

Z

march 1989 issue no. 2 (80p Stg.)

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inc.
v.a.t.

M A G A Z I N E

An Alternative View



THE BUSINESS OF BEING A T.D.

THE TARA MINES SCANDAL ■ EMMETT STAGG ■ CLINICS - A STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE
RUNNING FOR EUROPE ■ BHOPAL SETTLEMENT ■ THE GREAT CAPITAL TAX FIDDLE

Z QUIZ No. 2

The first three correct answers opened on April 20th will receive a free subscription to Z magazine.

1. The Kampuchean government is not recognised at the UN. Which grouping holds the UN seat (supported in that placing by the Irish government) for Kampuchea?
2. What two trade unions joined together to become the Manufacturing Science Finance union (MSF)?
3. Which country, with a higher proportion of Catholics than Ireland, voted in referenda in the Seventies FOR divorce and abortion?
4. Oscar Wilde wrote a great socialist pamphlet with a male-oriented title. What was it called?
5. For how much did Johnston Mooney & O'Brien sell their Ballsbridge, Dublin, site some time before going into voluntary liquidation?
6. What do the initials GUBU stand for?
7. By what name do we now know the writer born Aurore Dupin in Paris in 1804?
8. What cartoonist originated Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, the Roadrunner, Elmer Fudd and the rest of the Looney Tunes at Warner Bros?
9. It's Ravel's most popular piece. You know the one: relentless rhythm behind a single constantly repeated, but intriguing, melody line. You can't whistle it, but can you name it?
10. A new political organisation, supported by Senators Brendan Ryan and John A. Murphy, was launched in Cork on March 3rd. What is it called?

Answers will appear in the next issue of Z MAGAZINE.

ANSWERS to Z Quiz no 1

1. 1924; 2. James; 3. Mother Ireland; 4. Australia; 5. Queen Elizabeth II; 6. 18 hours per week, or more for the same employer; 7. Bob Geldof, at a civic reception in the Mansion House, Dublin; 8. January 21, 1919, in the Mansion House, Dublin; 9. The House of Commons Environment Committee; 10. Aretha Franklin; 11. Denis Dennehy, of fond memory; 12. Margareta D'Arcy and John Arden; 13. Travellers; 14. Nil; 15. 1868.

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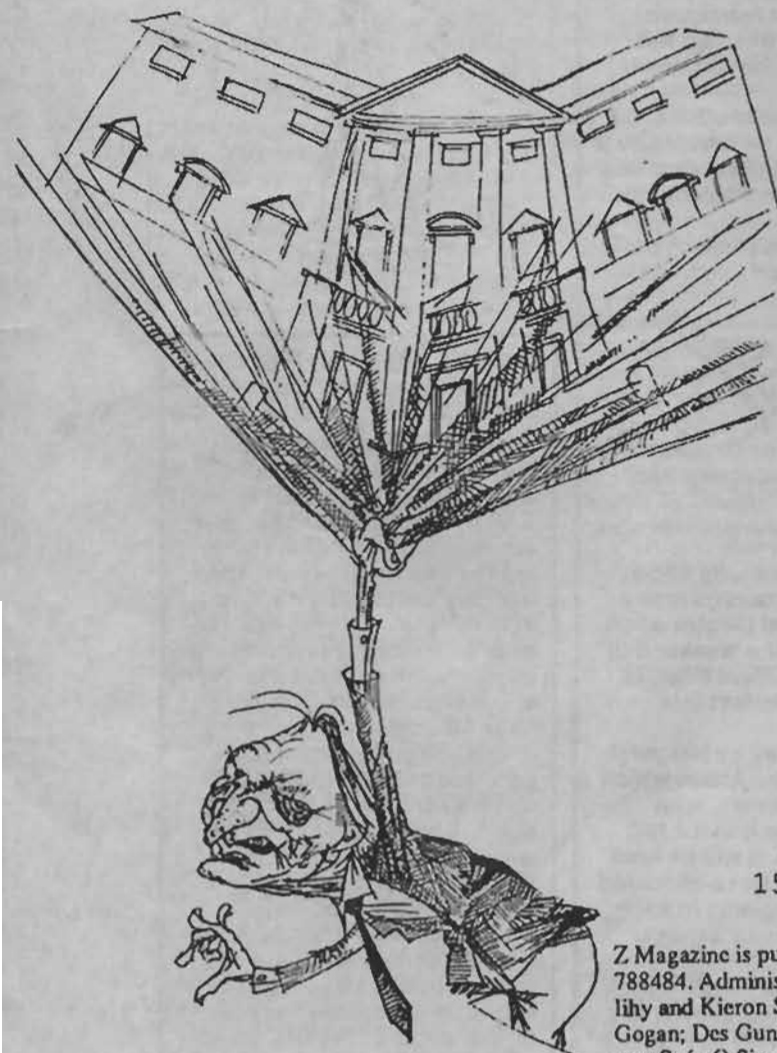
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THE TARA MINES SCANDAL

15 years of government mishandling



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f r o n t

Lawlor's land plans

LIAM Lawlor is at the centre of local controversy in Dublin West over a planning issue - and not for the first time. Some years ago, he was involved in an attempt to have land at Lucan rezoned from amenity to development. The land in question included 17 acres he owns.

Now a public hearing by An Bord Pleanála is due to take place into Dublin County Council's granting of planning permission for 64 houses at a site in an amenity area in Palmerstown. And a central figure, again, is Liam Lawlor.

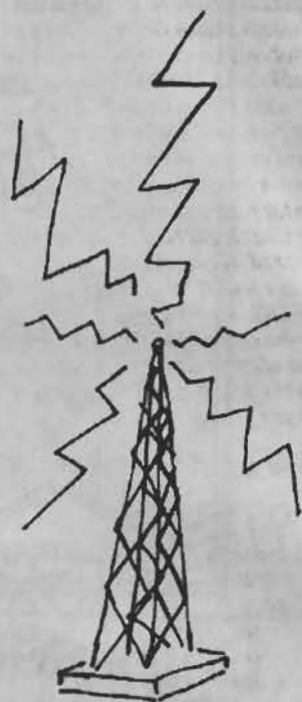
Bovale Developments want to build the houses on a piece of land designated in the county development plan as amenity. The original planning application last year was refused.

But Lawlor and two other Fianna Fail councillors, Sean Walsh and Finbarr Hanrahan, took steps to have the application reconsidered and decided on by a vote of the full council.

On December 12th permission was granted by a vote of 33 to 26, with all Fianna Fail councillors present, bar one, voting to grant permission. Lawlor came under attack at a public meeting in the area when he was asked to declare if he had an interest in the development. He dismissed the question as absurd.

Local opponents of the scheme, including An Taisce, point out that the proposed development is on the boundaries of an area to be covered by a Special Amenity Area Order which will effectively prevent development in the whole Liffey valley. This order has yet to be signed into effect by the Minister for the Environment.

An Bord Pleanála's hearing into the appeals against the planning permission may throw some more light on the activities of Liam Lawlor, businessman and TD.



Kelly criticises

PETRA KELLY, Green Party MP in the German parliament, has claimed that two leading European Social Democratic politicians have recently dismissed Irish neutrality as irrelevant. Kelly drew attention to a statement to the European Parliament by the Spanish Foreign Minister, Francisco Ordonez, in which he suggested that the limits on military cooperation included in the Single European Act in order to accommodate Ireland's position should be revised.

Kelly also criticised former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt who said in an interview that Irish neutrality was only of significance in relation to the unresolved northern question and Ireland could participate in the formulation of a west European defence policy.

Petra Kelly will give her own support to active advocates of neutrality on a visit to Ireland due soon.



non-stop re-start

THE Non-Stop Connolly Show, which helped encourage many people into radical theatre when it was staged over a weekend in Dublin in the mid-Seventies, is to be revived in Belfast this month.

The six-part play by Nargaretta D'Arcy and John Arden which could run for 18 hours, with breaks, will not be given a full stage production. It will be read and the parts will be re-allocated among the participants in each of the three one-hour breaks.

The reading of the show in Conway Mill, Falls Road, is part of the third annual Dúchas na Saoirse, taking place over the weekend of March 18-19.

Gib: one year on

ONE YEAR after Mairead Farrell, Danny McCann and Sean Savage were shot by the SAS in Gibraltar, the Irish government has long since forgotten the crocodile tears it shed over the deaths of 'unarmed Irish people'. Nothing has been heard of the report of the government's official observer at the inquest, barrister Donagh McDonagh.

But the government has good reason to hope the controversy will never be stirred again. Senior garde officers were themselves involved in the international intelligence and surveillance operation which led to the killings. A top-ranking detective is believed to have gone to Spain and/or Gibraltar to confirm identification of some of the IRA group.



l i n e s

radio special

THE Dublin Travellers' Education and Development Group is preparing a submission to the Independent Radio and Television Commission for a licence to run a 'special interest' service. These licences will go, either on a national or a local basis, to organisations which can demonstrate a demand for a particular category of music or of information and an ability to meet that demand.

DTEGD hopes to get other community-based organisations to support the submission by undertaking to provide some part of the programming.

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Tory gold

RIO Tinto Zinc, the major mining corporation, is looking to Tory Island, off the coast of Co Donegal, as a possible source of gold. But when the company's engineers arrive there to act on the prospecting licence granted by the government they may find it difficult to keep in touch with headquarters.

Such is the rundown of services on the island that by early March, only one phone was working. In bad weather and in the absence of proper harbour facilities, the island has been unreachable by sea for weeks at a time through the winter. Only an occasional - and temporary - helicopter service funded by Udaras na Gaeltachta has kept people moving to and from the island.

equality now

"OUR Time is Now" is the slogan for a conference being organised by the lesbian and gay reform group Unite for Change. The government will soon have to introduce legislation to reform the existing anti-gay laws which have been found to contravene the European Convention of Human Rights. The purpose of the meeting is to organise a united lesbian and gay response for this law reform campaign. The conference will be held in Dublin on Saturday April 1st and is open to all lesbians and gay men. Further details from Gay Switchboard Dublin, tel 01-544855 8pm to 10pm daily or your local switchboard.

Meanwhile the Irish Council for Civil Liberties major report on the rights of lesbians and gay men is at a final draft stage. Consultations with the lesbian and gay community are now being finalised. This report argues for full equality between heterosexuals and homosexuals in terms of the law regulating sexual behaviour (age of consent, etc.) The Report also argues for a comprehensive anti-discrimination act which would cover employment, housing, services, etc., and which would include all groups vulnerable to discrimination (travellers, etc.) The ICCL can be contacted by post at c/o 36, The Rise, Boden Park, Rathfarnham, Dublin, 16.





such initiatives create worthwhile jobs or whether they serve at times to further marginalise people.

The conference, organised by the Combat Poverty Agency and attended mainly by community activists, marked the launch of a study of local employment initiatives in two Dublin communities - *From the Ground Up*, written by Pauline Faughnan, UCD Social Science Research Centre. Representatives of both FAS and the IDA outlined their policy of support for community initiatives, support which was not all that apparent to those community activists attending the conference.

From the Ground Up documents the commitment of unemployed people in two working class areas of Dublin to create jobs for themselves. Their efforts were not matched by the State Agencies charged with employment promotion.

Claire O'Connor, of the Divorce Action Group, reflects on the passing - eventually - of the Judicial Separation Bill.

fas confusion

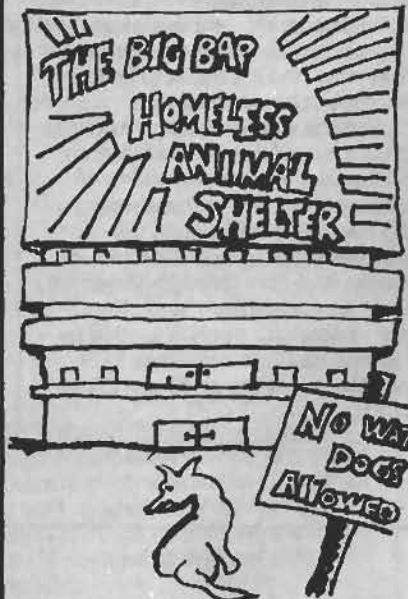
WELL over a year after three state agencies were amalgamated to form FAS, the process of combining the bodies is still not complete. The civil servants who worked in the Department of Labour's National Manpower Service retain civil service status and no date has been set for transferring them fully to the new agency. Nor has any grading structure been established for FAS staff.

Even with rationalisation there are far more chiefs at the top levels than could possibly be needed. There are arguments about promotions. Anybody who previously controlled a little patch of bureaucracy is trying to hang onto it.

For groups setting up schemes, dealing with AnCO's strange ways - like only paying over money to external schemes after they had spent money they didn't have - was never easy. The supposed streamlining of training and youth employment schemes has, so far, tended to make things more difficult.

transnational watchdog closes

The Transnational Information Centre in London is closing its doors this month, partly as a result of the cost of defending a lawsuit taken against them by MacDonalds for the publication *Working for Big Mac*. TICL has been a resource and research centre for trade unionists and activists on the less publicised activities of transnational corporations worldwide for nearly five years. Although they hope to continue in a research capacity, the public service will end. (See *Z* issues No.1 p.27 for TICL Guide to Research and Action on INCs.)



musicians collect

MEMBERS of nearly a dozen young bands based in Derry and the surrounding area have secured support from the Northern Ireland Arts Council and Derry City Council for a project to provide resources for local bands.

The North West Musicians Collective was set up in Derry last

summer and is run directly by members of local bands such as *Fear of Gods* and the *Turtle Assassins*. They aimed to assist bands by having equipment and rehearsal space available for general use, organising workshops and gigs, and, eventually, setting up a recording studio. Last month, they moved into premises provided by the City Council.

The Arts Council has promised support for workshops. And Keith Donald, popular music officer of the Republic's Arts Council (a contributor to *Z* no.1) is also helping. The Collective is supported locally by the unemployed workers group. The North West Musicians Collective has already had contact with the music workshop set up by the Peadar O'Donnell Unemployed Centre in Galway (see news item in these pages) and is seeking band exchanges with the Republic.

reclaiming the night

IN continuing protest against rape and violence, women took to the streets of Dublin on the night of March 8th - International Women's Day. The aim of the march was to "reclaim the night from the exclusive hold of men", says Fidelma Joyce, Women's Rights Officer with the Union of Students in Ireland, who organised the march. Sexual harassment and violence against women have gained priority as issues within USI in the wake of widespread attacks on students - on and off campus. In a recent survey by the Students Union in Waterford Regional Technical College twenty-three incidents of assault were reported, including two rapes.

USI's Women's Rights Officer believes the reported incidents of sexual assault are merely at the tip of a very large iceberg and that the surveys being undertaken on the issue in UCD and Trinity College will produce quite shocking results. "It is not good enough to argue that women will be okay if they walk in groups at night. We have to take the night back for ourselves". Joyce says, "The Reclaim the Night March was dismissed by some as a gesture but it was a vitally important one".



Donegal link

THE FAS office in Ballybofey, Co Donegal, last month sent out to dole offices and to individual unemployed people details of jobs in a London pub. The local placement officer said the circulars had been sent out at the request of a Co. Donegal man in the bar business in London. "People are going anyway. If they have something to go to it is better than going and having nothing," he said.

'dangerous' drug cleaned by court

ORGANON Laboratories, the drugs company with a plant in Finglas, north Dublin, has won a court ruling in Britain quashing an official health warning about the alleged dangerous side-effects of one of its products. Yet Beechams, which also manufactures the drug, was itself proposing to issue its own warning to doctors before the court judgement.

The drug is Mianserin, which ranks fourth in the league of anti-depressant drugs in Britain. As a result of the ruling, a journal of the Committee on Safety in Medicines had to be withdrawn because it included a warning to doctors not to prescribe Mianserin to patients over 65.

'read' letter day in Queen's

AN attempt to influence the outcome of a student meeting has led to the resignation of a prominent unionist activist in Queen's University. Peter Weir, Speaker of Queen's Student Council and Assistant Secretary of Queen's Unionist Association, tendered his resignation as Speaker when a letter written by him to a number of unionist students at the university was intercepted by republican students.

The letter urged unionist students to come five minutes early to a meeting in order to make a number of decisions that would increase the decision making powers of the traditionally unionist dominated student council. In the letter, Weir stressed "It is essential that every unionist possible turns up. The meeting will be over in less than five minutes."

Unionists were urged to arrive five minutes early "to ensure that the decision is taken before the majority of republicans arrive".

The 20 year old accountancy student was unrepentant when his plans became public knowledge after the letter fell into the hands of republican students. While he admitted that the letter was "reason-

catering for the unemployed

THE Brian Boru Cafe at the Larkin Unemployed Centre in Dublin's north inner city is organising a fundraising Cookathon over 20 weeks. Never reviewed by the restaurant critics, the BBC is a workers co-operative which serves good food.

