

the worker

FOR A WORKERS' REPUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

IT'S ALL BOALS

WAGES: THE REAL FIGHT BEGINS

DESMOND BOAL, former chairman of Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party, has offered a 'solution' to the 'Ulster Problem'. In essence this 'solution' is a reconstructed Ulster Province within a federal Irish state. The proposals illustrate further the amount of manoeuvring going on within the Ulster Loyalist right wing movements.

All of these groups are seeking alternative strategies in the face of British imperialism's determination to dismantle forever the Orange-Unionist monolith. It is obvious that Boal and Paisley, in some ways the most far-sighted representatives of the traditional Orange lower middle-class are aware that not only is there no return to the old Stormont but also that the political link with Britain is itself insecure. What remains for them to do is to find an alternative that will represent the interests of this section of the population within the framework of a future 32 county state.

Boal's proposals offer a plan for a sectarian province which would still be dominated by Protestant and Catholic parties. This would ensure that the working class would remain divided but could still be attractive to British Imperialism and to the Irish Ruling Class if the Northern Assembly failed to get off the ground. It could be the task of right-wing loyalist leaders to wean the Protestant workers away from identification with their 'Britishness' by emphasising 'Protestantism' as their unique characteristic.



Des Boal

Boal's proposals should not be seen as an individual careerist response to the inevitable, but as the reaction of a section of a class which up to now has played an important role in the Northern State and whose ideology still dominates the consciousness of the majority of the Northern working class. In the absence of a strong working class movement they have to seek their destiny within the horizons of the bourgeois state. For the loyalist leaders this will mean some accommodation with the Irish ruling class and with British imperialism although seeking the most favourable terms for this accommodation.

Already the response of Frank McManus and the Provisionals suggests that if the British do ever need an alternative policy to continue their domination of the whole island, then they may find it without too much difficulty.

Revolutionary socialists must be absolutely clear in their response to such manoeuvres. Not only do they represent the Provisional leadership's cynical disregard for those in their own movement who have fought in the anti-imperialist struggle for the aims of a socialist republic but also represent an attempt to deliver the Protestant and Catholic workers into a united 32-County state, firmly bound to sectarian parties and politics. Only Irish capitalism and British imperialism can benefit from such a plan.

The rejection of the proposals for a third National Wage Agreement is an enormous victory for rank-and-file trade unionists over the dead weight of the bureaucracy in the trade union movement. It is the biggest victory we have won in many years.

Several of the trade union leaders, Denis Larkin and Fintan Kennedy among them, had staked everything on seeing this agreement go through. In a recent book, the former President of Congress, Charles McCarthy, probably expressed the thoughts of many trade union officials when he said that the day of the industrial peace had come with the National Wage Agreements, and from now on the trade unions would not have to think about resolving industrial disputes but devising new wage agreements.

Well the working class has opted not for this industrial peace at the behest of the leaders, but for battle. We have thrown off a shackle that has tied us down for several years, divided our movement, and held back our living standards.

BIG GAINS

THE WAY is open for the working class to make big gains - but to do so it will have to be much more effectively organised than in the years before National Wage Agreements, and it will have to continue an unrelenting struggle against the kind of policies within the trade union movement which have led to this compromise and collaboration with the employers. If we do not win back the working class movement for the working class, the bosses and their friends in our movement will still tie us down.

The bosses still have all the resources of government and state to use against us - if they dare. They could strengthen the procedures of the Labour Court. They could bring forward legislation to 'rationalise' the trade union movement - and thus dampen the militants. They could trick around with income tax to buy us off. They have so many guns on their side that we cannot afford to relax one minute.

The fight over the proposals for a National Agreement have given us a glimpse of the strength that we, too, have. It was organised in a way that had not happened

before. It was expressed in a much more conscious way than on previous occasions. A new solidarity is being built up across all union barriers between those people who want to fight for their class, not pick up crumbs from the master's table.

Different trade unionists may have had different reasons for voting against the wage agreement proposals. But it is certain that the opposition in principle to such agreements organised by the Dublin Shop Stewards Committee, the Limerick/Shannon Region Shop Stewards Committee, and by similar committees in other places - in some cases less effectively organised - had a significant effect. Trade unionists know they were not voting entirely on their own, uncertain as to whether they could afford to risk the isolation of a NO vote. They knew there were others voting against, and they were equipped with facts and arguments against the very idea of such agreements.

RATTLED

Whatever the effect of these shop stewards committees on the outcome of the vote, it is clear that they have rattled some of the trade union leaders who are not at all anxious to see a development



Demonstration against the National Wage Agreement organised by the Dublin Shop Stewards Committee in January. The committee, composed of rank-and-file trade unionists from a wide variety of unions and jobs is continuing the fight for militant policies after the rejection of the wage agreement.

of democratic, rank and file activity in the unions. Ruadhri Roberts obviously thought the Shop Stewards Committees had a very substantial effect when he took the time at the Congress conference in January to attack its work.

What the Shop Stewards Committees have shown, above all, is a potential - a potential to unite the working class around a set of fighting demands, a set of clear objectives. They put forward the

alternative of rank-and-file solidarity to the divisive manoeuvring of the union bureaucrats. They show that a "free for all" need not be a situation where the weakest go to the wall, but where the strength of the best organised can be channelled to benefit the widest possible sections of the working class.

We have to build on that potential, build on the beginnings that have been made. How do we do it?

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Industrial Reports on Chrysler and Reg Armstrong (p 3); Noel Browne's lone struggle (p 5); Cinema under capitalism (p 4); ATGWU elections (p 8); Russian dissidents (p 7); Crisis in Britain (p 7); and much more

all correspondence to 95 Capel St Dublin 1

Oil crisis: what a song and dance!

Now they're all saying it. The oil companies have been deliberately misleading governments and peoples all over the world. The cut-back in supplies from oil producing countries was never as bad as was claimed. The companies have been quite prepared to go along with increases of the price of crude oil from the Arab Countries. The sort of gains they stand to make can be seen in 50% increase in profits for the major oil companies.

PRICES UP

In a press statement, and in the last worker, we said that the oil companies were trying to raise the price in order to get money for the more difficult and more expensive explorations in the North Sea and Alaska. And now Nixon comes along with a proposal to remove some of the concessions for the oil companies investing abroad and to encourage them to invest at home. Alaska is in the United States - and there are coal-fields in the Southern states which the oil companies have an interest in - so government policy and company needs seem to fit like a hand in a glove.

There is of course, some friction between the oil companies and the Arab



states - but that did not stop Exxon (Esso), asking the Saudi-Arabians to put up the price of crude oil several months before the 'crisis'!

When even the editorial writers of the 'Irish Press', for instance - start to question the credibility of the oil companies, you know something is stirring. The oil companies in this country, which are subsidiaries of the big international giants, have complete control of oil supplies, and complete control of the information about

them. The government depends on them for their statements - and those statements have been very misleading.

At no time in the past two months has there been a serious situation with regard to oil supplies in this country. The only uncertainty is about the amounts which the oil companies will allocate to this country from one month to the next. But storage tanks in Dublin docks have been full. Some oil companies have been looking around to lease storage space from others. Tankers have been queuing

up to unload.

There were some people who knew this, apart from the oil companies - the dock workers and their unions. Instead of echoing the prophecies of disaster, as John Carroll of the I.T.G.W.U. did, the union leaders should have flooded the place with statements to say what the real situation was about oil stocks, and the oil coming in

If they had done that, then maybe others would not have entered such bad deals with managements to accept cuts in earnings for shorter hours. As we said in our last issue, the answer to any such demands from employers would be: we're not responsible, and we're not going to pay the price! More than that, workers could have said: We know the oil is there, and it's only a matter of one set of bosses using others to push up their profits - we're definitely not going to pay the price.

If, after the last few weeks, you're beginning to suspect the whole thing was a "fix" from the beginning, then you're on the right track.

CHANCES FOR THE SEVENTIES

IN IRELAND the upsurge of working class militancy during the 1960s, and the example of struggle abroad from America to Vietnam to France, led many workers to seek a political solution in the Irish Labour Party. Labour moved to the left and went into the general election of 1969 with friends and enemies alike expecting it to make a breakthrough. It came out with a slightly increased vote and a slight loss in seats.

As entry into the Common Market approached, and the impossibility of radical reforms in Irish society became clearer, the prominent personalities who had joined the Party in expectation of a Labour upsurge carrying them into office began to join forces with the old right wing of the Party and to plan an alternative strategy: coalition.

Events in the North were to give them an opportunity. Industrial development there had shifted from the old Orange-dominated industries to international companies impatient with the inefficiency created by sectarian division. As the Southern economy was opened up to international companies — often more profitably than in the North — imperialism began to move towards the lowering of the Partition and sectarian divides in the interests of exploiting the island as a whole. Their chosen instrument was Terence O'Neill, Northern Prime Minister from 1963, who made liberal noises, had discussions with the Taoiseach, Sean Lemass, and moved towards reform at a snail's pace.

DISCONTENT

The pace was quickened from a different direction. In 1968 the discontent of the Catholic working class spilled over into a spontaneous mass civil rights movement. The government reacted with brutal suppression. The middle-class civil rights leaders tried to cool the situation to avoid provoking the Protestant working class. But Protestants, some of whom had participated in the first civil rights demonstrations (some Protestants, as well as Catholics, lacked the right to vote), became increasingly hostile.

The People's Democracy a socialist organisation born out of the civil rights movement, pressed onwards, saying that they were non-sectarian and socialist, but succeeding only in getting across that they were more extreme than the civil rights leaders. Other left-wingers such as Eamonn McCann of Derry and Bernadette Devlin, who was elected to Parliament in April 1969, increasingly feared that P.D.'s methods were simply driving the Protestant working class further to the right.

