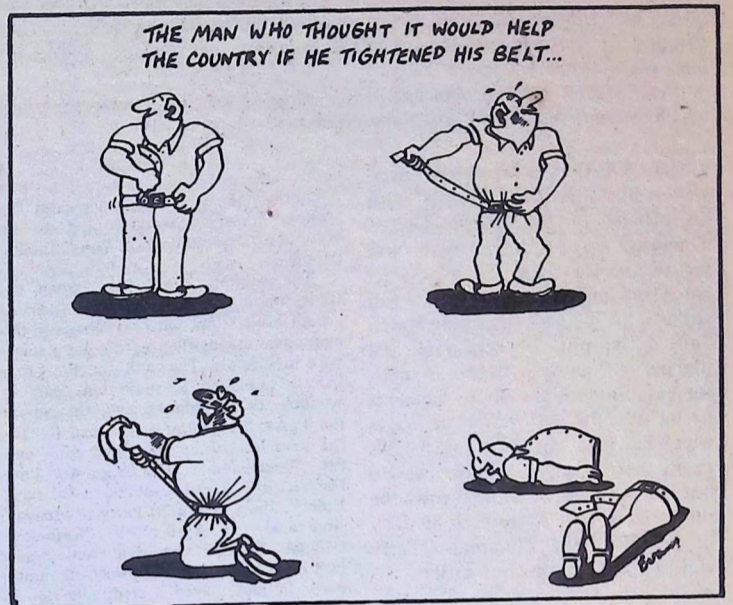


the worker

FOR A WORKERS' REPUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

NO WAGE CUTS! MAKE THE BOSSES PAY!

RESTRAINT ONLY HELPS THEM



WHEN ALL the dust has been cleared off the government's speeches about the economy, off the experts' advice and the bosses' wringing of the hands, one message comes out clearly: workers are being asked to shoulder responsibility for the crisis of a system over which they have no control.

The talk of moderation and restraint has narrowed down to one target only: hold down wages. This, we are told, is our salvation. This, we are told, is the cure for unemployment and the way to keep Irish industry competitive.

There is some vague suggestion of restraining increases in other money incomes, like dividends and professional fees. But only if and when the trade union movement has delivered the goods. The "package" they keep talking about is one which the trade union movement has to seal.

When the National Economic and Social Council suggested, the government took up and now has the Working Party on the Economy (the same people with a different hat) discussing further. It all amounts to a sophisticated blackmail. And in this grim game, the government, which tries to look like a referee, is in fact in the forefront of the attack against the confidence and the independence of the trade union movement.

The "concessions" in the June Budget are made to look like they are doing something to grapple with rising prices. But, as we explain alongside (see panel) the measures will have little effect on real inflation. Indeed, they are only intended to have a short-term effect on the Consumer Price Index.

But why has all this been necessary less than two months after the signing of the National Wage Agreement? The ruling class had pinned its hopes on being able to catch on to the coat-tails of an upturn in the world economy. Now they fear that inflation is so high in this country that the Irish economy will not be able to benefit from such an upturn. And they see that the upturn will be later coming than previously hoped for.

And we workers are to bear the burden of making the economy "cost-competitive", as they put it. They used to tell us that inflation

was caused by external factors beyond our control. Now, without any explanation, the tune has changed — they now claim that 80 per cent of inflation comes from increases in money incomes at home.

They used to tell us their main priority was to lower the level of unemployment. Now they tell us that they have to tackle inflation in order to tackle unemployment. What they're saying in a roundabout way is that if any of us who are working look for and get wage increases we will be keeping our unemployed brothers and sisters out of work.

It would be crazy for the trade

union movement to agree to re-negotiate the National Wage Agreement under this kind of pressure. The Agreement is restrictive enough, the trade unions should not even consider making it more restrictive. We urge all readers to demand the chance of vote on whether or not the agreement should be re-negotiated, the chance to discuss the issues properly at general meetings — and then to reject any proposal for talks. Any new terms which may be agreed should equally be rejected.

But whatever the outcome on that front the Wage Agreement already gives employers many ways of paying less than the terms agreed last April. The infamous "inability to pay" and "co-operation" clauses give them the means to refuse payment at all, pay less, or only pay if the unions agree to rationalisation and redundancy.

STRATEGY

This is the second aspect of the strategy worked out between employers and government over the past months: while employers refuse payment of the full terms even in quite profitable industries (see panel) and risk disputes over it, the government will continue its chorus about restraint and give full backing to the bosses in their attempts to isolate and defeat those "greedy" workers who only demand enough to keep

going at a trot behind galloping inflation.

In this situation, it is essential for rank and file trade unionists to rally around any workers who do take on the bosses on this score. The official trade union movement cannot be relied on to give them support and to organise solidarity. It is up to the rank and file to do this in whatever way appropriate — within unions and across unions, within industries and across whole localities.

The trade union leadership has no strategy to face up to the calculated manoeuvres of the employers and politicians. It snaps at the first chance of co-operation because it fears confrontation. And the ruling class avoids confrontation precisely because they know the trade union leaders will play the game.

It is up to the ordinary activists to organise those who refuse to have workers bear the responsibility for the system's troubles and who oppose the continuous involvement of the trade unions in collaboration with the bosses and the state. We can begin to do it on this basis:

**NO NEW TALKS ON THE WAGE AGREEMENT!
FIGHT FOR THE OLD TERMS AS THE VERY MINIMUM!
ORGANISE SUPPORT FOR WORKERS IN DISPUTE OVER NON-PAYMENT!**

Hands Off IRSP!

THE ARREST of nearly twenty Dublin members of the IRSP and the harassment of those outside Dublin during the last week in June must be condemned by all working class and republican organisations.

Nobody was charged but the Special Branch was clearly trying to establish in the public mind a connection between the arrests and the attempt to derail a train-load of Official republicans at Sallins. At the same time, they were building up their own information about the party and its members.

This is the most concentrated use yet made of the part of the Offences Against the State Act which allows the Gardai to detain people for 48 hours without charging them. There is nothing to stop Mr. Cooney doing what Mrs. Gandhi has done — arresting all the political opposition.

The fact that the Gardai and Special Branch can do this, and that they are willing to make use of their powers, is a warning to all of us. It should concern everybody on the Left and lead to a re-doubling of the efforts to get united action against repression.

Blackmail Budget

AFTER THE barrage of press speculation on the terrors the budget would hold Ryan's "package" was something of an anti-climax. It was then said that it "Wasn't too bad". Wasn't it? ... Let's look at what we're being offered:

There are two "presents" to workers in the budget — the rest is all penalties. Tax is going up, the real value of public expenditure cut down. The presents are "Employment Premiums" and "Price Cuts".

First, the premiums: The Government will give £12 to the bosses for any extra workers they take on. Apart from the money they will actually GAIN on this by not having to pay dole money — and from the tax they will get from that workers wages — these premiums mean next to nothing. The effect they will have

on unemployment will be minimal. The causes of unemployment are too complex to be affected by such juggling around.

The world-wide capitalist crisis, the effect this has had by stemming emigration — that old safety valve — the lack of new jobs for school-leavers and those coming off the land — none of these will be remotely affected by the premiums. In short, the whole idea is a con designed to play on workers' solidarity by offering an unfulfillable promise of helpful employment in return for a sacrifice made by those who have jobs.

The "price cuts" include a few pence off bus fares, the price of SOME foodstuffs and VAT off electricity, gas, fuel, footwear and clothing. This will mean that, say, a £10 pair of shoes will cost 67 pence less but retail prices will go up before the VAT is removed. The bakery bosses have been meeting to put pressure on the government to

jack up the price of bread. CIE have announced that not all fares will be reduced. Meanwhile prices in general are continuing to rise and the certainty of price rises of oil and other imports by the end of the year will ensure that they will rise again.

The main cause of inflation — the international anarchy of capitalism, with its speculation in commodities and currency will not be the least affected by such tuppenny-ha'penny tampering with the Consumer Price Index.

And tampering it is. The Index will be calculated ON ONE DAY in mid-August, just at the time when the tampering will show a slower price rise — and this will result in holding down wages over a PERIOD OF MONTHS.

The budgetary pill has a thin coating of sugar but inside it is a concoction that — if swallowed — will cause a massive setback for the labour movement.

REFUSING TO PAY

SMURFIT GROUP say they won't pay the National Wage Agreement to workers in some of their factories. Last year, their profits went up 101 per cent. The eight executive directors paid themselves a total of £486,000 in salaries and fees. Michael Smurfit, the Managing Director, "earned" about £150,000 in dividends on top of his share of that.

WATERFORD GLASS want the unions to forego parts of the National Wage Agreement. Last year they made over £5 millions in profits, having expanded to take over the Smith group (Renault cars). Chairman Paddy McGrath is one of the richest men in the country. His family interests make millions each year — in dividends from Waterford Glass.

DUBLIN NEWSPAPERS want a freeze

on wages for the rest of 1975 and have clubbed together to get it. For the last three years they have shown steadily rising profits. Now they want their workers to subsidise their operations when advertising is down and costs are up. In the 'Irish Times' this means subsidising enormous interest payments to the bank. In the 'Independent' this means subsidising Tony O'Reilly's investment adventures.

SUNBEAM WOLSEY is one of the employers in the Irish Textile Federation refusing to pay the National Wage Agreement. But they have not even paid the last phase of the 1974 Agreement to some of their workers. Others have "skipped" the 13th or 14th rounds. They use the threat of redundancy to hold back wage rises. A strike in Arklow Knitwear for implementation of the Agreement was made official by the ITGWU — but no attempt was made to spread it throughout the group.

1935 transport strike

RANK & FILE ORGANISE

AN IMPORTANT weapon for workers in struggle is a knowledge of the past. The Irish class struggle did not — as it might sometimes appear — end in 1913 and begin again in the sixties. As long as there have been workers and bosses the struggle has gone on — and will go on. From this continuing struggle, its victories and defeats and its methods, we draw the lessons for our own fight today.

Here, MARY BURNS, looks at an epic strike by Dublin Transport workers which ended in May, 1935, just forty years ago.

IT STARTED in a seemingly trivial way. A bus driver had a "brush" with an official of the Dublin United Tramways Co. (DUTC) and was sacked on the spot. There was an almost unanimous decision for a full strike in his support, beginning March 2nd. A transport workers' rank and file paper, "Unity", began to push for extension of the strike demands to include the restoration of wages which had been cut in the late 1920's. From there, the strike which was to last eleven weeks and throw the ruling class into hysteria as it drew in the IRA, the Communist Party and threats of a general strike, was on.