The cafe is seeking trade union sponsors for a Chef of the Day; the sponsors will reserve 20 places for the Chef's meal at £10 a head. Chefs who have already been sponsored include Senator Joe O'Toole (INTO) and Rosheen Callender (ITGWU). The Chefs of the Day will be judged on their menu, food quality, value for money and atmosphere. The winning chef gets

the real point

THE GLOSS has worn off Dublin haulage contractor's Harry Crosbie's much-praised achievement in refurbishing the Point Depot as a concert, conference and exhibition venue. Three months after it opened he sold half of the company for cash to a British firm. The acoustic consultants have had to be called back in to deal with the sound problems. And the restaurant run by Fitzler's was the scene of a two-week union recognition dispute. The ITGWU secured recognition but two women workers lost their jobs.

Heterosex

PART 2 OF YOUR GUIDE TO ANTI-SEXISM

AVOID THE NOTORIOUSLY SQUASHY 'MISSIONARY POSITION'

UNLESS YOU HAVE PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF DEEP-SEA DIVING, OR DON'T BREATHE THAT OFTEN...



THE MYTH THAT CONDOMS LOOK DAFT IS EXPLODED BY THIS ELEGANT LATEX TUXEDO; DAZZLE YOUR PARTNER WITH A CONDOM WITH CONFIDENCE DESIGN.



REMEMBER PENILE PENETRATION IS NOT EVERYTHING - EXPERIMENT & EXPLORE EACH OTHER'S SEXUALITY!

MOST IMPORTANTLY: DO NOT BECOME TOO DEPENDENT ON YOUR PARTNER. RETAIN YOUR AUTONOMY!



NEW'S WORLD CAN YOU BE CELIBATE & STILL SLEEP WITH YOUR CAT?

Good



Hmm... ON Monday & Tuesday I divided the Firmament...

... And saw that it was **GOOD**

Wednesday, Thursday & Friday I made...

... The sea, the land, The fowl of the air, The creatures that Crawleth, and Everything that moveth...?

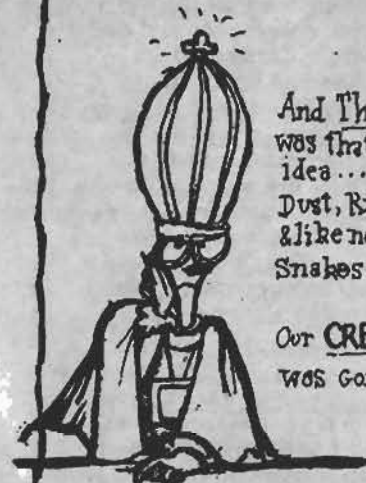
... All of which I Saw WAS **GOOD**



And Then there was that other idea...

Dust, Ribs, Image & likeness, Snakes & Apples-

Our **CREDIBILITY** WAS GONE.



We should have stopped at The Creatures that Crawleth!



Z MAGAZINE MAR/APR 1989

a LAW, AT LAST

Claire O'Connor, of the Divorce Action Group, reflects on the about turns and strange bedfellows that have - finally - led to agreement on the Judicial Separation Bill.

Even amid the bitterness of the divorce referendum debate in 1986, there was agreement on one issue - present laws needed to be radically reformed to deal with the reality of marriage breakdown. All political parties and church groups - even those most vociferously opposed to divorce - acknowledged that existing legislation was wholly inadequate and reform of family law was urgently needed. The political parties were agreed that this reform should be in line with the recommendations of the joint Oireachtas Committee on Marriage Breakdown, the major recommendations of which were: that irretrievable breakdown of marriage should be the one overall ground for granting a judicial separation; that a non-adversarial legal remedy should be available to couples who wish to separate but who cannot agree upon the terms of their separation and that, having granted a separation, the same court should have power to make orders in relation to maintenance, property, custody of children and inheritance rights.

In their election manifestos of February 1987, all parties, including Fianna Fáil, re-stated their commitment to the reform of family law. Thus, when Fine Gael TD, Alan Shatter, introduced to the Dáil a Private Members Bill based on the recommendations of the joint Oireachtas Committee, it was no surprise that it was welcomed by the Taoiseach, who indicated that Fianna Fáil would facilitate the passage of the Bill through the Oireachtas.

This consensus was, however, short-lived. At committee stage the Minister for Justice, Mr Collins, introduced a battery of amendments designed to wholly change the character of the Bill. Among these amendments were the removal of irretrievable breakdown as the basis for obtaining a judicial separation; the exclusion of couples still living under one roof from access to separation proceedings and the automatic loss of inheritance rights by spouses on the granting of a judicial separation.

The reasons for Fianna Fáil's about-face were, and still are, a matter for speculation. However, the effect of such amendments, if passed, were obvious. The fear of losing out on inheritance rights, the re-introduction of an adversarial element into separation proceedings and the exclusion of those very couples most in need of court assistance to sort out their separation would all serve to minimise the number of couples applying for a judicial separation under the new legislation. It is difficult not to suspect that this was, indeed, Fianna Fáil's objective in proposing these amendments.

Although the majority of Fianna Fáil's amendments to the Bill were defeated at Committee Stage (FF were in a minority on the committee), Mr Collins re-tabled these amendments at Report Stage, when the Bill was being debated in the Dáil.

Due largely to the disorganisation of the opposition in ensuring that all deputies were present for votes, several amendments were passed. In an attempt to re-gain ground and to prevent the dilution of the main thrust of the Bill, the combined opposition then voted it back to committee.

When the committee reconvened in mid-January, it appeared that another long, drawn-out battle was to ensue. Thus it was with some surprise, and not a little scepticism, that non-Fianna Fáil committee members heard Dr Michael Woods (who was standing in for Mr Collins) indicate that it was vital to get the Bill back to the Dáil as soon as possible. At this meeting it was agreed that Deputy Shatter and Mr Collins should meet to try to negotiate an agreement on the final format of the Bill.

Within weeks - in early February - agreement was announced. With the exception of the amendment removing the concept of irretrievable breakdown, Mr Collins had dropped all the other substantive amendments which he had consistently argued at Committee and Report stage.

Mr Collins second 'about turn' is just as baffling as his first. However, the Bill which will now return to the Dáil is one which will help to alleviate the present legal problems faced by couples whose marriages have ended. To these couples it is of little concern whether or not the law regards their marriage as having "irretrievably" broken down, as long as they have access to a legal remedy to sort out their differences. It is, however, a pity that the introduction of such legislation has been marred by pottiness and bad grace from the governing party.

Clare Farrell reports on the lonely death of a homeless man and the continuing controversy which has followed it.

9

LAST JUNE, 62 year old John Broderick died in the 'casual' ward of a Tipperary hospital. He died during the night. The doors to the ward were locked, and the ward was in a separate building away from the rest of the hospital. There was no staff there to help him and there are even unconfirmed reports that other residents banged on doors and windows but failed to attract any attention.

The casual unit was used as a service to homeless men in the Mid Western Health Board area. Since his death, Galway Simon Community have fought to

should be locked up in a unit overnight without any means of help."

John Broderick was born in Limerick and spent part of his life in England where he worked as a coalminer. In 1962 he caught tuberculosis and spent two years in a Cambridge hospital. When he eventually returned to Ireland, he became well known to the Simon Community in Galway, which he used on and off. He also used the casual ward at the Hospital of the Assumption, Thurles.

This is how Marlene O'Connor described the unit, which she visited on hearing of the death, in a report to Na-

appropriate alternative accommodation for homeless persons. Anyway, the issues identified, related to a transient population, "who are rarely from County Tipperary", it added.

While Galway Simon was visiting the Thurles Hospital, and trying to encourage changes and improvements, Senator Brendan Ryan was requesting an investigation by the Minister for Health, Dr Rory O'Hanlon. He first wrote on September 28, then again on November 17 and when by December 2 his letters had only been acknowledged, he wrote to three TDs asking them to



DEATH IN THE WARD

have the matter investigated, keeping a low profile, they say, so as not to embarrass the state or be accused of sensationalism. They wanted questions answered: Why was the ward locked? What steps would be taken to improve the service? Were there other locked units for homeless men around the country?

On February 20, after nearly nine months of asking such questions, Galway Simon was told that the ward has been closed without replacement. But many important questions have been unanswered.

"I'm not happy that a service has been withdrawn," says Marlene O'Connor, who worked as Information Officer with Galway Simon at the time of John Broderick's death and was involved in discussions and correspondence with the health board over the matter. "The service as it existed, and as I saw it after John's death was a fire and safety hazard, but it would not have cost an arm and a leg to improve the situation.

"I accept, as the health board has said, that John Broderick discharged himself against medical advice from the main hospital some time beforehand, and that he was very ill and would have died anyway. But I do not accept that anybody

tional Simon: "The ward is a single storey detached building which contains 15 or 16 beds... It appeared to me that the fire and safety precautions were not adequate, particularly in view of the ward being locked without an attendant being present. I pointed this out to Mr de Burca (Mid-Western Health Board Programme Manager, Special Hospital Care) and the Matron. They both appeared surprised and said the constraints of cutbacks would not permit the presence of an attendant and promised to refer the fire and safety matters to their fire and safety officer".

Nobody knows for sure whether or not other patients called for help when John Broderick died. Nobody knows because the ward was locked at the time. But it is possible that they banged and shouted, and it is possible that he died in distress. Whichever, Marlene O'Connor believes he died without dignity.

Confirming the permanent closure of the ward last month, the health board said it had been unable to ascertain any evidence of need for the unit "based on the Tipperary population per se", and said Thurles Urban District Council had been asked about the provision of more

raise the issue in the Dáil.

The Minister replied to Senator Ryan on January 13 last saying that the board was satisfied that conditions in the casual unit did not have any bearing on Mr Broderick's death. TDs who considered this reply inadequate asked more questions in the Dáil. Proinsias De Rossa wanted to know how many other locked casual units there were around the country? Why was the unit locked? Why should homeless men be treated this way? What guidelines do the department and health boards apply to the operation of such units? The minister offered to have these questions "checked out".

"As a major precaution against provoking reaction, we kept our mouths shut on this issue between June 1988 and January 1989... for our sense of responsibility, we have been treated with the minister's statement that John would have died anyway, and the unit has been closed down. We said all along that the service should continue, but the procedure of locking wards should be stopped and the unit upgraded, or an alternative service provided," says Brian Harvey, Information Officer with National Simon. "What they have done is morally indefensible and quite simply wrong."

THE BUSINESS OF BEING A T.D.

As the row over 'conflicting interests' in the Sugar Company affair worsens, a 2 report looks at how businessmen TDs live, without conflict, in the two worlds of commerce and politics.

PAT O'MALLEY was not the TD best chosen to throw bricks at Liam Lawlor for failing to disclose his commercial interests. The Progressive Democrat deputy from Dublin West came to politics from a background in business.

He presented himself to the electorate as a company director - but of which companies he did not specify.

One of them is - or was - Real Ireland Ltd., publishers of calendars and postcards in Bray, Co Wicklow. Pat O'Malley became a shareholder in the company in 1986. He also became a director of the company about the same time. Yet the files lodged by Real Ireland in the Companies Records Office reveal little of this. In fact, they do not record O'Malley's appointment as a director of Real Ireland. Nor do they record his resignation.

The company confirms that he was a director, but is not any longer. O'Malley became a TD less than a year after he became involved with Real Ireland. He received correspondence to his Dail office in his Real Ireland role.

Like many more before and since, Pat O'Malley has had no difficulty in marrying the roles of businessman and public representative.

In the absence of a register of TDs', commercial interests and given the limits on the declarations which councillors are required to make of their property interests under the Planning Act, the only official source of information about TDs' business activities is the Companies Records Office in Dublin Castle where the information is far from comprehensive and frequently out-of-date.

Companies are obliged under law to notify to the CRO all appointments of directors and to make annual returns with up-to-date details of shareholdings and directors, including details of the directors' positions on the boards of other companies. They are also obliged to make these annual returns promptly. TDs have been no more careful than others about ensuring that their companies comply with these regulations.

Real Ireland has not made any annual returns since its formation in 1982 - neither before, during nor since Pat O'Malley's involvement with the company.

The latest annual returns lodged by T. Stafford & Sons Ltd., of which John Stafford TD is director and shareholder, are for 1984.

Liam Lawlor's appointment last year as a director of Food Industries plc, courtesy of Larry Goodman, has not been registered at the Companies Office.

In fact, there is no record of the appointment of any of the directors who came on to the board last year who the sleepy Merchants Warehousing was transformed into Goodman's vehicle for rapid expansion in the food industry. Lawlor was asked to become a director of Food Industries, no doubt, because he is a TD, not despite it.

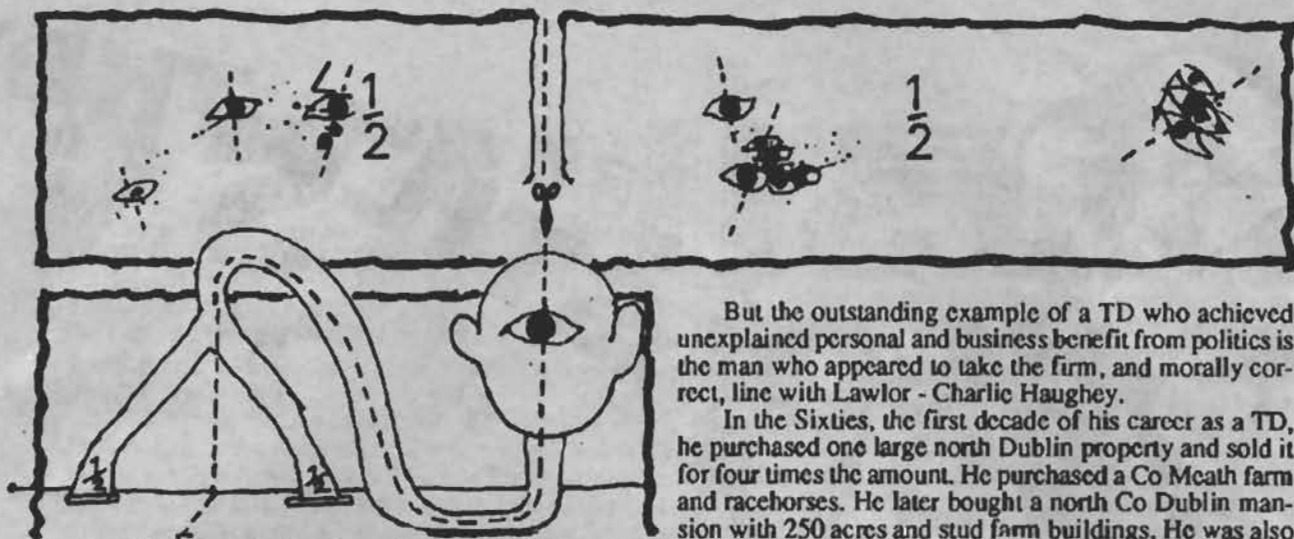
He was previously a director of a refrigeration company called Modular Cold Store Manufacturers, based in Mohill, Co Leitrim. He ceased to be a director in December 1982, just a month after he lost his seat in Dublin West - at a time, in other words, when he might have seemed to have more time for business activities. He had resigned as a director of Hall Thermotank (Ireland) in 1981.

ON FEBRUARY 28th last, Charlie Haughey assured the Dail that all his ministers and ministers of state had resigned any company directorships they held previously so as to avoid any potential conflict of interest.

Albert Reynolds, the founder and - still - principal shareholder in C&D Pet Foods, wasted no time. His resignation from the board of C&D took effect on March 10th, 1987 - the very same day that he was appointed government minister.

His wife, Kathleen, is a director and shareholder. Her son, Phillip, runs the company. It is scarcely credible that the Minister for Finance would not himself be involved in family discussions about the company. He would have been keenly aware of the implications for C&D Pet Foods of his decision to abolish Foir Teoranta, the state rescue agency. Foir Teo bailed out C&D at one stage and it holds a sizeable number of non-voting shares in C&D and has a representative on the board - at least according to the latest information filed with the Companies Records Office. The last annual returns filed there for C&D cover the year to January 1987.

Vincent Brady took a month from his appointment as minister of state to resign his position as director of Liffey Distributors, a wholesale company. His wife, Mary, already a shareholder in the company, had become a director six months previously and remains a director.



Pat The Cope Gallagher resigned from the board of his fish exporting business on the day he was appointed minister of state. Other members of the family replaced him; he continues to hold 99 of the 100 shares.

Peter Barry took some months after ceasing to be Minister for Foreign Affairs before resuming his position as chairman and director of Barry's Tea. Other members of the family, including his wife, Margaret, who sit on the boards of the several Barry tea and investment companies had, no doubt, kept him in touch.

Sean Barrett, minister of state in the coalition government, has expanded his interests in insurance and particularly in bloodstock insurance since returning to the Opposition benches.

Barrett is associated, in his companies and through joint ownership of racehorses, with a leading racehorse breeder, David Nagle, and with Frank Conroy, who is a director of the bloodstock sales company, R J Goff & Co. He could be counted on to oppose anything which might affect the very favourable treatment, in taxation, of the bloodstock industry.

