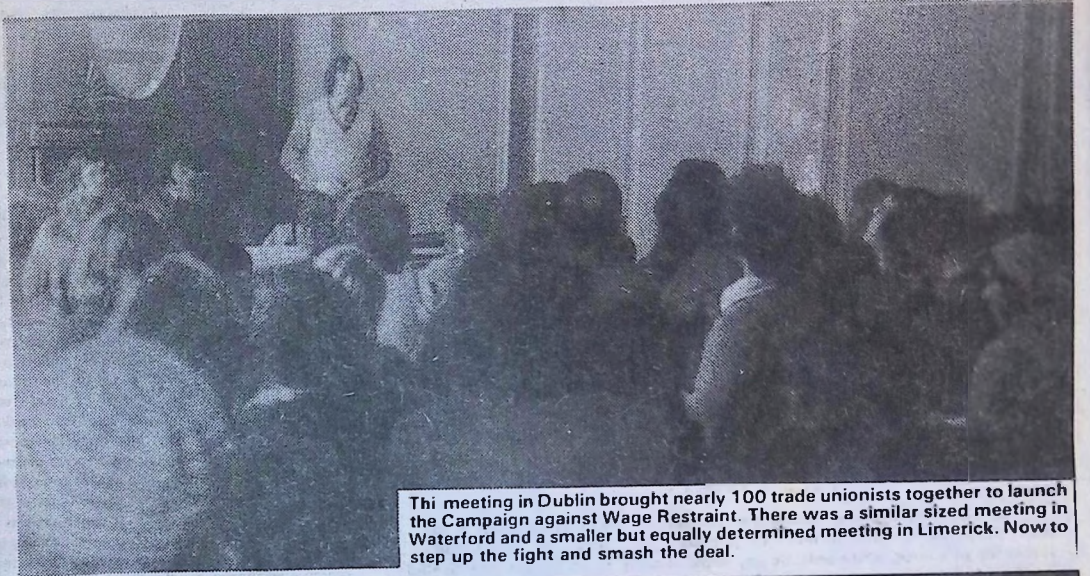


**LIMERICK**

THE MULTI-NATIONALS came, they saw, and Limerick workers are beginning to organise to make bloody sure they don't conquer. Despite the compromises of the ITGWU officials the rank and file fight back is beginning

Page 5

**the worker***Paper of the Socialist Workers Movement***NO WAGE CUT!**

This meeting in Dublin brought nearly 100 trade unionists together to launch the Campaign against Wage Restraint. There was a similar sized meeting in Waterford and a smaller but equally determined meeting in Limerick. Now to step up the fight and smash the deal.

**STEP UP THE FIGHT**

OUR UNION leaders sat through "intense discussions late into the night". How nice of them. What were they discussing? Wage restraint. Together with the bosses and the government they have wracked their brains to come up with a formula designed to promise us enough for it to have a chance of acceptance — but not enough to hurt the bosses profits.

And that was hard work. With prices soaring and wages held down during the previous National Wage Agreement workers have been paying through the nose for the bosses' crisis. Latest figures show a 7%

price increase over three months — that's a minimum of 28% a year. So our "leaders" had a tough job. They had to try to convince the bosses to give a little more than the bosses were at first willing.

■ ■

Their efforts to reach agreement with the bosses says a lot about where the loyalty of the union bureaucrats lies. When they have sat up late into the night to discuss how to fight unemployment? Or to ensure that the bosses couldn't welsh on equal pay? Or that our wages would not be slashed by inflation? Never! Yet a word in the ear from Cosgrave was enough to get them to miss their beauty sleep in order to come up with

another wage-cut deal.

And remember, the bosses position was publicised. So our "leaders" knew just how much they would have to compromise. During the talks a trade union spokesman was quoted in a Sunday newspaper as saying that they would be understanding and would "not push too far". To hell with the fact that workers were being pushed to the wall — our "leaders" have become too much like gentlemen to think of pushing back.

When the previous national Agreement ran out and thousands of workers were due a rise, a number of claims were supposed to be put in. These were sat upon. Building workers, furniture workers

maintenance craftsmen, NBU members — all with claims, all forgotten. Only the BWTU seems to have been any way interested in pushing their claim.

■ ■

The behaviour of the trade union bureaucrats amounts to nothing less than a good old-fashioned sell-out. Keeping well out of reach of the rank and file for fear of being pushed into a fight to defend our slashed living standards, they stayed comfortably in the bosses' pockets. There was even a rumour in the ITGWU that a circular had been sent round from hand to hand

advising officials not to put in or press claims as it might upset the appercart. Circular or not, damn all was done.

It is this role of the bureaucrats which motivated rank and file trade unionists in Dublin, Waterford and Limerick to hold meetings and campaign against further wage restraint. The union bosses are selling us out, only a strong rank and file campaign can give a lead to the fight back against wage restraint. The Socialist Workers Movement fully supports this campaign and we urge our readers to join in the fight. Reports of the meetings are on page 3.

**BETTER LIFE PLODS ON***Read inside*

Ireland and the General Strike.

International News, Page 6

IT IS many years since the trade unions have shown an active interest in the sectarianism and the violence which scar the north. The 'Better Life For All' campaign which was launched after the shooting of ten workers at Kingsmills has brought meetings and marches where previously trade unionism was confined to negotiation of rates and conditions at local level. New Trades Councils have been set up as a result of the campaign.

But what is its aim? Can it bring any real change in the situation? In the past, the trade unions have been unable to muster any forces when it really mattered — to push for an end to discrimination in the late 1960's, or to oppose the intimidation of the loyalist sectarianism in the 1974 Ulster Workers' Council 'strike'. Can they now gather the strength to bring an independent working class answer to the problems of the North?

That would be too much to hope for. The trade union movement is tied

into the state in so many ways. Its leaders are for the most part committed to some kind of power-sharing or 'partnership' as they now call it.

The support some of them give to this campaign may well be aimed at winning support for such a solution. Their hopes for a "non-political" campaign are, of course, based on the illusion that the state can be moulded and the government persuaded, to introduce measures which will improve the lives and conditions of working people.

■ ■

As we pointed out in the last 'WORKER', the aims of the campaign (a series of rights — to housing, to jobs, to freedom from intimidation, and so on) are vague. They don't offer any lead in tackling the enormous, and increasing, problems facing workers. They do not provide an answer to the

real threat of sectarian attack. They don't even suggest a way of fighting unemployment.

But the campaign could well rouse hopes which go beyond the leaders' limits. It could bring working class activists together who have been isolated from one another up to this. Some of the larger meetings have shown that there are quite a number of workers willing to start a real fight against the government's policies which have led to loss of jobs and to cuts in social services. They see that one way to begin to tackle sectarianism is to show the possibilities for united action on these fronts.

The trade unions themselves could never give the answers to the problems of the North — these answers are political, and can only come from a political movement of workers which is prepared to tackle the system head-on. But in the unions, and through trade union action, workers can gain the

experience and the confidence and the knowledge to take on wider tasks.

Socialists and radicals in the Northern unions should be pushing for action which can draw in the rank and file more actively. They should be insisting that the list of rights is translated into fighting demands. They should be proposing meetings and rallies in localities on particular topics — not just on the general theme of a 'better life'. That's too vague and allows people to waffle on about anything.

But above and beyond this, socialists and radicals must oppose any idea that the British government, through its command of the state forces, can bring us forward in the North. The state itself rests on sectarianism. The state itself obstructs free democratic association and organisation. The state itself intimidates and discriminates.

Where it is on the agenda at union meetings, North or South or in Britain,

union activists should declare their support for united action on working class aims, but point out the weaknesses and the ambiguities of the campaign and urge that its efforts be directed mainly into a fight against unemployment and redundancies.

We urge readers to put resolutions of this kind to union meetings — and to get them publicity if they are passed. The way to a 'better life' is through militant action against the bosses' present attacks and against their system.

**Political prisoners**

Page 7



# Thinking About Capitalism

by  
Mary Burns

IF YOU live to be 71 you will get a chance to vote in about 10 general elections. That's ten Xs you get to put against ten names.

X X X X X X X X X X — that's your lot, thank you, now get lost. After that the "professionals" run your life for you. And if you don't like the crowd who are in at the moment you'll get to use one of your Xs against them one of these years. And maybe put Jack Lynch back. Now there's a choice!

Of course, if the Socialist Workers Movement put up enough candidates at the next election you could put US in. But if you then found that you didn't like us there's not much you could do about it until the following election. Which is why SWM doesn't believe in parliament. We prefer democracy.

"Democracy" is probably the most overused, misused and abused word in any language. Everybody claims to love it and practice it, and everybody's opponent is said to be a threat to it. In our society it's supposed to be all over the place — like the holy ghost — and just about as difficult to find if you really look for it.

We're told that our government is democratic because it was elected. The conclusion is that Democracy = Elections. But that kind of "democracy" means simply a phony choice of who is to run our lives for us. To socialists, democracy means having direct control over how our lives are run.

