

# THE WORKER

Paper of the Socialist Workers Movement

## Free the Ranks 14



14 workers from Ranks have been jailed for occupying their factory. The wives of four of those jailed began an indefinite occupation in support of their husband's demands. They said if they were arrested there would be more willing to take their place. The Ranks workers must be freed from jail. It could be you next time!

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# NO TO THE



Photo: Derek Speira/Report

# AMENDMENT whatever the wording

by GORETTI HORGAN

THE STEPPING down of the government on the original wording of the abortion amendment is obviously a significant victory for those who oppose this hypocritical farce. The clearest lesson to be learnt from all the debates that have

been going on since about alternative wordings is that the amendment is, in fact, unamendable.

There can be no form of words which gives the foetus a right to life totally separate from the rights of the woman and which also respects the

woman's right to protect her own life and health.

So why did the government finally listen to what the Anti-Amendment Campaign had been saying for months?

Clearly the ruling class was getting nervous; opposition from the Protestant Churches was embarrassing to the Fine Gael party which had the creation of a secular society in Ireland as one of its main platforms. But more than that

it was the realisation that opposition to the amendment is so strong that they are not going to get the walkover vote - the 98% that they had expected.

The reaction of the anti-abortionists to the criticisms of the original wording shows that this referendum really is about more than abortion.

Despite the fact that even the Minister for Justice and the Attorney General have said that the wording would put women's lives in danger and that certain forms of

contraception would become unconstitutional, the so-called 'pro-life' people still want that wording.

Why do they still cling to a wording which is obviously anti-life - anti women's lives that is. Its because the groups behind the pro-amendment campaign are not really 'pro-life'. They are not just anti-abortion, they are also against every progressive measure and every liberalisation of Irish society.

They want to turn the clock back on women's rights and push women back where they think they should be - in the home, with ten or twelve children and no life of their own. In order to achieve this, they have to make sure that women can have no control over their fertility, through contraception or abortion.

The SWM supports a woman's right to choose abortion and will continue to oppose an amendment which would put

back years the fight for legalised abortion in Ireland. Its still not too late to drop the whole idea of the referendum. No date has yet been set for the vote and all the opinion polls show that most people think the referendum is unnecessary. It is, therefore essential that we redouble our efforts to fight the amendment, to bring the working class into that fight and to ensure that all who are against the amendment will be on the anti-amendment march for International Women's Day on March 5th.

Inside: Fianna Fail's Arse factor - page 2

# WHY PAY DUKES' TENNER?

THE CRUNCH is coming for Southern workers. Even before the next pay round begins, the average industrial worker stands to lose £10 a week after the effects of the Coalition budget.

It was the Evening Herald - rather than any radical publication that made that estimate. It is not just wages. A wave of redundancies has hit private industries. And now nationalised companies like Erin Foods are also threatening to let workers go. Proposals are seriously being considered to put CIE workers on a three day week.

What lies behind it? The seventies saw a phenomenal growth of Irish capitalism. That laid the basis for the orderly moderate wage increases that were enshrined in the National Wage Agreements. Those agreements maintained an official pretence of indexation. But despite its growth, Irish capitalism remained fantastically weak. It now competes on a world economy that has not yet fully recovered from the last recession that began five years ago.

The prolonged nature of the recession has forced it on to massive attacks on its workers. At the end of February, the 22nd wage round begins; John Carroll of the ITGWU has claimed that workers need a 22% increase just to stand still. He is absolutely right - but will the union leaders fight against a government that is preparing for a wage freeze in the public sector and a boss class that is set to follow the example in private industry.

The signs are that they won't. Ten years of wage agreements have given union leaders a powerful role in deciding wage increases. Those agreements shifted the power from the rank and file to the officialdom at every level. But it is a power they are reluctant to use. The union leaders more than half share the bosses ideas. They accept the limits of the system. They see the need for competitiveness. Above all they are tied to the Labour Party that is administering the attacks on behalf of the bosses.

The way out of their dilemma is verbal militancy, "We'll defend every job" says the ITGWU but they openly attack the Ranks workers. "We won't accept a pay freeze says the ICTU - but they watched while the government tore up the last public sector deal. They have taken up the banner of import controls because it is easier to blame someone else - especially if they are foreign workers - rather than fight.



It is not that the rank and file are straining at the leash for militancy. They clearly are not. But although the rank and file and the official share the same ideas - it is the rank and file who have to put up with the deals and still face the bosses daily.

There are those minorities who are prepared to fight. Sometimes it is the traditional militants. More often today it is the less well organised like Ranks or Dunnes Stores in Waterford and Cork.

Over the coming period The Worker will be arguing these simple points to all those prepared to fight. Firstly there should be no reliance on the Trade Union leaders and officials. In a period of recession they become more expert at selling out. In every strike, workers must seek to maintain their own independent organisation.

Above all, the running of any strike should never be left in the hands of the officials.

Secondly, the key to unity on the smallest issue is solidarity. There is no room for sectionalism. If the general workers think they can follow craft workers of a particular factory, they are lost.

The cancer of the two-tier picket has bred a tradition of separate fight. It is no longer on.

Thirdly, every struggle quickly becomes a political one. It is no longer a fight just against one boss.

To fight at all means having to break with some of the ideas of 'sacrifice' that the boss and the government pit out.

The best answer to the barrage of propaganda flowing from the bosses on the economy are simple socialist ones.

The building of a socialist organisation in the working class movement must go hand in hand with the resistance to this vicious government.

## Welders won't be framed

NINE WORKERS at the 'Storage Technology Products' Documentation Factory at Finglas have been out on strike since 7th February.

They were offered redundancy, which they refused to accept. The workers involved are welders, their job being to weld together the frames of the computers that are produced.

The bosses are arguing that their parent company in America is over stocked with frames, that is why they must import them.

This is a lie. The frames that they import come from different companies. It's all to do with making more profits

at the cost of workers jobs.

This company has been given grants of £6 million from the IDA and have also exploited the youth employment subsidy scheme where the state pays half the wages for six months.

These bosses have taken on workers after they were trained in AnCo, kept them for six months, kicked them out and then took more on: another way of getting cheap labour.

The workers are members of the NEETU and are supported by their union and also the Electricians at the factory.

There is a meeting arranged with Congress for an all out this week as we go to press.

Paddy Carroll

## Won't shift

EIGHT PROCESS workers at Gilbeys on the Naas Road are on strike against management's attempt to impose shift work on them;

They are members of the FWUI but union official Dowling refuses to make it official.

"We've been pushed out the gate" said one of the strikers - "but there are basic union principles you have to stand up for".

Dead right! They were given one days notice to get on shift work - although they had been negotiating the issue for a year.

Donations to Willie McHale Gilbeys Picket Line, Naas Road.



GEMMA HUSSEY believes education is costing the country too much. So out goes school bus subsidies and thousands of kids walk to

## HYPOCRITES CORNER

school.

But the state spends a fortune subsidising private primary schools. The staff may be untrained, but from an early age the children of the rich get to know "the right people".

No cuts here...

Could it have anything to do with the fact that her own brats get private education?

And Fine Gael's tame egg-head John Kelly (emigrate or languish on the dole) sends his to a private school.

