans which would be mobile advice centres. We have already earmarked eight definite areas in Dublin that we'll run in.

We haven't ruled out running in more, or in all, if organisational improvement allow.

GRALTON: What we've talked about so far is a strategy for building Sinn Féin as a party. But in relation to issues in which other organisations come into play, do you have any guiding strategy in co-operation with these? How do you decide on your possible involvement in such campaigns as the anti-amendment movement and the Nicky Kelly defence campaign?

BOLGER: We don't only work with those who agree with us on the North, or who share our view of economic and industrial questions. In the Nicky Kelly campaign, for instance, most of the best activists were our members or very immediate supporters. We are opposed to the constitutional amendment but, as much for organisational reasons as any other, we didn't throw ourselves into the campaign. We're not sure what we might have contributed anyway because of the line-up of forces in that very broad campaign.

But we have no objection in principle to taking part in a campaign, say, on divorce or on contraception or on housing in Dublin or on taxation. We do not have an exclusivist position. We might have been guilty of this in the past. But we do not believe that single-issue campaigns are the basis for building a revolutionary organisation. You must build on your politics.

GRALTON: You say you aim to be less exclusive than you may have been in the past. Are you at all embarrassed by what happened Declan Bree at the Mullaghmore rally? It's safe to assume that the people who heckled him were supporters, if not members, of the republican movement.
BOLGER: It was the media which turned the Mullaghmore rally into "an event". The problem with Declan Bree is that there is a lot of local resentment against the fact that he ran against Joe McDonnell, the hunger striker, in 1981. Bree's vote was very close to the margin by which McDonnell lost. There's a residue of bitterness about that. He knew the platform he was on and he should have anticipated the response he would get for the remarks he made about the armed struggle. But he is entitled so to say what he said, even if we don't necessarily agree with it.

GRALTON: Do you believe that it will be necessary to establish more clearly in the minds of members that part of the price of a higher political profile is having to accept criticisms from people with whom you are also co-operating?
BOLGER: People will have to realise that hitting the opposition, or even the slightly friendly middle ground, over the head with a hammer. Only by convincing people that our policies are thoughtful will we advance. Stridency is no replacement for sound argument. A lot of us are turned off by pub republicanism, in which is generally not indulged in by our own activists but by people who become patriots in drink. We're quite determined that we're not going to go hammer-headed at people. What we're concerned to do is on the one hand, build a general attitude in the 26 Counties that the British have to withdraw and, on the other, work with other progressive forces, without immersing ourselves, to build up an alternative socialist idoelogy among the people.

THE FIANNA FAIL STORY

THE RISE AND DECLINEOF FIANNA FAIL. Kevin Boland. Mercier. £3.30.
SEAN LEMASS AND THE MAKING OF MODERN IRELAND. Paul Bew and Henry Patterson. Gill & Macmillan. £15.00.

The analysis of the role of Fianna Fáil, and the associated necessary synthesis of a replacement with a stronger Socialist component, capable of taking the Irish revolution a stage further, has been the primary task of the Left since the '30s. The comprehensive and consistent failure of the Irish Left to address this task (for which the present writer must take his share of the blame) requires explanation, but this is another day's work. Into the ensuing theoretical vacuum, however, have come two books which, while not fulfilling the needs may provide stimulus and raw material for those who are perceptive enough to understand that this task is still at the top of the political agenda.

The Rise and Decline of Fianna Fáil by Kevin Boland gives a useful insider's view, while *Sean Lemass and the Makings of Modern Ireland* by Paul Bew and Henry Patterson is a scholarly collaboration between Queens and the Ulster Polytechnic which consciously takes a detached, outsider's ("two-nationist") view. There is a danger that the latter may be taken as a Marxist analysis, on the superficial ground that Paul Bew has contributed to the London magazine, *Marxism Today*, on Irish topics. It is anything but.