And even the elections which we have are worth little as the government does not control the system. Take unemployment, for instance.

Why doesn't the government abolish it? Because they've no control. Unemployment, rising prices, housing shortages etc. — the things which affect how we live — are determined by "market forces". And these forces are propelled by the unseen (and unelected) owners of capital as they scramble for profit. It's the government's job to act as a kind of referee between the different factions of the ruling class, to ensure they screw the working class in an orderly manner. If you can imagine a referee at a mass rape . . .

## THE STATE

A government's choice of action is also limited by the other trappings of the state: the permanent civil servants, the judiciary, and — above all — the armed forces (all of course, unelected). So any socialist party which "got in" would find itself confined to carrying on capitalist policies — or would soon find itself pushing up the daisies. The army is part of a CAPITALIST state, and is under the control of members of a capitalist class who would not hesitate to use any instrument to protect the interests of their class. The inevitable dead-end for socialists on the parliamentary road has been proven again and again — most recently in Chile.

Given the role of the government, the business of general elections is even more phony than it seems. The purpose of the whole carnival — with its posters, leaflets, canvassing, and the guys on TV playing with their "swingometers" — is



THE PARLIAMENTARY ROAD TO SOCIALISM . . . .

to whip up interest and curiosity about which party can best "cure" unemployment etc. and which crowd are making the best promises. And people vote. The same interest can be roused about competing football teams or race horses — only with parliamentary elections people get to decide the winner.

## DIPSTICK DEMOCRACY

The ballot papers on election day are then a kind of dipstick inserted into the population to find out who we believe to be telling the least number of lies. "Democracy" is then put away for another few years, and the system carries on. The existence of the elections give the impression that we have some say in our lives — but the vote cannot change the balance of forces in society.

And that's where revolutionary socialists come in. No matter which party "gets in" they will have to carry on the policies dictated by the "market forces" and the needs of the ruling class. It is here, where these policies have their effect, that socialists can offer a real choice to workers, a real alternative.

And it is from there that the real democratic forces for socialism can be built by workers organising their own forms of struggle through committees, councils, etc. with delegates recallable at any time. It is the organisations formed in this struggle which can challenge the policies of the ruling class and ultimately the capitalist state itself. It is these organisations — call them workers councils, commissions, soviets, whatever — which can govern in a workers state.

This is the democracy of revolutionary socialism — not the occasional rubber stamp elections of the "professionals" to give a facade of democracy.

Unfortunately, some socialists have fallen into the parliamentary trap — in the belief that THEY can become the "professionals" and deliver us to socialism — and they must indulge in all the manoeuvres necessary to enter the parliamentary arena. This involves compromising the independence of their militants in the unions and on the shop floor.

Not that socialists should never use the parliamentary process. It can in certain circumstances be used as a platform to promote revolutionary ideas. Otherwise, the "dipstick democracy" should be avoided like the plague.

# IRELAND AND THE GENERAL STRIKE 1926

## Solidarity in action

FIFTY YEARS ago, this month, the British working class began their greatest confrontation with the bosses and state. The 1926 General Strike was to shake the capitalists in their boots — only to collapse nine days later after betrayal by the official leadership, the General Council of the T.U.C.

The whole of the British working class struck in support of the miners, who were resisting massive pay cuts.

At the beginning of the strike the trade union leaders had decided to keep their members in Ireland out of the struggle. No attempt was made to halt the cross-channel trade which meant that cargos loaded by trade union labour in Ireland were being unloaded by scabs on the British mainland. But when Irish transport workers were finally called out, and they responded in a tremendous show of solidarity — much to the horror of local union officials.

In Dublin and Dun Laoghaire over 1,000 dockers and porters came out and when scabs were brought in to work B & I ships the crews struck in support of the dockers. In Drogheda dockers refused to load a cargo of cattle and sheep for Liverpool, and



The army protect scab supply column arriving in London. Irish dockers blocked similar attempts to break the strike.

the cattle owners helped by a lorry load of scabs from Dublin did the work. Thousands of local workers massed on the quays but were held back from the strike breakers by a massive force of Gardai. When the ship, the *Colleen Bawn*, finally set sail, a deafening roar of 'Up the Miners' came from the local workers.

## U.V.F.

In Belfast the Government, in league with Unionist employers and the old leadership of the U.V.F., had prepared a full scale strike-breaking organisation on similar lines to that in Britain. The dockers were 100 per cent solid in support of the miners, and a number of carters were out too.

Scabs were brought in under heavy R.U.C. protection, and an additional 100 police had to be rushed in from country areas when it was decided that the 'B' Specials contained too many trade unionists to be reliable for strike breaking purposes. The British had withdrawn most of their troops for duty in England, and the Unionist government was so worried that they decided to hold off their scabs for fear of spreading the strike.

And there is no doubt that had the call been made to spread the strike even further the workers would have responded solidly. Thousands of workers turned up for what they believed would be militant meetings, in many parts of the city, only to hear labour leaders like Sam Kyle M.P.

plead for "peace" and "constitutional solutions" to workers' grievances.

In Derry, where the dockers were also solidly out, no-one volunteered for strike breaking at all and the employers were powerless. In Coltraine, deemed 'safe' by the government because its workforce was predominantly loyalist, the workers responded to the strike call to a man, and the local Chamber of Commerce denounced them as 'Bolsheviks'.

## BETRAYAL

When the General Strike in Britain collapsed in defeat on May 12th, only two days after it had spread to Ireland, the dockers all turned up for work next day, only to be told that if they wanted their old jobs back they would have to apply individually. The bosses were trying to cut out their workforce and root out the militants. In neither Dublin nor Belfast had the great mood of militancy and solidarity been broken by the T.U.C.'s betrayal: the men refused to go back on any terms other than that they were all taken back as before. After a further week of strike action, in which railway workers joined, the bosses finally gave in and the dockers returned.

With the strike over and the threat to the system averted, the confidence of the bosses and state increased. The British miners fought on alone for another nine months until virtual starvation forced them to surrender. It took the British working class many years to recover from the defeat and in Ireland wages were slashed left, right and centre.

Today, as the working class of both countries face massive attacks from the ruling class, the solidarity shown in that battle fifty years ago, has lessons for our own fight.

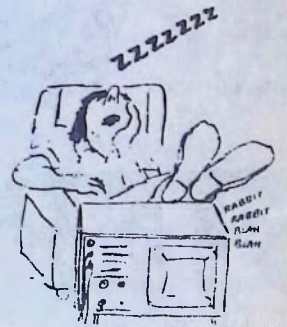
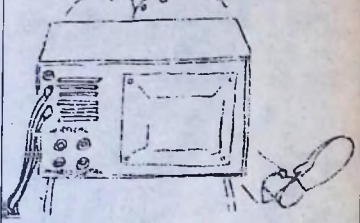
'BANSHEE', the journal of Irishwomen United, is going into its second edition. It is the answer of that organisation to the "media silence" about women's affairs. Its first issue, published on International Women's Day, dealt with contraception, unemployment, equal pay, the Constitution and "Father Church".

Most of it is in general terms — too general, in fact. It gives no feeling of what it is like to be involved in the struggles actually going on for, say, equal pay. And, on the same subject, it gives the extraordinary advice: "Get into the Labour Court and Fight!" Some place to have a fight.

'Banshee' is a welcome new arrival, however. It's available from Irishwomen United, 12 Lower Pembroke Street, Dublin 2 and from WORKER Book Service.

## OUR KEVIN

AND NOW FOLLOWS AN ADDRESS TO THE NATION BY MR. COSGRAVE



What did he say, Kev?



HE SAID THE NATION MUST PULL TOGETHER IN THIS DIFFICULT TIME AND WE MUST ALL WORK HARDER ESPECIALLY THE UNEMPLOYED AND MAKE SACRIFICES AND...



WELL WELL - AND I THOUGHT YOU WERE ASLEEP!





# Rank and file meetings say: WE'RE FIGHTING THE SELLOUT

THE MESSAGE from the rank and file is clear. At meetings around the country there was a determined No! to wage restraint. In Dublin about a hundred trade unionists at a meeting in Wynns Hotel set up a campaign to fight the bosses plans. Meetings were held in Waterford and Limerick where the opposition to any wage holding deal was just as strong. As meetings were being held the wheeling and dealing between the bosses, the government and the union leaders went on. The "talks" had broken down but the manoeuvring continued. And they were holding their cards close to their chests as usual. Our wages and standard of living were being decided for us up there at the top of the ladder. The rank and file were being kept in the dark not even knowing details of the negotiations let alone have any say in them.

But at the bottom of the ladder two things were clear. One: our union "leaders" were not in there fighting on our behalf - they were working hard at finding a compromise between the top amount the bosses could pay without cutting into their profits, and the least amount our "leaders" could hope to sell to us.

And they knew that meant cutting real wages. They knew that meant cutting our living standards. But then their allegiance has broadened to include the "National Interest" - and that means compromising to take account of the bosses profits. It's easy seeing that workers interests are not at top

of their list of priorities.