For when the civil rights leaders demanded more jobs and houses for Catholics, Protestant workers, who knew they had a privileged position, foresaw that there would be less jobs and houses for themselves. P.D. called on the civil rights movement to demand jobs and houses for all. But they failed to distinguish them-

selves from the Civil Rights leaders in the eyes of the Protestant workers, who increasingly fell under the influence of right-wing leaders like Paisley and Craig. P.D. had tried to link with the South, but not on a working class basis.

The sectarian confrontations of 1969 found the I.R.A. virtually unarmed, and this, together with the moves towards ending abstentionism, resulted in the split of the Republican Movement into Officials and Provisionals. The British Army, at first welcomed by the Catholics, became increasingly repressive, especially after 1970 and led to the Provisionals' bombing campaign which started in 1971. The Unionist government's response of internment produced mass support for the Republicans.

The Officials' strategy, however, was limited to organising for the remaining civil rights demands. The Provisionals joined with the People's Democracy in the Northern Resistance Movement, which was at first effective in organising resistance but because this was not on a socialist basis it was easily eroded by the British government's political manoeuvres. Through the introduction of direct rule in 1972 and power-sharing in 1973, the British government has largely succeeded in putting the Catholic working class back behind the middle-class civil rights leaders, now reorganised as the SDLP.

What was lacking through all this was a movement aimed at uniting the Catholic and Protestant sections of the working class the only way they could be united — as workers, on a socialist basis, and in opposition to all the middle-class leaders. Such a movement could make an impact on Loyalist workers only by a link with workers in action against the Southern government, for without such a link socialism appears simply as nationalism cloaked in left-wing rhetoric. The Communist Party, with some support among Protestant workers, might have been in a position to spell this out — but instead it was one of the main movers of the all-class civil rights line.

COALITION

The split in the Southern government in 1970 provided the opportunity for the Labour Party leadership to ram through the coalition policy. The left wing of the Party opposed coalition and then disintegrated. The established 'left' leaders like Noel Browne and Matt Merrigan insisted on staying in the Party and formed a Liaison Committee of the Left to rally their rapidly scattering forces. By so doing they condemned themselves to impotence in a period of increasing problems for the capitalist economy.



An early PD demonstration

An alternative strategy was proposed by the Young Socialists, under the influence of the League for a Workers' Republic. It was to form a new Socialist Labour Party, uniting revolutionary socialists North and South. The success of this strategy depended on attracting a substantial working-class base, and this was not achieved. Of the Northern groups, only the People's Democracy agreed to join — not a new party, but a loose Socialist Labour Alliance. (SLA).

INTELLECTUALS

The S.L.A. was largely composed of intellectuals, who were more interested in debating socialism than in practical activities. Its ideological disputations increasingly immobilised it as an organisation, leading to a loss of members. On the one hand, the L.W.R. regard "theoretical work and theoretical clarity as the first prerequisites for the defence of the working class and the building of a revolutionary class party". On the other hand, the more practically-oriented People's Democracy were increasingly moving away from the socialist agitations of 1970 and towards the viewpoint that national re-unification could be achieved before the working class's own, socialist, revolution — which resulted in their increasing alliance with the Provisionals. The P.D. were willing to organise among the working class in their local communities, but regarded the core of a working-class outlook — the factories and the trade unions — as a diversion from the real struggles outside.

The situation was further confused by the Young Socialists themselves being caught in a struggle between the L.W.R. and the "Left Opposition", later to become the Revolutionary Marxist Group (R.M.G.). Although less pervaded by arid dogmatism the R.M.G. rejected the struggles of the working class as the primary area of interest and argued instead for involvement in the student movement, in the women's liberation movement, in the fringes of the republican movement.

Faced with these diverse strands of opinion, a number of people, mostly from the S.L.A., came together in October 1971 to form the Socialist Workers' Movement. A majority of the membership from the beginning being manual workers, they were determined to establish, as the central point of political organisation, the struggles of the working class in the factories and through the trade unions. The S.W.M. put forward its conviction that the national question can be solved only by the united working class, Catholic and Protestant establishing a 32-County workers' republic, and rejected the civil rights strategy of the Official Republicans and the Communist Party, the united capitalist Ireland of the Provisionals and the later People's Democracy, the 6-County workers' republic of the earlier People's Democracy, and the

surrender to imperialism of the two-nations theory of the British and Irish Communist Organisation.

STRUGGLE

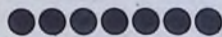
Through the publication of THE WORKER, through the attempt to link the struggles of the workers with the issue of repression of the national struggle, and through organising opposition in the trade union movement to the National Wage Agreements, the SWM is engaged in the task of building the working-

class socialist base which has been lacking through the hectic events of the recent years. The interest in socialism aroused since the 50th anniversary of Connolly's death, and the working-class militancy provoked by the increasing crises in the capitalist system, have to be brought together, and the choice is presented to all of us: whether to watch as hurlers on the ditch, or whether to commit ourselves to the hard struggle to grasp the opportunities and the challenges.

ARE THE FARMERS MAKING IT RICH?



MANY TOWN-DWELLERS, sickened by the continually rising price of food, imagine that the farmers must all be wealthy — and getting wealthier. There is a small element of truth to this, but it must be clear to everybody that not all farmers are gaining equally.



There are three farming regions in the country. In the South, dairying is the basic activity and some tillage goes with it. In the West and North West there are tiny holdings, and the farmers buy calves from the South to rear them to one or two years old. Much of the rest of the country has large farms on which the calves from the west are fattened for export or slaughter. Obviously the picture is not as clear cut as this, as some of each type of farm exists in all regions — but this is the basic picture.

The E.E.C. has benefitted milk and beef producers, and price increases in these areas have led to a 37% increase in farm incomes in 1972. Surveys of farm income have shown that in 1972 the income per farm was £17 49 in Munster, £14 02 in Leinster, and around £6 50 in Connacht and the three 'Southern' counties of Ulster. The gaps between the West and the rest of the country are obvious.

The small farmers have gained least from the price rises — for as the selling price of beef rises so too does the cost of calves. Irish calves are dearer in relation to the price of finished cattle than in any other country in Europe — and this hits the West most.

In 1973, dairy and tillage brought in bigger gains for farmers, but beef suffered badly, with prices at the end of summer

no higher than in Spring. The importance of this is seen when you realise that farmers buy cattle in spring to fatten them on grass and sell them in Autumn. In the current situation they would have to sell them at a loss and, not surprisingly, farmers who can are holding on to their stock. This is difficult where there are no winter-feeding facilities, particularly this winter when hay is scarce and of poor quality. — So again only the wealthiest and best equipped farmers can do it.

It is widely accepted that beef prices will recover in spring, according to the usual seasonal pattern. However, those likely to gain from this are those wealthy enough to keep their stock till prices increase. Here again the small, poor farmers — mainly the farmers in the West — are the losers. And the 10% of all farmers — roughly 20,000 in number — who made more than £3,000 in 1972 will again boost their incomes.

The main problem for most farmers and particularly the small ones is a lack of investment funds, which means that they are trapped in low-output-type farming.

Moves to get farming on a secure footing supplying the needs of workers, the majority of the population, as it could, and should, are likely only under a socialist system, because until then profit considerations ensure that most aid goes to the bigger farmers and less to those who need it.

So next time you moan about food prices, remember the farmers in the poor regions of the West and North-West trying to rear families on £15 per week, and curse the 10% of the farmers who thrive on the other's poverty.

SWM

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

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

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AFTER THE NO VOTE

THE FIRST thing that has to be done is to get the claims for higher wages, shorter hours, etc. moving. These should come not only from those workers whose agreements would have run out now in any case, but from any who think they can present a claim to keep ahead of soaring prices with some chance of winning it. The claims must be presented for the widest possible sections, industry-wide where it can be done, or across a trade, or most obviously, throughout the maintenance grades. By putting claims forward which are some way close to the demands of the Dublin Shop Stewards Committee,

the strongest and most confident sections can show they are concerned not only for themselves but for the less well organised — they can bridge that gap which the union leaders have encouraged to widen.

Most of the trade union leaders who yesterday were trying to sell a National Wage Agreement are hardly going to turn around and tomorrow go all-out for claims much more far-reaching than the terms proposed for a wage agreement. No doubt they will be the first to help the bosses attach "strings" — concessions on productivity and conditions — to any rises.

Thus the job falls on the militants to push the claims for flat rate increases, and no strings forward. To make sure of the best possible links between different sections of workers, effective shop stewards committees need to be set up on every job where there are several unions. Where such committees exist, they need to be made completely responsible to the ordinary members.

Effective shop stewards' organisations can make the Congress policy of 'two-tier picketing' irrelevant. If it comes to strike action over a claim it must be organised through the stewards of all unions in the work-place, and prepared in advance. It will not be good enough for groups of workers simply to slap up pickets and hope nobody will pass. The union leaders have succeeded in degrading the value of the picket and confusing workers about its meaning. But if it is used irresponsibly it can have just as bad an effect.

ACTION PLANNED

On the other hand, if industrial action is planned as far as possible with representatives of all sections in a job or an industry or a trade, if final decisions are made by mass meetings of the workers concerned, and if strike committees are elected and subject to the control by mass meetings, then we really can tell Congress what to do with their two-tier picketing.



Shop Stewards Conference held in January

These shop stewards' committees should also be the basis of local shop stewards committees in a town, and the local committee should in turn encourage the setting up of such bodies. Where a local shop stewards committee already exists, committees on the job should be encouraged to affiliate to it. In this way, the solidarity can be strengthened, the experiences shared, and local committees will really be in a position to offer meaningful support to workers in struggle.

All this work, however, could still be reduced to little or nothing if it does not lead to a change within the unions. As long as the unions are committed to the Employer-Labour Conference, the Labour Court, and all that paraphernalia, they can still, and will still, ride roughshod over the best constructed unofficial committees. They can still beat them back by isolation, or entangle them in the web of conciliation and all the labour court clap-trap, thus cutting them off from their source of strength at the work-place.