From the beginning of the strike not a bus or tram ran in the city. Mass pickets were placed on all garages and depots. In Sandymount, Ringsend, Summerhill, Conyngham Road, Blackrock, and all sectors of the strike front there was a hundred percent stoppage and tremendous enthusiasm.

THE PRESSURE for a strike action had come from supporters of the rank and file paper, "Unity". This was how the Communist Party paper reported the launching of the strike: "The whole meeting endorsed enthusiastically the line of the rank and file movement and its organ, 'Unity' and mandated the union officials to serve notice of strike."

The strike took place not in a vacuum but in an Ireland convulsed with class struggle. Unemployment was soaring; there were attempts in a number of towns, North and South, to organise Unemployed Workers Committees; there were bitter battles to establish trade unionism in factories in Belfast and in shops in Dublin; there were several strikes on wage demands and there were rent strikes in Belfast; there was an attempt being made, through the Republican Congress, to link the national and class struggles.

The ruling class were responding in the traditional way; fostering sectarianism and the "red menace" to divide workers on the one hand — and directly attacking rebellious workers on the other. The bishops Lenten Pastorals came on heavy

about the evils of communism, and Archbishop Byrne of Dublin warned the striking transport workers not to be seduced by the arguments of "un-Catholic" people.

The workers stood firm. When the trade union leaders tried to get them to accept arbitration, with no change in the employer's stand, they hardly got a single vote in support. The rank and file paper "Unity", played an important part in welding this solidarity and throughout the strike the union leaders had to face the criticism of an organised rank and file. "Tramwaymen Defy Union And Vote For Victory", ran the headline in "Workers Voice", the Communist Party newspaper. And again on April 20th: "Reformist Officials Try To Get Men Back: Stand Fast For Victory". Though the Communist Party in fact played a creditable role in the fight, the above sentiments would doubtless be dismissed by the CP of today as "ultra-leftist".

GENERAL STRIKE

The level of the struggle was raised when the state — in the shape of Sean Lemass — threatened to introduce alternative transport services. The workers' opposition to this was quite principled: the drivers offered to provide services themselves — if no fares were collected. This offer was, of course, turned down. At this stage the Communist Party called for a general strike to stop scabbing and when, on March 20th, the government brought in army lorries to ferry people to work, the IRA called for a general strike, arguing that the struggle had gone well beyond the borders of a normal trade dispute and that the government was clearly not neutral.

Unfortunately, the IRA's contribution to the strike was not as helpful as it might have been. Sniping at the wheels of the strike-breaking army lorries was one of their milder antics. On March 23rd two policemen were shot in Grafton Street by a couple of "cowboys" on bicycles.

The counter-attack by the ruling class was sharp. Forty-three members of the IRA and the Republican Congress were arrested, and on March 28th, "An Phoblacht" was seized, not for the first or last time that year. Peadar O'Donnell and



THIS IS HOW 'An Cosantoir' the official Irish Army journal, remembers the 1935 strike in its latest issue: "This was the first occasion on which army transport was used to carry civilians and was, I believe, from the Army point of

view a big success, since soldiers, up to that time, were seldom in contact with the public. By the time the strike was over a number of romances had blossomed into marriage for many soldiers".

Frank Ryan stated their opposition to IRA methods when released: O'Donnell: "We have to be very clear that in the coming together of Republicans and workers behind this strike, gun terrorism has no place."

Ryan: "I disapprove strongly of such tactics as acts of industrial terrorism because in the long run they only hamper the mass movement that alone can bring success. We must not let our unity be smashed by the counter-terrorist activities of the government, which always follow such activities."

Offers of help from the IRA were turned down by the union leaders who insisted that it was a "normal" dispute, and a call from the Communist Party for a united front on this and other issues was rejected by the Dublin Trades Council and the Labour Party.

As the strike went on the pressures on the workers to accept the union leaders' calls for conciliation were getting stronger. In April the leaders' proposals for a settlement were beaten by only a 5 to 4 majority. At the same time, the "red menace" tactic was paying off. The "Anti-Communist League of the DUTC Employees" started to publish "Eye Opener" from the address of the Amalgamated Transport Union, making the usual smears about red plots.

The transport workers eventually won a significant victory in late May, when they were offered increases of between 2 shillings and 21 shillings per week.

The settlement fell short of the original demands for full restoration of the wages cut in 1927-28, and there were no settlements on hours or conditions, but the strikers had held out against huge opposition.

1935 was to be something of a turning point. By the end of the year much was to happen that would seriously weaken the Irish working class. The Republican Con-

gress collapsed, the IRA moved further to the Right, and the short-lived unity of Protestant and Catholic workers in the North was submerged in sectarian violence. The Communist Party line against those "reformist union officials" was to change (along with a good many other lines) and the rift between Irish and British based unions was to widen, while unemployment demoralised thousands of workers.

Some things have changed since 1935 — but a lot remains the same. The reformist union officials are as entrenched as ever and the bishops continue to pastoralise against the interests of workers. Narrow nationalism and bigotry still take their toll of working class strength and the attacks of the bosses are as ruthless as ever and are becoming more so as the crisis within capitalism worsens. There still remains, however, the ability — the need — of workers to combat these attacks despite the manoeuvres of the ruling class and the obstacles thrown up by the reformists.

This ability and need is seen in the growing rate of unofficial strikes, the forming of such committees as that of the petrol workers, the increasingly widespread — though as yet haphazard — use of the sit-in tactic, and the resentment against the National Wage Agreement. It is now, more than ever, essential that the strengths shown in such battles as that of the 1935 transport workers be regathered and enhanced for the battles ahead.

REPRESSION

TWICE, since the beginning of the year, the Galway Branch of The Socialist Workers' Movement have held public meetings on repression. At the second meeting over sixty people, mostly workers, attended. Since then we have been attempting to get working class and anti-imperialist organisations together to work towards building an anti-repression committee — and immediately, towards organising against the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Bill, and against the charging of the Weston picketers.

A letter was sent to The Galway City Labour Party branches, including the "Militant" UCG student branch; Provisional Sinn Fein, Official Sinn Fein and Gluaiseacht Cearfa Sibhialta na Gaeltachta, calling on them to support the work to build such a committee.

Loud noises were heard from the Labour Party in opposition to the Offences Against the State Act and some more are being heard (though somewhat mutedly) against the repressive legislation presently being prepared. Supporters of the "Militant" have spoken hotly against detention of students in the Bridewell. But talk is cheap and as yet we've had no answer. Is this because the leaders don't want to put their feet where their mouths are? We hope not! So we expect a speedy and positive reply to the invitation to discuss joint action.

The Provos have sent no reply as yet, though their members have attended our public meetings. Their turnout at Limerick Jail in support of Rita O'Hare contrasts badly with a turnout of thousands for the anniversary of Michael Gaughan's death. Rank and File Provos should get the skids under the leadership at national and local level to partake in joint action and organisation against repression and in support of the anti-imperialist population in the North who face an immediate threat of a return of a Loyalist ascendancy worse than was there before 1968.

The Official Republicans hide in their sectarian hide-out but in Galway the arthritis of Stalinism may not have reached fatal proportions. We would welcome their participation in joint action against repression.

We also call on the Gluaiseacht to give a response.

We have taken the lead for united action. Now let us have SOME deeds — we have had MANY words.

THE FIRST steps towards the formation of a Shop Stewards Committee for Shannon were taken at a meeting held there during June. A couple of speakers from the Dublin Shop Stewards Committee addressed a crowd of local trade unionists and impressed on them the need for such a committee based on the rank and file which in a situation where we could not rely on the trade union officials to defend our interests. A number of people from Shannon spoke of recent redundancies and closures in which the union officials had let their members down. Further meetings will be held to get a sound base for the new committee.

Bishops Rule OK?

FOR FIFTY years we have had in Ireland a state where social, and to a large extent even medical, attitudes have been dominated by the views and dictates of the most reactionary hierarchy of that medieval institution the Catholic Church. On matters of divorce, censorship, contraception and abortion the law of this land reflects the needs not of the people of the country — still less the working class — but of the jealously guarded interests of a group of Bishops. Mother and Child Bill, Community Schools, access to contraception — all these have in practice faded away at the wave of a crozier.

The days when dancing was denounced from the pulpit are gone, of course. The hierarchy has now decided that clerical disapproval is a weapon which must be fitted with a silencer and used more discreetly. At the time of the Family

Planning Bill no open direction was given to the politicians, instead one heard rather muffled murmurings about the true duty of a good Catholic. No one doubted what that meant, and the result was the desired one; even that limited change was halted.

It might be said that things are changing, that the Church no longer wields the power it once did, so why chip at an iceberg when the water is warm? The answer is that things are not changing as fast as they need to and for some people are not changing at all, and that a bitter rear-guard fight by the Church can be expected against the recognition by Irish Law of what are basic human rights.

"Human Life is Sacred", the Bishops' latest pastoral, while it purports to be a moral guide, is really part of that tight and a timely warning to the faithful that any thought of change is frowned upon by their Graces. No matter how thorny the path there must be no straying. Paragraph 29: "At present more than 2,200 Irish girls are officially registered as having abortions in Britain each year. More than half these are from the Republic." No doubt this is



Browne of Galway

so. It would not of course have anything to do with the fact that the weight of the Church and its reactionary politicians has made contraception unavailable in Ireland

for most women.

Far from being a "moral guide", the Pastoral is a carefully concocted propaganda document. Many seemingly unconnected matters are dealt with as though they were different aspects of the same thing. What is termed in paragraph 49 "a creeping paralysis of the moral sense" is taken to include euthanasia and contraception as well as abortion.

floodgates

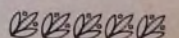
Thus in Britain "the delicate tiptoeing with the legalising of abortion has been succeeded, now that abortion has arrived on a grand scale, by an equally delicate tiptoeing into the field of euthanasia." And paragraph 24: "Availability of contraception will not lessen recourse to abortion." The pastoral is in fact, an attack on all aspects of what the hierarchy chooses to call "permissiveness." To allow any of these "evils" is to open the floodgates to them all.

However, the main thing worrying the Bishops is not the opening of any "floodgates" but the fear that a loosening of the reins on any of these issues might weaken their own influence and power. The fact that these reins are strangling

the lives of many working class women is, to the Bishops, irrelevant.