The second thing that's clear is the need for a strong rank and file campaign to pluck the unions out of the pockets of the union bosses and to ensure that when they are selling their allegiance they are not selling ours. To ensure that any deal arranged at the top of the ladder will be broken by the fist of rank and file militancy.

That campaign is underway. The Dublin meeting discussed the way in which the chains of the Employer-Labour conference could be broken. The democratic discussion that took place was in glowing contrast to the sharp dealing of the union bosses.

## MAIN JOB

The main job, everybody agreed, was to get the rank and file of the unions moving. If they were not applying pressure, organising solidarity with those in dispute, processing claims democratically and with militancy.

There was some disagreement.

soared, but they have made some people forget the very purpose of unions - to improve workers living standards and conditions. Many officials who have been appointed since 1970 have absolutely no idea how to put in a wage claim. They've never had to! They get a bit here and a bit there, sliding in and out between the clauses of the Agreements. They've become labour lawyers.

We all agree on the need for the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, and we support it - but it's doing the wrong job. It's wasting resources by "policing" unions instead of organising on the many important political issues on which the trade union should act.

Look at the effect of the Agreements. They've taken away the independence of individual unions to fight for their members. And for what? You're not even sure of getting the terms of the Agreement - little as they are - you've got to fight for it. Thousands of workers didn't get the last Agreement terms.

And the Labour Court is no help. Its role has been to find an excuse for the employer not to pay. They'll say perhaps, that they can't find a reason not to pay - that's the best you'll get, but they won't recommend payment.

Unfortunately, too many people seem to think that the trade union movement is the officials. It's not - it's the rank and file. And when the bureaucrats aren't doing their job properly - and they're not - it's up to the rank and file.



however, on how best to get the rank and file involved - should a campaign be limited to a fight against wage restraint and a pay pause, or should it also take up demands to fight unemployment and redundancies? Eventually, the question was resolved by saying that the main emphasis in the short term would be on mobilising on the issue of wages, while the trade unionists present also adopted a series of demands against unemployment and redundancies to be fought for in the longer term. As Brian Anderson put it, we always need to be able to decide on priorities - and those priorities might need to be changed from

one situation to another.

The Conference provided a useful starting point for a campaign. But it nearly foundered at one point on the confusion caused by the many resolutions to change this or that individual point of the policy outline presented by the Dublin Shop Stewards Committee. For some time it seemed that we had lost sight of the essential task to get the message across to our fellow-trade unionists that the arguments for restraint were a fraud, that it would be fought, and that organisation was needed to fight it.

The Socialist Workers' Movement a dozen of whose members were at the conference, is firmly comm-

itted to the aim of building a rank and file opposition to the bureaucrats within the trade union movement. We have spelt that out in issue after issue of 'The Worker'. But we also know that a rank and file movement is not plucked from nowhere; it is formed by workers in struggle. The first task is to help launch the struggle - and the most immediate issue around which this could be done was the fight against wage restraint.

## The bosses think it's still 1913'

ONE OF the best received contributions at the Dublin meeting was from Tom Flanagan, WUI, who said that the bosses were having a go at working people. He pointed to the behaviour of the police during the Crown Controls strike in Galway and said that the Superintendent who had used bad language when one of the strikers was injured would certainly not be sacked as the shop steward at Crown had been - allegedly for the same use of language.

"And look at Unidare, where a lorry driver who refused to pass a picket put up by the workers there was summonsed for having bald tyres when the police saw he was giving solidarity. Another lorry driver scabbed on the picket and drove right at the workers - could have killed them - and when one of the workers asked a policeman what he was going to do about it, he was told - 'Ah, sure, we're only keeping the peace'."

"The bosses are having a go at us and their pay freeze is just a part of it. As far as they're concerned it's still 1913. And it's about time we got out on the streets and showed them we're not going to take it lying down'."

## LIMERICK MEETING

OVER forty shop stewards and rank and file trade unionists pledged themselves to oppose all forms of wage restraint - at a public meeting in Limerick on Saturday April 3rd. The meeting was sponsored by "Bottom Dog", the local rank and file paper.

The meeting called for outright opposition to any National Wage Agreement which would only result in a massive cut in living standards and called for the immediate serving of claims for large lump sum increases in

wage levels as the only means of protecting worker's living standards. Full support was expressed for the recent claims on behalf of the building and maintenance workers.

The meeting was addressed by Pat Kiely, shop steward for Limerick Corporation workers and Ann Speed, ITGWU Dublin District Council, who urged the meeting to immediately initiate a broad based campaign along the lines of the Dublin campaign.

## What you can do....

A beginning has been made in organising the fight. We urge all our readers to take it up too. Get in touch with the Dublin Committee for a contact closest to you. Help organise a meeting in your area (including a locality of Dublin) to put the case across. Let's win back the trade union movement to the

job it is supposed to do - fight to advance its members' living standards.

For more details and information on the campaign contact the Secretary: **DERMOT WHELAN, 38 ARRAN QUAY, DUBLIN 7.**

## From the bosses' mouth

Of all the bogeymen surrounding the debate on a pay pause, none is more emotional than the cut in living standards, generally taken to mean a cut in the living standards of people fortunate enough to belong to a trade union. Living standards are not an absolute right which must not under any circumstances be tampered with. Of course living standards must suffer, but then they were too high to begin with.



"SOME PEOPLE say that National Wage Agreements are a charter for lazy trade union officials - mind you, I didn't say it, just some people", said Brian Anderson, AUEW/TASS organiser, at the Dublin meeting. His tongue was firmly in his cheek. These Agreement have had a very bad effect on the trade union movement. They have not only held wages down while prices



## FROM THE SHOP FLOOR

Reports from Unidare.

Cement Ltd.

Chrysler.

the Post Office and a bank worker.

# THERE'S NO MONEY IN BANKS

"THOSE 'GREEDY' bank officials are at it again, threatening a strike action if they don't get their wage rise." That's how many workers see it. But what's good enough for bank workers is good enough for any of us — the government could step in and stop payment of wage increases.

It could yet come to strike action — and, if it does, bank workers will need the support of all trade unionists. The politicians and the press will do everything they can to isolate them and castigate them. But there are answers to their charges: A BANK WORKER explains:

IN MAY of last year an agreement was reached between the Irish Bank Officials Association (IBOA) and the banks on salaries, grading, conditions, which gave bank employees an increase of 28 per cent over twelve months.

## Intentions

At Michael O'Leary's request the Labour Court was told of the agreement. (O'Leary has always been concerned about the pay and conditions of bank officials; in 1974 he brought in a Bill to limit their constantly rising profits — and power — of the banks.)

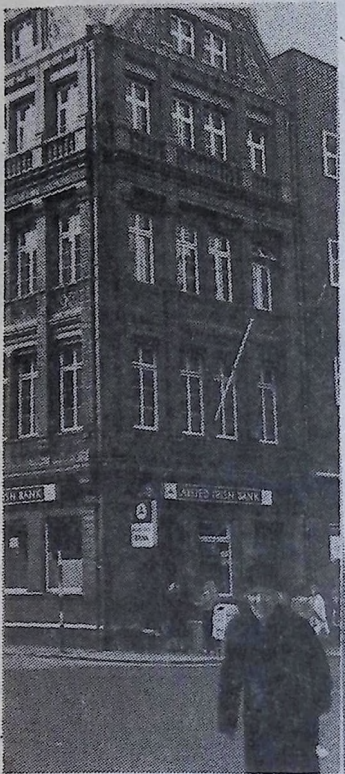
In December, the bank workers were due the third phase of the agreement when Michael O'Leary became interested in their plight again. He wanted this phase handed back to the banks. All in the 'national interest' you understand. O'Leary made his intentions clearer in direct talks with the IBOA. He wanted them to accept a voluntary wage cut. He would prefer not to have to put a Bill through the Dail which might prove just a little embarrassing to his relations with trade unions. They were. We were not taking it — so O'Leary had to go in head first and got his Bill through the Dail in double-quick time.

## Dangerous

Not a voice was raised in the trade union movement or the Labour Party against legislation to give the government complete control over pay and conditions in the banks. The Labour Party had once again taken the bosses' side and a very dangerous precedent had been set.

This is the background to the dispute — and this is why all trade unionists should support the IBOA in its fight against the government's attempt at repression in the area of wages.

Most people think of bank managers playing golf when they think of bank officials. But over half of the men and women working in the banks have less than ten years' service. They have started on £1864 a year, or £35 a week.



In 1976 that's hardly an enormous wage — especially when you remember that the banks cannot even plead falling profits. Last year, they made over £20 million profits between Bank of Ireland and the Allied Irish Banks. On top of that, bank workers may be moved to any point around the country at the whim of their bosses.

Next time anybody talks to you about 'greedy' bank workers, tell them to get their facts right. There's money in banks, alright, but it's not for the bank workers.

