

the worker

FOR A WORKERS' REPUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

'Tighten your belt' — THE REAL MEANING OF NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

'THE ESSENCE of partnership is that the partners share a common interest. That is our position.' So says the Coalition government in its White Paper on the Economy (A National Partnership). That is our position too. And that's exactly why we think the government's proposals ought to be thrown back at them.

There is no common interest between workers, on the one hand, who only have what they have worked hard for, and bosses who live off investments, and politicians who colly voted themselves a 40 per cent wage rise last month, on the other. There is not even a remaining shred of common interest between workers and the Labour Party politicians who claim to represent them in government. They decided on a different kind of partnership a long time ago—one with the big business backers of Fine Gael.

Social Con-Trick

After much halabaloo—and a month later—the government has produced a vague, waffling document which is clear about only one thing: that the only part of the economy which can be controlled is domestic incomes. All the facts and statistics hardly add up anything more. The message is stated loud and clear in the opening paragraphs: There's less to go around lads, so you won't be getting as much.

There's more than an echo of the British 'social contract' there—which is more correctly described as the 'social con-trick'. That was designed to hold wages down and tie the hands of the unions. And the Lorry drivers blasted a hole in it.

When it comes to considering policy on incomes the government mentions the proposal of the Central Bank for automatic increases in line with the cost of living index. That would mean increases in wages after the price rises have occurred. It would mean increases on an index which, as we showed last month in 'The Worker', under-estimates the real rise in the cost of living for workers by anything up to a half. So, the government, having considered that proposal, then rejects it, as

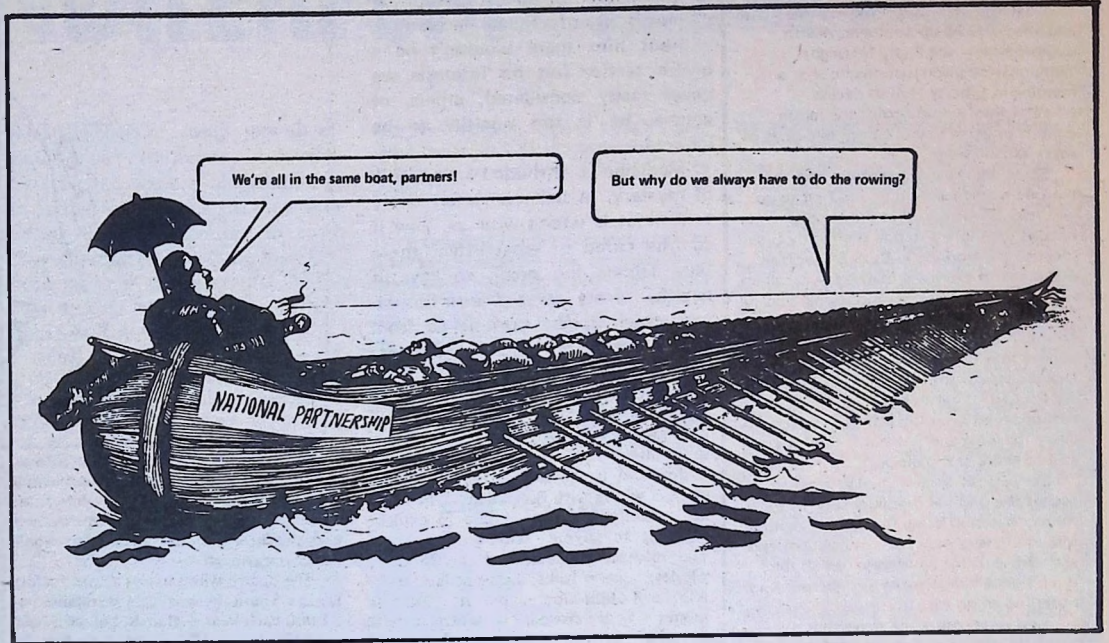
Birmingham Bombs

IT IS impossible to find any justification for the bombings in Birmingham in the context of the struggle against British Army repression in the North — if indeed they were carried out as part of that struggle.

We support that struggle, which is against the British state and the British ruling class, not against the people of Britain, and least of all, the workers of Britain. Bombings of this kind will only increase working class support for the British ruling class's efforts to crush the resistance in the North. They will make it more difficult for socialists and Irish workers in Britain to convince British workers that it is in their interests to see British imperialism defeated in Ireland.

The bombings will increase the determination of the British government to resolve the Northern crisis by force. We all suffer as a consequence of this action.

Even if the Provisionals did not carry out this bombing their commitment to a campaign on the mainland of Britain would lead to the same kind of result. Rank-and-file Provisionals should press for an immediate end to the campaign.



being too much!

When the government is considering other increases apart from wages and salaries it says these must be a matter of self-discipline. When's the last time you noticed Michael Smurfit or Paddy McGrath exercising self-discipline? Or the government itself, for that matter? What it really means is that profits, rents and dividends are free to go up, while wages are held down. And we have heard that tune somewhere before.

You might think the present crisis would have shocked the trade union leaders into some sort of action. But no: when they met at the end of November to discuss social and economic policy, they might as well have handed each other their prepared scripts and gone home again. Some were talking about social welfare payments, other about foreign borrowing, and none about direct action to defend jobs and living standards.

Faced with that kind of 'opposition' the government should have no trouble building their partnership. Indeed, they've got it already—with the union leaders generally unwilling to rock the boat which we are rowing.

Rank and File

Once again, we have to repeat the message: it's up to the rank and file. We do have it in our power to defend ourselves against the bosses' attacks, and not only that, but make some real gains. We won't do it if we don't learn quickly the need for unity and solidarity. We won't do it if we don't see that the government has made wages into a political issue, and we have to fight them politically using our industrial strength to force big increases on wages, to force them to take over factories which threaten to close and, above all, to block any attempt to tie the hands of the unions.

Assassinations ARMY AIDS LOYALISTS

MANY PEOPLE still seem to believe that the British Army could prevent the sectarian assassinations — and fly in the face of all the evidence of the past five years. They say the British Army has to be "given a chance". But what that usually means is given the chance for them and the RUC to operate freely in the Catholic areas. And that in turn means that the people who live in those areas have got to hand over the IRA whose activities prevent the "security forces" offering protection.

This is rubbish. The British Army has stood by while the murders take place — and they have done more. At times they have been directly involved in the killing themselves. They will do anything to weaken the determination of the anti-unionist population to resist — "morality is no problem for them.

The very fact that the British Army is in Ireland at all is a support to the right-wing extremist thugs who are mainly responsible for the assassinations. For they believe that they are fighting to "keep Ulster British". The Army's presence encourages them to assume that "their" statelet, and their privileges, which are based on sectarian divisions, can exist for ever.

BULLET

The balance-sheet of the killings shows a far greater number of Catholics killed than Protestants, and the British Army makes it quite impossible for those under attack to protect themselves. Anyone found with a gun, or even just a bullet, is liable to be jailed for up to ten

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INDUSTRIAL REPORTS ON ARMSTRONGS, SMITH'S (Wexford), BRUNO (Galway), RUMBACH (Waterford)

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years. In effect, the "crime" is one of being against imperialism — the loyalists have consistently had more lenient treatment in the courts, and at the hands of the troops.

DIVISIONS

The British Army is the tool of the tiny group of people in Britain who own and control the wealth there — and most of the wealth in the North. They have thrived on sectarian divisions between workers. It is these sectarian divisions — not some few twisted minds — which are behind the killings.

The British Army is maintaining these divisions at the wish of British big business. They are the problem. They could never be any part of the solution.

SHORT-TIME AT BUSH

WORKERS in Bush-Murphy, Santry, Dublin, were faced with 100 redundancies last month. Management tried to blame absenteeism but the store in Santry is filled with unsold televisions and cheaper models are reaching Irish shops, imported direct from Britain. With soaring inflation, feeding a family is difficult enough — buying a telly is out of the question.

Irish Transport Union bureaucrats negotiated for days with the management and finally came up with a hard-won compromise — the 7-day fortnight. Workers were given just one hour at a meeting in Liberty Hall to decide whether they would accept the redundancies or agree to work only two days of every second week.

Some argued that part-time and married women should be the first to go. The part-timers said that they badly needed the money to pay the family bills. Most of the workers in Bush are women and many of them are married — for them work is a necessity not an optional luxury.

Workers finally accepted the 7-day fortnight by a majority of 70 but some believe that this is only a stop-gap measure. One woman at the meeting told THE WORKER: "There's bound to be redundancies after Christmas. We come in every morning and wonder if our jobs will still be there at 5 o'clock."

Some Bush workers had wanted to accept the original redundancies for the money it would bring them. This attitude makes life very easy for management and very difficult for workers when all the redundancy pay is spent and there is no other job to go to.

And now comes the news that Brownlee Bros., makers of Ferguson television, are to sack 45 workers. However they are now seeking contact with others in the trade. Rory Cowan, the would-be radical Branch Secretary of the I.T.G.W.U. No. 13 Branch which represents these workers has done nothing to encourage this kind of link-up which is now vital.

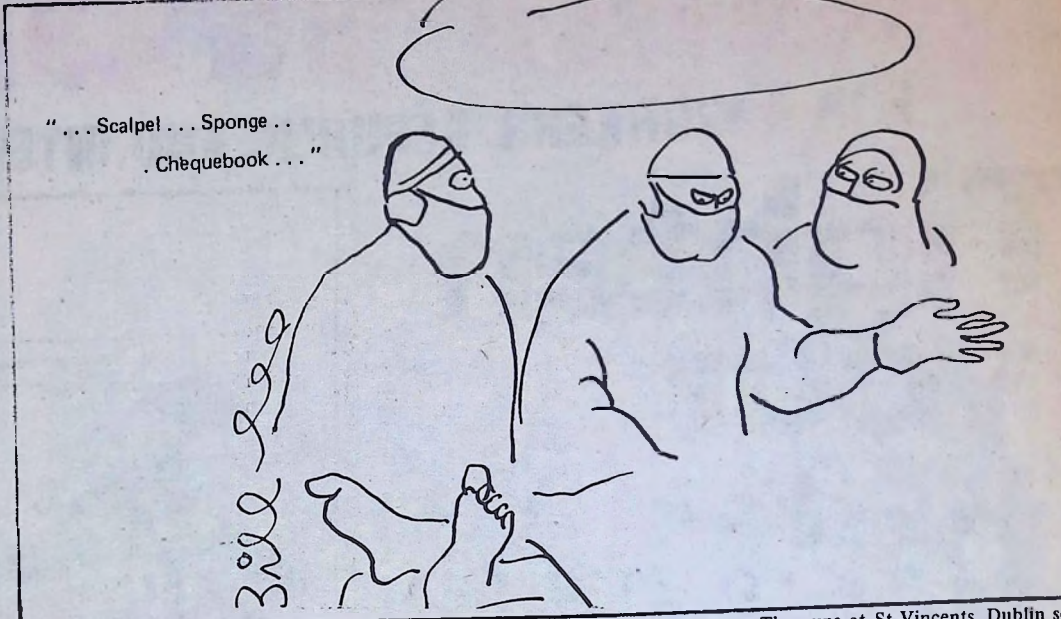
THE PROFITS OF SICKNESS

"THE ONLY person who doesn't have a say in the Health Service, is the patient", said one Dublin doctor "he's powerless". In the GP's surgery in the clinic, in the hospital, the patient is an unfortunate necessity — without him there wouldn't be a health service but his interests are never really considered, unless, of course, he is too wealthy to be ignored.

