

the worker

No 9 NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1972 4p
Published on 18th November 1972

FOR A WORKERS' REPUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

FIGHT FOR

JOB

"I won't be able to go out tonight, lads". Thousands of workers throughout Ireland are having to say this. Unemployment and increasing redundancies and short-time working are hitting workers' living-standards.

Rationalisation is the 'in'-thing there are plans to rationalise creameries, bacon factories, the textile industry, and a host of others. Individual firms are also 'clearing out' to prepare for stiffer international competition.

The bosses' sacking policy is bringing them gains, too. There are now less people employed in industry now than there were at the beginning of the year, but total production has increased. 1972 could see an increase of 6 per cent in the output screwed out of each worker.

PROMISES

The promises of new jobs to compensate for redundancies are being forgotten. The Industrial Development Authority is having to change all its forecasts. In the year from March 1971 to March 1972, there was an overall drop of 4,000 jobs. The figures will be worse for the twelve months of 1972. Some 'industrial development', that is.

While the authorities are beginning to despair (in private, of course) that they can ever catch up on the drain of jobs, it would be wrong for workers to share that despair. It would be wrong for us to imagine that we can solve the problem by accepting their explanations and arguments. The present crisis shows

us clearly enough that the capitalist system cannot provide a secure livelihood for all, and that it wastes the potential of tens of thousands of workers. We must organise for change for different priorities, starting now by opposing every redundancy and every sacking.

This is the situation around the country:

LIMERICK: The management of Clover Meats have tried to blame some of the workers for the threatened loss of 340 jobs at the bacon factory. But the only 'crime' of the Pork Butchers was to insist that they should not take a cut in earnings because of changes in the bonus system. Their union, the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, opposed them, trying to soften the management and persuade them not to close. Some hope!

with a management that first agrees to be bound by the Labour Court findings, and commits the union to the same principle, and then changes its mind. **WATERFORD:** One out of every sixteen Waterford workers has been made redundant this year. The strike against sackings at the Dunlop factory has been going on for two months. The strikers are still seeking the support of other Dunlop workers in Ireland, although they have support from dockers and transport workers who have 'blackened' goods to Dunlop.

The attitude of the I.T.G.W.U. has not helped get support from other Irish Dunlop plants. Jim Blake a Cork I.T.G.W.U. branch secretary, herded his 'flock' across a picket line put up on the Cork factory by the Waterford strikers. However, the

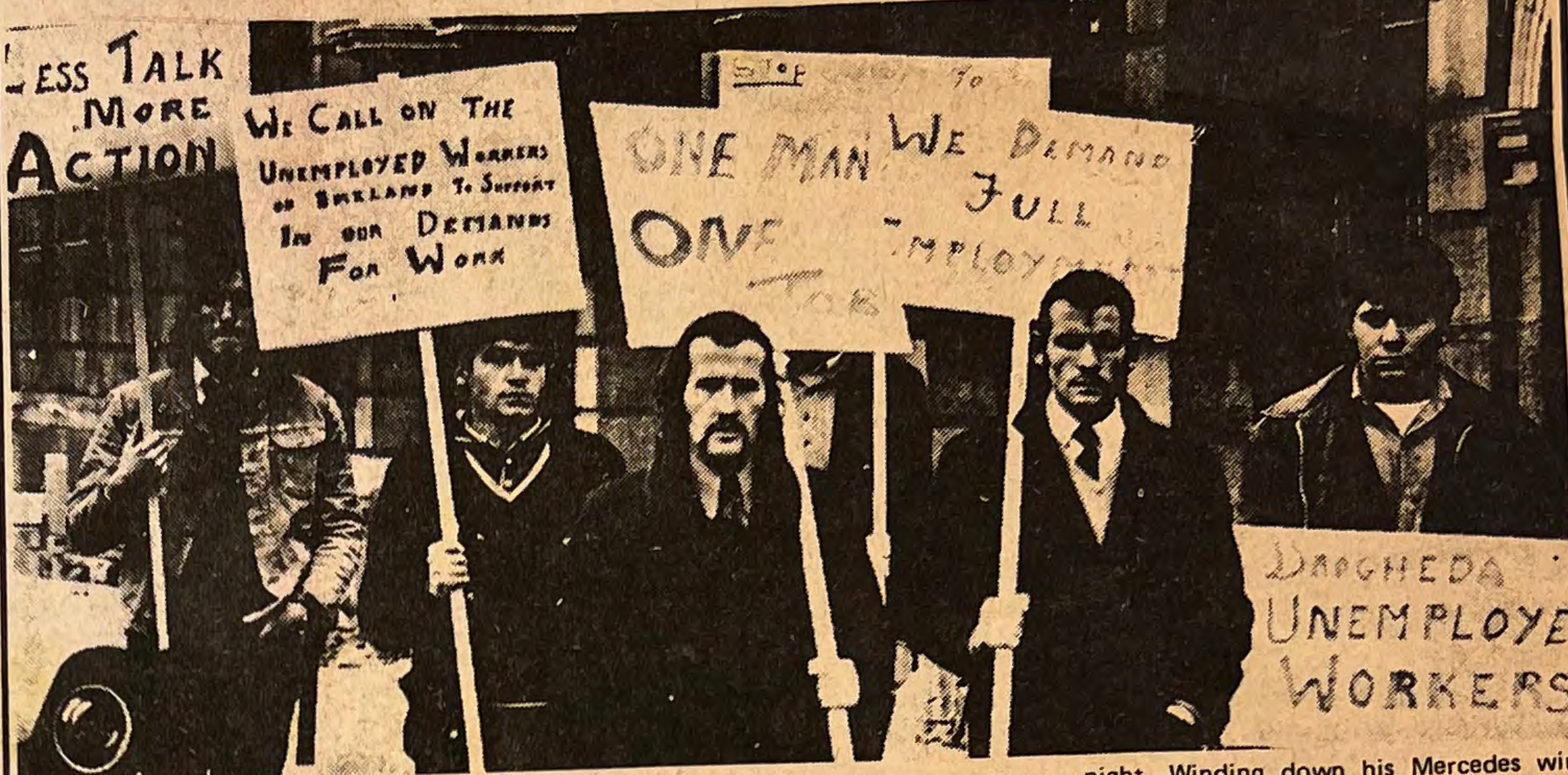
BRITAIN WORKERS VOTE TO STAY OUT



Fiat workers arrive to swell ranks on picket at Brittain's Long Mile Road plant

A mass meeting of workers at the Brittain car assembly plants on Saturday, 11th November, voted by a majority of 60 to continue the strike. The terms from management for a return to work offered no firm guarantees on any of the grievances. Now, more than ever, it is important to take the strike to other workers. Collections must be organised more effectively. The financial support and industrial strength of other workers, including car-workers in Britain, must be used to force the company to concede.

T.D.'s ABUSE DROGHEDA UNEMPLOYED



Drogheda Unemployed Workers' Committee put a 24-hour picket on the Dail at the beginning of November. Formed two weeks previously at a meeting attended by 60-70 workers, employed and unemployed, the committee set up a token picket of twelve members to pressure local T.D.'s into taking action on their behalf. They are only a small proportion of the 1,400 Drogheda workers now out of work.

Unemployment nationally is at 8½ per cent, but in Drogheda, the figure is nearly 20 per cent. There have been redundancies in two of Drogheda's major industries, footwear and textiles, at Woodington's and Greenmount and Boyne. When the new cement works was completed at Platin, there were more men laid off.

This situation is hitting two groups hardest: the men over 30 years of age, and the 16-18 year-old school-leavers.

strikers had been able to raise funds through collections in factories in Waterford and elsewhere. Local members of the Socialist Workers Movement have helped organise fund-raising activities.

Also in Waterford, 16 men and women were recently laid off at Goulding Plastics. The union official was delighted with the redundancy terms. But other trade unionists, even including full-time officials, are finding out that the draw-back of the redundancy payments scheme is that it discourages workers from resisting the sack - as well as paying little money.

DUNDALK: Workers at the Irish Flock Manufacturing Company are continuing their occupation, having been sacked six months ago! For many weeks, the owners of the factory could not be contacted, and they carefully avoided all publicity, afraid that their dirty business might be revealed. Now, the English owners have agreed to sell to a co-operative which has been set up, but the Irish directors have opposed the sale. They belong to a shady enterprise called the Irish Efficiency Centre, a firm of industrial consultants which invests as well as 'advices'.

At the other end of the country, the Irish Efficiency Centre has been involved in the setting up of a plastics factory in the Connemara Gaeltacht, along with Germany industrialists and the semi-state Gaeltarra Eireann.

REFERENDUM

It would be nice to think that a simple vote could overcome the problems of the Catholic Church's dominant position in the Southern State. But it won't.

Nor will a simple vote give an effective voice to the youth of this country. The frustration they feel at cheap labour-rates, a lousy education system, and a repressive morality, is being expressed in more violent, and more radical, terms.

Certainly, we support 'adult rights' from the age of 18, and we support the separation of Church and State. But we have no illusions that tit-bits like amendments to the Constitution will bring us much nearer to that situation.

There is no important section of the

Tulley

One object of local resentment over the lengthening dole queues is James Tully, Meath Labour T.D., and an official of the Federation of Rural Workers. His concern for the precise borders between Drogheda and Meath has prevented the development of an industrial estate in the border area.

The Drogheda Unemployed Workers' Committee is made up entirely of unemployed workers, most of whom have been out of work for more than six months. Their delegation to the Dail was received by T.D.'s on the first afternoon, but the picket got a much less civil reception as drunken T.D.'s staggered erratically from the Dail just after mid-

CO. TIPPERARY: Following hard on the heels of the closure of the Ballynary mines comes the announcement that 100 jobs are to go when Ardfinnan Woollen Mills close. That part of South Tipperary will be deprived of its only major place of employment.

WOOL TEXTILE INDUSTRY: The Atkins Report on the woollen industry has come up with predictable recommendations that the industry should be 'rationalised', mills closed, and 1,000 jobs chopped. All this for the sake of restoring 'reasonable' profit margins in the industry. But there is nothing 'reasonable' about any part of the profiteering system.

The suggestions for special redundancy terms just don't see this. They are saying that workers should take the sack, and that it is a dying industry. But it is only dying because capitalists are moving their capital to more profitable areas. Where there is such a shortage of jobs, we must fight to hold on to every one, even if it can be 'shown' that an industry is technologically behind the times.

We should be prepared to take on every single employer who threatens the sack. No amount of lobbying T.D.'s, and proposals for 'top level committees' and 'redundancy agencies', can substitute for the direct action of organised workers. They have the power to change the trend. The fight for jobs is now won in discussion in government offices, but

night. Winding down his Mercedes window one T.D. assured them: "I'd never hire a shower like you". A Labour T.D. encouraged them with the words, "Don't worry, lads, I'm a worker too", as he quickly changed into second gear. As Ivan Cunningham, chairman of the committee pointed out, T.D.'s are unlikely to find themselves out of work - at least not until the working class takes power.

More determined as a result of the picket, the committee plans to strengthen its links with the organised labour movement. It will be putting its case to local I.T.G.W.U. branch officials, and attending Trades Council meetings. The committee should get the full support of all Drogheda workers as it works to hammer out a policy against unemployment and redundancy which will enable workers to challenge a system which puts profit before people.

only where the workers have their collective strength, and are prepared to use it.

Wherever redundancy is threatened, a works committee must be set up to meet the threat head-on. The ordinary workers must direct the struggle, because we have seen clearly enough that the full-time union officials cannot be relied on. They try to take the initiative away from the shop-floor workers.

We must be prepared to use industrial action to stop sackings, and we must force the unions to adopt a policy of opposing all redundancies, and supporting any action taken to stop them. But even if the most powerful weapon, the factory occupation is to succeed, it must be supported by other workers. We must prepare the ground now in the localities and throughout particular industries and companies.

We can't afford to accept the bosses' arguments about 'profitability' and 'rationalisation'. Our jobs are at stake. The fight must be taken up throughout the 32 Counties: SAY NO TO THE SACK!

Clonmel Trades Council have launched a campaign against redundancies in the Tipperary area with a march and rally on 11th November. Representatives of the Waterford Dunlop Strike Committee were at the rally. This shows the way forward: linking workers in struggle against sackings. Pressure from the localities, and from the rank-and-file, can force the unions nationally to resist all redundancies.

have to take on the vested interests in the 26 Counties in a more meaningful way. We will have to undermine the social and political authority they claim. We will have to counteract the ideological mystification they put over—with the case for a Workers' Republic.