# STATE CONTROL? BIG DEAL!

JUST a note for those reforming socialists who seem to think that nationalisation is the be all and end all of socialism. The working conditions of postmen are one indication that all is not rosy in the public garden. A postman from one of the district offices in Dublin spoke to THE WORKER about pay and conditions.

A POSTMAN does not qualify for full pay until he is 28. At 22 he is on £41 basic per week. It will rise to £50 when he is 28. Not too bad, eh! But many postmen work a split-shift. There is no shift allowance for this. Busmen get shift allowance for split-shift.

On paper a split-shift is eight hours long. But according to the Dublin postmen, "it's really a twelve hour day". He gave us a day's timetable.

Start at six. 6.00 a.m. — 10.00 a.m. delivery in the District (this can last to eleven or twelve if the mail is heavy).

Then you are off till 3 p.m.

Now what in hell can you do from ten till three in the afternoon?

Especially when you have to spend a half-hour getting home and then three-quarters of an hour travelling to town before three.

3.00 p.m. — 4.00 p.m.:

Sorting in Sherrif Street. (you finish here at twenty to five in order to be over at Andrew St. at 5.00 p.m. If you've ever walked it you'll know that the person who set the 20 minutes never walked it)

5.00 p.m. — 6.30 p.m.:

Sorting in Andrew Street.

Our postmen certainly get around. But the feet! Six in the morning — till six-thirty in the evening — that's

a twelve-hour day in our book, split or no split. The least the men are entitled to is shift allowance.

In Sherrif Street the pattern of weird hours is much the same. About 30% of the workers here are non-duty holders. That is they don't have a set duty yet and they can be changed around from strange shifts to strange shifts. For instance recently a man was on 'lates' for two weeks, then he was given an early. A late is 2.45 p.m. to 11 p.m. But our postman says that he calls the so-called early shift a 'semi late'. Why? Lets take a look at it.

The 'early' goes like this: 8.30 — 12.30, break, 4.00 p.m. — 8.00 p.m. There is also a midnight shift. You can imagine what that's like.

You can imagine too. Workers in nationalised industries have to fight

# UNIDARE

EXTRACTS FROM THE REVIEW BY THE CHAIRMAN, MR. M. McSTAY,  
for the year ending 31st December, 1975

1975 was one of the most difficult trading years in the history of the Company. The economists' forecasts of

### THE NET PROFIT:

The net profit after tax (which included an exceptional taxation credit of £619,000) and after deduction of the interests of minority shareholders was £1,323,000 against £684,000 in 1974.

IT'S NICE TO see that somebody's not doing too badly even in these times of crisis — but it sure ain't the Unidare workers. You will note that the Unidare management intends to "consolidate" things by "eliminating some of the less viable sections". They help us understand that a little better by saying: that this MIGHT mean "a reduction in staff — despite all our efforts at maintaining the highest level of employment."

In every factory on the site they show just how much they really mean — not at all. The Wire Fabrication section has just been closed with a loss of 30 jobs. And the battles continue in the other places — to hold on to a job here, to get one vacancy filled there.

More and more, these little battles need to be drawn together. But, above all, they need to be drawn under the one heading of a fight for a substantial increase on basic wages, for shorter working hours and longer holidays. The craft unions have put in a claim — the ITGWU and TASS

we may be forced to reduce or even eliminate some of the less viable sections, and this could bring a reduction in staff, despite all our efforts at maintaining the highest level of employment.

should follow suit. And the fight to win it should be organised democratically and efficiently. Even with a new National Agreement in the air this fight should not be postponed.

### FROM THE BATTLE-FRONT:

IN Transformers, the workers have insisted that the main factory must be properly heated. In Alidare, men being replaced by a new extrusion machine are being moved to other factories — some to Pumps, to replace others who were transferred away from that factory! They want compensation for loss of shift allowance.

In Anodising, the men have been in dispute over interference with the bonus scheme. The whole factory stood solidly behind the group of workers most affected and worked "non-standard" and brought production crashing down.

Another change in bonus scheme

now being given a "trial run" means loss of one job in the spray shop. In Tinsley Wire, the tradesmen have set an important headline by working to rule — to secure the replacement of two electricians and a fitter. Wire and Cable workers have continued their ban on overtime in protest against redundancies which have taken place. But the action has not been given full official backing and the example is not known to most Unidare workers.

Carpenters and painters will soon be £6.50 behind fitters and electricians in bonus earnings. Their parity claim has been lost somewhere in the Labour Court. Their union, UCATT, has not been prepared to push the fight. The members themselves should now be seeking support for their own action.

It is time that all of these local fights were seen as one by Unidare workers. The management pursues a consistent policy throughout the site — and a large part of their effort goes into keeping us divided. The Joint Works Council bringing representatives of all unions together must get a new lease of life and itself pursue a consistent policy to resist all redundancies to press for a decent increase on basic wages and cut out all the divisive nonsense of the bonus schemes.

### UNIDARE STEWARD

# CHRYSLER

"NOW WE NEED YOU — now we don't! has always been the bosses song. When there are profits to be made they hire us and when their 'viability is threatened' they let us go.

So, after getting 80 voluntary redundancies and stepping up productivity last May, Chrysler Motor Assembly plant in Santry Dublin have recently been taking on more workers. Temporary of course.

In the meantime the Chrysler bosses must still be congratulating themselves over the neat one they pulled in February. To meet a special order Chrysler said they would have to import cars from the plant in Coventry, England. Why couldn't the Santry workers produce the cars in time? Because after the redundancies there weren't enough of them!

Having persuaded the Shops Committee to agree to the importation of fully built up vehicles, Chrysler rolled in more than the agreed number of 200, many of them with defects. How many of these cars were dumped on the Irish market isn't known, but the Santry compounds the dealers have never been so full.

Little has been heard of the demand for a 32% wage increase put in in February. The £12 in three phases which the Chrysler workers won by their successful strike action last summer was being outpaced by inflation even while it was being paid.

Only an active and militant shops committee holding regular shop floor meetings can make a stand against this manipulation and lead the fight for a real wage increase. On a wider level we urge Chrysler workers to join in the campaign against wage restraint.

as militantly as their fellow workers in the private sector. Until that struggle ultimately achieves workers control in the nationalised jobs the difference between the two sector is one of name only.

What's happening in your workplace?

Send us a report



# Shannon Sweethearts

or: how the ITGWU leaders learned to stop worrying and love the multi-nationals

THE INDUSTRIAL Estate at Shannon airport has been held up as a symbol of Ireland's "industrial miracle" in the 60's. But as this WORKER report shows, the miracle was little more than a three-card-trick and the losers were the Limerick workers.

However, the increasing militancy in the area is a warning to the card-sharks — the bosses, government, and union bureaucrats — that the game may soon be over.

by  
**FRED BURNS**

The bright young executives go out globe-trotting simply to get companies to "provide us with employment". And the legend seemed true through the sixties because throughout the world capitalism was booming and could provide jobs and a rising standard of living. During that period employment in Shannon went up from less than a thousand to about 4,500.

But the "miracle" was built on the fact that Ireland could offer cheap and plentiful labour, plus large tax concessions, free hand-outs, and numerous free or cheap services. The multi-nationals could get a third of machinery costs paid, with export profits tax-free until 1990, cheap lease on factories, grants for training workers and — most important — a duty free zone.

## Dropped

Now however, as the recession begins to bite even these incentives cannot attract the profit hungry bosses. Employment at Shannon has dropped by a sixth since 1968. And for the Shannon workers the real nature of these companies has revealed itself as viciously anti-union and threatening to pull out at a moments notice if any attempt is made to cut into their profits by pushing up wage rates. As one shop steward put it: "One thing you've got to understand is that since the foundation of this estate the ITGWU has never won a single major victory".

So far there's been a pretty cosy set-up for the bosses — and for the trade union officials. It has been some years since the first great battles for unionisation. In E.I. — the most famous case — the union was recognised but the closed shop wasn't won and many militants were subsequently victimised. Even today, major factories such as SPS, De Beers or Molex are either non-union or poorly organised. In Molex, like many other factories, a blacklist exists for all union militants.

However, through experience the bosses have learned that there are easier and less troublesome ways of doing things than fighting pitched battles against trade unions. For political and tactical reasons it became much more advisable for multi-nationals, particularly those from the USA and South Africa, to recognise a union. The IDA and SFADCO recommended the ITGWU as the sole union. A pattern is now set for all companies coming into Shannon.

Before the place opens it is recommended that workers will join the ITGWU and the company will deduct union dues from the wage packet. In return, the union enters into a "sweetheart" works agreement. Questioned about this practice, an ITGWU official in Dublin agreed that it wasn't very democratic to sew the workers into an agreement without their permission. He admitted that it does result in unions competing for members and offering "cheap rates" to companies. "But," he said, "if we don't do it some other union will nip in and scoop up the members." It's a sad glimpse at the motivation of our trade union "leaders".

