

# the worker

FOR A WORKERS' REPUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

## 'GUILTY' - ON ONE MAN'S WORD

### Workers' action needed to defend prisoners



DUBLIN BUSMEN PROTEST HEATH VISIT

GERRY O'HARE a former shop steward with the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union in Belfast, and a republican, has been sent to prison for a year because one man's opinion was enough to convict him. Special Branchman Fleming admitted in court that he had no evidence that O'Hare had been involved in illegal activities. He admitted that Gerry might well be a journalist working for 'An Phoblacht'. But Fleming was convinced that he was a member of the IRA. So, Gerry O'Hare joins the many others despatched to prison by the Special Courts for their political beliefs and actions.

We amt disagree with some of those beliefs and actions; we may think that many of these men could be free if they defended themselves in court; we may think that the junger strike brings unnecessary suffering. But we cannot simply sit and watch while the ruling class locks away some of the most active militants in the fight against repression.

THE SINISTER PURPOSE of all these talks between boss politicians becomes clear. The talk about a Council of Ireland, or Hume's bid to get into an Executive in the North, are a cover-up for greater repression. The massive use of force for the Heath visit, and for a prison riot that never took place, should be sufficient warning to all of us.

The republican prisoners are right to demand changes in the foul prison conditions. If they succeed, others too will benefit. Our job outside must be to organise the widest possible protest against the Special Courts which have imprisoned the men, and to demand their release. We must make these trade unions which have opposed the repressive laws translate their words into action.

The Socialist Workers Movement calls for united action by working class and anti-imperialist organisations to halt the repression. We are organising to back up this call.

## LABOUR'S PURPOSE

With the Labour Party returning for its Annual Conference to Cork, the scene of its infamous decision to enter a coalition, it is worthwhile to consider the results of that decision now, nearly three years later.

The basis of that decision was that the Labour Party was to be "given a guarantee that certain of its policy measures will be realised, particularly in full employment planning, the control of prices . . ." Has that guarantee been honoured?

The coalition manifesto for the last election promised to "introduce immediate price controls and stop the price rise." But prices are still rising as fast as ever.

It promised to "end socially harmful property speculation". They didn't do anything to help the people out in the gutter in Fenian Street, and the owners of building land are still reaping huge profits.

The manifesto promised to "declare a housing emergency and raise housing target to 25,000 per annum". There has been no emergency declared, and instead of building 25,000 houses parts of the construction industry are grinding to a halt.

So what purpose is the Labour Party serving in the present government? For the working class, none. But for the capitalist class, they are serving a very useful purpose. The Labour Party was given the three departments, dealing with the social services: health, social welfare, and local government (in charge of housing). So it is Labour Ministers who will get the blame for any lack of action in these areas.

#### Collaboration

Most important of all, it was given the Department of Labour. It is the Minister for Labour's job to sell to the trade union movement a policy of collaboration: collaboration with the employers. That is why both Michael O'Leary and the bosses are talking about industrial democracy. You can be quite sure they are not trying to give the workers more power. No, they are trying to repeat within each firm the

same trick that has been done with the government: to get a coalition between the management and the workers' representatives, so that the workers will co-operate in getting bigger profits for the firms, i.e. for the boss.

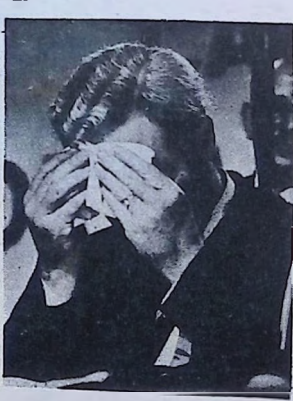
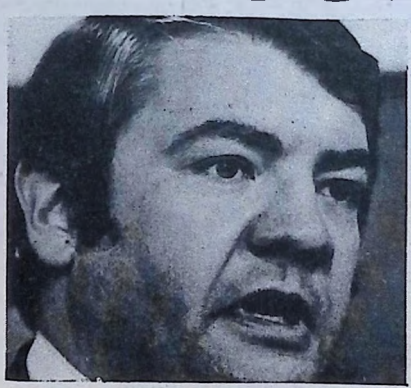
It is also Michael O'Leary's job to sell to the trade unions a new national wage agreement. Profits have to be kept in a healthy state. The one way the bosses can keep up with inflation without injuring their own profits, is an attack on the workers' wages, by keeping down the increases that are due.

What are the tasks of the working-class movement at the present time? To fight national wage agreements, to fight the class-collaboration of the trade union leadership, to fight the speculators and the profiteers who make their money out of others' misery. The Labour Party is not just irrelevant in this fight - it is on the wrong side.

There are people who recognise that all this is true and who yet remain sympathisers of the Labour Party. They feel that it has made mistakes but yet through some sort of apostolic succession it is still the party of Connolly. They should ask themselves whether it is better to be loyal to those who have betrayed Connolly's heritage, or to be loyal to Connolly's ideas of a workers' republic.

#### Election Machine

There are others who see the Labour Party simply as the party of the working class, and who think there can never be any other party of the working class. But while the Labour Party pursues its present course, it becomes less and less a party of the working class. It can no longer



Thornley causes Corish no sweat

attract the best militant workers interested in politics: it must more and more become a shell, an election machine dominated by T.D.s and party bureaucrats. The most eager-beaver socialists can make no headway against such a tide.

For it is not possible to reform the Labour Party from the inside. The administrative Council can ignore instructions from the National Conference, and since its proceedings are secret its erring members may never be found out. The National Conference is composed mainly of delegates from branches: any T.D. can form a new "branch", with two votes at Conference, by sending in £3 and the name of a "secretary". And there are many branches that never get further than that. Besides, it is impossible for one branch to communicate its ideas to another, unless they get a chance to speak at Conference. Branches have been even forbidden to issue statements to the press except on purely local issues.

The working class certainly needs its own party, a party composed of the most militant and politically aware workers, a party which would not compromise with the working class's enemies, a party which would act with the working class

and not in PLACE OF the working class, a party which would run itself in a completely democratic fashion and because of that would be able to rely on the loyal co-operation of every member in carrying out its policies. In a word, a revolutionary socialist party. The Labour Party cannot fill this role. Sinn Fein is inconsistent about its socialism and equally lacking in democracy.

The Socialist Workers' Movement does not claim to be such a party. Its small size means that there are vast areas of the working class which it cannot influence - and equally important, which it cannot learn from. But the S.W.M. can build a nucleus of the revolutionary socialist party of the future. It does so in the firm conviction that the increasing problems of capitalism will force hundreds, then thousands of actively-active workers to abandon trust in parliamentary and bureaucratic leaders and to seek a party alternative.

JOHN GOODWILLIE

**OPPOSE  
CONGRESS  
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ON  
WAGES —  
SEE PAGES  
4 & 5  
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**WHY  
ALLENDE  
FELL  
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**LETTERS  
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all  
correspondence  
to 95 Capel St  
Dublin 1



# THE GREAT CARVE-UP

"The moment was apt for business, so I said, 'Let us settle about our affairs in the Balkans. Your armies are in Roumania and Bulgaria. We have interests, missions and agents there. Don't let us get a cross-purposes in small ways. As far as Britain and Russia are concerned, how would it do for you to have 90 per cent predominance in Rumania, for us to have 90 per cent of the say in Greece and go 50-50 about Yugoslavia? I wrote (it) on a half-sheet of paper... (Stalin) made a large tick upon it and passed it back to us. It was all settled in no more time than it takes to set down...'"

Winston Churchill "The Second World War", vol. vi., London, 1954, p. 198.

THIS WAS how one of the most momentous results of the second World War was decided between Churchill and Stalin in Moscow in October 1944. It would be hard to find a better example of diplomacy between two imperialist powers. The deal was part of a wider package which had far-reaching effects on the possibility of working-class revolution in Europe in the years immediately after the war.

For alongside the geographical deal went the Stalinist policy of joining in coalition governments with elements discredited by the war. In Italy, for example, the Communist Party gave its full support to Marshal Badoglio (who in 1936 had led Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia) when in 1943 he was made head of the provisional government in the part of the country occupied by Allied troops. In France, the Communists helped to disarm the resistance and to revive the capitalist economy.

This happened, of course, against the background of enormous devastation and working class radicalism produced by the war. The great capitalist powers were presented with the delicate task of restoring bourgeois society. Hence their willingness to enlist the co-operation of Stalin and the Western Communist Parties. The alliance began to break up in 1947-48 when it became clear that the Russian and American blocs had conflicting interests in the long term.

The United States had emerged as the unchallenged world power. Three quarters of the world's invested capital and two thirds of its industrial capacity were concentrated there - the rest was shared over the other 95 per cent of the earth's inhabited surface. It had not been a theatre of war; gigantic surpluses were available to bail out European capitalism.

American policy was geared to mop up as great a proportion of world markets as possible. The U.S. Navy Secretary, James Forrestal, gave an outline in a letter dated 8 December 1947: "As long as we can out-produce the world, can control the sea and can strike terror with the atomic bomb, we can assume certain risks otherwise unacceptable in an effort to restore world trade... the years before any possible power can achieve the capability effectively to attack us with weapons of mass destruction are our years of opportunity."

The opportunity was seized in a number of ways. Marshall Aid came to Europe on condition that Communists be excluded from governments, and that the stability of capitalist regimes be guaranteed. The American military force in Europe and throughout the world increased dramatically. Further, the dollar was now tied to gold as the international unit of currency exchange, which allowed the U.S. to run a continuing balance of payments deficit for the next two decades.

THESE DEVELOPMENTS form the prelude to the Cold War and to an unprecedented long period of capitalist expansion up to the late 1960's. The two are linked by the key role of expenditure on arms. In 1962 UNESCO published a survey on arms-spending showing that about £43,000 million a year was being spent on arms, equal to at least 66% of the entire national income of the Third World countries, and about one half of gross capital formation throughout the world.

This spending provided a buffer against the tendency over many years for the rate of profit to decline in capitalist industry. It explains why we have not seen a repeat of 1929-type slumps since World War II. These arms were also used, of course, to jack up imperialism and used in the terrifying nuclear arms race.

The Cold War and steady capitalist expansion in the western countries are the background for understanding the working class movements of this period. Two features are worth mentioning in some detail: the rise, and the taming of the mass communist parties, particularly in France and Italy; and the emergence of the "Welfare State" which is often, mistakenly, thought to have been created by the social democratic parties.