The Referendum in the South will change nothing of substance. Like the Northern 'plebiscite', a result either way or the other would not seriously affect the balance of class forces in Ireland.

Whatever way the vote goes in the Southern referendum, the Special Courts and the 'harrassment' of republicans and socialists will continue. Whatever way the vote goes in the North, the British government will pursue its path of reconciling Green and Orange middle classes, and repressing their opponents.

WORKING CLASS ON THE POLITICAL STAGE

The first article in this series examined some early radical, pre-socialist movements. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the towns and industry expanded, and the strength of the working class grew rapidly. This was translated into political terms in mass organisations. It was to lead to the development of the Marxist theory of working-class revolution, and the first openly socialist parties. The third article in the series will deal with the later part of the nineteenth century.

There have been wage-workers for thousands of years. But not until the nineteenth century did the working class begin to act together as a class in politics. The country where this first began to happen was England, the first country in the world to become industrialised.

The pace-making industry in England was the textile industry, and here trade unions began to make themselves felt. Political agitation was being carried out at the same time, generally peaceful but leading to a couple of risings in 1817. 11 demonstrators were killed at Peterloo in 1819 and repressive laws were passed. The political movement collapsed. But during the 1820's there were attempts to form unions catering for several trades in Manchester and in London, helped by the repeal in 1824 of the Combination Laws under which trade unions were illegal.

On the Continent, 1815 had witnessed the final defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo and the establishment once again of absolute despotism across the face of Europe. It was an effort to turn the clock back from the revolutionary Europe of the preceding decades.

In the later 1820's an economic depression spread over Europe. In England, following a long spinners' strike, Buncrana emigrant John Doherty founded the National Association for the Protection of Labour, which won strong support especially among textile workers. In 1830 the hated Bourbon king of France was overthrown and replaced by Louis Philippe of the popular House of Orleans. Belgium gained independence from Holland and the Polish people rose in insurrection against Russia. In 1831 and again in 1834, Lyons silk workers rose in revolt against their miserable conditions, only to be cruelly crushed by the big merchants and well-to-do.

AGITATION

The French Revolution of 1830 encouraged the agitation in England for parliamentary reform. This movement was mainly working-class, but most of the leaders were middle-class. The three most industrialised countries in Europe - Britain, France, and Belgium - were now all con-

Part TWO in a series on the History of Socialism

stitutional monarchies with a limited vote: the capitalists had effective political control over their countries.

Realising that they had been duped by their middle-class leaders and that they themselves were no better off, many workers began to take an interest in socialist ideas which were beginning to circulate. An important part in the struggle against tyranny had been played by secret societies. Their chief organiser was an Italian named Buonarroti who had been active in Baboeuf's of 1796 to establish a Republic of Equals in place of the French bourgeois republic.

Auguste Blanqui adapted secret societies to proletarian conditions, and organised a rising in Paris in 1839. But the rising failed to attract the mass of the French proletariat and so was doomed to be immediately crushed.

UTOPIANS

Blanquism, though a revolutionary doctrine, did not allow the working class much of a role in their own emancipation. Neither did the teach-



An illegal meeting of agricultural workers at the time of Chartism.

ings of the Utopian socialists. Charles Fourier published schemes for the setting-up of self-sufficient "phalanxes" or settlements of 1600 people which would be started in the middle of the existing capitalist society.

In England, Robert Owen outlined a similar scheme. A few attempts at establishing Owenite communities were made, the most successful at Ralahine, Co. Clare, where the landlord Arthur Vandeleur brought in an English Owenite to form his labourers into a co-operative. This was remarkably successful: the members showed that they could work together for the common good without any overseers. But the community was solvent only because the population was unusually low for a country area, and it was dissolved when Vandeleur gambled his estate away.

THOMSON

The conditions of the working class were now attracting the attention of economists. The Cork landlord William Thompson argued that "without labour there is no wealth" and that "all the products of labour . . . ought to be secured to the producers of them". The only way labour could retain the wealth it had created was in the framework of co-operative production.

The Utopian socialists thought that once they had convinced the world's rulers that their schemes were rational and beneficial to society, then they would be put into practice. Only after years of being rebuffed by those who stood to lose, did Owen turn his attention to those who stood to gain. He tried to interest the trade unions in turning themselves into co-operatives, and accepted the presidency of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, which had been involved in a flood of strikes and lockouts. The government had responded by striking at the weakest link: six agricultural labourers from Tolpuddle were sentenced to seven years' transportation for administering "illegal oaths". In this time of crisis Owen's advice was always for conciliating the employers and refusing to sanction proposed strikes. With these tactics the union rapidly collapsed.

The most advanced sections of the working class now turned to a political movement of their own, the Chartist movement. The People's Charter was a democratic programme,

not a socialist one; but the Chartists believed that once they had won the Charter, the working class would use democracy to legislate improvements in their conditions. A petition was presented to Parliament in 1839; on its failure, some Chartists attempted an uprising. The Lancashire textile workers on strike in 1842 wanted to turn the strike into a political rising for the Charter, but were denounced by the Chartist leader Feargus O'Connor.

REVOLUTIONS

On the Continent Pierre Joseph Proudhon had announced that property is theft. This was to be a watchword of many French workers of the nineteenth century. But Proudhon wanted a society of equal independent producers, rather than a society based on socially-controlled production.

A new economic depression gripped the Continent from 1846 to 1848, followed by a wave of bourgeois revolutions. A revolution in Paris overthrew Louis Philippe and a bourgeois democratic republic was established. Revolutions also occurred in Sicily, Austria, Germany and the Papal States. In England the Chartist movement revived, but a march on Parliament was cancelled at the last moment by O'Connor, and Chartism soon came to an end.

The movement on the Continent was also short-lived. In France the new government had turned against the working class; it adopted the scheme of the working-class leader Louis Blanc for co-operative workshops, but put on a hostile minister in charge. Then it deliberately starved them of money, and "discovering" that they were wasteful, told them to restrict their activities.

The Paris working class revolted against the bourgeois state and were crushed. Reaction spread across Europe.

In the early part of 1848 and too late to influence its events, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels had published the Communist Manifesto. They had been in contact with a group called the League of the Just, and had persuaded it to drop its secret conspiratorial nature and form itself into a propagandist group - the Communist League. The League's new Manifesto was to influence the future.

J. G. P. S.



Repeal meeting at Tara, 15 August 1843

MISERY AND REVOLT IN IRELAND

The first half of the nineteenth century was a time of increasing misery in the Irish countryside. The poor responded by forming organisations to fight landlordism and the government. Under the names Whiteboys, Lady Clares, Whitefeet, Blackfeet, they terrorised the oppressors. They were "a secret agricultural trades union of labourers and cottier farmers - a trades union which undertook in its own wild way to execute justice upon the evictor, and vengeance upon the traitor to his fellows" (Connolly).

Side by side with the struggle in the countryside the workers in the towns were organising too. Their organisations were strictly against the law. Yet trade unions survived. When the workers demanded higher wages, attempts were made to use non-union labour or "colts" as they were called. These "colts" or scabs usually met a violent reception. Finlay, a newspaper owner of Belfast, had to issue his colts with guns to protect themselves. The Dublin Typographical Union supported the Belfast Typographical Union in their struggle against Finlay, and sent them £100. This early trade union solidarity is important especially when the employers were using religion to divide the workers.

While the workers in the country and in towns were organising and defending themselves, Daniel O'Connell arose as a national leader. He got the support of the Catholic clergy and people in a mass movement and eventually the government granted Catholic Emancipation. This meant that Catholics were allowed into Parliament, into officers' ranks, etc.

O'Connell moved on to call for repeal of the Act of Union of 1800. By 1831 39 trades had passed resolutions calling for Repeal. In 1837 the Trades Committee wrote to O'Connell asking: "What advantage is it to the tradesmen of Ireland that 1300 situations (jobs) have been thrown open by Catholic Emancipation. Has it given a loaf of bread to any of the thousand starving families of the poor operatives in this city?"

O'Connell had not at first shown himself to be on the side of the employers. But in 1838 he voted against shortening the hours of child labour in the factories. Around this time there were big trade union struggles in Dublin. O'Connell attacked them: "There is no tyranny equal to that which is exercised by the trade unionists in Dublin over their fellow labourers".

1843 was fixed to be Repeal year. Monster meetings were held throughout the country. The biggest meeting was to be at Clontarf in October 1843. This time the Government were frightened. The Chartists in England supported the struggle for Repeal. The Government banned the Clontarf meeting. O'Connell backed down. The consequences were disastrous.

By 1845 Ireland was in the Famine. Enough food was produced to feed more than twice the population. Yet thousands died of starvation. A Catholic bishop wrote: "The famine is spreading with fearful rapidity and scores of persons are dying of starvation and fever but the tenants are bravely paying their rents."

Famine

John Mitchel and James Fintan Lalor rejected this attitude. Lalor called not for repeal but for an Irish republic. He argued that the rents should be withheld till the people met and decided how much should be paid, not to the landlords but to their own native government. "Mankind will yet be masters of the earth".

Attempts were made to start rent strikes and an insurrection. But Mitchel and Lalor were arrested. The people were starving, emigrating, and disillusioned. Workers' organisations in town and country were smashed. The Irish people, ravaged and torn, could only wait for better days.

D. D. J. R.

I wish to have further details of the Socialist Workers' Movement

Send to Socialist Workers' Movement, 30 Strandville Avenue, North Strand, Dublin 3

Name _____

Address _____

VICTORY POSSIBLE IN BRITAIN STRIKE

On strike since late September, the 750 workers at the Brittain Group car assembly plants in Dublin remain determined and solid in their efforts to crack one of the country's most ruthless and tight-fisted bosses. The Brittain management have reacted to the workers' action with high-handed contempt, and with the crudest attempts to break the strike. From his distant Scottish home, George Clement Vincent Brittain has been ranting on about strikers being intimidated into taking action.

Three weeks after the strike started, the 750 workers were sacked. But all the 'ex-employees' remain on the picket lines, waiting to give the company the bloody nose it so richly deserves. The magnificent solidarity shown by Fiat workers on the picket line at the Parts Division in Long Mile Road is only one of the several set-backs Brittain has suffered.

Forced to open talks with the union, Brittain then tried to object to the presence of Ted McKenna chairman of shops committee, on the union delegation. Behind the weak excuses lay the real reason — Ted McKenna's unrelenting pursuit of his members' interests down the years.

Antics

Brittain has attempted to separate the rank-and-file from the strike committee and have failed completely. Using RTE as a mouthpiece, they tried to con the workers into believing that the dispute was over and that work would be resumed. The only result was stronger picket-lines. The management's antics have increased the determination to win.

For years now, the Brittain workers have been pushed around under the 1947 procedure agreement, which in writing at

least, gives management complete control of the shop floor. The shop stewards did make inroads into the agreement, but still the management refused to recognise any negotiating status for them. And they still used the notorious 'one hour's notice' to change conditions. The dispute then, is about who controls the shop-floor — shop stewards for their members or bosses for profit.

The 'mobility of labour' allowed management to move a worker from one job to another, even from one plant to another. This has undermined organisation on the job. Using "its rights in closing down all or a portion of the plant at one hour's notice", the management originally provoked the strike by closing the Drimnagh factory.

Bonus rates are fixed according to a system introduced in 1967. There has been no substantial increase in the 'points value' of the work done, although new models have been introduced. Nor have bonuses been increased with the rising cost of living. In fact, Brittain workers taken an effective 37½ per cent cut in bonus earnings since 1967. The method by which bonus payments are made has been exposed as a complete con — a one-sided imposition by management. As one worker told this paper, "Management says one car is worth 200 points. But can they explain why? Can they tell us why it's not worth, say, 300 points? Of course they can't."

The grievances of the workers are very real and resentment goes deep. The way is open for victory, but there are a number of pitfalls that have to be avoided.

The talks so far have gone on in secrecy. Only a handful of the strike committee know what has gone on so far. All the gains made during the strike could be lost in a few minutes at the negotiating table. It is an odd state of affairs where

negotiations are in the hands of a team of four, three of whom are full-time officials not involved in the dispute as strikers, and who will not have to work for Brittain under any new terms agreed.