In the light of the Bishops' motivation and the record of the Church as a whole, in which the needs of people have always come second to its own institutional power, the title of the Pastoral — "Human Life is Sacred" — is sick. Paragraph 20 contains a prime piece of cynicism: "Advances in medicine... have eliminated most of the cases in which pregnancy could be a danger to the mother." Most? And what of the rest? Or are these human lives, perhaps, less sacred?

The importance of the Pastoral lies in the ability of a group of men representing the interests of a powerful institution — with a vested interest in the preservation of the status quo — to produce and push through almost every letter-box in the country a series of "moral guidelines" designed to prop up its own influence. The fact that it exploits peoples' religious beliefs by coming in the well-worn guise of "the Bishops concern for their flock", makes it all the more underhand. We are treated as sheep, all right — to be kept penned.



Unidare: WORKFORCE DOWN PROFITS UP

UNIDARE has tried the same stunt as many other bosses (Jacobs, Chrysler, Glass Bottle, Cadburys etc.) when, in early May, they used the "present economic situation" to announce 67 redundancies. So far the resistance of the workers has prevented compulsory redundancies. But Unidare will almost certainly get what they want through voluntary redundancies. Voluntary redundancies could in fact, cut the Unidare workforce by far greater numbers than any straight lay-offs.

It's difficult to imagine a situation where lay-offs are more out of order. Unidare made £1½ million in 1974, an increase of 47% in profits. All subsidiaries increased their profits. One area made £50 per week per worker. The cheek of McStay, Bright and their gang in proposing lay-offs at this time is unbelievable. Under no circumstances - loss of profits, cash flow difficulties or bankruptcy - should workers pay for the capitalist crisis by giving up their jobs. But in Unidare the very suggestion of redundancies should have sent a shock of rage around the Unidare site, and around Liberty Hall.

Negotiate

Instead the workers' representatives - the officials of the No. 14 Branch ITGWU - were prepared to negotiate redundancies from the word 'go'. Instead of an immediate ban on overtime, and a work-to-rule, or similar action the Section Committee waited until a general meeting in Liberty Hall on Sunday 17th May, where, under the guiding hand of Arthur Kelly - Branch Secretary - the leading lights of the Committee stood FOR negotiating redundancies. Arthur Kelly reported the companies regret that in the present economic

situation they would have to let 67 workers go. They had lost orders, they were overstaffed and overstocked. At no point did he question the company's story. Instead he spoke of the effects of the Common Market, the "depressing" situation and of how many times he had to deliver similar reports to other workers.



In the teeth of opposition from the Chairman of the Section Committee, the head shop steward and the Branch Secretary (who all insisted they were "resisting" - that is, looking for money for - redundancies), the membership passed a resolution resisting redundancies. The resolution stated that the Committee were to inform management that the lay-offs were unacceptable and that they had the power to back this up with a ban on overtime, a ban on bonus and a work-to-rule. This line was taken mainly through the arguments of militants from Unidare Workers for Action, - the rank and file group within the site.

During this period overtime was being worked, supervisors were doing general workers' work and, in a short while, a new night shift was to be introduced into the Alidare factory. The facts point to the EXACT OPPOSITE of Unidare's ridiculous "poor mouth" explanations for putting workers on the dole. The annual report of McStay, Chairman of Unidare, reported profits all round. "The future of this department looks healthy", was the comment on the Cable department where they wanted to let some go. A detailed financial examination of the company in 'Hibernia' a few weeks before

the redundancies were announced was headlined "Unidare; a Minor Miracle". In two sections (SCA and the Foil Department) the company said demand for their products was down.

In SCA, sales were down 54%. But management never answered the question whether a big order for cable was in fact turned down because the profit margin wasn't high enough - a profit margin dictated by Phillips who control Unidare. Demand for aluminium foil was down. This was partly explained by the cancellation of the Gallaghers' order for cigarette foil. According to good information, Gallaghers cancelled the order because of the unhygienic conditions in which the cigarette foil was made. Questions like these were raised by the shop steward for the members in No. 2 Branch, where 16 clerical workers are threatened with redundancy, but no answers were ever reported to the workers.

After seeking to let two men go in the Pump Section it was later made known that the company plans to increase the number of pumps produced each month from 200 to 300 per month.

The company's declarations that they are overstaffed are equally laughable. Since 1969 the number of workers in Unidare was reduced from 2,100 to 1,400. At the same time production has doubled. So the productivity of the workers of Unidare has been pushed up to over three times what it was five years ago!

When all the garbage is raked aside Unidare's true motives for seeking layoffs, that is to RATIONALISE, to up their profits, can be found in simple terms in the annual report of the company. It says "Profits are still not high enough . . . A margin of not less than 10% on sales and 20% on capital must be achievable in such a highly capitalised business". The departure of 65 workers at £37 per week would give Mr. McStay and "the chaps" an extra £12,500 a year to back horses with.

The arrogance of many bosses in seeking lay-offs to protect or boost profits is matched only by the willingness of trade union leaders to help them out. A second general meeting was called for Saturday 31st May at which it was reported that when the Committee informed management of our decision to resist, management sought to open up discussions on voluntary redundancies. As

the Committee had no mandate to do this they brought the idea to the general meeting.

Meanwhile, they had negotiated - without a mandate - voluntary redundancies for a number of welders and fabricators. This precedent, and the support of committee members for voluntary redundancies, helped towards the acceptance of a resolution empowering the committee to negotiate them, although the resistance to compulsory redundancies remained.

So the union officials began the job of bargaining jobs away. Nobody can stop any worker leaving with a lump sum in his pocket. But that is an entirely different matter from a union officially selling jobs away with no demand that any of the departing workers be replaced. When representatives officially accepted the idea of voluntary redundancies this acts as an ENCOURAGEMENT to workers to take them.

At this stage, the company say they want 56 and not 67 redundancies. (Already business is picking up?). The negotiators have secured 2½ weeks per year above the government payment.

Pension

Now that it's certain that workers will be going, the vast majority of Unidare workers who will be remaining can fight for the following:

(i) If workers retire early now it should be the policy of the union to fight for ALL workers to have the chance to retire early in future. Instead of a lump sum that will quickly be spent the union should look for a decent pension for early retirees. BUT:

(ii) All workers who leave - through early retirement or voluntary redundancy - must be replaced. The rank and file can really win this one by refusing to do the jobs left vacant.

Right now, every active trade unionist in Unidare must convince his or her fellow workers that voluntary redundancy is no way out. The lump will soon be spent and most of those who will go will not get a job, for, possibly, years. The way to a better standard of life for most Unidare workers is to stay and organise within Unidare for a bigger piece of the "Minor Miracle" the workers themselves have made.

These Volunteers Cost Us Jobs

THE WORKER has in recent issues dealt many times with the need for a fight against redundancy and criticised the union leaders for failing to give a lead on this vital question. Many bosses, however, have discovered an easy way around any opposition there may be to redundancy plans - and the trade unions have had no answer. Instead of "demanding" compulsory redundancies, managements now "offer" voluntary redundancies. In most cases they have done at least as well out of this approach as the other.

There is, of course, a difference between compulsory redundancy and voluntary redundancy - the bosses don't get exactly the number of redundancies in exactly the places they want them. At least, that should be the difference. In effect, the easy acceptance of voluntary redundancies and of flexibility within the work-place has meant that managements have in no way been restricted by shifting from "compulsory" to "voluntary".

It is an astonishing thing in these days of over 100,000 unemployed that "redundancy" is not a bad word. To many people it means not the sack but a sum of money, a carrot they grab without a thought as to what they will do when it's run out. And, as all the forecasts show, there will be less and less for them to do as time goes on.

Now more than ever the unions need to establish firmly that they will not sell jobs and that any job lost through redundancy, natural wastage, or any of the more subtle devices, is a job to be filled again. And they need to make it clear that members who accept voluntary redundancy have the lowest priority for any new jobs available. The Waterford Branch of the ETU has already taken this stand.

Hiring

In Britain, the Speke Trade Union Committee, a local inter-union committee which has taken up the fight against unemployment in Merseyside has adopted a resolution insisting that anyone who has accepted voluntary redundancy should not be re-employed in any of their work-places. This is also the policy of a number of local shop stewards' committees in that area: they will oppose the hiring of those who have accepted voluntary redundancy until others have been taken on.

The trade unions have been even more helpless in the face of voluntary redundancies than in the face of closures and compulsory redundancies. In Chrysler, Dublin, we have seen the spectacle of the management having to close the doors to applications for voluntary redundancies which the union had done nothing to oppose. Within days of 77 workers leaving the production targets were stepped up! Suddenly, the "market situation" had changed and the bosses wanted 1½ times the previous production from 2/3rds of the work-force!

Nobody can blame the rank and file for their apathy when faced with redundancy. For all their decrying of unemployment the major unions do nothing to stop managements' adding to the dole queue. The Socialist Workers Movement opposes redundancy in all its forms and our members have taken up this fight in several work-places recently. Our job is to commit sections, branches and national unions to refuse to let their members go, and to make it obvious to those who opt to go that they are acting against their own interests and those of fellow trade-unionists.

As one worker who will lose her job because of the deal said to me, "If we weren't in a union the bosses could do what they like with us. But we are in a union and they're still able to do it." There's only one answer to this situation: take the unions out of the hands of the bureaucrats who control them and who "lead" workers into wholesale redundancies. Only when the unions are controlled by the rank and file, who have no other interest than their own protection, will we be able to effectively combat the threats and tricks of the Gerry Harveys of this world.

G. KERRIGAN

IRISH WOMEN UNITING?

DURING JUNE about 80 women met in Liberty Hall to discuss the possibility of working together around issues particularly affecting women and to bring about some united action by women in Ireland on their own behalf. The result of this meeting is an umbrella organisation called Irish Women United.

The basis for discussions at this first meeting was a Charter presented by some of the groups represented there and incorporating many of the areas of women's oppression and the demands we might make relating to them.

The document itself, it was generally agreed, was imperfect. It is far too general, in parts completely utopian. It ranges from the very particular "free 24-hour nurseries giving every satisfaction in respect of hygiene and education" to blanket demands like "an end to compulsory education". At the same time the section concerning working women, contains many of the points socialists have been pushing and an awareness of the problems posed by job evaluation, productivity deals, and other techniques used by bosses to do workers, women and men, out of their rights.

This section calls for the implementation of a national minimum wage; the male rate for the job where men and woman work together and a re-evaluation, under the control of the rank and file trade union movement, of jobs where women only are employed.