That is why it is an equally important task to group those people who are committed to this fight within individual unions, fighting for radical policies, for internal democracy, and building up a steady pressure within the trade union movement to force Congress to withdraw from the Employer-Labour Conference and all that goes with it. In the present climate it would be a first priority to get unions committed to the principle of a national minimum wage of £30, and get them fighting for it. Likewise, rank and file committees would fight to commit the unions to opposing redundancies and lay-offs, insisting on a full week's work or a full week's pay.

The stewards simply said that a good offer would follow if the changes in conditions were accepted. Originally, the Chrysler workers had demanded £12 more for 37½ hours while management offered only £4.55 for a two-year deal with worse conditions.

Chrysler workers have been told that management are being very helpful in keeping the plant on five days when output is fixed at 65% of normal, as it is in Chrysler UK. However, there is no reason for a cut-back since Chrysler Ireland have plenty of Simca Kits awaiting assembly, plus a big export order. Indeed, the reduction to 65% is an attack by management on the men's future earnings, since they are being asked, to 'rectify' the hundreds of incomplete cars in the yards. This is work which is normally done on overtime, and helps push up earnings. Not only are the management saving themselves money, but they also have the cheek to pretend they are doing a favour and thus help the deal go through.

When Measured Day Work was introduced five years ago, the trade union official said it was the best system, and would boost wages. Chrysler Ireland gave £2 increased for MDW, while Chrysler UK were forced to give £12 extra a week. Chrysler workers are now among the worst paid in Dublin, let alone in the car trade generally. And management are trying to screw them harder.

The rejected National Wage Agreement would have given Chrysler workers over £5 for no change in conditions — a good deal more than management were offering. The workers should stick to their original claim for £12 extra and a 37½ hour week, and fight to improve conditions, rather than selling them off for money. That way they can start catching up on lost ground.

A central task of these committees, whether based on a job or on a union, will be the fight for democracy within the unions. Some of those who have been actively involved in the fight against the Wage Agreement have either had, or have been threatened with union discipline against them. We must defend the right of trade unionists to put forward their own views within the working class movement.

We can expect some unions to take a "left" or more militant turn in the coming months. But we cannot look to left-wing union leaders to change the nature of the movement. They will show a militant face in order not to lose the loyalty of their members who want to fight for better wage and conditions, but they will be less concerned with actually winning those fights.

By its very structure the trade union movement is still far from the ideas and practices of worker's democracy. Officials are in many cases there for life, and are not subject to recall by the members. Their whole experience of frequent meetings with the bosses, and so on, tends to separate them from the rank and file. That is the basis of some of the real differences between Irish and non-Irish, craft, general and white collar unions, which the union leaders have, in many cases, fostered.

Those divisions can only be overcome if the unions are daily and hourly controlled by the members, if the union is, in fact, the workers on the job, and not the "union man" who comes rushing down when management call him to sort out trouble.

THE SOCIALIST Workers Movement is fully committed to the struggle to build up the rank and file organisation of the working class. Our members were involved in the first meetings held last August to discuss setting up an anti-National Wage Agreement committee. The people from half-a-dozen different unions who were at those meetings were later able to tie in with the similar efforts being made by shop stewards of the A.T.G.W.U., and our members have continued to play an active role as trade unionists and socialists in developing the Shop Stewards Committee. Comrades in Waterford, Galway and Belfast have been involved in similar attempts in those places.

The shop stewards' committees and rank and file committees in the union are, we believe, the vehicles through which a strategy for the class struggle can be carried into the broadest sections of the working class. But we do not see the effective industrial organisation of workers as an end in itself. The very existence and development of the shop stewards' committees demonstrates that there is a political vacuum to be filled as well as an industrial trade union vacuum. Many of the discussions hinge on essentially political questions, and if the government tries to manoeuvre its way to buy off the trade union leadership or curb the militants, then it will require a political response.

TAKE THE BOSSSES ON

With a clear view of an alternative society where the workers own and control the wealth it is easier to sustain an effort to build up the working class's independent strength on the job and in the union. And where that independent strength must eventually lead if any gains are to be consolidated — is to the building of a working class socialist organisation which can prepare to take on the bosses on all fronts. That is the struggle to which we are committed.

Basil Chubb, Chairman of the Employer-Labour Conference, tries to hide his feelings after the NO vote



WHY ON EARTH would the members of a trade union branch throw away their right to elect union officers? In Wexford recently half the members of the local branch of the Irish National Painters and Decorators Trade Union refused to vote in the annual election for the union Secretary.

Every year for the past ten years they have been presented with John Mulhall as a candidate — but many members complain they have never seen him. They knew even less about the other candidates on this year's list, so they tore up the ballot papers. The union is not all that big — about 1500 members in all — so it would not be too difficult to organise visits to all branches by the candidates for leading positions.

WE HAVE all heard about the Special Branch ringing up employers to tip them off about "politically dangerous" employees, suggesting that perhaps they should be shown the door.

But have you ever heard about the Public Relations Officer of a would-be socialist organisation doing roughly the same thing? Last month, Sean Kenny, of Sinn Féin (Gardiner Place) rang up the employer of one of our comrades to point out what he had written in THE WORKER, and to suggest that he was abusing his job.

WHAT

WE FEARED...

The National Income Tax Relief Organisation has issued the following statement:
Wage and salary earners are very disturbed that the Irish Congress of Trade Unions rave

make them pay for the boss's difficulties and mistakes. The lessons of the Britain's strike of 1972 must not be forgotten — there the workers won the solidarity of the dockers, and were able to stop the import of fully assembled British Leyland cars. There must be no illusion that the problems can be solved by Justin Keating or any other type of government intervention. It is only the workers themselves who can solve the problems, and how successful they are depends on how well they stick together and fight management.

We must not allow Reg Armstrong to pocket his ill-gotten gains, close the factory gate and leave the workers to walk away with a pittance, to be exploited further by the capitalist system.

ARMSTRONG WORKER

More attacks on conditions

AFTER SIXTEEN meetings shop stewards at the Chrysler assembly plant in Santry, Dublin, have finally agreed with management on a new set of working conditions. As reported previously in THE WORKER, the shop floor had rejected an earlier proposed agreement, and demanded a substantial improvement in conditions plus more money.

The meeting to consider the new terms was held in the city centre in late January, and to the steward's surprise it was as well attended as if it had been held in the plant. A proposal by the full-time official, Danny Browne, that he should read through the deal and take questions afterwards was rejected in favour of discussing it point by point.

The first point in the proposals concerned "justifiable reasons" for lateness, which was vague and open to use by foremen to penalise militants, and allow blue-eyed boys to go out for petrol during working hours. The discussion on this point led to general criticisms of the proposed deal, of measured day work and of most of the stewards and management. The meeting never got any further, and will have to be re-convened to consider the other points.

At no time in all this discussion was any specific wage increase mentioned.

THREE DAY WEEK

A CLOUD of uncertainty hangs over the Reg Armstrong Ltd. Opel Assembly plant at Ringsend, Dublin. The workers, who have been on a three-day week since November 26th, have been informed by management that this situation will continue until the end of January. After that there remains a big question mark.

Will the company go back to a five-day week? Will there be redundancies? Will the management try to cut back the labour force by laying off workers with short service?

It is true there has been a drastic drop in car sales, but Reg Armstrong lost no time in protecting his own interest by the instant action of putting the workers on a three-day week. This has meant a drop in take-home pay from an average of £36 a week to often less than £20. The demoralisation this has caused has reduced the work-force from 130 before the introduction of short-time working to the present 115. A cheap, painless way for Armstrong to get redundancies.

Working conditions at Reg Armstrong are very primitive. Men on the line are having to inhale lead dust because proper masks have not been supplied. Dirt extraction is inadequate, and there is a constant danger of accidents as the cars are moved around the cramped factory. Armstrong's penny-pinching attitude can be seen continually, and even where improvements have been agreed to, they always take months to put into operation.

Even in bringing in the three-day week Reg Armstrong showed that he was going to cut back every possible penny on costs. There was a 3¼ hour stoppage just before

Christmas because of a dispute over a loan from the company to the workers for the holiday period. At the end of it the management agreed not to stop any pay for the hours lost, but the week after Christmas the workers found they had been stopped those hours. It took a good deal of pressure to get the money out of Armstrong.

The workers at the Ringsend factory have good reason to mistrust Reg Armstrong. His record is one of someone always prepared to impose hardship on the workers in pursuit of his own personal fortune. This is obvious from the working conditions and the attitude of management, which have only been improved in the past two years through constant pressure from the shop committee and the A.T.G.W.U. official.

In spite of those improvements, the management only bothered to give 2½ days notice of the introduction of a three-day week. Whereas in some places negotiations over short-time have gone on over a period, in Reg Armstrong's it was proposed, and reluctantly accepted in just one meeting. The workers were only able to get one slight concession out of the company — that they should pay average five-day bonuses for the three-day's work.

There is no tradition of strong union organisation in Armstrong's, and as a result the seven-man shop stewards committee is often afraid to speak out against management for fear of being victimised. However, it is clear that the workers will need strong leadership in the times ahead, and this can only be brought about through a strong and effective shop stewards committee.

Armstrong workers must prepare to fight back against any further attempt to

The Dream Screen

CAPITALISM affects every area of our lives; Jobs, housing, even our recreations. This article looks at the way in which capitalism has shaped films and the cinema. It is written by a projectionist in a Dublin cinema.

MOTION PICTURES were invented around the turn of the century and the next thirty years saw the establishment of a film-making formula which has remained largely unchanged ever since.

The setting up of large-scale film production needed vast amounts of money so naturally the most advanced capitalist country, America, became the centre of the film industry. The old studio bosses set up a money-making machine which is still running today, not only in the U.S. but throughout the world. Hollywood may be dead, but the dream factory lives on.