The foundations of social welfare legislation were laid down in the 1880's and 1890's. A J. Balfour, a leader of the British Conservative Party, said in 1895: "Social legislation is not only different from socialist legislation; it is its most direct opposite and effective antidote." The same applies to Bismarck's legislation in the 1880's which was explicitly designed to head off the socialist movement.

Expanded in later years, most of the welfare services were wrecked in the period of slump and fascism. Their foundations

## Part 10 in a series on the History of Socialism

were laid after the war mostly by Liberal or Christian Democratic parties on the Continent.

The capitalists still needed to head working class resentment, and equally importantly, to reproduce a working class healthy enough and intelligent enough to operate capitalism with more advanced technology. Welfare spending did not redistribute income to any great extent: most of the redistribution was from one section of the working class to another, or from those at work to those too old or too young to work, and so on.

The rise in real living standards was achieved by working class struggles in a period of almost full employment. The concentration of wealth among a small minority was as marked at the end of the 1960's as in the late 1940's in the development capitalist countries.

WHAT THEN of the working class parties in the period? One after another, the Social democratic parties abandoned even the vocabulary of Marxism. Entering coalitions, or even as one-party rulers, their role became one of running capitalism more efficiently than the bourgeois parties. One result of this was that they became the most persistent advocates of incomes policies and of planning, which took on a new importance with the increasingly close economic links between the different countries and the rising problem of inflation. While still able to command a mass working class vote and still associated closely with the bureaucratic trade union leaders, their active working class support declined steadily. The Communist parties are perhaps of greater relevance. In France and Italy they came out of the war immensely strengthened because of their role in the resistance; the Italian C.P. had only 4,000 members in 1941, but 400,000 in 1944-45. The needs of Russian foreign policy and of Stalinist leadership led them into coalitions after the war in which they worked strenuously to get capitalism back on its feet. And colonialism too: the French C.P. voted for the re-introduction of French troops to Vietnam in 1946. With the development of the cold war they retreated to the sidelines, but they still retained their base of a community of militants within industry.



Churchill, Truman, and Stalin shake on it

Developments in the international communist movement upset this pattern, however. The death of Stalin and the exposes which followed; the split between Russia and China; the invasion of Hungary; the image of the Eastern European regimes presented by the Cold War, all forced the western communist parties to direct their policies less towards Russian foreign policy and more towards achieving a share in domestic government. This was especially so in France and Italy, where the political systems were deadlocked because they were excluded. The communist parties now made a much more explicit commitment to reformism and to parliamentary methods. They retreated from internationalism, presenting themselves as the only 'true nationalists'. They emphasised the industrial struggles less and less.

Thus when working class living standards were again under attack in the late 1960's the possibilities opened up for revolutionary socialists in countries like France, Italy and Britain to gain a working class base - something quite new. For although Trotskyist groups had survived since the 1930s, they had been isolated prone to splits and nowhere in Europe had they achieved any mass support.

The isolation of the revolutionaries was a result of the stability in the system but also of the determined efforts made in advertising, education, and the media, to persuade workers that class differences no longer existed. These were used as ideological means of keeping the working class quiet, together with the anticommunism of the Cold War.

THE EAST EUROPEAN regimes in the post-war period were far from stable. Russia's sphere of influence had, by 1950, been consolidated by the creation of

satellites on the Stalinist model, mostly imposed from above. Russia had suffered enormously from the war - 15 to 20 million dead and great numbers of factories destroyed. The country's rulers used the army to raid Eastern European industry and whole plants were transported to the Soviet Union.

However, the installation of these new regimes did not run smoothly. In East Germany in 1953 and in Hungary in 1956 open working class revolts broke out - in the latter case expressed in the classical form of workers' councils. The Russian regime tried to change course with Khrushchev. But the new policy of 'peaceful co-existence' led to further problems, and a break with Peking.

IT WOULD SEEM, then, that the years since World War II saw the resurgence of capitalism and the taming of independent working class politics. But in the mid-1960's the system was breaking down in ways that placed working class politics firmly on the agenda again, as symbolised by the massive French general strike in 1968.

As the arms race developed, the mechanisms which had produced economic stability were no longer so effective. The growth of multinational firms and the huge expansion of trade between the developed capitalist countries made inflation spread internationally.

Capitalist regimes had to go on the offensive against workers' living standards; social democracy could no longer protect them. This has made the building of independent working-class politics all the more vital - and a real possibility again.

P. G.

## Dublin anti-union firm defeated

FINGLAS LABORATORIES LTD. - the modern film-processing works on Dublin Industrial Estate calls itself 'Gratisfilm' or 'Free Film Service' in Britain and on the Continent. But neither the processing nor the workers who do the printing and developing, are especially free. According to management, the company's philosophy is "free meals, good wages, clean conditions, bonus and shift allowance" - that's what their ads say.

Mr. Geoffrey Stead - the owner and managing director, who moves in millionaire circles - subscribes to a much older philosophy. In his own words: "In fifty years of business I have never had to deal with a union". The family-owned company, which has a bigger processing plant in Glasgow, Scotland, and servicing depots in Britain and Europe, has always been strictly non-union. On the application form for employment at the Dublin factory, they actually ask: "Are you a member of a trade union?"

But now the question is different: "Why did you join the union?" And the answers are: low pay, no sick pay, management dictatorship on the job, poor job

security and irregular working hours.

A girl with over two years' service was sacked over the phone as she excused herself for not being at work because of sickness. That sparked off the revolt. Since then, the girls have been the most militant. Some had been sacked for making mistakes, or because a supervisor took a dislike to them. In another department the supervisor constantly harasses the workers - his latest move is stopping them talking on the job. Another worker has been passed over for promotion because he doesn't suck up to management. Photo-trimmers have been sent to do the garden, and splicers have painted part of the factory. There are many people doing twelve-hours at a stretch. Overtime was almost compulsory - as much as the management wanted.

At one stage, the training period was increased, for no good reason, from three to twelve weeks. So people work on reduced pay weeks after they have learned their extremely boring jobs. Some workers who had not finished their training period have been put on to training others.

But, as reported in the last issue of

'THE WORKER', some of the workers recently took steps to end all this by joining a union and getting it organised on the job. The management ran off for help to the Federated Union of Employers when a claim was submitted. But after a series of talks, seven out of the fifteen points in the claim were conceded. Others are to be discussed again - including the references to union membership in the application form.

When the engineers at Abel Alarms Dublin decided to join the union, they came up against immense opposition from their employer. Not only did he refuse to recognise the union, but he immediately sacked the Shop Steward. Not surprisingly the rest of the engineers would not stand for this and went out on official strike.

After four months, the men are still out; the strike is being prolonged

All of the 280 workers have secured a pay increase. The basic rate for male adults goes up from £23 to £26 and for female adults from £17 to £21. Previously a worker might do 60 hours and take home £27. But now the overtime situation is being regulated too.

There are still plenty of problems. The work is by its nature seasonal - people don't tend to take holiday snaps in November - so the firm will want to

by the "scab labour" which the boss is employing. Of course this is only to be expected from one who was a scab himself. Five years ago he helped to break a maintenance craft strike in Dublin when he painted all the railings around St. Stephen's Green in the presence of a mobile picket!

However, the tide is turning in favour of the strikers. Many important contracts have been lost due to the non-union labour. On one job, Cor-

lay workers off in the coming weeks. No doubt they will try to get rid of the union members among them. Many of those who are union members would normally qualify to be kept on as permanent staff.

The answer to the threat of victimisation is to build the union on the job as quickly and effectively as possible, to recruit more members, set up a section committee within the branch (No. 7, L.T.G.W.U.), and insist on the right to put up union notices - a right which Stead publicly grant, but on which he changed his mind. The company agreed to work on a "first in, last out" basis. They must be made to stick to that.

poration workers refused to allow them to work. Finally, and none too soon, the men's union, the E.T.U., threatened to call a one-day stoppage by its members throughout the country. Actions like these will help the Abel strikers to win in the end. Their struggle to organise a union will be seen as an example by other workers who, every day, are struggling against the actions taken by ruthless employers.

## CAUSE FOR ALARM



# STRIKE FOR A LIVING WAGE

MARRIED WORKERS with young families being paid only £20 a week and less in this day and age seems outrageous. But this was the scandalous wage being paid to some of the fifty workers who went on strike in August at Marlin Communal Aerials, Francis Street, Dublin. This ridiculously low rate of pay was one of the reasons for the strike.

A meeting at the FUE offices between management, union and a workers' representative committee broke up after a rise of 50p was offered to the servicemen engineers, and aerial erectors, and an offer of £6 was made to the cablemen. At a meeting of the workers themselves later on in the day, it was agreed that the offer of a 50p rise was ridiculous. They were also quick to see that the £6 rise being offered to the cablemen was done to undermine their growing unity and solidarity. The solidarity was the most prominent feature of the strike from the start. The decision to continue the strike, like all other decisions after it, was taken unanimously.

Various efforts were made by two managers, Mr. Cassidy and Mr. Kelly (the latter an ex-G.I. with a dubious military



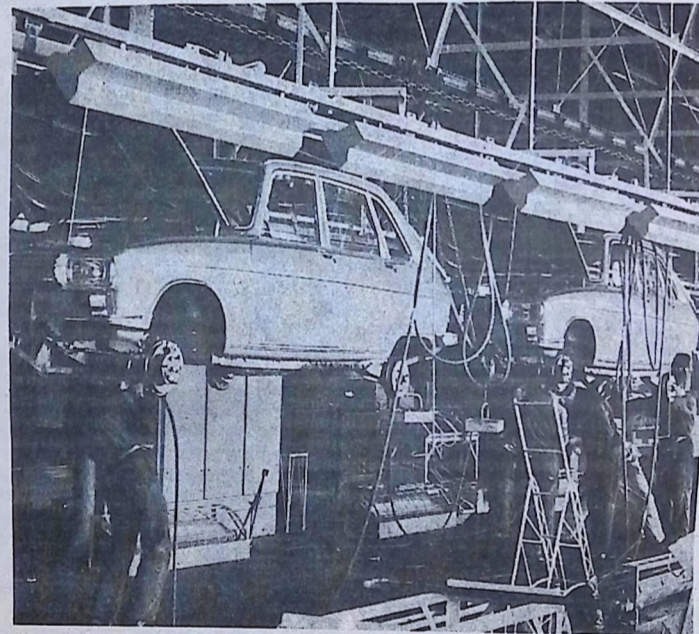
record) to undermine the strike, but have failed dismally. Separate meetings with the office girls were arranged, and also with the junior engineers. Attractive propositions were made to the junior engineers individually, but being loyal to their striking brothers and sisters they rejected them.

