

# THE WORKER

FOR WORKERS POWER AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

INSIDE

the worker

Political repression, riots, unemployment  
**NOW FIGHT BACK**

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# Defend Polish Workers



Crowds round a tank in Gdansk. A Solidarność sticker has been put onto its turret

The workers in Poland are being crushed by brute military force. Internment without trial; conscription of key workers into the army; massive price rises; police terror—are all the order of the day.

The regime calls itself socialist. It is nothing of the sort. It is only the boss class everywhere which needs to break free trade unions.

And it needs to do so in Poland because it is intimately connected to

the world capitalist system.

The Polish workers need no hypocritical support. They do not need the fine words of Ronald Reagan who actually disbanded the air traffic controllers union in his own country. While he condemns the Polish military, he buys the guns and bullets for the murders in El Salvador and Turkey.

Nor Maggie Thatcher. It is her state

which is the past master of internment without trial. To Thatcher we say: Warsaw, Belfast—Troops Out Now.

Solidarity can only come from the workers movement. Across the world it is the one struggle. East and West, our task is to defend our unions.

The best form of Solidarity with Polish workers is through building a militant working class movement here.

**SOLIDARNOŚĆ**  
**for ever**

**Warsaw, Belfast, Troops Out Now**

# aside

THE IRISH Labour History Society is the official body that has, since its foundation in 1973, pioneered labour history in Ireland through encouraging research, publishing articles, holding seminars, collecting documents etc. It is a most worthy organisation without a shadow of doubt. And every year in its journal it publishes the most worthy collection of labour history articles you could wish to find. This year's edition: SAOTHAR 7, IRISH LABOUR HISTORY SOCIETY, c/o ICTU, GRAND PARADE, RANELAGH, DUBLIN 6. PRICE: £3 is certainly no exception. Apart from the article mentioned above it contains major pieces on the Housepainters Union in Dublin 1860-90, Building Workers Unions, the 1945 Congress Split, and Miriam Daly on the history of women workers in Ireland.

But, for the general reader interested in labour history, it has to be said that, worthy though these all are, they too are a little dry, pretty boring to read and (except for Miriam Daly) not very relevant to your present-day labour activist.

One or two interesting pieces like Austen Morgan on Thomas Johnson and George Rudé on Eddie Thompson (now there's a labour historian who really is a pleasure to read). But otherwise, unless you really want to know what the Stockholm Workers Library is up to these days, it's strictly for fans — and pretty academic ones at that.

Now the other group in the labour history business is an altogether more funky outfit, the IRISH HISTORY WORKSHOP has just published its first journal after four years of existence. You can get it c/o 127 STRAND ROAD, SANDYMOUNT, DUBLIN 4. PRICE: £2. And there is undoubtedly some good stuff in it: Rayner Lysaght on the Munster Soviet Creameries, Margaret Ward on the Ladies Land League, Fergus D'Arcy on the Irish in Britain. But that's about it really. The other articles are all lightweight. The Irish History Workshop has not yet found the means of translating to paper the fascinating experiences and lessons brought to its workshops by many old labour and political activists. Maybe next time.

In fact, it's outside the formal societies and workshops that we come across the most authentic labour history to be published recently. It has the catchy title of THE ROLE OF THE RANK AND FILE IN THE 1935 DUBLIN TRAM AND BUS STRIKE and you can get it for 50p from the author BILL McCAMLEY, 10 GLASNAON PARK, FINGLAS, DUBLIN 11. It's a very different kind of labour history in a number of ways. First off, it's written by a real live worker, himself a rank and file activist until recently in the now sadly-defunct Busworker group. It relies mainly on the testament of old CP activist Larry White and the files of Unity, the contemporary rank and file paper—impeccable sources compared with official union and government reports!

But, above all, it tells a great story in a lively way. There's a real 'feel' here of what was going on and that's quite rare. And then, Bill makes a lot of it (rank and file control, inter-union rivalry, nationalism etc) relevant to today — maybe critically with another bus strike in the offing. His personal political asides are idiosyncratic, outrageous even, but what the hell. Whoever dreams of pure labour history will never live to see it — except perhaps in the pages of Saothar, written by academics for academics. No, we do need it all from academic research to popular stories. If you're a labour history fool like me, you'll buy it all. If not, get hold of Bill McCamley's effort and take it from there. Better still, write your own.

JOHN CANE

# We will not be intimidated

**WE WILL not be intimidated. We will fight for the right to control our own bodies.**

**We will fight for a woman's right to choose whether she has a baby or not.**

**And we will fight anyone who denies us that right.**

That was the message that came out of the very successful women's conference organised in Dublin on December 6th.

It was organised by the Irish Women's Right to Choose Group in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Abortion Campaign. The day was divided into sessions and workshops on 'Women and Poverty', 'Sex education', 'Male Involvement', Post Coital Contraception' and 'Where the Campaign goes from here'.

Everyone agreed that the task ahead of us was no easy one. The attitudes of Irish society towards women push women into isolation and force them to cope with their problems on an individual level. The State refuses to provide adequate child care facilities leaving women in the loneliness of the home or having to fork out exorbitant sums for private creches. Unmarried mothers if they are lucky enough to find a job that pays them more than a £6 a week automatically lose the paltry unmarried mother's allowance. And the all pervading guilt around sex that the Church encourages leaves women unable to control their own fertility.

## Discrimination

On the employment front, the picture is no rosier. A woman from the North of Ireland told us that women cannot expect to earn more than 66% of a man's wage. And a woman from the South told us that not only are unemployed women seldom considered unemployed but that when they do try and claim unemployment benefit, they are discriminated against.

In the final session discussing the way forward for a woman's right to choose campaign, the need to combat the ever growing 'pro-life' amendment campaign clearly emerged. Indeed throughout the day you could hardly forget it. A picket by the society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) waving obscene posters and brandishing bibles, chanted to every attendee of the conference that she was a murderer. A man signing himself in as Adolph Hitler attempted throughout the afternoon to disrupt the conference. And a woman who went to the lengths of disguising herself in a wig tried to attend a workshop. Her cowardice looked even sillier when her wig was removed and she crept out.

These pathetic antics of SPUC aside, the conference recognised the need to fight seriously the barrage of the pro life campaign. Right to Choose meetings around the country were suggested. Motions against the 'pro-life' amendment should be passed where possible in the Unions. Country areas had to be

included if rural women were not to be left to the hands of SPUC.

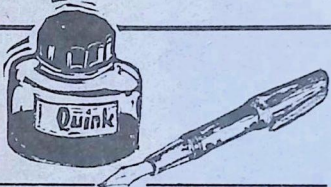
Some women felt that decriminalisation of abortion had to be the major plank of the campaign. Others felt that the immediate need was to counter specifically the 'Pro life' amendment campaign, since it was something that could be concretely raised now. A planning meeting for January for a future campaign was called for.

We must ensure that as many women as possible attend that meeting. You can get details from the Irish Women's Right to Choose Group at 3 Belvedere Place, Phone 787160/787664 or go to their regular Wednesday meetings at 8.00pm at the same address.



## Letters

41 Herberton Pk, Dublin 9



## No gay ghettos

Dear Worker,

In Ireland the three main gay groups, (NGF and IGRM in the South, NIGRA in the North) are only interested in gaining respectability and in providing social outlets for gays.

The provision of discos and cultural facilities are much needed and certainly should not be sneered at. But, this in itself is not enough. We can never achieve self liberation if we come out of one closet only to lock ourselves into gay ghettos. The only way that gays can become truly liberated is by getting involved in the struggles of other oppressed groups like women, youth, workers, and in the struggle for national liberation.

However, in their quest for respectability the established gay groups refuse to get involved in anything that doesn't specifically concern gays. Thus there is a need for a progressive gay group, one that will be prepared to advance from the discos and bring politics into the gay movement.

Several people who had been involved in the Gays Against the H-Block group realised that there was a need for a progressive gay group and consequently organised a Gay Liberation Workshop on Saturday 28th November.

The workshop was attended by about 40 people. It tended to deviate from the agenda and the debate was certainly sharp. The workshop opened with a contribution from Charles Kerrigan which traced the history of the gay movement

internationally, and its development in Ireland.

A general discussion followed and while some people felt that the state was not so oppressive towards gays since the draconian laws are rarely used and the disco is allowed to operate without police interference, others disagreed with this. They argued that the central question was the state, that it had no right to interfere in anyone's sexual affairs or to brand people as perverts because of their sexual preferences. Consequently it was put that there could be no achievement of liberation under capitalism and that gays could only win through by taking up the struggle for workers power.