Medicine is shrouded in an aura of mystery. In sickness we are rarely told what is wrong with us, how it can be cured or what effect those blue tablets are going to have; in health, we are never given information which might prevent us from ending up in the clinic in the first place.

A recent article in the 'Irish Medical Times', stated that the average amount of time given by a doctor to a patient, was three minutes. At the end of that time it is doubtful if the doctor himself knows what is wrong with his patient; if he does, he certainly hasn't any time to explain anything to anyone. Why, so little time? The medical profession in the 26 Cos., whatever else it lacks, does not lack staff. As the Dublin doctor put it: "Time is money. Each patient is worth a few pounds."

One doctor in the South East, rushing to make a record number of calls, ran into a flat, looking for a patient whom he knew to be an old woman. Finding an old couple in bed, he pulled out a syringe and plunged it into the woman's arm, only then to realise that he had come to the wrong address.



Some doctors are doing the jobs of nurses — putting on dressings for example — just to get the patients' fees, others are demanding that patients come to them each week when one decent visit would have been enough.

The doctor who services a large factory in the South East is paid a retainer of £2,000 each year — that is, before he sees a single patient. One worker visited him, three times with a bronchial illness but had to pay to see a local GP before he got adequate treatment.

In the last few weeks a leading Irish gynaecologist has condemned doctors for believing that the solution to everything was the anti-biotic. Drug companies are only interested in increasing their profits.

They are continually producing new products and few of these can be sold direct to the general public. So doctors get a barrage of mail advertising bigger and better pills. All that patients are allowed to know is that drugs have something to do with getting better. Leaving the clinic with a fistful of tablets is leaving it with some sort of hope of recovery. As the Dublin doctor put it: "You need to give tablets to have any kind of reputation. The drug companies have you beat."

The cost of drugs varies enormously and many chemists sell them at prices well above those recommended by the drug companies. Shrewd doctors, well into the sickness industry can set up their own chemist shop across the road and make a double profit out of unsuspecting patients. Many patients who do genuinely need the drugs prescribed, cannot afford to buy them. One fact not commonly advertised, is that no family need pay more than £3 each month for drugs — any amount over that can be automatically refunded.

If Brendan Corish's recent Health Scheme had not been sabotaged by Irish doctors, everyone would have been entitled to free hospital treatment. Free hospital treatment is a long way from a free comprehensive National Health Service — but it would have been a start. Why was the scheme sabotaged. Well, no amount of public money could compensate these businessmen for the fees they can suck out of hospital patients.

In 1972, Frskine Childers introduced the choice of doctor scheme — patients entitled to Medical Cards could decide which doctor they would have. Irish doctors agreed to this scheme only after a series of money-grabbing negotiations, during the course of which they managed to treble their salaries.

MEDICAL UNION

Two powerful bodies serve the interests of Irish doctors — and serve them a great deal better than any Trade Union serves the interests of workers. The Irish Medical Association was initially part of the British Medical Association and was led by a number of Conservative and well connected Dublin doctors. The Medical Union was set up by a group of doctors outside Dublin who felt that their financial interests could be better looked after. Now there is very little difference between the two, both are determined to screw the maximum amount of money out of the people who have no choice but to use their service.

The M.U. and the I.M.A. joined forces to defeat the free hospitalisation scheme. Every hospital gives Medical Consultants the right to use its facilities for his own private practice. Under the present system a Consultant is given a fee for every Medical Card Patient he sees and, of course, private patients pay him out of their own pockets. The Consultant's own basic salary isn't enormous but hospital fees can bring it up to between £20,000 and £25,000 a year. That is the kind of money Consultants want before they will agree to free hospitalisation.

Although many Irish hospitals are run by voluntary bodies, more and more are coming under state control. In run-run establishments, it is not uncommon for the ward sister to be a nun of several years standing who has herself had no medical training.

The nuns at St Vincents, Dublin sold their old hospital in St Stephen's Green for a sum of millions and with the help of a few more from the government, built a brand new establishment. A lot of government money was spent on equipping the new hospital for public patients. The nuns then built a little private hospital onto the main block and began to use public facilities for private patients, themselves making a nice profit. They also won a court case to prove that they, and not the government, were the rightful owners of the hospital.

But for all the details about the Irish Health Service and some of them are pretty sordid — one central point remains: illness, — like wealth and power, are not evenly distributed. Bad housing conditions, poor food, bad working conditions all add up to one thing — bad health. No information is available about the link between illness and living conditions in the 26 counties. Most doctors aren't interested anyway. Hospitals and clinics are full of the casualties of capitalism.

ILLNESS BREEDS

In any society there would be illness but illness breeds in conditions of want; illness breeds in damp, overcrowded houses, in air fouled by pollution, in families deprived of good, nourishing food. When Irish Capitalism has made you physically sick, it then provides its own very special answer — expensive hospitals, expensive drugs and expensive doctors.

The patient may be powerless but the worker is not. Trade Unionists must fight for a free, comprehensive National Health Service. They must fight for the nationalisation of the drug industry under workers control — its profits must be ploughed back into medical research not used to line the pockets of the wealthy and probably healthy. Capitalism makes dying and suffering an extremely expensive experience and a very profitable business. We live in a sick society; we must fight now for a healthy one.

SHEILA DUNCAN

APOLOGY

THE WORKER owes Michael Collins, General Manager of Clover Meats, an apology. We said in our last issue that it was he who saw Martin Hannigan selling 'An Phoblacht' in a pub just before Martin was sacked. Well, Michael Collins is a fine upstanding kind of a man, and he doesn't touch a drop. It was somebody else in the management who saw Martin selling the paper. Mind you, if Collins had seen him the result would not have been any different. For he is also a fine upstanding kind of a Fine Gael supporter.

PICKETLINE

'THE WORKER' has reported before on the toughening up of management attitudes in Cantrell & Cochrane, Dublin. During October 18 workers were sacked for taking unofficial action. They organised a protest picket and then an unofficial picket which was supported by 50 C & C workers. A court injunction was served which led to the men deciding to take off the unofficial picket.

On the return to work, the workers who supported the picket were warned by a slip in their wage packets that if they took unofficial action again they would be subject to instant dismissal. The management then proceeded to sack six of the militants from the 50 and sacked them. Thinking of the livelihoods of their fellow workers because of threat of sacking and the weapon of the state court injunctions, they decided to put on a protest picket — that is, not asking other workers to stay out.

However at a general meeting in Liberty Hall a motion, not even for strike action but for negotiations with management for their re-instatement was defeated by a handful of votes. Through frustration and the let-down by a section of their brothers the 18 men decided to accept the sackings. The other 6 decided to keep up their protest picket, which is going on at the time of going to press.

But what now — where do they go from here? What chance is there that the people who supported the strikers in vote and on the picket could influence their fellow workers to pull out the stops for another fight? If so, fair enough. But if not, the only way is for militants still inside to fight for positions as shop stewards and on the Shops Committee within the factory, to get rid of pro-management shop stewards and committee members who had a big influence on the workers who did not support their brothers. This situation has shown a victory for management in getting rid of some of the militants. All C & C workers could face a productivity deal next or need support if sacked. The only way for a victory over management is that worker stand by worker. That is what Trade Unionism is all about.

IN OCTOBER, workers at Gateaux Cakes in Finglas put an unofficial picket on the gate which was supported by all the

strikers told THE WORKER that they were fed up waiting for the results of negotiations on the bonus scheme between union and management. Negotiations had been dragging on for six months since the Gateaux workers struck earlier this year. They described the bonus as antiquated and it had last been raised in 1954. The basic rate for bakers was £29 a week and the average bonus earnings were £2-£3 a week. Semi-skilled workers were in fact coming out with the same money as the bakers.

Gateaux workers struck twice already this year. They were then looking for 12½% bonus but since they were waiting so long on the negotiations they increased the demand to 20%. This would apply to all general workers. The strike was sparked off when the Chairman of the Union branch (the Bakers Union) had discussions with management and didn't bother to see the workers afterwards.

Work was resumed and negotiations began. Rather than pay the claim Gateaux was prepared to shut down that large factory and all it means to Finglas. Protective notice was issued to all workers and one boss said he was prepared to let the cakes rot. But the workers knew this was only a threat and eventually the general workers got 15% bonus and the bakers more.

WHEN is a lockout not a lockout? Seventy workers, most of them women, from the candlemaking firm of Rathbomes, East Wall, Dublin, have been locked out since the last week of October. The boss says they are not locked out, but you figure it:

They had been working to rule previous to the dispute in an attempt to get rid of piece-work and establish a decent basic rate. In October they were put on a week's protective notice AND one hour's notice. Turning in for work one day they were offered their cards which they refused to take. They were next told that their cards were in the Labour. They weren't.

They've been out since. At time of printing the lock out is in its fifth week and one of the women on picket could not see it being resolved before Christmas. Meanwhile, management still claims there's no lockout, the workers get no

Labour money and no strike pay. Any offers of assistance should go through their union, the Marine, Port and General Workers Union.