"The Worker" is compiling a list of civic-minded Fine Gael TDs who send their children to the same schools as the rest of us - on the back of a postage stamp

ALICE GLENN is one of the leading Pro-Life Fine Gael TDs. Seems she is determined to enshrine 'Christian' values in the Constitution.

But Ms Glenn should have another look at the teachings of the revolutionary carpenter from Palestine.

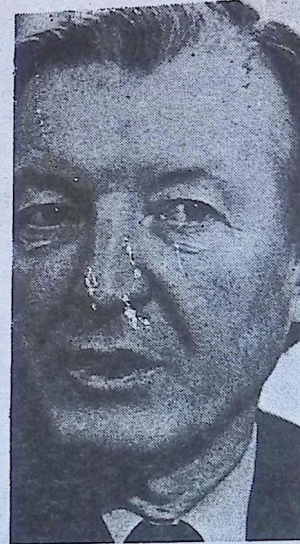
The small shop-keeper residents of Nelson Street in Dublin are protesting about the establishment of a Hope Centre for homeless boys.

Alice turns up at their protest meeting and speaks from the platform.

She wants an inquiry into how this dreadful refuge came to be opened.

Seems eggs have all sorts of rights, not so homeless boys...

# The Fianna Fail 'arse factor' that swung it for Charlie



THERE'S NO point denying that the Fianna Fail leadership bust was great fun.

And don't we need all the fun we can get, the way things are going?

The spectacle of the feuding factions gutting and gouging one another over whether Charlie Haughey is - or, on the other hand, is not - the reincarnation of Eamonn de Valera, is one that socialists can react to with unrestrained belly-laughs.

Especially since the assembly of bit-players - the media hacks and hackettes - ended up with enough egg on their faces to keep the newspaper industry in omelettes until this time next year.

But even so, buried away deep down in all the drivel there is a serious political aspect to this business.

The split in Fianna Fail is not just about personalities.

There are personal rivalries involved of course. But if that's all there was to it it would have been long ago. Either Haughey or one of his rivals would have won and that would have been that.

It's when there's some sort of ideological divide underlying the personal rivalry that feuds come to the surface again and again.

What is happening in Fianna Fail has to do with the peculiar nature of the party and the growing contradictions between the traditions on which it is based and the role which it actually plays.

Bizarre as it seems now, Fianna Fail was born, bloodily, as a radical national movement. It was created in Neil Blaney's memorable phrase, by "men with no arse in their trousers," and the party was intended, as Sean Lemass put it, to be only "slightly constitutional".

To many of the party faithful, Charlie Haughey personifies that conception of Fianna Fail.

Whether they are right to see him in this light doesn't matter for the moment. What does matter is that anyone who perceives Haughey in this way is unlikely to be swayed against him by the revelations of recent times about strokes, dodges and wheeler-deals.

On the contrary, that class of behaviour is exactly what might be expected from a "slightly constitutional" political operator, and people with no backsides in their pants could hardly be expected to share the sense of outrage experienced by, say, middle-class journalists.

Haughey is thus seen by both his supporters and his opponents as something of a wide-boy and a chancer and not entirely committed to the institutions of the 26 County state.

And for these reasons there are some within the party who love him and others who loathe him.

The reasons are almost entirely spurious. Almost.

The notion that Charlie Haughey poses a threat to the Southern State - or to "democracy as we know it" as Conor Cruise O'Brien puts it - is ridiculous. Like his hero de Valera before him, Haughey would no doubt have anyone who posed a real threat strung up - while at the same time continuing to roar "radical" rhetoric when it suited his electoral purposes.

But there is a certain tiny truth in it all.

There are quasi-republican pressures within Fianna Fail which, in certain circumstances, can carry the leadership outside the bourgeois consensus. The occasion of the Falklands/Malvinas crisis, for example, saw a Fianna Fail government go further than any other in western Europe in attacking British aggression and the murderous sinking of the Belgrano.

A Fine Gael-led government, or a Fianna Fail regime headed by O'Malley or Colley, would not have gone that far.

Similarly, it is pressure from the grass roots of the party which makes it more difficult for Fianna Fail than Fine Gael to take up an openly monetarist stance on state spending. And it is not a coincidence that it is the Haughey wing which takes most of the flak from monetarist economic commentators for being "irresponsible" in this area.

And maybe it's not a coincidence either that somebody somewhere was willing to put up a hundred grand to have Haughey given the elbow. We can assume that whoever it was had an arse in his trousers...

What all this illustrates is that if Fianna Fail disappeared in the morning there would be no need to re-invent it. Capitalism doesn't need such an unstable, and potentially destabilising, party bidding for office.

But for historical reasons capitalism is stuck with it - for the time being anyway.

And insofar as this makes it marginally more difficult for the ruling class to clamp its rule firmly on the mass of the people, it's not entirely unwelcome.

It would be unwise to push such matters too far, but, let's face it, anybody the Cruiser O'Brien thinks is the devil incarnate can't be all bad.

Just nearly all.  
by EAMONN McCANN

# OF BOMBS AND BOSSES

by DERMOT BYRNE

MONDAY 7th February and the news was good. The workers at Clondalkin were not going to jail. The struggle to have the plant nationalised had been won.

The same day I had a telephone call from the local CND. They were showing a film on the bomb in the Blackrock Town Hall. I'm glad to be told about the activity. But I'm a little angry when I mention about the Clondalkin workers and receive a yawn of disinterest on the other end of the line.

Angry because, as I hope to show, there is a real connection between the workers struggles under capitalism and the fact that the superpowers might exterminate the whole human race.

The world is full of inter-continental ballistics and nuclear bombs. The Russians have nearly enough as the Americans. There is not much good going into details. Every Joe and Jane knows that even a nuclear war on a 'limited scale' would wipe out millions.

The USA has spent over one trillion, 500 billion dollars, on 'defence' since World War II. The Russians say they have responded to defend 'socialism'.

It's the biggest lie of all times. They are in direct competition with the West and the workers have had to put up with

the same attacks on their living standards to protect the interest of their state-capitalist masters.

It is in response to this massive re-arming that the CND has grown. But there is a number of points which CND won't acknowledge. Our governments rule in the interests of a tiny privileged ruling class. They are not going to give up their bombs no matter how many peace marches take place. It's like asking Ben Dunne to stop having an alarm system and guard dogs to protect his premises. He won't call off the dogs because it's his firm and he's going to make sure there is no intruder. The capitalist state uses bombs and bullets to protect USA Ltd or Briton Ltd.

It is the system rather than the aggressive behaviour of individual rulers that is the root cause of war.

We live in a society where accumulation is obligatory for all capitalists. Anyone who does not accumulate in order to exploit is driven out of business. That drive to accumulate leads to the periodic economic crises such as the experience now. But it also leads to military competition, complementary and even taking over from peaceful competition for markets.

It was Lenin who summed up war thus: "It is nothing other than the method of competition at a specific level of development...the method of competition between the state capitalist trusts".

The concentration of huge blocs of capital—monopolies and their close integration with the

state leads to military competition and to war.

At present both superpowers find themselves with economic problems that create dissent among allies, clients and semi-colonies. Both fear the other will exploit them to their own advantage. And so both attempt to increase the number of their warheads to prepare to threaten 'limited nuclear war' if it enters their sphere of influence.

You cannot just demand peace without tackling the roots of the system that produces war.

