

the worker

FOR A WORKERS' REPUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

WAGE AGREEMENT: we all lose out

FOR MONTHS the government and the bosses have been warning us: don't look for any improvements in the standard of living. The terms proposed for the National Wage Agreement are cast in the same mould. It has been welcomed by the press as a 'Good Deal'. And yet all it means is that, at the best, our wages stand still for the next year.

If we accept responsibility for the economic crisis that is all we might expect. The union leaders won't be looking for any more. That's what years of National Wage Agreements have done for the workers' movement, tied it to the idea that there is a national interest which embraces bosses and workers. They have instilled into the heads of so many workers the idea that there is little they can do for themselves.

The Socialist Workers Movement has always opposed these agreements on

exactly those grounds. If anybody doubts that there is more to them than just the money aspects, they should look at the way this one has been negotiated. The bosses were reported to be reluctant to come to an agreement at all; they were also looking for closing of the 'loopholes' on anomaly claims.

The people we pay to represent us have made—on our behalf—firmer guarantees than before that there will be no industrial action for pay claims. The money the bosses will pay out on the wage increases will be worth paying, as they see it, if that promise is made to stick. From our point of view it is too high a price to pay for the privilege of barely keeping pace with inflation, or falling just behind. Worse than that, it means the strangling of an independent working class movement.

The whole agreement is closely linked to the Consumer Price Index. Late last year THE WORKER published an article (some copies still available) showing in detail how the CPI under-estimated in-

flation for workers. We are not alone in thinking that; Mickie Mullen has said it. For lower-paid workers in particular, the CPI under-estimates inflation by at least one third. Many items have far smaller places in the CPI than they have in most working class household budgets. As well as that, there is taxation on the increases to be taken into account. What looks like a 25 per cent increase may come out as something less a good deal less than 20 per cent. And then there's the increased price of the social insurance stamp.

At the time we go to press, we do not have details on the equal pay clauses. It seems certain they will bring even less advance towards equal pay than the same clauses of last year's agreement. So, equal pay appears to be a luxury which we have to forget when times are hard. No: as far as we are concerned, equal pay is an absolute necessity. As long as we don't have it, so long will the bosses be able to more easily divide us and weaken our capacity to fight.

The working class has been weakened

and confused by the massive unemployment and the record inflation. Unity of the working class in the face of these attacks is essential, but our leaders negotiate redundancies, accept tighter procedure agreements, advocate absurd 'Buy Irish' campaigns, urge restraint, and do everything to put obstacles in the way of working class unity.

The past three national wage agreements have had a disastrous effect on the trade union movement, tying it to the apron strings of the bosses and the government, and taking all initiative out of the hands of the rank and file. The first step to re-building a trade union movement capable of not only defending our standards but of gaining real improvements must be to say NO to these terms for a National Wage Agreement.

We can do better than this—by basing claims on the widest sections of workers, by looking for flat-rate (not percentage) increases on the basic wage, by demanding a national minimum wage, and a shorter working week with no loss of

pay. We certainly can't do worse than accept this agreement.

In a press statement the Dublin Shop Stewards Committee, which played such a large part in getting the first terms of the 1974 agreement rejected, points out the 'indecent haste' with which the Congress is trying to have ballots held and a decision made. 'It will be the job of all trade union activists to make sure that there are full and properly convened meetings to discuss the terms in all workplaces and all union branches, so that votes are cast in the fullest knowledge of what is at stake.'

Like the Shop Stewards Committee, THE WORKER believes that 'no agreement could be acceptable at this time or any other—which imposes restrictions on the right to strike or on the making of parity claims.' We urge all readers to canvass for a NO vote and fight for an alternative which really brings us forward.

OFFICIALS AIM TO SMASH IRSP

THE PRESS have been only too glad to present the clash between the Official Republicans and the Irish Republican Socialist Party as a tit-for-tat. And, no doubt, there are many people who do see it that way. The effect is to discredit all organisations claiming to be socialist and working class.

The Officials have been particularly well treated by the press. The years of working to get a respectable image have paid off. Only a few days before the shooting of Hugh Ferguson and Jim Sullivan and Bernie McDonagh, republican councillors in Belfast, were escorting British government representatives around the Falls.

Behind the respectable image is an organisation that is run completely undemocratically, which tolerates no dissent, and is ruthlessly committed to opposing any demonstrations of revolutionary socialist politics. It is an organisation which, as Eamonn McCann outlines on page 8 of this issue, is led by Stalinists. They are part of a political tradition which has been responsible for the slaughter and imprisonment of millions in Russia, for the brutal crushing of

workers' revolts in Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

The Officials took the decision in December to never let the IRSP get off the ground. And if that meant physically wiping them out, they were quite prepared to do that. Their six weeks of continual harassment and intimidation of IRSP members in Belfast have been forgotten in what looks like a tit-for-tat situation. They have repeated the same charges as they did at the time of the split with the Provos. Their hypocrisy knows no bounds.

But are the IRSP not asking for trouble by retaliating? The fact is, we don't know—and it seems the IRSP does not know for certain—whether their members are responsible for the shootings of Officials. Their membership is so loose that they can hardly exercise proper discipline over them. There may very well be 'self-appointed protectors' of the IRSP. The new party would lose nothing by stating openly and clearly what it does know about these activities and possible retaliation by its own members.

Against the Officials' lie-machine they are facing big odds; against the Officials' felon-setting (releasing to

the press details of 'jobs' carried out by IRSP members when they were in the Officials; naming the supposed leader of an IRSP assassination squad) they are almost powerless. But if the IRSP's claim to be building a revolutionary socialist organisation is to be taken seriously they must show principle in these matters, standing over the activities of their party, explaining just what their policy is, and, if necessary, expelling members who go against it.

On 4th March, the Socialist Workers Movement issued a press statement calling on both organisations to accept the good offices of a trade union leader such as Michael Mullen, of the ITGWU, as an intermediary. The papers refused to publish it. On 3rd March, the editor of the 'Irish Times' had a half-hour meeting with Macgiolla, de Burca and Kenny of the Officials.

The Official Republicans have long since abandoned any right to be called revolutionary or socialist. The IRSP has made a shaky start in presenting itself as both of these things. We support its right to organise politically and we condemn the Officials' campaign of terror and slander against it. MORE ON IRSP PAGE 5.



SIT-INS ARE GOOD FOR YOU!

THIRTY metal workers at the Guinness cake-making factory (Camac Cask Co) have decided not to take cuts in wages lying down. They are taking them 'sitting-in'. The cuts come from the ending of shifts as a result of a lowering of production. The company has already sacked 40 men when they threatened the metal workers with the loss of shift allowance and cuts of £11 and upwards per week.

The men started the sit-in on Thursday, 27 February. The company has done everything possible to isolate them from the general workers and from the outside world. But after five days the general workers came out in support of them.

The Socialist Workers Movement has been happy to help them with leaflets, posters and food. If the sit-in continues after when this is published we call on workers throughout Dublin to show their support for these men by raising financial assistance, as their union, the National Union of Sheet Metal Workers will not help. The Action Committee can be contacted at the factory in Stevens Lane, near Kinsbridge.

More on Camac—see page 6!

EVERY DAY the axing of more jobs in the car assembly industry moves closer. After four months on short-time, the 800 assembly workers in the Brittain Group are threatened with indefinite lay-off. The company will no longer be receiving supplies of unassembled cars from British Leyland, who want the biggest profits of exporting fully assembled cars from Britain to Ireland.

Union representatives (ATGWU) have negotiated with British Leyland directly and have had this confirmed. But they must be careful not to get involved on Brittain's side in the war of claim and counter-claim between that company and British Leyland. They must keep their independence—and that means that if Brittain's do try to close the plant they must organise for the factories to be taken over by the workers. Not taken over in order to have the men make a moral gesture by 'working in' but to have the four Brittain's factories used as the basis of an all-out struggle throughout the car industry in Dublin for nationalisation of the industry under workers' control and without compensation. No other way will save the thousands of jobs at stake.

LABOUR PARTY:

DISCONTENT IN RANK & FILE

NOT A MINUTE too soon the Left of the Labour Party and a good many rank and file activists have started to kick up about the Labour Party's role in the Coalition. The call is now being made on the party leadership to organise a special conference to discuss the matter.

The last special conference was the one held in Cork which decided in favour of Coalition. That decision has given some Labour T.D.'s positions of power which they are not going to give up easily. Some of them have become the most ardent defenders of the status quo, of law and order, and they're not going to change their spots.

It will take a lot of work just to get the conference held, and even more to get it to make the "right" decisions. Of course, if you make a

criticism of the Labour Party at a trade union meeting these days, and point out how trade union funds are supporting the party, you'll get applause. But that applause does not mean that those people can, or will, organise pressure on the party leaders to clean up or get out.

The branches of the Labour Party are largely dead places, where nothing new ever happens. And the structure of the trade union movement is generally so undemocratic that it would be impossible to organise mass pressure through it quickly enough.

But assuming that the conference is held, what then? The pro-Coalition leadership could probably win a majority and what would the Left do? Stay there to fight again? Let's imagine they got a majority at a

conference in favour of breaking the Coalition. The T.D.'s would not wear it; one way or another there would have to be a split.

OPPOSITION

But nowhere in the statements of the Labour Left do you ever get the feeling they have thought about the longer-term implications of being an opposition within the Labour Party. That is, that they must sooner or later face the alternative: either they continue burrowing inside a party which remains hostile to their views, or they, or some other large chunk, move out. If they did win the party to socialist policies it would not be the same party.

There are those who justify staying on in the party by saying that it is "the traditional organisation of the working class". That's not even true; the Irish working class have traditionally supported a variety of parties. Only a minority of the class have supported Labour consistently.

If it came to a split one way or the other it would be seen just how much the options have closed. With capitalism in its present state it takes revolutionary means to achieve reforms. Having separated themselves from the class collaborationists the socialists in the Labour Party would be forced to turn to revolution. In that situation, we would be happy to work with them to establish a mass revolutionary organisation.

Meanwhile — and with all these reservations — we support their

efforts to get Labour out of Coalition, get it on to socialist policies, and get rid of those who have betrayed the last few principles Labour can claim to represent. We would push them harder and more firmly in that direction. But do they really know where they are going?

UNIONS

Many of them are in a position to make a very real and immediate contribution to the fight for socialism being in a position of influence in their jobs and unions. A concerted socialist effort in the unions would draw the lines as sharply and as quickly as all this effort in the Labour Party and prepare the base for a future socialist party.

POPE ROBBED!

POPE PAUL in his encyclical *Populorum Progressio* condemned what he called "the international imperialism of money", and later spoke of the psychological gap between the world of finance and the world of religion. Holy Year could just be an effort to close the gap . . .