Kevin Boland, an unrepentant thirties Fianna Fáil man, makes a creditable attempt to chronicle how the rot set in. The 26th anniversary of Fianna Fáil (1951) was held with fanfares in the Capital Theatre, an oration from de Valera and publication of a souvenir brochure outlining the triumphal history: ". . . a record that enabled every member to see himself or herself in the gallant company of our heroic dead who had striven over the centuries to free Ireland from the tyrannical grip of the foreign enemy". Boland, with a nice sense of irony, contrasts the 1976 situation. A prestigious historian, T.P. O'Neill of UCG, Dev's biographer, was appointed in 1974 to produce for 1976 the history of the first 50 years of Fianna Fáil. It has, however, not yet appeared. T.P. O'Neill in an interview on *Feach* subsequently denied that he was writing it; he was to edit the contributions of others: ". . . even at this early stage there were problems arising for his professional integrity as a historian:". Yet no dogs barked. There appeared to be a cover-up: ". . . a rigid decision by media controllers that the unsavoury matter safely and efficiently swept under the carpet in 1970 was to stay there undisturbed . . . the loyal Fianna Fáil households . . . proud owners of the story of the first 25 years, have no corresponding record of the second twenty-five"

The 1970 events, of course, were those at the root of the Haughey-Blaney-Boland "Arms Crisis". The neglect of the North by Jack Lynch's (and indeed all previous) Governments, and their insensitivity to the issues raised by the Civil Rights movement, had produced an opportunity for a regenerative ". . . Caucus which insisted that this *was* our business,

Derek Speirs (Report)

Derek Speirs (Report)

Backroom boys and floppy-disks

the momement of truth for the Fianna Fáil party . . ." The elimination of the Caucus by Jack Lynch (on a tip-off originating from British Intelligence, which monitors all shipments of arms into Ireland, legal or illegal) laid the basis for what Boland calls "Mark II Fianna Fáil" which deploys ". . . with ever-increasing efficiency the full resources of our security forces along the border imposed by the foreign enemy, where they act on our behalf in concert with Her Majesty's army to defend the integrity of Her Majesty's realm . . . the case for the ending of the Union . . . has been officially withdrawn by the Mark II Government . . . (replaced by) . . . the policy of Cumann na nGaedheal, the one-time government under contract with the enemy to maintain his overlordship"

The roots of this betrayal go back to the Lemass period, and indeed to the de Valera period, and are there to be seen in the Bew-Patterson analysis. Boland, being the active politician concerned primarily with the shop-window of the political process does not detect them until they have thrived and blossomed. He has, however, enough gut-feeling to recognise and reject them: "the necessary measures to save our economy would be in breach of the EEC laws, framed as they are specifically and totally for the well-being of the unscrupulous capitalist proprietors of Europe . . . it is illegal to have the only realistic type of Buy Irish campaign possible . . . appeal to the patriotism of the supermarket-owners? We want our collective head examined"

Boland represents a high-point of Fianna Fáil radicalism; he has remained consistently pointing in the right directions: against British imperialism and the neo-Unionism of the Common Marketeers. The Left, however, have always found him unpalatable, mostly because he explicitly despises them: ". . . tiny minorities opposed to all our traditions".

If an Irish Left were to emerge with growth potential and with a creative respect for the democratic republican core of our national and social revolutionary traditions, Boland and his like would end up as respected fellow-travellers, bringing with them what remains of the grass-roots Fianna Fáil radical-democracy. In the absence of such a Left, Boland remains an isolated, and somewhat embittered, maverick.

The Bew-Patterson analysis traces the roots of the decline of Fianna Fáil back into the depths of Boland's "Belle Epoque", specifically to the backtracking on agrarian policy: ". . . I think it is a mistake to give land to landless men" (Sean Moylan, Minister for Lands, April 1946); also to the participation in the Marshall Plan (1947). The treatment of the transition period leading up to the conscious abandonment of protectionism in 1958, with the First Programme and its associated welcome to penetration by the transnational corporations (TNCs), however suffers from its view being restricted to the vision of the prominent Establishment analysis of the time. There *was* analysis, of a sort, going on in the Fifties, without academic specialist resources, by the present writer and others. We identified the key weakness of Fianna Fáil '30s radicalism as failure to achieve an independent Irish financial system, with the consequent inability to control the movement of capital. During the pre-1958 priod of investment-starvation, Ireland (North and South) was a net *exporter* of capital. The Irish rentier-bourgeoisie preferred to deal on the London stock-exchange.