Soon after the change of government in 1987, shares in one of Barrett's companies, Barrett Baldwin Moloney Ltd., which had been held by his wife, Sheila, were transferred back to him. But so little did the change seem to matter and so little is the care taken in recording these details that Sean Barrett is listed on the files in Companies Office as having the occupation 'housewife'.

Kieran Crotty, Fine Gael TD for Carlow-Kilkenny, has more reason than other TDs to be concerned about the action the government may or may not take in the bread price war. He is a long-standing director, through 20 years as a TD, of P J Crotty, the Kilkenny bakers.

Gerard Brady, Fianna Fail TD for Dublin South East, takes a keen interest in matters of optical benefits and drugs refunds. His family company owns a chemist's shop and optician's business in Dublin.

THESE businessman TDs and many more like them have, no doubt, found that the information they pick up as politicians is useful in making commercial decisions. At the same time, their political decisions must be coloured by commercial considerations.

Yet few know the factual details of these complementary - and not conflicting, at least not for the individuals involved - interests.

But the outstanding example of a TD who achieved unexplained personal and business benefit from politics is the man who appeared to take the firm, and morally correct, line with Lawlor - Charlie Haughey.

In the Sixties, the first decade of his career as a TD, he purchased one large north Dublin property and sold it for four times the amount. He purchased a Co Meath farm and racehorses. He later bought a north Co Dublin mansion with 250 acres and stud farm buildings. He was also able to purchase an island off the Co Kerry coast and build on it using the most expensive building method imaginable - flying the materials out by helicopter.

One successful property deal does not explain all that. But Haughey has firmly refused to be questioned about, much less give details of, his business dealings or his personal wealth.

With that example to guide them, more junior politicians are understandably shy about revealing fully their commercial interests. Z

HOW TO FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR TD'S BUSINESS INTERESTS

The Companies Office in Dublin Castle is the main source. To use it, you need to know a company name. If you think the company has the TD's family's name, but are not sure, you can look through the list of companies on the list (microfiche) for the one that seems most likely.

It costs a scandalously high £2.50 to look at the full file of a company's records. The first details recorded should be a company's registered office; a particular solicitor's or accountant's address used as a registered office may suggest a significant link.

The files should record directors and shareholders of a company and any changes in either of these. If any director has other directorships, this should be indicated. It is always worth looking up files of any such linked companies.

The company files should also contain records of any court judgements of debts owing obtained by creditors. They should also have details of any mortgages or charges on property.

(It may be worth checking at the relevant council planning office if there are any valid planning applications or permissions for that property).

Files at Companies Office are frequently out of date; if they are, bring this to the attention of the office staff.



The efforts to have contraception methods made legally available in the south started in earnest twenty years ago. Patricia Hegarty wonders if we are any better off today than we were then.

"People's rights as regards contraception weren't given to them - they were won. By people like the Irish Women's Liberation Movement, Mary McGee and the doctors who opened the first family planning clinic. Without them we'd have nothing at all and what we have at the moment is inadequate." That's the view of Jon O'Brien, Information and Education Officer of the Irish Family Planning Association.

Under-18s cannot get condoms from their local chemist without a prescription. They can legally be married at the age of sixteen. Some women are prescribed the Pill because their doctor cannot fit the Cap.

Women in rural areas have little access to family planning clinics and have to depend on rural GPs "who would quite often just prescribe the Pill, and not provide proper follow up", according to women attending the Council for the Status of Women's Health Conference last month.

Abortion is banned by the constitution and even the dissemination of information on abortion is unlawful.

Meanwhile, family planning clinics are struggling to survive although they provide a range of services which many doctors either will not or cannot provide. The Bray clinic is faced with closure from lack of funds and the Cavan group has all but given up looking for premises. Though providing an essential service the clinics receive no government funding and no state subsidy for their clients on Medical Cards.

Contraception in Ireland can more accurately be characterised by what is lacking than by what is provided. Lack of information, lack of access and lack of choice. But what actually is available today and what did it take to reach this level of provision?

1969: A company called 'The Fertility Guidance Company Ltd' was formed (later to be the IFPA) and opened its first clinic in Merrion Square, Dublin.

1970: The Contraceptive Train - a group of women from the Irish Women's Liberation Movement took the train to Belfast to buy condoms and other contraceptives. On their return to Dublin they challenged customs officers at Connolly Station to arrest them for illegal importation.

The customs officers allowed them to pass.

1971: The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 1971, introduced in the Senate by Mary Robinson, was defeated before it could be published.

1972: Mary McGee was defeated in her High Court case to prove that the confiscation of her contraceptive customs was unconstitutional. The confiscation had been carried out under Section 17 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1935, which purported to ban not only the sale of contraceptives within the state, but also the importation of them from outside it.

1973: In November, Mary McGee won her appeal case in the Supreme Court. This decision made the importation of contraceptives for personal use legal. The ban on the sale of contraceptives remained, however, and a second attempt by Senator Mary Robinson to amend the family planning law failed.

1974: The IFPA was now able to import condoms, diaphragms and creams and distribute them by donation at the clinics. However, they were charged with the promotion of unnatural methods of contraception in the booklet under the 1935 Criminal Law (Amendment) Act. The case was dismissed. The coalition government introduced a Bill to regulate the supply of contraceptives. The Bill was defeated when the Taoiseach, Liam Cosgrave and six Fine Gael deputies voted against it.

1976: The IFPA booklet 'Family Planning' was banned by the Censorship Board.

1977: The High Court declared the ban null and void. An appeal was lodged by the Attorney General and the Censorship Board.

1978: The Supreme Court upheld the High Court decision on the Booklet case. The Minister for Health, Charles J. Haughey, published the Family Planning (Health) Bill.

1979: The Family Planning (Health) Act became law. It allowed the sale of all types of contraceptives by pharmacists only - on presentation of a prescription, which could be supplied only to those who require them for 'bona fide' family planning purposes.

1983: The so-called "right to life" amendment was

passed by referendum, placing a constitutional ban on abortion and threatening restrictions on some family planning clinics. Doctor Andrew Rynne was prosecuted under the Family Planning (Health) Act for supplying ten condoms directly to a patient. He was fined £500 but this was dropped on appeal.

1985: Under strong attack from the Catholic Church, Fianna Fail and conservative lobby groups, Barry Desmond introduced the (Health) Family Planning Amendment Bill. The bill, which made contraceptives available to those over the age of 18 without a prescription, was narrowly passed.

1986: Judge Hamilton found in favour of SPUC in the High Court and ruled that it was unconstitutional to provide information on abortion. Open Line pregnancy counselling clinic closed down and the Well Women clinics ended their pregnancy counselling service. The advice available to women with unwanted pregnancies was thus restricted.

Under the current legislation, some local chemists sell the barrier methods of contraception: condoms, the sponge, spermicides. Through some local doctors you can get the IUD or coil, Depo-Provera, condoms, vasectomy and advice on natural family planning methods; the Pill is available for those who want it for 'bona fide family planning purposes', and the Morning-After Pill is available as a post-coital method. Female sterilisation is available mainly from private clinics.

Doctors and chemists are not obliged to provide this service. Clients can often be sure of a more comprehensive service at family planning clinics - but cannot always get to one, particularly if they live in rural areas.

Twenty years after they first opened their doors the IFPA feel that funds should be provided for:

research into medical methods of contraception
information leaflets on family planning, and
subsidising clinics for medical card clients who cannot afford to pay.

They would like to see:

female sterilisation being made widely available through public hospitals
greater access to services for rural women
a national programme of sex education in schools, and
greater training for GPs in family planning.

Legally, they want:

clarification of the 'bona fide' terms of reference, and
removal of the ban on the sale of condoms to under 18s.

But most of all, says Jon O'Brien, "the state should recognise family planning as an integral part of the nation's health care and as a human right. They should provide financial support and assistance to its greater availability and improvement in standards".

When is a Women's Centre not a Women's Centre?
When it has nowhere to go. Six years ago in Cavan, a small group of women began to meet regularly with the aim of setting up a family planning clinic and women's resource centre in the town. Such a clinic was, in 1983, urgently needed. Alternative facilities were non-existent. Indeed the very idea of family planning was taboo with a large section of the community, among whom there was furthermore an inevitable, although mistaken, association of contraception with the more complex issues surrounding abortion.

When the Cavan Women's Centre, as the group became known, started a serious search for rented premises, these prejudices became manifest. In, of

Clare Greene writes about the difficult experience of setting up a women's centre

course, the nicest possible way. Time and again as suitable properties became available, the landlords concerned, often initially enthusiastic, would find a bewildering array of reasons to withdraw at the eleventh hour. Well, wouldn't you know?

In the summer of '85 the group had to consider the possibility that they got the needs of the community quite wrong. It's hard to keep banging your head against the wall without a little reassurance. So we undertook a door-to-door survey of Cavan households, visiting one house in five throughout the town. Despondent, we half expected a hostile reaction, but in the event were overwhelmed by the degree of support voiced. The approval rate for the proposed clinic ran to 87 per cent of those interviewed.

Nevertheless as we enter '89 the Cavan Women's Centre still finds itself out in the cold. That opposition persists, resulting in some subtle repression from behind the scenes, is undeniable - any women's group operating in Ireland must surely know the feeling! However it must be said that other factors have distracted our attention and modified our aims. More emphasis on regular and well-attended public meetings and discussions, the Divorce campaign, and financial constraints have played a larger part since '85. The urgent need for a family planning service in Cavan has at the same time been eased by the increasing availability of such facilities from the local GPs which, though not brilliant, is a major step forward for women here. We feel that despite the failure - so far - to set up the proposed clinic, the Women's Centre deserves some credit for the change in local awareness.

The past six years have shown many results for the Cavan Women's Centre, even if they are not as tangible as we would have liked. The group continues to hold regular meetings and is still looking for a permanent base. The emphasis has moved away from family planning as the top priority, but the need to face up to other issues affecting women and their families in Cavan is as strong as ever, and there is a limit to what can be done without a place to work from. It's cold out here in the snow. Can anybody give us a key?

stare the rat down

Sue Richardson went to *"The Accused"* and found that for a film about rape it badly missed

The media would have us believe that one of Ireland's major talking points present is that film *"The Accused"*. Everyone, seemingly is talking about it - if - if - they are though, then it's the film itself, not the act of rape, that's the talking point as usual.

One of the best things about the film is the way it shows up the inadequacy of the legal system to deal with rape. However, one of the worst things about it is the way the justice system ends up being both villain and hero - to all intents and purposes the film has a "happy ending". This masks the end result of the workings of the justice system when it comes to rape.

In the film, the results are straightforward. Because there is a second trial the woman who was raped gets her day in court, proving to the general public as well as the jury, that a rape did indeed take place. She is, as is normal practice, insulted and humiliated by the lawyers of the defendants, but ultimately she "wins" because the men are found guilty. Six men go to prison: three rapists and three of their cheering bystanders. That's where the film ends. But it's not where reality ends.

Prison is the sentence given to those found guilty, of a crime, but what if the action being punished is not perceived as a crime? The men's perception that rape is not a crime is clearly shown in the film: all during the rape a crowd of men stand by, cheering and encouraging the rapists. The result is that the prisoner feels he is "innocent" - unjustly in jail. Someone is guilty - a woman - a woman - guilty of landing him in prison.

Research into rape shows that it is an act of violence against women. Rape has little to do with sexual gratification: it's about exercising power to brutalise and humiliate women. Men don't rape women because they love them; they do it because they despise them. If a rapist goes into prison as a result of despising women, feeling his action was appropriate and that he has been unfairly jailed, how do you think he's going to feel towards women when he's out? The recidivism rate for rapists is high.

Of the devastating psychological after-effects of rape on women we see practically nothing in the film. The general appearance, clothes, manner and language of the woman who is raped remain much the same throughout the film. Pregnancy? Venereal disease? No mention. She turns off her partner and weeps a couple of times and that's about the height of it. Incidentally, the portrayal of the counsellor from the Rape Crisis Centre is very negative.

Most of the reviews of the film have been peppered with sexist expressions like "she flaunted herself", "she wore a gaping blouse", etc. The role of clothing, behaviour and language are major issues raised by the film. Clothing is "provocative", "sexy", "gaping" - when it's worn by a woman. When did you ever hear these words used to describe men in body-tight jeans or navel-displaying shirts? Men are never sexually provocative. When they dance the woman the rape victim does it's never seen as being an "invitation" to rape. Would a man watching the rape of another man by three others say "He's putting on a great show?" And would he then turn around to another passing man and say "It's your turn next, honey" as one of the bystanders does to the victim's waitress friend?

I'm not saying men don't get raped. We all know they do. I'm simply saying that I haven't heard male rape victims being told they "asked for it".

Kelly McGillis who plays the prosecutor was herself raped by 2 men when she was a teenager. She says that what is needed is for rape victims to speak out. But it's easy to understand why so few do.

A large proportion of rapists are known to the raped. Rapists, like women batterers and child sexual abusers are "ordinary" men: the sort you know do "do" things like that. They are our fathers, brothers, sons, husbands, lovers, partners, friends, neighbours and acquaintances. We know them. They wouldn't. So they didn't. So it must have been her.

Silence on rape, on women battering and child sexual abuse is collusion with violence. We collude when we refuse to confront, or discover what is most unbearable. It will remain that way till this rat is flushed out into the open and stared down - until our streets, fields and homes are safe for women and children to live and play in.



LABOURERS FUTURE

In Tralee Labour Party members will be debating the most radical political and organisational programme ever put forward to a Labour Party Conference. This programme seeks to disengage Labour from the old moulds that, along with so many of its European counter-parts, it finds itself in.

There are motions to build broad, democratic alliances with progressive interest groups, to take the fight against the right wing consensus to a wider political plane than just the ballot paper and parliament. There are motions to enter into dialogue with other socialist political parties and independents to achieve a broad socialist alliance. There are attempts to build real links with the trade union movement at the grass roots level between Party and trade union branches and members. There are motions to



To move in radical directions, to break new ground requires confidence, self-assurance and a strong sense of purpose. Those pre-requisites are not widespread within the Labour Party. We are all aware that Labour has yet to make any breakthrough in the polls. The recent MRBI polls showed Labour still in fifth place in Dublin, no increase in support in Leinster while in Munster, the Party traditional base, our support is lower than the 1987 election results.

My fear is that the Party, uncertain as to its future and its inability to break through the right wing consensus, will seek out safe ground. People will retreat to tried and true methods, 'the right candidates', the clinics, an electoralism that is failing to present working men and women with a fresh, radical and progressive face.

Emmet Stagg, Labour Party T.D. for Kildare, writing here before the Labour Party conference, fears that the party will seek to play safe in the face of declining support.

modernise the Labour Party and bring its organisation into the late 20th century. Women in the Party have put forward proposals for new women's sections so that feminist politics is not treated as a purely electoral device.

That this agenda has not been treated with much interest from the media (last year democratic election of the Party Leader received all the headlines, but then that was categorised by many as a power struggle among personalities) should not mean that socialists and progressives outside the Party should ignore the fine print of this Conference. There will be the elections for Party officer (I, again, am facing challenges from the Trotskyist left and the Right of the Party), there will be the Leaders' Speech. But these are manifestations, not the real work of Labour Party conferences.

My fear is that Party members, though willing to break new ground, might be hesitant, unsure. Members everywhere are asking themselves, why aren't we gaining support; in times of cutbacks, emigration, unemployment - surely these are times when the Left should be making an advance.

This, of course, is not necessarily true. More times than not, it is times like these that make progressive advance most difficult. As I have never been a believer in the idea that the poorer the working class gets, the better it is for socialists (increasing poverty and alienation can just as easily lead to apathy or fascism), nor do I believe that the more the Party fails to advance, the easier it is for progressives in the Party to argue for radical change.

However, I am always the optimist. And I have a sense of history (it took democrats in the Party nearly 20 years to win the simple argument that the Party Leader should be elected by the Party itself). We will put forward the programme, argue the merits without rancour, personalisations or conventional power plays. We will put forward the vision of a Labour Party struggling with working men and women wherever their oppression takes place - the community, the workplace, the marketplace - inviting people to participate in their own struggles, organising people to organise themselves. It is a vision well worth arguing for, well worth working for. My great hope for this Conference is that in the first instance we win people to this vision, both within and outside the Labour Party. If that happens, votes will be a mere formality.



PROFILE OF AN ACTIVIST

DESPITE the huge public interest in what has become known as the Father Paddy Ryan Affair, and despite two recent MRBI polls showing a majority of people in the Republic opposed to extradition, the Irish Anti-Extradition Committee does not have a high public profile. The individual Fianna Fail activists who have opposed the government have commanded more attention.

Alistair Rutherfordale is not a member of Sinn Féin. So Section 31 cannot be blamed. It is, he believes, the climate of self-censorship and fear within the media that hushes any opinion which might be dubbed 'republican'.