The management have only come across with promises that they will not use the one hour's notice. But can the strikers be satisfied with such promises from a double-dealing firm? No; they must insist that the one hour's notice is abolished completely.

British Leyland workers in England, who assemble some of the same cars as the Brittain workers, have learned to their cost that improved wages on work study means that a battle seems to be won, but the war itself is lost. Any terms for a return to work which included acceptance of work study would mean the strike was lost. Management have said that they think the plants are overmanned. But the jobs of fellow-workers would be far too high a price to pay for improved bonuses.

The Brittain strikers will have to take the offensive, as we pointed out in a previous article. Every striker must be involved in the struggle. The best strike committee in the world is no substitute for the participation of the rank-and-file.

Workers in the car plants, the docks, and other manufacturing industry must be won to solidarity action. The example of Fiat workers shows that the support is there. Carworkers in England are keen to give active support, and have already sent money for the strike fund. But no fund is too big for workers in dispute. The decision by Brittain shop-stewards to join the British Leyland combine committee can be used as a springboard to get bigger commitments from workers in Britain. The delegation by Barney Morris, Secretary of the shops committee, to English car plants, and the picket by Scottish workers on George Brittain's home in Fife show the way ahead. If the present talks should fail, the time will have come for an all-out fight, mobilising the full strength of the working-class movement.

Barney Morris' tour of English car plants and the picket in Scotland were organised by supporters of 'Carworker', a paper 'for motor vehicle and component workers' produced by militants in the car trade, in Britain. The present issue carries a survey on sit-ins and details of conditions at many different factories.

The 'Carworker' is available in Ireland through 30 Strandville Avenue, North Strand, Dublin 3.

A LATE VOCATION?

Charles McCarthy, of the Vocational Teachers' Association, and ill-repute, turned away enthusiastic, young O'Brien supporters from his door in the 1968 election campaign. He was, he said, a convinced Fianna Fail man. His record in the trade union movement seemed to confirm this amply.

Charles McCarthy has now joined the Labour Party. His record in the trade union movement is unchanged.

Ballingarry: Thieves Fall Out

Controversy still continues about the closure of the Ballingarry coal mines in Tipperary. And we haven't heard the last of the story. There are rumours that an English or Welsh firm may be interested in taking over the colliery, and even that Tom O'Brien, the former owner, may be involved in some new deal.

Whatever happens in the coming months, there are events in the past which people in high places would rather forget. Indeed, they have been disagreeing among themselves. The jobs of 150 workers have been a secondary matter while factions in the business world and around Fianna Fail have squabbled.

Tom O'Brien is a staunch Fianna Failer. He was close to George Colley some years ago, at a time, too, when Colley was helping to 'bail out' another Tipperary F.F. man. Des Hanafin had been in a spot of trouble — a drunk, deep in debt, and with two legs broken in a car crash. Colley helped him with some of the debts — a telephone call had them cancelled. O'Brien helped him by buying his business, the Anner Hotel in Thurles. That was early in 1968 — just after the Ballingarry mines had received a £40,000 grant as well as various loans from the state — one from the Industrial Development Authority for £50,000. Now Hanafin is a senator, and next in line for the General Secretary's post in Fianna Fail.

O'Brien's party connections helped him get contracts for coal supplies too — from hospital authorities and county councils. Then there were the miners' houses, built right beside the county council houses, on the same design and by the same contractor. The people in Tipperary reckon these will be taken over by the County Council.

In 1970, following the bank strike, when O'Brien's pay cheques bounced through the county, he was again helped out by state loans. But now the 'scratch my back', and I'll scratch yours' seems to have turned sour — and once again the workers have paid the price of rivalry among bosses and politicians.

O'Brien, previously well 'in' with government circles, appears not to have known about the announcement of the closure. What's happened the Colley connection? Did the bureaucracy make the decision over the politicians' heads? Why is Jackie Fahy, Fianna Fail T.D. for the area, so active on O'Brien's behalf, while Noel Davern, the other Fianna Fail T.D., says nothing?

Above all, do the details matter? More than ever our concern must be to push past all types of middle-class politicians and take our own future into our own hands. The corruption will continue as long as there's something to be got out of it. But the workers can change that.

ROOFCHROME STRICKERS GET NO UNION SUPPORT

64 workers at the Roofchrome factory in Cork have been on strike since early September. They are demanding a complete overhaul in conditions and rates in the factory, and have submitted a 14-point claim to the management. Their key demand is for parity with other factories belonging to Pfizer Chemical Corporation in Ireland.

Working conditions at the factory, which produces lining material for the interiors of furnaces are dirty and dangerous. In recent years, conditions have got worse, and the work-load has been greater. But there has been no compensation for the workers. The basic wage is only £20. The strike was started after many fruitless efforts to get a change through official channels.

The Roofchrome factory is a subsidiary of the Quigley Company, which is in turn owned by the giant Pfizer company of New York. The President of the Quigley Company is John Mulcahy, Richard Nixon's personal friend. The Pfizer Corporation has 85 factories in 35 countries, and it is among the top 150 companies in the

world, making an annual profit of £40 million!

The workers at the Tivoli factory are battling with giants. But this can be their strength. The material they produce is valuable. It supplies other factories in the company. The raw material is mined by Quigley in Co. Kilkenny and processed at Dungarvan. The demand for parity can best be enforced by calling on the support of the workers in these other plants.

Collections to support the strikers have been organised at a number of Cork factories, including the £13 million Pfizer plant at Ringaskiddy. But the Roofchrome strikers will need more than money if they are to win. Cork dockers have shown 'he way by 'blacking' goods to Pfizer.

The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union officials have refused to support the men, on the grounds that their claim is in breach of the National Wage Agreement. The strikers will have to by-pass the officials, appealing directly to other workers in Pfizer factories and to others challenging the National Wage Agreement.

Out for 130 weeks



Tommy Murdock at the Fine Tubes Conference

Workers at Fine Tubes Ltd., one of 13 American owned factories at Plymouth, England, have been on strike since 15 June 1970 — 2 YEARS AND 4 MONTHS. At the end of last month they held a Conference in Birmingham to review the position and consolidate their forces for what they hope will be the final assault before victory.

Tommy Murdock one of the strikers who have gone to the picket line each day during the two years, comes from Dalkey, Co. Dublin. He took some time off from the Conference to talk to THE WORKER.

Profits up

He explained that the workers had only gained the right to belong to a union after a strike three years previously and since that time the management had continually tried to discredit the union and divide the workers. By 1969 trading profits had risen by 86% at Fine Tubes and there had been an increase in productivity in the same period. The workers, who were on a £16 p.w. basic, put in for a 6% rise. This claim finally led to the strike four months later — and the immediate sacking of all the workers — except four, who returned to work.

Unemployment was high in Plymouth — Tommy compared it to Ireland as he remembered it — and so the management found no difficulty in recruiting scab labour — helped by the fact that they gave them a rise of 9% in wages back-dated to the beginning of the strike!

At this stage, after more than 2 years — and a Government enquiry which came down on the side of the workers — all the management will agree to do is to grant the strikers interviews for new jobs if they will lift the blacking and the strike and sign on at the Labour Exchange. This they resolutely refuse to do — and at the Conference 600 fellow trade-unionists pledged their support, both financially and in blacking Fine Tubes and the firms who deal with them. They are convinced this strike is about labour union recognition, and its result will affect the whole trade union movement.

Tommy Murdock remembers jobs in Dublin with long hours, low pay and no union allowed — the reason he emigrated. Fine Tubes was his first job in England, and he was there eight years. He is not likely to settle for less than a complete victory. With the support of their fellow trade-unionists, he and the other strikers are convinced that this time they will win.

DENIS KANE

Another American anti-union firm, Pitney Bowes, has just opened new premises in Dublin. He has just had a depot here since 1964. The supplies of office equipment come from their factory in Harlow, England.

For six months last year, a group of workers at the Harlow factory struck for union recognition. It was a mini-Fine Tubes. But they got even less support from the unions, and eventually the strike came to an end with non-union labour still working in the plant.

REPORTS SHOW EFFECT OF BOSSES ATTACKS

IDA

The Industrial Development Authority received almost £27 million of taxpayers' money in its last financial year, which it spent trying to bribe foreign capitalists to come to this country and paying the inflated salaries of its own bureaucrats. For many years now the IDA has been publishing expensively produced reports on the Irish economy and the role of the IDA in it.

Despite its massive budget and staff of — one supposes — 'experts', many of their predictions have proved to be blatantly incorrect. To take the worst example, the IDA in their 1971 report predicted a redundancy level of 3,000: in fact redundancies reached almost 12,000. The IDA admits this error in its latest report (1971-72), but how does it explain it?

Two of the factors given are the troubles in the North, and the "rapid rise in labour costs". Let us take the North first. The "troubles" in the North have had little effect on industry there. Indeed, productivity has risen during the Provos' bombing campaign, and the level of foreign investment seems to be rising. Guinnesses have invested £1 million in Public Houses in Belfast, and American and Japanese capitalists have been buying up property and business concerns.

If international capital has not been frightened away from the North it is not likely that they will be frightened away from the South by bombs in Belfast and Derry. In fact, such is the generosity of the IDA that it is almost impossible to lose money in Ireland if you are a foreign capitalist.

The claims of the IDA that rising wage costs are putting foreign capitalists off is even more cynical, particularly as it contradicts their own figures. In the 1971 report the IDA wrote "absolute labour costs in Ireland are still substantially below those in neighbouring countries" (p. 11).

A table on page 13 of the latest report shows that there was a 16 per cent change in hourly earnings, which was only two points higher than Japan and four points higher than the U.K. What they forgot to mention was that price inflation — which hits the working class hardest of all — was the highest in Europe! Allowing for the price inflation, the Irish worker ended up worse-off than workers in other countries but the IDA blames him for the failure of foreign capital to come to Ireland.

NO: neither of these reasons is the real explanation for the fall-off in investment. It is the recession in the international economy which lies behind it. This is a dimension which the IDA Report does not take in. The impact of the crisis internationally can be seen especially clearly in the case of Britain, which only

contributed 4 per cent of the foreign investment in the 26 Counties last year, as compared with 22 per cent in previous years. Such is the state of the British economy that it is now competing with the 26 Counties for new industrial investment from abroad.

The IDA still tries to make us believe that the only way to "save" the Irish economy is to integrate it into world capitalism. The experience of the last five years show that this may be in the interest of the Irish middle classes, but that it is at the expense of the Irish workers. The workers always come off badly under capitalism, whether national or international, but the rate of exploitation is definitely increased when a backward country is opened to international monopoly capitalism.

-and LABOUR COURT

The Labour Court has delivered a triumphant report: "Workers, with a few notable exceptions, did not attempt to enforce claims for more than they were entitled to get under the (National Wage) Agreement".

The Court's Report for 1971, issued in October, relates the operation of the Agreement to the fact that 'man-days' lost in strikes were cut by nearly three-quarters from 1970 to 1971. During the same period, the Labour Court was kept very busy. There was a 200 per cent increase in the number of recommendations they issued. As in previous years, however, the numbers rejected by workers (35) was nine times greater than the number rejected by employers (3).

It's surprising how many people are still convinced that the Court is in some sense 'neutral', or that you can get a fair hearing there. To believe that you must first of all, never have been there, and, secondly, believe that the law and the state are fairly balanced between the two major classes in this society. Anybody who has seen Gardai protecting scabs, and employers getting court injunctions to stop pickets in a matter of hours would know that the opposite is true.

The Labour Court, and all the complicated procedures attached to it, serve only to confuse workers, and to stifle the development of independent workers' action and class consciousness.