Disagreement was certainly recorded on this proposal but the debate at least opened some people's minds and made them more amenable to discussion.

Tony O'Hara who was present as a delegate from the IRSP, gave a pledge of full support from the IRSP for activities that might come from the workshop, and stressed the need for gays to become involved in the struggles of others thereby advancing their own struggle.

In the afternoon debate continued with David Norris putting the point that it was the organisers of the workshops' fault that there were no working class gays present. It certainly was a political weakness that we who organised the workshop failed to put up posters in working class areas. The workshop failed to produce a manifesto but it did produce plans for a workshop on 'Lesbianism and relations between gay men and lesbians', to be held in February and tentative plans for a gay newsletter.

Important contacts were made at the workshop however and it can be seen as the first step towards the building of a progressive gay group. There is a more important task and that is the building of the revolutionary party. It is the duty of gay revolutionary socialists to work with this group and to fight to win it over to the politics of Lenin and Trotsky.

**PATRICK COLLINS**



## Empty gestures

Dear Worker,

Garret Fitzgerald and his constitution road-show is suggesting that perhaps the question of divorce and contraception could be opened. He says this between visits to Margaret Thatcher and denunciations of H-Block protestors.

The Bishop of Limerick, Most Rev Dr Jeremiah Newman, regards any mention of such topics as the betrayal of the Catholic faith and condemns these 'Hands across the border' gestures.

Why is it that the basic right to divorce and contraception is not granted as a reform that WE are entitled to but only as a sop to Ian Paisley.

And why is it that this crowd of clerics who take vows to remain outside marriage want to imprison us in ours even when it has degenerated into a living hell?

**Joe Ryan**  
Dublin

## RED WOMAN

Socialist Women who discuss and act on issues like:

- Women and the Trade Unions
- Women at Work
- A Woman's Right to Choose
- Creche facilities

Come along to our regular meetings. Contact Mary on 758071

# THE WORKER

## Ten years old this month

Des Derwin

Well, we're still here. The first issue of 'The Worker' — series 1, No. 1, was published in January 1972. To have survived is itself an achievement. Many previous socialist papers, and some published since the first 'Worker', have had much shorter lives. In the era of Connolly and Larkin even, socialist papers came and went like the mayfly. One of them was a namesake of ours — 'The Worker' — and hopefully we have more in common with it than the name. Many 'new' papers in those times, however, were really the same paper which continually changed its name to get around the censor's decree.

Whereas socialist papers were frequently banned at the beginning of the century, and sellers were in danger of attack from fanatical Catholics in the 30s, today's sellers are stopped and questioned by the political police or moved from the GPO or barred from particular pubs. (And of course, you wouldn't even carry a copy of 'The Worker' in your pocket in certain areas of the North.)

The physical repression of the revolutionary socialist press may have eased since earlier years (for the time being anyway). But it still clings on for dear life in a very cold climate. The financial burden of producing a regular paper constantly threatens to sink it. But above all, in today's Ireland a revolutionary working class paper (and the group behind it), which has pinned the flags of relevance and readability to its mast, is like a small boat in a big ocean. It sails on a sea that has no strong socialist — let alone revolutionary socialist — tradition to help it float. It sails a narrow channel between the becalming waters of the 'soft' left (the Labour, Communist and SFW Parties) and the tidal waves of Republicanism. At the same time it has to steer clear of the sectarian rocks which are strewn all along the revolutionary left — each one the stronghold of a small group apparently untouched by the sea around it.

The headline of the first 'Worker' was 'NOW FIGHT BACK'. We have been repeating that headline in different forms ever since! Throughout the decade the working class has been under attack from Wage Agreements, redundancies, injunctions, inflation, the British Army, the RUC, political repression, government spending cuts and on and on.

There have been gains — like the emergence of the women's movement. But many of the gains are now under attack.

It is from the fight back against the system BY WORKERS THEMSELVES that a socialist workers' movement (in small letters) and a Revolutionary Party within it will be built. The fight back — in the workplaces, Unions, housing estates, ghettos, mass movements — and the link-up between all the major struggles, led by socialist workers, is the only road to Socialism. To connect with, give a voice to and offer leadership to these struggles is the guiding Editorial line.

### Major struggle

The main article on the front page encompassed, in a rather generalised way, the North and unemployment throughout the country. But it reflected our concern, which has continued, to show that all the major struggles of the exploited and oppressed are really parts of the one struggle against capitalism. That each requires a socialist presence that links them up and brings them forward to the ultimate end of workers' power. From the start, however, 'The Worker' has sought to make concrete connections with real struggles, especially in the workplace. The first actual strike report appeared in the second issue. It managed to avoid naming the Dublin supermarket group where the dispute with WUI butchers took place! (It was Elephant Markets — now defunct.) The first significant strike reported on was the Michelin strike in Belfast, in issue No 4.

The SWM (founded on 13th October '71) and with it 'The

Worker' has not continued in one straight line since its initiation. But there has been a consistent thread. The first series of 'The Worker' ran for 48 issues between 1972 and 1977. When the SWM ended itself as an independent organisation, and went into the Socialist Labour Party, 'The Worker' ceased publication.

The Socialist Workers Tendency, founded in the SLP, produced six issues of 'Socialist Worker Review' from February 1978 to early '79. The Review was in magazine format and allowed a more in-depth treatment of topics for the more political audience of the SLP and its periphery. It was replaced by 'The Bulletin', a duplicated fortnightly, which was sold to SLP members only. This made it possible to comment more closely on the internal life of the SLP and to overcome the nurtured suspicion, at the time, that the Review was intended as an alternative to the SLP's own paper.

Fifteen issues of 'The Bulletin' came out between April '79 and February 1980. The SLP's own paper, 'Socialist Labour', in fact actually filled the gap left by 'The Worker' to a large extent, carrying on its style and informed by much of the politics of the Socialist Workers Tendency. When the SWM left the SLP in February '80, it was not a case of the old SWM re-emerging from the closet. The new organisation was called the Socialist Workers Movement, and its new organ

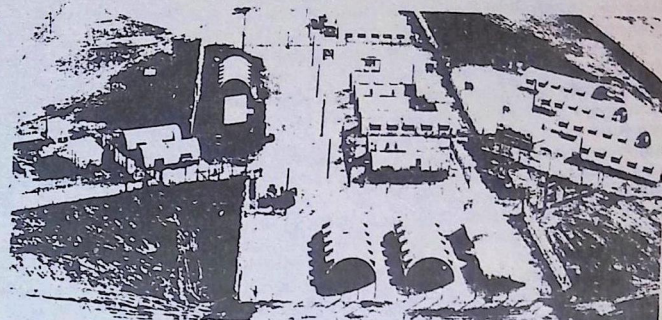
# the worker

JANUARY 1972 NEWSPAPER OF THE SOCIALIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT

Price 3p

## Political repression, rents, unemployment

# NOW FIGHT BACK



Concentration Camps—1972

Justice Minister O'Malley has threatened statutory sentences for political offences. There is a clear indication that repression will increase sharply in the Twenty Six Counties.

One year ago, Lynch announced during the 26th Christmas recess that he was preparing to intern people alleged to be conspiring against the state. He faced a massive response, and had to withdraw the threat.

Then, in August 1971, Lynch brought in internment in the North, with the backing of the British Army and of the Heath government in London. Again, the pressure was on Lynch to do the same. So far he has insisted to the British Tories that it would be politically impossible to take action against republican militants in the South and to prevent movement across the Border. It was not as if he did not want to; he could not.

Now, there are increasing signs that the Lynch government is prepared to take action. Cardinal Conway has prepared people psychologically for the violence bubbling below the surface in the South. What he is really preparing people for is to accept state violence against militants.

### LYNCH

Lynch need not introduce internment at all. He has a number of choices. Already sentences have been increased for offences under the Firearms Act. The course of justice may become even more summary. Meanwhile, the British Army is opening another internment camp at Magilligan in Co. Derry. Continuing to use internment as a main instrument of repression, the British government and the Stormont authorities are making more remote the kind of political statement which they themselves say they want.

Gerry Fitz was last week prepared to concede that talks could open if the state does not want to stall. When this was leaked, he changed his line. He knows what happens to people who talk in the Six Counties: two months imprisonment for publishing one copy of a republican newspaper.