But Pope Paul's statement may be less an expression of faith than sour grapes. He personally has helped the Vatican lose up to £100,000,000 by involving it with the Sicilian speculator Michele Sindona, now wanted by the Italian and American police.

When he came to power, Pope Paul re-organised the financial administration of the Vatican. He brought in his own experts, one group of whom were known in Vatican circles as the "Milan Mafia". He also brought in business experts from the Catholic Church in USA, including "il gorilla", Bishop Marcinkus. Tradition and decorum played little part in the thinking of these men; they were concerned with getting the maximum return on capital invested.



In 1969, Pope Paul's advisors introduced him to the Sicilian financier Michele Sindona. A deal was then arranged by which he would sell off the Vatican's holdings in Italian industry and would re-invest the funds internationally. For the Vatican, it was to be the dawn of an era of involvement in go-go funds, off-shore funds, Eurodollars, currency and commodity markets, in short, the arena of the riches-for-nothing brigade.

Unfortunately, this exercise in the "imperialism of money" went disastrously wrong. Sindona was an incompetent speculator and a crook. What he didn't lose, he stole. He created a vast network of associated banking companies, which he quietly stripped of assets. When one company lost money, he switched paper balances from others.

BANKS

Sindona lasted longer than he might otherwise have done because with his billing as "the Vatican's financial advisor" he was able to attract money from other sources. He became president of seven Italian companies and vice-president of three Italian banks. He received vast sums from the Italian state bank, and with the

- FINANCIAL ADVISOR DOES A BUNK

help of the Americans in the Institute of Religious Works was voted "Man of the Year" by the American community in Rome in 1972.

Even at this time Sindona was in trouble. He involved the Institute of Religious Works in a prosecution by the American SECurities and Exchange Commission, and so dubious was his reputation that President Nixon refused a secret donation of one million dollars from him for the notorious campaign to re-elect the President.

By late 1972 Sindona could no longer conceal his losses but the Vatican was still pumping money into his concerns. When the police finally moved on him, he had vanished. The Vatican and the hundreds of charities on whose behalf it invested money, had been taken for the most expensive theological ride in its history.

The moral of the story is not that the Catholic Church alone is involved in "the imperialism of money". The same is true of other major churches: the Church of England, through its Church Commissioners, is a slum landlord on a vast scale and a profiteer from South African apartheid.

The moral is that no socialist should ignore the role of the great churches as active participants in the very worst aspects of capitalism and hence as supporters of capitalism the status quo. Those who side-step the problem today will delude their followers and will find that the Church militant will still be there to resist them in the future.

JOHN BLACK

PROFITS

The Vatican has for a long time had a large amount of money invested in Italian industry. Pope Paul tried to break this connection for two reasons. Firstly, Italian industry has been in the doldrums and was not providing an adequate return on investment. Secondly, the Vatican had lost a battle to obtain exemption from profits tax which they claimed under the 1929 Concordat with Mussolini! Pope Paul was angered by this defeat so, the Vatican decided to bale out of Italian industry, regardless of the consequences for Italian workers.

Two main Vatican agencies were involved. One of them, the Special Administration, was set up in 1919 to handle a £1 million donation from Mussolini. The other, the inappropriately named Institute of Religious Works was set up after the war to handle financial transactions. It was the Institute which organised the departure. It is in a strong position to engage in international speculation because it is exempt from Italian exchange control regulations.

Unidare: Canteen Boycott

The economic crisis has come to Unidare with soft shoes on. That is, we have escaped the heavy boot of redundancy or short-time but the crisis has hit us less dramatically. In many areas, like Allidare and Anodising, workers have been taken off shift and shift allowance, and put on to days. The result is a £5-£6 loss of earnings, not to mention loss of bonus.

There have been rumblings among some workers that some compensation should be sought for loss of shift allowance, but they have come to nothing. So, just like everywhere else, a temporary fall in profit-making is answered by a drastic WAGE CUT for the workers. Some workers have been shifted from slack factories (like Allidare) to busy factories (like SCA). But you still have the spectacle of overtime (including some weekend working) at Transformers, Wire and Cable and SCA side-by-side with loss-of-earnings in other factories. The Section Committee should have looked for WORK SHARING WITH FULL EARNINGS.

At Allidare, workers were given a choice - a three day week on shift work or a full week on days. They chose the day-work and rightly so. Why should our taxes have to pay (through pay-related) our wages when (a) the company is profitable and (b) other areas of the company are booming? Soft-shoe redundancies have occurred through "natural wastage" - people are being told at Personnel "we have no vacancies at the moment" while a number of workers have left the site since Christmas. In this way the total workforce is cut down.

Along with this, canteen prices have been increased by 20%. This rise - which includes an 8p rise in the average dinner and a two-thirds rise in the price of a

sandwich - was slapped on the Canteen Committee in January and became law in February. It was met by an almost total boycott on the Works Canteen. 'Unidare Workers for Action', the rank and file group within the site, publicised the rises and issued two Bulletins calling for a Boycott. 'Not a Sausage' was one of their slogans. The first bulletin says "we have a right to meals in a canteen on the site. The meals should be free . . ." and declared that the company was "passing the cost on to us". A few days later the Joint Works Committee issued a "timid request" (according to the second bulletin) that workers not buy any of the increased items in the canteen. But no official, outright boycott was placed, and the request was not carried though by keeping it before the attention of the workers.

So, if the crowds start drifting back the blame lies with the Committees who once again had a sudden bout of paralysis. When the Company refused to say how much they subsidised the canteen by, the Works Committee should have flexed their muscles, if they have any, and said "tell all or else". The second bulletin of 'Unidare Workers for Action' includes a message to the canteen staff which says that if Gardner Merchant, who run the canteen, tries to lay them off "you must resist any threat to your jobs. And if there is, come to our shop stewards for help. We are boycotting Gardner Merchant and Unidare, NOT YOU". Union pressure, and the boycott, if necessary, should not end until the prices go down.

GRAVY

Two stories from Anodising this month. One is a bit funny and the other is a bit sad. Firstly, some of the men brightened up the drab walls by hanging a few "pretty faces". Up. Faces mind you, no full frontals. The Factory Superintendent ordered them down and, even though the shop steward conveyed the men's anger to the office, they stayed down. The funny part is that the same calendar (probably the VERY same one) hung splendidly last year in the General Manager's office. It's the rich that gets the gravy.

Now for the sadder one. In mid-February the polishers stopped work because a man was working within their shop at £34 while their rate was £32. Management had shunted this man from his reception job (for which the £34 rate was for) to the polish shop for weeks. After the shop steward had approached management on the situation he reported back that the Factory Superintendent wanted to contact the head shop steward and had not negotiated on the problem. At this, the polishers, who, incidentally, have been waiting 10 months for some answer to a dirty-money claim, went into the canteen and were followed by most of the workers.

The General Manager, Keegan, arrived and ordered the workers "back to work or off the premises" declaring that he managed Anodising. The polishers obliged by grabbing a strike placard and going outside the gate. When the rest of the workers left the canteen frantic efforts were made by management to get everybody working again. Keegan took key individuals aside and spoofted them. (Anodising workers never saw him work so hard before). But for a few hours eight men picketed the gate (demanding that they get £34 or the other man gets out) while the rest worked away. At lunchtime, the General Manager refused to allow them to use the facilities of the (small, local) canteen.

Work was resumed during negotiations with the head shop steward and the result was that a man would be trained for the polish-shop, to remain there. Unity of all Anodising workers must be built up again.

In the SCA factory, where about 200 accidents have occurred in four years, yet another man has been injured, this time fairly seriously. A hoist snapped and he was hit. The bobbin-winding machine is dangerous. One of the things you have to do to stop it is put your foot on the spinning bobbin. Three men have been hurt on the same machine recently. In fact the Federated Union of Employers might take this one up as a way of getting rid of redundant workers. Because each of the three were men transferred from Allidare where things are slack.



FARMERS on the march in Cork during their "Grow No Beet Campaign". Many people around the country, but particularly sugar factory workers and small farmers who depend on their supplies to the sugar factories, heaved a sigh of relief when the campaign was called off.

The I.F.A.'s list of demands included one sop to small farmers (on the price of young cattle) and one to farm workers (on tax-free allowances). But that was not a change of heart by the big farmer leadership of the I.F.A.; it was a way of holding the farming bloc together under their control even where there are serious differences.

At many of the meetings called to discuss the campaign the issue was rammed through. At a meeting in Athenry, Co. Galway in late January, there was strong opposition but the organisers managed to avoid a show of hands, and could claim afterwards that the meeting supported the campaign.

But was this not the same as workers going on strike? Not at all. If it had been carried through it would have brought widespread unemployment, an enormous loss of earnings in some of the poorest areas of the country. It was certainly not in the small farmers' interest - and it is mainly small farmers who grow sugar beet.

Small farmers find that I.F.A. leaders are very concerned about them when its a matter of getting dues, but don't pay much attention to the points they make at meetings.

FARMERS

There is little to be gained for small farmers, whose living standards are being pressed down by capitalist forces on all sides, including by the bigger cattle dealers, etc., by remaining inside the I.F.A. they need their own organisation with its specific demands. They should oppose the compulsory extraction of dues to support the I.F.A. on cattle and pig sales.

They could turn these dues to better use by supporting efforts to establish an independent organisation of small farmers. Such an organisation should aim at fundamental changes in the meat industry - the nationalisation under worker's control of the meat plants. This is a demand that can be fought for alongside the newly formed National Meat Workers Committee. In the short term, small farmers must seek the end of those government and EEC schemes which tip the balance further in favour of the big farmers - slaughter premiums and intervention, as they are presently operating. They should also withhold credit repayments to the banks and the ACC and support the proposal for a wealth tax and income tax for the rich farmers.

The rapidly rising prices of materials for farming - fertilisers, feedstuffs and machinery - will only be brought under control if those industries, on which we all depend in so many ways, are brought under public control. That's what small farmers should be fighting for - and seeking the support of the workers concerned for it.

WORKERS

The sugar company workers have seen the threat to their standards and conditions which the I.F.A. campaign could have brought. Whatever the differences between their bosses and the big farmers in future, they should not pay the price. They need to strengthen their own organisation to resist this, and to press their own demands. These could include: a shorter working week with no loss of pay and a ban on overtime; this would spread unemployment is very high.

These issues should be brought out into the open during the forthcoming bye-election campaign in Galway North-East. But after that, the real work will still go on. And it is the responsibility of better organised workers - for instance, those in Galway now forming a Shop Stewards Committee - to put their weight behind the legitimate demands of small farmers and of agricultural workers and those in the industries directly related to agriculture.

the worker

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SUNBEAM SIT-IN

THE WORKERS at the Sunbeam Wolsey factory in Cork took an unusual step when they decided to occupy part of the premises in early February. It was unusual not only because, as we were pointing out in our last issue, there have been so few cases of sit-ins and occupations in this country. It is also unusual because they were placing such limited demands on the company.