Free legal divorce and free legal contraception for all are also demanded and the organisation has decided to start an immediate campaign for free legal contraception as a priority, and wherever possible to bring up the other demands in the Charter, and to publicise them.

The uneven nature of the document was in fact reflected in the meeting. Women from Socialist Workers' Movement, Revolutionary Marxist Group, Peoples Democracy, the Labour Party, Lesbian Women, Radical Feminists, Womens Liberation Group (Dublin U.C.G., and U.C.C.) and many others differed in the emphasis they placed on the different sections. It was agreed, however, that the Charter was in the nature of a Manifesto, and it was not intended that trade union branches, or tenants' organisations etc. should be asked to accept it totally, or reject it. Nor is the document a socialist one and it would be wrong to insist that it should be. But it is also weaker in its impact by not being directed at working women. For they hold power to force changes which others do not.

Irish Women United provides a possibility for women to work together on issues they feel are important, a possibility that has not existed since the very early days of the Womens' Liberation Movement. The Constitution of the organisation allows for the formation of groups within the organisation around particular issues. A general assembly will be the deciding body of the organisation. In this way it is hoped to avoid the mistakes made by the Womens' Liberation Movement, and also to avoid the fate that befell that body.

(The group can be contacted through S.W.M., or directly c/o 32 Clarinda Park East, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.

M. McADAM

Cinemas: the carrot and the stick

HAVE YOU noticed that the cinema business is dying? Well, Gerry Harvey did a few months ago and told us all about it in the evening papers. "The cinema business is bleeding to death", he cried, and he should know - he's managing director of Odeon Cinemas Ltd. And yet, just recently there was Mr. Harvey in the papers again, telling us this time that there's a cinema boom and admissions are up 11% on last year.

You might be forgiven for thinking Mr. Harvey was confused or even schizophrenic - unless you knew that in the period between the two conflicting statements cinema workers had been conned and bullied into a pernicious productivity deal. The first statement was part of a barrage of gloomy news designed to demoralise workers - two days after the deal was signed Mr. Harvey could tell the truth. If you or I did that we would be liars, but with Mr. Harvey it's just good old business enterprise.

The deal was proposed in the usual way - with the stick and carrot. On the one hand Odeon threatened to close their cinemas - the Savoy Corinthian and Metropole - and on the other they offered a few quid extra. The deal involved 50% staff cuts and dire worsening of conditions and Odeon produced figures to "prove" that business was bad and that there was no alternative. The union officials of ITGWU's No. 7 Branch accepted those figures without question just as they accepted Odeon's right to hire and fire workers at will. All they were concerned about was the price of the hiring and firing.



GERARD HARVEY

And it is here that an important lesson must be drawn - not only by cinema workers but by all workers who in the face of attacks from the employers seek in vain for militant leadership from our bureaucratic union officials. Any suggestion that the union should fight the redundancies and indeed fight Odeon's threat was instantly shot down, "unrealistic", being the favourite word. Never at any stage did the officials even consider any course other than "reasonable negotiations" - even when it was clear that negotiation under threat might be reasonable from the bosses point of view but was certain to create redundancies and worsening of conditions.

Nowhere more clearly than in such deals do our union "leaders" demonstrate that not alone do they not object to the system under which workers labour is bought at the whim of the bosses but that they have found a comfortable niche within that system where their role is to negotiate the price the bosses pay.

IRISH CONGRESS OF
TRADE UNIONS:

Indians

AS TRADE UNIONS ought to be fighting organisations of the working class, a congress of trade unions ought to be a peak of fighting strength. But the Irish Congress of Trade Unions doesn't look like that. It looks more like an assembly of tired bureaucrats, company hacks, and government agents.

So little do workers look to it for leadership, that a survey of trade union members last year showed that 6 per cent of members had never heard of Congress and another 30 per cent said they knew almost nothing about it.

Yet this shadowy Congress has quite a lot of influence over our lives. Its leaders negotiate National Wage Agreements—and then sit on committees trying to get rid even of small increases promised in the Agreement. Many industrial disputes come up against Congress rules and procedures. So how does Congress get its authority?

The present Irish Congress of Trade Unions came into existence in 1959, following a 14-year split in the trade union movement. There are 91 trade unions affiliated, of which 24 have over 5000 members. 30 of the affiliated unions are British-based. The four largest unions (Irish Transport, Amalgamated Transport Workers' Union of Ireland, and A.U.E.W. Engineering) have 49 per cent of the membership between them.

The annual meeting of Congress (and the special Congresses held in connection with National Wage Agreements) receive most public attention. But it is the work done, or not done, between Congresses which could be important and is instead a story of inertia or interference.

Fight within

The number of trade unions and dissatisfaction among members with the service they are getting, has led to the problems of "poaching" and breakaway unions, in which Congress has adopted rules which prevent workers from joining the union of their choice. The aim is to prevent one union encroaching on an area where another union is already operating.

Of course, we believe that where workers are not being adequately served by the union they belong to the answer is not for them to leave it, but rather to fight within it, to change it from the inside, to make it more democratic and to make it look after their interests. To break away means, too often, that the most militant workers isolate themselves and leave the less committed members behind, more under the thumb of union bureaucrats than before.

Nevertheless, times can come when groups of workers feel they have no alternative but to leave. They must have a democratic right to leave. They should be allowed to exercise that right whether or not it is the best thing to do in the circumstances: they are the people best qualified to make that decision.

Yet Congress's attitude to this real problem is that the workers must toe the line laid down by their officials. The Congress Disputes Committee takes the decisions. To quote from the 1974 Annual Report, "the worker concerned should not be continued in membership of W.U.I. but should be returned by them to I.T.G.W.U." "A.G.E.M.O.U.

should not represent these members and should make arrangements to return them to the F.R.W." You would hardly realise it was human beings that were being shuffled around like this! This method does not resolve the original complaints. It means that well-established breakaway unions like the National Busmen's Union can never enter Congress. What is worst of all, it encroaches on our hard-earned right to join a trade union, and in this way weakens the trade union movement as a whole.

Picket

A second substantial way in which Congress has affected us all is the two-tier picket. Pickets were for long regarded by most Irish workers as inviolable. The success or failure of a strike often depends on whether the pickets are respected. But in 1970 Congress introduced the "all-out" picket, which no trade unionist was supposed to pass, but which cannot be placed until the Industrial Relations Committee of Congress meets and gives its agreement. This means that in any strike where Congress will not agree to a complete stoppage – and in every strike until the Committee bothers to meet – workers from unions other than the one in direct dispute are supposed to cross the picket-lines.

By a Congress decision made in 1973, "no union should pay strike pay to members who refused to pass a picket placed by a union where no All-Out Strike application had been approved." Since the two-tier picket was introduced, there have been countless cases of trade union officials appearing in person to shepherd their members across the picket-line of another union. Workers are being taught to ignore pickets. As soon as this lesson has been

Tully jokes about jobless

AS ONE part of its effort to solve the unemployment problem for the many out of work in the city, the Waterford Council of Trade Unions last month arranged a meeting with the Dept. of Industry and Commerce and the Minister for Local Govt., Mr. Tully. The purpose of the meetings was to bring pressure to bear on the "powers that be" to get jobs for the unemployed.

Members of Waterford Corporation, including the Mayor and the two local TDs, W. Keneally and Eddie Collins, also came along, supposedly to give the deputation some teeth.

After discussing the problem over a "drop" and a light meal in a well-known boozier in Naas, the deputation shared a certain optimism about the mission. (Great stuff that, it really does brighten your spirit.) Unfortunately our optimism didn't last as long as our hangovers.

T.U.
MOVEMENT
FACING
UP TO
CRUNCH?

Right: Hands linked in struggle, Mullen, Kennedy and Carroll congratulate each other on life appointments



successfully learned, they will go on to ignore the pickets of their own union. The employers must be rubbing their hands with glee... A newly-published study by the Irish Productivity Centre concluded: "Despite fears of being labelled as scabs, more flexible attitudes seem now to prevail on the passing of pickets than was formerly reputed to be the case."

The same survey showed that two thirds of national trade union officials thought Congress had *too little power* whereas half the non-full-time activists interviewed thought it had *enough*. Strangely, Congress exercises its substantial powers without being formally organised as a federation. Each member trade union retains its independence. Any union which fails to fall in line with the disputes procedure can only be suspended or expelled from Congress for "conduct or action... detrimental to the interests of Congress or affiliated organisations."

Mandate

Even on the far-reaching National Wage Agreements, the unions which voted against have on the whole abided by their terms. A special Congress has been held to empower the Executive to negotiate each Agreement. (When the original terms of the 1974 Agreement were thrown out, no mandate was given to the Executive to negotiate new ones. So new terms were "submitted" by

the employers at a "meeting" which was "not for negotiations"!)

Congress is run by an Executive Council of 23 members and a network of committees. It also contributes to government bodies and joint bodies with the employers. Last year, for example, Denis Larkin was a member of 8 Congress committees, 3 committees of the Employer-Labour Conference, 4 government bodies (Industrial Training Authority, National Economic and Social Council and a sub-committee, and a Foras Forbartha committee), and Congress representative to 4 other bodies. Fintan Kennedy and John Carroll almost equal duties.

Each of these people must never have time to see a real live worker! As a result, they get out of touch with the rank and file and live in a world of bureaucracy and meetings outside the labour movement. With the best will in the world (and it's few that have that), they cease to think like workers. And they will remain in charge unless we are all prepared to be active in the trade union movement and drag it out of the world of class-collaboration and make it again a fighting force for the working class, under the control of the rank and file workers. Then we can replace the unity of bureaucrats at the top of Congress with the unity of organised workers in action.

JOHN GOODWILLIE

GALWAY
MILITANT

YOU KNOW there's something happening when over 300 union members attend a meeting which usually has an attendance of less than a hundred. This was the case at the Annual General Meeting of the Galway Branch of the ITGWU during June.

The size of the meeting reflected the growing interest of the members to discuss and hammer out an answer to the bosses' and government's attacks. Unfortunately what took place at the meeting was little help.

Following the solemn opening of the meeting with prayers – which disgusted many union militants who believe in keeping religion out of working class issues – there was an address by the Deputy Mayor, none other than Senator M. D. Higgins. On and on and on he went, making great play of his reputation as a left-winger and a radical democrat, yet at no time did he call for regular union meetings or election of union officials. Still less has he issued any statement supporting the Crown strikers in their struggle to defend trade unionism. As a result of this time-wasting several vital issues were not discussed.