The grim reality of mass unemployment has struck home to people throughout the country. But different people have different reasons for talking about it. What a fight!

In the North, male unemployment reaches 50 per cent in some places. Total unemployment is over 45,000. In the last five years employment has actually fallen by 12,000. That is, there were 12,000 less jobs in 1971 than in 1966. Emigration has been falling steadily in the South in recent months largely because of mass unemployment in Britain. But it has been rising in the North. It is now proportionally twice as high as in the 26 Counties.

There is one important difference between 1972 and the mid-1950's. The workers, particularly in the South, have become used to steadily higher living standards. They have greater strength and more confidence than 15 years ago.

The industrial working class is now larger than it was 15 years ago. Redundancies in Ireland reflect the crisis in the world system. Unemployment in the

United States is rising; it now stands at 6.1 per cent. Unemployment is even increasing in the 'boom' countries, West Germany and Japan.

We must use our strength, the strength of our class to fight back against unemployment. In this struggle we will challenge directly the rights of the bosses and the government to run our lives.

### FIGHT BACK

Immediately, we must mount pressure throughout industry and the services, North and South, to get the trade unions to declare a ban on overtime, selective work to be done, and to negotiate productivity deals, and withdraw from present productivity schemes. We must have our struggles on the demand for 'Five Days' work or 'Five Days' pay.

There are obviously more choices to come. Workers in factories which are threatened with closure should prepare to resist. If the bosses are not prepared to keep the factories open, then the workers will, and no Forthright Entry Act or Industrial Relations Act will stop them.

The fight against unemployment is linked to the fight against Irish entry into the E.E.C. This could only mean more redundancies, and it will not matter whether you are a Protestant worker or a Catholic worker. The system will try to throw you on the rubbish dump. The only alternative to this situation, and to the E.E.C. is revolution. Demands for more protection for industry are totally unrealistic. We must start the campaign now, and make sure that it becomes a struggle for the Workers' Republic.

was called 'The Worker', but these names were not automatic choices. However a continuous tradition — and a loose organisational thread — was seen to go back to the old SWM and the old 'Worker' and a second series of the paper was launched in April '80. Since then there have been 14 issues, and a couple of 'specials' for the H-Block campaign. With circulation rarely going above 4,000 and rarely going below 1,000 paid sales we've a place among the Great Survivors more than the mass media. We have maintained probably the best (as they say in the Carlsberg ad) produced paper on the Irish left, aimed at a general working class readership. It is a strong base from which to work for a mass circulation paper. And

we've had a few scoops (though not as many as on a Friday night) like the Littlejohn story and the confidential document implicating government ministers, the Sugar Company and Ruairidhi Roberts of the ICTU in a conspiracy to hold down the wages of workers in the Company.

Also on the front page of the first 'Worker' was an endorsement from Bernadette McAliskey. It expresses today, ten years later, the politics of the 'Worker' in a way that is more than adequate. We can do no better than repeat it in full:

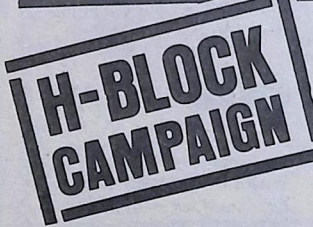
"As a committed Socialist Republican I welcome the appearance of the 'Worker'. 'The Worker' is more than just another paper. It is a pledge on the part of a group of committed Socialists

to do the work necessary to create the Socialist Workers' Republic. The Workers' Republic is not just a dream. It will, however, only become a reality, by patient effort and endless building of a Revolutionary Party.

"That work must be done on the factory floor, on the housing estates, wherever workers are involved in the day to day fight to maintain and improve their standards of living and achieve their ultimate victory, the ownership of the wealth they produce.

"It is your fight and this is your paper. Read it. Write for it. Use it as a weapon in the struggle for socialism.

"It cannot be otherwise in the North or the South, irrespective of religion: only a united working class can win that struggle."



# Activists in limbo

A recall conference of the H Block campaign has been scheduled for early February. It will not be before its time.

Over 500 local action groups were created during the H Block Campaign. Thousands of new activists were drawn into the struggle. Yet since the ending of the Hunger Strike many of these have been in absolute limbo.

In the meantime, though, the state forces on both sides of the border have moved extremely rapidly. They were clearly shocked at the level of support for the H Block Campaign and have responded through political and repressive means.

The Anglo-Irish talks were revived and the prospect of various all-Ireland institutions appeared. In the longer term, those arrangements give to Britain the possibility of loosening the border settlement when they consider fit. In the shorter term, the establishment of those political institutions breath life into the weakest forces of the SDLP.

Two recent court cases also indicate their determination to strengthen the repressive machinery at their disposal. Patrick Keogh, a young H Block activist received three years arising out of charges for the British Embassy demonstration.

He was tried before the Special Criminal Court because the march itself was defined as representing an assault upon the state. Nineteen more defendants, including some prominent Republicans and republican socialists, will appear before that court on similar charges.

Then, one week before Christmas, the Criminal Law Jurisdiction

Act was invoked to imprison Republicans who had managed to escape from Crumlin Road Jail.

Because the National H Block Committee has remained stuck in the groove of dealing with prison issues almost exclusively, it has not replied adequately to these developments. In fact, its performance on the Embassy 20 case to date has been weak in the extreme.

No bail was organised for Patrick Keogh; the turnout at marches was very low; there was no real attempt to turn the trial onto the activities of the police on the day of demonstration.

The recall conference of the campaign needs to immediately rectify these weaknesses. It must devote much of its resources into the Embassy 20 case and ensure that the issue is raised in every union branch around the country.

It should be clear about the nature of the campaign—it is a specific defence case to roll back a wider state attack. The truth is that if the campaign cannot defend itself through mobilising for such a case it will not have the confidence to go forward.

On a longer term, the recall conference should lay the basis for a broad-based British Withdrawal Campaign that is the only effective answer to the manoeuvrings between the British and Irish governments.

Such a campaign would be initially propagandistic—simply taking up the arguments on the role of the troops or the nature of the Northern State. If it is to have a real hope of success, its base of support should extend beyond the nationalist or republican sphere and embrace the labour movement.

Kieran Allen

THE WORKER  
FOR WORKERS POWER AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

Inside:  
H-BLOCKS: THE BARRACKS  
THE BARRACKS

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# The role of the Church

How can a revolutionary workers' movement be so bound with the Catholic Church? Crucifixes in Solidarity offices; masses in occupied shipyards; the Pope rather than Lenin—were just some of the paradoxes of the Polish workers' struggles. Some socialists in the West have taken these outward signs as sufficient reason for not supporting Solidarity fully.

It would have been amazing if it developed differently. A newly emerging workers' movement under a repressive regime calling itself Marxist could not spontaneously rediscover the revolutionary core of Marxism. When you work under miserable conditions in a shipyard called the Lenin shipyard, you are not going to immediately go to the works of the leader of the Russian revolution for guidance on strategy and tactics.

The Polish Catholic Church on the other hand had remained a symbol of opposition to national oppression. Like the Irish Church it had managed to surround itself with the myth that it

had always stood by the people. In fact, the Stalinist rulers of Poland did more for the Catholic Church than the most powerful of miracles. Religious vocations, for example, trebled since the post-war state was founded. The Polish Church now enjoys massive popular support—though that does not extend to abstinence from contraception and abortion.

How was that popularity developed? The present rulers of Poland are ideologically opposed to religious practices and beliefs. But they cannot alter the material conditions that produce religious superstitions. There is a society that depends as much upon alienation as on food shortages. They have attempted to destroy every last vestige of control that workers might have had over their lives. Their only method, then, of combatting religious beliefs was through repression.

But just as in Ireland, the Catholic Church flourished in conditions of martyrdom. As it survived it came to represent the

only independent and organised network in Polish society.

Increasingly as opposition mounted to the Polish regime the Church provided a focus and a set of ideas in the absence of other available alternatives. It also provided an organisational outlet for getting around censorship or bans on meetings. The Churches of Poland were the equivalent of the mosques of Iran under the Shah.

That was shown clearly when the first riots against the new military rulers of Poland began after church services in Warsaw.

The fact that the Church is seen as genuinely on the side of the working class is unfortunate, because the Catholic Church has done everything to hold back the struggle against the Polish state. It plays almost exactly the same role as in Northern Ireland identified with resistance, but using its influence to oppose all forms of militant struggle.