THE month-long strike by Northern lorry drivers, which ended in mid-November, was one of the best organised and most militant unofficial strikes yet seen in the North. The men were striking for a basic £40 for 40 hours for drivers' helpers and up to £53 for drivers themselves.

The strike was marked by a number of incidents. In the early days a picketer, George Hamilton, was killed by a scab lorry driver at Larne harbour. Dockers in Larne and Belfast blocked cargoes in solidarity with the lorry men. According to one of the strike leaders, British Army drivers used lorries hired from Northern Ireland carriers — a government owned firm — to scab on the strikers.

As the solidarity was maintained and the men resisted attempts by ATGWU officials to sell them short, right-wing Unionists took a hand in trying to smash the strike. Members of Craig's Vanguard Party alleged that the strike was a Republican plot to destroy the Northern Ireland economy, in the hope that this would divide the men on sectarian grounds.

The final success of the strike shows that the rank and file have the power to push their demands through against the hostility of the bosses, politicians and army, and in spite of the weak-kneed officials who dithered between tacit support and direct sabotage of the Strike Committee's efforts.

The strike also shows that when workers pursue their own class interests religious divisions are pushed to the background. The strike, in which 'loyalist' dockers in Larne and Belfast blockaded British imports came at a time when Palsley was calling — without success — for a boycott on Irish goods.

Now that they have tested and proven their own strength, the rank and file must retain organised structures — shop stewards' committees involving all sections of the transport industry. Links must also be made with the transport workers in Britain and the South where the proposed contact with the Dublin Shop Stewards Committee needs to be pursued.

Unidare: CALLING THE BLUFF

WORKERS in Transformers, part of the Unidare Complex in Finglas, Dublin, were threatened with a three-day week in late October when they worked a go-slow. They had decided on the go-slow action because of dissatisfaction with the incentive bonus scheme, which provided a difference of around 30p for working on transformers far bigger than the next size down. Retaliation came from the Factory Superintendent, Tommy Ryan, who informed the men that a three-day week was beginning the following Monday. At the same time other Transformer workers were offered overtime. But they showed solidarity by refusing it. The workers also found out that the Order Book was full.

In spite of this, welders who handle work from Transformers were the next to be threatened with the short week. The Works Committee had a meeting with higher management, who had nothing to do with the three-day week, which was now seen to be purely a local management bluff. Travers and higher management said they would conduct an enquiry into the whole thing. No shorter week occurred and the workers received an increased bonus of about £1.50 for working on the big transformers.

package

THE LATEST offer by the company on the claim lodged in May was accepted by workers throughout the Unidare site. The original claim was for £1 increase on the basic and 25% shift allowance. Two previous offers were rejected at the meetings in Liberty Hall. So this time Arthur Kelly (Branch Secretary No. 14 Branch, ITGWU) and the Works Committee made sure the latest offer would get passed. They brought the ballot boxes on to the job. There was also about £25 back money on offer, so many jumped at that. But what they took was only 80p per week on the basic and 25% shift allowance for the night shift only. All shift increases are to be paid bit by bit, and most of the full increases won't come until next June or July. The morning shift gets nothing until January 1976 and then it will be less than a penny in the pound.

But along with voting on the offers, this ballot was presented as a package which included sinister changes in the Site Agreement and — most dangerous of all — a licence to proceed with negotiating a Productivity Deal.

The new Agreement now contains a redundancy Procedure clause which means that already the union shows its willingness to negotiate if the highly profitable Unidare Company ever decide to throw some

of us out — and a Bonus Disputes Clause, which states that while we dispute a bonus arrangement we must continue to work that arrangement at 80 PI (Performance Index).

sit-in

In another Unidare factory, Anodising, there was a sit-in, also in October, to protect the rights of the shop steward. The shop steward was dealing with a safety hazard in the factory from which a row broke out between him and a foreman, who told the shop steward that he (the foreman) would set the time and place for the men to see him. Also a new bonus scheme is causing endless trouble for the workers there. First of all, eight part-time women were laid off to pay for the scheme and then the workers were given no choice but to accept that bonus scheme proposed by management. Some felt they would do badly out of it, but when one section (the polishers) actually did very well, management tried to cut down their earnings. They were told the quality was bad, then they were told they would have to polish 6 extra of a certain type of handle, per hour. They sat in the canteen and their bonus rate was left alone.

At the beginning of November big discrepancies in bonus payments to the shift workers led to a four-hour sit-in in the canteen. The workers only wanted to see the Time and Motion expert, who was in the factory at that moment, but Brendan McCabe, the Factory Superintendent, refused and actually led the expert past the canteen and out of the factory. He then said pay would be stopped. The head shop steward sent down word to return to work, which was ignored. When he himself arrived he persuaded the workers to go back. Then the management assured the shop steward that the bonus discrepancies would be dealt with immediately and pay for the time out was secured.

Two weeks later these discrepancies were not fixed up and similar ones have occurred since. Only a few days after the stoppage, Arthur Kelly the ITGWU Branch Secretary, sent a letter to management saying the union would not look for payment for future unofficial stoppages. A meeting for Anodising workers was called in Liberty Hall at which the militants were warned and the workers, who strongly defended their actions, were urged to follow the procedures.

At SCA another Unidare factory, the shop steward organised a stoppage over excessive fumes. He also called in a Factory Inspector. The Wire and Cable section stopped work one night because of the cold. In this factory the windows are broken. The cold at night also caused a walk-out last October at Tinsley Wire.

UNIDARE WORKER

A Suitable Case for Treatment

WHATEVER teeth R.T.E. may have had have been well and truly knocked out by now. Top and bottom, everything from The News to Outlook has had a Ministerial thump. Eoghan Harris getting the knock from "7 Days" last month merely confirmed the official position: that we are to see and hear nothing that conflicts with Government policy.

Harris's offence was to direct a "7 Days" feature on interment shortly after the burning of Long Kesh. After a tut-tut from the RTE Authority and the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, the management of RTE rapped a couple of people over the knuckles and shifted Harris. "7 Days" must be punch-drunk by now, having been on the receiving end of governmental attacks since it began.

Governmental interference in radio and T.V. broadcasting has a long history. At times it simply amounts to an angry phone call, and then again, programmes have been banned outright. A classic example was "Home Truths", the consumer advice series, which was first forced



to tone down its comments (earning itself the title "Half Truths" among R.T.E. staff) and which was eventually taken off altogether. Another, somewhat ironic, example was the Outlook programme on biased reporting, made by Father O'Herlihy, which never reached the screen.

Since the violence in the North came out into the open over the past few years government control has become far more direct. While there has never been any real danger of anything "subversive" coming out of the Donnybrook studios all departments of RTE have been walking on eggshells in case they should run foul of

MORE JOBS LOST IN WATERFORD

WATERFORD'S rising record of redundancies continues. Following close on the heels of the announcement from Goodbody's that they were closing their Jute factory in early December and sacking more than 400 workers, came the news that ACEC were sacking 42 workers with effect from mid-November.

ACEC had previously tried to lay off 21 workers in September but that had been beaten. An inter-Union Committee, representing the five unions on the job, was set up but that has now ceased to function. If it was still meeting the confusion which arose around the second batch of lay-offs could have been avoided. The Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union, representing half of those due to be made redundant, decided on strike action — and the I.T.G.W.U., representing the other half — was against this action.

ACEC have been looking for ways to "trim" their work force for some time. They are simply using the general mood of crisis as a convenient time to do this. If they are not willing to withdraw the redundancy notices, the action will have to be taken further. ACEC products — four-fifths of which go to ESB — must be blacked, and the fight taken up along

with ESB workers, to have ACEC nationalised under the ESB but with much more democratic control over the job by the workers.

At Goodbody's, the threatened closure came as no surprise; the company have closed down already jute processing plants elsewhere. But insult was added to injury when Goodbody's made it clear they were going to pay the minimum compensation. The workers, members of the ITGWU are demanding 3 week's pay for each year's service on top of the legally required minimum. Goodbody's replied with an offer of a ridiculous £10 per year.

EMBARGO

To press their demand, Goodbody's workers have refused to allow anything to leave the factory — neither the jute products they are still producing, nor the £1 million worth of machinery belonging to Youghal Carpets and Clover Meats which is ware-housed there.

John Carroll, the union's Vice-President who has recently been making radical noises, like calling for "state co-operatives" to beat redundancy, showed his true colours when he wrote to the workers asking them to lift the embargo on goods

going out. The workers gave him his reply at a mass meeting: a unanimous NO. They have also replied to the management's threat of earlier sackings: they will sit in.

Meanwhile, the slow-moving Waterford Council of Trade Unions has finally set up a Redundancy Committee to offer assistance to those fighting redundancy. The decision to do so came from an open meeting in October called by the Trades Council. At that meeting, attended by 80 or 90 local trade unionists there were many criticisms of the trade union leader's vote on redundancies. A resolution sent from the Waterford Council of Trade Unions to the I.C.T.U. two years ago urging a special conference on redundancies had been forgotten. Workers were being asked to pay for the bosses' problems — and not only by the bosses, but by the union leaders too.

The Redundancy Committee must get the support of all Waterford workers, almost any of whom could face the sack next, and when further redundancies are threatened, or when the disputes at Goodbody's and ACEC escalate, organise further public meetings to draw all the workers in the city into the fight against the scourge of redundancy and unemployment.

your fathers that you are now entitled to free milk and tell them to go down to the Manpower Service and they will get them jobs". Well I have news for that nun, a representative of the National Manpower Service was at that meeting and never uttered as much as one word.

When the Mayor was asked by one trade unionist "Could this meeting come up with any other solution to redundancies other than the very dim prospect of new industries coming to Waterford?" he replied "No, that would be outside the scope of this meeting" and he was right: what could three employers and a few Civil Servants do about redundancies? The answer is nothing: the whole meeting was a farce and futile and as the Mayor put it a "good exercise in public relations". It certainly was for him and three TD's but not for the 400 workers in Goodbody's nor the 130 workers in the Munster Chipboard who have been made redundant in the past two months.

LATE NEWS: It has now been announced that Wellworthy's, which was going to solve Waterford's unemployment problem at a stroke, will be employing a maximum of 120, not 1000. The announcement stated that this was because of objections from the unions at the British factory. THE WORKER is trying to find out exactly what was said by the British unions.

Did McCarthy of the I.D.A. know there was a threat to the promised jobs at Wellworthy's at the time of the meeting reported above? Was he afraid to say it?