And there was much to discuss. Galway has seen an upsurge in working class action in the past few months, with strikes in Bruno, Westcon, Beanna Beola



James Tully

that jobs will not be saved or won by going "cap in hand" to meet these "powers that be". The power which has thrown tens of thousands of workers on

Avoiding controversy at ITGWU

NOT EVEN the ITGWU annual conference could escape the grim realities of the present economic crisis. Throughout that week in Wexford there were repeated calls for the trade union movement to "DO SOMETHING". But the demands never went much further than that - neither from the platform or from the floor.

Of course, there were bitter attacks on the "economic experts", the failures of the government, the massive unemployment, but very little indication of how they are to be fought. Even the one firm stand which seemed to be taken - Fintan Kennedy's call, "Hands Off the National Wage Agreement" - was watered down, and has now dissolved.

That's not to say that the leaders of the ITGWU, and the conference delegates, don't care. Quit obviously, they do. But they lack any of the confidence in their ordinary members to start looking for answers where they are to be found:

in the rank and file of the trade union movement.

They cannot conceive of putting forward a policy of "no overtime", "no productivity deals" while unemployment is at this level, because that would mean having to stand up to the employers, having to organise support for the policy, and putting effort into maintaining it. Of course, there were attacks on excessive overtime and even on productivity deals, but somehow it's a long way from the conference rostrum to the shop floor.

Congrats

The way discussions were organised made it difficult for different approaches to come out clearly. And the whole atmosphere was one of congratulating each other rather than being prepared to criticise where mistakes are made. It was Fintan Kennedy who decided to call back Ann Speed a second time to speak on women's rights. Her case should have embarrassed him and his sort, but it didn't - they were immune and she pulled punches.

Kennedy's chairmanship actively prevented any controversy developing.

He had resolutions moved one after the other and let delegates speak to anything which had been moved at any time, so that just as discussion was getting going on natural resources somebody would get up to speak about pensions.

John Carroll, who is the most forceful of the Trinity on the platform, gave some amazing performances. Quite apart from the radio interview during the conference in which he suggested that the trade union movement might do the turn which it has done on the new Budget, he also complained that there had been much "confusion and tip-toeing" on the subject of family planning and then completely avoided the issue. In his view, the trade unions should not go ahead of its members on moral and theological questions. Everything else he said would lead you to believe that he saw the whole question of women's rights as a social and political question.

There was some criticism of trade union leaders expressed at the conference - that is, of leaders of other unions. A shop steward from Donnelly's launched a disgusting attack on ASTMS and on its organiser, Noel Harris, describing him as a "maverick" trade unionist. Of his own branch secretary he said that he had been proud

to see him at the factory at 6.30 in the morning to give his members moral support - that is to push them past the ASTMS pickets. Now, there's no question that some of ASTMS's recent recruits from supervisory and managerial staff do not always behave themselves well as trade unionists, but this is no way to deal with them. (In earlier WORKERS we reported the bad role played by ASTMS members in Cantrell & Cochrane and Rathbone's). But nobody from the platform or from the floor got up to condemn this unfraternal behaviour.

Others were trying to make themselves popular by pandering to backward ideas - Joe Sherlock of Sinn Fein, for instance opposed the abolition of the marriage bar for working women.

That was all part of the atmosphere at the conference, one which takes away from it completely the authority it should command as the policy-making body in the union. It is not that and nobody, least of all the executive, sees it as that.

Instead of being an assertion of the potential of the working class movement, the ITGWU conference was a closed-in and confident affair.

SOLIDARITY!

ONE OF the low points of this year's ITGWU Conference was a speech from Waterford Branch Secretary, Michael O'Brien who, among other things, blamed the slump in demand for Irish-made toilet paper and the consequent redundancies in Raytex Ltd. of Waterford, on the coachloads of people going North to Jonesboro - to buy toilet paper, and some other things... He suggested the access roads to the market town should be blocked.

O'Brien also condemned the British interference in this country which, he said, could be seen in the case of Wellworthy Ltd., an engineering factory in Waterford. He was referring to the fact that workers at the parent company in Hampshire, England, were opposing the transfer of work to Waterford. He was also making a sideways swipe at the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU in Britain) because its members are involved in the Hampshire factory.

This narrow parochial view is what stands in the way of trade union progress in this country. It doesn't occur to the likes of Michael O'Brien that the Wellworthy workers in England are doing nothing different from what his members would (hopefully) do if somebody attempted to transfer their work out of a factory in Waterford to another in Kerry.

But the even more scandalous thing is that it doesn't occur to the ATGWU, which has members in both countries, to make the connections, and put the Hampshire workers' case in front of workers in Waterford. Late last year the IDA were promising 1050 jobs in this new factory, which is making pistons, valves, etc.; the numbers of several workers are now at 55, so naturally enough people feel disappointed. It was the ATGWU's job to explain the situation.

In a similar situation in Dublin they again let their members down. Assembly of Triumph and Rover cars in British Leyland's plant in Kimmage is to be replaced by the manufacturer of seat frames for BMC cars. But that work has to come from somewhere - in this case from a factory in Bolton, Lancashire, where - not to surprisingly - the workers have decided to resist the transfer just as it was supposed to take effect.

British Leyland in Ireland have attempted to blame the delay in opening the seat frame factory on the ban on Leyland products coming into this country. Again, the ATGWU could have kicked the ball back at them firmly by lending support to the stand by the Bolton workers. Their members are involved in both places. They should have said clearly that they would not accept replacement jobs which were being taken away from other people and thus pressing Leyland to retain jobs in car assembly.

OFFICIALS BLOCK NT ACTION

and Crown Controls, as well as the formation of the Shop Stewards Committee in Galway and Connemara. A week before the ITGWU Branch meeting the Gaeltacht Shop Stewards and Rank and File Committee convened a meeting of thirty trade unionists - many of them shop stewards - at which the need for a separate ITGWU branch in the region was agreed. This demand is not based on some sort of parochialism - in fact Gaeltacht factories have given good support to the Crown collections - but on the basis that a separate branch in the region would allow greater participation and democracy.

The rising militancy of Galway rank and file workers has been matched only by the manoeuvring of the full-time officials. Galway ITGWU Branch Secretary Sean Meade, tried to sell the Bruno womens' strike short and his Assistant Secretary did his best to sabotage the Beanna Beola strike in Carraroe where the last phase of the '74 Wage Agreement has not been paid.

There is a reason for this carry-on. Mr. Meade has established what he called in an article in "Liberty" - "a good employer-employee relationship in the city". The reply from the I.D.A. manager was that he "would like to put on record how much we value our relationship with

Mr. Meade". This is the relationship: in I.D.A. and Gaeltarra Eireann factories the I.D.A. push for a closed shop with the ITGWU. There are numerous cases where the factories have been unionised BEFORE there was anyone actually working there. In return for these members handed to them on a plate Mr. Meade and Mr. Furseys Walshe guarantee industrial peace by smothering every grievance that workers have.

While this makes it handy for the union bureaucrats it drastically weakens the workers strength. Militants in this branch of the ITGWU must strengthen their links with each other by forming an action group within the union.

The support given by these militants to official and unofficial strikes demonstrates that the basis for a strong rank and file movement capable of wresting the unions back from hacks like Meade is already there. The fight must be taken into the unions with demands for regular monthly general and section meetings; for a separate Gaeltacht branch; for the democratic election of full-time officials, making them subject to recall.



Denis Larkin and Andy Barr at a Congress meeting

LABOUR GAME

A WASTED JOURNEY

the dole doesn't rest in the Dail. The bosses are no longer investing because of the economic crisis - a crisis which they themselves created. They are trying to solve their problems at our expense.

As I stated earlier this was ONE part of the Trade Council's strategy against unemployment - unfortunately, it is also the only part to which they seem prepared to give their energy. Late last year a number of demands were formulated on this issue, they included:

- 5 days work for 5 days pay;
- 35 hour week with no loss of pay;
- End of productivity deals which lead to redundancy;
- Ban on overtime;
- End to double-jobbing;
- Nationalisation under workers' control of industries threatening redundancy.

The council's energy would be better used by going to the 10,000 workers they represent explaining these demands, and why and how they should be fought, and in organising workers to fight to reject the burden being passed on by the bosses as a result of their crisis.

The Unemployed Workers Committee has told the Council that it is prepared to go to factory and Branch meetings with council members to explain why and how the demands must be fought for. The fight against redundancy must be linked to the fight against unemployment. Unemployed workers can shatter the myths (built up by the bosses, press and media) about the jobless being "on the gravy train". They can also point out how the strength of the worker at the bench is often determined by the number of jobless at the gates.

Unity

By adopting this type of strategy the Trades Council could show that there is a way forward. By fighting aggressively for their own demands, with unity of action and purpose, class conscious workers can save jobs and maintain and improve their standard of living, despite the dithering of the Tullys and McCarthys and the machinations of the bosses.

J. CLOONO

TEN O'CLOCK, the Labour Court. Four of us there from the union committee, plus the full-time official. The bosses' delegation is late, and so are the Labour Court judges. The union official gives us his written submission to read while we wait.

It's a sterile-looking room on the fifth floor of Anslay House, two long tables facing each other with the judges bench at the top, slightly raised. This will give the judges a somewhat imposing look as they dispense wisdom from above.

Enter the man from the FUE, very efficient-looking, clenching his pipe in his teeth and his brief-case in his hand. Trailing in his wake are half a dozen from the bosses' side. The clerk of the Court arranges an exchange of submissions, we get copies of theirs, they get copies of ours.

A few minutes later the judges come in. Everybody stands, the union official stubs his cigarette - no smoking while the court is in session. One of the judges is a "workers' representative", another an "employers' representative" and the third, the chairman, is supposedly "neutral". All are appointed by the Government. All three are fairly elderly and wear identical pairs of glasses, the chairman wears a spotted bow-tie. Chairs are dragged into place, everyone sits down and the game is on.

The clerk stands and solemnly intones the name and nature of the case. The ritual is made slightly ridiculous by his informal beard and sweater. The union officials stands and, word for word, reads out his written submission, then sits and the FUE man gets his turn. Then the question and answer begins. The chairman asks the union official for clarification of some point of the claim, then turns to the FUE man for his version. This goes on for about an hour, claim and counter-claim, verbal shadow-boxing. The other two judges join in with their questions. It is impossible to make out which is the unions' man and which is the bosses'.