Many in the CND look to what happened in Greenham Common and the imagination of the 'Peace Women'. But despite their amazement, they cannot succeed. Seventy years ago, there

were massive pacifist demonstrations against war and re-arming. It collapsed within days of World War 1 breaking out.

Chauvinism replaced the feeling of international brotherhood. Why? Because the peace demonstrators were never linked up with the day to day struggles against capitalism and imperialism. It's the same with the Greenham Common women.

They see it as a fight against the bomb - pure and simple. They do not see the links to the system which produces the bomb - and to the main force which can overthrow that system - the working class.

In 1914 millions died. Afterwards many came around to the belief that unless there was a socialist opposition to the machinations of war that was linked to the

Until the early 1930s, Zionism had little support among working class Jews. Socialism was a far more popular doctrine. But Herzl's argument that anti-semitism was an innate and inevitable sickness in non-Jewish society, that could not be combatted but only escaped from, this exercised a divisive influence on the working class.

After all, if non-Jewish would always persecute Jews, there was no point in Jewish and non-Jewish workers uniting to fight the common enemy - the boss.

Not surprisingly, therefore, Herzl's ideas were received with interest by business men, bourgeois debating societies and the very Christian cabinet ministers of major European states.

In 1914, the Turkish Empire - which had always opposed the release of any of its territory in the middle east for the purpose of a Jewish homeland - was disintegrating. For the control of trade routes, raw materials, markets and centres for capital investment in just such areas as the middle east, the European powers were about to sacrifice 12 million lives. What price could be placed on the rights of the native population of Palestine in such an imperialist adventure?

The price was the support of the Zionist Movement for the war in exchange for Lord Balfour's promise of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

After the war Britain took responsibility for Palestine and in the twenties and thirties facilitated Jewish immigration and land appropriation despite strikes and demonstrations by workers and peasants throughout the Arab world.

It was not until Britain faced the prospect of another European war that she attempted to restrict Jewish immigration and land purchase to pacify Arab opinion for the duration of the war. But it now seemed to Zionists that Britain was now ruling out the possibility of a Jewish majority in Palestine through immigration indefinitely and they would have to resort to the force of arms.

This was not a matter simply of Jewish farmers turning on their Arab neighbours with shotguns and pitchforks. Jewish terrorism (1939-48) was a well-equipped and well-financed operation. Zionism was already the junior partner in exploitation in Palestine. Between 1918 and 1939, despite the fact that they represented one third of the population, Jewish interests had come to control 40.3% of all capital investment. Arab capital contributed only 6.5% and the rest - 53.2% - was foreign owned.

The war itself was generating massive profits in the middle east. Banks in Palestine paid dividends of 20% in 1943. By 1945 Britain owed Palestine £100 million in war debts mainly to Jewish bankers. Zionism was hungry for power.

By World War II, Britain was already a declining force. After 1945 Zionism continued to need the support of a major power and found it in US imperialism.

In March 1945, Harold Guise wrote in the Wall Street Magazine:

"The whole middle east area today is a chessboard for economic and political manoeuvre seldom matched anywhere else. The complex



day to day struggle of working people, humanity had no future.

Today in 1983 this is even more true. You cannot rid us of the threat of war without ridding us of the system that leads inevitably to war. It is only when those who want peace see the struggle like those of the Clondalkin workers as important, that warmongers will tremble in their beds.

## Brooks-Thomas Le Duc stumps up

AT BROOKS-THOMAS Scaffolding Depot on Little Island in Cork five ITGWU workers were faced with redundancy when the takeover of the concern by Brussels business man Le Duc threatened complete closure.

The workers struck - it was made official - and M. Le Duc flew over from Belgium with an assurance that he had changed his mind and would keep the depot open.

He also committed himself to employing union labour and would give consideration to the existing workforce - but, in view of the recession, on a reduced level. — JIM BLAKE.

## Cleaners' dirty profits

CONTRACTORS by their very nature have always been the most exploitative of employers, worldwide.

Leading the field in this respect has always been cleaning contractors.

\* They make fortunes year in and year out screwing workers, by paying them a pittance, such as £1.20 per hour or £48 for a 40 hour week.

They get away with it because the workers are un-unionised - mention the word "union" and you usually end back on the dole.

The majority of workers employed by these firms have never heard of a national wage agreement - never mind received it - in years.

Because of the small dues involved, the unions have never bothered to organise these workers in the past.

But now the ITGWU have started a recruitment campaign in this field, being more concerned with their own fall-off in membership than anything else.

The companies operating in Ireland today are: Noonans; Contract Cleaners; Grosvenor; International and numerous other small cowboy outfits who all have the same policy:

No unions, usually short contracts and big profits.

ICC, incidentally, is owned by John Sisk, who has recently tried to break the unions on one of his own building sites.

Cleaning contractors tend to employ workers on a part-time basis - usually housewives - which makes it difficult to organise.

But there is one group of workers who should be an inspiration to other cleaning workers. It has been the workers in ICC, employed in Heuston CIE station, who over the past few years have improved their wages and conditions greatly, making them the highest paid cleaners in Ireland earning £140 per week.

But still their wages are below general workers in other industries.

They achieved this through being unionised and militant. Workers in this field have been screwed long enough by these cowboys. It's time to cut their big profits and get this section of workers organised.

It's up to the unions, but basically it will be left to the workers themselves.

by PADDY CARROLL (Shop steward, ITGWU)

# Imperialism - the force behind Zionism

by STUART DOWIE



Sharon, now forced out of Begin's cabinet.

IN THE press, the Beirut massacre was merely the inhuman handiwork of individuals like Begin and Sharon.

But larger forces lie behind the power of Zionism.

These are the forces of world capitalist imperialism. Zionism has simply been one of its agents and Israel one of its most important allies.

When Theodor Herzl first formulated Zionism in 1896, he understood quite clearly that no Jewish state could be established without the support of one or more of the great imperialist powers.

He devoted his energies to winning this support - not on the basis of the plight of the persecuted Jews, but on the basis that the Zionist Movement and a Zionist State could be an important ally to Western interests.

He was not a consistent opponent of anti-semitism - rather he saw anti-semitism as encouraging a sense of Jewish nationhood.

## What we stand for

The Socialist Workers Movement is a revolutionary workers organisation which aims to organise the working class in the struggle for power and 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. We base ourselves on the following principles:

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

There is no parliamentary road to socialism. 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. Real power lies in the boardrooms of big business. We stand for a workers revolution which produces a different, more democratic society — one based on councils of delegates from workplaces 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, Cuba or Poland. They are exploited by a state-capitalist class. A workers revolution is required in these countries too.

### A SOCIALIST ANSWER TO THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The six county Orange state is propped up by British imperialism. The system of discrimination, which affords Protestant workers marginal privileges over Catholics in for example housing and jobs has induced most Protestant workers to 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 and capitalism must be begun. However imperialism must be fought in the here and now and we support all forces engaged in that struggle regardless of differences in programme. We stand for the immediate withdrawal of the British Army and the disbandment of the RUC and 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.

### FOR RANK AND FILE CONTROL

The main area of political action for socialists is the mass organisations of the working class, particularly the trade unions. We fight for the independence of 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.

### WOMEN'S LIBERATION

We believe that only through socialism can women achieve full emancipation and that their struggle is part of the whole class struggle for socialism.