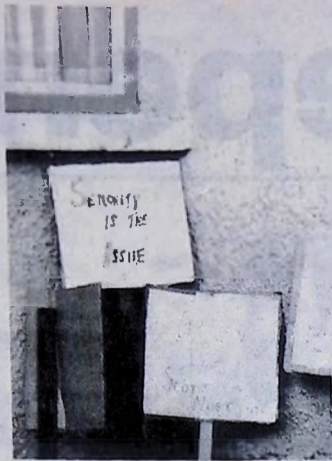
They were challenging the management's power to put them on short-time or to lay them off by unilateral decision, but they were quite prepared to negotiate redundancies and if "necessary" short-time. As their leaflets and posters said, (see picture) "Seniority" was the issue. They would accept some redundancies as long as they were based on "first in last out". They were not going to let management pick and choose who was to lose their jobs. They were only prepared to have the union (ITGWU) negotiate for the whole factory — not for individual departments.

It was not too surprising, therefore, that the sit-in ended after a few days when the action had forced management to take part in negotiations. The attitude of the Sunbeam Wolsey management had been arrogant in the extreme. On one

BLUNDERS

The dictatorial management has been a cover-up for the succession of blunders — even from a capitalist point of view — which the Sunbeam top brass have made over the past few years. But what were blunders for the management and investors were disasters for the workers.

It was Sunbeam Wolsey who sacked workers when they closed down Mulcahy Bros. of Dublin months after they took it over. It was Sunbeam who sacked others in Industrial Yarns in Bray, and while the Cork strike was going on announced the closure of Worsted Mills, only a few miles away. But that didn't stop them increasing their profits from 1973 to 1974 — from £172,000 to £913,000 (£5 per week per employee).



Left: Posters proclaim Seniority is the issue. Right: Card school in progress in the Board Room



At the Cork factory, which employs about one quarter of the 3,500 workers in the group, there have been over 350 redundancies during the last two years. There has been a steady run-down of the knit-wear section in particular. There were 570 working there in September 1973; There were 240 working there when the present strike started. The company have been able to use "natural wastage" to achieve this — as well as voluntary redundancies, early retirement and some redundancies negotiated with the union.

A factory built by the company in Tralee with the help of I.D.A. grants is now competing with this section of the Cork plant and adding to the problems. This was intended to be for export only and the Cork Shop stewards were assured it was no threat to them but now the company are shifting more and more of the production to Tralee, to take advantage of the high levels of productivity there. Two thirds of its output go on to the home market.

Late last year, the Sunbeam management told union representatives there would be no more redundancies and days later were looking for a few more here, a few more there. They quickly followed this with a threat not to pay the second phase of the fifteenth round

but to freeze wages until September 1975. At this stage, the "honeymoon" which had gone very stale had to come to an end.

Sunbeam management added insult to injury when the strike started, claiming to the press that all efforts were being made to get the workers back to work at a time when they were putting impossible conditions on negotiations with union. The handling of the dispute at Midleton Worsted Mills was on the same lines. They announced the closure of a large part of the plant and then responded to a union embargo on the goods leaving the factory by locking the workers out.

ITGWU

The real tragedy was that these two disputes were going on side by side and no real attempt was made to link them. It was well within the power of the ITGWU locally to organise a big demonstration in Cork when the sit-in started to bring together Sunbeam workers and Midleton workers, as well as those in Irish Distillers (in their fourth month of strike) and Fords (threatened with lay-offs and short-time).

With the knowledge that they could call on this solidarity, the Sunbeam workers might not have abandoned the sit-in so quickly and could have gone on to make a real dent in the management's bullying arrogance. Nearly three years ago when the same sharks were closing Mulcahy Bros. the Socialist Workers Movement urged the setting up of a "combine committee" that is a committee of union representatives from all the Sunbeam factories. Such a committee could prevent one set of workers being used against one another and could provide backing for any group in dispute.

With that power behind them the Sunbeam workers in Cork (some of whom opposed the early ending of the sit-in) could have won a victory for the three thousand five hundred Sunbeam workers through the country by halting redundancies and short-time altogether. We again urge that Trade Union activists in Sunbeam factories take up this call for a combine committee which will say:

- NO to Rationalisation leading to redundancies
- NO to Productivity deals
- NO to Short-time working

Conor Gets A Wrong Line

CONOR Cruise O'Brien has been at it again. Fresh from hounding workers in R.T.E., he turned his attention to Post Office technicians. Conor expressed surprise at the widespread disruption caused by the strike which started in Limerick and hinted that there was more to it than meets the eye. Stage two in his smear campaign came with the allegation that supervisors trying to maintain the service had been physically intimidated by union members. O'Brien then sent five engineers to Limerick, attempting to demoralise the workers on strike. As his final blow, he issued 160 dismissal notices, pending a return to work. The threat of official union action by the 5,000 members of the Irish Post Office Engineering Union (I.P.O.E.U.) if he had gone ahead with mass sackings, brought a hasty retraction of the notices, which mysteriously became "formal notices about absences, issued to safeguard the department".



The Department of Posts and Telegraphs has not been reorganised since 1951. The grading and wage structures may have been realistic in 1951, but have not taken the massive technological advancements of the last 25 years into account. The department is in a mess; it is little wonder that the service to the public is so bad and the worker's morale so low.

The union executive has been engaged in negotiations of work and a regrading within the Department to put technicians' pay in line with those in the E.S.B., Aer Rianta, and R.T.E. At present post office technicians class 2 are paid £42 per week, compared with £53 for E.S.B. electricians. Aer Rianta foremen receive £69 per week, compared with £43 in the Post Office.

The union executive has been unwilling to take official action, bound by the terms of the National Wage Agreement. The Limerick technicians decided to take the initiative in putting pressure on the Department. A national strike committee has been established with delegates from all areas of the country. The committee has called for a public enquiry into the running of the Department of Posts and Telegraphs. It has suspended the Limerick strike but if negotiations with the Department are not concluded satisfactorily, the Committee is prepared to take further action in support of Post Office technicians' demands.

The Department of Posts and Telegraphs has always seen the manual grades of the civil service as third class workers. The wage-rates of the technicians have fallen behind those of workers in other industries, and those of clerical civil servants. The Department claims that the claim would cost £1.5 million annually but have not shown how they arrive at this figure. In any case there is enormous waste in the department. O'Brien's reaction to the strike set a headline for private employers. With "socialists" like that, who needs capitalists?

IT'S A MAD, MAD WORLD

HERE'S a rather horrifying statistic: according to a recent report, more than a quarter of Irish people are admitted to a mental hospital at least once before they are 55. Of those who live to be 80, more than half will have been admitted at some stage.

What's your hang up? Don't say you haven't got one. Everyone has some "irrational" habit, whether it's biting nails or dressing up as Napoleon. Most of us do not go to the latter extreme. We settle for some of the in-between ways of reacting to mental pressure: smoking or drinking too much, developing neurotic temperaments, or becoming subject to periodic depression.

Others react with anger, vandalism, crime, mis-directed violence. Some develop psychiatric conditions too obvious for society to tolerate. Most of these are labelled "schizophrenic", and there were, at last count, 8,000 of them in Irish mental hospitals. There are another 8,000 patients confined for various other reasons. Add on the alcoholics, the addicts and depressives, who don't ever go into hospital and you come up with one hell of a total of human misery.

And forget that crap about the price, in terms of mental stress, that overworked business men pay for their middle class privileges. A recent report from the Medico-Social Research Board blows that myth sky-high. Manual workers are twice as numerous in mental hospitals as non-manuals. And such

workers as farm labourers and fishermen are nine times as likely to succumb to mental stress as "tired businessmen".

It's in the rural areas — especially the West — where the pressures of living in our green and pleasant land take their highest toll. The economic needs of capitalism which drained the rural areas of their young people, leaving dying communities composed of the very young and the very old, have resulted in the hospitalisation rate in the West being twice that of the East.

And what are mental hospitals anyway? What puts people into them, and what is the aim of the — often distressing — treatment these people get?

DUSTBIN

A mental hospital is for some patients a place of therapy. For others, it is society's dustbin where they will spend their days in a drugged lack of comprehension of what is happening to them. These are the retarded, the senile, and those others whose minds are so broken as to be beyond repair. The hospital is used to keep them out of our sight. An incredible 27% of patients have been confined for at least 20 years, 7 out of 10 for more than two years.

Others receive therapy aimed at making them "useful members of society" again. Adjusting such a person means in the words of one psychoanalyst, "to enable him to

feel that he is no longer the victim of unknown forces which determine the direction of his life". It's like fishing out a drowning man just to tell him to stop screaming — before pushing him back again. Because our lives are directed by forces outside our control. Our "free will" is all but non-existent. In capitalist society choice is cut down to a minimum. It has been truly said that "health is a state defined by an elite. And mental health — sanity — as defined by our rulers is shown by an acceptance of the slot in the economic machine into which we are fitted. This slot may be raising five kids in a two-room flat, working on a mind-numbing production line, or tending a handful of cattle on a deserted, lonely hillside. It is those for whom this reality becomes so oppressive that they create their own realities who are labelled schizophrenic.

Since our rulers cannot consider changing society to suit people they budget for a certain percentage per year who will reject that society in one way or another and provide mental hospitals and prisons in which these people can be "adjusted" or "corrected". They even make a virtue of necessity by turning the drug industry, which tranquillises millions of people into "sanity", into one of its most profitable enterprises.

The means of "adjustment" range from simple chat-sessions through various mind-distorting drugs, electro-convulsive treatment,

GENE KERRIGAN

inducing epileptic fits, to the rarely used lobotomy where a surgeon drills through the skull and "switches off" part of the mind. It all fits in to capitalism's pattern of treating people as machines with simple functions — working and consuming — which can be adjusted when they go out of order, like faulty T.V. sets.

VICTIMS

This is not to say that there was no mental illness before capitalism, nor that there will be none in a socialist society. But it is clear that a vast amount of unnecessary suffering is a natural by-product of this system. And instead of helping people, the practice of psychiatry is perverted into just another means of control, and dedicated hospital staffs are corrupted into the role of mental warders.

There is nothing mysterious or shameful about mental illness. Most of it is caused by the way in which we are forced to live. It can happen to anyone, and it will keep on happening as long as we are forced to live that way. It is society itself — not its victims — which needs a radical adjustment.

Northern jobs crisis deepens

"THE PATTERN in Northern Ireland is one of booming employment the pattern is one of many jobs in the pipeline." That is how Bob Cooper, then Minister of Manpower, described the jobs situation in the North only nine months ago, when the unemployment figures were at an all-time low of 26,000. Now there are 35,000 unemployed, an average monthly increase of 1,000 and Stan Orme, Minister of State with responsibility for the economy, is predicting a rapid increase to 40,000 out of work.