IRELAND and international capitalism

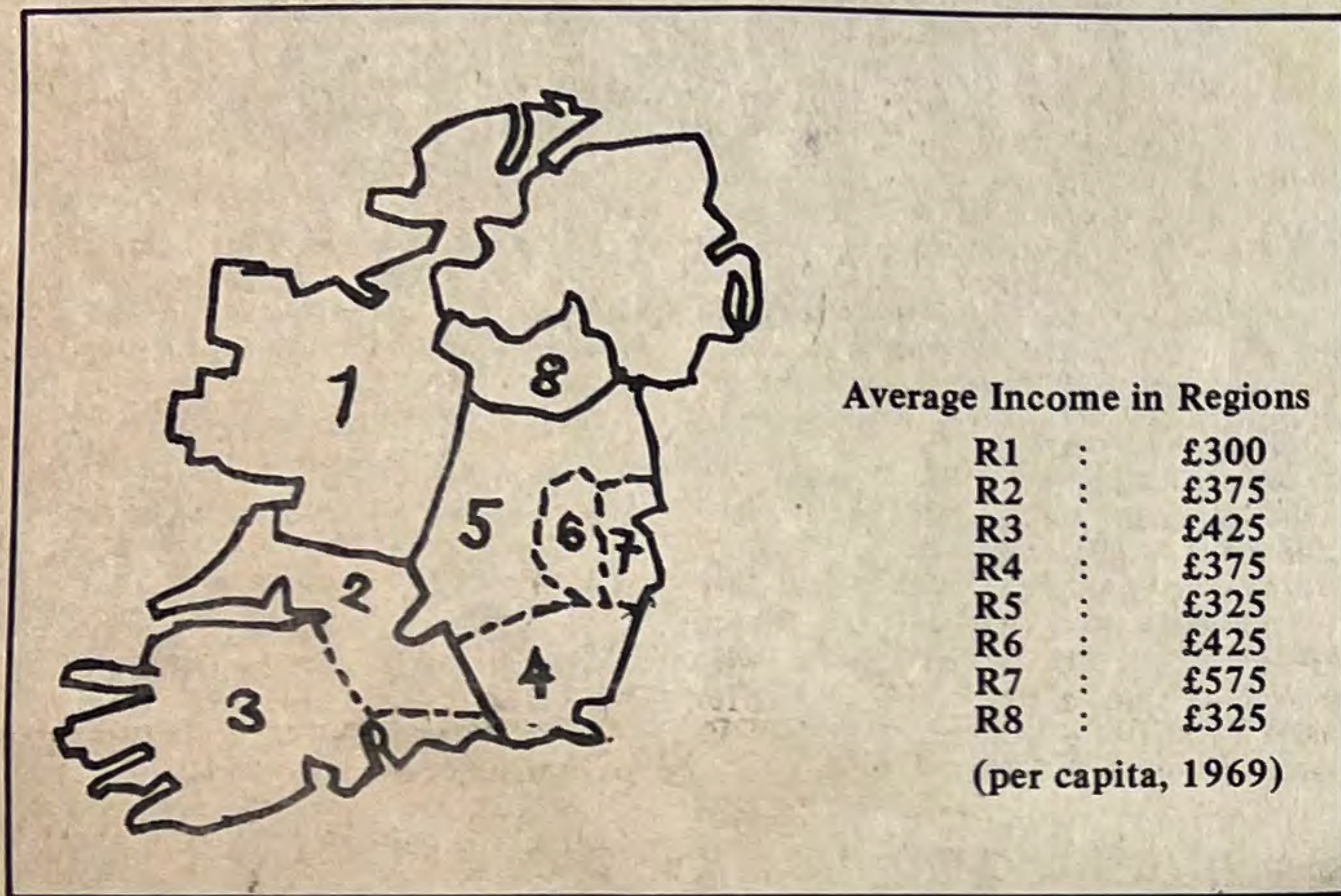
In the second of two articles on international capitalism and backward regions, JIM SMYTH examines the Southern Irish economy in the context of the EEC. It is quickly seen that the promises of high living standards and full employment while the Irish economy is 'open' to foreign investment are deliberately misleading. The way to reach such goals, however, is not by going back to local, protected capitalism, but beyond international capitalism to international socialism.

Entry into the EEC will have far-reaching effects on the structure of the Irish economy. For many years the Irish economy was protected by high tariff walls which had the effect of keeping industries alive which would otherwise have fallen victim much earlier to international competition. Although protectionism was designed to help the development of a national capitalism, it became obvious in the late fifties that Irish investors preferred to invest their capital abroad, and that international capital could see no incentive to invest in Ireland because of the high tariffs faced by Irish products abroad. Large sections of the "new" middle-class — the managers, technicians, bosses of service industries — saw that they could become rich quick if the Irish economy was opened up to increased foreign exploitation.

Added to this was the rise in workers militancy in the late fifties and the chronic unemployment and emigration.

The policy of the government in the sixties was to bribe foreign companies to come to Ireland by offering them financial inducements. Despite twelve years of intensive effort, unemployment in Ireland now is twice as high as in England, and we have the worse record in Europe in such things as housing, education and social services.

We pointed out in the last article that the outlying regions of Europe — of which Ireland is one — are exploited by the rich industrial areas. Not only is Ireland as a whole an exploited region, but there is a considerable difference between the various regions within Ireland itself as this map shows:



MARKET

The reasons for this are clear. Foreign industry is prepared to come to Ireland under certain conditions. These are: the possibility of dominating the Irish market, or the possibility of producing cheaply for export.

The Irish market is in the densely populated areas, which are the areas around Dublin. Firms tend to go where the markets are, and if they are export orientated, where the ports are situated. Wages may be lower in the poorer regions of the west, but this does not offset other disadvantages such as poor communications or lack of trained labour (they all emigrated years ago!).

To give just one example: of the 54 towns listed in the IDA regional plans for the west, 33 have a totally inadequate sewerage system and of the 27 telephone exchanges in the west, 22 are still manual. This lack of interest on the part of industry to set up plant in the underdeveloped regions is borne out by the statistics. The Leinster-region received almost

one third of the grants paid out by the IDA; Sligo and Leitrim (the poorest part of the country) only 2%; Donegal 2½% and the Midlands 4½%.

The stark fact of regional imbalance as applied to Ireland is that foreign capital will only come if it is promised a larger profit than anywhere else. This profit is made at the expense of the Irish people in the form of the export of profits or low wages. The IDA in its propaganda abroad makes much of the fact that social security contributions in Ireland are among the lowest in Europe, thus cutting the costs incurring to the capitalist. The fact that Ireland has one of the worst (perhaps fascist Portugal is even worse) social security schemes in Europe is of no interest to the well paid bureaucrats of the IDA.

BONANZA

Ireland is proving a bonanza for certain foreign firms: Technicon, an American firm with a subsidiary in

Ireland, made a profit of £2 million from its Irish subsidiary in 1969, a larger profit than any Irish public company. The fact that this £2m profit amounted to 44% of the total profits of the American parent company points to some interesting facts about the firms which come to Ireland on IDA grants.

BIG FIRMS

During the first wave of foreign investment in the sixties a large number of the bigger monopoly firms set up plants in Ireland. The middle sixties was a good period for international capital, with large profits and expanding markets. Some of this excess capital found its way to Ireland. The slowing down of capital accumulation in the late sixties led to a contraction of international spending:

During the last few years there has been a change in the type of firms setting up here. They tend to be small or middle sized firms which — although profitable — cannot raise the capital to expand in their own country or are facing severe competition from larger firms. The latest plans of the IDA envisage the setting up of holding firms in European countries which will raise capital from professional people such as doctors and lawyers who are then guaranteed a quick return on their capital.

ASIA

It is clear that the IDA wouldn't be reduced to trying to get small dollops of capital (average shares are in the region of £2,000) if it could attract international capital on a large scale. The tendency for international capital in the last few years has been to invest money in the far east. Siemens, Roelli (optics and other large European firms have already invested heavily there.

The logic behind this move is that Asia is densely populated and although the vast majority of the population lives in poverty the middle classes are numerically large, thus forming a market for consumer goods. Naturally, labour can be had for almost nothing. For example, Indonesia has a population of 100,000,000. If 1% of this can be reckoned to be the size of the middle and upper class this leaves us with a consumer market of 1,000,000 — large by any standards.

This move away from Europe is reflected in the falling off of international capital's interest in Ireland. Thus the importance attached by the IDA to attracting capital from outside the Common Market — Japanese or American firms. Whether the IDA will have much success in its efforts remains to be seen. The tendency of the USA to move towards more protectionist policies may influence the willingness of the EEC to allow them to set up plants in Europe, and there are signs that the European countries are taking a harder line with Japanese industry.

A plant in Ireland. More profit in the Common Market.



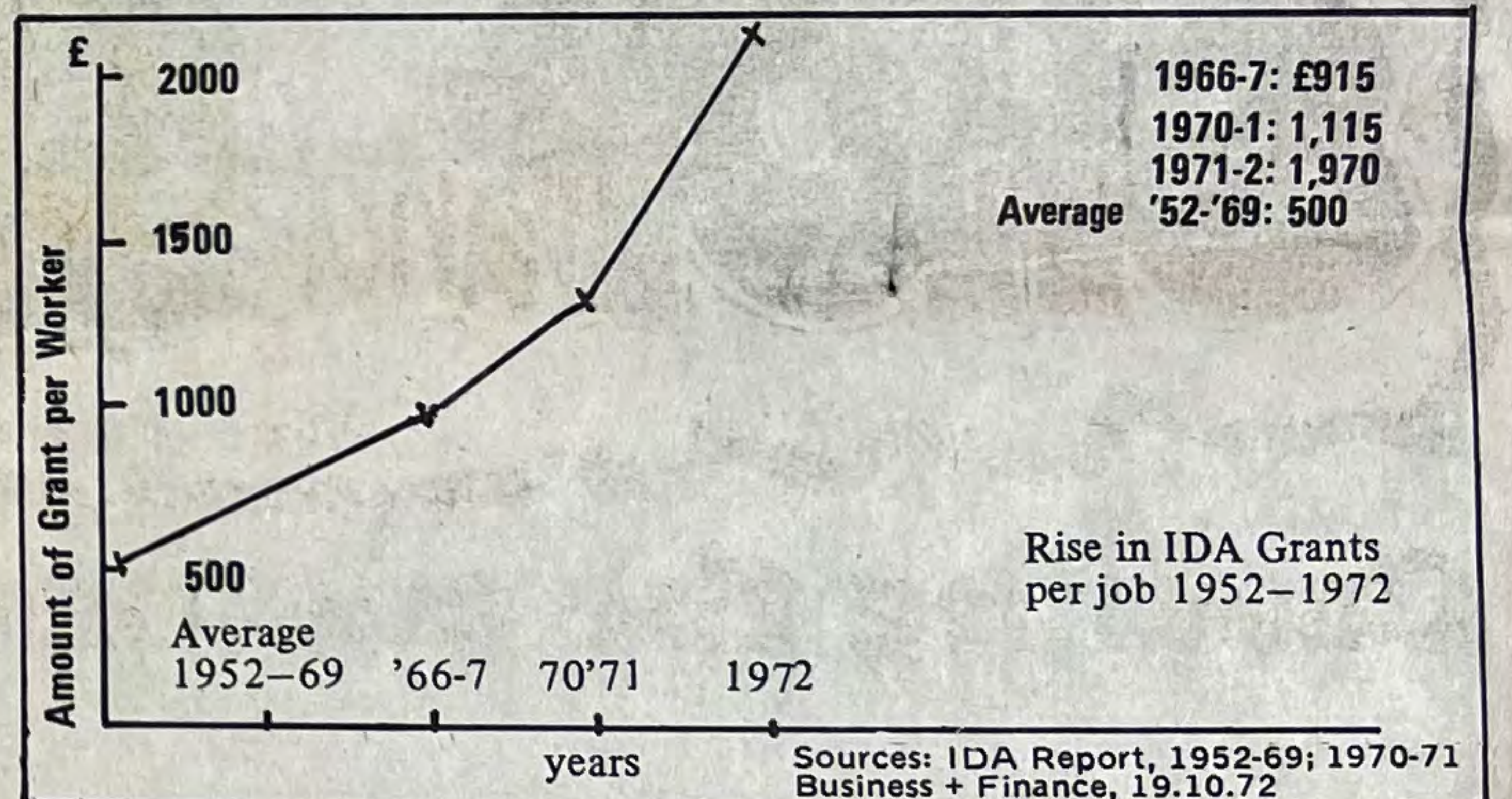
From 'Wall Street Journal'

One of the main objectives of the Treaty of Rome is to strengthen the power of international capital and accelerate the concentration of capital into larger and larger units. In Germany, for instance, 1% of the firms produce 41% of industrial production. The free movement of capital guaranteed in the EEC makes economically weak countries like Ireland fair game for any capitalist with money to invest.