Given the circumstances of capitalist society, it was inevitable that film-making would be bound by commercialism and originality would become a poor relation to profitability. The system demands that the primary aim of producers should be to make profits, not pictures. As a film has to be shown to a lot of people to make a profit, and as the distribution and exhibition of films is monopolised by a small number of companies, it follows that only the pictures those companies want shown will be made. All this means that a producer must virtually get permission from these companies before he begins work, if he wants his film widely shown.

Two companies, Rank and E.M.I., control most of the cinemas in Britain and almost the same situation applies in Ireland with their Irish subsidiaries, Odeon and the Adelphi Group, getting first-run options on most of the commercial films. Capitol and Allied get their share as well, and the independent cinemas run by smaller companies get the left-overs, the type of film outside the commercial success mainstream. Which is why these cinemas, the Curzon, International etc., get most of the interesting films — the very good and the very bad. The larger companies are only concerned with the slick money-making, candy-floss type of product.



But cinema is more than a potentially enhancing invention perverted by capitalism into being just another instrument for producing profits. Being dominated by the capitalist ethic, it peddles a phoney "good life" peopled by "stars" and "starlets" where happiness is equated with success within the system. Even the more realistic films are only concerned with people's struggle to fit into the system, to conform.

Taken one by one, these fantasies may be harmless, but when there is a steady stream of them (along with the even more conformist world of T.V. fiction) they must create in the viewer the illusion that this is what life is really about.

This is not a conspiracy of evil men trying to warp our thinking it is simply that because of the system only those film-makers who conform to this way of thinking and this way of making films, can get their pictures widely shown.

In Ireland the situation is worsened by a crazy system of censorship which bans or cuts most of the few films which do try to get to grips with reality. Sex and violence are taboo unless they are so unreal as to only arouse our fantasies, never our thoughts. Films which show violence in its reality are banned or cut while those which show killing as an exciting, manly thing to do are queuing up to be shown. Thus, while adult films which deglamourise violence are cut, children may watch the James Bond's and John Wayne's litter the screen with bodies like confetti after a wedding.

how capitalism projects itself

GENE KERRIGAN

Wayne is particularly offensive. As he grows older and more right-wing his co-stars seem to get younger. Two of his latest films, "The Cowboys" and "Cahill" show him demonstrating to young boys that the ability to kill is the badge of manhood. Wayne has always worn a phallic symbol on his hip but this latest gimmick of dragging kids on screen to witness and emulate his perversions is sick.

In a weird way cinema does reflect society accurately in one respect: its portrayal of the role of women. Rarely does a woman play a central character in a film or any role important in itself. Women are used as decorations or at best supporting roles as little more than props around which the male lead moves as he goes about his business. (There are exceptions, of course, but when is the last time you saw a film with a cast headed by several females with a male in a supporting role?) This is not too far removed from the position of women off screen and by magnifying this inequality — the cinema must take its share of blame

for the acceptance and perpetuation of sexual discrimination. There is no male equivalent of the "starlet". These young girls, all poured through the same strainer and into the same mould, removing all traces of individuality, parade through countless films identifying women as little more than notches on the hero's bedpost.

CRIPPLING

There are good films of course. Among the thousands made there are bound to be. There are film-makers who maintain their integrity despite the crippling effect of the system. But as long as cinema is bound by the profit motive its main product will be candy-floss entertainment at best and at its worst will have a long-term harmful effect on society. The solution? A radical change in society and the attitudes to entertainment. As long as production and distribution (whether of films, or more important things like food housing or oil) is in the hands of capitalists the first consideration will be profit, regardless of the effect on people. The few film-makers who grapple seriously with the problems of living in this society are squeezed out to the fringes of the film world starved of the resources which could make their work have a greater effect.

THE FAT DREAMER

THERE ARE 800 followers of Guru Maharaj Ji in Dublin and around the country. These young people look upon this overfed fifteen-year-old as their Perfect Master. Many of them are workers, which must mean that at least some young workers have been drawn out of the socialist struggle into the obscurity of the Divine Light.

The 'Divine Times', weekly paper of the Divine Light Mission, says, "If the current deadlock and world confusion has you befuddled and wondering where to turn next, check out what Guru Maharaj Ji has to give. You'll be satisfied." And he'll be satisfied with the new followers, and the extra cash. But the Guru and his movement are just another blind alley leading away from a rational and clear view of the society we live in.

The 'Divine Times' mixes religious instruction with comment on the real world. The so-called crisis in Britain has been receiving headline coverage. The Government and the miners and other militant workers are on a collision course . . . the problem will not be solved. The working people of this country are always going to want more than the Government is prepared to offer them. Man's nature never lets him be satisfied with what he has . . . The only way is for people to find an unequalled sense of personal satisfaction a peace of mind that is unruffled about bank balances, mortgages and hire purchase and will naturally project itself outward and affect society at large."

The working class has been offered rising prices and unemployment by the British Government and the class which it represents. The knowledge of the Guru Maharaj Ji obviously does not include an awareness of the condition of the workers.

The Divine Light throws its darkness on a speech made by Castro in which he claimed that Cuba was not yet ready for communism. For a start, communism or socialism, which means worker's power, have not yet been tried in Cuba. But the 'Divine Times' reaction to Castro's regrets is that "Time and time again man cannot dedicate himself to an ideal alone. Sooner or later corruption, self-interest or apathy will force him to compromise. Inner love and peace, experienced practically and consistently are the necessary prerequisites for implementing a plan for Utopia."

CONCRETE REALITIES

So when this vast "knowledge" is brought down to concrete social realities it means that the workers are wrong to struggle for more, to demand what is theirs, to demand even a living wage, which is what the Miner's struggle in England for instance, is about. Instead the workers must each find their own "sense of personal satisfaction", and "peace of mind". There is nothing more disturbing to anybody's peace of mind than to find the rent going up and the meat vanishing off the table. There is nothing



more favourable to the peace of mind of the ruling class than to have workers preoccupied with meditation to find an "unequalled sense of personal satisfaction"

If we turn to the Guru, what has he got to offer? He gives us the Knowledge. Knowledge of what. What knowledge? Knowledge itself does not exist — only knowledge of things. A follower of the Guru will tell you it has to be experienced to be demonstrated, the knowledge cannot be shown. Very convenient indeed.

Man is not essentially greedy or selfish. Human nature changes. Less than 200 years ago, for instance, it was "human nature" to hang, draw and quarter people in the open streets. Eskimos used to

leave old people out to die in the cold, while the Japanese held powerful traditions of honouring parents and ancestors. Which is "human nature"? Capitalism blocks and distorts human relations, but in struggle workers develop solidarity and help one another. They are not naturally greedy or selfish.

The life-style of the Guru himself does nothing to strengthen his teaching of detachment from material things. The money his 6 million followers surrender to him buys his houses, his big cars, his flying lessons, and, presumably, the jewels he tried to smuggle into India.

DES DERWIN

LETTERS TO

I would like to draw attention to a particular case of rising prices which is causing a lot of hardship. This is schoolbook prices, which in common with other prices, have continued to rise at an alarming rate. This year they have reached a ridiculously high level. They make a mockery of the so-called free education scheme.

All the talk about community schools and co-education amounts to very little if it is still basically the length and eph of the parent's wallet which decrees how far the child's education goes. Why otherwise would so many children of working class parents leave school with only the Intermediate Certificate — if they're lucky?

To deal with some of these problems we must demand that V.A.T. be taken off schoolbooks; that there is a public inquiry into schoolbook publishers' profits; that education and schoolbooks are free from primary to university level; that class numbers be reduced to 15 at most to allow teachers to devote times to each student.

It is vital that each individual receives attention to ensure development in the academic, psychological, and indeed spiritual aspects of his life. By use of small numbers and the intimate nature of the class each pupil can be taught self-reliance, and the ability to relate to others.

It is important, too, that a comprehensive range of subjects be taught with games and physical education receiving special attention.

B. SWEENEY

I was very interested to read the article on Tanzania in the last edition of THE WORKER. I agree with most of what you

SENATOR BROWNE'S LONE STRUGGLE

IF THERE IS ONE personality in the 26 Counties whom many people see as the representative of socialism, it is certainly Dr. Noel Browne. Since he first appeared on the political scene in 1948, however, he has pursued an erratic course as messianic prophet, voice in the wilderness, and socialist hero, all the time with a certain loyalty to the idea of socialism, and a confused strategy as to how to get there.

Noel Browne commands wide respect, not only among the more class conscious members of the Labour Party who oppose the Coalition policy, but also among workers at large. People admire Noel Browne, even if they don't agree with him. When he comes on the television the hubbub in the pub dies down. It's understandable too — in a society where so many people in "public life" speak with crooked mouths, and can only be relied upon to do one thing: to change course when the wind changes.

CONTRADICTION

Yet there is a big flaw, a contradiction, in Noel Browne's promotion of socialism and socialist ideas — the gap between his commitment to the idea and his hopeless failure to give any lead in organising a struggle for socialism. It can be seen, for instance, in his speech in the Senate on 19th December when he replied to Richie Ryan's threat that the Wage Agreement might not be paid. On the one hand he talked of "totally discredited views about the possibility of manipulating the capitalist system in order to provide a just society".

But he shows no alternative. He only goes on to say "the Government is extremely conservative and unlikely to accept the rather radical thinking and radical solutions which it seems to me must become inevitable in time. It just depends on how long they take and how much suffering is endured by the ordinary people until it is accepted that the ordinary methods of handling this situation will not be effective, the methods of ordinary

private enterprise capitalists". Who is going to accept it? And how will they make the change?

It is as if he has spent his life standing in the shallows of a deep river, on whose opposite bank lies his socialist paradise, waiting for the waters to dry up — instead of learning to swim. He has understood that the working class movement has a key role, but is very vague about it. He has spoken of the struggle in the trade unions between the left and the right, but he presents it like a debate or a personal rivalry. There is no vision of real live workers engaging in struggle to defend themselves against a declining standard of living or against those who govern their working lives.