Up to the present, various leaflets have been distributed to shop stewards around the city seeking financial support, and have pr 1 to be of tremendous benefit to the strike. Also, working class women who would otherwise have paid their bills to Marlin refused to pass the picket line, and have pledged to give their support to the strikers in whatever way they can. This has been a great morale

booster to the strikers.

There are two scabs working. One in particular had been suspect all along, having repeatedly refused to join the union. The same scab is the owner of a large house which he has converted into flats. The flats are rented to young couples at exorbitant prices. So when the decision to go on strike was made, it was not surprising to discover which side he was on.

Financially, Marlin Communal Aerials is doing well. A company whose share capital has increased from £1000 to £4500 in just over two years, and owned by a big Canadian company, Premier Cablevision, can easily afford to pay a living wage to its workers.



# CAR WORKS ERUPT

LAST MONTH, the giant Chrysler company threatened to pull out of Britain if strikers at their Coventry and Scottish plants did not return to work. It's a threat that has been made many times before by such companies, and will no doubt be made many times again. In several countries car companies are in increasing difficulties, and the managements are using the same means to divide and confuse the workers. But in Britain, France, Italy, West Germany, and the USA, it is also the car workers who are to the front line of the battle with the bosses and in the rise of rank-and-file movements of industrial workers.

**FORD, GERMANY:** Turkish immigrant workers were at the centre of a dispute at the Cologne plant, during September. The rate of inflation has increased from 2.7% to 7.2% in four years, and there is rising anger among West German workers. The Cologne dispute led to bitter clashes between strikers and scabs.

**FORD, BRITAIN:** The whole of the Dagenham plant, with over 7,000 workers, came to a halt last month over the dismissal of a worker.

**FORD, EUROPE:** The company is building its first plant in Spain - in Valencia - hoping to get away from independent trade unions and to exploit cheaper labour. The factory will employ 15,000 people. Toyota, General Motors, Peugeot, Volvo and Volkswagen are all trying to get into Spain.

**FORD, USA:** The vice-president of the union branch at a New Jersey plant was dismissed in June for allegedly encouraging workers to leave their jobs because of the heat. The temperature was 116 degrees in the factory.

**GENERAL MOTORS, USA:** On two separate occasions this summer, hooded pickets - hooded for fear of victimisation - brought the enormous Lordstown plant to a halt. They were protesting against the sacking of three workers.

**CHRYSLER, USA:** A sit-down strike at the Mack Detroit factory, in August,

followed quickly on a victorious strike at the Jefferson Assembly plant and a sit-down at the Detroit Forge. There have been growing protests about worsening conditions. The sacking of a militant sparked off the strike by 4,500 workers at the Mack plant. Police mounted a massive operation to break the sit-in.

Eventually, the picket was broken by 1,000 union 'hacks' from around the town, most of them white and holding office in the union, while the majority of the Mack workers are black. They marched down to the picket-line with clubs and guns.

Meanwhile - and true to form - leaders of the United Auto Workers, were doing a deal with the chiefs of Chrysler. The agreement they signed is for three years and gives the workers significantly less money than they were looking for in return for the company's 'concession' that there would be less compulsory overtime. That compulsory overtime makes a joke out of the claim that workers have won a 40-hr. week.

**CHRYSLER, UK:** The return to work

by the Linwood strikers in Scotland while talks go on means no end to the trouble in Coventry, the TGWU and the Engineering Union leaders sent their members across an official picket put up by the electricians. In Linwood, Scotland, 7,000 workers came out in protest at scabs doing electricians' jobs.

'The Carworker', produced by motor industry workers throughout Britain describes how the action of union officials

# Double Standards

Women are used to having the worst of both worlds, so it won't come as much of a surprise to hear of yet another example where the double standard applies.

We have recently discovered that the Department of Social Welfare has taken it upon itself to give its opinion on whether or not a woman should stay at home and mind her children or go out to work, and to use this as the basis for withholding unemployment benefit from women.

In this day and age women don't languish at home doing embroidery, waiting to be married. They work. They leave school and get a job, just like their brothers. They pay stamps, just like their brothers. They may work for several years and then they get married. A large majority continue work for several years and then they get married. A large majority continue to work, until the arrival of their first baby. In Ireland there is no provision for maternity leave, so the majority must leave their jobs, and even if they intend to go back to work, they take six months or so off.

Then they feel the pinch. Money is short. Or they want to use their talents and training, even for a few hours a day. They start looking for a job. They have paid stamps for years, so they apply for unemployment benefit. But they have reckoned without the Department of Social Welfare.

The first stumbling block is when you answer the question "Why did you leave your last job?" The girl in the exchange advises you not to bother applying when she hears the answer. You insist - so you have to explain

why you wish to "abandon" your child. You have to give the names and addresses of possible babysitters. You must explain how you will get the baby to the sitter if they don't live in the same area. All this goes down on the official form! - in addition to the usual "how many jobs have you applied for", and "how many ads did you put in the paper", etc.

You have applied, and week after week you go to sign on. Then one day you get a note to say "they" have decided you are "not available for work". They don't say why.

In despair you go back to the exchange. The girl says you can appeal, but won't be any use and if they say no this time... She asks "Do you not know any Minister?" She says that the only way to prove you are available for work is to get a job, and then leave it and apply again. You decide to appeal.

You still sign on every week, and eventually you are summoned before the Appeals Commission. You sit at one end of a long table which fills the whole room. They sit at the other end. All men. They start "Well you know what it's all about". You say you don't. They ask about the baby. Who will look after it? They ask about your husband. Does he work? Where? What is his job? You can see them totting up his wages in their minds and deciding whether you "need" the money or not. "That's O.K." they say "You may go".

"It's not O.K.", you say, and ruin your chances by launching into a speech about how men don't have to go through this to get their lousy few pounds, and how ever form you've filled in says if you make false statements you'll be prosecuted. Why, you enquire, don't they prosecute you if you say your available for work, and they believe you're not. You wonder why they don't want to know who is minding the baby now, and leave.

A few more weeks signing on, and then the letter to say your appeal was turned down.

This is just one case; there are many more equally ludicrous. You must be available for work to get unemployment benefit. You cannot prove you are available for work unless you get a job. If you have a job you don't want unemployment benefit. Catch 22. And all because the Department of Social Welfare has decided that a woman with a child may not work. And from the stories we have heard, they will maintain this attitude in the face of all opposition. One girl got her notice telling her she was unavailable for work in the same envelope with the Insurance Card she needed for the job she had just started...

M. McA.

## OUT OF TIME, OUT OF WORK

ESB recently let 50 electricians go on completing their apprenticeships. Four of these were in Galway - exactly one half of the year's apprentices. Last year the ESB let 73 apprentices go, claiming there was no work for them. Galway seems to have been the only district where the electricians' unions (ETU and IETA) put up a fight against this, but this year there was no opposition, and the ESB got away with their sackings.

Of course, ESB is not alone in this. It is a regular practice of many employers. Most often they claim they have to work for the qualified men, but then they hire more young workers and start the cycle again. Even though they may have been working for five years, apprentices who have "come out" and are then sacked do not get redundancy money. Serving time is not considered to be full employment.

The unions know full well that this is going on, but have not made any determined effort to stop it. Rightly they insist that all craftsmen should be union members, but this does not give workers the protection it should. The attitude of the unions towards apprentices is almost one of contempt.

Those are the real problems apprentices face - and ones for which AnCO has no answer.

EDITOR - Are there any readers with further examples of this abuse? Do readers know of efforts to resist it?

## TAKEOVER BY OFFICIALS

IN 1971, Ford workers in Britain had a nine-week strike on the issue of parity - they wanted wages equivalent to the best in the British motor industry. The strike was settled over the heads of the workers and their negotiating body, the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC), by the so-called 'left-wing' union leaders, Hugh Scanlon and Jack Jones. The settlement was an £8 a week increase spread over two years (the workers were out for £10 a week), but the increases were subject to two penalty clauses; there was to be a 'standstill on labour costs' and a 'standstill on grading grievances' for the life of the agreement. The Ford workers' wages and grading status were to be frozen for two years - while Fords were free to escalate their prices, impose redundancies, and further increase their profits.

John Mathews gives an account of the background of the strike and of the strike itself in a book which is based on discussions and interviews with the rank-and-file Ford workers.

The book begins with a chapter on the motor industry generally and gives details about the major manufacturers. Ford has set up plants in several countries to dodge customs barriers, make use of cheap labour and grab government grants by setting up in areas which are designated as 'underdeveloped' regions (for instance, Genk in Belgium). Fords will threaten to move plants to another country if there is resistance by the workers (Henry Ford II threatened Ted Heath with this during the '71 strike). Fords move their money and products across national boundaries

## THE FORD STRIKE THE WORKERS STORY

BY JOHN MATTHEWS  
Panther Paperback 40p

to exploit relative currency strengths and tax concessions on exports. Any government which dares to object to this can find itself subjected to the mighty economic strength of Fords.

All of this shows the international outlook of capitalism, which makes national solutions such as the call for greater tariff protection unrealistic. Only if workers have an international perspective can they curb these giants. This is the only answer to 'dual sourcing' - all components and final products have at least two distinct sources, so that supply can be switched from one to another in times of trouble - and the lack of parity in conditions between the plants in various countries, and finally the struggle for workers' control to ride the world of capitalism.



# SAY NO TO WA

## FIVE ARGUMENTS AGAINST WAGE AGREEMENTS

THEY TIE THE LEVEL OF WAGE INCREASES BELOW THE LEVEL OF INCREASES IN PRICES, PROFITS, AND PRODUCTIVITY.

THE TWO and a half years since the introduction of the first National Wage Agreement have seen record increases in prices. In particular, in the past years, food prices – which affect the lower paid most harshly – have been soaring. The price of foodstuffs rose 10% from mid-1972 to mid-1973, according to official statistics.

Working class families are having difficulties in making ends meet in a way that has not happened on this scale in the past ten years. It's not much of a defence for National Agreements to say it would have been worse without them!