We identified Partition as the main obstacle to the achievement of this important step in the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, contrasting the Irish scene with other relatively successful bourgeois democracies such as Denmark or Norway. The copper-fastening of Partition by declaring an independent 26-county Punt in the '30s, '40s or '50s was politically unthinkable. It is ironical that this has since been achieved, in a manner of speaking, within the greater EEC straitjacket, when the ability to use the financial system in the control process has been abandoned. However, for Bew and Patterson to admit arguments like this into the analysis of the '50s would be for them to invoke what at all costs must be suppressed: the national question, the whole of Ireland as the natural political and economic unit.

Indeed, the Bew-Patterson concept of imperialism is curiously eclectic: "(either) a malign force deliberately generating under-development in dependent States . . (or) a progressive force which tends to develop productive forces on a world scale". They complain that there is little detailed discussion of specific cases based on any reliable documentation: I suspect that this is an artefact of the English-dominated academic system; most analysis of imperialism is in the literatures of the anti-imperialist movements. Having said this, they go on to document the Anglo-Irish negotiations of 1947 in such a way as to conclude that neither model of imperialism holds in the Irish case. This is just not good enough, especially when at the end of the day one is left with the impression that the "main enemy" is the protectionist Irish bourgeoisie, feeding a common fallacy of the contemporary Irish Left.

As regards Lemass himself, the impression comes over of someone with a good radical position trapped in a system over which he has no control. To gain control would, however, mean unleashing forces which would tamper with property rights. This Lemass himself would (in 1945) have been prepared to do: ". . . the rights of owners should not include the right to allow land to go derelict . . . "

There is a quote from Kevin Boland's *Up Dev* which sums up pithily the role of the Irish bourgeoisie: ". . . Mr Lemass did make an effort to get . . . investment . . . but he found that patriotism was in short supply . . . the highest . . . aspiration was to win or breed a winner of the Derby . . . for the glory of old Ireland". In the period leading up to the repeal of the Control of Manufacturers Act (CMA) Lemass continued to defend the principles behind the Act but was unable to stem the tide of tendentious advice from economic pundits which promoted "good management, technical knowledge and capital all at once from the subsidiaries of big foreign companies" (Charles Carter, QUB, 1957).

Because the contemporary pundits quoted by Bew and Patterson were themselves unaware of the extent to which Irish emigré scientists and technologists were fuelling the R&D systems of the TNCs, the authors managed to avoid exposing this important national myopia. (Irish geologists who could have told Irish governments of the effects of tax-holidays on mining concessions were themselves working for the foreign mining companies, etc). Nor do they query the conventional wisdom, implicit in all their sources, that the right of Irish men of property to invest abroad is untouchable.

On the whole this is an unsatisfactory analysis of the period, unlikely to fuel the necessary synthesis of the national-democratic and socialist forces. It should, however, be bought and read for the partial insights it gives; perhaps it will stimulate a response from some marxist academic who understands what imperialism is all about and has some feel for the complexities of the Irish national question, if there be any such who has managed to survive with integrity the academic brain-washing machine.

ROY JOHNSTON

Books

Alice Walker

FROGS LEGS

THE COLOR PURPLE. Alice Walker. The Women's Press. £3.95 (UK).

Take off the pants, I say, and men look like frogs to me. No matter how you kiss 'em, as far as I'm concerned, frogs is what they stay.

A black woman in the American south is multiply oppressed: as a woman, as a black, as a member of the working class (if she's lucky), and, even, as a Southerner. Black American culture bears the burden of colonialism in its economic relation to white society, yet it is an essential part of American culture as a whole. Rather than constituting a mirror image of the white patriarchy, black society has worked out a different set of relations between men and women, specific to the economic relations within the community and in relation to the dominant social structure. *The Color Purple* brings these relations to life, demonstrating both the solidarity of women in these circumstances and the ambivalent position of men in the world defined by the book's leading character.

Celie, when we first meet her, is fourteen years old. She has just been raped by her father, and, having no-one else to turn to, begins a diary addressed to God. Gradually we realise her situation: living in the rural Deep South, her mother dead not long after the birth of Celie's first child, whle she is pregnant with a second. The father, we are told, kills the first but sells the second to a couple in another town. Not long afterwards, a Mr. —— comes to the house, looking to marry Celie's sister Nettie, who could, he figures, take care of his children following the death of his own wife.