What has been happening in the Irish economy in the last few years is a foretaste of what will happen in an increasing scale with full membership of the EEC. The penetration of foreign capital and the abolition of tariff-barriers has meant the death of traditional low productivity and high labour content industries such as textiles, leather, etc. These firms

are being destroyed and are not being replaced by new factories in Ireland. The type of firm being attracted by the IDA bribes — unlike native capitalist firms — demand a very high level of return on capital. Since their investment in Ireland is minimal, they will pull out as soon as their profits fall.

There is also a general trend towards more capital intensive industries, that is industries which have a high capital investment in plant and machinery and a smaller work force. This can be seen from the IDA grants to industry from which the amount of grant given per job created can be calculated. As can be seen from the graph the cost of creating a job has been constantly rising, from an average of £495 per job between 1952-70 to almost £2,000 last year.



This rising cost per job, which reflects the general tendency in Western Capitalism towards capital intensive low labour content industries, means that it is getting more and more expensive to create jobs for Irish workers. The redundancies reflect the fact that while the IDA "created" 7,700 jobs last year there were 11,000 redundancies — which would seem to indicate that the IDA is running like hell but getting absolutely nowhere!

The reasons for this are not hard to find. The cause of rising redundancies, inflation and rising prices are to be found in the policies of the Irish ruling class who opened the country to the exploitation of foreign capital.

Even the high priest of International capitalism, T. K. Whitaker, (the man who opened Ireland to rampant capitalist exploitation) was forced to admit recently (Irish Times 5.10.71) that one of the causes of

inflation in this country was the rampant speculation to which the Irish economy is subjected by the Banks and speculators, who are only interested in a quick profit (for instance from property deals). He might have added that these speculators, who buy up firms, rationalise them, and sell them off at a profit — after having sacked half the workers employed there — are generally supporters of the Party he served so faithfully for so many years.

Ireland is more subject now to foreign exploitation than it ever was under British rule. British rule allowed the development of a class of national capitalists who saw their advantage in separation from the UK. International capitalism destroyed, or is in the process of destroying, this class. The answer to international capitalism is not, as many republicans maintain, a return to national capitalism, but the establishment of a Workers Republic.

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' ACTION - lessons to be learned

A number of important strikes have taken place in international companies in recent months. Italian and British workers in the Dunlop-Pirelli corporation held a one-day strike together in protest against redundancies. A sit-in at a plant of the Dutch chemicals firm, Akzo, succeeded in stopping sackings there when it got the active support of Akzo workers in other countries.

Over 100 workers at the main factory of the giant French tyre firm, Michelin, recently struck for an increase of 5p per hour, and improved conditions. They work in a key department of the factory of Clermont-Ferrand, and the stoppage threatened production at Michelin

plants in other countries, where a total of 27,000 are employed.

The management — well known for its connections with extreme right-wing organisations — first of all sent individual letters to each striker in an attempt to get production going again. Then they asked other factories to do more overtime in order to make up the losses.

The International Chemical Workers Federation intervened at this point, however. Their affiliated unions in other countries stopped any attempts to comply with the management's request for scabbing. Basque trade unionists in Southern France and Spain offered to 'intercept' any lorries going from Michelin's Spanish

factories to Clermont-Ferrand.

In the event, the strikers returned to work without winning firm guarantees from the management to negotiate on their grievances. But the action of other Michelin workers showed an increasing awareness of the need for international solidarity.

The lessons for Irish workers are clear. An increasing number are working in subsidiaries of international corporations. Strikers at Dunlop, Roofchrome, and Brittain's, work in firms with international connections. By building links to workers throughout the big companies, and across the national boundaries, the working class can begin to challenge the might of the industrial giants.

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

I wish to subscribe to 'The Worker' and enclose 80p for 1 year

Name _____

Address _____

Send to **Socialist Workers' Movement**, 30 Strandville Avenue, North Strand, Dublin 3

SUPERMARKETS

It's not so long since there were no supermarkets in Ireland. About 15 years ago, a small 'self-service' store in North Dublin was attracting attention, while all the biggest grocery shops dealt 'over-the-counter' (and sometimes under it).

From 1968 to 1970 the sales of seven big supermarkets chains increased from £22 million to £36 million per year — an increase of nearly two-thirds. During the past ten years we have also seen the steady disappearance of the smaller family-owned shops. Indeed, even the smaller 'chains' of stores have been forced out of business by giants like Quinnsworth.

JOBS LOST

Redundancies in the distribution trade have been one of the results. There were 837 workers laid off in the trade in 1971 — one tenth of the total redundancies officially recorded. As well as this, self-employed shopkeepers have either been forced to take jobs as wage-earners, or have stayed open later, and on holidays, in order to catch the extra business.

For the shop assistant, there has been little to choose between the two systems — they have always been among the lowest-paid and worse organised groups of workers. Many shops have resisted attempts to set up unions by every foul means at their disposal — victimising and intimidating any individuals who tried to get a union started.

For the shopper, the pressure to buy more useless commodities has increased. The fact that there are less shop-assistants there to persuade you, does not mean that a shopper buys less. On the contrary, the housewife, in particular, is bombarded hourly with advertisements at home and in the street. When she goes shopping,

she is tempted by the articles in eye-catching packing, and on shelves at a convenient height. She is told about 'amazing new offers', she is seduced by 'piped music', and, most sickening of all, she has to listen to honey-voiced store managers sing the praises of marshmallows over the public address system.

NERVES

A housewife has to have nerves of steel to resist the pressures and temptations, but if she does hold out against them, there's still the good chance that the children will pick up sweets and chocolates on the stands delicately placed at the check-outs. How many times have mothers been embarrassed by being asked to pay for the sweets already crammed into the child's mouth?

It's fairly clear that the method is working, too. We can see the supermarkets idea being extended beyond groceries to a whole range of articles even including antiques!

Psychologists in the pay of big business spend millions researching ways of persuading people that the particular shampoo/flour/underwear they have is useless, and that they must have another brand.

The growth of supermarkets demonstrates in a very real way, a number of things about the system we live under. It shows the tendency towards greater concentration of wealth, and bigger businesses — the outcome of competition between capitalists. It shows the system's wastefulness — producing absolutely useless goods, producing too many goods, and employing people full-time to people they must have things they don't need.

The bigger businesses also have greater power — including the power

to fix prices. When Kerrygold 'came home', the supermarkets forced the price down below what the creameries wanted. (Of course, they lost nothing, because the taxpayers who subsidise the creameries foot the bill). But much more often, they are forcing prices up.

It is a myth that supermarkets are cheaper because they buy in bulk. All the bulk-buying does is to increase the profit margins. A supermarket worker recently told the 'Irish Press': "We were charging 17p a pound for tomatoes for weeks. Everyday I walked to work past shops selling the same tomatoes for 12p. So I asked the manager about it. He said he knew perfectly well what they were selling for, but as we were selling them as fast as we got them in for 17p, why should we charge less!" The few special bargains which attract the shopper into the supermarket are always counter-acted by other goods being sold dearer than elsewhere.

TAX

Part of the heavy advertising programme of one supermarket chain used to go on ad nauseam about not charging turnover tax, but as the same supermarket worker told the 'Irish Press', "I know that they've been charging Turnover Tax all along, I add it in myself — 5 per cent tax and 30 per cent profit margin, right on top of the wholesale cost".

Now we've got the supermarkets and shops saying 'No Added Tax here' — that's only because they've put it on the shelf prices, rather than charging it at the check-out. The overtime some shop-assistants got recently was spent re-pricing goods till late into the night, and still they say 'No Tax'.

- robbing their customers and their workers



BAD CONDITIONS FOR SHOP WORKERS

Five pounds for fifty hours — that's what a lot of young people are getting in shops and supermarkets. Wages and working conditions are deplorable in the big majority of them.

There are some shops which do allow union organisation — but on condition that it is tame. Others resist tooth-and-nail any attempt to get unions started in the shops. There have been cases of physical intimidation of people who have tried to organise unions. And the usual answer to any such efforts is the sack. There are other employers, of course, who use more subtle methods, and offer active trade unionists supervisors' and managers' positions.

There's certainly a lot of 'buying off' going on, as the normal balance of supervisors to shop-assistants is two-to-one! Supervisors and store managers spend much more time spying on the staff as they do helping customers.

With weak organisation and such a multitude of management, it can

be easier understood that conditions are so bad. The hours are irregular, and on Thursdays and Fridays, the assistants are often expected to work a 12-hour day. In some shops the bribe they get for doing this is a 'supper' consisting of a can of coke and a chocolate biscuit. All on the house!

Even if there was more food offered, the canteens are, with very few exceptions, disgusting. Dirty and cramped, they're not the kind of places where workers can sit down and sort out common problems. Especially not, when breaks tend to be 'staggered'.

So while you're getting angry with rising prices, and feel like taking it out on the staff, just think again. The soaring prices are not going to pay exorbitant wages for shop-workers. During November, a girl working in a Dublin supermarket got a 'wage rise'. It came to 12½p per week — about the same as increase on a pound of meat. The employers will have their pound of flesh.

SHOP and SAVE

Who are they trying to fool?

Conning the customers

In one Supermarket alone, Quinnsworth clocked up £20 worth of sales every minute! This fact was pointed out to Galway shoppers who attended the opening of the new Shopping Centre in a leaflet distributed by the local branch of the Socialist Workers Movement.

The £1½ million centre was opened with suitable pomp and noise by Bobby Molloy, the man who is helping to push up rents, and again cut workers' living standards.

The main benefits from the new centre will not go to the shoppers but to the hawks of the Weston-Pennety-Quinnsworth-etc. etc. Em-

pire, and to the property company, Hunter Investments, who 'developed' the place. What the hell they're supposed to have done for their cut, apart from put in money and take out more, nobody knows.

Every time Galway people shop in the Shopping Centre, they might like to reflect on the £1 million Pat Quinn got for selling his stores to Weston, on the enormous profits which Weston stands to make from his increasing control of the retail trade, and on the twenty property and finance companies which the directors of Hunter Investments have interests in.

...IN GALWAY

They might like to reflect on that — and resolve to fight for a change to a system where the majority of the people, the working class, control the factories and shops, transport and finance. That's the alternative to this increasing power in the hands of a few — not any fond idea of a return to 'fair competition'. It doesn't exist, and it never will in this system.

Do you remember who was shouting so loud for workers to restrain themselves to £2 rises? — none other than that well known worker's friend Pat Quinn.

...IN WATERFORD

A recent prices survey showed that Waterford is a very profitable place to own a supermarket. The housewife pays more for her shopping basket there than in any other town in Ireland. The sample basket cost £3.14 in Waterford, compared to £2.83 in other towns.

When the owner of two supermarkets in the town, P. J. Breen, was asked to comment on the survey his statement was interesting: "A wrong impression has been given and it will be very hard to rub it

out. It won't do Waterford any good". To make sense of this comment, replace 'Waterford' with P. J. Breen.

BESCO, which Breen owns ran a half-page ad in the local papers to show that they were in fact cheaper than the newspaper survey showed. But like Mr. Breen's statement, their ad is worth a second look. On such essential items as sugar, bread, potatoes, and eggs, they admit that the survey was correct in the prices it quoted, and in awarding Waterford the BLACK SPOT FOR PRICES.

RENT STRIKE FACES PROBLEMS

The National Association of Tenants' Organisations (N.A.T.O.) has now launched a rent strike throughout the 26 Counties. A delegate conference held at Tullamore on 29th October voted overwhelmingly in favour of this action.

N.A.T.O. is calling for a total re-drafting of the legislation on differential rents and on house purchase schemes. A series of local strikes in towns throughout the 26 Counties have forced changes in the system operated in those areas. But the 1966 Housing Act, the cause of the dispute, still remains on the statute books.

It would be pleasing to report that the local strikes are now at a peak, and that the national rent strike is the obvious next step for tenants. However, the Dublin rent strike is waning, the Limerick strike has been 'on' and 'off', Waterford tenants

voted against a national rent strike, and some of the Cork associations are also against it.

We don't point this out in order to rejoice in the situation; we only want to show the big difficulties which N.A.T.O. faces and which it must overcome. It will take intensive work by N.A.T.O. supporters to do this. There must be a deliberate and constant effort to keep all tenants involved — through bulletins, meetings, pickets and demonstrations.