At the same time, the profits of private enterprise have been rising at an unprecedented rate. The bigger companies in particular, as well as banks, insurance companies and building societies, have never known a bonanza like it. Shareholders never had it so good. The increase on the value of shares on the Stok Exchange in 1972 was £100 million – and that's just the value added from higher profits, not from new investment! While the tiny minority of the population who own and control all the wealth have seen their fortunes rise, the vast majority of wage-earners have either lost out or stood still in the same period.

When we allow for the increase in the cost of living (and remembering that it affects the lower paid differently from the higher paid, who spend a smaller part of their income on food), tax deductions and increased social welfare contributions we see that the vast majority of workers HAVE TAKEN A CUT IN THEIR STANDARD OF LIVING thanks to the wage agreement. Even the ITGWU paper 'Liberty' admits that the best increase a worker could have got within the terms of the Wage Agreement would be 10% – for someone starting on £17 in 1971! A 10% rise in actual earnings in that period – about 4% each year. Increased earnings in many cases are due to working longer hours.

The National Agreements have increased the gap between the 5% who own the most of the wealth and the rest who do the work. They have held still, or lessened, the workers' total share of the national income, which has been unchanged for a generation.

The 'escalator clauses' of the national agreements have been no defence at all against rising prices. Even if the method of deciding the amount of the increase was fair – which it is not – the best that the 'escalator' could do would be to compensate AFTER price rises have taken place, so that we never catch up, and, of course, the percentage rises don't take account of tax deductions.

The Wage Agreements have been a form of wage CONTROL, therefore pegging down workers' incomes while profits, dividends, rents and consumer prices have been soaring.

THEY HAVE NOT PROVIDED ANY PROTECTION AGAINST REDUNDANCIES, SOARING INFLATION, AND HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT.

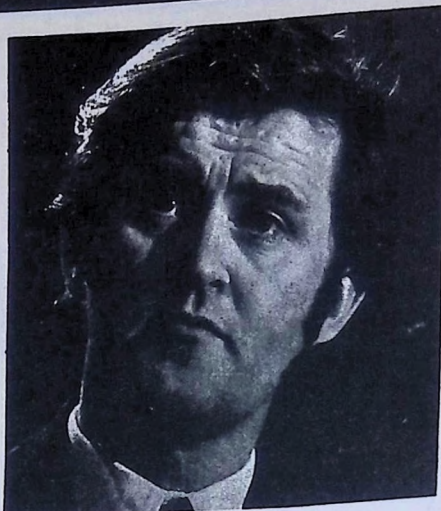
THE SECOND National Wage Agreement was also dedicated to defeating unemployment. Employers and politicians have made eloquent pleas to trade unionists to assist the 'national economy' by agreeing to restrain wage rises. They have wept into their champagne about Ireland's poor competitive position. They have pleaded for loyalty to the 'national interest', promising that it would be repaid by greater stability, more investment, more jobs, and greater prosperity. All we would have to do would be to 'pull together', 'buckle our belts', and 'pull up our socks.'

In 1972 we had over 10,000 redundancies on top of what is already the highest level of unemployment in any country in Europe, and we 'enjoyed' the highest rate of inflation. The 'national interest' is a device for blinding us to those facts. It is being used the world over. These facts are that the world economy is in a crisis from which no single country can shield itself. We see the fruits of the crisis in the monetary scrambles – devaluation and frantic moving around of reserves. We see it in world-wide inflation and increasing unemployment. Countries that have had a steady improvement in living standards and no unemployment since world war II – Sweden and West Germany, for example, now face job problems they have not known for 40 years.

The Irish economy is backward, weak and very 'open' – that is, it depends a lot on foreign trade and investment. It is dominated largely by big international companies. Manufacturing industries rely heavily on imported materials. Therefore we are bound to feel the 'ups and downs' of the world economy very sharply. The National Agreements have not softened the blow – and they cannot. Any attempt to sell a further agreement on that basis is a fraud and a deceit.

The problems and the instability of the economy are in no way the responsibility of the workers. There is no 'national economy' or 'national interest' which stands above the two main classes in this society – the capitalists and the workers. By playing that tune, the ruling class has been able to tame and divide the working class movement. They look for sacrifices from workers when things are bad for them, but they don't rush to reward them when things improve.

Let those who defend wage agreements for their contribution to the "national economy" explain away the price rises, the redundancies, the poverty – and the fantastic pickings for profiteers.



The Minister for Wage Agreements, Michael O'Leary

THEY HAVE NOT ADVANCED THE POSITION OF THE LOWER PAID OR BROUGHT EQUAL PAY FOR WOMEN ANY NEARER.

THE SECOND National Wage Agreement was dedicated to 'social justice' and the cause of the lower paid. It was fine stirring stuff which convinced quite a few people – but it was a fraud! It was deliberate below-the-belt-blows, aimed at exploiting working-class solidarity.

It is true that some groups of workers may have got rises they might not have got in other circumstances (but who's going to prove that definitely?) – but it's also true that lower-paid workers have been the first to suffer from that most glaring reminder of the one-sided 'agreement', the exemption clause (clause 17). For the second year running, agricultural workers have got less than what they are due under the agreement. Previous to this, workers in the woollen industry footwear, furniture, textiles, hotels, etc. – all among the less well organised and lower-paid – have 'missed out' on the agreements.

In some cases, it has taken a strike, or the threat of a strike, even to get the minimum payment under the agreements. In others the Labour Court has had to recommend payment of rises due two years previously!

At the same time, the better organised and better paid who have been able to benefit from the productivity clauses and 'anomalies' clauses. Dockers, journalists, some engineering workers, as well as some grades in the public service have been able to get increases greater than those set by the agreements.

In the debate on the second National Agreement there was a great ballyhoo about these agreements bringing equal pay nearer. But yet women only get paid a proportion of what men were paid. Even the 'revised' terms – revised to the tune of 15p more a week for women! – still give women less than men. How could that close the gap?

Women earn a smaller proportion of men's wages in Ireland than in any other European country. They are the biggest army of the lower paid. National Wage Agreements have not advanced them, and cannot do so. Only better organisation and the determined effort of the whole trade union movement to get a minimum wage implemented could.

THEY SIGN AWAY THE RIGHT TO STRIKE, AND UNDERMINE THE RIGHT TO FREE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING.

THE TRADE UNION movement was born in struggle; it has fought for every right it has. These rights should not be thrown away. But by giving effective negotiating powers to the executive of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, and by making it virtually impossible to get full official backing for any industrial action that might be taken, this is what the wage agreements do. Bosses admit that even if the wage agreements did not have much effect on inflation, they did 'stabilise industrial relations' – that is smooth the path of the exploiters.

Workers in individual places of work, and individual unions, have far less power to determine improvements in pay and conditions. They immediately come up against one obstacle: Congress Executive. It no longer has a function merely of co-ordinating the activities of affiliated trade unions, but one of policing the movement and keeping it in line. Some of the effect of this can be seen in the dramatic drop in days lost in strikes – from over 1 million in 1970, to 270,000 in 1971 and 200,000 in 1972.

We saw how Congress officials instructed men to pass the ESB shift workers' pickets – something for which they would rightly have been thrown out some years ago. During the strike by workers at the Britain's car assembly factories in late 1972, the main union involved, the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union, was giving the men official backing, but Congress refused to sanction an "all-out picket" because of the challenge to the National Wage Agreement involved in the men's demands.

Congress introduced the two-tier picketing system just before the first wage agreement was signed in 1970. The two things combined have effectively undermined the power of the picket; they have set worker against worker in a more bitter way, rather than bringing greater unity, as the trade union chiefs claimed they would.

Each union and each group of workers united at the shop floor should be in a position to chart its own course. Solidarity among workers is the only basis for unity, not a one-sided agreement with the employers which puts Congress in the position of judge, jury, and executioner on the rest of the trade union movement.



THEY BIND THE TRADE UNIONS TO MACHINE, MAKING THEM RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE CAPITALIST ECONOMY MORE REMOTE FROM RANK AND FILE MEMBERS.

THE NATIONAL Wage Agreements have emphasised a weak trade union movement – the over-riding influence of the national organisations and the relative feebleness, in most so far as organisation on the job. In the past ten years, Congress has come to a dominant role. At the height of the industrial militancy of the 1960s, the leaders were discussing with the government how to curb with a law the rank-and-file movement.

They were anxious to tell the bosses how best to run their factories – get in on planning and on schemes to increase productivity, raise the workers' cause. The wage agreements have strengthened Congress leaders and employers. The talks take place without the rank-and-file. The union leaders don't even go into the talk of demands which the rank-and-file might shape.

Congress takes the responsibility for guaranteeing wage increases – in return for nothing from the employers! They make agreements are not 'sinned against'. By means of the two-tier system they can make things very difficult for any group of workers anything higher than what is allowed under the wage agreements. They give Congress the role of policing the Labour movement.



# TO WAGE SELL-O



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## THE POSITION OF EQUAL PAY FOR

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## TO STRIKE, AND FREE COLLECTIVE