The father won't hear of the, however, and insists that Mr. —— take Celie instead. Eventually he does: Celie has no choice in the matter. Netie comes to stay with them for a while, but soon disappears.

The turning point in the story is the appearance of Shug Avery, the notorious singer from the community who had made good elsewhere and who is also the former lover of Mr. ——. It is through Shug that Celie begins to gain a sense of self-awareness and hope, and the love that develops between these two women becomes the pivotal emotion in the story.

As years go by, we get to know not only Celie and Shug, but an entire community of relatives, friends, lovers, children and others. Nettie turns up in Africa with a black missionary family, and the book continues by interposing Celie's diary with letters to and from Nettie. In the end, it is not only the love between women which we experience, but the love of one's own people and community, and a greater sense of human strength and weakness.

The Color Purple is well-written, vivid in characterisation and compelling in its development. Its cultural setting (American between the world wars) and language (black American English) may be a bit obscure to some Irish readers, but this language has an eloquence not to be missed. The book is flawed by an adherence to literary conventions (mistaken identities, coincidences which are central to the plot, the sudden inheritance of money, etc.) which diminish its originality and strength. I found the ending a bit too sweet, avoiding the conflicts which we know still exist. The voice of Celie doesn't always age in proportion to the chronology of the story, nor am I entirely comfortable with the opposition between Nettie's letters and those of Celie. Nevertheless, *The Color Purple* is well worth reading and, once read, is not easily forgotten.

JEFF KALLEN

THE PHILOSOPHY OF PRACTICE

THE REVOLUTIONARY IDEAS OF MARX. Alex Calliniscos. Book Marks Publishing Co-operative. £3.95 sterling.

If every contemporary book on Marxism was so kind as to admit its party bias on the first page it could save readers and reviewers much irkso me decoding. Armed with the information that I would be reading a well-infored SWP position by an honest author, I also received a cogent introduction to the history of socialist philosophy, and most importantly, the concept of the dialectic which is excellently explained in this book, if not always well-employed. Callinicos lucidly points out that Marxism is not a dogma but a tool for ongoing political process, yet pitiably seems to think the productivity of theoretical debate ended with the Bolshevik Revolution.

Callinicos is humane and forgiving when it comes to the Utopian Socialists. Consequently the chapters leading up to Marx's development of dialectical materialism are credible in presenting the complexity and age of socialist philosophy. The radical impact of Hegel's contribution is very well expressed — understanding the effectivitys of contradiction is essential to any student of Marxism. Marx, by his own words, inverted Hegel's dialectic, "in order to discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell". In the chapters preliminary to that on capitalism, Callinincos very sensitively reveals how abstract philosophy led to the material evidence which evolved Marx's political theory.

In the chapter on *Capital,* Callinicos can be credited with an excellent understanding of this most challenging of Marx's writings. He manages to convey, by his own words and careful juxtaposition of quotations, the "economic law of motion" as revealed by Marx. The difference is, Callinicos does it in 34 pages. Here, the ongoing material dialectic is exposed as a self-perpetuating machine which secretes the appropriate ideology as a by-product of its continuous flux. Preserved is Marx's non-moralising vivisection of the material interdependencies: the machinations of competing capitals, already in 1867 long outside the control of individual interests.

As this book approaches its none-too-surprising conclusions, it tapers into a moral stance; one can easily see the idological *camera obscura* at work. After so superbly explaining the way idology trots along after relations of production, Callinicos pursues a righteous faith in workers' ability to transcend that ideology without help from either party elite or academic theorists. Granted, a useful debate exists between this standard liberal-leftist view and the more Althusserian variety, but as Callinicos, who is well-versed in the oppostion, elects nowhere to reveal this debate, the one-sided approach works against this integrity. Fortunately, he follows this party didacticism by the statement: "Experience since Marx and Engels' time has shown that attempts to introduce socialism peacefully are invariably met with armed resistance . . ."; here he exposes the gap between a philosophical faith in democracy and functional revolution. He admits that Marx overestimated the effects of universal suffrage, which later led to theories on the function and nature of ideology.