Alistair Rutherfordale smiles at the thought. He and his fellow campaigners are usually honoured with just one line: "A group of anti-extradition protestors were outside. The Gardai



pathy for this issue which needs to be reached."

Being a northerner living in the Republic, he acknowledges that many in the South see the North and partition as non-issues, irrelevant to their lives. Alistair Rutherfordale favours a broad alliance of radicals coming together to develop a philosophy that could address the North, the EC and multi-national exploitation.

"The South proclaims itself a republic but the politicians here are sitting with a begging bowl held out to foreign investors, who then come here, take, and give nothing in return. British involvement is one thing, the international dimension is the other.

"I do not see any future until such time as Irish people can determine their own destiny and rebuild economic structures to favour the workers. The central point is convincing people

Clare Farrell talks to Alistair Rutherfordale, chairperson of the Irish Anti-Extradition committee, about his northern Protestant upbringing, his move towards republican politics and his hopes for the current anti-extradition campaign

said there were no incidents".

"The media present a pro-British line on this. I'm sick of the 'international obligation' argument," he says. "Most of the signatories to the European Convention on Suppression of Terrorism have derogations; they still retain the right to determine whether there is a political offence. The three clearest and most recent cases of this are Paddy Ryan in Belgium, Harry Flynn in France and Joe Doherty in the United States. None of these three have been extradited."

Alistair Rutherfordale grew up in a Protestant family near Hollywood, Co Down, and studied law at Queen's University. He quotes Wolfe Tone to anyone who is surprised that a northern Protestant could come to his position, especially a northern Protestant of 27, who is little older than the current so called 'troubles'.

He came to his present position, he says, through involvement in socialist politics, student union activity and, finally, the hunger strikes of 1981.

"Unionism never attracted me. I always had a left tendency," he says. "At one stage I was very close to the Northern Ireland Labour Party. Seeing all those splits, though, I came around to thinking you could not have a left position solely in a Northern Ireland

context; the national question was dividing the working class in the North.

"The hunger strike was the watershed. Around that time, whether people supported the IRA or not, they had to acknowledge that they were there and they saw the armed struggle as a way of reaching a political goal. This wasn't the mentality of psychopathic killers. But the Northern Ireland Labour Party either ignored it, or worse, were antagonistic."

Alistair Rutherfordale was elected deputy president of the Students' Union in Queen's in 1983. He now works in the USI national office. He is just finishing a thesis, 'The Exclusionary Rule: Evidence in Violation of the Constitution of Ireland' for a master's degree.

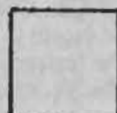
It was his interest in law which led him to the anti-extradition campaign. There was some political pragmatism involved too. "Extradition was an issue on which I felt something could be done. The pressure had to go on the southern political leaders because they ultimately can do something to stop it. The Paddy Ryan case showed if you mobilise enough people something could be achieved. What the Irish left badly needs is victories in the South. If you're winning, then people get involved. There is an underlying sym-

that partition, Britain, the EC and multi-nationals are the issues that are causing the economic problems of this country. The real question is: why did the national debt come about?

"An alliance has to develop an economic philosophy than can be relevant and draw people together. Personally, I would like to see the development of an advanced social democracy with priorities like access to housing, health and social services. But I don't like to get too lost in this debate. One of the problems with the far left is that they get stuck in particular left positions which are far too rigid."

Rigidity is perhaps the reason he is not a member of any political party. He prefers, he says, the freedom to discuss ideas and change. He likes the idea of being able to agree with whom he wants, on what he wants and when he wants.

Alistair Rutherfordale will shortly submit his Master's thesis but he cannot imagine himself ever practising law. For the present, his time is fully occupied with the campaign to prevent the extradition of Paul Kane, Owen Carron and Dermot Finucane. It is a hopeful sign, he thinks, that no new extradition cases are coming before the courts.



choosing a leader

WONDER if students of politics will draw any conclusions from the startling evidence given in the Irish Distillers case by a prominent Dublin investment consultant. When it emerged that a key point at issue concerned a tax clearance certificate, he was advised "to get up to Kinsealy" and arrange such a certificate.

Now this consultant is a citizen whose vote at the ballot box is worth no more and no less than any other. Nonetheless it was accepted that he wielded a quite disproportional potential influence at the centre of political power.

In theory, ministers exercise real power and make decisions in the public interest after weighing up competing claims. In the Beaumont hospital case both Barry Desmond and Rory O'Hanlon faced a group of determined medical consultants who refused to co-operate in the opening of the hospital until agreement was reached on their claim to a private clinic on the site.

Such conflicts are not new. In many ways they are the stuff of political power. But is it not remarkable how often the final resolution of these conflicts favour those who can back their claims with an unstated blackmail as to how they will act (or refuse to act) if they don't get their way.

In a recent article a British Labour MP, Dr Oonagh McDonald recalled efforts in 1976 to formulate a Capital Acquisitions Tax while she was a Treasury Minister. As discussions proceeded so many special cases were made, so many exemptions introduced that the whole purpose of the exercise was eroded. It was eventually abandoned.

We all know the rich exercise power providing access to influence for ordinary citizens and groups. The remark-

able fact is how unsuccessfully they play this role at present.

The FF Ard Fheis and the Labour Annual conference were held in recent weeks. Both are set piece events as much and can, directly or indirectly, influence the decisions of governments. What concerns me is the absence of a sustained countervailing influence. Political parties who organise on a mass basis are supposed to be a major element in to provide a suitable media image as to channel the views of rank and file members to those who are to represent them. Party managers go to great lengths to avoid a headline disaster such as that which befell the hapless PDs when they expelled God from their draft Constitution while most delegates were at Sunday Mass.

For the two main parties these Annual meetings are as much social as political events. The FF veterans from Bruce who spoke to Fintan O'Toole in the *Irish Times* admitted as much. The photo of a mere 40 delegates debating environment policy in the vast Point Depot during the FG Ard Fheis confirms the basic irrelevance of the gatherings for these parties.


The size of Labour's conference has grown in inverse proportion to the party's share of the national poll. When I joined in 1968 the conference was held in Liberty Hall very comfortably with some 700 delegates and Labour was at an all time high in the polls. Tralee welcomed 1500 delegates with the party desperately trying to break out of its single figure rating.

This year's key decision may well mark a genuine breakthrough and not just for Labour itself. The one member one vote system for choosing the party leader will inevitably transform the na-

ture of party membership. It will over a decade trickle down to the way candidates are chosen and represent a considerable transfer of power away from the parliamentary college of cardinals. It must certainly create a similar move in the WP since it is modelled on the rule of the new merged big union SIPTU. It is even conceivable the bigger parties will be obliged to follow suit.

Political parties may thus be revived as the route for a concerned citizen to influence events. But it is a slow process. It could quite easily go into reverse. Take an important political decision and examine the options open to a citizen who wants to influence its outcome. What, for example, should a worker who lives in Tallaght do to get a DART type transport system? This is far from being an extreme demand. It has been costed by CIE and is included as an urgent priority in its development plans. But it is a public investment proposal and hence cuts across the acknowledged set of priorities of those who are drawing up the Dublin regional plan.

Tallaght has active Labour and WP branches and high profile public representatives. Many local activists positively choose to direct a demand such as the DART line through local development bodies rather than through the party political path. This, in my view, fatally weakens the political process. It feeds the tolerance allowed to local politicians to support individual projects while also supporting the policies which at national level make the achievement of these projects impossible.

As long as this ambiguity towards party politics continues to exist I believe there will be no capacity to match the power and influence of those who, at the drop of a hat, can "get up to Kinsealy" 

MOTHER IRELAND, the documentary made by Derry Film and Video has been excluded from this month's Celtic Film Festival. The exclusion highlights once again the precarious situation with which this workshop and the Belfast's film and video workshop have to operate.

Censorship has accompanied all filmed reporting of the North in recent years. In 1983 'Acceptable Levels', a TV feature, told the story of a London-based TV crew which comes to Belfast to cover "the troubles" through the eyes of a young girl.

The interview in the Divis Flats is going fine when a young girl is shot dead nearby with a plastic bullet from a British soldier's gun. Back in London, the director sits at the editing bench and instructs the editor to remove the "on-the-spot" footage as it is "emotive" and upsets the "balance" of the piece.

After twenty years of conflict, it could be said that the British public and the southern public are no better informed as to what is happening in the North. Memories reach back to the last atrocity. Interest has long been a victim of apathy and censorship.

Up to recently few films were made in the North. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland refused to fund film and the British Film Institute refused to recognise the North as falling within its responsibility.

While a key factor in the establishment of the Belfast and Derry workshops in the past four years was the support of Channel 4, the involvement of most of the people in those groups in media - video, community printing presses and theatre - goes back to the 70s. In the case of Derry the move into video became an obvious and a necessary one. The city was among the most photographed places in the world yet no-one in Derry knew how to counteract the sensationalist 'war-torn' image of the place. Belfast Independent Video cite cases of foreign journalists paying kids to throw stones for the cameras during the hunger strike campaign. The workshops are seen by those who work in them as an antidote to the voracious media and film industry - centralised, inaccessible and exploitative of people and situations. For many media people it could be Derry one day and Delhi the next.

Channel 4 provides funding for wages and production as part of its support for some 25 franchised workshops throughout Britain and the North of Ireland. The workshops are defined by their collective work practice - sharing of skills, a close relationship with the community and their equal wages. Most members of both Belfast and Derry workshops have no professional background but are self taught.

The commitment of workshops to covering issues in their region would perhaps not be too problematic for a workshop in Cardiff but given the situation in the North, their position is often precarious. In this context the traditional notions of documentary 'balance' and 'objectivity', suspect in themselves, are difficult to sustain.

The exclusion of Derry Film and Video's Mother Ireland from the Celtic Film Festival, this year being held in Brittany (March 13-17), indicates the difficult atmosphere in which the workshops must work.

While the Celtic Film Festival denies any censorial role and points to the large number of entrants, the Derry group is convinced that the festival's pre-selection committee (with a majority of broadcast company members) has taken on board the censorship measures of the British and Irish governments. The film, which looks at the tradi-



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alite

tional image of Ireland as a woman and draws response from women associated with the nationalist struggle and feminist issues since the beginning of this century to this image, was the first programme to be banned under the censorship notices issued by Douglas Hurd last October.

The decision of the Celtic Film Festival not to screen *Mother Ireland* coincided with an award of Best Documentary for the film at the recent Festival Femmes Cathodiques in Paris. One person familiar with the documentary at Channel 4 described it as "an excellent first broadcast production from a workshop", which only intensifies the suspicion of censorship. "This is unacceptable," says producer Margo Harkin, "for a festival which claims to be representative of indigenous film culture in the Celtic countries."

The Belfast Workshop encountered similar problems with their first production (as a workshop) which dealt with plastic bullet deaths in the North of Ireland. It was initially given the go-ahead by Channel 4. But when it was completed the channel advised that it not be presented for broadcast. There was an increasingly conservative regime at the channel with the arrival of Michael Grade as Chief Executive; deregulation was placing added financial pressure and the political situation was deteriorating around the time of Gibraltar and the Milltown and Andersonstown killings.

Their most recent production, 'Our Words Jump to Life' is an irreverent look at the issues (sectarianism, emigration, etc.) facing Belfast youth. It was screened on Channel 4 in December. The Independent Broadcast Authority had sought otherwise but Channel 4 stood by it, one person in the Channel commenting that the only imbalance was that the parents didn't get a chance to respond to the anti-authoritarian views of their children.

It is a year since Derry Film and Video completed *Mother Ireland*. It is also a year since one of the six women featured, Mairead Farrell, was killed in Gibraltar. In her interview she explains how she joined the IRA while still in her teens, the attempts of her and other women to deal with the perception of women republicans as being there to back up the men and her dislike of the *Mother Ireland* image because it suggested submissiveness. It was only when she died that her presence in the programme became an issue. It is unlikely that this programme will ever be seen on Irish or British television.

This may be a measure of the success of this recently established production group in producing a unique and provocative programme from their Derry base but also illustrates the level of censorship that takes place level within broadcasting when it comes to the North.

In May, Derry Film and Video go into production for *Hush-a-Bye-baby*, a story of a young Derry girl who becomes pregnant. Channel 4, in funding the production, have sustained their commitment to the group. This will be shot on 16mm and will probably feature everyone in Derry.

Belfast Independent Video will continue to work on video producing documentary involving a close relationship with communities developed in recent years. They are more hesitant about working on film because this involves either learning new skills or hiring freelance technicians. Almost completed is a documentary on Religion and Atheism in Ireland, which includes interviews with people of different beliefs, due for future broadcast on Channel 4.

red

NICARAGUA

Molly O'Duffy, a recent visitor to Nicaragua, considers the plight of that country in the light of a book on a community at war.

FRAGILE, BUT FIRM

On July 19, Nicaraguans will celebrate the tenth anniversary of the overthrow of the dictator Anastasio Somoza. They will have a party. But will they have food on the table?

Nicaraguans get poorer by the day. Having been all but defeated in its attempts to topple the Sandinista government by military means, the US government has adopted a strategy of impoverishing the Nicaraguans. The hope is that hardship will turn the Nicaraguan people against their government. The US trade embargo contributes directly to hunger in Nicaragua; children are again dying from diarrhoea.

This is a tired revolution - or a revolution which never had a chance. The economy is in tatters. The people are in rags. But they keep on smiling, laughing and, most of all, fighting. Alison Rooper's book* is a portrait of those besieged but happy people at a particularly difficult time in their history.

US foreign policy has put four million Nicaraguans at the centre of the world stage. Most of us know them only through statistics: 8,000 killed in a decade of fighting. A book which reveals their lives is valuable. Salman Rushdie wrote about Nicaragua on the strength of meeting a few top shots and going to some parties. Alison Rooper went to Condega, a small town in the North, and lived with a poor family.

Her book describes in painstaking detail the agony and ecstasy of life in Nicaragua. It contains all the information required for an understanding of the national context and presents that information in a scholarly, but immensely readable, way.

The people of Condega, having won with their sweat and blood some degree of control over their lives now have to spend sweat and blood defending that small gain. The struggle to remain the only Central American country not in the pocket of the US is important to all socialists, whatever views they may have on the revolution or on the actions of the Sandinistas. The description of the price paid by Condegans for the privilege of ploughing their own furrow cannot fail to move anybody opposed to US imperialism.

Ms Rooper chose to live in a town close to the border with Honduras. Fear of invasion by US forces and the ac-

tivity of the contra were the background of daily life. The book lets the people speak for themselves: a Sandinista woman who 'discovered herself' through the struggle; the local comandante moved to tears by the sight of a comrade's body, mutilated by the torturers of the National Guard; the mothers of the 'heroes and martyrs' of the revolution; the liberation theology priest who recalls the killing of a Sandinista teacher two months before Somoza's overthrow; and, most moving of all, the old man who played his part in the revolution running messages for Sandino in the 1920s.

The personal experiences give an insight into the optimism of a people who, even when the revolution did not deliver paradise, are prepared to defend it. Ms Rooper does not gloss over the inequalities and imperfections of Nicaraguan society. Women participated to an extraordinary degree in the insurrection, they play a crucial role in national politics, but the plight of the vast majority has not changed; for some, it has worsened.

Ms Rooper's 'bean a ti', like my own, spent the whole day in the house, cooking, washing clothes by hand and looking after grandchildren whose fathers were fighting or had deserted the family and whose mothers were working or hawking to support them.

Since the period covered by the book the war has scaled down. But, also since that time, the local currency (cordoba) was devalued and a series of drastic measures introduced. Then Hurricane Joan left 300,000 homeless and destroyed much of Nicaragua's export crops, coffee and cotton.

The US government continues to foment social and political unrest. Alison Rooper's book helps to explain why, in such dire economic straits, Nicaraguans have not yielded to that kind of pressure. The people of Condega will not give an inch to the United States. Fragile the victory may be; it is also enduring.

* *A FRAGILE VICTORY: A Nicaraguan Community At War.* By Alison Rooper (Weidenfeld and Nicolson). Details of (and excerpts from) a number of other books on Nicaragua are contained in *NICARAGUA: An Unfinished Canvas*, published by the Nicaraguan Book Collective, Dublin.

Last summer after the latest series of economic cuts by the Sandinista government a poignant letter appeared in the party newspaper.

It was from a worker outside Managua the capital city who had to take a bus every day to the hotel near the outskirts where he was a porter. The steep hike in bus fares and the compression of wages had left him in a sorry state. Now the price of the bus ride to work was more than his daily earnings. What am I to do?, he asked.

Just before Christmas, the latest estimate for inflation came out: 20,000 per cent and rising. Buying vegetables

in 1979 they promised a novel approach for change at a moment of intense revulsion for Pol Pot's disastrous reign in Cambodia.