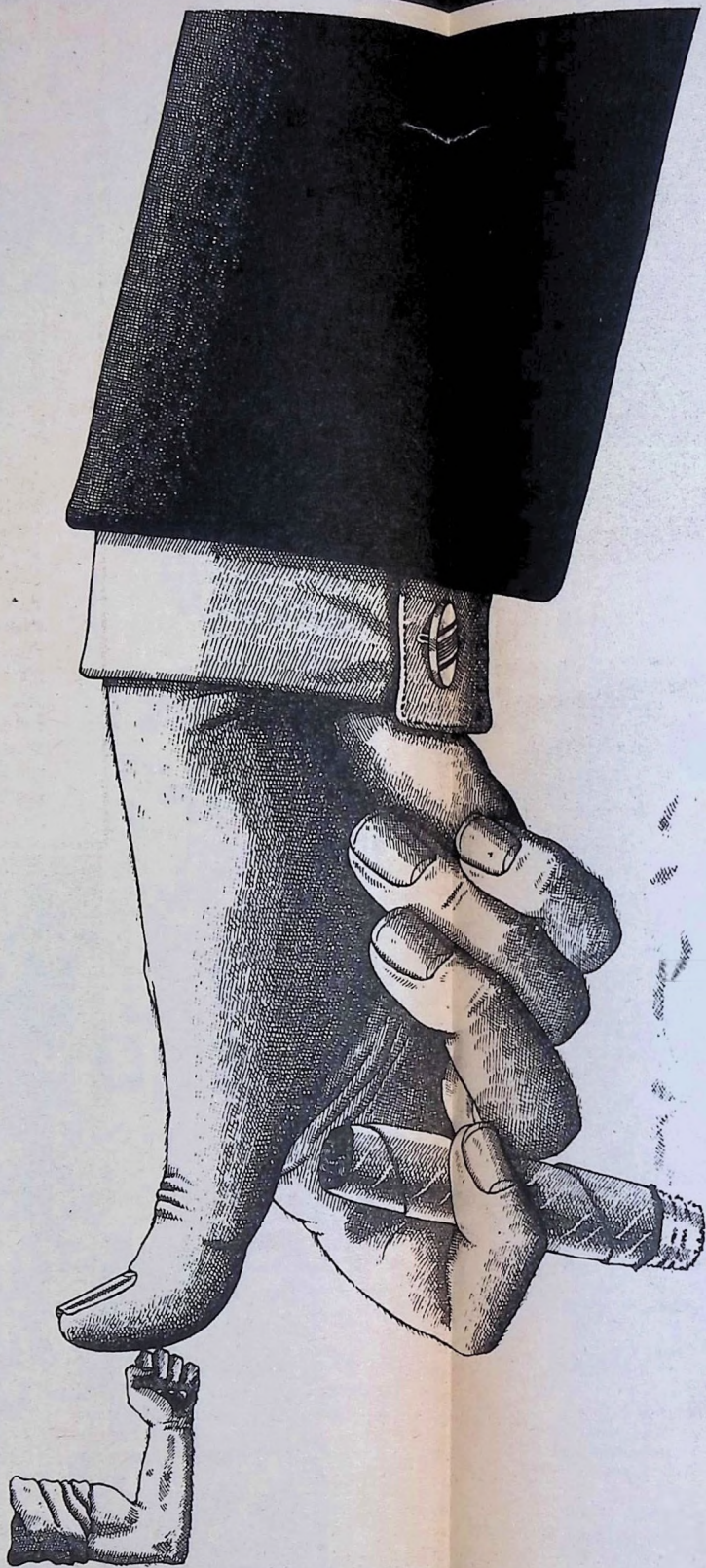
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**THEY BIND THE TRADE UNIONS TO THE STATE  
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MORE REMOTE FROM RANK AND FILE MEMBERS.**

THE NATIONAL Wage Agreements have emphasised a weakness of the Irish trade union movement—the over-riding influence of the leaderships of the national organisations and the relative feebleness, in most sections, of organisation on the job. In the past ten years, Congress has come to play a more dominant role. At the height of the industrial militancy of the 1960s, Congress leaders were discussing with the government how to curb with unofficial rank-and-file movement.

They were anxious to tell the bosses how best to run their system, trying to get in on planning and on schemes to increase productivity, rather than advancing the workers' cause. The wage agreements have strengthened the ties between the rank-and-file. The union leaders don't even go into the talks with a clear set of demands which the rank-and-file might shape.

Congress takes the responsibility for guaranteeing wage restraint by the workers—in return for nothing from the employers! They make sure that the agreements are not 'sinned against'. By means of the two-tier picketing system they can make things very difficult for any group of workers who go out for anything higher than what is allowed under the wage agreement. These agreements give Congress the role of policing the Labour movement, taking power

## PROFITS UP!

**Bank of Ireland Group:**

Profits up 43% in 1972

**Allied Irish Banks:**

Profits up 23% in 1972

**Ulster Bank:**

Profits up 58% in 1972

**Northern Bank:**

Profits up 23% in 1972

**Waterford Glass:**

Profits up 51% in 1971 and 23% in '72

**P. J. Carrolls:** Profits up 29% in

Profits up 29% in 1971 and 29% in '72

**Jefferson Smurfit:**

Profits up 24% in 1971 and 35% in '72

**Youghal Carpets:**

Profits up 25% in 1971 and 115% in '72

**Fitzwilton:**

Profits up 15% in 1971 and 90% in '72

**Smith Group: (Renault assemblers)**

Profits up 80% in 1971 and 85% in '72

**Irish Distillers:**

Profits up 7½% in 1971 and 36% in '72

**McInerney Properties:**

Profits up 88% in 1971 and 31% in '72

**Rohan Group (builders and property**

**developers):** Profits up 55% in 1971

and 35% in 1972

**Cement-Roadstone:**

Profits up 35% in 1971 and 42% in '72

## COALITI

The Coalition government has put all its economic and political eggs in the National Wage Agreement basket. The fourteen-point election manifesto made clear their commitment to the principal of Garrett Fitzgerald explained the point further:

*"The National Coalition, because of the close relations between the Labour Party and the trade union movement, and because of the Coalition's commitment to social justice, has in its power to do what Fianna Fail cannot do - secure the trust and confidence of the representatives of workers in hammering out an agreed policy to tackle inflation"*.

Their commitment to this kind of collaboration, dressed up as a 'policy to tackle inflation' has guided much of their action since coming to power. It has gone further than just trying to get a third wage agreement. There has been talk of a 'social contract' and of 'economic partnership' for longer-term planning of the economy. The aim of all this is to get the union leaders involved in

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Congress leaders sell the deal

out of the hands of individual unions and of the rank-and-file.

Behind the power of Congress and of the employers, there is also the power of the state—ultimately, the courts, prisons, and security forces. The first wage agreement was negotiated under the threat of a wage freeze by law. The government might try to bring in something similar if a third wage agreement does not get through. Already the government has been playing a very active role in handing out worthless bribes for a wage agreement.

Congress is tied to the government by a number of strings, the latest being collaboration in the national Economic Council. It does not have the independence to resist any further tricks by the government or employers might pull to get them, holding back the workers even more. The top trade union leaders spend most of their time with bosses and politicians, and hardly know the feelings of the rank-and-file anymore. They are 'bought off' with higher status, and the prospect of a government job.

In fighting wage agreements we have also to fight to win back the unions for the member. We have to oppose any undemocratic manoeuvre used by the union leaders to sell wage agreements to the workers. We have to campaign for a trade union movement that is independent of the influence of employers and of the government and democratically controlled by the rank-and-file.

The material contained in these pages, along with additional information, will be published in a pamphlet, available shortly from THE WORKER, 95 Capel Street, Dublin 1.

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# WRITE NOW!

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### FROM INSIDE LONG KESH

A chara,

I read 'The Worker' September issue, with amazement and disgust, the hysterical ravings of a so-called 'Belfast Comrade' who, seemingly, exerted his apparently limited knowledge of the Northern situation to slanderously attack the Provisional Republican Movement. I trust you will accord me space in your columns to answer a number of his anti-Provisional execrations, the rest I prefer to treat with the utter contempt they so richly deserve.

'Belfast Comrade' claims that the Provisionals have been responsible for the infliction of severe hardships on working class communities. Further, he claims that many innocent people have been killed as a result of I.R.A. action in built-up areas. What 'Belfast Comrade' conveniently failed to point out is the fact that most civilian casualties incurred during the present struggle, fatal or otherwise, can be directly attributed to the British Army, whose role in the Nationalist ghettos is not merely to eradicate the I.R.A. but also to eliminate resistance to British domination from all quarters. He, also, overlooks the fact that 118 Volunteers of the I.R.A. have been killed during the present campaign of armed resistance.

Alternatively, 'Belfast Comrade' advocates that all Socialists should work for an end to Provisional armed resistance within the ghetto areas.

It would appear that he is suggesting collusion with the forces of occupation in an attempt to bring about 'normality'. We could, then, sit back and allow the new assembly to function without hindrance and work through the 'usual democratic methods' in pursuance of reforms within the system.

'Belfast Comrade' must realise that

reforms are totally unacceptable to the Republican Movement and nothing less than the complete dismantling of the present Northern statelet will suffice.

'Belfast Comrade' goes on to unscrupulously allege that because of constant occupation of Catholic working class areas, the Provisionals are able to unjustifiably claim to be the 'Army of the People'. Moreover, he suggests that the Provisionals are largely dependent on constant British military repression to maintain support. If this is so, why then have the Provisionals consistently demanded the withdrawal of troops from these areas?

He then continues to surmount all heights of ludicrousness by saying that Sinn Fein resemble the middle-class nationalist party of fifty years ago. I was completely unaware that the old Nationalist party were working for the establishment of a Democratic Socialist Republic in which social and economic policies, similar to those outlined in Eire Nua would be implemented.

Sinn Fein is not, as 'Belfast Comrade' suggests, subordinate to the I.R.A., and notwithstanding the constant harassment and arrest of their members on both sides of the border, they have managed to give the struggle and the many people involved a clear sense of direction and understanding. It is ridiculous of 'Belfast Comrade' to say that Sinn Fein have failed to recognise the full implication of British Imperialism both North and South. It is because of their determined opposition to imperialism that many members of Sinn Fein are now languishing in the Curragh and Long Kesh Concentration Camps.

Finally, I notice with amusement that suggestion of 'Belfast Comrade' that the Provisionals are providing valuable propaganda for the British Army and S.D.L.P. They will surely have to strive to equal that of a so-called Socialist who, prefers to criticise the only true revolutionary body in Ireland rather than offer his services in a more constructive manner in an effort to defeat the system, to which we are all opposed.

Is Mise,  
Pat Shannon  
Hut III  
Long Kesh

Editor: In fairness to 'Belfast Comrade' it should be pointed out that he only called for an end "offensive action".

### WHITHER DUBLIN?

Dear Editor,

Recently I read in the 'Irish Times' an article by John Swift entitled 'The March of Organised Labour'. As a former executive member of the Dublin Trades Council it caused me a certain amount of nostalgia. I read his description of the role formerly played by the Dublin Trade Unions who were affiliated to that body, of how they formed Councils of Action and conducted campaigns against Wages Standstill Orders, rising prices, and whatever threatened the workers' standard of living. He claims that it is the pressure of the organised workers that has brought things this far.

How far?

So far as a new National Agreement to be accepted in Liberty Hall by delegates (mostly there because they are 'yes' men) and officials (mostly conservatives), and not by the consent of the rank and file. Workers are being called upon by Congress to make sacrifices for the common good by accepting a lower standard of living for the time being. If there should be sacrifices, why only from the workers?