The current plague of redundancies has hit the textile industry hardest. One Belfast firm, the British-owned Ewart Liddell Co., has recently announced 360 redundancies - most of them women. In Newry, at least four firms have declared large scale pay-offs. The Donnelly Spinning Co. has sacked 120 workers and cut its shifts from three to one. Steegan Ltd., and Stevenson & Son, both part of the Courtaulds empire which employs over 10,000 in the North, have paid off 60 workers each and put the rest on short time. The Franklin Mills have closed down altogether making 120 people redundant. The Edenderry Spinning Co. has sacked 200 workers. And so the story continues around the Northern textile firms. For the most part those sacked are women, few of whom are unionised, and there has been no resistance to the redundancies.

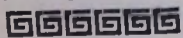
The shirt-making industry, which employs up to 7,000 in the North West is in a state of collapse. The Ben Sherman Group which was one of the biggest employers in the business has recently closed down five of its seven factories - two in Belfast, two in Derry and one in Strabane. Three of the factories were shut down after a Government take over of the firm which has received £2½ million of state aid in the last couple of years.

In the bakery industry there have been wide-spread sackings and more are threatened. The Co-op bakery is threatening to pay off 260 workers on March 1st and there are rumours that Kennedy Hughes may sack 600 workers.

worst hit

Newry has been one of the worst hit areas of all. As well as the textile firms mentioned above there have been sackings and threatened sackings at: Keady Carpets (140), Osborne Electronics (210), Reckitt and Colman (150), Builders Providers (60), Armagh Down Creameries (40), Reeds Corrugated Cases (100), British Insulated Calendar Cables (80). In Coalisland, the Pendragon Manufacturing Co. has closed and the Brick and Pipe Co. has paid off 60 workers. Ford's Autolite in Belfast have stopped nightshift and laid off 30 men for two weeks. International Engineering Ltd., is sacking 200, while Grundig, who recently promised 1,500 more jobs at a new plant, are threatening redundancies at their Dundonald plant.

These are just a few of the many cases of redundancies in the North in recent weeks and months. As they show the crisis is spread throughout industry and has every sign of deteriorating still further. And, as the recession hits the British economy harder, the North will be less and less able to export its unemployed - something it has relied on in the past to keep unemployment figures down.

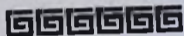


SO FAR there has been little resistance to this massive attack on workers' living standards. Many of those being sacked will receive lump sum redundancy payments bigger than they have ever seen in one bundle before. As one militant trade unionist who is concerned about the lack of any fight back, put it: "they don't threaten redundancies here, they promise them!"

The trade union officials almost always enter negotiations on redundancies with a view to simply getting the biggest possible payments for their members they can, instead of arguing for, and leading resistance to the sackings. They must take a large part of the blame for the fact that such attitudes persist.

And they don't help by advocating spectacular showpiece conferences between management, unions and the government, on how they can all co-operate to solve the crisis - as Billy Bleasie of the Northern Committee of ICTU did recently.

Fighting against redundancies means fighting against the bosses and against the government which stands behind them - not co-operating with them. But before workers will fight they must be convinced of the possibility of winning. The Union officials' acceptance of the bosses' "inevitability" arguments disarms the workers and spreads despair. That is why successful opposition to redundancies depends on strong rank and file organisation at the shop floor level, and a set of fighting policies which can mobilise all the workers to resist in a situation where the threat of redundancies can so easily divide them.



THE first thing we must get clear is that there is no inevitability about redundancies. They are part of the capitalist system, a system which operates only for profit and not to satisfy the needs of the people. For instance, while there are thousands of unemployed building workers, and while brick and cement plants are laying people off, one house in five in the North is not fit to be lived in. There is a crying need for houses, plenty of willing workers and an abundance of material, yet no houses are built! And they have the cheek to tell us that unemployment and redundancies are inevitable!

Capitalism is at present going through a serious crisis and the bosses are determined to make us - the workers - pay for it. Redundancies are one of the ways they try to do this, and we must resist tooth and nail. When they come crying to the workers about falls in profit or inability to compete with other firms, we must simply tell them that that is not our fault and we are not prepared to pay for their crisis with our jobs. We must not let them get one single concession from us on this issue - no creeping redundancies. We must resist all redundancies from the start.



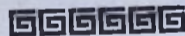
Stan Orme

AS THE North's unemployment crisis worsens daily, Stan Orme is predicting an 8 per cent unemployment rate in the near future. But, as is usual in the



Unemployed men at the 'bru' in Derry

In a situation where a section of the workforce is to be laid off we must fight for worksharing with no loss of pay. A reduction in the basic working week to 35 hours would not only prevent redundancies but also absorb the unemployed. Such a reduction would of course, not mean a loss of earnings: it would be 35 hours' work for 40 hours' pay. Across the board increases in basic pay and a guaranteed minimum of £40 per week would reduce workers' dependence on overtime for a living wage and would thus prevent sackings. It is a ridiculous situation where some workers continue to get overtime when others are being fired due to a lack of work.



Where the boss threatens to close down altogether, factory occupations must be seriously considered. The plant and machinery can be held hostage for our jobs and the occupied factory used as a centre for spreading resistance. Where private capitalists fail to maintain our jobs then we must demand that the government puts up the necessary finance while we control the things immediately affecting us; work-speed, hiring and firing, etc. That is what we mean by the demand for nationalisation under workers' control.

North, nothing can be taken at face value, or, as one wit put it: there are three kind of lies; lies, damned lies, and statistics. Orme's 8 per cent is a lie. It is a lie because it lumps together unemployment statistics for areas where the different rates of unemployment are vast, and while 8 per cent is itself of crisis proportions it hides the grim reality of the most depressed areas in the North as the following figures, for January, show.

TOWN	% UNEMPLOYED (males)
Strabane	24.9
Newry	20.2
Cookstown	16.1
Dungannon	15.7
Limavady	15.7
Omagh	15.4
Derry	15.1
Ballymoney	14.9
Enniskillen	14.0
Kilkeel	13.7

While we fight to preserve every job we must realise that our fight against redundancy is part of the general fight against the whole capitalist system which causes such chaos and which brings so much misery to thousands of unemployed workers. It is a worthless system in which many people go short of the necessities of life while factories lie idle and thousands of willing workers have no jobs to go to. Many of the jobs we are now fighting to save would disappear under socialism.

one machine many jobs

For instance, in the bakeries where it is now possible for one machine to take on the jobs of hundreds of workers. We fight for those jobs because we know that if they are lost the working class is that much weaker, and because we know that in fighting to save them those workers will gain a bit more strength and knowledge of the system that oppresses them, and be better placed to carry the fight forward than if they accepted the sack without a fight.

In the context of Northern Ireland, the fight against redundancies and the system which creates such widespread unemployment cannot be separated from the fight against British domination. The greatest part of the economy here is controlled by British firms, most of which have been attracted here by huge state grants. These are the firms, which, at the first chill wind, turn tail and run, without losing a penny of their own money, and usually with a well stuffed bank account at the end of the adventure. That is what the 'British connection' is all about.

Far from benefitting us - the workers - as the loyalists and SDLP like to pretend, British big business milks us dry and then discards us. As the British crisis deepens we will feel ever worsening effects here. Now is the time to organise the resistance.

MIKE MILLER

3-YEAR STRIKE

TENANTS on three estates in Cork - Mayfield, The Glen and Toghher - are now in the third year of their rent strike. 500 tenants have now withheld about £½ million in rent. The tenants are still holding regular meetings and they circulate information weekly. They also have the support of many other tenants throughout the city. Last year after the jailing of three tenants, the rent strike spread.

The strike was concerned with the condition of the N.B.A. houses and the differential rent system. The Corporation has now admitted publicly that the N.B.A. houses are full of faults. They have said that these will be repaired but they deny that any of the faults are major ones. The tenants say that the floor beams are not secure. There is a loud noise coming from the motors of the heating system - contrary to the directive in the 1966 Housing Act but there have been no

prosecutions. The houses are very damp; foul air is constantly being recycled. They are a health hazard.

Despite protests, the tenants have got no satisfaction from the Corporation. They are demanding a Public Enquiry and the publication of a report prepared by the Institute for Industrial Research and Standards (IIRS). This report was commissioned by Sisk's, the builders, but the results have never been made public. Jim Tully, the Minister for Local Government, must release this report. The fact that he has not done so, has made the tenants very suspicious. Maybe the report backs up their allegations.

Tenants are also fighting the differential rent system. When the National Association of Tenants Organisations accepted the scheme, the Cork tenants were on strike. Tully never consulted them although they publicly opposed the scheme. It was negotiated

PROBLEMS FOR THE I.R.S.P.

TRY AS they may, the Official Republican Movement cannot deny that the formation of the IRSP has caused them serious problems, or, more accurately, added to their problems, which as THE WORKER has detailed, have been growing over the past few months. Nobody could have expected them to be pleased about the new party, but it should still have been a shock to members and supporters of the Officials who believe their claim to be "socialist" to see the organisation respond with a campaign of terror against Belfast members of the IRSP.

The "evidence" which the Officials have used publicly to smear the IRSP - for instance, a crowing piece in the 'Irish People' about the arrest of two IRSP members found with explosives - could equally apply to their own members.

Whatever the local Belfast issues involved are concerning the control of arms dumps or the past record of those who have now joined the IRSP, the new party has succeeded in putting itself forward nationally as genuinely concerned to grapple with the problems facing socialists and anti-imperialists in Ireland today. But as the party leaders are only too ready to admit, they have still to work out policy in many areas.

The IRSP's first conference, takes place during March, and it is then that the gaps will have to be filled and the lines strengthened. We hope of course, that this will point the party's policy more firmly in a revolutionary socialist direction. But nothing we have seen so far leads us to believe that this is a foregone conclusion.

You do not "cook up" a revolutionary programme in a few weeks, of course. It is the work of years and it is based on a depth of experience in the working class movement which the IRSP does not have. And there is a particular problem in the IRSP's case - the people who have joined the party have done so for a wide variety of reasons, and with widely differing expectations.

Not all, or even most, of them will see the problems facing the IRSP in the terms expressed by Bernadette McAliskey who, speaking at an IRSP public meeting in Dublin last month, laid out clearly the kind of mistakes which the Irish Left has made over the past six or seven years and the lessons to be learned.