Over the last year and a half it has

\* spoken out against the condition of the Gdansk shipyard strike which founded Solidarity

\* 'counselled moderation' after Solidarity activists were beaten up by the militia in Bydgoszcz

\* publicly denounced the more militant KOR at a period when the authorities were trying to have them locked up

\* called for passive acceptance of the military coup in Poland on the basis that 'Pole must not fight Pole'. It could have been Thomas O Fiach rather than Glemph who delivered the message the morning after the coup.

As the Stalinist rulers of Poland become increasingly isolated from the mass of the population after their reign of terror, it is to the Catholic Church they will look to mend their bridges. They have done so in the past. After the workers' revolt of 1956 Gomulka rushed to the Catholic Church to form a new pact. They were more than willing to cooperate.

The illusions in the Catholic Church are an obstacle to the development of the Polish workers' struggle. But socialists in the West cannot react to these illusions with a Cold War mentality in reverse—if the Catholic Church is involved, it stinks.

Over 100 years ago Karl Marx wrote: 'People make history—but not in conditions of their own choosing.' It is precisely because we fight under conditions we do not control that our banners and ideas do not always correspond to the real revolutionary nature of the struggle. To dismiss Solidarity as a Catholic revolt is like claiming that the struggle in Northern Ireland is a religious sectarian war.

Stop prising us apart with wedges  
Of conduct marks and privileges,  
Suppressing facts that do not fit  
And stewing history down to shit.

But back our words to what they mean,  
Words which grew empty and obscene,  
So we can live with dignity  
And work in solidarity.

Give over telling us you're sorry,  
What guilt for past mistakes you carry.  
Look at our mothers and our wives,  
Grey and exhausted—like our lives.

(Anonymous verses circulating in the main hall of the strike at Gdansk, in August 1980. From: 'Prześcień Stale Nam Przepraszać', Wydawnictwo im. Konstytucji 3 maja, Warsaw, 1980, a collection of some of the strikers' poems issued by an 'unofficial' publisher)



## The Twenty-Second Demand

Give over telling us you're sorry,  
What guilt for past mistakes you carry;  
Look in our faces, weary slaves,  
Grey and exhausted, like our lives.

Give over calling us to order;  
To discipline and honest labour;  
Try self-examination when  
You call us 'Our Dear Countrymen...'

Give over classing us as crazy,  
Anarchic, inexperienced, lazy;  
Stop choking us with poster-glue;  
The place to start reforms is—you!

Give over calling us the foe  
Of all society, of our brother;  
Just count our numbers, and you'll know  
How strongly we can help each other.

Give over making us eat lies  
With lowered heads and tight-shut eyes,  
And for our culture, wait before  
One vast, monopolistic store.

# SOLIDARNOŚĆ

Solidarity was a magnificent trade union. Its level of union democracy would have shocked most trade union bureaucrats.

- \* There were regular elections for all union positions and special meetings to discuss the candidates' policies.
- \* In addition Solidarity had the right to recall any official who might not have been fighting properly.
- \* All officials were paid the average industrial wage. Many of them were 'on leave' from their old jobs.
- \* Discussions at leadership levels

were recorded and played back on cassette tapes to local branches. So too were many negotiations.

\* The basis of the union was the workplace. Each 'circle' of 50 workers had a delegate (shop steward) who met weekly together and reported back to their base.

\* The union was built up on geographical branches in order to encourage solidarity between stronger and weaker sections. Thus, hospital workers never went on strike but depended on miners or engineering workers to win their demands.



Gdansk shipyard 1980

# The struggle continues

There was the Warsaw Rising of 1944; the 'October Spring' of 1956; 1968 and the shipyard workers of Szczecin and Gdansk in 1970; and Solidarity in 1980. 'Repetitions of History' is how bourgeois journalists and historians see it. The rising of Polish workers against the regime, the promising of reforms and then, inevitably, no reforms and the crushing of the movement. With a characteristic fatalism they dismiss such 'events' as mere cycles of history.

But history never repeats itself. And nobody knows that better than the Polish workers themselves. The growth of Solidarity has, at every turn, been influenced by the learning of past lessons. Those lessons point to the danger in trusting any talk of 'reforms' from the regime, whether it be in the mouths of Gomulka, Gierek or Kania. AS Polish workers say today, 'Our only guarantee is ourselves.'

1st August 1944 THE WARSAW UPRISING: The Russians stand by while the uprising is brutally crushed

The mass of the population of Warsaw rise up against occupying Nazi forces. Mass popular organisations, like the Polish Socialist Party and the Peasant Party, unite forcefully so that within two days the Germans have lost control of the city. Their programme, with the support of the Home Army of the Resistance Movement proclaims agrarian reform and workers' control of industry.

The Russian army, only fifteen miles from Warsaw, offered no help. With a strong air force which could have countered the powerful German Luftwaffe, they could have mounted effective resistance to the Nazis. As it was, they stood by and watched Warsaw razed to the ground and a quarter of a million Polish peasants and workers massacred.

One year later, the Russian army triumphantly enters Warsaw as the 'liberator'.

1956: Gomulka hangman of 'October Spring'

Poland by 1956 is in severe crisis. Polish stalinisation—the exaltation of 'model workers' in order to rebuild Polish post-war industry—has cost the workers dear. Their real wages have fallen by over 30 percent since the war. Disillusion with the Communist Party has set in and party membership has severely declined among workers and peasants. Polish intellectuals have joined the general mood of discontent and are speaking out against the anti-socialism of Stalinism. The ruling bureaucracy itself is divided between hardliners who want to pursue the post-war Stakhanovite (model workers) policy and a 'reforming' wing whose promises of reforms as the only way out of the crisis.

It all comes to a head in Poznan. Workers in the Zipso engineering plant refuse the imposed overtime and strike for a 20 percent increase. The whole city joins in a massive demonstration shouting 'We want freedom', 'Down with false communism', 'Down with the Russians'.

The Poznan insurrection is put down. But the mood spreads. In October Workers Councils spring up elsewhere and workers with intellectuals (in their paper Pro Prostu—Straight Talk) demand that the councils be extended.

Gomulka of the reforming wing of the party is brought in, in the hope from Russia that this talk of reforms and deals with the Catholic Church will quieten the workers. By many, even those on the left, he is seen as a real change in the regime. But it is an illusion. He emasculates the workers councils and by 1957 in calling for heavier police repression of strikes. Eventually all freedom of expression is stamped out, Pro Prostu closed down and the workers' movement—the October Spring—crushed.

1968: Students alone could not win

In the aftermath of the Czechoslovakian struggle, students

in Warsaw demonstrated after two of their leaders were expelled. They were beaten up by the hated militia. Ten thousand students took to the streets across the country in reply to the brutality. They were joined by young workers—but the vast majority of the working class did not move.

The authorities replied with baton charges and massive arrests. They denounced the trouble makers as Jewish. Through repression and anti-semitism they broke the storm clouds of '68.

1970: Live Bullets and a New Reform

In December 1970, average food prices rose by 20 percent. The workers in the Northern towns of Szczecin and Gdansk immediately organised strike committees and took to the streets. 40 workers were shot dead in Szczecin. The country exploded. A general strike was prepared.

The Polish Communist Party retreated. A new reformer was found. Gierek took over from Gomulka. But still the local strikes continued. They only ended when Gierek went personally to the Szczecin shipyard and guaranteed wage increases. He presented himself as totally opposed to Gomulka and as a representative of a new nationalist Poland. Workers had not yet seen through the new reformers.

1974: Broken illusions

The food prices went up again. Poland moved into a new crisis as massive sums of capital were switched to investment in heavy industry. The workers in Radow and in the Ursics tractor factory struck and burnt down the CP headquarters. A wave of arrests and the isolation of the areas beat them back.

But from the ashes of '74 a new organisation was formed. KOR organised to defend the arrested workers. They published a small paper *The Worker*. The basis was laid for the birth of Solidarity.

# We say Poland the unfinished revolution

Poland is not a geographical curiosity. Neither are its class struggles different in substance from our own — in spite of the fact that its rulers dress up their capitalist rule with the jargon of socialism.

Capitalism — the system of production for profit and not for need — is a world wide system. Its priorities determine the public policy of governments around the world. And it is a system that having accomplished its historic mission — to free society from the backwardness of feudalism and absolute monarchy — declines into stagnation, crisis and wars.