The trade unions are faced with new responsibilities and must fix aims corresponding to the changes in the capitalist system, and to the growing role of workers in society. But while the Congress is becoming increasingly involved in the EEC, enterprise and society, and

life is bringing out the need for new rights, what is often occurring is a limitation of fundamental trade union freedoms. There is increased repression of the workers, not by capitalists alone, but by the officials. A fine job is being done of pulling wool over the workers' eyes.

In an article in the last issue of 'The Worker', it was pointed out what a farce these National Agreements are by a worker from Waterford Glass. If Waterford workers are concerned with the standards of living, why not the Dublin Trades Council? What has happened to the council, once so vociferous?

The movement should not apologise for its determination (if such still exists) to get wage increases for its members. Rather it should aim to bring about that standard of living and human dignity which is the birthright of our people. A notable advance made by the members of the NUJ has recently proven what can be achieved, even though their action was frowned upon by Congress.

Perhaps what is needed is not Trades Councils where delegates go for a chat and a few jars afterwards. But rather:

1. The right to trade union activity at every work place plus the right to circulate trade union newspapers and publicity material.
2. The right to hold meetings in every work place.
3. The right to have a militant shop stewards movement.
4. The right to take part in international trade union activities.

When this is done, perhaps we will know not only whither Dublin, but whither the Irish worker.

Fraternally,  
K F

## RENT STRIKE

Dear Editor,

Re your article on NATO problems in your September issue, most of what you state is true, but of course it is slightly different when seen from the "inside".

When the Rent Strike started, many Associations merely announced to their members that they should withhold rents, instead of consulting them and getting their approval and support. Even so, the Strike was very successful until the Corporation sent out Notices to Quit. This frightened off a lot of support.

Pickets on Jervis Street were maintained fairly well during the summer of 1972, but readers will appreciate the difficulty of getting picketers into town and keeping them there 8 hours daily for

a 5-day week. Our people are necessarily workers and housewives and unlike ordinary strikers don't always be able to take time off for their normal vocations.

The TENANT newspaper is now in its 4th fortnightly issue. It was unfortunate that the paper didn't appear during the struggle when it could have built up a readership, but the Editorial Board were engaged in raising funds for the two months prior to publication.

The first two months of the TENANT's life has been news filled by the negotiations and the end of the Rent Strike. Even a fortnightly is too seldom in such a situation. The paper may now become a monthly (or bi-monthly).

The non-political, non-sectarian clauses in NATO's Constitution are merely phrases commonly used in organisations such as this. Obviously it is political and most of its members are Catholic.

Jim Brady  
Dublin 7  
Editorial Committee Member  
THE TENANT

## The Poem of Derry

Derry is beautiful,  
Derry is gay,  
Blotting, fighting  
Every day.

Army shooting,  
Men fell dead,  
And nobody cared  
Derry bled.

Army raiding,  
Saracens roaring,  
Voices shouting  
"The Army's in."

Derry is beautiful,  
Derry is gay,  
Blotting, fighting every day.

NEIL BROWNE (aged 9).

Derry.

from  
IRISH WEEKLY

# WHAT WE STAND FOR

## SOCIALIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT

The SOCIALIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT is a revolutionary workers' movement, whose aim is the organisation of the working class in the struggle for power and the transformation of the existing social order. All its activities, its methods and its internal organisation are subordinated to this and are designed to serve this purpose.

Capitalism is a system based on production for profit, not for human need. This system is driven by the necessity to accumulate profit, which means that capitalists compete with one another, both nationally and internationally.

The capitalist class is a ruling class whose ownership and control of the means of production is based on the exploitation of the working class. Thus, a small minority rules society. In Ireland, 9 per cent of the population owns 90 per cent of the wealth.

The contradictions between competing capitalists, produce war, poverty and crisis. The struggle between the classes will produce the overthrow of capitalist society.

Capitalism needs the working class; the working class does not need capitalism. Present day capitalism is entering a period of stagnation and crisis; it attempts to solve its problems at the expense of working-class living standards and democratic rights.

This system is international: in the drive to expand it must extend its power over the whole world. 250 companies dominate the international economy. The search for markets and materials has led to imperialism—the brutal oppression of the peoples of two-thirds of the world and the effective strangling of those peoples' attempts to develop their societies.

### Imperialism

International capitalism operates in Ireland through British imperialism's military, economic and political domination of the whole country. Britain maintains a standing army in the North. British imperialism has divided the working class on sectarian lines. British investments throughout Ireland equal 50 per cent of all investment in manufacturing and commerce. The Dublin and Stormont governments are subservient to the dictates of the international system and thus to its agent, Westminster.

Imperialism dominates Ireland as a whole: it treats Ireland as a unity. The struggle to defeat imperialism, therefore, must be fought in a united way throughout the 32 counties. This involves the overthrow of the Orange-Unionist state in the North and of the Green-Tory state in the South.

Irish capitalism, Green and Orange, is wholly integrated into the world system. Because of this, the mere unification of Ireland, or the removal of British troops, cannot in themselves mean the defeat of imperialism in Ireland. There is no independent republic this side of the Workers' Republic. Only by the uniting of the

working class can power be taken from the Orange and Green ruling class minorities and victory be won over imperialism.

It is the Irish working class and small farmers who bear the load of this imperialist domination. The contrast between Ireland, a neo-colony, and the Western capitalist countries is especially glaring:

- North and South:
  - 120,000 unemployed—the highest rate of unemployment in Europe;
  - 60,000 redundancies expected in the next four years;
  - 100,000 unfit houses and the worst housing record in Europe;
  - £9 per week net average income per rural household—the third lowest in Europe;
  - 1,000 political prisoners.

The working class has the capacity to end exploitation and oppression. In Ireland North and South the working class is now the predominant social class numerically and in terms of potential strength. The class has achieved a new self-confidence and self-reliance; this needs political co-ordination. Independent working class action can create a society based on production for human need, democratically controlled by the majority. By organising at the point of production and in the localities the workers can lead a struggle to the Workers' Republic. This would not mean merely a State takeover of the means of production, but workers' control of all aspects of society, local and national. Such a society does not exist in any country today.

The Socialist Workers' Movement stands for the nationalisation of banks and industry under workers' control and without compensation. To this end we actively engage in the day-to-day struggles of workers and small farmers and seek to build a mass working-class party which can lead the struggle to build socialism in Ireland as part of the struggle for international socialism. A Workers' Republic cannot survive without the aid of the British and Continental working classes and the international extension of the revolutionary fight.

The Socialist Workers' Movement opposes the E.E.C. to which the only alternative is socialism in Ireland, as part of a socialist Europe. The Socialist Workers' Movement opposes N.A.T.O. and all other international military alliances. We are independent of Washington, Moscow and Peking. We support all anti-imperialist struggles throughout the world.

### Workers struggles

The Socialist Workers' Movement fights for:—

- full support for workers and small farmers in struggle;
- defence of the living standards of workers and small farmers;
- rank-and-file control and socialist leadership of the trade unions;
- the election of all trade union

- officials, subject to recall;
- all strikes to be declared official if supported by the majority of the workers concerned;
- a minimum wage of at least £30 for a 35-hour week;
- equal pay for women;
- 100 per cent trade unionism;
- opposition to all anti-trade union legislation;
- opposition to all incomes policies under capitalism;
- against unemployment, redundancy and lay offs. We support the demand: Five days' work or five days' pay;
- repeal of all repressive legislation—e.g. Special Powers Act and Offences Against the State Act;
- extension of the Civil Resistance Campaign in the Six Counties;
- release of all political prisoners;
- evacuation of British troops from Ireland;
- defence of working class areas against military and sectarian attacks;
- freedom of worship for all religious groupings;
- total separation of Church and State;
- an end to clerical control of education;
- a secular and comprehensive education system controlled by teachers, pupils and parents;
- raising of school-leaving age to 18;
- free education to the highest level;
- adult wages and adult rights for workers at 18:
- free and comprehensive health service;
- end to means-tested benefits;
- minimum wage for the unemployed and pensioners;
- one family—one house;
- emergency housing programme and expropriation of all building land;
- tenants' control of estates, including rents;
- full social equality for women,
- free contraceptive facilities with full medical services;
- 24-hour nurseries;
- income for small farmers and agricultural labourers on parity with industrial rates;
- division of large estates under control of local farmers;
- the building of a genuine co-operative movement among farmers and fishermen;
- nationalisation of hunting and fishing rights.

The SOCIALIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT is a democratic organisation open to all those who accept its principles and objectives, who work in one of the units of the movement, agree to recognise its discipline and pay dues.

"Internationalism; to some people this is the great (1918-1900) which frightens them off from socialism" (James Connolly). The struggle for a Workers' Republic in Ireland is inseparable from the international struggle against capitalism. The Socialist Workers' Movement fights to build a mass party of the working class as part of a revolutionary international of working class parties.





Chilean generals salute a job well done.

# WHY ALLENDE FELL

*"THE ARMED FORCES, observing their status as a professional institution take no part in political debate and submit to the lawfully constituted power Bonds of co-operation and mutual respect have evolved between the army and the working class in the name of the patriotic goal of shaping Chile into a free, advanced and democratic land.*

*"Ultra-left elements clamour for the immediate introduction of socialism. We hold, however, that the working class will gain full power gradually; it will be in step with our gaining control of the state machine that we shall begin to transform it in the interests of the future development of the revolution"*

Those were the words of G. Banchemo, a member of the Central Committee of the Chilean Communist Party writing in the August edition of 'World Marxist Review'. He must be eating them now, if he is still alive.

He should have known that the army was no friend of the Chilean working class. In 1903, during the Valparaiso dock strike, they killed 30 people. In 1905, they killed 200 in the Santiago meat strike. In 1907, 2000 were massacred at Iquique, and in 1925 the army slaughtered 3000 at Coruna. Again in 1931, the army tore into the workers when they seized power after a general strike. As recently as 1969 there was an attempt at an army coup.

Even in June of this year there was an abortive army revolt. How could Banchemo regard it as 'loyal'?

The Right in Chile always counted on the military to safeguard their interests. And they wanted them in the Cabinet to do it more effectively. The military officers wanted to talk to the truck owners when their strike brought transport in Chile to a halt. But when workers took over factories in the Punta Arenas industrial zone, a military operation led by General Torres, de La Cruz invaded the factories and took them back. One worker was shot dead, and another injured with a bayonet.

One middle class woman summed up the feelings and hopes of many of her kind when she said "If President Allende does not leave, we will bang on the doors of the military barracks."