The bosses' aim with these works agreements is to channel all shop floor action into the "official" channels, to draw out grievance procedures and demoralise workers by sapping their strength in the workplace. So, some of the agreements make it mandatory to send disputes to that graveyard of lost causes — the Labour Court. In addition, most agreements give the company the right to sack anyone engaged in an "unofficial" strike. KRAUS and NAIMER workers can "have their employment terminated without recourse to grievance procedures" for unofficial action. EI can sack for any unofficial strike, sit-in or slow down. FERENKA has a rule which says "the shop steward must be seen to do everything in his power to prevent unofficial work stoppages."

## Aim

The agreements also aim to cut across the solidarity of workers on the

Industrial Estate by outlawing sympathy strikes.

While the ITGWU bureaucrats are happy to sit back and watch the dues roll in trade unionism in Shannon stumbles from defeat to defeat. Over the past year or two EI have been letting workers go in batches so that hundreds have now got the chop.

In NARCO — Air Shields the bosses claimed that due to shortage of demand about 50% of the staff would have to go. Yet a short time later the rest of the workers were on over-time and week-end work. In LANA-KNIT there was a rush for voluntary redundancy which meant that other workers were left with a double work load and a tiny pay increase under the productivity deal. Worst of all is BUTTE-KNIT where workers have agreed to work over-time FREE in an attempt to save their jobs.

## Lead

In all this the union bureaucrats have never given a single lead to workers. Indeed, their role as policemen of the rank and file has drained enthusiasm and militancy and blocked efforts to advance. The multi-national companies at Shannon are allowed to get away with corruption, attacks on militants and the smashing of any real resistance. In this situation the bosses just about have a free hand and some companies have used the tactic of "casual labour" with ridiculous ease. BEFAB, for instance, could turf out a batch of temporary workers and pick up another batch when it suited them. In SCRIPTO (and most notoriously, CALLINS) the company closed for



\* \* \* POSSIBLY the most disgusting picture ever taken. Mullen, Kennedy and Carroll, the Holy Trinity of the ITGWU celebrate their security. Each of them holds his top union position for life. No such security for Shannon workers on whose backs they have climbed to the top of the ladder. It will take a rank and file movement to give the union ladder the kind of shaking needed to wipe the grins off their faces.

about six months to "re-organise". When it came to re-hiring the bosses had more or less a free hand to pick whom they wanted. IT IS clear that the fight to develop resistance to the multi-national bosses cannot be left in the hands of the union bureaucrats. It's a job for the rank and file.

The first step must be the development of good shop floor organisation, with joint shop steward committees linking different union members — in particular, breaking down division between craft and general workers. Regular departmental meetings where shop stewards can consult their members and workers assemblies of all workers in the factory held once a month would ensure that work-place policy can be decided in the most democratic manner and that undue dependence on senior stewards does not occur.

Because of the number of factories on shift work it is essential that shop stewards get time off to hold meetings on the job.

But the essence of solidarity is in links between factories. It is a fantastic situation when there are two factories on the estate back to back, both owned by JOSEPH LOGAN, yet no links exist between them. Many workers in Shannon face similar problems. Equal Pay claims are arising in many factories. They have to be co-ordinated so that precedents are set which mean that equal pay claims can be based on something more than the terms of the equal pay legislation. Because of the physical and mental effects of continuous shift work a shortening of hours — like the AUEW's demand for a 35 hour week — is the only real compensation. Claims like these can only be raised and won if there is coordination between rank and file workers on the estate.

## Demolish

And the union bureaucrats will never organise on this basis. It would undercut and demolish their happy "sweetheart" relationship with the bosses.

One bloke put it like this: "It is terrible to see the Callins workers going down to defeat after weeks on strike. And do you know why? Every week they stood outside factories with tin cans, looking for financial support — there weren't even proper collections taken up for them in some factories."

Only the building of a real and representative shop stewards

committee for the whole of the estate can ensure the unity and organised resistance necessary to take on the bosses. Such a committee has begun to be built on the Waterford Industrial Estate out of a situation similar to Callins. In a situation where the trade union officials are acting as "policemen" over the rank and file, channelling everything into "procedures" designed by and for the bosses and state, only a shop stewards committee which is willing and able to combine official and unofficial methods can lay the basis for any offensive by workers at Shannon to win their struggle.



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## The 'Solzhenitsyn' you don't know

be more right wing, Britain, he said was the pearl of the Western world but was in danger of collapsing into socialism. And socialism equals stalinism, which equals concentration camps. He's a priceless weapon in the propaganda ward against socialism.

But the man in the picture, Leonid Plyushch, has suffered too. How come you've got to snoop about in obscure magazines like *Intercontinental Press* to get his opinions on Russia?

Answer: Because he's still a socialist.

Plyushch, unlike Solzhenitsyn, was persecuted because he fought the Russian rulers from a left wing position. He does not believe Russia to be socialist, he defines it as state-capitalist and says:

"I think that one of the Trotskyists' errors is their belief that the state in the USSR is a degenerated workers state.

It would be a workers state if the workers exercised the slightest control over the government. In the Soviet Union you have no say about who governs. The

workers can only vote for a single candidate who is imposed on them... property has passed from the hands of private owners to those of what Marx calls "collective capitalist society" the government... the planned economy remains. But there was also a planned economy under Hitler. In the Soviet Union, planning is from the top down, without any consultation. At the bottom you have no right except to shut up and obey".

So, Plyushch remains a Marxist, opposing so-called "Soviet" Russia and its rulers - AND opposing capitalism. And ignored by the "free" press. I or Plyushch speaks of "the tragedy of the revolution" because the victories of the Russian workers of 1917 were overturned by Stalinism and capitalist intervention, while Solzhenitsyn - a rich but broken man sees tragedy in the idea of workers rising at all.

YOU probably will not recognise the man in the picture above. He's a Russian dissident who was imprisoned for opposing Stalinism. He's now in exile. No, it's not Solzhenitsyn with the beard shaved off.

You'll have no trouble recognising Solzhenitsyn, though. The papers print his every word and the BBC has recently given him hours of prime time on TV to tell us how capitalism should

## Chile: message of resistance

*WORKERS in Chile have "suffered a 50% reduction in their wages compared with the money they received before the Dictatorship*

*... The Chilean working class can not mobilize or fight against this situation. Trade Unions have been dissolved, and basic workers rights recognised all over the world have been abolished. Those who have fought for trade union rights have been jailed, cruelly tortured, thousands of them murdered, and the luckier ones have lost their jobs, joining the millions of Chileans condemned to absolute starvation".*

THESE FACTS are known outside Chile, though the full horror of them is not well enough known among workers. But it is not simply to produce a humanitarian reaction that the Revolutionary Front in support of the "Chilean Resistance" have started to publish the bulletin CHILE: RESISTANCE & SOCIALISM, of which the first issue is now available.

The bulletin aims to communicate the experience of Chilean revolutionaries, drawing the lesson that the defeat of Allende is not an isolated event but part of a general trend: that those who attempt a "peaceful road to socialism" like the Popular Unity in Chile end up opening the road to defeat.

The bulletin includes articles discussing the disastrous economic situation brought about by the policies of the Junta, the dubious position of the Catholic Church, the scandalous

trading links which "Communist" China is building up with Pinochet's Chile, and the lessons of Chile as they appear to the Portuguese working class.

The second aim of the bulletin is to "create a movement supporting those Chilean revolutionaries who, underground, imprisoned or in exile, are drawing on the experience of defeat to prepare the way for victory."

To that solidarity the Socialist Workers' Movement will contribute to the best of its ability, not only as a duty to the international revolution but also because the clarity of the Chilean revolutionaries' opposition to the reformist Communist Party and the supporters of Allende, carries a lesson for the Irish working class.

Some of the articles in the first issue are a bit long-winded, but they do not suffer from the slogan-mongering or tortuous theory sometimes found on the Irish left. The ability of Chilean revolutionaries in Ireland, tempered by experience and repression, to present agreed positions is welcome and refreshing, but one would hope in future issues to read more about the revolutionary organisations, their differences which must be considered seriously, and the isolated sparks of resistances which come from Chilean workers even in their darkest hour.

J.G.

CHILE: Resistance and Socialism No. 1. Available from The Worker Book Service, 24 Talbot Street, Dublin 1. Price 20p plus 7p postage.

## Portugal: steady drift to the right

"REVOLUCAO" (Revolution), the paper of the Portuguese Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat, is under attack from the government. Two separate cases have been taken against it for particular anti-government articles published during January and February. The "director" of the paper, and leading member of the P.R.P., Isabel do Carmo, has been threatened with imprisonment if she does not cough up £2,000 in 48 hours.

A number of other papers have

faced charges, too, but none has been hit so hard. Even when Isabel faced a similar case under the fascist regime she only had to pay out £400. The P.R.P. sees this present action as a sign of a steady drift to the right.