This truth was disguised by the long post war boom, fuelled by the diversion of huge proportions of output from the worlds leading economies to produce and stockpile the means of mass destruction — arms, both 'conventional' and nuclear.

The nature of the world system was also disguised by the fact that one great camp claimed itself to be communist and free from the idiocies of capitalism. Our rulers encouraged us to believe this myth because if Russia was what socialism and workers revolution were about, so much the worse for revolution. Stalinist rulers too maintained the fiction that their tyranny was workers power as a figleaf of legitimacy. In fact these claims are bogus. In the mid twenties in Russia after a devastating civil war, foreign invasion and famine, the workers, isolated by the failure of revolution in other European countries, lost power to the rising stalinist bureaucracy. Their conditions are now no more socialist than those employed by CIE or ESB.

After world war 2 the armies of state capitalist Russia merely marched into East Europe and installed regimes in their likeness based on naked repression and thirsty exploitation.

But the world capitalist order is now in deep crisis east and west. Poland is only the weakest link in the chain. Its crisis is largely that of an economy that has borrowed up to the hilt to finance export industries just as world markets collapse because of the world slump. The RCA Colour Television factory in Warsaw stands idle for the same reason that industries close in Cork or Waterford — goods can't be sold.

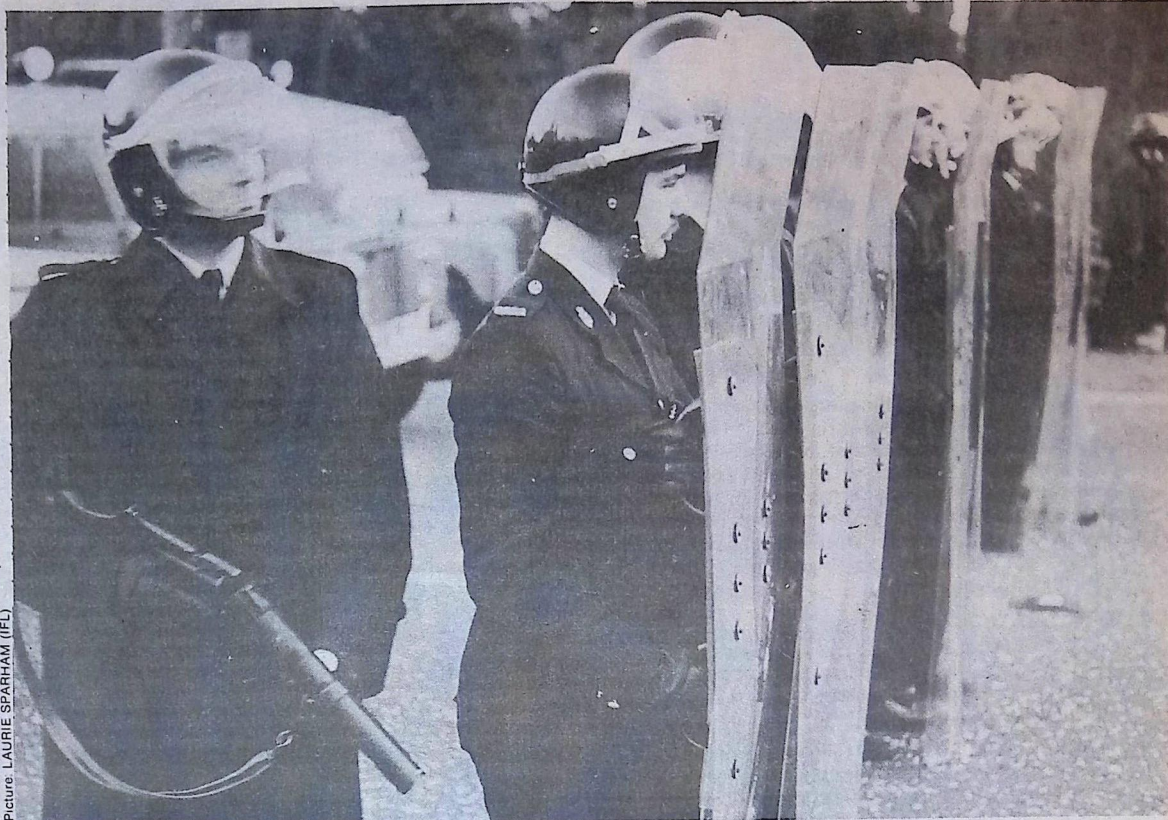
The heroic fight of the Polish workers seems to have temporarily been knocked back. Driven to challenge the state by organising a free trade union to defend themselves against the crisis of the bosses system, they found that they would either have to take power or fall back. But what a performance it took to drive them back — troops on every corner, no internal communication, and mass arrests.

What the Polish workers lacked was a section of their movement arguing for a workers take-over. Not only arguing, but organising, leading other workers in the various partial struggles convincing them that only workers power could take Poland further. Such a body — a revolutionary party of workers — could have challenged the conciliators for leadership of the movement. Lech Walesa, although as recent reports bear witness personally courageous and honest, was politically weak. By always proposing moderation, conciliation, and negotiation with the authorities, he delivered the workers of Poland to the military council. No matter that he called for general strike when the army took over. The strike call was insufficient when the question was: who is going to run Poland, the workers or the authorities?

Having pleaded with the workers to answer 'the authorities', how could they balk at the logic of the choice? Defence was insufficient when the crunch came — only offensive action could succeed and nobody had prepared the ground.

All this argues for the creation of a revolutionary party of the workers. At first a minority — thought too extreme by most workers — but in so far that it can sink real roots in the working class and establish in practice the correctness of its policies, when the crunch comes — as come again it must — the workers have the opportunity and leadership to overturn for ever the crisis ridden system. Many workers in Poland will be drawing this lesson and even in conditions of illegality it seems likely that steps are being taken to put this into action.

We are International Socialists. The system is international and so are its crises. Such a revolutionary party will develop in Ireland too. Such a revolutionary party has to be built before then. We ask all Socialist workers to join us in the task of constructing it.



THE RUC in action. But to whom do they owe their allegiance?

## Mutiny looms in the RUC

by MIKE MILOTTE

THE RESIGNATION of Alan Wright, chairman of the Northern Ireland Police Federation, has brought to a head the conflict that has been festering in the RUC for many months—if not years.

The conflict rests on a simple question: to whom does the RUC give its allegiance—to the elected government of the day (however much the RUC dislike government policy) or to the Protestant Ascendancy as currently championed by Ian Paisley?

The present phase of this enduring crisis began last November when, four days after the killing of Unionist MP Robert Bradford, the Police Federation discussed the establishment of a new armed force modelled on the old B Specials, the all Protestant militia that struck fear and terror into the Catholic population with their sectarian murders, lootings and burnings.

As the Federation met, Ian Paisley was promising to bring his 'third force' onto the streets and was cal-

ling for police support.

The Police Federation meeting also considered a motion of no confidence in RUC chief Jack Hermon. The motion was defeated by the narrow margin, ten votes to nine.

### Furious

The anti-Hermon faction argues that the RUC—or rather its political masters at Westminster with whom Hermon is bunched—have lost their nerve in the 'war against terrorism' (the struggle to subjugate the Catholic working class).

They were furious when the British Government gave in to public pressure and ordered a halt to the wholesale use of torture to extract 'confessions' from IRA suspects. This had been

the only way the RUC could gain convictions in the juryless courts.

Without the torture the 'conveyor belt' that carries Republican activists into the H blocks has slowed down. What is more, the long struggle for political status hardened the prisoners themselves so that many more of them than ever before now return to active service after their release.

The H block struggle also brought many new recruits to the IRA who could afford to select only the best.

Under these conditions sections of the RUC, like Paisley, have been demanding ever tougher security measures like the reintroduction of internment without trial and hanging.

Instead, however, the British Government opened talks with the Dublin regime geared towards some sort of long term 'solution' to the political stalemate in the North.

This is seen by the Loyalists—and by many in the RUC—as the British Government's final admission that it cannot beat the IRA.

Hence Paisley's 'third force', a body that would supposedly fight the IRA independently of the 'shackled' RUC and Army. Hence also the growing threat of a police mutiny in support of Paisley-type policies.

There is no doubt that the RUC is a politically committed force: committed to the maintenance of

the six county state. That is why Protestants join the RUC and that is why it is nearly 100 per cent Protestant in composition.