"A GOOD EXERCISE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS"

D. POWER

THIS is how the mayor of Waterford Joe Cummings (Fianna Fail) described a meeting held during November which he chaired, of Trade Unionists, local TD's, President of the Chamber of Commerce and the Regional Chairman of the IDA. A list of redundancies was read out and all three TDs shook their heads in true diplomatic fashion in an assumed air of pity. It was pointed out to the meeting that within the past few months 546 jobs were lost in Waterford city through redundancies.

Mr. McCarthy of the IDA replied that they expect 800 new jobs to be created next year and that this would absorb these redundant workers to which the Mayor replied "Well, that is an optimistic note anyway" to which all three TD's nodded their heads in true diplomatic fashion. While Mr. McCarthy likes to project the possibility of new jobs he did not seem very anxious to project the possibility of more redundancies which have occurred since that very meeting.

Mr. McCarthy also seemed to talk about a static work force: he did not consider the several hundred school leavers that we have in Waterford each year: where are these people going to get jobs? When a shop steward from

Goodbody's Jute Factory which has closed down making 400 workers redundant within the past few weeks, made a comment that it seemed to him that our TDs were not doing enough to bring new industry to Waterford, Mr. Eddie Collins, a Fine Gael TD, opened his mouth in true diplomatic fashion and said: "There is nothing I wouldn't do for Waterford". The same Mr. Collins is the owner of a local meat factory and he didn't hesitate to make his workers redundant. These were the only words spoken by any of the three TD's throughout the whole of the meeting.

SHOWER

It seemed ludicrous to me that these three men, all of them employers who would not hesitate to make their own workers redundant, would sit at a meeting to try and solve the redundancy situation. A redundant Jute Factory worker told me how a nun in the Presentation Convent, which his 12-year-old daughter attends, asked the class "Hands up all girls whose fathers worked in the Jute factory". A shower of hands went up and the nun replied in all wisdom and full knowledge of the capitalist system "Go home and tell

Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act.

Under this section, RTE has been prohibited from broadcasting anything which might promote the aims of "an illegal organisation". Exactly what would be "promoting" those aims is left to the discretion of the Minister for P & T. It is this vagueness which causes (and is meant to cause) unease among the RTE staff.

For instance, they know that they must not broadcast Republican-type records on radio, nor interview spokesmen from the you-know-what, but other than that they only learn that they have disobeyed Section 31 when they get the shove, as in Harris's case.

So, the censorship of RTE seldom has to be done directly. It is achieved far more effectively by thumping anyone who steps over the invisible line drawn by Section 31. In this way, RTE producers and journalists are very, very careful to censor themselves. This choice they have — between self-censorship and risking their jobs — is known as Freedom of the Press.

The Minister doing the thumping at

the moment is Conor Cruise O'Brien who has been lashing out in all directions lately. His hysterical insistence that anyone who questions government policy is either a "subversive" or a fool, has ruffled some liberal feathers and led to a growing body of opinion that the man has, in his own quiet way, cracked.

For he HAS been under a strain over the past couple of years. Instead of just ensuring that our letters arrive on time — which is his job as Minister for P & T, — he has been hopping from one department to another, like a mini-Kissinger, giving his verdict on everything from the Irish language to Defence, and above all — the North.

Unlike the other members of the Government, O'Brien is not content to merely repress those who act against his views on this question, but — like an intellectual boot-boy, stomps on all those who dare to even question his position. Having put all his eggs in the power-sharing basket and supported, in its name, internment in the North and encouraged and

helped to carry out repression in the South, he has seen that basket tip over and now like a schoolmaster who sees his pupils getting out of control — his hysteria grows worse daily.

Despite his distressing condition O'Brien is still functioning in the interests of a "satisfactory" solution to the national question. Satisfactory, that is, to his class. And his position is safe from the erstwhile liberals whose outrage is ineffectual and irrelevant. But he is still reachable by those prepared to take action.

And the only ones in a position to take effective action against a member of the ruling class are — as ever — workers. There are three unions involved in RTE. It is up to those members of the W.U.I., I.T.G.W.U., and N.U.J. to arrange suitable treatment for this pathetic and dangerous case.

GENE KERRIGAN



Loyalist Return?

MIKE MILLER

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... of the "power in May, the British all but abandoned find a compromise in to the northern power has been the military chiefs ng on a renewed error against the ction of the work-

... ion for the Con- ns consists of a rt to suppress all the British rulers oclaim their faith onvention to find tion", they know one else that the loyalists will win y and use their nd the restoration ndancy. Although Labour leaders o return to Stor- erated, they have d can do nothing, in one form or

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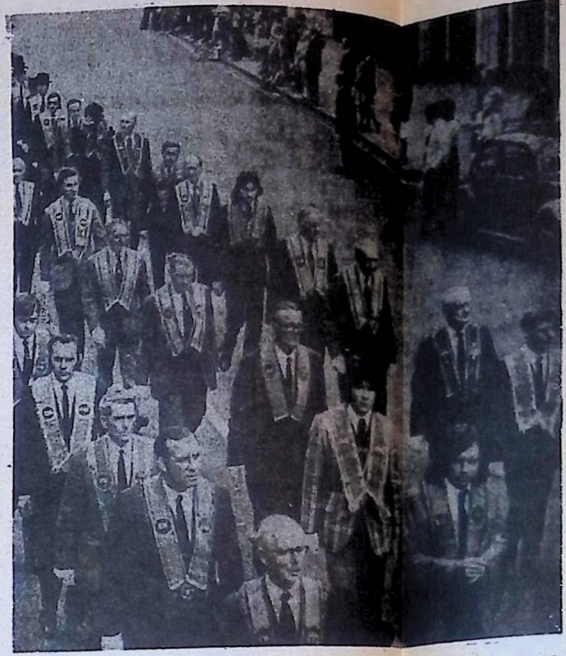
... nt loyalist assass- n was gaining the Loyalist ing- known killers, om Long Kesh. acks on Catholic British regime in g all anti-Union- e names of the n. It is known A and UVF men instructions from t nothing is being n.

... me, the staunchly d RUC are being loyalist para-mili- s have instructed o join, and applic- ership have rock- British are con- and training ultra- se ground is being e "Ulsterisation" would enable the play a less direct the forces of a ont, while British uld keep its grip the 6 Counties.

The Southern ruling class too has capitulated to the "inevitability" of some sort of loyalist take-over. Under the ideological leadership of Conor Cruise O'Brien they are trying to extricate themselves from any responsibility for, or involvement in, the deepening Northern crisis. Yet they are totally committed to destroying resistance to such a loyalist take-over, arguing that the continuing resistance is actually an encouragement to the Loyalists. The physical repression by the Southern state of those directly or indirectly involved in the Northern struggle is actually making it easier for the right-wing extremists to get their way.

RULERS

The British ruling class is prepared to tolerate a return of the old ascendancy set-up — with a token Catholic presence — because of the deepening economic crisis at home. Because of this the British rulers cannot allow themselves to get drawn in to a war against the reactionaries here. They are the protectors of British big business interests in the North. Their return to power would also help prevent the emergence of any independent Protestant working class struggle on the economic



Above: The British Army in action in a Catholic area and Loyalists on the march.

level, "while living standards are slashed.

Already the loyalist working class "radicalism" has been seen as a complete sham. There is total confusion among the UDA and UVF on political matters. While shunning the "fur coat brigade" they have not been able to offer any significant alternative to the workers. Nor will they ever do so, as long as they remain tied to

unionism, which means capitalism and imperialism.

The attempted political intervention by the UVF's Volunteer Political Party was short-lived. After a near 50-50 vote in the army council on the question of a resumption of open warfare, the UVF announced it would not stand in the convention election. Nor is it likely that the UDA will intervene. The UDA and UVF

remain the shock-troops of ultra right wing reaction.

The key to the success of the British-Loyalist strategy is the defeat of the anti-imperialist struggle. So far that has not succeeded. The resurgence in recent months shows there is still a willingness and an ability to fight. But if that fight is to be successful, it has to be properly organised and politically directed.

Below: Anti-Internment demonstrators confront the troops.

INTERNMENT: NEED FOR UNITED FRONT

INTERNMENT has once again exploded in the face of the British government and the British Army. First, the internees in Long Kesh burnt their concentration camp almost to the ground, and then, a group of internees broke out, only for one to be murdered by the British Army and the rest re-captured.

These events were the trigger for the largest demonstrations and meetings against British repression in the North for some time. The issue of internment has come right back into the centre of the political mess created by British Imperialism in the North. Whatever the Gardiner Committee, which will report shortly to the British government on alternative methods of beating down the resistance, recommends, it cannot change that.

As in previous years at this time, the authorities in the North may release a few internees, but internment could still become the issue on which a mass movement is built up within the Catholic section of the working class which, with the right politics and leadership, could force not only an end to repression, but the withdrawal of the British Army — and more. And that movement will have to be built essentially among the Catholic workers — the Loyalist opposition to internment remains limited and sectarian, and could be much more easily bought off.

Despite the magnificent response to the call for action by the Belfast United Workers and the Derry Friends and Relatives of the Internees, it is still a fact that it has taken action by the internees themselves to spark off the mass response. Between the burning of Long Kesh and the shooting of Volunteer Coney, there was no mass action in any part of the Six Counties. This must not be allowed to happen again!

The internees have given enough — it is the political responsibility of those of us outside fighting imperialism and capitalism to take up the task of developing a movement whose programme would enable the building of links between those fighting repression in Belfast and Derry, then throughout the Six Counties and ultimately Ireland as a whole.

At the moment, the groups in Derry and Belfast which have been behind the demonstrations are not accountable to the people who actually come out on the streets. In Derry, for example, workers have been occasionally called on to take strike action by a group (Friends and Relatives of the Internees) who, whatever their good intentions are unable or unwilling to bring workers directly into the drawing up of a campaign of action.

As a result, we have both Bishop Daly and the Derry Trades Council claiming that this group was taking over the functions of a trade union. Because the Derry workers have had no part in deciding when they will come out, or who should lead their demonstrations, it was only a matter of time before demoralisation crept in to undermine their confidence.