### 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 struggle for workers power internationally. The SWM fights to build a mass party of the working class as part of a revolutionary international of working class parties.

# the worker

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I want to join.  I want a subscription and enclose £3.50.  
 I would like more information about the SWM

Name .....

Address .....

# Clondalkin proves it

## Paper sit-in gets results

THE ARMY must have thought the Clondalkin Paper Mills were re-opened again.

They sent a lorry down to the mill just three days after the case against the occupying workers was dropped. The lorry was full of secret files they wanted pulped.

The colonels were jumping the gun a bit. The state has paid a ten per cent deposit over to the liquidator and are due to pay the rest by March 22. Before the mill re-opens, under state ownership, there is still a lot to sort out.

Clondalkin workers are reluctant to scream victory. They have seen too many hiccups in the year-long fight to win nationalisation. And their struggle has taught them never to trust bosses or state bureaucrats — "When do workers ever fully win under capitalism?" asked one of the strike committee.

There are many issues to be worked out yet. Proper care and maintenance procedures have to be established to make sure there is a mill to re-open at all. There have been no guarantees given yet on manning levels. Or on what type of management structure will operate.

The only thing the workers have to go on is a document the last Fianna Fail government and the ICTU agreed to back in November 1982. They have received a verbal assurance that it will be adhered to.

"We've got to keep the pressure up. Getting the purchase by the state is no good in itself. We've got to still make sure they agree to proper manning levels," said Brian Nolan, the PRO of the Clondalkin Workers Action Committee.

It is that determination to continue on a struggle, even after victory seems fully assured — that basic distrust of authorities — which has brought Clondalkin Paper Mills workers the closest to forcing the state to nationalise to save jobs. It has never been achieved in the South before. We have our CIE, our Bord na

Mona and the ESB — which are so beloved as "islands of socialism" by the Workers Party. But they were taken over by the state only because private capital could not effectively run them, and they were necessary for the running of the system. Nationalisation to lubricate the wheels of capital.

Clondalkin is different. If the agreement is completed, it will be the first nationalisation forced upon a reluctant state by the power of workers. It will put flesh on the slogan so often shouted — "Nationalise to save the jobs." Despite all talk of the special nature of Clondalkin — the value to the national economy of a paper mill — it opens the way for all other redundant workers to demand the same. In the class war, there are no "special cases" — only signposts to be followed.

The Clondalkin workers are under no illusions about why they have come so far. It was

not the Labour Party in coalition that got anything for them. The first time they met the Coalition minister Bruton, he more or less showed them and the ICTU the door. The next time, the Coalition could see the scale of workers mobilisation that was building up if Clondalkin workers were locked up. They capitulated immediately.

Brian Nolan believes that it was the simple fight for jobs that won a hearing — "We would have been jailed for defending our right to work, that is what caught workers' imagination. Look at Ranks. They have got an equally just case. But they haven't put the same emphasis on saving jobs."

But it was also the level of organisation of the campaign that had much to do with it. Brian Nolan again — "We had a committee of twenty. It was sub-divided into sub-committees — industrial, finance, occupation and publicity. We

met at times on a daily basis and reported our progress. We sent teams around the country to organise blacking and to get collections in. We didn't just wait for the press to come to us, we chased after them. And we moved politically — issuing leaflets, at election time, winning written pledges from, among others, Dick Spring."

Clondalkin was indeed a model occupation. They did not just seize the factory. They used the occupation as a base for organising. Seizing the factory and holding the assets to ransom is in many ways symbolic. The bosses still have a barrage of legal weapons they can use against you. If the symbolic seizing of the factory is to be changed into a reality then wider workers' support is crucial. That is the truth the Clondalkin workers grasped. And that is why they have come so close to winning.

Solidarity is never one way. Clondalkin workers went out to get support. But they also became a beacon for other workers who had a fight on their hands. De Lorean workers travelled down to meet them. And when Ranks workers were put behind bars, the Clondalkin stewards were among the first to visit them.

It there is one simple lesson from the Clondalkin struggle, it is that solidarity action can beat this vicious government.  
by KIERAN ALLEN

## The lessons of Ranks

AS WE go to press fourteen workers are in jail following the decision of Rank flour-milling to close its operations in Ireland.

After failing to reach agreement on a "rationalisation" plan that would have axed 122 jobs, 300 jobs are to go at the flour mills in Limerick and Dublin.

The company's rationalisation plans would have meant redundancies and the introduction of non-union labour — driving a coach and horses through union organisation.

Eventually the Limerick workers voted against strike action and accepted redundancies, as did some of the Dublin workforce.

By February 4, the remaining 28 Dublin workers went into occupation demanding adequate redundancy payments. At this stage the ITGWU withdrew official backing — although they claimed they sympathised with the men's plight.

The company obtained a High Court order preventing "trespassing" on the company's property and within a week occupiers were jailed for

refusing to abandon their occupation.

"The Worker" and the organisation which produces it — the Socialist Workers Movement — unreservedly supports the fight of these workers and is doing everything in its power to assist, for example, organising a fund-raising social and assisting the workers canvass support from other workers. However we believe that by accepting the principle of redundancies — understandable in view of the large number of workers who have accepted already — the occupiers have weakened their position.

As Brian Nolan — PRO of the Clondalkin Action group — has pointed out, it is very much more difficult to ask workers from other factories and industries for support for a dispute involving redundancy payments than it is for a straight fight for jobs.

Which brings us to our second point. As the example of Clondalkin has shown, an occupation — however militant — can only succeed with the support of other workers. There are very few of us who are strong enough on our own

to win such an important dispute. And the intervention of the courts and the jailings of the fourteen make the winning of support from other groups of workers absolutely crucial. Perhaps through inexperience, perhaps through lack of numbers, the workers themselves have been reluctant to go around other workplaces putting their case and arguing for support.

Also, it must be understood that no vote, no matter how democratic, no matter how large the majority, can commit any group of workers to redundancy. No majority can sell a minority's jobs. It is always open to any group of workers to fight their own redundancy.

But putting all this aside, the most important lesson of this dispute has been the complete failure of the official labour movement, right or left, to do anything but stab the workers in the back.

The Irish Transport and General Workers Union must take the biscuit for hypocrisy. Having deluged their branches with a torrent of posters and leaflets urging workers to

# OCCUPATION WORKS



Clondalkin workers occupied their Mill and forced the government to act. (photo Derek Speirs - Report)

## Carrigaline occupies

210 workers — clerical, manual, supervisory and maintenance — have taken the decision to occupy their factory at Carrigaline Co. Cork.

Sixty per cent of the workforce are women.

The factory has been producing high-class art pottery for 54 years and was taken over two-and-a-half years ago by a Mr Lutz Kiel who has extensive business interests in West Germany.

Ina Keenan, one of the Occupation Committee, told *The Worker* —

"The aim of the occupation is to get our proper payments. The company, although making all the proper deductions made no PAYE or PRSI returns for the past two-and-a-half years.

"We are discussing the idea of a workers co-op to run the place but we know that pottery is a very low profit industry.

by JIM BLAKE

We do know that the place was run very badly. We were constantly beset with delays in production because our suppliers had not been paid.

"There was a total lack of communication with the owner who once confided in me that he was trained as a flower arranger! He hounded anyone who disagreed with him.