Many believe that in the event of a UDI bid by Paisley the most that could be expected from Hermon and his personally loyal elite officer corps would be their resignation, thus enabling rank and file RUC men to go over en masse to Paisley, taking their formidable armoury with them.

### Committed

Those weapons have been supplied by successive British Governments.

If the Paisleyite threat in the six counties is to be halted the British state must be forced to withdraw entirely from the North—and take all its guns with it.

## The myth of the 'workers state'

The People's Republic of Poland is neither socialist nor communist. It has not even abolished privileges and inequality. It is in fact a state capitalist regime with a ruling class whose main function is to accumulate capital through the exploitation of workers.

The SWM has almost been alone in the Irish left in opposing the myths about the 'workers states' in the Eastern bloc. But now a new book that was written in Poland takes the lid off some of these lies.

Poland: the state of the Republic was originally the result of an official commission. But once its findings were made known it was censored. Here is what it says:

'Social differences are growing in Poland. Part of society continues to live with lower than the social minimum income, while another segment consisting of the privileged, has incomes several or even dozens of times the average.'

'Inequality and injustice are everywhere. There are hospitals that are so poorly supplied that they do not even have cotton wool, and our relatives die in the corridors; but other hospitals are equipped with private rooms and full medical care

for each room. We pay fines for traffic violations, but some people commit highway manslaughter while drunk and are let off with impunity. In some places there are better shops superior vacation houses, better shops, superior vacation houses that ordinary people cannot enter. People see all this and they know that high ranking officials drive luxurious cars...'

'There is an increasing tendency to fill posts with "One's own people"—from the younger generation. This is the case not only with leading positions in agriculture or the administrative apparatus, but with all kinds of posts, eg publishing houses, institutions of learning

and scientific jobs'. A recent study shows that a child whose parents have a higher education has 7.5 times the chance of staying within the ranks of the intelligentsia than the child of a farm worker has of entering them.'

There has been a continual run down in the social services. In 1960, expenditure on education, health, social welfare, recreation and sports amounted to a third of all capital investments, now it has fallen to 19 per cent. As a result, their schools are overcrowded and teachers badly paid, a third of young couples have no accommodation of their own, the number of hospital beds in Warsaw is barely half the European average and a quarter of essential medicines are unavailable.

## What we stand for

The Socialist Workers Movement is a revolutionary workers movement organisation which aims to organise the working class in the struggle for power and for the overthrow of the existing social order.

The system under which we live, capitalism, is based on production for profit and not for human need. It is a system that leads to poverty and war, racial and sexual oppression.

Only the working class can destroy capitalism and build a socialist society based on workers control of production.

Our political action to prepare the working class for that is based on the following principles:

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

There is no parliamentary road to socialism as the left in the Dail believe. The system cannot be changed by piecemeal reform. The state machinery—the courts, parliament, the police and army—are used to maintain the dominance of the ruling class. The real power lies in the boardrooms of big business.

We stand for a workers revolution which produces a different and more democratic society—one based on councils of delegates from workplaces and localities who are democratically elected and subject to recall at any time.

### NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW

That kind of socialism does not exist anywhere today. Workers have no control over countries like Russia, China or Poland. They are exploited by a state capitalist class. A workers revolution is required in those countries too.

### A SOCIALIST ANSWER TO THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The six county Orange State is propped up by British imperialism. By bribing loyalist workers in the past with privileges in, for example, housing and jobs. Protestant workers have come to see their interests as being served by the British-backed Unionist boss class. This divides the working class and delivers a section of the workers as allies of imperialism. The Northern state is sectarian in essence and must be smashed.

The slow task of building working class unity against imperialism must be begun.

However imperialism must be fought in the here and now and we support all forces engaged in that struggle regardless of our difference of programme.

We stand for: Immediate withdrawal of the British Army. Political Status Now.

The Disbandment of the RUC and the UDR.

In the South, the bosses are junior partners with other European and American bosses in world capitalism. The main enemy is the boss at home. Nationalism or a united capitalist Ireland offers nothing to workers. The only republic worth fighting for is a workers republic.

### WOMEN'S LIBERATION

We support feminism as being the legitimate progressive and necessary struggle by women against their oppression as women and believe that the self-emancipation of women as a sex is central to the meaning of socialism.

Only through socialism can women achieve full emancipation and therefore the women's struggle must be led by working class women as part of the struggle of the whole working class for socialism.

### FOR A RANK AND FILE MOVEMENT

The main area of political action for socialists is the mass organisation of the working class, particularly the trade unions. We fight for the independence of the unions from state interference, democratic control of all union affairs and the election of all union officials.

We oppose all anti-union legislation and all forms of national wage understandings and wage restraint. We oppose all redundancies. We say: Occupy to demand Nationalisation under workers control. Fight for a 35 hour week. We support the building of a rank and file movement which draws together militant trade unionists to oppose the class collaboration of the union leaders.

### FOR A REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS PARTY

The SWM is a democratic centralist organisation open to all those who accept its principles and objectives. The struggle for a workers republic in Ireland is inseparable from the international struggle. The SWM fights to build a mass party of the working class as part of a revolutionary international of working class parties.

THE WORKER is produced by the SOCIALIST WORKERS MOVEMENT. If you would like more information on our activities and policies, would like to become a member of the SWM or would like to take out a subscription to THE WORKER—£3.50 for a year—clip and post this form to SWM, 41 Herberton Park, Rialto, Dublin 8.

I want to join;  I want a subscription and enclose £2.50.

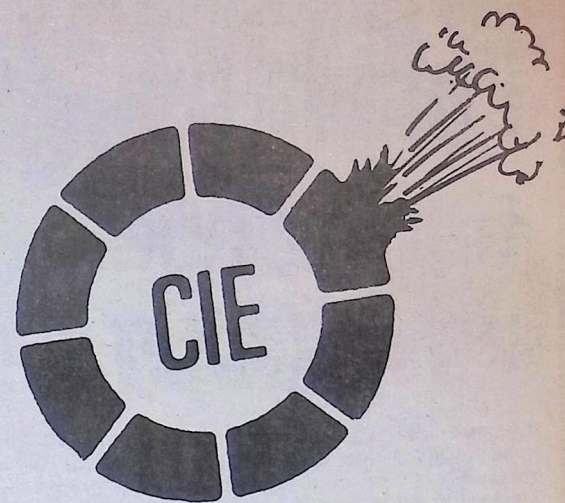
I would like more information about the SWM

Name.....

Address.....

# INDUSTRIAL NEWS

## A lot of noise but no militancy



By the time you read this, you will know what we do not—whether the 16% offer to CIE drivers and conductors has been accepted by the work force.

Back in March 81 the NBU submitted a claim for a 'substantial increase'. Bus workers had lost purchasing power because of price increases so a cost of living increase was needed. But over and above this, busworkers had fallen behind in the earnings league. The unsocial hours we work, the shift work and poor conditions we endured needed compensation. Our claim was to have these 2 elements.

That was how Tom Darby, head of the NBU expresses the claim. he asked for—and got—an overwhelming mandate for strike action.

The claim was submitted and when no progress was made notice was given to strike on Nov 2nd. A Labour Court hearing was begun and the strike postponed. The Labour Court recommended £7 which was rejected out of hand. Meanwhile the National Understanding had expired.

### Strike Action was planned

The NBU has never been party to National Understandings and made it clear that its claim was quite apart from any new National Understandings.

The ITGWU, which is the other major union organising Busworkers, had a series of members meetings at this time. The Company chairman had delivered a report that was all gloom and doom and the new pensions scheme—years in negotiation—was frozen by the Finance Minister's embargo on new money to the semi-state industries. At these meetings ITGWU members expressed support for the NBU claim and looked for some indication that the ITGWU would officially back the proposed NBU strike. Jimmy Cullen, Secretary to No 9 branch was evasive. Discussions towards a new National Understanding were still being held at Congress level even though the chances of something being cooked up was slim. If no new NU emerged then the ITGWU would submit its own claim, he said.

Eventually such a claim

was submitted and strike action was planned for late December to steal a march on the NBU who had now deferred their strike plan to January 4th.

And then the 16% Public Sector settlement was offered to the busworkers and balloting was organised.

It would not be surprising if a majority of busworkers accepted it in spite of the fact that with inflation running at 25% a year and the settlement proposal to run for 15 months living standards must fall even further.

