

SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

movement for a socialist republic

election special

VOTE AGAINST REPRESSION

The Cosgrave government has called this election at a time when the economic crisis has been intensifying, with the real unemployment figure at 160,000, and with workers' standards of living falling. They are now looking for a vote of confidence in their government, assuring us not only that they will do as well if re-elected, they will do even better. We don't doubt they will. In fact we are fully confident that if re-elected unemployment will continue to rise, only to be equalled by prices. Throughout the election campaign the coalition parties and Fianna Fail have argued over whose 'solution' is best; who can get the most new industries etc. But they have both remained curiously silent about the real growth industry in Ireland - REPRESSION. Because beneath the facade of their proclaimed intentions both the coalition and Fianna Fail have this up their sleeves as the real solution to the crisis.

* IN PROPORTION TO ITS POPULATION, IRELAND HAS THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF POLITICAL PRISONERS IN EUROPE, HIGHER THAN SPAIN OR THE SOVIET UNION.

* TORTURE: "POLICE BRUTALITY" OF SUSPECTED "SUBVERSIVES" HAS IN THE LAST YEAR BECOME AN ORGANISED EVERYDAY AFFAIR.

* CONVICTED PRISONERS, PARTICULARLY

POLITICAL ONES, ARE TREATED LIKE ANIMALS WITHOUT A SINGLE HUMAN RIGHT.

* CENSORSHIP : THIS HAS BECOME THE ORDER OF THE DAY, DIRECTED AGAINST FEMINIST MAGAZINES LIKE "SPARE RIB", CRITICAL THEATRE LIKE "GAY SWEATSHOP", BANNING REPUBLICANS FROM RTE ETC.

It has become so common that it is very rare when the state has to step in and directly enforce it. It is usually 'voluntarily' self-imposed, as the media doesn't publish things which might embarrass the government too much. The really important questions in this election are not the differences between the coalition and Fianna Fail but their similarities; and it is on these questions that they are silent. They both agree on throwing the Northern minority to the wolves. They have no intention of lifting a finger to oppose the discrimination against the Catholic minority in the North, much less trying to get those who prop up the sectarian 6 County statelet, the British Army, out of Ireland.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND REPRESSION

The same is true about the great "debate" about ending unemployment. Both parties know that this debate is farcical; that to create new jobs you need new capital to create new

to create new industries. So where is this money going to come from? There is no way anyone is going to lend them enough money to end unemployment. On the contrary the bankers are very well aware that far from things improving they are going to get worse. The only way we can get the resources to create new jobs is by taking it; by nationalising under workers' control the wealth and resources of this country and initiating a 32 County National Plan to provide jobs rather than profits. While such a move would benefit the vast majority of the Irish people, it would meet fierce opposition/whose interests both Fianna Fail and the Coalition represent. The point is not that any of these parties is unable to end unemployment but that they are unwilling to take the necessary measures. The obstacles to solving unemployment are ultimately not economic but political.

Both the Coalition and Fianna Fail recognise only too well that they are totally unable to solve the economic crisis and it will get steadily worse and worse; and as more and more people are without jobs and real wages continue to fall the working class will begin to fight back. It is this "problem" which they are preparing to solve by increased repression. So, in reality, despite their pretended differences, the Coalition and Fianna Fail are united in their policies; defend the status quo north and south by escalating repression. It is for this reason that we as socialists have as our main slogan - VOTE AGAINST REPRESSION.

FIGHT BACK NOW!

But while we realise that only socialist measures can ensure jobs for all and a decent standard of living we ^{it is not enough} also realise to advocate a blueprint for the future, we must begin to organise workers, women, students, small farmers, the unemployed and the youth to fight for their rights. And we must begin now! Young people out of work can see no way forward and if they are to

mount a real struggle against unemployment, the organisers ^{workers} must give them confidence by showing strength, especially in the area of redundancies. The same is true in all other areas. If we are to support the Northern minority in getting rid of British troops and ending sectarian discrimination we must first of all mount a powerful campaign in defence of civil liberties and democratic rights which are being rapidly eroded. Likewise in education; a truly democratised educational system is not possible until we can first of all fight to maintain existing standards and facilities. Because a working class which lacks the experience of fighting to defend democratic rights and its own immediate interests will never achieve a Socialist Republic. So rather than seeing these elections as just another gimmick by the ruling class we must see them as an opportunity to begin the fight back.