This shows a sort of elitism which runs through a lot of Noel Browne's ideas. In his view, the policies of the trade unions depend on whether they have left-wing or right-wing leaders; it is a struggle between elites. Indeed, he behaves a bit like that himself as a politician; he rarely descends from the lofty heights of his speeches and his writing to a real involvement in the problems of working people.

Maybe we can see here why the "socialist countries" appeal to him. "The socialism that I believe in which seeks the ending of the capitalist system, the ending of the social injustices associated with capitalism, has gone on apace throughout the world. Most of the people who have fought for socialism have not lost courage in face of considerable opposition as some of my comrades have lost faith. Because of that a third of the world, or nearly half of the world, is socialist, people are the better of it."

Even if it was true that social injustice had been ended behind the Iron Curtain, it would still matter whether the workers



Noel Browne

had taken power for themselves or whether they had control over their own lives — and neither of these things is true for the "socialist countries".

If we look at Noel Browne's attitude to the Catholic Church we see again this lack of faith in the power of the working class. His experience of the Church's power when it vetoed his Mother and Child scheme may have understandably coloured his feelings, but at times he has seemed to say that the Church would have to be smashed before the workers' minds would ever be opened to talk socialism.

Such an attitude to the Church's power is in many ways understandable, and Noel Browne shares it with many other radicals and socialists. But it really underestimates the ways in which working class consciousness may be changed in struggle for working class aims.

The experience of Irish history does not bear out Noel Browne's understanding of the Church's position. There has, it

is true, never been an anti-clerical movement in the South. But when the Pope banned collections for O'Connell and Parnell, the collections soared sky-high; when the bishops excommunicated the I.R.A. not a republican defected; and if the Church tries to stop the workers when they are on the move it will be thrust aside.

If the Church is the bulwark against socialism, why has irreligious England not gone Socialist?

Noel Browne's emphasis on the role of the Catholic Church has also led him to play down the importance of the struggle in the North, because in so many ways that struggle seems bound up with Catholicism. In fact, he has on occasions given comfort to the Unionists, keeping quiet about Northern discrimination but maintaining the attack on the Catholic South, but it must also be said that the national question is one on which he has never been able to keep a clear, consistent line.

In Noel Browne's attitude to coalition we see what must be his central failure: his failure to understand the nature of the state. In early 1970 he was advocating that the Labour Party should demand certain key departments and policies in a coalition which would be "entered into solely to further the creation of Connolly's Socialist Republic in Ireland."

Last June he wrote in a bulletin circulated to Labour Party members: "Certain patterns of action appear to be worth considering by those who believe that they should continue to look for change from within the structure of the parliamentary game, where the role of the revolutionary can be little else but simply that of a socialist propagandist." But then he went on to speak of participating in coalition governments, saying that socialists in such coalitions must be firm, dedicated, and committed to using power "to prise from power the bourgeois conservative political parties. Further, to use that power in order to change, in a revolutionary way, the whole vertical privileged class structure of our society, and minority-held wealth and property in the Republic... We could, as with the Marxist Allende in Chile, use the parliamentary system to destroy capitalism".

OLD BOTTLES

Unfortunately for Noel Browne, capitalism destroyed Allende a few months later — as it was inevitably bound to do. You cannot pour new wine into old bottles. The machinery of the capitalist state — the civil service, the parliament, the army, the police, the courts — are designed to serve capitalism. Even with socialists at the top they are useless to create socialism.

Socialism can only be created from the bottom upwards, through the working class's own action, through the overthrow of the capitalist state rather than its reform.

Noel Browne calls himself a revolutionary, and yet he does not see how the working class can, and must build up its power outside capitalist institutions to make a revolution. His words and his actions are not those of a revolutionary. He does not use parliament solely as a platform, which is what a revolutionary would do. The effect of so much he does and says is, in fact, to persuade people that change can come through the manipulation of the parliamentary system.

JOHN GOODWILLIE

THE EDITOR

have written, but I would like to make a number of points.

1. As I understand it, the upsurge of working-class militancy against 'non-socialist managers' was not altogether unconnected with official government policy. The attitude of TANU to independent working class activity is certainly not a "ruthless determination to suppress". Neither, of course, is it a simple one of encouragement, but let us not oversimplify matters.
2. "The belief that TANU can be turned leftwards is a myth". Judging from our experiences with Labour parties in this part of the world I suppose some comrades might fancy this to be self-evident, but the way you have phrased it, it's just an unqualified assertion.
3. "Only the working class can establish the type of regime..." In fact, a workers state in a country like Tanzania would undergo 'Stalinist degeneration' even quicker than Russia did, the means of production being that much less developed, etc. etc. This is the really important point, as it determines our programme for revolutionary socialists in places like Tanzania. It is a problem that is currently causing me considerable puzzlement; I don't think you can sensibly write an article on Tanzania without tackling this problem. It leads of course to the idea that "Nyerere is doing the best that he can in the difficult circumstances he finds himself in."

I would be very interested to hear your views on this question. I would also like to hear your sources.

Bill Fakes,
Cambridge,
England.

WHY DID HE DIE?

Last October when I started work in a Dublin hosiery factory the first of my new mates was Jim McGinn, a young worker from Strabane. Seeing a new face on the shop floor he soon introduced himself, and was friendly and helpful in showing me the ropes. Jim told me he was a Provo and we argued about the limitations of a purely military struggle in the North, and the wastefulness of mobilizing people in a struggle without clear and worthwhile political objectives. But Jim believed the British Army to be the principal enemy. The system of class exploitation which uses soldiers to do their dirty work for them could be left till later.

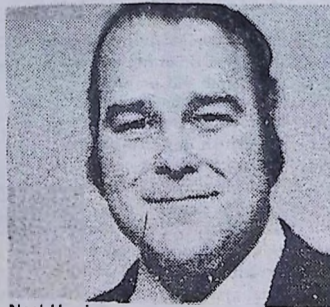
In our unofficial strike action which followed shortly afterwards Jim earned my respect. He was a militant, unafraid to speak his mind and more active than most in fighting for to improve wages and working conditions. While we were out Jim went up North for a weekend, but he didn't return. We ended our strike. The few vague assurances that the union official seemed so pleased with, turned out to be worthless lies. We heard nothing from Jim.

In December it came over the radio: Jim McGinn, twenty years old, staff-sergeant in the Provisional I.R.A., killed when a bomb he was carrying exploded prematurely, 1500 at his military funeral, shops and factories closed by workers who left to attend. I knew Jim only a short time, long enough to appreciate his sincerity and his courage. Angry and a little sickened by his death I asked myself why? Why should a young working class militant be destroyed fighting the tools of capitalism in a military campaign which doesn't even recognise that capitalism itself is the real enemy which must be destroyed?

E. O'DWYER

FANS of Jim Conway, General Secretary of the A.U.E.W., will be disappointed to know that the January issue of the "A.U.E.W. Journal" contains only five pictures of their hero. He had reached six a couple of months ago. Mind you, those five pictures for last month's issue are packed into the first fifteen pages to make up for it.

In the December issue of the Journal there was even more to make up for the paltry number of pictures of Jim — a hysterical article in which he attacked socialists and militants and, it seems, most of the members of his own union.



Noel Harris

THE LAST place Noel Harris, Divisional Officer of A.S.T.M.S., expected to be sorting out disputes was in front of his office. But that is what he had to do just before Christmas.

His union used to share premises with the Labour Party in Earlsfort Terrace, and is now moving with the Labour Party to Gardiner Place. The decorators are still working on the premises, and just before Christmas the workers picketed the place in protest against being laid off for the holiday period.

Harris came across the picket when he was going to his office and helped get a settlement for the men. But there has been no change in the contract: the Labour Party is still using non-union, lump labour to get the job done.

THE ON-OFF strike at the Guinness Brewery site is on again. The attempt by Dublin Trades Council to stop the strike in return for promises by management to negotiate seems to have failed. The stewards are also contesting the injunctions

A COUPLE of months ago, Pat Quinn made a big killing on the sale of the Deadman's Inn, a pub to the west of Dublin. It was a perfectly normal capitalist deal, the sort of thing that shows up the crooked nature of the system (which considers such things normal); and the sort of thing which shows up the contradictions in this society, where one man can make more in a day or two than many could ever hope to make in several lifetimes.

But there are 'communists' around the place who think differently. The British and Irish Communist Organisation, whose main contribution to the confusion of the working class is to have produced a theory that there are two nations, Protestant and Catholic, in Ireland, said in its paper "Comment", that it did "not begrudge Pat Quinn his money"!

against several of them for to stop them picketing in the courts and are looking for financial support to do this. The dispute started when N.E.E.T.U. and P.T.U. members demanded parity with electricians in dirty money for work on a particular part of the site.

The only thing they held against him was that he was putting his money into useless things like pubs rather than into industry. They are in favour of more capitalism, not less, they say — but it has to be of the right type.

What an extraordinary position for communists to take, to tell the bosses that they should make their profits from screwing directly the workers and their sweated labour, rather than making profits from the sale of drink to workers relaxing after their labour. What a distortion of everything socialists and communists have ever represented — an end to exploitation and the fight for worker's power.

If anybody should ever come across this organisation and be put off socialism and communism by what they say, thank again, they're a complete fraud.

the worker

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TWISTED VIEW OF STRIKES IN 1960'S

Review

'THE DECADE OF UPHEAVAL' is an apt title for a book dealing with Irish industrial relations in the 1960's. For it was in the 60's that foreign firms sprouted like mushrooms, heavily manured by IDA grants, the industrial workforce expanded and Irish society was convulsed by major, bitter strikes, as the workers insisted on some share of the benefits, however small they may have been overall.