Charade

The judges eventually indicate that they know enough of the arguments to give a judgement and the game is over. They will give the score in a few weeks' time.

Should they recommend against our case and we feel strongly enough about the issue we can then use our trade union muscle to force the bosses to see things our way. Of course we could have done that in the first place and spared ourselves the charade.

The formality of the "court", and its rituals, are deliberate. The appearance must be given of an impartial decision handed down from the three wise men. Yet what's impartial about it? Even if the workers' representative always supported the workers he would be outvoted by the bosses' man and the governments'. And then the employers - though far outnumbered by the workers - get equal representation. So the decision on our claim, as on all which go before the Labour Court, will not be made on the merits of our case but on what will give the best chance of stability. The court is a stabiliser, designed to prevent rocking of the boat.

The Labour Court must, of course, sometimes find in favour of the workers. Just as the government can not always be seen to support the bosses so must the other institutions of the state give an appearance of independence. The interests of an individual boss is secondary to the overall interests of the system. But all its decisions will be in the interests of the system as a whole. Providing "stability", that perpetual but impossible aim of capitalism, is the function of the "court". Stability of a system based on exploitation is not in the interests of workers - neither is the Labour Court.

THE WORKERS TAKE THE STAGE

IN THE 1950s British workers in Ford's car plants were, for the first time, experiencing speed-up, the practice of speeding up the production line for which Ford was already notorious in America. A shop stewards committee emerged to combat it at Dagenham, and in 1963, after a strike over a victimisation, seventeen of its leading activists were sacked. Against this assault the full-time officials did next to nothing. For the Ford workers it was a dramatic setback. The shop stewards committee was all but smashed, shop floor resistance drastically weakened. The men worked on in quiet desperation.

Just one episode in the continuing story of the Ford workers' fight for control of the line and eventually, one hopes, for control over their own lives. It's an exciting dramatic story of the class struggle, the kind of history they don't teach in the history books. An excellent book has been written about it though, 'Working for Ford', by Huw Beynon follows the fortunes of the Ford Motor Co. in Britain and tells of the struggles of British workers against the might of the third biggest multi-national in the world.

Ford's

Now a play has been written which tells the same story in a very different way. 'The Motor Show', by Steve Gooch, and Paul Thompson, is a comedy, but at heart a very serious one. It traces the developments of the Ford Empire from its beginnings in Detroit, where even the capitalist press had to express outrage at the violent methods employed by Ford's Service Dept. — a band of some three and a half thousand private policemen whose job it was to maintain discipline among the workers, protect Ford's property and, above all, to prevent unionisation. But with the outbreak of World War II and profitable Government contracts in the offing Ford finally relented and allowed the unions in; he didn't want his workers striking for union recognition when there was so much money to be made from the War. 'De ultimate form of built-in obsolescence' as Mr. Big calls it in the play, 'Dose weren't bangs we were hearing, dey were booms!'

The post-war boom was even better. Peace, for Henry Ford, meant as big a piece of the world market as he could elbow in on. His preference for building plants in underdeveloped areas, where high unemployment meant low wages and a vulnerable labour force, brought him to places like Cork and Liverpool. When the system which he operated so profitably started lurching in fits and starts towards the present crisis, Ford, like the rest of his parasitic class, was determined to make the workers bear the burden. As Uncle Sam and John Bull put it in one of the many songs which punctuate The Motor Show:

E. O'DWYER

Right: *Kartoon Klowns, a London-based group, in a scene from their play, about law and order.*



Inflation spirals to the sky
No-one knows the reason why
That's why you and I
Must blame the workers!

The play uses a mixture of documentary scenes and slapstick humour in a way that makes it both an entertainment and a piece of recorded working class history. So if you were taught to believe that history is dull then this is a play to get hold of and enjoy. It was first performed to an audience of carworkers and their families in Dagenham before being transferred to London.

The Abbey is perhaps an exception. It is the 'National' Theatre, a showpiece, and as such it receives a large grant. Many smaller theatres get little or no financial aid at all and because of the sort of theatre they do, for the most part plays by middle class people about middle class people, their audiences are largely limited to middle class people. The language, the themes, the atmosphere — all act as effective against working class people joining this exclusive little club. Even if they wanted to.

Subsidy

Will we ever see it on an Irish stage? Unlikely. Theatre in Ireland is still largely a middle class habit and tends to reflect the decadence and confusion of that class. But it's a fallacy that workers don't support the theatre in this country. It's true that not many working class people go to the theatre; for entertainment most prefer the cinema, the television or the pub. But, like it or not, workers do support the theatre, in particular the Abbey which last year received a Government Subsidy of £320,000. That's taxpayers' money, yours and mine, and it enabled the Abbey to continue another year putting on extravagant rubbish for American tourists and Dublin's theatre set.

Cake Play

The beginnings of an alternative are emerging however. Already we have had the Non-Stop Connolly Show, a series of historical plays on the life and times of James Connolly. A less ambitious affair was the Cake Play, a parody of the hardsell tactics which our trade union and political 'leaders' use to get the N.W.A. accepted. And if you go along to the next Resources Protection Campaign meeting you'll get a chance to see Miss Natural Resources 1975, a comedy on the plunder of our mineral wealth.

Bare and often roughshod beginnings. But beginnings nevertheless. And they are important for that. Just as politics is too important to be left to the politicians so theatre is too important a means of expression to be left to the middle class theatre establishment.

Snooping about

"YOUR OBSERVATIONS will be appreciated at an early date", said Monica Barnes at the end of a statement from the Council For The Status of Women urging "no further increases to men until women reach parity". Well, most of my observations would be unprintable but I would not very respectfully point out that the government didn't even have the cheek to suggest anything as repressive as this. This would mean wage cuts for two thirds of the working population. It would mean equalising women's pay upwards to what are in many cases already unacceptably low rates. It would mean trusting employers to transfer savings from non-payment of increases to men to bring up women's wages.

Behind the tough talk about "sell out" and "no longer . . . used as an economic sacrifice" there is a reactionary core of middle class assumptions a hundred miles distant from the realities of working life as they confront the thousands of working women.

"IT IS ULTIMATELY only the British government which has the power to take the steps necessary to bring peace, democracy and community reconciliation to the area" — 'United Irishman', June 1975. Whose bloody side are you on?

A COURT CASE reported in the 'Windsor Express' in England recently brought the most frightening prejudices to light. A soldier was charged with assaulting an Irishman in a pub and causing him grievous bodily harm. Martin Bolger and three other Irish labourers had been drinking in a pub in Windsor. His three friends left while Martin went into the jacks. There, the soldier attacked him, kicked him in the groin and hit him in the face and the stomach. Martin had to be taken to hospital and undergo an operation. It was the soldier's second charge of assault. And this is how the judge, Mr. Justice Thesiger, wrapped up the case:

"The accused has had two terms in Northern Ireland. He would be naturally afraid that a drunken Irishman would be attacking him."

The judge told him: "You have served in Northern Ireland where a large number of people were probably attempting to murder you. One of the same race, drinking no doubt on the high wages available over here, approached you, I accept that you did not take any money."

"But you did for the moment intend to do him grievous bodily harm. I think you must be careful with this conviction behind you to resist the temptation to use violence unless you are ordered to shoot in Northern Ireland."

"The sentence for losing your temper with this man is six months in prison suspended over 12 months."

IT WAS SAD to see that a talk on Connolly and Women was only included in the Irish Labour History Society's symposium as an after-thought. Sadder still that the talk was poorly prepared and took a rather one-sided view of Connolly's attitude to the women's oppression. (A briefer, but more adequate account was published in the last WORKER). But it was outrageous that the discussion was cut short in such an abrupt way. All the speakers had gone on for too long but there was plenty there to discuss further. It was pushed to the limit and eventually ended when one of the Liberty Hall staff marched in with a brush and started dismantling the microphone.

We were making way for bingo, of course. The ITGWU has its own priorities.

"BIG TOM" St. John, boss of the Ambassador, Regent and Academy cinemas is noted for his warm smile and jovial manner. However, my good friends in ITGWU's No. 7 Branch know different. "Big Tom" was approached before last Christmas to donate a turkey as a prize in a fund-raising raffle in aid of indigent union members.

He was quoted as replying: "No way. I'll be lucky if I have a bloody turkey for my own table the way things are going. He was last seen heading towards his marble-floored mansion in what could have been a Mercedes. Keep your turkey, Tom, and stuff it."

THE BODY organising that raffle is an interesting one. The Theatre and Cinema Benevolent Society. It's run by ITGWU's No. 7 Branch whose members contribute 6p each per week to the fund. The members voted to increase this to 10p over a year ago but this was knocked on the head by Mickey Mullen for some obscure reason.

Started in 1938, it's the only genuine fund of its type, helping out retired branch members who have fallen on hard times. While wishing it increasing success and hoping that other branches and other unions take up the idea, I do hope that the reason such a fund is necessary is not forgotten: the lousy wages paid to workers and the pittance they are fobbed off with when they are retired. More than half the people helped by the TCBS are ex-female cleaners, the lowest paid adult workers in the branch. They get a full £10 less than men doing the same work — and those men aren't paid too well either. The existence of the fund is necessary and that necessity is a damning of the system under which we live — capitalism.

MARY BURNS

Without mass involvement there would be no possibility of backing up, for instance, this call from a statement from the Chairman and Secretary of the Shops Committee at Brittain's: "We now call on Mr. J. Keating, T.D., to study the possibility of taking over the franchise for British Leyland vehicles, and re-employ all displaced assembly workers."

To say that there is apathy is only to admit the mistakes of the past. It will be necessary to take risks to stand a chance of achieving what the Brittain's shop stewards are suggesting: nationalisation of the assembly industry. The Socialist Workers Movement believes that nationalisation would have to provide for shop stewards' control of manning, speeds, rates and conditions.

That's the only way out of the present mess. The Chrysler workers have shown that car workers are not beaten yet. The selective use of the ban on built-up imports can still be a valuable weapon in the struggle. Now that more of the car workers are back at work the Branch Committee must not allow the problems of each individual plant to be treated individually. Every spark of resistance, starting with Chrysler, must be fanned up to set a fire going again. Then the car workers really can "show a lead".

CHRYSLER WORKERS

GIVE A LEAD

A STRIKE by production workers at the Chrysler motor assembly plant in Santry, Dublin, has had the plant at a standstill since the middle of June. The workers are claiming the restoration of a differential in pay which they have had, and now lost, over other motor assembly workers in Dublin.