But the workers have been left on the boil too long. The NBU should have pressed ahead back in November, but they allowed the delaying tactic of the Labour Court to hold matters up. Even then Tom Darby claimed that a strike after Christmas would be more effective. Many NBU workers could not understand the delay and supported the urging of a Bus Bulletin produced by supporters of this paper to strike while the iron was hot.

### Build round Bus Bulletin

Of course to strike and win would mean fighting for all Public Sector workers. And this would mean seeking support and levies from other semi-state workers in our battle. No attempt to create such a public sector alliance was made.

The lesson is that the ITGWU leadership was playing for time in the hope of a National Understanding releasing it from the respon-

sibility of leading action. The NBU leadership was bluffing. By making a lot of noise it gave the impression of militancy, but postponed action at the least prompting.

The mandate it asked for it got and it has given back. The determined lead it said it was going to give—to a militant wage struggle has evaporated. And if the ballot accepts the 16% offer, as seems likely, it will slough off responsibility to the rank and file.

Ordinary busworkers have no say in the formulation, timing or organisation of the claim.

General members meetings of both unions are just occasions for bluff and breast beating. The occasional Bus Bulletin issued by supporters of the Worker is the only rank and file mouthpiece currently functioning.

A group of activists around the Bulletin needs to be built that can break down the isolation and lack of information among busworkers and create in garages groups of members of all unions that can take matters into the hands of the ordinary members.

The Worker Bus Bulletin can be contacted at 971036.

## No tears for NU Demand £25

THE National Understanding has gone. No tears will be spilt for this instrument of wage restraint.

But what has replaced it? Insidiously the great divide is opening up.

On one side private industry where local bargaining is beginning to get going. Here wage settlements reflect what profits are seen in the kitty. On the other side is the public sector where a 16% over 15 months deal is being widely touted.

It is clear that the mere death of National Wage Agreements does not automatically deliver the sort of free collective bargaining that maintains living standards. It can just as easily lead to fragmentation, division and weakness.

If we accept the profit system we must accept disguised wage cuts because given the crisis, profits are harder to come by for the boss and the crumbs from his table are consequently smaller too.

But if we reject the profit system we can begin to see that what defends our livelihood is our willingness and ability to fight. And to fight needs Solidarity—a word being trampled on by army boots in Poland at this time.

We need rank and file unity—submitting joint claims, blocking tainted goods, spreading the burden of strike benefit by levying workers at work.

But we need rank and file power. The trade union bosses don't have to manage on our money or put up with our conditions—they have no stomach for a fight except one forced on them.

### The answer

In periods like today workers struggling against the boss with little or no help—even hindrance from their official leadership, throw up mechanisms for fighting independently of their leaders.

On all sides, the bosses and their government—phony Labour Party and all—are telling us to accept sacrifices for the good of the nation They tell us this from the ministerial Mercedes or the business banquet.

Well they can have their answer—£25 across the board!

# SAFETY SCANDAL ON THE BUILDING SITES

# INDUSTRIAL NEWS

## Workers take CIE to the cleaners

Seventeen workers lost their lives in the building industry in 1980. The numbers were more than double than that of the previous year. There were also 548 reported injuries—compared to 391 the year before. *The Worker* spoke to a trade union activist in the building industry who has to remain anonymous because of the blacklist that is currently operating.

These horrific figures are only the tip of the iceberg. A large number of accidents are never reported. Safety Inspectors make only the rarest of appearances on the sites. When they do come the local site management are warned well in advance. Special safety arrangements are then devised for their benefit.

### Death

Officially, the Construction Industry Regulation lays down minimum legal standards. But they are never adhered to. The only time a contractor is fined for breaching the regulations is after there has been a death. Even then, the fine can be as low as £10.

The accidents and deaths are not primarily due to individual carelessness. Systematic cost cutting by the bosses means that there is a general tendency for accidents to rise. There are a number of areas which shop stewards in the industry should look out for.

Most bosses attempt to get scaffolding erected as quickly as possible with the minimum of expense. No hand rails or toe boards are provided. The result is a greater likelihood of building workers falling from heights or objects slipping off the scaffolding. In addition most scaffolding is now erected on a lump basis.

Trenches are never shored up. Yet a recent English study showed that workers caught in a trench



collapse have only 1 in 4 chance of surviving. That is not very surprising. One cubic yard of earth weighs 1 ton.

Usually there is no proper maintenance on most building equipment. The dumpers have almost always something wrong. The brakes are gone or the steering is faulty. They drive around leaving a cloud of exhaust fumes.

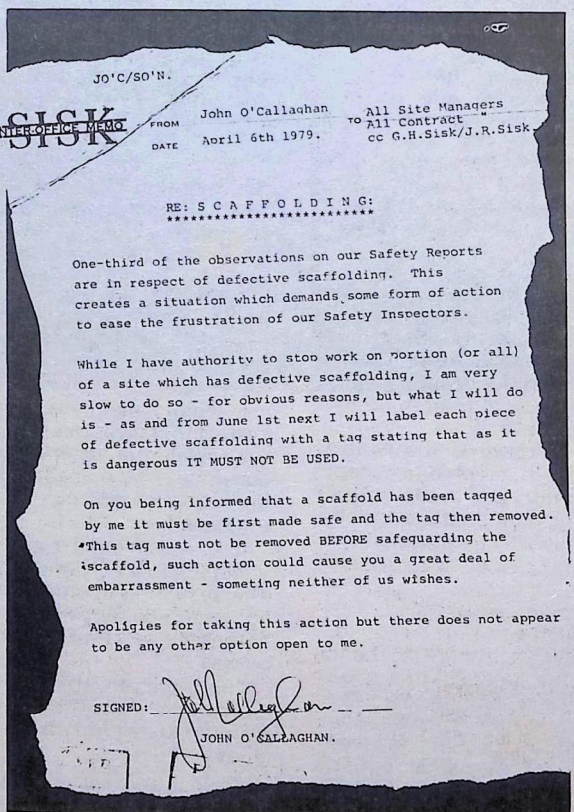
A new hazard that building workers face is weedkiller. This is now used extensively in after site clearance. T-246 is the name of one particularly nasty weedkiller.

There is in fact a very simple reason why the accident rate is shooting up. When contractors are tendering for a job they include the cost of safety measures. They usually quote the Construction Industry Regulations in full. This then becomes a source for jacking up their profits. For they never spend the money they have actually quoted for safety.

The building industry is the real concrete jungle. And the only way to survive is through organisation on the sites. Your life could depend on it.



The work is dangerous. The workers dodge falling bricks and timbers as the bulldozer pushes down an outside wall, or as the crane driver guides the concrete ball that swings from his crane to topple stronger buildings.



The letter that proves it! John O'Callaghan is the head of Sisks Safety department. In this internal memo he states that one third of safety problems are caused by defective scaffolding. Yet he would be 'very slow' to stop work on a site which has defective scaffolding—for obvious reasons.

His solution? HE will place a tag on each piece of defective scaffolding which reads; IT MUST NOT BE USED. Sisk building workers should be very careful not to trip over Mr O'Callaghan's safety tags which should be appearing in sites all around the country any day now!

Night cleaning has never been the most organised of jobs. The bosses have always held the trump card. Any show of militancy and the contract will be lost. Yet, a magnificent step forward has now been taken by the workers who clean out CIE trains in Heuston station.

In 1979 CIE decided to subcontract out the cleaning of their trains. Contract Cleaners—a subsidiary of the British based Pritchard group—won the tender for one year. CIE could extend it, if they were happy with their standards. In fact they did not. Contract Cleaners were replaced by ICC (which was part of the Sisk group) due to a cut in price when tendering.

Despite the change, the complete staff were automatically re-employed on the same wages and conditions they had previously won. Union organisation was strengthened and in the course of the year with ICC new improvements on sick leave and overtime payments were won. However at the end of that year ICC lost the tender and Contract Cleaners were back again.

This time around they were determined to break union organisation. Although the precedent had been established by the previous company, Contract Cleaners now refused to re-employ all the staff. Wages and manning levels were cut. Eight workers were given the sack. Strangely enough they included the shop steward and deputy shop steward!

### Disgust

The workers who remained were appalled. But they also acted. They showed their disgust by leaving half of the work undone. The company responded by bringing in scab labour in the morning to finish the work. After seven weeks of frustration and 'trench warfare', CIE intervened and contacted ICC to see if they were ready to move back in.