The book concludes with a chapter on the meaning of Marxism today, which is disappointingly incomplete, as if to say that the pinnacle of dialectical materialism has been reached in this decade, and we have now only to act on what is already known. He admits the extent to which revolution is historically and culturally specific, yet sinks to boring adjectives about Poland, Stalinism, and U.S. interventionism without taking into account the historic specificity that evolved those conditions. He would not, apparently, care to admit how specific his own political line is, and I find this a major weakness in what is otherwise an appealing basic introduction to Marx's philosophy of practise.

MOLLY KALLEN

BEGINNER'S LUCK

ECONOMISTS FOR BEGINNERS. Bernard Canavan. Writers and Readers Co-op. £2.50. (UK).

CUBA FOR BEGINNERS. Rius. Writers and Readers Co-op. £2.47.

The trouble with economics is that, while it virtually runs our lives in one way for another, knowledge about the subject is almost inaccessible to the common person or even the average college graduate. Economicsts seem to keep a closed circle and, in most western countries, Marxist economists aren't even treated as economists but relegated to sociology or development anthropology (it's all right to apply Marxism to the Third World, but not to us, thank you). *Economics for Beginners* promises a "good, clear introduction to the history of economic thought," which is "amusing" and "thoroughly researched." It *is* thoroughly researched. I imagine that it was written by an economist, which strengthens its claim to accuracy but renders it virtually as inaccessible as the economics texts I read in college.

I'm not certain that Canavan's idea of organising the book so closely around the seven authors he treats is particularly good. The seven (Smith, Malthus, Mill, Marshall, Keynes, Ricardo, and Marx) were critical in developing modern economics, but they also worked within a wider context that made sense out of what they wrote at the time. Canavan decontextualises their work and offers very little critical analysis, so that our understanding of his copious quotations from original sources is not enhanced.

A comic book raises special issues, too, concerning the use of cartoon illustrations to counterpoint serious politics. Canavan has a very heavy touch: I find little humour and even less use of pictures to complement (rather than simply accompany) the text. Every page is crammed with text or illustrations, further undermining its status as a comic introduction. *Economists* is useful as a sound introductory refrence to its subject, but it doesn't pierce the closed circle.

Cuba, on the contrary, is a masterpiece. Though not a new book, it was reprinted not long ago and is in circulation enough to warrant mention. Rius (also author and illustrator for *Marx for Beginners)* has combined a good background history of Cuba with an insightful discussion of the Cuban revolution and its aftermath.

Tracing the development of Cuba from the time when Christopher Columbus 'found it' in 1492, Rius details the role of the Spanish in Christianising and colonising the island, killing the three million Indians and substituting African slaves to build the colonial economy. Revolution isn't new in Cuba: Spanish landlords and traders rebelled against Spain throughout the early 19th century, culminating in the ten-year rebellion of 1868-78 in which 85,000 Spaniards and 50,000 Cubans died. This rebellion brought the end of slavery, but did little to change Cuba's colonial status. Further uprisings, starting in 1895, led to the Spanish-American war, in which the US defeated Spain and took possession of Cuba (along with the Phillippines and a host of other territorities).

Substituting American for Spanish colonial rule meant new levels of governmental corruption and much tighter control of the native economy. Cuba became the playground of American business, both literally and figuratively: not only was it a profitable piece of land with a cheap work force, its proximity to the US encouraged its development as an enormous casino, brothel, bar, and (not coincidentally) naval base. Virtually every economic enterprise or resource in Cuba wa. by the 1950s, completely controlled by US businesses or their Cuban (sic) partners.

When the Cuban revolution triumpheted in 1959, Rius points out, it was not specifically Communist in orientation. The agrarian reform programme was of primary importance, alongside native control of the economy, and the provision of housing, food, literacy, and the like. The American blockade and trade embargo, together with the overt policy of sabotaging the Cuban government (whether by invasion and bombing or through more devious means) led naturally to links with sympathetic partners in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and China. Nothing that has happened since 1959 has made this alliance seem unwise.