The pressure and disruption of constant war makes it impossible to really judge whether this was a success or a failure. Some would say that the basic characteristics have been wiped out altogether. But in trying to strike a balance between lifting up the poor and retaining the confidence of the private sector, Nicaragua is confronting huge problems faced across the world in countries like Mozambique. And notwithstanding the war, the Sandinistas' own

CLOSE TO THE EDGE

in the market, paying for a meal in a restaurant involved the transfer of scores of notes at prices which would be different the day after. A pointed symbol of the crushed idealism are the millions of newly printed notes put into circulation every week bearing the portraits of revolutionary heroes that lose their value within days.

The East German presses cannot keep up with the demand so old copies of 20, 50 and 100 notes are stamped with three noughts and sent out in stacks. There is so much money in circulation, so many notes change hands so often and so fast that it would hardly matter if counterfeiters set up their own printing press.

In these circumstances, a revolutionary government can do practically nothing except survive, as the Sandinistas have done through discipline, guile and imagination. A more extraordinary question is: how do poor Nicaraguans survive? Like the man who spends more than his day's wages squashed on an overcrowded bus. With the government incapable of providing relief and daily life always deteriorating, never improving, this can be something of a mystery.

The answer lies partly in two options which mirror our own relationship of old with Britain: emigration and remittances of dollars from Nicaraguans working in the US. Emigration really speeded up last year as negotiations for a final settlement to the war dragged on and on and economy got worse and worse.

What happens to these bills when they arrive back in Nicaragua shows just how much the country has become a dollar economy. Over five years ago they opened a supermarket to sell luxury and essential goods to diplomats for dollars. But now if you go into the 'diplo' store on any day of the week you're likely to find it full of Nicaraguans spending their remittance dollars on cornflakes and packets of Uncle Ben's rice.

And it is not only those with relatives in the States who will be there but various workers paid in dollars as an incentive. The government is giving so many dollars to private coffee farmers that major towns in the coffee producers areas have opened up mini diplos.

Paying for coffee beans partly in dollars is one of the tactics the Sandinistas have used to keep alive their much vaunted mixed economy. When they came to power in

confusion about what to do has contributed to the mess.

For instance, they now admit that many confiscations of farms were unwarranted. They have abandoned control of internal trade which forced peasants with a few acres to sell their beans and rice to the state who then sold it cheaply to the town. Often private businessmen and farmers complain that the rules keep changing the rules.

There was one famous example of this last year when completely new notes and exchange rate were introduced overnight. It was accompanied by a removal of subsidies to agricultural producers and more reliance on the market. But at the same time for nakedly political reasons, the government set wholly unrealistic prices for a range of basic goods, used up reams of newsprint every day in declaring war on speculators who sold above these prices and sent bands of young party members in to dismantle the stalls of errant merchants. Within a fortnight the whole campaign was forgotten and a few months later the economic planning minister said the whole affair had been an embarrassing mistake.

There is a strong argument that the current cuts and retrenchment would not have been so severe if the government had been less dogmatic and more imaginative in the past few years when various policies were obviously fouling. And the real irony is that at the same time as one zealous government agency is putting obstacles in the way of farmers and businessmen, another department is handing them generous subsidies.

Equally, it is very hard to see how all the reforms in the world can now work without massive capital investment. Here, the Reagan administration has done its work by stealth, blocking loans and credits from the International Development Bank and the World Bank.

The Soviet Union and its allies in Comecon have essentially bankrolled the Sandinista war against the contras. But they believe that the point has been passed when further investment is just dead money.

No matter how many Ladas are sent to Managua, Nicaragua's ability to have a working economy is still dependent on its neighbours in Central America and the US. That is why, with the contras beaten, both President Ortega and Mr. Gorbachev are trying to persuade George Bush to lift the trade embargo.

NICARAGUA

RAISING ISSUES + PICKING COFFEE

Profile of the Irish Nicaragua Support Group

The struggle in Nicaragua has engaged the attention of more people here than that of any other country, with the exception of South Africa. And the Irish Nicaragua Support Group is one of the largest and most active of the groups in solidarity with the people of a developing country.

The INSG has 250 members and ten affiliated unions, organises a regular, and successful, fund-raising disco, Club Sandino, publishes a two-monthly newsletter and a six-monthly bulletin, has hosted several delegations of Nicaraguans, including music groups, to Ireland and helped working and study trips of Irish people get to Nicaragua.

In this, the tenth anniversary year of the Sandinista revolution, the INSG has an even fuller agenda than usual. It culminates with the staging in Dublin next October of a European conference of Nicaraguan solidarity organisations. This comes five years after Ireland was represented for the first time at that European conference.

That was in 1984, the year the INSG was founded. A number of public meetings in support of the Sandinistas had been organised in Ireland before that. The favourable report of an all-party delegation of TDs and senators which went to Nicaragua to observe the 1984 elections helped generate wider interest in - and broader support for - Nicaragua.

When Sergio Ramirez, vice-president of Nicaragua, visited Ireland in early 1985, Trinity College Exam Hall was jammed with over 600 people who wanted to hear him. There was similar interest in the visit the following year of Miguel d'Escoto, the foreign minister.

Also in 1986, the INSG organised the first visit to Nicaragua of a group of Irish supporters and it sought to broaden further the support for Nicaragua through the Nicaragua Must Survive Campaign. The dominant fear at that time was that the United States would go one step further than direct (though covert) aid to the Contra and invade Nicaragua.

In the Nicaragua Must Survive campaign and in other initiatives, the INSG has adopted the strategies also followed by other European solidarity groups. Like them, the INSG maintains close liaison with the nearest Nicaraguan embassy, in London, from which it receives regular mailings of information.

Information has come too - and in increasing volume - from the INSG supporters who have gone to Nicaragua. A number of the most active members of the INSG have lived and worked for extended periods in Nicaragua. The 1988 coffee brigade of 35 people distinguished itself by picking more coffee than any other international brigade. It also spawned the Nicaragua Book Collective (see footnote to Molly O'Duffy's piece alongside). The 1989 coffee brigade returned on February 28 after a six-week stay.

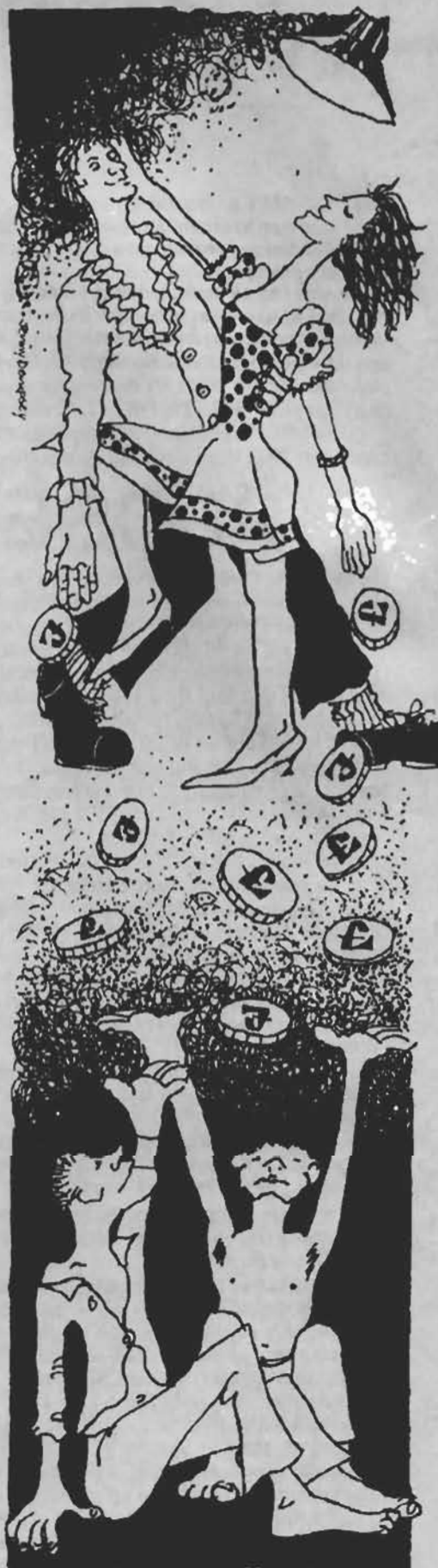
With the establishment of Club Sandino - on a model developed by the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign in Britain - the INSG has been relieved of the pressure of having to scrimp and scrape funds together for every initiative. Launched a year ago in Dublin after an initial set-back, when the first intended location went on fire, the monthly, later fortnightly, disco specialising in Latin American and African sounds, has been a social and financial success. Club Sandino celebrates its first anniversary at McGonagles on March 11th.

There are now plans to run occasional Clubs Sandino in Bray, Galway and Sligo. INSG committees have been established in eight centres outside Dublin, among them Co Donegal, Co Clare and Co Tipperary.

The funds go to support the regular activities of the INSG. It is the Nicaragua Must Survive campaign which has supported individual projects such as rapid airlifts to Nicaragua of drugs much in need. The NMS has now been dissolved into INSG as other supporting groups have not been able to sustain the effort.

The INSG is co-hosting with Christian Aid - a development aid organisation of the Protestant churches - the visit to Ireland at the end of March of Thomas Tellez, a Baptist minister. He will address a public meeting in Trinity College on March 30 on the impact of Hurricane Joan and the rehabilitation work remaining to be done. A Nicaraguan delegation representing a cross-section of social interests is expected to visit Ireland during the summer.

Contact: Irish Nicaragua Support Group, 29 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-614854.



kurd jailed

MEHMET Aslan, leader of the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) in the Ankara region, was last month sentenced in a Turkish court to 15 years in jail for membership of his party. The PKK has waged a political and military campaign for Kurdish autonomy since 1984; an estimated 1,300 people have been killed in the fighting.

batteries ban

ALKALINE batteries, which last longer, are also more harmful to the environment. And Sweden is to ban almost all types of alkaline battery from January 1st next. The ban covers any batteries containing more than 0.025 per cent mercury and cadmium - that's reckoned to include 90 per cent of all alkaline batteries. From July 1st, these batteries are to carry a label declaring they are dangerous to the environment.

cargo blocked

WORKERS in Argentina and Uruguay last month boycotted a ship due to take cargoes from their countries to the Falkland Islands/Malvinas. The ship was the first to sail between the islands and the South American mainland since the 1982 war and was ser-

viced on its first trip. But unions in the two countries said they would not facilitate a regular service.

bubble bursts

The 'miracle' of South Korea's economic performance, about which we heard so much in Ireland when Saehan Media announced two years ago the still-not-started Sligo video cassette project, is no longer looking so miraculous. The miracle was built on low labour costs. And workers have been demanding - and getting - more during the past year. So, some South Korean companies have decamped to Thailand and Singapore.

One company which cannot do that so readily is Hyundai, the massive corporation which makes cars and other engineering products. A ship's engines factory in Ulsan, in the south-east, was closed for 70 days from December by a dispute. A settlement was reached last month on pay claims and demands for the reinstatement of four union activists.

But at Hyundai headquarters in Seoul, shipyard workers last month camped in the offices and set up tents outside demanding settlement of their dispute. The shipyard has been at a halt for three months.

Sting Tour

A fundraising tour is planned for next month by Sting, the British musician, to help finance a reservation "the size of Ireland" for Amazonian Indians. Sting has been involved in discussions with Indians to set up a project to protect part of the Amazonian Rainforest (every minute fifty acres of rainforest is being cut down).

There is criticism from some tribes over a lack of consultation and they fear that a proposed hydroelectric dam that they have been strongly resisting may be built inside the reserve.

At the very least the tour will raise the issue of the disappearing rainforests thought by ecologists to be the 'lungs of the earth' because they replenish the earth's supply of oxygen.

judge quits

ONE of the five Indian judges who proposed the \$470 million compensation for victims of the Bhopal disaster (see Tim Jones' article in these pages) has resigned from hearing legal challenges to the settlement. The Supreme Court has been heavily criticised in the media and elsewhere since it secured the agreement. The judge who quit described the criticisms as worse than impeachment. A new panel of judges will hear the challenges. **Z**

MOUNTAINS & MOLEHILLS



Tim Jones casts a sceptical eye on the settlement for victims of the Bhopal chemical industry disaster

Bhopal was the worst industrial disaster in living memory. Some 3329 victims have died from exposure to the toxic gases emitted by the Union Carbide pesticides plant. Victims continue to die at the rate of one a day. Of the 200,000 people exposed to the toxic gases, some 40,000 were seriously injured.

Injuries have involved eye and respiratory problems, coma, gastro-intestinal problems, lesions in the central nervous system, impaired immune system, psychological trauma, behavioural disturbances, an increased frequency of aborted foetuses and retarded intra-uterine growth of babies born to gas-ex-

posed mothers.

Immediately after the disaster, the possibility of Union Carbide going into bankruptcy was raised. Now the Corporation has fought off a takeover attempt at great cost and is currently returning record profits.

The Indian government consistently favoured an out-of-court settlement, at least in part to avoid washing its dirty linen in public. While a hail of protest halted a similar attempted deal in December 1987, the government can now claim it is acting on instructions from the Supreme Court.

The losers are, of course, the victims. The settlement figure seems parsimonious in comparison with those offered in relation to mass torts involving asbestos,

ter - sabotage according to Union Carbide, mismanagement of health and safety, according to the Indian government and the international trade union movement.

Four years after the disaster basic facts relating to exactly what toxic gases poisoned the victims of Bhopal are still not available.

In July 1985, Robert Wager, US public interest lawyer, argued "if they're able to cut a deal...and if it's a settlement that they can live with - where they can still make profits - it's likely that the whole community of businesses that deal with these kinds of toxic materials will be encouraged to spend less money on safety because they will be able to

A BAD DEAL



posed mothers is.

The immediate need for reparations and compensation was overwhelming. All sides in the drama - Union Carbide India Limited, which owned the factory, Union Carbide Corporation which owned Union Carbide India, and the government of India - expressed grave concern for the victims of this disaster. Yet it has taken over four years during which the victims of Bhopal have suffered untold agony before a settlement was imposed by the Indian Supreme Court. While the unseemly squabble over blood money dragged on, victims were left by the wayside.

The settlement is a triumph for Union Carbide. The company took a hard nosed attitude, showing it was prepared to use every legal delaying tactic available. The final settlement figure is much nearer that proposed by Union Carbide than those proposed by the Indian government and by the victims' political supporters.

Agent Orange and the Dalkon Shield, the difference in those cases being the nationality and skin pigmentation of the victims. A dead Indian is cheaper than a dead American.

The amount involved - \$470 million - compares very unfavourably with the minimum cost of compensation for economic losses, relief and restitution as estimated by the American Citizens' Commission on Bhopal at \$4.066 billion. More interesting yet will be to see how much of the settlement eventually 'trickles down' to the victims: experience with state relief to date has not been such as to inspire much trust.

The report on the disaster compiled by the Indian Central Bureau of Investigation, which presumably formed the basis for charging Warren Anderson and other Union Carbide executives with culpable homicide, may now never appear. The settlement also prevents the testing in open court of the conflicting interpretations of the cause of the disas-

quantify their exposure. They will see that they really don't have to guard against the worst because this was the worst, and if Union Carbide is able to survive intact, then companies don't have much to bother about."

No company director or chief executive officer worth her or his salt will have failed to learn much from the legal struggle that followed Bhopal. Union Carbide was able to consistently deny liability, refuse to make any decent amount of interim compensation available to the victims, spend vast amounts of money in a corporate restructuring, use every avenue of the legal process to delay progress and in the end come out losing only fifty cents from its 1988 dividend payment of \$1.59.

With corporate killings going this cheaply, more Bhopals can be expected.

Tim Jones is the author of Corporate Killing: Bhopals Will Happen (Free Association Books, 1988)



Bring Back the Bus Conductors, says Johnny Gogan.

I've become a lot fitter since the Dublin buses went OPO and they got rid of the conductors. For, employing a mode of transport known as "bus-stop hopping", I now proceed on my journeys on foot.

If a bus should appear, the expected delay at the bus-stop - due to people with babies, elderly people needing a tug up the last step, or the unprepared with their £10 note - always gives me time to catch up.

When CIE management ventured on its great rationalisation plan in the year of the Dublin Millennium, it failed to take some of these more human elements in to account. They went straight for the bus crews, undoubtedly leaving their own jobs intact.

Nevertheless, despite the deterioration in service, the policy proceeds apace. Really, these people should be... well, at the very least, made to leave their cars at home.

The delays in travelling which have resulted must surely discourage the use of public transport. The bus drivers have become increasingly testy. And why wouldn't they be, doing two jobs instead of one for little recompense?

Many drivers have suffered threats and attacks in recent months, attributable to their vulnerability in the absence of any back-up. The signs of stress have also begun to show in increased absenteeism.

However, the problems of public transport don't lie with Dublin Bus alone. They lie also with the high level of private motoring which congests Dublin city traffic and keeps public transport at a low priority.

The key to a successful system of public transport lies with punctuality and speed. DART, the Dublin Area Rapid Transport system, at least has proved this.