The authorities are well aware that there are differences between tenants. In fact, they use this in order to intimidate people into breaking rent strikes. The local associations must face up to this and start explaining as widely as possible what the demands of the strike are, and why it must succeed.

N.A.T.O. could gain strength from closer ties with the trade union movement. Up to now, the unions have been slow to act in support of tenants' demands. Perhaps the gap could be bridged more effectively through linking the demands for lower rents with those for higher wages — A NATIONAL MINIMUM BASIC WAGE OF £30 AND A NATIONAL MAXIMUM RENT OF £2.

The tenant's meeting that never took place

What must have been one of the strangest ever meetings was that now infamous Inchicore Labour Party meeting where Brendan Corish made his famous speech on Coalition.

Apparently Brendan decided that the time was ripe for a speech and he asked

HOUSES FOR DWARVES

People have been having a good laugh lately at the new Corporation houses in West Finglas, Dublin. They are on the McInerney site, and they are supposed to house working-class people. Some families who have had the luck to be drawn for a new house in the Corporation house-draw have turned down these monstrosities.

The houses are built six-to-a-block and are tiny. From the outside, they look dull and dingy. Doors and windows are extra small. In the back, there is only one upstairs window. But beside it there is a crazy looking oblong window, about 18 inches deep — and with frosted glass! The stairs come right down to the

hall-door, and to open the door it seems best to stand on the bottom step.

There are two main rooms downstairs, ven smaller than the usual boxes in Corporation houses. Some people have been visiting the houses as a form of amusement on a Sunday afternoon. But the joke isn't funny — £4,700. These are purchase houses, and the depositor has to raise for the privilege of living with a stooped back is £600.

Perhaps the authorities have calculated that because of rising prices people will be eating less food, and getting smaller as time goes on.

his pro-coalition colleague Dr. John O'Connell to arrange a meeting. Poor old Dr. John could not find a Labour Party Branch to meet so he called together a local tenants committee to talk about B-scale rents.

Imagine their surprise to find the hall

filled with T.V. cameras, political correspondents from the newspapers etc. and none other than Brendan Corish to address them on the importance of getting Fianna Fail out at all costs.

Even another blow to Brendan's personal credibility was not too much to pay.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

SOCIALIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT

The SOCIALISTS WORKERS' MOVEMENT is a revolutionary workers' movement, whose aim is the organisation of the working class in the struggle for power and the transformation of the existing social order. All its activities, its methods and its internal organisation are subordinated to this and are designed to serve this purpose.

Capitalism is a system based on production for profit, not for human need. This system is driven by the necessity to accumulate profit, which means that capitalists compete with one another, both nationally and internationally.

The capitalist class is a ruling class whose ownership and control of the means of production is based on the exploitation of the working class. Thus, a small minority rules society. In Ireland, 9 per cent of the population owns 90 per cent of the wealth.

The contradictions between competing capitalists, produce war, poverty and crisis. The struggle between the classes will produce the overthrow of capitalist society.

Capitalism needs the working class; the working class does not need capitalism. Present day capitalism is entering a period of stagnation and crisis; it attempts to solve its problems at the expense of working-class living standards and democratic rights.

This system is international: in the drive to expand it must extend its power over the whole world. 250 companies dominate the international economy. The search for markets and materials has led to imperialism — the brutal oppression of the peoples of two-thirds of the world and the effective strangling of those peoples' attempts to develop their societies.

Imperialism

International capitalism operates in Ireland through British imperialism's military, economic and political

domination of the whole country. Britain maintains a standing army in the North. British imperialism has divided the working class on sectarian lines. British investments throughout Ireland equal 50 per cent of all investment in manufacturing and commerce. The Dublin and Stormont governments are subservient to the dictates of the international system and thus to its agent, Westminster.

Imperialism dominates Ireland as a whole: it treats Ireland as a unity. The struggle to defeat imperialism, therefore, must be fought in a united way throughout the 32 counties. This involves the overthrow of the Orange-Unionist state in the North and of the Green-Tory state in the South.

Irish capitalism, Green and Orange, is wholly integrated into the world system. Because of this, the mere unification of Ireland, or the removal of British troops, cannot in themselves mean the defeat of imperialism in Ireland. There is no independent republic this side of the Workers' Republic. Only by the uniting of the working class can power be taken from the Orange and Green ruling class minorities and victory be won over imperialism.

It is the Irish working class and small farmers who bear the load of this imperialist domination. The contrast between Ireland, a neo-colony, and the Western capitalist countries is especially glaring:

- North and South:
- 120,000 unemployed—the highest rate of unemployment in Europe;
- 60,000 redundancies expected in the next four years;
- 100,000 unfit houses and the worst housing record in Europe;
- £9 per week net average income per rural household—the third lowest in Europe;
- 1,000 political prisoners.

The working class has the capacity to end exploitation and oppression. In Ireland North and South the working class is now the predominant social class numerically and in terms of potential strength. The class has achieved a new self-confidence and militancy; this needs political co-ordination. Independent working class action can create a society based on production for human need, democratically controlled by the majority. By organising at the point of production and in the localities the workers can lead a struggle to the Workers' Republic. This would not mean merely a State takeover of the means of production, but workers' control of all aspects of society, local and national. Such a society does not exist in any country today.

The Socialist Workers' Movement stands for the nationalisation of banks and industry under workers' control and without compensation. To this end we actively engage in the day-to-day struggles of workers and small farmers and seek to build a mass working-class party which can lead the struggle to build socialism in Ireland as part of the struggle for international socialism. A Workers' Republic cannot survive without the aid of the British and Continental working classes and the international extension of the revolutionary fight.

The Socialist Workers' Movement opposes the E.E.C. to which the only alternative is socialism in Ireland, as part of a socialist Europe. The Socialist Workers' Movement opposes N.A.T.O. and all other international military alliances. We are independent of Washington, Moscow and Peking. We support all anti-imperialist struggles throughout the world.

Workers struggles

The Socialist Workers' Movement fights for:—

- full support for workers and small farmers in struggle;
- defence of the living standards of workers and small farmers;
- rank-and-file control and socialist leadership of the trade unions;
- the election of all trade union officials, subject to recall;
- all strikes to be declared official if supported by the majority of the workers concerned;
- a minimum wage of at least £30 for a 35-hour week;
- equal pay for women;
- 100 per cent trade unionism;
- opposition to all anti-trade union legislation;
- opposition to all incomes policies under capitalism;
- against unemployment, redundancy and lay offs. We support the demand: Five days' work or five days' pay;
- repeal of all repressive legislation—e.g. Special Powers Act and Offences Against the State Act;
- extension of the Civil Resistance Campaign in the Six Counties;
- release of all political prisoners;
- evacuation of British troops from Ireland;
- defence of working class areas against military and sectarian attacks;
- freedom of worship for all religious groupings;
- total separation of Church and State;
- an end to clerical control of education;
- a secular and comprehensive education system controlled by teachers, pupils and parents;
- raising of school-leaving age to 18;
- free education to the highest level;
- full adult rights at 18—e.g. the right to vote;
- adult wages and adult rights for workers at 18;
- free and comprehensive health service;
- end to means-tested benefits;
- minimum wage for the unemployed and pensioners;
- one family—one house;
- emergency housing programme and expropriation of all building land;
- tenants' control of estates, including rents;
- full social equality for women;
- 24-hour nurseries;
- income for small farmers and agricultural labourers on parity with industrial rates;
- division of large estates under control of local farmers;
- the building of a genuine co-operative movement among farmers and fishermen;
- nationalisation of hunting and fishing rights.

The SOCIALIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT is a democratic organisation open to all those who accept its principles and objectives, who work in one of the units of the movement, agree to recognise its discipline and pay dues.

"Internationalism; to some people this is the great bug-aboo which frightens them off from socialism" (James Connolly). The struggle for a Workers' Republic in Ireland is inseparable from the international struggle against capitalism. The Socialist Workers' Movement fights to build a mass party of the working class as part of a revolutionary international of working class parties.

What are they aiming at?—AIM Report

During the time when the Women's Liberation Movement in Ireland was getting most publicity and concentrating its efforts on the contraception issue, a small group of women, dis-satisfied with the way their sisters were proceeding, left. They, with others, formed, a group called AIM (Action, Information, Motivation). At present they consist of about 20 people, including men. They do not wish to recruit members, since they feel they can do the task they have set themselves quite adequately with this number.

Set up in January last, the group decided to concentrate all its efforts on influencing the introduction of legislation to give Irish women and children an enforceable right in law to a proportion of the family income. As a first step in that direction they have just produced a report on their investigations into the subject and their recommendations for change.

The report itself is concise and to the point. It looks at the legal position in Ireland today where, disgracefully, a married woman has no income whatever, and no right even to that part of her husband's which he gets by virtue of being married to her. Likewise, children's allowance is legally the property of her husband — an issue which the W.L.M. have actively campaigned on.

Contrasting this with the position in other European countries, we find that in Germany or Holland for instance any Court will automatically instruct the man's employer to pay an adequate proportion of his wages directly to his wife, if he fails to do so himself.

Flexible

In France and Britain the system is more flexible with Commissions or Tribunals operating through the Social Welfare system, where a wife can raise her case. In France, again, an employer can be ordered to pay directly to the wife — in Britain however the State takes over as breadwinner and "maintains" the family through various benefits.

AIM points out that the Constitution of this country states that "mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home" — yet another meaningless article in our troublesome Constitution! Very obviously the State does not mean any such thing — and is not prepared to do anything about it.

Given that the group makes such a strong case in the Report against the present system, its recommendations are surprisingly mild. A Family Tribunal of 5 members who are interested in or (my italics) have a knowledge of social problems whose first duty would be an attempt at reconciliation between the husband and wife. The Tribunal would operate through Social Welfare Offices. Failing reconciliation and voluntary maintenance, they would serve an order on the employer to pay a percentage of the husband's earnings to the wife. However — in case this appears too strong, and since all's fair in love and war — in all cases the husband has the right to appeal!

Oppression

One of the members of AIM to whom I spoke, confessed that they were all middle-class people with social consciences. This comes over only too well in the Report as a whole, and in particular in the recommendations. In the whole report there is no questioning of the role of men and women in this society — in particular, since the Group orientates itself towards women's problems, there is no questioning of the oppression of women, or their position in society. The whole approach is, not to change a situation which is obviously wrong, but to make it more bearable for the people who are suffering under it. They do, in fact, look for causes, but define them as "irresponsible husbands", or gambling and alcoholism, etc. They do not seem to think it necessary to ask why men should act 'irresponsibly' towards their wife and children, or what drives a man to drink. They seem to find no fault with the system as a whole, that one piece of legislation could not put right. In fact they say at the end of their Report that "a solution is well within the capacity of our legislators".

Their whole attitude to the problems of women shows no understanding of the fact that women must fight for their own liberation. From this report it is obvious, in fact, that they feel that women are not being properly looked after by the people who ought to be responsible for their welfare, whether they be their husbands, or the makers of the laws.

MARIE McADAM

TWO VIEWS ON LENIN

Lenin's work has probably been subject to more different views than any other individual in the revolutionary movement. There is a favourite game among the Left — more tragic than ironic — of quoting Lenin at each other to support divergent views, and positions.

It is welcome, therefore, to see the re-publication of a short work first published in 1924 which sets out to establish the "unity of his thought". George Lukacs wrote this study shortly after the Russian leader's death. New Left Books have now issued a new translation in paperback form (George Lukacs: Lenin, A Study on the Unity of His Thought, 60p).

Because Lenin was an immensely practical revolutionary, constantly having to deal with new tactical situations, the emphasis of his writing changes widely. Indeed he often changed his views. The confusion about the heritage expressed in his written work has arisen as a result of attempts to emphasise one aspect of his work more than another.

Lukacs attempts to distil from Lenin's work a set of central concerns, and to place these into a coherent conceptual framework. This makes the book difficult reading in parts. Lukacs' philosophical background was a complex one, and his style and method reflect this. We find in the first paragraph of the book the following statement:

"Historical materialism is the theory of the proletarian revolution. It is so because its essence is an intellectual synthesis of the social existence which produces, and fundamentally determines the proletariat and because the proletariat struggling for liberation finds its clear self-consciousness in it".