"Who is afraid of the truth?" they ask. "Who is afraid of public discussion? Who wants to shut up the revolutionaries? It is those people who have suspect interests to hide and who know they are wrong."

or there'll be trouble.

So, the rulers of one Indian state, Maharashtra, have come up with a solution. Compulsory sterilization. If you've got three children you have a choice: be sterilized or go to jail for two years, where the government has the power to sterilize you anyway. No right of appeal. They're proposing to sterilize 2.2 million people.

But surely the Catholic Church, which rabbits on about the sacredness of life when abortion or contraception is raised in Ireland, will have something to say? Not a sausage. Every Catholic member of the state's parliament is either supporting the new law or keeping their mouth shut.

One, holy and apostolic church? No. Sections of different ruling classes who act according to their class interests and use peoples genuine faith towards that end.

Sterilization is okay, just like any other method of controlling your fertility - as long as you want it. But forcing people to limit their ability to have children is as repressive as denying them the right to do so.



Part of the huge crowd at the Albert Hall, London, demonstrating for the Right To Work.

## Marching for the right to work

"TODAY we have caused a ripple. It is up to us now to make a splash that will wash away unemployment and the system that creates it". That was Ernie Roberts of the AUEW speaking in front of five and a half thousand people at the mass protest rally for the Right To Work in London's Albert Hall on March 20th.

Behind him sat the Right To Work marchers who had just completed their 300 mile march from Manchester to London. They led the chant of "Occupy - Nationalise - Fight for the right to Work"! which echoed back from all four balconies.

In the words of John Deason, Secretary of the Right To Work Campaign, the march was "not so much a march - more a flying picket". In Manchester they occupied a building site in protest at the sacking of 70 electricians and met with the building workers who then called a mass meeting of the 500 working on the site. The meeting decided on all-out strike action and two days later the 70 workers were reinstated with back pay. The site then affiliated to the Campaign and sent a delegation to the rally in the Albert Hall.

Similarly, at a film processing factory in Staffordshire, the intervention of the marchers helped heal a division between TGWU and ASTMS members and win a strike for union recognition. The workers sent a husband to the rally.

Wherever the marchers went they received a warm reception in the

Kevin Doogan,  
at the rally in London.

streets and factories. They were fed and put up for the night by trade councils, factory canteens and labour clubs. But there was one group whose reception for the marchers was less than friendly - the boys in blue. On the last lap of the march the police - including the Special Patrol Group, the anti-riot police - descended on the march with ferocity. Photos clearly show the police attacking the march with no provocation. After wielding their batons and injuring several marchers they arrested 35 of them along with nine building workers from a nearby site who had come out to welcome the march.

The defence of the arrested marchers, whose trial comes up on May 21st, is part of the continuing campaign by the Right To Work organisation. The march and rally were platforms from which to boost the campaign. As Harry McShane, veteran of the 1930's marches against unemployment, said at the rally;

"Now, for the first time in our history, we are on the road to building a mass movement with unity between the unemployed and the employed".

This was the message taken back to the workplaces and unions. The fight against unemployment is growing in the British working class. Here in Ireland we have our own building to do. In the words of John Deason's closing speech to the workers in the Albert Hall - "If we can't fight for the right to work, we can't fight for anything."

## RELIGIOUS NEWS

TWO ITEMS of news this month for the Pope.

I trust that his Holiness doesn't make a habit of listening to Radio Moscow, the propaganda station beamed at the West to tell us how nice things are under the benevolent reign of bith brother Brezhnev. It's a pity, that, as he would have got an earful of encouragement a few Sundays back.

For what should pop out but the lovely brogue of Mick O'Riordan, Secretary of the Communist Party of Ireland and the personification of unholy Bolshevism for the faithful. Mick told about the great time he'd had on his trip to Lithuania. What joyful tidings had Mick of this little paradise which Mother Russia has tucked (firmly, very firmly) under her wing?

Well, says Mick, before the

Lithuanian workers had socialism declared for them the previous right wing regime had close links with the Catholic Church, yet there was no Lithuanian language version of the bible. But now, thanks to the massive strides of Russian "socialism"...

Now, THERE'S something to warm the bones of Lenin! The CPI can expect to recruit massively among clerical students and supporters of Gael Linn.



FROM FARCE to obscenity. Even those of us hardened to the sickness of capitalism and its supporters are from time to time repelled by news of its latest atrocity.

India is crowded. Too many people, too little produced. Not enough jobs, houses, food. And India's ruling class, like any other, are facing a crisis. It's a hard world, you've got to compete, you've got to jettison whatever is dragging on the economy



# Political prisoners: grinding them down

WHEN Daithi O'Conaill came out of Portlaoise in April he gave a good part of his first press conference to underlining just how bad conditions are in the prison there. Many people who have got used to hearing this from Provisionals only may have come to not believe it completely.

Even somebody passing Portlaoise can see what a monument it is to the brutality of the ruling class - soldiers with guns at the ready; barbed wire everywhere. The visitor faces all kinds of checks - and the latest rules allow the prison authorities to refuse entry to anybody without giving a reason.

But prison is made for grinding down the prisoners - and the Governor and the wardens try to do that in Portlaoise with a whole range of different methods of harassment and intimidation. Every now and then they let the police run riot in the prison on the basis of some invented security risk.

The Provo prisoners, who form

the vast majority in Portlaoise, have been able to force concessions, however, through the strength of their numbers. The Official republican prisoners can also manage to get concessions

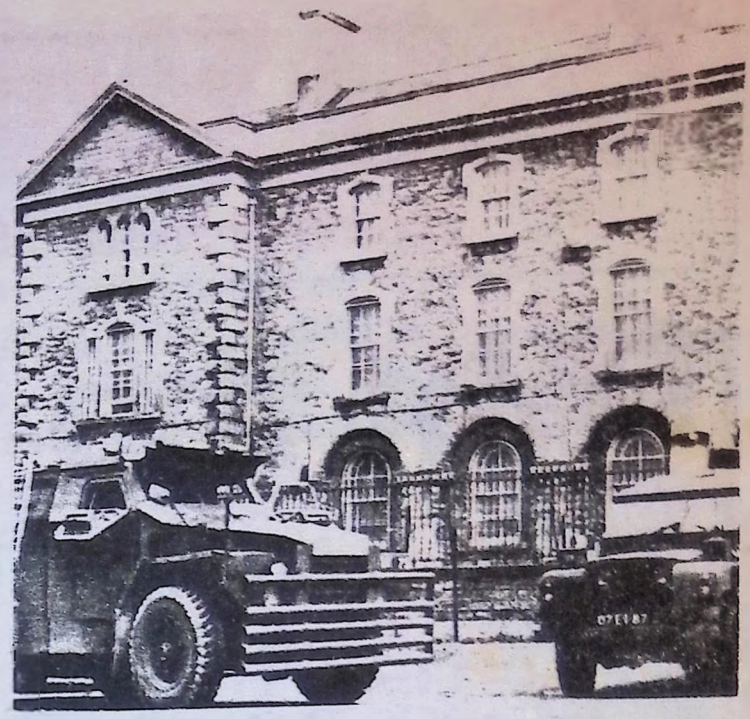
A small group of prisoners who are neither Provos or Officials, and who have mostly left or another for political reasons, are in the weakest position. And because the prison authorities seem to be aware of their left-wing politics, they come in for harsher treatment.

There are about a dozen of these in the group, calling themselves 'socialist republicans'. They are held together, kept in their cells for just under 23 hours a day, exercising on a small strip of land, and allowed to watch TV or

practice crafts in a tiny cell. All of these facilities may be stopped for any reason the Governor cares to take.

At one stage the cells were stripped bare, supposedly because there were explosives there. No explosives were found, nobody was charged, but meanwhile the prisoners had to eat their food off the floor. Their protest earned them solitary confinement for 36 hours - more than the legal limit. They also lost remission of 14 days for another protest; it might have been more if the authorities had not feared a riot by the Provisionals.

During January they were watching TV and a couple stayed over the time to see the end of the film. Nothing was said about it until a few days later when one prisoner was called up to the Governor about it. He refused to go - so the Governor came to the cell and knocked off 14 days' remission for watching TV too long.



Troops surround Armagh Prison

## Status; not just snobbery

REMEMBER when Ruairi O Bradaigh was promising that all hell would break loose if the British government removed 'special category' status for prisoners in the North? And remember when Loyalist leaders were making the same threatening noises?

Well, it seems as if some deal has been done. 'Special category' status has been done away with. And there has not been a fight over it. The Brits came to some agreement with the Provos and loyalists that it would be done gently, so that they would hardly notice.

Did it matter at all? Why make any fuss in the first place about political status?

A lot of republicans have reacted quite rightly against the elitism of the Provo leadership who believe themselves to be chosen without having to fight for their ideas publicly. And they have done so by rejecting the idea of political status. That's an elitist

idea, they say. Why do republicans, or anybody else for that matter, deserve special treatment? Other people argue that all prisoners are, in fact, political.