The results of the Cuban revolution are impressive. Rius even includes statistics (after apologies) to chart the spread of education and literacy, and gives an overview of the tremendous progress that has occurred, both in infrastructural terms and in human details (phone calls and baseball games are free, and rents are 10% of income). A later commentary discusses Cuba's role in international liberation movements as well as recent developments in grass roots local government.

Cuba, with its mixture of education and humour, uses the comic book format to its best advantage. In portraying a socialist revolution that is clearly working under themost difficult circumstances, it is an inspiration in an environment now so conducive to pessimism.

JEFF KALLEN

WOMEN IN PUBLISHING

IF YOU CAN TALK . . .
YOU CAN WRITE
SINGLED OUT
MISSING PIECES
Women's Community Press. £2.00.

This month sees the launch of three titles which are the product of twelve unemployed women on an AnCO "Women in Publishing" course which was designed and implemented by Irish Feminist Information (IFI). The function of this course was not only to provide an outlet for the creative expression of women who do not have general access to publication, but also to integrate more women into employment in the publishing industry. According to a speech by Roisin Conroy, women form only one-third of the labour force in this industry, and their average earnings are only 55% of men's earnings.

The twelve women trainees on this course were selected on the basis of their background in community and/or social issues groups and their interest in the publishing process. A group of six women from the course are planning a workers' co-operative which will produce and sell community based publications, so the original objectives around which the course was planned will be realised: the creation of a community press and the provision of employment for women.

"If you can talk . . ." is a collection of prose and poetry based on women's day-to-day experiences as wives, mothers, workers, daughters. This book provides a good example of how "ordinary" experiences are transformed mysteriouisly into art with only a slight change in perception, largely contingent on whether or not one views one's life in terms of creative contribution. That sought after change in consciousness gives this book much validity in improving women's awareness of their own creative potential.

"Singled out" was a response to increasing demands on Cherish (the self-help group for single mothers) to provide resource materials on single-parentage. It is written by women in Cherish, based on their own experience and knowledge, and provides basic information on human rights such as housing, social welfare benefits, and equality before the law. It is attractive, comprehensive and creatively illustrated.

"Every story that makes sense and discloses meaning is contagious in its power"; says the preface of "Missing Pieces", a co-operative reference work listing over a hundred women who have made contributions to Irish life and culture over the last century. This book was put together by the six women from the AnCO course who are forming a workers' co-operative. In six weeks of research and training they assembled the material for this book and decided to publish it with a view towards school-going as well as general readers. This is the first volume, and deals with women who have left a mark on Irish history since the Famine.

"Missing Pieces" begins with an educated introduction to "alternative" Irish history, and gives a strong impression of solidarity and co-operation amongst those women who put the book together. It also provides a basic introduction to a much neglected social history of Ireland through its journalists, trade unionists, artists, embalmers and all-round characters. Highly recommended.

MOLLY KALLEN

Letters

Dear Gralton,

To be honest, much of OwEn McCarthy's letter (*Gralton* 8) on my "SLP" article is beyond my grasp. As I understand it, the main point he makes is that there can be no significant development on the Irish Left without an effort to overcome its ideological shortcomings and to work out an overall strategy. With this I would wholeheartedly agree. For reasons of space I omitted the following from the original article:

The left is not just ideologically isolated, it is ideologically weak. Its counter-arguments to right-wing austerity solutions are insufficient in quantity, but also unsatisfactory in quality of content. The mass media can be partly blamed for the former. The latter is up to the left.

The Irish far left is theoretically weak (which is not the same thing as wrong), especially in the area of political economy — in furnishing, for instance, a cogent alternative to "the state is broke" consensus.

The "serious" left's answer of "more state spending" begs the question and neglects the second, and newer, leg in the ruling-class

The SLP and the Revolutionary process:

rationale: "the competitiveness of Irish industry".

Since writing this, some very useful, although limited, responses to these questions have in fact been produced e.g., 'There Is A Crock Of Gold' by Paul Sweeney in *Liberty,* June '83, and 'Jobs and Wages' a pamphlet, again by Paul Sweeney and other socialist economists.