The danger could be, therefore that a large part of the membership will have no part in the formulation of policy which they will later be expected to advocate. Having recruited so rapidly and

so openly the IRSP will have to face squarely the great unevenness of political levels among the recruits. If they do not see political education as a major priority at this time they may end up with something quite unworthy of the name of "party". They may find that undemocratic methods are easiest and quickest. Democratic centralism, after all, depends at least as much on the general level of political consciousness and activity of the membership as it does on any formal measures.

discussion

There is no doubt that the IRSP can continue to attract not only dissident republicans but also individual radicals who are looking for an organisation. They can do so on the basis that there is open and honest discussion inside the organisation about the tasks to be taken on. In general, the republican tradition has allowed little or no room for that kind of critical political discussion. The tradition, with its elitist and conspiratorial aspects, could be a millstone around the IRSP's neck.

In the elation about recruiting new members and building new branches it may not appear as the most immediate concern - but



Seamus Costello, IRSP chairman

the IRSP cannot get away with leaving its attitude to that tradition unresolved. Unhappily, the statements we have heard about not needing people such as Marx and Lenin for guidance, or about the "socialism" of Wolfe Tone, make us fear that the attitude to the republican tradition is quite uncritical.

class

If the socialist part of the title is to have real meaning, it will depend on the extent of working class involvement and on the use of working class methods to face

all issues. The suggestion that class politics can only come into their own when the Brits are driven out opens the doors to all kinds of short-cuts. It seems to suggest, too, that the anti-imperialist struggle can, or should, be fought by something other than class politics.

It is striking that the IRSP has not yet succeeded in recruiting many serious working class militants with real depth of experience in the trade union movement. The commitment to bring the class struggle to bear in the national struggle, stated by Bernadette McAliskey, will need to be much more specific before they do. But without that sort of base the socialism may be too easily shelved for the moment.

In all of these things we see that the critical points for the IRSP are those at which it has not yet shaken off the legacy of the Officials. There is still a "hang-over" from the past, and it will not go away by forgetting about it but only by deliberately looking for the remedies.

Nobody can deny the potential of the IRSP - but it could easily be wasted. It will certainly not be realised if the party sacrifices the long-term perspective of building an organisation on a stable political base for the short-term gains of rapid recruitment.

DURING FEBRUARY, the Dublin Branch of the Socialist Workers Movement published a pamphlet called 'THREE DAY WEEK - the need to fight it'. This lays out clearly the dangers of short-time, giving examples where it has gone, come just before, or gone along with, redundancies. It shows how any of the bosses' reasons for bringing in short-time can be turned against them, and argues that workers should in no way accept to pay the price of the crisis in the bosses' system, whether directly through lay-offs or indirectly through short-time working. Finally, it demolishes the myth that being on short time is in any way being "on the gravy train".

'THREE DAY WEEK - the need to fight it' is available from Socialist Workers Movement, Top Floor, 95 Capel St., Dublin 1, price 5 pence, plus 5 pence postage.

BURKE SAYS HE'S BOSS

RICHARD BURKE, ex-school teacher and Minister of Education Extraordinary, has never really left the class room. Introducing the coalition's new proposals for higher education, he made it clear that he was boss. The class of naughty children could take the proposals or leave them - they were non-negotiable. They were going to happen anyway. Well, naughty children have a habit of rebelling and that's just what students' and teachers' unions are doing - and some of them are even turning over cars.

It's easy to write off Burke as the nasty man behind the nasty proposals. Labour Ministers Conor Cruise O'Brien and Justin Keating were involved in drawing them up too - more proof that the Labour Party in coalition is prepared to sell out anything it ever believed in as long as it can hang on to some vestiges of power.

privileges

The result of the new proposals will be to reduce the educational opportunities available to the working class and to link higher education more closely to the employers and the middle class. The Coalition have cynically labelled their plan as a Comprehensive System and falsely claimed that it will end the Binary System now existing.

The "Binary System" refers to the division between university and non-university or vocational colleges. The division was clearly brought about by the demands of the employing class and an attempt to preserve middle class privileges.

On one side of the division, universities turn out graduates for teaching, the professions and jobs in business, administration, technology and management. They preserve the traditionally privileged position of the middle class. They are the chief means by which capitalist ideology is spread through the educational system.



Richard Burke

The kids of a doctor or a lawyer are, at present, 20 times more likely to get to university than the kids of semi-skilled or unskilled workers. There are many reasons for this but they all boil down to class differences.

The non-university or "vocational" colleges, on the other side, were formed to train workers as cheaply as possible for easy exploitation. These colleges have only provided bare skills - nothing like the broad education of the Universities. The capitalist state has always refused to spend enough money on the colleges of technology, commerce and catering, or on the newer Regional Colleges, to make them genuinely "educational".

Now the coalition claims to be uniting all the colleges into a "comprehensive system" to equalise opportunity for all in Higher Education. But this claim is a lie and even many conservative observers have seen it as a lie. Instead, the universities are to continue as private middle class institutions run on tax-payers' money with more favourable conditions for their staff and students than in other colleges.

The linking and mergers between TCD and UCD faculties are designed to cut back on the number of places available for students and to save more money for capitalist investment in more profitable areas. Already these cut-backs have caused an overspill of middle class students into the "vocational" colleges where working class kids are squeezed out because they cannot compete financially or educationally with middle class privilege.

In the past six years, the numbers passing Leaving Certificate have gone up from 13,000 to over 23,000 but the number of places for them in university has only gone up by 2,000. This has increased the intense competition to get into "vocational" colleges.

Social Studies are to be reduced in TCD and transferred to UCD. This means that an important ideological subject is to be monopolised by a faculty effectively run by the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin with little intellectual opposition from any part of the 26 counties.

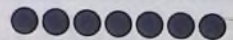
By making the Catholic college, Maynooth College, a full college of a secular university under bishop's control the Coalition plan to give this ideologically-controlled college the false image of "academic freedom". This has already been done to the Teacher Training College at Drumcondra and Carysfort by tying them up with the Education Department at U.C.D. A similar plan is now proposed for the recognition of the Mary Immaculate teacher training college at Limerick. All these are to continue under church control - and on public money.

apprentices

The Coalition proposes to separate apprentices from the Ballymun Institute which will combine Bolton St., Kevin St. and Rathmines Colleges. Apprentices will thus be isolated under AnCo for easier exploitation and less education. At the other end of the ladder higher courses in the Regional Colleges and Ballymun will come under the control of the Universities.

The non-University colleges will become cheaply-run technicians factories, while the universities, Limerick Institute and the teacher training colleges will strengthen their middle class, academic monopoly of power, privilege and finance in higher education.

It is made quite clear in the Department's Green Paper leaked by the Education Times: "changes would not be envisaged in relation to the appointment, remuneration and superannuation of the staff of any of these institutions." - despite the admission that many "vocational" lecturers, as well qualified as those in universities, have 2½ times longer hours, no facilities for further qualifications or research and poorer salaries.



Teachers' unions and Students Unions along with other unions should demand both North and South:

1. The reform of all universities into multi-level, post-school institutions open to everyone who has finished school, irrespective of age, previous achievement, financial means or social class.
2. All vocational colleges to be developed and expanded in the same ways as Comprehensive Institutions.
3. A comprehensive grants scheme for all students and a guaranteed minimum period of full-time education of six years or its equivalent after finishing school, for all workers without loss of pay.
4. Equal conditions for all teaching staff, students and employees in all types of colleges and the right to control their own colleges.
5. An end to the church control of teacher training colleges, North and South, and the appointment of lecturers to be strictly on merit.

nationally through N.A.T.O. so there is pressure on the tenants to drop this issue. The tenants point out that this is an unjust scheme because it causes a decrease in real wages.

For every extra £1 increase which workers get in the cost of living increase, they pay 14 pence in extra rent. The cost of living increases are supposed to keep up with price increases - they don't - but the differential rent scheme causes workers to fall even further behind.

By fighting the differential rent scheme, the Cork tenants are leading the way for all tenants. The scheme must be rejected. Many workers are not aware of the continuing struggle. The 'Cork Examiner' has consistently refused to report any news of the strike. The tenants in other areas of the city must organise to support N.B.A. tenants.

Last April, tenants in other areas went on strike. They were not organised so the strike was broken. A rent strike will only be successful if it is organised and seeks the support of workers on the shop floor. Only the support of Cork workers and tenants will lead the N.B.A. tenants to victory.

AS YOU saw it, the government remained firm and intransigent while the Provos in Portlaoise got weaker and weaker. But did they remain cool? From the inside, it looked a bit different.

Patrick Ward's condition was serious but not serious enough to merit the dramatic move to Jarvis St. Why was he moved? Cooney was scared. He didn't trust the medical skills of the military doctors and he got very scared that the Provos would carry out their threat to shoot him if Ward died. So scared was he that he was ringing Jarvis St., at 4 o'clock in the morning to find out Ward's condition.

And why Jarvis St.? Well it's the nearest thing to a prison. There's only one entrance and only one exit. Physically, it resembles a barracks. If that seems a bit far-fetched, just ask yourself how Patrick Ward recovered so quickly from being on the verge of death.

HOWS THIS for hard neck? An ITGWU deputation from No. 7 Branch, led by the dashing Group Secretary Edmund Browne and Branch Secretary Mick McEvoy, did a little research in England as a result of threatened redundancies in the cinema trade. Was fast Eddie leading his comrades across the water to forge solidarity links with British workers also threatened by the foul Lord Rank?

Nope. In fact Rank brought them over, eight or nine of them, at a cost of £1200. They wanted to convince the union officials that cineams over there can be run on little or no staff and could they please arrange for the same to apply here.

Obviously, Rank will be looking for a return on their investment in terms of depressing stories brought back about the need for "rationalisation". Well, I know of a cinema in Australia with a staff of 200. Any chance of the bosses giving another deputation a holiday down there to check that one out?

WHILE the cinema bosses look after the comfort of the union officials they are not so concerned about the welfare of the rank and file. One night in February a suspect parcel was discovered outside the Ambassador in Dublin. The management was informed. Not till half an hour later did the workers find out. The show, you see, must go on. The projection room is about twenty feet from where the parcel was. Had it been a bomb, and had it exploded, the unwarned projectionists would now be working in that Big Cinema in the sky. I know the bosses are looking for staff cuts, but

I MUST have said it before but I'll say it again — the only way socialists can organise in the trade unions is by organising amongst the rank and file. There are some "socialists" in the Scientific Staffs Branch of the Association of Scientific, Technical, and Managerial Staffs (ASTMS) who wouldn't agree with me.

Snooping about

BY MARY BURNS

At their recent AGM, a few right-wingers submitted a motion to accept Wage Agreements in principle. Instead of putting forward serious arguments against wage agreements, some of the "left wing" bureaucracy tried to prevent the motion from being discussed. Why? Well, they argued that as ASTMAS was a British-based union, even if the branch passed the motion it could have no effect on union policy.

How could any trade unionist in the 26 counties possibly join a union that won't discuss 26 county matters because it is British based? Why are these 'socialists' in such a union? The answer is they are not socialists and they're not right about the possible effect on ASTMS policy. This was just a bureaucratic way of suppressing discussion — simply because the right might have got their motion through.