The alliance of the Right and the army has been responsible for Allende's downfall How could it have happened after three years in which the workers seemed to have made such gains? How were the workers' organisations crushed so quickly?

SALVADOR ALLENDE was elected President of Chile on 4th September 1970 with 36.3% of the votes. The Popular Action Front, containing communists, socialists and parties of the centre-left committed itself to working within the framework of the Chilean constitution drawn up by a Congress 150 years ago.

It was committed to reforms, and did achieve some - free milk for children, a cut in unemployment, all-round wage increases of 20%, free hospital care, and nationalisation of some industries. But the distribution of wealth remained very unequal, with half the population owing only 15% of the wealth.

Some workers became over-enthusiastic, however. They over-stepped the mark on proper rights. They occupied factories, and provoked Allende to make his position

clear on workers' control. "We are not going to hand over a company to the workers just so they can produce what they want or to let them turn the fact that they can control a factory to their own personal advantage in order to demand higher earnings than other people."

The Communist Party supported Allende in this. In Banchemo's words, "The traditional forms of public action (e.g. strikes) are gradually giving way to new ones, such as the drive for higher productivity, the labour emulation movement, participation in management actions against sabotage..."

The Popular Action Front tried to prove to the capitalists that it could do a better job, if left alone. Allende boasted that his regime could keep the workers under control, and command their support. "The strength of this government lies in respect for the constitution and the law".

Workers in Chile were not always taken in by this. Nor did they all have the same illusions about the military. Some tried to arm themselves. The Central Workers Union demanded the repeal of the arms control laws which gave the security forces the right to organise arms raids without government approval.

The workers were being disarmed, however; they were being forced to work harder - with the encouragement of Fidel Castro, who toured the country urging greater output - and denounced as reactionary if, like the copper miners of El Teniente, they went on strike for higher wages. They were delivered like lambs to the slaughter when the beast of the Chilean bourgeoisie, wounded by Allende's pin-pricks, reacted.

## SETBACK

The defeat of the Chilean workers has been a serious set-back for workers throughout the world. But the workers of Chile have learned a hard lesson - and we must all learn it too - that there is no gradual, peaceful road to socialism. There is no substitute for the workers having their own organisations and fighting, with their own methods, for their own programme for socialism.

The involvement of US companies in Chile, and in plots to overthrow Allende, highlights again the international character of capitalism, and the impossibility of national solutions. We must show solidarity with the Chilean workers, and condemn the military take-over. But we will not do it by pretending that Allende was something he was not. His methods are partly responsible for the defeat.

The tragedy of the Chilean experience is that it was so utterly predictable.

KEN QUINN

# International News

## S. ITALY'S PERMANENT DISEASE

The cholera epidemic in Italy has exposed the misery of life in the slums of Southern Italy. Smooth government ministers have been explaining that the epidemic came from mussels - it was even darkly hinted that the shell fish were Tunisian in origin - and urging people to avoid eating uncooked shellfish. Coastguards, mobile police, and a helicopter scoured the coast around Naples to destroy the mussel beds on which many thousands of poor Neapolitan fishermen depend for a livelihood.

The slum-dwellers of the southern towns have different ideas about the origins of the epidemic. A few days after the cholera outbreak barricades went up in a slum in Naples when the police charged a demonstration against inadequate public hygiene, a local town hall was stoned and elsewhere the local inhabitants staged large demonstrations which were answered by police batons and CS gas. The slum-dwellers were protesting about the appalling conditions of life in the slums, the constant struggle against disease and poverty which the epidemic has brought to a boiling point.

## INFECTED

For life in the slums is permanently infected - not only by disease but by unemployment, and acute poverty. A recent survey by a group of left-wing doctors in a typical Naples slum shows how. Secondigliano lies on the outskirts of Naples. Built by a government institution it houses 191 families and many more rats; 75% of the rooms are rat-infested. In each room 10 people on average have to live and sleep. Only a quarter of the total population of the slum are judged to be in good health. In the last 5 years, for every thousand babies, 135 died before the age of one - that is one in 7 babies die soon after birth. The causes of their deaths are quite common infections which could easily be cured with proper medical attention - bronchitis tonsillitis and other illnesses. But there is only one doctor in the whole slum and he tends to give medical advice over the phone! Finally, over half the breadwinners are unemployed or underemployed.

The South of Italy is also one of the areas of highest unemployment in Europe. In the 50's and 60's the Italian economy, despite short periods of recession, grew at a fantastic rate which pushed it into the top league of Western Capitalist countries. The boom was at the expense of working people, North and South. But while industry and with it jobs and wages, were concentrated in the North, the South was left to decay in the sun. Millions of workers were forced to emigrate northwards to live in the prison-like conditions of Switzerland, where low wages, sweated labour and racialism awaited them. The situation is no different today. One in

five people in Calabria in Southern Italy are unemployed. Southern Italy is a great factory for exports - the export of labour only.

Grandiose state schemes to encourage industry and cheap housing have come to little. State money for housing has passed into the hands of speculators for profitable private housing. Capital has been invested in industries such as chemicals which use a relatively small labour force. Income per head in the south is half that in the north. Yet prices are rocketing all over the country. Last year food rose by an average of 40%. Even the basic essentials became a luxury. This summer water was being sold in Sardinia and Puglia for £1.25 a litre. In July the price of bread rose to 75 pence a kilo causing riots and attacks on the profitable bakeries.

The cholera epidemic has for the moment focussed the rage of the poor in Naples and elsewhere on the inefficiency and corruption of local government. Several days after the epidemic broke out, only 100,000 people had been vaccinated in Naples. Refuse collection continues to be as inefficient as usual and piles of rat-infested garbage lie in the streets of Naples, fertile breeding grounds for disease. The sewers in some slums continue to run openly along the streets.

## ROOTS

But it is neither mussels nor the inefficiency of local government that lie at the roots of the cholera epidemic. The squalid conditions of life in the slums of southern Italy are the product of economic development. The profit-motivated concentration of industry in the great triangle of Birmingham, Amsterdam and Milan is systematically impoverishing the outlying areas. There are not two nations in Italy. The underdevelopment of the south complements the massive growth of industry in the North.

Southern Italy is one of the backyards of European capitalism - the garbage that chokes its sewers comes down from the polluted centres of Europe. For as long as profit and competition dominate the economy, the slums of southern Italy will remain. The disease and poverty of the slum-dwellers of Naples is just a part of the price we all have to pay for capitalism.

MIKE BALFOUR

## COD WAR

Gunboats are crashing again in Iceland's waters. The cod war is flaring up. The following article by Dermot Quish, recently returned from Iceland is a background account of that country's effort to resist the destruction of her natural resources by British and West German trawler companies. The conflict and its solution cannot be viewed in merely national terms - Britain versus Iceland.

British fishermen have nothing to gain from annihilating cod fish in the North Atlantic. Likewise, a growing number of Icelandic fishermen realise that Icelandic trawler companies only need bigger and better trawlers to be equally destructive of the fishing resources. This 'robbery economy' approach to the resources of the planet, be they fish, mineral or plant, will not end until such time as the economic system is controlled by the workers in the interest of humanity and not by bosses in their drive for

profits.

ICELAND, LIKE IRELAND, has been under foreign rule since the Middle Ages. But unlike Ireland it had very little, economically or strategically, to offer its imperial masters. The result has been a history of total neglect by Denmark. Famine, plague and volcanic disturbances were blithely ignored by the Danes, whose sole interest in their remote colony was cheating the natives of their fish and wool.

This infertile volcanic slab of an island, bigger than Ireland but with a population little bigger than County Cork, has fish as its sole natural resource. As Loftur Juluisson, secretary of the Icelandic Fishermen's Union has put it: "We are like a single tree in the middle of the Atlantic that has only a single root". Understandably, Icelanders are determined to prevent that root from being destroyed.

The cod beds are being decimated daily by British and West German trawlers. Every year 70% of the fish are removed, and the fish being caught are getting



Joergensen, Iceland's Premier

smaller and smaller. In 1948, 60% of the cod caught in the area were over ten years old. In 1970, the figure was 5%. Obviously the fish population cannot reproduce itself in the face of such relentless capitalist exploitation.

The first confrontation with the British came as far back as 1928. Three unarmed Icelandic coastguards went to arrest a British trawler fishing inside the Fjords. The British rammed their boat, drowning two of them. The Danish government did nothing. In 1944, Iceland broke the union with Denmark, and in the early 1950s Cod War I broke out when Iceland

extended its fishing limit from three to four miles. Britain imposed economic sanctions for 2½ years, but to no avail.

In the second cod war, over an extension of the limit from four to twelve miles, the British sent in the Royal Navy, but failed to intimidate the Icelanders. Last year, Iceland decided its only hope of preventing its fish resources from being wiped out was to control the waters of its continental shelf; these are the actual cod breeding grounds.

The limit was extended to fifty miles, and we began Cod War III. The British again sent in gunboats, this time with air support. But Iceland no longer has to rely on the Danish government for action. Already, over seventy trawlers have had their lines cut, and one trawler which refused to leave the area has been fired on. Iceland has no army, and its tiny fisheries protection service is no match for the British. They hope to strengthen their case by winning support at next year's 'Law of the Sea' conference, which is due to be held in Santiago, Chile.

The conflict has had the advantage of highlighting the absurdity of the American NATO base at Keflavik. The US has always claimed that the base is for the protection of Iceland, but it has not raised one word of protest about the presence of the British navy in Icelandic waters. Resentment against American occupation, always present, is growing amongst the people. The so-called left-wing government in Reykjavik is of course reluctant to antagonise the Americans.

Most Icelandic fishermen I have spoken to do not blame the British fishermen. They are aware of the fact that it is the British trawler companies and their class representatives - the Tory government - who are responsible for the conflict.

There can be no unity between exploiter and exploited. Huge profits are extracted from Icelandic workers by 'their own' trawler companies and fish factories; so it does not exactly come as a shock to hear the capitalist shouting for national unity.



# KNOTTED NICRA

IN MANY PEOPLE'S eyes, it was the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (N.I.C.R.A.) that started the 'whole thing' going in the North. Five years, and a couple of splits later, N.I.C.R.A. is still going — not exactly strong, but going all the same. Last month they organised a march from Coalisland to Dungannon along the route of the first Civil Rights march in 1968. Some of the speakers were the same too.