"I have been involved with this factory all my working life. It is also the mainstay of of this whole village of Carrigaline."

Mick Joe Donovan, also a member of the Occupation Committee said —

"It is a disgraceful situation where in this country the man or woman drawing a wage packet is hit with everything . . .

We have a peaceful sit-in here, but we are staying here until we know where we stand.

"It was the Revenue Com-

missioners — the Government agents — who eventually closed us down. When it comes to deciding who gets what from the company, we will be pushed third or fourth in the queue of creditors. Business debts will come first."

It is difficult to prove that the company were behaving fraudulently but the owner had one consignment of goods shipped out to one of his companies in Germany with an 85% discount to himself.

One sales rep. was making — as he thought — payments on a car through the company, until he found that the car was leased and he owned no part of it.

Pay cheques have bounced. Mick Joe Donovan said he fully supported the Clondalkin Paper Workers and would be sending a telegram of support to them.

ly constituted. Those who waited for the Trades Council to give the lead are still waiting.

The role of those who parade around the Dail as "socialists" has been every bit as shabby. Dick Spring — hot-foot from facilitating arguably the most reactionary, anti-working class budget in the history of the state — chimed in with the statement that he didn't like occupations, that they achieved nothing. He might have said that he was not returned by his supporters to allow workers to be jailed and joblessness soar — but he didn't.

The Workers Party spokesman Pronias de Rossa offered to mediate between the employers and the workers. Now a socialist deputy worth his salt would surely use every opportunity to disrupt Dail business, using the parliamentary platform to encourage workers to support with action in the face of these jailings. Not so the Workers Party, for them the lamb should lie down with the lion. Whichever Special Branch man is delegated to listen-in on WP phone calls,

must be bored to death.

It is clear that this fight will be hard. After the Clondalkin victory, the government is trying to hold the line, not allowing it to be a precedent. The jailings and the occupation can only be won if workers are mobilised in support of the Rank workers. For the duration of the dispute, flour imports should be blacked at port of entry — not "to protect Irish industry from competition", but because the imports are strike-breaking. Collections, demonstrations and the rest have to be organised.

And some link-up must be made with the thousands of workers who have received, or are expecting, news of redundancies by the minute in other factories. Workers have a right to occupy their means of a livelihood. All this means going around and raising that support, arguing that connection. The Ranks workers are in a good position to begin that task.

Only the rank and file can free the fourteen. Only the rank and file can save these, and their own jobs.

by KEVIN WINGFIELD

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# The 'sisters' who sell out

MAGGIE BLAKE reviews the new book **SISTERS** by feminist **JUNE LEVINE**.



IT IS one of the mysteries of journalism and journalists for me that people who can express themselves so clearly

and with good English can often be confused themselves. June Levine comes across as one such person.

For a start she makes no secret of the fact that she is middle class, was always middle class and intends to stay firmly middle class. With her purely feminist politics there is of course no conflict in that. She doesn't really appear to see society in terms of class. For her the world is full of men who refuse to share power with women.

Because she has no socialist perspective she is shocked and



Inset Nell McCafferty

surprised when co-founder members of the Women's Liberation Movement, Mary Kenny and Nuala Fennell become so easily absorbed into the establishment.

She appears to get satisfaction from those whom she

sees as having moved "beyond socialism"—Mairin De Burca became a feminist as distinct

from having been a pro-woman socialist." Nell McCafferty seems to have moved in the same way: "Women didn't have power and so Nell from a socialist stand-point made a big shift to feminism."

Perhaps I shouldn't be the one to do a criticism of the book in that I left Ireland in the 1950s at 16 years of age and returned in 1979 to live in Cork. I therefore missed out on all the events and characters in the book, and the book is made up of filling in the background pictures of these.

She admits, when talking about her own emigration to Canada — as a doctor's wife — that she was unaware of the "forced exit of people who had no hope of work at home, no knowledge of when they might be back, not much desire to go in the first place."

I learnt how to fight back against the system through the trade unions when I became a shop steward in COHSE in England and I must admit to being impatient with women like June Levine who want to enter the fray with us as workers but want at the same time to retain their middle class hang-ups and prejudices. We all have a lot to learn and we are all full of contradictions but cannot begin to fight effectively until we have properly raised class-consciousness.

Racism, anti-women prejudice, anti-Irishness and anti-semitism are things which arise from the class division of society and have to be dealt with as well, both in the day to day struggle and in the fight for socialism.

by MAGGIE BLAKE



KIERAN ALLEN reviews the recently-published autobiography "Father McDyer of Glencolumbkille".

He saw the boat to England or America as the legacy of the middle class republic. And it was that misery that drove McDyer to seek radical solutions.

In 1962, for example, he proposed that the old mountain cottages be used to form the basis of a massive commune around Glencolumbkille.

Despite all the deep-seated prejudices which associated the communal ideal with Stalinist Russia, he managed to persuade 112 farmers to agree to the plan. But the

## FR MCDYER OF GLENCOLUMBKILLE

state refused to supply even a loan and instead encouraged what McDyer himself described as an "anaemic scheme" for a sheep farmers' co-op.

McDyer went on to push the more "anaemic" co-ops. There were co-ops for everything from handknitting to fish farming. But the scheme to scrape together the tiny savings of small farmers to build an industrial base collapsed.

McDyer turned to private industrialists. A little chat over a glass of brandy or over a game of golf and the dynamic priest had persuaded some businessman to put up the capital and become a shareholder. The co-op idea vanished. McDyer set himself up as a benevolent capitalist to "get things done."

Ironically, one of the few remaining monuments to McDyer's dream was to be a holiday folk village and a hotel with a "conference room". If you can't break the chains of under-development, you may as well have the tourists come to look at the natives.

Throughout the book, McDyer describes himself as a socialist. He is mistaken. His "socialism" is born out of pragmatism rather than struggle. It is the "socialism" of the entrepreneur who is forced to break all the rules. It is a type of

Christian socialism that pushes self-help through co-operation rather than a commitment to political action.

The simple truth is that there was no local solution to the agony of Glencolumbkille. McDyer could see that communal farming offered a way out of the backwardness of Irish agriculture. But he couldn't see that it demanded a fight to lay our hands on the mass of wealth in the hands of the big farmers and the bosses.

McDyer could make practical sense of the communal ideal to over a hundred Donegal farmers. But how much more practical the ideal would be if it were backed-up by the resources of a different type of state willing to subsidise the machinery, the fertilisers and marketing costs.

To be fair to McDyer, he looked for radical solutions in a period when the working class were just waking from the depressing 50s.

There were just no forces that could even argue the politics that could link up the interests of workers and small farmers.

McDyer's book is useful in pointing to an example where Irish small farmers showed they were not wedded to any mystical clinging to private ownership.

by KIERAN ALLEN

IN THE late sixties and early seventies Fr. James McDyer became a household name for having fought against the cancer of emigration.

## Russia - the great lie

CHARLIE NOLAN reviews an important new pamphlet exposing Russia's fraudulent claim to Socialism, "The Great Lie", by **ABBIE BAKAN**.

IN THE late seventies the word "detente" was used to describe the improvement of relations between the Soviet Union and the Western powers. In reality this strange word was used to conceal the true nature of the "Soviet" system which is state capitalist, and the problems it is experiencing within the world-capitalist system.