Not only that — but the bureaucrats are also empire-building. They want 26 county autonomy and they're prepared to use any argument to get it. But what about our brothers and sisters in the 6 counties? Well that's another empire . . .

I'M VERY MOVED that the Official Republicans have made a contribution to European Architectural Heritage Year. They have bought an early 18th century house in Newry as a headquarters for their clubs in the area. They have appointed a "General Manager" for the premises and they have got a licence for the bar. But as 'United Irishman' is at pains to point out, "officers in the club stressed that the bar was only a very small part of planned activity." Of course, of course.

IF, LIKE ME, you were desperately wondering what ever could have happened to our dear Captain Orr after he so gracefully stepped down in favour of Enoch Powell, then no doubt the following will be of some interest, if nothing else. Captain Orr, past Imperial Grand Master of the Orange Council of the World, is currently engaged in building his own private army — a not unusual past-time for loyal sons of Ulster.

Orr's "Middle Class Association" as he calls it, has attracted some seasoned warriors, as he revealed in a recent letter to the 'Times'. Among them are, a bloodstock agent, an antique restorer, a consultant astrologist, a jockey club handicapper, a pedigree cat breeder, and an heir to a dukedom. No doubt the "lads" are relieved to know that so far Capt. Orr and his fierce fighters for freedom are biding their time over the water.

LAST JULY, the British government announced plans for a public takeover of Harland and Wolff, the Belfast Shipbuilders. But it will not be nationalised by the British government itself, and will instead come under "local" management. As yet no-one has come forward to take on the job once occupied by Ivor Hoppe, the Scandinavian whizz-kid, under whose expert guidance the yards lost scores of millions of pounds.

Hoppe resigned last August, and since then it has been revealed that he was paid £75,000 a year. That is equivalent to £1,500 a week — or as much as most of us if we work really hard, will earn in a year. What is more, Hoppe never paid a penny in tax which means that his pay packet was actually worth about twice as much. And it was paid into a Swiss bank account.

When Hoppe was given a start down at the yards Stormont was running the show and could apparently dish out tax-payers money as it saw fit. But now, under direct rule the British Government cannot pay any more than the best paid heads of nationalised industries. Hoppe got more than £30,000 a year in excess of that!

"NEVERTHELESS, throughout the Community (EEC), numerous obstacles remain in the path of full emancipation. Above all, the root causes of inequality persist. In addition to equal pay and other material objectives, it will be necessary to bring about a fundamental change in society's attitude to women. That will mean changing the bias of schoolbooks, home upbringing, advertising and all the things that in the past have defined a traditional role for women. In short, what is needed is a cultural revolution."

Right on, sisters. But hold — who wrote that? Believe it or not, it appeared in the official publication of the EEC in Dublin, 'Community Report', and it does not mean that the officials of the Common Market are about to take to the barricades. It shows just how glib the talk of liberation and "cultural revolution" can become if it is not always linked to particular and concrete changes in the structure of society. Because such changes are necessary in order to get rid of the "root causes of inequality". There is a very low limit to what can be achieved in women's liberation with capitalism, a society based on inequality and division. If "cultural revolution" means anything at all it is a something which will take place after the establishment of a worker's state to root out the ideas and attitudes which linger on from the old society . . .

TRADES COUNCIL STAND AGAINST REDUNDANCY

WATERFORD members of the Socialist Workers Movement have been active, as delegates from the unions, in pushing the local Trades Council to take a stand against redundancy and unemployment and to co-ordinate a campaign on the issues. We have already reported in THE WORKER that an anti-redundancy committee of the Trades Council was set up at an open meeting attended by 70 trade unionists. That committee has now brought its recommendations back to the Council.

These are the points they laid down:

1. That the Council and its affiliated unions continue and increase the demand for nationalisation under worker's control of all areas of the industrial and economic field.
 2. That the Council and its affiliated unions press for the introduction of a 35 hour week.
 3. That the Council and its affiliated Unions demand the establishment of a national programme of public works.
 4. No overtime at the expense of jobs — the application of this recommendation to be a matter for factory committees.
 5. Elimination of double jobbing.
 6. Support by the community for Irish-made products.
 7. Greater liaison between different unions in jobs, through the operation of joint committees.
 8. Resistance to productivity agreements providing for loss of jobs either directly or through natural wastage.
 9. That the Council consider withdrawing its delegates to the Waterford Industrial Development Association.
- These recommendations are being discussed at further meetings of the full Council. The Drogheda Trades Council has also taken steps to

co-ordinate resistance to redundancy and unemployment, setting up an "Unemployed Persons Association" and calling on firms who threaten to bring in short time to "open their books". The Dublin Council of Trade Unions, which has got as far as having an indecisive, "consultative" meeting on the subject, likes to think it has given the lead . . .

SIT-IN AT GUINNESS SECTION

THE SIT-IN by 20 workers at the Camac Cask Co. in Dublin who had been made redundant ended after five days when the workers decided to accept a Labour Court recommendation on redundancy compensation. The company, which is part of the Guinness Group, makes kegs for Guinness and other brewers and also spiral staircases. It brought in extra staff less than a year ago with a view to expansion, but it was 20 of these same workers who were told on 7th February that their jobs were gone. The company announced that it intended to make a further 20 redundant on 21st February.

FOOD

The men were outraged — many of them had taken the jobs believing that the fact that the Guinness backing would mean security — but still they did not contest the redundancies in principle. Their aim in sitting in was to embarrass the employers and win £50 per month of service for each man who was to be made redundant. The company immediately tried to sabotage their action by interrupting supplies of food and blankets to them, refusing the use of the telephones and demanding the removal of the single placard the men placed outside the works.

The workers not affected by redundancy continued working while the sit-in went on. And that was what weakened its effect. If the workers had been really determined to inflict a defeat on the management they would not only have stopped production there but taken the fight to the workers in the rest of the Guinness Group.

The Camac workers refused the company's offer of a £30 lump sum payment to each man regardless of service. None had been there long enough to qualify for the £100 per man recommended by the Labour Court.

WHAT WE STAND FOR SOCIALIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT

The SOCIALIST WORKERS MOVEMENT is a revolutionary workers' organisation, which aims to organise the working class in the struggle for power and for the overthrow of the existing social order. All its activities, its methods and its internal organisation are designed to achieve this purpose.

The system under which we live, capitalism, is based on production for profit, not for human need. It is driven by the capitalist's need to amass more and more profits. This makes capitalists compete with one another for markets and for political control, both nationally and internationally. The fruit of that competition is seen in war, poverty and crises.

The capitalist class controls this society by its ownership and control of the means of production; that in turn is based on their exploitation of the working class. The capitalist class is a tiny minority governing the lives of the majority, and claiming to have "democracy" on its side. In Ireland, 7 per cent of the population own 70 per cent of the wealth.

The working class — and only the working class — has the capacity to end exploitation and oppression. In Ireland its confidence and its strength

have increased enormously in recent years, and the working class is now the largest social class. What our class lacks, however, is a political leadership with the influence to resist all ruling class pressures on our actions and to point the way clearly towards socialism as the only solution to the working class's problems, and those of any social group oppressed by this system.

A working class organised independently of the middle class in its own fighting organisations in the work-place, and in its own democratically controlled socialist party can create a society based on production for human need. The establishment of a Worker's Republic the necessary goal of the class struggles, would not mean merely state control of investment and of industry, but workers control, from the bottom, of all aspects of society.

That kind of socialist society does not exist anywhere today. The attempts of the Russian working class to build socialism were halted by the failure of their revolution to spread, and by the actions of the Stalinist rulers, who established a new type of society based on exploitation and oppression. We oppose the

Moscow regime as we oppose those of Washington and Peking.

Because the capitalist system itself is international, and the world economy is increasingly dominated by a couple of hundred companies, the fight for socialism must be organised on an international basis too. A Workers' Republic in Ireland could not survive without the aid of the British and Continental working classes. In supporting all genuine anti-imperialist struggles, in Ireland or anywhere else, we hold that imperialism and capitalism can only be defeated by world-wide worker's revolution. For imperialism is simply the form which capitalism takes today.

The SOCIALIST WORKERS MOVEMENT fights to unite the working class irrespective of religion and sex in struggles to cut back exploitation and improve living conditions. We fight to make the workers' organisations, the trade unions, completely independent and democratic in order that they may play an effective part in these struggles. As immediate aims we fight for a minimum wage of £30 for a 35-hour working week, for rank-and-file control of the trade unions, and we oppose all anti-trade union

legislation. We oppose redundancy, unemployment and lay-offs.

On the national question, we believe that the present leadership of the anti-imperialist movement has shown itself incapable of maintaining a consistent approach because it is incapable of recognising the class content of the question. The national question can only be solved in the working class's struggle for power, and that can only be won by a united working class. As immediate aims, however, we fight for an end to internment and to repressive legislation North and South, and for the withdrawal of the British Army from Ireland. We support the self-defence of working class areas

against military and sectarian attack. We fight for total separation of Church and State.

The SOCIALIST WORKERS MOVEMENT is a democratic centralist organisation open to those who accept its principles and objectives, who work in one of the units of the movement, agree to recognise its discipline and to pay dues. Along with revolutionary organisations in other countries, with whom we have fraternal links, we are striving to build our own organisation to gain such support as to work meaningfully for a revolutionary international of working class parties.

SWM

I wish to have further details of the Socialist Workers' Movement

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Send to: TOP FLOOR, 95 CAPEL STREET, DUBLIN 1

AFRICA: CHANGE TO POWER SHARING?

TWO YEARS ago a tremendous wave of strikes by hundreds of thousands of black workers swept South Africa. Although strikes were illegal, in great spontaneous upheavals the black working class achieved more than ten years of sabotage and propaganda by the banned liberation movements. The leader of the older South African capitalists, Sir de Villiers Graaf, called the strikes "the greatest threat to white South Africa".

Strikes continued at a high level through 1974. But a second threat to apartheid arose with the coup in Portugal in April, and the decision in July by the new Lisbon government, under popular pressure, to give independence to its colonies.

The strategy of white South Africa has been to defend itself against the independent black states to the North by building up buffer-states on its frontiers: Rhodesia and the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique. In these buffer-states, South African capital has large investments; and they send many of their workers as temporary emigrants to South Africa.

To supply electricity to South Africa, a dam is being built at Gabora Bassa in Mozambique (which itself has no industry to use the electricity which will be generated). The Mozambique ports of Lourenco Marques and Beira depend principally on goods coming from, and going to, South Africa and Rhodesia. In these ways, the buffer-states become "neo-colonies" of South Africa: economically under the domination of South African capitalism. At the same time, military assistance by South Africa to their governments helped them to keep down their guerrilla liberation movements, and made sure that no guerrillas could survive the long journey through the buffer-states to South Africa.