Throughout the seven week period, the workers had received no co-operation from the union. They were fed the same line of having to 'exhaust procedure' and take the issue to the Labour Court which would have meant a minimum of three months delay. They decided to seek out someone in a higher position in the ITGWU. They met Pat Rabbit who after hearing their story and acting very surprised told them he would sanction official action. A ballot was taken and strike notice was served on the company.

It was the straw that broke CIE's back. Two days later Contract Cleaners lost the contract and ICCs moved back in. Eight jobs had been regained and victimisation was ended. The workers had shown what unity and decisive action could achieve. Many now know that it is a first step to getting the cleaning business properly organised.

# THE WORKER

FOR WORKERS POWER AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

## Three years for just demonstrating

The charge amounted to high treason. The sentence was three years in Portlaoise jail. And what for? For being on a demonstration. Simply that.

That was what Patrick Kehoe, one of the thousands that attended the British Embassy demonstration on July 18th, discovered in the dock of a Special Criminal Court last month.

From the beginning the odds were piled against him. Being tried in the juryless Special Criminal Court where the verdict is at the whim of the judge alone was hardly going to ensure him even rudimentary justice. The fact that the prosecution's chief witness was Chief Superintendent Robinson who himself claimed that he had known Patrick Kehoe from previous H Block events was hardly going to make his statements impartial. In fact he went as far as to say that at the time he claimed to have seen Patrick on the demonstration, supposedly brandishing a flag

pole at the line of police, the Chief Superintendent said to himself 'Is Kehoe going to pursue his vendetta against me to the end?' Clearly at least one person was delighted at the final sentence.

But the sentence is disturbing for other reasons. The actual charge was 'obstructing the gardai in the course of their duty by violent means.' Apart from the fact that there was no other evidence beside the word of Robinson that Patrick was so much as even carrying a stick of any sort, the implication was that his presence on the demonstration alone constituted violence against the state. Where does that leave any demonstrator—whether they be supporters of the H Block campaign or Trade Unionists defending their right to picket—in the future? How much now can we take the right of assembly for granted?

The Special Criminal Court seems to have said we can't. And Patrick Kehoe's case is only the first in a line of twenty people who were picked up retrospectively concerning the British Embassy Demonstration. The remaining nineteen arrested like



Patrick three weeks after the demonstration on the basis of 'photographic evidence' will be coming up before the Special Criminal Courts in January. Everything points to them receiving similar or worse sentences than Patrick.

The workings of the Special Criminal Court have already concerned international human rights bodies. Amnesty international has shown interest in investigating the case of Nicky Kelly sentenced in the Special Criminal Court concerning the Sallins Train Robbery. Judge Block from France, a well known human rights defender, attended Patrick Kehoe's trial.

But in order for the remaining nineteen to stand any chance of proving their innocence, a campaign has to be built in their

defence. The clear infringement of basic democratic rights of this case too, must be clearly stated. The injustice of the Special Criminal Court has to be exposed. And why this case could affect every one of us must be brought out of the cloisters of closed courts.

To do that, the Defend the Embassy Committee needs support and quickly. Raise the issue in your Trades Union branch showing the threat that this case represents for Trade Union activists. Leaflet your area with information on the case to let people know what goes on in the Special Criminal Court. The Committee can be contacted at c/o 29 Mountjoy Square Dublin 2, and they will provide you with leaflets, model resolutions and details of future activities.

## Outside on the street

OUTSIDE ON THE STREET What do the Atrix and the Dublin Trades Council have in common? The answer, right now, is nothing. The Dublin Unemployed Action Group is trying to change that. Will we succeed? Why are we bothering? Read on...

Atrix are just one of the rock bands that have played free at one of the Rock 'n' Dole Gigs that the DUAG has put on at the Lourdes Hall in Sean McDermott St., Dublin. These gigs help us to raise a little much-needed money. But that isn't really what they're about. They're about the kids that go to them. Kids from the Inner City. Street kids. Unemployed. Looking for a cheap dance and getting it with just a little bit of a leaflet thrown in. Most won't even bother to read the leaflet but a few do. And somehow the words on the leaflet relate to the kids. 'The system gives us unemployment — let's stuff the system'. That's the message. In Sean McDermott St. it gets an echo... thanks to Atrix.

The scene changes. Not a million miles away in Liberty hall, the Dublin Trades Council are hosting a seminar on how to tackle the unemployment problem. A few of us DUAG people mosey along. The bloke on the door won't let us in because we aren't 'properly authorised union delegates'. 'Well, can we just give out a bit of a leaflet then?' 'Sure... outside on the street.' It's a different world.

Now the Dublin Trades Council is a very famous body. It's not so long ago that they organised the massive tax marches. They have radical policies on everything under the sun. So we thought you see, well, that they would be interested in us and the street kids from Sean McDermott St. We had some ideas about tackling unemployment that we wanted to talk to them about. Things like setting up an unemployed centre in the town where the unemployed

could meet to discuss things, play a little pool, get some advice on dole hassles. Like getting some of the Sean McDermott St. kids onto a march with kids from Waterford and Dundalk. Like us unemployed helping out any workers that are trying to resist redundancies and them helping us to get the unions to stop electricity cut-offs for unemployed families. Well, we eventually got to talk with some of the Trades Council people. We told them all these things. They listened and thanked us and said they'd get back. But, to tell the truth, we're not too sure that they are interested.

So right now the great joining together of Atrix and the Trades Council is still a long way off. The Trades Council has no relevance to the Atrix street kids (and precious little to unemployed trade unionists as well). Organised labour, despite reams of documents and hours of talk, is not actually doing anything that the unemployed can involve themselves with. Worse, there seems to be a fear of any such involvement by the 'great unwashed'. Fear of careful plans being upset, fear of losing control, fear of music, fear of street politics. Organised labour is sitting scared.

And in the meantime the dole queues lengthen, the youth get 'alienated' and concerned trade unionists run seminars on 'the problems of drug abuse amongst unemployed young people'. It's all very sad because, quite simply, the only way a radical movement against unemployment can be built is by uniting the frustration of the unemployed to the power of the employed. So DUAG will keep at it. The gigs for the kids will go on and so will our attempts to win 'the hearts and minds' of organised labour. Any help you can give us would be very handy, believe you me.

JOHN CANE

## We say

A century ago Marx described the unemployed as 'the reserve army of labour'. He meant that in times of boom when workers were in demand they would provide a pool that would weaken the bargaining power of workers, in time of slump every worker would have at the back of their mind the threat of being thrown on the dole.

As unemployment races towards the widely predicted 200,000 workers are tempted to accept speed ups, reduced manning and wage settlements that erode their living standards. Our rulers know this very well which is why unemployment benefits are so paltry — after all it encourages the others.

The cause of unemployment is capitalism. The system which has produced the powerful productive forces of modern industry can only set those forces in motion if it sees the prospect of a good rate of profit. All over Europe, nay, all over the world, industrial plants stand idle. This was the industrial power that ten or fifteen years ago was proclaimed as the motor of perpetual boom. Man's mastery over nature — as measured by the productivity of human labour when applied to all the technologies of modern society with the advanced science and culture of today do provide the possibility of a life free from want for all of this globe's inhabitants.

A world system where production for profit and not for need is a world system constantly in danger of slumps, crises and loss of confidence by the businessmen. That danger and those crises

get worse as the system becomes more and more a museum piece. This is why abundance is not produced. This is why factories, mines and industries stand idle while people starve and men and women rot in the unemployed queues.

Unemployment will only be got rid of when the system that gives rise to it is also overthrown. But even while the majority of workers remain to be convinced of the need for the revolutionary transformation of society, the fight back must be organised.

It is not militant trade unionism that causes unemployment. Higher pay does not lose jobs. The system is in slump which means that every fighting capability of the working class must be harnessed to enforce our priorities and not the bosses'.

The unemployed and the employed are brothers and sisters. Their fate hangs together. The struggle to halt job losses is the struggle to shorten dole queues.

What is needed is a strong, militant fighting campaign of the organised workers — who have the power to fight unemployment. The Dublin Trades Council has let slip an opportunity to launch such a campaign. Meanwhile we call for occupations of workplaces that cannot guarantee the right to work, rank and file control of trade unions to ensure fighting unions and unity of employed and unemployed to beat back the bosses' offensive.

CAN you imagine the resources needed to produce even an eight page paper like The Worker?

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