In a pamphlet — published jointly by the Socialist Workers Party and the International Socialists, our counterparts in Britain and Canada — entitled "The Great Lie" by Abbie Bakan, the creation of the state capitalist system is described.

State capitalism was not the inevitable result of an attempt to build socialism, but the result of the attempt to build socialism in one country.

The bureaucratisation under Stalin marked the end of any form of workers power and any hope of socialism. The regime's objective then became to compete successfully with western capitalism and still remains their objective.

Its ruling class demands from its workforce more effort for the cause of "socialism" when in fact its economic problems lie within the world capitalist system, of which the Soviet Union is merely one part.

This is an extremely useful and readable pamphlet especially for those who still consider the Soviet Union to be a socialist state but who are increasingly questioning its methods

and motives which bear an uncanny resemblance to those of western capitalism.

In a world where workers' class consciousness is growing all the time and posing an ever growing threat to the ruling order, it is only natural that the ruling class of both extremes of the same system — private enterprise and state capitalism — will encourage support from their workforces for the build-up of weapons to use against the other side who they describe as either the enemies of "freedom" by the western power: or the enemies of "socialism" by the Soviet Union.

These are the time-honoured methods of competing imperialist powers.

This is a very important pamphlet in the struggle for International Socialism — East and West.

by CHARLIE NOLAN

## The Worker Bookservice

The Socialist Workers Movement distributes a number of books and pamphlets outlining our politics.

Here are a few of them.

**ABBIE BAKAN** - The Great Lie £1.00

**CHRIS HARMAN** - The Lost Revolution, Germany 1918-23, £5.00

**NIGEL HARRIS** - Of Bread and Guns. The world economy in crisis. £3.50

**COLIN BARKER & KARA WEBER** -

Solidarnosc. From Gdansk to Military Repression. £2.50

add 10% for p&p (maximum charge 1.50)  
Cheque to SWM 41, Herberton Park, Dublin 8.

INDUSTRIAL  
**NEW**

## Dunnes Sores Fight

Reports by Jim Blake in Cork, David Byrne in Dublin and Johnny Cluno in Waterford.

AT DUNNES Stores, workers have been in dispute over conditions for part-time workers and union recognition.

The Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks has been losing members to other unions recently, no doubt connected to the fact the union's leaders usually instruct their members to cross pickets of other disputes.

To help to reverse this loss a more militant policy on Dunnes Stores seems to be forthcoming.

Part time staff have been joining the IUDWC recently and a stand seems to be being made on this issue, with the Congress "All-Out" applied for.

The company have a policy of employing as many workers as possible on a part-time basis.

Pay for part-timers is £1.20 a hour compared with £1.80 for full-timers.

Typical of conditions is working from ten in the morning until three in the afternoon with no break, having to ask permission from young junior managers to go to the lavatory — permission the young managers often refuse in order to impress senior managers.

Young women are told to lift heavy crates, with the threat of the sack if they refuse.

Workers are forced to submit to personal searches as they leave work by company detectives, and being spied on is not unheard of.

Part-time workers have the support of the full-timers. A one day strike last month led to stores in Cork being on total strike since.

But Dunnes management in Cork have been playing it dirty. They brought in school-girls from Middleton to take over the cash tills. They have loads brought in at night when pickets have gone off.

The workers have responded by placing a 24-hour picket on the huge new Ballyvolane stores.

The IUDWC called a Friday afternoon march through Cork's Patrick Street last month which consisted of 300 marching — including a delegation from the Cork Unemployed Action Group.

In Waterford, 22 Dunnes Stores workers are out on official strike in defence of a fellow worker who was summarily dismissed by the management as a cost-cutting exercise. This was done with no discussion and in flagrant disregard for the universally accepted principle of seniority.

In an effort to break the strike, Dunnes management have drafted in non-union labour from Dublin to do the work of the Waterford workers.

# Waterford Job-loss city

Waterford and the South East Region has become a serious victim of the cancer of unemployment. Increasing unemployment in the area is now outstripping the level obtaining in the recession-ravaged western region of the country. The problem throughout the south east is now assuming frightening proportions.

The area has experienced the highest unemployment increase in any region of the country since 1978. There are now well over 5,000 unemployed in Waterford City alone, if you include school leavers, unemployed married women, part time workers, etc. who don't sign on because they don't qualify for Social Welfare benefits. That is over 400% increase since 1973 making Waterford the Republic's worst unemployment blackspot.

## THE TYPE OF INDUSTRIES HIT

**AN ANALYSIS** of the trend over the last few years shows an alarming recession in traditional employment sources — textiles; footwear; leather; meat; paper-making and timber.

Jobs have been lost in factories like Henry Dennys; Clover Meats; Goodbody's; Waterford Sack and Bag Co.; Board and Paper Mills, Croker's; Dunlop; Munster Chipboard; Ironfoundry; ACEC, etc.

Politicians, the IDA and workers always hoped that gains from new industries coming into the area would offset those job losses, as indeed they did with the development of new industrial estates over a number of years.

Now, however, with recession biting deeper and deeper, the problems from the decline of the traditional industries are being compounded by the soaring job losses from new grant-aided firms established during the last ten years.

Some of the grant-aided industries which went to the wall during the last few years include: DA Radlators; Dobson Fibres; Rumbach Plastics; Torsion Balance; KDC Paints; Multiamatic; Mirichem; Quigly Magnasite; Magnox; Kawado; Wellworthy Engineering; Poly Pak; Fismar and Siekmans Engineering.

The most recent casualty among this group was Performance Sailcraft Ltd. who manufactured specialised sailing dinghies. They closed just before Christmas.

Many more of the grant-aided industries are only just hanging-in, including the IDA's shining jewels in Waterford, Milton Bradley Toys, who have just had some redundancies, and Measurex Electronics, who have gone back on short-time.

The problem is not just in manufacturing industry. The building industry has all but collapsed with just two or three sites operating.

Health service and Local Authority cuts have also cost jobs with the South Eastern Health Board demanding a two per cent reduction in staff — 100 jobs — by the end of March and a further 3 per cent — 150 jobs — by 1984.

Jobs have also gone in the hotel and catering industry and the depression in the rest of the service sector and in agriculture has cost many more jobs.

The cold winds of recession are even beginning to affect the mighty Waterford Glass, with rumours of short-time working in the Company.

## THE WORKERS' RESPONSE

**THERE ARE** records of Coopers protesting against the bacon manufacturers and exporters in 1791 for switching to canvas wrapping instead of barrels.

The Mayor of the time warned that combinations of workers were illegal, and that publicans should be vigilant in preventing their premises from being used as meeting places.

In the early 1950s, there was an unemployed group who were involved in agitation, marches and demonstrations. In the end, some secured jobs with the Local Authorities while others who had been blacklisted had to take the boat to England, an option most others took by choice.

(We are happy to report that some of that group are alive and well and keeping the flag flying among the electricians in Fleet Street.) However, for our purpose here we will be dealing with workers' responses over the last ten years or so.

Plans to reduce the labour force by a third in Irish Dunlop were resisted by a long and bitter strike from September to December of 1972. Irish Dunlop had been producing slippers for the Irish market since 1965 and corduroy shoes from the late seventies.