PARTY

The first chapter on the party makes clear that Lenin's ideas on centralism do not support the view that there should be a small leadership group over and above the working class. Centralism is necessary in order to counteract "ideological regression". Under a wide variety of pressures in capitalist society, workers can be persuaded to accept parts of organization ideology: only a disciplined organization with firm guidance can overcome this. This organisation must be "capable of learning" it must be "flexible"



"remain active" and be able to "adapt". Lukacs suggests that this adaptability could even extend to the very form of the organisation itself.

Conquest's version of Lenin's theory is that it "substitutes revolutionary will power for subjective social circumstances". Lukacs' summary is that it: "contains as fixed poles: the strictest selection of party members on the basis of their proletarian class consciousness, and total solidarity with and support for all the oppressed and exploited within capitalist society".

Finally, one of Lukacs' few quotes from Lenin summarises the arguments against those who suggest that the power of International capitalism can be countered by a return to a protected economy and small locally-based industries.

"The bourgeoisie makes it its business to promote trusts, drive women and children into the factories subject them to corruption and suffering, condemn them to extreme poverty. We do not demand such development. We do not 'support' it. We explain that trusts and the employment of women in industry are progressive. We do not want a return to the handicraft system, to pre-monopoly capitalism, or domestic drudgery for women. Forward through trusts etc. and beyond them to socialism!

A word of caution is necessary, however about the Lukacs book. At the time he wrote it Lukacs was trying to get back into favour with the leaders of the world communist movement. The focus on the concept of "compromise" as a guideline to Lenin's thought opens the door to later counter-revolutionary measures which were justified by the need to maintain state power — not the power of the working class, but of a ruling clique. Indeed "compromise" characterises Lukacs own career: he conceded both intellectually and personally to Stalinist policies and thus to bourgeois and non-Marxist ideas.

Lenin was an uncompromising internationalist. His "Last Testament", suppressed by the Stalinist regime, indicated his fears that the isolation of the USSR internationally would lead to compromise which would destroy the gains of the Revolution. The theory and practice of "Socialism in one country" has proven him right.

BRIAN TRENCH

Georg Lukacs: Lenin, A Study on the Unity of His Thought, New Left Books, 60p.

Robert Conquest: Lenin, Fontana, 35p.

International News

Spanish Crisis Deepens

The strikes and demonstrations which shook the North-West of Spain recently are a new sign that Spanish workers are emerging from a political silence imposed by the repressive Franco regime. The illegal workers' commissions organised the solidarity of the workers of Vigo in protest against the sackings of alleged 'agitators'. The demands for higher wages to meet the rapidly rising cost of living could present impossible tasks for Franco in the twilight of his career. It is certain that Spain will see a sharpening of the class struggle in the coming months.

In this article, KEN QUINN traces the background to the present crisis.

Thirty six years ago, Spain was the battlefield for some of the most violent and most bitter class struggles of this century. The urban and rural working class along with the republican sectors of the middle class, fought and lost to the combined forces of the industrial and financial bourgeoisie, the land-owners and rich farmers, and binding them all, the Army, the Church and the Falange (Fascists).

When the forces of reaction, led by Franco, won, the suppression of the working class began in earnest in 1939. The state structure, rested on such suppression. The shaping of the Franco regime was based on a policy dictated by the 'nationalist' ideology of the fascists, that is, national isolation from the European economy.

In spite of — and partly because of — this isolation, it was not until the early 1950's that industrial production rose again to pre-1936 figures. Spanish agriculture was gripped by depression until the late 1950's. Low wages and unemployment caused extreme poverty and misery, and mass emigration from the land to the cities, and often from there to other countries.

State legislation was used to keep wages down during this period, as well as the pressure from the large 'reserve army' of labour coming off the land. From 1940 to 1955 the cost of living rose 2½ times as much as wages. Such super-exploitation was perhaps unique in Europe.

The heavy state apparatus made for the growth of an enormous civil service, which expanded by one million people in twenty years. This 'new class' served a double function as watchdog on the economy, and as a consumer market. Civil service wages were double that of the industrial worker, and three times that of an agricultural worker.

Industrial and economic development was further directed by the interests of the big finance capitalists. In this sector, the power was more and more concentrated in the hands of a few. 70 banks disappeared between 1939 and 1964, leaving only five active, who effectively monopolise saving facilities and the availability of credit. From banking and finance, monopolisation spread to other sectors of the economy, yet again strengthening the hand of the ruling class in keeping the workers down.



Citizen Army volunteers on the way to the front during the Spanish Civil War

Despite this massive repression, including the use of physical violence against opponents, and the strict control of education by an ultra-reactionary clergy, the working class has been fighting back. As the years have gone on, it has emerged more and more powerfully as an independent force. The period of economic development in national isolation saw the working class double its numbers.

In the late 1950's there was a series of strikes which led the state to abandon direct control of wages, and to introduce a form of collective bargaining controlled by the state unions. This in turn sparked off the mass strikes of 1962-66.

It was just about ten years ago that the Spanish workers started to organise effective factory committees independent of the 'Sindicatos', so-called trade unions tied to the state and openly operating in league with the ruling class. They needed also to be out of reach of the police, who were being used to spy on, and repress, the workers. The first 'workers' commissions', as they were later called, were set up in Asturias, a mining and industrial region of North Spain. When they tried to negotiate on their own behalf with management, the leaders were arrested and thrown in jail.

From this confrontation, the strug-

gle spread. Workers in other industrial centres struck in support of their jailed comrades, and committees were formed in many areas. For some years, there was a tendency for the committees, or 'commissions', to disappear, when some small economic gains were made. About the mid-1960's, they became more permanent structures. Operating illegally, and in the face of the most ruthless repression, the workers' commissions have become the authentic mass organisations.

Political organisations are still weak and work in the most difficult circumstances. As in the period of the Civil War, the pro-Moscow Communist Party is the biggest. Its worker-militants work in the 'commissions' but its programme states that the way forward is through a democratic revolution and a return to competitive capitalism. It calls on the state to curb the power of the monopolies, in other words, for a change to a state run by the middle class and the small industrialists. They fail to see, it seems, that the middle class are not only interested in state power and liberal reforms, but also in becoming richer capitalists. They can only achieve their goals at the expense of the working class. So anxious has the Communist Party been not to alienate the 'progressive' middle class, and to limit its demands to democratic tasks, that it has even called for a return to the monarchy!

It is clear that the workers' commissions, covering such a wide range of experience and awareness, cannot themselves capture and maintain the political initiative in the class struggle. In the struggle to build these rank-and-file organisations the perspective must be raised of establishing a revolutionary party rooted in these Commissions. Such an organisation could integrate the democratic demands into a fighting programme for a Spanish Workers' Republic.

KEN QUINN

FIGHTING MOOD OF BRITISH WORKERS

Working people in England have been attacked on all sides by the Conservative government. Heath's package on prices and incomes is only the latest in a series of attempts to drag the British economy out of its mess at the expense of the workers' living standards. Before this, we have seen unemployment rise to record levels, soaring prices, rents pushed up by new legislation and cuts in the social services.

The Labour Party has made weak noises of disapproval, but Labour Councils throughout the country are now implementing the new rents scheme which will, in some cases, double rents. Having failed to beat down the organised workers through direct confrontation, Heath's government is now even taking a leaf out of Wilson's book, trying to get co-operation between the Trades Union Congress, the employers' organisations, and the government.

Over the past year-and-a-half, however, there has been an extraordinary change in the attitudes and behaviour of workers. They have refused to take the attacks lying down, and have adopted aggressive tactics to beat them. Whatever is decided in the 'corridors of power' can still be made irrelevant on the shop-floor.

SIT-INS

One of the signs of a changed mood among workers in Britain has been the wave of sit-ins. It was nearly eighteen months ago when workers in the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, (U.C.S.) decided to resist redundancies by staying in the yards, and keeping all the sacked men working. That 'work-in' has now come to an end, and some redundancies have actually been conceded, but the solid face shown by the workers against an attempt to sack a couple of thousand inspired resistance throughout the country.



Thornycroft sit-in strikers occupy the directors' boardroom

There followed sit-ins at Plessey's in Scotland, Allis-Chalmers in North Wales, and Fisher-Bendix in Liverpool. Workers were insisting on the right to work, and the right to decent living standards. Where union leaders would not act, the rank-and-file was taking the initiative into its own hands.

The long strike by the coalminers saw another 'new' tactic being used to force home the workers' message — the mass picket. Power stations were closed down by this method, and thousands of workers brought into the struggle against the Tory government who were not directly affected by the miners' pay claim.

ENGINEERS

In March 1972, engineering workers in the Manchester area staged sit-ins in 30 factories — this time, not to stop sackings, but to press a claim for a £6 wage rise, a 35-hour week, equal pay, and longer holidays. They were occupying factories the bosses still wanted to keep at full production, not ones that were closing.

Since then, there have been sit-ins

and 'work-ins' at a number of factories. 45 women leather workers took over a small factory in Norfolk which threatened to close, and have been organising the production there themselves. Workers in North London engineering works sat in to press for better conditions. For over two months now, the British Leyland Thornycroft factory in Hampshire has been occupied. The workers are opposing a take-over by an American firm which will cause redundancies.

The dockers' strike and the builders' strike showed most clearly the effects of the changed mood: workers went on to the offensive in order to spread their struggle. Where the union officials did not support them, the workers carried on without them. The mass pickets and flying pickets used in these strikes brought the workers directly into confrontation with the police, and taught them a few hard lessons about whose side the state forces are on. The mass solidarity shown by workers when the five dockers were jailed during the summer also showed that the state forces can be beaten. The dockers were freed by the wave of strikes and demonstrations.

The fight against the Tories is not limited to industry, however. In the last two months there have been rent strikes starting in many places in England, Scotland and Wales. Council tenants in over 100 towns are taking direct action to beat the so-called 'Fair Rents', which are fair for nobody except the builders and speculators. Once again, the working class is discovering that it can only depend on its own forces. The local Labour councils and Labour Party organisations are proving to be the most treacherous 'allies'.

The Tory government must be kicked out. It is only looking after the interests of the profiteers. Its repressive policy in the Six Counties is part of an overall policy to crush any organised resistance. But in England, as in the North, the working people, who have suffered from this policy, are fighting back. More and more, they are beginning to see the need for a complete change and the need for a socialist alternative.

S. DUNCAN

REPRESSION

...in Turkey

The rulers of Turkey have their hands well soiled with years of repression against political opposition. During October, they added to the long list of their victims. 21 members of the Turkish Workers' Party were sentenced to prison terms ranging from six to fifteen years. The trial had started in August 1971, and the party was dissolved by government decree at the beginning of this year.

Even the distorted expression of working-class aspirations put forward in the programme of this Stalinist party was too much for the Turkish government. The leader of the party, a 62-year-old sociology professor, was elected in late 1968 after she had supported the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. But the ruling class is so weak and unstable that it cannot tolerate any kind of radical movement. The Workers' Party did have the support of some trade unionists. The party is smashed and its leaders are in jail — but the Russian government is still trying to do a deal with the Turkish government.

...in Korea

Moving closer, too, are the regimes of North and South Korea. As we reported in 'The Worker' some months ago, talks have been going on between representatives of the two governments with reunification as a distant perspective. Now, Park Chung Hee, the Southern Premier, has proclaimed martial law in South Korea. He has suspended parts of the Constitution and

banned political parties. Anybody suspected of being sympathetic to the North is harassed by the police authorities.

The response of the Northern press has been to accuse Park of trying to prevent re-unification. But who would want to unite with such a regime — presumably only one of a similar kind. What has happened to the North Korean leader, Kim Il Sung's supposed revolutionary fervour?

...in Canada

The Canadian government of Pierre Trudeau claimed to be Liberal. But it can only afford to be as liberal as the pressure from a growing opposition allows.

During October the offices of the Quebec Free Press Agency were raided by the police, who took away an enormous pile of documents, files, lists of subscribers etc. This was the fruit of 18 months' work, during which time the Free Press Agency has produced a weekly bulletin crammed with news of workers' struggles, particularly in industry and the trade unions. The police are obviously looking for leads to the 'trouble-makers'.

The police also raided the offices of two other radical groups on the same premises, taking members' and subscribers' lists. Following the general strike in Quebec during May and June, the Canadian authorities are worried about any new upsurge in which radical political forces could have more influence.