The revolutionary left's message — 'refuse to accept responsibility for the mess they created' — is a correct *slogan,* but it is not backed up by any richness of alternative. Except, maybe, in theoretical journals thrice removed from popular, immediate and Irish application. If you want immediate action from workers it's no use saying that a different economic system will deliver the goods. If the revolutionary left really has more to say than 'put up the barricades now' it must be able to point to wealth and resources available now, to short-term strategies and to transitional demands.

Even the thesis that the crisis is not a natural disorder requires background explanation, beyond assertion. Yet, apart from one or two once-off, duplicated pamphlets on specific aspects of the crisis, no organisation has thought it worthwhile to present a comprehensive work on the economic crisis, while the ruling-class view fills the reading and viewing matter of the working-class.

But the problem is not just one of more elaborate treatment of the issues. Much of the necessary theoretical development — on the economy, the national question, organisation on the left etc., entails original investigation and true discussion; research and debate. It cannot be fitted into the journalistic and political functions of popular monthly newspapers. To be fruitful it must have really open search and exchange, free of given dogmas, if *new* ground is to be broken for socialist thought in Ireland.

Therefore new and open forums of debate must be sought. Even where groupings *have* developed positions to offer, such forums can complement the separate propagation of their own line, and, indeed, demonstrate the superiority of one line over another in the context of truly reasoned argument.

Hope that fills a gap. Incidentally, who is Rakovksy?

Yours etc.

Des Derwin

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JIM GRALTON

JIM GRALTON is the only person to have been deported from the 26 Counties for political activity. Gralton was not prosecuted for any criminal offence. His offence was to have helped give the poor, the landless and the unemployed of County Leitrim the confidence to fight for themselves.

In the early Thirties, Gralton devoted himself to establishing a social hall for the people of Gowel, Leitrim. For this heinous crime he was denounced from the pulpits and the hall was eventually burned down. Finally, in 1933, the De Valera government succeeded in deporting him — despite a vigorous campaign on his behalf waged by left wing trade unionists and republicans, unemployed activists and local supporters.

Gralton's name represents a challenge to established authority, a call for people to take their fate into their own hands and an imaginative application of socialist ideas in a difficult environment. For all that, and more, he deserves to be remembered. That's why this magazine is named after him.

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SOUNDING OFF

Comrades and Calculators

There used to be a great cliche on the Left that always came into use at meetings with titles like "Socialism — The Way Forward", or "Socialism — Making The Links", or "Socialism — Drawing The Lessons". The cliche was about parliamentary democracy. It was, like much of the rhetoric, an imported cliche. "Capitalist democracy", the speaker would rage, "consists of putting an X beside someone's name once every five years!"

We even worked it out scientifically. If it took one minute to mark the X, the speaker might say, and you voted in every general election for fifty years, that meant you had ten minutes of democracy in your whole lifetime.

Huh, said the speaker, some democracy. "The alternative we're proposing here tonight is the mass democracy *etc etc etc etc* proletariat *etc etc etc* workers vanguard *etc etc etc* memory of the class *etc etc etc* way forward *etc* make the links *etc* draw the lessons *etc etc etc* hope you can come to our next meeting in a fortnight's time, on Socialism — What Is To Be Done?"

The X-every-five-years cliche took a bit of a hammering when someone pointed out that it was a fine cliche for the British comrades, but over here we had PR and you got to mark 1-2-3 every five years. Okay, maybe the political point was the same, but it didn't sound as snappy, and the cliche went out of style.

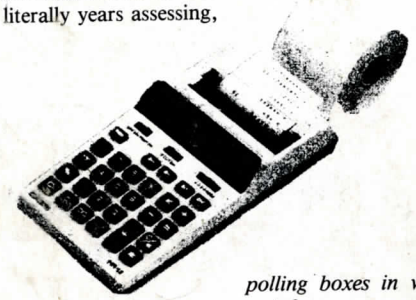
It was finally killed off by The Great Capitalist Plot Against Socialist Cliches of 1981-82, which involved staging three general elections within eighteen months.