The firm claimed the redundancies were necessary due to increased imports and changing fashions. The real reason was the removal of tariffs on footwear from other European countries.

Dunlop could ship in containers of footwear from their other factories, especially low-cost Spain, so there was no need now for their Irish operation. Dunlop, who had a number of other factories and depots around the country, had been shedding jobs in those for similar reasons.

The Waterford workers who were ATGWU members argued that these redundancies were the thin edge of the wedge and decided to resist. They endeavoured to establish a Dunlop Inter-Factory Committee to fight all the job losses — but without success.

## INJUNCTION

Later, and despite a High Court Injunction, Dunlop's factories in Dublin and Cork were picketed. In Cork and Dublin, ITGWU officials shepherded workers across the picket lines and the local works committee did the same at Dunlop's other factory in Waterford.



Latest closure, Graves Ltd (photo courtesy Waterford Post)

After 16 weeks the strikers, who had been well supported by local dockers and others, were forced to accept short time working and redundancies. 18 months later the whole factory closed and many hundreds of jobs were also to go at Dunlop's other factories around the country.

In 1978 the American owners of the National Board and Paper Mills decided to close the plant with the loss of over 200 jobs. The mill was one of only two in the country manufacturing paper from pulp.

An action committee was immediately set up to resist the closure. The workers, who were ITGWU members, called on all workers in the city to support their attempts to get the Government to save the factory.

They hoped to persuade the Government to do this by lobbying the local public representatives — TDs, Mayor, Chamber of Commerce, etc.

They also asked the Trades Council to help by organising support. This resulted in a half-day general strike in the city and a mass demonstration with 20,000 taking part.

A leaflet put into the factory at the time by the Waterford Branch of the Socialist Workers' Movement urged the workers not to rely on the single strategy of deputations by public representatives to the Government, but to rely instead on their own unity and industrial strength as well as the solidarity of other workers, and called on them to occupy the factory, holding it and the machinery to ransom until their demands were met.

Some members of the Action Committee argued for a similar strategy but with the help of the ITGWU officials who "wanted nothing done which would jeopardise the work of the public reps", this strategy was defeated.

Shortly afterwards, the enthusiasm and confidence which the demonstration had created was replaced by demoralisation which resulted in the mill section taking redundancy money. Soon after, the other half of the plant — the box factory — also closed.

Around the same time, there were some skirmishes in the building industry over redundancies, most notable in Sisks and Carmody Builders Ltd which resulted in strikes.

The contractors were saying that when a site finished, the men also finished, even though new sites operated by the same contractors were starting up at the same time. For the contractors, this was a handy way of getting rid of trouble makers — trade unionists.

These strikes ended, by and large, in victories for the workers albeit temporary because soon

afterwards the building industry went into slump which resulted in no work at all.

Poly Pak Ltd — a new grant-aided company manufacturing packaging machines — was occupied by its workers when it closed almost overnight after the Managing Director did a bunk

## SEARCHED EUROPE

The occupation, which was well-supported by local trade unionists, went on for a couple of weeks while the workers and the IDA searched Europe for the management team and a new owner.

However, it never re-opened leaving the workers to salvage what they could, money-wise, from the situation.

The most recent example of resistance to redundancy occurred at the Reginald Bars and Grill. Last October the owner gave two days notice that the premises had been sold with the loss of thirty jobs. The directors — all members of the medical profession — sold the premises over the heads of the workers to another publican who wished to employ his own non-union staff.

Again the premises were occupied by the workers, mostly women members of the ATGWU, who were demanding a guarantee that they would retain their jobs.

A bitter six week dispute ensued which involved picketing doctors' surgeries, chemist shops and public houses.

This resulted in forcing the prospective buyer to withdraw from the deal in favour of another who was prepared to keep on the staff. However the new buyer — who had difficulties with one of his nightclubs — was unable to raise the cash to buy the premises and the workers accepting a redundancy deal.

The way this dispute was dangled by the union left a sour taste in the mouths of a lot of people who had supported the occupation and it will make it more difficult to get people involved in future.

## THE ROLE OF THE TRADES COUNCIL

OVER THE years the Trades Council has always supported workers prepared to fight redundancies and closures.

It was the Council which brought the thousands on to the streets in support of the Paper Mills workers.

Its members argued the need for a fight-back in the workplaces and produced leaflets and posters for the demonstration.

The Council has organised, some times in conjunction with other groups, seminars and workshops on unemployment. It sent resolutions to the ICTU Annual Conferences calling for a more militant response to the jobs crisis and the setting-up of unemployed centres as well as the need for unions to retain unemployed workers in membership with full rights.

It organised a bus-load of unemployed workers to lobby the 1981 ICTU Conference. It supported last year's "Peoples March for Jobs" and sponsored marchers. It changed its rules to allow two unemployed delegates to sit with full rights. It has produced a policy document calling for closer links between the employed and unemployed; for resistance to all



Strike bound Dunnes Stores

closures; for a 35-hour-week; for a ban on systematic overtime, and double jobbing, etc.

No doubt, the fact that two unemployed workers, delegates from their own unions, have sat on the Council over the last few years has helped shaped these policies.

But the problem is that the Council — though it can make general propaganda — has to wait for individual workplaces or unions to move and request it to help before it can act. The examples of resistance described are exceptions rather than the rule.

The stock answer from most trade union officials to closure is to send a deputation to Leinster House and to do nothing which would militate against this strategy working. The recent closure of Waterford Ironfoundry was a case in point. When the Council offered to help, it was politely told it was not needed "lest it frighten off a prospective buyer"!!!

Another example was the most recent closure at Waterford at Graves Ltd, Builders Providers, when Michael O'Brien, ITGWU Branch Secretary said that if talks failed to avert closure, the workers may take action "but not action which would make a bad situation worse"!!!

## THE POLITICIANS' RESPONSE

ALL THE politicians and their parties are glad to go along with the strategy of deputations. They attend the emergency meetings and make the most fiery of speeches.

And when they fail, as they invariably do, well what the hell! They have tried their best, haven't they?

The Workers Party seem to go along with this strategy too ever since they dropped extolling the virtues of the semi-state companies like Irish Sugar/Erin Foods when they started job-cutting. They still go on about developing natural resources, agriculture, downstream industry, etc. And who could disagree with that?

This might be more credible, however, if they didn't vote for job cutting on the City Council! For three out of the last four years, their Councillors have voted for spending cuts on Waterford City Council.

When the public complain about lack of services due to "cuts" they come up with brilliant self-help schemes. For example when tenants in Ballybeg complained last summer about the lack of street cleaning and grass cutting, because of cuts, Martin O'Regan a prominent Workers Party member and local election candidate, suggested collecting money each week to hire skips and to buy lawn mowers to do the job themselves.

The tenants, as tax payers of course, were in effect paying twice for these services.

This same workers representa-

tion, as a shop steward in Wellworthy's Engineering Plant, paid tribute — at a beano where redundancy cheques were handed out — to the management for "their fresh approach" [!!] after closing the factory with a loss of over 200 jobs.

The Workers Party trade union strategy of "progress through responsibility" means they would never call for a militant response to closures, let alone support one. It also means they seldom criticise officials.

## SO WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS FOR A FIGHT-BACK?

SOME PEOPLE would say the prospects for a fight-back are not very good citing the apathy reflected in the low vote for the unemployed candidate in the recent election.