The differential had been established some years ago when Measured Day Work was introduced. The Chrysler workers were outside the National Wage Agreement, but their own "house agreement" was even more restrictive. Their claim has been in front of management for over three months. When they came out on strike the managements were "offering" a rise of £5 a week spread over a year. A new offer of £10 was turned down unanimously by a general meeting of the strikers.

It was the management's attempt to bring in redundancies and step up production at the same time which stiffened the resistance. The unions, mainly ATGWU, refused to negotiate compulsory redundancies but were unwilling, or unable, to stop 77 men taking voluntary redundancy. Within days of these redundancies happening the workers received schedules for a 50 per cent increase in output from the reduced work-force!

The news of redundancies came first in April and was something of a surprise

to most workers who had been prepared to accept the management's assurances that the moving around of some workers was not a lead-up to redundancies. A general meeting with all four unions represented decided to place an embargo on all built up imported vehicles if the company should attempt to introduce compulsory redundancies.

Shortly afterwards, the management extended an 'offer' of voluntary redundancy from clerical workers to production workers. The ATGWU full-time official opposed the scheme but it was brought in nonetheless by letters to each individual worker.

The rush for voluntary redundancy surprised even the management who were forced to persuade a number of "key people" not to go out. The reasons are not too difficult to find, however: the demoralisation within the car assembly industry, the absence of clear leadership over the months and years from the Action Committee and from the ATGWU Branch Committee, the defeats in Brittain and Armstrong's, the rumours about Chrysler UK being in trouble, and the

absence of a pension scheme in Chrysler Ireland.

But all of these things could have been answered with effective union organisation and leadership in Chrysler itself. Unhappily the Shops Committee failed completely in the task; the head Shop Steward was one of those to opt for voluntary redundancy.

The imposition of the ban on built-up imports has been a last-ditch attempt by the car assembly unions to force the hand of the government and the employers to maintain employment in assembly. It has been a difficult decision to defend against the constant attacks by the bosses through the media. It has also been

unpopular with some of the assembly workers, and has been breached by dockers and transport workers in Rosslare.

The ban on imports of built-up cars raised as many problems as it solved but it needed to be defended. It could have provided a focus for opposition to the run-down of the industry if there had been an attempt to organise the men around it — with demonstrations and meetings, and occupations where closure is threatened. The Branch Committee plays its cards too close to the chest and seems either afraid or unwilling to involve others. There was talk some weeks ago of regular fortnightly meetings for all car workers. What happened then?



Right: Danny Browne, ATGWU official, addresses Chrysler strikers

A STRANGE 'SOCIALISM'

STRANGE THINGS have been happening in China over the past few years. The Chinese leadership are making the most gigantic turnabouts in their policies which must bewilder even the most enthusiastic Maoist. Nixon, Kissinger and the rest of the gang have been changed from "imperialist aggressors" into guests of honour, Edward Heath and the Tory party are regularly praised in Peking. Relations between China and fascist Spain are becoming more friendly and China has even supplied arms to dictatorships to suppress popular revolts — as in East Pakistan.



Chou En Lai greets Empress Farah Diba of Iran — land of a thousand torturers — on arrival in Peking

Many people in this country see China or Russia as their model of socialism. The picture of masses of disciplined people working from dawn to dusk on communal land sums up all they want to know about socialism. However there are two basic features of Chinese "socialism" which expose it. In the first place, the socialism that was built in China had nothing to do with a working class revolution. Secondly, the Chinese leadership are attempting to build socialism in one country which is in contradiction to the fundamentals of Marxism.

China before 1947 was held down as a backward economy by the imperialist powers of the West. At one stage, British merchants were draining silver out of the country and forcing the Chinese to accept opium in exchange. Mao's revolution in 1947 was a great victory in that it defeated this kind of exploitative blood-sucking. At the same time we have to examine who exactly was in the leadership and what they were pursuing.

The fact is that the working class in China played a minimal part in the struggle. The Chinese Communist Party had been forced out of the cities after disastrous

defeats in the 1920's due to the crazy attempt to unite with Chinese capitalist elements who eventually turned on them. Their base was for many years in one of the most backward regions of China. The number of working class members of the party was insignificant.

The Chinese "communist" revolution of 1947 was in fact the work of the middle-class intellectuals leading a vast peasant army. Their programme offered only minor reforms to the working class of the towns — their primary task was the welding together of unity between all classes. Mao's perspective was the building up of a powerful nation-state in order to be self-reliant and independent of imperialism. His model was Stalin's Russia.

But for Mao to be able to push forward China's economic development he had to be able to accumulate a surplus from what was produced in order to divert it into investment in heavy industry. In other words, men and women had to be forced to "save" by not allowing them to consume all they produced. This was achieved in Russia in the 1930's by the most brutal dictatorial rule, smashing all worker and peasant resistance, and in fact pulling back all the gains that were made in the 1917 revolution.

However, the problem Mao faced was worse. The Chinese population were much poorer than that of Russia in the thirties so that not only did they need to consume

the largest part of what they produced — but many of them needed more than they produced.

The real point is that the dilemma — i.e. balancing between the need to accumulate capital and preventing the level of consumption getting so low that there is massive revolt — is only a dilemma for those who wish to build "socialism" in one country. If Mao had an international strategy the Chinese revolution would have been used as a base from which to spread the revolution to advanced countries.

This would have been an appeal to the workers of the world on a class basis rather than the present manoeuvres with capitalist governments. A revolution in the advanced countries was a condition of the survival of socialism in China. In the absence of such a strategy Mao was forced to pillage the Chinese peasantry and increase the exploitation of the Chinese working class in pursuit of his goal of national power.

Just as the revolution in China was achieved by the association of classes, Chinese foreign policy is based on seeking a coalition with the ruling classes of the world in its defence against the super-powers of Russia and America. It does not

IT'S bad enough to have the Chinese government turning cart-wheels under the name of socialism but worse to have their slavish followers turning with them. One of the latest posters to appear on Dublin walls from the Maoists says "Support the EEC" but also says "refuse to have workers pay for the crisis". Well, it's either one or the other. Make up your mind whose side you're on.

matter what type of regime they line up with because the most important thing is the interests of the Chinese economy — not the interests of the working class. It is precisely because its aim is national power that China does the craziest turn-about in foreign policy and makes allies on the basis of its immediate aims rather than the pursuit of working class power throughout the world.

But the Chinese working class have shown numerous signs of revolt against the state-capitalist regime. The number of reports of strikes have risen since 1965. Shanghai, Nanking, Hungchow railways have experienced massive strikes. In Hangchow there have been reports of "disturbances" and protests against police brutality, torture and the high living of the bureaucrats.

K.A.

A FULLER account of China under Mao is given in *International Socialism 78* available from Worker Book Service, 95 Capel St., Dublin 1.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE SOCIALIST WORKER'S MOVEMENT, WORKER BOOK SERVICE, AND SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE WORKER, WRITE TO SWM, 95 CAPEL STREET, DUBLIN 1.

15 children, or that a further child would break her will to live, or that it would mean giving up a job she wanted to keep, or that it would mean tying her into a relationship she did not want to have, or any of the 1001 reasons why a woman might not want to be a mother.

SUPPORT

The Bill requires that two doctors from different medical practices would have to agree to the abortion. It requires that only doctors give advice on abortion, ruled out organisations such as Pregnancy Advisory Services on which so many Irishwomen arriving in England have depended. These clauses would, of course, delay the actual operation, but the Bill also sets a 20-week limit on the ending of pregnancies.

Nobody may like to admit it but abortions are performed in Ireland by the most horrible methods which often cause permanent injury. Irishwomen have every interest in seeing the National Abortion Campaign succeed in defeating the Amendment Bill. The campaign is supported by Labour MP's and by trade unions, locally and nationally, whose members see that there is a fundamental working class and democratic reason why this should not become law.



People's Liberation Army enter Nanking, 1947

GERMAN SACKINGS: THE PRICE OF PARTICIPATION

A RECENT TV programme about the German industrial "miracle" devoted a major part of its time to the mass sackings by Volkswagen and the reaction — or more accurately, the non-reaction — of the unions to the loss of 25,000 jobs.

West Germany, with a Social Democratic government, is often pointed out as the most enlightened of the Common Market countries, the state where — by law — workers sit on the supervisory board of the major companies. In fact, the Social Democratic view of worker participation is given the force of law.

Volkswagen, which is 40% state-owned, has like all the other car firms in Europe been badly hit by the latest economic crisis. It has, like the others, decided that the workers must pay for the crisis. The "socialist" Economic Minister stated bluntly, "I will have no British Leyland in Germany".

When the company puts its redundancy plans to the supervisory board the seven workers' representatives voted against and the fourteen management reps voted for. The unions, though they voted NO to the sackings, took no positive action to prevent them. In fact a Volkswagen director remarked afterwards that Herr Loderer (the chief union representative) has adopted a much more managerial approach at the decisive redundancies by saying that they would help the company to get over the present crisis. In other words, what's good for Volkswagen is good for the workers.

It is easy to see why "socialists" like Michael O'Leary favour worker participation on the German model. This con permits bureaucrats like Herr Loderer to talk militantly to workers then sell them out behind closed doors. As the idea of this kind of "participation" is mooted more and more in Ireland socialists should be ready with the answer: Shove your Workers' Participation: we want Workers' Control.



Loderer (left) shakes on it with VW boss

35,000 On Abortion March

ON JUNE 21st, 35,000 people, mostly women, marched through London in protest against a proposed law which will have a serious effect on the position of Irishwomen, but which has never been discussed in this country. It is, of course, the Abortion (Amendment) Bill which has been brought in by a right-wing Labour MP, James White.

If it became law this Bill would require that any woman having an abortion would have to have been 20 weeks resident in Britain. This would make it virtually impossible for the 2 or 3 Irishwomen who go to Britain every day for an abortion to end an unwanted pregnancy in the way they wish.

Most people in Ireland would like to ignore the fact that so many — or any — Irishwomen have abortions. It is a fact, nonetheless, and the failure to face up to

it is merely another part of the gross hypocrisy which rules in this area of Irish life.

Abortions become necessary because contraception is not generally available and because of the widespread ignorance about its use and about sexual relations in all aspects.

As we argued in the last WORKER the essence of the matter is the woman's right to choose. She is denied that in so many ways in Ireland — by the legal situation and by the prevailing attitudes.