Meanwhile, the bus drivers are getting it in the neck. I mean, witness a scene: careering down the Malahide Road at 11.30pm of a Friday night, trying to take the fares, listening to the roars of the party going on upstairs on the top deck, dodging the odd bottle of acid, looking for change, watching the traffic, trying to drive straight, arriving late...

It's enough to make you walk. Bring back the conductors and make public transport a growth area in the Age of Recovery.



WONDERLANDS

There is a lot to like about London. Unfortunately, it is not always obvious when you are half way through your one hour journey to work, standing up against a flutulent Financial Times Reader, on the 8.12 am to London Bridge.

When 'one' arrives at the platform there is a mad panic to clear the station before more trains pull in and disgorge their hoards of city 'gents' and office 'girls'. It's not often possible to see the ground in front of you for the marching feet drawn like magnetized zombies towards the underground.

I've long since given up trying to descend into the tube. Since my failure to get picked for the Irish Rugby Squad, I don't fancy my chances. Mind you, judging by recent performance I wouldn't fancy their chances either. But that's another story.

Instead I join the hoards who cross over the bridge. Leaving the station I am reminded what day of the week it is by the free magazine that is shoved in my hand by energetic young people who must get up at the crack of dawn.

Monday - Ms London; Tuesday 'G' - girl about town; Wednesday - Midweek; Thursday it's 'Nine to Five'; and I never need to be reminded it's Friday.

I was thrown into confusion last week when, arriving on the north side of the bridge, there were two men in their fifties with well worn jackets and peaked caps handing out free sheets. They could have been dockers. Intrigued by the possibility of a community newspaper competing with the glossies, I took a copy.

It was called 'Docklands'. Inside feature after feature described how wonderful the reinvestment and yuppie enterprises are for the neglected area. A major feature on safety on building sites, briefly mentioned the 150 deaths and 4,000 serious injuries in the industry over the past year before going to sound the trumpet for the Canary Wharf developers. The paper is brought out by the London Docklands Development Corporation.

The two men in their caps very probably were former dockers. Their metamorphosis is euphemistically called "retraining the local community to avail of employment spin offs".

The jobs advertised were for salaries in excess of £20,000, the property was mainly office/studio apartments and the classified were for piano lessons and picture framing.

If you find it difficult to see how this development caters for the large Bangladeshi community in Tower Hamlets or the indigenous docks workers, Margaret Thatcher will lend a hand. "The local people have been given a vital role in communications". Loosely translated that means handing out freesheets.

Margaret Thatcher's use of language and communications has already given linguists and sociologists a life time's work.

It is not so much what you hear as what you don't hear. The recent drop in the unemployment figures being heralded as a major victory, is an example.

The announcement that unemployment has dropped below 2 million for the first time in over five years drowned the sound of small voices pointing out that when you exclude hundreds of thousands of people from signing on there is bound to be a dramatic drop in figures. But that message is too complicated to make much of an impact in this fast-moving booming society.

The Unemployment Unit here estimate that 700,000 people have been omitted from the figures, people who have not found jobs.

Walking by Sainsburys or Boots or was it MacDonalds the other day, I noticed a sign proclaiming their participation in the latest training scheme. Now employers can take on people - usually 16 or 17 year olds, to operate a cash till, sweep a floor or pack a big mac, for six months and instead of paying them £100 per week they can pay them a quarter of that amount as a training allowance. When you can't sign on what else can you do.

This government is "finding the workers without jobs to do the jobs without workers".

There is a lot of dirty work in this city that needs doing.

But I digress. As I said there is a lot to like about London. Last night, a young woman called to the door asking me to sign a petition against the poll tax. That is the new way of paying rates, except it is charged to the individual instead of per household. The estimated average is £515 per person over 18 per year. Protest is still alive.

Yours, Mary Jane O'Brien.

CAPITAL GAINS & LOSSES

Tax avoidance: how the rich can swing it. Joan Burton reports on the case of the millionaire McGrath brothers.

A SUPREME court decision which bound the Revenue Commissioners to hand back £2.5 million in capital gains tax to the millionaire McGrath brothers has led to a flood of copy cat tax avoidance schemes. Some estimates suggest £150 million may have been lost in tax revenue through these schemes. Like the McGraths, these tax avoiders have been using off-shore companies in places like the Isle of Man.

The three McGrath brothers, of Hospital Sweeps and Waterford Glass fame, are among the richest people in Ireland. Their unexpected £2.5 million windfall came when the Supreme Court ordered the repayment of a capital gains tax charge levied on them by the Revenue Commissioners. This decision of the Supreme Court gave formal legitimacy to a complex tax avoidance scheme they had set up through Isle of Man companies.

Capital gains tax has existed here since 1975. One of its provisions allows certain losses to be offset against gains to reduce liability. But what happens when the loss is quite artificially created for no other purpose than tax avoidance?

The British courts faced this same question earlier in the decade. The revenue authorities there challenged a scheme set up by the Burmah Oil Company. Burmah was owed £159.3 million by a wholly owned subsidiary MORH, which in turn owed the same amount to another subsidiary Holdings. Burmah paid £159.6 million for the shares of Holdings, of which £159.3 million was repaid to MORH who, in turn, repaid the same sum it owed to Burmah. Holdings then went in to voluntary liquidation, but only some £300,000 went to Burmah from the wind up.

Burmah then sought to have the difference between this £300,000 and the £159.6 million it had paid for Holdings to be allowed as a loss for capital gains tax purposes.

The House of Lords refused point blank. It ruled that there was no real loss involved. Here, said Lord Fraser, was "the apparently magic result of creating a tax loss that was not a real loss." Lord Diplock went on to warn those

whose business consisted of designing off-the-shelf tax avoidance schemes that the judiciary would adopt a hard line against "pre-ordained series of transactions into which are inserted steps with no commercial purpose other than avoidance of a liability to tax".

When the Irish Revenue Commissioners brought the McGrath case to the High Court they hoped that these UK rulings would be upheld and the scheme set up by one of the three brothers quashed. Miss Justice Carroll declined. So did the five judges of the Supreme Court.

The scheme allowed by the Irish courts was even more artificial than those struck down by the House of Lords. It involved dealings between Isle of Man companies which resulted in a technical loss of almost £1.4 million which could be offset against capital gains earned in Ireland by the McGraths years earlier.

The Irish judges took the view that only Parliament could

take the responsibility for outlawing such schemes.

THIS SUPREME Court judgement passed the ball back to obviously very reluctant Ministers. In his Budget speech Albert Reynolds acknowledged the concern of the Revenue Commissioners over the losses that were accumulating since the decision.

Prominent firms of accountants were telling financial

THE McGRATH SCHEME:

December 2nd 1981: Mc Grath buys controlling interest in Parapet, an Isle of Man company.

December 8th 1981: Mc Grath buys from Parapet 500 shares in another Isle of Man company, Garfish, for £900 subject to a Parapet repurchase option for £1000. However, the underlying value of these shares was £1.4 million.

January 5th 1982: Mc Grath sells the shares in Garfish to London Law for £900. The effect of the Parapet repurchase option has depressed the market value to £900.

The net effect of the set of transactions is that shares with a value of £1.4 million were sold for £900 thus creating entirely artificially an allowable loss of over a million pounds that could be offset against real capital gains to reduce liability to capital gains tax.



Maginnis fits the bill

Brian Trench on the media

IF KEN Maginnis didn't exist, the southern media would have had to invent him. He sounds like the authentic voice of northern unionism, with his strong line on law and order and his firm resistance to any hint of united Ireland tendencies. But, at the same time, he is willing to debate political ideas and will even venture into enemy territory to do so.

Maginnis meets the limited needs of the Dublin-based media neatly. They love the combination of firm denunciation and sweet reasonableness. Above all, they love the fact that he is available.

Quotes from Maginnis in the southern media outweigh those from all other Official Unionists together. For reactions to the latest act of political violence or for commentaries on political initiatives, Maginnis is the man.

So complete is the dependence on Maginnis that the southern media dare not look any wider. They certainly dare not examine just where Maginnis fits in, just what his standing is.

There is a larger dimension to this reliance on Maginnis and on his SDLP security spokesperson counterpart, Seamus Mallon, and it is this: the southern media want to 'normalise' the North, to assert the centrality of representative politics. They need to believe in the eventual triumph of the institutions and in the absence of local institutions they give pride of place to those who would occupy them if they did exist.

The resulting distortion occurs most of all through omission: the representatives of public interests outside the imagined institutions are rarely heard; the attitudes and the conditions which sustain anti-institutional organisations are rarely surveyed.

SOME things are Good Things and some things are Bad Things. Agreement between unions and government on a social contract is a Good Thing. Rising prices and, even more, matching pay claims are a Bad Thing.

But in one area of journalism, high, and higher, prices are a Wonderful Thing. The property pages of the newspapers record with uncontainable enthusiasm the repeated trumping of previous house price records.

It is not those who might live in the houses - at least, not, unless they are rich and famous - who determine this perspective. It is the builders and the estate agents whose commission rises with the overall price of property.

We have come to accept this kind of stuff in the property pages where the articles generally have a pretty obvious relationship with ads - even by using the same language.

But in drawing newsroom journalists into its new property supplement the Irish Times is making things worse rather than better. Such journalists carry with them a different kind of authority. They have been given wide scope to write about their particular enthusiasms, in some cases their own neighbourhoods.

Kevin Myers wrote a characteristically purple piece about a house four doors down from his own, saying that the asking price was far too low. As it turned out, the refurbishing was far from adequate.

The influence of the media is generally overestimated and property journalism may have little direct influence on the market. But it is clear, if the words mean anything at all, that the writers intend to massage the market. And this is a Bad Thing.

A NEW group called Media Watch is holding its inaugural meeting in Dublin on March 11, aiming to set up mechanisms for monitoring media coverage of a number of issues and to campaign for fair, accurate and comprehensive reporting.

Some of the areas selected for particular attention are: censorship of certain views on the Northern conflict; concentration of media ownership; tendencies to reinforce the conservative economic consensus; foreign news.

This ambitious agenda demands the participation of a great many people.

But a caution: it is essential to situate critiques of the media carefully - Are they made from the standpoint of the media's own declared professional standards? or are they made from a left-wing perspective, arguing for a consistently different kind of emphasis. In campaigns of this kind, the two approaches have sometimes been confused.

Journalists of special charter jets going to the Isle of Man to set up McGrath type schemes. Fees of up to £30,000 per scheme were mentioned. Business and Finance reported that "the bigger practices burned up their fax machines sending out notes to their clients advising them that this was an opportunity not to be passed over".

Reynolds left open the possibility that an amendment might be backdated to the date of the Supreme Court decision. The events of the subsequent weekend provide a fascinating insight into the influence of wealth on sensitive law making in Ireland.

On January 29th, the Sunday after the budget, there was a report in the Sunday Press that the Revenue Commissioners were actively seeking retrospection including, if necessary, a validating constitutional referendum.

That same Sunday Mr Haughey moved quickly to dispel any rumours of retrospection. For a Taoiseach so normally sparing in comments to the media his instant reaction was truly astonishing. There would, he declared, be no retrospection in the proposed legislation. In effect, he was reassuring the country's most wealthy citizens that no effort would be made to claw back the huge losses the state had suffered in the six months since the judgement.

Without such retrospection the amendments are likely to be a dead letter. A coach and four has been successfully driven through the 1975 Capital Gains Tax Act. All the parties in the state promise tax reform. But these promises are hollow until the special privileges enjoyed by the owners of capital are tackled. The events surrounding the McGrath case show again how entrenched those privileges are and how powerful the beneficiaries remain in our political system

Joan Burton is a lecturer in Accountancy. She is a member of the Labour Party Administrative Council.



The elections to the European Parliament in June will see a number of candidates opposing, in various measures, further integration into the European Community. Z has invited four of them to outline the case they are making to voters.

TREVOR SARGENT
(Green Alliance, Dublin)

OUR EC membership has resulted in centralisation of economic and political power often outside Ireland altogether. We now have the highest unemployment rate ever. (Non-EC European countries all have lower unemployment figures). Roads have been built while public transport has been cut back. (Bus Atha Cliath services are down 17%).

We are more dependent than ever on unsustainable chemical agriculture and short-term EC grant aid. Every year EC countries shed 350,000 farm jobs and still we have immoral wastage in over production of dairy produce. We would be much more sustainable outside the present EC.

One of the few positive aspects of being an EC member has been its environmental laws. This proves that some international forum is necessary to coordinate certain issues common to a number of regions or countries.

In the European Parliament, 12 Green MEPs are already working towards a Green vision of Europe that is broader than the EC and involves at least 29 countries straddling the 'Iron Curtain'. Green Parties are growing in Poland and Hungary now. However, we cannot ignore the existence of the EC in its present form. Certain EC policies require immediate change before long term changes can take place to create a peaceful Europe of the Regions.

1. Our neutrality needs to be protected and must be assertive in opposing

world hunger and militarisation.

2. Greens will push to close the many loopholes in EC law, especially those that allow national governments claim immunity for potential environmental hazards on the grounds of an essential energy programme (for instance Sellafield).

3. We will introduce a replacement for the Common Agricultural Policy - one that is ecologically sustainable, labour intensive, and will expand growth of cereals and pulses to improve soil structure and fertility.

4. Greens will continue to work for alternatives to domination by world multi-nationals in the EC over Europe and other continents.

If current policies continue, capital will move more to the centre leaving the poorer peripheral areas more dependent than ever on compensation money and political patronage from Brussels. Less border control will also increase the danger of agricultural diseases spreading quickly. Although we welcome freedom of movement within the EC, most unwelcome is the racist discrimination against non-EC nationals living and working in EC states.

Green policies and campaigns are pushing to prove how human societies can operate with the understanding that we are part of nature, not on top of it. Our election manifesto explains for instance how and why fundamental change is needed to stem emigration through (a) innovative job opportunities in a sustainable ecological and energy-efficient economy, (b) job sharing as well as reduced working hours and (c) a basic in-

come to be paid to all, not as a hand out but as a fair dividend of the state's income which more and more comes from machines and less from income tax.

As in life itself, all Green policies are interdependent and our local plan called 'Blueprint for a Green Dublin' shows a city with fewer cars and more cycleways; pedestrian areas as well as cheap efficient public transport; less smog; more trees; less sewage discharge.

Support for the Green Party/Comhaontas Glas campaign comes from local Green groups, as well as many people in environmental groups, 'Third World' groups, human rights and peace groups as well as local democracy organisations such as community councils and residents associations. Overseas the other 16 Green Parties in Europe support us and together we have drawn up a 'Common Programme of European Greens' which forms part of our respective manifestos for the June elections.

Similar to my pledge in local and general elections, I will retain from my MEP salary the same amount as I currently get paid as a teacher to allow me live and do my job. The remainder (which including expenses is substantial) will be set aside to be spent by the Greens on various environmental and community projects.

Green Alliance, Tel: 01-771436

JOE NOONAN
(People First/Mcitheal, Munster)

THE ISSUES are not just unemployment, the environment and Irish neu-



WHY RUN FOR EUROPE?

trality but also, and perhaps more importantly, the future of Europe after 1992. I am standing with the support of People First/Meitheal, a new Munster organisation founded by Cork non-party activists who campaigned together in the 1987 Single European Act (SEA) referendum.

Those in People First/Meitheal range from centre to left, and there are others who reject such categorisations. The founder - trustees include Senator Brendan Ryan.

People First/Meitheal believes that a large number of Munster voters are not represented by the five sitting MEPs. It wants, instead, a candidate who will take a critical stance on EEC issues, who will report effectively and honestly to the electorate on developments in the EEC, and who is genuinely concerned about Irish employment, the poverty resulting from the lack of real jobs, neutrality and the environment.

In recent years Ireland's position on each of these areas has worsened dramatically. Whether this is due primarily to the actions or otherwise of the EEC or of successive Irish governments, is a matter for debate - but the combination of the two together has surely been devastating. A majority in Dáil Éireann now pursues an extraordinary consensus, one which does not tolerate any serious criticism or discussion of EEC policies.

We need an MEP with the courage and practical back-up to take a fresh approach. We in People First/Meitheal believe that such a candidate would succeed in Munster, where just 16.6 per

cent of the vote is needed to take a seat, and that this is the only realistic chance of electing someone to challenge the existing political complacency on issues that concern us. On election, the MEP's salary and expenses will be administered by the movements trustees.

Like the Danish People's Movement, which has given us moral and practical help, we will act as an independent focus for national interests at EEC level and resist attempts to increase the European Parliament's powers at the expense of those of member states.

This campaign will continue after the June elections, regardless of their outcome because of the need to raise awareness about the 1993 Treaty. This is the Treaty, called for by Delors and others, designed to create a European Union by adding currency and defence competence to the post-1992 EEC framework. It will have to be approved here by referendum and we must not let the politicians get away with another six-week "sign-or-else" exercise this time.

These will be the last European Parliament elections before this 1993 Treaty. It is only by getting out the information and preparing for the next battle that we can ensure that the destiny of the nation is decided by its people and not by its elite groups.