Yes, the vote was disappointing but it is always difficult to get out a protest vote in an election for national government.

There was a lot of goodwill and support shown outside the door offices during the campaign, but it was not translated into votes. The candidate was effectively only one week in the race and coming from Dungarvan was unknown in the City.

There were also three other candidates competing for the working class vote: An ex-chairman of the Labour Party running as an Independent; the official Labour candidate and of course Paddy Gallagher of the Workers Party.

One can only hope the message that employed and unemployed must organise and fight will have got through to at least some workers. Improved Social Welfare, the Redundancy Payments Act, Compensation, Pay Related Benefits, etc. introduced over the last decade or so have all taken the raw edge off unemployment.

Many workers took the carrot in the belief that they could get a job in a couple of months. But now that has all changed. You have to fight to get the Redundancy Payments Act, never mind compensation.

Short term pay related benefits are to be cut and taxed and there is increasing pressure to cut other benefits as well. The prospects of getting a job if you now become unemployed are very slim indeed and of course the escape route of emigration has long since been closed off.

So there is now the possibility that workers might be forced to fight.

It will be the job of socialists, militant trade unionists and unemployed activists by their unity of action and purpose, as well as a level of class consciousness, to encourage that fight-back.

# THE WORKER

FOR WORKERS POWER AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM



Save ALL schools

# PRIORS

# ASSEMBLY OF BIGOTS

THE TORIES aren't happy presiding over the closure of the North's industrial base. They have now taken the axe to the whole school system.

Two months ago, the Education and Library Board announced the closure of fifty state schools, twenty-nine primary and eleven secondary schools in the Belfast area.

The excuse given was the falling school rolls - which have been declining for a number of years.

Throughout the whole of the North, the ELB have decided to close a total of two-hundred and thirty primary and secondary schools. There is of course no denying that the population of the North is declining. But socialists have argued that the falling school population should provide the opportunity to lower the pupil teacher ratio. The poverty and deprivation of the North certainly warrants it.

After the announcement of closure a resistance group was formed. It calls itself - the S.O.S. - the Save Our Schools campaign. They have taken to the streets to highlight the issue.

Protest meetings have been called and pickets have been a daily feature outside the offices of the ELB.

John Cushmanham from the Education Committee of Prior's Assembly has been attempting to dampen the protests down by focussing on his official mediation with the Education and Library Board.

But the S.O.S. group are determined that the control and direction of the campaign remain in their hands.

Like everything else in the North, education operates on sectarian lines.

The state schools cater predominantly for the Protestant population. On the nationalist side there has been no announcement of closures yet.

The schools in the area are controlled and maintained by the Catholic Church. The ELB pays two thirds of the maintenance costs - the Catholic Church paying the remaining one third.

The ELB will reduce the budget of the schools. Then the Church will decide which stay open and which close.

But the signs are that the schools most likely to close are those in the re-development areas like the Lower Falls which have seen a major shift in population to the new estates outside Belfast - like Twinbrook and Poleglass.

The closing of schools in West Belfast will mean higher bus fares, bigger classes, and the loss of teachers jobs.

A start has been made with resisting the closures at a meeting of teachers in West Belfast. They passed a motion resisting any redundancy and it will be going forward to the INTO conference later in the year.

But if the campaign is to succeed, a number of things must be done. It will have to broaden out to involve the whole community of the area.

It will have to link up with the S.O.S. group and more importantly, follow their example of taking to the streets.

MALACHI HIGGINS

THE MASK is slipping from the face of Prior's Assembly. As the assembled shades of unionism go through the motion of parliamentary debate, a gush of bigotry and spleen is flowing out of that body.

Speaking on the evils of the GAA, the Official Unionist Assembly member William Douglas had this to say:

"They play on the Lord's Day. The environment of the towns becomes hideous with their cries while other people attend church."

And that is reason enough for

turning them down for the paltry subsidies that sporting bodies get in the North.

The Independent Unionist Frank Millar was not to be outdone. He introduced a resolution calling for the scrapping of the Fair Employment Agency. The Right Honorable Millar argued that the FEA ignored the fact that there is "something in the customs of Roman Catholics as a group which places them at a disadvantage in the labour market." Millar thought he had found the key to Catholic unemployment:

"There is a higher incidence of drug and alcohol addiction among Catholics."

Through such eloquent reasoning Millar convinced his colleagues to wind-up the FEA.

The very existence of Prior's Assembly represents a threat to the aspirations of anti-Unionists. Their spoof and crude bigotry are a joke as long as they have no real power. In any other country they would be hauled up before a Race Relations Board. But the North is not any other country.

Sectarianism and bigotry runs through every bit of its official institutions.

And the bigots are intent on achieving a return to full Stormont type powers. They reckon that Prior's dithering will not last for ever. A Tory victory at the election later this year would be a green

light for a big drive to win full powers.

Meantime, the shoot-to-kill policy of the RUC and British Army is designed to soften up the anti-Unionist policy.

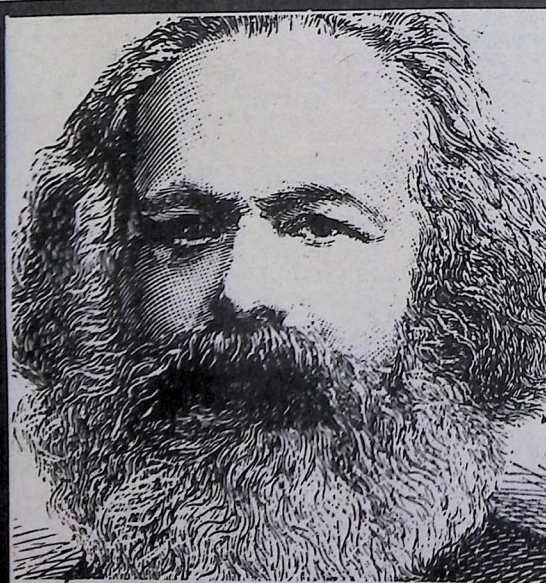
Gone is any attempt to give any sops to the SDLP. That party has been reduced to a series of media stunts like negotiating a "Council of Ireland" with Fitzgerald to hide its increasing weakness.

For the British ruling class has reacted to the massive 35 per cent vote for Sinn Fein in the Assembly elections with just one strategy - the jack-boot. There will be more stake-outs, shoot-outs and murders until anti-unionists learn that they cannot vote Republican without paying the price.

Unfortunately, the votes at the Assembly elections have not been translated into any organised movement. Sinn Fein has thrown its energies into building constituency clinics in preparation for the Westminster elections. For all those concerned about the bigotry and sectarianism of life in the North, SF have just one answer - put trust in the Republicans, armalite or votes.

It is not enough. If the threat of the Assembly is to be removed, then it demands militant mass action on the streets.

This is the only language the bigots understand.



Karl Marx died in London a hundred years ago.

Socialist Workers Movement will be holding a series of meetings with Paul Holborow from the British Socialist Workers Party who will speak on the revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx.

Sunday 13th March  
West Belfast 3.30

Lake Glen  
Monday 14th March  
venue to be announced

Tuesday 15th March  
Cork Connolly Hall  
Ladds Quay.

Wednesday 16th March  
Waterford ITGWU Hall