One reason why republicans should insist on special treatment in prison is that they are already getting special repressive treatment from the police, the courts and the prisons themselves. Many of those held in Portlaoise prison, for example, are there because they are 'guilty' of membership of an organisation, or, more correctly, because some cop says they are members. Others have been framed. Yet others have received sentences well in excess of the "normal", just because they are active in republican organisations.

To get the authorities to recognise

political status is to get them to recognise that there is a political struggle going on. Of course, they know this privately. But publicly they try to make out that they are dealing with a bunch of hooligans and criminals. The ending of political status in the north is an attack on the anti-imperialist movement. It is intended, along with other measures, to isolate the militants from any wider support.

If the members of a political organisation are being imprisoned for their part in a struggle then the organisation will want to hold its members together. The right to hold meetings, to assemble freely, to have access to literature and to lecturers or tutors from outside is essential in order to hold the organisation together.

That's the main part of what political status is all about, maintaining the discipline of the political organisation and keeping political discussion alive.

The authorities will generally try to isolate political militants from one another or impose conditions where real political life and contact with the outside world becomes impossible.

Demanding political status should not mean trying to be relieved of 'ordinary' prison duties. The tragedy of Frank Stagg's death was that his struggle was always an individual one. He wanted something different from everybody else in the prison, didn't do the duties which would have brought him into contact with them. So, there was no way they could support him.

'ordinary' prisoners will be interested in political ideas, but they cannot discuss them if they do not have contact and with militants and the chance to meeting, discuss and read.

Prison aims at breaking down solidarity and at isolating each individual from the next so that the treatment can break him or her down more easily, and more effectively. Every thing a politically conscious prisoner does should be aimed at overcoming that isolation, of forging links in struggle for better conditions, generating the solidarity of a shared opposition to the system.

With that kind of lead prisons can yet become universities of revolution.

BRIAN TRENCH



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## The "Irish Mirror"?

WHAT'S THE difference between the Sunday Mirror and Sinn Fein's paper the Irish People? Well the Mirror has more pages. The other differences are getting harder to see.

Last month we published the facts behind the Mirror's smear job on the Portuguese solidarity meetings organised by the S.W.M. Now comes the Irish People smear. We won't devote much space to it as we've better things to do with our pages than indulging in bickering with other groups. However we must set the record straight as the Irish People's story amounts to little short of felon setting.

The Provo's paper, An Phoblacht reported the visit to Ireland of a Portuguese socialist Miguel da Silva whose speaking tour was advertised widely as an opportunity for Irish workers to discuss the nuts and bolts of revolution with someone who had first hand experience of it.

sights" of the SWM, that the SWM was prepared to "trade ideology for fire power" and was now - in the words of the headline - "the guiding light behind the Provos".

The slightest knowledge of SWM politics shows that we uncompromisingly reject the traditions of republicanism and base our organisation, traditions and activities, firmly in the working class. Unlike Official Sinn Fein, which still retains its republican roots and maintains an armed wing that has not hesitated to back up its political theories with 'firepower' - even against former comrades in the Provos and the IRSP. While disagreeing with the tactics and the strategy of the Provos we defend them against repression on the basis that they are opposing a capitalist state and a victory for that state is a defeat for the working class. We believe the bankruptcy of the Provo politics are apparent to many within the republican movement and it is our duty as revolutionary socialists to attempt where possible to influence them in a truly revolutionary direction. That position has not changed.

Official Sinn Fein have got a little uneasy at the idea of the Provos publishing 'socialist' articles. Instead of welcoming it as a sign that some Provos are losing faith in the

militarism of republicanism, they fear it. Instead of trying to influence and encourage such moves they use every opportunity to denounce their former comrades and to establish their own "respectability".

What kind of 'respectability' is it which smears other radical organisations and so encourages state repression? Which uses the Provos' recognition of the importance of the events in Portugal as a stick with which to beat them? Which ignored the public presence in Ireland of a Portuguese revolutionary until it could be used against other organisations?

It is, in fact, the 'respectability' of slandering other working class organisations in order to show itself worthy of trust and power. It is the mantle of respectability necessary to climb above working class struggles, up the rungs of the parliamentary ladder, to a position within the present system from where it believes it can deliver socialism. It is the mantle of respectability which all reformists need.

It is for this reason that reformists must denounce as 'ultra left' any organisation which refuses to follow up that ladder, but which attempts to organise the class at the bottom of the ladder - in order to knock the ladder down.

Every action causes an equal and opposite reaction. And the strength used by the Officials in hurling abuse only helps to drive them further into the swamp of Stalinist paranoia.

GENE KERRIGAN





# the worker

Paper of the Socialist Workers Movement

WHERE IS THE BETTER LIFE ?

THE "Better Life For All" demonstration called for April 10th didn't take place. As yet it's hard to tell just how serious the organisers are in their proposed campaign against sectarianism. On page 1 we take another look at the campaign and how socialists can best influence it.

## Fight the redundancies

MEMBERS of the Confederation of Ship Building and Engineering Unions have called a half day strike for April 27 to protest the British governments cutting of 2000 defence jobs in Northern Ireland. If carried out, this will be the first positive action taken by workers to halt the massive unemployment here.

There are now over 50,000 workers out of a job in the north, according to "official" figures. That's a 36 year record. Every week seems to bring news of more closures, more short weeks, more redundancies. And it's going to get worse - most predict 80 thousand out of work by the end of the year.

Life on the dole is, of course, not new here. In many nationalist communities in Belfast, Strabane and Newry, unemployment has been consistently around 28%. Unemployment has become a way of life in these areas.

### DEFENCE CUTS

What is new this time round is the attack on the jobs held by loyalist workers, jobs that the British government seemed always ready to jump in and save. The biggest blow came with the cut of the 2000 defence jobs. The Labour government argued the need for economy. Therefore the jobs had to go no matter how "loyal" the workers.

Workers here know that there is more to come. Cuts are expected in the shipyards and major engineering works.

Many in the nationalist community have argued, "Good - let them get a taste of life on the brew". "They've had the jobs all these years, we never had any." These sentiments are understandable after the long years of job discrimination against the nationalist community.

However this crisis is hitting all workers in Northern Ireland - loyalist and nationalist. Traditional industries - like the many shirt factories in Derry that employed hundreds of women - are closing down. Small service industries, bakeries and co-ops where nationalists were able to get jobs, have been cutting back and closing down.

The bosses and the British government are going through hard

## 50,000 on the dole - more to come

times. Their answer to their problems is to attack the workers - close plants that aren't making enough profit for them; throw many people out of work to save on their wage bill; and make the rest work harder through overtime and productivity deals.

The bosses and the government can get their way if there is no fight back by all workers. If the workers in the defence plants, the textile factories and the shipyards don't fight for their jobs, it will be easier for the bosses and the government to attack other jobs next. It will also be easier for them to continue to increase the prices and rent that we all pay.

The fight back must include all workers - employed and unemployed, in both communities. Rank and file workers can begin to organise now to force the bosses and British government to give us decent jobs - and we don't need defence work either. The defence establishment is only a waste of our tax money. But it's also the way the British government is able to attack workers in Northern Ireland, Britain, Angola and other places. There are lots of other very useful things that workers could produce in Northern Ireland to make our society a better place to live, alternative goods which are need and could be produced instead of "defence" jobs which merely serve the capitalist state.

Rank and file workers can use their power to say to the British government - Give us jobs for all or we'll shut you down!



Unemployed men at the 'bru' in Derry

### ..... and this is how we can do it!

THE BOSSES and the government say we have to accept unemployment. The trade union leaders wring their hands and talk with politicians about the crisis and come up with no answers. But rank and file workers can organise themselves and begin to fight for jobs. Here and in other countries workers have found ways to fight against unemployment:

1. **BAN OVERTIME:** It really works. Even House of Commons figures show that in manufacturing industry in Britain a complete ban on overtime would create 359,600 jobs. Workers at International Harvesters in Britain proved it works. They refused to do overtime and 30 extra workers were hired.

2. **STRIKE FOR JOBS:** 579 council workers have gone on strike to save 181 jobs in Merseyside. The workers are holding mass meetings and going to council estates for support.

3. **REFUSE CLOSURES:** 75 workers are due to lose jobs because a steel stock-holding warehouse is to close down in Newport. But the workers are refusing to leave. A shop steward there said "We have also agreed to halt the transfer of steel to other warehouses. There's 3 million pounds worth of steel in this warehouse and the owners had better not forget it."

It's important for workers to share their experiences in this fight. Send us your report on how you're fighting unemployment.

## The violence they don't condemn

ALICE SMITH is dead. She is dead because the machine she was operating had no safety guard and she was pulled in and crushed to death. She was 71 years of age, worked in Rosses Mill in Belfast, part of a textile group which last year made a net profit of £13.5 mill.

Alice's death did not reach the headlines. They were reserved for visiting dignitaries and beauty queens. Her death will go down as yet another industrial statistic. Her place was taken at the machine an hour after her death.