One of the most cruel hoaxes being put around regarding 1992 is that the border between the Republic and Northern Ireland will be abolished. Anyone who suggests that equalising VAT in Newry and Dundalk will lead to the removal of the border cannot be taken seriously.

When the governor of the Central Bank warns of Ireland becoming the Appalachia of Western Europe, and when the head of the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) wonders if there is a conspiracy of silence about the EEC's disastrous jobs record, it is clear that the true nature of 1992 has dawned on people well outside the average Z reader profile.

Without your help, however, the fraud of 1992 will continue to be perpetrated by our MEPs. Can you sleep knowing that? If not, contact us.

People First/Meitheal, 6-7 Cornmarket Street, Cork. Tel: 021-275692.

RAY CROTTY
(Euro-Election Campaign, Dublin)

IN THIS election I invite the votes of those who fear the consequences of, or do not desire, closer integration with the EEC. However, resisting closer integration with the EEC will only make sense if we then vigorously, creatively and patriotically use the retained sovereignty to devise and implement policies appropriate to our circumstances and which will end mass unemployment, mass poverty and mass emigration.

Some good may be achieved, in collaboration with the Rainbow Group, in the European Parliament in impeding legislation particularly unfavorable to Ireland and other small nations in the EEC. The principal aim in contesting the election is to rally opposition to closer integration with and dependence on the EEC, and by winning a seat, to secure a



source of funds to be used to develop and consolidate that opposition.

On the possible disappearance of internal borders in Ireland, it has to be said that most restrictions on Ireland's internal borders were imposed by Irish governments. With appropriate economic policies, which would greatly lower real costs in the Republic, most of those restrictions could be removed, without reference to Brussels or London.

64,000 people in the Dublin constituency voted against entry to the EEC in 1972. Almost twice as many, or 115,000, voted against the SEA in 1987. On trend, that vote, which is critical of the EEC, will by now be at least 120,000. If Dublin gets its due allocation of five European Parliament seats, one third of that number will suffice to elect me in June. If Dublin continues to be under-represented with four seats, less than half the 'no' vote, or 55,000, will suffice.

People should vote for me for the same reason as people voted against entry to the EEC and against the SEA: because they believe that integration with an dependence on the EEC is contrary to Irish national interests; and because they believe that, by the vigorous, creative and patriotic exercise of our sovereignty we can create here a society in which all the Irish can get a livelihood at least as good as is attainable elsewhere.

I hold that the more highly paid, the poorer is the quality of public representatives. High pay attracts persons concerned to advance their private interest rather than the common weal. It induces elected representatives to seek primarily re-election rather than the public good. I feel strongly that public representatives should be content with incomes no higher than the average of their constituents, having in addition, the respect of the public for the honourable discharge of their duties.

My campaign is supported by individuals who, so far as their affiliations are known, are attached to parties and organisations spanning the political spectrum. However, EuroAlert has made a generous donation, and The Danish Peoples' Movement have wished us well. Finance for the campaign has come principally from individual subscriptions.

Ray Crotty's Campaign,
Tel: 01.770045

ANNE SPEED
(Sinn Féin, Dublin)

THE BASIC Republican and socialist position is simple and all embracing. It is that the ills of this island North and South, the unemployment, injustice and inequity of our society are the results of imperialism and the fact that our people do not have the right to self-determination. I am standing as a Sinn Féin candidate on June 15th to popularise this view and build opposition to continuing EEC membership.

We control neither our wealth nor our markets nor the allocation of our resources. Under the EEC, competition from Multinationals has decimated major sectors of industry - paper, timber processing, tanning, footwear, leather textiles and so on. Instead of a developing native industrial base, we have had multinationals flooding into Ireland to get behind EEC tariff barriers. The outflow of wealth/monies from our economy is enormous:

- £1 billion multinational profits (1987/88 figures);
- £1-£2 billion social/economic cost of emigration;
- £1 billion foreign debt servicing (1988);
- £1 billion Irish investment abroad (Smurfits, Waterford Glass, Cement Roadstone, Bank of Ireland, Allied Irish Banks).

Further integration into the EEC means:

- loss of fiscal control (Ireland is to harmonise taxes);
- loss of monetary controls (Exchange controls - harmonisation of banking regulations);
- loss of power for State intervention (i.e., government purchasing schemes, marketing schemes, state planned allocation of resources, etc.)

We as a people will no longer have the autonomy to pursue policies that stem economic decline, or to take the only measures that can reverse Ireland's historic economic impoverishment and underdevelopment - namely, state allocation on a planned basis and state development of markets.

The solution to Ireland's ills is in the Republican objective of a 32 county Democratic Socialist Republic which is inconsistent with imperialist dependency and integration into the EEC. 1992 has been hailed by some opportunist politicians as the ending of partition that 'borders will go'. This is a con. Trade

barriers, customs posts may be removed but the British military and political machine will still occupy the six counties.

Voters should be aware that Ireland will have only 15 out of 518 deputies in Strasbourg, less than we had at Westminster under British rule. The Dublin government will retain only the function of regulating our adjustment to EEC policies. In ten years time, according to Eurocrat Delors, 80 per cent of social and economic policies will be decided in Brussels.

Promises of "EEC gold" from the Regional Fund will ring very hollow in the months and years to come when the biggest ever "slush fund" (£4 billion over next 4 years) available to establishment parties will be mis-spent on the needs of private enterprise. Community interests and job creation will not be the main priorities.

Despite equality legislation, huge numbers of women are living in poverty and women workers are still paid two-thirds of men's wages. Progressive EEC directives have been gathering dust because of the political opposition of conservative parties at the Council of Ministers. This will continue to be the case. And even more so in the case of workers' rights, where unlike for other matters, unanimity is required.

Activists are already organising in protest. A Republican MEP will resist and link up with other progressive forces in Europe on all vital issues. In raising all these issues, our campaign has drawn support from like-minded people involved in community groups, women's and students' movements, and trade unions. This is a serious campaign for us and we are out to win a seat.

If elected, I will be paid by the party. Any salary or expenses of public representatives are not the personal property of the individuals concerned. An EEC income will be utilised as a resource to both the party and campaigns to resist the big upheaval that 1992 holds in store for us.

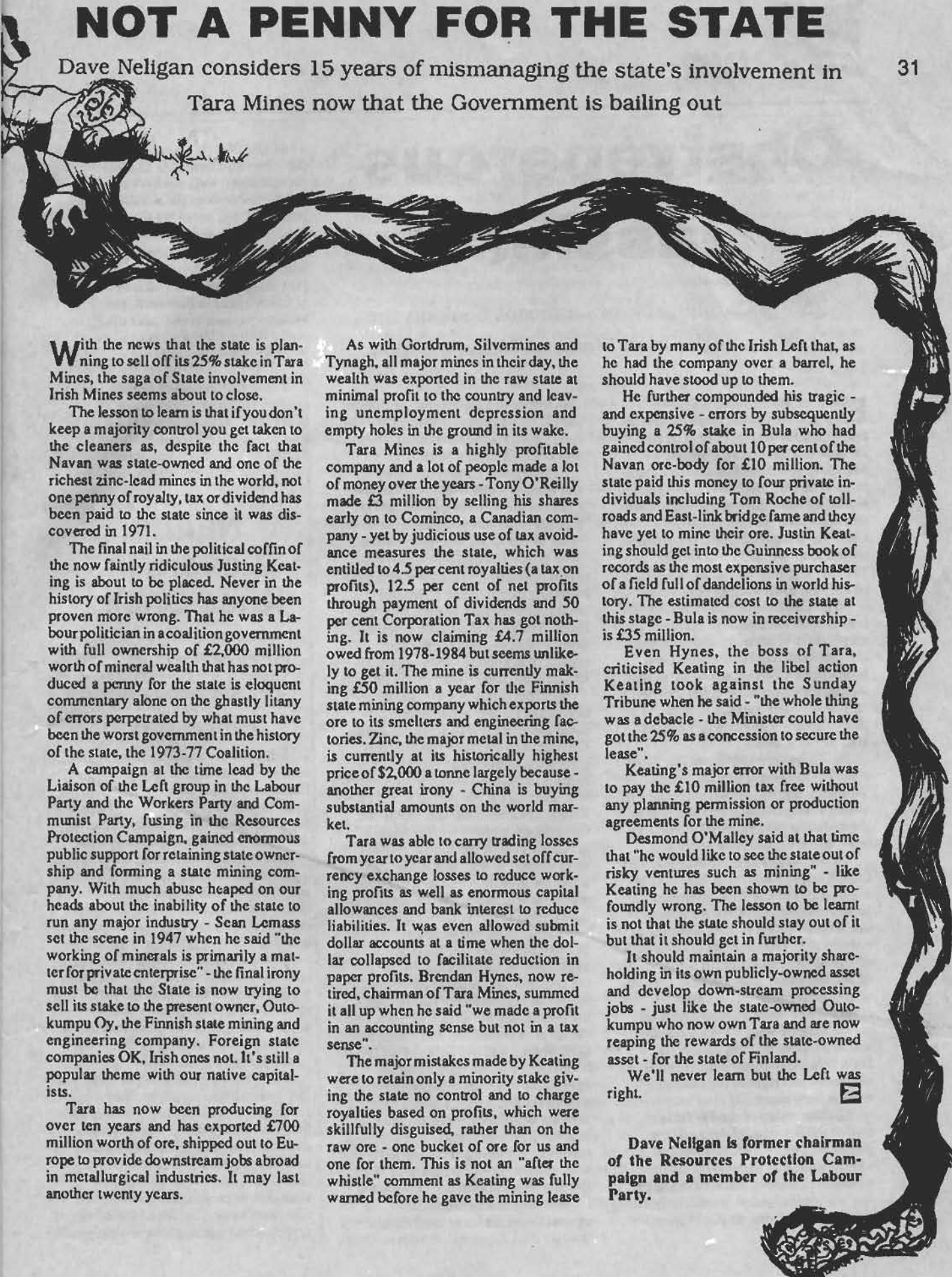
EEC membership is not irreversible. There are alternatives: a negotiated association with the EEC and other trading blocs, on the basis of mutual advantage. This would not be easy to achieve in the short term. In the meantime, I will be campaigning to win a seat - and, to build the biggest possible opposition to the plans that establishment politicians and bureaucrats have in store for us.

Sinn Féin European Election Campaign, Tel: 01-308783

NOT A PENNY FOR THE STATE

Dave Neligan considers 15 years of mismanaging the state's involvement in Tara Mines now that the Government is bailing out

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With the news that the state is planning to sell off its 25% stake in Tara Mines, the saga of State involvement in Irish Mines seems about to close.

The lesson to learn is that if you don't keep a majority control you get taken to the cleaners as, despite the fact that Navan was state-owned and one of the richest zinc-lead mines in the world, not one penny of royalty, tax or dividend has been paid to the state since it was discovered in 1971.

The final nail in the political coffin of the now faintly ridiculous Justing Keating is about to be placed. Never in the history of Irish politics has anyone been proven more wrong. That he was a Labour politician in a coalition government with full ownership of £2,000 million worth of mineral wealth that has not produced a penny for the state is eloquent commentary alone on the ghastly litany of errors perpetrated by what must have been the worst government in the history of the state, the 1973-77 Coalition.

A campaign at the time led by the Liaison of the Left group in the Labour Party and the Workers Party and Communist Party, fusing in the Resources Protection Campaign, gained enormous public support for retaining state ownership and forming a state mining company. With much abuse heaped on our heads about the inability of the state to run any major industry - Sean Lemass set the scene in 1947 when he said "the working of minerals is primarily a matter for private enterprise" - the final irony must be that the State is now trying to sell its stake to the present owner, Outokumpu Oy, the Finnish state mining and engineering company. Foreign state companies OK, Irish ones not. It's still a popular theme with our native capitalists.

Tara has now been producing for over ten years and has exported £700 million worth of ore, shipped out to Europe to provide downstream jobs abroad in metallurgical industries. It may last another twenty years.

As with Gortdrum, Silvermines and Tynagh, all major mines in their day, the wealth was exported in the raw state at minimal profit to the country and leaving unemployment depression and empty holes in the ground in its wake.

Tara Mines is a highly profitable company and a lot of people made a lot of money over the years - Tony O'Reilly made £3 million by selling his shares early on to Cominco, a Canadian company - yet by judicious use of tax avoidance measures the state, which was entitled to 4.5 per cent royalties (a tax on profits), 12.5 per cent of net profits through payment of dividends and 50 per cent Corporation Tax has got nothing. It is now claiming £4.7 million owed from 1978-1984 but seems unlikely to get it. The mine is currently making £50 million a year for the Finnish state mining company which exports the ore to its smelters and engineering factories. Zinc, the major metal in the mine, is currently at its historically highest price of \$2,000 a tonne largely because - another great irony - China is buying substantial amounts on the world market.

Tara was able to carry trading losses from year to year and allowed set off currency exchange losses to reduce working profits as well as enormous capital allowances and bank interest to reduce liabilities. It was even allowed submit dollar accounts at a time when the dollar collapsed to facilitate reduction in paper profits. Brendan Hynes, now retired, chairman of Tara Mines, summed it all up when he said "we made a profit in an accounting sense but not in a tax sense".

The major mistakes made by Keating were to retain only a minority stake giving the state no control and to charge royalties based on profits, which were skillfully disguised, rather than on the raw ore - one bucket of ore for us and one for them. This is not an "after the whistle" comment as Keating was fully warned before he gave the mining lease

to Tara by many of the Irish Left that, as he had the company over a barrel, he should have stood up to them.


He further compounded his tragic - and expensive - errors by subsequently buying a 25% stake in Bula who had gained control of about 10 per cent of the Navan ore-body for £10 million. The state paid this money to four private individuals including Tom Roche of toll-roads and East-link bridge fame and they have yet to mine their ore. Justin Keating should get into the Guinness book of records as the most expensive purchaser of a field full of dandelions in world history. The estimated cost to the state at this stage - Bula is now in receivership - is £35 million.

Even Hynes, the boss of Tara, criticised Keating in the libel action Keating took against the Sunday Tribune when he said - "the whole thing was a debacle - the Minister could have got the 25% as a concession to secure the lease".

Keating's major error with Bula was to pay the £10 million tax free without any planning permission or production agreements for the mine.

Desmond O'Malley said at that time that "he would like to see the state out of risky ventures such as mining" - like Keating he has been shown to be profoundly wrong. The lesson to be learnt is not that the state should stay out of it but that it should get in further.

It should maintain a majority shareholding in its own publicly-owned asset and develop down-stream processing jobs - just like the state-owned Outokumpu who now own Tara and are now reaping the rewards of the state-owned asset - for the state of Finland.

We'll never learn but the Left was right. 

Dave Neligan is former chairman of the Resources Protection Campaign and a member of the Labour Party.



Obstreperous lassies

Mary Carolan reviews a recent book on the history of the Irish Women Worker's Union.

Employer/labour relations have changed somewhat since the formation of the IWWU in 1911. The first President of the union, Constance Markievicz, while Minister for Labour in the first Dáil, demonstrated a remarkably innovative approach towards dealing with trenchant employers. Louie Bennett, then General Secretary, nostalgically recalled Markievicz, gun in hand, walking into an early version of the Employer Labour conference.

'The Conference had droned on for hours. Miss Bennett was eloquent, the employer was adamant and no appreciable advance had been made. Then Madame Markievicz strode in, pulled out her gun, pointed it at the terrified employer - "ten minutes to settle, after that I shoot!". The employer settled after seven minutes'.

In this book, Mary Jones has filled a void in the arenas of Labour and Women's history, at the same time providing a long overdue introduction to the unexplored territory of women's trade union organisation in Ireland.

The IWWU was established by Jim Larkin in 1911 and reflected the coming together of the three prominent forces in early 20th Century Ireland - the Women's, Nationalist and Labour movements. This separate organisation of women reflected Larkin's concept of one big union with a gender division between men and women.

Women themselves were divided on the issue of separate organisation and throughout its long history, the IWWU had to counter attacks on its autonomy and right to organise as a woman only union.


The leadership of the IWWU recorded its lack of confidence in the goodwill of male trade unionists towards promoting improvements for women in the work force - a cynicism that was well founded, particularly during the negotiations on the 1936

Conditions of Employment Act, when the ITUC supported Section 16 of that Act, which restricted women's right to work during certain hours.

Throughout its seventy three years, the women's union championed the cause of the woman worker, and unlike the other unions, placed conditions of labour on an equal footing with remuneration, a position which netted substantial gains for all workers including morning and afternoon breaks, canteens, lavatories, bicycle sheds. The IWWU was the first union to strike successfully for the fortnight's paid holiday - after a 14 week strike by the laundresses of the IWWU.

Until her death in 1956, the direction of the IWWU reflected the personal priorities and concerns of Louie Bennett, who had taken on the reorganisation of the union in 1916 when its then secretary, Helena Moloney, was interned for her part in the 1916 Rising. Not until the late 1950s did the ordinary woman worker attain a greater degree of participation in the work of the IWWU, and Jones illustrates the problems this lack of communication between the members and the all powerful executive created.