That is what is at the centre of the broadly-based opposition to James White's Bill — the assertion that it is the woman's right to choose, and that she should not be penalised for her choice. The Bill would mean that women who chose to end an unwanted pregnancy would have to rely largely on the back-street abortionists and place their health, their possibilities of having more children, and even their lives, at risk. IN 13 years from 1960 to 1973, the number of deaths from abortions fell from 62 to 12, as a direct result of the 1967 legislation which made it easier to have an abortion.

The proposed legislation would, if passed, require women to present a case that continued pregnancy would severely damage her health or her children's health. It would not matter that the woman was only 15 years of age or already had

CROWN CONTROLS

STRIKERS at the Crown Controls factory on the Galway Industrial Estate set a new headline for workers in Galway by organising a march from the strike-bound factory into the town centre at the end of June. With the help of the Galway Shop Stewards Committee the strikers were able to publicise their case and counter-act the lies being put out about the dispute from management and from the strike-breakers who have claimed to represent the union.

The strike, which has been going on since late April is about a central issue of trade unionism: the right of the union members to elect their own representatives. A shop steward was dismissed for using "foul language" in an argument about redundancies (see the last WORKER). The accusation was nothing but an excuse — the bosses simply did not want Martin Daly as shop steward.

Workers in Galway who have had it demonstrated to them so often that they cannot rely on their full-time officials for support and leadership must see the strikers' case. But the issue has been confused by the scabs who have tried to establish themselves as the union committee and who claim that the decisions have been undemocratic. If anything the issue was let lie too long. As we reported in the last WORKER the shop steward had been willing to let the case go to a Rights Commissioner. Only after his recommendation went against the union was the strike decision taken.

The Galway branch of the Socialist Workers Movement has emphasised the importance of the Crown Controls

Scabs fail to halt strike



Picket on Crown Controls factory on Galway Industrial Estate

strike in several leaflets: "If the Crown workers go back to work defeated it means that the way is open for the bosses all around Galway to use the threat of unemployment to victimise shop stewards and steam-roll over all opposition in the factory. This way they can enforce low wages and rotten conditions. If the Crown workers win, however, it means that shop stewards in other factories will win greater confidence to represent their fellow workers effectively".

That is why the efforts of our members have been directed to getting support for the strike from elsewhere. The response to collections has been encouraging. Money has come from the Dublin Shop Stewards Committee

and from the Galway Gaeltacht as well as from factories in the city. Sean Meade, the Galway Branch Secretary of the ITGWU, showed what he thought of such solidarity when he held on to money raised for the Strike Committee among workers in Galway Printed Fabrics.

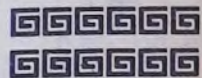
SUPPORT

The support that has been shown can be built on and used to isolate the 50 or so who have broken the official picket to return to work. The Strike Committee must go out and organise support. The Coiste

Oibri na Gaeltachta could arrange for meetings in their area at which the Strike Committee representatives could put their case. Similar meetings could be arranged in Galway City. The collections can be extended — and the support directed to another bigger demonstration into the city, and to a mass picket on the factory supported by delegations of workers from all work-places on the Industrial Estate.

In that way the claims of the breakaway group to represent the workers can be exposed. They are, in fact, led by a group of staff members who are being paid during the strike and who are quite happy to prostitute themselves to the bosses.

MEMBERS of the Socialist Workers Movement distributed leaflets in Trim and Navan describing the strike-breaking activities of local haulage contractor, Michael Diviney, whose trucks have been taking containers from the factory to Dublin docks. There was an interested response to the leaflets as Diviney and his drivers are well known in the area. And there was a rather different response from Diviney and his mates. They followed the comrades from Trim to Navan and encountered them just as they had finished leafletting. After some pushing shoving and a few punches thrown they tried to maintain that they were not scabbing as the strike was unofficial! The Gardai arrived to threaten our comrades with charges of conduct likely to lead to a breach of the peace if they continued leafletting. They made it clear whose side they were on.



They got money from the management to send around notices by registered post on behalf of a "new" branch of the AUEW. They were able to pay for inserts in the local papers — which the newspapers may have printed in good faith but which the journalists and printers should object to. Not only the shop steward's position is under attack but the functioning of a whole union branch.

To show their recognition of the Strike Committee as the proper representatives of the union's interest in this dispute AUEW branches throughout the 26 Counties should send moral and financial support to the Galway strikers.

It is in the hands of trade unionists throughout Galway and throughout the AUEW to ensure this strike wins.

URGENT NEED FOR UNITED FRONT

THERE ARE new needs, and new opportunities, for the building of a united front against repression at this time. In the North, with the clock going back to 1968 and British accommodation to some sort of loyalist rule on the cards, the threats to the Catholic population are increasing. Counter-violence will not ward them off; mass political action could remove them altogether.

In the South, the government is doing its part of a deal with the British by bringing in the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Bill. If it gets away with using this and other repressive legislations against republicans, the whole working class, but particularly the activists, are in danger.

It is time we presented a united front of working class and anti-imperialist organisations against these attacks, which will sharpen as the political and economic crisis worsens.

The Socialist Workers Movement has many times raised this call and addressed it to the republican movement. But the Officials have now retreated into a shrinking circle of dogmatic sectarianism. They no longer even raise the calls they used to for unity — against internment, extradition, the EEC, etc. Instead, they are trying to keep in with the liberal establishment by impressing on them what reasonable people they really are. At the same time, their attacks on left-wing organisations increase.

The Provisionals' leadership will not commit itself to anything it cannot control. So it ignores the calls of other groups to join in common action — even for the defence of Provisional republican prisoners! They don't even consider it worth their while to answer a letter from the groups campaigning for the release of Rita O'Hare asking them what their attitude to the campaign was.

That might be understandable if the Provos were already doing a better job for their prisoners, or already campaigning against the Special Court. But they're not.

Most of the trade unions choose to ignore the repression against republicans. But they do so at their peril. The building of a united front must be aimed quite centrally at drawing in trade union organisations. The call must be directed particularly at those committees, at local and national level, which have passed resolutions condemning repressive laws. The rank and file of those organisations will have to apply concerted pressure on the leaders to commit them to more.

Those working class activists, socialists and republicans, who see the need for a united front with a mass base must seize whatever opportunities present themselves. The Provisionals would have us believe that, since the cease-fire, they see more clearly the role of political action. Their members should by now be asking themselves when the leadership is going to put that into reality and start showing them how.

The split in the Officials and the formation of the IRSP should also make the ground more fertile. Those who helped form the IRSP had in the past criticised the Officials' holier-than-thou attitude to other organisations. The new group is, on paper, at least, committed to joint action against repression and for British withdrawal. However, their support for common activities in defence of Rita O'Hare and Rose Dugdale has been less than half-hearted.

The calls for a "broad front", which the IRSP first made over six months ago,

can now more easily be taken up as the Officials' harassment of the organisation has decreased in recent weeks. But, as we suggested in the last WORKER, the IRSP has not given time to working out how it is going to carry its paper commitments into action. The conference in April simply did not consider that — and we are now seeing the consequences.

The IRSP would have learned nothing from past mistakes if it believed that it could show a lead, and attract working class support, by simply calling on people to join the party on the basis of a familiar mixture of radical and republican ideas. The thing that would mark a real break from the traditional republican past of most of its members would be a real effort to argue the party's politics in the rank and file of the working class movement and make them relevant to that arena.

The claim to be working for socialism has no content if it is not translated into day-to-day work among rank and file workers. As a tail-piece to traditional republican activities like marches to Bodenstown it carries no weight.

The essential way in which a defence against repression can be turned around into an offensive for socialist goals is through a united front in which workers are represented as workers and socialists and others maintain their independence and put forward their own political ideas.

The tradition of republican military elitism offers no lead to anti-Unionists and anti-imperialists still reeling under the several political shocks they have received from the UWC strike onwards. Tit-for-tat killings only increase the dangers. Those who argue that there can be

some republican solution to the national question prior to the working class solution only help the loyalists knit together their united front.

The united front does offer an alternative to elitist military actions, to the secret negotiations with British government representatives and the telephone exchanges with civil servants. It offers a way for those committed to the struggle against repression to be more than spectators. It offers a way for socialists to put forward working class methods — that is, mass democracy and mass control — and the working class's particular interests. It could provide an alternative to the Civil Rights Association's pathetic attempts to convert Merlyn Rees. And it could provide a way of showing up the hollowness of the SDLP's claims to oppose internment.

If, in a worsening situation, the need arises more directly for physical self-defence of whole areas, the united front would allow such action to be brought under democratic control.

The building of a united front is an essential and urgent task in order to overcome the political demoralisation and confusion which is taking root. It will be built in the first instance among Catholic workers — inevitably — and it will be difficult for some time to carry the work into the trade union movement except in some outlying areas. But unless we have that aim the only solution to the national question, the establishment of a Worker's Republic in the 32 Counties, is postponed forever.

If socialists and republicans wish to carry the fight against repression to the mass of the working class it will take patient work, an attention to detail about how the case is presented and how the activities are prepared. It will not be done by minipickets or poster campaigns however correct the demands of these may be. All the actions will have to be linked together into a chain which carries directly into the workers' organisations and the work-places.

The Socialist Workers Movement believes that the forces exist to carry out such a campaign. The political will must be found — because the need is more urgent every day.

GROWING SUPPORT FOR T.O.M.

THE REALLY important thing about the May conference of the Troops Out Movement in London completely escaped the papers in this country. They all reported in some detail the speech by a right-wing Labour M.P. Leo Absa, but none of them stressed that this conference was made up of delegates from the rank and file of the labour movement. Indeed, there is growing concern at all levels in the British labour movement at the role "their" government is playing in the North.

The Troops Out Movement is aiming to organise that concern in a clear direction; its two demands are Troops Out Now and Self-Determination for Ireland. TOM exists to gather mass support for these demands and have workers in Britain break from, and oppose, the traditional ruling class policy on Ireland.

The unfortunate thing about last month's conference was that the rank and file workers there were not heard more distinctly. When the discussion was opened to the floor it was dominated by the representatives of a series of political groups who had their very particular, and often very petty, axes to grind.

However, the potential of TOM is the essential thing. As the crisis in the North deepens and the Labour government is left even more obviously without a policy, TOM, with broad trade union support, could have a real effect on the situation. TOM must give its union affiliates a way of making their presence felt as distinctly working class organisations. And socialists in Britain must regard it as a priority to see TOM and its basic demands pushed to the centre of the labour movement.