The crowd at the meeting in Dungannon heard the same message—'Civil Rights' is non-sectarian, non-violence, and non-political. This time the non-sectarian part was emphasised more — inscribed on the banner at the head of the march, demanding freedom for Republican and Loyalist prisoners, and stressed again and again by speakers who called on Loyalist at the back of the meeting to support them in the fight against internment and military repression.

The call was clear enough, but there are plenty of reasons why Loyalist should not respond. No matter how many times N.I.C.R.A. representatives say the opposite the association's background and past record is 'sectarian'. It earlier gave a platform to people who could only be described as 'Catholic sectarians' — in Dungannon, to Aidan Corrigan, for example. Its demands have always been more rights for Catholics — which Protestants can only interpret as meaning less rights for them. The efforts made by N.I.C.R.A. to appease and draw in middle-class Catholic elements always made it impossible for it to cross the sectarian divide in the only meaningful way on working class lines. The 'non-sectarian' claim looks thin indeed.

## Dominated

N.I.C.R.A. is dominated by the Official



Republicans and the Communist Party of Ireland, hardly 'non-political' organisations. That is perhaps the most hypocritical and confusing of its claims. What it really means is that the two most influential political organisations in it bury their identity for the sake of some respectability. Of course, the lines often get crossed, and Official Republicans, as Republican Clubs, advocate political action when other Official Republicans, as N.I.C.R.A. representatives, advocate non-political action in the same circumstances. Or when a prominent Official, wearing his N.I.C.R.A. hat, says he has no reason to oppose the whole system, and wearing his 'socialist Republican' hat, talks about the dictatorship of

the proletariat and god knows what else.

The lunacy of it all reaches a peak with Official Republican clubs, claiming in another breath to be part of a socialist organisation, issue statements calling for non-political action. N.I.C.R.A.'s non-political stance has also meant that for years they were unable to dissociate themselves from SDLP careerists, even if they wanted to — at least, not until it was too late. The hypocrisy of all this cannot have escaped even the least politically conscious Loyalist.

## Military Wing

As for the 'non-violent' claim, N.I.C.R.A. may reasonably stick to it. But it cannot

disguise the fact that its main supporting organisation has a military wing, however inactive it may be at times. But then there are cases too of Official Republicans wearing a N.I.C.R.A. hat condemning actions of the Official Republicans wearing berets...

'Non-sectarian' politics are certainly called for in the North, but not at the expense of recognising realities, or pretending Tommy Herron was a socialist. Those politics could only be developed on the basis of workers' interests — the only interests which can lastingly counter the sectarian manoeuvres of capitalist politicians. N.I.C.R.A. has never recognised the specific interests of the working class, much less tried to relate to them.

Whatever views we may have on offensive violent action — and much of the offensive action of the Provos is positively counter-productive — nobody, certainly claiming to be a socialist, could deny the need for force against the military repression in the North. The Officials do not, but their joint 'front', NICRA, does.

NICRA's support is waning — that's no reason for joy when there is no fully effective mass organisation. But if they're looking for reasons for this, and for the failure to cross sectarian lines, they should look at their own confusion and contradictions, at their own hypocrisy, and not to the sometimes misguided actions of others who have chosen other methods to fight repression. NICRA gives the Loyalists little reason to stop waving their 'Ulster' flags.

# THOSE LONDON BOMBS

IT IS NOT YET clear who is responsible for the recent London bombings. Fleet Street has been quick to point the finger at the Provisionals — and as yet the Provos have issued no disclaimer — one can only guess at their motives... the gingering-up of a 'bring our boys home' campaign, or perhaps to prove they are still a force to be reckoned with.

The latest press statement attributed to them, in reply to Heath's "total integration" speech, speaks of bringing "the war right on the doorstep of the British people"... with "every city, town and village... open to guerilla warfare".

If this means the placing of bombs in railway stations, shopping centres and other public places, as happened in the recent bomb attacks, Republicans could not be more guilty of doing a grave disservice to their cause. If Republicans believe that by the use of such tactics, they can advance the Irish struggle by one step, they are gravely mistaken.

To employ the methods of indiscriminate terrorism is to play into the hands of the very forces they are trying to defeat. Republicans may try to justify the use of such actions by pointing to the lack of any real solidarity movement in Britain. To do so would be to deny that the potential for such a movement exists when it clearly does. The indiscriminate killing and terror in such a campaign would only have the effect of isolating those forces, British socialists and Irish workers in Britain, who are trying to get such a movement off the ground.

## Duty and Right

British socialists clearly have a duty to support all those forces fighting British Imperialism in Ireland. But we also have a right to criticise those actions we think are harmful to the building of a mass movement both here and in Ireland. The substitution of terror tactics for the long hard work involved in building such a mass movement, is a short-cut which will lead to nowhere but defeat. We defend the right of the Provisionals, or any section of the Republican Movement, to use force against British Imperialism. But if Republicans believe that the use of such force alone, without the necessary political programme aimed at mobilizing the mass of workers, is enough to achieve their aims, then they are seriously mistaken.

This vacuum in Republican strategy can clearly be seen in the post-Stormont period. The confusion among the mass of Catholics after the fall of Stormont and the failure of either wing of the Republican Movement to provide political direction, enabled the SDLP to win back the leadership of the anti-Unionist forces.

To add to this mistake, by embarking on a bombing campaign in Britain can only have disastrous consequences. It will strengthen the hand of Heath and Cosgrave in pushing repressive measures against Irish workers and socialists in both countries. The subsequent weakening of working class offensive is too high a price to pay for such mistakes.

Republicans in the 26-Counties should learn from the march of Dublin busmen against Heath's visit. It is there and in other organised areas of the working class where the real power lies, not in the blind-alley of indiscriminate terrorism.

## KEVIN O'DOHERTY (Irishman working in England)

Already 40 people are withholding their ground rent — £15 per year payable to a 'Mr. Hunt', believed to be representing none other than McInerney Properties, and the committee are strongly urging others to follow their example.

The decision by A.C.R.A. to launch a national campaign against ground rent has encouraged the committee in its fight and it intends to involve itself in that campaign. Waterford Tenants Association has come out in support of the new committee.

# LOCKING UP THE KIDS

WHILE Whitelaw interns 15-year-olds in the north thousands of other children are returning to the boring routine of the classroom. A Northern school-student looks at the links:

AFTER TWO months of comparative freedom, its back to endless rules and regulations. For many in the North, being ordered about has become a way of life; if it's not the teachers in the school telling them what clothes to wear and how long their hair should be, it's the Brist telling them whether they are permitted to walk up their own streets.

The British Army in particular welcomes the ending of the holidays. Now the local young 'thugs' will be locked up for at least six hours a day, and with any luck, they may be more concerned with passing exams than with throwing stones. However, the Brits has better not relax too much for there's nothing better than a riot after school for relieving classroom tension. But if the British Army oppression is all too obvious, school oppression is applied with much more tact.

Some teachers are liked by their pupils but most are detested. The present system

compels teachers to play the role of remote and impersonal bullies. How can you respect someone who demands to be called 'sir' or 'miss' all day and who calls you by your surname or a sarcastic nickname, thus keeping the relationship on a strictly formal basis. What are the serious objectives to calling a teacher by his/her first name? It would certainly help to destroy the present atmosphere of impersonal teacher pupil relationships.

But what about the discipline? Pupils must learn to respect their superiors in the context of school discipline, the word respect has become twisted out of all recognition. To the typical headmaster respect means that you dress in an accepted fashion, you wear your hair at an accepted length, and generally conform to petty rules. How can you equate the denial of simple personal liberties with respect? Everyone should at least be allowed to dress as they wish at school. Inevitably 'Christian standards' enter into the argument and the acceptance of the decisions of one's elders without question. In the name of Christ, isn't it time that school authorities realised that respect is a two-way thing?

Meaningful pupil participation in the day to day running of schools is essential. In some schools in Britain student participation has been experimented with, but

as yet it is still on a very small scale. There are many ways in which students could contribute e.g. pupils should be in charge of school games. At present even the games students play are decided for them. Many Christian Brother schools, for example, insist on playing Gaelic games although soccer is usually more popular.

Because teachers are reluctant to give responsibility to students, students find that they have to accept the responsibility of standing up for each other. This has been highlighted in Belfast by the internment of a number of schoolboys aged around 16 as a result of Sinn Fein (Provo) called for a one day boycott of schools. Predictably the teachers were totally against the idea. As a result the demonstration was called off. However a number of teenagers who felt strongly about the situation walked out of school on Monday 24 September. Steps have since been taken to expell them.

In school you are taught that responsibility and consideration mean obeying senseless rules and conforming to the accepted standards, in short you do not question the wisdom of your superiors and above all you do not revolt against the system—a fitting preparation for a society where a few people have the power to dictate the lives of many.



Ragoon flats

# .. and Waterford

LISMORE PARK Waterford is a large, new estate of privately-owned houses built by McInerney Properties Ltd., the giant building company. At present, over 5,000 people live there and houses are still being built.

As well as this, they learned nothing from the Ballymun experience—even though the complaints were coming thick and fast from Ballymun by the time Ragoon was being built.

THE RESIDENTS of Corrib Park, Galway, are discovering that Corporation houses are as faulty as the Ragoon and Mervue flats. Inside there are all the signs of bad finishing; doors do not open and close properly, wooden fittings are uneven, the wiring is dangerous.

Recently one of the residents woke up during the night to find one of the walls smouldering from an electrical fault. Outside, the site had not been developed by the building contractors, drains are blocked, there are rocks in the gardens, and roads are not properly surfaced. Very soon, the contractor will be relieved of his obligations, and the ratepayers will then have to pay for this development.

# Housing agitation in Galway ..

MOTHERS have threatened to leave the Ragoon Flats in Galway because there are no lifts. Some families have already got transfers out of this new estate because of other complaints.

Lack of lifts is not the only problem Ragoon residents face. They cannot control the heating individually. They have nowhere to hang clothes to dry. There are rats in the refuse shaft, and the bad wiring has already electrocuted a man. Ragoon has no TV aerial—and the Corporation will not take responsibility for getting one erected. They just pass on a list of companies to the residents.

Some of the problems are familiar to have lived in Ballymun flats in Dublin. There seem to be a few connections; same builder (Sisk's), same method of building with pre-cast concrete units (made by a Sisk company), and similar design. In spite of the saving you would expect from taking over something done before, a Corporation spokesman has said that a flat built by this method was more expensive than a house. Someone made a lot of easy money.