Despite these problems, the 70 years of this women's union are marked by an unswerving loyalty to the principle and practise of women's industrial organisation. Throughout the period, despite advances made in the areas of conditions and remuneration, women had not only to find labour but to win the right to labour against the often united opposition of employers and male trade unionists. Women themselves were not always in accord, and, in particular, the controversy over the right of married women to work raged into the 1980's. Despite their differences, though, the IWWU presented a united front against the excesses of capitalism. In

1984, the IWWU amalgamated (with the reluctant consent of a reduced membership) with the FWUI and today functions as the women workers branch of that union. Mary Jones has explored the personalities and priorities behind this country's first women only union, exposing the complex internal and external tensions that at times stimulated and hindered its development, and, at the same time, created a fitting tribute to the women workers of this century. 

These Obstreperous Lassies: A History Of The Irish Women Workers' Union by Mary Jones; Gill and Macmillan (December 1988) £12.95

Nature Lovers in Knee Socks

Peter McDermott reviews a book on the German Greens

SOME political scientists have begun to argue that there is a new cleavage in European politics between "materialists" and "post-materialists". The raising of the total social product in recent decades has led to a situation where politics is less about eeking out a living, less about bread and butter issues, and more to do with "personal" concerns. Hence, we have seen the development of the new social movements in the 1970s and 1980s.

"Post-materialists" are, according to the political scientists, loosely left-wing, particularly in their value systems, and the potential electoral support for "post-materialist" parties is enormous; the bad news is that this spells the end for class politics.

The left should take this view of the "new politics" more seriously, but reading Werner Hulsberg's history of the German Greens - by far the best available - reveals its limitations. His account situates the Greens in the context of the post-war West German state and, in particular, its authoritarian party system which excluded an repressed dissent, creating a deeply-



rooted tradition of extra-parliamentary opposition.


When the Green Party was founded in 1979, it was nurtured by the powerful social movements against nuclear power and nuclear weapons. A majority of Green voters participated in these movements and clearly identified themselves as being to the left of the SPD.

Far from being classless, the typical Green voter belongs to the better-educated, white-collar section of the working class, involved in the service and technological sectors - the worker of the year 2020, as one West German analyst argues.

Originally the Greens were, according to one of its best-known politicians, Joschka Fisher, "the peculiar union of student missionaries of world proletarian revolution with nature lovers in their knee-socks". There are now three important broad tendencies: the fundamentalists (Petra Kelly is a moderate in this camp), the eco-socialists (with some of whom Hulsberg himself sympathises) and the realists.

Ironically, many of the student street fighters of the past, such as the charismatic Fisher and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, identify with the realists, as do 80 per cent of Green voters. This faction is more open to some sort of "Red-Green" alliance, that is, coalition with the SPD (Social Democrats). But they often find themselves outvoted internally.

Hulsberg embraces Green philosophy and its critique of elements of left orthodoxy, but he has retained many far-left assumptions and categories. He is very good on what is specific to the German experience, but his approach is more questionable when extracting general lessons.

He gives a seal of approval to groups coalescing around Pierre Juquin, the Communist Party dissident and 1988 presidential candidate, in preference to the official French Greens. The latter did not go beyond ecology and "develop a social dynamic". But, surely, a Green electoral take-off is as likely to be social democratic or left populist in orientation. Even in Germany where all Green currents desire a new society, the realists, on their own admission, are a "little foggy" about what this entails. 

The German Greens: A Social and Political Profile, Werner Hulsberg. Verso 1988 (£9.95 sterling).

IN THE third week of February, which was not untypical, 29 hours of game shows and quiz programmes were broadcast by the six terrestrial and three entertainment satellite channels carried by Cablelink. That's over four hours a day on average.

Sounds a lot? Not when you consider that the total output of those nine channels is running at close to 140 hours every day. Game/quiz shows make up less than three per cent of the total. And they don't hog peak viewing times; two thirds of game/quiz shows go out during the day-time.

Much 'left' or 'intellectual' criticism of game/quiz shows is misplaced. Not only does it tend to exaggerate their weight in total TV output, it also tends to exaggerate the ideological harm allegedly inflicted on the viewer. Coming, as it usually does, from people who actually watch very little TV, such criticism is often ignorant of any differentiation in the genre. Every game/quiz show is not *The Price Is Right*.

At the moment, there is, in fact, no programme on the terrestrial channels in *The Price Is Right* vein. The American version of that show is to be found in *The Great American Gameshow*, a 'ghettoised' compendium of old game shows going out every morning on Lifestyle. That other bete noire of intellectuals, *Sale Of The Century*, has resurfaced on the revamped Sky Channel - without Nicholas Parsons!

Avoid the satellite channels and you can avoid the 'big prizes for no skill' shows that openly celebrate the acquisitive society. You will not, however, be able to avoid a good number of crass, mind-numbing game shows and moronic, embarrassing quizzes. Here's a list: *Through The Keyhole*; *Trick Or Treat*; *You Bet*; *Scruples*; *Play The Game*; *Number One*; *Headliners*; *Question Of Sport*; *Give Us A Clue*.

These shows are not venal. They are simply bad examples of the genre, no more or less ideologically harmful than bad documentaries or bad soaps. Ostensibly about games or quizzes, they are really little more than vehicles for minor 'guest celebrities' to earn a few bob arseing about. There will always be an audience for this kind of thing.

All the shows mentioned so far account for a little over half of the weekly 29 hours output of game and quiz shows. That leaves us with over 13 hours per week of programmes in the genre which have some merit.


Here's a list of worthwhile game shows: *Pyramid Game* (UTV, 9.25 am, weekdays); *Countdown* (Channel 4, 4.30 pm, weekdays); *Hitman* (UTV, 7 pm, Tuesdays); *Chain Letters* (UTV, 7.30 pm, Thursdays); *Bullseye* (UTV, 5.05 pm, Sundays); *Catchphrase* (UTV, 7.15 pm, Sundays). Currently off the air but due back soon is *Blockbusters* (UTV, 5.15 pm, weekdays).

These shows feature ordinary folk displaying skills with words or numbers or whatever. Some formats are more demanding than others but all are serious. The contestants want to win but the prizes are not the main consideration. Some of the shows are marred by intrusive, smarmy presenters and the obligatory introduction of the contestants can often be stomach-churning but beyond the show-biz presentation lies some rare participation TV.

Countdown, the show 12-year-old Tim Morrissey from Raheny had a successful run on recently, is both demanding and involving. Presented by Richard Whiteley, the nicest man on TV, it allows you to stretch the old mind for half an hour every afternoon in a non-competitive, non-hype atmosphere. It's the best of the game shows.

The best of the quiz programmes is no longer running. Presented by the second nicest man on TV, Bamber Gascoigne, *University Challenge* has now been replaced by *Mastermind* (BBC1, 7.45 pm, Sundays) as the quiz of quizzes. It's a degeneration. You can get half the general round questions on *Mastermind*; you were set up for the week if you got half-a-dozen out of a couple of hundred on *University Challenge*. Sign of the times.

There should be a market for a straight, serious quiz on RTE; many contestants from Ireland do well on British quizzes. But the three currently running on RTE1 don't come up to the mark. *Rapid Roulette* (7 pm, Thursdays), *Know Your Sport* (7.30 pm, Thursdays) and *Where In The World* (8pm, Sundays) all suffer from loose formats that are often unfair to contestants.

The better game shows and quiz programmes allow us to see ordinary people on the box as subjects rather than objects, even though the structures are tightly controlled. The best also allow some intellectual participation by viewers. Not much television can make such claims. 

CRITICAL STUDIES

34

Harry Browne, one of the organisers of last month's Critical Studies Conference on Ireland's open economy, explains the purpose of the conference and assesses what it achieved.

Over 100 people representing a broad range of Irish 'alternative' opinion participated in the first conference organised by the Irish Critical Studies Group, "Ireland's Open Economy - Alternative Perspectives", on February 24th and 25th at Dublin's Kinlay House.

The Conference heard about a dozen papers and presentations from academics and activists with widely varying views but with one goal in common: to share openly information and analysis which could help to loosen the stranglehold which the political right holds over economic thought in Ireland today.

The success of the conference was in itself evidence of how tight this grip is: politically sophisticated people, many highly dedicated to progressive causes, found it necessary to give up most of a weekend to learn a few basic facts about, for instance, the nature of multinational penetration of Irish industry, the growing marginalisation of small farmers, or the consequences for a small peripheral economy of the increased economic integration which 1992 promises for Western Europe.

The structure of the conference progressed from sectoral 'deep background' to discussion and debate about strategy. So, while the last of the four main sessions may have contained many of the familiar rhetorical elements of a political meeting, Friday evening's opening session featured in-depth historical and analytical papers on Irish industry and agriculture by, respectively, Maurice Coakley, a Dublin Northside activist, and Hilary Tovey, of the Trinity College Sociology Department.

Coakley's research findings illustrated the failure of the IDA strategy of recent decades to bring sustainable economic growth, as multinationals provide (fewer and fewer) dead-end jobs, fail to establish 'linkages' of supply, distribution and production with Irish firms, and choke off resources which could support indigenous industry. Tovey illuminated the gross inequities created and exacerbated in rural Ireland by government and EEC agricultural policies, with only a tiny percentage of Irish farm holdings justifying the label 'commercial'.

Meanwhile, she pointed out, the same establishment promotes a prettified vision of the timeless Irish countryside at odds with the lives and livelihoods of most who live there. Journalist Robert Allen's response at this session combined rural and industrial

concerns by examining the pharmaceuticals, and particularly the political struggle being waged against US company Merrell Dow in Co. Cork (see Issue No. 1 of Z).

At Saturday morning's session MSE research officer Tony Moriarty presented a disturbing 'balance sheet' of Ireland's disastrous economic performance since entering the EEC - a 'platform' for continental markets: a view that supported the sort of multinational exploitation which Coakley had explored.

Eithne Murphy of Teagasc warned of the risk that Ireland would be further deprived of human and capital resources in the post-1992 Europe. But Murphy also disturbed what had threatened to become a comfortable anti-EEC consensus at the conference by calling for an increasingly integrated political union by which Brussels' social spending could be made statutory rather than discretionary.

Economist Andy Storey, one of the organisers of the conference, presented a witty but balanced view of the so-called 'social dimension' of economic integration, scorning some supposed 'benefits' like increased labour force mobility ("freedom to move across national frontiers to work is nothing new to Irish people!"), but reminding the conference of such things as the EC directive on equal pay.

From the floor, Anthony Coughlan suggested that from the point of view of Irish self-determination, European integration must compare unfavourably with the 19th century Union.

Also on Saturday, Raymond Crotty used some Irish economic history to enlighten the conference about the financial risks, in terms of capital flight, posed by present economic thinking and strategy. Eoin O'Malley of the ESRI followed with perhaps the most talked-about paper of the weekend, a detailed outline of an alternative industrialisation strategy, in which native industries are fostered and developed with the help of the state.


Anne Speed and Tony Coughlan later suggested that such a strategy was incompatible with EEC membership, given that even now the IDA operates at the discretion of EEC bodies charged with ensuring that trade in the Community is "free and fair". O'Malley himself, however, did not agree with their point.

A lively discussion closed the con-

ference; this featured Coughlan, Speed, Michael O'Reilly of the ATGWU and the Labour Party, Mick Rafferty and Peadar Kirby. Kirby with the help of Kader Asmal from the floor, made a point which was crucial not simply to "challenging the economics of the Right" but to the very purpose of the conference and the Critical Studies Group: the Right's hegemony over Irish public life is in large part ideological, and to combat it progressive people need to find a way to develop sophisticated alternatives, and to make them, in turn, accessible to the mass of people.

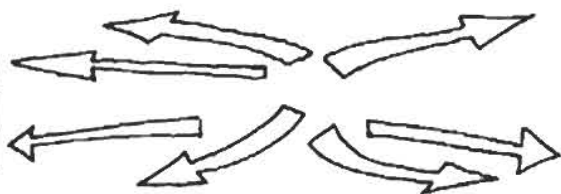
As discussion from the floor went over a range of topics, the conference organisers returned to key point: at a meeting in which religious people could be found side by side with Belfast republicans, trade unionists and Green Party activists, a firm consensus on the nature of, and solutions to, what ails us in Ireland is not feasible. Moreover, the Irish Critical Studies Group was not formed to, and could not pretend to, articulate such a consensus. Rather, the group hopes to provide a forum where these people can get together again, to discuss issues that were perhaps neglected at this conference, like the North or the environment, debate and refine their positions - not to achieve any false consensus, but to try to tap the real resources which are there to undermine the ideological foundations of right-wing power.

In this non-sectarian spirit the Critical Studies Group as a body has no business formulating policy positions, although we would be only too delighted to see people finding common ground through the forum the Group provides.

For now, we hope to publish the papers presented at the February conference, ideally as the first issue of a regular journal. It is also planned that regular discussions, debates and seminars be held on the variety of topics that concern radicals. We'd like to hope that a sufficient number and variety of people will be attracted to the group for it to catch the newest currents of thinking not only in economics and the social sciences, but in culture and the arts, law and 'hard' science. 

The Irish Critical Studies Group will hold an open meeting to plan its future activities on Tuesday March 21st at 7.30 p.m. in Kinlay House, Lord Edward Street, Dublin.

GROWING



FRINGE

The tremendous growth in the Independent Theatre movement over the last few years is perhaps the most significant development in Irish Theatre this decade.

A new organisation has recently been constituted called the Independent Theatre Association whose aims are to improve conditions within the sector by initiating an aggressive programme of self-help and promotion. Z Magazine spoke with I.T.A. President, John Farrell.

Z: Can you tell us what you mean by Independent Theatre?

JF: The term coined in the Sixties was 'fringe' and I suppose you could see the association as comprised of companies that at some other time might have been fixed with that label. As we approach the Nineties, 'fringe' has become an over-used term whose meaning appears fixed in the public mind with political agit-prop theatre produced on a shoestring. In fact, this is no longer the case. This once peripheral sector of the industry has, over the last decade, become a major component in both the financial and artistic life of our professional community, whose production and performance standards have unassailably risen to an unprecedented level.

Therefore, the term 'independent' is used - not to exclude anyone, but to indicate a range of shared concerns and problems that have to do with funding, promotion, venues, resources and skills.

Z: So you're basically made up of young companies - that sort of middle level between, say, University Press and the Gate.

JF: In terms of turnover, certainly, but not in terms of identify. One problem that Independent Theatre continues to experience is a kind of misinformed perception that we're all kids doing shows while waiting to get a job in one of the major theatres. That division does not exist. The majority of our country's professional theatre workers participate rather freely in both sectors. Someone does a show with the Abbey and then does a show with, say, Rough Magic. Those kinds of work experiences complement each other and don't represent any derogation of stature. Our position is that the health of the major managements and the Independent sector are inextricably linked.

The Independent Sector produces a much greater volume of work, and promotes a much greater diversity of styles and artistic aims than it is possible for the larger venues to embrace. We sometimes forget just how dependent the major managements are on this sector of the industry - as Carolyn Swift has put it, the fringe is the life-blood of the theatre. And not just in terms of showcasing new talent. Look at the history of Irish Theatre in general: we would do well to remember that both the Abbey and

the Gate, for example, have very humble 'independent' origins themselves - not unlike such current companies as Horizon, Co-Motion, and Theatre Unlimited. Not to mention the wealth of regional theatres and arts centres.

Z: So the term 'independent' does not really imply a separation from the establishment theatre?

JF: 'Independent' is used here to suggest common ground in terms of the concerns of the less established companies. It also - and more importantly - describes the status of the membership itself. The I.T.A. is primarily a free association of individuals coming together to develop practical initiatives that are mutually beneficial.

We have, for example, already developed a programme of workshops available to members at cost, and have established talking shops for the various disciplines - actors, designers, administrators - which allow for an open exchange of ideas and opinions. A resource centre is planned, as well as an on-going programme of staged readings, seminars, festivals, symposia, etc.

Z: What do you see as your main objectives?

JF: Well, basically, to legitimise the work in this sector, to define standards and work practices, and to lobby for more support from both the private and the public sector, so that this area can continue to develop to its full potential. It will very much involve selling ourselves and making the public aware of who we are and what we do.

Not long ago, one of our city's leading impresarios (who will remain unnamed) was overheard making a sweeping general statement about the Independent Sector saying "Can't act, can't direct, they put up a set - it falls down". Well, those kinds of statements are ridiculous, but as they play into some distorted perception that already exists, people tend not to challenge them. They tend to think, "Oh yeah, that must be true".

Well, we're saying it's not true. The top ten companies in the I.T.A. had a turnover of over half a million in 1988. Independent Theatre is consistently turning up performances, direction, designs, and scripts of an outstanding calibre. Most of our audience finds the work in the Independent Sector much more satisfying than the 'safe' drama of the establishment stage.

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