She was one of the thousands of non-union workers, mostly women, who form a sort of 'reserve army' of the employed. Behind them stand the reserve army of the unemployed.

Northern unemployment figures are nearly 1½ times the figures for the same period last year. But the statistics hide a large part of the iceberg. Married women looking for a job may not be registered; if they haven't got the full quota of stamps, they can't collect the dole and so don't bother to sign on

Thousands of unemployed women are just 'forgotten'.

The easy way out of this uncomfortable fact is to say that women are only working for 'pin money' or in order to get out of the house and meet people. Three out of five women who are working do so to pay for essentials like food and heating. 14 per cent of the women working are the main bread-winners in a family.

They are concentrated in the textile and clothing industries where the Equal Pay Act is a sick joke: there are virtually no male workers to compare with. So, women workers in the North will continue to take home miserably lower wages than their sisters in Britain. These same industries are hardest-hit by closures. Five shirt factories have closed in Derry in the past year. In another 90 are to be laid off - 86 of them women.

What can we do about it? Women workers in some places have shown the

way to win, using their industrial strength and being prepared to go all the way with it. The government will be quite happy to forget about us, as will many trade union officials and male workers, unless we are members of unions, active within them, and fighting for the right to work.

### Determined

Men will need to be reminded of our situation, but ours is not a completely separate struggle. We must refuse to accept all redundancies, whether for men or for women. We can do this by forming rank and file organisations within the unions determined not to let the union leaders sell jobs.

We must demand replacements for workers who retire or leave voluntarily. The running down of jobs is just one

more way to add to unemployment. And it is being widely used in the public sector at the moment. Again, it will be women, as mothers, who will suffer most from under-staffing in hospitals and schools. Thousands of skilled workers, nurses and teachers, have their skills wasted in the dole queue.

We must fight for proper child care facilities for working mothers (and fathers). There are no state-run nurseries in Northern Ireland, just one other way in which it has fallen behind Britain. We must refuse to accept second-class treatment and make sure there are no more victims like Alice-Smith, killed by the greed of capitalism.

RACHEL CARROLL





# the worker

Paper of the Socialist Workers Movement

1st Floor, 24 Talbot St., Dublin 1.

Supplement to issue No. 35 May '76

## The case against the Agreement

IT IS a wage cut. And they're not even trying too hard to convince us it's not. They expect us to be grateful that it's not a bigger cut.

The "pause" of two months means that we will have had a 2.8% increase to cover five months before the new increases begin. That's a time when prices are going up at 2% per month. Groups of workers coming later in the queue do worst. They're getting increases in the middle of 1976 calculated on the artificially pegged down cost of living index of 1975.

The wages of someone on £40 a week would rise by 16% in two phases. Take tax out of that and it's 10 or 12%. The real value of wages — the buying power — will drop by almost 20% because inflation is now running at over 7% a quarter — and accelerating.

THEN there's the famous "inability to pay" clause. Our union "leaders" were in such a hurry to complete the sell-out that they left this clause to be tacked on afterwards — as a kind of P.S. Well, this clause meant that tens of thousands of workers didn't get the terms of the last Agreement. And there can be no doubt that the bosses are aiming to widen this loophole in this Agreement.

THEN there's the next Budget to come, which the government will use to "claw back" some money that the government didn't figure on spending when they did their sums last time. It will, of course, be clawed back from us.

EQUAL PAY? Forget it. This Agreement will follow the previous ones in ensuring that equal pay

doesn't become any more than a pious hope on paper. It will tie the unions into a contract which gives the union bureaucrats a good excuse for not fighting for equal pay.

THERE'S just one argument and one purpose for the new Agreement. It will help the bosses and government in their efforts to stabilise their system and catch on to the coat tails of the boom which they hope is coming. Then, they hope, their economy can get back to the profit-rich era of 1973. Remember how good we all had it then? Like hell. A boom for their system is a boom for them. And to get into that situation they want US to tighten our belts yet again.

Our union bosses — because they have their comfortable niche within this system — want to help pull the economy up by its bootstraps. Our bootstraps. Our answer must be a loud NO!

Show it, mate, not with the price of bootstraps today.

### ... and what we need

WE CANNOT expect to convince our fellow workers to reject this deal without offering an alternative. One which presents a fighting way to protect our wages, jobs and living standards.

We must fight for across-the-board lump-sum increases with no strings.

We must insist that all claims are put in and fought for NOW. The disgraceful way in which the bureaucrats buried the £15 claims so as not to rock the Agreement applicart must be exposed, and the claims fought for.

We must demand that meetings are held to plan claims and prepare

a fight for them, and that all negotiations are under the control of the rank and file. Without gaining the support for these claims they cannot be won — or what is "won" will be only what the bosses want to give.

### Rank and file

National Wage Agreements have killed rank-and-file initiative; to begin to organise resistance to all the attacks facing the working class we have to get rid of them.

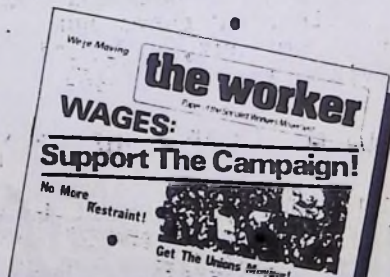
We must ensure that wage increases are not won at the expense of the lower paid, women workers or the unemployed. This

means fighting for a minimum wage, for full equal pay without strings, and for a 35 hour week without loss of pay to create employment.

These will not be won without a fight. And it's a fight we will have to force our union leaders into. This will take a strong rank and file organisation. Immediately, we would urge all workers to join in the Campaign Against Wage Restraint. The address of the secretary is on page 3 of THE WORKER.

IT'S THEIR CRISIS — DON'T LET THE UNION LEADERS MAKE US PAY FOR IT.

# Vote NO! step up the fight



Pin this up on your notice board.



## MARCH BAN HERALDS MORE REPRESSION

The Coalition government's ban on the Provisionals' 1916 commemoration (25th April) is yet one more sign that they have taken a deliberate decision to step up repression against all who oppose British rule and the power of the bosses.

Ever since Mr Cooney spewed out a rabble-raising speech in St Ann's church last month about terrorists, subversives and Marxist infiltrators, the screws have been turned tighter.

The attack on the IRSP was intended to drive one republican organisation off the scene simply by physical force and intimidation. Many of those arrested could not possibly have had anything to do with an alleged crime - and the Gardai knew that well.

Special Branch surveillance of members of all left-wing organisations has been stepped up. Members of the Socialist Workers' Movement have been trailed by these thugs.

There's talk now of a second Special Court to cram even more people through these phoney trials. And Cooney, who has threatened new, tougher laws, may be planning to bring in short-term detention.

With all of this, the government hopes to bring about a situation in which all forms of radical opposition will be made more difficult. They aim to make people afraid of "getting their nose dirty".

So, it becomes more difficult to organise militant opposition to unemployment or even public opposition to the proposed National Wage Agreement.

The warnings are clear enough. If the thin end of the wedge is driven in, they will get away with more. If we don't organise to stop it now we will find that the room left for all of us to move in has grown smaller.

It is urgent that anti-imperialist and working class organisations unite to fight repression. None can hope to do it on their own. We need a united campaign which can draw in broad support.

The Provos and the IRSP have been deaf to such calls in the past. We genuinely hope that they will heed them now. With the combined forces of several organisations we could set seriously about gathering support where it really matters - in the trade union movement. For it the organised working class which has the power to turn the tide - and if they don't their organisations could be next.

(22/4/76)

## NO NATIONAL WAGE AGREEMENT!

PHIL FLYNN, Deputy General Secretary of the Local Government Union, and Pat Glynn, Shop Steward at Unidare for AUEW-TASS, are the two main speakers at a meeting called by the Campaign Against Wage Restraint. Both will speak in a personal capacity at the meeting, which is to take place on Thursday, 29th April (8.00 pm), in the Ormond Hotel, Ormond Quay, Dublin.

In a leaflet advertising the meeting and opposing the proposed National Wage Agreement, the Campaign says: "they may call (it) all kinds of fancy names, we call it a wage cut, a drastic drop in living standards."

## MARCH AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

DUBLIN TRADES Council is to organise a "Work Not Dole" march. That was the decision taken at the monthly meeting held in April.

The Council adopted a resolution from the District Council of the ITGWU which also called for a mass lobby of the Dail. Every trade unionist in Dublin should start working to make the march a big success as soon as the date is known.

Unhappily, no organising committee was elected at the delegate meeting, so the responsibility falls back on the Executive. And they have got something of a reputation for being slow to move. It is in all our hands to make sure they don't let this initiative die.

## COME AND SEE US!

If you want to meet SWM members or buy books at the WORKER Book Service, call to 1st Floor, 24 Talbot Street, Dublin 1, at any of the following times:

TUESDAY: 7.00 pm - 9.30 pm.

THURSDAY: 7.00 pm. - 9.30 pm.

SATURDAY: 12.00 noon - 4.00 pm.