UNITY

This is precisely what the authorities are depending on to destroy any possibility of sustained and united action by the Catholic workers. British policy has for a long time been aimed at undermining any unity among Catholic workers ready to fight repression and it now depends on the collapse of resistance to the constant terror of the British Army, the assassination campaign of the loyalist murder gangs, that would prepare the way to have the RUC readmitted to Catholic areas as 'protectors'. On that basis, and on the basis of the hoped-for defeat of the IRA, the way would be open for



power-sharing between Craig, Paisley, West and Co., on the one hand, and Fitt, Hume, etc. on the other.

If the 'moderates' or worse still the Bishops keep the initiative among the Catholic population, then the authorities will have won half the battle in preparing for that goal. In Derry, some workers who were obviously frustrated at seeing thousands of their comrades marching behind Bishop Daly singing 'Hail, Queen of Heaven' put a resolution to the Derry Trades Council asking the Northern Committee of the ICTU to initiate a campaign against internment through the ICTU and the British TUC. The trouble was the resolution did not commit anyone to doing anything. It was quickly passed — and could be as quickly forgotten.

The union branch which passed the resolution (No. 1, A.U.E.W.) have now called for a one-day strike against internment and are looking for support from other trade unionists. This is certainly the right kind of lead, but the danger is that if it is properly prepared and followed up, it will simply turn out to be one more demonstration without a perspective of putting the unity and strength of those workers ready to fight repression on a permanent basis.

Because the trade union leadership will resist every attempt within branches to press them to do anything, the

Socialist Workers Movement believes it is now more urgent than ever to build a United Front of working class and anti-imperialist organisations against repression which can, through local committees draw trade unionists into the centre of the struggle. The lead in organising for such a United Front must come from trade unionists, from a union branch, shop stewards committee, or rank and file militants inviting all interested bodies to a preliminary meeting.

In a United Front each organisation participating elects its own delegates and each organisation has the right to argue for its ideas in public and private meetings — within the context of the fight together on agreed demands. But on no account should we heed those who say "No politics!" Internment is a political issue, and the means of opposing it most effectively must be the subject of open debate and discussion among those expected to take part in the fight against it.

Only if each group taking part has the elementary right to say why it is against internment can the mistakes made by the Belfast and Derry groups, who both demand "no politics" at their meetings, be overcome. We believe that only such a United Front, with its local committees, by involving Catholic workers as workers, offers

the possibility of using their power and muscle in a permanent and increasing role. Furthermore, we believe that only the involvement of trade unionists as an organised body gives us a chance of forcing the trade union leadership in Britain and Ireland (who say they are against internment) to do something for the internees and all those suffering under British repression in the North. Above all, the United Front allows revolutionary socialists to put forward the need to smash the whole capitalist system in order to end repression for ever.

In the South, too, we call for a United Front of working class and anti-imperialist organisations against repression. Finally, the growth of the Troops Out Movement in Britain can provide the basis for the third prong in a three-pronged attack of the British and Irish working classes against internment and repression in Ireland. For this struggle, now being fought by only a section of a section of the Irish working class, is in the interests of all Irish — and British — workers.

EDWARD BELL

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ON HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE

THE systematic physical repression of a people under minority rule is the trade mark of the British profiteers. Over 200 years of the history of capitalism, techniques have been perfected, lessons learned.

You don't shoot whole populations which rebel against British rule, for then you have no workers to produce profits, no unemployment to keep down wages, no social misery to divide people. The British Army uses 'low cost, long intensity' operations; the cost of the military should be lower than profits, so money is spent on intelligence work, finding out the militants and eliminating them, all the

time making people aware of the army's presence. The aim is to divide populations racially or religiously then force political solutions upon them.

So the army harasses and terrorises people by always being present in their lives, constantly interrupting the daily routine by searching, checking, questioning, interrogating and imposing limits on movement.

When I served in Aden we had so many check points, patrols, etc., that people moved like water through locks on a canal. The able-bodied, those capable of fighting back would be subject to early morning arrests, interrogation, internment, etc.

Interrogation methods are now designed to leave no mark, but 'merely' injure the brain. It was a bit cruder in

Aden, I saw a man with his hands and feet lashed behind his back to a stake, with a pointed end stuck in the back of his neck. If he flinched when he was kicked, or squirmed when the soldiers pissed on him, the stake went further into his neck. If he ended up with a broken neck, that was nothing to do with us; if people starved, died of bad health, children grew deformed because of extreme poverty, while the sheikh lived in a palace, that was nothing to do with us. We were there to 'keep the peace'.

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That was the code word; our operations went under 'peace keeping

role'. That kept people from being confused, when they read in the papers of the armies 'peace-keeping'.

In Aden I used to read the papers — like the 'Daily Mirror' about how grateful the Aden people were for us keeping the peace. Yeah, grateful — for doors being kicked down in the early hours, for their husbands and sons being taken off for questioning. Newspapers don't print these things, don't mention the latest techniques, batons which give electric shocks, gas which can paralyse, strobic lights which affect the nerve centres.

Yes, some soldiers do become disgusted, to begin to see through all those layers of 'training' they received. But where do they turn to — there's no place in society for soldiers who rebel

against orders, against a society that says... "do it"... "go on"... "pull the trigger"... and "well done", "congratulations", "have a medal".

It's when you get out of the army that it really hits you when you're on the dole (the reason for joining in the first place) and you think of the times guarding an oil refinery in Aden. Not a penny of its profits did you get, just a first-hand experience of the misery caused by the profits in British board-rooms. The argument for continuing British rule came out of the end of a gun.

NEIL DAVIES
Former Paratrooper, British Army

'Unpleasant duties' and a good deal worse

AN IRISH Army officer, writing in the army magazine 'An Cosantoir', said, "The blunt military cudgel is kept carefully concealed in the background, while propaganda and overt violence in regulated degrees of intensity have become significant instruments of strategy." For the past while part of the strategy of the Southern ruling class has been to gradually reveal that "blunt military cudgel", Landrovers full of armed troops are becoming a fairly common sight on Dublin streets. The army is the strong arm of the government against the republicans and eventually against the rising militancy of the working class.

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In a recent speech, Mr. Donegan, the Minister for Defence, said the Army would be called upon to do "unpleasant tasks". He later backed down and explained he meant more of what is already going on — assisting the "civil power". But already there are three soldiers to every Garda on the Border — the highest strength ever in the area. And they are performing the unpleasant task of chatting to British soldiers.

But the inside of an army always reflects the outside society which the army 'protects'. In our conversations with ex-members of the Irish Army, for THE WORKER, we see how the ordinary soldier is treated as badly as the workers in the rest of society.

An ex-soldier told us about Border duty. "We were patrolling for 10 hours with maybe ½ hour's stop for cold tea and a few greasy sandwiches. One time a man coming off duty went wild and shot off about 4 rounds. He had done two stints on the Border without a break. He was engaged and couldn't see his girl friend. He was taken in by P.A.'s and kicked about and was out of action for a few weeks".

"One night on patrol we saw a light about a mile away. We slowed up and six of us went on foot. Coming across the field were 3 men, very drunk. We recognised them — one lieutenant and two second lieutenants. From their talk we knew they had been drinking with British officers. Not a word was said and they were taken in quietly". The following night a soldier came in a half-an-hour later. He was locked in the guardroom, charged and confined to barracks for a few days.

We also spoke to a butcher who used to be in the FCA who told us about the meat and food supplied to the men. "McKee Barracks was supplied from a shop in Benburb Street, which was not the nicest butcher's shop in town. They get the cheaper cuts and they're cooked in antiquated cookers. You break out in pimples after the food, the plates are not properly washed and the bread is often stale. A couple of years ago FCA men in the Glen of Imall had a strike — they refused the food."

"The uniforms don't fit, they're itchy and the design is deplorable. The FCA jackets don't meet the trousers. The whole day is spent struggling to keep the uniform together. The officers' uniforms are o.k."

"About half the strength of the Army is taken up by maintenance, cooking and officers. Officers and their friends often had big 'do's in McKee Barracks." Here we see the waste to which the taxpayer's money is put.

The arms with which the FCA drill are old and dangerous. Shells are faulty and the FCA field-guns date from the Boer war.

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"Fourteen-year-old FCA members are given loaded guns and were guarding McKee Barracks. Once, a regular soldier was coming from the barracks toilet when he was shot at by an FCA guard who did not give the official three warnings before firing." (he only called out once). Luckily the regular was not hit, but if these standards apply throughout the whole Irish Army no wonder two men were nearly killed by Irish troops on the Border recently.

A member continued, "We were taught anti-riot drill, how to break up a crowd". (A crowd of protesting workers, maybe?). "We were taught the tactics of firing WITH LIVE AMMUNITION ON CROWDS. The whole idea of crowd-control was to train us to ACT AS A MACHINE."

Any young worker thinking of joining the Army — especially in this time of growing unemployment — should get that idea out of his head. Not only will he be trained and expected to act against his fellow workers, he will get a rough time himself within the Army.

FADING OFFICIALS

BY THE TIME this is printed Official Sinn Fein will have held its annual Ard-Fheis. The Officials claim to be a socialist organisation. By that standard the Ard-Fheis should be a real exchange of views and experiences between militants in the working class movement seeking to develop a coherent policy for that movement. But the Ard-Fheis will have been nothing of the sort.

Instead, it will have been an attempt by the leadership of Official Sinn Fein to justify a nationalist opposition to the EEC, a reformist approach to the North — through NICRA — and bureaucratic solutions to internal political problems in the face of growing dissatisfaction and criticism from members. Above all, it will have been an attempt to use Joe Sherlock's success in North East Cork to justify concentrating on election work.

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In fact, Sinn Fein went into the Ard-Fheis with morale at its lowest ebb for a very long time. There have been resignations and expulsions of leading members. Many local organisations have simply given up selling the papers. Others have abandoned whatever other activities they had. And yet others are paralysed and confused by political disagreements.

One of the hallmarks of a genuine revolutionary organisation is a reflection, in part, of the future. The way the Officials have handled their internal problems throws a strange light on the future they have in mind for us.

It's been said often enough that the Officials can be changed to a revolutionary working class organisation. And we've said often enough that we would be in there helping



it to happen if we thought it was possible. But are the Officials prepared to give a serious commitment to consistent work in the trade union movement? Are they prepared to discuss their ideas openly with others within the working class movement? Are they prepared to recognise in practice that arguing for working class leadership of the national struggle means taking up the working class' demands in that struggle now? Are they prepared to join with other organisations in united action to resist the growing repression which faces us all.