Mr. McCarthy's book presents the readers with the American management theory of industrial relations, a pseudo-scientific version of what the Catholic Workers College has put out for a long time. In general terms, this approach admits of no inherent and inevitable conflict between worker and employer. Explanations for strikes and other forms of industrial disputes are sought rather in terms of psychology, status, management mistakes and friction between different unions. These can all be important factors — but they are froth on top. In many ways, that's what McCarthy's book deals with — different attitudes, ideas, notions circulating in society without any material base below them.

This is not to say that it is not an important study. There have been so few serious studies of Irish trade unionism, and in some areas McCarthy has an intimate knowledge. Even if his social analysis is very incomplete, he does have a few useful insights into some of the strains and tensions in this society. He points out the very important influence of private land-holding in retarding social progress. He stresses the role of the

ALLENDE SPEECHES SHOW THE MISTAKES

"I can assure you that the armed forces of Chile and the corps of the carabinieri have, and will continue to have, great respect for the constitution, for the law and for the will of the people as expressed through the ballot box" —

Salvador Allende, 30th March 1971.

In a television interview two years later, in September 1973, Allende was still expressing this belief. That was only three days before he was murdered, his "socialist experiment" destroyed, and all of Chile's working class organisations decimated — by the army in which he placed so much trust.

This collection of Allende's speeches shows that the seeds of his downfall were sown by his reliance on a spurious 'unity' of the Chilean people. His attempt to bind the various strands of society — middle class, workers, peasants, military — into a make-shift unity and steer them down a parliamentary road to socialism was doomed to fail. Unity requires a common interest, and the interests of the different classes were not only dissimilar — they were opposed.

A myth as big as the one which saw the army as impartial is the one which describes Allende as "the first democratically elected Marxist head of state". For Allende had admitted in May 1971: "I must state quite plainly that I am not a Marxist. I am a man who has read some Marxist theory."

Allende's aim was not a Worker's Republic or a radical re-structuring of society, but, as Richard Gott says in his introduction to this collection, "to extend the material and cultural values of the middle class to ever larger sectors of the population." Allende himself was specific on this point. "We have never, comrades, said that there would be a republic of workers and peasants. We have said that there would be workers in the government, and it is as well to understand the

Catholic Church as a force for social conservatism. But much of this is only material to back up his own basically conservative attitude.

What McCarthy misses is the force that ties all this together — the fact that Ireland is a country dominated by imperialism, a society marked by enormous inequality, where 5% of the population in the 26 Counties own 70% of the wealth, and one in every four persons lives in poverty. In all the mass of statistics and facts, those are two which McCarthy conveniently 'omits' to mention.

McCarthy's own mission seems to be to drag this country into the era of modern capitalism, to help its progress towards an advanced industrial state. The change is happening, of course, not all that quickly. The figures he quotes show that in 1970 more than one third of Irish workers were still employed in agriculture, and only 30% work in manufacturing industry.

WEAKNESS

This helps to explain the relative weakness of the working class, which still has its real strength around Dublin, and smaller pockets in a few other big towns. This has misled many Irish socialists to try to build broadly based fronts on national issues rather than stressing working class and social issues. Official Sinn Féin is walking a tight rope between several of these options.

But if McCarthy's book shows nothing else, it does show the potential of this small working class — and that apparently is what he is afraid of. On the very first page of his introduction, he talks about worker's action threatening "the fabric of our society". Whose society is it when it is controlled by a tiny minority of the population? Certainly not the worker's — so why should they care for its fabric?

McCarthy deals with several of the

major strikes in the 1960's in detail — the building workers strike of 1964, the power worker's strikes, the maintenance strike, the bank strike and the busmen's strike of 1962. In dealing with the last of these he shows his true colours when he approves the union leader's conscious neglect of a mandate from rank and file members.

McCarthy's attitude is one of full support for 'responsible' union leaders — he was one himself after all — and opposition to demands he sees as excessive or militant. If it takes brow-beating to get the responsible attitude through, he doesn't worry too much. If he talks about democracy, we can be sure he is not talking about worker's democracy — nor has he practised it. In his own union the Teacher's Union of Ireland, there is

now a rank-and-file committee pressing for more radical policies and for internal democracy.

Readers can draw a simple single moral from the story of each dispute. To win key disputes it is essential to have a militant shop stewards movement. If such a network existed across the unions, then the maintenance strike could have strengthened the unity and solidarity of the trade union movement, instead of weakening it. The power of stronger groups of workers could be used to win victories not only for themselves but also for the low paid, the poor and the old.

To have this kind of effect, a shop stewards movement would have to be strongly rooted in each union — and this is only conceivable through the building of rank-and-file movements in each union, offering an alternative militant leadership and challenging the power of the bureaucracy.

There are encouraging signs that the Shop Stewards Anti-National Wage Agreement Committees could develop in this direction. Anyone who doubts the need

for this policy should read McCarthy's book — they will cry at the opportunities that were missed. They must not be missed again.

Although the book has some merits in the information it provides, socialists will be more than wary of the idea that better management and better trained management could make strikes a thing of the past. The class war does not make its appearance in these pages. McCarthy's sympathies lie with "compromise" and "reasonable solutions" — and eventually a political solution in which the trade unions are involved in the running of the capitalist state. Much of the Irish trade union leadership feels the same way. If you want to know what they're thinking, and how to oppose them then its worth reading this book. But at £3.60 you probably won't want to buy it.

Charles McCarthy: *The Decade of Upheaval — Irish Trade Unions in the Nineteen Sixties*; Institute of Public Administration; £3.60.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

SOCIALIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT

The SOCIALIST 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;
- 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;
- free contraceptive facilities with full medical services;
- 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.



difference". It is extraordinary that there are still people, and organisations in this country, which claim to be socialist, who would have us believe that Allende was "the leader of the Chilean revolution".

Allende placed great emphasis on achieving his goals "legally". This meant obeying the laws established by capitalists for the protection of capitalists — laws which the ruling class would disregard when they were no longer useful to them.

Allende no doubt wanted socialism in some form, but he did not believe that the workers could carry out the revolution themselves, but should support him at the ballot box while he reformed society through the institutions of the state. While he is due our respect for the fact that he worked, fought and died for his beliefs, the tragedy is that his reformism left the workers defenceless, and led to the slaughter of thousands of working class activists, and the destruction of an independent working class movement in Chile.

It was a terrible price to pay for what we already knew: that the parliamentary road to socialism is a dead end.

G. Kerrigan

Chile's Road to Socialism — speeches of Salvador Allende, Penguin 40p.

SOMETHING STIRRING IN RUSSIA

Right: Dissidents on trial in Moscow; Far right: Solzhenitsyn

SHEILA DUNCAN

ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN, writer and novelist, has caused a stir with the publication in Paris of his latest work, 'Gulag Archipelago' — an account of the experiences in Russian concentration camps from 1918 to 1965.

Stories reaching the West from Russia in the 1930's told of murder, bloodshed and repression under Stalin's rule. Despite denials at that time by Communist parties inside and outside Russia, Khrushchev admitted to the 20th Congress of the Russia Communist Party in 1956 that the purges had happened, that the camps had existed. It was he who authorised the publication of Solzhenitsyn's first work, 'One day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich', which recorded the horrors of Stalinism.

Khrushchev's attempts at so-called de-Stalinisation were slow and wavering; he departed in the 1960's and Brezhnev tightened party control once more. Dissidents were harassed and imprisoned. The advances of science meant that 'mental hospitals' replaced the old labour camps. Leonid Plioshch, a dissident intellectual, was given a "chemical strait-jacket" drug and his illness was diagnosed as "creeping schizophrenia with messianic and reformist ideas."

In 1970 Solzhenitsyn was awarded the Nobel Prize for his novel 'The First Circle', but was refused an exit visa to collect his prize. Solzhenitsyn and a physicist, Sakharov, who was responsible for the development of Russia's hydrogen bomb, started a campaign to attract Western attention to the plight of liberal, Russian intellectuals.

Solzhenitsyn argued that the West was too pre-occupied with "petty tyrannies" in the non-communist world and was not noticing the "bigger one" in Russia. Sakharov said: "It's up to you in the West to put pressure on your governments so that the U.S.S.R. is compelled to respect human liberties." He went further: "The West's surrender to Russia's real or imaginary might would mean the perpetuation of the Soviet people's subjugation."

For these two men and their literary supporters, like Lydia Chugovskaya, recently expelled from the Writer's Union,

"socialistic" capitalism could converge with liberalising communism if the latter receives a bit of help from its friends. Enough Western pressure will ensure, they believe, that Russian intellectuals can freely express their ideas, and that the liberties of the West reach the East, and a beautiful world system will emerge.

Emphasis on the overwhelming importance of ideas is a strand which binds all the Russian dissidents. Roy Medvedev, a writer, and his twin brother, Zhores, the geneticist, hope that the next generation of Soviet leaders will be able to do for "the production of spiritual goods and intellectual achievements" what present and past rulers have done for the country's material production.

The Medvedevs, however, are opposed to soliciting Western pressure, arguing that this will only strengthen the hand of the hard-liners. They stress that the liberal intellectuals lack any mass support. Calling themselves Marxist-Leninists they insist that Russian liberalisation can only be achieved by exerting pressure on the men at the top. They point to the recent closure of the underground magazine, 'Chronicle of Current Events', as evidence of the powerlessness of the liberal intelligentsia.

They recognise that the Western propaganda is aimed at undermining the Marxist idea but they fail to see the importance of involving Russian workers in the fight against repression and bad conditions.



This is even more true for the other dissidents, that they do not see the fight for changes in Russia in terms of worker's action — and yet their protests do reveal a little of the conditions under which Russian workers live. If intellectuals are repressed, what about militant workers who object to state tyranny?

Another strand running through Russian dissident thought — or as much of it as we get to know here — is concern for the national question. Less than half of the population of the U.S.S.R. are Russian; the remainder belong to a variety of small nationalities, Ukrainian, Georgian, Armenian, etc. Despite Stalin's Georgian origins and his early work on nationalities — his only writing that can command any attention from socialists — his solution to the nationalities problem was brute Russification. Opposition to central Russian domination grew, particularly in the 1950's and 1960's, and 1972 saw the trial of a number of Ukrainian dissidents.