Cork

CHILD LABOUR RAMPANT

Did you ever drive into the city car park garage in the Grand Parade to get petrol late at night? They run a very efficient service, don't they? Well - it's easy for them. They employ five little boys from 6 p.m. - 12 p.m., 6 days a week, for the grand sum of £3.50!

But you may say, they get plenty of tips on top of that. Isn't it time we realised that this tipping lark is just another skillful weapon used against workers in service industries by their bosses? When workers depend on tips to bring their wages up to a decent level it means they have to be on their toes all the time, they can't speak their mind for fear of losing a few shillings, they have to be more servile, and this of course makes them much easier to manage. It also gets the public to pay some of the workers' wages and so keeps profit that bit higher for people such as the City Car Park owners.

There are other sources of cheap labour available to the bosses - women, immigrants, rural people - but the most vulnerable of all are children. The exploitation of children is nothing new of course, it has a long and sordid history. In books like Oliver Twist, Charles Dickens shows us the terrible degradation of children in 19th century England. Michael Davitt, before he began his fight against the landlords in Ireland, had lost his arm working a dangerous and powerful machine as a child in England.

Most people imagine that this type of exploitation is now in the past, but this is not so. The apprentice system is very often a thinly disguised form of exploiting youth. Young girls working 50 and 55 hours a week in fashionable hairdressing saloons all over the country get £2 a week while they are 'training'. More often than not when they are 'trained' they are dismissed and replaced by another 'trainee'.



One of the most depressing forms of child exploitation in Cork is the plight of the "Echo Boys". Johnny O'Mahony, who organises them, is reputed to be a very wealthy man, and has an interest in at least one plush public house. Contrast his opulence with the depressing conditions of his newsboys.

When will workers stop trying to hide from life in a pint of Guinness and ask some basic questions? This dehumanising society we live in does not have to exist - we can build an alternative, if we are prepared to work for it.

Recently, Brendan Behan's play "Richard's Cork Leg" was condemned as vulgar by the Bishop, and a committee of middle class ladies was organised to protect public morality in Cork. The Lord Mayor was ranting and raving on the same theme during the Film Festival. How often have Councillor O'Sullivan or Bishop Lucy spoken out against the vulgarity of child exploitation? And those Blackrock, Douglas and Montenotte old dear's would be doing a better service to public morality by objecting to the social obscenities of capitalism instead of getting their knickers in a knot over a few double meaning jokes.

D. QUISH

DIVIDED

Our system of society - the capitalist one - is not interested in the welfare of people. It is interested in screwing as much profit out of them as possible. The weaker and more divided the working class people are the easier it is for the bosses to exploit us. Cheap labour helps the bosses in two ways - firstly they pay less wages (so they have more for themselves) and secondly they weaken the bargaining power or organised workers for better conditions and higher wages.

GALWAY NOTES

New Factory For Gort

Eire Precision Ltd. sounds like the name of a factory owned by a "normal" Irish boss - possibly one from the Gaeltacht. In fact it is owned by a gentleman called Mr. Weinz-Weka, a German who owns a big company in Germany. Why did Mr. Weinz-Weka come to Ireland? Let's hear him speak. "We have sound business reasons for coming to Ireland". "The real reasons for our coming to Gort", says he, opening the new factory, "are the increasing socialism in Germany, the world market and currency situation and the conditions in Ireland".

One of our foreign industrialists has let the cat out of the bag. Translated Mr. Weinz-Weka's speech means that wages are too high in Germany for fat profits ("increasing socialism") and he expects wages to be low enough here - a "sound business reason". Bobby Molloy then chips in to add his total agreement. "I am confident", says he "that our local workers will fully meet the exacting standards of the production activities."

Mr. Weinz-Weka will have to learn a hard lesson - that workers all over the world will no longer stand for low wages. Perhaps the Gort workers will show him that the 'human element' he says brought him there is the human desire to improve living standards and get rid of exploiters.

Tuam Houses

Galway County Council feels it's doing a good job - it has built new Council houses on the Dublin Road in Tuam. The only trouble is that they are not enough. People have been refused houses who are living in caravans only eighteen feet long. One family was refused who are living in a corrugated iron shack.

In a lot of the cases there is no water, sewers or electricity. The families in the caravans and shacks must dig a hole in the ground outside to get rid of the refuse. Some people have called for different people to get the houses but the point surely is to call for more houses.

U.C.G. Stopwatch

University College, Galway, recently appointed a new personnel manager to watch over groundsmen and painters. Things

are to be sharpened up. After all there is a new college being built and things must look up for that. So from now on the tea break will be limited to 10 minutes, exactly timed on a stopwatch. The workers will have to wash their own dishes and cook their own tea - previously the job of the kitchen staff.

At the same time, other employees - the academic staff - can wander in and out from their tea break any time they like. They call that academic freedom! Militant members of U.C.G. branches in U.C.G., which is made up of both lecturers and groundsmen are calling for the same rule to apply to all workers - i.e. to get rid of stopwatch discipline.

Digital

Workers at the Digital factory on the Galway Industrial Estate voted recently not to join the union. This is a very important decision because the Digital firm is building a bigger factory and could become one of the biggest non-union firms in Galway. The company has a long anti-union record, and a very determined management has been able to convince the workers at the firm that they do not need a union.

There is a further reason for this setback - the state of trade unionism in Galway. Branches have known not to meet for months on end and even only hold one annual general meeting. The branch secretaries of various unions have refused opportunities to encourage setting up unions. Even when invited down to speak to garage workers interested in joining, the branch secretary preferred to stay in his office.

Council workers who demanded to be paid every two weeks instead of monthly have met with opposition from these same union officials. The union card now seems to be only a passage to getting a job. We still say to the Digital workers that, although the unions look like bodies who only collect dues, they should join them. There is a difference between the union bosses and the union members.

The Digital workers may believe now that they do not need unions but the factory is not quite a happy family of bosses and workers. When the screws are on, the workers there will see they do need organisation, and the solidarity of other workers.

The North BRITISH AIM FOR STABILITY

While military repression seems to go on endlessly in the North it is easy to lose sight of the long-term goal of British imperialism in Ireland. Their short-term tactics should not be confused with the long-term strategy.

Simply stated, the British aim is to incorporate the Catholic middle class in the Six Counties, represented by the SDLP, into the political system. Outside it they are both embarrassing and potentially dangerous.

Along with Alliance and the NILP, the SDLP, voice of the Catholic middle class, and the link with the Dublin regime represents the changed interests of imperialism.

Two forces stand in the way of the plan to absorb the SDLP into the state: the republicans and the hard-line Unionists. The fact that the British Army has concentrated all its savagery on the republicans should not obscure the deeper aims. Britain's intention is not to create a fascist, or military, dictatorship here.

DANGER

The Republicans have borne the brunt of British violence because they were much more of an immediate danger to imperialism than any loyalist organisation. They mobilised thousands of workers in a consciously anti-imperialist struggle, while the loyalists were still only shouting abuse from the side lines. There was also the fact of long-standing Unionist/Tory ruling class unity to be taken into account. Until the British had successfully split the Unionists into two camps - for and against their long term strategy - they could not take on the hard liners of the extreme right.

While the Republicans were being physically repressed, the Unionist bloc was being eroded. The Tories refused to give any fundamental concessions to the extreme Right, and insisted on the need for change in the political structures of the North. Unionists were given the option of accepting change or breaking with it.

Having split that has now taken place of a deeper reality in the class interests of the Unionists. Two groups have emerged among the ruling class: those who see a future alongside the Catholic middle class, in a 'normal' bourgeois



How far will Whitelaw take it against the U.D.A.

democratic structure in the North, with greater ties with the South, and eventual re-unification; and those who cannot. Among the first, significantly enough, are two former Ministers of Community Relations, Basil McIvor and Dr. Robert Simpson, and the former Ministers of Development - Roy Bradford, and of Commerce - Robin Baillie, whole positions in Government gave them direct experience of the wider trends of the Irish economy towards greater integration with the South.

On the other hand, men like Craig and Taylor - the representatives of the irreconcilable hard Right - have based their careers on bigotry and corruption; they are Orange politicians of the Old School. The Orange system of privilege and corruption is now, however, out of step with the long-term needs of imperialism. It stands in the way of the integration of the SDLP. In economic terms, this camp represent the smaller capitalists threatened by the EEC and the rationalisation it requires.

The ability of the hard-line Unionists to maintain support among loyalist workers shows these workers' fears of change. Protestant workers have in the past been rewarded for their unquestioning support of the Unionist/Orange regime by privileges over Catholic workers. But the British government's willingness to use force against loyalist workers shows they are serious about changing that situation.

However, the British cannot determine which way the loyalist workers will move in the long run; the anti-imperialist forces can. The system's ability to postpone more serious confrontations with loyalist workers by economic investment is severely restricted by the overall crisis of world capitalism. Experts are predicting a major slump in shipbuilding in two years' time - the government cannot go on putting money into it for the sake of political balance.

The other alternative for imperialism is to smash the loyalist workers. Indeed, some sections of the republicans have been demanding that they do this. They seem to assume, therefore, that the state is a 'democratic' institution which can take action against fascist, anti-democratic forces. The state forces in question are British imperialism's occupying troops, and the Protestant workers are certainly not fascists.

Years of sectarian Unionist Rule, to gether with the failure of the anti-Unionist movement to offer them a viable alternative have driven them to the UDA and the politics of Craig. They have been encouraged to see Catholics, rather than the capitalist bosses and British domination, as the enemies. The war on Stormont was never enough to win loyalist workers to the anti-imperialist side. It was, and still is, essential to wage the struggle on clear working class lines, as opposed to nationalist ones. It was, and is, essential that the more class-conscious workers, in the South and among Catholics in the North, begin to win tangible victories over the bosses, so as to point a real road forward, to loyalist workers, to split them from Craig and Taylor who do not, and never can, represent their real interests.

SMASHING WHOM?

We believe that Craig and Taylor, and the section of the ruling class that they represent, will have to be smashed. But that is a different thing from smashing the Loyalist workers who support them at present. Those who demand that the army smash the Protestant workers presumably do not believe that these workers can be won away from Craig and Co.

By winning them on the basis of socialist policies, North and South, the task of smashing Craig and his class becomes one for the working class, and one in which the British Army can play no part. The British Army is part of the problem; it cannot be part of the solution.

M. MILLER

PROVOARD-FHEIS



The Ard-fheis of Sinn Fein (Kevin Street) on 28-29 October did not produce any fireworks. The military situation in the North has meant a trend away from the bombing campaign and more towards attacks on British soldiers, and this trend would disarm the critics of bombing.

To balance the military changes, it becomes necessary for Sean Mac Stiofain to put more emphasis on political activity. This is, at least, an inch forward in the right direction. But it is dictated by events, rather than by the conversion of the leaders. Ruari O Bradaigh, too, showed a new emphasis on "the mass support of the splendid people which ultimately decides all such issues".

The Provisionals have seen some need for working-class support. O'Bradaigh said: "It is vitally necessary that Republicans at local level get involved in situations so that Irish workers may experience at first hand our concern for their interests." But there is no mention of the policies they will advocate to the workers, except setting up co-operatives.

Interestingly enough, the movements are in the direction of Gardiner Place. This does not mean that the Provisionals and Officials are moving towards unity. It does mean that the same facts which dragged the Officials a bit to the left are now having their effect on the provisionals.

This direction is seen in the wish expressed to have talks with the Northern Loyalists and calls for the release of Loyalist prisoners. But the Provisionals seem to see the Loyalists just as another group of fighters. Have they asked themselves what they have in common with the Loyalists? Unless there is something in common talks would be a waste of time.

The Officials, at least, have realised that what they have in common with the majority of Loyalists is that they are both working-class. But the Loyalist workers will not be tempted by the Officials' civil rights, nor by the Provisionals' Irish unity. Working-class unity can only be built on the basis of fighting for socialism.

Title: The Worker, No. 9

Organisation: Socialist Workers' Movement

Date: 1972

Downloaded from the Irish Left Archive.

Visit www.leftarchive.ie

The Irish Left Archive is provided as a non-commercial historical resource, open to all, and has reproduced this document as an accessible digital reference. Copyright remains with its original authors. If used on other sites, we would appreciate a link back and reference to us, in addition to the original creators. For republication, commercial, or other uses, please contact the original owners. If documents provided to The Irish Left Archive have been created for or added to other online archives, please inform us so sources can be credited.