The other reason for the decline of the cliche was the greater readiness of the Left to intervene in elections. No count centre was complete without the comrade with the calculator. ("Okay, here's the way I see it: if 93% of the Fine Gaeler's surplus goes to the Labour guy, and if we get 34 votes from his surplus — which puts us above Sean Sugarloaf Mountain Real Ale Liberation O'Looney (Ind.), so that he gets eliminated first — and then if the Labour guy is elected next and we get 97% of *his* surplus, then we'll come within 800 votes of saving our deposit.")

The purpose of this page is not to revive the should we/shouldn't we argument about electoral politics. (Most of us long ago answered that one, "It depends".) But it is worthwhile, for the benefit of the comrades with the calculators, drawing a map of the electoral territory in which they are operating, and pointing out the hostility of the natives.

Political parties used to have wizards who knew every pocket every constituency and who were valued for their knowledge. They knew that "that" village was for us and "that other" agin us. They knew which streets to send the party cars to on polling day.

Those people are still around, but they have been augmented by the HQ whizz kids. These are full timers who spend literally years assessing, probing and stroking each constituency. They weed out troublesome members, promote the useful ones, rig selection conventions, sabotage awkward potential candidates and allocate areas within constituencies for each candidate to till and harvest. This is called — and they say it without a blush — "vote management". These people don't just have knowledge of constituencies — they also have files and floppy discs.



Their other purpose is to conduct regular secret polls of the electorate. Then having found out what the voters want, they formulate the party programme accordingly — using very general terms, as most policies will later be reneged. This is a marketing technique — precisely the kind used to launch soap powders and bubble gum.

At ground level there is constant "clinic" work — doing personal favours for voters, or appearing to do so. There is also patronage — providing, or appearing to provide, jobs or influence for supporters.

Most of this is routine by now, well known to the comrades with the calculators and way beyond their resources. Sorry, the bad news is only beginning.

When people vote there are several party supporters sitting near the ballot box with copies of the electoral register. They mark off the name of everyone who votes. Nominally this is to guard against personation — and it does have some minor function in that regard. However, personation is usually just a game to keep the troops happy. They cancel each other out and it's a dying art, anyway. The real purpose of these supporters is to provide the parties with a list of everyone who has voted — *and the polling boxes in which they have voted.*

At the count, the parties provide their supporters with pre-printed forms. On these they fill in the number of each polling box as it is opened. There is an unwritten understanding that the party workers will be able to see each vote as it is unfolded and stacked. From this they mark in how many first preferences each candidates gets *from each box.*

The parties now have a list of names and addresses (perhaps three or four hundred) of people who have voted in each box. They also have alist of how these votes were cast in that box. They *also* have very detailed lists compiled by canvassers, which give indications of how individual voters lean. *And* their information is not merely based on one election but is accumulated from several decades of elections. All of that marking of registers and forms that goes on at polling stations and count centres has little to do with the current election — it is being done for the *next* election and the one after.

It is possible for parties to get a fairly accurate picture of who voted for them, who voted against, whose vote swings, where these people live and what has to be done to keep or win their vote next time. That is: a "fairly accurate" picture. In some constituencies the geniuses are so good that they get a *precise* picture, house by house.

A poll a few years ago showed that about half of the electorate make their choice on the basis of constituency service. Things such as policy, the ministerial talent on offer or th extent of crookedness of the party leader are subordinate. The parties have for each constituency a precise profile of their strengths and weaknesses, of favours owed, of problems stroked and promises made. They have the resources of the Dail, which is routinely used as part of the election machine (i.e. Dail questions).

The extent to which the major parties are able to manipulate the electorate cannot be overestimated. It's no good moaning about this, it is a fact of life.

There are, basically, two major consequences. One, governments rarely achieve a mandate for anything. In February 1982 Garret FitzGerald sought a mandate on a hairshirt programme. He was rejected. Haughey, who was still in his boom and bloom phase, was elected. In November 1982 Haughey, with the Estimates published, had to seek a mandate for hairshirt policies. He was rejected. FitzGerald, who refused to say what his policies were, won. Last November, neither Fine Gael nor Labour sought a mandate for the policies they are now implementing. They let the machines gather the votes — the main job of the politicians was not to present policies which would win votes but to avoid saying anything which would lose votes.

The second consequence is that anyone trying to break into the system is playing against the odds. Again, there's no use moaning about it, it's a fact of life.

By Gene Kerrigan

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