FOR A BLUESHIRT GOVERNMENT - VOTE LABOUR!

The central point in these elections is the extent to which an opposition emerges to the government's policy of repression; and it is around this issue that we should judge the various parties and candidates. It is unfortunate that the largest party which claims allegiance to the working class, the Labour Party, should stand four square behind the repressive policies of the government. Labour ministers such as Cruise O'Brien and Michael O'Leary have made a point of being the most ardent and virulent exponents of police state measures while almost all the other Labour TD's have come grovelling in behind every Blueshirt attack on democratic rights. They have participated in a government which has administered big erosions in living standards of the workers without muttering a word of dissent. If we want a real party representing the interests of the workers there must be no coalition with a party like Fine Gael. By voting for candidates who publicly support repression we would not be strengthening opposition within the Labour Party but giving those who trail behind the Blueshirts a blank cheque for the future. For this

reason we advise not to vote Labour - although exceptions should be made for people like David Thornley who, however critically, have publicly opposed repression.

THE NEW OPPOSITION

Despite Labour's continued servile participation in coalition this election has shown signs of the emergence of new opposition forces in the 26 Counties. This opposition, although presently fragmented, and creates the possibility of initiating mass struggles against the repressive policies of both Fianna Fail and the coalition. The most significant forces to come out in opposition to these policies are the independent Labour candidates for Artane and Finglas, Matt Merrigan and Noel Browne. In their programme they declare their intention of campaigning against the National Wage Agreement and for full defence of civil liberties and a comprehensive family planning service. Given this and their links with the labour movement a strong poll for them will open up big opportunities for launching national campaigns around these issues and for mounting a fight within the trade union movement to defend workers' rights. The chairperson of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, Seamus Costello, is also highlighting the issue of repression and deserves to be supported. We also suggest voting for the Communist Party candidates and for other candidates opposing repression - for example James McKenna in Ballyfermot. Unfortunately Sinn Fein - The Workers' Party have been driven by their obsessive hatred of the Provisionals into a position of neutrality on the question of civil liberties and are sometimes supporting repression. Their candidate in Limerick has tried to jump on to the clerical bandwagon which is 'anti-vandalism' and he actually calls for more police in working class areas (!) and for more detention centres (!!). Surely any socialist would realise that the real criminals who are ultimately behind vandalism are those who deprive working class people of a decent standard of living and their areas of proper amenities. Rather than calling for these young

people to be locked up we call on them to direct their anger against the system which oppresses them.

"BOTTOM DOG" CANDIDATE

The campaign of Joe Harrington, a Socialist Republican sponsored by the "Bottom Dog" newspaper, in East Limerick, is very important for the development of a militant socialist opposition in the Labour movement. In an interview with SOCIALIST REPUBLIC Joe Harrington explained that he was contesting the election in order to popularise the idea of the necessity for workers to organise themselves to fight against unemployment and repression. "We cannot trust the politicians, we can only trust in our own strength". He also stressed the need for a fight for women's rights pointing out that despite ten years of promises we still don't have contraceptives freely available through the health service. He hoped in the course of his campaign to build support for the Contraception Action Programme (CAP). He also defends the rights of small farmers: "Too many people fail to distinguish between the big ranchers and small farmers. It is only the ranchers who have benefitted from the EEC. Most small farmers are no better off than the average factory worker. Indeed they are of the worse off. The small farmers are the natural allies of the working class". Joe Harrington welcomes the emergence of a left wing opposition to the government's policies especially the candidature of Browne and Merrigan. He hopes to combine with them and anyone else interested in building a mass action movement in defence of civil liberties. He believes that "these elections can be the beginning of a real fight back against the erosion of democracy and the working class's standard of living."

STOP THE EROSION OF CIVIL LIBERTIES -
VOTE AGAINST REPRESSION
SUPPORT THE STRUGGLE AGAINST REPRESSION NORTH AND SOUTH - READ
SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