All of those things would mean integrating themselves into the lives and struggles of the workers — and they are not prepared to do any of them. Some of its leaders have put the organisation too firmly on to the path of reformist and Stalinism for that to change.

It would not be surprising, then, if most members feel after the Ard-Fheis that there is no option but to break with the Officials — and maybe set up a new organisation. If they do, they must learn the lessons of the past few years — that the working class' need for socialism cannot be pushed into the background, that it is the guiding light for socialists' involvement in all struggles. They must also see that the hopes of previous years that one or other leading figures could solve the problems were misplaced.

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There is no short-cut to the patient and disciplined work that needs to be done, no short-cuts in discussing fully the limits of the republican tradition. Least of all are the short-cuts of the Provos, military action without any guiding political strategy, any kind of model. If any new organisation does emerge it will need to be fully democratic and openly involved in the struggles of the working class.

Whatever does come out of the Ard-Fheis we take the conviction of those in the republican movement who claim to be socialists seriously enough to urge them yet again to take up the call for a united front of working class and anti-imperialist organisations to fight repression. And we make that call all the more strongly to any new organisation which may come out of the wreckage of the Officials.

We have received the following from a group of workers in Rumbach Plastics, Waterford:

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

"SORRY, lads, the situation is hopeless." So says our management and our union representatives. How many times will workers in other industries hear this before long?

Even the bosses admit there will be severe unemployment. We in this factory Rumbach Plastics, wonder why, instead of playing sugar daddy to the now discredited Labour Party, the unions would not get up off their behinds and provide some leadership in the coming struggle. They and they alone have created almost complete apathy amongst a large section of the workers.

It is going to be left to the men on the shop floor to bear the brunt of the coming struggle. We have found this out time and time again in this factory. We have found our Union representatives are, or seem to be, carrying on a softly softly policy with management. They seem to find as many excuses as management for not getting tough.

To our minds, it must be that some sort of deal was made with (1) the I.D.A., (2) the bosses, (3) the National Executive when all these estates were built. Some of these officials scream about democracy, but look at the Industrial Estate, Waterford, where joining the I.T.G.W.U. is a condition of employment. Too bad if we are not happy with that union. Three cheers for democracy.

In our particular factory, Rumbach Plastic, the starting rates were unbelievable £14 a week. All of the men worked really hard to get the factory into production, after being told: "We will look after you in a couple of months." The months turned into years and only when extremely pushed by the men did they ever concede anything.

Then the boom came: overtime galore. Some of the men through past experience were worried about excessive overtime. The committee approached the management and got a signed statement from the then manager that under no circumstances would there be any lay-offs resulting from this.

Every second weekend was worked, then the crunch, sorry boys, market trouble, material trouble. Abiding by the rules of all bosses they started sacking men all over the place. Our Union's attitude to all this: "What can we do?" Well, for a start, if they are really as worried as they pretend they could call through their National Executive for (a) Introducing a 35 hour working week with no loss of pay, (b) Giving the real power back to where it belongs, the shop floor, (c) A ban on all overtime, (d) Nationalisation of industry.

To get the message across we in Rumbach believe a one day national strike against redundancy should be called by the unions. Why not copy the farmers' successful tactics, i.e. demonstrations blocking whole towns. This is the type of action that is needed now. One thing for certain is: any fight that will take place will have to come from the rank and file.

MIKE MILLER

above: The British Army in action at a Catholic area and Loyalists on a march.

below: Anti-internment demonstrators confront the troops.

UNITED FRONT



possibility of using their power muscle in a permanent and in- ing role. Furthermore, we believe only the involvement of trade ists as an organised body gives chance of forcing the trade union rship in Britain and Ireland (who hey are against internment) to do thing for the internees and all : suffering under British repression e North. Above all, the United t allows revolutionary socialists e need to smash the e capitalist system in order to epression for ever.

In the South, too, we call for a ed Front of working class and -imperialist organisations again- epression. Finally, the growth in the Troops Out Movement in ain can provide the basis for d third prong in a three-pronged ck of the British and Irish icking classes against internment epression in Ireland. For this e being fought by a section of the y a section of the class, is in the h working class — and British ests of all Irish — and British workers.

WARD BELL

Snooping about

DID you notice Mickey Mullen getting all radical after the Labour party Conference and going on about how Labour's role in government wasn't up to scratch? Maybe that was just Mickey giving a warning that his members — or any trade unionists — were not going to be easily bought off.

Anyway, Fintan Kennedy was quick to reassure all that the ITGWU had not suddenly lurched to the left. His speech at last month's Dublin District Council of the union was bare-faced call for trade unionists to make sacrifices to help boost up the capitalist economy. Of course, it was all dressed up in obscure talk about a "national social consciousness" which he wants us all to share with the bosses, the politicians, professional people, and so on.

WHAT Mullen and Kennedy did inside a couple of weeks, Denis Larkin did in two days. At the opening session of the Kilkenny Conference on Poverty last month he announced to the assembled ranks of nuns, social workers and home assistance officers that in order to get rid of poverty the whole system needed to be changed, wealth and power needed to be radically re-distributed. The Bishops shook visible.

But that was Friday night. Then there was Sunday morning. The Bishops who had organised the conference had prepared a press statement on poverty. It reminds us that while the poor are still poor, workers (they're not poor, of course) have had three wage increases in a year under the National Wage Agreement. They ask Denis, the Friday night radical, to endorse the statement. And he does. Every word. The Bishops cheered silently.

AND THAT reminds me to tell you the difference between Matt Doolan on a Saturday night and Matt Doolan on a Monday morning. Saturday night is when Gay Byrne, that well known defender of the rich, gives him a platform for his reactionary views. You probably heard him go on about the evils of contraception. But there's another Matt Doolan. He's a representative for a medical firm. And on the Monday morning after giving one of these performances he arrives around at a doctor's to sell his wares, including ("We won't mention these", says he) contraceptive pills. One doctor at least has refused to see the hypocrite since then.

SPEAKING of that old pontificator reminds me to ask you: what have the Apostolic Nuncio, businessman Dermot Ryan, and the members of the executive of the Communist Party got in common? Well, not much, actually, except that they were all at that binge in the

Russian Embassy to celebrate the Russian Revolution. To be quite truthful, you wouldn't have known that was what it was about. Not a speech or a political gesture all night. Just plenty of food and booze.

Nobody should be surprised. The Russians are not trying to spread socialism they gave that up about 50 years ago — The junket last month was the normal thing for diplomats of a capitalist state to do.

Of course, there are some other people apart from supporters of the Russian regime who believe that they are still sowing subversion around the place. The Special Branch have been keeping a close eye on the Russian Ambassador's residence out in Dalkay — and one of them has even been learning Russian for the job. Which will put him in the select company — which includes Conor Cruise O'Brien — of those in the state machine who speak Russian.

ONE MAN, ONE JOB DEPT: Being fond of a drop myself I hesitate to criticise the drinking habits of our ITGWU officials but it's come to the point where they are making a public show of us. A while back we had two of them, Group Sec. Eddie Brown and his little brother Gerry, drooling down from a billboard advert. grasping pints of Bass, and assuring us that "After all is said and done there is really only one. Hardly a good union slogan.

More recently we've had twenty-foot high posters of a guy with an uncanny resemblance to Paddy Keenan of No. 7 Branch, plastered (sorry) all over the place showing the bould Paddy slumped in a bath, glass in hand, announcing that Smirnoff left him breathless. It's a handy way of picking up a few extra bob, no doubt, but I refuse to believe that Mickey Mullen pays his officials so badly that they have to resort to such nixers to subsidise their habits.

APPRENTICES from the building industry, doing a course at the AnCo Training Centre at Ballymun, have been 'training' on a house in Stillorgan. In the house lives Mr. Agnew, the director of AnCo, and, presumably, the wood and materials used were paid for by the tax-payer too.

MOST workers get full pay when they're 21 (even if it's only full UNEQUAL pay) but postmen don't get it until they are 28. At present Dublin postmen are signing a petition to have the age reduced. And if that doesn't work stern action is in the offing.

MARY BURNS

STATE CASH AND CHURCH CONTROL -Burke's schools plan

THE OIL companies, when they sent their prices soaring sky-high, were hardly thinking of the impact this would have on the management of national schools in the 26 Cos. Yet this has provided the opportunity for what looks like the biggest change in national school management in a century — the setting up of management committees in exchange for a bribe of more money from the State.

That this action should come from the conservative Catholic Minister for Education, Richard Burke, should make you suspicious. Burke, who defends the use of corporal punishment in schools by reference to "the Christian ethic" and an old Papal Encyclical. Burke, who followed his master, Cosgrave, into the "no" lobby to vote against the Contraceptives Bill.

grants

And when you look at it, it is a reform in the tradition of "Things must change in order that they remain the same". National schools will get bigger grants for heating, cleaning, etc., if the school manager (parish priest) sets up a "management committee". These grants will in the first year simply get back to the old proportion of costs borne by the State. The I.N.T.O. has quite rightly rejected the new scheme on the basis that all costs should be borne by the State. But it shrinks from drawing the conclusion that if the Church pays none

of the costs, it should have none of the control. Of course, any national teacher who said that could be sacked the next morning — by his manager.

The new management committees will comprise 4 church nominees and 2 parents. Nobody has said who will nominate the parents. Any parish priest should be able to find a couple of "reliable" parents.

contributions

But even if the parents were to be elected by all the parents of pupils, they would still be only a couple of "token Teagues" put in to give a new, "democratic" face to the continuing reality of Church domination — the continuing reality of sectarian education. Teachers will be forbidden to be members of management committees; they must know their place in the hierarchy: at the top, the parish priest who gives orders to the principal, who gives orders to the teachers, who gives orders to the pupils, so as to prepare them for their later life of getting orders from the foreman, who gets orders from . . .

The worst feature of the new system is the "local contribution". At present, the manager has to pay any extra costs of maintaining the school, over and above the state grant. But the new-style state grant is given on condition that a "local contribution" of at least £1.50 per pupil is raised. What easier than for the parish priest to demand that each child's parents hand over £1.50? So we are back to

fee-paying schools. Never mind that the Constituion guarantees free primary education to the citizens, if the manager thinks he can get away with it, he may try.