The Ukrainian journalist, Chomovil, exposed the KGB witch-hunts and trials in the Ukraine and was sentenced to seven year hard labour. He too professes to be a socialist and stresses the importance of ideological freedom. He asserts what he calls "the rights of all nations within the multi-national state". The nationalists command more mass support than the intellectuals and by virtue of their position recognise that Western pressure can be no substitute for the grass-roots support of national minorities.

If the dissidents have so little support overall, however, why is the Russian

International News



life? Who is it who controls production in Russia? Is it the workers or the bureaucracy?

The workers may have a nominal stake in the factories but they have no say over what is produced and how it is distributed. As in the West there is a fundamental contradiction between classes — between those who own and control and those who merely sell their labour. Asking exploitative Western capitalism for help is pathetic; it only tends to give monopoly capitalism a human face it does not deserve.

Socialists must oppose the repression of Russian intellectuals, and representatives of national minorities. But, more than that, they must oppose the oppression and the exploitation of the Russian working class. Russian liberalisation could benefit the workers, as it did in Czechoslovakia, where what started as a disagreement in the bureaucracy almost snowballed into a conflict which raised the question of power.

The Russian dissidents do not speak for the working class — in some ways they speak for different sections of the ruling bureaucracy — but they might open up the way for working class socialists to express their opposition. The root of the question, East and West, is class versus class, not bureaucrat versus intellectual.

bureaucracy so worried about them; The most recent attacks on Solzhenitsyn reveal two things. First that the Kremlin is concerned that the 'Gulag Archipelago' provides a focal point for anti-Soviet propaganda, and secondly, and more importantly, that it will impair Russian attempts at a detente with the West.

There is a delicate balance between the desire for improved East/West relations and the corresponding need for at least a liberal facade.

Liberal facades can be dangerous, however, and the Russian bureaucracy obviously fears that a facade today may mean a real fight for democratic rights tomorrow; they fear it will no longer be confused liberal intellectuals who lead a watery fight but rather rank and file workers opposition which will be demanding much more than ideological reform.

The intellectual dissidents are far from a Marxist view of history. For Solzhenitsyn life in Russia has always been marked by state repression of the individual; for him this is an inevitable and eternal contradiction for any society. For him 1918 is as 1935, is as 1967. 1917, he thinks, was not a revolution by and for the workers.

None of the dissidents raise the fundamental question of power — the power that was fought for and won by workers in 1917: power that was lost by Russian isolation and the early decimation of the working class. Naively, Sakharov argues that the most important individual right is the right to distribute one's own work. What about the right to control one's own

TORIES MAKE SCAPEGOATS OF MINERS

British capitalism is facing its biggest crisis in a generation and the reasons for this are as much to do with the international economic situation as with the particular problems in Britain. All the major economies of the world are facing a period of recession, which has only partly something to do with oil price rises and shortages, and much more to do with the end of an economic boom which had lasted for two years, and with capitalism's inability to deal with inflation.

--- capitalism's elaborate machinery a set of rotting props ---

In the face of these problems all the elaborate machinery built up through the E.E.C. and the International Monetary Fund, and so on, has had little or no practical relevance. The solution the bosses the world over are trying is the same: an all-out attack on workers' living standards.

British capitalism does have its own peculiar problems. While the Tory government's wage policy held back real living standards and pushed up profits, it did not result in increased investment in industry. In fact, the 'boom' has worsened the country's balance of payments problem, now likely to run to £3000 million a year. Inflation has also got worse.

The real depths of the recession may not come until later this year. The Tories

"We are locked in the fiercest class battle for a generation". This is how one socialist journalist has described the current situation in Britain. At the time of writing the three-day working week introduced by the Tories is beginning to bite — it costs £500 million a week in lost production. There has been talk of a general election, the miners are still holding out with their overtime ban and members are to ballot on the call for an all-out strike from the more militant members.

and the employers know this, and decided to take on the miners now, assuming that if they could beat the miners, the way would be open for a more general attack on the working class.

That much must be clear: British capitalism has to break the back of the worker's resistance if it is to get out of its present mess. This is why the employers are prepared to go along with a lock-out which will cost about 300 times as much as it would to meet the miner's claim.

The offer being made to the miners is within the so-called Stage Three of the "counter-inflation" policy. The Tories designed this on the basis of an estimated 3½% growth rate, which is now quite unrealistic. A threshold clause built into Stage Three is likely to be scrapped — and a much tougher Stage Four seems certain.

The decision on the lock-out was a political decision by the Tory Government. Along with it, they have been able to loosen working conditions and may be able to use this again later. What, then, has been the response of the trade union leaders and the Labour party?

The T.U.C. leaders have continued talks with the government and are willing to go along with their plans for Stage Three. Even the engineer's leaders are talking about settling within the framework of Stage Three and had the cheek

to suggest a ban on overtime in the middle of a lock-out, in order to pursue a £10 pay claim!

Given the ties between union leaders and the Labour Party, this raises the question of an election once again. While socialists can have no illusions in the Labour Party it is quite clear that a victory for the Tories in an election would lead to sharper attacks on workers' living standards and sharper repression. Already policy action against picketers has got much tougher, the Special Branch is being used against trade union activists, and last month the government had an enormous rehearsal for times to come when the army took over Heathrow airport.

In these circumstances, socialists in Britain support the return of Labour — without any illusions as to what they might achieve. They consider it would at least hold back the repression and allow for the real work needed, the building of a revolutionary socialist organisation solidly rooted in the factories and unions, to go on.

The immediate task of socialists in Britain are, quite obviously, to expand this organisation. The gap between the seriousness of the problems posed — the need for socialism — and the organisation and consciousness of workers is still big.

Heath now appears to be sitting out

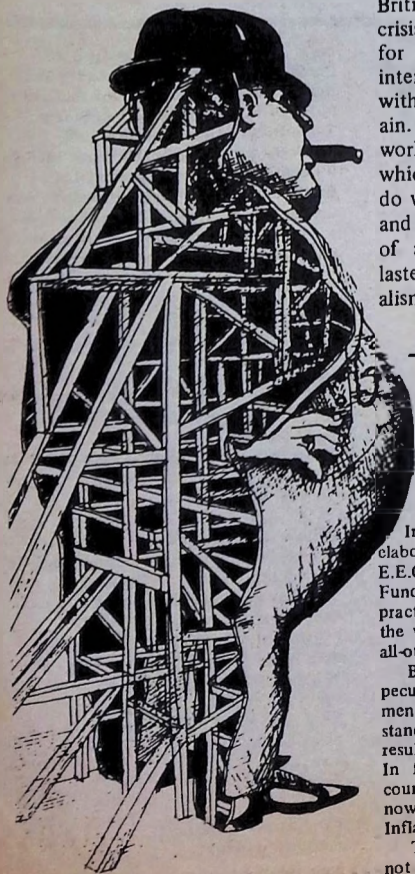
the conflict with the miners until warmer weather reduces the pressure on power stations. So an overtime ban does not seem enough to win the miner's claim. The urgent need is to turn it into an all-out strike — this would settle the conflict in no time.

Militants in other industries, especially the engineers and railway drivers, could give practical and effective solidarity to the miners — for example, with an extended boycott of the power stations.

Throughout industry the fight needs to be organised for full pay whatever the cut-backs in working hours. It's becoming clearer every day that the lock-out had little to do with coal supplies and the oil situation. Coal stocks are higher than they were before the all-out miner's strike in 1972. The point applies as much to the North of Ireland as it does to Britain. Any attempt to make workers pay for the difficulties of the capitalist economy will have to be beaten back.

But even the most effective defensive moves of this sort will not be enough to guarantee the living standards of the working class. In Britain 1% of the population owns, and largely controls, 80% of the industrial wealth. And as long as that is the case, the same cycle of repression against workers can come back. The task of revolutionary socialists in spelling out the need for socialism, and the possibility of getting it, are much more immediate than they have been for a long time.

PAUL GILLESPIE



PROVOS FIGHT ON but for what

"With confidence in the support of the Irish people we will press harder with the fight and ensure by our determination, courage and intelligence that 1974 is the Year of Freedom." So read the Christmas message of the Belfast Brigade, Provisional IRA. At the same time they summed up the achievements of last year: "the injury inflicted on the British enemy has brought its whole economy and influence to a state of ruins."

The Provos clearly see 1973 as a year of advance for the anti-imperialist struggle in the North, and believe that 'final victory' can be achieved in 1974 simply by maintaining the same type of military activity. While much of what they say in this respect is meant as a morale booster to the young volunteers in the Six Counties, the leadership remains convinced of the correctness of its own strategy and tactics.

Nothing could be further from reality than the Provo's "analysis" of the present situation. 1973, was, unhappily a year of disorganised retreat from the anti-imperialist movement, a year in which the British ruling class made inroads on the resistance. Militarily the Provisionals were weakened through a series of arrests and through the undermining of their support in the working class ghettos. Politically the SDLP have struck an alliance with the British rulers and out-manoeuvred the Provos for the political leadership of the Catholic working class.

The Provos do not envisage any dramatic military victory over the British Army in the form of a final show-down in which the British would surrender. They aim to force the British government to declare their intention to ultimately withdraw from the North. That, for them, is a "final victory".

But even if such a declaration could be wrung from the British, it would by no means bring British imperialist rule to an end. There are no British troops or political administrators in the 26 Counties, but it is just as subservient to the needs of British imperialism as the North. The Southern ruling class is totally dependent on imperialism because it is a capitalist ruling class. There can be no free or independent Ireland so long as capitalism remains. The imperialist connection can only be broken through the overthrow of

capitalism.