PORTUGUESE COUP

After the Portuguese coup, the spirit of freedom spread to the colonies. Strikes broke out in Mozambique. The black liberation movements soon were shown by popular support to be the only people worth talking to, and Portugal has now formed provisional governments in Angola and Mozambique, which include the liberation movements to whom independence will be granted later this year.

South Africa is therefore faced with two black governments on her borders, and the task ahead of her is to maintain and increase her economic control, acting through black governments instead of through the Portuguese colonialists. Despite the radical nature of the liberation movements, they may be forced to play the role this would assign to them. They have fought guerrilla campaigns in the countryside, supported by peasants; they have not organised strongly the workers in the towns - the only people with the ability to stop them selling out. Their sympathies with Russian and Chinese "socialism" mean that they can easily set up state enterprises and call it socialism, while remaining closely linked to the South African economy.

Mozambique depends on the money coming from her 130,000 emigrants in South African mines and from trade through her ports, and the leader of the provisional government, Joaquim Chissano has already promised to finish the Gabora Bassa dam and supply electricity to South Africa. And if the new government stops being co-operative - there are mercenaries ready in South Africa to foment disturbances and then go in to "restore law and order". In Angola, there are three liberation movements, and whatever the result of the planned general election, South Africa can always give a little assistance to the most "moderate" one in order to keep things from getting too hot. For Angola has oil, and that must be stopped getting into the wrong hands...

JOHN GOODWILLIE



Vorster and his caddy boys

The removal of the Portuguese line of defence makes the frontiers of South Africa, its territory South-West Africa, and Rhodesia too long to defend militarily. That is why pressure now comes on to Rhodesia, where there have been 2000 South African troops and police assisting in defence for a long time. With South African encouragement, African leaders have been released and there has been talk of negotiating with them.

INSULATE

The South African government's aim seems to be to establish some sort of power-sharing government (meaning that office will be shared with middle-class blacks). Such a government would need to be internationally acceptable, to preserve South African economic control and to insulate South Africa from black Africa. South Africa has no intention of withdrawing economically from Rhodesia: it is speeding up the building of the railway line connecting the two countries. South Africa is adopting a conciliatory tone in the United Nations, and making a few gestures - but no more than gestures - against apartheid, to enable Zambia to get out of its dilemma. Zambia is the frontline black-ruled country, where several liberation movements have been based, but its economy has been weakened seriously by sanctions against Rhodesia.

THE whites, who are 19 per cent of the population, have been allocated 87 per cent of South Africa. The remaining 13 per cent is the African "homelands". The majority of Africans live outside the homelands. The majority of people living in the white area are Africans.

MANY Africans working in the white area must leave their wife and children in a "homeland".

THE Minister of Labour may reserve any specified class of work for whites only.

THE Bantu Affairs Commissioner may cancel any African's contract of employment.

AFRICANS may not go on strike. IN the mining industry, white wages are 20 times black wages.

However, the signs are that the Rhodesian blacks will not let their leaders recently released from prison, the Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole, has said: "Since leaving prison I've been impressed by the constant use of the phrase, 'Where can we join others?' After about three days I realised that by 'joining others' people meant 'joining the guerrillas'."

As in Rhodesia, South Africa is making gestures in South-West Africa (Namibia) towards the independence that the United Nations is demanding. It is pressing ahead with the setting up of homeland governments based on reactionary tribal chiefs. For the establishment of a black government in Angola gives South-West Africa a black neighbour. So here again, some sort of power-sharing might be used to give a facelift to injustice, and allow continued domination by South African capitalism.

For cosmetic treatment is all that will come by these methods. South African apartheid will not reform itself out of existence: it can only be overthrown by revolution. But a new and more acceptable "image" in the world is useful not only to Western "liberals", but also to show to the rulers of black Africa, who by and large live at the top of bureaucratic and capitalist systems that oppress their own peoples. They need to show to their people that apartheid seems to be changing. But the South African working class holds the real key to changing it.

FROM 1948 to 1973, 10½ million Africans were arrested and prosecuted under the pass laws.

45 per cent of African children die before the age of 16.

DURING 1973, South African police killed 117 people.

IN Rhodesia, 5½ million Africans are allocated 40 per cent of the land; the 249,000 whites are allocated 45 per cent.

THE Rhodesian government has moved 60,000 people in the Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land to 20 "protected villages". The Africans had to build the villages when they arrived.

From the heart of the class struggle

THE CRISIS. Social Contract or Socialism? By Tony Cliff. Pluto Press. 75 pence.

THERE'S a crisis on and there may be a worse one to come. Government Ministers, bosses and 'expert' economists can't agree on what caused it. But they're all sure about one thing - wages have to be held down one way or the other.

Tony Cliff's book comes from the heart of the British class struggle but it still has many lessons for Irish militants and revolutionaries.

NESCAFE

The crisis is world-wide; unemployment is rising in all the Western industrial countries. Inflation is soaring and investment is falling. Bosses blame rising prices on the third world countries who've increased the prices of raw materials - but the price of coffee beans, for example, has fallen and a jar of Nescafe still costs more in the Supermarket every week.

The capitalist press talks of shortages. Resources are drying up, they say, yet the Canadian government paid farmers millions of pounds to burn almost the entire wheat crop. Why? - to keep prices up.

But if the bosses need to keep prices up they also need to keep wages down and they'll use any argument to win the battle.

Tony Cliff takes a lot of his material from when the bosses are talking to other bosses. 'The Economist' which is their paper - stated baldly that even if wages in Britain had stood still prices would have risen by 7.4%. Profits aren't negotiated controlled, planned or frozen and profits are still rising.

The rich have it all ways. The worker can't avoid paying taxes - they're taken out of his pay packet even before he gets it. But the rich can bank in Malta or the Isle of Man. They need not declare their incomes. The British government loses millions of pounds through tax evasion yet 22% of people found guilty of social welfare benefit fraud were prosecuted - only 11% of those found guilty of tax evasion were.

Even so, workers pay more tax than capitalist spongers. VAT means that tax is transferred to goods that everyone has to buy and that is another big slice out of a worker's wage packet.

On top of that, British governments have introduced legal wage freezes, voluntary wage freezes and thresholds - indexed wage freezes. And the union leaders have welcomed the Social Contract - a voluntary wage freeze - which they'd never take from a Tory government. Taking it from a Labour one just makes it easier for the Labour party to run the bosses system. The lower paid gain nothing from freezes because they depend on the successes of the best organised, most militant sections of the class to make any steps forward.

SIT-INS

Dealing with unemployment and social welfare payments, Cliff lists seven European countries and shows that the UK spends the lowest percentage of its GNP on the social services. He left us out of the list but if he hadn't we'd be right at the bottom. And Ireland has the highest percentage of unemployed in the EEC.

Tony Cliff gives firm, concrete, practical advice about organising sit-ins to save jobs. Irish workers faced with redundancies, closures and short-time working, will find this section very helpful. It isn't just 'theory' - it is based on the experience of thousands of British workers who've used this weapon. Occupations,

says Cliff, are not just directed at the bosses - they are not just economic - they are directed against the government - they are political.

The most dangerous enemies of the working class, Cliff argues, are not the fascists calling for private armies, or even the government calling for social contracts but the Trade Union bureaucrats who sell wage freezes and cut-backs to the workers. Workers have to win back their unions and turn them into rank and file weapons in the struggle.

The British working class are on the move. They have fought some brave battles. They have won some great victories. Black workers and women workers - the two most exploited sections - are moving into the front line of the resistance. And as Cliff says "One can be lenient sometimes with a man who seabs on men but there can be no tolerating men who seab on women as women are in a much weaker position".

WINE

But the rank and file fight on the shop floor isn't enough on its own. It's not our crisis. It's part of the lousy system. As long as the lousy system exists, so long will there be crises, unemployment and exploitation. Socialism is not just an alternative it is the only alternative and the working class can only achieve that led by a revolutionary party.

In May 1972, Michael Noble, Tory MP for Argyle bought a bottle of wine for £3,538 - that's £100 a glass. On Christmas day 1972, Mrs. Mary McCloy was found dead in a flat choked to death on cardboard - there was no food in the house.

That's capitalism. You can't believe that nothing should be done about it. You might believe that nothing can be. If you do, Cliff will convince you that you are wrong. The possibilities are all there it's just a question of seizing the time and building the movement. There's no arguing with a united, fighting working class. We can really make this crisis their crisis and their last crisis at that.

FAULT

The book does, however, have one fault - for us, a pretty big fault. It doesn't mention Ireland. Clutterbuck and the techniques of state repression are mentioned but nowhere does Cliff state that the Six Counties have been used as a laboratory for the development of dangerous and high sophisticated methods of social control.

He mentions the UWC strike in passing, almost as if it happened in Britain, and simply as an example of the indisputable fact that the state cannot take on a united, fighting working class. It's fair to say that there is a lot of confusion amongst British militants and socialists about the Irish situation and it is therefore difficult to forgive Cliff for failing to point out the lessons of the UWC strike - a strike which is hardly a good example of united working class action. It was sectarian and reactionary.

Nor does Cliff talk of Irish politics in the British context. There have been some hostile reactions by British workers to their Irish brothers in England. Cliff misses a valuable opportunity by failing to explain what the Irish struggle is about and why deportation and harrassment of Irish workers must be strongly opposed on the shop floor and in the unions. Economically and Politically, Ireland is too close to ignore.

SHEILA DUNCAN

ON SUNDAY afternoon and evening, 29th December, Republican prisoners in Portlaoise took over E-wing and held it for six hours against hundreds of prison warders, Gardai and heavily armed soldiers. The behaviour of the Gardai and the troops - complete with CS gas and sub-machineguns just like their British counterparts - the continuing bad conditions in the prison and the callousness of the Government towards the hunger strikers all re-inforced the Provos' claim that they were subject to particular victimisation.

The same ruling class that forces us to waste ourselves in factories, to live in 'houses' that seep with dampness, to get by on £10.50 if we are old, sent its security forces into Portlaoise who "set about systematically wrecking cells and personal property, including a typewriter, religious objects, over 100 radios and some sporting equipment belonging to the prison. Beds and bedclothes have been removed. The men are sleeping five or six to a cell without heating." (An Phoblacht, 10/1/75). The image of the Gardai, who did that wrecking, as friendly guardians of the people cannot stand up to such reports.