Parents must organise and get ready to resist any such attempts. They must refuse to pay any money. If the Church wants to keep control of the schools, it must foot the bill out of its own resources.

Speakers at the Labour Party Conference in Galway in October made much of this £1.50 contribution. But their answer was to pass twenty resolutions critical of Burke's policies, many of them calling for his resignation. The Labour Ministers hardly lost much sleep thinking how they would face Burke at the next Cabinet meeting.

It is only by organising locally that an impact will be made. Socialists will support such efforts — and go on to demand the scrappings of the present sectarian national schools, controlled by the Church and the Department of Education bureaucracy, and the establishment of non-denominational primary schools controlled by representatives of the parents teachers and the local community.

JOHN GOODWILLIE

BOOKSHELF

Scream Quietly Or The Neighbours Will Hear by Erin Pizzey (Penguin Special — 45p)

THERE are thousands of them — beaten, brutalised, scarred for life but battered wives aren't taken seriously. They must like it, say the authorities. One TD described wife-beating as "a good sport down the country".

"If they don't like it", say the cynics, "why don't they get out?" Erin Pizzey gives the obvious answer — they have nowhere to go.

Herself a battered wife, Ms. Pizzey was instrumental in setting up the Chiswick women's Aid Centre. Over 5000 women and children have passed through, some have stayed for years. The

stories they tell are stories of the most incredible suffering. The kids are often disturbed, withdrawn or dangerously violent: the boys often made the accomplices of their father's brutality, the girls often raped and themselves beaten.

The book argues that the child acquires the aggressive habits early. The little boy sees the fear his father provokes, the physical power he wields and has often begun to imitate him by the age of eight.

The neighbours turn up their teles so they can't hear the screams. Social workers and doctors urge women to stick with it for the sake of the children! All are interested in preserving the family which for these men, women and children has become an instrument of terror.

Ms. Pizzey isn't bitter — nor are the women she works with. They know that

the wife-beater suffers like the victim. But something concrete must be done — to help. That's the reason for the existence of the Women's Aid centres in England and for the one here, in Dublin.

The book doesn't quite say its all part of the lousy system — but it is. Wife-beating isn't confined to any social class, it isn't simply the product of bad living conditions or tiny wage packets. Wife-beating is the product of a system which promotes and encourages violence — its the product of a system which regards the family as sacred, which squeezes all the frustrations of everyday life into that tiny unit, which sees wives and children as the property of husband and fathers.

Wife-beating isn't a joke. Noone could read Mz. Pizzey's book and still believe that it is.

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

FRANCO's death can only be months away. For a long time there has been uncertainty as to what would happen after his death. With the fall of the fascist regime in Portugal that uncertainty has increased. During the past few months there has been a big wave of strikes in Spain. Here, PAUL GILLESPIE, looks at the growing crisis in Spain.

SPAIN ABOUT TO EXPLODE

THE Portuguese events have had an influence on the class struggle in Spain in the last few months. Although historically relations between the two countries have been surprisingly remote at all levels, Spanish workers could hardly have failed to be impressed by the combativity and verve of their Portuguese brothers.

The Spanish media have, in spite of censorship, devoted a great deal of space to Portuguese developments. In the reports there are hints of a commentary on the Spanish regime itself. The Spanish ruling class is embroiled in a political crisis over the succession to Franco, combined with a fear that his departure may provoke dramatic conflicts with an increasingly confident working class.

This autumn collective contracts are up for re-negotiation. A wage freeze has been in effect since January while inflation has been at the rate of 25%. At the same time, Spanish industry is being affected by the international recession, leading to lay-offs and redundancies. In October 30,000 car workers throughout the country were involved in fighting back. Over 13,000 workers at the Renault plant in Valladolid held meeting during September at which they sought a forty-four hour week with Saturday afternoons off, increases of £20,

a month with negotiations to be controlled by committees elected at factory assemblies rather than by the bureaucrats of the State-controlled Central Nacional Sindicalists. More generally, they demanded the legal right of free assembly and the right to strike.

The government amended the 'labour code' at the end of the month, making the forty-four hour week legally unattainable, which led the workers to call a strike and the company to declare a lock-out. This led to demonstrations, arrests and sackings.

Although other factories came out in sympathy with the Renault workers, by October 9 they were back at work with none of their demands achieved. Repression and lack of leadership had won the day. Similar struggles in Barcelona at the seat car plant were linked around the same kind of demands, but with rather more success. Again, there was a fantastic and rapid development of solidarity action with 30 companies and over 15,000 men involved altogether.

So despite repression and the difficulties of organising, there are big workers' struggle going on in Spain. The country has been industrialised very rapidly since the late 1950's with nearly 40% of workers now employed in industry. New forms of organisation have grown parallel, in particular the commissions obreros (Workers commissions) elected in a plant base and often directly responsible to an assembly of workers. It has, however, been difficult for two reasons, to link them up, industrially, regionally or nationally. The first is continued state repression and surveillance. The second concerns the role of the Spanish Communist Party.

PORTUGAL: C.P.'S DISASTROUS POLICIES

THERE was only one party in Portugal in a position to take the opportunities presented by the fall of fascism last April—the Portuguese Communist Party. Today, it is the largest political organisation in the country by far. With an estimated 30,000 members and several full-time workers it far outstrips the Socialist Party or any of the 'moderate' groupings.

You might think that should be a strong position from which "the party of the workers and of the anti-fascist resistance" could lead the working class to bigger gains. Through its influence in the trade unions, in the army, and in the population generally, the PCP could have undermined any attempt to restore capitalist stability on new terms.

It could have done. But it has not. Indeed, it has done precisely the opposite. Its party leader, who is in the government, is not a revolutionary thorn in the side of those seeking to put Portuguese capitalism on a more secure footing. He is their most dedicated — and indispensable — ally. THERE is a wide interest in, and acceptance of, left-wing ideas in Portugal. Much of it is expressed in terms of support for the Communist Party and the attention given to its activities and publications. The thousands who have joined the party each month have little detailed notion of the party's policies, however.

They couldn't have — because many of them have joined up just by signing an application form thrust into their hand by one of the party's many willing workers.

Nor do the new members have much chance to become involved in the formation of new policies to deal with the new situation. The party congress held late in October was a stage-managed affair. The party leadership had clearly decided what few points they wanted changed in the party programme. Although this was the first legal congress of the party held for 48 years, and although it came at the end of six months of bitter political and economic struggles, the business was done in a day.

And yet it is easy to understand why the Portuguese Communist Party should attract support, why it should for so many the focus of strong anti-fascist feelings. The Communist Party has had a continuous record of opposition to fascism since 1926. In spite of the most severe repression. It has held together and kept publishing papers and pamphlets. That's something the Communist Party of Ireland has not succeeded in doing, having split and disappeared several times in its history.

MOSCOW

Communist Party activists have been tortured and imprisoned. The party's man in the government, Alvaro Cunhal, was himself held nine years in solitary confinement before he escaped from an island prison. Many of those who avoided imprisonment had to live in exile — and, not surprisingly, some of them, including Cunhal, chose to spend their exile in Moscow.

And that fact explains another important side of the Portuguese Communist Party — its closeness to the "official" Moscow line, and its intolerance of "deviations". (While the Irish and Spanish Communist Parties, for instance, did at first criticise the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Portuguese Communist Party immediately produced a statement in full support of this action.)

The party has survived underground and has been particularly influential in industrial struggles. But it advocates the maximum use of the meagre legal framework available at the local level of the state industrial relations network. Thus it hopes to establish a 'legal' industrial base as a bargaining counter in a more general political programme for a popular front type coalition with bourgeois sectors and parties against the Franco regime.

★★★★★

There has been increasing evidence lately that the C.P. is seeking to demonstrate to these sectors that it can hold back and control working class struggles, in an attempt to reassure them about its future role in any coalition.

In the 1960's the party advocated an alliance with "progressive capitalists and progressive elements in the church, the army and the professions". This would leave the "Franco clique" isolated along with monopoly capital and big landowners, his social base.

★★★★★

There has, of course, been a considerable growth in the middle class, expressing itself in calls for liberalisation. But the momentum for the very halting attempts in this direction by the regime recently came from a different quarter. It became more and more difficult to run a modern industrial capitalist economy without dismantling some of the bureaucratic restrictions inherent in the first period of Franco's rule. This task was given to a group of technocrats associated with the Catholic organisation Opus Dei. But they ran up against a problem posed by the very success in the economic sphere.

Its logic demanded full integration into the EEC, which could not be granted without dismantling some of the regime's repressive features. The ruling class has been afraid to carry this process through

the most militant workers. For the workers don't necessarily stop and start in clearly distinct stages, and if they are willing to go ahead, it can only be counter-revolutionary to stand in their way.

The fascist state apparatus has not yet been completely dismantled in Portugal, and already the Communist Party has begun to water its programme down. The police and the National Guard are fully intact. There is a considerable left-wing influence in the army, but still many officers who support the ideas of the old regime, or of Spínola. There is still a serious danger and what does the Communist Party do? It changes its position from out-right opposition to NATO to toleration of it. It doesn't mention the US base in Portuguese territory, when the old party programme did. The 1965 programme called for the expropriation of the big farm owners (latifundia), but we can be absolutely certain, given the Communist Party's position in government, that if the farm workers of the South respond to the economic sabotage by the farm owners by seizing their land, the Communist Party will oppose it. And if mass redundancies provoke factory occupations in the coming months, CP militants who will be drawn to support them, will find the party line against them.

But on one crucial point the Communist Party's attitude has shifted. From saying in their 1965 programme that an armed people is

And even the fact that it is being more or less openly discussed has provoked the ultra right in Spain on to the offensive again. With numerous examples of vicious and unprovoked thuggery.

★★★★★

The second point to be made about the C.P.'s strategy concerns the role of the working class in the coming period. Workers who have occupied factories, who have taken on the police and military in hundreds of struggles will not engage in a decisive struggle simply to hand over power to their exploiters. Inevitably they will pose the question of workers' power, socialism, which by its very nature involves a full scale democratisation. There will be no other way to defeat reaction in Spain, even if there is to be a temporary period of bourgeois democracy. To bind the workers to this limited gain is to disarm them in the face of certain counter-revolutionary attempts, as happened in the Civil War when the C.P.'s refusal to consolidate workers' power gave Franco the victory.