The year that has passed was one in which overall Provo activity fell off sharply from the year before. There were fewer shootings and bombings, fewer soldiers and RUC-men killed. And there was a shift from urban to rural warfare.

As the Provos see it, one of the most important things determining the attitude of the British public to the presence of "their" army here is the ability of the Provos to inflict serious and ever-increasing casualties on the army. This, coupled with serious economic destruction through bombings, would, they believe, undermine public acquiescence in Government policy and eventually force a commitment to withdraw.

The ability of any guerrilla army to inflict such casualties and damages depends in the final analysis on the active mass support. Maintaining such support is a political task which the Provos have not been able to meet. To have done so would have required offering a viable political alternative to parties like the SDLP. But all the Provos offer is "Eire Nua", a political programme which has no relevance to the great majority of workers in the North, and is nowhere linked to the actual struggles taking place on the streets. It is utopian, and in many respects a backwards-looking document, totally out of touch with present conditions and the needs of the working class.

In the past few years the Provos did maintain support, but only because middle-class Catholic politicians were given little room to manoeuvre by their British masters. The introduction of power-sharing has enabled the SDLP to come to the fore with the promise of "radical reforms", peace, and even the eventual reunification of Ireland (something the British do not oppose in principle, so long as they are able to dictate the pace and the terms.)

asking was whether or not the same tellers will be conducting the count in the new election.

The retirement of Norman Kennedy as Regional Secretary later this year has given rise to speculation as to who his successor will be. In his history in the trade union bureaucracy Kennedy has set a standard of achieving non-union posts equal to none. In his time he has served on The Electricity Board, the Airport Board, the Whitelaw Commission (at 25 gns a sitting), the Review Tribunal (13 gns.) an important Common Market committee, and, as a Senator for many years, collected £350 per year plus a tidy sum for every time he put in an appearance at Stormont. It has been suggested that his income from non-union jobs (obtained by virtue of his rank in the trade union movement) was well into the £1000's each year.

Kennedy's successor should be appointed six months before he leaves the job. The appointment is made by the Executive Council. Clearly Kennedy would have an interest in ensuring that the two Irish representatives on the E.C. were favourable to someone who would carry on the Kennedy 'tradition'. The Chairman of the Regional Committee sits on the selection panel and while not permitted to speak could have a strong influence on the choice from behind the scenes. It was interesting that a Kennedy man, Taggart, obtained the Chairmanship of the Regional Committee against a left-wing candidate Kennedy was the only man who had official details of the successful candidates in the regional election, yet Taggart and another Kennedy supporter,



The Provos refuse to face up to the fact that mass support has declined. Marches and demonstrations are attracting fewer and fewer people; more informers have surfaced than ever before, and there have even been demands from Catholic ghettos for British military protection from the IRA. The housewives of McClure Street in Belfast recently protested publicly with such a demand after a civilian was accidentally killed when shots were fired at an army patrol.

The problem confronting the Provos cannot be overcome through the introduction of more sophisticated weaponry — something they have been threatening for some time. Such a move may indeed increase the number of enemy casualties, but, as the underlying causes of the downturn in the struggle remain, this could only be a short-term achievement for the Provos. The introduction of new weapons will not rebuild the mass movement.

There is now a task of winning working class support away again from the SDLP. This must be the aim of all genuine anti-imperialists. But it will not be done simply through denouncing the SDLP as traitors and by a mere continuation of protest marches on issues of repression. Any alternative to the SDLP must be firmly based on working-class politics, and must tot-

ally reject the SDLP's compromises.

In its place there must be a firm commitment to working class struggle against all aspects of imperialist and capitalist rule, which will involve fights against the ruling class's attacks on wages and conditions, and on issues of rents, slum housing and unemployment. This will involve a serious criticism of the SDLP's proposed 'solutions' to the economic problems of the Six Counties which are merely designed to make capitalism more 'normal' and acceptable. And it will involve offering an alternative programme which places the struggle for worker's power, North and South, at the head of the anti-imperialist fight.

While the leadership of the Provisionals have consistently rejected any changes in their policies, especially changes in a socialist direction, there are many rank-and-file members who are committed to socialism. In the first instance they must begin to recognise the problems facing the anti-imperialist movement in the present period and reject the dangerously naive optimism of the leadership. There is little hope of making any great changes in the policies of the movement, and, if they are not to simply become disillusioned and drop out of politics, they will ultimately have to look elsewhere, to a genuine socialist organisation.

SUPPORT GROWS FOR PRISONERS

THE DEMONSTRATIONS and statements in support of the 'Winchester 4' hunger strikers are increasing steadily, both in England and Ireland. County Councils, city commissioners, bishops and academics are now calling for the transfer of the Price Sisters, Kelly and Feeney to prisons in the North.

The prospect of 20 years in prison far from relatives and comrades is a frightening one for anyone to contemplate. The demand for a transfer is a humanitarian one, and although limited, it must be supported. Evidently the hunger strikers and their closest supporters see no way of securing their release.

Who could fail to admire the courage, the almost reckless courage, they are showing? What has been so characteristic of many of the young people pitched into the struggle against imperialist repression in the North. We see it not only in military actions they are accused of, and which they have never seriously denied. But what is the direction of that courage? Are these individual sacrifices necessary?

The very fact that the republicans resort to individual heroism and individual terrorism tells us something about the movement itself. For such actions are only necessary when the mass movement has failed. Such tactics would not be necessary if the many republicans and sympathisers among Irish workers in Britain were working in an organised way in the working class movement to convince people of the need for British withdrawal from the North.

If republicans and their sympathisers were themselves capable of initiating and sustaining a serious campaign, the hunger strike would not be necessary. The British working class is up in revolt against the Tory government and the policies of wage restraint, but the republicans have been unable to link with even a small section of the militant workers to press forward their demands.

It is a tragedy to see such energy and courage wasted. There have been enough deaths already in the North among those fighting imperialism — not only through the direct repression of the Brits, but also through mistakes — for more to be added voluntarily.

The pace at which the liberal, respectable protests gather strength may not be enough to force the British government's hand in time. A concerted campaign within the working class movement, not merely for the transfer of the Winchester prisoners (or just the Price sisters who have been singled out for all the attention), but for the release of all political prisoners and an end to repressive legislation, could have some effect. It could be more easily maintained, too, beyond the emotional upsurge for four martyrs.

ATGWU: KENNEDY RULE OK?

IN DECEMBER the elections to the Irish Regional Committee and the General Executive Council of the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union took place. The E.C. election was later declared void, however, when a number of discrepancies in the voting 'came to light'.

SCATTERED

The 11/2 and 11/65 branches (commercial transport) returned a 100 per cent vote, although the members are scattered throughout the North and the ballot box was situated in Transport House in Belfast and was only open on one day. The same branch votes were still allowed to stand as far as the election to the Region was concerned. In Derry, 1,800 votes were supposedly cast in 2 hours.

There was no investigation into the large number of obviously fixed votes, and the question union members are

Around GALWAY

NINETEENTH century segregation persists in a few factories in Galway. Members of the staff are made to feel just that little higher up in return for continuing to stay quiet. Recently, the management at Crown Control decided to have a bit of a do in the Rockland Hotel. It was a secret party with only staff, firemen, a few charge-hands and the management invited. The arrival of a few workers straight from the shop-floor caused indignation. They were ejected promptly.

McBride, managed to canvass the new members in favour of Taggart before the first sitting of the new Committee.

If no successor to Kennedy can be found before the July elections to the I.C.T.U. Executive, Kennedy would most likely remain as his union's representative, even though he would resign from the union shortly afterwards. This would enable him to control the union from the outside for the coming period which is going to be crucial in the development of the Left in opposition to the type of bureaucracy Kennedy represents.

Maybe some people need to think again about their view that the rank and file simply get the leaders they deserve!

A SMALL sub-contractor entered into an agreement with the Regional Hospital management to build an extension to the hospital a few months ago when maintenance men at the hospital discovered that he was employing non-union labour they forced him to withdraw from the site, under the threat of strikes and blacking.

A few weeks later he sneaked back. Again the workers at the hospital had him expelled. However, he finally managed to get over their objections when he discovered that one of the employees was in a union a few years ago in Cork. The contractor paid all his back-dues and has survived for a period with only one man working on the site.

THE NEW Leisureland complex is turning out to be a white elephant, as we predicted it would a couple of months ago. And the people of Galway will be made to pay the price. They are now having to pay for its upkeep, as they paid for the upkeep of the Kennedy Park. Even the local businessmen who wanted Leisureland in the first place are squealing. However, the gentlemen should be reminded of a few facts.

The original plan, as we stated in a previous issue of THE WORKER, was for a swimming pool to be built on Father Griffin Road, near the centre of town and

beside a major working class area, the Claddagh. However, in the late 1960's the tourist industry began to fall away, and hotels were left with empty bedrooms. The property values in Salthill fell.

Under pressure from the local hoteliers (known as specialists in cheap labour) Bord Failte decided Galway needed a new tourist attraction. They demanded that the swimming pool be incorporated into a big entertainment complex, and backed up the demand by threatening to withhold grants. They got up a company to run the place, composed of Bord Failte representatives and local gombeen-men like O'Flaherty and Ryan. The ratepayers were going to foot a large part of the bill.

So what the hell have the businessmen got to complain about? The complaints should be coming from the people who are kept out of the place by the prices, and occasionally by the bouncers — the working people of Galway.

GALWAY STUDENT nurses have shown the way for hundreds of girls working in hospitals throughout the country.

Traditionally, nurses have been organised either into the Irish Catholic Nurses Federation, whose only function is to guarantee bishops an audience every year, or the Irish Nurses Organisation, less explicitly religious but still very polite and with a speciality in lobbying T.D.'s.

Galway student nurses have joined a trade union, the Workers Union of Ireland, which just occasionally behaves like a trade union ought to. And they have won a 40-hour working week, time-and-a-half for night duty, substantial back pay and National Wage Agreement increases which they had previously been missing.