PRISON PROTEST

The December protest was in support of demands relating to segregation, medical facilities, diet, parcels, handicrafts, parole, tuck shop, educational and religious facilities. When the protest was smashed ten Republican prisoners in E-wing went on hunger strike for the demands. Once again the Provos have shown great heroism and great courage in their struggle. But, as we have said before, a martyr is a dead rebel and is no longer any harm to the system except, perhaps, as an inspiration to the living. The hunger-strike did force concessions on some of the demands, but how much quicker would the concessions have been made if a mass protest movement had been mobilised around the demands. And how much of a political leap forward would we all have made if that was achieved? Especially if this movement had been a movement with muscle - that is, which included trade union organisations and committees. Trade union bodies which passed motions against repressive legislation should have been invited by the various Support Groups to hold meetings in support of the hunger strikers.

Demonstrations were smaller than for Mac Stiofain two years ago, yet the organisation of marches figured in a very small way in the Provisionals' propaganda. The confusion caused by the apparent addition and subtraction of demands

along the way did not help to rally workers, many of whom already saw no link between their situation and that of the prisoners. But, in fact the Government's bid for a complete defeat of the Provisionals on this issue was made in order to boost their confidence and strengthen their hand, the same hand they need to deal with workers' militancy in the face of unemployment and wage restraint, the same hand they need to cut costs and make the workers pay for the crisis. Even when segregation was conceded and Pat Ward finally came off hunger-strike, the Government insisted that 'political status' had not been conceded and that they had not been made to back down.

POLITICAL STATUS

Almost all the demands the Portlaoise prisoners raised are rights every prisoner is entitled to, no matter what capitalist law he or she has broken. The demand for political status is a need for any political organisation seeking to hold together behind bars. But it should not mean that the political prisoners consider themselves "above" the criminal riff-raff, the vast majority of whom are in jail for taking back what the rich robbed in the first place.

Socialists should take a lead in the struggle for "ordinary" prisoners' rights and the organisation of a prisoner's union. This gives them opportunities to politicise non-political prisoners.

Being a political prisoner means being able to meet with comrades, hold classes, discussions and meetings, and having an elected structure to govern the prisoners' affairs. Each organisation should have the privacy of its own internal organisation. But that does not mean a sectarian shunning of all other political prisoners. Socialists in prison, like socialists outside, can hold useful discussions with others of different tendencies with a view to common action, and invite them along to meetings where at all possible, as the socialists and communists did in the Curragh Camp in the 1940's. Of course, activity like this was very limited in Portlaoise where prisoners have been kept in separate cells in conditions of maximum security and minimum humanity.

The Provo prisoners are "political prisoners" not by virtue of their own high-falutin' view of their own status but because of this society which has led them to take up their struggle. We support their demand for political status because we oppose that society.

IN RESPONSE to the hunger strike by republican prisoners in Portlaoise the Galway Branch of the Socialist Workers Movement distributed a leaflet in the town pointing out how the government's attitude to the Provos was part of a general sharpening of repression, and calling on workers to attend a meeting to set up an anti-repression committee. The meeting was held successfully. We will report on further developments.

80 Jobs Lost At Crown Controls

A FEW WEEKS after Christmas, a statement appeared in the "Connacht Tribune" from the management of Crown Controls, claiming that the factory, which produces lifting equipment, was in a good state of health. Two weeks later 83 men were sacked. Most of them had been with the company less than two years and were not, therefore, entitled to any lump sum redundancy payments.

Workers opposed the redundancies saying that they broke previous factory agreements. They stressed that management had no right to sack people and, at the same time, shift others around to take their jobs. Workers strongly objected to a charge-hand being brought back onto the shop floor and doing more people out of work.

The Socialist Workers Movement brought out a factory bulletin stressing that there was only one way of fighting redundancies - in this situation - demanding work sharing on full pay or, at least, on full union rates.

The management were cunning. They gave the 83 men their pay for the week and told them they need not work. This meant that the workers who would be interested in fighting redundancies would not be around to do so.

VICTIMISED

Management are now beginning to use the threat of unemployment to break the shop floor organisation. A shop steward has been victimised and sacked for using bad language. Ironically, the foreman who sacked him swears like a trooper. Immediately the men walked out but have since gone back to allow the Labour Court to make a decision in the case.

The bosses are also tightening up on the smaller issues. A welder who got a doctor's certificate saying that he was unfit to work, had to be re-examined by a factory doctor who reversed the decision.

There are weaknesses in the shop floor organisation. Splits and visions between the different departments have come out into the open.

The workers have too much faith in the Labour Court. Sometimes it makes sense to beat a hasty retreat, to gather forces pending the decision. However, in Crown, as in most factories in Galway, workers are too often prepared to wait for Labour Court decisions. The Labour Court is far from fair and unbiased; anybody looking at its record will see that it is heavily pro-boss.

The aim of the Crown management is clear: they are trying to weaken shop floor organisation so that when the market picks up the profits will flow easily. Despite divisions the shop floor organisation has, in the past been able to impose restrictions on the management.

Now management have sent out a letter offering some redundant workers a retraining position at Crown. The retraining system is run by AnCo. They want to have a semi-skilled reserve labour force, subsidised by state grants which they can use if and when the situation improves.

A LOAD OF LIES United Irishman on Hungary

By
EAMONN McCANN

"Hungary is a small country situated in Central Eastern Europe", begins an article in the January issue of 'United Irishman'. That is the only factual statement in the article about contemporary Hungary. The rest is Stalinist lies.

The kernel of the article - and its significance for socialists in Ireland today - comes in a passage towards the end which, at the risk of boring readers, is worth quoting at length:

"For a while the leadership of the Hungarian Working Peoples' Party fell under the control of a power-hungry group headed by Rakosi which imprisoned and executed innocent working people. This group was defeated and expelled from the HWSP and from power. The western press and bourgeois politicians tried to use these events to justify the counter-revolution in 1956. This attack on the working people was the last ditch stand of the fascists and right-wing elements who tried to turn back the clock of history. They assassinated socialists and took over buildings and fired on workers killing many of them. The government asked for the intervention of Soviet troops who assisted in defeating the counter-revolution"

This is the standard Stalinist line on the Hungarian Rising - every "i" dotted, every "t" crossed. It may well make a few older readers nostalgic, because it is some years since it has been spelled out quite so fully. Since 1956 most Communist Parties have become a trifle more sophisticated, realising that if you want to put rubbish like that across it is necessary to soft-sell, to gild the lily, to make the occasional genuflection towards fact.

Over in Gardiner Place, however, they are still a little raw, being relatively new to the game. It is only since the recent mass defection of "dissidents" that Comrade O'Hagan and his satellites have been able to serve up Stalinism neat in the U.I. It will take a little time before they acquire the sensitivity so painfully built up over the years by, say, the British Communist Party. The teeth of some British comrades must have ground at the naivety of the Irish acolytes.

To illustrate how crudely the "U.I." tells its lies it is necessary only to match its article against a few of the facts.

Leadership of the party "fell under" Rakosi's control, says the 'U.I.', as if this were some unfortunate accident. In fact, Rakosi was, until Khrushchev's "secret speech" denouncing some of Stalin's more gross crimes, Russia's main man in Hungary. And the 'U.I.' fails to tell us just how and by whom Rakosi and his henchmen were "defeated and expelled". Rakosi was thrown out as a direct result of the worker's rising in Pznan Poland, in July 1956, which convinced Hungarian leaders and their Russian bosses that some show of change was necessary to prevent a similar trauma in Hungary.



This did not do the trick. With industrial and agricultural production stagnant and no channels available for the suppression of resulting discontent, the situation exploded in late October. This is what the 'U.I.' calls the "counter-revolution" by "fascist and right-wing elements" to "turn back the clock of history".

This raises a host of questions. The Hungarian Rising was marked by mass strikes and demonstrations. 100,000 marched on October 22nd. Every single factory in Budapest and in other centres struck. They struck from 4th to 19th November, then from 21st to 23rd November, then from 11th to 13th December. How on earth did "fascists and right-wing elements" pull off such massive shows of strength? By terrorising the workers, says the U.I. But the anonymous writer does not quote a single source in support of

this contention. The reason being that there is none.

We publicly challenge the 'U.I.' editorial board to quote one contemporary account of the Hungarian events from any source - Stalinist, Marxist, bourgeois or any other - which mentions the leaders of the uprising firing on workers or assassinating socialists. It never happened. To discover what *did* happen, let us quote from some accounts which even the 'U.I.' should regard as acceptable:

"We repeat . . . although, as usually happens in mass movements, irresponsible, or in some cases, reactionary elements joined in action, they do not constitute the back-bone of such long-lasting or intensive struggles." - *Trybuna Ludu*, Polish Communist Party daily, 28th October.

No danger

"From every one with whom we talked we have received the reply that there is no danger of abolishing revolutionary achievements, such as returning property and land to former owners." *Borba*, Yugoslav Communist Party daily, 1st November.

"In their spontaneous origin, in their composition, in their sense of responsibility, in their efficient organisation of food supplies and civil order . . . and not least in their striking resemblance to the workers' peasants' and soldiers' councils which sprang up in Russia in 1905 revolution and in February 1917, these committees, a network of which now extended over the whole of Hungary, were remarkably uniform" Peter Fryer, correspondent for *Daily Worker*, British C.P. daily, in Budapest.

What did those involved in the rising themselves say? The definitive statement of aims is probably that set out in a lengthy statement document detailing and analysing the struggle to date, which was issued on 21st November.

"APPEAL OF THE CENTRAL WORKERS' COUNCIL OF GREATER BUDAPEST TO ALL FACTORY, DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILS.

"Fellow Workers! The Central Workers' Council, democratically elected by the Budapest industries and districts, turns to you with information and an appeal in order that we might make our ranks stronger and more united . . . As so often before, we again declare that we have our mandate from the working class and that, true to our trust, we shall defend our factories and our fatherland from capitalist and feudal restoration, if necessary at the cost of our lives."

(This, according to the U.I. is "trying to turn back the clock of history")

One could go on, quoting observers' accounts in newspapers of all political viewpoints, and the speeches, leaflets and resolutions of those who participated in the rising, to demonstrate that the 'U.I.' account has nothing in common with the facts. But what would be the point?

Those who control the contents of the 'U.I.' and the politics of Official Sinn Fein, are not interested in the facts. They are concerned to defend a political philosophy, Stalinism, which represents not the interests of the working class, but the foreign policy needs of the Soviet bureaucracy.

Towards that end, they are unwilling to let mere fact stand in their way. The falsification of history is the hallmark of their politics. Those rank and file members of Official Sinn Fein who continually assert that they are *not* Stalinists should now realise that, whether this be true or not, they are certainly being *led* by Stalinists.

For fuller details of the Hungarian Rising, readers should refer to 'Bureaucracy and Revolution in Eastern Europe' by Chris Harman, published by Pluto Press (£1.80) and available from the WORKER BOOK SERVICE. This very fully documented book (from which some of the above quotes are taken) also gives details of the workers' revolts in Poland (1956, 1971) which don't even get a mention in the February 'U.I.' article on Poland.