Unfortunately the revolutionary left in Spain is not yet strong enough to carry through and give leadership to the workers in the next period. Such a party is a pressing priority. It can only be built by co-ordinating the economic struggles into a national perspective for workers' power.

necessary for victory over fascism, the party now says that "the arms to defend the democratic revolution are in the right hands. They are in the hands of the Armed Forces Movement." These were Alvaro Cunhal's words at a press conference during October, in which he also insisted that the party was not interested in gaining power. With an effort the Communist Party could probably win more votes than any other party in the elections due to be held next march. But it will make certain that it does not expose itself in that way.

It is only just over a year since the Chilean generals took power through a bloody coup. The Portuguese Communist Party is quite right to point to the dangers of fascism returning in Portugal — possibly by the same means. But it is quite wrong to urge workers to place their trust in supposedly progressive army officers and middle class politicians in order to defend themselves against that threat. Not merely wrong, not merely mistaken, but potentially disastrous for the whole working class.

BRIAN TRENCH



Portuguese transport workers on the move. Spanish workers to follow?

Galway: BRUNO WOMEN FIGHT SACKINGS

IN MID-SEPTEMBER, the Shop Stewards at the Bruno shirt-factory in Galway and I.T.G.W.U. officials had a meeting with Mr. Pancaldi, the biggest shareholder in Bruno Shirts. Rumours of a shakeout or closure were scotched and the union officials, Meade and Furseay Breathnach, insisted that all jobs were safe. These reassurances were put in writing. The next day two girls were given a week's notice. So much for the promises of the bosses and trade union bureaucrats.

Eight girls who had worked in the factory from two to five years were put on a trial period under a system of new bonus targets which the bosses and managers tried to force on the workers without negotiation. After contacting Meade and Breathnach six times the patience of the women ran out and they stopped work. They were ordered off the Bruno premises. Of the 68 workers who were union members, 48 left the premises and went to the I.T.G.W.U. hall. The other twenty including a number of supervisors whom the bosses called 'staff' and tried to split the workers, went on working.

LIARS

At the union office, Meade and Breathnach called the forty women liars and said that the Bruno bosses had been on the phone after the women left and had arranged a meeting with the union. One of the women on the Bruno Strike Committee put it this way: "The union acted promptly towards the management, though they had ignored six calls from us. This left us wondering who was paying the union subs - the union members or the management?"

In spite of continuous pressure Meade and Breathnach refused to make the strike official. As in the case of the strike in the Gaeltacht factory, West Con, they hoped in this way to break the grip of the unofficial pickets by having them passed by the twenty who stayed in.

The women set up a strike committee and put pickets on the factory. The militancy of the women surprised Meade and Breathnach no less than the boss Pancaldi: They were demanding (1) Unconditional reinstatement of the two dismissed workers; (2) Abolition of the trial period; (3) Overall working conditions to be reviewed for all; (4) Payment in full for work lost in the dispute. During the week the strike committee issued a leaflet to the shop stewards

in the industrial Estate which expressed their feeling that unless the workers in the estate came together they would not be able to fight the bosses' offensive and would be picked off section by section.

The response was not reassuring though the women, due to inexperience had not got in direct personal contact with the chief shop stewards. However, the Bruno women have taken the initiative in pushing for a Shop Steward and Rank and File Committee in the Galway Industrial estate. This must now be acted on by all militants in Galway City as the first instalment in the task of building a powerful Galway Shop Stewards and Rank and File Committee. This will enable workers to fight the offensive of the bosses and win; in spite of the sell-out politics of Trade Union Bureaucrats such as Meade and Breathnach.

When the Bruno women and West Con workers threatened to leaflet and picket the Labour Party Conference and publicise the unwillingness of ITGWU Union Officials to help them fight, Meade moved and soon an offer was made. This was to abolish the trial period and to refer the dismissals to the Labour Court. As the women had got little real support from other workers and as they were presented with the prospect of remaining on unofficial strike for weeks pending the Labour Court decision, they decided on a tactical retreat and went back to work pending the decision of the Labour Court on the dismissals.

ADVANCES

The Bruno workers have made a few more advances since. They called a general meeting of workers in the factory when they went back and had new shop stewards elected all of whom were behind the strike. They insisted that the two dismissed women meet Meade only with shop stewards present. Meade gave in with reluctance. The Bruno workers should now form a factory committee. They should elect two more rank and file representatives to bring the committee up to five and establish this as the negotiating team to meet the bosses. If the Labour Court endorses the dismissals the women should fight back, this time through an official strike in which they must mount a more effective struggle for real backing from other estate workers.

A.J.

ARMSTRONGS OCCUPIED



BY SITTING in to demand their jobs back the Reg Armstrong car-workers have given a lead to all workers facing redundancy. They have broken the cold ice of passive acceptance of lay-offs, especially for the car trade and the Dublin area in general. Each week a shift of six or seven men have occupied the plant, with support and collections coming from many other factories. Fiat workers collected £125 one week. A march in support of the occupation brought out 1,500 car workers on a Thursday afternoon and a group of Dublin Gas Co. workers marched down to Armstrongs the following week. Workers and union officials at McCarins and Reg Armstrong were led to believe that replacement jobs would be provided by General Motors at Tallaght. In late September an aggregate meeting of car workers voted overwhelmingly for defence of all existing car jobs and not for seeking job replacements. The union officials - anxious for the multi-nationals' job replacement line - were not satisfied until a second meeting was called, which rejected retention of all jobs. But then General Motors said, "We did not say we would offer job for job."

At first, only a couple of Armstrong

men, suddenly laid off for an indefinite period, rallied to the proposal of Bertie Galbraith, shop steward, to sit in. Instead of closing immediately Armstrong offered a three-day week. He was to consult the men about all matters that affected them. Instead, he sacked them by post. Now a sit-in got a much greater backing and the first batch of workers went into the factory. On 29th October most of the Armstrong workers marched in support to Armstrongs.

MARCH

Instead of going out and publicly organising widespread support, Danny Browne, ATGWU Branch Secretary, and the Cars Action Committee kept their cards close to their chests. Not even the car factories were properly informed about the Thursday afternoon march to be held in support. It was left to the Armstrong workers themselves, and members of the Dublin Shop Stewards Committee, to go around factories on the day before - and even on Thursday evening. The Armstrong delegation who attended a Dublin Shop Stewards Committee meeting asked that members of that Committee attend their (Armstrong's) meetings in future.

In these early weeks of the sit-in morale is high, but how long will the Armstrong workers have to occupy? Will

they get their jobs back? If the occupation remains as isolated as it is they could be still there when the Revolution itself comes. Management have tolerated them and even accommodated them in the canteen. A victory is possible only when the action begins to bite. Armstrong must be prevented from selling the cars he still has. Sales outlets must be picketed. It is essential to prevent fully assembled Opels coming into the country - the appeal to Dublin dockers and the idea of sending a delegation to Rosslare are steps in the right direction.

Recently, there was a strike at Armstrong's electrical factory. When actions like this occur the Armstrong car workers should go and join the picket. The workers at Armstrong's Honda factory must be brought into the struggle. In both these places Armstrong can be hit because he wants PRODUCTION there. Beyond that, all car workers must be mobilised; any of them could have to take similar action at some stage to avoid going on the dole. So the Armstrong fight is the fight of the whole industry. The original decision of car workers to maintain the assembly industry must be pushed and acted upon, with prevention of car imports "on wheels". And the only way they can achieve that is for to fight for the nationalisation of the factory under the control of the workers involved.

Wexford: CLOSEDOWN AT SMITHS?

WHEN the Rights Commissioner, Con Murphy, reported on the recent dispute in Smith's car assembly plant in Wexford, he pointed out that unless there was better co-operation all round, Smith's might be forced to shut down the plant. This gave the already depressed workforce in the factory their first laugh in many weeks as they have known for months that the management plans eventually to close the plant, where Renault cars are assembled.

However, what they are not as well aware of is the national campaign taking place at the moment to save the car assembly industry in the face of government opposition in line with EEC policy. Unfortunately, this campaign has been centred in Dublin, and attempts to get the carworker's union action committee to take the fight around the country have failed. And yet it is clear that the car workers in Wexford need the contacts and the encouragement from outside. It now seems certain that they will not see 1975 out in car assembly unless some action is taken by the workers.

A leaflet published by the ATGWU action committee has taken the 'job for job' myth apart: "No one in a position to speak with knowledge about the industry,

neither the government nor the employers nor the union side of the industry, say that new jobs will be provided on a job for job basis for those now employed in car assembly. If some jobs for the present car work force do materialise in the new ventures, they will not be on the basis of present wage rates, or bonus or other plus payments working conditions or travelling arrangements.

DUMPING

The 170 Smiths workers are not fooled by any unwritten guarantee of jobs, but there is a feeling abroad that nothing can be done to save their existing employment. But still nothing is said about the dumping which has been going on for some time - or the bogus "Irish-assembled cars". One could hardly call cars which have no more than a steering wheel or a wing fitted on to a fully built up car at Rosslare an Irish-assembled product, but the importers are getting away with this.

In Dublin the car workers have begun to take action to halt this flow of fully built up cars. They appealed to car workers and dockers not to handle imported assembled models as a means of supporting their action to resist redundancy and unemployment in the industry.

The Smith's workers have already carried out such action during a strike over their bonus scheme and it was very successful; they were well supported by the dockers in Rosslare Harbour who refused to handle any goods for the car assembly industry.

Management in Wexford must not be allowed whitewash the EEC proposals or con the workforce with unwritten guarantees of jobs. Already they have started the carve up with individual cases of victimisation.

Car workers from all over the country must unite in their action if it is to be successful and also involve workers in all other connected industries. Smith's workers also need to develop the contacts with their mates in Waterford Glass, now owned by the same company - the glass workers will be prepared to help in the struggle to save their Wexford jobs.

Car workers do have the strength to win - if they highlight every instance of redundancy, prevent the manufacturers bringing in assembled cars over their jobs, and sit tight on the bosses' property if they threaten to close down. In this case more than any other we need to realise that the best form of action is not always to go out the gate.

LATE NEWS: Workers at Smith's again took strike action on Thursday and Friday 21/22 November, in support of a sacked worker.

the worker

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